

TUESDAY

WEATHER

Lows tonight Mid 60s
Mostly Sunny Wednesday



Details on PAGE 3

AREA

Nature becomes
a friend
to visitors
at preserve

PAGE 3



SPORTS

Twins batters pound Tigers
to take 10-8 'Homerdome' victory

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PEOPLE

Resident eyes modeling career

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PETOSKEY News-Review

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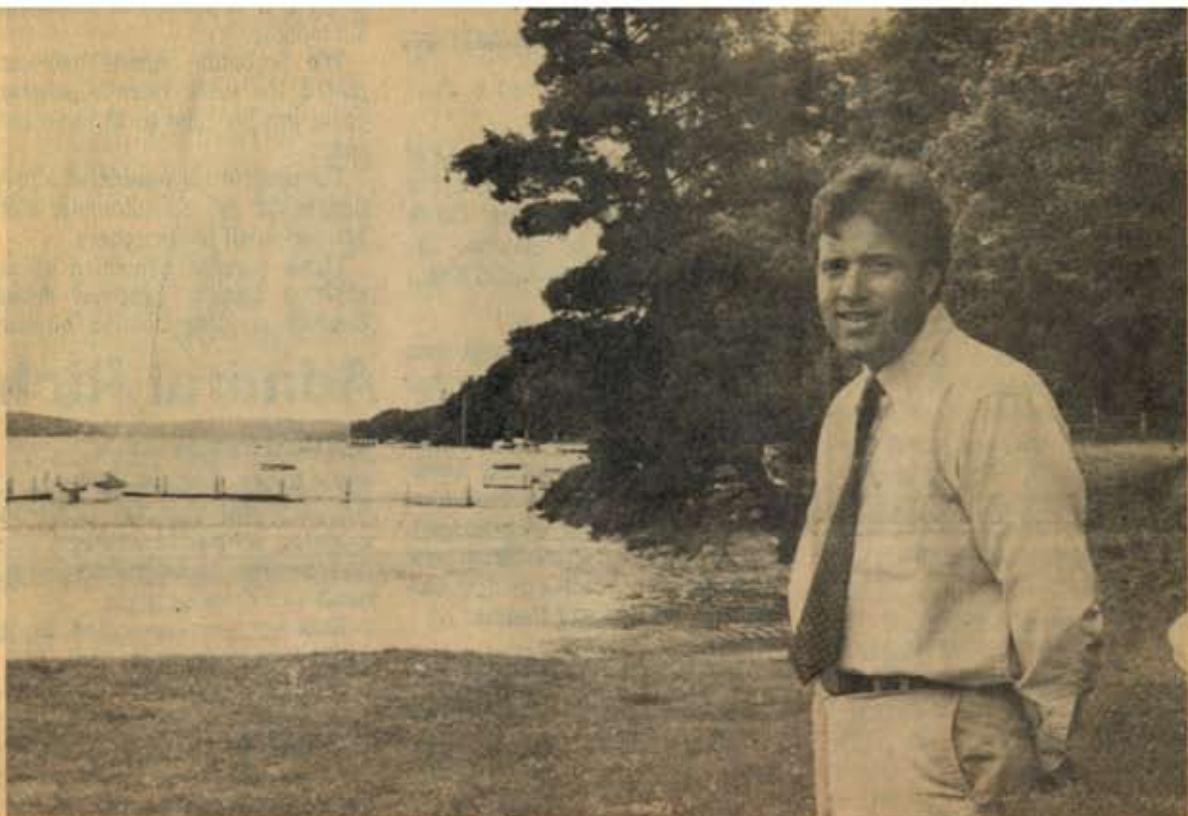
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WALLOON LAKE: Benjamin Alexander visited "Hemingway Country" last week to further reflect on the late author. Alexander is a professor at Hillsdale College. (NEWS photo by Shelley Deneau)

Hemingway's area stories studied as example of Southern writing

By **SHELLEY DENEAU**
News-Review Staff Writer

WALLOON LAKE — When students take Professor Benjamin Alexander's southern literature class at Hillsdale College, the first author they study is Ernest Hemingway.

Northwest Michigan residents who consider the Pulitzer prize-winning author a local folk hero may shake their heads and say "What?"

Alexander admits he also en-

countered a surprised reaction from his students, but he firmly believes Hemingway's work has been an effective teaching strategy.

Once the students read Hemingway's Northern Michigan-related stories and identify with his regional writing style, Alexander says they can then carry that over to southern literature, which is also regional in scope.

Prior to introducing Hemingway in the class, Alexander said he had a difficult time making the

students understand the regional identity inherent in most southern writers — authors like Mark Twain, Flannery O'Connor and Andrew Lytle.

Alexander's interest in Hemingway's writing style led him to Walloon Lake last week to further reflect on the author's work while experiencing the northern woods so often discussed in the books.

WHEN THE NATIVE South Carolinian was hired at Hillsdale See **HEMINGWAY**, page 2

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Hemingway: 'Southern' author

Continued from page 1

College in 1981, his exposure to Hemingway's work was limited. That was soon to change.

"The problem I immediately confronted was that southern literature, even by the masters, is nonetheless regional literature," explains Alexander, who holds a doctorate degree in English literature and political philosophy.

"I ran into a problem because the students had no regional identity."

Mainly from Chicago, Detroit and other Midwestern towns, Alexander's students were filled with stereotypical images of the south. Their experience was confined to the television movie "Roots," "Gone With the Wind" and Fort Lauderdale beaches, he said.

"When I tried to teach, it was very difficult to get them involved in southern regional literature," he said. "I had to find a way to make the southern experience more immediate to them."

In reading Hemingway's Nick Adams' stories, Alexander found a remarkable resemblance and theme to those works of literature regionally associated with the south.

"What became the unifying theme was the treatment and love of the land," he explains, gesturing with his hands to express the point.

HEMINGWAY, Alexander also discovered, was a man who was a

lover of all facets of nature.

"He doesn't try to conquer the land," the professor adds. "He interacts with nature. He also practiced what he preached."

As a descendant of the pioneer spirit of Northern Michigan, Alexander says Hemingway's stories reflect the authors concern about what he foresaw in the future, including the evolution of leisure time, growth of progressive civilization and development of the tourist trade.

Through Nick Adams, Alexander claims Hemingway was able to express his protest against the consumptive stages of modern civilization. He was also able to capture the meaning of land to Indians and absorb this into his fiction.

Alexander believes that Hemingway's talent as a regional writer has been largely ignored by a "timid academia" which has tended to identify with Hemingway the man, and not Hemingway the writer.

"What I'm saying is that (Hemingway's private life) is none of their business," he says.

"I think it has gotten out of hand."

He takes a recent newspaper article showing the commercialization of Hemingway's name and says "this is ridiculous."

"The Hemingway that needs to be promoted is the stories," he adds, setting down the paper, "don't you see? Not these ridiculous images."

ALEXANDER SAID Madelaine "Sunny" Miller, Hemingway's sister, is rightly justified in being tired of people snooping about for information on her brother's private life.

"She remembers him as a great artist and his accomplishments as a stylist," said Alexander, who was able to get a very rare visit with Miller.

Alexander would also like to help restore a balanced memory of Hemingway, so that the general public and the academic world recognize the contributions of Hemingway as a literary hero not a folk hero.

Alexander believes Hemingway's Northern Michigan experiences have never been linked to the agrarian (land-related) themes in southern literature before. He recently submitted an article entitled, "Hemingway and 'Southern' Northern Michigan," to a modern language association. This 11-page article may become the working draft for a book or a longer article.

Visiting the area where Hemingway spent his childhood and early adult years has reconfirmed Alexander's literary interpretations.

"It has made me see that fundamentally the southern experience is not an isolated experience," he said, relating to the southerners' relationship to the land.

He also says he only see glimpses of the Northern Michigan Hemingway knew.