



Summer on Lake St. Clair

At Mike's on the Water

ARTICLE BY SUE BALDANI | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAIGE PEABODY

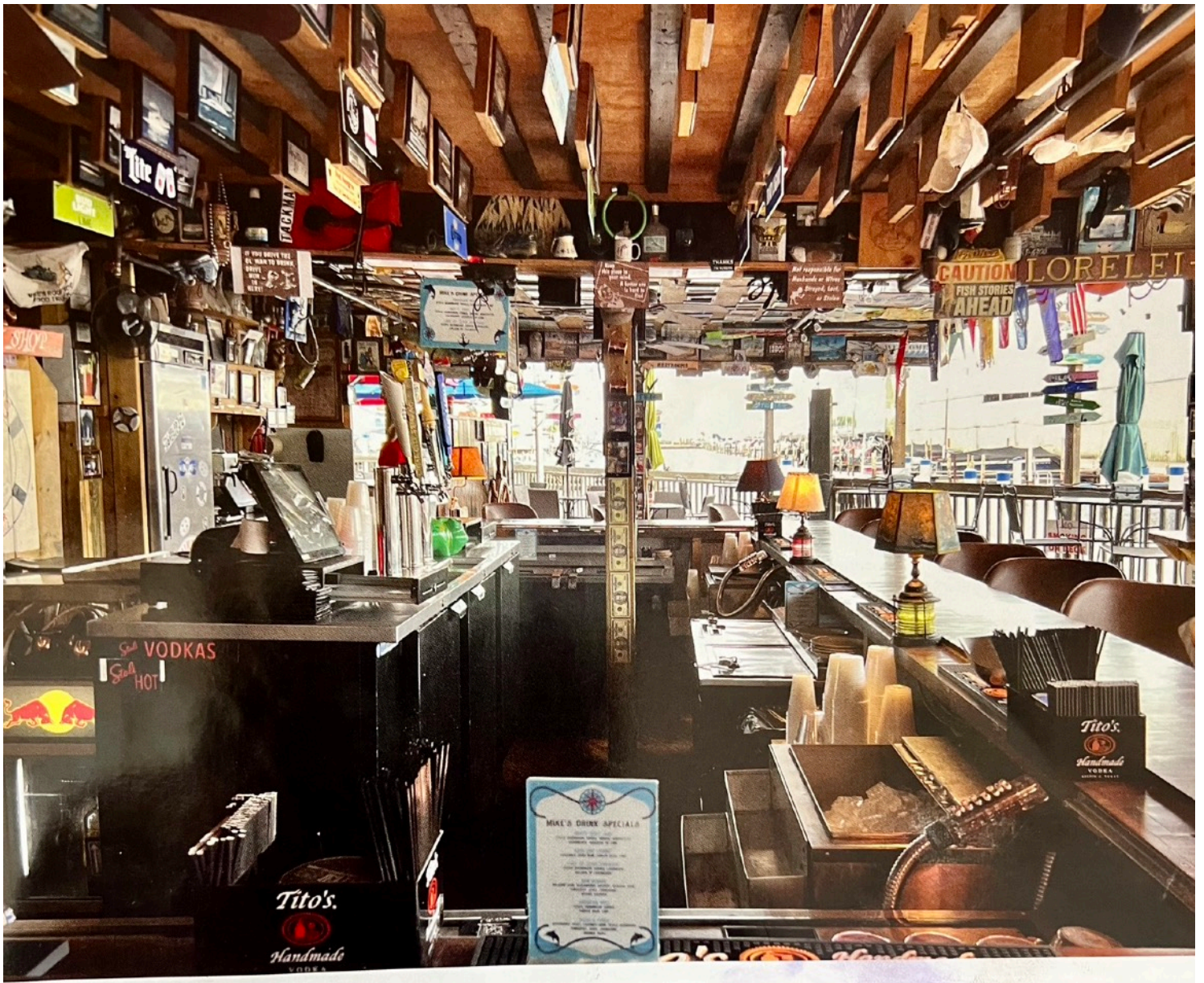
After working in and running restaurants for most of his life, in 2004, Mike LeFevre retired and started traveling the world. He was having a great time, but his time of leisure would soon come to an end. "In 2009, I got a phone call from my brother-in-law telling me to come home right away. My sister had breast cancer." Since Mike had fought his own battle with cancer and was one of the lucky ones, he was ready to fire her up to beat hers.

One night when he was at her house, some friends stopped by. "One of their husbands, a gentleman named Jim, asked what I was doing these days," says

Mike. "I told him I was going to get my sister well, and then I was going back out into the world."

Jim then mentioned that Pete Beauregard, owner of Michigan Harbor on the Nautical Mile, was looking for someone to open a restaurant in an old bathhouse and warehouse at the docks, and Mike's name came up. The next day, he and his sister drove to the marina to look at the property. When he saw the little old clapboard bathhouse, he was hooked. "I looked at my sister, and I said, 'East Coast, Key West Burger Bar, let's go.'"

When he met with Pete a couple days later, Pete offered him the whole building, but Mike just wanted



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that little building. He had big plans for it. That was the official end of his retirement.

Mike's on the Water on St. Clair Shores opened on May 25th, 2011, with 130 seats. Due to high demand, Mike expanded every year, and today, there are over 360 seats. There's a large deck out back, a floating dock in the water, an expanded bar, a large banquet room and a rooftop bar.

At one point, he was going to build an indoor miniature golf putt-putt course, but now it's a smaller banquet room, a public living room he calls it and a museum for my special "secret" collection.

In addition to the museum, the family room will include all the awards and accolades he has won over the years, along with mementos and pictures of his family, including his sister, Susan Amine, who passed away in 2012 at 47. "It's just memories of my life in that room."

He wants all of these items on display because he wants to share them with others. One of the biggest reasons he went into the restaurant business is because he enjoys being around people. "I love talking to people," he says. "I greet the people at the front door, and I make people feel comfortable. I often know what they drink if I don't know their names. People want to be recognized. One of the greatest shows in the world was Cheers, where everybody knows your name."

The menu in the main restaurant is very diverse, and some of its most popular sellers are the lake perch, rainbow trout, lobster rolls from the East Coast, and stuffed burgers.

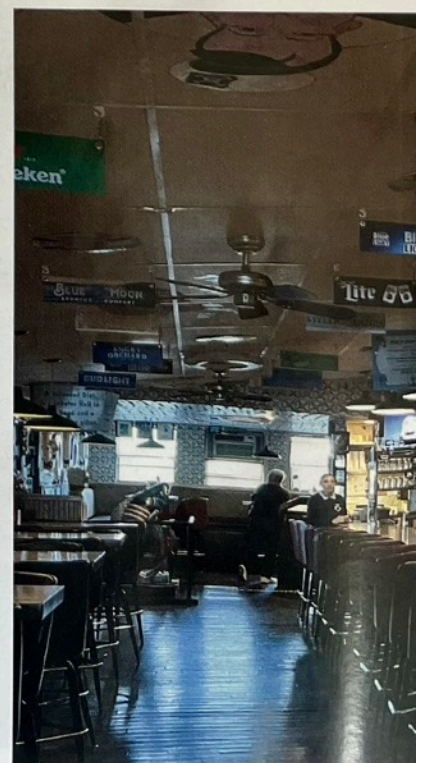
"People were asking for food upstairs too, so I put a barbecue by the steps, but that didn't work," he says. "Then I tried to get food from the kitchen to the roof, but the buns flew off the trays and into the lake. Then I had an idea - I would put a food truck on the roof." That's right, a truck on the roof, and not any old truck.

"I was looking for a truck when my construction guy came in with a new truck. His old truck was the one that had carried all the lumber for the restaurant, and I asked him where it was. He told me it was for sale, and I said 'sold.'"

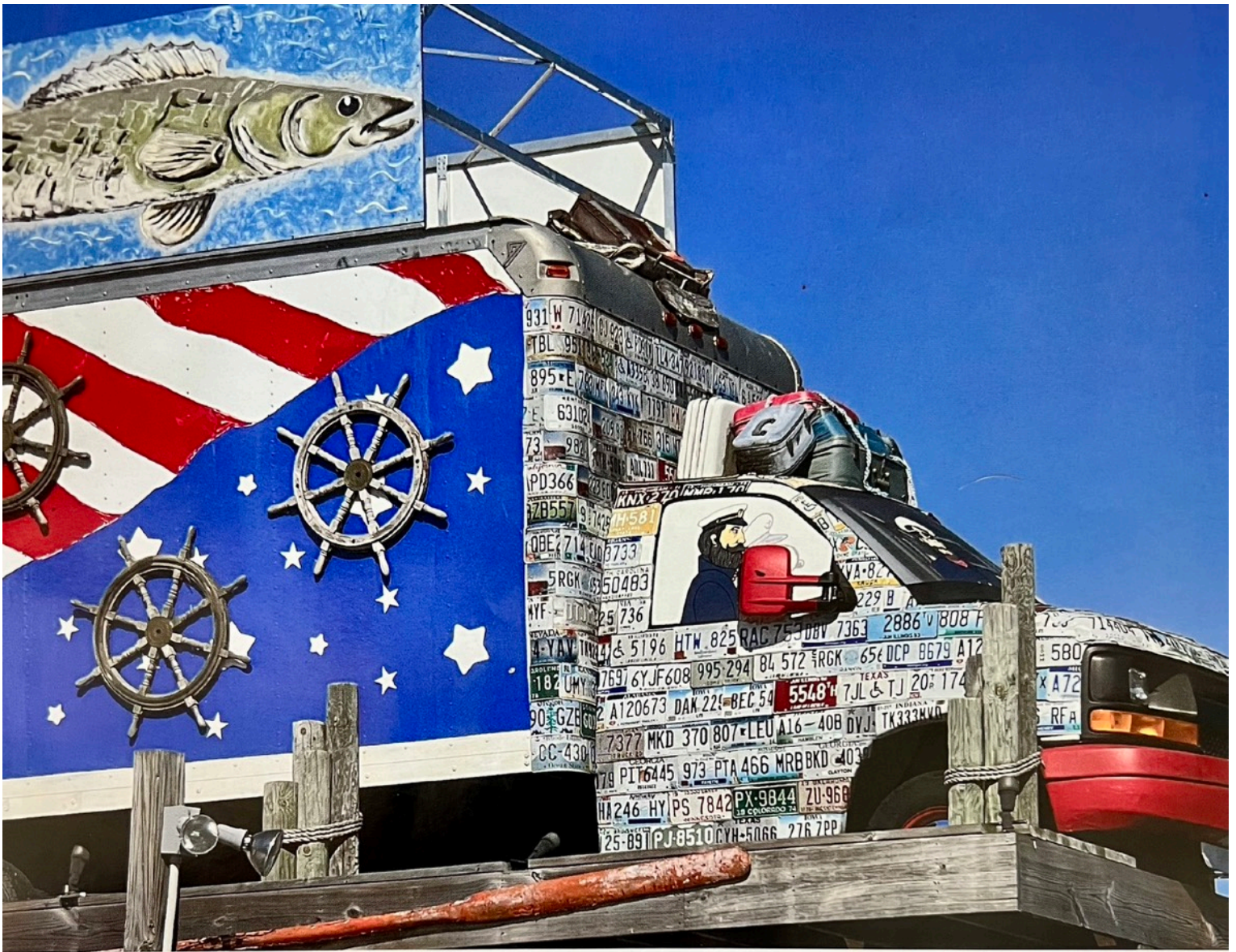
When the truck was hoisted onto the roof, it made the local news. That former construction truck now serves everything from tacos and burgers to chicken and pretzel bites. It's not the only truck on site though. Mike has an ice cream truck outside for those who want dessert.

Customers and people who know Mike aren't surprised by his creativity. The entire restaurant is filled with unique and interesting items.

"Everything on these walls has a story," he says. "Some of it's from my travels - I've been to 129 countries and just stamped my last continent in February when I went to Antarctica - and some of it is things my customers gave me. The walls are smothered with memorabilia which adds to the character. We have the captain's coat I wore at the front door of my first restaurant to greet and seat people because since we were on the water, I wanted to make it feel like the Love Boat." Other things he bought



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at local auctions, such as the lighthouse and bench out front. There's even a fish with a pipe in its mouth.

Mike is also passionate about giving to charities. On the restaurant's opening day, he auctioned off all the buoys hanging on the ceiling and walls to raise money for breast cancer. "I'm involved in many other causes too, including Wigs For Kids, Angels Supporting Animals, The Helm, Cops for Kids, Kids On The Go, the Diabetes Foundation, Racing for Kids, and the Grosse Pointe Crisis Club. I was honored to be named the chairman for Full Circle Foundation in November at their gala for autistic kids. It's not what you have... it's what you give."

MikesOnTheWater.com

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