

News from Small Town (Tawas)

Middle America

Issue #28

February 15, 2023

By Michael Gilfix

Enjoy this Newsletter and let me know what you think!

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.

Just Imagine an Effective Volunteer Fire Department

No town with the small size of East Tawas (perhaps 2,800 people) can afford full time firefighters. They rely on volunteers.

Life long resident Bill D is in charge. The department is proud of its ability to recruit an ample number of volunteers who receive training and who are available at a moment's notice.

In so many communities, large and small, volunteerism for such efforts is not always successful. In the Iosco County communities, we have wonderful exceptions.

Volunteer Fire Department and Playboy

When I was 15 or 16 years old, I was getting a haircut from Skip R on the corner of Newman Street and Bay Street. The fire alarm went off. He dropped everything and ran out the door to jump on the careening fire truck and tackle a reported fire a few blocks away. I thought this was absolutely wonderful – because there was no one else in the barber shop to stop me from reading the Playboy Magazines that he had in the waiting area. Ah, Memories!

Here is a photo of the East Tawas fire truck:



Selected Reader Comments

From Tawas Resident, Ed N: "I enjoy your tidbits about our community. Keep up the good work."

From Jim H: "You're on a roll. Entertaining asides on the news items. And your comments are generally uplifting and filled with affirmation. You come across as a real Tawas lover, not a critic from afar."

From Judy P: "I love your comments (about) what is going on in East Tawas."

From Maris G: "Statistics say that small town newspapers are dying. A newsletter like yours reflects a refreshing counter-example."

Iosco County News Herald – February 8, 2023

More and More About Perchville

It bears repeating that Perchville USA is in its 73rd year and captures local attention for weeks and weeks. This issue of the Iosco County News Herald features multiple stories, lots of photographs, and more related news items.

In a previous issue, you met the King and Queen of Perchville, Jay and Julie. You also met the Junior King and Queen, Caleb and Brooke. As the lead newspaper article indicates, "the royals" appeared at many events and were feted everywhere. There were dances, fish fries, military-style shooting contests, and a "murder mystery dinner."

Tawas Elementary Kids and Syrian Refugees

A local resident's nephew, an army officer, told her about all the shoeless kids in a refugee camp in Syria. His aunt contacted a Tawas elementary school teacher who enlisted her students. About 200 pairs of shoes were packed up and sent to the army base in Syria for distribution.

It is wonderful to see the kids' world view expanded by such activities.

Local 4-H'ers Win Prizes in Lansing, Michigan's Capital City

This was all about rabbits. Ellie's winner was Sherbert, a Mini Lop. Bennett won with his white New Zealand rabbits.

Churches and Faith

Every issue includes announcements by no fewer than 19 churches about regular services. I looked at the local newspaper for Los Altos, a community near me with a population in excess of 30,000 people. Its weekly newspaper advertises 8 churches.

Food Vendor Changes at the Iosco County Jail

The Iosco County Jail is in the same building it was when I was in town, in the 50's and 60's.

To capture a higher quality of meals for the inmates, the cost per meal will increase to \$2.65 from \$2.55 for the displaced vendor.

I Can't Resist: One More Item About Perchville USA

On February 4, with temperatures in the 20's, long lines appeared on Newman Street for the "Chilly" Cook-Off. Twenty (20) businesses participated. That's almost every business on Newman Street.

A New Restaurant is Opening In Oscoda

It is Dudley's Diner and Coney Island. Tawas City has a new hair salon, or at least a new name. It will now be known as Salon 55. Keep this in mind when you're in town.

9th Annual Pike Fishing Contest

Slated for February 18 on a slightly inland lake, Van Etten Lake, participants will pay \$15 to see who will capture the largest Pike and the largest Perch. Chili, hot dogs, chips and coffee will be free for the event.

Snowmobiling is Dangerous

For the 9th time this winter, a snowmobiler died when he lost control and was ejected, striking a tree. Speed is usually the culprit, particularly for the less experienced who are no doubt energized – and distracted -- as they cruise through trails deeply embedded in the forest.

Hunting Can Be a Passion – Some Hunting is Unethical

A Michigan hunter faced 10 charges for unlawful hunting, using more than one license, and worse. Said Scott M, "Sure, I love to kill deer. If I could kill more I would, to be honest with you."

Deer hunting itself is not unethical. There is a strong argument to the effect that it has positive effects because of large herds and the annual worry about starvation during the winter. I also had friends in high school whose family's needed to hunt deer – year round – to put food on the table.

Looking for a Rental?

An East Tawas "country home" with three bedrooms is available. It has central air. The cost is \$850 per month.

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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