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Three Sections

40 Pages

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Adding grapes to the mix

Cherry Bay Orchards looks to future, buys winery

By Amy Hubbell
Enterprise news editor

The county's largest cherry grower is looking to another fruit to help sustain its business for the next generation.

Cherry Bay Orchards, owned by Don and Bob Gregory of Suttons Bay, has purchased Chateau de Leelanau Vineyard and Winery from Dr. Roberta Kurtz of Leelanau Township. The transaction is significant in that it is the first-ever sale of a county winemaking/grape operation. It is also of note because it marks what some consider an apparent shift in the county's biggest crop — cherries — to grapes.

"The positive economic contribution that viticulture and wine making add to the tourist and agricultural industry is definitely noticeable in the Traverse City area," said Roger Veliquette, who along with brothers Andrew and Matt Gregory (sons of Bob) and Don's son-in-law Mark Miezio represent the second generation of fruit growers taking on the winery/vineyard. "We wanted to be part of that."

Cherry Bay has 2,200 acres of cherries in Leelanau County and another 500 downstate. But even the biggest fruit grower recognizes that viticulture and winemaking have provided an economic spark for the peninsula, which for decades has centered on cherry growing.

"The wine industry is here to stay in Leelanau County," Don Gregory said. "We've watched the 'dessert' industry contract. Fortunately, there's a market for dried cherries and juice which has offset our losses in other markets. But we're going to have to make changes to continue."

Gregory noted that the growing popularity of viticulture continues the agricultural evolution in the county which began with timber; went to potatoes then general farming and cherries.

"We need something different that the next generation can attack," Gregory said.

Numbers from the National Agricultural

(Concluded on Page 15)



JOHN PETOSKEY, who worked on Indian fishing rights and the case that allowed the Grand Traverse Band to establish Turtle Creek Casino, has been ousted as the tribe's general counsel.

Attorney who guided tribal growth loses his job

By Eric Carlson
Of The Enterprise staff

The top attorney for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians since 1987, John Petoskey of Peshawbestown, this week learned that he will lose his job at the end of this month.

On Monday, in a closed-door session, the Tribal Council decided to "reorganize and restructure" its legal department, effectively dismissing without explanation the man who'd served as the tribe's general counsel for some 23 years.

Back in 1975, Petoskey was a long-haired student at Western Michigan University who spent summers at home engaged in an activity that often elicited anger and threats of violence from Leelanau County's commercial and sport fishermen — the exercise of Indian "treaty" fishing rights in Lake Michigan.

Petoskey's mentor at the time was tribal fisherman Arthur Duhamel, for whom the tribe's commercial fishing marina in Peshawbestown was subsequently named.

By 1979, Petoskey had completed his

(Concluded on Page 15)

MEMORIAL RIDE



PARTICIPANTS TAKE a short break by Kasson Sand & Gravel midway through Sunday's Roy Taghon Memorial Snowmobile Ride. The event attracted more than 80 snowmobilers and riders and raised money for the Roy Taghon Memorial Scholarship fund, which aids Glen Lake students. Riders traveled from the Empire Airport to Benchwarmers in Maple City, where chili and hot dogs were served to commemorate the late Taghon's service to the community. (Photo courtesy of Lynn Herman)

Shooting star

S-B boy captures state free throw championship

By Alan Campbell
Of The Enterprise staff

Long before March Madness, Leelanau County has a state champion in boys' basketball.

Thomas Hursey, a fourth grader at Suttons Bay, bested competition at the Michigan Elks Hoop Shoot contest Saturday in Bay City to claim the title of state champion in the 8- and 9-year-old category.

Hursey didn't just stroll up to the line and toss them in. He practices by shooting about 100 free throws a day — and was back at it the day after winning.

"He was back in the gym yesterday, shooting again," said his Thomas' father, Todd Hursey, Suttons Bay varsity basketball coach. Thomas is a regular at varsity practices, where he can be found hogging his game at baskets along the sidelines.

Thomas said he stuck to his practiced habits taught him by Todd and his grandfather, also named Thomas Hursey. He resides in Okemos, but spends much of his summer in Leelanau County.

"I dribble three times, then I breathe," he said,



THOMAS HURSEY won the Michigan Elks Hoop Shoot contest in his age category Saturday.

when reached Tuesday. "I was a little nervous."

Thomas won despite having his poorest showing in the competition. He won the district competition in Traverse City by hitting 23-of-25 free throws, and beat out eight competitors in a state regional shootout in Manistee by hitting 22-of-25. Players in his age group shoot from 11 feet. The program offers six categories — boys' and girls' in age groups of 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13.

(Concluded on Page 15)

Judge blasts delay in filling Probate seat

By Eric Carlson
Of The Enterprise staff

A spokesman for Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm acknowledged this week that some in Leelanau County appear to be unhappy about a delay in appointing a replacement for Probate Court Judge Joseph E. Deegan.

Philip E. Rodgers Jr., chief judge of the 13th Circuit Court, may well be at the top of the list. He's frustrated that a replacement still hasn't been named for Deegan, who died last July at the age of 72.

"We hope to fill the (judge's) position by the end of February," the governor's deputy press secretary Megan Brown told the Enterprise this week. "We understand the concern about delays in Leelanau County, but everyone is doing more with fewer employees these days."

"That is such unmitigated garbage," responded Rodgers, who along with other local judges has

(Concluded on Page 15)

INSIDE



John Pupa talks about his trip to improve Peruvian villagers' eyesight, and to see the ruins of Machu Picchu, Sec. 2, Pg. 1

In Section 2:

✓ Downhill enthusiasts debate the question: Skiing or snowboarding? Pg. 1

In Section 3:

✓ Classified ads and legals



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Judge blasts delay

Continued from Page 1

picked up all of Deegan's caseload.

"What shocks me is that three additional vacancies come up around the state since Joe Deegan passed away, and all three of those have been filled already," Rodgers said. "What's the problem?"

"We continue to review applicant backgrounds, and the selection process is still under way," Brown said.

Brown flatly declined to discuss who might have applied for the judgeship, and why the delay has continued.

"Our policy is not to discuss who has applied," Brown said.

Last July, the governor's office set an Aug. 19 deadline for candidates interested in applying for the position. At the time, a spokesman explained that the Michigan Bar Association was to review the applications and make a recommendation to the governor that rated candidates as being either "highly qualified," "qualified," or "not qualified" — but did not "rank" the candidates.

"My understanding is that they conducted interviews of five candidates in September," Rodgers said this week. "My guess is that they are delaying appointing a new judge either because of general incompetence or because they're expecting to make a really bad selection."

Anyone selected must be a resident of Leelanau County.

Under state law, the person selected would fill the position until the next General Election which, in this case, would be in November 2010. At that time, the appointee — or any other qualified candidate — could run for election to fill the remainder of Deegan's original term which, in this case, would be until 2014.

Leelanau County Clerk Michelle Crocker said that — in terms of the tim-

ing of elections and deadlines for candidates — there is no political advantage to be gained by delaying an appointment.

"If the governor's office appoints someone between today and March 19," Crocker explained, "the only advantage that person might have in running for the position in November is that they would run as an incumbent, and the ballot would say 'Judge of Probate' below their name. That and maybe the additional publicity they receive just by being appointed by the governor is the only advantage they'd get."

If a replacement is appointed by March 19, Crocker said, that person would have until only March 22 to file an affidavit of candidacy to run for the judgeship in the August 2010 Primary. If three or more candidates run for the judgeship in the August 2010 Primary, Crocker said, the top two vote-getters would run in the November 2010 election.

For candidates hoping to run for the judgeship who were not appointed to the position by the governor, an April 27 deadline has been set to file for the August Primary.

"My guess is that the governor will appoint someone to the position well before April 26 — the last day an 'incumbent' can file as an incumbent in the primary," Crocker said.

Rodgers said he agreed with Crocker that nobody appears to be playing games with the election deadlines related to appointing a replacement for Deegan.

"But some kind of game is being played by the governor's office, and I wish I knew for sure what it is," Rodgers said. "It isn't about money because the position is already funded through the state's Judicial Fund, not its General Fund. Any suggestion to the contrary is disingenuous at best."



ROBERTA KURTZ, the former owner of Chateau de Leelanau Vineyard and Winery, is surrounded by (from left) Mark Miezio, Don Gregory, Bob Gregory, Andrew Gregory and Matt Gregory.

Cherry Bay Orchards

Continued from Page 1

Statistics Service's 2006-07 fruit survey bear that out. Red tart cherry acreage increased from 7,850 acres in 1997 to 8,150 in 2006. However, the number of farms that grow red tarts for the same period dropped from 151 acres to 124.

Tremendous growth in the grape wine industry is demonstrated in the same report, which shows that the number of county farms growing the fruit more than doubled between 1997 and 2006 from 15 to 31.

Likewise, the grape acreage grew steadily from 200 acres in 1997; 275 in 2000; 325 in 2003; and 390 in 2006.

Part of the purchase, which will be finalized upon the appropriate licensing for the new owners, was 27 acres of grapes adjacent to Cherry Bay's property in Suttons Bay Township. The acreage, planted by Kurtz 20 years ago, is located just over the township line in Leelanau Township.

The elder Gregorys will be tending to those grapes and hope to expand to vacant agricultural property, which perhaps is more suitable for grapes than cherry-growing. That would include some south-facing slopes and steep inclines that conflict with mechanical cherry harvesters.

"(Kurtz) did the early work. We hope to put in additional grapes and become as efficient at grape growing as we have cherry growing," Gregory said.

In addition to growing fruit for Chateau de Leelanau, Gregory said Cherry Bay has also been approached

by local wineries seeking additional grapes to produce their own award-winning vintages.

Matt and Andrew Gregory, along with Veliquette and Miezio, admittedly don't have much experience as vintners, but they're looking forward to the challenge.

"Taking the helm of one of northern Michigan's oldest wineries offers us many challenges," Andrew Gregory said. "And the fact that we can build on traditions as well as bring new ideas to fruition is exciting."

Don Gregory is confident about what the future holds for second-generation of farmers and the county's second biggest crop.

"They probably know more about winemaking than we did about cherries when we first started," Gregory said.

The winery staff will continue to welcome the public, Thursday through Saturdays, at the Chateau de Leelanau tasting room, located at the corner of Hilltop Road south of Suttons Bay.

Wines made from riesling, chardonnay, bianca, cabernet franc, pinot noir, merlot and regent grapes are available for sample and purchase.

Leelanau snow gauge

(as of Wednesday morning)

Snowfall this week — 4"

Snowfall this season — 83.5"

By same day in 2009 — 136"

For the month — 0

Season's record snowfall

(Since 1955-56)

231 inches in 1995-96

In February 2009 — 25"

In February 2008 — 32"

In February, 2007 — 41"

In February, 2006 — 32"

In February, 2005 — 16.5"

In February, 2004 — 37"

In February, 2003 — 42"

In February, 2002 — 29"

In February, 2001 — 20"

In February, 2000 — 19"

In February, 1999 — 11.5"

In February, 1998 — 1"

In February, 1997 — 42"

In February, 1996 — 39"

In February, 1995 — 55"

In February, 1994 — 37"

In February, 1993 — 24"

In February, 1992 — 29"

In February, 1991 — 20"

In February, 1990 — 21"

In February, 1989 — 45.5"

In February, 1988 — 28.2"

In February, 1987 — 6"

In February, 1986 — 22"

In February, 1985 — 57.5"

In February, 1984 — 6.5"

In February, 1983 — 14"

In February, 1982 — 9.75"

In February, 1981 — 40.5"

In February, 1980 — 39"

In February, 1979 — 36.5"

In February, 1978 — 26.5"

In February, 1977 — 21"

In February, 1976 — 29"

January Snowfall — 29.5"

(January record 84.9" — 1982)

December Snowfall — 54"

(December record 86.6" — 1989)

November Snowfall — 0

(November record 43" — 1995)

October Snowfall — 0

(October record 5" — 1969)

(Measurements taken at Suttons Bay)

Shooting star

Continued from Page 1

At Bay City, Hursey canned 8-of-10 in the first round of shooting, then connected on 12-of-15 to finish 20-of-25. The runner-up was 18-of-25.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, sponsors of the tournament, picked up expenses for the Hursey family to spend two days in Midland at the Valley Plaza Hotel. Cheering on Thomas were his sisters Laren, 7, and Jane, 12, along with Todd and Nikki Hursey. Also attending were his grandparents Barb and Mike Kirt of Lake Leelanau.

But the Hurseys didn't take up the offer to spend Saturday night as Todd and Thomas took advantage of their downstate visit to attend the Michigan State-Northwestern basketball that evening. They made a long drive home that ended early Sunday morning.

"We had a really fun weekend," said Thomas.

Hursey now advances to the Great Lakes Regional Shoot March 20 in Angola, Ind., where he will face state champions from Ohio and Indiana. Another win would move him to the National Hoop Shoot set for April 24 in Springfield, Mass., where he will have a chance to stand beside past champions that include former NBA star Chris Mullin and Major League baseball player Chris Naegele.

But it won't be easy. In 2009, cham-



THOMAS HURSEY displays his form at school Wednesday morning by making a free throw.

pion Oakley Baker from Geneva, Minn., hit his first 25 shots, then five straight in a shoot-out. However, Thomas Hursey's 23-of-25 performance in Traverse City might move him into first place in the Hursey family.

Todd Hursey, when growing up in Midland, placed fourth in the nation in the 8-9 year old field for the Hoop Shoot. The third-place shooter in last year's nationals missed two of 25 free throws.



SUTTONS BAY Elementary School honored its students of the month for January this week. They include (from left) Jackson Kovarik, Jasmin Denny and Gavyn Shananaquet.

Weather Readings

BINGHAM

Horticultural Research Station

	High	Low	Snow
Jan 27	16	16	3.5"
Jan 28	13	8	.5"
Jan 29	16	8	.5"
Jan 30	19	14	.5"
Jan 31	22	11	.5"
Feb 1	22	12	-0-
Feb 2	26	12	1.5"

SOUTHERN LEELAND TOWNSHIP

	High	Low	Snow
Jan 27	24	23	na
Jan 28	12	9	na
Jan 29	12	8	na
Jan 30	18	11	na
Jan 31	21	18	na
Feb 1	21	14	na
Feb 2	21	18	na

MAPLE CITY

	High	Low	Snow
Jan 27	24	14	2.4"
Jan 28	16	7	1.8"
Jan 29	14	8	1.4"
Jan 30	21	11	1.1"
Jan 31	no readings		
Feb 1	23	4	-0-
Feb 2	26	9	Tr.

SUTTONS BAY

	High	Low	Snow
Jan 27	13	3"	
Jan 28	1"		
Jan 29-Feb 2	-0-		