

★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

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A Community News Organ

Fri., Feb. 25, 2011

ELBERTA ALERT REBORN 100 YEARS LATER

Newspaper team forms in the Village

By Janet Buck and Emily Votruba

Benzie County." The paper's name was changed to the *Elberta Alert* that May to reflect the name newly chosen by South Frankfort's citizens.

The paper reported on the town, nearby communities, and national and international news. Accounts of Frankfort's Frontenac Hotel fire and the sinking of the *Titanic* can both be found in 1912 *Alerts*. In addition to "hard" news, there were romantic fiction serials, amusing anecdotes and cartoons, household tips and advice on health remedies (smallpox, whooping cough, scarlet fever, and pneumonia were scourges to rich and poor alike), school reports, obituaries, and classifieds. Ads by local merchants

DID YOU KNOW that *Elberta* once had a newspaper? The *South Frankfort Alert* made its debut on February 16, 1911, almost exactly a century ago. Its editor and publisher was M.O. Dawson, who in the first issue declared the paper "an exponent of the rights of the people ... published in the interest of South Frankfort and

for everything from cabbage seed to couture clothing appeared in the eight-plus-page paper, which was published every week. Subscriptions were a dollar a year (later lowered to fifty cents—perhaps because of ad revenue!).

Elberta was just past the dawn of the twentieth century in 1911. Henry Ford had introduced his "horseless carriage," but Wm. Schafer's livery business was still flourishing. The lumbering era in Northwest Michigan was ending, and much of the magnificent virgin forest had been replaced by cherry, apple, and peach orchards. The Ann Arbor Railroad and Carferry system were the major employers here, supporting other *Elberta* businesses, including Glarum's and Thomas's Stores, Edwards Hardware, Collins Drug Store, the Luxfords' bank, and Coddens's Moving and Draying. The "Brick" Picture Show projected silent films downtown, and Dr. La Rue was caring for *Elberta* in a large home-hospital building that's still on Frankfort Avenue. Victorian mores and manners held sway, and the world was for the moment at peace.

We don't know when the *Alert* ceased publication, but it disappeared sometime during the First World War. We don't have the last issue, and the first issue too seems lost to history. But a few issues are in the collection of Janet Buck and the Benzie Area Historical Museum. These crumbling brown papers are historical treasures, and they along with copies of other area rags (the *Advisor*, the *Frankfort Times*, the *Beulah Banner*, the *Frankfort*



An early issue of the *Elberta Alert*

Express) are now being digitized through a grant to the Benzie Shores District Library, to be put online.

In December a group of *Elbertians* decided to revive our local paper and start a website. We have held public meetings in the *Elberta* Library, and the meetings will continue. A true community-run paper, the *Alert* will be something everyone can contribute to in some way. We hope to provide accurate local news, information and fun for *Elbertians* here and elsewhere. As you can see, we already have several advertisers, and with their support we'll continue to cover our costs and keep the paper free for Village residents. We'll start out as a four-page monthly and expand from there. Our little town has a lot of stories to tell, and you'll read all about them here. Ψ

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Feb. 25, 2011

HEAVENS TO BETSIE

THE INITIAL PUBLIC comment period was lively. Ruth Nanni mentioned snowmobiles being operated on Village streets. The council confirmed that enforcement of the ordinance is lacking.

Kelli Stapleton pitched her idea to change the Village's name to "Heaven." A text of her argument is available online at the *Elberta Alert* site. At press time Stapleton was planning to get on the agenda for the March meeting.

Art Melendez presented PowerPoint slide scenes to illustrate the benefits of a Village-owned laptop and digital projector when applying for grants.

County Commissioner Marcia Stobie projected the Maples millage at \$8.2 to \$8.4 million, based on property values, which are expected to drop 3% per year for the next 5 years (8% countywide). Construction could begin this summer.

Connie Manke of Parks and Rec thanked Ken Bonney for preparing

the Lifesaving Station for the Winter Whine. She invited everyone to the public forum on the Master Plan (Feb. 21). Reg Manville said, "Everyone here should be at that meeting."

Because of Laura Manville's recent illness, the budget committee had not met. The council agreed to adopt last year's budget of \$889,900 temporarily.

The month's bills, including \$17,347.15 in accounting fees and \$9,364.28 in payroll, were approved for payment.

Diane Jenks and Ken Holmes of the Water and Sewer Committee reported \$50,000 in revenue for BLUA.

Reg Manville said he wants official business cards for council members and name signs for meetings. The Village website has been improved, with meeting minutes for the past year now posted there.

Chris Sullivan and Matt McDonough of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) said GTRLC needs to be reimbursed for the \$1.1 million it spent to hold the Thorpe dune area for the Village. GTRLC will help the Village get grants for this money.

The sale could close by March 25, and the Village will have 90 days to prepare the site for the public, per the conditions of the trust. The Village must develop a management plan for the new dune park, including amenities (parking, picnic shelter, trail signs, etc.). A council member must work with GTRLC to create the plan and secure about \$150,000 in funds toward an endowment and operating expenses estimated at \$5K to \$10K per year. The Village needs to make sure its plans for the park fit within grant restrictions.

Reg Manville asked the council for their general feelings on wind power. Reg remarked that as with the railroads, sometimes sacrifices must be made for the good of all. Matt Stapleton said he was against having a wind discussion without a specific proposal on the table. Ken Holmes said that "NIMBY" has been standard operating procedure and that's why we don't have much industry left in the area. He said Gilmore Township has a moratorium on wind turbines at least until August 28 and so the Village must wait for their decision, as they have all the industrial zones. Linda Manville said she found the

turbines visually disturbing, and mentioned people suffering seizures from the "flicker effect." Scott Gest remarked that turbines probably could not be installed on the bluff because it can't support the heavy trucks that carry the components.

After some discussion, Diane Jenks proposed that a letter be drafted and reviewed by Village attorney Joe Quant saying the \$60,000 loan due in 2015 for payment to the Elberta Landholding Co. be extended until the tax base from the development allows the Village to make the payment as planned. Scott Gest said an extension was possible.

The Lifesaving Station reportedly made \$40K this summer.

Reg Manville offered his condolences on the passing of Ross Thorsen's mother and Matt Stapleton's father, and thanked everyone for their support during Laura Manville's illness. Ψ

The Alert aims to report accurately on Village meetings; however, paper space is limited. Longer versions of meeting reports appear on the Alert blog (elbertaalert.wordpress.com). Corrections and additions are welcome. Official agendas and minutes for Village Council meetings are available at the Village Office and at www.villageofelberta.org.

Remember When ... With Ken

The winner of the 2010 Alert Holiday Décor Contest claims his prize: this space in the paper.

★ Portrait by Art Melendez



Kenneth Holmes has lived in Elberta (with brief interruptions) since 1941 and has collected and taken many photographs of the Village. This one depicts the transfer of the deed to the new Elberta Village Library, circa 1951. Mr. Holmes said the first Village librarian, Maggie McManus, had already amassed a number of books at her post at the township hall to bring with her to her new job. The library site was donated by Clarence and Dorothy Buckner in 1951. Can you *Alert* readers identify any other faces in this picture? If you can, please write to elberta.alert@gmail.com, or call 231-399-0098. Ψ

From left: Gerald Vigland, Village trustee; Maggie McManus; Howard Rupright, who moved the Conundrum Café building to its present site; Bud Tanner (in hat); and gliding pioneer Zada Price

WHINE-O!

New event warms the Shiverers

By Diane "Jinx" Jenks

THE FIRST WHINE IN THE PARK took place Saturday, February 19, 2011, after the third annual Shiver by the River across the bay. Sadly the carnivorous warm rain ate away Jennifer Wilkins's fabulous snow animals, and sledding was impossible. The strong breath of Mother Nature blew the fire pit idea out like a weak flame. When weather changes the dynamics of an event you kick into plan B. We proceeded directly to the Lifesaving Station for the food, music, alcohol, and indoor-fun part. Sometimes one has to stop whining and start wine-ing.

The guests had many savory food options. Michele and Rob from the Conundrum Café offered Cuban sliders, dill pickle soup, brownies, and flavored shaved ice. Heather of the Mayfair had Tom's famous brats and chili. Becky from the Cabbage Shed had their borscht and mini meatball subs. Derrick from Tali Bistro made crab bisque, beef burgundy, and spaghetti. Elberta will put its festivals on the map with this type of cuisine. Not only was the food amazing, but the prices were very reasonable. If you didn't get a chance to be at the event, you should make it a point to visit all of these establishments.

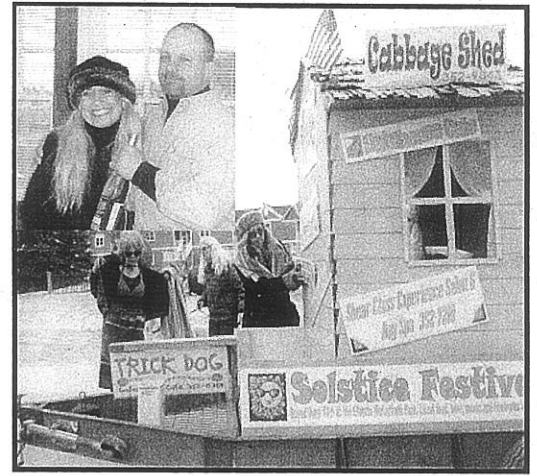
Uncle Ted's Crawlers, a large acoustic group, got the crowd joining in with some nostalgic songs. You know, the ones we baby boomers hear on the "oldies" station and say, "That's not old, I love that song!" It was like friends jamming together in an atmosphere of winter wonder. One couple got up to dance to everyone's admiration.

The bar featured all Michigan products. Acoustic mead in cherry and apple has a taste I can't explain (you just have to experience it). Eight Michigan beers chased wines from Grand Traverse and Boskydel

vineyards. Northern Naturals showed off their organic fruit wines and hard cider. Don't miss out on these palate-surprising flavors. Good from front to back.

What can I say about the volunteers? Jennifer Wilkins and Merren Garber, Connie Manke, and Tom Votruba crafted the Shiver Parade float in the cold. Art Melendez spent hours on the computer designing signage, gathering float materials and offering his garage for assembly. Kenny and Duane had the task of prepping the Station, which had to be slowly de- and rewinterized.

Matt and Kelli Stapleton, Tom and Cheryl Zatkovic and Nikki and Nicki were fun, friendly, and on the ball behind the bar. Tina and Carl Noffsinger, Mel, and Sue Oseland sold tokens. The cleanup crew, Michele, Linda, Connie, and Bill—God love you for the dirty work. I can't name every volunteer, but please know how much I appreciate you.



Shivering floaters: Emily Votruba (in bikini) and Jennifer Wilkins (in coonskin cap) discover that duct tape doesn't stick below freezing. Connie Manke with Jesse, sporting leis. At the Lifesaving Station (inset), warm and toasty Stapletons. Photos courtesy of Diane Jenks.

Everyone broke even or close. We covered the \$500 rental fee for the Lifesaving Station. We decided to waive the vendors' fee so they could make some profit, and they're all on board for next year. We overordered the alcohol, but we can use it at the Solstice Festival.

I always say, when people get together amazing things happen. This was one of those things. Community spirit is priceless! Thanks to all who came, and we'll see you at an even bigger Whine next year! Ψ

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MARCH

A young man was treated by Drs. Kinne and La Rue after getting trapped in a steam vat. (South Frankfort Alert, March 16, 1911)

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
1, 4	PLANNING AND ZONING / MASTER PLAN MEETINGS	Planning and Zoning Committee regular meeting; Master Plan Committee regular meetings with Sarah Lucas of NMCog	Elberta Library Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (first Tuesdays) 8 am (first Fridays)
2	PARKS & REC MEETING	Regular meeting of Parks and Recreation	Village Community Bld.	7 pm (first Wednesdays)
3, 17	WINE- AND THEMED DINNERS AT THE MAYFAIR	Wines of Portugal (3rd); St. Patrick's Day Party with authentic Irish dinner and drink specials, house-made desserts, games and freebies (17th)	The Mayfair Tavern, 515 Frankfort Ave.	Call (231) 352-9136 for reservations
6, 13, 20, 27	ALERT EDITORIAL OFFICE HOURS	Submit a story, calendar item, ad, or image, discuss content, or just drop by for the heck of it.	Elberta Library Frankfort Ave.	1 pm - 2 pm / (Sundays)
17	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village Council	Village Community Bld.	7 pm (third Thursdays)
18-20	WATER FESTIVAL	Betsie Bay watershed hosts discovery activities, food, and celebrations of H ₂ O. With Seth Bernard & May Erlewine, speakers, and local talent.	Various spots around FFort and Elberta	See website for times and locations: www.water-festival.org
19	GROW BENZIE WORKSHOP	"Hoop House Management," third in a series of workshops with sustainable farmer Craig Schaaaf on extending the growing season	5885 M-115 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia	10 am - 3 pm (231) 882-9801; growbenzie@gmail.com
19	COMMUNITY DINNER	Community Dinner at Elberta's United Methodist Church. Good free food and fellowship	555 Lincoln Ave.	4 pm - 6 pm (third Saturdays)
24	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE	Open meeting with Sheriff Rory Heckmann to discuss county security issues. At the County Jail.	505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah	7 pm (fourth Thursdays)



BLAST From the FUTURE!

Historical interviews by an Elberta teen

Merren Garber talks to Christeen Kibby Crawford

I interviewed Christeen Kibby-Crawford, who has seen Elberta grow up over the years. She graduated from high school in a class of forty students and went to nursing school. Christeen's great-grandfather was Frank Martin, one of the first settlers here in Elberta.

I read in Blacklock's *History of Elberta* that Frank Martin came to the Betsie lake area in 1855 with his father-in-law, Joseph Robar. Frank and his wife, Amelia, started living in Joe Oliver's trapping shelter. The

wind from the lake would pile the snow and sand on top of the trapping shelter. Frank, Joe Oliver, and, John Greenwood decided to build a wall of logs and brush on the Lake Michigan side of the shelter to block the snow piles. People started calling it "Frank's Fort." By about 1859, Frankfort became the name of the whole area around Betsie Lake.

My questions for Christeen were simple. I wanted to compare my life growing up in Elberta with hers. Christeen remembers feeling safe growing up in Elberta. She loved going to the beach, hanging out with her friends, and just having

fun. They got to the beach by hiking up the woody hills, and they sledded on Anderson Hill. She shared a memory of when M-22 was lined with large maple trees. She recalled how

in now. She did and was friends with one of the daughters who lived there. It was interesting to hear the description of the inside of

my house and the differences and similarities that still exist today.

I asked what she would have liked to see happen to Elberta when she was growing up. She said she never really thought that it would change.

But Christeen was excited when things did change, like M-168 being spruced up, and she is excited about how the young people are becoming more involved with the town, and about the possibilities of using wind for power.

Elberta has definitely grown up over the years and Christeen is and was excited for the changes that have happened and the possibilities for change in the future. Ψ

Alert editor Merren Garber attends Frankfort-Elberta High School.



Did you know that Elberta was Frankfort first?

Christeen with Curlie.

Photo by Jennifer Wilkins

absolutely beautiful it was walking from a friend's house one evening and watching the

large snowflakes fall through the tree canopy.

Christeen lives in Elberta in the home that she and her brother were born in. I was curious to know if she knew the Soderquists, who lived in the house I live

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