

# Grand Hotel Poetry Series To Begin July 11

Grand Hotel will offer a poetry series again this year, "Poets at the Grand Hotel: from My Favorite Poets to Yours," an eight-week program exploring the works of various poets and styles that begins July 11.

Cottager James Lenfestey will lead the Wednesday programs, to be held from 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. at the hotel's Audubon Bar. The classes are free to the public.

Mr. Lenfestey says no background in poetry is required, and all necessary materials are available at each class. He submits the following schedule:

July 11: Recent discoveries in ancient China, from 2400 BC to 1200. Including poems and tales from Mr. Lenfestey's recent travels through literary China, this class is dedicated to Mackinac Island resident Alice Martin, who was born in China.

July 18: Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273). How did a 13th century mystic from a small religious commune in what is now central Turkey, brought to us in American translation by a 20th century Tennessean, become the most popular poet in English in the world today?

July 25: Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). The class will recite together "Kubla Kahn" and make the case that this famously "interrupted dream" poem is perfect as it is, plus read and discuss some of Coleridge's other mysterious poems.

August 1: Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). Few knew her then and it can be difficult to know her now, this monkish angel of Amherst, widely considered "America's first great lyric poet." She was essentially unpublished in her lifetime, and not seriously appreciated until after 1955.

August 8: Robert Service (1874-1958). Service was Mr. Lenfestey's father's favorite poet. His poems are still recited by heart around campfires and over barstools. The class will recite together the long ballad, "The Cremation of Sam McGee," and at least one other, for the fun and story of it.

August 15: Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). Mr. Lenfestey's mother's favorite poet, Millay willfully burned her candle "at both ends," harnessing the rigorous sonnet form to a wild life whose motto is

inscribed in Poet's Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York: "Take up the song: forget the epitaph." She won the Pulitzer Prize in 1923.

August 22: Gary Snyder (1930- ). Mr. Lenfestey will make the case that Gary Snyder is his generation's greatest philosopher, with crucial essay collections from "Earth Household" to "Back on the Fire." His poems, deeply influenced by the ancient artistic and spiritual traditions of Asia and native America, have won the Pulitzer among many other prizes and awards.

On August 29, the class will read, recite, and discuss the favorite poems suggested by the class.

Mr. Lenfestey is a teacher and writer in Minneapolis and on Mackinac Island. After careers in academia, advertising, and journalism, he has published articles, essays, and poems in books and magazines, including two poetry collections released in 2006 and two forthcoming this year. He runs a poetry festival in Ojai, California, and a poetry reading series in Minneapolis.

# Bride and Groom Jam Session



Bluegrass musicians guitarist Mick Adams, bassist Todd Kirchner, fiddler Katie Kirchner, ukulele player Chad Kirchner, and banjo player Paul Kirchner jam outside of Harts Rooms Saturday, June 30. The band, Special K, is from the Traverse City area and Katie and Todd Kirchner were married earlier that morning on Windermere Point. "We're all musicians," Mrs. Kirchner said of the impromptu session. "This is what we do."

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Wants More Respect

To the Editor:

Wednesday, June 27, I was riding my handicapped cart on Main Street. One of the traffic control officers pulled me over and demanded my license. I told him three things:

1. I am a handicapped person.
2. I live on Mackinac Island.
3. I have been using this cart for the last six years.

The young man said, "I don't care. I want to see your license." I told him, "If you feel that way, let's go and talk to your Chief."

We proceeded to the police headquarters, and the Chief refused to talk to me. However, I did hear the Chief tell the traffic control officer to apologize to me. He did say, "I'm sorry, but I still need to see your doctor's letter."

When are they going to stop picking on Island residents who are handicapped? It seems as if there is no respect for anyone anymore.

Thank you for listening to me.

Carrie L. Wellington  
Mackinac Island

## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



### 'Mighty Mac' Is Engineering and Political Triumph

As a cub reporter on a rainy day in 1958, I tagged along when 1949-60 Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams, with seagulls over his head and sunflower seeds in his mouth, was the first governor to walk the Mackinac Bridge.

As it celebrates its 50th anniversary, I offer some reflections on "Der Bridge" - as dubbed not at all fondly by the late, great bestselling Upper Peninsula author ("Anatomy of a Murder") and Michigan Supreme Court Justice John Voelker. He treasured pre-bridge splendid isolation.

Although critics at the time dubbed it "Soapy's Folly," Williams gets deserved kudos along with U.S. Senator Prentiss M. Brown as political driving forces behind building of Mighty Mac.

Motorists today approach the span on the G. Mennen Williams Freeway. In my last interview with Williams reflecting on his unprecedented six terms (at the time, terms were two years; now they're four), he quipped: "I made myself a failure by not having two or three headline achievements, outside of maybe the Mackinac Bridge."

(In truth, Williams accomplished much on education, social service, mental health, and other areas, but left Michigan on fiscal rocks.)

Williams wasn't our first governor to tout bridging the peninsulas. It was a dream of feisty 1911-12 Governor Chase Osborn, a journalist-outdoorsman who was the only governor from the Upper Peninsula and one of Michigan's most progressive and memorable political figures.

Long after leaving office, Osborn personally lobbied President Franklin D. Roosevelt for support of the bridge, meeting with FDR about it in

1939 at Warm Springs, Georgia.

That year, the *Holland Sentinel* observed editorially that Osborn, then 79, was still "up to his neck in public projects of all sorts," most notably fighting for the bridge.

During his 1930s reign as state highway commissioner, 1941-42 Governor Murray Van Wagoner aggressively advocated the bridge. Causeway construction was started southward from St. Ignace, but was stopped because of World War II.

I was part of a United Press International team, led by Tom Farrell of the Lansing Bureau, covering the 1957 opening of the bridge and its dedication in June 1958.

Our photographer at the dedication had a glitch in capturing the nighttime fireworks display over the bridge.

With the help of Executive Secretary Larry Rubin of the Mackinac Bridge Authority, we were able later to locate, and rouse, the fireworks crew at a St. Ignace motel, and convince

it to stage a special late night firing over the bridge.

"Boom, Boom, Boom" was how the now-defunct *Detroit Times* began its story describing the reenactment that startled sleeping residents on both sides of the Straits.

The four-day Bridge Dedication Festival began at 9:05 a.m. June 25, when Williams and his State Police bodyguard walked through the St. Ignace tollgate.

They were accompanied by 34 members of the International Walkers Association of America, Rubin, and two reporters.

The fog was so thick that two ships collided beneath the bridge shortly after Williams reached Mackinaw City. Damage was slight.

President Dwight Eisenhower called the span "an engineering triumph." It also was a political triumph.

*George Weeks retired last year after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.*



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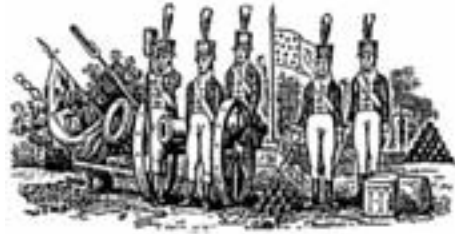
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