



GRAND TRAVERSE DESCRIBERS

# Not The Beacon Newsletter

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*Stay Informed, Be Empowered*

## Air Show To Feature Human Powered Flight

April 1, 2024



After exhaustive negotiations with the airport authority broke down again over the weekend, MacCready Aviation of Pasadena, California stepped up to save the day. Paul MacCready said, “We’ve been looking for a venue to demonstrate Human Powered Flight and the Cherry Festival Air Show seems perfect.” He went on to describe the event as “...an old fashioned barnstorming without the environmental impact.”

The air show will feature both the Gossamer Condor II and the Gossamer

Albatross II executing tight formation maneuvers including a barrel roll, wing walking, and the first inside loop attempted by a human powered aircraft in a live air show. Pilot Millie Robinson said, “Unlike jet powered air shows spectators will be close enough to see our faces and feel our propwash.”

To avoid TVC airport congestion, the planes will take off from the Civic Center baseball field where a team of students from Norte Youth Cycling will escort and help launch the planes. Rumor has it that a local member of the Cherry Capital Cycling Club will attempt the first amateur aerial cycle transit of East Bay. Details are unconfirmed but the code word “Energizer Bunny” was mentioned.



The air show will promote the launch of commercial versions of the Condor and Albatross cycle planes. For older or less hardy cyclists, MacCready Aviation is planning to offer electric assist versions. Condor and Albatross models are expected to be available at bicycle shops in late summer.

## Sea Trials for Bluff Road Ferry Begin



Sea trials have begun for a ferry to bypass the collapsed section of Bluff Road in Peninsula township. Assuming the trials proceed on schedule, the ferry will begin operation on Memorial Day. A trip on the ferry will cost only \$.50 for pedestrians and bicycles and \$1.50 for automobiles. Trucks up to 3 tons can be transported.

The ferry will be owned by the Bluff Road Cooperative managed by Capt. Edward Smith. The ferry will be self-service; users summon the ferry on a mobile app, drive aboard, and hit the “go” button on their phone to automatically go to the other end of the detour. Transit time will be about seven minutes.

The ferry was donated by an anonymous donor. GMC (Generous Motors Corp) donated a piloting system from their self-driving car program. Traverse City Laundry donated a vending mechanism from one of their older Speed Queen Dryers to collect the tolls.

In the event of difficulties during transit, passengers will be able to use the pay phone in the wheelhouse. It will have a direct connection to the Google Help Desk.

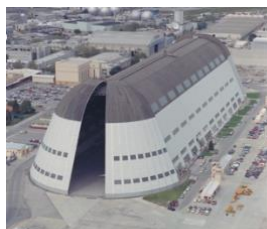
## Low-Cost Solution Found for Hartman-Hammond Bridge

The Hartman-Hammond Bridge has been beset with large cost overruns even before the first shovel of dirt was moved. Transiting the Boardman River Valley without environmental damage required a long, expensive cantilever span that drove the cost beyond reach. Engineers at EZC (Electric Zeppelin Company) are working with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission on a new twist of an old idea: a bridge that floats on air.

The idea is not actually new. The first aerial pontoon bridge was built in 1919 near Lake Baikal in Russia. It crossed the Selenge River just north of Ulan-Ude. That bridge used a large hydrogen blimp to support the span and was secured by a steel framework and high strength cables purchased in the US from Roebling Cable Company. Unfortunately, static structure proved insufficient to stabilize the bridge and it was taken out of service a few years later.



Ulan-Ude Bridge 1919



EZC headquarters  
Moffett Field, Ca.

It became apparent that a powered structure with sophisticated controls would be needed make an aerial pontoon bridge practical. The idea sat dormant until the EZC based at Moffett Field merged solar power, modern digital controls and high efficiency rare-earth electric motors.

EZC is currently building an aerial pontoon bridge across the Gallegos River in Argentina to handle excess traffic on Rt 3 at Guer Aike. EZC estimates that an aerial pontoon bridge across the Boardman River would cost between 1/3 and 1/4 of the cost a conventional bridge. The span would be built in California and floated into place, carried aloft by solar powered Zeppelins that would provide support in perpetuity.



Construction begins at  
Guer Aike Bridge,  
Argentina

## Linda Salt's Corner

We hope you have enjoyed our bit of April Foolery. If you were on to us from the start, congratulations! If we got you for a moment, we hope this was an amusing reminder to check your sources. While *The Beacon* is to be trusted, this publication, *Not The Beacon*, not so much. Knock-offs and fakes abound. Read the fine print, and take what you read online from me, Linda Salt; take the internet with a grain of salt.

When things are suspicious, look for multiple sources. Check reliable edited journals or fact checking sites like Snops.com.

Some of the names in *Not The Beacon* are real. Paul MacCready invented the Gossamer Condor, the first human powered aircraft. His Gossamer Albatross did fly across the English Channel by human power. His aircraft used a canard design with a small wing in front. The canard was invented by the Wright Brothers. Paul MacCready passed in 2007.

Millie Robinson never flew for MacCready. Instead she won the first Womens Tour de France in 1955.

Capt. Edward Smith will not run the Bluff Rd. Ferry Cooperative. He was the captain of the Titanic.

The Zeppelin hanger at NASA's Moffett Field really exists, The Electric Zeppelin Company does not.

The Roeblings (Johann, Washington, and Emily) were the engineers of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Ulan-Ude, Russia and Guer Aike, Argentina exist. Aerial pontoon bridges, not so much.

Bridge and Ferry images were generated by AI. The other images are genuine.  
Happy April Fool!

Harold Lassers  
AKA Linda Salt

## HELPFUL LINKS & INFO

BOC meetings are usually held at 9 a.m. on the first and third Wednesday of the month.

You can find a link to the agenda and minutes at:

<https://grandtraversecounty.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Org=Cal&Id=418>

You can watch a livestream of the meetings and view replays of previous meetings online at:

<http://www.co.grand-traverse.mi.us/184/Board-of-Commissioners>

You will have to attend the in-person meeting in order to make a public comment. The BOC permits public comment for three minutes at the beginning and end of each meeting.

The BOC has nine commissioners – six Republicans and three Democrats – each of whom represents a district.

You can find your commissioner at this link:

<https://www.grandtraversedems.com/boc>

You can find contact info for the BOC members here:

<http://grandtraverse.org/184/Board-of-Commissioners>

You can email all the commissioners at this address:

[commissioners@gtcountymi.gov](mailto:commissioners@gtcountymi.gov)