

★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

*free!

vol. 101 no. 6

A Community News Organ

Wed., Oct. 3, 2012



GO, FISH! Low Water Raises Concern over Spawn Run

EVERY 50 YEARS OR SO, say the old-timers, the Betsie Bay gets a bit parched. The cycle corresponds to Lake Michigan levels, which control the bay, according to Mark Tonello of DNR Fisheries Management. The last time we saw average lake levels this low, down around 176 feet, was in the early '60s—before the lake was stocked with salmon. Some fishermen have been worried about water levels for several years, and that worry produced a head of steam just after Labor Day, when a grassroots campaign was launched to compel the DNR and local authorities to come up with a solution—dredging being strongly favored. Village president Reg Manville and

Frankfort city superintendent Josh Mills say they are in negotiations with the DNR and the Army Corps of Engineers to get the necessary permits for a dredge to take place before the next big fishing deadline: the steelhead run in the spring. The problem, as usual, is money. Neither community has the funds for the project, which Mills said could cost \$150,000 at minimum. In the meantime, the DNR has banned angling in this portion of our natural fishery, from the midbay marinas to the trail bridge, until further notice. A dearth of feed fish may mean the die off is a blessing in the long-run. But it's bound to hurt local business in the short run.—Emily Votruba



SALMON CRISIS 2012 The photo above left was taken Sept. 19, 2011, during one of the biggest salmon runs in memory; that spells a big fishing year in 2014. This year, by contrast, many fish never made it upstream. In August the low water level in the Betsie Bay had become painfully obvious. "I didn't know we had so many saints in Elberta," wondered Lois Schram at the dozens people walking way out in the bay at all hours. By the time Labor Day weekend rolled around, the hundreds of dead and dying fish, and the numbers of people netting and otherwise bothering them in their attempt to find their old channel or breach the sandbar and make into the Betsie River was a disturbing sight (and smell). Moved by the plight of the struggling amorous fish as well as by fear of a terrible fishing year in 2015 (when 2012's baby fish will return from the big lake), some citizens took it on themselves to do some civil engineering, digging a path for the fish. This was stopped by TC DNR officer Robert Torres (left) on Sept. 17. A fishing ban for the mouth of the Betsie goes into full effect Oct. 10. PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: TIMOTHY O'BRIEN, CHIP MARKS, CHIP MARKS

ELBERTA SCHOOLKIDS REUNITE



Organizers Joyce Gatrell and Marilyn Olsen

FOR THE TENTH TIME in 30 years, former students of Elberta's two schools met up on a Saturday in August, this time at the Mini Pond/Marina Park Pavilion. There were some new faces among the old faces: Joanne (Sluyter) Kline made it for the first time this year. She would have been class of '47 if her family hadn't moved away. Joanne and another woman looked at each other, figured they ought to know each other, then looked at each other's name tags. "Jeanne? Are you in there?" Joanne said. They were equally pleasantly surprised to see each other. Jeanne

Dupuy Bowman ('48), of Green Valley, AZ, was also attending for the first time.

Marilyn Olsen and Joyce Gatrell ('53) organized this year's event, as they've each done many times in the past. They were happy with the turnout of about 75 people. Marilyn would have been class of '56, the last Elberta class, but she "got very foolish," fell in love, got married, and went to Benzie Central for her senior year. She recently had her first great-grandchild.

Marilyn says they've lost 23 former students in the past three years. She did a class-by-class roll call at the reunion, going back to the '30s. The oldest reuniter was probably teacher Florence Bixby, now 91. Much missed this year were Roy Price, who passed away in January and Laurelle Storr (from the last Elberta high school class, 1956). Earl Soderquist ('53) was at the reunion looking great in his University of Elberta sweatshirt. He passed away in September 20. Butch Kjergaard passed the day of the reunion, August 18.

Vivian (Thomas) DuFresne

In Brief...

POST OFFICE We're sad to see postmaster Tim Flynn retire, but will enjoy sending him off (see Calendar). While we're waiting for our new part-time person (at least one person has been interviewed by Frankfort PM Jack Kline), we say hello to Kay Merrill, of the Benzonia PO, whose friendly face will ease us through the transition. On October 16, the cash-strapped USPS will hold a public hearing on the future of the Elberta Post Office (see Calendar). Would you like confirmation, assurance, we'll still be postal? Let them know!

had traveled the farthest, from Yorba Linda, CA. Her brother Tommy Thomas ('43) probably traveled the shortest distance, from Washington Avenue.

This year Marilyn and Joyce inaugurated the "free fudge sale" in honor of a fudge sale the kids held back in the day, when Marilyn

said most of them couldn't afford the 5 cent price they set. "Most of us aren't much better off now than we were then!"



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Waiting for Somebody to Do Something

By Emily Votruba

BILL SOPER asked that "Parks and Rec credit card" and "village taxes" be added to the agenda. The meeting lasted two hours. Absent was Ken Holmes, who was recovering from hip-replacement surgery.

INITIAL PUBLIC COMMENT Cheryl Gross spoke about illegal vehicular use of the beach. "Our neighborhood has put up signs. Sometimes they get run over. Sometimes they don't. Just recently somebody was stuck [in the sand] and gunning it and ripping [the beach] up like crazy. I urge you to please take action to put up barriers to keep the cars off the beach."

CORRESPONDENCE The Village heard from the state that transfer of M-168 ownership is complete. "Anybody have anything to say about that?" asked Reg Manville. "Means we have to take care of it now," said Ken Bonney.

APPROVAL OF BILLS The July bills were approved. Receipts were \$117,344.32. Expenses were: accounts payable \$96,314.98; payroll \$9,466.58, for a total of \$105,781.56. The Farmers' Market brought in \$420 and the Historical Preservation Committee had \$75.73 in donations; \$450 in sponsor revenue had come in for Solstice. These figures are included in the \$117,344.32. No expenses were reported for the month of July. Treasurer Laura Manville said that was because

there weren't any. Confusion still reigns in P&R over the financial report they receive from Laura; Linda Manville said because there was no bottom line figure each month it's hard for P&R and council to determine what money is available for P&R projects. Laura will meet with members of P&R on October 2 to explain how to read the monthly financial report she compiles.

KEN BONNEY/DPW Ken replaced some sprinkler heads at the Waterfront Park, and areas that were brown were now green. He removed the old playground equipment from Anderson Park to make way for the new exercise equipment. At press time a community member had raised concern about the new equipment's screws coming loose, and Jennifer Wilkins had gone out at 11 pm on September 28 to put caution tape up around the equipment. The state-mandated water reliability study and general plan had begun with consulting engineers Gourdie-Fraser. "That's why we had colored water that one day in town," because of a pressure check on the fire hydrants, Ken said.

WATER AND SEWER Diane Jenks said the auditor would meet with the BLUA board in September.

PARKS AND REC Having resigned as P&R liaison at July's meeting, Reg did not attend the P&R meeting. P&R VP and secretary Jen Wilkins said she and Michele Cannart had gone over the financial report and bank statements for Solstice Fest 2011 and wanted clarification on two charges from Odette electric for about \$1,500 each. She also said Solstice was double billed for a food expense, which made it seem the Festival had not made as much money as it had. She asked for that correction, and that the record

show that the beer cups used this year were actually purchased last year. Jen asked for discussion of P&R's responsibilities vis-à-vis the Waterfront Park and Lifesaving Station. Is there a percentage of the Waterfront Park budget and LSS budget (which come out of the Village general fund) that P&R should contribute for maintenance? Should the two electrical expenses actually come out of the LSS maintenance fund, since they resulted in a permanent improvement to the building's electrical capacity, rather than charged to Solstice? Jen also presented the budget for the movie marathon and said it had been publicized. She asked if P&R had permission to fund-raise for the beach road, the boardwalk planks, and other beach improvements. Council did not remark on this.

Reg asked Ken to expound on the electrical bills. Ken said the first bill was for an emergency temporary line to run outside the LSS to create enough power for the musical acts during Solstice. The second bill was for the permanent fix, with conduit and a separate fuse box. Bill said since 22% of Village revenue goes to the maintenance of the Waterfront Park, he thought the electrical improvements should not come out of P&R or Solstice funds. Laura said this year we spent three quarters of our income from the LSS rentals on repair and maintenance of the LSS, and the LSS fund was now in deficit. Laura said she could assign the electrical expense any way council wanted.

Reg said he thinks there's still a misconception about P&R money, Village money, and Solstice money: "It's all one." Bill said "Park and Rec raises its own money." Another argument ensued. It is true that Parks & Rec get their funds from fund-raising and

OOPS! CORRECTIONS

During the July Meeting, Reg Manville accused Connie Manke of credit card fraud, not of having committed a felony. His precise quote regarding felonies was: "If there's a felony involved, I'm the president of this village, and [if] I think there's a felony involved that violates a law federal, state, or local, I am going to act." The vote on Connie Manke's dismissal from the Parks and Rec Commission was actually 3 to 2. Diane Jenks left before the vote occurred. • Barb Kibby did manage to get all her pets outside her house and into her yard during the McConnell Drive gas leak on July 22 before authorities compelled her to leave the scene.

do not receive any money from the Village. The state auditor maintains, as does Reggie, that monies raised by a village commission are village funds. Connie Manke requested that the rights and responsibilities of P&R be better spelled out, including the matter of a spending cap for unapproved purchases. Bill Soper was approved as the new P&R liaison.

BEACH Ross Thorsen said the Tuesday Truckers women's group had cleaned the beach. The last official cleanup for the year was September 5. Ken said he had emailed a representative from Sand Products. The rep said he would send the paperwork with the GPS locations for all the [property demarcation] stakes for the beach road.

FIRE & SAFETY No board meetings were scheduled.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS Ross said there is enough pre-painted siding to finish the west wall of the LSS. Reg said because of unexpected legal fees [likely referring to the Putney lawsuit] the LSS project should be put on hold. Diane Jenks said Gilmore Twp supervisor Carl Noffsinger said he didn't want to get another quote for the library roof (besides the one from Ross), and he was waiting for the Village to decide how much they would contribute to the project. Laura (who is also Gilmore Twp treasurer) said it sounded like everybody was waiting for somebody else to do something.

BETSIE VALLEY TRAIL Scott Gest said the Village has an opportunity to take a leading role in the trail authority. Council appointed Reg Manville as the Village's representative on the trail management board.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE Village clerk Sharyn Bower proposed that she come off the Village's regular health care package because she's on Medicare. She was willing to go to a supplemental program

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Remember When . . .

Last March the *Alert* spoke with beloved Village teacher Mrs. Bixby, 91, who taught in Elberta for 30 of her 35 teaching years. Florence Wallaker was born in Frankfort and except for summers at Central Michigan has lived here all her life. Some students remember picking cherries in the Wallaker orchard. She graduated from County Normal and taught briefly at a rural school in Midland County. Then war came and Elberta needed to replace men who had left for the service. Florence taught all day and took classes at night, some in Benzonia and some in TC, until she earned her degree, in 1964.

The 1951 third-grade class at Elberta School (left) met at the rickety-staired, three-story 1870 school on Steele Street. Mrs. Bixby later gave the new (1959) building high marks. It had new desks, a bathroom in each classroom, and an all-purpose room for performances. "Each classroom had a door out to the playground. It was a lovely building to work in."

Mrs. Bixby volunteers at the Benzonia Area Historical Museum and this July 4 was inducted into the Frankfort-Elberta High School Hall of Fame. "I look at Elberta kids, from such a small school, with not a lot of extras, but they've come out so well." Thank you, Mrs. Bixby!

TOP ROW, FROM LEFT: Walter Costigan, Judy McPherson, Lois Costigan, John McCullin, Pat [?], Karl Manke, Terry Aroue, Jackie Lautner, Mrs. Bixby. ROW 2: Tommy Smeltzer, Bonnie [Thelma?] Richards, Roger Vignand, Billie Settles, Allen Vignand, Veral Tanner, Glenda Gilbert. ROW 3: Florence Tracy, Sharon Nye, Karen Fitzhugh, Frank Condon, Tommy Twigg, Marlow Stuck, Mary Jo Little, Betty Anderson. BOTTOM: Fay Gilbert, Fred McConnell, Billy Huhnke, John Gear. Can you correct us on the names of any of these kids? We'll let you clean the erasers! PHOTO COURTESY OF CONNIE MANKE

with her husband and she would want to pick up an AARP dental program under Delta dental. The Village's cost for that would be \$151 per month for a total of \$1,812/year, a savings of \$6,197.28 on Sharyn's benefits. Without Sharyn on the plan, the premium for Ken and Laura together would be approximately \$14K. Sharyn said she was willing to getting approximately \$4,700 less than Ken and Laura in compensation. because she wanted to help the Village save this money and help Ken and Laura keep their benefits.

Laura explained the Village's HRA (health reimbursement arrangement). The HRA plan reimburses employees up to \$500 for a single and \$1,000 for a family for out-of-pocket health expenses. If the reimbursement isn't used, it amounts to a savings in premiums. Laura said participation in the program had saved the Village \$27K in premiums in three years. Linda said the state requires us to recognize three people for health care. The cap for that is \$16,500—\$5,500 each. Linda said when she first brought up the matter of employee benefits last year there were some potential penalties and restrictions involved in terms of grant money if municipalities failed to comply with the new law. She said she'd learned

the state has since relented on penalties. "Even though we may not be in jeopardy of being looked at harshly in terms of grant applications if we fail to comply, I feel that since we are in a deficit situation it's good on our part to present ourselves in compliance with something the state has asked for—whether it's a hard cap in a dollar amount or employee contributions of 20%. I would not vote to opt out [of providing health coverage, which municipalities may do under the law], but I do think we should come in under the hard cap. Laura said opting out would require a two-thirds vote by the council. Council unanimously approved the health care package as presented, with three people coming in under the hard cap per Senate Bill 7 and reimbursement to Sharyn toward her premium.

VILLAGE TAXES/EMPLOYEE SALARIES Bill said he wanted to make the public aware that 50% of their Village taxes go to two people in the Village [the *Alert* was not able to confirm this at press time]. He said in Beulah and

continues on page 6



LAW & ORDER

By Bob Kenison



BENZIE CRIME REMAINS ABOUT THE SAME

On September 10, Benzie County Sheriff Rory Heckman spoke with me about current crime statistics in our county.

Sheriff Heckman said the overall crime rate in Benzie for 2012 is comparable to that of 2011, except that traffic accidents are down. High gas prices and the mild winter we recently experienced may have contributed to the decline. Unfortunately, the drunk driving statistics remain relatively unchanged.

Sheriff Heckman notes an increase in the use of illegal narcotics. He stated that this is a relatively new problem for our area, and he fears petty crime may rise in association with this activity. This is not only a concern for Benzie County, but a great, growing concern for all of Northern Michigan. Use of harder drugs including heroin, methadone, and methamphetamine has also led to an increase in overdoses. Benzie County experienced three deaths in the past year due to hard-core drugs.

What's more, addiction to legal prescription drugs has grown tremendously. People report their prescriptions stolen or missing from their medicine cabinets. Many of these drugs are highly addictive.

I asked Sheriff Heckman how the police department is handling the budget cuts, and what impact they have on how the police force fulfills its duties. He said the cuts make it difficult. "There are fewer eyes out there." In 2007 Benzie County had one detective sergeant, two investigators, and a full-time secretary. In 2012 we had only one detective sergeant and a part-time secretary. With decreased officers it takes longer to do things. At press-time the new county budget included seven road deputies and three sergeants.

Sheriff Heckman said three current investigations are taking up a lot of time: the Luedtke murders, the Platte Valley Auto Sales case, and the forty-year-old Sutter case. Autopsy results for the Luedtkes had still not been released as of September 13. A hearing in the Platte Valley Auto Sales case was held September 11. The cold case of Terry Wayne Sutter's death on September 1, 1973, has been warmed up. Sheriff Heckman is very concerned about these three cases. He wants to bring closure to the families and community in the murder cases. He said there are many victims in the PVA fraud case, both local citizens and financial institutions.

As Sheriff Heckman leaves the department, we'd like to express our appreciation for the work he has done for our community, and hope that his successor will continue his legacy.

Ross Thorsen

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OCTOBER

Marcellus Fuller of Joyfield was nearly killed by the Smeltzers' Durham bull (10/08/1884). Mrs. Robarge of South Frankfort was buried today (10/07/1885). Mr. Edgecombe is Postmaster in South Frankfort; and L.W. Crane has a new store in South Frankfort which he intends to fit out with some of the finest offices in the county for his company (1889). —excerpts from the *Frankfort Express* reprinted in 1912 editions of the *Elberta Alert*

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
3	PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING	Regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Historic Preservation Committee	Elberta Library 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (first Wednesdays)
4, 11, 18	ELBERTA FARMERS' MARKET	Informally voted one of the regions best farmers' markets. Stop by for the best local produce, meats, plants, and even music! LAST DAY: OCTOBER 18!	Marina Park/Farmers' Market Pavilion	7:30 am-12 noon (Thu.)
4, 6, 12, 20, 27	MUSIC AT THE CABBAGE SHED	Annual Don Jones Memorial Jam Session (2-4 pm Oct. 6); Rootstand's swashbuckling folk and blues on Oct. 12; Oktoberfest, with traditional keg toss and cabbage bowling (6 pm Oct. 20). On Oct. 27, Josh White Jr. from 8 pm-10 pm, followed by the Platte Plains Wolf Pack during the Halloween Party, costumes encouraged! Plus Open Mike Night every Thursday!	198 Frankfort Ave.	various times
5	OLIVER ART CENTER OPENING	Reception for show of works by Jacquelyn Bischak and Gary Kulak, on view through October 31	132 Coast Guard Road, Frankfort	5 pm-7 pm
9	GILMORE TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING	Regular meeting of the board of Gilmore Township	Elberta Library 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (second Tuesdays)
10	EMPTY BOWL BENEFIT FOR FOOD PANTRY	Soups from many local restaurants are featured in this fundraiser for the Council on Aging's Food Pantry.	The Gathering Place, 10579 Main St., Honor	1 pm-2pm
10	FAREWELL PARTY FOR POSTMASTER TIM FLYNN	Elberta's postmaster since 2005, Tim Flynn retired October 1. Join us in the Back Room of the Shed to thank him for his 30 years of service with the USPS. Hors d'oeuvres provided.	The Cabbage Shed, 198 Frankfort Ave.	5 pm
11	BENZIONIA ACADEMY LECTURE SERIES	"With Liberty and Justice for All: The Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State University," a talk by Dr. Jim Thorpe.	Mills Community House, 891 Michigan Ave.	7 pm-8 pm
13	FRANKFORT FALL FESTIVAL	Giant pumpkin parade, the Scottville Clown Band, Mutt March, games & pumpkin carving, free movies at Garden Theater, pumpkin chunking! NEW THIS YEAR...Kid's Fishing Contest sponsored by Big Bob's Outfitters (231-352-5360), pumpkin cuisine contest!	downtown Frankfort	10:30 am-3 pm
14	ALERT EDITORIAL MEETING	Open meeting for the editorial team and anyone who wants to join, to discuss local news events and plan current and future issues.	Elberta Library 704 Frankfort Ave.	1 pm (second Sundays)
16	PUBLIC FORUM ON POST OFFICE	A public discussion of the future of the post office. Complete closure? a village-style post office in the back of a business? or 4 hours a day?	Village Community Bld. 401 First St.	12 noon
17	EVENTS AT BENZIE SHORES DISTRICT LIBRARY	Reflections by the Bay presents: "Internet Safety" with Mike Pasche of North Coast Computers	630 Main St., Fft	7 pm
18	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village of Elberta Board of Trustees	Village Community Bld. 401 First St.	7 pm
18-21	FRANKFORT FILM FESTIVAL	Movie magic at our own Art Deco theater. \$50 for a pass. Schedule at www.frankfortgardentheater.com	The Garden Theater, 301 W. Main St., Fft.	various times
20	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)
23, 24	LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATE FORUMS	A chance to meet and question candidates for County Commission before November 6. On the 23rd: Candidates for District I (Almira Twp east of Reynolds Rd) Lisa Tucker vs Bob Roelofs. Candidates for District VII (Weldon, Joyfield, Blaine and Gilmore Twps) Donald Tanner vs Adrian Poulisse. 24th: Probate judge candidates John B. Daugherty and John D. Mead, and sheriff candidates Ted Schendel and Coury Carland.	County Commissioners Chamber, 448 Court Place (off Michigan Ave./US-31)	7 pm-8:30 pm
25	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING	Monthly meeting to discuss county security issues with Benzie County sheriff Rory Heckman.	Sheriff's Dept., 505 Michigan Ave./US-31	6 pm-7 pm

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one day, and we thought about taking a photo of it, but our camera battery was dead...and...it looked so good...and...let's just say we'll be challah-ing back.

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New arrivals In addition to those who are new to this world (see below), we're excited to welcome **Chip Marks** and his

Art Center's 31-year-old new executive director, **Steven Brown**, late of Germany, has set up house. He has lifelong camping roots and some family in the area. Two months in, he likes the Village, but says he hates the gridlock in his morning commute. He is thinking of getting a rowboat. "But it's all Coast Guard property around

is now equipped with a replacement upper leg joint. We hope to see him out on his early morning dog walk again very soon.

★ ★

Stepping Out to Keep Residents Home Sweet Home **Billie Hughes** is a nurse with **Benzie Home Health Care**. "Facilities have their place," she says. "But at a facility I'll have an 8 hour day divided among 14 or more people. When I go to someone's home, they have my full attention for an hour and a half. Sometimes a person just needs a little help remembering to take their pills, get breakfast together, or get in and out of the shower. Last year the Walk-a-thon raised about \$16K. You can tell I'm impressed about it." This year, on August 4,

GARDEN THEATER AD HERE

Last Day of Voter Registration! is October 9. Register with Gilmore Township clerk **Sharyn Bower** between 5 pm and 7 pm (231-352-4901) or at the Secretary of State office in Honor.

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Ray A'hearn has left Lincoln Street to join his daughter in Joliet, IL. We'll miss the dapper, white-haired gent on his neighborhood walks. We hear **Ed Higgins's** new tenant is the new chef at the reborn **Mayfair Tavern**. No word at press time of their opening date. Rumor has it they have ordered a new stove.

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Birthdays... **Jennifer Wilkins** (8/12), **Westley Allen** (8/16), **Brian Confer** (9/1), **Addie Mae Noffsinger** (age 7) and her dad **Glenn Noffsinger** (9/11), **Katy denHeeten** (9/13), and **McEwen Stapleton** (10/1). We also congratulate Ms. Wilkins on her baking prowess. Her challah bread won first place at the county fair in Traverse in August, entered by her impressed employer, **Crystal Downs**. The *Alert* found a golden brown, subtly sweet, perfectly fluffy loaf on its doorstep



SUNRISE Casey and Jennifer (Sandman) Johnson proudly welcomed a new baby girl into their home on July 10, 2012. Ava Elizabeth (left) was born at Munson Medical Center and weighed 5 lbs. 15 oz. Her

older sister Olivia was happy to have a new baby sister to help her celebrate her 4th birthday on July 29. On August 16, Melanie Bredbanner and Greg Lowry were joined by Hailey Wesson Lowry (right), 7 lbs. 7 oz.. Hailey's arrival delights her grandparents Sue and Steve Lowry and Mickey and Debbie Bredbanner and great-grandparents Lois and Ken Holmes. How nice that we have two new villagers to improve our census. Welcome, Ava and Hailey! AVA PHOTO BY JENNIFER JOHNSON; HAILEY PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILKINS

grandson, **Neo**, to Crapo Street. Chip has jumped in with both feet, and his camera and graphic design skills, and is already providing great imagery for the *Alert* newspaper and Facebook page. A little further west, on Narrow Street, the Oliver

the office here, so it would be kind of like the D-Day landing every day. Except without the guns...and the...Europe."

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More Noffsingers... **Christopher Noffsinger**, son of **Laura Manville** and

Carl Noffsinger, married **Jenna Frantz**, of Frankfort, on September 22, with a reception at the Waterfront Park. Congrats!

★ ★ ★
Hip, Hip, Hooray! **Ken Holmes**



new boardmember **Mike Viilo** started at 2 am and walked around Crystal Lake. If you think that's too pedestrian, consider **Macy Adams**, **Zoe Lozowski**, and **Vika Cobb**. They rode 10 miles on their bikes to support high-quality at-home care. Swimming and jet-skis count, too.

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More from the mess deck... In these brisk early-October days it's hard to remember the long hot summer. But **Lois Schram** has 85 quarts of canned tomatoes to show for a truly splendid *Solanaceae* season (she gave a couple away). **Paul Schram** (pictured at the height of the harvest) must have had a premonition, because he planted tomatoes all over. "The only downside of the weather was the water bill!" said Lois. Lois must really like canning!



HAVE A NEWS ITEM YOU WANT BLASTED? Call or text 231-399-0098, send your story by mail to Elberta Alert Foghorn, PO Box 357, Elberta, MI 49628, or write to elberta.alert@gmail.com, attn "Foghorn."

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ARCHANGEL: David Milarch and one of the cloned trees he hopes we can learn from. This photo is part of a powerful series of images of Millarch and his project made by Elberta resident Brian Confer in early summer 2011. PHOTO BY BRIAN CONFER

27th Annual Ann Arbor RR Workers Picnic

BLAINE TOWNSHIP hall hosted another round of rabid raffling, potluck, and reminiscence Aug. 5 as an assortment of engineers, brakemen, firemen, marine office staff, and others gathered. Jim and Joanne Gilbert MC'd as usual. Larry Morden and Jim Hunt had recently celebrated birthdays. Posters with old photos and great wooden models of two car ferries were on display. Ed Robinson declined his tablemate's suggestion of a game of Tunk while they waited for the raffle. He was feeling patient that day be-

cause he had run out of Squirt. "People would play Tunk when they had time down in the engine room, to get the cards warmed up." Norm Hagen described employee relations during his 35 years on the car ferry: "As long as we were on the boat, we got along." He got the job after traveling the country by motorcycle after WWII. "I had to get that crap out of my mind." Once off the boat for their 8 day break, workers were reliably unpredictable. "We all had rooms in town," Norm said. "Peasoup's was a wild place back then." Phil Mix said his father put him on a train to Toledo as soon as he finished high school. He worked on an ore laker until he got his seaman's license. "An inch is as good as a mile," said Ken Holmes. "Aw, they only count with hand grenades and horseshoes," said Ed.

Book Review

THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES: LOST GROVES, CHAMPION TREES, AND AN URGENT PLAN TO SAVE THE PLANET • Jim Robbins (Spiegel & Grau, 2012)

WHAT HAPPENS when you combine a near-death experience, a visit from angels, an ailing planet, and a scientific journalist who connects the dots? You get an extraordinary true story about a local hero who is saving ancient trees for future generations.

The Man Who Planted Trees is David Milarch, a Copemish, MI, tree farmer who, as a result of his brush with death and what he describes as instructions from angels, set out to clone the world's largest and oldest trees in order to preserve their genetics through the coming changes to our planet. Author Jim Robbins weaves Mr. Milarch's personal saga with scientific evidence for the crucial role trees and forests play in balancing Earth's water and atmosphere, and even in treating potentially lethal human diseases. Robbins begins by describing his shock as the ponderosa pines on his acreage in Montana suddenly started to "fade"—millions of trees literally sucked dry by the mountain pine beetle, turning from green to reddish brown. The beetle's population has soared in recent years because of warm temperatures that have allowed more overwintering larvae to survive. Locally we're seeing a similar die-off of our ash and beech trees.

Milarch is convinced that we can learn from ancient trees how to manage through the many stresses of climate change: "A tree that lives a thousand years might know something about survival," he says. A "Champion tree" has the highest combined score of three measurements—height, crown size, and diameter at breast height—for its species.

The goal of Mr. Milarch's Champion Tree Project is to clone each of the 826 tree species in the U.S., make thousands of tiny seedling copies, and sell and give away as many as possible. "The genetics of the biggest trees are disappearing," says Milarch. "Someone's got to clone them and keep a record."

Some in the scientific community criticize Milarch; they say it's not certain that these trees are survivors because of their genetics. But studies in the new field of epigenetics show that trees have a type of DNA memory in which certain genes turn on or off depending on environmental stress (insects, temperature swings, drought) and other factors. Other critics say cloning an ancient tree is like asking a 90-year-old woman to give birth—impossible! And yet Milarch's team has successfully cloned trees over 2,000 years old. These clones now grow in various places around the globe and are mini-laboratories for scientists. The book describes new research on how trees and forests are the equivalent of the earth's lungs and liver; helping it breathe and distribute oxygen and moisture appropriately and detoxify our waters and soils.

"People should be awestruck, outraged, overwhelmed," Milarch exclaims. "A tree that is five, six, eight, or fifteen feet across, the champions we are cloning, [that] is the size of what all of our trees in the forest once were.... When we look at the trees around us, we're looking at the runts, the leftovers. The whole country should be forested coast to coast, with these giants... We don't realize what we've lost."

Without trees, life as we know it could not be sustained. David Milarch is committed to helping us act as stewards to what's left of our forest inheritance. At the end of the book you may feel as moved as I was to help in Milarch's effort today. It really only requires that we each plant a tree.—Ann Sinclair



PHOTO CONTEST Fill in the name blanks for this photo and send in by snail or e-mail to win a free subscription to the Alert! FROM LEFT: Norm Hagen, _____, Bud Reed, _____, Jim Hunt, Bob Larson, _____, Jim Nelson, Ed Robinson, Jim Gilbert, Jim Burns, Larry Morden, _____, John Szilaggi, David Harrell, _____, Deryl Holmes, Ken Holmes. PHOTO BY CHRISTINE HOLMES



SUNSET



We Will Miss...

PAUL IVAN PURCHASE (August 13, 1963–July 25, 2012)

Paul Purchase departed this life at his Crapo Street home. He was born in Reed City to parents Marie (McDonald) Eastman and the late Merle Ivan Purchase.

Paul collected, fixed, bought and sold CB radios for years. He truly enjoyed buying and selling things on eBay. Paul loved to share his time and talents with his entire family, especially his grandchildren. He had a real passion for muscle cars.

He is survived by his canine best friend, Turbo; son Jared (Brandi) Depew; grandchildren Jaden and Devin Depew; mother Marie Eastman; siblings Kenneth (Lisa) Purchase, Shannon (Julie) Purchase, David (Rhonda) Purchase, Brenda Purchase and Elaine (Keith) Landgraf; stepmother Nancy Purchase; stepsister Carolyn Anderson, and many other relatives and friends.

Paul was preceded in death by twin brother, Jerry; stepbrothers Gregory and Scott Grubb; and special friend Barb Miller. A memorial service was held on July 30, 2012 at the Eden Bible Church with Pastor Dan Ingersoll officiating.

WALDEMAR "BUTCH" KJERGAARD (August 18, 2012)

Nineteen fifty Elberta High School graduate Butch Kjergaard passed away this summer on the day of the school's fiftieth reunion celebration. He lived near Benzonia with his wife, Dorothy. He is survived by 4 children and his brother Bill.

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BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history, topics, and interviews by an Elberta teen

Mystery Under the Lake

By Merren Garber

IT WAS OUR LAST DAY of summer vacation on September 3 and my mom and I decided to enjoy ourselves. We took a boat ride on Lake Michigan with our friend Dave Ward (Wardo) for a last bit of vacation fun. We went out towards the pier, then continued farther up until we reached Point Betsie.

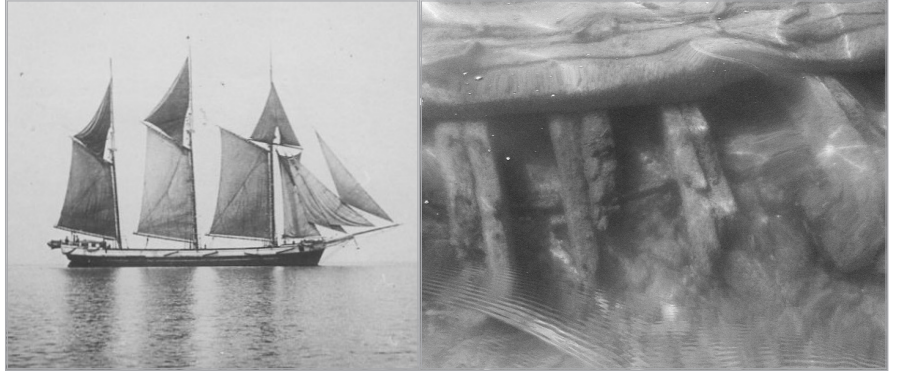
Right before we reached our destination, we were journeying past the Congregational Summer Assembly, 50 or so feet from the shore, when we found something really neat! It was the bottom and sides of an old boat underneath the water. Because it was well-preserved and probably unnoticed for a long time, we could still see the chains and old rusted nails attached to their beams. We didn't know how this old boat sank or where

it was coming from, but it was the coolest thing ever!

As we cruised around it seven or so times, my mom was next to me snapping away to get as many pictures as she could. But while she and Wardo were busy, I started to think to myself, how come no one ever noticed this? And if they did, then how come I've never heard of it? These questions kept popping up in my head as we left our newfound treasure behind and continued up to Point Betsie. Once we were there, we went along the shoreline collecting rocks and scavenging among them for Petoskey stones.

After a while of that, we all piled into the boat and set off for home. We went back around the pier and back to the docks, and we helped get the boat back onto the truck.

After we got home and said our good-byes, my mom and I did some research on the boat underneath the water. With a little help from my mom's friend who hap-



WISH /DA KNOWN: The schooner as it looked in 1867, left, and today in its watery grave. LEFT PHOTO COURTESY JED JAWORSKI; RIGHT PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILKINS

pens to be a boat guru, we learned some information about our little boat. It turns out it's called the *Ida*, and is a schooner. It was built in 1867 in Milwaukee and was designed to carry lumber as its cargo. But on September 29, 1908, it sprang a leak 12 miles from Frankfort and ended up capsizing. The crew of six men all made it to

shore safely in a lifeboat.

After learning about this, I was pretty shocked and also excited that we had found something built so long ago. I wonder what we'll end up finding next summer! Ψ

Alert editor Merren Garber is a sophomore at Frankfort-Elberta High School.

COUNCIL REPORT, cont'd

Benzonia, the clerk and treasurer work 4 hours a week. "It seems to me that we don't

have 8 times the work that other villages do... Benzonia has 125 more people than us." Reg described pay freezes and cuts that had been made in the past four years, said

Laura had brought in \$127K in grant money, and said Bill should go to the office and see what the employees actually do. Sharyn said, regarding the other villages' workload, "We have grants, the Lifesaving Station, the [Waterfront] Park. We have a lot of things they don't have." Scott Gest said that as a new staff member in NMCoG and Elberta's largest taxpayer, he found easy full-time access to government helpful.

PAYPAL was discussed at some length. Emily Votruba said Laura could work with web designer Jon Maue to set up the account. Reg wasn't sure how Laura felt about doing that. Matt asked Emily to research how to make it clear to which projects/funds donations should be applied.

PARKS AND REC CREDIT CARD A long and contentious discussion rehashed this issue. Council discussed revising the policy, since much has changed in electronic money transactions since the card policy was adopted, June 21, 2001. Matt suggested reissuing two cards to P&R and that the cards be kept at the office and checked out. "It's time to move forward. They still need to get supplies. I'm sure the lesson has been learned." He said transparency would be accomplished simply through the credit card receipts and statements. Council voted unanimously to issue two credit cards, one to the secretary and one to the president of P&R and that the cards be kept in the Village office. At press time (October 1), P&R were still without cards.

FINAL PUBLIC COMMENT In response to a question from Emily, Sharyn said the library roof is a township project and they don't have to go out for bids. Bill asked if the library is Village property. Sharyn said it's complicated and she didn't want to comment. Ross said he'd be happy to have other roofers look at the project. The council did not decide what, if anything, they would contribute. Reg suggested the buildings committee look into selling or leasing one of our four municipal buildings.

Art Melendez expressed concern about vandalism on the beach and in the park and urged council to put up security cameras, or something. Reg said he'd brought up the idea of security cameras before.

Scott Gest said the Corps of Engineers' Historic Preservation arm had declined to comment on the Car Ferry Apron demolition. He blamed the delay in receiving his permit for the fact that derrick boat 16, which could have lifted the entire slip up intact, will no longer be available for use. He is working with Luedtke's to come up with a new removal schedule, pending a final approved memorandum of agreement with the Army Corps and the State Historic Preservation Office regarding preservation of the structures.

Jen said her daughter and roommate were nearly hit by speeders while biking on 168. "The speeding is out of control." Ken Bonney said to remember who you vote for in November. "The people who are going to run for prosecutor and sheriff are who you need to talk to to find out what they're going to do." Diane asked if we could now put in speedbumps on 168, since we own it. Ken said he would look into it. Ψ

A longer version of this report appears on the Alert site: <http://wp.me/p1bgEv-ir>

ELBERTA SCHOOL REUNION, cont'd

The fudge was "sold out" by the end of the day. The raffle netted Ella Reid a beautiful multistory wooden birdhouse created by noted builder and Elberta grad Melvin Pierce. Shirley Pierce, wife of Mel's twin brother, Kelvin, encouraged everyone to donate to or join the walking team on September 30 for Lou Gehrig's disease, which took Kel's life four years ago. She said her team had raised over \$8,000 in that time and hoped to raise another \$2,500 this year for ALS of Michigan. Jean (Wildie) Cavan graduated from

Frankfort High in 1965, attending school in Elberta through 8th grade. Jean actually went to both Elberta schools: She had to walk some distance to the old school from her home on 2nd Street, but then got a break in her commute when the new school opened a block away in 1959. The Charles Blacklock designed school was closed after 1962 because of consolidation.

Thanks to Joyce and Marilyn for putting their hearts and souls into this event, keeping it lively all these years. Tell your friends and let's get a great turnout for the next reunion, three years from now, on the third Saturday in August, 2015!—Emily Votruba

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Logo designs by Jennifer Wilkins

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