

**Interlochen Public Radio**  
**Issues/Program narrative — 2023, Q2 (April, May, June)**

By Ed Ronco, news director

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IPR's new environment reporter began work in the last three days of this quarter, but still managed to get a story on the board. Our coverage, as in quarters past, touched on a variety of subjects, including some expanded work in the business and economy subject area.

**Arts, Entertainment and Recreation**

In Q2, we covered a dearth of leadership in the arts world, where turnover is high, especially following the pandemic downturn. We also spread our geographic wings a little with two noteworthy stories from Petoskey. The first was about a mystery piano that appeared in a pedestrian tunnel. The second, a touching feature about the community coming together to hold a children's bike parade in memory of a longtime business leader who, herself, was in the defunct bike parade years ago. We also resumed regular contributions from Joe Beyer, as IPR's arts and culture commentator, leading listeners to fun things to do and new experiences to try.

**Law and Justice**

We are eternally grateful to our capitol correspondents in Lansing — Rick Pluta and Colin Jackson. But while Michigan's legislature dominated this subject area, it didn't hold a complete monopoly. Coverage also included efforts in Traverse City to build a stronger culture of safety in local schools, a flap between the Grand Traverse County prosecutor and a local advocacy center, and Up North prosecutors weighing in on a bill to ban life sentences for juveniles.

**Environment and Agriculture**

This remains our most voluminous area of coverage. *Points North* put forward episodes about ice rescues, fishing tournament cheaters, beaver dams and glow-in-the-dark squirrels. We also saw a culmination of the Camp Grayling story — a long-planned controversial expansion of a military base that finally received a decision from state regulators. We also covered the first anniversary for the deadly Gaylord tornado. We will continue to see expansion in the quarters ahead now that we have a new environment reporter and a climate change reporter arriving in the middle of Q3.

**Medicine and Health**

Mental health stories were heavily present this quarter, with the expansion of services in Cheboygan, help for teens in the Grand Traverse Bay region, and some shakeups in different organizations.

**Business and Economy**

We explored traditional business stories — like programs to bolster the local workforce — but also some nontraditional business and economy stories. For example, Tyler Thompson did a feature story on some high school seniors restoring a pickup truck

damaged by the Gaylord tornado. Not an obvious biz/econ story, but it became one by illuminating the truck's importance to its owner's livelihood. We also did an enterprise story on revenue from marijuana businesses bolstering tax revenue in Gaylord.

### **Politics and Government**

Traverse City fired its city manager, the state legislature acted on a handful of bills dealing with extreme risk protection orders, abortion, school safety and transportation. We followed acrimony on a local health board, the state budget process, and even a push to get more people to become Michiganders.

### **Race, Identity and Culture**

Highlighting three key stories. In May we had a conversation with Chasten Buttigieg, the teacher and author married to current U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. He spoke about growing up gay in our region, and the current pressures faced by members of the LGBTQ community. Organizers of Traverse City's Juneteenth celebrations talked to us about not only the events they have planned, but the importance and legacy of the holiday. And state lawmakers outlawed discrimination based on the way people wear their hair, and other culturally important traits.