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MILLER FAMILY

FARM

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UNCHARTED WATERS

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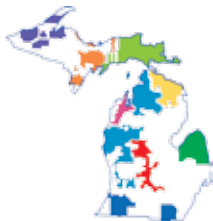
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Photo—Rudy Malmquist



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Kneeling left to right: Jake Miller, Hannah Miller

Photo—Emily Prehoda

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Date of Incorporation: Sept. 30, 1937
Fiscal year-end: Dec. 31
countrylines.com/coops/ontonagon

Ontonagon County REA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Principles + Values = Cooperatives



Debbie Miles
General Manager

All cooperative businesses around the world operate in accordance with the following seven cooperative principles.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Less known is the fact that cooperatives have also adopted a set of values that help to put these principles into practice. Cooperatives are based on the values of **self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity** and **solidarity**. In the tradition of their founders, co-ops believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Let's take a closer look at these values and see how they impact us here at Ontonagon REA. The founders of the co-op created it to serve the members that use the electricity and other services we provide, and we continue to do that today. This embodies the values of *self-help*, taking action and doing what needs to be done. We also know we must embrace the value of *self-responsibility* and be accountable to you, our member.

Each member has one vote, no matter how much electricity you use. This ensures that *democracy* is practiced the way it is intended with *equality* for all members. This is a key difference between co-ops and investor-owned companies where the number of votes you have depends on the number of shares you own.

For co-op members, *equity* has two meanings. We strive to treat all of our members fairly. It also means that, as a member, you have *equity* (ownership) in the co-op.

While each co-op is autonomous, we do act in *solidarity* with other co-ops and our community. We know that we can do more for you by partnering with other co-ops and like-minded organizations.

Your parents were right when they said, "Honesty is the best policy." As an owner, you have the right to expect us to act with openness and in a transparent manner. We welcome your active participation in our co-op.

Cooperatives have long (and correctly) been identified as the original socially-responsible business, meaning we care about the impact we have on the community while ensuring we are economically viable.

We try to demonstrate our concern for the community through caring for others every single day. By using our values in support of our principles since our founding in 1937, we have been able to serve you for the past 79 years and will carry on these traditions into the future. ■

Virtual Home Energy Audit

By Tom Tate

Is your home using energy efficiently? Unless it was built quite recently to stringent energy efficiency standards, there are bound to be areas of your home where you can improve efficiency, save money and reduce your carbon footprint.

In a perfect world, your best option is to hire a trained professional to conduct a full-blown, in-home energy audit. This usually involves a detailed inspection of your home's insulation levels, HVAC system, lighting, appliances and exterior space. A professional energy auditor will typically conduct a blower door test to check pressurization and spot hard-to-find leaks in the exterior. Also, a professional may use a duct blaster to identify leaks in your home's ductwork.

One drawback to the in-home energy audit is finding a time that works with your busy schedule. An energy audit can typically take several hours.

Luckily, there is a viable alternative: the online or "virtual" home energy audit. These online tools have come a long way over the last 10 years. Today's online energy audits are user-friendly and take only a few minutes to complete. An online energy audit can provide an assessment of your home's energy efficiency and typically provides helpful tips on how to reduce energy waste. The audits utilize sophisticated computer models that typically use local housing types—factoring in the age, size, flooring and construction materials of the home—and local weather data.

I have used several of these audits and found they typically come within a dollar or two of my actual energy bills when fed the correct information. Amazing! True, the audit won't provide a pressurization test of your home and ductwork, but it is a convenient start.

Here's where to look for online energy audits:

- michigan-energy.org/audit/Ontonagon
- The Department of Energy (hes.lbl.gov/consumer/)

A word of caution: Be careful when using online energy audit software provided by organizations other than utilities, government agencies or universities. Unfortunately, some companies may try to obtain information to sell their products and services. If you see phrases like, "Learn what your



power company does not want you to know" or the site looks like a marketing page, I'd suggest moving on. Unless you are dealing with a local electric co-op or your trusted fossil fuel provider, do not provide any personal information outside of your physical address (for data accuracy) or an email address for receiving a full report.

If an online energy audit doesn't interest you, the Department of Energy offers a DIY energy audit section on their website at energy.gov/energysaver/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits.

The bottom line? Choose the energy audit that works for you, then implement as many of the recommendations as you can. Even taking small steps can add up to significant results and you'll see the benefits in your utility bills for years to come. ■

NO BARRIERS

ADVENTURES FOR RURAL VETERANS—APPLY BY JAN. 31

Michigan electric cooperatives believe there should be “No Barriers” for veterans with disabilities. That’s the name and idea behind CoBank’s No Barriers initiative. Michigan cooperatives are looking for qualified veterans* from our local community to participate.

No Barriers is a five-day, all-expenses-paid, expedition in Colorado, designed to help veterans with disabilities transform their lives through curriculum-based experience in challenging environments (climbing, rafting and hiking).

If you are a disabled veteran, or you know of a disabled veteran in our community who would like to participate in the No Barriers program, please complete the form on our website:
countrylines.com/nobarriers

**Must have VA disability rating to be eligible.*



Storm Watch: Plan Ahead And Be Prepared

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Your electric cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared. Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving you without power. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

Winterize Your Home

- Inspect and maintain heating equipment and chimneys to ensure they’re working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to stop air leaks and related heat loss.
- Freezing temperatures can cause water pipes to burst. Wrap pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. From the inside, windows can also be covered with plastic.

- Make sure everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it. House fires occur more often in winter, especially from using alternative heating unsafely.

Stay Warm And Safe

Plan ahead for alternate heating or other places you can go. A fireplace, propane space heater or woodburning stove is sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented and used with caution—make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working. If you use a portable generator, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload it, and use a proper outdoor extension cord that can handle the electric load.

Visit ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239) for more tips on preparing for winter storms. ■



ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE
YOUTH TOUR



Michigan Co-ops Inspire Tomorrow's Leaders Today With **YOUTH TOUR 2017**

An exclusive summer highlight for the best and brightest youth in the state.
June 10–15, 2017

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors (going into their junior or senior year this summer) and is sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives. From the battlefields of Gettysburg to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., the program explores the leadership lessons of our nation's history and will immerse students in the cooperative spirit.

Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

**Youth Tour applications accepted
between now and Feb. 28.**

Trip Highlights Include:

- Visit the Gettysburg Civil War battlefields
- See Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner"
- Explore the Washington, D.C., monuments and memorials
- Attend a theater performance at the Kennedy Center
- Explore the museums of the Smithsonian Institution
- Pay respects at Arlington National Cemetery
- Meet with Michigan Senators and Congressmen
- Batter up! Enjoy a Washington Nationals baseball game

**Additional information and online application
are available at CooperativeYouthTour.com.**

Agribusinesses: Save Energy And Money Now

Reducing the amount of energy used to power your farm equipment is a smart way to cut costs. Upgrade your outdated equipment today to save energy and receive cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program.

Rebates For Energy-Efficient Products And Equipment

Receive cash back when you purchase and install energy-efficient measures, such as: low-energy livestock waterers, fans and controls, milk-handling equipment, variable speed pumps, dairy refrigeration tune-ups, lighting upgrades and controls, water heaters, and more.

Farm Energy Audit

The Energy Optimization program has partnered with the Michigan Farm Energy Program (in conjunction with Michigan State University

Extension) to offer a \$500 rebate toward the cost of a farm energy audit. The audit will help you identify where and how to implement practical, energy-saving alternatives to outdated, inefficient equipment.

Rebates For Custom Projects

Have an energy efficiency project in mind, but don't see it on our list? The Energy Optimization program provides rebates for innovative and unique energy efficiency projects designed to meet specific needs, such as long-day lighting systems, milk harvesting and cooling equipment, high-efficiency, in-floor radiant heat, and more.

These are just a few of the energy-saving offers currently available for Michigan agribusinesses. View all farm services incentives at michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for details. ■



Farm savings for the long haul

Reduce your energy use and costs now and into the future! The Energy Optimization program provides cash incentives for installing energy-saving lighting, fans, controls, pumps, compressors, and more.

ENERGY TIP: Custom rebates are available for large or complex projects unique to your agribusiness.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Wild Weather



This is a storm moving in from the west taken near the lift bridge in Hancock. Very ominous!
By Mary Kaminski, Hancock



Submit A Photo And Win!

Ontonagon REA members whose photos we print in *Michigan Country Lines* will be entered in a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit up to \$200 on their December 2017 energy bill!

Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Family** due **Jan. 15**—March issue and **Planes, Trains and Automobiles** due **March 15**—May issue.

To submit photos, and for details and instructions, go to

<http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Lake Superior starts to kick into higher gear every fall, as seen here at the breakwater leading out to the Keweenaw Waterway Lower Entrance Light near Jacobsville. By Nathan Miller, Chassell



The Porcupine Mountains. By Tiki Wilson, Ontonagon

HEALTHY LIVING

Great tasting, good-for-you recipes.

Energy Bars

Joyce Tamminga,
Great Lakes Energy

- 1 cup peanut butter, sunflower butter or almond butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup honey
- 3 cups rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ground flaxseeds or chia seeds
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 cup any combination of nuts, seeds, and soft dried fruit (sunflower seeds, raisins, dried cranberries, etc.)
- shredded coconut

Combine the peanut butter and honey in a large mixing bowl and stir until smooth. Gradually add oats and chia seeds/flaxseeds. Add chocolate chips and nut/seed/fruit mixture. Mix gently to combine. Use a 7x11 or 9x9 pan sprayed with baking spray. Sprinkle bottom with coconut, pat down mixture firmly, and sprinkle more coconut on top and pat down. Refrigerate and cut into small bars. Enjoy for a healthy snack! Keep refrigerated.



Fresh Corn Salsa

Mary Babcock, Thumb Electric



- 2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- ½ cup red pepper, diced
- 1–2 jalapeños, seeded and minced
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped
- 4 teaspoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Sauté corn over medium-high heat until kernels begin to char. Set aside to cool. In a medium bowl, combine onion, red pepper, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, and salt. Add sautéed corn and stir to combine. Enjoy with fresh chips!

Overnight Oatmeal (Muesli)

Mary Ellen Wynes, HomeWorks Tri-County



- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup yogurt (your choice)
- any fruit
- any nuts
- any fruit juice

Combine your oatmeal and yogurt. Add your fruit juice, nuts and fruit. Stir and refrigerate overnight. Enjoy in the morning!

Delicious And Healthy Avocado Pudding

Cindy Dickinson, Presque Isle Electric



- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- pinch of salt
- chocolate chips

Mash avocado in bowl until smooth. Stir in rest of ingredients. Chill 30 minutes or more. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top as garnish.



Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

Join our exclusive online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

Please submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

“Muffins & Breads” due Feb. 4

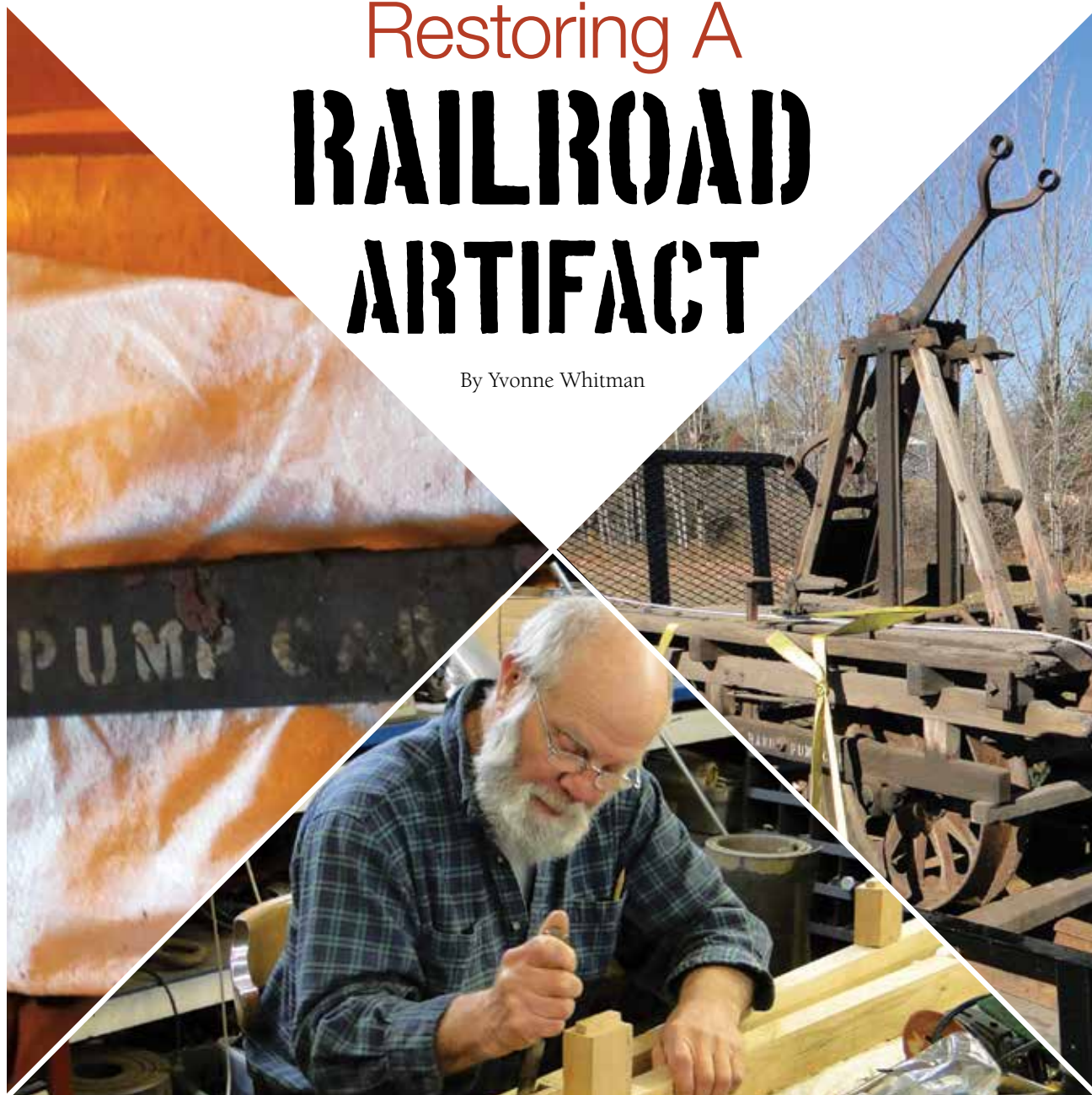
“Breakfast & Brunch” due Mar. 4

Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

Go to micoopkitchen.com to register.

Restoring A RAILROAD ARTIFACT

By Yvonne Whitman



Left: An original piece from the car. Center: Gerry at work on the car. Right: The pump car in the original condition it arrived in before Gerry began working on it.

Photos—Shirley Lamma

Peering inside a shed in 2013, Copper Country resident Gerry Lamma had no idea that his curiosity would result in a three-year restoration project. That day, while assisting his friend, Ron Whiting, with some volunteer work at the Quincy Hoist Mine in Hancock, Gerry happened to notice an old dilapidated shack with the door ajar. Looking inside, he immediately noticed what appeared to be an old railway pump car. "It was bent and twisted, and in very rough shape," he recalls, but for the man who has had a lifelong interest in trains and history, it was a diamond in the rough.

Some investigating revealed that the four-man pump car had originally been used by mine workers to patrol the rail line that ran between Calumet and Hancock. Checking for washouts and general railway repair work, the car was readily able to be lifted off the railway by the men when an oncoming train warranted quick evacuation from the tracks.

The pump car was another historic remnant of the magnificent copper mining history of the area. The Quincy Hoist Mine, in operation from 1846 to 1945, was the most successful of the 1840s-era mines

and, in 1863, was the country's leading copper-producing mine. When the mine ceased production in 1945, the shaft number two was, at 9,260 feet, the world's deepest shaft. After the heyday of the mining era had ceased, the Quincy Mine, along with other Copper Country mining sites remained defunct. But, in 1992, when the Keweenaw National Historic Park was established, the Quincy Mine Hoist and surrounding areas became a part of it and are now a popular tourist attraction.

After initially spotting the car, Lamppa approached the Quincy Mine Association Board of Directors with a proposal to restore the car. The Board agreed and, in the fall of 2013, the car was transported to the heated garage of Gus Haapala, one of Gerry's neighbors. He immediately got to work on the pump car but quickly discovered that it was going to take some patience to bring the car back to life. "There were no blueprints or guide books to refer to," he recalls. "I just had pieces, so there was a lot of, 'measure, drill, measure again.'"

In the spring of 2016, he brought the car to a barn at his own home where he began to reassemble a working car. A true stickler for detail, Gerry states, "Anything less than perfect and I wasn't going to

be a happy camper." But three years later, and an estimated 400 hours of painstaking restoration, he was satisfied with the outcome and recalls thinking, "Thank you, Lord."

None of this came as surprise to Shirley, Gerry's wife of 44 years. "He's always loved trains." As for his dedication to the project, she states, "He's done a lot of things very well in his life. If he pursues it, he can do it."

In October 2016 the car was returned to the Quincy Mine, good as new, and was met with an appreciative review. According to Whiting, "Gerry's work is impeccable. He is known for his unique carpentry work, and he is extremely attentive to detail. The restored car truly reflects this."

Lamppa had support and assistance with the project from Michigan Tech's Foundry Department, Peninsula Powder Coating, and other friends who all stepped up.

To see what the restored car looks like, visit the Quincy Hoist Mine when it reopens in the Spring of 2017. For more information on the mine, visit the website at quincymine.com. ■



Gerry and his wife Shirley pictured with the restored pump car.

Photo—Yvonne Whitman

"If we don't care about our past, we cannot hope for the future."

—Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis



Historic photo of the Quincy Mine when it was in operation.

Photo—MTU archives.



MILLER FAMILY

FARM

— A LEAP INTO —

UNCHARTED WATERS

By Yvonne Whitman

After a long career in the construction business, Rob Miller, then a Madison, WI, resident, found himself at a crossroad when he lost his job during the 2008 economic downturn. During this time, his son, Jake, was working for a vegetable farmer. Jake's work in the agriculture industry piqued Rob's interest in how foods were being grown. "I realized that food is a commodity that will never go away," Rob says. It was a realization that steered him and Jake to investigate alternative methods for farming. "And that led us to aquaponics," Rob explains.

Aquaponics is the marriage of aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (the soilless growing of plants) that grows fish and plants together in one integrated system. The fish effluent provides an organic food source for the growing plants, and the plants provide

a natural filter for the water in which the fish live. This environmentally-sustainable method of farming is free of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, plus it uses just one-tenth of the water expended in traditional field growing methods.

The Millers began working with Nelson and Pade, a Wisconsin aquaponic company, to learn everything they could about the technology. When trying to decide where to locate their operation, the decision was easy. "When I was a kid my favorite spot was Michigan's Upper Peninsula to visit my grandparents. I love it up here," Rob reflects.

In 2013, Rob, his wife, Dawn, and their three children all took a leap of faith into uncharted waters and moved their family to a seven-acre farm in Carney. Once owned by his maternal great grandparents, the farm is currently owned by Rob's parents, Fred and Sandy. Purchasing a nearby additional 60 acres, Rob began construction on the first building for the aquaponic operation.

In 2016, the farm was recognized as one of three finalists in the Governor's Energy Excellence Award for Best Project in the Agriculture sector.



Tilapia are a critical component to the farm. Jake is holding a fish in front of one of the farm's six fish tanks. Each carefully monitored 500-gallon tank holds approximately 250 fish.

The first shipment of 276 tilapia fish were delivered in 2014. It took them approximately one year to get the system operating at full capacity, growing both fish and produce. So, how does it work? The nutrient-rich water from the fish feeds the 200 lettuce seeds that are planted every day, six days of the week. Approximately 40 days later, the crop is harvested and ready to sell. The farm now produces several types of lettuce, kale, tomatoes and cucumbers. The produce is sold in 10 U.P. grocery stores, in addition to supplying healthy food to the Carney and Gladstone school lunch programs. This has all been accomplished with little to no advertising, but rather through word-of-mouth publicity. The quality of the produce advertises for itself, the Millers attest.



Rob Miller proudly stands in the rows of his impressively tall tomato plants.

Photos—Emily Prehoda

Still in its infancy, the operation will reach full capacity in five years when it is expected to produce 60,000 heads of lettuce and 70,000 pounds of tomatoes annually. Future plans include a certified kitchen on-site, so that they can sell the fresh fish, as well as constructing more greenhouses for crops, such as strawberries and peppers.

Family involvement weaves its way through the fabric of the farm with Rob's son, Jake, handling fish operations, his daughter, Hannah, as a greenhouse technician, and son, Jon, as general help. Rob's wife, Dawn, initially a bit reluctant at the prospect of relocation, adds, "Now that I'm up here, I love it. I love working on the farm. I've always enjoyed gardening, and this is just gardening on a different level."

"I have to attribute all of this to my mom and dad," Rob thoughtfully acknowledges. "They have been entrepreneurs their entire lives, and they taught by example. I saw first-hand their successes and failures and how they got through them. Those sorts of life lessons helped me through my own trials and errors with this business."

Together, as a family, the Millers have traversed uncharted territory to be able to supply fresh, sustainable food throughout the U.P.'s four seasons.

Miller Family Farm is a member of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association. For more information on the farm, contact them at 906-639-2506, millerfamilyfarm2013@gmail.com or eatupmichigan.com. 🐟

VEGETARIAN MINESTRONE

A Miller Family Farm Favorite

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, diced
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced into thin half moons
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 tablespoons chicken flavored seasoning (vegetarian)
- 6 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon steak sauce
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (Annie's vegetarian)
- 12 ounces fresh kale, chopped
- 3 ½ cup tomatoes, crushed
- 4 cups spaghetti sauce (homemade or store bought)
- 3 ½ cups navy beans canned (drained & rinsed)
- 1 ½ cups zucchini, cut into small bite size
- 2 cups ditalini, cooked (or other small pasta)
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add onion, garlic, celery and carrots. Sauté 2–3 minutes until onion is translucent. Add mushroom, oregano and basil and cook 2 minutes over medium heat or until mushrooms are softened. Prepare broth by dissolving vegetarian chicken seasoning into boiling water, then add to pot with onion mixture. Add steak sauce, Worcestershire, kale, tomatoes, spaghetti sauce and beans. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 10–20 minutes, add zucchini and cook 10 more minutes or until zucchini is tender. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, then add the cooked pasta. Remove from heat and serve. Makes about 1 gallon.



Find this recipe and more at **micoopkitchen.com**.

View from inside the burner of the still-intact, beautiful, steel and wire mesh dome. The dome prevented embers from escaping from the burner.

Photos—Emily Prehoda

The Nahma Burner Standing Proud for 117 Years

By Yvonne Whitman

Driving into the quaint Upper Peninsula town of Nahma, it is impossible not to notice the imposing 125-foot-tall structure looming on the shore of Lake Michigan. 'The Burner,' as it is referred to locally, is an iconic and historical landmark, a reminder of an era gone-by from the town's bustling lumber-industry heyday.

In 1881, the Bay de Noquet Company built a mill in Nahma to process lumber from trees that had been harvested from the 220,000 acres of timberland that it owned in Alger and Delta counties. Logs for the mill were floated down the Sturgeon River, and the mill operated each year from spring until the freezing of the river forced a shutdown in early winter. The lumber was then shipped on barges, mainly to New York and Chicago, for use in the demanding construction industry.



A historic photo (L) of the burner picturing one of the conveyors that transported wood waste from the saw mill directly to the burner. The conveyors no longer exist. The photo on the right is the burner in its present-day condition.



Amazingly the weathervane atop the historic burner has stayed intact throughout 117 consecutive years of U.P. weather.

Bay de Noquet Lumber, like every mill at the time, struggled with how to handle the unwanted wood product generated by the sawmill, and disposal of it created an ongoing problem. Burners were eventually developed to provide a contained method to dispose of the bark, sawdust and shavings. In 1899, the company built a towering burner complete with conveyors that took the unwanted byproduct directly from the sawmill and transported it into the burner.

Along with a sawmill and burner, a company town emerged, and Nahma soon had a school, general store, hotel, hospital, clubhouse and a company payroll building. At its peak, the mill and logging operations employed 1,200 people; and for more than 70 years the company town flourished. However, in 1951, with timber supplies dwindling, the last board was cut, and the lumber company sold all its holdings, including the town, to the American Playground Company. The company used the facilities to produce the wooden components for playground equipment. In 1989, due to rising costs in shipping the finished products and the fact there were only six employees left, most at retirement age, American decided to relocate Nahma operations to Indiana. The mill was now quiet, and the townsfolk were concerned about their futures. With everything else becoming a memory, the burner continued to stand proudly at the water's edge.

Today the burner is both an icon and a representation of the timber industry of the 1900s. According to Nahma Recreation Coordinator Glenn Lamberg, "It really is a link to the past for current residents and living descendants. The burner is a reminder of their ancestors, the true pioneers of logging in the U.P." Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2011, the burner is the last known one of its kind in the United States.

But the burner has begun to deteriorate, and the structure is now at a slight tilt. Remediation to

prevent the structure from falling into the lake will be necessary. Formal efforts to save the burner began in December 2013 when a grassroots group, in conjunction with the Nahma Township Historical Society, formed a committee. The group recently received the results of an engineering study that indicated it would cost around \$370,000 to repair the structure. The group is actively seeking public and private funding. "There is grant money out there to fund historic preservation," Lamberg explains. "What we need is for someone in our community with grant writing expertise to step forward and help us out."

If properly preserved, 'The Burner' will continue to stand as a beacon for future generations to appreciate and understand the significance of the lumber era to the history of the Upper Peninsula. Donations and community involvement are still needed to bring this important project to fruition.

For more information on the project and to find how you can help, visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/savethenahmaburner/. ■



One of the mill's working crews circa 1920. Company records indicate that at one time the mill employed 1,200 people.



A photo from a story on the Bay de Noquet Company selling all of its holdings, including the town of Nahma, that ran in the October 1951 issue of *Life* magazine.

Sky's The Limit

By Jack O'Malley

What happens when you combine a master electrician, educator, licensed contractor and self-described tinkerer? You get Mike Schmerl, an instructor at Northwestern Michigan College and owner of Panoramic Electricity.

Since starting his electrical company 23 years ago, Mike has made the study of electricity something of a hobby, fueling the fiddler within while inspiring a new generation of electricians. In fact, one of Mike's electrical apprenticeship classes was awarded a grant to study solar power. With his home now covered in solar panels, wired with various switches and batteries, Mike uses his personal experiences with this alternative energy source in the classroom. And his students seem to be warming to the idea.

"Solar has amazing benefits," Mike said. "We are much further along in its day-to-day use than people even know." An electric car, for instance, can run approximately 238 miles between charges. Mike says, "that pretty much covers the average day driving for most of us."

But what happens when you combine an electric car with solar power? Mike discovered you can have an affordable and comfortable means of transportation as proven by the solar powered golf cart he built! And while he admits some working vehicles might still need gas or diesel fuel to operate, Mike remains confident that soon we'll be picking up groceries in electric powered cars.

Some argue that Michigan's often cloudy, overcast skies make solar impractical. Mike insists that's not true. He cites Germany, a country sharing its latitude with Michigan, as a global leader in solar energy. While acknowledging that solar might not be the total solution to man's energy needs, Mike



says sun power complements other energy forms, pointing out that "even oil companies see the value of finding alternative energy sources so as to extend their production life."



Jack O'Malley

Describing solar power as the perfect marriage of old and new technology, Mike understands many of us will never be truly off the grid. "We will always need bigger generating capacity to power an ever-growing infrastructure," Mike explained. "If you want a hot tub or larger appliances, you will always need the power grid." ■

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