

Glen Lake

Great Lake Story 2017

Block Arbor: Chapter One



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www.renderconstruction.com



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Block Island, Rhode Island is named among 12 of “The Last Great Places” in the Western Hemisphere by The Nature Conservancy. Located an hour’s ferry ride off the coast, the small Ireland-like locale is also the only place Mike and Molly Beauregard hadn’t seen while living in the state during the ’90s.

A few years after moving to Michigan with their three kids in the spring of 1998, the couple traveled back East for a long weekend in February, when the 7-mile-long, 3-mile-wide island — a top tourist spot in summer — was “dark and windy and a little Stephen King-esque,” said Molly. “We rented this quirky little kit house built in the early ’70s, but it was on a phenomenal piece of property.”



The Beauregards inevitably bought the home, positioned on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, as a family cottage. “We loved it,” Molly said of the next 11 years. “But it was really only fun from mid-June to mid-October. Even after we renovated, we still only visited just two weeks a year and mostly rented it out.”

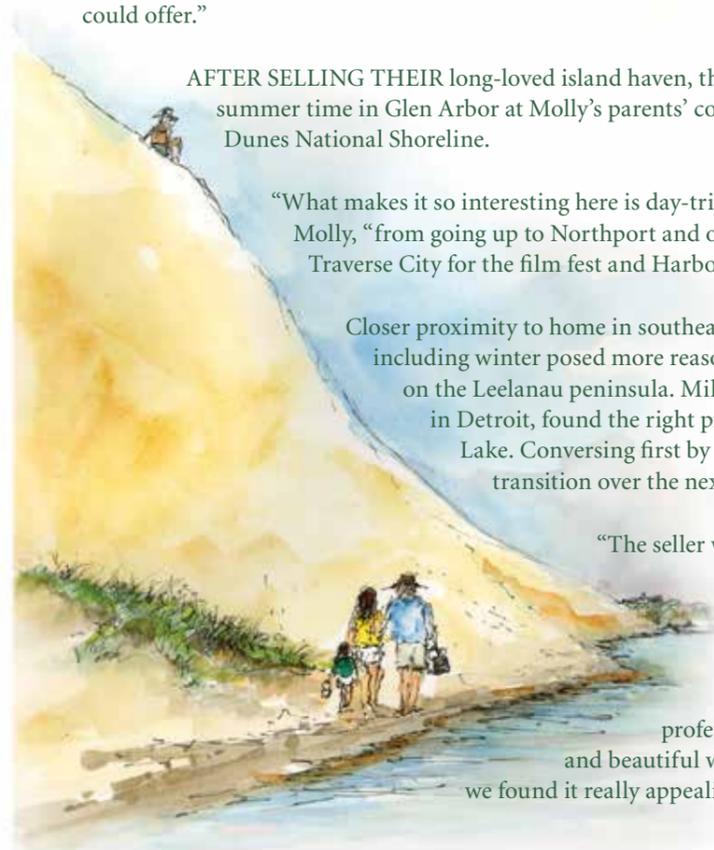
Heading out East became more difficult, she added, as Madeline, Camille and Charlie grew. “We also wanted more to do as our family became older,” she noted, “than this remote little place could offer.”

AFTER SELLING THEIR long-loved island haven, the Beauregards spent more summer time in Glen Arbor at Molly’s parents’ cottage on the edge of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Shoreline.

“What makes it so interesting here is day-tripping to different places,” said Molly, “from going up to Northport and out for concerts in the dunes to Traverse City for the film fest and Harbor Springs to visit friends.”

Closer proximity to home in southeast Michigan and different seasons including winter posed more reasons to explore vacation real estate on the Leelanau peninsula. Mike, a private equity investor based in Detroit, found the right property for sale by owner on Glen Lake. Conversing first by email, he worked on an ownership transition over the next 18 months.

“The seller was a widower and professor from Northwestern (Michigan College) with many family memories and sentimental attachment to the land,” shared Molly, herself a sociology professor in Detroit. “It was wooded and beautiful with a view and had a sweetness; we found it really appealing to pick up that thread.”



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY W. ODMARK

It also had a long rambling old house that felt like being on a train, she added, with heavy moss and small saplings that had taken root growing out of the roof. “Completely endearing, and not at all conducive to modern living,” Molly assessed. “But our youngest was still in high school and it wasn’t the right time for a big project. We planned to just camp out here for a while.”

And then the storm hit.

THE 100-MILE-PER-HOUR WINDS and wall cloud that ripped through Glen Arbor on Aug. 2 the summer of 2015 completely transformed the Beauregards’ new land. “What had been a wooded property was now a meadow,” Molly said. “We had a large insurance claim, but it didn’t make sense to fix a house we knew we’d be replacing.”

She and Mike felt sad for neighbors on Glen Lake who grieved the landscape they’d long known. “But for us, in a weird sort of way, it was like a huge hand swiping down — an opportunity to make this property our own and reimagine what it could be.”

This year’s Great Lake Story relays the ingenuity and craftsmanship of an exceptional home-building team led by the following Michigan-based experts. Read more about the collective path they take to forging a new start for the Beauregards on Glen Lake in upcoming issues of Michigan BLUE Magazine, and the distinctive skills and talents they individually bring by visiting them online.

Great Lake Story is a continuing series chronicling enriching stories of waterfront homes and those who design, build and own them. We invite you to follow the story of Mike and Molly Beauregard and the design/build team of builder Eric Render, architect Joseph Mosey, interior designer Jones-Keena & Company and landscape architect Environmental Artists. Look for each chapter on mibluemag.com.

