

## NITELIFE GUIDE

# Open mics are testing grounds for local poets and musicians

BY ANDY TAYLOR-FABE

Record-Eagle staff writer

Whether your perfect evening involves poetry and coffee or music and beer, northwestern Lower Michigan has open mics to suit your taste, with options ranging from acoustic music to informal poetry readings.

Although Terry Wooten's weekly Stone Circle storytelling, poetry and music forum finishes up for the season on Labor Day weekend, aspiring poets and poetry aficionados will have other opportunities to practice their craft this fall.

Mike McManus and Todd Mercer host a poetry open mic once a month at the Shine Cafe, located in the lower level of Horizon Books in Traverse City.

Like Stone Circle, the participants and the audience range from high school stu-

dents to senior citizens. But unlike Wooten's event, which emphasizes memorized poems and the recitation of classic poems as well as original work, McManus said his open mic, which features mostly original work, is more of a testing ground for works in progress.

"It's helpful to read your stuff out loud. If something sounds wrong, you can go back and work on it. It's great practice — to bounce your ideas off a crowd," he said. "I don't usually read things that I know very well."

McManus also said that he had surprisingly little trouble getting the open mic off the ground last fall.

After attending a poetry workshop in California and deciding they wanted to start their own open mic,

they began to spread the word about their event. Although they advertised in local papers and talked to area high school teachers to try to involve teenagers, they relied almost completely on word-of-mouth. Although the first meeting was sparsely attended, "interest has spread," McManus said.

The event has many regulars, but some of its participants are particularly dedicated. McManus remembered a woman who came into town on her way from Grand Rapids to Petoskey just to read something at the open mic. Last winter, a poet drove from Cadillac during a snowstorm so she wouldn't miss the chance to participate.

A different kind of open mic takes place each



Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

**Mike McManus reads a selection of poems during Open Mic night at Horizon Books in Traverse City.**

Sunday at The Loading Dock bar and restaurant in Traverse City. But the bar setting doesn't mean it's a loud and raucous event.

"It's a very laid-back atmosphere," said Carmel Candela, a bartender at The Loading Dock.

Playing an acoustic guitar or piano, local musicians, both amateur and professional, entertain the crowd, mostly with original work.

"A lot of the people who play are solo songwriters — some are musicians from local bands," Candela said.

Since some of the performers make regular appearances at the open mic, there is also a regular crowd of music lovers who pack into the bar to see their favorites, Candela said.

The composition of the crowd is also a little more predictable than those at events like Shine Cafe's open mic.

"We get a lot of bar and restaurant people — that's the night to go out if you're in the business," Candela said.

## Congratulations...



**Ann Pasch**, winner of the Record-Eagle *Sailing Through Summer* giveaway.

Ann and her husband Stan will enjoy a Bed and Breakfast Cruise on the Tall Ship *Manitou*.

See page 48 for your chance to win an Old Town Kayak, paddle, and life jacket from Gander Mountain in Traverse City in the *Paddle Pacification* giveaway.

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**For more information or reservations on the Tall Ship *Manitou*, call 941-2000.**

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## Area nitelife

### ANTRIM COUNTY

**Lulu's Bistro** Open seven days a week; summer hours Mon. through Sat., lunch 11-2:30 p.m., dinner 5-9:30 p.m., Sun. Fondue Night 4-8 p.m.; 213 N. Bridge, Bellaire; 533-5252.

**The Rowe** Ellsworth, French Wine Luncheons every Sat. noon to 2 p.m.; \$10/person; 588-7351.

**Shanty Creek** Dick and Jane, Aug. 29, Sept. 12 & 13; Lee Malone, Aug. 30, Sept. 5 & 6; Justin Avery, Aug. 29, 30 & 31; Dominic, Aug. 31 & Sept. 26; Michelle Chenard,

Sept. 4, 11, 18 & 25; Chris Ventzke, Sept. 5, 6, 12, 19, 20, 26 & 27; Nelson Olstrom, Sept. 19 & 20. Shanty Creek, Bellaire; (800) 678-4111.

### BENZIE COUNTY

**Cabbage Shed** Don Jones and Friends (jazz/Dixieland), 7-10 p.m. Thu.; acoustic open mic Fri. hosted by Sharron Bay, no cover; 198 Frankfort Ave., Elberta; 352-9843.

**Crystal Mountain Resort** Thistle Pub and Grill, 11 a.m.-midnight Sun.-Thu.; Fri. and Sat. 11 a.m.-1 a.m., 12500 Crystal Mountain

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