



Dale G. Young / The Detroit News

When you've been inside Good Hart's general store, you've pretty much seen the business district. The store also serves as the post office, bakery, deli, real estate office, garbage pickup spot, gas station, message center, and more.

# Heart of Good Hart: 'The Store'

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Can't find it here? You probably don't need it.

By Mark Hörnbeck  
Detroit News Lansing Bureau

**G**OOD HART, Mich. — Year-round residents and even summer folks in this tiny northern Michigan resort call it simply "The Store."

But that doesn't even begin to cover it. The barn-red, bunting-festooned general store in picturesque Good Hart is a grocery, a bakery, a delicatessen. It's a post office, a gas station, a real estate office and a garbage pickup spot.

In addition, it's a gathering place, message center, lost-animal depot and baby-sitter clearinghouse.

"It's the social headquarters for this part of northern Michigan," said Trina Hayes, a 46-year-old summer resident.

The Store is virtually the only building in downtown Good Hart, which sits at a break in a tunnel of trees — a 20-mile archway of beeches, birches, oaks and maples over blacktopped M-119 about 20 miles southwest of the Mackinac Bridge.

Good Hart's general store is an homage to old-time, small-town America, a kind of Norman Rockwell painting come to life.

"Most of us come from other places," said Hayes, who is from Chicago. "You come up here and it's like what everyone thinks the small town used to be. The kids can stop by

The Store, pick up a candy bar and put it on credit."

A golden retriever named Bingo sleeps on the gravel drive, forcing drivers to go around him to use the gas pumps. Bear, a large, gray cat, watches visitors.

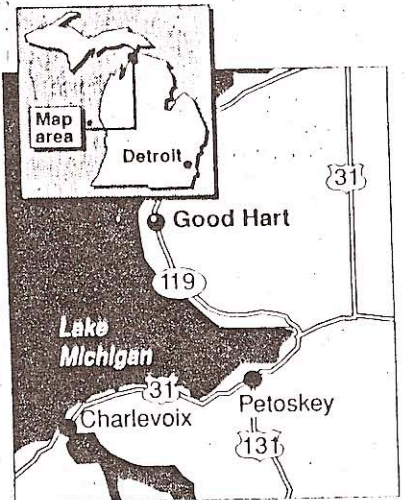
The regulars sit on wooden benches near the door and talk politics. Visitors buy a slab of smoked Lake Michigan whitefish and fresh apple-cinnamon bread and nibble on them at a picnic table.

The 78 antique brass mailboxes inside are for residents who don't get home delivery.

"Every problem in the area flies through this door," said Carolyn Woods-Sutherland, postmaster, baker, grocer, real estate agent and owner of The Store since 1971. "When their power goes out, they call us. When they need a baby-sitter or they need to leave a message for family or friends, they call us. We're the only number folks around here have on auto-dial."

The town, formerly called Middle Village, was named for Ottawa chief Kaw-meno-te-a, or Good-Hearted. An Indian burial ground is next to the church.

Good Hart has about 50 permanent residents, but the population swells to 700 by June, when summer dwellers arrive to enjoy the small-town aura and pristine shore.



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Postmaster, baker, grocer, real estate agent and owner of The Store