

OBITUARIES

Harry Harris



Harry Harris

Naturalist, photographer, and outdoor enthusiast Harry Harris lived quietly near Cedarville with his wife, Helen, surrounded by the birds he loved. Situated on the banks of Flowers Creek, close to Lake Huron, their home and workshops tell of a humble life among natural surroundings.

"I always thought of them as people who lived off the land," said a friend, Annegret Goehring. "Harry was very much a part of the nature, the seasons, and the water and woods around him."

Mr. Harris was 89 when he died Saturday, August 19, 2006, at War Memorial Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Harrises worked closely over the years to create intimate photographic images of birds. They were taught some photographic tips from Al McGrew, a former Hessel resident and ornithologist, and went on to shoot rare, close images of nesting birds. Their photography took time, sometimes the better part of a day, for instance, to capture a warbler feeding its young. Mr. Harris would follow birds returning to their nests, then erect blinds nearby so he could capture on film their daily routines. His works have been published by state and national organizations, including the Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy. A collection of Helen and Harry Harris photographs is housed at the Les Cheneaux Historical Museum.

Mr. Harris probably is best known, however, for his swallow boxes that have housed thousands of nesting tree swallows. In the late 1960s, the Harrises started building, painting, and placing birdhouses throughout the Les Cheneaux Islands area. Local residents knew it was spring when the colorful boxes on spindly wood poles appeared in the marshes. Mr. Harris' slight figure was barely noticeable as he slipped in and out the marsh, while swallows swarmed over his head, vying for the precious boxes.

The couple placed birdhouses every spring and retrieved them every fall to clean, paint, and store them over the winter. They built the houses from recycled wood and nails, and painted them with salvaged paint. Once people became aware of what they were doing, the Harrises began to get donations of wood and paint from local residents.

The Harrises also gave more than 10,000 of their birdhouses to all who requested them, Mrs. Harris estimates, and they made bluebird box kits for the Audubon Society's mail order catalog for several years.

Mr. Harris built boxes in his workshop, and Mrs. Harris painted most of the boxes in her quaint painting shed.

Over the years, their quiet but persistent devotion to the natural world attracted appreciative fans, and Mr. and Mrs. Harris have been featured in Michigan Natural Resources Magazine, local newspapers, and have been the featured speakers at Michigan Chapter of the Audubon Society meetings in Cedarville. Mr. Harris narrated a video about local bird life that was made of the images they shot over the years.

Mr. Harris was born March 24, 1917, in Monroe to Frank and Catherine (nee Glickler) Harris. He lived in Monroe, Flushing, and Davidson while growing up. He

worked on a farm, then at Williams Gun Sight Company in Davidson for a few years.

He married Helen Lied in Marlette May 3, 1941. In August 1956, after life in lower Michigan became too civilized for them, the Harrises moved to their home on Flower Bay in Cedarville. They discovered the area while on a hunting trip, and it became an autumn destination for the couple in the years preceding the move.

Mr. Harris worked as a gunsmith who repaired and sighted in rifles, and he also worked for Clark Township for several years.

In addition to his work with birds, Mr. Harris enjoyed hunting, fishing, and observing all wildlife in the area. He was a regular figure at Cedarville Foods grocery store, where he picked up truckloads of food and vegetables that were no longer salable to feed the wildlife around their home. They had regular visits from deer, ducks, and birds, and children particularly loved visiting the home to see the wildlife.

"They were always willing to share all the information they had," Mrs. Goehring said. "So you always learned something when you went to visit them. You got a special feeling of being there, with them, and being part of their world."

Mr. Harris was a staunch advocate of double-crested cormorant control, and the few times he raised his voice, it was to encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take action during hearings on cormorant management. His hand-made cormorant decoys have been used for the past three years by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services division in its cormorant control project in the Les Cheneaux Islands.

Mr. Harris is survived by his wife of 65 years, Helen; one daughter and her family, Christine and Thomas Hemmi of Linden; two grandchildren, Brian and Brittany Hemmi; one sister and her family, Helen and Delmar McGuire of Lincoln; one brother and his family, Norman and Katherine Harris of Fernwood, Idaho, and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by two brothers, Floyd and Walter Harris, and two sisters, Mary Jarvie and Edna Eighmey.

There will be no public services. Reamer Galer Funeral Home of Pickford is assisting the family with arrangements.

Helen Larson



Helen Larson

Helen M. Larson, 100, of Rudyard died Saturday, August 12, 2006, at Tendercare Nursing Home of Sault Ste. Marie.

She was born March 26, 1906, in Rudyard, to James and Mary Ann (nee Fischer) Haydon.

She married Lauri Larson September 18, 1933, in Brimley.

Mrs. Larson was known for her beautiful needlework, loved baking, and enjoyed having friends stop by for coffee. She was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Rudyard.

She is survived by many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Mrs. Larson was preceded in death by her husband, Lauri Larson, who died in 1972, and by siblings and their families, Honora and Loyd Desrochers, Margaret and Arthur Desrochers, Rose Haydon, Grace Haydon, Ann Haydon, Patrick and Jane Haydon, Timothy and Edna Haydon, William and Ellen Haydon, Edward and Ada Haydon, and James and Tess

Haydon, and her parents.

Visitation was held Wednesday, August 16, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic Church of Rudyard. A funeral immediately followed visitation, officiated by Monsignor Timothy Desrochers. Burial will be at North Rudyard Cemetery.

Memorials may be directed to St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

Charles Schepperley

Charles E. Schepperley of the Birch Shores Peninsula in Trout Lake was a former machinist who worked for Jerry's Tool and Die in Gaylord until his retirement in 1997.

Mr. Schepperley died at the age of 71 Saturday, August 19, at Mackinac Straits Long Term Care in St. Ignace.

He was born in Mancelona May 16, 1935, to James and Verna (nee Bonner) Schepperley.

He lived in Gaylord until 2003, when he and his family moved to Trout Lake, where they had owned a home since 1990. He loved to fish and hunt, and was called a "family man" by his friends.

He married Sonja Boyd in Mancelona March 16, 1957, and she survives.

Mr. Schepperly is also survived by a daughter, Anne, one son and

his family, Charles and Jayne Schepperley of Gaylord, and three brothers and their families, Donald Schepperly of Seattle, Washington and Traverse City, Harry and Marion Schepperley of Bellaire, and Clare and Geraldine Schepperley of Livonia.

He was preceded in death by two brothers, Gordon and Arlie Schepperley, and a sister, Elsie Romanik.

A memorial service will be Saturday, September 9, at Grace Brethren Church in Ozark. Pastor Chip Jones will officiate. Time of the service will be announced at a later date.

Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery in Trout Lake.

Dodson Funeral Home of St. Ignace assisted the family with arrangements.

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Faith Van Hoven

Faith A. Van Hoven, 52, of St. Ignace, died Friday, August 18, 2006, following an automobile accident.

She was a former resident of Zeeland and Redington Beach, Florida. She had worked for Madeira Printing.

Miss Van Hoven is survived by her parents, Abram and June Van Hoven of Zeeland, brothers and sisters and their families, Tom and Pam Van Hoven of Dorrr, Daniel

and Francine Van Hoven and Michael and Cindy Van Hoven, all of St. Petersburg, Florida, and several nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Visitation will be held from noon to 1 p.m. Friday, August 25, followed by services at 1 p.m. at Lakeshore Memorial Services in Holland.

The Reverend Eugene Los will officiate. Burial will be in Zeeland Cemetery.

Workshop for Business Owners To Be Presented August 30 in Sault

A workshop for small business owners will be presented Wednesday, August 30, in Sault Ste. Marie. The workshop will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Administration Complex at 523 Ashmun Street.

The workshop will feature Conrad Valle from the U.S. Small Business Administration's district office in Detroit, who will discuss

some of the small business programs available and eligibility requirements.

The event is being co-sponsored by the tribe, the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center, the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce, and Michigan Works.

For more information or to register, contact Jeff Holt at (906) 635-6050.

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