

TRAVEL

Michigan's UP offers a Superior vacation

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

My wife, Debbie, and I had never been deeper into the Upper Peninsula than the Soo and decided this was the year to see what the rest of our Great Lakes State was like.

What we found was miles of clean, uncluttered sand beaches, picturesque rocky shores, endless miles of forest lands, lakes, rivers, dramatic cliffs, waterfalls, pleasant towns, friendly people but no bears.

The UP has yet to be tainted by developers. There are few big hotel operations north of St. Ignace. There are few kitschy shops and the forests haven't all been turned into golf courses.

For years we had vacationed in the Sleeping Bear-Leelanau Peninsula. But recently the developers have been encroaching so relentlessly that much of the area's beauty has been compromised and the people crunched around Traverse City makes it seem like you haven't left metro Detroit.

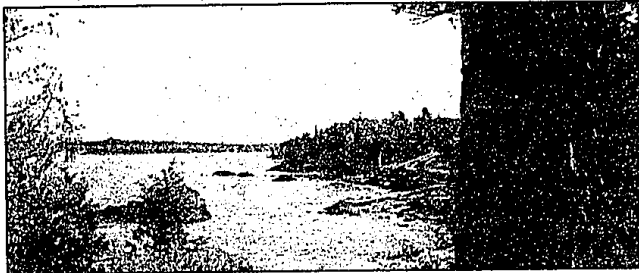
The UP has its tourist attractions (Pictured Rocks and Tahquamenon Falls) and a growing number of Indian casinos scattered about in small towns and large. It also has a history of poverty that is evident in some of the older towns and shabby crossroads. But even some of these places have a relaxed, almost 1950s summer vacation style that is preferable to the prefab vacation towns along Lake Michigan.

Once we crossed the Mighty Mac, we began to notice that the traffic became lighter as we drove along U.S. 2, a beautiful stretch of Lake Michigan beach with scenic stops. The population of the UP is only about 300,000 in an area the size of several New England states combined. Though it gets its share of summer vacationers from lower Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota, the cold Lake Superior waters (a constant 40-48 degrees), the lack of crowds at a minimum even on this ideal August week.

Our first lodging place was the Pinewood Lodge, a bed and breakfast in Au Train operated by Jerry and Jenny Krieg. We selected this place blindly from the Michigan Lake to Lake guide of the Bed & Breakfast Association.

What we found on arrival was stunning. The Pinewood is a large log home overlooking Lake Superior with a long, clean and empty expanse of beachfront inviting long walks to listen to Superior's waves splash along the shore.

The Krieges operate a low-key establishment, allowing their visitors the freedom to explore the walkways and gardens, watch ruby-throated humming birds feed, sit on a swing or in a



Rocky shores: The red rocks and green trees make a dramatic contrast on the Keweenaw shores of Lake Superior.

gazebo to watch the sunsets or take a video from a bookcase back to their room. (We watched Jimmy Stewart walk around this area in "Anatomy of a Murder.") But they are also knowledgeable guides to Superior country, quick to offer a little history and geography about the place they love. Jenny Krieg also serves a fine breakfast.

Au Train is convenient for biking, hiking, canoeing, fishing and sightseeing. From here we drove to Munising for the Pictured Rock boat cruise. This is a must. The 1-1/2 hour tour is the easy way to see this beautiful work of nature, soaring cliffs of multi-colors (caused by the seepage of water through the rocks). Our captain was a humorist as well as a guide.

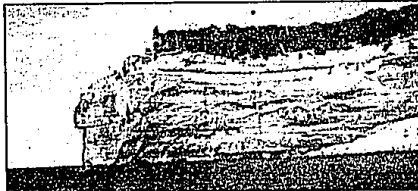
Pictured Rocks can also be hiked and kayaked. Grand Island National Recreation Area is also near Munising. This is a great place to hike, bicycle and fish. We spent a morning walking in a gentle rain and enjoyed the views and the quiet.

To the west of Au Train is Marquette, the UP's largest city (Pop. 27,000) and home to Northern Michigan University. This is a town that seems to respect its heritage. Many fine 19th century buildings downtown have been restored, including the courthouse featured in "Anatomy of a Murder."

We stopped for a pasta at Jean Kay's, in the shadow of the world's largest wooden dome. Pasties are a UP culinary specialty invented by Cornish miners to carry a lunch of beef, potatoes, onions and rutabagas in a light pastry crust. Jean Kay serves the best.

Marquette has also preserved its natural heritage on the impressive Presque Isle, a city park that invites hikers and bikers with impressive Lake Superior views.

Moving west, we continued our exploration of the UP by heading for the Keweenaw Peninsula,



Pictured Rocks: Indian Head is one of many startling rock formations on the cliffs at Pictured Rocks, best viewed from the water in excursion boats or kayaks.

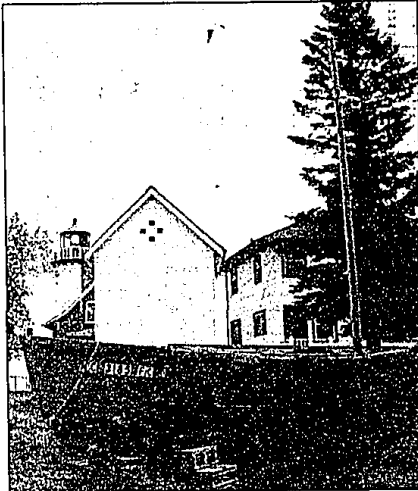
offering a contrast to the sand beaches of the Munising-to-Marquette area.

On our way to the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, we veered off U.S. 41 to drive along the Lake Superior shore on S.R. 26. We came back later to bicycle on this same road because of its dramatic rocky shore and red rock beaches. It was here that we stopped at the Jumpot, a bakery and jam store operated by monks. We bought wonderful sweet fruit cake pieces and thimbleberry jam.

The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in Copper Harbor was built in the 1930s by the CCC to provide work in the depressed copper mining country. We stayed in one of the original log cabins, notable for their cleanliness, large stone fireplaces and beautiful views.

The best restaurant we found in Copper Harbor was the wonderful Harbor Haus. Despite a kitschy German restaurant motif, the Harbor Haus serves excellent food with dramatic views of Lake Superior. Everything from the appetizer (light potato pancakes with goat cheese and apples) to the dinner (an amazing grilled trout) to dessert (a raspberry cobbler for two) was excellent and the service from our waitress, Juanita, was warm, considerate and fast, though she was at the end of a

12-hour day. After our meal we watched the sun set across the bay from the restaurant's long dock. There were many other great finds on this vacation — two excellent bookstores (84 Charing Cross in Munising and North Wind Books in Eagle Harbor); the Eagle Harbor Inn, which serves good sandwiches and pizza in an attractive wood-paneled nautical setting; numerous waterfalls; scenic turnouts maintained by the state and providing not just rest stops but walking opportunities in beautiful



Fair warning: The Eagle Harbor Lighthouse is one of many around the potentially treacherous Keweenaw Peninsula. The lighthouse is now automated and operated as a museum.

settings; a slow drive through the Soney Wildlife Refuge to watch herons and terns; biking opportunities on road and off; lighthouses, especially the Eagle Harbor lighthouse and its friendly guides; the view from Brockway Mountain; the protected beach at Bete Gris where Superior is warm enough to swim (for some); and Fort Wilkins State Park with its excellently recreated fort.

The fall season here, mid-September to early October, should offer unforgettable color views.

The UP is also a winter wonderland of ski resorts and snowmobile trails.

Anyone planning a trip to the UP should consult the excellent Hunt's Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula (Midwestern Guides, \$16.95), a great resource for discovering both the major attractions and off-the-beaten track treasures.

(Next week, closer to home in a foreign country.)

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GREAT ESCAPES

FLIGHT ALTERNATIVES OUT WEST

Sun Country Airlines is offering flights from Metro to Phoenix, Los Angeles or San Francisco starting at \$149.95 one way beginning in September and running until the end of the year. Flights go to and from LA any Tuesday and Friday; to and from Phoenix Monday and Thursday; and to and from San Francisco Wednesday and Sunday. Westbound flights leave at 9-20 in the morning and are handled by Hamilton, Miller, Hud-

son and Fayno Travel of Southfield. No minimum or maximum stay required. Call (800) 669-4466.

BOOKING MID-MICHIGAN GOLF

"One Call Books It All" has worked this summer for the Mount Pleasant Visitor's Bureau Golf Central Michigan program. Because of the casino in Mt. Pleasant, the area has become the No. 4 state tourist spot according to AAA of Michigan. Callers booked 1200 individual rounds of golf through the pro-

gram which also books lodging and offers discount restaurants. You can book one of the area's 13 golf courses now for September or October; call (517) 772-4433 or (800) 772-4433.

FALL/WINTER TRAVEL GUIDE

The new Michigan Fall/Winter Calendar of Events & Travel Guide is available free from Travel Michigan by calling (888) 772-GREAT (784-7328). Travel Michigan has set up toll-free fall color conditions — (800)MI-4-FALL (644-3255).

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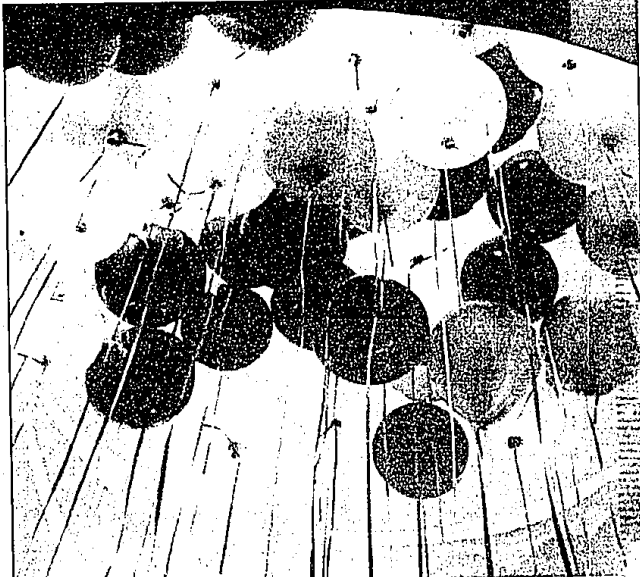
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