

Hemingway's Horton Bay & Walloon Lake

Ask Chris Struble, president of the Michigan Hemingway Society, which passage by Ernest Hemingway he thinks describes the region where both men spent their summers and he flips to the opening paragraph of "Summer People," one of "The Nick Adams Stories."

"Halfway down the gravel road from Horton Bay, the town, to the lake there was a spring. The water came up in a tile sunk beside the road, lipping over the cracked edge of the tile and flowing away through the close growing mint into the swamp. In the dark Nick put his arm down into the spring but could not hold it there because of the cold. He felt the featherings of the sand spouting up from the spring cones at the bottom against his fingers. Nick thought, I wish I could put all of myself in there. I bet that would fix me."

The area referenced is just across the lake from the Hemingway family's summer cottage, Windemere. Struble says the mint still grows there and the freshwater still rises from the ground.

Horton Bay and Walloon Lake lie within Charlevoix County, adjacent to Emmet County and Petoskey. The Horton Bay General Store still stands, offering a seasonal bed-and-breakfast, tavern, garden patio and soda fountain. The Red Fox Inn, one of the area's earliest homes, is now a bookstore specializing in Hemingway.



PETOSKEY CELEBRATES Hemingway's birthday

THE YEAR WAS 1899. The intersection of Bay and Lewis streets in downtown Petoskey was taking shape with the completion of the Perry Hotel — the only one of this city's grand, turn-of-the-century resort hotels still in existence.

On July 21 of that year, Ernest Hemingway was born in Oak Park, Illinois. That October, the 3-month-old Hemingway made his first visit to Northern Michigan when his family constructed its first cottage, Windemere, on the shores of Walloon Lake.

Ernest was the second of six children born to physician Clarence Edmond Hemingway and Grace Hall, an opera singer who debuted at Madison Square Garden. His impressionable youth was spent at the summer cottage, where he learned to fish and developed a love of nature.

At age 16, Hemingway and an Oak Park friend, Lewis "Lewy" Clarahan, set out to hike from Illinois to Petoskey for a summer stay. Upon arrival, Hemingway stayed at The Perry Hotel, paying 75 cents for his room, before heading to the cottage.

Although war, work and women often kept him away as a young man, Hemingway found solace among the woods and waters of Walloon Lake, Horton Bay and Petoskey. This is where he came to recover from battle wounds, a broken heart and the mental anguish that tormented him most of his life.

These locales also found their way into the pages of his books, specifically "The Torrents of Springs," a 1926 parody novella, and many of "The Nick Adams Stories," which were published posthumously in 1972.

Regarded as one of the most influential writers of our time, Hemingway was honored with a Pulitzer Prize in 1953 for "The Old Man and the Sea" and with the Noble Prize in Literature in 1954. Yet, even with the success of his articles, short stories, novels and screenplays, he could not escape his demons. In 1961, Hemingway — like his father, two siblings and several other descendants since — ended his own life.

Today, the communities of Northern Michigan host events focused on the author's life and works.



The 2nd Annual Hemingway Birthday Celebration will be held 6 p.m. Thursday, July 21, at the historic Stafford's Perry Hotel in downtown Petoskey. For \$50 per person, guests will enjoy a five-course Hemingway-inspired dinner alongside distinct Hemingway historians, in honor of the author's 117th birthday. Space is limited and reservations are required by calling (231) 347-4000.

Petoskey residents hope this will be the summer that a statue, based on a 19-year-old traveling Hemingway, will be unveiled in Pennsylvania Park. A documentary, "Young Hemingway Finding His Muse in Northern Michigan," by Michigan filmmaker George Colburn also will hopefully be released in time for the celebration.

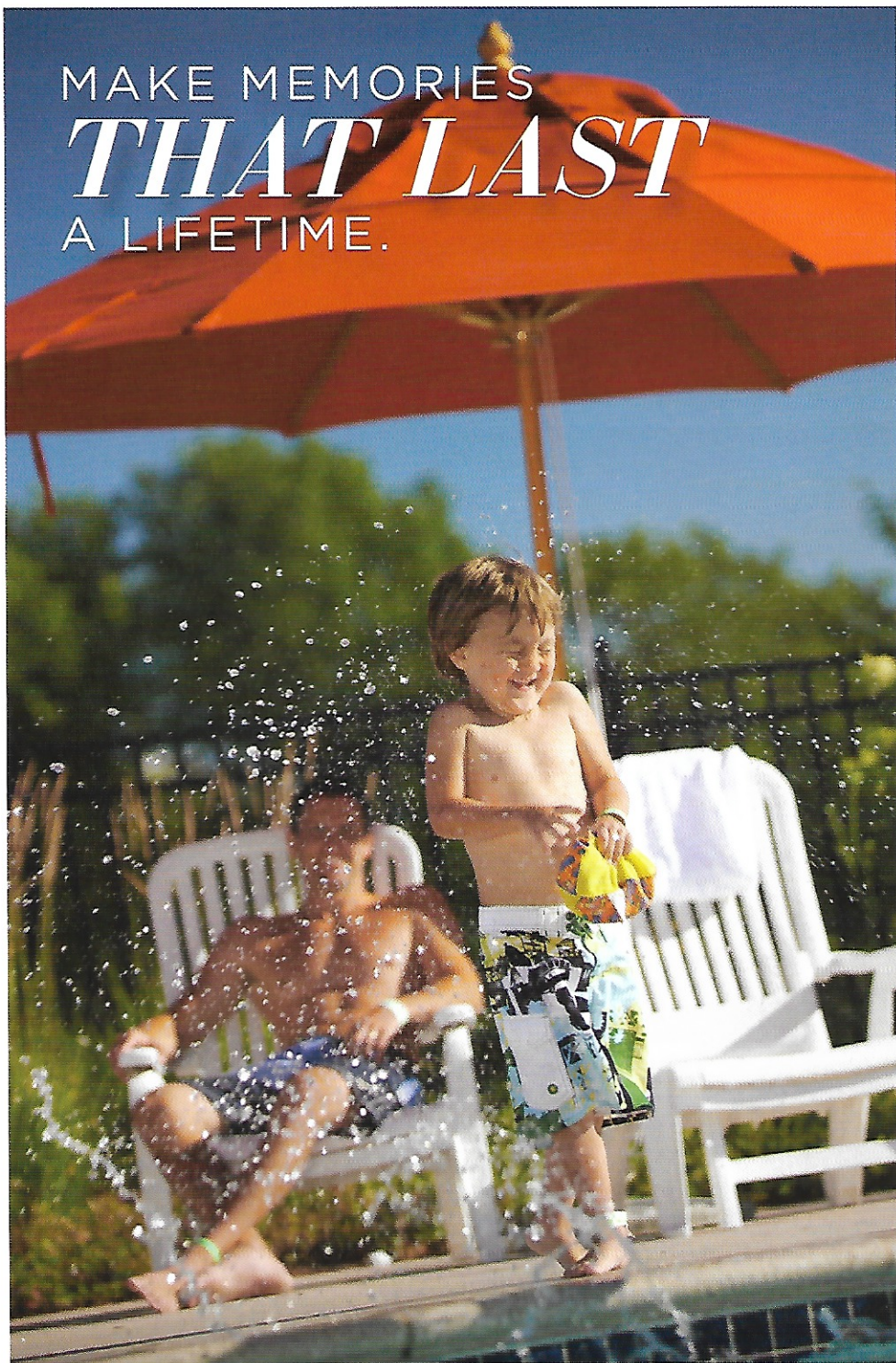


Later in the season, the Michigan Hemingway Society Fall Conference, October 14-16, will again feature lectures, authors and tours. Petoskey also hosts A Moveable Feast Weekend to coincide with the conference, with events such as the 5K Run with the Bulls, Winner Takes Nothing Chili Cook Off and To Have and Have Another Drink Tent, as well as screenings of Hemingway movies.

For more information, visit mihemingwaytour.org and petoskeyarea.com.

— Dianna Stampfler

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