

MEET MM's MARQUETTE MONTHLY NEW OWNERS

Marquette Monthly's *new co-publishers Jane Hutchens and James Larsen want you to know one thing: MM is back, and it's here to stay.*



After a 17-month hiatus, *Marquette Monthly* is back in print, bringing the stories of Upper Peninsula life to readers once again. And for the first time in its long and storied history, *MM* has two co-publishers -- Jane Hutchens and James Larsen.

Both Hutchens and Larsen said they received an overwhelmingly positive response following their announcement that *Marquette Monthly* would return with a September, 2021 edition.

"It's been awesome to see the enthusiasm our community has for the *Marquette Monthly*," Larsen said.

After the decision was made to shutter its doors as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the question remained in the community: would *Marquette Monthly* ever return?

"I could not see it going away for good," Hutchens said. "I just did not want to see that happen."

Working as the ad sales representative at *MM* for the last several years, the opportunity arose for Hutchens to become the magazine's next publisher. Her next step was to call her good friend and former coworker James Larsen.

"I've always had James in mind as somebody that would be a perfect fit for *Marquette Monthly* ... He takes care of his customers and builds relationships with his customers," Hutchens said. "I picked up the phone and I said, 'James, I have an idea that I think we should do.'"

For Larsen, it seemed like the right opportunity at the right time.

"I was very interested," he said. "I had been a long time reader and admirer of the product. The more we dug into it, and I found out more about how amazing the staff was, the more interested I got even. It just felt like it was the right thing to do so we jumped in."

Both Hutchens and Larsen have a long history in the UP, working for local media outlets and involving themselves in their communities.

Hutchens was born and raised in Menominee, attended school at NMU and graduated with a BS in Speech Communications. She moved away for eight years, but "finally got smart and came back," she said with a laugh, and has been working in advertising sales for over two decades.

Larsen is a long-time Marquette County resident who has worked in local print media for roughly 13 years. He's part of the Superiorland Baseball League and is a former Negaunee High School baseball coach. His son is the fifth generation to live in Marquette County.

MM's first edition hit the streets nearly 34 years ago, when Mary Kinnunen decided Marquette was ready for an independent publication to help tell the stories of the people who called the area home. Since the inaugural, 20-page edition, Kinnunen's idea blossomed and grew, finding a long list of contributing freelance writers and artists who were given an outlet for their work to be published in a magazine that has grown to be four times its original size. That legacy continued through Pat Ryan O'Day (whose name became synonymous with *Marquette Monthly* during her long tenure as publisher), and eventually her daughter, Aileen, who took over after Pat passed away.

Now, Hutchens and Larsen can add their names to that list. For the pair, knowing where you came from helps guide the way ahead.

"It is important because without them, there would be no us," Larsen said.

And though the pandemic claimed a few months from *Marquette Monthly*, it stole only time, not the resolve of the people who help keep the publication going month after month.

"It's like getting the band back together, and we're so blessed to have such talented people," Larsen said "Not just the staff, but the contributors, freelancers, and artists."

The pair plan to continue *MM*'s legacy of in-depth storytelling, featuring articles on the people, places and

events that are woven into the fabric of Upper Peninsula culture.

"We wanted to provide that platform for all this talent that's out there -- writers, artists, to showcase what they can do," Larsen said. "Imagine you have this thing inside of you, this creative drive and you have no outlet. What a horrible thing to not have an outlet. That was missing, and I think this fulfills that for a lot of people."

The content will remain what *MM* readers have come to expect from the monthly magazine: long-form features that highlight the brighter aspects of living in the UP, many of which will continue to be written by long-standing contributors. The City Notes and Calendar sections will also remain, offering *MM* readers plenty of opportunities to attend events in their communities.

And the co-publishers remain committed to *MM*'s creed of local, local, local. That means local advertisers keep the publication free and available to anyone who wants a copy.

"Many people ask us how we can give it away for free. It is because of the support of the local advertisers. They truly are the reason it makes it to the racks," Hutchens said.

Though the pandemic took its toll on *MM* over the last few months, the new publishers see a bright future ahead, and plan to continue providing a community based publication to readers across the UP.

"*Marquette Monthly* is gonna keep going," Larsen said.

You can pick up *Marquette Monthly* at over 200 locations throughout the central and western Upper Peninsula. Potential advertisers and artists wishing to submit their work for consideration should contact Jane Hutchens at jane@marquettmonthly.com or James Larsen at james@marquettmonthly.com. Calendar items should be sent to calendar@marquettmonthly.com. Interested writers should contact editor@marquettmonthly.com.

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