

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

## ***Middle America***

**Issue #18**

**December 8, 2022**

**by Michael Gilfix**

Input from a reader re Veteran's Day: It is wonderful that we have received many comments, suggestions, and questions from readers. One extensive comment reacted to my updates about Veteran's Day and how it was so openly celebrated in Tawas schools and on the streets. The comment pointed out that, in some states, the schools are not closed like they are in California. The benefit in that (rather red) state is that the schools have organized programs and presentations about Veteran's Day, veterans, and what it means to be of service to your country.

Speaking for myself, I was "reluctant" to serve in the military during the Vietnam war. I became a Volunteer In Service to America (VISTA), which was the domestic Peace Corp, after college at Stanford to get a one year deferment. I lived in and focused on community organizing in an African American community in Houston, Texas. Then, in 1969 or 1970 came the draft lottery. I was fortunate because my number was 334, which meant that I was not going to be drafted. Those with very low numbers were drafted and faced difficult decisions.

I have come to thoroughly understand the need for smart, competent individuals to be in our military. The experience in Israel and the Ukraine demonstrate that conflict is always on the horizon and that a strong military is an unfortunate necessity.

And think about this, from English philosopher G.K. Chesterton:

"The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him."

If our nation needs to fight and needs soldiers, will we have enough trained soldiers who love what is behind them?

## **Iosco County News Herald – November 30, 2022**

Things slow down in East Tawas during the fall and wintertime. While many deer hunters cruise through town, and while the fall colors attracted many people in October, tourists have more or less disappeared. To say that downtown is quiet is an understatement.

Perennially wonderful is that freshly fallen snow stays white, clean, and pure. There are no sources of pollution in East Tawas – other than automobiles and splashed mud. In the nearby woods, it can be strikingly beautiful as snow blesses and beautifies tree branches. Cross country skiing is huge in the area with miles and miles of trails to explore and enjoy. Snow mobiles are fun for a small number and a scourge for those who enjoy the immense quiet of the Michigan woods.

## **Big Buck Bonanza Oscoda Man Still in First Place**

I know you are interested in who will win the prize for bagging the biggest buck in this deer season. No change. The “massive” 16 point buck is still the largest.

Deer hunting is huge in the community, along with countless communities across the nation. A *Wall Street Journal* article recently reported that more deer have been taken this year in many states than in countless prior years. Herds have grown and there are more hunters. There was a time when I opposed deer hunting – in my naivete. I now understand the appeal, the sport, and the need to keep herds at manageable levels.

### **Tree Lighting Celebration and Parade**

The 47<sup>th</sup> annual event took place downtown, just two blocks from where I grew up. Downtown, parenthetically, is about 2.5 blocks long.

### **Short Term Rental (STR) Ordinance – A Hot Topic**

Proposed is a local ordinance that would limit these rentals to 30 in the city of East Tawas. A number of property owners objected or raised serious concerns because they have reservations, some 18 months into the future.

Economic benefits of STRs were discussed. One interesting comment, related to parking and traffic, was that street dances (also on Newman Street) resulted in parking issues.

I have attended some of these dances on my annual visit. The number of attendees are not large. Parking barely spills over to the streets a block away. Real parking issues exist in neighborhoods like mine in Palo Alto where a resident permit is now required to keep our streets available for resident parking. It is all relative.

### **High School Senior Year Book Photo**

My wonderful spouse, Myra Gerson Gilfix, suggested that I include a photo from the 1965 graduating class from Tawas High School. I think she wants everyone to see how I have aged – gracefully, with some aches and pains, but still “all there.” Here is my photo from 1965:



### **Reporter Job Still Available!**

The newspaper is still looking for a reporter, full time. Experience is preferred, but not necessary. Let me know if you are interested.

## **Fishing Report**

Again, there is no fishing report in this issue. Presumably, this is because it is winter time. Nevertheless, Perchville will welcome anglers to this annual, festive event.

I recall local fishermen going out onto the ice, building a small shanty, drilling a hole for fishing, and stocking the shanty with snacks, beer, and whiskey. I was always amazed at the fact that there were no reported deaths as a result of these combined elements.

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### ***Notes from the Author***

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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