

News from Small Town (Tawas)

Middle America

Issue #19

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by Michael Gilfix

Comments from Readers: I thank our many readers who have sent in comments, virtually all expressing support and enjoyment. My Tawas friend, Jim, has given me many great ideas.

An east coast friend sent in a note in response to my comments about the military, Veteran's Day, and service. He expressed agreement with my comments about military service. He added "the military should not recruit its staff from an increasingly small segment of our population. Doing so creates an 'us and them' ethos. One advantage of both the Israeli and Ukranian drafts is that they are universal." He goes on to say that other forms of universal service could be made available so that the military would not be the only option. In 1969, I joined VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). That put me for a year in the poorest, tiny community within Houston, Texas to work on community organizing. That experience shaped my life in many ways.

With so many disaffected, alienated, and angry youth on the right and left, the trend is disturbing. I would love to see some energetic, forward-thinking legislators create a national service requirement that would include military service as an option.

Christmas Holidays in East Tawas

I am always amazed that, as a Jewish guy, I am annually moved and nostalgic when I hear Christmas music played in stores and elevators. It reminds me of my childhood in East Tawas when the roads were frozen and there was virtually nothing to do. Christmas Day was fun - kinda – because I would dash over to the houses of my friends in the neighborhood to see what presents they got. They always welcomed me and let me join them in playing with the toys they received.

It is similarly interesting that many or most of the classic Christmas songs were composed by Jews. This includes:

- "Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire"
- "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow"
- "Walking In A Winter Wonderland"
- "Silver Bells"
- "Santa Baby"
- "White Christmas"
- "I'll Be Home For Christmas"
- "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer"
- "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"
- "A Holly Jolly Christmas"

After all, Jesus was a Jew.

Iosco County News Herald – December 7, 2022

He's Done it: Oscoda Hunter Wins the Bick Buck Bonanza

This gentleman lead the contest from its earliest days. He won a rifle valued at just under \$700. You will remember from prior issues that women and kids also had entries that, perhaps unfortunately, were not prize winners. The "youth winner" is 12 years old and shot an 8-point buck. His prize was \$25 in cash.

Parades and Tree Lightings

Every town in the county had a parade and/or a tree lighting. Even in temperatures that were below freezing, events were well attended. It doesn't hurt that cookies, hot chocolate, and Christmas caroling are always part of the experience.

Waste Water Treatment Problems

The good news is that the waste water facility in the Tawas Utility Authority (TUA) "did not have a phosphorous violation on September 1, 2022." The bad news is that there were other violations and that the facility is significantly under-staffed. As I always mention, jobs are plentiful in Tawas and in the area – notwithstanding the lack of industry.

Circuit Court Sentencing

Thomas H of East Tawas pleaded guilty to "attempted assault with a dangerous weapon." The charges for assault were dismissed.

It is amazing how many criminals in Iosco County attempt all kinds of things but never seem to achieve them. Dismissed charges while pleading guilty to "attempted" something or other is a routine.

Bryan P. will spend 6-20 years in prison after a jury trial convicted him of meth manufacture and sales. He is a fourth notice offender. He also pleaded guilty to a charge of kidnapping. The good news for Bryan is that charges of homicide-solicitation of murder and conspiracy to commit witness intimidating were dismissed.

There are many other drug and drunk driving offenders, but that is nothing new.

Oscoda Has a Canine Agility Winner!

Staffy is a Staffordshire Bull Terrier who is particularly nimble and disciplined. He did so well that he is heading off to Orlando to compete in the National AKC Agility Invitational. Good luck to Staffy!

Local Audubon Bird Count Taking Place

This is the 123rd annual bird count, conducted across the nation. On the shores of Lake Huron, and with countless lakes and rivers, Iosco County is a natural birding paradise. The most frequent visitors are Chickadees, Mourning Doves, Nuthatches, and Woodpeckers.

The idea of counting the birds was developed as an alternative to killing them. The occasional Cape May Warbler is also spotted in the area.

Budweiser Bottles and Rolling Stone Magazines

An enterprising local is advertising “2 Budweiser Millennium bottle and glass sets, like new” and “three boxes of Rolling Stones magazines dating back to 1980. I will give you the phone number if you are interested.

“Five Reasons to Shop Local”

No surprise is the supplemental “holiday gift guide” that urges readers to stay away from the big box stores. Surprisingly, there is a Wal-Mart in Tawas City.

The article emphasized the benefits of local hiring, the ability to move quickly to respond to local tastes, and more clearly investing in the local community.

Yet, it is well known that Wal-Mart is perhaps the major employer in the area. It is also a social center where many locals converge to see who else might show up, to chat, and for a cup of coffee.

I must say that the Village Chocolatier of East Tawas does an exceptional job of packaging holiday chocolate gifts. They will ship anywhere. The phone number is (989)362-7728. Tell them Mike sent you.

Reforestation Effort

The Iosco conservation district is selling seedlings, transplants, and shrubs at extremely reasonable prices. The goal is to get homeowners to plant more trees and bushes that are native to the area.

Doesn't that make sense!

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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