

★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

*free!

vol. 100 no. 4

A Community News Organ

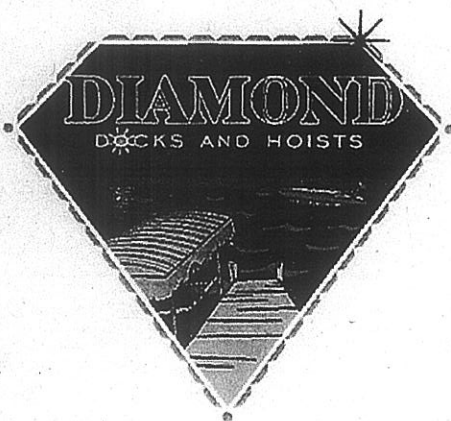
Tues., May 31, 2011

SOLSTICE FESTIVAL! A USER'S GUIDE



1. Beer Cow and Beer Tokens
2. Main Stage, Beer Garden
3. Corn Hole
4. Solstice Tent (T-shirts, Food, Tokens)
5. Entrance and Restrooms
6. Amphitheater: Poetry Slam, DJ Fluffy
7. Nonprofits/Tug of War
8. Teen Pavilion: Bands, Freestyle War
9. Shelter: Bonfire
10. Kids' Games: Gross Food Eating Contest, Rockin R Stables, Jump House
11. Fireworks
12. Sundial
- P. Parking

From 12 noon to 12 midnight on June 18, the Solstice Fest is jammed with fun for all ages. For the band lineup, a list of vendors and sponsors, and other info, go to www.elbertasolsticefestival.com. Volunteers are needed! Call Josh Stoltz: 231-640-0200.



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IT'S THE BIGGEST EVENT of summer 2011: June 18, the Elberta Summer Solstice Festival. To get you ready for the longest day of the year, the Alert spoke with Josh Stoltz, who organizes the event along with Josh Herren, Bill Soper, Connie Manke, Jennifer Wilkins, Art Melendez, Adrian Hirsch, and many others.

ELBERTA ALERT Whose idea was this?

JOSH STOLTZ Jinx Jenks, Elberta's own festival queen, conceived the Solstice Festival for the opening of the Waterfront Park, back in '02.

A festival for the summer solstice sounds pagan. Will there be pagans there?

Everyone around here loves the sun, regardless of religion, and especially after not seeing it for eight months.

What's the worst thing that ever went down during the Solstice Festival?

In 2009 we were cranking out so much juice on

the stage that we lost power to all the music equipment. We had to redirect our electricity from other sources and the show went on.

Who is the most famous or hilarious person to get dunked in the dunk tank?

We just started the dunk tank in 2010, and Jeff Sandman created quite a buzz. Based on internet polls, our local police department staff would be the most popular dunkees.

For people who have never been to the Solstice festival, do you have any fashion advice?

Dos and Don'ts? My fashion advice: DO reduce-reuse-recycle. DON'T watch TV. Bring a long-sleeve shirt/sweatshirt for the time between when the sun starts to set and when you warm up from getting your boogie on. Also: bring sunscreen, money, dancing shoes, an umbrella, a camera and a chair if possible.

Anything new this year that I should definitely

continues on page 4

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THE WINDS OF WAR

By SP4 Art Melendez

WHEN I WAS ASKED to write an article on present living Elberta Veterans for this good paper, without thinking (as I sometimes do), I said yes.

When I finally sat down to put together an outline for the article, I realized that, as a Vietnam-era veteran myself, I had a whole slew of memories and emotions. Later, as I interviewed the veterans listed here, I realized I am not alone. My time talking and sharing with these men was filled with laughter, quiet breaks in conversation, and sometimes tears without words. To me, some of these

SOME VETERANS AMONG US

<p>CHARLES WILLIAM BUCK Navy Lieutenant and Ship Commander, 1953-57, Korea and South Pacific, Korean War</p> <p>THOMAS HAHN Army Specialist Fourth Class, 1965-67, Vietnam War</p> <p>SYLVESTER LEE E6 Navy SEAL, 1967-70, Vietnam War</p> <p>JERRY LITTLE Navy Seaman and Radioman, 1967-72, Vietnam War</p>	<p>ARTHUR MELENDEZ Army Specialist Fourth Class, Signal Corps, 1966-68, Germany, Vietnam War</p> <p>ORAL MIX Air Force E-5, Airplane Mechanic, 1942-45, USA, World War II</p> <p>EDWARD ROBINSON Army, 11th Armored Division, 1942-45, Germany, World War II ★ ★ ★</p>
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Sylvester Lee, a Purple Heart recipient, now serves his country by helping veterans get health care, back benefits, and PTSD counseling. He is writing a book on this work.

moments verged on holy. It was surely a privilege.

The only people who can understand our experiences are those who have experienced the same. Something we all agreed on was the travesty of the multiple tours required of our troops today, and the tiny percentage of us who now serve while the majority go on with little knowledge of their sacrifice.

On more than one occasion in a high school classroom I asked my students if they knew what the

draft was. In general to them it was something that passed through a window and moved papers off a table.

Back in early 1966, after graduating from the School of Visual Arts in New York and working for a military contractor, I was drafted into the Army. The Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive, U.S. and world politics were realities that as an 18-year-old I was not prepared for. I was a New York City "flatlander": one who believes that the whole world is flat—that it all looks and thinks like we do.

After basic and specialized school I was shipped to Germany, where I served as a radio relay and carrier attendant on a missile site. Now as a

65-year-old citizen and veteran, I have learned, no matter what my political beliefs, that the freedoms that I enjoy and no longer take for granted come at a cost. The cost: men and women in uniform—military, fire, police, EMT, who watch over us 24/7. Thank you all for serving our country! Ψ

The Parks and Rec Committee, of which Art Melendez is a member, is planning renovations to our Veterans Park, including a new memorial plaque to replace the missing old wooden one. If you'd like to share your memories of Elberta veterans, if you are a veteran, or if you'd like to help restore Veterans Park, contact Art at 616-446-5340.

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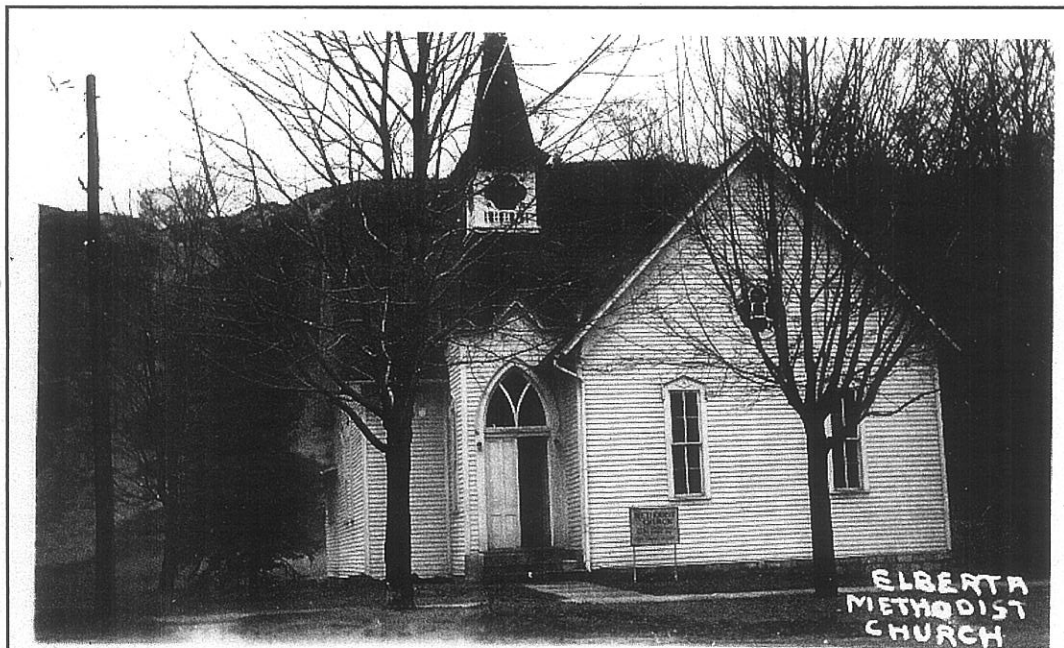
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Remember When ... With Ken

★ Portrait by Art Melendez



Each issue, Ken Holmes gives us chapter and verse on Elberta history. This month: the Village's best church.



This photo was probably taken about 1938 by Ray Edwards. The church didn't change much from the time it was built, in 1884, until 1965, when new siding, an addition, and a new entrance was put on. Notice how bare that hill is behind it. Reggie [Ragnar] Robinson was the one who planted most of the trees up there. You can see the trail leading up the hill where we used to go tobogganing and hiking. Up at the top you can make out the water tank, which today is completely hidden by trees. The church was built by Samuel Elliott of Pierport, and was funded largely by ice cream socials. In the past year we've redone the roof.

SOLSTICE USER'S GUIDE, cont'd ly not miss?

Laughter Yoga at about 3 or 4 pm will reoxygenate you in preparation for the nighttime stuff. There's a rumor that the tug-of-war will pit the Frankfort-Elberta football team against Benzie Central. Ella Riot (formerly My Dear Disco) is our headlining act—they'll go on late. And of course, the *Elberta Alert* will have a booth selling T-shirts.

Will there be CPR teams on hand in case I have a good time? Local fire, police, and EMS are always on call. Plus Jennifer Wilkins is certified in CPR, so stand near her.

Any rules I should know about? The Beer Garden strictly enforces the 21+ age policy. We have a double fence and security on hand to ensure no one under 21 is served alcohol.

What can I expect to eat? All restaurants in the area have an opportunity to vend at the festival. This year, festival organizers are going to offer picnic food and homemade local and organic strawberry shortcake. Also we'll have Randy dogs, the Conundrum, the Cabbage Shed, and the Lighthouse vending.

I'd like to follow the money. The profits depend largely on our sponsor support from the local businesses and from beer sales. All proceeds go directly back into the festival and to support other Elberta Parks and Rec projects and upgrades.

What happens if it rains?

YOU NEED A VARIANCE JUST TO LIVE [HERE]*

By Emily Votruba

NEW NAME SIGNS graced the council meeting table. Matt Stapleton said it'd be nice to open the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Reg Manville said he'd take that under advisement.

County Commissioner Marcia Stobie reported that the redistricting committee had voted to combine Gilmore Township with Blaine, Joyfield, and Weldon, and Frankfort with Crystal Lake, thereby splitting her district. This would pit Stobie against Don Tanner, also a Democrat, in the next election. The average countywide equalized valuation went down .66%, not as bad

*Jordan Bates on Elberta's zoning

as expected. The county has advertised for a new administrator and will start interviewing candidates in June. On Stobie's recommendation, the council voted to adopt a 180-day moratorium on medical marijuana sales operations to give the P&Z time to create an adequate ordinance.

Kelli Stapleton introduced the mayor of Hell, Michigan, John Colone. Colone discussed his demonic moneymaking ruses, including sales of dirt from Hell for \$6.66, and recommended that Elberta "be whimsical," "steal ideas from Trick Dog," and consider Stapleton's idea to monetize a new district called Heaven. He remarked that paint is cheap, suggesting a colorful paint job on the Library and other Frankfort Avenue storefronts. Reg Manville commented that he catches a lot of hell at his house for free, and that he'd like to see some backup from Villagers before he the council go ahead with the Heaven idea.

Sitting as the zoning board of appeals, the council approved the request for a variance for Jerry Little's house, with Bill Soper recusing himself because of a possible conflict of interest. Marcia Stobie handed out copies of the

plans for the house, which will be 720 sq. ft. P&Z have tentatively set 7K as the new lot size and 720 sq. ft. as the minimum house size. Currently our zoning requires lot sizes of 12K and a house size of 800 sq. ft., which means that about 50% of the lots in Elberta and several houses are nonconforming. Mr. Little's new house, which is being moved from River Rd., is 480 sq. ft., but will have an addition to make up the difference.

Carl Noffsinger, the zoning administrator, said more research needs to be done on lot sizes and setbacks for the new zoning ordinance, citing the possibility of speculators buying "dinky" lots and putting in so-called affordable housing. "I don't think you're even close," Noffsinger said of the tentative zoning changes. Ken Holmes said only three houses had been built in town for the past 20 years because of the zoning ordinance.

The expense report was approved with a new figure: receipts. Receipts totalled \$19,543.24. Expenses including accounting fees were \$16,187.67. Payroll was \$8,105.30.

Ken Holmes said operations and revenue at BLUA are getting close to

optimal as septic tank pickups increase. Elberta puts out 30K-32K gallons per day, Frankfort over 275K gallons.

Contrary to Parks and Rec's report, the farmers' market is not open until 1 pm now; that decision was made after the noon schedule had already been agreed to with vendors. The \$500 in proceeds from the Winter Whine needs to be submitted to the Village. Licenses for beer, wine, and fireworks for the Solstice Festival need to be seen and approved by the council at the next meeting, and the fireworks contracts need to be approved by the fire department before Solstice. The auditor found 4 violations of Village rules in Park and Rec bookkeeping, including failure to charge a 6% sales tax on beverages, and a donation made to the Benzonia ice rink fund without council approval. The council discussed the idea of Park and Rec reporting monthly to council on their expenditures and minutes.

Stephen Laske, of Lincoln Ave., said he was glad to see Jerry Little's old house gone, and noted the derelict cars on the corner of Lincoln and Acre and on Crapo St. The council averred that we have an ordinance against this.

continues on page 6

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JUNE

Sam Wexler and family came from Marinette, WI, to spend the summer; Emil T. Vigland and wife had twin boys; 46-year-old Mrs. Wm. Moore, of Marshall, MI, is the mother of 26 children—she had one child from her 1st marriage and 25 children from her 2nd marriage, including seven pairs of twins. She first married at age 14.

The Elberta Alert, June 7, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
1	PARKS & REC MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village Parks and Recreation Committee	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm (first Wednesdays)
3	MASTER PLAN MEETING	Master Plan Committee regular meeting with Sarah Lucas of NMCog	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	8 am (first Fridays)
4	GROW BENZIE WORKSHOP: EXTENDING THE GROWING SEASON	"Building Hoop Houses," a daylong hands-on workshop presented by Craig Schaaf. Participants will help construct a hoop greenhouse. \$10 for family/couple. Bring a sack lunch.	5885 M-115 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia	10 am - 3 pm; 352-4487; growbenzie.org
5	LAKE EXPRESS HIGH-SPEED FERRY RIDE/TOUR	Tour the Lake Express ferry, docked in Frankfort, for free from 9 am to 11 am and 3 pm to 4 pm; reserve ahead for \$10 rides at 11 am and 1 pm.	Frankfort boat launch	www.lake-express.com/frankfort
	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION	Celebrate with Frankfort-Elberta seniors as they commence! Congratulations to the class of 2011.	Frankfort-Elberta High School	2 pm
7	BENZIE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY	Meeting of the Benzie Area Genealogical Society, at the Historical Museum. Learn about your family history and local history.	6941 Traverse Ave., Benzonia	2 pm (second Tuesdays)
	GILMORE TOWNSHIP MEETING	Regular meeting of the board of Gilmore Township.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (second Tuesdays)
12, 19, 26	ALERT OFFICE HOURS	Submit a story, image, or ad, discuss editorial policy, join the editorial team, or just drop by for the heck of it.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	1 pm - 2 pm
12	DANCE PERFORMANCE: CHAOTIC HARMONY	Special free sneak preview of a multimedia production inspired by the life of artist and naturalist Gwen Frostic.	Jean Parsons Center, Lake Ann	4 pm - 6 pm
16	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Elberta Village Council.	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm
	WINE DINNERS AT THE MAYFAIR TAVERN	Prix-fixe dinner featuring wines of Michigan! Call 231-360-8292 to reserve.	The Mayfair Tavern, 515 Frankfort Ave.	6:30 pm
17, 25	MUSIC AT THE CABBAGE SHED	Traverse City-based reggae/jam band Soul Patch; then Blue Dirt, also of TC, bring prog-rock-inflected jammy grass on the 25th. \$5 cover both nights.	The Cabbage Shed, 198 Frankfort Ave.	9 pm
18	ELBERTA HISTORY WALK	This year's tour focuses on the car ferries and railroad. Free.	Lifesaving Station	10:30 am
	SOLSTICE FESTIVAL	9th Annual music, games, and food celebration! Aarrggghh!!	Waterfront Park	12 pm - 12 am
	COMMUNITY DINNER	Free food and fellowship at Elberta United Methodist Church!	555 Lincoln Ave.	4 pm - 6 pm
23	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE	Meet with Sheriff Rory Heckmann to discuss county security issues. At the Benzie County Sheriff's Office.	505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah	6 pm (fourth Thursdays)

FRESH STEPS

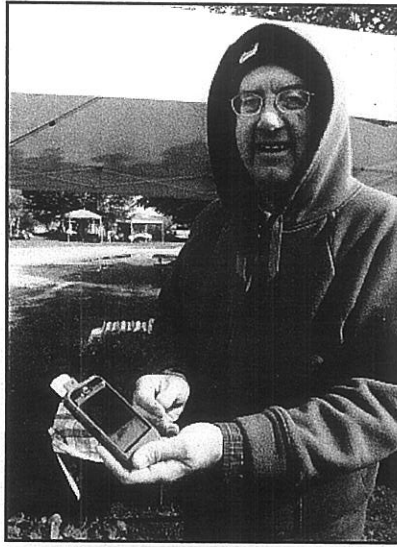
New ideas open the Market

By Emily Votruba

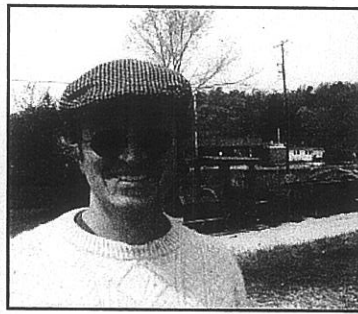
BEGUN IN THE MARINA PARK in 2003 by Andrea Stupka-Burks and a small group of others, the Farmers' Market has earned a reputation as one of Benzie County's best, increasing its revenue and vendor field year by year. On a recent Thursday, the *Alert* hit a chilly, blustery morning to commune with our local food providers and see what's been sprouting.

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

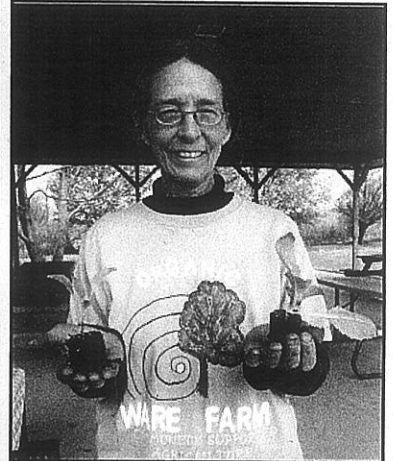
"I try to introduce something new each year," says Grace Phillips of Loving Dove farm, out of Bear Lake. "You have to look at the market and see what niches need filling." Already a purveyor of exotic items like fresh figs, artichokes, and ginger, she hopes to add Meyer lemons from a ten-foot tree in her greenhouse. Tim Kluck, of Wild Things, showed off a large ziplock bag full of *Morchella semilibera*, an unusual variety of true morel that he says are abundant now. Perhaps they enjoyed the lateness of the season, which has Britt Uecker, of Lutz Farm, bringing plants from Pleasanton Greenhouse until the vegetables are in full force. She will also have a new early variety of strawber-



Lou Yock (above), of Potter Road Farm, can run credit cards using a device called a Square on his cell phone; he also accepts Project Fresh coupons. Loving Dove Farm's Grace Phillips (right, with her daughter Magdalena), expects Meyer lemons from her greenhouse this year.



Greg Kindig (the Ant and the Grasshopper Farm) now offers early fruiting strawberry plants.



This season, for the first time, Sandy Ware is selling vegetable plants in soil blocks, to encourage people to get even closer to their food source and to Mother Earth. Here she holds two varieties of cabbage.

ries soon, to make up for what will likely be a late cherry year.

Crescent Bakery isn't doing the Elberta Market this year—sad news for farmers and shoppers who enjoyed their coffee on chilly mornings like these. Bob Korten explained that the new Cottage Law allows people to prepare food out of their homes, and "the field has gotten a little crowded. It started to be so last year."

Contrary to rumor, no food vendors have come forward yet this season, but Jim Barnes, of the Culinary Arts Community and Wild Leek Productions, says he may still appear as he did last year, with foods prepared

with organic ingredients sourced from fellow EFM vendors. "I'd love to do a You Are What You Eat thing, with a bunch of frozen roasted-local-vegetable lasagna portions that people can take with them."

EFM volunteers continue to collect and deliver unsold food and cash from vendors to donate to food banks every week, and several vendors take Project Fresh and

Senior coupons.

HI-TECH: CREDIT, BRIDGE CARDS, LOCAL ORBIT

The Market location has no phone line, so the EFM wants to raise funds for an iPad or smartphone device for Bridge card and credit card payments. Until then, it's helping promote the use of Bridge cards at Grow Benzie on their machine. Some vendors have taken matters into their own hands: Lou Yock does credit card sales on his own iPhone, and Randy Rice provides a card-running service at the Frankfort market, charging vendors a 6% fee. Grace Phillips said that in the 9 years she's done the market, only a handful of people have asked to use credit cards. "Us little guys can't really afford to do wholesale," she said of Rice's service.

Local Orbit (<http://localorb.it>), an online ordering service, debuted late last season and now has 20 sellers in the area. By ordering products and paying online in advance, shoppers can ensure their goods will be waiting for them on market day, and farmers can better gauge how much stock to bring. Coordinator Becky Noffsinger said a new system will allow farmers to cross-list for different markets, so Elberta will be added to the loop for sellers who already work the Frankfort market. "We're listing a great

variety of products," Noffsinger said. "Restaurants are using the site to save the time they used to spend making phone calls to individual farmers. And sometimes vendors sell out of a product fast. I've noticed at the Elberta Market you have to get here really early for eggs."

NEW ENERGY

Greg Kindig, an EFM farmer since 2007, says it's one of his favorites. "It's a true farmers' market, strictly grower to consumer. They seem to enforce their no-reselling policy better than others." Market manager Meg Louwsma says she's implemented random farm visitations this year to make sure that remains the case. The market also has a new website, a project is under way to add locally built picnic tables, and the new electrical hookup certainly helps make the future look bright. Ψ

Open each Thursday from 7 a.m. to 12 noon until mid-October; www.elbertafarmersmarket.com or call 882-4573 for more information.

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BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history, topics, and interviews by Elberta teens

Man's Best Friend Wants to Play Too

By Merren Garber

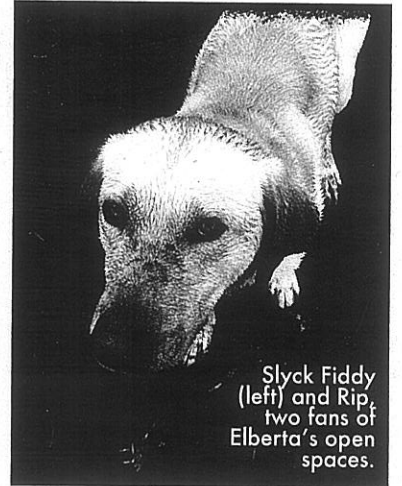
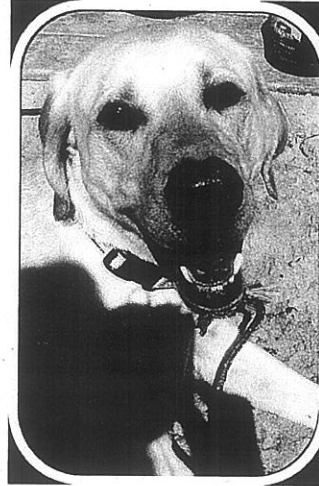
RECENTLY, I NOTICED the new no-dogs-in-the-park signs posted at the Waterfront Park. I can understand not wanting those lovely doggy land mines around while you're trying to enjoy one of Elberta's many parks. But if rules were posted and the Village got those dog-poop-bag dispensers like I've seen at other parks, people could enjoy the parks with their family pets too.

Like many other Villagers and locals who have titled Elberta beach the Dog Beach, my friends and I enjoy taking our dogs to the beach whether it's for a short walk when it's colder weather or for the whole day in the summertime. The dog ban ordinance, if it's enforced, will only keep people away from Elberta, and

that would be bad, because we need people to keep coming to Elberta. The fact that Elberta is known as having a dog-friendly beach sets us apart from the other towns. It brings people here, and we need to keep that outside-of-the-box reputation.

I have talked to a few residents about the ban on dogs in the parks. Some of the things I've heard are: "I'm still going to take my dogs there," and "I always clean up after my dogs, this is ridiculous!" and, my favorite, "Why don't they ban the geese too? There's more goose poop at the Waterfront Park than there is grass." My friend Jonathan Drury, who lives here, said, "Your dogs know when you go to the park without them. They get depressed. I've always seen dog owners pick up their dogs' waste. Besides, one dog log left behind pales in comparison to the seagull and goose poop that's there. So why not bring the whole family to enjoy Elberta's beautiful parks? Take only pictures, leave only footprints and paw prints."

My mom, Jennifer Wilkins, wrote



Slyck Fiddy (left) and Rip, two fans of Elberta's open spaces.

up a proposal to improve the parks in Elberta and presented it at a Park and Rec meeting recently. Part of her improvement ideas included installing dog-poop bag dispensers in each park in Elberta as well as along M-168 and at the beach. This would keep residents and visitors of Elberta coming and enjoying our town with all their family members.

I did some digging on the internet on dog park rules. I think if rules were posted by each dog bag dispenser then owners would be aware

of the Village rules and be less likely to disobey them. Pet owners! If you would like to see the ban lifted on dogs, please contact the Village office or attend a council meeting to tell the Village leadership how you feel. It takes a Village to make a change! Let's do it for man's best friend!

Ψ

Alert editor Merren Garber attends Frankfort-Elberta High School.

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER WILKINS

COUNCIL MEETING, cont'd

The council voted to give Reg Manville and Sharyn Bower the authority to sign a first-responder contract with the fire department. The Village still gets charged for 911 calls, so no savings has been realized from our opting out of the first responder service.

The auditor's report at the next meeting is projected to show our general fund deficit down by \$300K.

The council voted to move forward with the Land Conservancy property acquisition pursuant to trust fund procedures, in spite of a query from attorney Joe Quandt about mineral rights, after hearing Matt McDonough's argument that no third party is likely to come forward to claim them.

The Lifesaving Station doors require repairs of \$2,000-\$4,000 each. The council accepted the only bid

received for cleaning the Lifesaving Station, from Kristi Mills, for \$150 per cleaning. The \$25 in savings per cleaning will go toward the general fund. Ψ

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THE ELBERTA ALERT

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