Michigan Humanities Council presents

The Great Michigan READ

The Nick Adams Stories
by Ernest Hemingway
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Welcome to 
*The Great Michigan Read*

On July 9, the Michigan Humanities Council announced the selection of Ernest Hemingway’s *The Nick Adams Stories* for the first-ever *Great Michigan Read*. *The Nick Adams Stories* chronicles a young man’s coming of age in a series of linked short stories. Nick’s path to adulthood is shaped by his Michigan surroundings and presents a timeless look at the human condition.

Most of the Nick Adams stories are set in Michigan. This includes “Big Two-Hearted River,” which many argue captures the essence of the Michigan outdoor experience.

After reviewing scores of Michigan titles and authors, the Council’s book selection committee selected *The Nick Adams Stories* based on its broad appeal, its relevance to current life, and its undoubtedly “classic” status. This title presents an accessible entry point for first-time literature readers, yet will challenge the most advanced bibliophiles.

For the next year, as hundreds of thousands of Michiganders open their copies of *The Nick Adams Stories*, readers will be introduced or reacquainted with a classic piece of American literature.

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**How can I become involved?**


- **Learn more about the book and the author**. Start with the reader’s guide or link to [www.greatmichiganread.org](http://www.greatmichiganread.org) for background on Ernest Hemingway, his Michigan connections, his publications, and other information.

- **Discuss the book**. Share your thoughts about the book with friends, family, colleagues, or your reading group. Explore discussion themes in the reader’s guide or online at [www.greatmichiganread.org](http://www.greatmichiganread.org).

- **Attend a *Great Michigan Read* program or event**. Check [www.greatmichiganread.org](http://www.greatmichiganread.org) for a complete schedule of events and programs. With more than 100 participating communities, there’s bound to be one near you. If not, encourage your library to participate.


- **Listen to *The Nick Adams Stories* audiobook** on your commute. Available at Meijer, Barnes & Noble, Schuler Books & Music, Borders, and other retail locations. Also available online.

- **Give a copy of *The Nick Adams Stories* to a friend, family member, or colleague**. Spread the word and share a literary reading experience with others!

- **Start a book discussion group**. Book discussions can be informal and fun. Encourage your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, or church to read the book, gather in small groups, and discuss.
Experience Michigan Through

*The Nick Adams Stories*

Jan Fedewa, Executive Director & Judy Rapanos, Chair, Michigan Humanities Council

The experience of being Up North, the woods, the water, and the outdoors will be enjoyed by thousands of Michigan residents as they participate in *The Great Michigan Read*, a one-book, one-state initiative featuring Ernest Hemingway’s *The Nick Adams Stories*.

Join us and spend time rediscovering Hemingway, the woods, the water, and *The Nick Adams Stories*. It will help you reconnect to your stories about place, family, and coming of age.

All the love went into fishing and the summer. He loved it more than anything. He had loved digging potatoes with Bill in the fall, the long trips in the car, fishing in the Bay, reading in the hammock on hot days, swimming off the dock, playing baseball at Charlevoix and Petoskey . . . the fishing trips away from the farm, just lying around.He loved the long summer.

- Ernest Hemingway, “On Writing,” *The Nick Adams Stories*

The Council is pleased to present Ernest Hemingway and his works to Michigan citizens. It is an outstanding opportunity for people to connect to the past, the present, and the future as they explore the many themes presented in the book . . . coming of age, father-son relationships, war, love, family, fishing, camping, hunting, nature, and more.

*The Great Michigan Read* is the outcome of the Council’s Strategic Plan to embrace a Council-led program that has statewide impact. After a series of Program Committee meetings, the Council elected to implement a one-book, one-state initiative that includes granting opportunities for libraries, cultural organizations, museums, schools, and other non-profits that participate in its implementation. Its purpose is to promote literary reading to help create an educated and engaged society.

According to a report recently released by the National Endowment for the Arts, literature reading is fading as a meaningful activity, especially among younger people. Less than half of the adult American population now reads literature. From 1982 to 2002, the percentage of American adults reading literature has declined from 56.9 percent to 46.7 percent.

Clearly, it’s timely that we forge ahead with introducing Michigan citizens to a literary masterpiece that was literally made in Michigan. From July 2007 to July 2008, reading and discussion programs, a traveling Hemingway exhibit, speakers, interpreters, essay contests, and many more creative programs will grace the state as we introduce Nick Adams to youth through seniors. The Council will provide the necessary resources to complement the reading program such as a reader’s guide, a dedicated website, posters, bookmarks, a documentary along with a study guide, and more.

Young Hemingway with his catch. Photo courtesy of the Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston.
The MHC interviewed Michigan Hemingway Society President Mike Federspiel for insight about Michigan's cultural connection to Ernest Hemingway. Federspiel, a former ninth-grade English teacher who once assigned Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, has a biographical connection to *The Nick Adams Stories* through his own summer vacations in the Petoskey area.

**What does Hemingway mean to Michigan?**

To many people, Hemingway's Michigan connections are a surprise. They typically associate him with exotic places around the world rather than our state.

**What did Michigan mean to Hemingway?**

Hemingway was inspired by place. Young Ernest Hemingway was captured by exotic Northern Michigan; it excited his sense of adventure and his imagination. As a young person, experiences here helped to form who he became. He later used the settings and the people of Northern Michigan for inspiration. In the 1920s, when he sat in cafés in Paris, France, he returned to Kalkaska, Horton Bay, and Petoskey in his thoughts and writings.

**How would you interpret The Nick Adams Stories?**

*The Nick Adams Stories* can be read at many different levels. Some people will look for biographical references of Ernest in Nick. Did what happen to Nick also happen to Ernest? Some people come to the stories looking for place, captivated by his descriptions. Does this place look the same today as in the story? What did he change? And, others come to the stories at the literary level. They will look at how he captured relationships, people, and nature.

**What do his stories tell us about who we are today?**

The stories are eternal. Young people always react when they experience death for the first time. Others wonder if “that’s all there is” in a marriage or relationship. Young people look at the stories from their perspective and as they grow older, they look at them through a different lens of lived experiences.

**How do The Nick Adams Stories relate to Hemingway developing as an author?**

I think Hemingway discovered his style in *The Nick Adams Stories*. He had a whole memory bank of his experiences, and he used this when creating *The Nick Adams Stories*. He worked more deliberately with these stories than perhaps anything else he wrote. There isn't a word there that isn't supposed to be there. *The Nick Adams Stories* helped to determine his style for the rest of his career.

**What can we expect to see at the Up North with the Hemingways exhibit at the Crooked Tree Arts Center?**

You'll see a number of artifacts associated with Ernest and his family including a six-page letter to Jim Gamble from Ernest Hemingway in 1919 in which Gamble is urged to come to Northern Michigan. It is his best letter describing Michigan. There is a postcard he sent his father in 1919 on a trip from Seney, which inspired “Big Two-Hearted River,” and an unpublished handwritten story he wrote in high school about a lumber camp. There are family photographs seen by the public for the first time, and first editions of magazines that printed his Michigan stories in the 1920s.

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*Young Hemingway at Horton Creek, 1904. Photo courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library and Jim Sanford.*

Participating Communities

Adrian Public Library
Allegan Public Library
Alpena County Fletcher Public Library
Ann Arbor: 826michigan
Baldwin: Pathfinder Community Library
Barryton Public Library
Big Rapids: Artworks, Big Rapids Community Library
Burnips: Salem Township Library
Calumet Public School Library
Camden Township Library
Center Line Public Library
Charlevoix Public Library
Chase Township Public Library
Chesterfield Township Library
Clawson: Blair Memorial Library
Clinton Township: Clinton-Macomb Public Library (South Branch), Macomb County Library
Colone Township Library
Dansville Library
Dorr Township Library
Douglas: Saugatuck-Douglas District Library
Dowagiac: District Library
Eastpointe Memorial Library
Engadine Library
Evart Public Library
Fennville District Library
Flint Public Library
Fremont Area District Library
Grand Haven: Loutit District Library
Hamburg Township Library
Hastings Library
Highland Township Public Library
Hillsdale Community Library
Hollander: Herrick District Library
Holton: Holt-Delhi Library
Hopkins Public Library
Howell Carnegie District Library
Idlwild Public Library
Iron Mountain: Dickinson County Library
Ironwood Carnegie Library
Jamestown: Patmos Library
Lakeview: Tamarack District Library
Lansing: Capital Area District Library, Library, Library of Michigan
LeRoy Community Library
Leslie Library
Luther Area Public Library
Macomb Township Public Library


Tour Hemingway’s Michigan

Nick looked back from the top of the hill by the schoolhouse. He saw the lights of Petoskey. Hemingway referred to the city as ‘Sepi Jingan.”

Horton Bay: Greensky Hill Indian Methodist Church

A Michigan Historic Site, this area was (and still is) sacred to the Native Americans. Hemingway wrote about it in several of the Nick Adams stories, most notably “Indian Camp,” “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” “Ten Indians,” “The Indians Moved Away,” and “Fathers and Sons.” Prudence Boulton, who may have been the model for the character of Prudie in “Ten Indians,” and/or Trudy in “Fathers and Sons,” is said to be buried in an unmarked grave at Greensky.

Horton Bay: Charles Farm
A right turn (west) out of the Teesdale Preserves takes one across Horton Creek, and in 2/10 of a mile one can observe Charles Farm on the right.

Hemingway had good friends who summered here, and he used this land as the setting for “The Three-Day Blow” and a major scene in “Summer People.”

Horton Bay: Public Access and Boat Launch
Southeast of Horton Bay on the Charlevoix-Boyne City Rd. for approximately one mile; turn left (east) on Summer Rd. to the end.

This site offers a panoramic view of Walloon Lake. In Hemingway’s “Wedding Day,” it is the spot from which Nick Adams and his new bride Helen begin their honeymoon by rowing across the lake to the cottage where they will be staying, just as Hemingway and Hadley Richardson did after their wedding.

Petoskey: Little Traverse Historical Museum
Off Lake St. near the Gas Station

Built by the Chicago, Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad in 1892, this served as the main station for the Pere Marquette Railroad in Petoskey. Hemingway refers to it as the “Sepi Jingan.” The station was converted to a museum and houses a permanent exhibit of materials on Hemingway.

Walloon Lake: Public Access and Boat Launch
Southwest of Horton Bay on the Charlevoix-Boyne City Rd. for approximately one mile; turn left (east) on Sumner Rd. to the end.

BAY VIEW
Evelyn Hall

PETOSKEY
Little Traverse Historical Museum
Pennsylvania Plaza (Railroad Station)
Perry Hotel
Jesperson’s Restaurant
Flatiron Building
City Park Grill
Harold Grant Building
Carnegie Building
Potter’s Rooming House

HARBOR SPRINGS
Harbor Springs Train Station
Michigan in Hemingway

Born on July 21, 1899, just outside of Chicago, Ernest Miller Hemingway grew up in the middle-class town of Oak Park, Illinois. Hemingway spent parts of his first 22 summers with his family in Northern Michigan, near Petoskey. Without the burden of school or work, he roamed the wilderness, honed his outdoor skills, and accumulated the friends and experiences that helped foster his literary development.

In 1918, Hemingway was wounded in Italy in the First World War and returned to America to continue writing. He married his first wife, Hadley Richardson, in Northern Michigan in 1921. Subsequently, he moved to Paris, France, where he wrote several of The Nick Adams Stories having been inspired by his experiences in Northern Michigan.

Nick Adams on the Air

During the next year, the Michigan Humanities Council will broadcast Great Michigan Read programs, feature stories, announcements, and more through a partnership with the Michigan Talk Network. Programs featuring The Nick Adams Stories and Hemingway will be archived as podcasts and accessible in mp3 format from www.greatmichiganread.org.

Tune into The Big Show with Michael Patrick Shiels on Mondays through Fridays, from 6 a.m. - 10 a.m., on the following stations:

- WSCG  Greenville  1380 AM
- WBCH  Hastings  1220 AM
- WIAN  Ishpeming  1240 AM
- WKMI  Kalamazoo  1360 AM
- WJIM  Lansing  1240 AM
- WDMJ  Marquette  1320 AM
- WMMI  Mt. Pleasant  830 AM
- WODJ  Muskegon  1490 AM
- WJML  Petoskey  1110 AM
- WJNL  Traverse City  1210 AM

HEMINGWAY ON PBS

The Council and Michigan Public Media will collaborate to produce a three-minute video feature about Hemingway and The Nick Adams Stories for public television stations across the state. WCMU and the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University are also producing a 30-minute video about Hemingway’s experience in Northern Michigan. It will be made available in DVD to all schools and Great Michigan Read participating organizations. It will also be broadcast on WCMU and made available to other Michigan PBS stations. For broadcast dates, times, and locations, visit www.greatmichiganread.org.
In the fall of 1989, I was a freshman at a perfectly fine Detroit prep school that I hated. I hated my wealthy peers, the dominance of team sports, and the Dad’s Club golf outing. The bright spot in my angst-filled day was Honors English 9 with Mr. Bean, especially the week that we spent reading Hemingway’s *The Nick Adams Stories*.

That year I wanted two things: to become a writer and a real man. Not a golf outing kind of man, but a man who understood the world and relished its rough and tumble nature.

It is not hard to fall in love with Hemingway when you are young and at odds with the drabness of your world — the fishing, the woods, the women. When we read *The Nick Adams Stories* that year, we were not just reading stories of adventure, we were reading what felt like a guide to surviving the jagged edges of life, the kind of knocks Hemingway would eventually refer to as “the broken places” we all have to endure.

Every bookish, Honors English 14-year old is broken in some way, but as I read Hemingway that autumn, for some reason, I felt a lot less broken.

When we finished reading *Nick Adams*, Mr. Bean gave us the task of finding the “perfect Hemingway sentence,” the one that summed up worldview of this writer that so many of us suddenly wanted to become. If we found it, we’d get an automatic A for the semester.

The next morning, our searches proved fruitless. We went around the room, making our best guesses, all of us wrong. Then Mr. Bean stood up in the center of his room and, in his booming voice, he turned to “Big Two-Hearted River” and read the perfect Hemingway sentence: “He liked to open cans.”

We were baffled. We groaned and complained and said that we’d been had. Seriously? That?

Now that I have become both a published writer and some sort of a man, I see that Mr. Bean was right: Opening cans is an act boiled down to essential, understandable elements. This sentence celebrates, in Papa’s typical understatement, the redemptive power of simplicity, the pleasure of beans, soup, or spaghetti. Hemingway’s best works — and these stories are his best works — are hymns to the sublimity of simplicity, sermons against chaos.

Some days, when domestic responsibilities seem overwhelming, when the grind of making a living wears me down, or when I puddle up just listening to the evening news, I think of that sentence: “He liked to open cans.”

Me too. You bet.
The Michigan Humanities Council will award up to $7,500 for The Great Michigan Read proposals that expose new audiences to literature. This grant program is a funding priority at this time. The postmark deadline to submit major grants is September 17, 2007. The Council will review draft proposals if submitted prior to August 25, 2007. In addition, quick grants of up to $500 are available to nonprofit organizations in support of infrastructure and programs relating to The Great Michigan Read. This program will award grants until all allotted funds are exhausted. Apply at least four weeks prior to the start of the program.

Applications and guidelines for both major ($7,500) and quick ($500) grants are available on the Michigan Humanities Council website at www.michiganhumanities.org. For more information on Great Michigan Read grants, please contact the Cynthia Dimitrijevic, Grants Director, at 517-372-7770 or cdimitrijevic@mihumanities.org

Sample Great Michigan Read programs include:

- **Related arts projects:** Creative writing, poetry, visual arts inspired by Nick Adams, Michigan as “place,” or other themes in the title.
- **School projects:** An interpretive drama written by high school students collaborating with a drama or theatre group, inspired by The Nick Adams Stories. Or, teachers and students from two or more school districts read one of The Nick Adams Stories and participate in a creative writing contest featuring their own works which are shared with the community.
- **Documentary:** Video, audio, photo projects, or oral history programs inspired by Nick Adams, Michigan as “place,” or other themes in the title.
- **Speakers/Chautauqua:** Choose from the Council’s speaker's list or find other humanities professionals to present on related topics. Or, bring in a Hemingway reenactor for a unique, firsthand experience.
- **Discussion group:** Public libraries, museums, and authors collaborate to provide reading and discussion programs for community members centered on The Nick Adams Stories. This could include small groups moderated by humanities professionals or by peers; adult-led teen groups, etc.
- **Film:** Explore Hemingway, Nick Adams, or related themes in a film series and discussion.
- **Read-a-thons:** Celebrate Nick Adams, Hemingway, and Michigan with a read-a-thon.

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation is supporting The Great Michigan Read with a $20,000 grant to the Michigan Humanities Council. The funds will be used to assist with the production and distribution of the reader's guide, bookmarks, posters, construction of The Great Michigan Read website (www.greatmichiganread.org), and special events held in conjunction with the year-long program.
Powers of Observation

by Liesel Litzenburger, author, Now You Love Me, The Widower. Litzenburger was born in Harbor Springs.

I was given the Ernest Hemingway Prize for Writing by my seventh grade English teacher, Mr. Verlindi. The honor was handed out at the end of the school year to the kid most likely to see her name in print one day. I took the prize very seriously, even though it was Mr. Verlindi’s own invented award, something to encourage geeky young writers — who probably weren’t too great at organized sports and other forms of junior high popularity — and it’s still the best thing I’ve ever won. This is true because Hemingway was my very first favorite author and he was also the very first author whose style I noticed. By that I mean, I probably put down one of his novels and said, “Wow, this guy writes really short, simple sentences! He uses almost zero big words!”

My powers of observation weren’t exactly razor-sharp in the seventh grade, but I somehow recognized a great writer when I read one, and I could tell that Ernest Hemingway was doing something completely different than anyone else I’d ever read, something both understandable and mysterious at the same time. I immediately began trying to copy him, to write exactly like him, and this went on for many years. The results. Of this. Weren’t. Pretty. You get the idea. I gradually gave up my Hemingway-style plagiarism, but I went on to read all of his novels and his short stories, going over some of his books two or three or four times, the way a lost person studies a map to find a way home.

To this day, it’s tough for me to think about how much Hemingway has influenced my style without admitting that it’s more than I can really calculate. I sort of grew up while reading Hemingway, breathed it all in. From him, I feel like I learned how a sentence can work, how it’s possible to use very few words to create deep feeling, how a writer can write about familiar places he or she knows well — places in Michigan, believe it or not — and make those places seem both beautiful and new.

I grew up in Northern Michigan, and the towns, some of the characters’ last names, the woods, and lakes of The Nick Adams Stories were the places and people of my own childhood. But to me, the mark of a great writer is the ability to take the personal and make it universal, and I think the true magic of Hemingway’s work is his universal appeal.

In what is my favorite Hemingway story from Nick Adams, “The Last Good Country,” young Nick runs away into the Michigan wilderness with his little sister. There’s a moment when Nick stumbles on the secret of time. It could be that moment in anyone’s childhood, anyone’s life: “He had already learned there was only one day at a time and that was always the day you were in. It would be today until it was tonight and tomorrow would be today again. This was the main thing he had learned so far.”
The Michigan Humanities Council connects people and communities by fostering and creating quality cultural programs. It is Michigan’s nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since 1974, the Council has supported thousands of cultural programs exploring the humanities in Michigan.

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