

Chalk Talk

...from the Hessel School House, home of The Avery Arts & Nature Learning Center

March 2020
Volume 4, Issue 1

Reflections on the Past, Present, & Securing the Future

During one of the most challenging periods any of us has experienced in our lives, we are pushing to get this issue of *Chalk Talk* out as soon as possible in order to convey a vital message to all our supporters that we are and will be doing everything we possibly can to help secure the future of this beloved national historic landmark that notably contributes toward perpetuating the values that make Les Cheneaux and the Eastern Upper Peninsula such a remarkable world.

Herein we review the special events and programs held over this past winter that we anticipate repeating, followed by those planned for this spring and summer. We know that some, and very possibly all, may have to be postponed or cancelled, but we will utilize our beautiful outdoors as much as possible to help ensure their occurrence. Thus, at the top of our wish list is a 20x30 tent to serve as an “auditorium” as need be.

We'll begin with the development of our Writers Program and, in his own words, Paul Gingras's experiences while attending his first national writers conference, just as the world was beginning to realize how dramatically lives might soon be changing.*

PAUL'S REFLECTIONS...

“This is the convention everyone will remember,” said Kathleen Driskell, chairman for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) at their annual gathering Thursday, March 5, in San Antonio, where Avery Arts & Nature Learning Center (ALC) was represented by myself, as its director, and author Joe Haske, a college professor and native of the Les Cheneaux area.

Attendees experienced a radical shift in perspective, right from the start, as

the worldwide spread of **Coronavirus Disease** sparked fear of infection, halved participation in the conference, and dramatically altered panel memberships. But despite health concerns, the event drew **droves of writers, publishers, teachers, students, and writing-program directors** to the Henry B. González Convention Center, where the sheer deluge of writing professionals produced an intellectual buzz that hummed like electric current.

For my part, **nature writing, community education**, experimental writing, flash fiction, and diversity activism drew me to panels on those subjects. An offering entitled, *“Not Your Parents' Nature Walk: The Next Environmental Nonfiction”* proved exceptionally relevant to ALC efforts. Guided by experts, energized nature writers converged to discuss what we've done, the history of our genre, and **where to go with nature writing in an overpopulated world that is creating a challenging future.**

Equally enthralling, the opportunity to describe ALC programs and the ease of gathering ideas from other professionals charged my mental batteries – a process bolstered by the vital abundance of high-quality coffee.

Amidst evening parties along the San Antonio River Walk, **Joe and I discussed ways to augment the ALC Writing Program**, including the possibility of working with Northern Michigan University's graduate writing programs (which we had both attended) and Lake Superior State University's undergraduate writing program. **Joe offered to help ALC develop accreditation**, an advancement that would enable us to offer college credit to writing students. **If this comes to pass, ALC will be in position to draw an everchanging melange of intellectuals to the Les Cheneaux Islands area.**



Paul Gingras at AWP National Writers Conference in San Antonio.

Throughout my conversations, **writing professionals strongly and consistently encouraged ALC to obtain a residential site for writing retreats**, an approach originally offered by ALC Writing Program creator Bonnie Mikkelsen.

For our center's purposes, the most useful element of the event proved to be the **Writing Centers & Conferences (WC&C) gathering**. A division of AWP, this group included directors of a truly eclectic group of writing-based projects. Every director offered formal advice to each other, one at a time, in rapid two-person exchanges.

Continued on next page...



Joe Haske participating in an Author Reading at AWP Writers Conference.

Each of us explored our most pressing question. Mine was this: *How should ALC go about generating turnout for writing workshops in our remote natural paradise?*

I cannot overstate the volume and quality of the answers I received. Directors from San Diego to Wisconsin shared realistic, diverse ideas, which I plan to pursue with utmost enthusiasm.

Looking at ALC's opportunity to empower writers, I find myself tasked to address another critical question: *What IS Avery Arts & Nature Learning Center?* Not a school or collective, it emerged as a **unique endeavor featuring an empowered writing program - set squarely within the most water-rich natural area left in the United States.** This is its strength, its defining characteristic. **The ALC Writing Program offers unparalleled ambience.**

With these thoughts in mind, **I fully explored how the AWP Writers Conference could aid our cause.** According to Mimi Herman, AWP representative for WC&C, *"This is the best conference in North America to exchange ideas with your peers on how to create programs that change people's lives."*

For our part, Joe and I couldn't agree more.

Paul Gingras - March 8th, 2020

*Editor's note: Immediately upon Paul's return home, he self-quarantined for two weeks and spent the time intent upon moving the program forward.

THIS SUMMER'S WRITERS PROGRAMS...

There is a special thread connecting these two programs; both authors have comparatively deep roots in the Eastern UP.

Although **Joe Haske** lives in Mission, Texas, his Les Cheneaux family **goes back at least five generations. He was born in Sault Ste. Marie and grew up in Cedarville.** His background is detailed in *Chalk Talk's* Volume 2. He has been our 'guiding light' in developing the ALC Writers Program. Author of the **award-winning book, *North Dixie Highway*,** he is a professor at South Texas College, and a member of the National Book Critics Circle and contributing editor for *American Book Review*. This will be his second workshop for Avery Learning Center. www.josephdhaske.com

Angeline Bouley's roots are more than deep! Born on Sugar Island, she is a member of the **Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.** Her father, Henry Bouley, is a traditional firekeeper, and has participated in the Native American Exhibitions here at the schoolhouse as the storyteller. Angeline was Assistant Executive Director of the Sault Tribe, and then Director of Development for the Great Lakes Boat Building School before moving on to become Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Dept. of Education. She resigned the office when **her first manuscript was acquired at auction last October in a seven-figure**



CRAFTING A BOOK-LENGTH MANUSCRIPT *

*3-day workshop with Joe Haske
June 18th-20th*

For new or established, fiction or non-fiction writers. Participants will explore the initial stages of planning and composing a book-length prose manuscript. The emphasis will be on **setting and the role of the natural environment in crafting a sense of place,** as well as various other elements of prose style and technique.



FROM SPARK TO STORY *

*An interactive workshop for aspiring writers with Angeline Bouley.
July 21st 1:00 to 5:00*

Learn more about the art and craft of writing – character/plot/theme/voice – and the business side of traditional publishing – questions to ask an agent/what happens during an auction/working with an editor. *Note: An evening reading is in the planning stage.*

***Please visit www.hesselschoolhouse.org for updates.**

deal by Holt/ MacMillan. A Young Adult thriller, titled *The Firekeeper's Daughter*, it is scheduled for publication in Spring, 2021. She describes it as the beginning of a series of indigenous Nancy Drew-type novels that she would have loved to have read when she was growing up. www.angelinebouley.com

Special Reflections on last Fall, Winter, & upcoming Events



Without a doubt, one of the most successful events to be held at the School House since its restoration was the revival of **Les Cheneaux Community Children's Halloween Carnival**, thanks to a generous donation by **Luke and Lynelle Jaroche** and **Maple Hardwoods, Inc.**, and the enthusiasm and hard work of many volunteers. The turnout of **96 children from pre-school through 5th grade**, on Saturday, October 26th, guaranteed that this will once again be a much-anticipated annual occasion.



*Acoustic guitar instructor
Ken Izzard with his class.*



*Teddy Gough and his
daughter, Tessa Jo ("TJ").*

Numerous workshops and classes to appeal to a variety of interests and age groups filled the calendar to brighten the darker months. To list a few: *writing children's literature, nature walks, carnivorous plants, winter invasive species, tracking mammals, identifying winter trees, traditional Native American art, children's leather pouch making, block printing, intro to guitar, Qigong, carving hummingbirds...*

AS WE MOVE INTO SPRING...

With deep regret, we have had to postpone our indoor events in March through May

due to the COVID-19 crisis. One that has stimulated a great deal of interest is the **Blastomycosis Seminar**, planned for Saturday, May 9th. **It has been rescheduled for next year, Saturday, May 15, 2021.**

The key speakers are leading experts on the disease, **Dr. Daniel K. Langlois DVM** of MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine; **Dr. Carol A. Kauffman, MD**, professor of Internal Medicine at U of M. Also participating are **Scott Schreiber**, Region 8 epidemiologist with the Michigan Dept. of Community Health, and local veterinarian **Dr. Clinton A. Groover**, who has diagnosed

Continued from previous page...

a number of blastomycosis cases in his practice. The moderator is **Robert A. Smith, president of the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council.**

Invitations were sent in February to veterinarians and medical professionals throughout the state; the public was to be invited this month. **We had engaged a videographer to cover the seminar for a presentation to summer residents and visitors in July, to be hosted by the Watershed Council.**



*Blasto Seminar participant
Dr. Clinton Groover.*

Blastomycosis is a fungal infection that can lead to a serious and often fatal illness in dogs (and sometimes cats) from rooting around in certain soils. In recent years, it has been diagnosed more frequently in humans as the symptoms have become more readily recognized. The fungus likes very moist soils, so it is of particular concern in this part of the world due to our wetland environment and the cedar bogs. **With our mobile society, it is critical that not only the public be better informed but also veterinary and medical professionals who practice outside of this area.**

Note: for more info re blastomycosis, please visit www.lescheneauxwatershed.org and www.lescheneauxcommunityfoundation.org

ALDO LEOPOLD FESTIVAL

Tuesday, June 2nd thru Sunday, June 7th

...celebrating one of America's most influential naturalists.

An unforgettable Les Cheneaux Islands



experience, where Aldo Leopold spent his earliest summers and developed his deep understanding and appreciation of nature and its interaction with the human soul. **He is often regarded as the father of wildlife conservation.**

The 5th annual Festival, based at the Hessel School House, offers an extensive selection of **activities for all ages** through presentations and field trips. There are birding excursions from dawn to dusk to view and listen to warblers and waterfowl and raptors and marsh birds... children's hikes...the study of bats and bees and butterflies, wood borers and bark beetles, carnivorous plants, orchids, and ferns. Hike the Aldo Leopold Preserve on Marquette Island, through the same woods he explored in his youth; enjoy paddling during sunsets and in the light of the full moon.

As this goes to press, The ALF Planning Committee is monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak and CDC recommendations for large gatherings. It is committed to everyone's safety and to providing you with a wonderful nature-based experience. It will be making the decision on or before May 1st as to holding or cancelling the event or certain portions of it. Please visit www.aldoleopoldfestival.com and www.hesselschoolhouse.org for updates, program schedule, and registration.

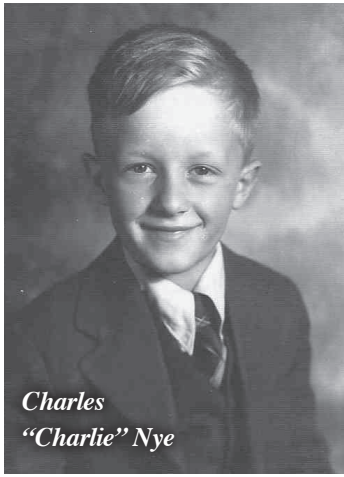
SUMMER AND THE ARTS

The Les Cheneaux Arts Council promises enchanting exhibits in the gallery and receptions to honor the artists. While much is still in the planning stage, **national award-winning watercolorist Sandy Meyer** of Coopersville, Michigan, will be returning with a **gallery showing through the month**



of July. A reception in Sandy's honor will be held on July the 30th, followed by her two-day workshop focused on realism. She'll address unique challenges in painting such as capturing an image of moving water, working with watercolor on unusual surfaces, and using egg tempered watercolor.





Charles
"Charlie" Nye

Memories of Hessel School

PART 2

by Charles "Charlie" Nye (1943-1949)

Editor's note: Charlie initiated this column in the first issue of Chalk Talk in January, 2017. It is well worth your taking the time to click on the home page of hesselschoolhouse.net to re-read it.

In September of 1943, I entered kindergarten along with Gerald Smith, Sally (Lindberg) Smale, Mike McLeod, Elenore Ferguson, Kathleen (Andrews) Landreville, Lois (Harrison) Lordson, Ray Hansen, and Carmena Poglese. I was only four years old at the time.

The school teachers and education staff knew the most important thing to learn early on was the ability to read. If one could not read they could not be educated. So from first grade on, learning to read was extremely important. The girls at this early age (6 and 7 years old) were very well ahead of the boys in book learning.

However, something strange was happening. The girls were indeed smart but the boys began to get As in reading. Markings were A-B-C-D & F. Probably some of the teachers were puzzled and not a little suspicious that something was going on. Well, something was going on but we boys kept it a secret. *The secret was comic books!*

Comic books were frowned on by educators in those days. They were considered crude and frivolous. But we loved them. We would read most of them at home, of course, but sometimes we would sneak them into school and read them in the library or in the back of the room.

One could buy them everywhere...drug stores, department stores, etc. For a lowly dime, one could purchase *Donald Duck*, *Porky Pig*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Sky King*, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Dick Tracy*, *Tarzan*, *Superman*, and many cowboy titles. The girls, of course, stuck to *Archie Comics* with *Archie*, *Jughead*, *Veronica* and *Betty*, and maybe *Wonder Woman*.

The comic books were frivolous on their story lines, but spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and proper use of nouns and verbs were all there.

On a given Saturday, I visited John and Donald Eseltine and traded 50-50. I read them all in a week and then read them again. This is where I learned to read and comprehend.

Willy Walker, another neighbor, collected westerns. He would not give up a western in trade for any reason. He stood up to begging and threatening. He would trade others but never his westerns. He was glad to *collect* a western, of course, so I would demand two of his others for one western I had.

As he grew older, Willy's collection grew to well over 100: *Roy Rogers*, *Gene Autry*, *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Tom Mix*, *Johnny Mack Brown*, *Cisco Kid*, and many others. After high school, he left home to seek his fortune. His stepmother, Violet, found his collection in his bedroom. She unknowingly treated them like old newspapers and tossed them all out. Today, that collection would be priceless.

Report cards were kept carefully by the teachers and sent home with the student every six weeks to be reviewed and signed by a parent. But reading, writing, and arithmetic weren't the only things we had to watch out for. We were graded on penmanship, deportment, persistence, citizenship, self-reliance, habits and attitudes.

The girls were the smart ones in all the grades K through 5. Sally Lindberg Smale, Mary Sue Lindberg Hill, Ruth Eseltine Kester, and Judy McDonald Old got the high grades but we boys had a thing going with our reading excellence.

Mrs. Dorothy Edgerly was a well-respected, talented teacher. For two years, in the middle 1940s, she taught K, 1st and 2nd grades, all in one room. Two more years

she taught 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, all in the other room. She kept track of our attendance, our progress, and our safety. We did not appreciate it enough. We do now. I wish I could tell her so.

Sadly, one day I scared Mrs. Edgerly so bad she almost went home at noon. We were playing softball on the west side of the school, as we did almost every day. I was batting and got hold of a good one. It smashed through the K thru 2nd grade classroom window, where she was sitting alone. Glass and debris flew all over the room. It was an accident, but I was one scared third grader. I was forgiven and not disciplined but did have my noon-hour spent sweeping up.

by Charlie Nye



Charlie's 8th birthday party – Oct. 1947
LtoR: Top row: Billy Knoy, Floyd Pierce
Middle: Patty Pierce, Johnny Eseltine, Gerald Smith, Mike McLeod, Bottom: Donald Eseltine, Nancy Knoy Reno (eating box of Cracker Jacks), Charlie holding cake, Ruth Eseltine Kester

Our Deep Gratitude continues...

for all of you who have contributed, in heartfelt ways, toward securing the future for Hessel School House and Avery Arts & Nature Learning Center.

DONATIONS

Maureen Adgar
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**denotes gifts of \$1,000 or more*

***denotes gifts of \$15,000 or more*

BUSINESSES

Les Cheneaux Distillery

FOUNDATIONS

Lenore Follansbee Broughton Fund**

MATCHING GIFTS

Morgan Stanley (Maureen Adgar)

GIFTS IN KIND

Hal Burton of Ostlund Pest Control EUP -
spraying
Nadine Cain – *tools/table/supplies*
David Dutcher – *Christmas decor*
Lisa and Shawn Fitzgerald - *materials/
construction for Children's Halloween
Carnival*
John Hessel – *snow banking*
Brad Koster – *snow banking*
Wil Reding – *file cabinet*
Marty Sherlund – *snow banking*
Robert A. Smith – *camera*

GRANTS

Americana Foundation - *\$24,000 (see note
below) nature education*
Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional
Planning & Development Commission
Community Development Mini-Grant
Program - *\$900*
Islands Wildlife - *\$2,000 for nature
conservation programs*
Les Cheneaux Arts Council - *\$4,000 arts
programs*
Les Cheneaux Community Foundation -
*\$1,000 graphics production for 2020
The Guide*
Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural
Affairs - *\$4,000 arts programs*
Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians – *\$5,000
operations*

Editor's note: The Americana Foundation's impressive grant made possible this year's notable expansion of ALC's Nature Conservation Program. Please visit www.americanafoundation.org to learn about its mission and its founders, Adolph H. and Ginger Meyer, plus the article its Executive Director Kathryn Buckner posted in February. She is looking forward to attending the Aldo Leopold Festival in June and experiencing Les Cheneaux for the first time.



ONGOING BRICK AND BENCH NAMING CAMPAIGN

4x8 Bricks

George W. Andrews: *George & Gail Andrews – Fairfax VA*

Jim & Christine Bawks: *In memory of Bob and Bertha Bawks*

John and Patricia Booth: *In memory of Rummy and Rosie Booth (w/ paw print!)*

Bobby and Krista Brown: *Keith and Ruth Kester*

Sandy and Carol Bryson: *For our friends Lucky and Elizabeth Ingram*

Laura Campbell: *The Windsor Family – Mill Pond*

Susan Causley: *Kathleen Beacom Candler*

John and Barbara Collins: *Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Club Collins*

Missy DeWick: *In loving memory of Maeve C. Fitzgerald, always in my heart.*

Marlene Wilson Ehle: *Wilson's Cottages*

Linda Calvin Gilbreath: *Follow your dreams.*

Sharon Henley: *In memory of Jerry and Earline Birge*

Danny Hitchens: *In loving memory of Anthony Jay Lee – Kellee C. McLeod*

Carol and Lee Hubbard: *Lee and Carol Hubbard*

Keith and Ruth Kester: *Keith and Ruth Kester*

Thomas and Mary Laher: *Thomas and Mary Laher, Wilderness Bay*

Greg and Beth Malcho: *Each one teach one well done. The Malcho Family*

Maureen T. Neal: *In loving memory of Charles S. Neal. He loved Hessel.*

Tracy Olmstead: *Austin (Joe) and Karen Olmstead*

Kate and Jack Otstot: *Kate and Jack Otstot*

James Pflueger: *James and Sheryl Pflueger, Les Cheneaux Dreams*

Michael Van Lokeren: *We love Bonnie.*

Bernice Rutecki: *Bernice Brenek Rutecki*

Adam and Cynthia Wellman: *The Wellman Family – 1970 to present – LaSalle Island*

8x8 Bricks

Lynn Brown: *Stefanski-Brown Family in honor of fine public schools everywhere that develop great minds.*

Anne and Bob Gottlieb: *Honoring our parents Barbara Brown Laing, D. Bruce Laing*

Sadie Nye: *Sadie Nye in memory of husband Richard E. Nye "Richie" former student Hessel School House*

Marnie and Jim Haines: *Marnie & Jim Haines – The Far Side*

Anne Tassier: *In honor of Fred & Florence Nye and their children: Harold, Dorothy, Wilbur, Percy, Marge, Fred Jr., Robert*

MEMORIAL BENCH

Janet Carrington: ** In memory of Marguerite and Nicholas H. Noyes*

Brad and Joy Vincent: *Each of us has a creative voice and vision within us. Let it be heard. Let it be seen.*

OUR GREAT VOLUNTEERS!

Debbie Beukema, Laura Campbell, Nora Cardinal, Missy DeWick, Tim DeWick, Matt Dost, Carol Duncan, Jane Dunn, David Dutcher, Selma Edsinga, Lisa and Shawn Fitzgerald, Jane French, Paul Gingras, Judy Hamel, John Hessel, Fred Hofnagle, Dave and Reyne Honkavaara, Jim and Diane Keighley, Margy Long, Beth Malcho, June Maurer, Jennifer Miller, Pauline Mitchell, Bette Nye, Carol Nye, Robin Pendery, Dan and Jan Reelitz, Susie Rutledge, Michelle Sheckler, Marty Sherlund, Kerri Smith, Linda Sudol, Lorie Thompson, Keven Turk, Pat Wilson, Kara Windsor

2020 OPERATIONS SUPPORT DRIVE

Your continued support is vital toward maintaining this exceptional historic landmark. We continually seek grants through all appropriate resources, but **many foundations choose not to support operations and maintenance. This is challenging because how can we maintain the programs without proper administration?** Thus, we must continually reach out to you to fund the basic costs of managing the facility and developing our programs to benefit the community at large.

If you are a former student (or immediate family member), you may receive **15% off any event rental in your name.** If you choose to waive the rental fee, you may treat it as a tax deduction, which will be recorded on your receipt.

Gifts of a \$1,000 may have a memorial plaque placed along the garden walkway; \$1500 gifts may have a memorial bench.

ONGOING ENGRAVED BRICK CAMPAIGN

This is such a very meaningful way to make a timeless gift. The proceeds are used toward upgrading the landscaping and prospective gardens. The bricks will be featured in areas such as the north entry patio, a small picnic patio nearby, and brick walkways throughout the grounds and gardens.

The bricks are available in **two sizes at \$100 (4x8) and \$250 (8x8).** You can note on the enclosed envelope if you wish to purchase a brick or bench, or call the office at 906-484-1333 for more information.



Wish List

1. 20x30 tent for summer outdoor programs (up to \$1,500)
2. Signage for storybook trail (up to \$750) <http://chelseadistrictlibrary.org/storybook-trail/>
3. Auditorium ceiling fan (up to \$1,000)
4. Installation of security cameras for entry and office areas (about \$2,000)
5. Funding for writers' programs
6. Donation for building custom corner bookcase/storage unit in reception area
7. Photo display stand
8. Fencing for propane tank
9. Commercial solar light for sign on M-134
10. Blinds for office area

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HESEL SCHOOL HOUSE

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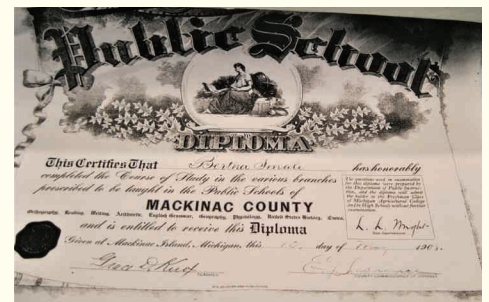
Mark your calendars,
ALUMNI!!!

**THE 5TH ANNUAL HESSEL
SCHOOL REUNION WILL BE
SUNDAY, JULY 26TH AT 4:00!**

Once again, the Board will be your hosts and supply the brats & burgers, and Tim DeWick will bring the beer. Bring a side dish, your beverages of choice, and lots of memories and stories!



Class of 1947 – Back row: Margie Andrews, Ann Causley, Cleo Pope, (unknown), Jessie Burlew, Dorothy Windsor, Mary Andrews, Loretta Mongene, Bill Walker. Middle row: Mike McLeod, Kathleen Andrews, Sally Lindberg, John Eseltine, Charlie Salters, (unknown), Charlie Nye. Front row: Elenore Ferganson, Ruth Eseltine, Lois Harrison, Judy McDonald, Gerald Smith, Ray Hansen



Mission Statement

The Hessel School House Corporation supports the Avery Arts and Nature Learning Center as the centerpiece of the Les Cheneaux Islands community for the purpose of ensuring the continued vitality and prosperity of the area and its residents.