

Traverse City: Spectacular sunsets, shorelines, shopping

By MARY QUINLEY
SPECIAL WRITER

A Mother Nature shifts gears, local travelers begin to make plans to savor the warm seasons. For Kris Kowynia and Tom Diaz of Westland, the reservations are already made.

"This summer will be our third year going to Traverse City," said Kowynia, who loves to watch the spectacular beachfront sunsets. "We usually stay in a place on the Grand Traverse Bay."

Tucked into Michigan's northwest Lower Peninsula, Traverse City and her surrounding sister communities, present a lively mix of city life, soothing shorelines and wide stretches of grapevines sprinkled among gentle hills.

Go with a friend or take the family.

"We went to the Sleeping Bear Dunes," said Kowynia. "It's amazing! We took the scenic drive and stopped and looked out over the cliffs."

If you go...

Traverse City is approximately 250 miles from Detroit. For information on the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, call (800) 748-0303 or check their Web site: www.grandtraverseresort.com.

For information on all Traverse City area attractions, reservations, or to request a free copy of their travel guide, call (800) TRAVERS or visit their Web site at: www.mytraversecity.com

Blessing of the blossoms

On May 20 and 21, Traverse City, the largest producer of cherries in the world, will celebrate the Blessing of the Blossoms. "It's a family affair," said Jeff Haas, vice president of public relations, Traverse City Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Old Mission Peninsula, said Haas, is "literally covered with mile-after-mile of cherry blossoms." Activities include wine and sparkling juice tasting, nature hikes and walks through the Old Mission Lighthouse.

Scenic Drive

The Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive, a 7.1-mile route, features panoramic views of the dunes, Glen Lake and Lake Michigan. Once you've completed the drive, park the car and explore the dunes on foot.

"It was exhausting," said Kowynia, describing their trek to the top of the dunes. However, she added, "we ran down the

hill. I felt like a kid."

Last year the couple attended the city's National Cherry Festival. Kowynia described the fest's atmosphere as very small town, with local arts and crafts dealers and an assortment of cherry-flavored foods. "I had a piece of cherry pie," she said. "It was awesome."

The week-long celebration features activities ranging from turtle races and parties to cherry-picking contests and live entertainment. This summer, the festival is July 1-8.

How about a family-friendly, one-stop getaway on the city's fringes?

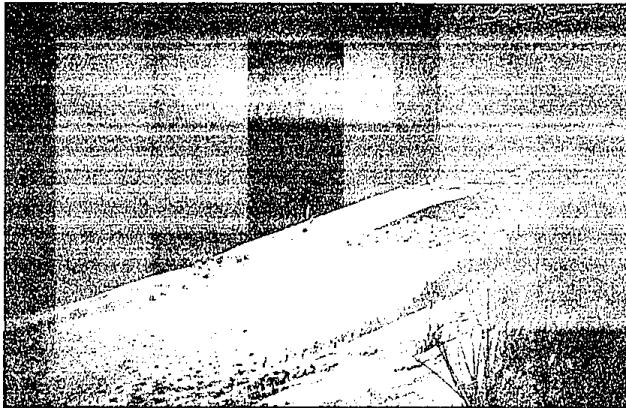
Grand Traverse Resort

The Latarski family has a suggestion. It's the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, six miles northeast of Traverse City in Acme.

"While my husband attended a conference, the kids and I found things to do at the resort," said Pat Latarski, a Livonia resident. Of course, browsing at the Tower Gallery of Shops was on her list.

"The shops were wonderful," said the mother of three children. "There were a variety of things. One store had made-in-Michigan products. Other stores carried art works and tourist-type items."

A dip in the pools (there are two) and the hot tubs ranked as favorite activities. "I did the indoor hot tub," she said. "It was



Panoramic view: A view from the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive of Sleeping Bear Dunes and Lake Michigan.

refreshing."

The Latarski liked the convenience of everything being under one roof. "In my opinion, it's better to stay in the Towers rather than the condominiums," said Latarski.

Condominium accommodations are located along the fairways of the golf courses and on the shores of the bay.

During the summer months, guests 6-12 years may participate in Cub Camp. The mix of educational and athletic options goes from drama and first aid lessons to international crafts and volleyball games. Advance registration is required.

Bring your clubs. On March 31, the resort's three championship golf courses, including The Bear, a Jack Nicklaus design, and a Gary Player-designed course, will open.

Many of the region's courses—there are more than 20—are tournament-tested and host Michigan championships. When

you inquire about accommodations, be sure to ask about packages that include lodging and golf.

While you're in Acme visit the "performing museum." A fabulous display of player pianos, nickelodeons and music boxes lines the spacious walls at The Music House.

Take the kids by the hand and meander through the rooms. You'll be treated to the sounds and sights of restored and rare antique musical instruments.

Options

Want to do something else in and around the city? How about a snooze under the stars? It can happen on the tall ship Malabar. Rustic cabins with a mid-1800s motif are available for bed-and-breakfast passengers.

Or stroll along the streets of the historic downtown area. You can taste fudge, search for antiques, and shop for miniature train cars.

A restored City Opera House

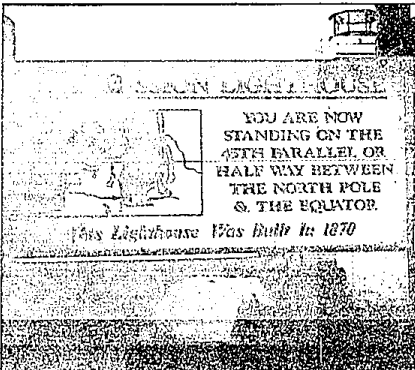
featuring summer theater; candlemaking demonstrations at the Candle Factory; and, community productions at the Old Town Playhouse supply indoor entertainment.

Feel like fishing? Coho, whitefish, trout and salmon keep anglers busy. If paddling piques your interest, rent a canoe or kayak from a local livery.

Before heading home, take a side trip: A mini-car excursion to the Leelanau Peninsula (north of the city) delights lighthouse lovers. The century-old Grand Traverse Lighthouse warned passing ships of the rocky Lake Michigan shores.

So—are you prepared to bask in Mother Nature's long-awaited scenery change? Perhaps Traverse City deserves consideration.

Mary Quinley is a Livonia resident and author of "52 Ohio Weekends." (Country Roads Press).



Sightseeing: Kris Kowynia in front of Old Mission Lighthouse, near Traverse City.

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Job Fair

Burton Manor Livonia Wednesday March 29 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Here is a great opportunity to check out a new job. You'll be able to talk to recruiters from all over the metropolitan area who are eager to discuss a new career or a career change with you.

You'll have access to a wide range of jobs, from retail to the professions—and you'll meet a lot of friendly people who are interested in you and your career goals.

JobFair 2000 is absolutely FREE. Larry Goldsmith, The Job Coach, will be on hand to help you with your resumé and give you valuable interview advice.

Mark your calendar and plan to be in Burton Manor on the 29th!

New Location!

These area businesses:

<p>Ansoburg Water Co. Accountants Connection, Inc. Alfalon Cellular Altaria Healthcare American Blind and Wallpaper Factory American Express Financial Advisors Arcomark Educational Products ABK Healthcare Services, Inc. Avia Rent-A-Car The Barber Group The Barber Group The Barber Group</p>	<p>E.J.H. Construction, Inc. Eldercare Home Care Group Employment & Training Designs English Gardens Entech Personnel, Inc. Enterprise Rent-A-Car Environ, Inc. Ethan Allen FCI USA, Inc. Federal Reserve Bank First Federal of Michigan First Federal of Michigan First Federal of Michigan</p>	<p>Home Depot HomeTown Newsprint Huntington Management Jabl Circuit Jewish Vocational Services Kinko's Kroger Company of Michigan Lease Acceptance Corp. LSG Sky Chafe Master Automatic Mattress & Futon Shoppe McAfee Consulting, Inc. Oakwood Heating & Cooling</p>	<p>Payroll Permanent Staff Company Personnel Systems Personnel Unlimited Phillips Service Industries, Inc. Pittman Security The Phoenix Group Plastopak Packaging, Inc. Premium Protection Press-Print, Alliance of Michigan Professional Medical Centers Professional Medical Centers</p>	<p>Bears Skyway Precision, Inc. Staffing Personnel Services StaffPro Services of Michigan Sylvan Learning Center TCF Bank Tempo, Inc. T.J. Maxx Total Armored Car Trans Inna Management, Inc. United Dental Service University of Michigan Health System University of Michigan Health System</p>
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