

# ***News from Small Town (Tawas)***

## ***Middle America***

**Issue #14**

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### **Iosco County News Herald – October 26, 2022**

#### **Cost of Living in Tawas**

A nursing home in Tawas City is one of many businesses that have many job openings. A CNA, the lowest of three levels of certification for health care providers, will likely be paid about \$18 an hour. This approaches \$38,000 per year.

I am struck by the relatively affordable cost of living, at least in terms of housing, in East Tawas and surrounding communities.

The newspaper classified section identifies a three bedroom house for rent for \$750 a month. A two bedroom apartment is \$800 a month. So, with housing costs under \$10,000 a year, a full time CNA can live in a home or an apartment and have sufficient funds for other necessities of life. This is not the case in so many other communities.

There is also a two bedroom home for sale in Oscoda for \$110,000.

#### **Another Meaningful Obituary: William Neil Thornton**

Neil was the editor of *The Tawas Herald* and of *The Iosco News Herald*. He was known as the “town historian” because he authored a number of books about the community. Impressive for good humor and a deep sense of community responsibility, he is the prototypical small town newspaper man. He was born in Tawas City and his ashes are interred in Tawas City. Neil was 94 years of age.

#### **Local Politicians, Candidates**

A candidate for the school board is a member of the Constitutionalist Party. This is a little known party that was originally known as the “Taxpayers Party.” It has a religious, conservative view of the constitution and members tend to be conservative activists. Regardless of whether residents vote for her, I wonder how many understand what her political philosophy is. She is very clear in identifying “federal government overreach into local school districts” as the most pressing issue facing the local community. My guess is that she will win.

Another candidate sees the creation of a marijuana ordinance as the accomplishment she wants to achieve. There is also a proposal to restate the city’s charter in “gender neutral terms.”

### **Faster than a Speeding Bullet**

A 37 year old man was sentenced to a day in jail and continued probation. He was convicted of "attempted false report of a felony." Apparently, he called the police and told them he had a gun trained on a woman and that he was going to shoot and kill her. Officers responded quickly and found him walking out of the house laughing and saying that he made the call to see how quickly the officers would respond. He also told the dispatchers: "Let's see how fast your guys' cars go, cuz' she's about to get a bullet." Sentenced to only one day in jail, this guy is not going to be deterred from doing this again.

### **Ouch! Oscoda Football Teams Beats Tawas Area**

As a kid, the Oscoda-Tawas football game was an intense rivalry. My team, the Tawas Braves, lost more often than it won. We did enjoy meeting the Oscoda cheerleaders.

### **Student Athlete Acknowledged**

Brian MacEwen of Tawas has a nice action photo in the "Senior Sports Spotlight" section of the newspaper. In addition to being a great soccer player, he is a 4.0 student. Too rarely is academic success acknowledged and highlighted. This is a nice exception.

### **Accused "Murder for Hire" Member of the East Tawas City Counsel**

I reported about this in issue #13. Interestingly, and although he is out on bail, he did not show up for the last counsel meeting. He can be removed from the City Council only if he is convicted of a felony. At present, of course, he is only charged. It will be interesting to see if he shows up for future meetings and participates while charges are pending.

### **Alabaster \$5,000 Investment Proves Invaluable**

On October 16, there was a fire in Alabaster. Both the Tawas City fire department and the Tawas City police department were dispatched.

Recall that tiny Alabaster Township is now paying the Tawas City police department \$5,000 a year to patrol and respond to calls in Alabaster. They already have their money's worth!

**A Headline:** The Boathouse Beer Company and Boozery Hosts Dinners for the Tawas Area Middle School football team.

This speaks for itself.

### **Pancake Breakfast to Support Harrisville-Based Non-Profit**

This caught my eye because Harrisville is so rarely mentioned. Its population is under 500, substantially more than it was in 1947 when I was born in Harrisville.

### **Halloween Announcements and Activities Abound**

Halloween has always been big in Iosco County. When I was about 7 years old, my friend Jim reminds me, he and I and two other participated in a "best costume" contest in the community building. He thinks I won 2<sup>nd</sup> place, but I doubt it. Beginning at that age or even younger, we went "trick or treating" on our own without parental accompaniment. We stayed in our neighborhood, where everybody knew us and there was no thought whatsoever that it could be dangerous. Ah, the good old days!

In the nice neighborhood where I live in Palo Alto, California, a grand total of three groups of kids came by for trick or treat. Faced with a health food and nutritional dilemma, we held our breath, closed our eyes, and threw out all of the Reese's, chocolates, and other candy that we still had because we had so few visitors.

We told a neighbor who warned us that she would go "dumpster diving" in our garbage can to retrieve the Reese's.

### **Bystanders to be "Immediate Responders"**

A Local business person trains individuals to be first responders when a problem arises. She teaches about the Good Samaritan law, self defense, CPR, and first aid training. Similar training is offered by our neighbor just a few blocks away.

This type of initiative is timely for reasons too obvious to explain.

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The Goal of my Tawas News is to educate and amuse you about my home town, East Tawas, Michigan. It is to remind you that small towns still thrive in America, that they are sometimes struggling, often vibrant. It is based on my hometown weekly newspaper, personal memories, and occasional, very personal observations.

The Inspiration: The inspiration was Garrison Keillor's "News from Lake Wobegon" on his NPR show, Prairie Home Companion. Lake Wobegon was fictional, quietly poignant and lol enjoyable.

Tawas is not fictional; it is very real. It is similar to Lake Wobegon in many ways – the farmers, the pastors, the community where everybody knows everybody's business.

The town of East Tawas is located on Lake Huron on the lower peninsula about 110 miles north of Flint, Michigan. The population is around 2,723. It hasn't grown much from my childhood in the 50's and 60's. The adjacent town of Tawas City has a population of about 1,726. Why 2 separate towns? Don't ask.

*So, enjoy, and let me know what you think. Share it with friends and family. I am happy to add anyone to the mailing list, so send me names.*

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