

# 'Hello, summer!'

*Lakeshore community gears up for another brisk tourist season despite slow economy.*

● A roundup of activities and events in South Haven, **Page A2.**

it's continued to grow even through the economic slowdown," King said. "Not just the tourism; we've been pretty good all the way around."

Lake Michigan shoreline towns have been able to buck the downward economic trend the last three years because they offer a relatively inexpensive vacation close to home, said Cindy Assink, assistant director of the South Haven Visitors Bureau.

The slow economy may actually be boosting tourism on the lakeshore because many people are choosing not to spend their travel money on airline tickets. Instead, they are picking destinations they can drive to for a weekend or a week, she said.

In addition to drawing from the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo

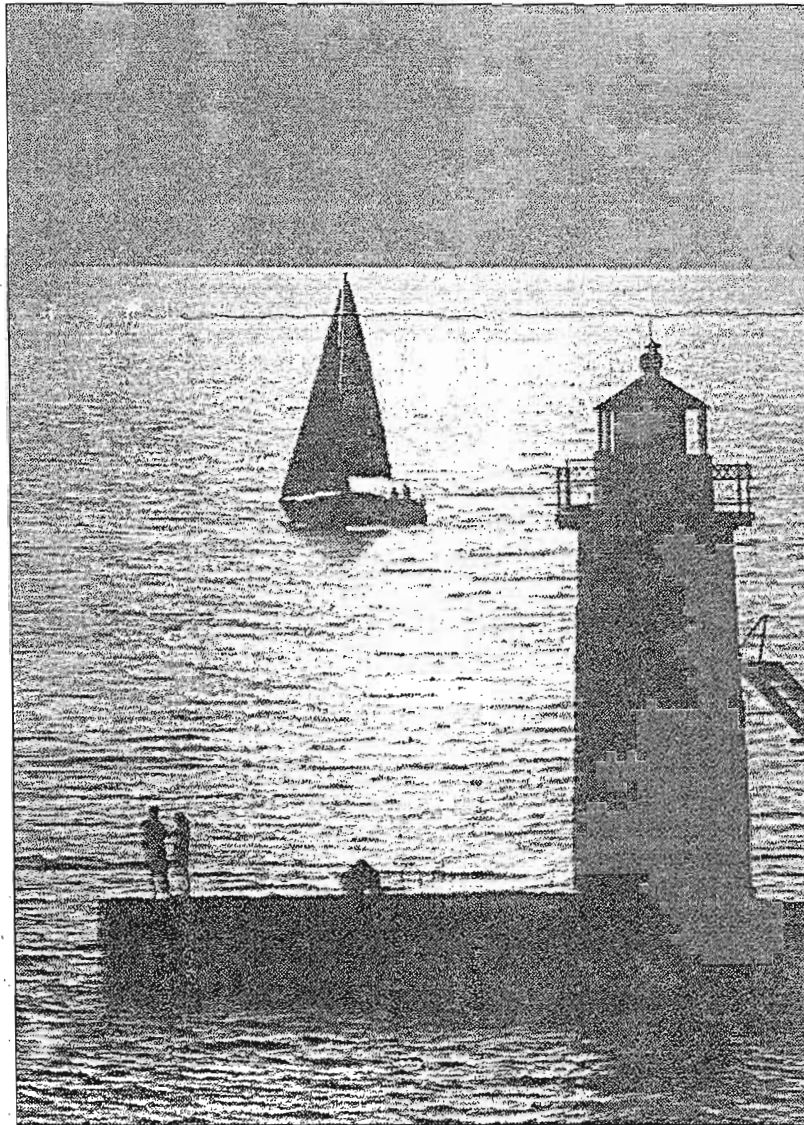
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**BY ERIC BOWEN**  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

**M**emorial Day Weekend is a time to remember fallen heroes, light the grill and, for many in southwestern Michigan, take a foray to South Haven.

One of the area's most popular travel spots, South Haven enters the tourist season this weekend, the traditional start of summer. And despite tough economic times, South Haven Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Larry King said local vendors are looking forward to a prosperous year.

"One thing about South Haven and the tourism industry is that



GAZETTE FILE

The piers on and lighthouse Lake Michigan are among the reasons South Haven is a popular summer tourist attraction.

At left, Jo Ann Neubauer positions the Bear Claw Coffee stuffed bear outside her coffee shop in downtown South Haven. Neubauer and other shop owners are gearing up for summer business.

MARK BUGNASKI / GAZETTE

