

All downhill

Young athletes attack the slopes at the Grand Traverse Ski Club weekly race.

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Student selections

Traverse City Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs make their selections for student honors

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Tough choices

Outdoor columnist Gordon Charles looks at the difficult position California wildlife management finds itself in: shooting eagles to save foxes

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GRAND TRAVERSE HERALD

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Herald photo by Carol South

The Long Lake Trails Fund recently received a \$35,000 grant from Rotary Charities, capping off their \$70,000 fundraising effort to begin widening, paving and designating as bike lanes the shoulders around Long Lake. John Shields of Long Lake Township holds a map showing the proposed 14.5-mile route around the lake; the first phase of this plan is scheduled to begin this year.

Bike trail on the right path

Long Lake Trails Fund receives \$35,000 grant from Rotary Charities; construction slated for fall

By Carol South
Herald contributing writer

Long Lake Township residents are on the road to better recreation thanks to the efforts of some devoted cyclists in the township.

No longer will bikers wobble on narrow, unpaved shoulders as traffic zooms by on the twisty roads circumnavigating the lake. As for walkers, they can have the space for a leisurely stroll without worrying that a car will mow them down.

Phase I of a 14-mile bike path around Long Lake is now becoming a reality thanks to the efforts of citizens, the Grand Traverse

County Road Commission and a recent grant from Rotary Charities.

By this fall, organizers of the Long Lake Trails Fund hope that construction will begin on a 4.2-mile section on the south end of the lake. This phase will place a five-foot paved shoulder from East Long Lake Road to Mud Lake. The trail also provides access to Interlochen and Karlin and connects to established bike trails.

As population skyrocketed in one of the fastest-growing townships in the area, the traffic volume also jumped and biker and pedestrian safety plummeted. Many bik-

ers and walkers just gave up, noted Long Lake Trails Fund member John Shields.

"There is just not enough room to share," Shields said. "When I moved here six years ago, I used to bike around the lake, which takes about an hour. But it is too dangerous now."

"I think people feel trapped in their subdivisions around here because the only way out is by a car," he added.

A group of concerned citizens began talking about the idea nearly ten years ago. Some portions of the roads around the lake already have wide paved shoulders, but these will be designated as

bike lanes as the project progresses. Other roads have no paved shoulder at all and are very curvy and hilly roads — a dangerous combination.

"I live here and the amount of traffic has just tripled in the past few years, and having kids, our concern is to build these trails now," said Bob McLain, owner of McLain Cycle and a member of the Long Lake Trails Fund. "It is a very difficult task to do it now, because of land and money. But given ten years, it will be almost impossible."

A few years ago, the Long Lake Trails Fund partnered with the Grand Traverse

Regional Community Foundation as a non-profit umbrella and began fundraising in earnest. The township was also supportive. They mentioned the effort a few times in their newsletter and donations began coming in.

With help and guidance from the Grand Traverse County Road Commission, who knew about federal grant money known as TEA-21, Long Lake Trail Fund members determined they needed \$70,000 to qualify for this grant money. The community raised \$10,000, the

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Mt. Holiday offers lift for cash-strapped

Ski scholarships provide lift tickets and equipment for low-income youth

By Carol South
Herald contributing writer

With a successful ski season underway, Mount Holiday Ski and Recreation Area is working on its next

goal: provide children who cannot afford to ski access to their facilities.

One of only five nonprofit

See Mt. Holiday page 2

On-court rivals team teach sport

Volleyball clinic participants learn from both West and Central High coaches and players

By Carol South
Herald contributing writer

Bump, set, spike then repeat, repeat, repeat.

At least that was the plan for 134 children who attended Sunday's volleyball clinic held at the Central High

School gym. They learned, practiced and then practiced again the basic moves of the sport.

But learning the game's fundamentals was secondary to lighting a spark about it

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Herald photo by Carol South

Ben Maxfield, 10, makes a Chinese character during a hands-on portion of a Chinese New Year celebration held Saturday afternoon at the Traverse Area District Library. The celebration drew 20 participants and featured a sampling of Chinese food, culture and crafts.

Library honors Chinese culture

Chinese New Year party features food, calligraphy and Kung Fu demonstration

By Carol South
Herald contributing writer

Welcoming the Year of the Monkey, 30 youth celebrated Chinese New Year in style Saturday afternoon at the Traverse Area District Library.

They feasted on rice, spring rolls and egg drop soup, practiced their hand at Chinese calligraphy and created a dragon's tail, a dragon mask and a lucky New Year's envelope. In addition, storyteller Jill Bert told a folk tale of how the Chinese dragon acquired its horns.

The food was a hit with most attendees. They waited patiently through the story, a Kung Fu demonstration and a cultural presentation while the scents of rice and soup filled the room.

"I didn't know about the yin-yang information," said

Allix Geiger, 10, a home-school student from Kewadin after the presentations. "I love the food."

A few students dressed in black and red clothes, considered lucky colors for the New Year's celebration. All the library staff and volunteers helping at the event coordinated their wardrobes around this theme.

Nor Serocki, a sixth grade student at Eastern Elementary School, sported an authentic Chinese hat, a souvenir of her father's stint in the Peace Corps in Malaysia. She also wore the lucky colors of red and black.

"I learned a lot about how they celebrate the New Year," said Serocki, 11, after the program. "I love the Chinese culture, because

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Herald photo by Carol South

Attendees at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy winter Open House Saturday toured student training areas that mimicked life both in the pilot house as well as below decks in the engine room. Cadets and staff at the academy welcomed community members, alumni and prospective students to the new facility on Front Street.

Public finds academy shipshape

NMC Maritime Academy holds open house for new facility

By Carol South
Herald contributing writer

Throwing open their doors to the community and prospective students, staff and cadets at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy welcomed the public to their Winter Open House.

Drawing more than 1,000 people during a three-hour stretch on Saturday, the open house was a resounding success.

"The beauty of it is that it did exactly what we wanted

it to do: get Traverse City residents to come in and see this beautiful facility," said John Berck, admissions coordinator for the Great Lakes Maritime Academy. "This wouldn't be here if it weren't for the people of Traverse City."

Cadets in the program hosted the open house, answering questions, giving tours and demonstrating equipment. This year's enrollment jump to more than 100 students, providing a cadet at every turn to answer questions or

share their story.

"We had a lot of fun and no one enjoys it more than our cadets," added Berck. "One of our goals at the academy is to educate the public, not only about the academy but about the industry."

Two engine room simulators proved to be popular stops on the tour as cadets helped visitors steer a big boat on the St. Mary's River. This new simulator displays

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