

News from Small Town (Tawas)

Middle America

Issue #24

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by Michael Gilfix

Enjoy this Newsletter and let me know what you think!

<p>For an explanation of my goal and the inspiration, look to the end of this newsletter. You will see information about where Tawas is located and how big it isn't.</p>

Iosco County News Herald – January 11, 2023

It Pays to Live in Iosco County!

It turns out that a resident of Iosco County won a \$500,000 lottery prize. He purchased the ticket in the county at a business just outside of Tawas. The winner discovered his winning ticket as he and his wife were preparing Thanksgiving dinner. What could be more appropriate!

I am not a fan of lotteries since they are a form of regressive tax. Nevertheless, it is wonderful to celebrate winners.

Could the Price of Skinless Franks be Fixed?

I always look at the advertising for the local markets. Klenow's, located in East Tawas, is selling Koegel franks at \$43 for a 10 lb package. Freel's Market in Tawas City is selling the same product for the same price. Marketing hint: if either store knocks a dollar off the price, business could surge!

East Tawas Approves a \$13,000 Bid

The East Tawas City Council approved this bid to improve the police department garage. In so many communities around the country, \$13,000 would be viewed as "miscellaneous expenses" or something else that requires no focused attention. That the city council dealt with this contract reflects a sense of frugality, which is not a particularly common characteristic of larger communities.

Local Democratic Party Celebrates a Year at their East Tawas Office

Democrats are the minority party. The Iosco country Republicans have their office in Tawas City.

The local Democratic Party office announced that they partnered with two organizations that focus on forest and highway cleanups. Other activities are diverse. While I do not want to sound overly simplistic, it is so healthy to have both parties visible and active in

the community. This was not always the case, as I remember relative invisibility of the Democratic Party in prior years.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Thrives – These Efforts Raised over \$30,000

Holiday bell ringers staffed no fewer than 150 90-minute shifts, primarily at two of the major markets. It was described as “often a family affair with children, and even dogs participating,” according to an organizer. These efforts raised over \$30,000. Funds were then distributed to Iosco County families in need.

Are there bell ringers at holiday time in your community if you are not living in the Tawas area? Note likely. In Tawas, they are already signing up volunteers for next year.

Community Culture Thrives

I recurrently point out the diversity of theater and other entertainment activities that are available to residents. Upcoming, for example, is the 7th annual “Hot Reads for Cold Nights,” which will take place at the Tawas City library.

In East Tawas, there will be the Tawas Bay Art Gallery Event – “Paint Your Pet.”

The theater group in Oscoda is holding auditions for its next play, *Everybody Loves Opal*.

Related is a Harrisville event to express “staff appreciation” for staff members at the Brew Haus. I wish I could attend this event, revisiting the tiny town in which I was born.

Snow Mobile Event Exhibits 160 Sleds

In this event, held for the 17th year running, they feature “early 1960’s-era antique sleds.” This got my attention since I was in high school in the 1960’s. From at least this perspective, I and my classmates have achieved “antique status” a bit earlier than we expected.

And hats off to Ray B, who got an award for being the oldest participant at the event.

Tawas City and Tawas Police Department Audits – All You Want to Know and More

The interesting thing about the newspaper article about the audits is that it is incredibly detailed and complete. It includes no fewer than 81 dense paragraphs detailing every aspect of the audit.

What Does “Honor Roll” Really Mean?

Each class at the Tawas area high school has about 100 kids. It was announced that 59 high school seniors made the Honor Roll in the first quarter. As I have often observed, this approach undercuts the otherwise helpful inclusion of honor roll on a college application. As increasing numbers of colleges and universities ignore SAT and other such tests, one wonders how the application process is being administered by the admissions offices.

What will they rely upon?

The Diversity of Sports is Remarkable

In my “good ol’ high school days” I believe we had four sports: football, baseball, basketball, and track. This time of year in the Iosco county area, we have wrestling, bowling, swimming, hockey, and basketball for both boys and girls. Come the spring, there will be more school sports to play.

The size of the student body is about the same as it was in the early 1960's. This means that a much higher percentage of the student body participates, which is a good thing.

Antique Piano For Sale

The ad says that it "came by train from Chicago years ago" and the asking price is \$25.

Blue Jeans at Work Generates \$2

While many businesses hesitate to have their employees wear blue jeans, a local business pays \$2 every Friday for every employee who wears blue jeans to work. That generated a \$796 donation to a library program.

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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