

# ★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

\*free!

vol. 101 no. 4

A Community News Organ

Fri., June 22, 2012



## LIFE SAVING STATION CELEBRATION

On Friday, June 8, 125 to 150 folks turned out to celebrate the 1st annual LSS Open House. Not only were there many Elbertians out for the evening, but people throughout Benzie County came to take a look at the recent remodeling work done by Ross Thorsen and Mark Held. Lots of great food was brought for the potluck and all were treated to some great grilled chicken, dogs, and freshly caught lake salmon...yum! To top it all off, festive music selections were provided by DJ Duane Wallace. Lots of toes tapped under the loaded tables, and a good amount of two-stepping happened out on the dance floor. Thanks to all our community members for your interest and support of our fine Life Saving Station. A big thanks to all who brought food and beverages for the evening. A special thank-you goes to those who worked to make this a special evening for everyone: Ken Bonney, Duane Wallace, Jen Wilkins, Ross Thorsen, Bill O'Dwyer, and Sue Oseland. Thanks to the clean-up group, including most of the abovementioned folks, and also Emily Votruba, Diane Jenks, and Linda Manville. Thanks to Marilyn Maslo for photographing the event. We hope to make this celebration of our local treasure an annual (or semi-annual) event and encourage all to join in the fun!—Sue Oseland PHOTO BY MARILYN MASLO

## ZBA DENIES PUTNEY LAND USE PERMIT

DURING A THREE-AND-A-HALF-hour meeting on June 6, the Village Council sitting as Zoning Board of Appeals went carefully through a series of motions in hearing Loy Putney's appeal of Carl Noffsinger's denial of a land-use permit for the former Bay Valley Inn property to be used as agricultural labor housing. The ZBA found that migrant worker housing did not fall under the Village's ordinance as an identified use within the C-1 Commercial district, that the proposed housing as initially described by Putney did not fit the definition of "apartments," that the project did not fit the definition of a state licensed facility, and that "labor housing" did not qualify as a use by right or special use according to the uses listed for the C-1 zoning district. They also found that the approximate 5-day delay

beyond the 15-business-day deadline for the zoning administrator to issue his first ruling "demonstrates substantial compliance with the [deadline] and we have received no information that the [delay] caused any problems for Mr. Loy Putney."

Several members of the public were present at this meeting but no public comment was taken, as the ZBA had advised the audience at the previous meeting. The Village's attorney in the zoning appeal matter, Ed Roy, served as a facilitator and helped the ZBA formulate the proposed findings. It was evident that ZBA members had made an effort to understand Putney's request and our ordinance as it stands, and had considered information brought to light during previous public comment and correspondence. Several clarifications and corrections to the

language in the document were made by ZBA members during these deliberations. This delicate work was disrupted several times by an audience member making motions to adjourn the meeting.

Both Reg Manville and Ken Holmes recused themselves from the ZBA, as they had done at the two previous meetings, because they are being sued by Putney for discrimination. Ed Roy, in a phone call, said he knew of no legal requirement that those recused must leave the meeting place, as had been suggested by members of the public. He also said that in his over two decades of experience in these proceedings it was very unusual for a ZBA lawsuit to precede the ZBA's determination, as happened here (the lawsuit was filed March 27). Roy said that he is often impressed by the strength of the collective wisdom of a body such as this one, which ninety percent of the time leads them to the right result, and that this was certainly true in our case.

At press time the next court date in the litigation (for which Gretchen Olsen is the Village's attorney), had not yet been set, according to the County Clerk. Inquiries may be made by case number: 12-9378-AS.—Emily Votruba

## In Brief...

### CAR FERRY APRONS

On May 7, according to developer Scott Gest, a miscommunication led the Luedtke engineering team to begin demolition work on the West Slip. Some approach boards were removed, but an Army Corps rep has determined that the work was halted before any violation occurred. The Army Corps has not yet issued a permit for the demolition, according to Brian Grennell of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Corps has ruled that removal of the docks would cause "significant adverse impact" to the historic value of the site. This means a Section 106 process is now under way, in which the Corps, Elberta Land Holding Company, and the SHPO work together to formulate a memorandum of agreement producing a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of historic value. The Elberta Historic Preservation Committee has sent a letter to the Army Corps, Scott Gest, and the SHPO, outlining a proposed mission statement and preliminary plan for preserving and displaying parts of the loading docks in our Waterfront Park. The committee has held one public meeting, on June 13, and others will follow to create a final proposal to present to Council. The committee seeks your input! If you have ideas or want to be informed of future committee events, please contact Emily Votruba at emilyvotruba@yahoo.com, call 231-399-0098, and/or follow our Facebook page "Save (at Least Some of) the Elberta Car Ferry Aprons." The committee is also seeking funds for completion of the project. Please make your tax deductible donation payable to the Village of Elberta, memo "Historic Preservation Committee" and send to 151 Pearson St., Elberta, 49628.



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**"Point of order—I never laughed"\***

By Emily Votruba

IT WAS A WIDE-RANGING 2.75 hour meeting.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE** Don Tanner is running for the new District 7 (Elberta, Gilmore, Blaine, Joyfield, Weldon, Village of Thompsonville) slot. He once served in Elberta's district many years ago and looks forward to doing so again. He said the county has a new contract with the Council on Aging, and the Council has a new interim director, Kay Bond, former director of BACN. Tanner had recently been to Lansing to put a health-care funding proposal under Gov. Snyder's nose. He and Chip Johnston, Elaine Wood, and Matt McCauley from the Council of Governments met with the governor's health care staff. The governor was interested in the proposal and had called for another meeting on it.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** Eric Van Dussen spoke on the Beachgate controversy. "The first thing to be determined is where Lakeside Blvd. is actually located. I'm not sure many people in this room have a clue. I would contest whether the Village owns the road, but even

if it does, can they barricade it lawfully?" He also questioned whether one council person and the Village DPW should have unilateral authority to close the road. "Even if I supported the action of putting up the gate, if I served on this board I would be furious because of the lack of transparency and due process." VanDussen said he didn't think he had the grounds to file a civil action, but that he would welcome the possibility of his prosecution for taking down the gate if it led to a resolution of the problem of beach misuse. He read from an October 2008 council resolution obtained from Reg Manville: "Whereas Lakeside Blvd is located in the Village of Elberta and has been maintained by the village for a period of over 10 years, therefore be it resolved to take the road into the Village road system as a street by user.' No one talked to an attorney before you did this. I talked to the clerk."

**APPROVAL OF BILLS** Total receipts: \$140,917.90. Expenditures: accounts payable: \$139,187.74; payroll, \$ 9,783.43; Solstice, \$ 97.61. Total expenditures: \$149,068.78. We received \$113,851.43 from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust and issued a check on April 14 to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for the exact same amount.

**KEN BONNEY/DPW** Both boardwalks are out. The building given by Scott Gest is down and back behind the shop. Reg asked that we be sure the Village dumpster is in compli-

\* Eric VanDussen on being accused of finding his vigilantism amusing.

ance with the dumpster ordinance.

**WATER AND SEWER** The BLUA board discussed terrorism insurance. Ken said any policy would be subject to review by the United States Treasury.

**PARKS AND REC** Laura said several names



had come up for people to be in the dunk tank for the kids' tent fundraiser (held May 26). Volunteers (there ended up not being any volunteers, according to Jen Wilkins) would do half-hour shifts.

Bill Soper said the Farmers' Market had opened that day with 8 or 9 vendors. Not a huge turnout of patrons, but a normal number for the beginning of the season. He said Market Master Sue Oseland is doing a great job.

**BEACH** Sue and 4 volunteers picked up 6 bags of garbage and a fender, Ross Thorsen said. No wallets,

to the deepwater port and the development district near the Waterfront Park.

**BEACH ROAD** Diane reported on a beach meeting held the day before on-site. Present were Robert Forrest (DNR), Lt. Shaw (DNR) Justin Vanderlinde (DNR), Robin Schmidt (DEQ), Ken Bonney, Ross Thorsen, Reg Manville, Scott Gest, Jen Wilkins, and Diane Jenks. She read the following statement: "The objective was implementation of short and long-term goals for utilization and preservation of Thelma's Cradle and Lakeside Blvd. In 1907, Paula and Nels Bye dedicated to the parcel known as Thelma's Cradle to the use of the public. Since that time Sand Products purchased the surrounding property, with an easement through Thelma's Cradle as part of that agreement. The property on either side is privately owned. It is not part of the land dedicated to the public. In 2008 there was a public hearing to discuss possible solutions to the damage to Elberta Beach and adjoining beaches by motorized vehicles. I was not present at that meeting. On August 10, 2011, I received a letter from a concerned private property owner about vehicles driving on the beach [the letter was included in the trustees' packets]. On November 2, 2011, I called a meeting looking for options for enforcement against vehicles on the beach, critical dune, and high risk erosion areas. On April 22, I received several calls ... about vehicles [on the beach]. I called Sheriff Heckman, Lt. Shaw, and Ken Bonney asking for help. On April 23, acting as president pro tem, I felt it necessary to ask Ken Bonney to put up a gate. The topic was placed on this meeting's agenda for discussion. On Tuesday the 23rd the gate was installed. Elberta Beach was never closed; foot traffic was not dissatisfied. Nowhere in the original dedication did it say we must allow access by motorized vehicles. Wednesday, April 25, Eric VanDussen tore down the gate, went to a public meeting and admitted he did it. Ken Bonney called the sheriff and a report was made. The gate went up and down a few more times at the expense of the Village. Each time, the sheriff was called and reports were made. I called state police, DNR, and the Benzie County prosecutor. The solutions discussed at the meeting yesterday were: 1. Limit vehicle access beyond the parking lot, making vehicle access easier to prosecute. 2. Limit vehicle access until funds are raised to improve the road, which would be done in phases; as portions are completed that portion of the road would be opened. The Village is the keeper of this gift [from the Bye family], which is a blessing and a curse. Enforcement against trespassing is an ongoing frustration."

A long and somewhat circular discussion followed concerning the question of whether or not the Village indeed owns the road/has the right to block it, how and whether improvements should be made to better designate the road; and what sort of involvement the public should have in these decisions. A motion was made by Ken Holmes to block the road with a gate at night only, as was done briefly back in the late '70s when he was the Village employee. Council approved this motion with two nay votes and it was later retracted as the meeting was about to end and after public comment was heard, at the urging of Matt Stapleton. Information about the history of the conflict and other salient points are summarized below.

Ken Holmes said that Sand Products put up no-trespassing signs a few years ago on their property and they were taken down. "Bye Street originated where Trick Dog is and led down over the hill. Back in the '50s the Village made an arrangement with the oil company to use the road that runs right alongside the hill, where the office for the oil company was, right straight across to the beach. That [right of way] was later terminated and this Bye Street access was established." Ken Holmes helped survey the property for what is now the bluff parking and steep hill down to the beach.

Reg Manville: "At one time Sand Prod-

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*Remember When ...*  
*With Ken* ★ Portrait by Art Melendez

This "painted lady" Victorian has played hostess to Elberta history, most notably as the site of probably the first hospital in Benzie County.

The building at 809 Frankfort Avenue, now known as the La Rue House Bed and Breakfast, was built by L. W. Crane of the Crane Lumber company for his first son over a few years between 1889 and 1892. The Cranes lived in the 1886 white house immediately south. The new house was later sold to the livery and real estate businessman August Natzel in 1906. In this 1910 photo we see Mrs. Natzel on the porch, her two sons in the foreground, and a daughter (either Sylvia or Blanche) standing in a white dress. The house changed hands again shortly after August Natzel was convicted of murder (a story for another issue), and Dr. Frank and Nurse Ellen La Rue bought it in 1918. It remained a place of refuge and healing until 1949 and carries on that legacy today. **ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY AND PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET LA RUE BUCK**

# FOGHORN • LOCAL ITEMS LOUD AND CLEAR



**Elberta School Reunion time!** Our first get-together for the Elberta School was started by me, **Joyce Gatrell**; **Ken Holmes**; and **Shirley Chesney** on August 13, 1983, to be held every three years from that date. We had the first one at the American Legion Hall in Frankfort and in other years we held them at the Sail Inn in Benzonia (now closed), the Cabbage Shed in Elberta, and most recently we decided to have a potluck pig roast at the Mini Pond in Elberta! In 2000 we had a Homecoming parade and



**Oak Fitzhugh** was our Grand Marshal. Several of our former teachers were also in the parade. Later **Marilyn Olson** and **Darlene Buene** took charge of the reunion planning. We're looking forward to **August 18, 2012**, which will be the 10th reunion for the Elberta School. Anyone who went to Elberta School should make a point to come. We have a lot of fun.—*Joyce Gatrell*

**The 2% Solution** Not alone among many community members, **Suz McLaughlin** has been concerned about empty food pantry shelves at BACN—particularly the lack of fresh and whole foods. McLaughlin and a core group of folks from the former Lakeland Food Coop started Still Grinning Food Co-op 17 years ago as a way to access bulk, organic, and natural foods and other hard-to-find items. In May she hit on some ideas for having the group's economy of scale benefit BACN. Rather than the flat one-time cash donation Still Grinning had contributed in the past, considering that the group's own membership is experiencing some financial hardship, the coop members voted to use their collective buying power, forgoing the 2% volume discount they receive for buying in larger group quantities, and transferring the equivalent of their annual discount, which totals about \$300 worth of goods, to allow BACN to shop their distributor's website. As of this summer,

BACN should be seeing a broader range of healthy whole foods including peanut butter, whole wheat flour, local dried beans, whole wheat pasta and other nutritious items. BACN is located at 2804 Benzie Hwy (Us 31/M115), Benzonia. <http://www.benziebacn.org/>

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Happy anniversary wishes** to **A m b e r** and **Travis Lovegrove**, married six years ago on June 21.

★ ★  
**Birthdays...**  
**Taylor Bankson**, sweet 16 on May 24. **Reggie Manville**, June 2; **Diane "Jinx" Jenks**, June 13. On June 3, **Aristine Manke** got her birthday wish and celebrated her 95th spring in the company of every one of her children and their spouses, along with a few nieces and nephews.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
We welcome new resident **Lynn Bishop**, late of Los Angeles, to Washington Avenue.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Gift from the earth...** **Charla Kramer** was working in the garden at Echo Bend Farm a couple of weeks ago when she discovered a sterling silver ID bracelet. The name on the bracelet, **James E. Orr**, indicated it belonged to the late husband of the (now deceased) woman **Charla** and husband **Tom Kramer** bought their house from. They took a photo of the bracelet and e-mailed it to the Orrs' daughter. The daughter, **Bev Johnson** of Traverse City, replied (tearfully, she said), and so did her daughter, as well as an aunt, who saw the post about the bracelet on the Kramers' blog. The find has led to an exchange of photos, including one showing **James Orr** wearing the bracelet during WWII. It seems the item was lost before Ms. Johnson knew it existed, and she sees it as a sign her dad is watching over the farm... and her... and the Kramers. She'll be picking it up the next time she's in the area.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Gilmore Library Board appointee** **Benzie's** smallest township joins the **Benzie Shores District Library** as a full member with bibliophile **Sharyn Bower** as our inaugural board member.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Breaking: We're joining!** The Alliance for Economic Success's **Lakes to Land Regional Initiative**, that is. At the June Council meeting, just before press time, trustee **Linda Manville** made a compelling argument that Elberta will reap benefits from joining with the surrounding



**RITE OF SUMMER** One of the many things we look forward to year after year at Solstice Fest is the sight (and sound) of dance mistress **Kelli Stapleton** selling flower crowns to benefit the **Betsie Valley Dance School**. *Stravinsky would approve.* PHOTO BY **MATT STAPLETON**

townships in this regional planning effort, having been assured by the group's organizers and other members that we'll not have to revise our master plan to do so. Look for more on what this all means in future issues of the *Alert*. Visit [www.lakestoland.org](http://www.lakestoland.org) if you just can't wait.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Elbearta** was sighted on Saturday June 16 at 10 in the forenoon by **Margaret Davidhizar** at the intersection of Bigley and Grand as she was out walking her dog, **Emily**—



gentleman on the railroad bridge was watching Mom and Dad Crane feed their young ones through a high-powered lens, and he let her have a peek.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**All Woofers go to Heaven...** The *Alert* got a call early one recent morning from **Bill Soper** with a story idea, and it was a rush job. Some young gents on bikes had rolled into town the night before and at the urging of **Jim Barnes** had camped with **Bill** and **Connie Manke** rather than heading on up to Empire. Good call. In



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an interview conducted as they packed up their rice and beans and chocolate for their road trip across the country, the three (two recent college grads from Ohio and one 27-year-old from Connecticut) raved about the beauty of Michigan in general and Elberta in particular, and promised they'd be back. All three plan to do farmwork—one wielded a Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms handbook. Perhaps the best part of their short stay? Taking in the Transit of Venus on a clear night at the bluff lookout with their hosts. We'll be hearing more from them.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**8 miles of fiber optic cable** are being installed underground from Frankfort to Elberta to the Verizon tower at Grace and Forrester as this issue goes to press. **Rose Contracting** out of Kawkawlin are



Progress on the Grace Rd. stairway, June 19. PHOTO BY **GRACE BANKSTON WILLIAMS**

doing the work, hired by AT&T to bring their local service up to 4G, so said the two shy nameless Rouse fellows. "That's 8 miles uncut," said one, quite impressed with himself. Here's to improved connectivity! At least for AT&T customers.

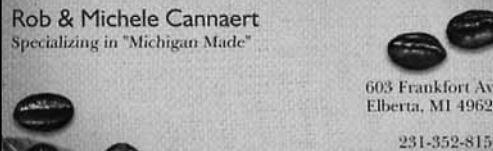
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ucts closed off the road and the Village made them take that barrier down. We also had the Village super a few years ago put a berm down further along the road prohibiting traffic to the far end. All three times, these barriers have been removed. Do we keep it open as is or do we close it and put a nonmovable object to restrict vehicle but allow pedestrian traffic? ... I look at it this way, if you have a residence in the Village and someone goes off a Village street and onto your property, it's your problem. If Sand Products owns the rest of the property, why are we in this situation where we have to solve the problem?"

Diane Jenks: "The only way people can access that property is on our road, so I think we have a responsibility."

Ken Holmes: "We own 4,000 feet [of roadway, Lakeside Blvd.]. It was graded all the way down years ago. We had glider meetings down there. It was always used that way. But the dunes have moved into Sand Products property because of [ORV traffic]."

RM: "If we close the road, expect a firestorm. That beach is one of our assets, one of the nicest beaches in the whole state of Michigan. Access is free, it's a beautiful, sandy beach. People use it all the time."

DJ: "The way it is now, you don't know what you can drive on and what you can't because there are tracks everywhere. We need a designated road so people can tell when they're trespassing. We need to improve the road and add some parking."

Linda Manville: "My personal feeling is that the State of Michigan has mandated that critical dunes and high erosion areas be protected. As an elected official I have sworn to uphold Village and state laws, and because of that I support closing the Blvd. and working at it in phases so we can have access for people."

Ross: "I'm not sure where I stand on closing the road. I definitely think there's a problem down there. I want to see that road get developed into a parking area, but I'm not sure about closing the road."

Bill Soper: "There seems to be some question about whether we own the road, so we have to start there. I think we should table it until we find out. Who can tell us?"

Matt Stapleton: "We've been maintaining it for years, but I don't think Bill's question should be sidestepped. ... We can't make a decision based on what we 'believe' when we're talking about legal documents. I agree we should have a plan. I don't know if right now is a good time to talk about whether we do it in phases. We should set up a subcommittee. Maybe there's a grant out there."

The legal standing of a map produced by Gordie-Fraser 10 years ago that included Lakeside Blvd. was discussed.

A member in the audience asked if there would be public comment before the vote on Ken Holmes's part-time gate proposal. Reg said public comment would occur at the end.

Council and Ken Bonney discussed the possibility of having some roadwork

completed before July 4th. The nature of possible barriers was discussed, including possibly large boulders (as had been recommended by the sheriff's department at earlier beach meetings).

Matt suggested Sand Products might be approached to fund signage informing the public about closure times and marking the road. He volunteered to do shifts opening and closing the proposed temporary night gate. "I've been down there at night and there's a safety concern after dark when those trucks are down there." He addressed Eric Van Dussen. "Eric, Occupy Elberta Beach. You tore down the gate—"

EVD: "I don't think 'tore' is the right word."

MS: "OK. You helped it come down. You were upset because your access to the beach was blocked."

Eric said he was upset for the whole community, and that closing the road at night only would still be problematic because of regular late-night use during the summer. "If you could block off where cars shouldn't be going off road [at the end of the road and sides] I think that would be a better solution than blocking the road [entrance, at the border between Village and Sand Products property]."

The question of grant funding was discussed. Diane said she'd looked at all the grants mentioned by the DNR and others and they all take a 50% match.

The possibility of re-creating the road

with the aggregate that Elmer's is now hauling out was discussed. Bill Soper said council should authorize and begin construction of the road.

MS: "If we're going to make changes, we need to let the public know ahead of time. 'I'd like to recommend that we follow an open public procedure. And do some research. For example, what happened Ken when you would close the gate at night and someone was still back there?'"

KH: "They stayed there! [laughter] There's no reason people can't walk down there. And they ought to be able to walk down there safely. What happened to people walking? Is there something wrong with that?"

EVD: Said he felt many people in the room hadn't been heard and might want to get in a comment before the vote. "There's no definition of night and day... your motion is unconstitutionally vague."

Reg Manville moved the discussion to the mini-pond dock removal proposal.

BS: "I move that we remove the existing docks in preparation for a walkway. They're way up in the air, there's no railings. They're not safe. I would hope there would be grants available. Tear them out as soon as possible and also the concrete entryways to the docks that should come out and various other things."

Ken Bonney said they would fill one or

continues on page 5



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**JUNE  
•  
JULY**

Olive Phinisey is the only Elberta H.S. graduate this year; 8th grade graduates are: Frances Schafer, Doris Blacklock, Mabel Hayes, Rachel Little, Fern Bartlett, Wm. Grenaway, Signor Sivertson, Carl Anderson, Mortimer Saxton.  
—The Elberta Alert, June 14, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
21, 28, 5, 12, 19, 26	ELBERTA FARMERS' MARKET	Informally voted one of the regions best farmers' markets. Stop by for the best local produce, meats, plants, and even music!	Marina Park/Farmers' Market Pavilion	7:30 am-12 noon (Thurs.)
26...; 18	PROGRAMS AT BENZIE SHORES LIBRARY	The Young Writers Group (ages 8 to 8th grade) meets every Tuesday morning at 10 am. NOTE: library closed on the Fourth of July. On July 18, Reflections by the Bay presents "Shipwrecks of Sleeping Bear Point" with Ross Richardson	Main St., Frankfort	10 am; 7 pm
26	BACN BENEFIT DINNER	Dine out and 25% of your tab goes to BACN. June's restaurants are Coho Cafe and Lumberjack Bar and Grill in Honor.	various locations	first Tuesdays
26, 30, 1, 11, 13, 31	MUSIC AT THE CABBAGE SHED	Soul Patch on the 26th of June; VW with Mark Messina on the 30th, and the Sock Hop dinner dance from 6 to 9 on the 1st. Johnny Magambo on the 11th; Platte Plains Wolf Pack on the 13th; Claudia Schmidt & Sally Rogers on the 31st. Plus open mic every Thursday!	198 Frankfort Ave.	9 pm unless otherwise noted
30, 31, 1	BENZIE COUNTY PLAYERS	"None of the Above." "A snappy new comedy by the playwright Jenny Lyn Bader about the risks people end up taking when they're trying to safeguard themselves." 7:30 pm on Saturday and Sunday plus a 2 pm matinee on Sunday. Tickets \$10.	Mills Community House, 891 Michigan Ave.	7:30 pm and 2 pm
JUNE 31 - JULY 8	FRANKFORT-ELBERTA FOURTH OF JULY CARNIVAL	Watch with awe the Great Wallendas, test your mettle on the midway vs. the carnies and jointies, eat things that are terrible for you and then throw them up. This is what Freedom is all about.	Frankfort Open Space	all day and long into the night
5	AUDUBON CLUB FAMILY EVENT	Rebecca Lessard of Wings of Wonder—open to all ages!	Tribal Outpost on Hoadley Rd. Benzonia	7 pm-9 pm
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12	BENZONIA ACADEMY LECTURE SERIES	"The Roaring Twenties" by Michael Nagle, Westshore Community College Professor of History.	Mills Community House, 891 Michigan Ave.	7 pm-8 pm
19	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village of Elberta Board of Trustees	Village Community Bld. 401 First St.	7 pm
21	COMMUNITY DINNER AT ELBERTA'S BEST CHURCH	Good free home cooking plus good friends at Elberta United Methodist.	555 Lincoln Ave.	4 pm-6 pm (third Saturdays)

# FOGHORN • LOCAL ITEMS LOUD AND CLEAR



**Elberta School Reunion time!** Our first get-together for the Elberta School was started by me, **Joyce Gatrell**; **Ken Holmes**; and **Shirley Chesney** on August 13, 1983, to be held every three years from that date. We had the first one at the American Legion Hall in Frankfort and in other years we held them at the Sail Inn in Benzonia (now closed), the Cabbage Shed in Elberta, and most recently we decided to have a potluck pig roast at the Mini Pond in Elberta! In 2000 we had a Homecoming parade and



**Oak Fitzhugh** was our Grand Marshal. Several of our former teachers were also in the parade. Later **Marilyn Olson** and **Darlene Buene** took charge of the reunion planning. We're looking forward to **August 18, 2012**, which will be the 10th reunion for the Elberta School. Anyone who went to Elberta School should make a point to come. We have a lot of fun.—*Joyce Gatrell*

**The 2% Solution** Not alone among many community members, **Suz McLaughlin** has been concerned about empty food pantry shelves at BACN—particularly the lack of fresh and whole foods. McLaughlin and a core group of folks from the former Lakeland Food Coop started Still Grinning Food Co-op 17 years ago as a way to access bulk, organic, and natural foods and other hard-to-find items. In May she hit on some ideas for having the group's economy of scale benefit BACN. Rather than the flat one-time cash donation Still Grinning had contributed in the past, considering that the group's own membership is experiencing some financial hardship, the coop members voted to use their collective buying power, forgoing the 2% volume discount they receive for buying in larger group quantities, and transferring the equivalent of their annual discount, which totals about \$300 worth of goods, to allow BACN to shop their distributor's website. As of this summer,

BACN should be seeing a broader range of healthy whole foods including peanut butter, whole wheat flour, local dried beans, whole wheat pasta and other nutritious items. BACN is located at 2804 Benzie Hwy (Us 31/M115), Benzonia. <http://www.benziebacn.org/>

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Happy anniversary wishes** to **A m b e r** and **Travis Lovegrove**, married six years ago on June 21.

★ ★  
**Birthdays...**  
**T a y l o r Bankson**, sweet 16 on May 24. **Reggie Manville**, June 2; **Diane "Jinx" Jenks**, June 13. On June 3, **Aristine Manke** got her birthday wish and celebrated her 95th spring in the company of every one of her children and their spouses, along with a few nieces and nephews.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
We welcome new resident **Lynn Bishop**, late of Los Angeles, to Washington Avenue.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Gift from the earth...** **Charla Kramer** was working in the garden at Echo Bend Farm a couple of weeks ago when she discovered a sterling silver ID bracelet. The name on the bracelet, **James E. Orr**, indicated it belonged to the late husband of the (now deceased) woman **Charla** and husband **Tom Kramer** bought their house from. They took a photo of the bracelet and e-mailed it to the Orrs' daughter. The daughter, **Bev Johnson** of Traverse City, replied (tearfully, she said), and so did her daughter, as well as an aunt, who saw the post about the bracelet on the Kramers' blog. The find has led to an exchange of photos, including one showing **James Orr** wearing the bracelet during WWII. It seems the item was lost before Ms. Johnson knew it existed, and she sees it as a sign her dad is watching over the farm... and her... and the Kramers. She'll be picking it up the next time she's in the area.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Gilmore Library Board appointee** **Benzie's** smallest township joins the **Benzie Shores District Library** as a full member with bibliophile **Sharyn Bower** as our inaugural board member.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Breaking: We're joining!** The Alliance for Economic Success's **Lakes to Land Regional Initiative**, that is. At the June Council meeting, just before press time, trustee **Linda Manville** made a compelling argument that Elberta will reap benefits from joining with the surrounding



**RITE OF SUMMER** One of the many things we look forward to year after year at Solstice Fest is the sight (and sound) of dance mistress **Kelli Stapleton** selling flower crowns to benefit the **Betsie Valley Dance School**. **Stravinsky** would approve. PHOTO BY **MATT STAPLETON**

townships in this regional planning effort, having been assured by the group's organizers and other members that we'll not have to revise our master plan to do so. Look for more on what this all means in future issues of the *Alert*. Visit [www.lakeistoland.org](http://www.lakeistoland.org) if you just can't wait.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**Elbearta** was sighted on Saturday June 16 at 10 in the forenoon by **Margaret Davidhizar** at the intersection of **Bigley** and **Grand** as she was out walking her dog, **Emily**—



this according to **Margaret's** sister **Marilyn Freebold**, who herself had a not so close encounter with a family of **sand-hill cranes** in the marsh. A gentleman on the railroad bridge was watching **Mom and Dad Crane** feed their young ones through a high-powered lens, and he let her have a peek.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**All Woofers go to Heaven...** The *Alert* got a call early one recent morning from **Bill Soper** with a story idea, and it was a rush job. Some young gents on bikes had rolled into town the night before and at the urging of **Jim Barnes** had camped with **Bill** and **Connie Manke** rather than heading on up to **Empire**. Good call. In

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an interview conducted as they packed up their rice and beans and chocolate for their road trip across the country, the three (two recent college grads from Ohio and one 27-year-old from Connecticut) raved about the beauty of Michigan in general and Elberta in particular, and promised they'd be back. All three plan to do farmwork—one wielded a **Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms** handbook. Perhaps the best part of their short stay? Taking in the **Transit of Venus** on a clear night at the bluff lookout with their hosts. We'll be hearing more from them.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**8 miles of fiber optic cable** are being installed underground from **Frankfort** to the **Verizon tower** at **Grace** and **Forrester** as this issue goes to press. **Rose Contracting** out of **Kawkawlin** are



Progress on the **Grace Rd. stairway**, June 19. PHOTO BY **GRACE BANKSTON WILLIAMS**

doing the work, hired by **AT&T** to bring their local service up to **4G**, so said the two shy nameless **Rose** fellows. "That's 8 miles *uncut*," said one, quite impressed with himself. Here's to improved connectivity! At least for **AT&T** customers.

**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, attn "Foghorn."**

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ucts closed off the road and the Village made them take that barrier down. We also had the Village super a few years ago put a berm down further along the road prohibiting traffic to the far end. All three times, these barriers have been removed. Do we keep it open as is or do we close it and put a nonmovable object to restrict vehicle but allow pedestrian traffic? ... I look at it this way, if you have a residence in the Village and someone goes off a Village street and onto your property, it's your problem. If Sand Products owns the rest of the property, why are we in this situation where we have to solve the problem?"

Diane Jenks: "The only way people can access that property is on our road, so I think we have a responsibility."

Ken Holmes: "We own 4,000 feet [of roadway, Lakeside Blvd.]. It was graded all the way down years ago. We had glider meetings down there. It was always used that way. But the dunes have moved into Sand Products property because of [ORV traffic]."

RM: "If we close the road, expect a firestorm. That beach is one of our assets, one of the nicest beaches in the whole state of Michigan. Access is free, it's a beautiful, sandy beach. People use it all the time."

DJ: "The way it is now, you don't know what you can drive on and what you can't because there are tracks everywhere. We need a designated road so people can tell when they're trespassing. We need to improve the road and add some parking."

Linda Manville: "My personal feeling is that the State of Michigan has mandated that critical dunes and high erosion areas be protected. As an elected official I have sworn to uphold Village and state laws, and because of that I support closing the Blvd. and working at it in phases so we can have access for people."

Ross: "I'm not sure where I stand on closing the road. I definitely think there's a problem down there. I want to see that road get developed into a parking area, but I'm not sure about closing the road."

Bill Soper: "There seems to be some question about whether we own the road, so we have to start there. I think we should table it until we find out. Who can tell us?"

Matt Stapleton: "We've been maintaining it for years, but I don't think Bill's question should be sidestepped. ... We can't make a decision based on what we 'believe' when we're talking about legal documents. I agree we should have a plan. I don't know if right now is a good time to talk about whether we do it in phases. We should set up a subcommittee. Maybe there's a grant out there."

The legal standing of a map produced by Gordie-Frasier 10 years ago that included Lakeside Blvd. was discussed.

A member in the audience asked if there would be public comment before the vote on Ken Holmes's part-time gate proposal. Reg said public comment would occur at the end.

Council and Ken Bonney discussed the possibility of having some roadwork

completed before July 4th. The nature of possible barriers was discussed, including possibly large boulders (as had been recommended by the sheriff's department at earlier beach meetings).

Matt suggested Sand Products might be approached to fund signage informing the public about closure times and marking the road. He volunteered to do shifts opening and closing the proposed temporary night gate. "I've been down there at night and there's a safety concern after dark when those trucks are down there." He addressed Eric Van Dussen. "Eric, Occupy Elberta Beach. You tore down the gate—"

EVD: "I don't think 'tore' is the right word."

MS: "OK. You helped it come down. You were upset because your access to the beach was blocked."

Eric said he was upset for the whole community, and that closing the road at night only would still be problematic because of regular late-night use during the summer. "If you could block off where cars shouldn't be going off road [at the end of the road and sides] I think that would be a better solution than blocking the road [entrance, at the border between Village and Sand Products property]."

The question of grant funding was discussed. Diane said she'd looked at all the grants mentioned by the DNR and others and they all take a 50% match.

The possibility of re-creating the road

with the aggregate that Elmer's is now hauling out was discussed. Bill Soper said council should authorize and begin construction of the road.

MS: "If we're going to make changes, we need to let the public know ahead of time. 'I'd like to recommend that we follow an open public procedure. And do some research. For example, what happened Ken when you would close the gate at night and someone was still back there?'"

KH: "They stayed there! [laughter] There's no reason people can't walk down there. And they ought to be able to walk down there safely. What happened to people walking? Is there something wrong with that?"

EVD: Said he felt many people in the room hadn't been heard and might want to get in a comment before the vote. "There's no definition of night and day... your motion is unconstitutionally vague."

Reg Manville moved the discussion to the mini-pond dock removal proposal.

BS: "I move that we remove the existing docks in preparation for a walkway. They're way up in the air, there's no railings. They're not safe. I would hope there would be grants available. Tear them out as soon as possible and also the concrete entryways to the docks that should come out and various other things."

Ken Bonney said they would fill one or

continues on page 5



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# JUNE • JULY

Olive Phinisey is the only Elberta H.S. graduate this year; 8th grade graduates are: Frances Schafer, Doris Blacklock, Mabel Hayes, Rachel Little, Fern Bartlett, Wm. Grenaway, Signor Sivertson, Carl Anderson, Mortimer Saxton.  
—The Elberta Alert, June 14, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
21, 28, 5, 12, 19, 26	ELBERTA FARMERS' MARKET	Informally voted one of the regions best farmers' markets. Stop by for the best local produce, meats, plants, and even music!	Marina Park/Farmers' Market Pavilion	7:30 am-12 noon (Thurs.)
26...; 18	PROGRAMS AT BENZIE SHORES LIBRARY	The Young Writers Group (ages 8 to 8th grade) meets every Tuesday morning at 10 am. NOTE: library closed on the Fourth of July. On July 18, Reflections by the Bay presents "Shipwrecks of Sleeping Bear Point" with Ross Richardson	Main St., Frankfort	10 am; 7 pm
26	BACN BENEFIT DINNER	Dine out and 25% of your tab goes to BACN. June's restaurants are Coho Cafe and Lumberjack Bar and Grill in Honor.	various locations	first Tuesdays
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## Summer People and Color Tour

TWO BOOKS BY AARON STANDER

### SUMMER PEOPLE—A RAY ELKINS THRILLER (Writers & Editors, 2009)

Aaron Stander lives in the woods of Northwest Lower Michigan. He spent most of his adult life in the Detroit area, where he taught English and creative writing until he and his wife moved to their cottage near Traverse City in 2000. He is an author interviewer for Interlochen Public Radio and a resident writing teacher at Interlochen Arts Academy. He has now written four Ray Elkins murder mysteries, plus a prequel. This is his first novel and the first of the series.

The main character, Sheriff Ray Elkins, was raised in a poor family “Up

North,” received an undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, served in the army in Germany as a military policeman, then returned to UofM for a graduate degree. He taught at a major Midwest university before returning to his northern Michigan roots and becoming sheriff of fictional Cedar County, which is based on Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau. He is a highly intelligent Renaissance man with eclectic interests including English literature, art, music, sculpture, and architecture. He is also a gourmet, a handyman capable of building his own kayak, and a someone who raps well with the locals. In Stander’s portrayal, Ray’s character truly comes to life.

In this regional mystery, the reader will be able to identify many of the re-named places, and the characters are well-drawn local types whom most readers familiar with this part of the world

will recognize. However, in this first novel, some gaps in the rather thin plot do exist, and the ending is somewhat ambiguous, leaving the reader hanging, unsure exactly what the motives are for three of the four murders that take place or how exactly they have been solved.

### COLOR TOUR—A NORTHERN MICHIGAN MURDER MYSTERY (Writers & Editors, 2006)

This novel takes place in October in Northwest Lower Michigan’s rural paradise of fruit orchards, blue lakes, shifting sand dunes and endless beaches. The peacefulness of a lovely fall day is shattered when an elderly widow is out walking her dogs along the shoreline and stumbles upon the bodies of a young couple who have been brutally murdered.

Sheriff Ray Elkins returns from his debut in *Summer People* to seek out the murderer of this popular, vivacious young woman, who teaches at a nearby

elite private school, and of her boyfriend, who has been visiting her for the week-end. During Elkins’s investigation at the school he discovers some dark dealings indeed, and also stirs up old memories of his own from long ago. Aaron Stander’s writing in this second novel seems surer and more grounded than in the first—the plot and storyline run along smoothly and keep the reader’s interest until the last page—and the denouement presents an ironic twist.

Two of Stander’s colleagues, Anne-Marie Oomen and Jack Driscoll, current and past directors of the renowned Interlochen Arts Academy Creative Writing Program, and both well-known authors themselves, have written glowing reviews, as has Doug Stanton, the Traverse City author and *New York Times* best seller. This is a book anyone who likes a good murder mystery is sure to enjoy.—*Janet La Rue Buck, Alert Literary Editor*

## SUNSET

*We Will Miss...*

### EARL K. PARSONS JR. (July 11, 1941–May 19, 2012)

Earl “Punchy” Parsons left this life to join his parents, Earl Sr. and Hazel Parsons, his oldest son, Kenneth, and his sister-in-law Debbie Reed in May while visiting his family in California.

Punchy was a proud supporter of the Frankfort Panthers sports programs. He was always a willing volunteer to serve as a baseball coach or part of the “Chain Gang” during football season. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and truly appreciated the great times he spent with his friends at deer camp. A friend to all, Punchy had a smile that will be forever remembered.

Punchy was the successful owner of Earl Parsons’s Painting for many years. He cherished his family and was especially proud of their accomplishments. He was a very doting grandfather.

Punchy is survived by his wife of 41 years, Dyana; children Brad (Marcy) Parsons; Jodi Parsons Soto and Alan Parsons; grandchildren Devon, Sydney, Kory, Shayla, Austin, Brandon, and Katelyn; brother Delbert (Sharon) Parsons; sister Barbara Miller; sisters-in-law Denise (Rick) Seaman and Dixie (Greg) Wilkens; many nieces, nephews and cousins, plus a host of friends.

A memorial service was held June 2, 2012, at the Benzonia Jowett Funeral Home with Pastor Rick Stieve officiating.

### KEVIN J. BANKTSON (June 11, 2012)

Kevin James Banktson of Gilmore Township passed away June 11 of leukemia. He was 54. Kevin graduated from Frankfort High School in 1976. He worked on many area farms and in the fruit processing industry in several locations.

Kevin is survived by his brothers, Gordon of Grand Rapids, Les and Jeff (Julie) of Gilmore Township and Dan of Elberta, nieces and nephews Brenna, Max, Paige, Tami, Taylor, Lorynn, and Morgan Banktson, and Wyatt and Trevor Crawford. He also leaves many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends, especially the morning coffee group at the Lighthouse Café.

Kevin was preceded in death by his parents, Jim and Betty Banktson; grandparents Arthur and Grace Banktson, and William and Evelyn Alpers.

Father John Porter officiated at the graveside service held at the Gilmore Township Cemetery on June 16, 2012.



### COUNCIL MEETING REPORT, cont'd

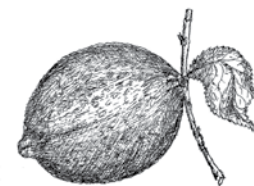
two dumpsters and a dumpster is \$800.

Some confusion ensued as to whether the entire docks (including the pilings, which would require an Army Corps and DEQ permit) or just the tops were to be removed. Ken Holmes urged that the pilings be preserved so a marina might be developed again at some point. Council passed an amended motion to remove just the tops of the docks.

Final public comments brought some matters to light: At the 2008 beach meeting the sheriff’s department and DNR had recommended that the Village pass an ordinance to vacate the road, because we cannot legally restrict public access to a public road without an ordinance. Ken Holmes said he didn’t think an ordinance had been passed after that meeting but he would look into it. The original motion was retracted and the topic tabled.

Emily Votruba asked that address numbers be put on the Library building, since the word “Library” has been removed.

Scott Gest said he and the State Historic Preservation Office were under the impres-



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sion that Jed Jaworski was a member of the Historical Preservation Committee. Emily Votruba assured him that this was not the case. Gest said the SHPO had never heard of her (Emily), and Emily said she could produce documentation of her communication with two SHPO officers. Reg reiterated that all projects and committee members must be approved by council, no village money should be spent, and Scott’s project should not be delayed by “any type of historical situation like what we ran into prior, when we tried to remove the [SS *City of Milwaukee*], and it cost the village \$100K in legal fees. I didn’t want to go through that again.”

Talk turned again to the beach. ♣

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# BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history, topics, and interviews by an Elberta teen

## A Look at Lake Invasives

By Westley Allen

*This an edited (but not fully fact-checked) version of a paper Mr. Allen wrote for his 11th grade English class in at Benzie Central in May. This summer Westley will be working as first mate on Sea Joy out of East Shore Marina, his "dream job."*

THE GREAT LAKES hold 21 percent of the world's surface freshwater and 84 percent of North America's, according to the EPA. Species in the Great Lakes ecosystem range from as insignificant and small as an emerald shiner to the grand size of a sturgeon. Each species has its role and helps to keep the ecosystem balanced and biodiverse. Scientists state that the removal of just one species could mess up the state of equilibrium in the Great Lakes. The introduction of a new species can also disrupt that state of equilibrium.

As different means of transportation arise, they provide new means of dispersing invasive species. Railroads became popular in the 1800s, and "by 1860, railroads connected the Atlantic coast to the Great Lakes. The construction of railroads and roads provided newly disturbed habitat and promoted dispersal of plants into new areas," according to the writer James Carlson.

Railroads were a major means of transporting invaders, but even more important were the ballast tanks of freighter ships that entered the Great Lakes. Carlson writes that "between 1930 and 1990, 74 species were introduced [into the Great Lakes], of which more than one-half became established subsequent to the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959."

The regulations for freight ships have been quite lax in the past and are only recently becoming more stringent. An excerpt from an article written by Carlson in *Bio-science* magazine describes the situation in better detail: "Organisms typically remain

in a ballast tank when the exchange process is incomplete, as it often is—many vessels either would not (due to weather conditions) or could not (due to design) pump out every gallon of their ballast water before pumping in new water. In response to this concern, Congress has called for a detailed exploration of alternate ballast water control strategies. But, as Carlson states, "As long as the Great Lakes are subject to human mediated transfer, the world's largest freshwater resource will continue to be at risk from invasions." Carlson also provides the statistic: "Approximately 15% of these nonindigenous species have caused severe harm affecting agriculture, industry, human health, and the natural environment."

The Great Lakes currently have "at least 139 nonindigenous fish, invertebrates, fish disease pathogens, plants and algae" (Carlson). The government has itself played a hand in the introduction of new species into ecosystems: "Government agencies have deliberately introduced fish species, mostly to enhance fisheries, into the Great Lakes since the 1870s" (Carlson).

Some agencies have been making concerted efforts to rebuild the Great Lakes and legislation has been passed in several states to employ protective measures against the invasion of certain species. But some people believe there is still not enough being done about it, and that the government should create more agencies with the sole purpose of restoring the Great Lakes back to their former state of pristine health.

Others believe that the Great Lakes are not of great importance and that the money that the government allots towards protecting and restoring them is money being wasted. Mark Davis of the *Earth Island Journal* gives his opinion of the issue: "Usually provided with just a single perspective, the public largely accepted the idea that non-natives [invasive species] as a group are noxious and undesirable. In fact, that is anything but true. Non-native species are just species."

Mark Davis once wrote, "For twenty-five years, the American public has been inundated with horror stories involving non-native species. This has been largely the result of selective communication from scientists and a media that too often have been more than eager to promote these stories without engaging in any critical analysis or research of their own."

Because many native species began to decline at about the same time that non-native species began to become abundant, some ecologists and conservationists prematurely assumed that the non-native species were the cause for the decline of the native flora. Davis brings to light this valid point: "Once harm is claimed, the society is generally obligated to try to reduce or eliminate the harm. Also, if harm is misrepresented, scarce societal resources can end up being spent on needless and futile management programs."

Some on this side are from people who are Conservative politically. Supporters of this side believe that the government should allot the money to be used for the Great Lakes to fund major tax cuts for upper-class Americans.

In another article Davis notes, "Efforts to vilify non-native species by representing their effects are ultimately counterproductive, as is the use of pejorative language to describe them: e.g., calling them "invaders" or biological pollution."

In my opinion, the government should create and fund

more programs to regulate and rehabilitate the Great Lakes. I like the proactive approach: Minimize inadvertent introductions of new species that hitchhike rides into the U.S (via ballast water or other means), and subject any planned introduction to rigorous examination by experts. Another plan that I agree with and it is as follows: "Short of eradication, several technologies are available to lower invasive populations: biological control (introduction of a natural enemy), chemical control, and mechanical and physical control" (Davis). Though each one of these may contribute minutely to successes, none of them is a silver bullet.

The government is indeed lately getting more involved. The House recently passed a spending bill that reduces the federal budget by more than \$61 billion for the remainder of this fiscal year. The bill allocates \$225 million to the EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, down from the \$475 million President Barack Obama suggested for the program in 2011. The good thing about this bill is that no current Michigan Sea Grant projects will be affected by federal budgets, having already received a large sum of money from the GLRI. The bill also wouldn't affect Great Lakes projects that are university sponsored. Jennifer Read, the assistant director and research director for Michigan Sea Grant, states this point: "[Restoration Science] requires a lot of adaptive management—that is, being able to monitor and understand what's happening in the result of your restoration activity and tweak it as you need to and follow up on later years. So having less dollars to do that activity means... we're able to do less."

As Senator Rick Durbin describes the budget plans for the Great Lakes: "[I have] vowed to work to protect funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. [The cuts] would delay Asian Carp Research efforts and carp management activities including electrofishing and netting." After the meeting Durbin had this to say; "This is unacceptable to the thousands of people in the tourism and fishing industries who rely on a health Great Lakes ecosystem for their livelihood. Congress can't expect to preserve these jobs and grow our economy if we don't invest in the protection of Lake Michigan."

The Great Lakes are a unique feature that we simply can't afford to lose, nor do we want to lose it. At times the lakes can be calm and serene, while other times it unleashes its fury upon the shores of the



Westley Allen, spring 2012. PHOTO BY FRANK SPADAFORO

surrounding states. We must accept what the lake gives us either way and enjoy what we have before it is too late. Even with quagga mussels, zebra mussels, Asian carp, round gobies, and other aquatic invaders, the Great Lakes have survived. The survival from this point forward now depends on us. If we don't do something soon, we aren't going to have a Great anything except for a "Great Oops." Every region has its own unique feature(s) that attract people from far and wide. We just happen to have five of them.

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(231) 651-0425  
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