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**CHARLES MEARS
STATE PARK
SUPERVISOR
HECTOR
'MANNY'
VALDEZ**

**PENTWATER'S
ANNUAL
HOMECOMING
CELEBRATION**

PAGE 24



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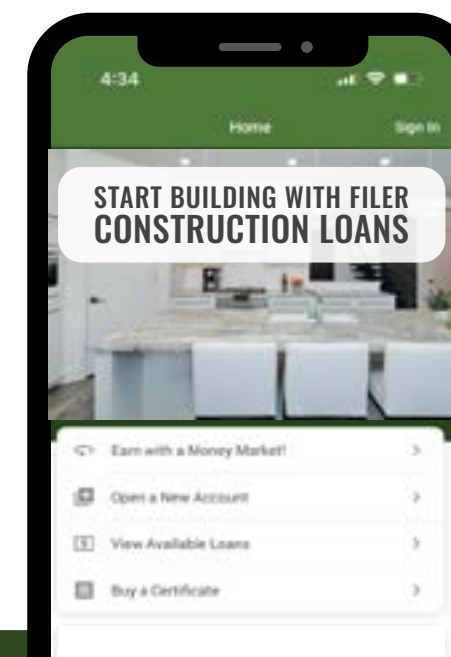
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Making the loop:

Pentwater couple completes 'trip of a lifetime'



BY SHANNA AVERY
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

In what Chuck DeVries and Linda Lane describe as a “trip of a lifetime” on their trowler, ‘Tempus,’ the Pentwater couple not only experienced nearly a year of beautiful sunsets and sunrises over the water and charming waterfront towns full of rich history, but also a renewed sense of the goodness of humanity during their successful feat in completing America’s Great Loop.

Through the America’s Great Loop Cruisers’ Association, those who take up the challenge get to circumnavigate through the eastern part of the U.S. and Canada by cruising up the Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway and through the New York state canal system into the Great Lakes. From there they continue down the inland river system, across the Gulf

of Mexico and around the southern tip of Florida.

In fact, Chuck and Linda (and Magic - the seafaring dog) began and finished their exciting adventure in Daytona. They set out on April 26, 2024, and are still pumped up with all thrills from the trip from when it concluded on April 15 of this year.

During their travels, Chuck and Linda gained between 40 to 50 miles a day.

“There were so many fun things about it. It was the greatest year of our life. It was so much fun and we met so many cool people,” Linda said.

She described how the boat came to be named Tempus, which is Latin for “time.”

“We both had life threatening illnesses and we both just kind of looked at each other and said ‘You know, we’re both lucky to be here. All you have in this life is time, so let’s go do something really fun.’ So we did the whole trip 11 days short of a year. And it was the most fun year of our

life,” she said.

“It was a constant learning adventure every single day,” Chuck added, as he described going across Canada and then back into the Great Lakes. He said the Trent Severn Canal was especially stunning, with most of the locks dating back more than 100 years.

Linda described all the really quaint little towns along the canal, and that there were places along the canal where boaters can dock along the wall.

“Canadians are known for being so friendly, and it’s true. It was just great, so fun and interesting,” Linda said.

The journey then brought them down through the Great Lake System which they came through the Straits of Mackinaw.

“We spent a couple days on Mackinaw Island,” Chuck said. “Pulling your own boat into Mackinaw instead of taking Starline over, is really cool. We went all the way down the west coast of Michigan

and stopped in Pentwater for two and a half months. In late September we went through downtown Chicago and then a whole series of connections through there.”

It was in this area they came into a system with big locks, commercial traffic, tug boats and barges, with some tugs large enough to carry 18 semi trucks. Chuck was amazed by the amount of commerce on the inland rivers. From the Illinois River they met the Mississippi. Traveling on the Mississippi they accessed the Ohio River to the Cumberland through Kentucky.

“We did a side trip to Nashville. Nashville is not on the way. I had no idea Nashville was such a crazy town,” Chuck said.

Linda described seeing cities such as Charleston.

“Any city you see from the water, it’s so different to go into a big city that you’ve seen from land, and totally different when you come in from water. It’s like totally seeing it through different eyes. It is so interesting,” she said.

Also on their trip south on inland waters, they made another side trip to Muscle Shoals.

“If you’re a music fan at all, Muscle Shoals has several studios where everybody from Aretha to the Rolling Stones cut albums,” Chuck said, explaining he could feel the vibes from all the history there. “We discovered just down the road from the studio was Helen Keller’s birthplace, which was cool.”

In this area they also got to see one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s last creations and discovered a place called Rattle Snake Saloon, a restaurant in a cave. And then there was a “coon dog cemetery” where only coon dogs were allowed to be buried.

Linda and Chuck
take a selfie with the Chicago skyline in the background



Peterborough locks



Chuck and Linda experienced a beautiful sunset heading to the Exumas



Erie canal

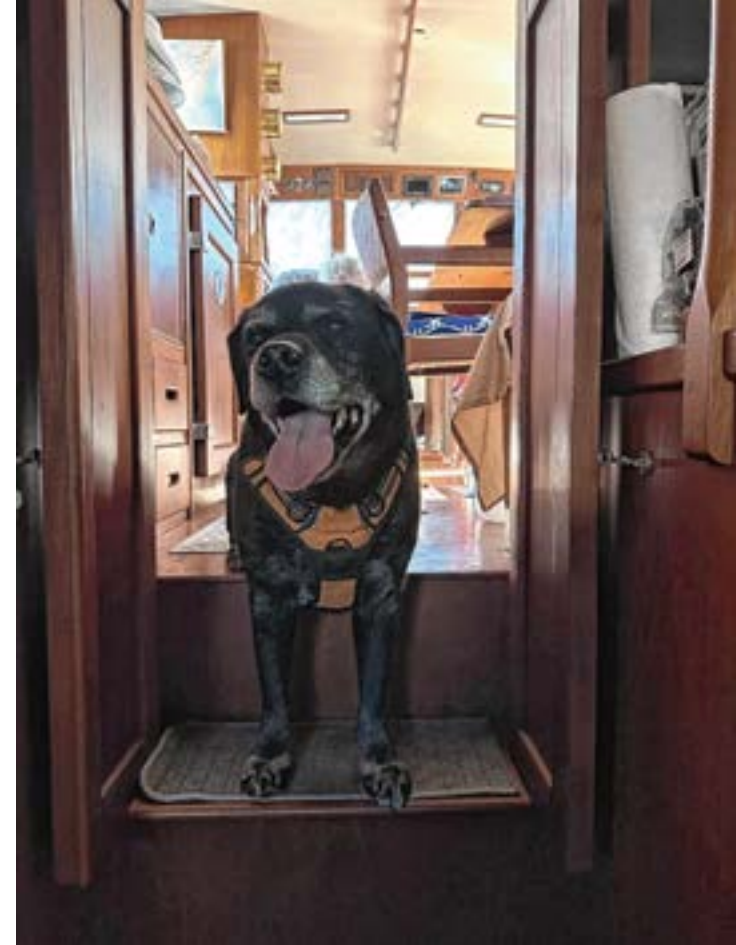


Michigan City lighthouse

They also felt an emotional tug while viewing Tom's Wall, a tribute to Tom's grandmother, a misplaced Native American who had to walk the trail or tears. She got to Oklahoma and said, "The rivers here don't sing," and took the two year journey back home. The stones on the wall represent every step she took.

"It has a spiritual vibe, it is really cool," said Linda. "That was one of the best parts of the trip."

Chuck and Linda hit the sea in Mobile, Alabama, where they picked up a buddy boat with people they met back in Canada.



Magic smiles, enjoying life on the rivers and seas



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The Museum volunteers have worked hard this past year acquiring grant money to have a professional assist us in compiling an outstanding historical display of those who have come to our village over the years called, "Journeys to Pentwater." a compilation of historical stories ... retold combining, written word, voice and photography and then viewed using the latest addition to our museum ... **Touch Screen Technology.**

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Stunning sunset views at Pelican Bay

“A lot of people end up getting buddy boats where you bump into them and you see a lot of similar people along the routes,” Linda said.

Chuck referred to it as “Loop frogging.”

Linda said there were many serendipitous moments, such as running into people from Pentwater in the Bahamas.

“You make lifelong friends doing this. A few friends we will be in touch with now forever,” she said.

Chuck described seeing some of the damage-stricken areas from hurricanes in the Florida area.

“You can’t imagine all the beached boats from the hurricanes going through. It’s so sad. It’s heartbreaking. There was a boat shoved up on land,” Linda said.

Chuck said days on the water began with brewing coffee and looking at the weather forecast, which could be pivotal for knowing when to stay docked or to chase down some more miles.

“Once you get in open water crossing the Bahamas, the weather becomes very very critical. The boat will take it, but you don’t want to,” he said. “We discovered that on the way back from the Bahamas. We took off, nice smooth seas. We were cruising, and once we got across the gulf

stream the rowdier it got, and by that time we discovered that a 42 foot boat can surf. We had some big waves.”

Chuck and Linda traveled through these turbulent waters for eight hours.

“You’re so anxious to get into port,” Linda said. “The day we crossed over, a small fishing boat flipped with nine people. They saved four, and five ended up drowned. They were illegal immigrants crossing over from Haiti and they got caught in that weather and didn’t make it.”

Despite some of the challenges of bad weather and seeing the aftermath of hurricanes, or sometimes stopping for boat repairs, one of the great highlights was experiencing people’s better nature.

“People were genuinely helpful,” Linda said. “In today’s climate, it’s not typically what you see, which was really uplifting to me, because people were so kind and willing to share. They will drop what they’re doing to come and help a boater in distress, and there were a couple of times we helped people and they helped us. It was really inspiring.”

Chuck said politics rarely even came up, like an unstated rule.

“It was an expensive trip to do, but I’d do it again,” Linda said.

One of their favorite parts of the trip was getting to spend time on the Georgia sea coast, which gets overlooked by a lot of people because of eight-foot tides.

“There’s massive marshes where the sun would go down and the moon would come up, and the only light you’d see in any direction was your anchor light on top of the mast. You hear wildlife, and birds and you hear fish popping. It is so beautiful,” Chuck said, also mentioning they got to see when Elon’s rocket blew up.

“We saw several space launches,” Linda said. “It’s being in the right place at the right time. We saw the harvest moon coming up and you don’t need a light on at all because it reflects on the water so much.

“You wake up with million dollar views every single morning,” Chuck said. “I’d recommend to anyone that has any inkling of adventure doing this trip. Do not hesitate.”

Chuck said if they were to do the loop again, they’d see more of the Canadian and north country, which they felt could be explored more.

Chuck and Linda are glad to be settled back on land for the time being, but plans of a future Looper trip are definitely not out of the question.

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Rooted in faith and CONNECTED TO PENTWATER since 1856

BY CRISTINA JUSKA
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

Even before Pentwater was incorporated as a Village in March of 1867, they had a church. The New Centenary Methodist Church—which operates as Centenary United Methodist today—was dedicated

in August of 1866, but the story begins a decade earlier.

Current Centenary United Methodist Pastor Vaughn Thurston-Cox, and longtime church member Anne Soles, said it all began with Joseph Elliott, a Native American graduate of Boston School of Theology. Elliott, a gifted speaker, gave the



first Methodist sermon in lumber baron Charles Mears' boarding house in 1856. Mears supposedly said something to the effect of, "I guess we're starting a church here; Elliott is downstairs preaching."

Anne said that Elliott was assigned as a missionary to Native Americans who had moved to the area after ceding Grand Rapids, and he would come into town to preach. At that very first meeting in Mears' basement, Anne said that the new congregation tithed a total of \$40—which was a lot more money back then—and pledged pork and potatoes.

"They don't pay me in pork and potatoes anymore," Pastor Vaughn joked.

The food went to the reservation to help feed the Native Americans. Elliott served as the congregation's first pastor from 1856-1858, even before the first "little wooden church" was built in 1866, with meetings taking place in homes and in the schoolhouse.

The early wooden church and parsonage were destroyed by a fire in April of 1875; they started building the new "gothic style" brick church, which still stands today, that same year. Anne said that the congregation worshipped in the basement until the new church was paid off, at the pastor's insistence. The total cost to build was \$3,500 and the brick church was dedicated in 1879.

Technically, due to the fire, Centenary UMC is the oldest congregation in Pentwater but the second-oldest church building.

Pastor Vaughn said the current steeple is the third one. The first steeple was struck by lightning in 1954 but the 1887 bell survived. The bell tower then had a

small cap that was eventually replaced by the current steeple.

The church's pews that the congregation still sits in today were purchased "used" from another church. This is why they have numbers on them but are not arranged in numerical order. "We are not sure how old they are," Pastor Vaughn said. The cross, altar and lectern were built by Anne's father, Francis Hiscock, out of butternut wood.

Pastor Vaughn said that there are two ways to tell time in Pentwater: the Village's siren at noon, and Centenary UMC's bells, which ring at 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. "When I arrived [four years ago], the siren had been out of commission for a while," he said. Once the siren was fixed, "I slowed our bell down by about 45 seconds so it wouldn't overlap the siren."

With no air conditioning in the sanctuary, Centenary UMC holds its summer

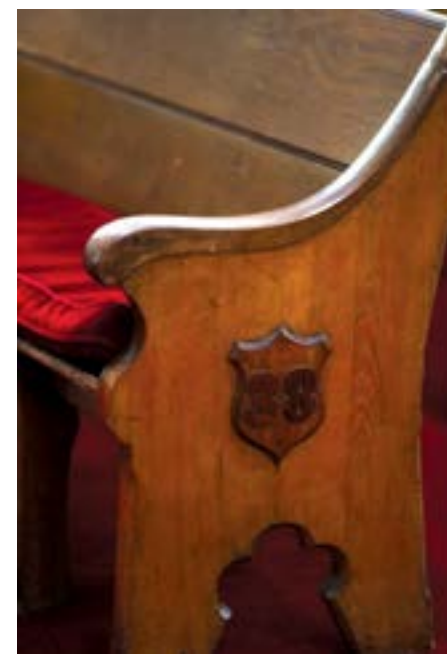


services outdoors on the Village Green at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays. "A lot more air is moving around there," Pastor Vaughn said. The number of attendees swells in the summer and shrinks in the winter months, but the church stays open year-round. It is heated in the wintertime.

Centenary UMC serves community meals every Wednesday evening, September through May. The church has the only Servsafe-certified kitchen in Pentwater that is not owned by a restaurant. Pastor Vaughn says they serve around 15,000 meals annually, or about 250 per week. Some people eat in the church's dining hall, while others pick up the meals curbside. They also donate meals to COVE women's shelter.

Volunteers from the community help make everything run smoothly. "If anyone wants to come help and be a part of the good going on, we're like, 'Come on, join us!'" Pastor Vaughn said.

He says Centenary UMC's vision statement drives everything they do: "'Becoming the breath of God in the community by loving God, serving others, and welcoming all.' That really is the heartbeat of this church. We want to be a good neighbor to everyone."





Q&A

WITH HECTOR

CHARLES MEARS STATE PARK SUPERVISOR 'MANNY' VALDEZ

BY DAVID L. BARBER
PHOTOS BY JEANNE BARBER

Every day, squirrels walk through the office of Hector Valdez.

Birds of every feather fly through it, too, while at the same time bugs crawl through it. Truth be told, wildlife of every paw and claw are welcome in his office.

And of course there are the campers – lots and lots of campers – who are welcome, too.

Known as 'Manny' to his family, friends and all the aforementioned, Valdez' office is all that makes up the outdoors of Charles Mears & William Field Memorial Hart-Montague State Parks, where he serves as unit supervisor of those Pentwater area parks.

A few weeks ago the PTW Magazine got the opportunity to take part in this Q&A with the soft-talking, always-smiling park ranger:

PTW: How long have you been in Pentwater?

VALDEZ: It's been 13 years now. I moved to Pentwater in January of 2012. After the previous 12 years of moving around the state somewhat regularly, I was so happy when I got to Pentwater that I knew this was the first place I had been in all that time that I wanted to buy a house and establish "roots" in this community. Being in Pentwater made me want to stop moving from park to park.

PTW: How long have you been with the state park's program?

VALDEZ: (I was a) summer worker 2000 to 2003, seasonal ranger 2003 to 2008, unit supervisor at J.W. Wells State Park 2008 to 2012; unit supervisor here from 2012 to present.

PTW: Where are you from?

VALDEZ: I was born and raised in Owosso, Michigan.

PTW: What previous parks/posts did you serve?

VALDEZ: I began my career at South Hig-

gins Lake State Park as a summer worker, then as a seasonal ranger. I transferred from there to Tawas Point State Park where I worked for a couple of years, before getting promoted to unit supervisor at J.W. Wells State Park in the U.P.

PTW: How many acres and campsites in your Pentwater park?

VALDEZ: Mears State Park is approximately 50 acres. We have 175 campsites which includes a camper that we rent. In addition to camping, we have a modern lodge that we call the Dune Grass Villa that we rent year-round. The Dune Grass Villa is the former manager's residence, so it is a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house that is fully furnished. From Memorial Day to Labor Day there is a one-week minimum rental period that begins on Friday. During the "off season" we have a two night minimum rental period.

PTW: Is your park typically filled during the summer, if not, to what percentage of capacity?

VALDEZ: Sort of, due to us having site

specific reservations it often leaves sites open for one or two nights throughout the summer. Of course, these openings are during the week so to the people who want to camp here for a week or more they see us as being "full." For example, on July 8-9 we have a site available for two nights and on July 13-14 we have a site available. The other detail that gives people the impression that we are always full is because reservations can be made six months to the day in advance.

In January and February every site gets reserved so six months out from July and August we are truly full, but then between then and now cancellations occur and we end up with sites available for a night or two during the week. Generally, we are more than 85 percent occupied each week throughout the summer.

PTW: Would you say the charm of your park is that it is "quaint" in size, and that that is the same for the community itself?

VALDEZ: The "quaintness" is complemented by us being in between Silver Lake



and Ludington. I would wager that many people who come to vacation in Silver Lake or Ludington do not come to Pentwater during their stay, but the people who come to Pentwater for a week's vacation do go to those places as part of their vacation.

Pentwater is the retreat where people can feel calm relief to the hustle and bustle, not only from their hometowns but from the other places they visit during their vacation. Another aspect that plays into this is that people who come to Pentwater are “generational” visitors, meaning that the grandparents came to Pentwater years ago and their kids continued coming to Pentwater and then their kids grew up, had families and came to Pentwater. For many people that I talk to this goes back four generations. I think that familiarity that people have developed with Pentwater contributes to the quaintness.

If you think back to 2020, State Parks were one of the first places that were closed due to the pandemic that were allowed to re-open. It was determined that people needed the parks for exercise and recreation. I learned that year that the number one recreational activity that occurs at this park is people just relaxing, whether that be reading a book or lying on the beach or sitting at your campsite. Our number one activity here at this park is relaxing.

PTW: How many employees do you have and what are their responsibilities?

VALDEZ: This park contains me and the lead ranger, Nathan, who both work year-

round. I am the administrator of the park and Nathan is the ranger that has the responsibility of fixing things from plumbing to equipment like the tractor to the buildings. We have two seasonal rangers, Josh and Megan, and the four of us are considered the career staff at this park. In general, the four of us share responsibilities in respect to customer service and park maintenance.

The seasonal rangers must also fix things frequently – mainly campsite electrical repairs and plumbing related issues but also building signs and tractor work. The three rangers are able to perform law enforcement but I do not have a law enforcement commission which is standard for state parks. The rangers assist me with the hiring of the summer staff of which we hire ten people. The 10 people we bring on for the busy season work on the



day-to-day needs of the park from registering camps and selling Recreation Passports to cleaning buildings, moving sand, fixing picnic tables, painting and several other tasks required to run such a densely populated park. Our summer staff season runs from the middle of April until the middle of October. The career rangers season is about two months longer than the summer staff.

PTW: Where do your campers come from, what other states?

VALDEZ: In 2023 I had to ask this question for a grant application and the information that I received surprised me. That year our camping reservations represented 53 percent of the zip codes within Michigan, as well as 35 different states and five different countries including Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

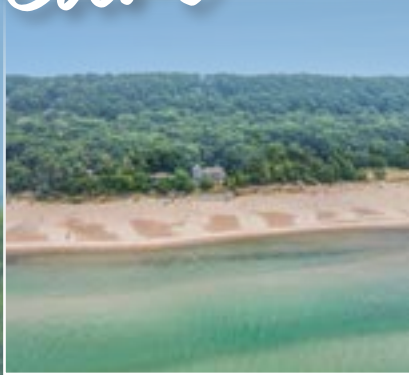
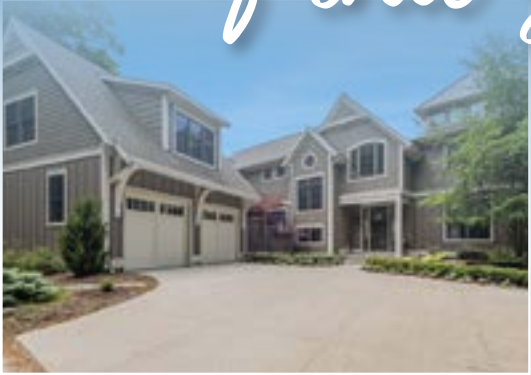
PTW: How close do you, yourself, work with the village officials of Pentwater?

VALDEZ: I have a “somewhat close” working relationship with village officials. We do not have regularly scheduled meetings, and I do not participate in village government meetings or activities. We work together on sand moving activities at the end of Lowell St. When events occur, we have meetings to coordinate. The police department works closely with the park since oftentimes the action within the village is happening in the park. However, I have to follow statewide policies and regulations which oftentimes are more robust than local municipalities.

PTW: Anything you'd like to add?

VALDEZ: We eagerly anticipate needed park improvements such as the renovation of the beach bathrooms and concession stand and the replacement of the campground electrical system. Even though these improvements are identified as a crucial need they are not yet funded so planning has begun but we do not have a time frame for when those projects will be completed. The park started an official Facebook page last year to be able to communicate directly with folks as progress is made on these initiatives and to be able to communicate day to day things. There may still be some “unofficial” Facebook pages out there so look for the one with the DNR logo to be sure you are following the correct page.

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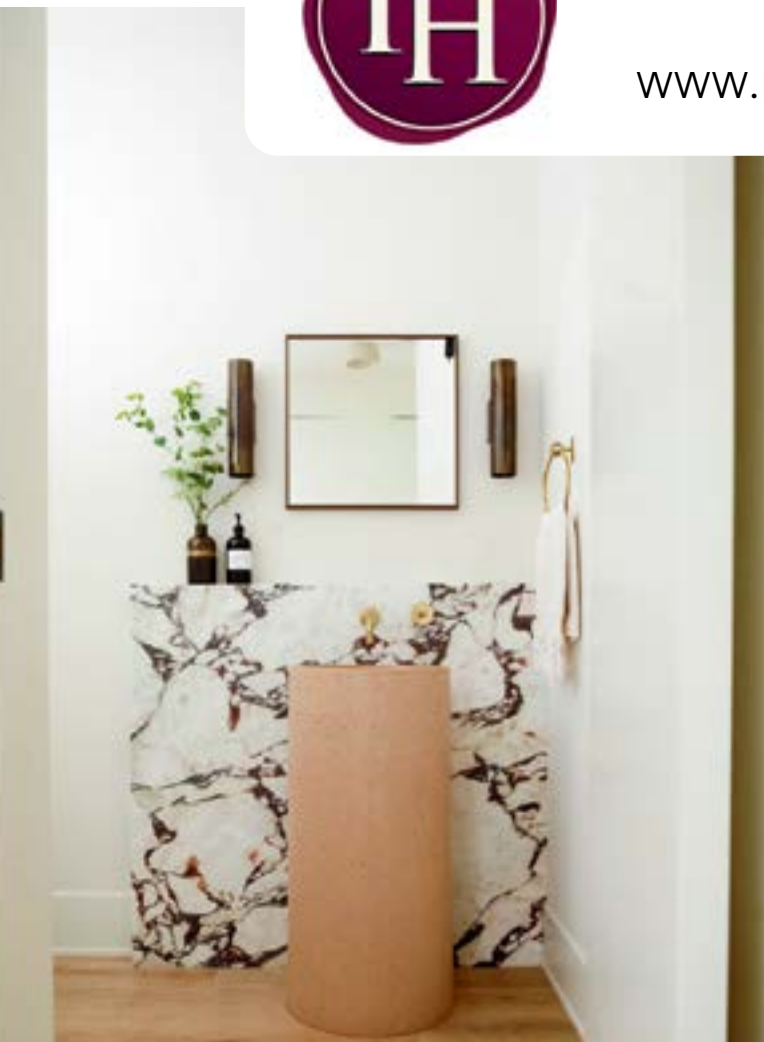
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SUMMER IN PARADISE

*Photo Essay
by Jeanne Barber*

All things said, there's much to be said about spending summertime in Pentwater: weekly farmers markets draw untold numbers of visitors; the Lake Michigan beach at the Charles Mears State Park is an iconic drawing staple; happy, smiling visitors stroll downtown Pentwater; visitors and residents get from here to there and back again on golf carts; visitors stop to get close-up looks at outdoor sculptures; and much more.



Sweet treats

to beat the heat
and nurture the
taste buds

BY CRISTINA JUSKA
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

It's summertime and dare we say hot outside. Whether you are spending a beach day at Mears State Park or strolling the shops on Hancock Street for some retail therapy, you're going to want to cool off at some point. May we suggest something cold AND sweet? Check out one of these places in downtown Pentwater for your next "little treat" – come on, you know you deserve one.

Starting at the north end of the main drag is Pentwater Dari Creme, a walk-up stand with outdoor seating offering both soft serve and hard serve ice creams. In addition to a variety of specialty sundaes, flurries, shakes

and malts, they also have slushies and root beer floats to help you keep your cool on a hot day. Plus, Pentwater Dari Creme offers snacks like hotdogs and chicken tenders close to the state park.

Cael, an employee at Pentwater Dari Creme, said that their most popular item this summer is the "Breakup Flurry" – made with vanilla-chocolate-twist soft serve, hot fudge, Oreo pieces and peanut butter cups. It's sure to get you through your next breakup or at least a day at the beach.

Next up is Pentwater House of Flavors. Owners Dana Hasil and Phil Grondsma opened the shop four years ago, and both are from Pentwater. Dana said that it's known as a place for hard ice cream as opposed to soft

serve, with 40 flavors on the menu.

She said that their most ordered flavor is the Michigan Pothole, a dark chocolate ice cream with chunks of fudgy "asphalt", followed by Superman ice cream for the kids.

Dana said that Phil's Sundae is quite popular, as well. It features the Michigan Pothole ice cream with peanut butter and hot fudge toppings – decadent! She said that their distributor told them that they are the only shop in the area that still makes "old fashioned, hand-dipped milkshakes."

Yes, they take a bit longer to make, but they are worth every minute and you can get a shake or malt made with

any flavor of ice cream.

Plus, Dana said their french fries are "the best in town," thanks to their secret seasoning blend, and their BLT is pretty great, too. Pentwater House of Flavors has not raised their food prices this year so it's also an affordable option for a yummy meal.

Not too far down the road you'll find Cosmic Candy, where you will find every kind of candy under the sun. They also have hard serve ice cream, but they are known for a cold treat that's downright magical: the "Butterbeer" slushie. This frozen concoction of Harry Potter fame tastes like butterscotch and comes topped with a flavored whipped

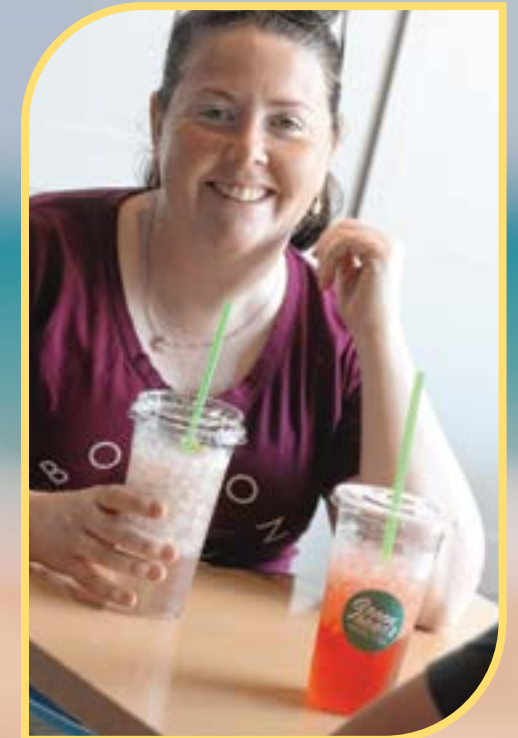
cream that puts it right over the top in terms of deliciousness. It's a must-try!

Near the Village Green is Pentwater Froyo. According to employee Alyssa, they have been open for one year now and offer an alternative to regular ice cream. She said that frozen yogurt has a lower amount of lactose and also contains probiotics, which are beneficial for gut health.

Fat-free, gluten-free and sorbet options are also available, and Alyssa said that they change out the flavors weekly, so there's always something new to try. Pentwater Froyo also offers milkshakes made with frozen yogurt, as well as iced boba teas, which are very popular this year.

And finally, a little further south on Hancock, is our final destination: Green Isaacs Coffee. In addition to iced coffees and cold brews, they have special custom sodas that are very popular in the summer months, said employee Sarah. They are similar to the fancy sodas that are all the rage at Swig Drinks in Utah; you choose your base soda and then you can select flavor syrups and even cream to add in. There are more than 50 flavors to choose from! Sarah said their most popular is the "Sour Patch Kid" – lemon-lime soda with strawberry puree and almond flavor.

So, no matter what you are looking for in terms of a cold, sweet treat this summer, one thing is for sure: you will find it in Pentwater.



FISHING

FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

BY LARRY LAUNSTEIN JR
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

PENTWATER - Looking to be with people who share your passion for sportsfishing? The Pentwater Sportsfishing Association has been offering opportunities like this since 1985, with the belief that sportsfishing is a major part of the recreational and tourist appeal in Pentwater and that sportsfishing positively impacts Pentwater, Oceana County and the West Coast of Michigan.

According to the PSA President, Dean Jessup, "The purpose of the association is to provide a forum for its members to express their ideas, concerns and interest as they relate to the development, protection and general promotion of sportfishing in Pentwater and adjacent Lake Michigan, to serve an action group to propagate the common interest of its members."

Jessup said the association works with local village and county agencies with boating safety, purchase and place lighted channel navigation lighting, purchase lighted no wake buoys, serve on the State Department of Natural Resources Citizen Advisory Committee, and serve on the Michigan DNR Tribal Citizens Advisory Committee.

According to the organization's website, "As a group of amateur fishermen, we're always game for some fun on the water. From early spring

until late fall, we have the information to help you have a great fishing experience in Pentwater."

As PSA board member Rob Bannink said, "We promote sport fishing in the Pentwater



area; we work with the Oceana marine law enforcement and give donations to them to help with their work in the waterways, help them with donations for the kids water safety day where they educate youth about water safety and give away life jackets to them each year.

"We put in lighted buoys in Pentwater Lake and take them out in the fall, helping local law enforcement with them - it greatly helps navigation - in the lake at night," Bannink said. He said the organization also

places "lights along inner piers, each side up, to help navigate through the waterway."

"We give money to the fish cleaning station each year to help it run so residents and visitors alike can use it to clean fish at no charge," Bannink said.

The fish cleaning station is at the Pentwater Municipal Marina.

In addition, Bannink said "We have given money to different local events each year."

One event that is important to the PSA is the kids' fishing contest, held this year on Saturday, June 28. This year's Teach A Kid event had 29 kids participate, with 11 boats taking them out fishing. The goal of the event was to teach the kids how to do big lake fishing and appreciate the resources available in Michigan for the future of the sport.

"A big thing for PSA is to promote youth to fishing and we do this event each year free of charge," Bannink said.

The PSA also likes to promote getting women into fishing so the organization hosts a contest for them each year, too.

And they have worked on the local Municipal docks in the past to help keep them in good working order.

As far as the fishing goes, Bannink said the group generally fishes in Lake Michigan from around the Little Sable Point Lighthouse in Mears to the Ludington pumped storage. And, Jessup said, a few people do some river fishing in the fall. But they don't do any ice fishing or pier fishing in the winter.

Support for the organization comes from fishing and tackle companies, who support the organization with donations.

Jessup also said that the group does not charter any boats, but does support their



PSA President Dean Jessup with the Mystery Weight prize-winner, Denver

local charter boat fleets. The Pentwater Sportfishing Association does not supply boats on their own or any other fishing supplies.

The board, Bannink said, meets once a month beginning in May through September on the third Saturday of the month besides meeting in Park Place in May. Membership dues are \$10 for an individual



PSA Kids fishing weigh in PHOTOS PROVIDED

listing of local charter boat companies. The organization can also be contacted by email at psafishing@gmail.com.

One of the organization's sponsors and donors is Charlie's Marina, at 240 6th Street Pentwater, Michigan 49449. Their phone number is 231-869-5000 and their website address is <https://charliesmarina.com>.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 9: Bannink's Lines Down Tourney
- Aug 22: End Big Fish Contest - 9 p.m.
- Aug 23: PSA Annual Mtg / Dinner / Awards - 2 p.m.
- Aug 30: PSA Mini Tourney
- Sept 13: PSA Board Meeting
- Oct: Remove Channel Lights



Keegan Pointer, Grand Prize Winner, with his King Salmon



Madison, the day's smallest competitor, collects her goody bag during the awards ceremony at the kids' fishing tournament in Pentwater



BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME



24 - PTW - AUGUST 2025

BY SHANNA AVERY
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

The people of Pentwater know what a special community they have, and the annual Homecoming Celebration encompasses all that make the town a gem, from the charming downtown area, unique businesses, the lakefront, and the cherry on top - the friendliness everyone is greeted with.

Homecoming is agreed to have begun in August of 1930, but in 1920 the Pentwater Mother's Club (forerunner of the Parents Teacher Association) saw a need for a community house with a gymnasium, and it took 10 years for this to come

to fruition. The first Homecoming happened in conjunction with the dedication of the new community house, and was chiefly promoted by Ann Jensen Flagg.

As Pentwater's biggest event each year, the community is gearing up for a great celebration with a grand parade, music, impressive fireworks and so much more celebration and fun.

Sue Hopp, Vice President of the Pentwater Artisan Learning Center said she particularly enjoys the Scottville Clown Band during the Homecoming, and just how the festivities bring everyone together year after year.

"I love seeing all the families come to

town and talk about their history in the town and how they're here for Homecoming because their parents did and their grandparents did, their aunts or their uncles or whatever," Hopp said. "That week there's a lot of memories that people share about what Homecoming is to them and it is about coming back here, and celebrating as family."

Rhonda Buzan, who volunteers at the Chamber of Commerce on Tuesdays, said the Homecoming truly has a wonderful impact each year.

"It's just an awesome time for this community to come together and appreciate the band, the veterans, all the

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Sue Hopp appreciates how the Homecoming is a special tradition bringing generations together



Mary Parker, as director of the Pentwater Township Library, loves the fun of each year's parade with the library and its supporters participating in it



Rhonda Buzan, who volunteers at the Chamber of Commerce, enjoys seeing the big impact the celebration has on the community.

military that's present, and one of the big things I appreciate being a volunteer here in the Chamber is it's another opportunity to collect money for fireworks because it's expensive and we do it twice a year. But it's a great impact on the community because it's something positive and it involves people of all ages and our downtown looks lovely. We have lots of flowers out on our main street, and my dad was a World War II Bomber Pilot who flew 71 missions, so I am always touched by the im-

pack the flags up and down the street make," she said. The Pentwater Township Library is another group that looks forward to each Homecoming and participating in the parade. "The library is always in the parade. We look forward to it and we always have something different each time," said Pentwater Township Library Director Mary Parker. "We're going to have the friends group march with us, and we have kids to come be in it with us, and volunteers from all over the place

will come and walk in it with us. But we never know until the actual event what's going to happen. One year it was rained out so only a few cars were in the parade, but every year, it is something different." Barker said when the library closes at 2 p.m. on Saturday, everyone hustles to get ready for the parade. They leave the doors open so other groups in the lineup can get ready and use their restrooms if need be.



Our school of choice window is now open; we are accepting applications for the 2025-2026 school year; you can access the application on our website or stop in to our office to complete an application today!

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Homecoming history

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HOMECOMING

**95th Annual
Homecoming
Celebration**
August 14th-17th



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Village of Pentwater
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Edward & Sharon Brosius
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AUGUST 14-17TH - HOMECOMING

AUGUST 16TH - FIREWORKS

PENTWATER.ORG






HOMEcoming

KICKS OFF THE SECOND THURSDAY IN AUGUST

This is the largest event in Pentwater. Locals and visitors love to come “home” for Homecoming. There are numerous activities scheduled for everyone’s enjoyment.

Some of the highlights are the Strawberry Shortcake Social, combined concert with Pentwater Civic Band and Scottville Clown Band, Sand Sculpture Contest, Horseshoe Tournament, Big-Ten Pre-season Tailgate Party, Grand Parade, Fireworks, Pancake Breakfast, and more.

This is a fantastic fun filled annual event where all are welcome and it gets better every year.

Thank you to our Homecoming Sponsor:

Grand Sponsor: Shelby State Bank

THURSDAY, AUG. 14

10AM-1PM FARMERS MARKET
VILLAGE GREEN

6PM STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE SOCIAL
VILLAGE GREEN
PENTWATER LAKE ASSOCIATION

7:30PM LES BAILEY MEMORIAL CONCERT
Pentwater Civic Band & Scottville Clown Band
combined concert on the Village Green

8PM COMEDY
VILLAGE CAFE & PUB

FRIDAY, AUG. 15

8AM-12PM SAND SCULPTURE CONTEST
JUDGING AT 11AM READ ALL THE RULES
CHARLES MEARS STATE PARK
THEME: MAGIC OF PENTWATER
PENTWATER SERVICE CLUB

EVENING - LIVE MUSIC
VILLAGE CAFE & PUB

EVENING - MOVIES ON THE GREEN - FROZEN

SATURDAY, AUG. 16

MORNING HORSESHOE TOURNAMENT

4pm GRAND PARADE
Parade Registration Form
Grand Marshal:
Bart Zachrich has posthumously been named 2025 Pentwater Citizen of the Year
Citizen of the Year
PENTWATER SERVICE CLUB

Evening LIVE MUSIC
Village Cafe & Pub

Dusk FIREWORKS
Charles Mears State Park
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SUNDAY, AUG. 17

VFW PANCAKE BREAKFAST 8AM-12PM
VFW HALL



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