

Winterfest Perchville USA

February 5 - 8, 2026



February 4, 2026
Supplement to the Iosco County News-Herald & Oscoda Press

LOCAL NEWS

Dave and Marcia Lesinski named 76th Perchville Royalty

EAST TAWAS – The Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce (TACC) has announced that Dave and Marcia Lesinski are the King and Queen of the 76th annual Perchville USA.

Both lifelong residents of the Tawas, the Lesinski’s embody the community spirit, volunteerism, and leadership that define Perchville Royalty.

Dave and Marcia first met in high school, and both graduated from Tawas Area High School. They were married in 1973 and together raised two daughters, Kimberly and Michelle. Their family has since grown to include six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

The Lesinski’s are the owners of Great Lakes Insurance Agency in Tawas City, which they have operated since 2002. The property where Great Lakes Insurance stands holds a special place in Marcia’s family history.

Her family purchased the corner lot in 1927. Today, that same property is where the iconic large American flag is proudly displayed.

Through Great Lakes Insurance Agency, Dave and Marcia have also been generous sponsors of numerous community events, supporting local initiatives year after year.

Dave currently serves on the Tawas City Council and has held numerous leadership roles over the years, including with the



2026 PERCHVILLE ROYALTY – Dave and Marcia Lesinski, pictured here, have been named the King and Queen for the 76th annual Perchville. The couple was officially crowned on Jan. 31 at the Coronation Breakfast, which took place at the American Legion in East Tawas.

original Tawas City Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Tawas Police Authority Board, the Industrial Development Corporation, and the Tawas Boosters Club, where he served as president for ten years. He coached softball for more than 20 years and was actively in-

involved with Mariner Fest.

A Kiwanis member since 1992, Dave has also been deeply committed to the Knights of Columbus, serving as treasurer and later as Grand Knight for many years. For more than a decade, he ran the Knights of Columbus kitchen, preparing meals for

Lesneski, Danek announced as 2026 Perchville Junior Royalty

EAST TAWAS – The Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce (TACC) has announced that Colton Lesneski and Kinsley Danek will be the 2026 Perchville Junior King and Junior Queen, representing the 76th Annual Perchville celebration.

Lesneski is a seventh grade student at Tawas Area Schools. He is the son of John and Krista Lesneski and has an older sister, Gia, and a younger sister, Mila. Colton’s family also includes three dogs – Bodie, Stella and Bruno.

Lesneski enjoys staying active through sports, including soccer, basketball and golf, and also likes playing the guitar. His favorite subjects in school are literature and math. He is actively involved at Holy Family Church, as well, where he serves as an altar server and helps with Bible school and youth group activities.

A devoted sports fan, Lesneski supports FC Barcelona for soccer, the Boston Celtics for basketball, University of Michigan football and Oakland University basketball. He hopes to follow in his father’s footsteps one day, and become a dentist.

Some of Lesneski’s favorite Perchville memories, include the festival’s “Chilly” Cook-Off and watching the magician performances at the Family Expo.

Danek is a sixth grade student at Tawas Area Schools. She is the daughter of Sarah and David Danek and has a brother, Pierce.

Danek has been playing hockey since the age of 2, and currently plays defense for the Midland Hornets, wearing jersey number 44. In addition to



2026 PERCHVILLE JUNIOR ROYALTY NAMED – Colton Lesneski, pictured right, and Kinsley Danek, have been named the 2026 Perchville Junior King and Queen. They were officially crowned during the Coronation Breakfast at the East Tawas American Legion, which was held on Saturday, Jan. 31.

hockey, she enjoys basketball, cross country and soccer. Her favorite subjects in school are science and physical education.

Danek dreams of continuing her hockey career at the collegiate level – with hopes of attending either Central Michigan University or the University of Michigan – while also pursuing her goal of becoming a doctor who works with babies, either as a pediatrician or OB-GYN.

History of Perchville

Take a walk through history at the Iosco County Museum with the Iosco County Historical Society. Tours are self-guided, but volunteers will be available to answer questions.

Free to the public, but donations are appreciated.

community events, including Perchville fish fries and the coronation breakfast. One of his favorite Perchville memories is participating in the demolition derby—an experience he remembers as “a lot of fun.”

Marcia has long matched Dave’s dedication to community service. Often working alongside him in the Knights of Columbus kitchen, baking cakes, washing dishes, or helping serve, she has also been active with the Tawas Boosters Club, served as a Brownie leader, volunteered on the Chamber’s Light Up the Bay committee, assisted the Tawas DDA, supported Mariner Fest, and helps with Holy Family Nursing Home ministries. She also helps place American flags along US-23, and her family continues the tradition of organizing and displaying the iconic large flag on their historic property, as well as carrying it proudly in the Fourth of July parade.

Marcia cherishes her memories of serving Perchville meals at the Knights Hall and loves

seeing the community come together in celebration.

Despite their many accomplishments, neither Dave nor Marcia has ever sought recognition. In their interview, they expressed how deeply they believe in giving back to the community that has given so much to them. Their lives reflect genuine generosity, leadership, and service – qualities that make them outstanding examples of Perchville Royalty.

The TACC congratulated Dave and Marcia on being named the 2026 Perchville USA King and Queen. Their lifelong dedication to the Tawas continues to enrich the community and inspire those around them.

The 2025 Royalty, Ray and Jennifer Bruning, officially crowned Dave and Marcia at the Coronation Breakfast on Saturday, Jan. 31. The breakfast took place at the American Legion in East Tawas, and only a \$10 Perchville button was required for entrance.

Take a dive into winter!

If you live in northeast Michigan, you most likely enjoy winter outdoor activities of one sort or another. And the next couple of months or so will offer the best chances to get out into the elements and enjoy your favorite sport.

February and March often provide some of the best skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling and ice fishing of the winter season. But winter also comes with a word of caution: Don’t forget about safety – especially when it involves getting out onto the ice of local waters. Ice on Tawas Bay, as well as inland lakes and rivers, can potentially be dangerous to venture onto and one should always exercise caution.

With the 75th rendition of Perchville USA set for the Tawas this weekend the best of winter is yet to come. We invite you to get outside and jump right into winter before it’s over. Besides, the water’s just fine!

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76TH ANNUAL

Perchville USA

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SATURDAY, FEB. 7TH

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REGISTRATION BEGINS SATURDAY, FEB 7TH AT 11AM AT THE EAST TAWAS DNR BOAT LAUNCH

HURON COMMUNITY BANK

LOCAL NEWS



Courtesy photo
WINTER HIKE – A lantern-lit winter hike will be held Feb. 28 at Tawas Point State Park. The event will be held from 6-9 p.m. and begins near the Tawas Point Lighthouse.

Tawas Point State Park to hold Winter Lantern Hike

EAST TAWAS – Looking for something to get out and do this winter? Tawas Point State Park is holding its first ever Winter Lantern Hike.

The event will take place on Feb. 28, from 6 to 9 p.m. The lantern-lit hike will begin at the new Friends Pavilion on the lighthouse grounds and follow the Central Point/Coast Guard Maintenance Trail to the end of Tawas Point. The trail will be illuminated by oil hurricane lanterns, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

A warming station with pro-

pane heaters and fire rings will be available near the Friends Pavilion on the lighthouse grounds. Hot chocolate and s’mores will be provided while supplies last.

The trail will not be plowed. Snowshoes are encouraged and welcome, but will not be provided. Be sure to bundle up in your favorite winter wear and dress for the conditions.

A Recreation Passport is required to enter the park, all park rules apply and no pets allowed on the hiking trail during the event.

Ray Ray’s 12th annual fishing tourney is Feb. 14 on Van Etten Lake

OSCODA – The 12th annual Ray Ray’s Pike Town USA Fishing Tournament returns Saturday, Feb. 14 to Van Etten Lake.

The annual event began when Ray Eberhardt passed away from multiple myeloma cancer in January 2014. His brother, Rick Eberhardt, said that Ray’s favorite pastime was pike fishing.

All funds benefit cancer pa-

tients in northern Michigan.

The tournament gets underway with registration at 7 a.m. The entry fee is \$15. Weigh-in starts at 3 p.m. at the Air Force Beach Warrior Pavilion.

Prizes will be awarded for the largest pike and the largest perch. In case of a tie, the winner will be decided by the first one turned in. Cash prizes for the fishing tour-

namment will be determined on how many entries are received.

Chinese raffles will be held and a variety of prizes will also be offered. Chili, hot dogs, chips and coffee will be provided at no charge. Biscuits and gravy will be provided in the morning.

For more information or to register for the tournament, contact Eberhardt at 989-329-2962.

Museum is open during Perchville

EAST TAWAS – The Iosco County Historical Museum will be open during Perchville.

Located at 405 W. Bay St. (US-23), East Tawas, the museum will be open Feb. 6-7, from 11 a.m to 3 p.m.

Members of the Iosco County Historical Society will be providing a warming pit with hot and cold beverages inside.

For more information about the museum, email iosco.history@gmail.com or call 989-362-8911.



76TH ANNUAL

Perchville USA

FAMILY EXPO

FEB. 7TH 2026 11AM-4PM

EAST TAWAS COMMUNITY CENTER

760 NEWMAN ST.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

ALL DAY ENTERTAINMENT BY BPT & CONCESSIONS BY AMERICAN LEGION POST 211

11:00AM DOORS OPEN

11:30AM JOEL TACEY MAGIC SHOW

12:00PM INTRODUCE JR. ROYALTY & PRIZE DRAWINGS

12:15PM CHAMPOIN FORCE ELITE CHEER PERFORMANCE

12:30PM K-9 SEARCH & RESCUE DEMO

1:00PM KIDS' GROOVE WITH TWW

1:15PM JOEL TACEY BINGO!!!!

1:45PM TALENT SHARE

2:15PM PRIZE DRAWINGS

2:30PM KIDS' GROOVE TWW

3:00PM CLARK THE JUGGLER

3:45PM PRIZE DRAWINGS

4:00PM GOOD BYE TILL NEXT YEAR!

YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN PRIZES!

SCHEDULE WILL ADJUST AS NEEDED

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EAST TAWAS

Perchville USA

FISHING TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY, FEB. 8TH

WEIGH-IN, 11AM-NOON

FREE LUNCH, NOON

AWARDS, 12:15

Three-day fishing event on

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 6-8.

Participants must catch their fish in Iosco County.

First, second and third place prizes will be awarded in two divisions:

Youth (age 16 and under) &

Adult for longest; Perch, Walleye, Pike and Blue Gill/Sunfish.

Registration, awards and free lunch for all participants will be in the Hospitality Tent located in Harbor Park Parking Lot on Sunday.

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Tawas Bay

2026



Photo by John Morris
MONUMENTAL SNOWFALL – The 14-foot Lumberman’s Monument is pictured covered with a winter’s snowfall. The bronze statue of three lumbermen highlights Michigan’s logging history, which was significant for the development of the state’s economy in the 1800s. It was dedicated on July 16, 1932. The monument is located along the River Road National Scenic Byway in the Huron National Forest in Oscoda Township.

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LOCAL NEWS

Historian shares stories of first Perchville

TAWAS – In January 1950, an unnamed *Iosco County News* reporter wrote, “Weather permitting, Tawas Perchville, a colorful array of fishing shanties, will become a reality on the ice of Tawas Bay Saturday.”

Seventy-six years later, the popular festival – which started by the suggestion of an area businessman to spur the local economy – is still going strong and is a highly anticipated yearly event.

The 76th annual celebration began with a weekend of events, starting Jan. 31 with the annual Coronation Breakfast held at the American Legion. Perchville’s full schedule of events is included in this special edition.

According to the late area historian Neil Thornton, the event started after area businessman Harold L. Gould pitched an idea to the area chamber of commerce in the fall of 1949.

Thornton, an area newspaperman, publisher, life-long resident and author of 16 books on the history of the area, witnessed many of the events first-hand.

Gould’s idea was to construct a town on the ice of Tawas Bay, to bring tourists and fishermen to town and to give area businesses a booster shot during a depressed winter economy.

Area businesses built shanties resembling their shops – complete with gas heaters – and the structures were laid out on the ice over “good fishing grounds,” according to the newspaper account.

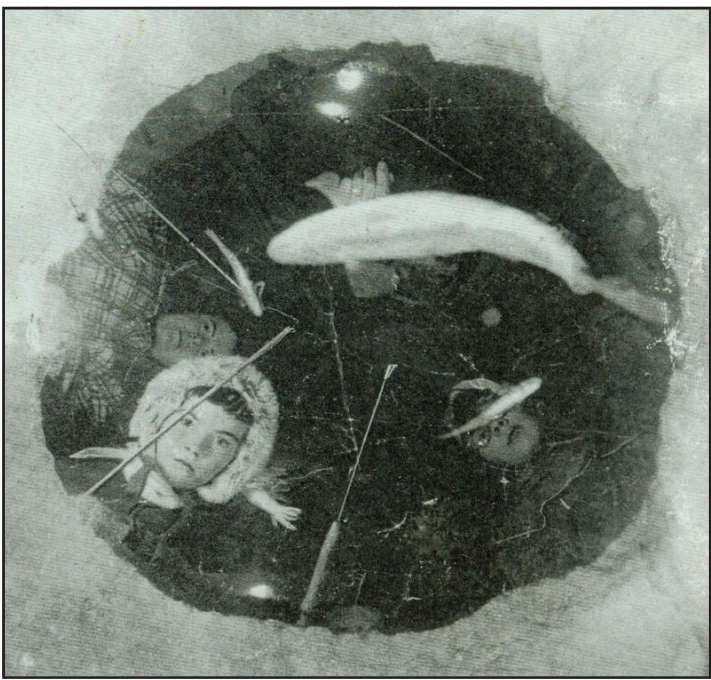
The shanties, which numbered from 25 to 30 during



Courtesy photo
FOUNDER – Harold Gould, a Tawas druggist and sportsman, originally pitched the idea for Perchville to the city’s chamber of commerce in 1949, and was given the go ahead to organize the event.



Courtesy photo by Neil Thornton
IMPROVED RIG – This photo of Joe Clark’s improved underwater photography rig was shot by Neil Thornton in 1950. The improved rig was constructed by Clark out of a pretzel tin, according to Thornton.



Courtesy photo by Joe Clark
FISH-EYE VIEW – This iconic Life Magazine ice fishing photo was done by freelance photographer Joe Clark – known as the Hillbilly Shooter – during the first Perchville in 1950. He used a rig to put a camera underwater and film children from a fish’s point of view. The little girl is identified as Shirley Nunn.

the first week, were open to fishermen who wanted to use them free of charge, minus a \$5 deposit, which was returned.

The first newspaper account of the event was merely a sidebar to the huge amount of space area reporters would use in covering the time-honored event in later days.

But in 1950, the unnamed reporter’s enthusiasm couldn’t predict the popularity and the growth the festival would take as the decades progressed, despite the shantytown being destroyed by high winds several times that first year.

“It is possible,” the story went on to state, “as soon as the program gets underway, a ‘Perchville Mayor’ may be elected to rule over the ice community.”

A later newspaper account lamented the loss of the town and the stymied attempt to elect a mayor.

But despite the setbacks to the festival caused by Mother Nature, the first festival was a huge success.

Reservations, according to newspaper accounts, were coming in from as far away as Ann Arbor and Chicago and the number of shanties reached 37. It was everything organizers could do to keep fresh bait flowing into the shanties to catch the huge and abundant perch.

The public clamored to rent the fishing shacks, with the Tawas garnering national attention after a broadcast by NBC.

The event had stretched into weeks when a photographer from *Life Magazine* showed up to chronicle the event.

In 1950, Thornton was just a 21-year-old reporter and photographer for his father, P.N. Thornton’s newspaper, the *Tawas Herald*.

He said, at the time, there was much excitement over Perchville, which was part of the beloved and very popular Silver Valley Winter Sports Festival, which was heavily reported for weeks at a time.

“Everyone thought it was just a great idea,” he said on the Perchville aspect of the festival. And after a story about the little town on the ice was printed in

the *Bay City Times* – a story that was eventually picked up by the *Associated Press* and published across the country – Perchville drew the attention of *Life Magazine*.

Thornton said the magazine hired famous photographer Joe Clark, who was known as the “Hillbilly Shooter,” to come and get a perch photo from the fish’s point of view.

Thornton, with access to one of the town’s only darkrooms, was employed by Clark to assist with the photo. According to Thornton, Clark thought he could achieve the photograph by lowering a Rolleiflex camera encased in a plastic bag under the water.

It wouldn’t work and a wooden rig with a glass window was constructed by an area furniture builder. Thornton said flash bulbs were rigged to the camera and suspended under the water, and a perch was put on a tether to achieve the photo.

After the initial photo was taken, Clark sent Thornton to the Herald’s darkroom to develop the photo, joining him later after a couple more shots.

Weeks later, Clark would return with an improved underwater rig, constructed from a pretzel tin, and an iconic Perchville photograph – with two children gazing down into an ice hole at a wriggling perch – was achieved.

Thornton said the event was significant to him, as a young photographer who would eventually work in journalism as a soldier during the Korean War. Another aspect was having *Life Magazine* in the Tawas.

In 1950, Thornton said, one could not pick up a single television station and the magazine was an outlet to the outside world.

In 1964, after a winter of warmer than average temperatures, Thornton said the winter sports carnival was cancelled in February.

But although interest in Silver Valley was waning, Perchville was getting bigger, with reports of shanties in the hundreds on the ice.

Organizers decided to hold Perchville as an event in and of

itself in the beginning of March. The event was successful, according to accounts, though a large amount of water on the bay ice wreaked havoc, according to Thornton.

It was in 1966 that a Perchville tradition was born, the first polar bear swim at the event. According to a *News* story, Harry

McElyea of Flint came to Tawas Bay weeks before the event to test the water and gave a performance, swimming in Tawas Bay at Perchville.

He did it again the following year, Thornton said, and by the third year hundreds were taking the plunge.

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LOCAL NEWS

DNR: Ice fishing is the ‘Coolest Sport Around’

LANSING – For many people, fishing is the most relaxing way to spend the day. And, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in the winter months the most popular angling activity is ice fishing. To those who have never tried it, ice fishing is sometimes looked upon as an oddity, but for others, ice fishing is the best kind of fishing.

Although it doesn’t appeal to all, many anglers actually prefer fishing through the ice to open-water fishing. For one thing, anglers can get just about anywhere on the lake during ice fishing season, something they can’t do without a boat during the open water season. Virtually every fish that’s available to anglers in the summer can be caught through the ice – some are even caught more frequently in the winter, the DNR said.

Once you’ve spent a little time on the ice, you’ll soon see a different picture. Ice fishing is more than just a way to fill the long days of winter. It’s a chance to breathe the cold, clean winter air, to spend quiet time outdoors with family and friends, and to relax and collect one’s thoughts away from the hustle and bustle of a busy world.

Just walking on the ice can be a unique experience, especially when no snow obscures the view of the water below. However, as with any outdoor activity, safety should be your top concern. When it comes to ice safety, you should steer clear of dark spots or places where the snow looks discolored.

The DNR said some other good rules to follow include:

- Never fish alone.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Always test the ice with a spud (described later).
- Take the appropriate emergency items, such as a lifejacket and ice picks.
- Take a cell phone with you in case you need to call for help. Dress in your warmest winter clothes; fill a thermos with hot coffee, chocolate or tea; and bring an empty bucket or old lawn chair to sit on.

To get started ice fishing, you’ll need the basics: something to make a hole in the ice, something to clear the hole and keep it open and ice free, and something to fish with, or equipment.

The two basic tools used to make holes in the ice are spuds and augers. A spud features a long-shank with a chisel-like end that’s used to chip a hole in the ice. A spud is a tool you use when the ice isn’t too thick. An auger is a corkscrew-like device



SUNSET PIKE – Tawas Bay is home to quality fishing, including on the ice for walleye, northern pike and perch. Pictured is John Morris of East Tawas holding a nice pike taken on a frozen Tawas Bay with a tip-up at sunset.

with a cutting blade that operates like a hand drill to make a hole in the ice. For extremely thick ice, power augers that run on batteries or small gasoline engines are available and make creating holes much easier.

Once the hole is created it needs to be cleared of ice chips or slush. A skimmer (or a slush scoop) is a small cup with holes in it (to let the water run out) on a long handle. It is inexpensive and perfectly suited for the job. A skimmer is used to clear the hole right after it’s made, as well as throughout the day if it’s particularly cold and if additional ice forms.

Note the size of the hole is important. The hole must be big enough that you can get a fish out, but not too large of a hole that it may endanger someone’s life. Anglers are recommended to keep their holes to a maximum of eight to 10 inches in diameter which would accommodate the size of most fish species. When abandoning fishing holes, anglers should mark them with a tree branch, sticks or chunks of ice to alert others of their

presence. Ice fishing equipment can be divided into three basic categories: hook-and-line, tip-ups and spears.

Most hook-and-line anglers use short, limber rods with reels or simple spring-tension spools to hold the line. Sometimes they may use something as simple as a couple of pegs on the rod handle used to wrap the line around. Limber rods allow the use of light line, which usually results in better fishing and absorbs more of the shock when fighting fish.

Hook-and-line anglers use live bait, artificial lures or sometimes both to catch many different species of fish. Anglers often use small lures, such as teardrops or flies, with live bait – such as wax worms (bee moth larva), spikes (fly larvae), wigglers (mayfly larvae) or minnows – attached to the hook for better action. The bait can be fished without movement or jigging can be used to attract the fish. Jigging is most successful if a lure of any kind is used.

Hook-and-line anglers have

the choice of using a bobber on the line, just as they would while fishing in the summer. Some may also fish with a tight line and use a spring bobber, which is a small strip of metal or wire that extends off the rod tip like an additional eye on the rod. Any motion alerts anglers to the bite, a bonus for small fish or light-biters. Generally, anglers begin by fishing near the bottom and work their way up in the water column until they locate the fish, then continue to fish at that same depth. Anglers can use bobbers to set their baits at a preferred depth or fish a tight line, either fishing without movement or jigging.

For bigger fish, anglers use heavier gear with larger lures or bigger hooks which allows them to use larger baits – minnows, smelt, salmon eggs or spawn bags. Anglers generally start at the bottom and gradually move up in the water column when jigging, while those fishing with live bait, spawn bags or salmon eggs generally fish right off the bottom.

Some anglers prefer to fish with tip-ups, which are devices set on the ice above the hole that dangle the bait (most often minnows) beneath them. Tip-ups, which feature small reels submerged in the water, get their

name from a flag that’s bent over and attached to the reel. When a fish takes the bait, the reel turns and releases not only line, but the flag as well. The flags’ “tip up” action alerts the angler to the fish taking out line. Tip-ups are usually spooled with heavy, braided line. Often an angler who is fishing with a rod will also set a tip-up in a different hole, giving them two ways to catch a fish and giving them an opportunity to fish for different species, or more than one fish, or at two different but close by locations.

Spearing is another form of ice fishing that is a more specialized but traditional sport. Anglers who spear cut large holes in the ice, usually with an ice saw or chain saw. They fish from tents or small shelters commonly called shanties that can be portable or more permanent (or at least as permanent as the ice is). The shanty blocks the light, allowing anglers to see down more clearly in the water in order to spear the fish. This has given rise to the term dark-house spearing. Spearing anglers generally dangle decoys or large live baits (such as suckers) in the water to attract their target fish. They utilize spears that typically

See Ice Fishing, Page 6A

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OUT ON THE ICE – Ice fishing is a popular winter activity for many anglers across Michigan. Pictured above are two ice fishing shanties set up on a frozen Tawas Bay.

LOCAL NEWS

Perchville Schedule

Saturday, January 31

9:30 a.m. Doors Open Coronation Breakfast, American Legion*

Thursday, February 5

5 p.m.-8 p.m. Royal Feast & Murder Mystery, The Gallery Venue by Branham’s

Friday, February 6

6 a.m. Fishing Tournament Begins*
Ends Sunday at noon
11 a.m.-3 p.m. History of Perchville, Iosco County Museum (US-23)
4 p.m.-8 p.m. Fish Dinner, The Collective, 821 Newman St.
5 p.m.- 9 p.m. Hospitality Tent, Harbor Park Parking Lot*
Live Entertainment by Rampage
5 p.m. Cornhole Tournament, Hospitality Tent*
6 p.m.-8 p.m. Perchville School Dance, (5th-8th Graders TAHS only)
Tawas High School Cafeteria

Saturday, February 7

10 a.m.-10p.m. Free Shuttle Service
10:30 a.m. Frozen Chosen Shooting, Iosco Sportmen’s Club
10:30 a.m. Perchville Parade, Tawas City Fire Department to Newman St.
10 a.m.-4 p.m. Perchville Bazaar, The Collective
Open-4 p.m. Lucky Buttons Participating Businesses*
11 a.m. “Chilly” Cook-Off, Downtown East Tawas (requires Coozie)
11 a.m. Polar Bear Swim Registration, East Tawas DNR Boat Launch
11 a.m.-3 p.m. History of Perchville, Iosco County Museum (US-23)
11 a.m. Pits Open for ATV Barrel Races, Dewey Durant Park
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Family Expo, East Tawas Community Center, 760 Newman St.
Noon-4 p.m. Closest to the Pin Contest, Bogey’s Indoor Golf (106 W. Westover St.)
Noon- 4 p.m. Warming Station, East Westover Street next to Sleep by the Bay
Noon-8 p.m. Hospitality Tent, Harbor Park Parking Lot*
Live Music by Smokie Links & AMF
1 p.m. ATV Barrel Races begin, Dewey Durant Park, 712 W. Franklin St.
1:30 p.m. Polar Bear Plunge, East Tawas DNR Boat Launch
3:30 p.m. Polar Bear Plunge, East Tawas DNR Boat Launch

Sunday, February 8

11-12 p.m. Fishing Tournament Weigh-In, Hospitality Tent*
12:15 p.m. Fishing Tournament Awards Hospitality Tent*
* Events that require a \$10 button for admission

ICE FISHING

Continued from Page 5A

have a substantial weight to them and have seven to nine tines on the end of a seven-foot handle.

The most common species hook-and-line ice fishermen are looking for are panfish: bluegill, sunfish, perch and crappie. Tip-ups are generally used for larger game fish, such as northern pike, walleye and various trout species. In Michigan, spear fishermen are allowed to target northern pike, muskellunge, lake sturgeon and many other species. There are many restrictions associated with spear fishing and anglers should read the annual Michigan Fishing Guide for more information.

A basic tip for all three ice fishing methods is that the most success is seen around dawn until mid-morning and again from late afternoon until sundown. This is especially true for panfish and walleye. Some species can be more aggressive at other times during the day, such as northern pike. It’s also important to understand that fish are more sluggish during the winter and move around less, especially during the middle of winter when ice thickness and snow cover is the heaviest. The more holes anglers cut and try, the better their chances are for locating aggressive fish.

One common piece of equipment nearly all types of anglers who ice fish utilize are electronic fish finders. These help anglers locate both aggressive and non-aggressive fish and make it easier to determine if your holes will be active and how present fish are reacting to your fishing methods.

It’s important to be prepared to face the elements when you go ice fishing by including these items: shelter and apparel.

Ice fishing can be a fairly cold activity, especially on those windy days when it doesn’t seem fit to be outdoors. On such days, a shanty is almost a requirement. Many portable shanties are available at your local sporting



goods store, although some anglers, especially in northern Michigan where the ice fishing season can last for many months, build elaborate but removable shanties on the ice. These may have insulated walls and many of the comforts of home. Propane heaters can keep them warm and help keep the fishing holes from freezing. But even a simple windbreak, made of plywood or particle board, can help. A sheet of plywood, cut in half and hinged, makes a simple windbreak. If skis or runners are added to one side, then it can easily be pulled across the ice.

It’s important to note that all shanties must be removed from the ice by a certain date, appropriate to the zone in which you are fishing. When removing a shanty, anglers must also remove any and all garbage affiliated with the structure, including plywood and propane tanks.




On less harsh days, many

anglers can be seen on the ice on portable folding stools or overturned five-gallon plastic buckets. Buckets often double as gear carriers. Anglers can fit their rods, lures and baits into a bucket and easily carry them out on the ice with them. In many cases, anglers build gear boxes, often on sleds or skis, which they can pull behind them. The creativity of Michigan anglers can regularly be seen on the ice as many have built sophisticated devices to transport their gear and to ensure their comfort.

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1950-Present

YEAR	QUEEN	KING
1950 - 1954		Mayor Hank Greenwood
1955 - 1958		Mayor Chet Parker
1959 - 1963		Mayor Percy Scott
1964	Cheryl Elwell	Ron Gamble
1965	Beverely Hall	Mayor Percy Scott
1966	Sandra Treichel	Robert Reynolds
1967	Esther MacIntyre	Howard Shelley
1968	Madeline Young	J.P. McCarthy
1969	Suzanne Mason	A. Barry McGuire
1970	Debbie Teague	Chuck Waters
1971	Barbara Hintz	Chuck Waters
1972	Linda Lansky (Walters)	Gene Riley
1973	Barb Lecroy	Charles Manos
1974	Julie Mahar	Van Patrick
1975	Debbie Bryer	Joe Clark
1976	Sue Stevenson	Herman Weaver
1977	Holly Look (Barry)	Marc Wesley
1978	Coleen Johnson	Rev. Alfred Saulsbury
1979	Lynette Rapp	John Carroll
1980	Bonnie Look (Bright)	Harris Barkman
1981	Susan Lambrecht	Roger Jackson
1982	Barbara Miller	Ivan O’Farrell
1983	Joan Blust	Ralph Western
1984	Meta DeWyse	Robert Elliott
1985	Carol Klenow	Gen. Earl O’Loughlin
1986	Charlotte Paner	Robert Bolen
1987	June Hudgins	John Austin
1988	Jan DeWyse	James DeWyse
1989	Dianne Reitler	Edward “Jim” Barry
1990	Laura Leslie	Ron Leslie
1991	Tara Western	William Western
1992	Mickie Philpot	William Philpot
1993	Patty Sterling	Bill Busch
1994	Glenna Confer	Pat Ruster
1995	Anna Busch	Ron Hall
1996	Mary Stanfill	Steve Klenow
1997	Mary Bean	John Herrick
1998	Clare Clark	Michael Welsch
1999	Sharon Miller	Gary Bailey
2000	JoAnn Lutz	Norman Klenow
2001	Lori McMurray	Craig McMurray
2002	Yvonne Babe	Art Gainer
2003	Brenda Chadwick	Dennis Frank
2004	Debra DeBois	Scott Bird
2005	Kalla Harris	Kevin Allen
2006	Ester Radgowski	Louie Zimmer
2007	Judy Quarters	Lyle Groff Jr.
2008	Ginger Penman	Don Penman
2009	Helen Pasakarnis	Keith Frank
2010	June Scott	Tom Coyle
2011	Christine McDaniels	Jim Kolts
2012	June Westheim	Jim Westheim
2013	Karen Curtis	Ralph Boudreau
2014	Kim Miller	Allen Miller
2015	Jolene Grusecki	Tim Haskin
2016	Judy Merluzzi	Mike Merluzzi
2017	Mindy Ferguson	Mark Ferguson
2018	Kristin Cherwinski	Dareck Cherwinski
2019	Annge Horning	Jerry Malone
2020	Tarcy Stevelinck	Paul Stevelinck
2022	Karen Stoll	Bill Stoll
2023	Julie Samuels	Jay Samuels
2024	Jackie Masich	Steve Masich
2025	Jennifer Bruning	Ray Bruning II
2026	Marcia Lesinski	Dave Lesinski



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LOCAL NEWS

Remembering when...

Silver Valley, the area’s winter playground, had great run

Editor’s note: Below is a reprint of a story published in 2016 in the *Iosco County News-Herald*.

EAST TAWAS – Before today’s Perchville USA in the Tawasites, an annual winter sports carnival was held at Silver Valley sports park, located nine miles northwest of East Tawas on Monument Road in Huron National Forest.

The following trip down memory lane and photos are used with permission from Neil Thornton, historian and author, from his book, “In My Day, *The Nifty Fifties*.”

A winter sports park was conceived by civic leaders in 1937. Nearly 20 businessmen met with Ralph Crowell, then supervisor of the Huron National Forest, and John “Swede” Franson, district ranger, and a large area along Silver Creek was selected to develop a family friendly winter sports facility.

Funds were scarce in late depression years and money was raised for the park’s development through popular subscription services, dances and other benefit events.

Volunteers from the community joined the winter sports committee, forest service staff and Civilian Conservation Corps from Camp Silver Creek to construct the first toboggan run. They carried snow to form the trough for the 1,700-foot run. Water carried from Silver Creek, was poured from sprinkling cans to freeze an icy surface on the run.

The first toboggans were ones formerly used at Carl Schmidt’s winter sport park in Greenbush. The Schmidt toboggans had not been used in years and were repaired at Silver Valley, according to Thornton.

In addition to the toboggan run, an ice rink, bordered by forest, ski runs for adults, a coasting slide and small rink



Courtesy photo provided by Neil Thornton
SILVER VALLEY QUEEN – Women were chosen each year to reign over winter sports at Silver Valley. WJR sports director Van Patrick crowns Ruth Nash as Silver Valley Queen in 1952.

for children were also built. A tin pan slide, later called Belly Flopper Hill, was one of the most popular coasting runs, Thornton stated.

Silver Valley opened to the public in January 1938.

Due to a successful first season, which attracted between 1,500 and 2,000 visitors, more funds were raised and, in the fall of 1938, timber was cut in the national forest to provide lumber to build two wooden troughs for toboggan slides, construction of a warming shed, ice rink improvements, more ski runs and to install a pump and water system to ice the toboggan slides.

Its popularity increased with each year until World War II when, from 1942-1946, park activities ceased, except for local skiing.

During that time, toboggan

runs deteriorated and bridges over Silver Creek required rehabilitation. The committee raised \$3,000 to reinvigorate the facility and hired returned veterans to perform the job. An estimated 30,000 visitors flocked to Silver Valley during its first post-war season.

According to a Consumers Energy brochure from the late 1950s, the park contained four slopes and trails and two tows, with a ski shop, instruction, rentals and skating. It also had a two-course, 3,100-foot toboggan slide with toboggan tow.

The beginning of Silver Valley’s demise came in 1965 after two years of financial losses following carnival weekends which experienced poor weather, plus the inability for the committee to raise local funds to meet new fed-

eral regulations to improve facilities and operations. Thornton stated that the facility suffered a slow death for five years. A Jan. 27, 1966 story in the *Oscoda Press* told that two ski tows would be open the remainder of the season on Saturday and Sunday.

With the renewed interest

of cross country skiing in the 1980s, groomed trails were extended into Silver Valley. Today, it is known as Corsair Ski Trail System where visitors can still enjoy beautiful winter scenery found in northeastern Michigan, framed by Norway, white and jack pines.



Courtesy photo provided by Neil Thornton
SITTING PRETTY – Joyce Michaud, 1959 Silver Valley Queen, is shown with members of her court after a fast toboggan ride.

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