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BY DAVID L. BARBER

SPECIAL TO SHORELINE MEDIA

PHOTOS BY JEANNE BARBER

PENTWATER – Positioned on a shelf just over his right shoulder is a small white sign with black lettering. Not much bigger than a business card – it's a calling card, really – the sign unveils the mind-set and heartfelt sentiment Pentwater Chief of Police Laude Hartrum has for his peaceful paradise that sleeps on the shores of Lake Michigan.

That little sign reads, quite simply: Pentwater: Living the Dream.

And so he is - Living the Dream.

Now 63, Hartrum has been in law enforcement all his life, having served 23 years with the Mason County Sheriff Department and for a short time in Isabella County, before becoming the lead police

officer in Pentwater 15 years ago.

Also a certified diver who's a member of the Oceana County Sheriff Department Dive Team, Hartrum still enjoys diving the inland waters of the area and of Lake Michigan, when called on to do so. His 23-foot-6 boat the Defiant – built by his dad back in the 1960s – is his diving platform.

"The keel was laid down in 1967," Hartrum said. "My dad built that boat and we redesigned it – we put the centerpiece in."

With all the boat traffic that moves into and out of Pentwater Lake from Lake Michigan, Hartrum and other water law enforcement can be kept busy during the summer months.

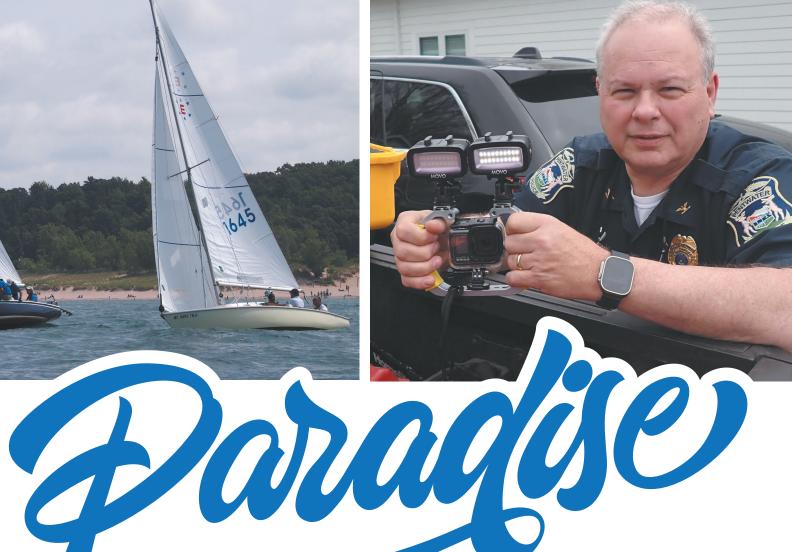
"The sheriff's office has a marine patrol and they, ultimately, have the primary job of (patrolling our waters)," he said. "Pentwater is the only lake in Oceana

County that has access to Lake Michigan, so because of that we'll end up with one of the DNR boats (Department of Natural Resources) here, too.

"And through an arrangement I have with the village I'll run my boat, (when needed). The sheriff's office is usually on every day except Monday and Tuesday, so on those days if something comes up, I'll usually run my boat and do tows and things like that. I always like to talk about boats – I love boats."

Hartrum said despite the heavy boating traffic between Pentwater Lake and Lake Michigan during the peak months, there are few accidents involving marine craft.

"Our boating accidents are usually more at a dock – they'll bang into a dock – or they'll bang into another boat," he said. "We don't usually have too many boat-on-boat accidents out on the water.



"The Coast Guard will also come in, swing through the lake and stop off and say 'hi, good afternoon.' But when they're running their larger boat they can't get into our harbor because of its shallow draft, but usually they don't get into the lake itself so they'll operate off shore where it can get pretty crazy.

"We have your peak times in the morning, and then sometime around 1 p.m. when the charter boats are swapping out when some are going out and others are coming back in," Hartrum said. "Pentwater Lake is a pretty heavily used lake. We have had drownings, but those have been in Lake Michigan. We've had a couple just outside of the channel, but those were back a ways."

Over the years Hartrum has dived into the sunken wrecks of a number of ships, including the Minch, the Novadoc, the Comanche tugboat, and others." The 380-foot long SS Anna C. Minch was a cargo carrier which broke in two and sank in Lake Michigan between Little Point sable and Pentwater, with a complete loss of its crew, during the famed Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940.

The SS Novadoc was another freighter lost during that storm, though all its crew except two were rescued.

The Comanche was a tugboat that sank in just under 100 feet of water about five miles off Pentwater 40 years ago, in 1985. It is sitting upright and is considered a scuba diver's prized dive site.

"There's not much left of those," he said. "Diving is inherently kind of dangerous, but when you're on a team and you're doing things, that's a lot of fun practicing how to do things. We've gone down on sunken boats. We went down on a plane that crashed. Back in the day,

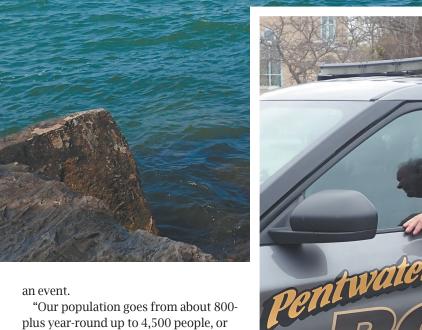
we would dive for a lot of property that had been ditched – old VCRs, those sort of things. And sometimes we will go down to find the body of someone who has drowned."

There are, of course, the non-aquatic areas of paradise that need to be policed, too. A quaint, quiet community with no traffic lights and no jail cells, downtown Pentwater and its immediate surrounding area becomes an amazing maze of pedestrian traffic, golf cart traffic and vehicular traffic, during its peak summer season.

"Vehicular traffic downtown (during the summer) is pretty strong from about 10 a.m. until about 9 p.m., and it can get solid, all looking for limited parking spots," he said. "Our big events are the Art Fair, the Hot Rod Shows, Fourth of July, Homecoming and more. Virtually every weekend of the summer we have



PENTWATER POLICE CHIEF LAUDE HARTRUM IS 'LIVING THE DREAM'



an event.

"Our population goes from about 800plus year-round up to 4,500 people, or more, beginning about Memorial Day. Some weekends we might have 10,000 people in town - those who live here, the campers, the people passing through, the shoppers, we get a lot."

And it's been that way for years many, many years.

"You know, folks pretty much come to Pentwater because their families had been coming here for generations - it's very generational, passed down from great grandma, to grandma and to current families," Hartrum said. "They don't come here looking for trouble, they come here just to have their fun and do their thing and we're grateful for that - it's great. They know each other - they know all the good things - it's like a big family: everybody knows all the good stuff and

everybody knows all the bad stuff.

To police, the waters and roads of Pentwater - of paradise - Hartrum said his department "... partners with the sheriff's department, all the time."

"I have three full-time officers - me and two other guys - and I have four part-time officers," he said. "We try to have one or two people on from 8 a.m. into the wee hours. And then I have what we call Public Service Officers, which are 18- and 19-year-old guys who come in and help with parking, golf cart patrol. We have a golf cart convenience corridor that's approved by MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) where you can go virtually anywhere in Pentwater that does not have a speed limit of 35 miles per hour, or higher. (Those carts) have to be registered with us and they

have to meet certain criteria. We have our own cart.

"We send (our PSOs) who are with us in the summertime to a two-day training where they learn how to use our radios, how to write tickets and that kind of stuff. They also spend time with our historical society. That training is designed so if they see somebody on the street, they (can ask them), 'Hi, how are you doing, are you having a good time? Can I help you with anything?' If folks have questions, we want to answer them."

As far as investigating crimes, Hartrum said "... we'll do shoplifting, we'll do neighbor disputes, larcenies, assaults - but no, we're not doing assaults every week but we do have 'em - because folks come here to have a good time, so we don't usually have a lot of issues."

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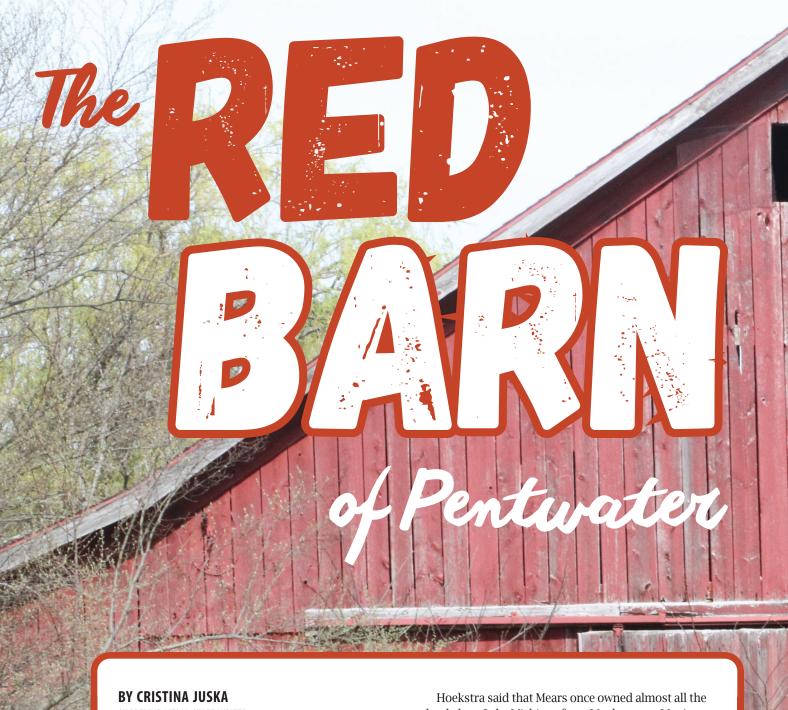


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SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

While many sources claim the famous Red Barn of Pentwater was constructed in 1862, according to records kept by the Pentwater Historical Museum it was actually built a few years earlier than that.

A synopsis of the barn's history provided by the museum's Daniel Hoekstra states: "The River House Farm Barn was constructed in 1859 by pioneer West Michigan businessman Charles Mears, and is probably the oldest standing structure in the area."

For perspective, during this era in Pentwater's history, mail had just begun coming to the area twice a week. You could take a ferry across Pentwater Lake to Frenchtown for five cents a person. Later, in 1867, Pentwater was officially incorporated as a village.

Hoekstra said that Mears once owned almost all the land along Lake Michigan from Muskegon to Manistee, and Pentwater was the site of one of his early logging operations in 1855. The site was used as a lumber camp before a house and barn were built; the house burned down in 1957.

Mears decided to establish a "model farm" on the site and planted the county's first peach trees there. He then added apple, plum and pear trees, shipping the fruit to Chicago to sell. Mears also raised prized cattle and horses on the farm.

When Mears died in 1895, the River House Farm was passed on to his daughter, Carrie Mears, who spent her summers in Pentwater until her death in 1957. Carrie bequeathed the land to the state of Michigan in her will. When they acquired the property, the State Parks Division used prison labor to reshingle the roof, paint the





outside of the barn, and reinforce the foundation.

Today, time and decay have begun to take their toll on the structure, which was last repaired in 1999. A group of concerned citizens has been meeting recently and started the Red Barn of Pentwater Facebook group. Their goal is to save the barn by finding an entity to take over its care.

Pete Kailing, wildlife biologist and area manager of three DNR state game areas, including the one the barn sits upon, said that the land is used for hunting and wildlife propagation. The DNR has no use for the building and has no plans to restore it themselves.

"We can't sell the land because it was purchased in part with Pittman-Robertson dollars," Kailing said. However, he offered two possible "pathways" forward.

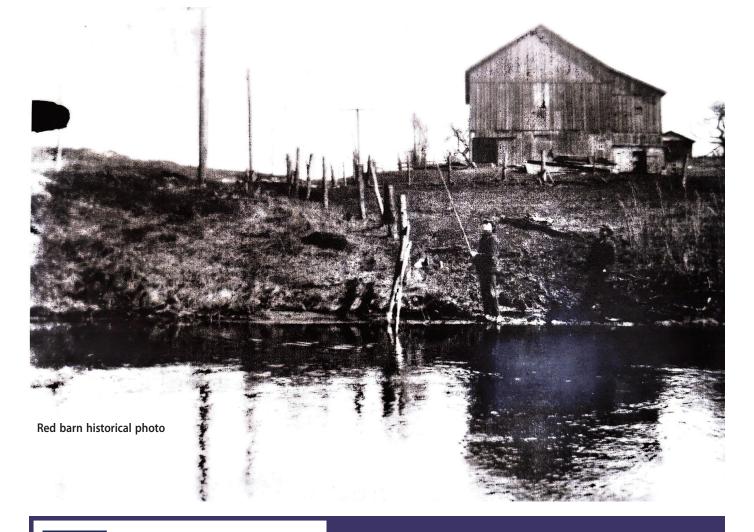
"One, they can move the barn to another location. Two, they can trade the barn and the acreage it sits on for another parcel of land within our acquisition boundary," Kailing said.

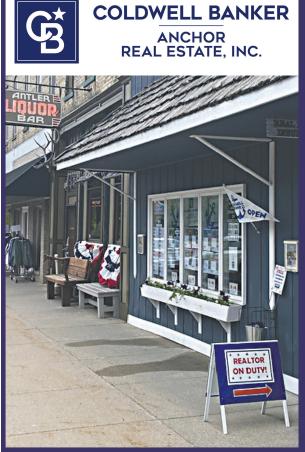
Keith Edwards, Zoning Administrator for Pentwater Township, dispelled rumors that they would be taking over the barn. "The barn itself is in Weare Township; we are working to assist Weare." Lynne Cavazos, Pentwater Township Supervisor, stated, "The project is in its very early stages at this point."

Residents and visitors alike are hopeful the barn will continue to stand proudly at the gateway to Pentwater.

As Hoekstra said, "Over the years, as they approach the village, tourists and residents have come to recognize the barn as a guidepost, apprising them that they have arrived; they are home. It is a tangible symbol of the man who built so much of Pentwater and the surrounding area...It is an important landmark dear to the hearts of those who love this village."







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CREATING at Channe



MEMORIES Laue June

BY SHANNA AVERY

SHORLINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

Visitors who vacation in Pentwater don't have to go any further than the Channel Lane Inn to experience a friendly, joyful atmosphere and cozy and charming accommodations for a memorable stay.

After all, making memories for guests is what it is all about, for Channel Lane Inn Owner Lisa Wells, who shares with readers the fulfilling experience of running an Inn at Pentwater.

"I get visitors from all over - all over the world, even - and it seems like the Pentwater charm affects people right away. They come, they sleep good, and they just love being in this location where they can walk to town, walk to the beach, and they all comment on how friendly the people are here," Wells said.

Pentwater boasts being a quaint, beautiful beach town with a small-town friendly atmosphere that people enjoy being part of, and Channel Lane Inn taps into that special quality.

"Our community is very friendly and welcoming and they all feel that when they get here, so a lot of my first-time guests become annual guests or repeats. Some have been coming for generations, and they love the memories they make in this town," Wells said. "It has a good vibe, it has a good feeling, and I feel all the positive energy my guests bring with them

just creates that."

Wells, who grew up in Shelby, went off to college and lived in Kalamazoo where she did social work when the opportunity to buy the motel presented itself.

"I bought the Motel in 2008," Wells said. "So to come back to the area and live so close to Lake Michigan which I just love so much - it was a great opportunity. And my kids went to Pentwater Schools and graduated from Pentwater Schools, and it's just been such a nice place to return to."

The Channel Lake Inn has six kitchenette rooms, a one-bedroom cottage and a two-bedroom suite, all furnished and beautifully decorated.

"I really look at the motel as being a landmark for Pentwater. It's been here since the '50s. It was originally a house with the six kitchenettes off the back, those were always here, and the garage. So when it was built, it was Channel Lane Apartments Motel and maybe in the 60s they converted the garage into a cottage, but some of my long-time guests still refer to it as the garage. There's one man in town who as a youngster, his family was the first ones who stayed out there, and it still had the garage door opener in the room," Wells said, explaining some of the history.

"The couple I bought the motel from, in 1995 they built a living space up above, and when they started building up above the lower unit, the ranch house became a rental. That's the most popular rental. It's a two bedroom and two bathroom unit," she said.





The motel used to be seasonal, but since Wells began operating it, she has been able to accommodate guests all year round.

"I actually do get some guests in the wintertime. I get some people who want to cross country ski or just like the beach walks. Craftsmen who are working on cottages will come and stay for the wintertime and some fishermen will come in the winter," she said. "It's a nice time of year, and not too busy. It's when I'm able to get maintenance and upgrades done. It is def-

initely slower in the winter, but there's a need for it to be open, especially if there's an event in town,or during the holidays family overflow will stay here when they get together with their local families for Thanksgiving or Christmas or if there's a funeral or a wedding. It's nice to be here for people," Wells said.

Of course, Wells said she couldn't run everything so smoothly without the great help from her crew with house cleaning and maintenance work.

But the reward in itself is watching gen-

erations of families make memories.

"I think what strikes me the most is the generations that come back every year. So for me, it's such an opportunity to share in their vacation, watch their children grow, get married, have kids, and the generational piece is very nice to be a part of," she said. "To make their memories here is so important, because you just cannot pay enough for those, so that's the biggest thing that I see with people. Sometimes I'll have older guests who come who haven't been to Pentwater since they were

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"I think what strikes me the most is the generations that come back every year"

Lisa Wells

little, so for them to be able to again revisit those memories is really important."

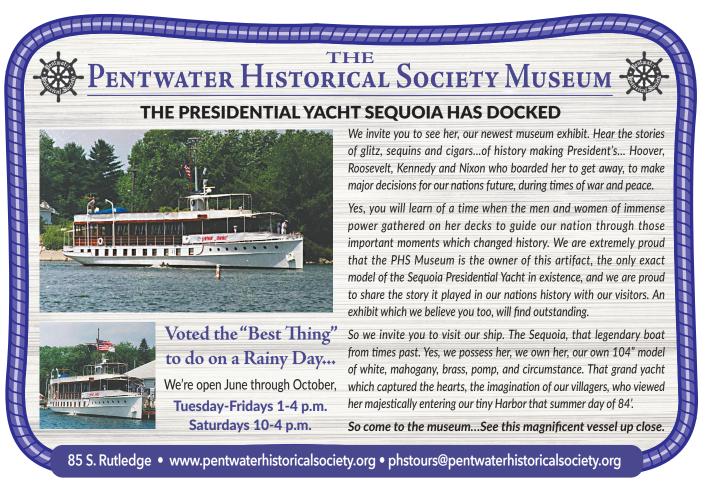
Along with providing wonderful accommodations for folks, Wells enjoys being a business owner in Pentwater.

"As a business owner, it is really a bless-

ing to be a part of a community like this. In a small town there are so many hats to wear, and so I work at the school in their food service and I serve on the Village Zoning Board of Appeals. I've worked with a township office. I'm in the junior

Women's Club. There's always extra things to do here and participate in to promote our village. You get invested in it for sure," Wells said.

When people travel to Pentwater, they can be sure to have a great and memorable experience at Channel Lake Inn, where Wells and her team will greet them with a smile and all the friendliness a small beach town offers.





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SUMMER FUN

IN PENTWATER

PHOTO ESSAY BY JEANNE BARBER



GRAVEYARD OF SHIPS

The twenty-mile span of Lake Michigan between Little Point Sable, at Silver Lake, and Big Point Sable, north of Ludington, has earned a reputation as the "Graveyard of Ships." Beginning with the loss of the Neptune in 1848 through the Armistice (now Veterans') Day Storm of 1940, nearly seventy vessels have gone down in these treacherous waters. Gales and November snow storms have made navigation of this part of the lake a sailor's nightmare. Significant among the losses near Pentwater Harbor were the schooner Wright in 1854, the Minnie Corlett and the Souvenior in 1875, the Lamont in 1879 and the tug Two Brothers in 1912. The freighters William B. Davock. Anna C. Minch and Novadoc were all lost on November 11, 1940.











Friends of Pentwater Hart Trail to Host Tacos and 5 K Trek for Trail on Saturday, June 28 in Pentwater





On Saturday, June 28, 2025 the non-profit organization Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail will hold its annual fun-filled Taco luncheon and guided 5k ride/run/walk through Pentwater known as Tacos & Trek for the Trail.

This will be the seventh such fundraiser for the Trail to be held on Pentwater's Village Green, with the 5k ride/walk/run beginning at 11:30 a.m. Reg-











istration for the event may be completed online at Pentwaterharttrail.com or at 11 a.m. the day of the event.

A donation of \$35 per person includes participation in the 5k ride/walk/run, two tacos and a t-shirt (with pre-registration link online at: Pentwaterharttrail.com) or a two-taco lunch is

available for a \$10 donation

The groups of bikers, runners and walkers, will depart from Second Street on the North side of the Village Green, following their group's leader through the Village.

All proceeds from the event go toward future maintenance of the Pentwater

Hart Trail (PHT). The PHT begins at Carroll Street at Sixth Street in Pentwater on the paved shoulders, continues along Monroe Road to Longbridge Road, then along Longbridge Road to Wayne Road. At that location, the proposed 10-foot wide trail will be constructed in right-ofway along Wayne Road to Harrison, Har-







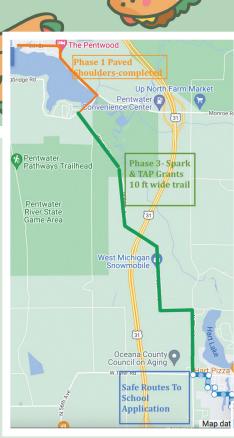


rison east to 72nd Avenue and 72nd to Tyler, where the Safe Route to School Section begins and then connects with the Hart-Montague Rail Trail on Water Street.

The effort to create a trail from Pentwater to Hart, to connect with the rail trail, began in 2015. In 2020, the committee formally became a 501C3 nonprofit organization called the "Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail." Of the total cost, \$5.2 million is still needed for construction of the trail. The FPHT is working to raise most of this goal through state and federal grants, but private donations are also critical to the trail's

completion. In 2018, an allocation of \$1.4 million for trail construction was made by former Michigan Senator Goeff Hansen. Volunteer members of the FPHT currently work on the creation of the trail and in the future, will work to maintain the trail to the safety standards of the appropriate government agencies. Funds raised in excess of the goal shall be placed in a reserve fund and shall be used solely for trail maintenance.

Anyone interested donating to the trail and/or becoming a "Friend of the Pentwater Hart Trail" may find more information at Pentwaterharttrail.com









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Teachers telling stories through music as





STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTOS

BY STEVE BEGNOCHE

SPECIAL TO SHORELINE MEDIA

PENTWATER - Rick Magrath and Annie Gallie have played music together for a dozen years as the Alt-Folk duo Canopy Space. They connected at Pentwater Public Schools— "the happiest place on earth" according to Gallie - where both taught and Gallie continues to teach.

With four recordings under their belt and a fifth set to be released later this year, Canopy Space performs regularly – especially during summers when school is out – in communities from Ludington to Muskegon. The duo has a busy schedule for summer 2025.

Canopy Space's performances are a mix of original music and cover songs from musicians such as the Indigo Girls and The Cranberries to Tom Petty and the Beatles. They choose covers which can surprise and engage an audience.

A Pentwater resident, McGrath crafts the sets so the songs flow, with suggestions of what to cull from Gallie, a rural Scottville resident. They understand people come out to hear music they are familiar with and like so they mix original and cover music about 50-50 at gigs.

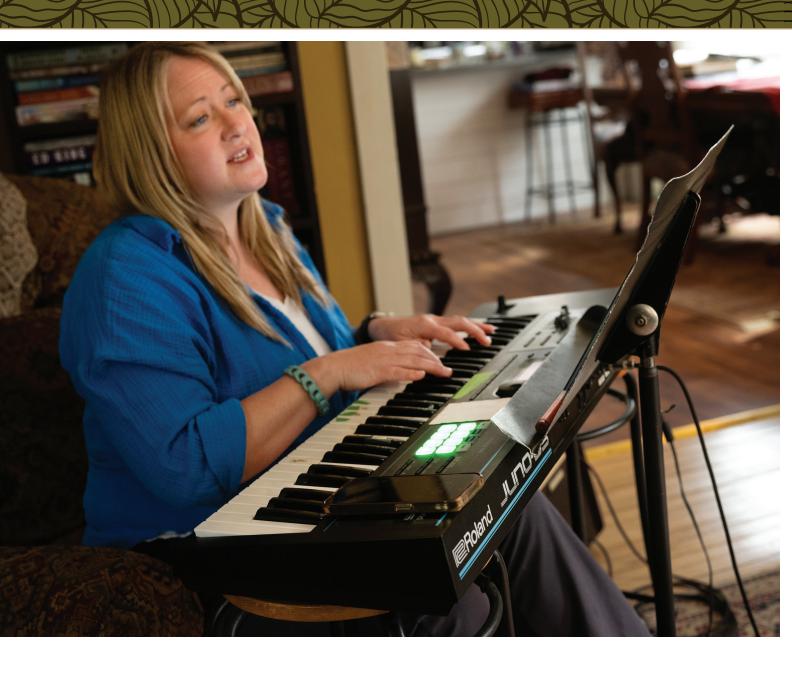
"It's so cool to do original music," Gallie said. "It's fun when you play out and you see people focusing on what you are saying, and they come up and talk to you

about (an original) song... Not a lot of bands get away with it."

Which original songs prompt reaction or deeply touches someone in the audience can surprise them.

Magrath retired from teaching two years ago after 35 years in the classroom. Gallie continues teaching at Pentwater, a school where everyone knows everyone while growing together through the years. She said Pentwater school provides a caring environment and "the best" education.

Beginning in 2003 when his son Nathan graduated from Pentwater, Magrath wrote and performed an original song for each graduating class performing it at graduation, a tradition Canopy Space



carried on for 20 years but can't this year as Magrath will be out of town.

Because Pentwater teachers work with the same students for years and students move together through the school, Gallie and Magrath said students and staff get to know one another well and to care about each other. Each graduation song tried to capture what was unique about that year's graduating class.

A student connection shows in another visible manner. Canopy Space uses student art for the covers of their albums: Riley Barnett for "Cruel Art" (2015), Meagan Grondsma for "Color My Own World" (2016), Hannah Gebhart for "Reach" (2020), a photo of Magrath's for "Swimming" 2023, and current Pentwater senior Belle Powers for "Time and Time and Time and Time" to be released perhaps in autumn. "It's fun to include them," Magrath said, describing Powers as very creative "and easily our Number One fan."

The art classroom – which serves pre-K through 12th grade students – is across

the hall from Gallie's room allowing another close connection and relationship for students of all ages and staff. In fact, Gallie said, the art teacher at times will call over to her class for a high school boy to walk a young elementary boy to the restroom.

Magrath and Gallie began playing music together as a way to unwind after the school day ended. They'd play music for 30-45 minutes in what they dubbed "The Long Commute" to refocus and release stress before heading home to spouses



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTOS

and life outside of school. Eventually, they began writing songs.

"She started throwing lyrics at me," McGrath said.

"I throw nonsense at him and he makes it beautiful," Gallie replied.

They developed a method to their writing. Gallie provides most of the lyrics by placing phrases, poetry and thoughts on what is now a large Google document Magrath looks through. "I can mine it. I pull it out ... and I find melodies to make it work, he said. "She's very imagey and

I'm more of a story person. The images are really cool."

"The writing is what is really important to us," he continues. "To be able to sit and write songs, and say something, that gives us a lot of satisfaction ... You don't want to repeat yourself. You want to say something fresh, putting it in a new format I don't want to sound like anybody else. I want us to be us."

"We pushed ourselves to write about the human experience as a whole, not just love songs, but to also write about nature, current events, even anxiety," Gallie said.

"And an average day," Magrath adds.
"Songs about gratefulness, songs about our band ...songs that people can relate to, but that are fresh," Gallie said.

Their music is available on music streaming services, on compact discs at performances, and a handful of songs are available for listening on their website, https://canopyspaceband.com/.

While Magrath is a fan of duets and acoustic music, Gallie listens to elec-





STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTOS

tronic music and hip-hop which influences her approach even though Canopy Space is neither an electronic nor a hip-hop band.

One recent change is the addition of an electric keyboard Gallie plays when not playing guitar.

Gallie has played music since a young girl growing up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She started on violin at age 5. As a teen her father, who also is a performing musician, taught her guitar. During high school, she worked for a violin master, learning to repair violin family instruments, managing and running the operation during a summer the owner spent playing bagpipes on Mackinac Island. Part of her duties included playing every string instrument in the store each week.

A graduate of Western Michigan University with a master's degree, Annie found her way to Pentwater after she met Jim Gallie, Jr., now manager of Ludington State Park. Back then, he took a job at Charles Mears State Park and she, too, headed to Pentwater landing a teaching job. In 2013, she made a New Year's resolution to learn a cover song each month. Having heard about Magrath's music, one day she talked to him about it

"He asked if I could play guitar, I said, yes. He asked if I could sing, I said yes. He asked if I could do both at the same time, I said, yes."

So, they gave it a try leading to "the long commute" after-

school sessions, performing out within a year, and Canopy Space today.

Raised in Massachusetts, Magrath bought a guitar while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard which he joined at age 18. Instead of watching movies while off duty as many did, Magrath would play guitar on the helicopter pads and bows of Coast Guard boats. He learned from other crewmates, too, in what he called the North Atlantic Blues Band. After leaving the Coast Guard, Magrath did landscape work. He and his wife, Deb Gritter-Magrath, tired of the materialism they saw living in the East,







wanted a change. In 1988, a teaching job in Pentwater opened. Coming down Monroe Road and seeing the red Charles Mears barn and the beach in Pentwater, he said they felt they were at home – and they made it so.

Magrath also has solo albums of songs he's written on his own: "Disconnected," with local multi-instrumentalist Andy Henley, and recently "Simple Gifts: Songs from New Hope," a reworking of new melodies for old hymns produced by Dick Bourgault.

Henley and Bourgault, along with Dan Nugent, also recorded Canopy Space albums. Nugent helped with the first album made in two chilly days in an unheated local storefront window at The Spare Room in Pentwater and again on "Swimming." Bourgault will record Canopy Space's new album. Each has a unique approach and sound, Magrath and Gallie said.

The inspiration for the title track "Swimming" arose from the memory of Magrath and crewmates being allowed to jump off their Coast Guard vessel in the calm waters of the equatorial doldrums.



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"Knowing there was two miles of water beneath us, that was pretty freaky," he said.

Teaching English is a large part of both of their resumes. At Pentwater, each also taught other subjects – Magrath, history and current events among others as well as coaching baseball and basketball, and Gallie, Spanish and Integrated Studies as well as coaching cheerleading.

They're different geographical backgrounds leads to ongoing kidding. Gallie jests about Magrath's East Coast dialect. Magrath likewise makes light of Gallies' Yooper use of "eh" to end sentences.

Gallie tells of Magrath learning she had made some mini-grammar lessons. When he asked her about them with his East Coast way of drawing out the "a" vowel sound, almost losing the "r" sound, she thought he was asking about her "minigramma." "I about fell on the floor," she said – especially since she had a grandmother who was physically very small.

Two years into retirement, Magrath said he misses the kids, but not correcting essays. He fondly recalls the reading circle, and the class Gallie and he created in which students read a history book, research a world issue such as the Palestine-Israel conflict and create a project to present their solutions to the issue to a panel of members of the public who voted one as the best.

"They think they can do it, and it's a beautiful thing," Magrath said.

"You can challenge them, tell them this is going to be hard," Gallie said of teach-

ing in Pentwater.

The students will rise to expectations, she said, knowing they are going to be safe as they attempt to reach expectations.

"(Teaching) was absolutely awesome," he said. "You never get bored. As busy as it is, I loved it. You feel like you're contributing so much to kids, to life. It's a great place to do it. This is an incredibly supportive community," Magrath said.

"The school, it's the happiest place on earth. It's a family," Gallie said.

Music makes for its own family, as well. Gallie and Magrath hope people listen, like and follow Canopy Space as they gig about the area this summer, one song at a time.







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