

Leelanau Enterprise

MICHIGAN NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

75¢

Vol. 141 — No. 49

Lake Leelanau, Michigan 49653

Thursday, September 6, 2018 Three Sections

44 Pages

Copyright 2018, Leelanau Enterprise, Inc., all rights reserved.

County Rain Spigot Opens Up

VERY WET	VERY DRY
12 Days	14 Days
Aug. 24-Tues.	Aug. 10-23
6.13"	.02"

Source: National Weather Service, Maple City weather post

Supervisors mixed on Ironman

By Eric Carlson
Of The Enterprise staff

The supervisors of seven townships in Leelanau County that may be asked to host parts of a 56-mile-long Ironman biking event next summer are expressing mixed opinions on the prospect.

While backlash against Ironman was expressed following a recent County Board meeting, it will be up to township boards to decide whether to allow the race to pass through their jurisdictions. So far, some township supervisors appear supportive, while others are not.

Organizers of the Ironman Triathlon have proposed holding a "Half-Ironman," a 70.3-mile

event in the Grand Traverse region on Aug. 25, 2019.

Officials of the City of Traverse City have already agreed to host a 1.2-mile swim as part of the triathlon off Clinch Park in West Grand Traverse Bay. As now designed, the city park would also serve as the start and finish of a 13.1-mile run onto the Old Mission Peninsula in Grand Traverse County, and a 56-mile bike ride in Leelanau County.

Mainly for liability reasons, the Leelanau County Road Commission has recently been requiring townships to apply for permits to use county rights-of-way on behalf of organizations that want to use the roads for bicycling events.

That will require votes by Township Boards in as many as seven Leelanau County townships through which the bike route might go.

Speaking to the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners at its regular monthly meeting on Aug. 21, Trevor Tkach, president of the Traverse City Tourism organization, said he and other Ironman proponents plan to pitch the idea next month to township boards in Leelanau County.

All seven of the township supervisors queried

(Concluded on Page 19)

Dams work to keep lake levels

By Jen Murphy
of the Enterprise staff

With Lake Leelanau water levels at least half a foot higher than normal, whitewater is pouring out of the Leland Dam and Leelanau County maintenance director Jerry Culman is working hard to manage the flow.

"Everything is saturated. We've gone from one extreme to the other," Culman said.

The lake is six inches above a Circuit Court order at the Narrows, and higher at the south basin, he explained.

He's doing what he can, lowering the gate on the Leland River that regulates water flow to Lake Michigan.

"The past 24 hours, even though I've lowered the gate, the level only came down one inch," he said. "I'm hoping I can slow things up in a day or so. The amount of water and energy that's going on is dangerous. It's whitewater almost down to Carlson's."

It's a tricky situation to manage since too much water can cause erosion issues as it flows through Fishtown. He's been down to the dam every morning since last week trying to make adjustments to the water flow, and he said he will go down multiple times a day so charters can get in and out of Fishtown.

So Culman will be patient.

"I would like to drop the gate, but because of the Lake Michigan high water levels, it doesn't flow ... and only so much comes through the Leland River," he said. "It's a bottleneck effect. We need to dredge the Leland River to increase

(Concluded on Page 19)



SCHOOL'S OPEN

Lillian Bob couldn't wait for her first day at Leland Public School, and the thought of being in Mrs. Scott's second grade classroom. "I'm excited about school," she said. She's shown with her father, Robert Neddow.

No pact for G-L teachers

By Amy Hubbell
Of The Enterprise staff

A mediator may be called in to help Glen Lake teachers and the Board of Education negotiate a contract — something that has proven difficult through eight months of negotiations.

Members of the Glen Lake Federation of Teachers (GLFT) returned to the classroom this week just as their previous contract expired Friday, Aug. 31.

They are the only teachers in the four county public school districts working without a contract.

And that's something new for Laker staff who are members of the American Federation of Teachers.

"As far back as current employees can remember, the GLFT and Board of Education have been able to reach an agreement before the start of the school year," said Jennifer Gretzmacher, GLFT president.

In the last several months, Gretzmacher said the GLFT has received three formal, written proposals from the school district. Two were taken to a vote and were nearly unanimously rejected.

"The main criticisms focused on the board's desire to take away current benefits and required additional work without equitable compensation," the union president said.

Talks have been ongoing since January. Yet, the

(Concluded on Page 16)

Glen Arbor's new sign to go dark

By Amy Hubbell
Of The Enterprise staff

The sign that has caused an uproar in Glen Arbor has been turned off pending the assembly of a township subcommittee to examine the issue.

The Glen Arbor Township Board voted 5-0 last Thursday to turn off the sign, which has been the talk of the community since its switch was flipped

in late July.

Residents turned out in full force at the board's Aug. 21 regular monthly meeting seeking removal of the sign, which they said doesn't fit the character of the community. They provided a 120-signature petition backed by residents who "disapprove" of the sign and question its design, size and cost to the community.

Concern didn't appear to have waned much by last Thursday, when more than 30 turned out for a special meeting. Officials had to move the gathering from the township office in the Township Hall to the gymnasium.

The sign was the only topic on the

agenda. It has two parts: an electronic portion that is 3 feet high and 8 feet in length and a decorative part that varies from 2 1/2 to 3 feet in height.

The board had the sign made earlier this year at a cost \$26,000 — a move second-guessed by township trustee Don Lewis, who offered an apology to the community.

"I'm aware of the situation and I would not vote to do it again," he said. "I apologize."

Audience members continued to pound the board, including some who said they fear setting a precedent for similar signs in the community.

(Concluded on Page 16)



IRONICALLY, IT was the sign opposed by township residents, that informed them of a special township meeting on the subject last week. The sign has since been turned off, pending the findings of a special committee.

