

East Tawas News

Issue #7

**"A slice of small town middle America"
by Michael Gilfix**

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Why small-town newspapers succeed: Sports Teams Galore!

This issue of the local newspaper featured no less than 21 articles about high school and other area sports teams. Pictures of team members from Tawas and surrounding, small communities abound, all in color. This means that virtually everybody in town will know someone on one of these teams. Keep in mind that the total population of East Tawa, for example, is well under 3,000.

I think this is wonderful. Scores of kids get to see their pictures in the newspaper. They send them to relatives all over the country. It is a source of pride and involvement in the community.

Letters to the Editor

Mary is concerned about letters from "our right-wing citizens." About abortion, she worries that women face "a world where government decides whether and when they bear children."

Sherry M is more than a little unhappy about the January 6 committee, complaining that the two GOP candidates recommended by the GOP leadership were not allowed on the committee. "Sham and shame is what it is..., or an advance case of Trump Derangement Syndrome." She ends with a comment we can all embrace: "We agree on this: vote like your country depended upon it."

Mud was on Everyone's Mind

Mid-August saw the Michigan Mud Jam in Hale, just outside of Tawas. The article identifies Iosco County as "the nation's mud Mecca, hosting thousands of rednecks, tuners and hippies who live in trailers" and attended.

Small Town City Council Gets it Done

In a "short meeting," the East Tawas City Council highlighted the diversification of the city's \$94,000 in invested assets. The "Holy Smokes Tobacco" shop got approval to begin construction for a site along US-23.

They also approved the hiring of a new police cadet. Interestingly, his education and training is to be paid for by the Michigan Works Program.

Will small towns be attracting law enforcement professionals with lower pay, but safer, less critical communities?

Local Theater Thrives

The Shoreline Players offers a play on an outdoor, portable stage to maximize comfort and informality. Local actors thrive and charm their audiences.

Celebrating Grampa Bob's Tree

A charming photo of five grandkids of Bob McDonald tells his story. 62 years ago Bob was working in the area and stuck a branch of a willow tree in the ground at the Tawas Point park. It worked! It is now a hearty, climbing tree that countless children enjoy annually.

Bob McDonald was one of my teachers. He helped many of us grow and thrive, just as he did with that willow tree.

Fishing Report: Night-time fishing for bass

Anglers are urged to fish for bass in the first couple of hours after dark. Use "surface presentations. After the cast, work them aggressively with a jerking motion, making sure they pop and gurgle across the surface of the water during your retrieve."

Are people happier in small towns?

A major Canadian study concludes that they are. Happiness "is correlated with both lower population density (implying fewer interpersonal interactions) and a greater sense of "belonging" in one's community (implying stronger social connections)."

Here is a thought from Immanuel Kant: "The nice thing about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you're doing, someone else does."

Remember: Send me comments and email addresses of friends and family who would like to receive my updates.

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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