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April 2016

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REGIONAL NEWS

Relay for Life

The Cass County Relay for Life will be from 6 pm June 17 to 6 pm June 18 at the Cass County Fairgrounds in Cassopolis. Last year, the Cass County Relay brought in more than \$10,000, from the eight teams participating in the event.

People who are interested in joining the planning committee, signing up a team for the relay or simply wish to donate can do so by visiting the Cass County Relay for Life webpage at <http://relayforlife.org/casscountymi>.

Event to aid anti-abuse group

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services will host the Survivor Stomp, a 5k run and 1.4 mile walk on April 30 at Fred Russ County Forest Park on Marcellus Highway. Packet pickup will begin at 8 am, the race will start at 9 am. Registration fee for runners is \$25 for adults, \$15 for children 12 & under. There is no fee for the walk but a \$25 pledge collection is suggested.

For more info and to access registration visit www.dasasmi.org. For info contact kimk@cassmi.org or call 273-6154.

Earth & Sky Celebration

The Earth and Sky Celebration will be held at Dr. TK Lawless Park on Saturday, May 21, from 3:30-9:30 pm.

The event will feature environmental education, hiking nature interpretive trail, magic show, live birds of prey, hands-on youth activities, full moon viewing while enjoying a bluegrass jam around campfire. Call Korie 269-506-8334 to set up an education booth for your organization, to volunteer or for more information, or visit the website: www.earthdaypark.webs.com

Dementia conference planned

On Wednesday, May 11, the Cass County COA will host its second annual Dementia Conference at the Lowe Center in Cassopolis. This program will cover various aspects of dementia care for professional and family caregivers.

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia can be difficult, emotionally, physically, and financially. Through the Dementia Conference, the COA aims to provide caregivers with a wealth of information to support them and raise awareness of the resources available to assist them. The conference also connects caregivers to a supportive community of people with similar experiences.

The conference will include a line-up of speakers, beginning at 9 am with Erin Van Groningen of the Alzheimer's Association of Kalamazoo. Later presentations will feature gero-psychiatrist Dr. Nadeem Mirza of Bronson Lakeview Hospital, Elder Law Attorney Mike Walling, and a team from Hospice of Southwest Michigan.

This year's event is presented by the Shopko Foundation. The Dementia Conference will run from 9 am to 4 pm at the Lowe Center, 60525 Decatur Road, Cassopolis. Registration is \$20 per

person, which includes lunch and refreshments. A vegetarian option is available for lunch, but must be indicated when registering. Free respite care for family members is available but must be pre-arranged prior to the day of the conference. For more information or to register, call Keryl Conkright at 269-445-8110 or 800-323-0390.

Diabetes PATH Workshop

Beginning April 6, Diabetes PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) will be offered at the Cass County COA's Front Street Crossing in Dowagiac. This program is offered by the COA through a partnership with Region IV Area Agency on Aging.

Diabetes PATH is a six-week Chronic Disease Self-Management Program that teaches practical skills for living a healthy life with diabetes. Developed and tested by Stanford University, the workshop focuses on self-care, learning new coping strategies, and sharing personal experiences with other group members. It is designed to be part of an individual's current medical treatment. Research has shown that people who have attended this six-session workshop feel better, are less limited by their illness, and spend less time at the doctor or in the hospital.

Classes are scheduled to meet weekly at Front Street Crossing, 227 S. Front St., Dowagiac, on Wednesdays from April 6 to May 11. Each session will run from 1 pm to 3:30 pm.

Cost for the six-week workshop is free, but donations are gratefully accepted. Family members, friends, and caregivers are also encouraged to attend. Class sizes are limited and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, please contact Adrienne at the Cass County COA at 269-445-8110 or 800-323-0390 ext. 232.

Outdoor Adventures day camp

Registrations are now being accepted for "Outdoor Adventures" at St. Patrick's County Park (South Bend).

Five camps are offered for children entering kindergarten through 8th grade.

- July 11-15: Walk on the Wild Side! (ages 10-11)
- July 18-22: Buzz, Hop, Soar! (ages 5-6)
- July 25-29: Art Week (ages 8-9)
- August 1-5: Animal Adventures (ages 6-7)
- Wednesday, August 10: Paddles, Poles, Discs and Arrows (ages 11-13)

For more information, or to request registration materials, please call 574/654-3155, or visit www.sjcparks.org.

Free meals at CUMC

The Cassopolis United Methodist Church offers a FREE meal to all community members on the third Saturday of each month, from 4:30-6 pm. The meals are prepared in the church by church members, and menus range from hot ham & cheese sandwiches to chicken Parmesan with spaghetti.

All community members are invited and encouraged to come, enjoy a meal

and fellowship with others. The church is at 209 S Rowland St., Cassopolis, with ample parking and handicap entrance at the back of the church, off O'Keefe St.

Dowagiac Farm Market

The Dowagiac Farm & Artisan Market is cultivating plans to kick off its third season in the downtown this June. Growers and artisans can reserve their space now for the market that re-opens Wednesday, June 1, and will continue through the second Saturday of October. The market will be open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 am to 2 pm.

Vickie Phillipson, program director for the Dowagiac Downtown Development Authority (DDA), said growers and artisans can register to participate in the market by contacting her at (269) 782-8212 or by e-mail at vphillipson@dowagiac.org. Working with her is Steve Arseneau, director of the Dowagiac Area History Museum.

The Market will be downtown at Division and Railroad streets, upon the lawn of the Dowagiac Area History Museum. The location provides easy access and visibility to M-62, which is one of the major arteries coming into the city.

Space is available at the market for \$10, when having your own overhead canopy. Vendors, without a canopy, can rent one from the DDA for an additional \$2.

Tree & plant sale

The Cass County Conservation District will have its 2016 tree seedling and fruiting plant sale from 10 am to 6 pm on April 22 and from 9 am to 2 pm on April 23 at the Cassopolis COA. Left over seedlings will also be available at the Edwardsburg Town Hall from 9 am to 2 pm on April 30.

On sale days plants are available on a first-come, first-served basis or you can pre order (orders are due by April 1 and must be picked up at the COA on April 22 or 23).

For more information or to receive an order form call 445-8641, ext. 5.

Soup Luncheon at CUMC

The Cassopolis United Methodist Church will have a soup luncheon fund raiser on April 15 from 11:30 am to 1 pm at the church, 209 S. Rowland, Cassopolis. The event will feature two types of homemade soup, salad, dessert and beverage for \$7. Proceeds will be used for the roof fund. For more info call 445-3107 or 445-2334.

Cass County COA to offer Creating Confident Caregivers class

Beginning Monday, April 11, the Cass County COA will offer Creating Confident Caregivers, a program for individuals who are caring for a loved one with dementia or another form of memory loss. This program is offered by the COA through a partnership with Region IV Area Agency on Aging.

The program will meet on Mondays from 10 am to Noon for six weeks, from April 11 - May 23 at Porter Township

Hall, 69373 Baldwin Prairie Road, Union. The program is offered free of charge. Advance registration is required. Contact Keryl Conkright, R.N., at 800-323-0390 or kerylc@casscoa.org to register or for more information. Respite care for family members with dementia or memory loss issues is available free of charge during the class but must be pre-arranged.

2016 Railroad Crossing Repairs

The Canadian National Railroad will be replacing railroad ties from the Indiana/Michigan state line northward to the Village of Penn in Cass County beginning April 11, performing work on one track at a time. As part of the program the following road intersections will be rebuilt or improved:

- Redfield Street east of Conrad Road
- US 12 in Edwardsburg
- Harris Street west of M 62
- Pine Lake Street west of M 62
- Jefferson Center Street west of M 62
- Evan Street west of M 62
- Hospital Street west of M 62
- Decatur Road at Fox Street
- Gards Prairie Road north of Fox Street

The private farm crossings located along this section of track will also be rebuilt as part of the project. The road crossings will need to be closed for approximately two weeks each for upgrades to occur and the CN Railroad will contact the emergency services, schools and Road Commission ahead of each individual closure. The road closures have been coordinated with the local fire departments and the Cass County Road Commission to provide public access and mobility during the project. During road closures detours will be posted by the railroad.

The following road crossings will be done with the first track line tie replacement:

- US 12 in Edwardsburg
- Pine Lake Street west of M 62
- Evan Street west of M 62
- Hospital Street west of M 62
- Decatur Road at Fox Street
- Gards Prairie Road north of Fox Street

The remaining road crossings will be done with the second tracks tie replacement:

- Redfield Street east of Conrad Road
- Harris Street west of M 62
- Jefferson Center Street west of M 62

The project is estimated to be completed by the middle of June. For questions please contact Cass County Road Commission at 269-445-8611.

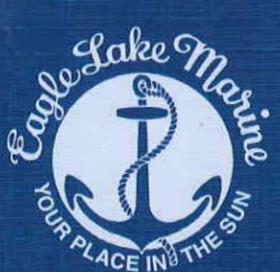
Summer arts & crafts show

The Cass Area Artists(CAA) have issued a call for artist for the 2016 Summer Arts and Crafts show to be held on July 9 on the grounds of the Lowe Center, in Cassopolis. The juried show is open to Michiana artists and crafts persons working in many media, including painting, jewelry, photography, stained glass, ceramics and pottery, woodturning and more. For more information and an application visit <http://www.cassareaartist.com-show> or call 228-8047. Application deadline is April 1.



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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

April 6 - Book Sale, 11 am- 5 pm, \$1 bag day at the book sale. Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 269-487-9214

April 6 - Cookies and Canvas for Kids, 1 pm, Limit 20 kids ages 5+ and registration is required. Call to sign-up. Kids will paint a picture with instruction. Cass District Library-Main Library, 357-7822

April 6 - Mother Son Book Club, 6 pm, Book club for moms and their sons in elementary school. Call Stephanie for more info. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 7 - Family Game Night, 6 pm, Play board games at the library! Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

April 8 - Lego Building, 1 pm, Enjoy free build play time at the library. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

April 8 - Free Skin Cancer Screening by Dr. Mark Kuriata and Advanced Dermatology at COA, Cassopolis, 9 am. Call for an appointment. Times available between 9 am and 4 pm. 445-8110.

April 12 - Book Bunch Book Club, 5:30 pm, Reader's choice night; members talk briefly about a book they read recently. Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

April 12 - Mother Daughter Book Club, 6:30 pm, Book club for moms and their daughters in elementary school. Call Stephanie for info. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 14 - Annotating and Illustrating The Hobbit, 7 pm, Tolkien fans will not want to miss this presentation by Douglas A. Anderson. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 14 - Wine Glass Painting: Spring Flowers; 1 pm, COA Front Street Crossing--227 S. Front Street, Dowagiac; Cost is \$5 for one glass and \$3 for each additional glass. All supplies included. Advance registration required.

April 18 - Coloring Club, 5:30-6:30 pm, Materials provided at this coloring club for adults. Free to attend! Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 487-9214

April 18 - Coffee and Canvas, 6-9 pm, Registration required, painting class is for ages 16+ and costs \$15 per person. Class is taught by professionals from Wine and Canvas in South Bend. Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 269-487-9214

April 19 - MS Special Program; Neurologist Dr. Michael Englert to present on treatment, current studies, medications, and more at COA in Cassopolis, 1 pm.

April 20 - Garden Club, COA, Cassopolis, 1 pm

April 21 - Self-defense class for women taught by the Cass County Sheriff's Office, 1 pm, Cassopolis COA, Advance registration required. 445-8110

April 25 - Beginner Cake Decorating Class, 6-8 pm, Registration required, class is for ages 10+ and costs \$10 per person. Class is taught by Christina Richey of Christina's Cakery. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 25 - Lego Club, 6-7:30 pm, Enjoy free build play time at this monthly club that meets during the school year. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

April 26 - 5 pm - National Association of

Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

April 27, 29 - Estate Planning, Special presentation by Jennifer Vanderveen of Tuesley Hall Konopa, LLP, 1 pm; April 27 at COA in Cassopolis; April 29 at COA Front Street Crossing--227 S. Front Street, Dowagiac

April 30 - Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services Survivor Stop 5k run and 1.4 mile walk, packet pickup 8 am, race at 9 am.

May 24 - 5 pm - The National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

June 17 - Cass County Relay for Life, fairgrounds, Cassopolis, www.relayforlife.org/casscountymt

June 28 - 5 pm - National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

July 26 5 pm - National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super

Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

August 23 - 5 pm - The National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting of the year at the Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

September 27 - 5 pm - The National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

October 25 - 5 pm - National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet in Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome. For information, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

December 6 - 1:30 pm - National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter annual holiday dinner at a site to be determined. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome, no RSVP needed. No business meeting, new officers will be sworn in. Next meeting will be March 28, 2017. For information call Jean Rowe, 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

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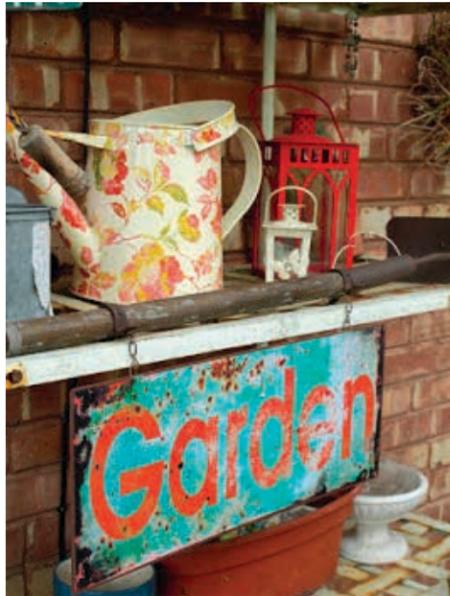
Spring is now a reality instead of a daydream

by JANE BOUDREAU



It's hard to believe April is here already. The promise of spring is a reality instead of a daydream and I hope all of my Neighbors are done with the months of hibernation and ready to move on out to the great outdoors. I have green shoots coming up everywhere. I'm always so pleased that I took that extra time in the fall to add more bulbs to my garden beds. Many times during the spring I stand back, look and think, "I need more red next year. Maybe yellow." I keep a small garden journal with the names of my plants and seeds and the date I plant them. I have many rough diagrams which include bulbs and flowers I've planted because otherwise I simply lose track. Often times I see something I'd like to add to the garden but the season is too far along so I make notes to follow through the following fall or spring. I enjoy the whole process of planning, planting, maintaining and enjoying my garden. Spring is always hectic but then it's smooth sailing. By June I'm walking around pulling weeds here and there while the dogs follow me or are just rolling in the fresh green grass. And I have cut flowers in the house pretty much all the time. I love my cute garden decorations. It's a great way to let your individual personality come through. I love bright colors outdoors although I'm not like that with my indoor decor, nor do I wear a lot of bright colors. I guess this is where I let my wild child run free!

I have a tendency to do an overly quick clean up of my yard, garden, patio and porch in the fall. The weather is usually gloomy and there is a definite nip in the air. My cheeks turn red and my fingers numb. Pots and tools go into the shed in a haphazard way. Our thoughts are focused on getting inside in front of a warm fire, embracing a more quiet and relaxed time and planning for the upcoming holidays. Then spring comes along



and you pull those shed doors open wide and, "arrrrrrgh!" In my case I usually have a few flats of flowers, plants, bulbs and mulch ready to go. But first I have to face a jumble of dirty pots, tools, half used bags of fertilizer and grass seed. In the corner is a tangle of rakes, shovels and hoses. This year will be different. This is my plan and maybe you might be able to glean a few hints from my list, unless of course you are totally neat and organized and understandably appalled by the scene I just described.

1) Start with eliminating anything broken, beyond repair or no longer needed and toss it into a trash can (or your recycle bin).

2) Fill a large plastic tub, bin or bucket with warm water and a bit of mild dish soap. Let all of your hand held garden tools have a good soak. Rinse with the hose and let them dry in the sun. Then give them a nice rub down with a soft clean cloth and some regular old vegetable oil, paying careful attention to the wooden handles.

3) Squirt a little of that dish soap into your flower pots and then hit them with the jet sprayer on your hose. You don't want any problems or potential disease from the previous season causing anything to linger when you pot your new plants. Use that hose to spray down your rakes, shovels and brooms as well.

4) Check the expiration dates on everything; your seed packs, plant food, fertilizer and bird seed. Toss the old stuff.

5) If you have a lot of cute garden decorations, wipe everything down with a wet cloth so they shine.

6) Find ways to maximize your storage in your shed, garage or wherever you keep your garden tools. Hooks for tools large and small. An extra flower pot is great for your smaller tools. Plastic zip lock bags for your seeds to be stored in. Take time to roll up your hoses and secure with a bungee cord and hang on a large wall hook. Nesting or stacking plastic and clay flower pots is always difficult when they won't come apart later. Save or buy some bubble wrap and cut a circle out just an inch or two larger than the bottom of the pot. This will help you pull them apart later. And never leave clay or ceramic pots outdoors over the winter. They crack very easily.

7) Keep a list of everything you need to replace or feel might make your life easier and make a trip to your favorite garden center. Have fun and reward yourself for all of your hard work. Remember~~~~ if you spend time doing all of this prep work well in advance of the weekend you plan to get out and start yard/garden clean-up or planting, you want to be prepared to enjoy the most enjoyable part of gardening without a lot of confusion and wasted time.

I might add ... these are tips I've learned from my own experience... nothing has been copied from any source whatsoever. So proceed with caution... :-D

Do you have any tips you can pass on? I'd love to have some interaction here in my column so if you have any tried and true methods for spring garden prep and planning...send me an email and I'll share them along with your name in next month's issue of Neighbors. My email address is at the end of this article. I'd love to hear from you!

It hasn't escaped me that many of you might not give a hoot about planting flowers or veggies or doing any sort of yard work. I'm sure you are yawning big time by now. So lets focus on some indoor fun, or well...getting your home all spiffed up so you can call it a day and just kick back on the patio, deck, sun porch, beach... wherever. I love that our lakehouse needs very little done inside pretty much all summer. Other than sweeping up a lot of sand, changing sandy sheets from little sandy feet and watching how sand refuses to go down the bathtub drain no matter how you try to wash it down or how many

times you swear... making a few small changes here and there will chase the remnants of winter out of your home.

Decoratively speaking I like to tuck away a lot of clutter and keep things simple in the summer. Not only does it make cleaning easy but if you have guests coming and going, they usually leave enough of their own things around and your home can start to look like a huge mish mash of everything under the sun. Literally. I like to keep my fireplace clean but since we have a lot of cooler evenings here in the Midwest, I won't do anything like placing candles inside or floral arrangements. That's all fine and pretty but I want to be able to toss in a few logs on a cold night. I



keep them around but I also add some seasonal interest on the hearth. Just a little basket filled with dried or faux blooms or stems is perfect.

I like to change out simple inexpensive things that lighten up a room like curtains ... sheers especially. I eliminate the layers of quilts and blankets on the bed and just add a light blanket over the top sheet and a throw at the end of the bed that comes in handy for naps.

Don't neglect that spring cleaning, but I'm not going to call this spring cleaning. First of all you know how to do that and secondly, you should have done it by now. Lets just call it "Getting Ready To Move Outside For The Next Three Months Cleaning". Windows are a biggie for me. For outside I like the Windex Outdoor Cleaner Kit that has several poles that connect to reach way up high. The scrubbing pad does it all and then you just hose it off. We like to use the power washer to get into all the eaves and crevices where you might have hidden debris, bugs, webs and nests. Well darn, I took you back outside again. Okay, do the windows inside, too. Use a squeegee, we have big windows. I also like using newspaper instead of paper towels or cloths. I have dogs so this turns into a daily

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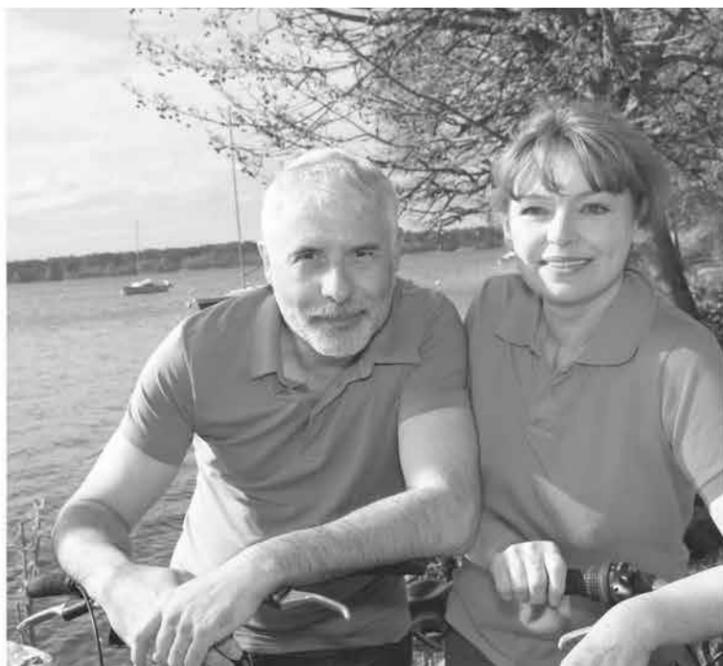
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thing at about a 3 foot level where their noses connect with the window every time they see anything from a human to a groundhog.

Clean out your linen closets. Why? I don't know. Mine are always in disarray by the time spring rolls around and I want freshly washed towels. Rotate them all the time so you aren't always using the clean ones on top while the ones on the bottom start to smell musty. And they will. If you have a lot of guests coming to stay, hit up the sales on soap, shampoo, toilet paper and Kleenex.

Purge your fridge and cabinets. Donate canned and packaged foods if you haven't used them and the expiration dates are good. I say this because we seem to shift to using fresher foods in the summer to grill and make salads and so forth. Think fresh. Clean the refrigerator and freezer really well too, as it's going to fill up with all sorts of fresh fruits and veggies soon. This is also a great time to soap up and hose down your coolers that you use outside when you have an abundance of company. Oops, took ya outside again! :(

If you happen to live on a lake or you just have guests coming and going, I'll share some tips on getting your guest rooms company ready in next month's column. For now I think you have your hands full. Again, if you have spring cleaning tips, email a few to me.

I think you know how I love to make a pretty table. I'm not pretentious by any means yet I love to make company, friends and family feel special. If you have a creative side I hope you enjoy this part of my column as well. This table is 'spring-ish' and incorporates some not so usual ideas. The table runner is actually a towel, a very thin Turkish towel. My every



day dishes are on inexpensive straw placemats from Pier 1. The napkins were found several years ago on sale and the centerpiece, just a small candle holder with dried hydrangeas from my garden. Again, I try to think outside the box. And money doesn't grow on trees so I love to use what I have and use the same things over and over in different ways. If I were to switch out the napkins and centerpiece, I'd have a whole new table. But the point is to have fun, make your family and friends feel loved, and the occasion memorable.

I'll leave you with a simple recipe perfect for the transition from colder to warmer weather. Tummy filling pasta with lots of veggies minus the heavy red sauce (and white). Feel free to substitute many of the ingredients. This is what makes it your own. It all comes together easily, it's very healthy and all you need to add for a great meal, even for company, is some fresh bread. Here we go...

Simple Lemon Linguine



- 1 pound linguine or fettuccine
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 T butter
- 2 large pieces of shallots, skinned and chopped finely (about 2 T)
- 2 cloves of garlic chopped finely
- 2 T Pine nuts (found by spices or Italian foods)
- 1 c fresh snow peas
- Grated zest of 1 lemon (the yellow part)
- Juice of 1 whole lemon
- 1/4 c white wine
- 2 c fresh spinach
- 1 T dried thyme
- Salt and pepper

Put a large pot of water on to boil and cook linguine until tender while you prepare the remainder of the recipe. Drain, cover and keep warm.

Heat the olive oil and butter in a large, deep saucepan over low heat. Add the shallots and garlic and cook about 5 minutes until just tender. Add pine nuts and snow peas and cook an additional 5 minutes tossing frequently until the snow peas are soft. Grate the lemon zest over, then the juice of the same lemon. Add the wine and bring to a low boil. Add the fresh

spinach and gently combine. Sprinkle in the thyme and salt and pepper. Simmer another 2 minutes until spinach is wilted. Serve the linguine with the sauce spooned over. Serves 4.

It's been great to share some ideas and a recipe with you again this month. I truly hope you email me with some of your gardening and spring cleaning tips. I'd love to feature some of these in my articles over the next couple of months.

In May we are going to talk more about spiffing up our outdoor spaces, making guests feel comfortable (and if we never have guests, just make some extra rooms in our homes a little prettier and cozy). I'll probably have another inspiring table setting and a recipe or two.

Happy Spring Neighbors! Bring it on!

~Jane

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Toning up vs. bulking up

By Brenda Harris
Cass COA

Everyone has an idea in their head when it comes to looking their fittest and healthiest. For some it's fitting perfectly into a certain outfit, or walking on the beach in a swimsuit with total confidence. For others, it may mean seeing a defined midsection reflected in the mirror, or having strong, toned shoulders or legs.

We all have our own goals for how we want to look and feel.

Although your specific goals maybe different from those of others, almost everyone wants to look and feel toned and fit.

What does "toned" really mean? And is it different from "bulking" up? This article sets out to define just that, and to dispel some myths about toning, strengthening and bulking up.

What is Toning?

When most people say that they want to "tone up," what they usually mean is that they want to become leaner. Basically, they want to lose fat, and add a little muscle definition—but not so much muscle mass that they look like a bodybuilder.

In the fitness world, there is no real definition for toning that is greatly recognized. Rather, toning is a term used to describe the end goal, which usually results from a combination of basic weight-lifting and fat-burning.

What about Bulking Up?

Most men want to "bulk up" and

women usually wish to avoid building big, bulky muscles. Although there is no strict definition, "bulking up" means adding a lot of muscle mass to the body and possibly reducing one's body fat. Bulking up harkens images of bodybuilders and big football players—usually male and usually beefy!

Toning on the other hand, refers to aerobics instructors and Hollywood starlets who have lower amount of body fat and some visible muscle, but not huge muscles.

So now that we have our definitions straight, let's move on to facts and fallacies about toning up and bulking up.

5 Common Myths about Toning and Bulking Up

Myth #1: Lifting light weights will tone your body and lifting heavy weights will bulk you up.

The Truth: The idea that lifting lighter weights for more reps does a better job of increasing the muscular endurance, lighter weights will not help you "tone" better than heavyweights. In fact, because heavier weights build the strength of your muscles, thereby helping to increase your metabolism and burn fat, lifting heavier weights with fewer reps (8 to 12 on average) and working until you're fatigued is more effective at helping you reach your toning goals than lifting lighter weights. Not to mention that it's more time efficient too.

Myth #2: Building muscle and bulking up are one and the same.

The Truth: If you've been avoiding weights because you think that building

muscle means that you'll bulk up, think again. When you lift weights that are challenging, you actually create micro-tear in the muscle fibers. These tears are then repaired by the body and in that process the muscle becomes stronger and a little bit bigger. However, because muscle tissue is more dense than fat, adding a little bit more muscle to your body and decreasing your fat actually makes you look leaner—not bigger. To really bulk up, you have to really work with that goal in mind. Bodybuilders spend hours and hours in the gym lifting extremely heavyweights, along with eating a very strict diet that promotes muscle gain. The average person's workout and diet—especially a calorie-controlled diet—doesn't result in the same effects.

Myth #3: Lifting light weights won't help you get stronger.

The Truth: When it comes to lifting weights, the secret to really getting stronger isn't about how much weight you're lifting. Instead, it's all about working your muscle to fatigue where you literally cannot lift the weight for another repetition. So, if you're like most people and extra time is a luxury, it makes more sense to go heavy and then go home!

Myth #4: Women and men should lift weights differently.

The Truth: It's pretty common to see women lift 3-5 pound dumbbells to do biceps curls while men pick up the 20-pounders to do the same exercise. Although men are genetically stronger than women. They aren't that much stronger. Second, most women tend to stick to the weight machines or basic leg-

work that target the rear end and abs, while the guys at the gym are more likely to be seen working out with free weights or using barbells and most often focusing on their vanity muscles: the biceps and chest.

If you really want to lose weight and get lean — no matter whether you call that toning or bulking — people of both genders should have a strength-training plan in place that works every major muscle in the body at least 8 to 12 times, using a weight that is heavy enough to change, grow and adapt, making you stronger and leaner no matter if you're male or female. Lifting this way is also a great way to lose weight.

Myth # 5: Certain forms of exercise build long, lean muscles.

The Truth: No form of exercise makes muscles "longer" because your muscles do not—and will not—respond to exercise by getting longer. It's just not how they work. Muscles are a certain length because they attach to your bones.

A wide variety of movements and exercises can help you strengthen your muscles without necessarily making them bigger. In fact, you can develop a lot of muscular strength without your muscles ever increasing in size.

Exercises such as yoga, Pilates, dance classes can help to increase your flexibility and your posture, which can give you the illusion of feeling and looking longer or taller.

You have the information that will help you to get stronger and tone that body.

Have a great workout!

Facing your fitness fears

By Brenda Harris
Cass COA

Get ready to face those fitness fears. Most everyone has some type of worries when first starting out on a fitness program. There are pros and cons to anything a person does. One of the fears, if I lift weights, I'll bulk up. Fear not, what makes men bulky is weight lifting and testosterone. In fact, weight lifting can actually help women slim down because muscle cells are smaller than fat cells. If you are happy with your figure and strength level, you can improve your endurance level by focusing on lower weights and higher reps.

Another fear is my schedule, I'm afraid I won't find the time to do my exercising. Exercise doesn't have to be like clock work. Your workout can be done where you can fit it in. Even by doing 5 or 10 minutes at a time will add

up. It isn't written in stone you have to do it one hour a day, same time, same place, and the same way. I can do anything because of my schedule, by taking the stairs or walking during my lunch break. Every little bit will help you reach your goal.

What if I don't feel sore from my new exercise routine? Guess what? You don't have to hurt after your workout to get benefits. Most muscles quickly adapt to how hard you are working that muscle group. The intensity will most likely make you ache after the first time. Your workout doesn't have to be heavy duty to do you good.

What about mirrors? Do I have to stand in front of them and look at this body? Your workout can be done inside or even outdoors. Don't limit your workouts to one area. Be creative and do different types of workouts. When you are outdoors not only your body muscles will

get a good workout, but your mind does too. Outdoor workouts can challenge you in many ways. Uneven surfaces, while walking, will help you burn more calories. If you can't get out of the gym, pick a spot at the back of the fitness class

where you don't have to look at yourself in the mirror

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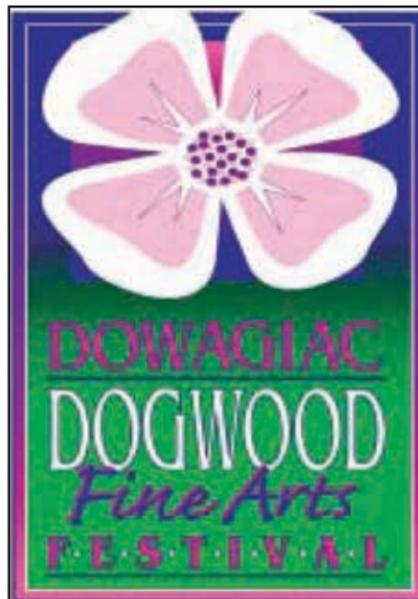
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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Have you thought about insurance for ...?

By **VICKI BROSSMAN**
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency of Cass
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Jewelry, Firearms, Silverware – Are you aware the basic homeowners policy has a limit for theft of these items? If you have items that are more valuable, you may want to schedule each item individually on your policy. When scheduling items, you will need a description and a recent appraisal. Not only can scheduling an item allow a higher limit for theft, it offers broader protection including accidental loss - such as dropping your earring down the drain of the kitchen sink, leaving a piece of jewelry in a hotel room, or losing a diamond from your wedding ring.

Drones – Homeowner insurers are beginning to take a hard look at drones and even including exclusions for drone-related liability in their policies. Suppose your drone crash lands into someone's car or house causing damage, injures a person, or takes pictures or videotapes a neighbor who sues you. Without liability coverage, the money will come out of your pocket. Not only that, you have no coverage to repair or replace your damaged drone. This also

includes the theft or loss of your drone.

Wedding Insurance – Are you planning a wedding? Does your venue require liability insurance? You may want to purchase a Wedding Policy. A wedding insurance policy includes coverage for property damage to the rented banquet facility, medical payments coverage in case a guest falls or gets sick from the food, and host liquor liability. Many facilities require they be added as an additional insured to your insurance policy. While most homeowners insurance companies will not allow this, a Wedding Policy does. Insurance may also be available for other special events such as a 50th wedding anniversary, a graduation party, or a birthday party.

Travel Insurance – Suppose you planned, saved, and booked your dream vacation. What if you have to cancel your trip due to illness or other unforeseen event? The purchase of travel insurance will help you protect the investment in your trip. A travel insurance policy may include coverage for trip cancellation and interruption due to illness, or death of you, a family member, traveling companion, or business partner, trip delay, medical expense and evacua-

tion costs, lost, stolen, or damaged baggage, and accidental death.

Pet Insurance – If you have a pet, you are familiar with vet bills. Pet health insurance is available to help with these expenses. Three levels are available: Basic coverage – the least expensive option providing the lowest reimbursement for certain veterinary expenses, Comprehensive coverage – a more expensive option with better benefits, and Pet Well Care Protection – a plan that reimburses for preventative care such as physical exams, flea and heartworm protection, and vaccinations. Life and Theft insurance is also available and normally used for high value animals.

Identity Theft Insurance – Having your identity stolen can be inconvenient and costly. Identity theft insurance provides reimbursement to victims for the cost of restoring their identity and repairing credit reports. It usually covers expenses such as phone bills, lost wages, notary and certified mailing costs and sometimes attorney fees. Some companies offer restoration or resolution services that will help you through the process of recovering your identity. Identity theft insurance may be available as an

endorsement to your homeowners or automobile insurance policy or by purchasing a separate Identity Theft policy.

Household Help – The insurance coverage needed will depend on the type of help you hire. If you are contracting with an outside firm, ask for a certificate of insurance. If you are personally hiring household help, the type of insurance needed will depend on whether they are occasional help or permanent full- or part-time employees.

Don't make the mistake of thinking your homeowners and/or automobile insurance will cover every situation. Contact your insurance agent with your questions. Your agent will help you determine what type of, if any, additional coverage is needed as well as the cost to you. Once you have this information, you will be able to make an educated decision.



Path Act makes many tax breaks permanent

Provided by **Greg Schoenfeld**
Compass Wealth Advisors

In a welcome end-of-year surprise, the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act, signed into law on December 18, 2015, made many popular tax breaks permanent and retroactively extended others. Most of these provisions had expired at the end of 2014, and-as has become typical of tax extensions-congressional action came too late for meaningful current-year planning, though you may still benefit on your 2015 taxes. More important, the provisions that were made permanent will help individual taxpayers and small businesses plan for future years. The PATH Act is complex, but these are some of the most significant provisions for individuals and small businesses.

Tax Breaks for Individuals

These provisions are now permanent parts of the federal tax code.

Sales tax deduction-Taxpayers who itemize deductions on Schedule A of IRS Form 1040 can elect to deduct state and local general sales taxes in lieu of

state and local income taxes. This is especially important for those who live in states without an income tax or for those who make large purchases during the year.

American Opportunity Tax Credit-A tax credit of up to \$2,500 of qualified higher-education expenses (partially refundable, depending on income) is available for each of a student's first four years of college, subject to income phaseout limits.

Classroom expense deduction-Teachers can deduct up to \$250 in classroom expenses "above the line" (on Form 1040 before adjusted gross income) in 2015. Beginning in 2016, the amount is indexed for inflation and might include qualifying professional development expenses.

Qualified charitable distributions (QCDs)-Individuals 70 years and older can make tax-free QCDs from their IRAs (up to \$100,000 in a year). The QCD counts toward the required minimum distribution.

Employer-provided mass-transit benefits-Employer pre-tax reimbursement is set at the same level as parking

reimbursement and retroactively increased from \$130 to \$250 monthly for 2015 (\$255 for 2016).

Child tax credit-The \$3,000 income threshold for calculating the refundable credit is now permanent. Earned income tax credit-Both the credit for families with three or more children and the higher income phaseout range for couples filing jointly have been increased. The following tax provisions were extended through 2016.

Qualified higher-education expenses-Up to \$4,000 can be deducted above the line on Form 1040, subject to income phaseouts (not available for a student claiming the American Opportunity Tax Credit or the Lifetime Learning Credit).

Mortgage debt-The discharge of up to \$2 million in debt associated with a qualified principal residence can be excluded from gross income. This allows "underwater" homeowners to execute a "short sale" without being taxed on the forgiven debt.

Mortgage insurance premiums-Premiums paid for qualified mortgage insurance can be deducted as qualified residence interest on Form 1040, subject to income phaseouts.

Energy credit-A credit for 10 percent of certain energy-efficient home improvements remains available, up to a lifetime cap of \$500.

Section 529 Plan Changes

The law includes more flexible distribution rules for Section 529 savings plans and adds computers and tech equipment to the list of qualified higher-education expenses. Tax Breaks for Small Businesses The following tax provisions were made permanent.

Section 179 expensing-Up to \$500,000 in qualifying equipment can be expensed, with phaseout at \$2 million in total purchases (indexed for inflation after 2015). Computer software and qualified real property may also be expensed, with the \$250,000 limit on real property eliminated after 2015.

Research credit-The tax credit for qualified research and development expenses, which dates back to 1981, is finally permanent. Beginning in 2016,

new provisions provide additional benefits for some small businesses.

Exclusion of gain on qualified small-business stock-Capital gains from the sale or exchange of qualified small-business stock held for more than five years can be excluded from income; this applies to the alternative minimum tax and to the regular income tax.

The following tax provisions were extended as indicated.

Bonus depreciation-Companies can deduct 50 percent of the cost of new capital purchases through 2017; the deduction falls to 40 percent in 2018 and 30 percent in 2019 for most property types. Bonus depreciation is typically applied after Section 179 expensing.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit-The credit for hiring veterans and candidates from other "targeted groups" is extended through 2019 and expanded (beginning in 2016) to employers that hire qualified long-term unemployment recipients.

Looking Forward

Further tax legislation seems unlikely until a new administration and Congress take office in 2017. Taxpayers may have to wait some time to learn about the fate of provisions set to expire after 2016. However, after years of fiscal gridlock, the PATH Act shows that politicians can find common ground regarding taxes.

The information in this article is not intended as tax or legal advice, and it may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalties. You are encouraged to seek tax or legal advice from an independent professional advisor. The content is derived from sources believed to be accurate. Neither the information presented nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. This material was written and prepared by Emerald. Copyright 2016 Emerald Connect, LLC.

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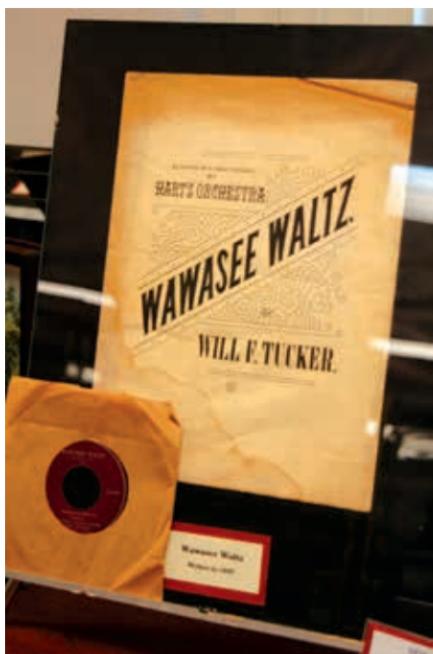
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INDOORS AND OUT

Podcasts and podcasting explained

Ever heard of podcasts or podcasting? If you like to learn, then you might enjoy listening to podcasts.

Podcasts are basically a program (talk- or music-based) which you can download from the Internet. Think of these as being similar to a radio talk show, except they have more topics than just politics or current events. You'll find many podcasts that touch on subjects such as entrepreneurship, music, reading, writing, technology, automobiles and more. Usually, these are released weekly, but you'll also find many

that are released daily and monthly.

Where can I get these podcasts?

1.) iTunes: One main source is through the iTunes store, either on your Apple device or on your computer (if you have iTunes installed). If you don't have iTunes installed on your computer, it's free and easy to install. Once you have it, you can do a search in the iTunes store to download free podcasts to listen to.

2.) All over the Internet: There are many places to get podcasts throughout the Internet. You can do a simple search on your preferred search engine, such as Google, for

something like "automotive podcasts" and you'll come across a wide range of results.

There is something for everyone, so give it a try. It's really about what interests you.

Until our next cup! ~Ed

Ed Marshall is an Information Technology & Security Professional, who grew up in Dowagiac and currently resides with his fiancée in Decatur. In his spare time, he's an avid photographer, writer and enjoys the outdoors. He also created a Facebook page for Computing over Coffee: [Facebook.com/computingovercoffee](https://www.facebook.com/computingovercoffee)

Computing over Coffee

By Ed Marshall

Got a computer-related question for Ed? Email him at ed@computingovercoffee.org

NATURE NOTES

Eagles and woodpeckers

Provided by
Cass District Library,
Local History Branch

Two adult bald eagles have taken up residence at Saint Patrick's County Park in Saint Joseph County, Indiana, where they have not only built a nest, but have at least one eaglet hatched!

Notre Dame University put up an "Eagle Camera," which monitors the nest 24/7. An online link to the camera overlooking the nest can be found at <http://environmentalchange.nd.edu/programs/nd-leef/eagles>

The St. Patrick's County Park northern boundary is adjacent to Madeline Bertrand County Park, located in Niles Township in Berrien County, Michigan. Both parks overlook the St. Joseph River, where eagles hunt for fish.

The eaglet, if it survives the next round of cold weather, will leave the nest this spring or summer and will not achieve its adult plumage, being brown body with all white head and tail, until the year 2020.

Report your sightings to Jonathan Wuepper at wuepperj@gmail.com.

Two red-topped woodpeckers

There we see two species of woodpeckers that inhabit our area. The first is the male red-bellied woodpecker, common everywhere in the region year round. One must nearly have the bird in hand to see the red on the lower belly.

Male red-bellied woodpeckers have a reddish cap and forehead as well as red nape. Both male and females have distinctive ladder-backs.

Red-bellied woodpeckers are traditionally more common south of our area, but have moved their range northward, displacing the red-headed woodpecker.

The red-headed woodpecker (both adult male and female) have deep red hoods, with black and white backs.

Red-headed woodpeckers prefer oak



Bald eagles at nest, St. Patrick's County Park, St. Joseph County, Indiana.

Photos by Mark Parren of St. Joseph, Michigan.

and hickory nuts and tend to nest in "dead snags," being older dead trees.

In recent decades the red-headed has declined at an alarming rate, due to being less specialized in nesting and driving away red-headed here that do persist.

Other factors contributing to the decline of the red-headed woodpecker are the loss of orchards, more aggressive pesticides and the quick elimination of dead trees.



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HISTORIC POSTCARDS

Historic postcards depict rich scenes of our area's past

In this issue of Neighbors, Jerdon Real Estate of Dowagiac, owned by Floyd Jerdon and his son Tom, has provided antique postcards of a few of the many lakes in our area.

Floyd and his wife Donna started collecting post cards more than 20 years ago, and since Jerdon Real Estate specializes in marketing lake property, it was a natural fit that Floyd's interest be directed to the lake cards. The collection now numbers many thousands.

Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the

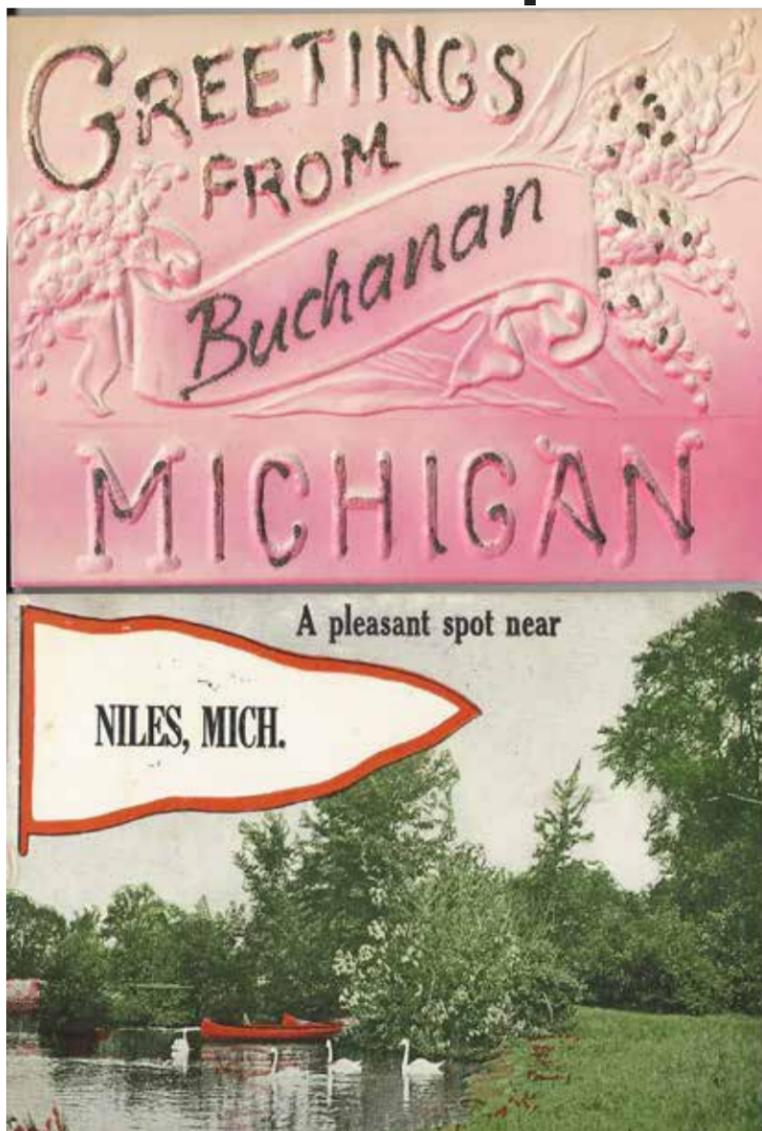
publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

Among other places, the book may be purchased at the Jerdon Real Estate office on M-62 West, and at Whistlestop Gifts, which is operated by the Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce.

For more information or to get a copy of Jerdon's book, visit the website: www.arcadia-publishing.com

In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of Buchanan and Niles.

In future issues, we will couple additional cards from one or more of the area's lakes with views of nearby communities and countryside.



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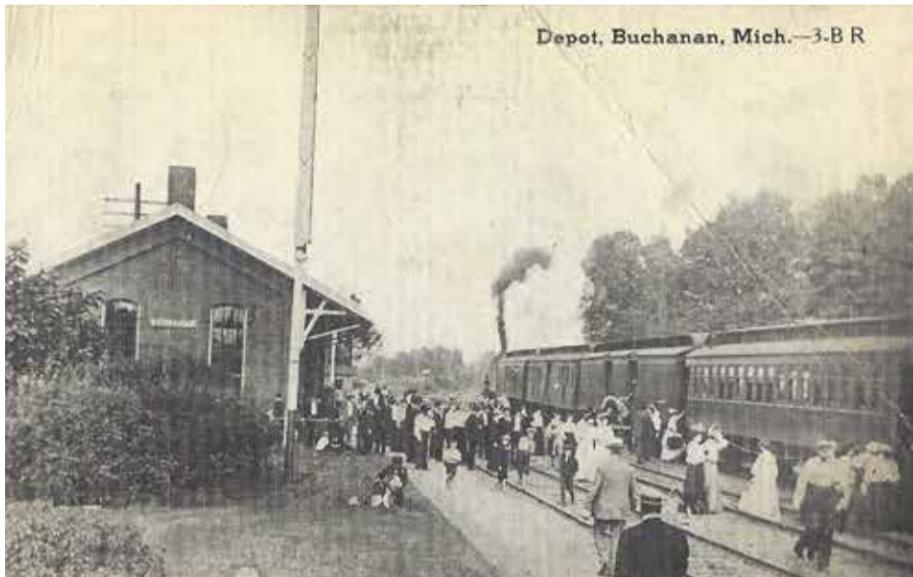
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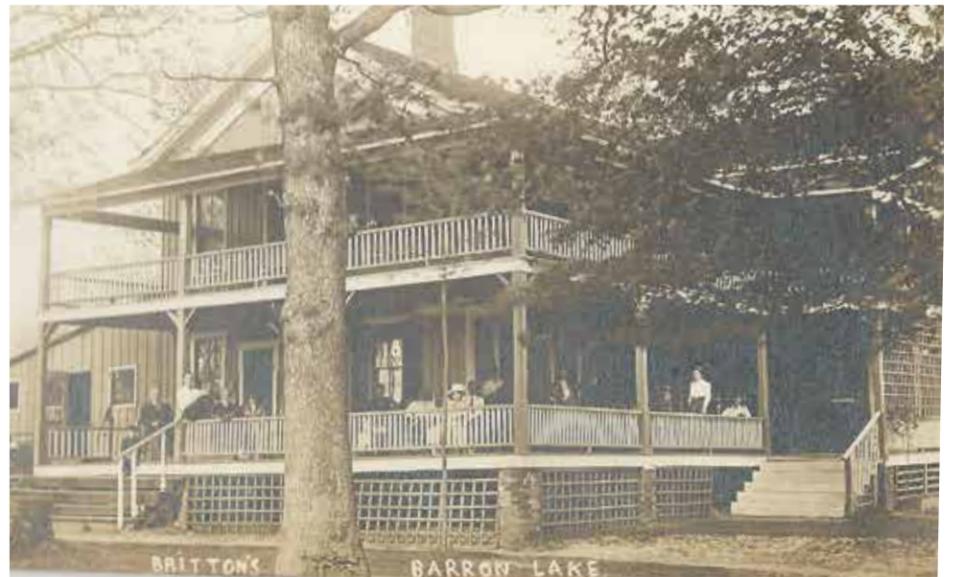


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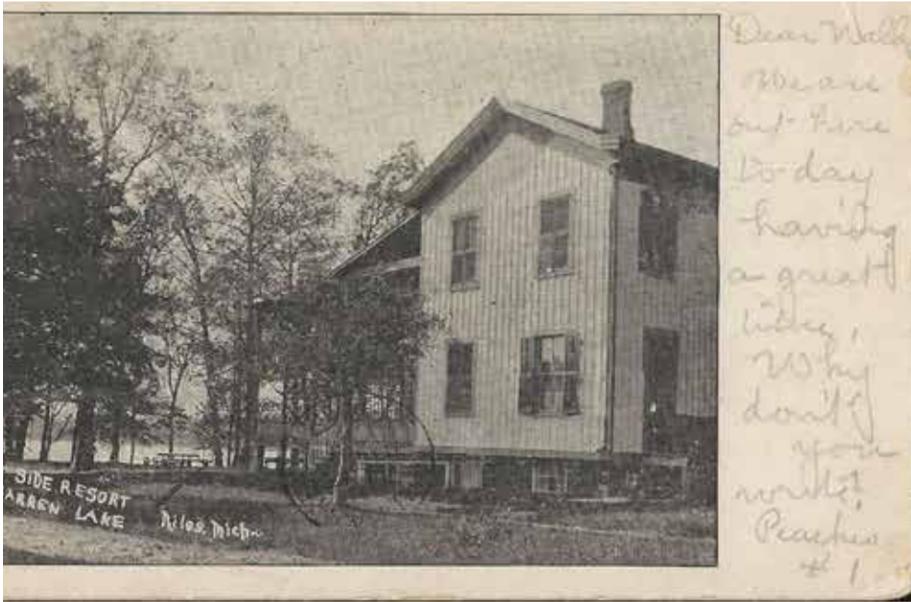
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OUR CHILDREN

Spring break on a shoestring

by SANDY FLEMING

The weather will hopefully be fine and the kids are all looking forward to a whole week without school responsibilities. Some families already have their reservations to a vacation hotspot or cruise. Others have big plans with the extended family. But what if you and your kids are stuck at home that first week in April? Parents may need to work, or perhaps there just isn't enough extra money to get away from it all. Spring break on a budget doesn't have to be a bust! Find out how to have fun with the kids with little or no cash expenditure. Discover some economical activities, and some great ideas to keep the young ones occupied at home without resorting to mega-amounts of video games and movies.

If You Can Get Away for a Bit

A family outing does not have to be long, elaborate or expensive. Even if you only have a few hours to spend on your trip, here are some great ideas that you may not have considered, or perhaps haven't done for a while.

Break your family routine by heading to a new town for a visit. We have numerous choices within easy driving distance of Cass County, including Middlebury, Shipshewana, Bristol, Elkhart, South Bend, New Buffalo, Michigan City, St. Joseph, Niles, Kalamazoo, Sturgis, and Three Rivers. Each of these has free and inexpensive attractions that you may have overlooked, such as museums and parks. Use your favorite search engine to Google the name of the town you are considering, and find their homepage or the page for their Chamber of Commerce. From here, you should be able to access these hidden jewels. Look for city and county parks-many have programming for kids. Find museums. A museum doesn't have to be large and famous to have some great resources for children. All of the cities mentioned on the list have small museums that really cater to families and have low or even no admission costs. Many are even quite child-friendly,

boasting hands-on activities in their areas of specialty that your kids are likely to love. If your family's tastes run more to the outdoors, sometimes there's nothing better than a picnic and a new playground to explore. Check them out! Try the local library for some free or inexpensive spring break activities, too. For example, the Cass District Library is hosting a few sessions of Cookies and Canvas at various locations, story hours for the little children, an author talk, and a family game night. You can get all the info at <http://cass.lib.mi.us/events>. You'll find story times, family movie nights and even a Lego Contest at the Dowagiac District Library during spring break (more info at <http://www.dowagiacdl.org/events/>). There's fun no matter where you look!

Stuck at Home?

So you can't get away. Maybe you have to keep to your usual work schedule, or maybe the cash is tight and it's tough to scrape up any extra even for a short outing. It's nowhere near the end of the world. Spring Break will still happen, and it can still be a blast for every younger member of the family. Here are some ideas to try.

A quick trip to the Dollar Store might be in order. You can grab some basic kid-pleasers like coloring books, art supplies, puzzles, and small trinkets. Dole these out over the course of the week, especially to children who are keeping up their end of the deal by behaving themselves, getting chores done, etc. Most kids love surprises, and you don't have to spend a fortune to make them happy.

Trade screen time for work time. Set up a system where the kids can earn coveted time with video games, television, and computers by doing the things they need to do. Make sure everyone's got chores, and it's a good idea to keep academic fires burning as well. Practice those math facts, do some writing or encourage them to read a bit each and every day. When they accomplish their set tasks, reward them with access to their electronics.

Do a service project. Making the

world a better place is a great value to instill, and Spring Break offers the free time to get the job done. Earn money by doing chores or making a craft to sell, then donate the cash to a favorite charity. Volunteer to help a neighbor with some housework or outside chores. Write letters, draw pictures, or make calls to older or shut-in relatives or friends. Occupy younger children so that parents can get some spring cleaning done. You can even help the youngest children reach out by coloring. Check out <http://www.colorasmile.org> for a neat program where you can print out coloring pictures, color them, and return them to the organization for distribution to the elderly and handicapped to brighten their days. Various veterans' organizations also have projects that kids could be doing, so do a bit of research that direction if you have interest.

Get a book of games from the library or do a bit of quick research online to get the rules and play procedure for brand new games. Try card games, group games, games for one, and games for two or more. Put each child in charge of learning, planning and teaching a new game each day of the week.

Get cooking together. Kids of all ages love to spend time with their parents in the kitchen. Take them to the next level (whatever that may be) with their cooking during Spring Break, when you (or they) have time to plan and prepare more elaborate meals and dishes than usual. The schedule is usually more relaxed, even if parents are sticking to their usual work routine, so it's easier to let the kids help.

Line up a series of kid-friendly science experiments. The Internet is full of ideas, and there are books at the library. Some can even be done by kids with little or no supervision! Want to extend the learning? Get the kids writing. They can write down directions for the experiments they do either in paragraph form or in step-by-step form (or both), then record their observations and conclusions.

Start a big project over Spring Break.

Have your children set up a museum to display their collection or to educate others about something important in their lives. Have them turn a favorite book or story into a play by writing a script, creating props, assigning parts or making puppets, and then performing for family and friends.

Have children design and build their very own unique game. Take a few moments to talk about how games work, and what makes them fun. Think about the features of familiar commercial games, then plan a new creation. Kids may want poster board, markers, small items to use as pawns, and extra dice or spinners as they make up the rules, try them out, and modify them to make the game work in the way that they want it to.

Nearly everyone has a camera in their cell phone these days, and many kids actually have their own devices. There are loads of ways to incorporate picture-taking into larger projects. Have the kids take pictures of items around the house or neighborhood, then trade pictures and make up a story that they could illustrate. Have kids try to trick each other by taking shots of items at strange angles or extremely close up and have a contest to guess the subject of the shot. Compose pictures that are funny in some way, or that mean something special to the photographer. Set up a photo scavenger hunt around the home, yard or neighborhood and give a prize to the first person who comes back with all of the requested pictures.

So you see, there are all sorts of things to do over Spring Break, and most of them don't have to cost hundreds of dollars. Some can even be enjoyed by kids on their own. Don't give in to the pressure to park the kids in front of screens during that first week of April! With just a little planning and prompting, they can be out and about, exercising minds and bodies all week long.

Sandy Fleming is an educational consultant, private tutor, and author living in Edwardsburg. Visit her website at <http://www.learningnook.com>.

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LOCAL HISTORY

Thomas Bond's Civil War Diary

**Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch**

At the time of this writing, in November, 1864, Thomas Faxton Bond was returning to his regiment, 19th Michigan Infantry, from leave spent back home in Cass County earlier in November. Bond was wounded in his back on May 15, 1864 and spent considerable time in hospital. During October 1864 he was granted leave. His brother Frank died October 15, 1864.

During the 1860s the extended Bond family lived in and around Dowagiac, specifically in Wayne and Volinia Townships.

It is believed that Thomas F. Bond lived in Volinia Township with his wife Clara and young child in 1864. Thomas Bond was likely living on property that is located between the current roads Fosdick and Crane Streets, northeast of Dowagiac.

Original spelling, etc. has been kept from the transcription of Thomas Bond's Civil War diary.

Thursday, November 24, 1864 -- This day was set apart by the President, and to be regarded by the people as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. Oh! that I could mingle my voice of my loves ones in offering thanks and praise to God, for his loving kindness and

tender mercy towards us, and keep us all in the path of duty. I trust the Soldiers of this place will appreciate the kindness of the ladies in providing excellent dinner on this occasion.

Friday, November 25, 1864 -- Felt pretty bad in the morning, but soon felt better. sat down after breakfast and wrote Father's folks. While writing the Chaplin came in and invited me over to his rooms. I went over and his orderly is gone and I remained through the afternoon at his request and perhaps shall remain several days. Finished my letter to Clara in the afternoon. The Agt. called in the morning.

Saturday, November 26, 1864 -- Went over in the morning and started a fire in the Chaplins room, then went over to the ward and until the Dr. went thru, then returned and distributed paper and envelopes to a great many men before noon. I passed through the wards with the Chaplin and left some reading matter. Wrote a letter in the afternoon for a sick man. Received a letter in the evening from Darling. Were well.

Sunday, November 27, 1864 -- Went over to the room early and built fire. Swept out. After breakfast and returned and after the Chaplin came I went over and got the room in readings for the services. The Hall was full. After dinner went back and wrote a let-

ter to Henry, and family. Oh! how long the day is. How I wish I could be at home with the loved ones.

Monday, November 28, 1864 -- Went over in the morning and put the rooms in order. Passed through the wards with the Chaplin [and] found the men comfortable. Chaplin attended funeral services. Distributed a great deal of paper and envelopes. Mark Daniels & Blasdell started for Detroit on special transfers. I sent a letter by Daniels to mail to Clara. Did not feel well in the afternoon.

Tuesday, November 29, 1864 -- Felt some better, a beautiful day and a swarm as Spring morn. More men were admitted into the Hospital, and a great many were transferred to Ind. & Ill. Quite a busy forenoon as a great many ca,e for paper and envelopes. Wrote a letter to Dells in the afternoon. How much I would give for a few hours to visit my loved ones at home. May God protect them.

Wednesday, November 30, 1864 -- A beautiful day which commenced with another lot of men coming in and transfers to Madison, Ind. [I spent] time at the Chaplins room for there was a lot of papers brought up which had to be folded and put in order for distribution. Wrote a letter to D.F. Detz[?] in the afternoon. No news from my darlings at home. How much I want to hear [from them.] Drew pants [?] from

Chaplin.

Thursday, December 1, 1864 -- Was down most sick, felt very much like Rheumatism. Remained in the Chaplins room most of the day, which was very pleasant. A heavy battle in progress near Nashville, and the enemy's loss reported at 4,000 and 700. No letter from my darling ones at home. What can it mean[?]. I traded pens in the afternoon with a Michigan man.

Friday, December 2, 1864 -- Felt quite unwell in the morning and ate no breakfast but had not much to do through the day except write letters for a man in the 1st and 11th Wards. A cloudy rainy day, which made it very lonesome. The Chaplins paid me for the pants in the morning. No word from home. Can it be that I have got to go through to the Sabbath without one word[?]

Saturday, December 3, 1864 -- A beautiful day and more men came from Nashville & a great many went to Ill. A very busy forenoon distributing papers and wrote letters to Francis Detz, and commenced one to Clara, but it seems I must get one before I send it. [An] amazing number of trains on the R.R.

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THE LAST WORD

There's no fool like an old April fool!



When I was a few years younger, I used to pop out of bed every morning, stretch off the night's aches and kinks, splash some water in my face and grab a banana ... then I was ready to swing off on a grapevine into the jungle to wrestle a pesky crocodile or two, save a maiden from quicksand or lead a safari to reclaim the hidden treasures of some ancient, extinct civilization.

When I was a few years younger ... Nowadays I'm more likely to indulge in bouts of intense inertia than capturing crocodiles; more ready to go three rounds with the snooze button than wrestle with the muddy maidens; more satisfied Googling the hidden fees endangering my portfolio than dodging the dangerous booby traps of an Incan temple.

Truth be known, nowadays just popping out of bed is among the most strenuous activities of my day unless you count jumping to conclusions, sticking my nose into other peoples' business or pushing my luck as genuine forms of exercise.

Nowadays I'm feeling old, and I'm wallowing in self pity (which is another faux exercise I'm good at).

Let me explain my distress ...

You see, I just completed a vacation with some neighbors who are less than half my age. It was a great vacation. We had a great time sailing around a beautiful place (at least I know I had a great time, and I genuinely hope that sailing on a geriatric gunboat didn't put too much of a hitch in their stride).

But vacationing with people so lithe

and agile and fit and ... well, so young ... has in retrospect served to accentuate the contrast in my own state of conditioning and health (or lack thereof).

It's hard to spend a few days around a guy with six-pack abs ... when I can't even guess how many days on the exercise bike it's going to take to work off all those 12-packs that formed my abs.

I'm hoping it was a life changer to see a guy jump into the ocean, swim a quarter mile to shore and climb a 1,000 foot hill to take a photo ... while I was still lying in the shade wondering if I'd have the energy to wash my own cup after I got through the morning coffee.

In a sense it was rejuvenating to be around people with that level of energy ... even though I was hard pressed to muster up enough energy to change the batteries in my Kindle.

In a sense it was inspiring to see my companions all scampering up and down the ladders to tend the dinghy and scrambling across the deck to haul the halyards and trim the jib sheets ... especially when all I wanted to do was crawl back into my bunk and pull the bed sheets over my aching head.

But in another sense my conscience shouted at me (yeah, I know, everyone shouts at me ... I need a Belltone) about how old and out of shape I've let myself get, and how bittersweet is the taste of getting older.

On the sweet side, I recognize that considering the life I've led, I'm already a lot older than most people (myself included) would have ever guessed that I would reach ... and unless I'm missing some-

thing about that whole "dead" thing, getting older still at least *seems* like a better option than not.

But on the other hand, if I'd known back then what I know now I certainly would have taken better care of myself.

And after a week on a boat my arthritis aches.

After a week on a boat my sciatica sucks.

After a week on a boat my back creaks and my elbows crack and my feet beg for an Epsom-salt soak.

After a week on a boat I'm feeling old and grumpy and sour.

At least I'm still able to get up every morning, stretch, splash some water in my face and grab that banana ... that's the sweet part ... but nowadays, it seems the banana's gone a bit bitter on me.

Nowadays, I'm drowning in old.

Ok, I know what I have to do.

I should jump on that seldom-used bicycle in the garage and pedal around the lake ... instead of playing another round of solitaire on the computer.

I've should take my dog for a long walk in the park every day ... instead of parking myself on the sofa for that afternoon nap that's become such a habit.

I should jump into the water and swim a few laps to the neighbor's pier ... instead of surfing the web for banana bread and fudge brownie recipes.

I should jog to the corner and back every day ... instead of jogging my memory with old sayings like "The road to (geriatric) hell is paved with good intentions."

"Just Do It" the tee-shirts scream at

me, mocking my flaccid and flabby forearms and my waddling, weakened stride.

And I'm going to start.

Soon!

Any day now I'm going to jump on the exercise bike upstairs and pund out an hour or so a day.

As soon as I put away all the folded clothes on top the exercise bike's seat.

Any day now I'm going to go get the kayak out from under the deck and speed-paddle around the lake for a couple hours.

As soon as I muster up enough energy flowing to speed my butt out of the deck chair in the sun.

Any day now I'm going to quit procrastinating and turn over a new leaf to get back into a regular habit of exercise and diet and get myself back into shape.

As soon as I quit turning over and going back to sleep for another hour or two every morning.

Ok, I'm a little late for this but I'm going to make a New Year's Resolution ... for April Fool's Day.

Be it resolved that starting April 1, 2016, I am going to exercise more; eat better, lose weight and reclaim the active part of my former life ...

If I can just get out of bed ...

You know what they say, there's no fool like an old fool.

Well, maybe I'm an old April fool.

So now I'm going to go grab a nap to work up enough energy so later on I can pop out of bed, wrestle a crocodile, save a maiden ... and all that.

Or not ...

Happy spring everyone!

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