

★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

*free!

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A Community News Organ

Fri., June 24, 2011

DREAM OF THE FAST FERRY

By Jed Jaworski

A GREAT DEAL OF FAST TALK has surrounded the recent fast ferry visit to Frankfort-Elberta harbor.

Lake Express, owner and operator of the vessel of the same name, normally operates its ferry between Milwaukee and Muskegon. On June 4 and 5, 2011, the ferry made a special visit to Kewaunee, Wisconsin, and Frankfort-Elberta. Townsfolk were invited to come down for a free tour of the ship, and for a \$10 fee (which would be donated by Lake Express to local charities), could take a nearly one-hour ride aboard the ferry.

According to Frankfort city superintendent Josh Mills, Frankfort has been actively exploring cross-lake service possibilities with Algoma, Wisconsin, since 2006, and with Kewaunee since 2010. "Frankfort has a strong interest in reviving cross-lake service in a way that ensures economic, social, and environmental viability; we must continue to study the issue." He said the city was very pleased with Lake Express and the recent event, which raised \$8,483 for local charities and drew an estimated total crowd of 1,200.

People gathered and mused as the unusual-looking vessel with its state-of-the-art technology entered the harbor after a record-setting 1.5 hour crossing from Kewaunee. One could not help but ponder how this scene has played out in the past. In 1892 the world's first open-water rail car and passenger ferry, the *Ann Arbor no. 1*, made its debut in Elberta, then known as South Frankfort. Unlike anything the world had ever

seen, its innovative design would be duplicated around the world. In 1958 the Ann Arbor Railroad would send the aging steamer *Ann Arbor no. 6* to be rebuilt into the first streamlined diesel-powered ferry on the lakes: the *Arthur K. Atkinson*. In 1965, *Viking*, the first diesel/electromotive-drive and bow-thruster-equipped ferry, became one of the fastest and most powerful ferries on the lake. *Viking* was the pride of the Ann Arbor fleet until the service's demise nearly 100 years after its inception, and the ship's likeness remains above the Frankfort gateway arch today.

Since the era of the Great Lakes car ferries, the Frankfort-Elberta

"The whole experience was fabulous. It was an incredibly smooth ride. Whether we're a port of call or a destination, I think it'd be great to have the ferry here. The Elberta port might be a better choice for Lake Express costwise. We'd need shuttle service to Frankfort, but we need that anyway." —Jinx Jenks

harbor has seen a precipitous decline in commercial maritime activity. Still, within the memory of residents is a working waterfront with the sounds of fish tugs, ferries, and steam derrick boats. A "community within a community" of people



All aboard! The Lake Express high-speed ferry docked at Frankfort Harbor on June 5 for two one-hour excursions. Parking will likely be an issue if the ferry begins regular service here. Kate, Heather, and Laila Bowe enjoyed the wind in their hair on the upper deck at 30-plus knots.
PHOTOS BY JED JAWORSKI

made their living on and around the water. Instead of being off the beaten path, Elberta was the path, a port of entry where hundreds of people and hundreds of tons of freight arrived by ferry to Michigan twenty-four hours a day.

So, as more than a thousand people came to the waterfront to see the latest ferry marvel, there was a palpable feeling of hope that the harbor could again host something like this new ferry. Ken Szallai, the president of Lake Express, said the special visit was a goodwill promotional event and a tribute to the car ferry legacy of the two ports; however, many people ponder the possibility of other motives. It's no secret that the SS (steam ship) *Badger*, a converted traditional rail car ferry much like

those that sailed from Elberta, operated by the Lake Michigan Carferry (LMC) out of Ludington, competes with Lake Express for business. The Lake Michigan ferry trade is brutal: high fuel, maintenance, and operating costs; stiff regulation; a short season; and frequent inclement weather with rough seas. Add an economic downturn and you get a sense of the challenges.

Indeed, the original date for the *Lake Express* visit was canceled because of a failed crankshaft bearing in one of the ship's four 4,000 horsepower engines. The SS *Badger's* coal-fired steam engines (registered as Mechanical Engineering Landmarks) keep reliably turning after over fifty years of service, but

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ANOTHER FINE MESS

By Emily Votruba

REG MANVILLE asked Ken Bonney if the cars on the corner of Lincoln and Acre had been taken care of. Ken said the next move was to talk to the resident in question. Ruth Nanni commented that the Village makes a lot of ordinances but enforces them "only on certain people."

The bills for the month of April were approved: \$46,697.79 in receipts, \$19,857.03 in expenses and \$9,123.97 in payroll, for a total outlay of \$28,981.

Ken Holmes said BLUA was projected to run short on its budget sometime during the year and that

a rate increase of 60 cents per thousand gallons from \$2.50 to about \$3 was to be pondered on. Diane Jenks said the decrease in revenue was due to improvements in the sewer system and pipes, which meant less infiltration, amounting to a savings for consumers but a loss on BLUA's end.

Ross Thorsen reported that Manistee YouthBuild cleaned up 15 piles of gobis on Elberta Beach, and that someone had burned trash by the boardwalk, leaving a pile of melted cans and bottles. A citizen had asked that the Village put up a sign warning people not to leave valuables in their cars in light of recent thefts.

Once again, Reg Manville remarked, the council has to take care of some business that should have been dealt with previously, in this case to meet a set of DEQ requirements for the water supply system, which received a deficient rating in 2005; compliance was requested again in 2007 and nothing was done. The Village must submit a General Plan for each aspect of the water system as requested in 2007, along with an updated Reliability Study; an Emergency Response Plan; an up-

dated Sampling Site Plan (the one submitted in 2005 contained errors); must fix vandalized overflow screens on the two water storage tanks and a damaged handrail on one 50K gallon storage tank and secure the ladder from unauthorized access. Ken Bonney said he had already completed the repair requirements and the other items were in process, pending some help with the General Plan from engineering consultants. The DEQ also recommended fencing off the two tanks to prevent further vandalism, and that a valve turning program be initiated to ensure adequate maintenance of each valve. The Village was to submit a work plan to address the deficiencies by May 31.

Reg said he and Scott Gest and Gest's attorney would meet the next day to discuss the claim of an overcharge for sewer work on the Elberta Landholding Co. property. Manville said Gest's attorney had not yet responded to the Village's forbearance proposal regarding the application of \$10K to the \$60K we owe ELHC.

Ken Holmes said the first responder truck was pretty well shot and the fire department had found a good used vehicle, at a savings of \$8,000 over a new one.

Raven Millworks was to get started drawing up specs for the Lifesaving Station window and door

replacements.

At meeting time the Village audit had not yet been received from auditor Dave Wilson, but it has since been completed. Wilson cited significant deficiencies in the finances for Park and Rec; among them, non-conformance to state law in the commission's bylaws, failure to submit a few receipts and canceled invoices, and an unauthorized payment made outside the Village (to the Benzonia ice rink fund, in the amount of \$500). The auditor recommended that the Park and Rec fund's bookkeeping be taken over by Village treasurer Laura Manville; that's pretty much an order, as one phone call from the auditor could bring the state in to take over the books, Manville said. Further, this isn't new news, as the auditor raised red flags on Park and Rec's books last year; "This is our second warning," Laura said. After some discussion, the council voted to have Laura take over the books July 1; authorized a revision of the bylaws (written in May of 1970 and never signed) to conform with state accounting principles; and retroactively approved the Benzonia ice rink donation. According to Laura, the commission's money will still be kept in its own separate account, with no commingling of funds. Park and Rec will see the balance every month as usual and may receive any kind of report through the Village's computer system. The Park and Rec account will move to State Savings Bank, which holds the other Village accounts. Park and Rec's president, Bill Soper, will always be a signer, and Sharyn Bower or Laura will be second signer. Statements, checks, and cash will all come to Laura at the office, and she will make all deposits. Park and Rec will present an amended budget for this year for approval with a general outline of projects, and expenses will be approved monthly by the council as other Village costs are; a list of officers and members is also required.

The council discussed Carl Noffsinger's position as zoning administrator and authorized Reg and Sharyn to draft a letter to him stating that a change to the position would be voted on at the July meeting. One idea is to combine the position of planning commission head with that of zoning administrator, at a savings to the Village. Some members of council feel that Noffsinger has philosophical differences with the direction P&Z wants to take, toward smaller lot sizes and more development. Ψ

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Remember When . . . With Ken

★ Portrait by Art Melendez

Each month, Ken Holmes brings us the fruits of his historical knowledge. For cherry season, he picked a Ray Edwards photo of the Elberta Packing Company.



Janet Buck's father, Ralph La Rue, worked as the Packing Company's bookkeeper for much of his life. Most people in town worked there at one point or another from 1936, when it was incorporated by the Cohodas and Weksler families; even kids as young as six, including Jan, worked picking cherries (she made 50 cents a lug). Most women in town took seasonal work on the line sorting cherries from July until mid-August, first sweets, then sour. The company produced Cherry Ho! canned cherries and Apple-Keg apple juice. The latter was world famous because it was issued to American troops overseas during WWII. The plant shut down in 1972 because the company couldn't conform to regulations against polluting the Bay; it burned in 1975.

OOPS: The name of one of our living vets, Thomas Haan, was spelled incorrectly in the May issue. Mr. Haan himself graciously alerted us to this at Solstice Fest. We regret the error!

ELLA RIOT STORMS SOLSTICE FEST

By Sarah Parlette

STARTING WITH AN attention-getting megaphone blast, Solstice Festival's headlining band, Ella Riot, reinvigorated spectators when night fell on June 18 with a distinctive blend of dance, techno, disco, and electronica.

After a witty introduction by DJ Cousin Curtiss, the Ann Arbor-based band rocked the upper stage with melodic and electrified sounds. Bathed in neon green and blue lights, the quintet let loose their self-described "Dance-think" music on the crowd. As a member of the underage community, I was disappointed not to be able to get past the orange barrier that separated minors from mead drinkers; however, the vibrations from Ella Riot's powerful playing raced well past the beer garden and into the shoes of anyone around.

Enchanting the crowd with her unexpectedly big voice, Ella Riot's petite vocalist, Michelle Chamuel, dressed in thick sunglasses and a white jacket, danced across the stage to the toe-tapping, head-bobbing trance of her fellow band-

mates. From quick-changing

beats to quiet and dramatic pauses to explosions of sounds echoing across the ever-increasing dance crowd, the band got people to leave their beer garden tables and chairs behind, as they danced with their instruments and made music with their whole bodies. Brilliant bass sounds and unexpected pulses matched the ebb and flow of the reflective waves of Betsie Lake and the

twinkling of lights from across the lake in Frankfort.

Continuing to incorporate the headshaking sound of the megaphone, Ella Riot played their hit song "It Could Be," with multiple vocal-

ists belting out notes that



washed over the dancing and writhing mass. With shouts of "You guys rock" and "Northern Michigan!" and "Do it again!" the progressive electro-pop quintet continued to build the energy of the crowd. Couples danced, swayed, and shook, while a few tried to tango to the funky fusion of evolved dance beats. As the beats got faster and notes got harder, miniflashes from

strobe lights illuminated the musicians and the clapping, smiling spectators.

After performing all original material, Ella Riot, who recently changed their name from My Dear Disco to match their reinvented sound, covered "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)," by the '80s duo Eurythmics, and were rewarded with a roar of applause and happy hoots.

Returning for an encore, the band pulled a quick change: keyboardist Tyler Duncan took out his electric "Irish bagpipes" and battled the guitars and drums with a wickedly inventive, Celtic influenced tune, "Clubbin," which the band later made available to Elbertians as a free download. Then Ella Riot ended the evening (or rather the morning) to a thunderous round of applause. Festival organizer Connie Manke said when she asked the band if they'd like to come back next year, they said, "Oh yeah!" After causing such a stir, I think we can bet they'll be back to rock Solstice socks off again. Ψ

Sarah Parlette, of Grand Rapids, is a journalism student at Aquinas College and is working at the Conundrum Café this summer. PHOTO BY PATRICK KELLY

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An apology from the newspaper: "We celebrated the 4th and, as a consequence, are a little late this week." Paul Rose's new Cadillac arrived from Detroit. Harriet Quimby, who lived in Arcadia and who was the first woman to fly across the English Channel, was killed on a flight in Boston on Monday.
—The Elberta Alert, July 5, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
1	MASTER PLAN MEETING	Master Plan Committee regular meeting with Sarah Lucas of NMCoG	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	8 am (first Fridays)
3, 10, 17, 24, 31	ALERT OFFICE HOURS	Accepting newspaper stories and images and recipes for the Elberta Centennial Cookbook!	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	1 pm-2 pm Sundays
3, 16	ELBERTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH EVENTS	The choir presents the patriotic cantata "Of Faith and Freedom" during morning worship; the American Legion acts as color guard. Welcome Vets and Coasties! Breakfast follows. This month's Community Dinner features picnic fare: chicken, hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, salads, baked beans, watermelon, dessert.	555 Lincoln Ave.	8:55 am; 5 pm-7 pm
3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 23, 26, 30	MUSIC AT THE CABBAGE SHED	Dulcet-toned Hannah Rae Beale and band; Jonny Mogambo's electrified roots; jazz guitarist Dan Adler; the Subprime Blues Band raises your interest rate; folk duo Claudia Schmidt and Sally Rogers; folk tenor Michael Fracasso; Mulebone's blues flute and frets; Oz harmonica by Harper	The Cabbage Shed, 198 Frankfort Ave.	9 pm; \$5 cover
5	PARKS & REC MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village Parks and Recreation Committee, now on first Tuesdays.	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm (first Tuesdays)
12	GILMORE TOWNSHIP MEETING	Regular meeting of the board of Gilmore Township.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (second Tuesdays)
12, 13, 14	ECO SEEDS EVENTS	Free movie night at the amphitheater! GOONIES begins at dusk. On Wednesday, also at the amphitheater, bring a story or poem to share from 7 pm to 9 pm. Then Thursday, 4 pm to 9 pm, volleyball and sandsculpting on Frankfort Beach.	Elberta Amphitheater, Waterfront Park; Frankfort Beach	various times; http://is.gd/EillG4
16	ELBERTA ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR	For the 21st year, Elberta shows how it's crafty.	Farmers Market/Marina Park	10 am-4 pm
	GROW BENZIE 2ND ANNUAL "HAPPENING" BENEFIT	Sustainable chefs Eric Patterson and Jennifer Blakeslee of The Cooks' House in TC, and world-class mixologist Mark Stoddard of the Bitter Bar and Happy in Colorado; plus music by Jonny Mogambo, live and silent auctions, and Dancing Ladies. Purchase tix from Deb Query, 352-4487, or at Hull's.	5885 M-115 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia	5 pm; \$65 or 10 for \$500
21	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Elberta Village Council.	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm
28	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)

FOODSTUFFS

Zorro, open-faced at the Villa Marine

By Kathryn denHeeten

AHHHH, THE DAYS of childhood television on the two channels we got in Elberta (Traverse City's and Cadillac's). Does anyone remember *Sky King*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Three Stooges*, or ... *Zorro*? I was keen on all those shows, but Zorro had a little something special going for him—he was handsome! If anyone thinks five-year-old girls don't get crushes on handsome men, I'm here to tell you, you're dead wrong. That olive skin; that dark, slicked back hair; that pencil-thin mustache—and the mask only added to his *je ne sais quoi*.

By the summer of 1959, I had been to many a watering hole with my dad and was mascot to him and his drinking and BS-ing buddies. I thought life couldn't get any better, but, one fateful day, it did. We took a drive over to Frankfort in the pickup truck and there he was, the man of my dreams—*Zorro*!

OK, OK, it wasn't Zorro. It was the proprietor of the Villa Marine Bar, Vic Lane. Even though he turned out not to be the real thing (the lack of mask tipped me off), he was still the handsomest man I'd ever seen in my five long years of life, and the Villa

became one of my favorite places to visit with the guys.

One evening this spring I went to the Villa for dinner with my friends Karen and Sue. I have been there occasionally over the years, but I still feel the nostalgia whenever I walk in. There's something both comforting and disconcerting about returning to places from one's youth. I've found it's best not to think too much and just concentrate on the menu.

Karen and I are fans of the good old Cuba Libre (translated into American: rum & Coke), so we ordered up a couple of those. I think Sue ordered something healthy, like water. Then we looked at the view, the menu, the view, the menu, until we took pity on the patient waitstaff and decided to order. That's when we discovered the trio of Reubens.

Yep, that's right: The Villa Marine has a Reuben sandwich to please pretty much everyone. I like the traditional recipe—mmmm: corned beef brisket, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and that special sauce, all grilled up on some rye bread—so that was my choice. Karen decided to have the Polish Reuben, a creative take on the old favorite, utilizing the food that goes better than anything with sauerkraut—Polish sausage. Ever health-conscious, Sue discovered the Georgia Reuben, made with smoked turkey, coleslaw, and Swiss, with cranberry sauce on the side. Let's just say *wow*. We were not disappointed! From the sausage to the brisket to the turkey, the Reubens were a culinary delight.

Karen and I went back to the Villa

a couple of weeks ago on a Saturday evening and sat at the bar sipping drinks and listening to the small talk around us. No, it's not the same bar it was all those years ago, but it's easy to see that it's still a local favorite for good eats and camaraderie.

I felt a little sad that night sitting at the bar, remembering those days when my world was filled with orange sodas, smoked fish, and charming storytellers—Daddy, Knob, Ob, Archie, Jack, and, of course, "Zorro." I recalled one of my dad's old 8 mm home movies, of a party in the back of his plumbing shop (now Lane's, owned by Vic Lane's son Vic), and I saw the flickering black-and-white images of those

men in the prime of their lives, some laughing with gusto, some leaning together companionably in the midst of a good tale. Many of those fellas are gone now, my dad and Vic Sr. to name two. But I sometimes catch the echo of a laugh, a whiff of ghostly beer and cigar smoke on the air, and maybe, just maybe, the swish of a sword marking a Z in the air as a little girl in braids sits cross-legged on the linoleum, too close to the TV. Ψ

Kathryn denHeeten grew up in Elberta and comes back as often as possible. She works at the Tribal College in Mt. Pleasant, where she advises students and does a bunch of other stuff.

FAST FERRY, cont'd

have been targeted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA has given *Badger* until February 2012 to stop releasing coal ash from its boilers. If *Badger* fails to make the changes, the vessel will have to cease operation, creating an opportunity for a competitor, like *Lake Express*, to initiate a Frankfort/Elberta-Kewaunee run. More centrally located on Lake Michigan and with a much shorter distance across the lake, the Frankfort/Elberta-Kewaunee route has some strategic advantages.

Here is where the plot thickens. The *Lake Express*, at 192 feet, carries 248 passengers, 46 autos, 12 motorcycles and a crew of just eight at 35 mph; the *Badger*, at 410 feet, carries 600 passengers, 180 autos, commercial trucks, and RVs, at 18 mph, and was designed for a crew of 52. Rumors have it that the urban-business-commuter portion of Lake Express's business model never panned out. Further, the *Lake Express* was first intended to run from April to December, but the vessel quickly proved to be no match for the kind of weather Lake Michigan dishes out, and the season was drastically shortened. Indeed, the Coast Guard mandates that the boat must seek safe haven in 12-foot seas, a common occurrence on Lake Michigan. The more substantial *Badger* can operate year-round, but the low off-season traffic volume and high crew and operating costs make it unprofitable. A northern route with heavy tourist traffic could be lucrative for Lake Express if the *Badger* is out of the picture in 2012.

Lake Express has organized a

strong opposition to an application by LMC for federal funds to cover \$14 million of the cost of converting the *Badger* to diesel. LMC says their fund application is about environmental stewardship, and the conversion would not give them a competitive advantage over Lake Express, because coal is cheaper than diesel fuel. When Lake Express applied for \$17.5 million dollars in federal-backed loan guarantees for the construction of the fast ferry in 2003, LMC fought that application, saying they shouldn't be forced to compete with U.S. taxpayers. They too made the claim there was not enough traffic to support two ferries; but Lake Express's loan was approved. It would not seem completely crazy to speculate that a Frankfort/Elberta-Kewaunee run for a second Lake Express boat, or abandonment of the Milwaukee-Muskegon run in favor of the northern route, might suit Lake Express's business plan. Challenging and costly shoreline improvements would be necessary to support such an operation, and it is difficult to say where that money would come from.

The minds of the passengers aboard *Lake Express* likely were not dwelling on those matters when, just outside the Frankfort pier light, the Rolls-Royce jet drives suddenly brought the ferry up to cruising speed. The boat headed north toward Point Betsie into a slight headwind. As wind speeds soon exceeded 40 mph, passengers on the open upper deck clung to railings and held onto hats as they made a dash for the lower protected deck. Inside the main

continues on page 6

★ SUNSET ★

We Will Miss...

EDNA MARIE BEECHRAFT
(November 25, 1934–June 11, 2011)

Born in Elberta to Edward "Monday" and Marie (Falk) Layman, Edna was a force in the community in her efforts to preserve local car ferry and railroad history. A resident of Honor since the '60s, she retained family property on Furnace Avenue. She was known as "Honey" by her eight great-grandchildren.

NARDA JANE HUGHSON ADAMS
(July 11, 1963–June 13, 2011)

Narda was the beloved daughter of Christeen Kibby Crawford and Jerry T. McNitt, and the mother of a son, Lucas Hughson. A lifelong artist and gardener, she founded Cemaya Windows and Interiors and served as a substitute teacher in Traverse City Area Public Schools.

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JULY FISHING PREVIEW

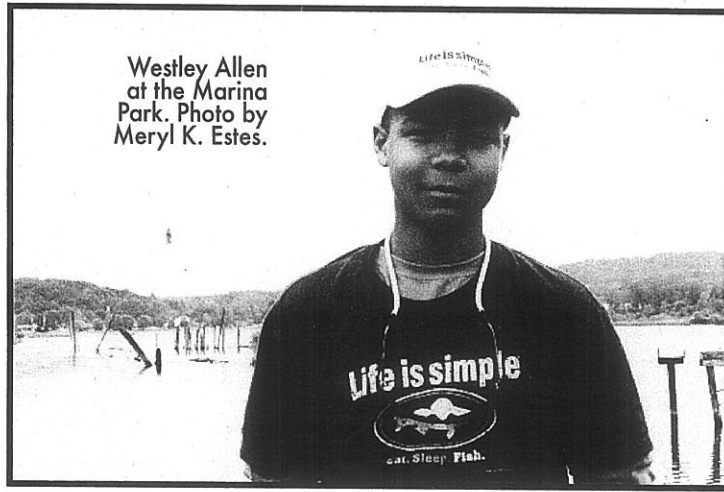
By Westley Allen

JULY IS NEAR, and I know that most of you are wondering, "Where should I fish?" Well, I'm here to fill you in on where to fish, what to fish for, the best times to do so, and what gear to use.

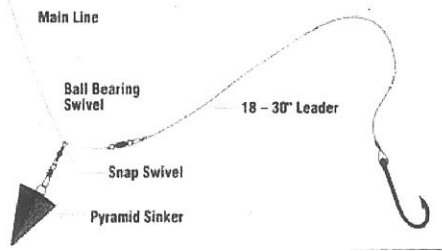
First off, I'll introduce my personal favorite spot, the T-Dock. The T-Dock is conveniently located at Frankfort's Open Space, right next to the Frankfort library. It is about a minute walk to the gas station, a minute to the store, and a minute walk to the Tackle Box, everyone's favorite tackle store. The Tackle Box sells worms, poles, high-quality line, and all the right lures to catch whatever your target fish is. As you may well have figured out by the name, the T-Dock is shaped like a T. All parts of the dock are fishable and will produce fish, but I tend to favor the left (east) side. In July you can expect to catch variety of fish here—choose from: bullhead catfish, perch, bluegill, smallmouth bass, pike, carp, and rock bass. Most of these fish can be caught with your traditional worm and a bobber, but at times fishing for these fish can be challenging. Smallmouths, for example, are spawning

a little later than usual this year, so they can be seen in their "beds" all along the shore. You can entice the fish with a jig tipped with a worm or minnow, or you can anger the fish into biting by throwing a lure repeatedly past its face. Pike will have to be caught with spoons or spinnerbaits, but will occasionally be caught with a worm. The rest of the fish can be caught with worms. The best times to fish at the T-Dock are early in the morning and in the evening, but you can catch fish there all day. I recommend a 7- to 8-foot pole strung with 6- to 8-pound line.

The second location on my list is



Westley Allen at the Marina Park. Photo by Meryl K. Estes.



the Frankfort pier, which has plenty of room to accommodate a lot of fishermen. I prefer the Frankfort side of the pier because it's more accessible and more easily fished. The whole inside of the Elberta pier all the way up to the elbow is full of rocks, and any fish hooked will break your line in those rocks. The same is true for the outside of the Frankfort pier past the elbow, but this is not a desirable fishing spot anyway. Everyone knows where the Frankfort pier is, but in case you don't, it's located on the beach at the end of Main Street. Drive down to the beach and take Michigan Ave. until you see Sac St. for a more direct route. From the pier you can catch smallmouth bass, perch, and any anadromous fish, including steelhead trout, brown trout, and Coho and Chinook salmon. ("Anadromous" means fish that swim up rivers to spawn.) Fishing for anadromous fish calls for a more specialized approach. From the pier you can cast spoons or cast out bait, the most common bait being alewives. Alewives come into

the harbor in May and June and stay until the water temperature reaches 65 degrees. You can catch alewives by throwing either a cast net or a Sabiki rig. A Sabiki rig consists of a line with several gold hooks tied onto it with a snap swivel for attaching a weight on the end. For some weird reason these fish have a fascination with golden hooks. Anyway, anadromous fish follow the migration of the alewives, gorging themselves till full. When lots of alewives are in the bay it's no use trying to catch anything. But when the alewives die off or start to head elsewhere, that's when the action begins. Loco and Crocodile spoons in white or silver work really well off the pier. The best way to rig an alewife is shown in the diagram at left. The weight size should be 1 ounce, the leader should be 10-pound fluorocarbon with a 12-pound main line. The hook size should be either a number 6 or 8 circle hook, and the leader size is adjustable. You'll want a longer leader for live alewives to allow them to swim freely. You can also put a bead on between the snap swivel and the two-way swivel. The same gear goes for the stub piers and the Elberta pier. I recommend a 9- to 10-foot pole for casting spoons with 8- to 10-pound line. For live bait fishing I recommend a 10- to 12-foot pole with a light tip strung with 10- to 12-pound main line and an 8- to 10-pound leader.

Well, there you have it. I've relayed all the basic information you'll need to fish around these parts. Now of course, there are other little tips and secrets, but what fun would it be if you didn't find these out through your own fond and memorable experiences? Ψ

Westley Allen is a Frankfort resident in his junior year in high school. He spends all his spare time dealing with all aspects of fishing. Diagram found at www.freeewebs.com/ncsaltwater/pyramid-fishfinder_rig.jpg

GREAT GOBS OF GOBIS...



Chris Bass, part of a team of 13 YouthBuild beach stewards, rakes up deceased varmints.

In mid-June, Manistee YouthBuild came to Elberta Beach, as they often do, to clean. On this particular day they were met with a particularly stinky project: thousands of

dead gobis that had washed up on shore. "Ken Bonney came down with a backhoe and scooped up all the raked piles. Hopefully the die-off has ended and the beach will return to its nonsmelly beauty!" said Sue Oseland, YouthBuild coordinator.

According to Mark Tonello, fisheries management biologist for the Michigan DNR, the gruesome event was a natural fish kill, probably due to recent big swings in water temperature. "It's nothing to be alarmed about. I don't expect to continue to see these die-offs this season."

Local sportsman Jonathan Drury expressed his concern about the gobis, just one among several invasive species in the lake. "This never existed 20 years ago. There were no gobis, no zebra mussels, just a pure sand bottom. The mussels and the seaweed are changing the ecosystem of the lakes. This is a problem that already exists. If the Asian carp enters, they would cause havoc to an already fragile system."

Manistee YouthBuild has two more cleanups scheduled for this year, one right after the 4th and the last one in August, for a total of five. Give a shoutout to this crew for taking on a big dirty job! PHOTO BY SUE OSELAND

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BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history, topics, and interviews by Elberta teens

My Mermaid Moment

By Merren Garber

THE 2011 ELBERTA SOLSTICE Festival was amazing! I had a lot of fun visiting different booths and hanging out with a bunch of my friends. We visited the Conundrum Café tent, which sold a variety of candy, shaved ice drinks, and mini sandwiches—some of them I helped make as an employee of the café. The *Elberta Alert* booth was selling their great new T-shirts and subscriptions. There was a cool tie-dye booth, and Amalia Fernand was showing people how to make leather bracelets for \$5. The food booths were busy and everyone had something different to offer. Organic meat, fruit and vegetables seemed to be popular menu ingredients.

Around 3 pm on Solstice Saturday I started getting ready for what I had volunteered for. A few days

prior my mom said that Mrs. Stapleton told her that the girl who was going to be the Solstice Mermaid had to work and so she was wondering if I would be willing to take her place. I have to be honest, at first I didn't know if I would enjoy the whole being-in-a-mermaid-costume thing, but once I got into it, I really liked it. My mom and grandma started putting my fake hair in, which was pretty heavy, but really neat looking. I have to thank my mom for doing my face paint. It was funny to watch her apply the paint. I kept taking pictures of the process with my phone. Donna created my costume. It was impossible to walk in but was really neat. I was driven to the Solstice Festival in the Frankfort fire truck and carried to my mermaid stool. I gave out necklaces to younger children and looked at people looking at me. I'm not sure if they were good observations or not, but I'm hoping they were. I have to thank the guys at the fire station and Mrs. Stapleton for allowing me to ride in the fire truck. Coolest ride ever!

My mermaid moment may have been brief, but Elberta rocked all day and all night. The view of the fireworks from the top of the hill at the park was fantastic. Especially with the lake behind them, they were so neat. It was great being at the Solstice to see and listen to it all and have a small role in it. Everyone who played music and cooked food did an amazing job and made the Solstice turn out really fun for a lot of people! We have to give a big thank-you to Bill and Connie and all the organizers. I'm looking forward to next year's Solstice 10-year celebration—2012! I know there will be more food, music, great things to buy, and fun events for the whole family. See you there! Ψ



Merren, aka "Salina" the Solstice Mermaid.

Alert editor Merren Garber attends Frankfort-Elberta High School. PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILKINS

FAST FERRY, cont'd

cabin it was quiet and snug, with a friendly and accommodating crew. Singer-songwriter Rebyn from Mil-

waukee entertained guests with a live performance. In a remarkably short time, Point Betsie was astern, and off Platte Bay the vessel turned

back to harbor. With the winds down to around 30 mph on the return trip, a few more people ventured out to the sun deck. Kate Bowe and her two young daughters gazed at the streams of frothing white water behind the catamaran's jet drives, clearly thrilled. Nancy Tate had driven up from Hart, Michigan, for the event. She remembered riding aboard the SS *Milwaukee Clipper* and the railroad ferries. "I'm not certain about this type of boat. I think getting there is half the fun, and speed is not an attraction for me," Tate said. As the *Lake Express* made its way back into Betsie Bay, it passed the crumbling remains of the Elberta ferry docks. The scene, viewed from the gleaming deck of the new ferry, evoked a sense of passing time and inevitable change. Just what that change will be in the port of Frankfort/Elberta remains uncertain, but a picture was painted by this event, and perhaps a seed planted. Ψ

community-based collaborative projects.

Jed Jaworski works in the historic preservation field and with Michigan State University Extension. A merchant mariner, Jed has resided in the Frankfort area for over thirty years, and has worked with many

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