

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

## ***Middle America***

**Issue #26**

**January 31, 2023**

**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>
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### **Reader Comment: “Perhaps things last in small-town America.”**

This comment is from a current Boston area resident who grew up in East Tawas around the same time I did. He was commenting on the longevity of Klenow's Market and Freel's Market. Both, he observed, have probably been around 100 years.

The survival of these two markets suggests both marketing skills and being very “present” in the community. To survive, they have to have the business of locals since tourists are only there 3 or 4 months every year.

In larger communities, the cost of doing business and the prevalence of large, chain businesses have indeed been the death knell for countless small businesses. Yet there is a Walmart in the Tawas. That these two small, local markets survive is indeed a tribute to their longevity.

Long live Klenow's and Freel's!

### **Gilfix Published Wall Street Journal Letter**

#### **“Tie Me to the Mast!”**

When I read the weekly newspaper from Iosco County, I always read the Letters to the Editor. I look for interesting content, something that is sufficiently interesting to pass along.

This process got me in the letter writing mood. After I read an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal by Fay Vincent, past commissioner of baseball, I was inspired. His op-ed was entitled “Old Age is Like a De-bencher.”

I sent a letter to the editor that was published on January 24, 2023. If you want to read it, it is at the very end of this issue.

**Iosco County News Herald – January 23, 2023**



### **Lighthouse to Receive Past Due Restoration**

Here is a photo, rather blemished, of the lighthouse that has attracted thousands of visitors over the years. Located at Tawas Point State Park, the bad news is temporary: no one will be able to climb the winding stairs to the top this summer while improvements are being made. Nevertheless, lighthouse aficionados will soon enjoy an improved, restored lighthouse.

### **Sign Up for the Chocolate Party**

4-H programs are forever creative. They are hosting a Chocolate Party on February 13. This is not just for eating. Participants (age 5-19) will learn about the history of chocolate, taste-test, and do some chocolate dipping by hand.

Chocolate tasting *a/ways* gets attention.

### **Another Coat Drive – Lead by the Michigan State Police**

I have to wonder: is this effort stimulated by the remarkable success of Puff Cannabis, the marijuana distributor that so successfully gathered hundreds of jackets for local distribution? Probably no, but again, one has to wonder.

The more efforts like this, the better.

### **“Wild Caught Perch” at Klenow’s**

My young buddies and I fished for perch off the Tawas dock, sometimes catching more than one perch on a multi-hook line. This ended many years ago when perch virtually disappeared from Tawas Bay and Lake Huron. While they have made something of a comeback, perch now available in Tawas no doubt came from Canada where Great Lake’s fishing still enjoys success.

If you haven’t enjoyed pan fried perch, you are missing something.

### **Foreclosures and Fighting Them**

Every issue of the newspaper includes Notices of Foreclosure on local properties. This issue of the newspaper features a program, albeit limited, to help locals avoid foreclosure with help from the Michigan Homeowner Assistance Fund. While there seem to be many jobs available in Tawas, foreclosures seem all too common.

Related is another program prioritizing seniors and veterans that provides funds for home repairs. Having funds for home repair and avoiding foreclosures are clearly linked, so let's hope more folks will be able to keep their homes.

### **A Quiet Time in Tawas, Small Northern Towns**

The holidays are over and it will be a few months before summer tourists return. The streets are quiet, the temperature is dipping, and everything slows down. As much as local residents rely on tourists for the economy, there is a special appreciation for these quiet times.

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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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