

Festivals abound in summer

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usually something the whole family can enjoy without spending a lot of money.”

One of the biggest of this summer's many offerings can be found July 5-12 in the form of the National Cherry Festival.

The Cherry Festival has been called one of the Top 10 Civic Festivals in the country, and this year, it sees its 76th annual observance.

For eight days, cherries in all forms are celebrated through parades, competitions, sporting events, concerts, art and food — and that's just for starters.

Though very much a tradition for the area and the state, the festival plans a number of new events and offerings each year. For 2003, just one is a Very Cherry Drink Contest.

You can almost guarantee that music will be a part of any festival, but in the case of the 2nd Annual Traverse Jazz Festival, it is the reason for the event.

Last year's first-ever, six-day fete of jazz drew

around 17,000 people to music-themed offerings at venues throughout the area. This year, it runs July 24-29.

The festival has its cornerstone in the 11th Annual Suttons Bay Jazz Festival, with the headliner for that day-long musical extravaganza being legendary jazz pianist Ahmad Jamal.

During the course of the six days, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Friday Night Live and Old Town Playhouse, among others, will serve up jazz and fun for music lovers.

You can't have a festival

without food, and much like the Jazz Festival, there are dozens of other fetes whose purposes are to heighten appreciate of food and wine.

A partial list of culinary options for June includes the Lake City Fish Fest on June 7-8, the Leland Wine & Food Festival on June 14 and Alden's Annual Strawberry Festival on June 15.

July is by far the busiest summer month for festivals, and the national celebration for the 4th of July provides a springboard for many communities to have civic celebra-

tions of their own.

Events such as Lake Ann's Homecoming, Bear Lake Days and Elk Rapids' Harbor Days give communities the chance to gather together and reflect on their history and progress.

Calendars of events, available in this newspaper or through chambers

of commerce or visitors bureaus, are a helpful source of information on the festivals that take place in the summer.

Checking individual city or village Web sites or those built for specific festivals are also easy, accessible ways to learn more.

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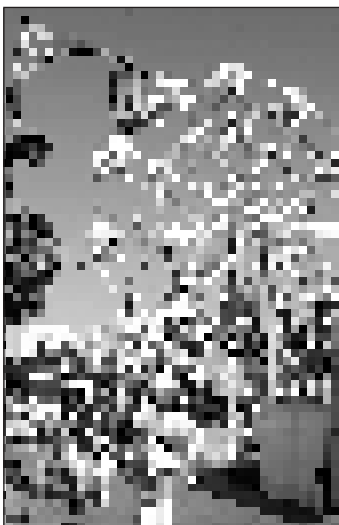
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Alpenfest will be held July 15-19 in Gaylord.