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May 2017

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Neighbors is published monthly from
March through December.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Cass County CASA Hosts 11th Annual Auction & Dinner June 23

The 11th Annual CASA Reception, Auction & Dinner will be held at Our Lady of the Lake Social Hall in Edwardsburg at 6 pm Friday, June 23. The event features a reception with Judge Dobrich, followed by dinner and a live auction and raffle. This year's featured speaker is Giovan Bazan, a nationally known motivational speaker, youth advocate, and teen mentor.

Among the auction items included:

- Notre Dame football tickets
- Personally autographed batting helmet from the World Series Champion Chicago Cubs plus tickets
- 100 bottles of Craft Beer
- 30 bottles of excellent wine and a cooler to keep them cool
- River House for up to 4 couples on the Au Sable River, outdoor activities plus gift cards for nearby breweries, dinner
- Magician Lake Pontoon Cruise & Dinner for 10
- Mackinac Island Getaway: 2 nights at the Grand Hotel including meals
- Chicago weekend at The Talbot Hotel, including brunch & dinner and VIP passes

RAFFLE: One winner chooses between Costa Rica Getaway, Pebble Beach Golf, and Vintner Adventure in Sonoma. \$6,000 value, tickets \$25 and available now. For more information, visit www.casscocasa.org.

Tickets are \$75 per person and can be purchased from CASA board members or at the CASA office in Cassopolis. Tables of 8 are available. Tickets include the Friends of CASA reception hosted by the Honorable Susan L. Dobrich.

Cass County CASA is a nonprofit agency of trained volunteers from the community who are appointed by the Judge to advocate for abused and neglected children in Cass County. All contributions are tax deductible.

For more information on tickets for this event or raffle tickets contact Erica Boulanger or Jim Ward at 445-4431 or casscocasa2@yahoo.com

Cass County Medical Care Facility Auxiliary 55th Spring Luncheon

The Cass County Medical Care Facility will host its annual luncheon (\$7) Thursday May 11, 11:30 am at the Facility's dining room. Reservations are due by May 8 to Joyce 445-3198.

1899 Vintage Courthouse Forum

On Tuesday, May 23, from 4-6 pm at the Cass County Road Commission, 340 North O'Keefe St. in Cassopolis, the Cass County Board of Commissioners will host

a forum to hear recommendations from community members on the future of the 1899 Vintage Courthouse. Moderated by Troy Clay, Chair of the Cass County Economic Development Corporation, the forum is a follow up of the recent presentations on funding options. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Diamond Lake Triathlon set

The Diamond Lake Triathlon is back on Saturday July 22, beginning at 7:30 am at Diamond Lake's Park Shore Marina, 22230 Maple St. Cassopolis.

For information on sponsorship contact Joe Fazzini at 317-490-7843 or e-mail j.fazzini@yahoo.com.

For more info on the event see www.diamondlaketri.com.

Dispose of unwanted prescription or over the counter drugs safely

Wanted: Old or undesired prescription and over the counter drugs. The Cass County Sheriff's Office is now providing a permanent drop box as a way to safely dispose of prescription and over the counter medications, vitamins, and other supplements. Sorry, liquids, patches, sharps or lancets cannot be accepted. The drop box is located at: Cass County Sheriff's Office, 321 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031. Open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Blooming Wildflower Stroll at Bendix Woods County Park

Join a park interpreter at the Runnels Shelter at Bendix Woods County Park on Wednesday May 10 at 6 pm. Participants will learn how to identify native wildflowers found in Indiana. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate hiking shoes.

Pre-registration is required by Monday, May 8. Program fee is free. For more information or to register call 574-654-3155.

Pollinator workshop planned for May 13 at SMC

Cass County Pheasants Forever (in partnership with Southwestern Michigan College) will be hosting a Pollinator Workshop On Saturday, May 13th. The workshop will be held at the SMC Dowagiac campus on Cherry Grove Rd. in the William O'Leary Building and will run from 10 am to 3 pm. The workshop is open and free to the public.

Guest speakers will discuss and answer questions about honey bees and bee keeping, planting home gardens for pollinators, and a special guest speaker that will talk about butterflies. A catering truck will provide food and beverages. Pheasants Forever will provide free

wildflower seed packets to attendees that they can use to plant their own pollinator garden.

Any Cass County area organization or business that is involved in conservation, habitat, gardening, or related subjects is invited to come and display at the event. Exhibitor tables will be made available free of charge (advance registration required) and vendors are welcome to sell products and gifts related to pollinators, environment, nature, and gardening. If you have questions or would like to exhibit or sell at this event please contact Jeff Nelson at (574) 522-6595 during business hours.

Dalrymple elected chairman of Edwardsburg Museum

Sally Dalrymple of Milton Township has been elected chairman of the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum's board of trustees. She fills the vacancy created by the death on March 9 of Chairman Jo-Ann Boepple, the museum's founder.

Dalrymple's parents, the late Harley and Frances Proper, moved in 1936 to Edwardsburg where Frances taught elementary school. Dalrymple was a teacher and guidance counselor in the Edwardsburg Public Schools for more than 30 years until her own retirement. She is an EHS graduate who earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, and a Master of Arts from Andrews University, Berrien Springs. She and her husband, John, have been active members of the museum since 2014, and Sally has been instrumental in streamlining and detailing the museum's extensive collection of documents and photographs.

After growing up on Eagle Lake and moving to the Village of Edwardsburg after her marriage, Dalrymple served as the village clerk in the 1970s.

Dalrymple is a member of the Hope Community Church in Niles where she is the church clerk, is a member of the Monday Evening Club, and participates in several bridge groups in Edwardsburg.

She and John have two daughters, Sherry Smith and Jill Anderson, and three grandchildren.

Cass artists summer show

The third annual Cass area artists will again be hosting a summer art show on July 15 from 10 am - 4 pm on the grounds of the Lowe Center near Diamond Lake in Cassopolis, Michigan.

Edwardsburg Museum season

The president of the Grand Trunk Western Historical Society of Durand, Michigan, will speak at the Edwardsburg

Area Historical Museum on Thursday, June 1.

Historian Joe O'Brien will speak at 7 pm as the first of two speakers slated for presentations that will highlight the museum's exhibit this summer on railroad history in the Edwardsburg area. His topic will be "The Grand Trunk Western Railroad and Its History in Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana."

O'Brien has worked in heavy industry for more than 35 years in areas of project management and sales management. He has been an active director of the GTWHS for 20 years. In addition to his presidential duties, he is director of the organization's archives. A proponent for passenger railroads and service, O'Brien has given many presentations on railroads and railroad industries, including one on "What Foundries Supply to Railroads," which he presented in 2013 at the Michigan Railroad History Conference.

Speaking at 7 pm on Thursday, June 15th, will be Chuck Hart, an Edwardsburg resident whose topic will be model railroading. Hart was born and reared in Michigan City, Indiana, and received his first model train when he was five years old. He served with the United States Navy from 1964 to 1985, and worked as an electrical engineering manager for an aerospace company in San Diego until he retired in 2007. He moved to Edwardsburg in 2008.

Hart is a life member of the National Model Railroad Association, has been a member of several model railroad clubs throughout his life, and is president of the Elkhart Model Railroad Club. With his extensive experience in model railroading, he has spoken at many model railroad conventions covering all aspects of the railroad hobby, including model railroad design, scenery, and development of realistic railroad operations as they pertain to the hobby. Hart is currently building a model railroad layout at his residence and is helping the Elkhart club build a new layout. Several of his model railroad pieces are expected to be on display at the museum.

Several other model railroads will be exhibited at the museum, along with historical documents and photographs, and memorabilia from the museum's collection. Several pieces will be loaned, including a running model layout provided by the Cass County Rail Club, and actual artifacts from the Grand Trunk and Canadian National railroads that are part of the extensive collection of Larry Krise of Edwardsburg.

On Thursday, July 6, Stan Disher of Edwardsburg, will give a presentation on his collection of antique wall

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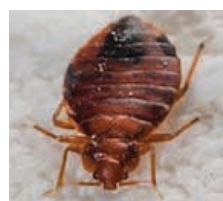
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REGIONAL NEWS

and mantle clocks, several of which are displayed on the balcony of the museum's gallery. The clocks date to the 1850s.

Probate Judge Susan Dobrich and her sister, Patty McCain, will share memories of growing up along Christiana Lake when they speak at the museum on Thursday, August 10.

The second display of the season, which opens August 29, will be devoted to fabric art from the museum's collection, or items loaned by residents. Robin English, owner of Robin's Nest of Edwardsburg, will speak about quilting and other fabric art forms at a presentation on Thursday evening, September 7.

On Thursday evening, October 19, Jim Becraft, who worked in Cass County government for more than 40 years until his retirement in 2016, will share memories of growing up in Mason Township, and stories of his work in property description for the county.

Owen Wright, former longtime supervisor of Mason Township, will share stories of growing up in Cass County and memories of his work in business and government when he concludes the speaker series on Thursday, November 9.

As in past years, the museum will sponsor two fundraising events, the annual perennial plant sale, which will run from May 20 through June 10, and the U.S. 12 Garage Sale, scheduled the weekend of August 11. The museum's annual John B. Sweetland Award for community leadership and service will be presented at the museum during the open house for Edwardsburg Public Schools alumni on Sunday afternoon, August 20, after the All-School Reunion.

Dogwood Fine Arts Festival set for May 11-21 in Dowagiac

The 26th annual Dogwood Fine Arts Festival is a community tradition that plays host to nationally recognized visual and performing artists.

The festival opens May 11 with the Merchants Art Stroll, featuring the original works of area artists at downtown shops. The evening concludes with a gallery opening and reception at the Dogwood headquarters.

This year's festival showcases in concert on May 13 Haitian-born pianist Jean Prosper, who was raised on classical and gospel music, and is an avid student of jazz; and on May 17 storyteller Sam Payne of Utah, who has traveled the world sharing his original tales and songs. You'll also meet author Renee Rosen of Chicago on May 19, whose history of the Windy City is the perfect backdrop for her novels. There's also Klassics for Kids on May 12, featuring the North American Brass Company, Youth Fine Arts Night

on May 18 and Funky Junk Art Gardens May 12-22. The fine arts festival is also pleased to present on May 20 Youth Voices: The Orphan Train Story, which is the opening event of a summer-long tribute to the Orphan Trains and their impact on Dowagiac.

For more information call (866) 490-2847 or visit www.DogwoodFineArts.org

Dowagiac Community-Wide Garage Sale is May 26, 27

Collectors, antiques enthusiasts and thrifty consumers enjoy the perfect hunting ground presented by this community's Garage Sale Weekend. Hosted by Leader Publications, the event affords families the opportunity to go green, as others experience a great weekend of fun and exploration!

For more information email vphillipson@dowagiac.org, phone 782-8212, or visit www.DowagiacChamber.com

Beckwith Park Summer Concert Series begins June 1

The 2017 Beckwith Park Summer Concert outdoor music series, hosted by the Dowagiac Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and underwritten this year by Chemical Bank, Honor Credit Union and Huntington Bank, opens the first Thursday in June and continues through mid-August. All performances begin at 7:30 pm.

Music enthusiasts enjoy vocal and instrumental performances featuring jazz, bluegrass, the big band sound and ethnic.

The artists and this year's performance dates include: Southwestern Michigan College Brass Band on June 2, Mike Struwin Duo June 9, Gator Boys June 16, Erica Sherry Band June 23, Lake Effect Jazz Big Band June 30, Chameleon July 7, Tony Fields & Doug Decker July 14, Jared Knox for a special 2-hour concert, 7:30 to 9:30 July 21, Sixth Generation July 28, Schlitz Creek Bluegrass August 4, A Touch of Country, featuring Dowagiac resident Dennis Ferrier August 11. Scheduled Raindate is August 18.

For more information contact Vickie Phillipson at vphillipson@dowagiac.org, 782-8212, or see www.DowagiacChamber.com

Sister Lakes Triathlon & Relay

Athletes from across the Midwest will take in this area's natural beauty on Saturday, July 15, as they compete in the Sister Lakes Triathlon & Relay. Participants will swim Round Lake, bike the smooth & rolling terrain of country roads, and run a course that takes them around Big Crooked and Dewey lakes, and many of the residential areas of this summer-

time Mecca.

The two-transitional event, which features both Olympic and Sprint distances, begins at 8 am. On-site registration takes place at Sister Lakes Lions Club-house, where post-race festivities are held.

For on-line registration, visit www.3Disiplines.com

Summer in the City Sidewalk Sales

Children enjoy Fun Fest carnival rides. Enjoy more than 50 hours of entertainment at Dowagiac Summer in the City, which opens Thursday evening, July 20, and continues through Saturday. This is truly a family-friendly event, featuring The Taste of Dowagiac, Summer on Tap, vocal, instrumental and dance performances, and such action sports as BMX demos.

For more information email vphillipson@dowagiac.org, call 782-8212, or visit www.DowagiacChamber.com.

Steve's Run is July 29, 2017

Steve's Run annually attracts 1,000 runners. Sports enthusiasts on Saturday, July 29, are sure to enjoy the acclaimed Steve's Run, which has been a favorite of Midwest runners for the past 41 years. This original road and trail race through Dowagiac and its surrounding scenic trails was named Michigan's Best Race in 1996 and was named one of the nation's top 10 vacation races by Runner magazine in 1982.

The event features a 10K for runners, a 5K for runners and walkers, and a children's 1K fun run. The race begins on the Dowagiac campus of Southwestern Michigan College at 9 am.

For information call 782-1000 or visit www.swmich.edu/fireup/stevesrun

Cass County Fair July 30 - August 6

As mid-summer draws near, the 166th annual Cass County Fair returns to Cassopolis July 30 through August 6. Grandstand entertainment features Caroline Kole, who has been on a two-year international tour with Reba McEntire, SJO Super Cross Championship Series, along with the demolition derby, super-stock and street-legal truck pulls, rodeo events and monster trucks. Free must-see events include horse pulls, fireworks, daily grounds entertainment and hundreds of 4-H, Open Class and commercial exhibits. The fair is open Sunday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

For information phone 445-8265 or visit www.CassCountyMiFair.com

Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show

Classic autos and motorcycles cruise into historic Dowagiac Saturday, August

19, for the Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show. Winning autos receive trophies, with dash plaques presented to the first 150 entries. Festival goers will enjoy 1950s music, auto games, the Tailgate Treasures' Flea Market, a Lions Club pancake breakfast and barbecue. Activities open in the central business district at 7:30 a.m.

For information email vphillipson@dowagiac.org, call 782-8212 or visit www.DowagiacChamber.com

Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow

Located on tribal land of the Band of the Potawatomi Indians in neighboring Pokagon Township, more than 100 Native American dancers from throughout the Great Lakes will compete at Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow on Saturday & Sunday, September 2 & 3. As they compete for cash prizes, the Potawatomi Indians celebrate the end of the huckleberry harvest.

Families will enjoy the music of drum groups, as they visit a marketplace that showcases black ash baskets, traditional beadwork, sweet grass braids, jewelry, crafts and native foods.

For more info call 782-8998 or visit www.PokagonPowWow.com.

Under the Harvest Moon

Celebrate the crisp autumn season of Michigan in downtown Dowagiac at Under the Harvest Moon, Saturday, October 14, from 10 am to 4 pm.

This fun and family-oriented festival showcases vendors of antiques, handmade goods, fall produce and sweet delicacies. View our display of vintage farm tractors and vote for your favorite scarecrow. There's also street entertainment, a pumpkin pie eating contest and Caruso's caramel apple and cider bar.

To receive information on booth vendor space, call the Chamber at 782.8212.

Preschoolers discover "Coyotes" at St. Patrick's County Park

Preschoolers and an accompanying adult will learn about the coyote found in Indiana from 9:30 to 11 am on Thursday, May 18 at St. Patrick's County. The class includes hands-on nature activities, an outdoor hike and a craft. Please dress for the weather.

Nature Munchkins is a program series for 3- to 4- year old's to explore nature with a parent or other adult. Siblings outside the age bracket are not allowed to attend. The Nature Munchkins series is offered by the St. Joseph County Parks.

Individual classes: \$5/child-adult pair and \$3 for a second child with parent. Registration and payment required Monday prior to program. For more information please call 574/654-3155.

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Mother's Day B & B

(Cass County Butterfly and Bee Workshop)

Come to this fun, free, informative workshop to learn why butterflies and bees are important, how they are threatened, and what you can do to help. Guest speakers will answer questions about butterflies, bees, and landscaping techniques everyone can do. Receive free seed packets to plant a Mother's Day butterfly garden in your own yard. Families welcome!



Featured Speaker - Dolly Foster
Butterfly Expert and Landscape Horticulturist
www.hor4u.blogspot.com

Presentations include:

- 10:00 AM - Bee keeping and native bees
- 11:30 AM - Landscaping for pollinators and natural beauty
- 1:00 PM - Butterflies - monarchs and more

Exhibitors will include local and regional conservation groups, businesses and vendors

Attendees will receive FREE wildflower seed packets to plant their own butterfly / pollinator garden

What: Free pollinator workshop

When: Saturday, May 13th, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Where: Southwestern Michigan College - Dowagiac, MI

For: Everyone! Bring family and friends.

This environmental workshop is brought to you by:



Cass County Chapter
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www.casscountypf.org



Southwestern Michigan College
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For exhibitor and vendor information contact: Jeff Nelson (574) 522-6595

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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

May 4 - Storytime (ages 3-5), 10 am every Thursday in May, Explore a variety of topics with stories, crafts, and more, Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822

May 4 - Mah Jongg, 6 pm every Thursday, New players are welcome, Cass District Library - Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

May 5 - South Bend Symphony Orchestra Wind Quintet, 1 pm, free and open to the public, Cass District Library - Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

May 6 - Cinco de Miles 5K Run, 9 am, Central Park, 295 East Mishawaka Avenue, Mishawaka, IN, www.cincodemiles5k.com

May 6 - 3rd Annual David's Run for Autism and Silent Auction, 10 am, Nappanee Elementary School, 755 East Van Buren Street, Nappanee, IN, www.facebook.com

May 6 - Free Comic Book Day, All Cass District Library Branches during open business hours, First come first served, 357-7822

May 6 - Movie: Doctor Strange, 10 am, Free popcorn and water provided, Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822

May 8 - Mary Daly Dash, 9 am, Mary Daly Elementary School, 1735 Strong Avenue Elkhart, IN, elkhart.k12.in.us

May 8, 15, 22 - Adult Drawing Classes, Mondays from 6:30-8:30 pm, course is \$12 per class and materials are provided, Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822

May 10 - Blooming wildflower stroll at Bendix Woods County Park, 6 pm, 547-654-3155

May 11 - Cass County Medical Care Facility Auxiliary 55th Annual Spring Luncheon, 11:30 am, \$7, 445-3198; reservations due by May 8

May 11-21 - 26th annual Dogwood Fine Arts Festival, Dowagiac, 866-490-2847

May 13 - Cass County Pheasants Forever and SMC Pollinator Workshop, SMC, Dowagiac, 10 am- 3 pm, free. 574-522-6595

May 16 - Library Lounge featuring Musician Brynn Allison, 6 pm, Light refreshments provided, Cass District Library - Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

May 17 - Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum season opening with the history of railroading in Edwardsburg.

May 18 - Mushroom Hunters Meet Up, 6-7 pm, People interested in starting/joining a local mush-

room hunting club are invited to attend, Cass District Library - Howard Branch, 487-9214

May 20 - Annual Red Regiment 5K Run and Fun Walk, 9 am, NorthWood High School, Nappanee, IN, dregiment5k.weebly.com

May 20 - Cass County Household Waste Collection, 9 am - Noon, Cass County Fairgrounds, Cassopolis

May 20 - Two Rivers Meet - Glow Race, 8:45 pm, Lifeline Center, 174 State Street, www.tworivers-meetrace.com

May 21 - Silver Lake Duathlon, 9 am, Silver Lake Farms, 5811 North 500 East, Rolling Prairie, IN, www.silverlakeduathlon.com

May 23 - 5 pm, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet, Benton Harbor. All retired /current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome, Jean Rowe 782 2769 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

May 23 - Niles Ensemble Spring Concert by Music Academies, 6:30 pm, This concert is free to attend, there will be a canned food collection for the Salvation Army at the event, Cass District Library - Howard Branch, 487-9214

May 26, 27 - Dowagiac community-wide garage sale, 782-8212, www.dowagiachamber.com

May 27 - 2017 Super Fun Color Run Registrations Due Today if ordering a t-shirt, Turn in payment and form at the Main Library during regular business hours, Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822

June 2 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, SMC Brass Band, 782-8212

June 7 - Dowagiac Area History Museum Spring Lecture on Baseball, Amusement Parks and Faith: A History of the Israelite House of David by Archivist David Kohrman, 783-2560, www.dowagi-acmuseum.info

June 9 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Mike Struwin Duo, 782-8212

June 10 - 2017 Diamond Lake Association meeting, 10 am

June 10 - 2017 Super Fun Color Run, 9 am, Pick up a registration from the Cass District Library. Free and open to the public; run/walk held at Cass County Council on Aging in Cassopolis. Organized by Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822

June 10 - Summer Library Club Begins, All Cass

District Libraries, Register for "Build a Better World" library club at your local branch. Cass District Library - Main Library, 357-7822 June 11 - Cass County CASA annual dinner and auction, \$75, 445-4431

June 16 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Gator Boys, 782-8212

June 23 - Cass County CASA annual auction and dinner, Our Lady of the Lake, Edwardsburg, 6 pm, \$75/person, 445-4431

June 23 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Erica Sherry Band, 782-8212

June 23-25 Ken Ludwig's Moon Over Buffalo, Beckwith Theatre, Dowagiac, jackgannon255@gmail.com

June 27 - 5 pm, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet, Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome, Jean Rowe, 782 2879 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

June 30 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Lake Effect Jazz Big Band, 782-8212

July 1 - Diamond Lake Fireworks 10:30 pm, Birch Lake fireworks, dark

July 7 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Chameleon, 782-8212

July 14 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Tony Fields & Doug Decker, 782-8212

July 15 - Third annual Cass area artists summer art show, Lowe Center, Cassopolis, 10 am - 4 pm.

July 15 - Sister Lakes Triathlon & Relay, www.3disiplines.com

July 20 - Summer in the city sidewalk sales, downtown Dowagiac, 782-8212, www.dowagiachamber.com

July 21 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, Jared Knox 7:30 - 9:30 pm, 782-8212

July 22 - Diamond Lake Triathlon, 7:30 am, Park Shore Marina, Cassopolis, 317-490-7843, j.fazini@yahoo.com, www.diamondlaketri.com

July 25 - 5 pm, National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 annual pot luck picnic at Maiden Lane Park, St. Joseph Township. Main food will be provided, bring a dish to pass. All retired/current federal

employees, spouses/families are welcome, Jean Rowe 782 2769 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

July 28 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Sixth Generation, 782-8212, 782-8212

July 29 - Steve's Run, SMC, 9 am, 782-1000. www.swmich.edu/fireup/stevesrun

July 30 - Aug 6 - 166th annual Cass County Fair, Cassopolis, 445-8265, casscountymifair.com

August 4 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Schlitz Creek Bluegrass, 782-8212

August 11 - Beckwith Park Summer Concert series, Dowagiac, 7:30 pm, Dennis Ferrier, 782-8212

August 12 - Barron Lake Decorated Boat Parade, 2 pm (rain date Aug. 13, 1 pm); theme: Music August 19 - Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show, downtown Dowagiac, 7:30 am, 782-8212, www.dowagi-acchamber.com

August 22 - 5 pm - National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting at the Super Buffet, Benton Harbor. All retired/ current federal employees, spouses /families are welcome, Jean Rowe, 782 2769 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

September 2, 3 - Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow, 782-8998, www.pokagonpowwow.com

September 26 - 5 pm, National Association Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 monthly meeting, Super Buffet, Benton Harbor. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome, Jean Rowe, 782 2769 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

October 14 - Under the Harvest Moon, 10 am - 4 pm, downtown Dowagiac, 782-8212

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

December 5 - 1:30 pm, National Association of Retired Federal Employees SW Michigan Chapter 572 annual holiday dinner at Coach's Bar & Grill, Stevensville. All retired/current federal employees, spouses/families are welcome, no RSVP needed. No business meeting, new officers will be sworn in. Next meeting March 28, 2018. For information call Jean Rowe, 782 2769 or jeanrowe70@comcast.net

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Fitness is a journey, not a destination

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

Fitness is a journey, not a destination. Isn't fitness just being skinny? No, there is so much more to it than that. The question really is, "Is every part in your body functioning efficiently; your brain, your heart, your lungs? Can your body meet your daily physical demands?"

For most people the answer would be no. Even that question does not seem to really flesh out the concept of overall fitness and wellness. Fitness is a goal that endures our entire life, through our physical needs of a healthy heart and lungs, but also our nutritional needs, and mental needs. It is our goal in life that we strive to meet all of our needs.

The best way to start achieving physical fitness is to engage in some form of physical activity and exercise. As the journey of fitness is started, it is important to understand what both mean. Example, taking a walk around the block, the same block, the same pace, and the same amount of time.

You would think that this was exercising. However, instead it is just physical activity. To be considered



exercise, the physical exertion must exceed that which I would already be accustomed to, meaning, that my body has to challenge itself more than what it's normally used to for it to be considered exercise.

Exercise improves the various systems of my body to improve functioning over an extended period of time.

Cardiovascular exercise increases the efficiency of our cardio-respiratory system; our heart, lungs, and the process through which our body transports and supplies oxygen to where it is needed in the body. This is important because it helps us maintain levels of physical activity over lengths of time without feeling tired.

Cardiovascular health decreases our likelihood of developing Heart Disease, the largest killer in America. The key to aerobic activities is that while engaged in these activities, our

bodies use more oxygen, have an increased heart rate, and keep our heart rate up for a long period of time.

Specific examples of this kind of activity are walking, jogging, cycling, running, swimming, aerobic exercise. Cardiovascular exercise is very important to our overall fitness.

Muscular strength refers to the amount of force muscles can generate against resistance. For example, when I lift a free weight of 10 pounds the muscles in my bicep are pulling, generating force, against the weight resistance of the 10 pound weight. If I had not developed the muscular strength, I could not have generated the correct amount of force to lift the weight.

The development of muscular strength is important and there are ways to determine if you have.

Consequently, when you don't use it you lose it. To stay in shape, it is

important to maintain a regular exercise schedule. Developing your muscular strength helps improve your self-esteem and also other problems associated with weak muscle structures.

Once you have decided to start exercising, you need to develop a fitness plan that is right for your individual needs. Various kinds of exercises will ensure that you challenge your body in different ways. Remember to mix it up!

Secondly, one must acknowledge that it takes duration of activity to also receive benefit from exercising. Example, it takes 20-30 minutes a day to see the benefit from exercising.

Thirdly, it is important to understand that intensity of exercise plays a key role in the direct benefits. Overload is when you work the body much harder than it is used to working.

Fitness is not just being thin, but instead a lifestyle choice that will help you live a long, fulfilling life. Are you ready to begin the lifetime journey of fitness and good health? See you on the road, working on your journey!

Self-management and arthritis

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

If you are reading this article about Arthritis it suggests that you know someone who has arthritis, trying to find ways to live well with arthritis, looking for other things beyond taking the medicines your doctor prescribes, managing pain and doing the activities you want and need to do.

Self-management is the practice of taking charge of your arthritis and seeking solutions to the problems it brings.

Why self-management is important

As you probably know all too well, arthritis is a chronic condition that doesn't have a cure. Self-management

involves taking responsibility for your own health and well-being and learning to live with your condition.

Practicing arthritis self-management can be life-changing because it helps you to accept your condition without letting it control you.

Exercise is one self-management technique that can help differently. With a painful condition such as arthritis, it can be tempting to avoid physical activity. However research has shown that the right kind of physical activity is good for people with arthritis — it reduces pain and improves strength, endurance, flexibility, balance, and physical functioning. It can also help to improve mood and sleep. With all these benefits, exercise is one of the most effective forms of self-management you can do to improve life with

arthritis.

For general health the US Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting a total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week, or about 30 minutes a day, five days a week. (You are exercising at a moderate intensity when you are slightly out of breath, but still able to carry on a conversation.)

In addition to aerobic exercise, people with arthritis should do strengthening exercises to keep the muscles that support joints strong, as well as stretching and range-of-motion exercises to keep joints flexible.

Before you begin an exercise program, it is important to talk to your doctor or a physical therapist to find out which activities are safe and appropriate for you. Low-impact activities

such as walking and cycling are good ones to start with, as is water exercise. Water exercise programs can reduce pain, increase flexibility, and improve overall health.

One of the steps is educating yourself to learn as much as you can about fitness and how it affects you, what your treatment options are, and what you can expect in the future.

Other areas of self-management that are important are eating healthy, modifying activities, modifying your environment, assistive devices, and topical treatments.

Setting smart goals is by far one of the most effective self-management techniques. When you set realistic goals and achieve them, you increase your confidence and feel more in control of your arthritis.



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PASTA ITALIA CON CHEF DONATO

Chicken Marsala, Salmon with Truffle Oil

There are many recipes for Chicken Marsala but here is one that has a lot of flavor. You can also substitute veal for this as well.

Ingredients

flour
salt, pepper, paprika
2 shallots minced
3-4 cloves garlic minced
olive oil
butter
Marsala wine- 3/4 cup
Chicken broth 3/4 cup
Chicken breasts sliced length wise and pounded into 1/4" scallopinis.
handful of chopped parsley



Directions:

1. Slice the chicken breasts lengthwise and put between 2 pieces of parchment paper and pound to 1/4 " with a meat pounder or flat bottom of a skillet
2. Dredge the chicken in the flour seasoned with salt, pepper and paprika
3. Cover the bottom of the skillet with olive oil, get it hot and then saute the chicken on each side until slightly brown, set aside and cover with foil
4. Add 2 pats of butter and saute the shallots for a few minutes until they start to soften, then add the garlic and saute for 2 -3 minutes more.
5. Add the Marsala and let cook under medium high heat until the smell of alcohol leaves, then add the chicken broth. Cook for several minutes until it reduces then add another 2 pats of butter and the parsley.



6. Put the chicken back in the skillet for a few minutes to heat up and absorb the flavor.

7. I serve this over noodles or flat pasta but you can serve with vegetables as well.

SALMON WITH TRUFFLE OIL

This is a very simple recipe for salmon that has a tremendous flavor and is simple to prepare. You can also do Sea bass the same way

Ingredients:

Salmon fillets
course sea salt truffle oil
foil

Directions:

1. Tear off a piece of foil about 18" Put the salmon on top in the middle

2. Put coarse sea salt on top of the salmon to taste

3. Drizzle with truffle oil

4. Enclose the fish by making a tent, closing all the sides-see picture

5. Put in a preheated 350 degree oven and bake for 20- 25 minutes.

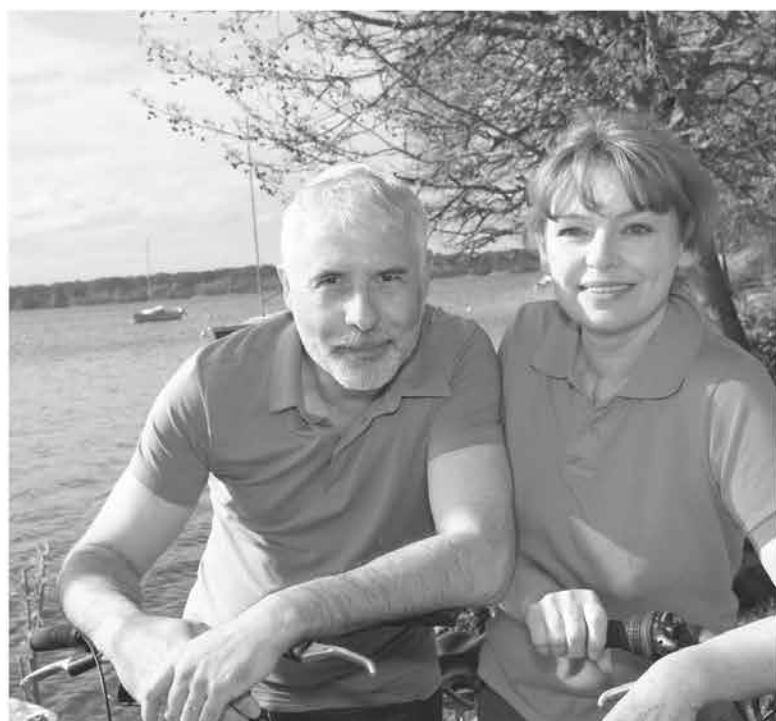
6. Serve with foil on a plate, just open up the foil and enjoy

A note about Truffles and truffle oil. The white truffle comes from the Alba region of Italy only in the fall and costs over \$2,000 a pound. It grows naturally, cannot be reproduced, and is hunted with dogs. You can get the same flavor from truffle oil which has a unique flavor and adds to many dishes.

You can buy a decent brand of truffle oil from Martin's at a very low price.

Dennis Bamber is an avid cook. He grew up in the restaurant business and has traveled extensively worldwide as well as being a partner in a business in Paris for 9 years. He is a second generation Italian-American.

He is currently a realtor with Cressy & Everett, licensed in Michigan and Indiana, and specializes in lake property.



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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

Putting a little spring in your step

by JANE BOUDREAU

Hey Neighbors! I hope all of you are feeling that little skip in your step now that we are waking up to warm weather and blue skies. I went for a walk on a mild, sunny day earlier this week and before I knew it I had been wandering for almost 2 hours. Very unlike me but I have to say, seeing the falling blossoms from budded trees, wisteria climbing trellises, and ivy turning bright green had me mesmerized. And the scent ... intoxicating!



I have some cute little daffodils popping up in the borders of my garden beds, and the tulips are just ready to open. They did well this year in spite of our more warmer winter. They really do like a deep freeze or two. I have a lot of Southern blogger friends who would love to grow bulbs the way we do but their temps are too warm. Then again, how I'd love to have year round flowers, especially magnolias.

What I do have is a ton of daisies. We planted a border along our shed at the lake house and they have multiplied like crazy over the years. I really need to divide them ... dig up a few clumps and plant them in a few other spots, I hope to do that soon. Over the years I have had them in vases all over the house. The more you cut them, the more they grow. If you have anything perennial (flowers that come back every year) that are crowding and overflowing your garden, do this soon before they bloom or in the fall.



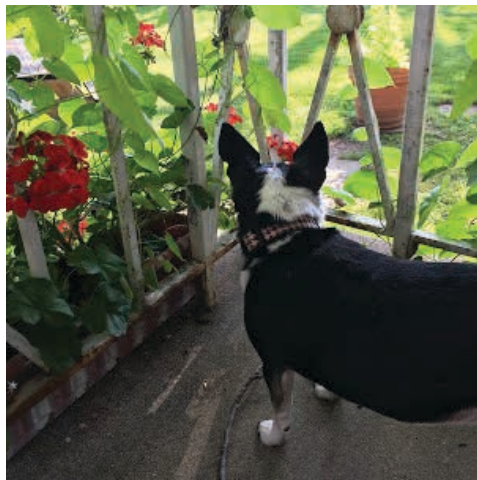
I'm dreaming of my warm weather spaces. I love to collect unusual planters and decorative pots for my annual flowers and herbs. I'm big on container planting if you know me by now. I have my garden beds and they make my heart go pitter patter, but having plants and flowers nearby on the patio and deck is heavenly. And SO easy to care for. A weekly splash with the hose, a bit of natural fertilizer a few times during the season, and you have that lovely color surrounding you while you are relaxing outdoors.

A simple tip about containers (as I always have to give my 2 cents), especially clay pots. Your plants will dry out much quicker than flowers planted in the ground. Soaking them thoroughly before they dry out is important or the roots will become weak. Keep the pots in semi sun/shade if they are looking scraggly or you are going to be away from home for a few days. I like to use a thin layer of wood chips on the surface of the soil. It really keeps the moisture in and helps with any

overflow of potting soil when you water.

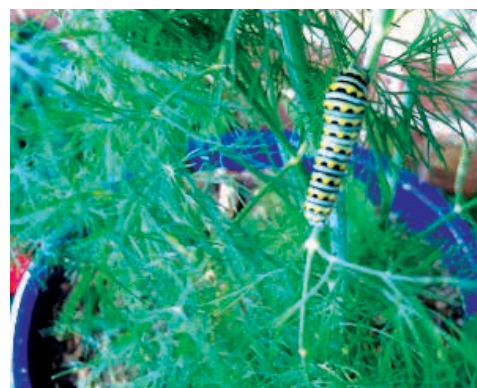


I've had the fun of planting some garden beds at the lake because I have full sun as opposed to my house in the city which is surrounded by walnut trees. It's been a challenge but I'm loving that it's very much maintenance free and these gorgeous flowers are quite resilient. I'm getting ready to rake out the decomposed leaves that I added last fall. They are nutrient rich and keep the moisture and warmth in the soil. Over the winter I would empty the remains of our fireplace ashes around our boxwood, it's a great source of potassium, and a super lazy way to get rid of those ashes.



While we talk about effort-free plantings, can I discuss morning glories with you? Delicate deep green vines twine around everything and anything (don't stand too still near it for long), and yes, some call this a colorful weed. I love to grow morning glories on my porch railings as a 'screen' of sorts. I've also tossed a few seeds along a chain link fence that adds a lot of privacy. The leaves are large and wonderful, and twine away upward and sideways quite quickly in late spring. Here in the Midwest, the flowers don't actually appear until about August depending on the amount of sun they get. They open up when the sun is right over, for some it may be the early morning ... hence their name, or for me, in the evening when the sun is over the west side of my home, as you can see here with my little Layla peering out.

Come fall you can let those little seed pods dry up on the vine to gather and spread out in the spring anywhere you want to start new vines. I like to share them with friends. The seed pods will sprout once they receive adequate watering. Voila! But be prepared ... these plants are little stranglers. Off my back porch this porch is my little herb garden and the morning glory vines have tangled around my little basil and oregano plants many times. Keep an eye out and snip them back.



While we discuss my herb garden, can you spot the caterpillar? And, do you know this will someday be a Monarch butterfly? Amazing. I am in awe of the whole metamorphism thing. I grow a lot of milkweed near the lake and I even brought seeds to start here in Illinois. Milkweed is slowly dying off as we expand out road and highways, eliminating a lot of its natural growing habitat. Since Monarch feed exclusively on milkweed, we need to respect it.

Lecture over. Now ... the little caterpillar that could. I started growing dill in my herb garden a few years ago. And it was also around the time I brought some of the abundant milkweed plants home from the lake. These critter are attracted to dill and love to munch on it. Granted, you might end up with a skeleton of a plant in a day or two but heck ... it's a good cause! (A secret here: I grow a few dill plants on my patio. If I see a caterpillar, I gently pluck it off and move it to the herb garden!). It all comes full circle and that makes me happy. If you have little kids or grand kids, this is a wonderful way to get them involved with nature, all in your own backyard.



And now for some recipes, my friends. I like to keep things moving seasonal. This month I'm steering toward light, healthy and easy meals as we are hopefully getting outdoors more and don't need to be cooped up in the kitchen. All of these can transition to summer and beyond, the idea is variety, flavor, ease and tastiness!

Here I have a one pot meal that will have you moaning over the flavors. It totally took me by surprise and I make it at least three times a month. If you love chicken but get tired of the same old, same old ... you'll love this. Please let me know if you have any questions about the recipe.

Baked chicken & chorizo sausage

Ingredients:

2 T olive oil, divided
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
12 oz. soft chorizo sausage, crumbled
2 cups medium diced yellow baby potatoes
One red onion, sliced in rounds
2 t. dried oregano
2 t. salt and pepper each,
Zest of one large orange.

Directions:

In a medium size ovenproof skillet or Dutch oven, heat 1 T. of the olive oil over medium heat. Lightly brown chicken thighs about 3 minutes each side. Turn heat off. Add crumbled chorizo sausage, then top with diced potatoes. Layer red onion over, then oregano and S&P. Grate orange zest over the top and then drizzle the remaining T of olive oil. It will look like the above photo.

Remove from stovetop to oven pre-heated to 425 degrees. Bake 30 minutes covered, then 30 minutes uncovered. Serves 4. Enjoy!

Jane's Fish & Chips

Fish and chips are something you can really and truly make at home without a deep fryer contraption straight from Paula Deen's kitchen, or something you've seen on an infomercial. This fish comes out crusty and tender and tasty, and I've even included a really simple way to

make homemade fries and a tarter sauce. Very simple and just one pan (except the fries, but those are easily cooked up in your oven at the same time you are doing up the fish). Give this a try and smile afterward!

1 to 1 1/2 lb. fresh cod
1 egg swished around with a whisk or fork
1 1/2 t baking soda
2 c flour
2 t salt and pepper
1 to 1 1/2 cup canola oil
2 T malt vinegar (optional)



Directions:

Cut each piece of cod into 4 pieces. Gently beat egg and set aside. Combine the flour mixture in a shallow bowl while you heat up the oil and vinegar in a deep pan over medium to high heat. Dip the fish in the egg and dredge in the flour mixture. Fry approximately 2 minutes on each side. Do not let them over-brown. Keep the thinner pieces of cod toward the sides of the pan. Remove to a plate and cover with foil until ready to serve.

My simple tartar sauce is a mixture of mayo, pickle relish and a teaspoon of fresh lemon juice. Play and taste ... so fun.

For the chips I cut 4 medium size Idaho potatoes (after washing them) into 1/4 inch slices. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper and brush the potatoes with a bit of canola oil ... Sprinkle with a teaspoon of salt (add a bit more after cooking). Bake at 425 for approximately 20 minutes until tender, but watch closely. Recipe serves 4. Enjoy!!!!

After Easter I really needed a break from the overabundance of ham and ham leftovers. I wanted something simple, easy and light, and I found it when I started to play around with eggs and vegetables.

Quiche knows no season. I love it for supper in the fall, lunch in the summer (a great dish for midday company with a salad or fruit). Don't forget heated up for breakfast. So I fiddled with this recipe yesterday after restocking my fridge with fresh produce. Do you ever find yourself looking at an empty refrigerator 24 hours after it was packed with the makings of a holiday dinner? The leftover are (thankfully) gone and you're left with 13 bottles of water, 2 cans of Amstel Light and a carton of sour cream. Stock up and make this light recipe.

Colorful Veggie Quiche

1/2 c chopped shallots
1/2 c. green onion
1/2 c asparagus tips
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1/2 c roasted red pepper (in the jar packed with oil, drained), chopped
1 T olive oil
7 eggs
3/4 c milk
2 cups cubed or grated cheeses of your choice
2 t nutmeg
1 T salt
1 t pepper

Directions:

Chop the veggies excluding the red peppers. Saute about a minute or two in a small saucepan with the olive oil. You just want to release the flavors. Stir in

Continued, see **JANE** on next page

BUSINESS & FINANCE

The Housing Market in Cass County & SWMI

Overall home sales fell by 1 house behind the number of house sold in March 2016 (49 vs 50). At the end of the first quarter, sales were down 13 percent from 129 home sales March 2016 to 112 in March 2017.

Nine waterfront homes were sold in March 2017 compared to 10 in March 2016. Year-to-date, water front home sales were down 15 percent (22 vs. 26). Non-waterfront home sales remained the same in March 2017 (40 vs. 40). Year-to-date, non-water front home sales dropped 13 percent (90 vs. 103).

In March, the average selling price in Cass County for all homes soared 42 percent to \$197,333 from \$139,348 in March 2016. The median selling price for all homes in March climbed 29 percent to \$130,000 from \$101,200 in 2016.

The average selling price for waterfront homes rose 54 percent in March to \$458,667 from \$297,849 in March 2016. The median selling price for waterfront homes skyrocketed 81 percent (\$375,000 vs. \$206,750).

The average selling price for non-waterfront homes in March jumped 39 percent to \$138,533 from \$99,719 in March 2016. The median selling price increased 7 percent to \$98,250 from \$91,577 in March 2016.

The median price is the price at which 50 percent of the homes sold were above that price and 50 percent were below.

In Cass County, the number of bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a part of all closed transactions in March dropped to

In March, the average selling price in Cass County for all homes soared 42 percent to \$197,333 from \$139,348 in March 2016. The median selling price for all homes in March climbed 29 percent to \$130,000 from \$101,200 in 2016.

13 percent from 26 percent in February. The lowest percentage reached in 2016 was 9 percent. The highest percentage last year was 26 percent, in January 2016.

For comparison, the number of bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage of all transactions in our overall market in March was 13 percent, the same as in February. In January the percentage was 11 percent. The percentage in March was the lowest percentage in the month of March since 2009 when the bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage was 60 percent.

Throughout SWMI, the housing market in March, rallied following the restrained results in February. Compared to a year ago, the market was up double digits for number of houses sold, total dollar volume and average selling price. The first quarter ended setting record numbers for year-to-date, total dollar volume and both year-to-date, average and median selling prices in our year-over-year comparison since 2006. This is a significant since 2016 surpassed previous

housing market results and became the new peak year.

Fueling part of housing market's rise is the very low inventory of houses for sale. At the end of March there were just 1,646 houses for sale compared to 1,991 houses in March 2016. This was a 17 percent drop in one year. At the end of March we had 5.4-months supply of houses for sale going into the peak selling season. Last year at the end of the quarter there was a 7.1-months supply. To give a perspective of how far the market inventory has fallen, in March 2010 there was 14.7-months supply of houses for sale.

The number of houses sold in March 2017 increase 17 percent from March 2016 (285 vs. 243). Year-to-date, the number of houses sold was up by 8 percent over March 2016 (675 vs. 624).

The average time a home was on the market before it sold in March was 118 days compared to 115 days in March 2016. At the end of the first quarter, the average time on the market was up slightly from a year ago but just by 3 percent.

The higher number of houses sold set the total dollar volume for March soaring 35 percent past March 2016 (\$54,780,625 vs. \$40,717,803). Year-to-date, the total dollar volume was up 19 percent (\$129,413,512 vs. \$108,631,937). The year-to-date, total dollar volume for the first quarter was the highest in our year-over-year comparison.

The average selling price in March 2017 increased 15 percent from March

2016 (\$192,212 vs. \$167,562). The year-to-date, average selling price was up 10 percent (\$191,723 vs. \$174,089). The year-to-date, average selling price also was a record breaker.

The median selling price of \$129,900 in March 2017 was up 3 percent over the \$125,900 set in March 2016. At the end of the quarter, the median selling price increased 7 percent to \$130,000 from \$121,000 in 2016.

Overall in SWMI, the mortgage rate bumped up slightly to 4.365 from 4.314 percent in February. Last year in March, the rate was at 3.84. Nationally, the Freddie Mac mortgage rate in March was 4.14 compared to 4.16 percent in February for a 30-year conventional mortgage.

This data reflects home sales across Berrien, Cass and the westerly 2/3 of Van Buren counties and should not be used to determine the market value of any individual property. If you want to know the market value of your property, please contact your local REALTOR®.

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JANE

Continued from previous page

the roasted red peppers. Set aside.

Whisk the eggs and milk up until frothy. Stir in the cheese. A tip here: I am so, so tired of mass produced and distributed orange cheese we call cheddar. Try a white cheddar from Wisconsin (the BEST choice for cheese in our area), a Parmesan, Romano or Asiago. These have a little bit of a bite and add a smooth flavor when added in small chunks as opposed to grating.

Add the seasonings to the egg mixture. In a pie dish or small casserole, spoon in your veggies. Pour in the egg mixture and place in a 425 degree oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 and bake for 45 additional minutes. Let cool 5 minutes before serving. We loved this with a simple salad but you can always serve it with a chunk of good Italian bread and butter.



Jane's Jazzed Potato Salad

I've been accumulating a lot of potato salad recipes and I thought I'd share a

few over the summer so you can try out some new flavors and twists. This one is a winner. It sounds involved but it's really not. In fact, since you don't have to peel the potatoes you've already shaved off some prep time.

Ingredients:

6 medium size Idaho potatoes*
1 cup sliced celery
1/4 cup diced shallots (or onion)
1/4 cup chopped flat leaf parsley
2 to 2 1/2 cups mayo (no salad dressing!)
3 slices of thick bacon, cooked, cooled and crumbled
2 tablespoons of reserved bacon drippings
3 tablespoons of reserved potato skins**
2 tablespoons of chopped chives
One hard boiled egg, roughly chopped in small pieces
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Scrub the potatoes and add to a large pot of salted boiling water. Cook until an inserted knife finds them firm all the way through. Do NOT overcook* or they will crumble when assembling the salad. Remove to a colander and let cool and dry.

Meanwhile, prepare your veggies and parsley. Place in a small bowl. Perhaps prepare your egg but keep it separate.

Once potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel the skin with a paring knife trying not to remove any flesh if possible until you have about 3 tablespoon. ** Chop into small pieces. Add this to a small skillet with the 2 tablespoons of drippings and gently fry until crisp. Bacon fat smokes and burns easily so watch the temp of the heat. Remove and drain on paper towels. Combine with bacon pieces and set aside.

Cut potatoes into 1 to 1 1/2 inch chunks. Place in a large bowl and season with about a teaspoon of salt and pinch of pepper. Begin to fold in mayo by the 1/2 cup (very gently). How much creaminess you want is up to you so just keep adding slowly. Reserve about 1/2 cup and then add your celery and shallots and parsley. Fold in the rest of the mayo along with

another pinch of salt.

Spoon the salad into a pretty bowl, top with the chopped egg, then the bacon/potato skin combo. Sprinkle the chives over and then chill for at least one hour before serving.

Sending all of you wonderful May wishes. I'm so excited to get 'light' in ever way possible; clothing, cooking, cleaning, watching tiny little plants sprout from the ground and new buds on the plants. Please find the joy in that along with me!

Jane Boudreau is a writer and lifestyle blogger who lives on Diamond Lake, along with a home in Chicago and a little place in the mountains of North Carolina. She enjoys cooking, gardening, hiking, reading and crafting. Follow along. You can reach her at blndy9@yahoo.com All photos are taken by and property of J. Boudreau. Please ask for permission for using.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Real Estate markets on the mend

Provided by **Greg Schoenfeld**
Compass Wealth Advisors

With a stable housing market, low interest rates, and a more positive employment picture, more Americans may be in a position to buy or sell properties in 2017. Moreover, the U.S. tax code favors real estate ownership, allowing for tax savings that might help families enhance their everyday lives and build wealth over the long term.

Incentives for Homeowners

The ability to write off mortgage interest and other home-related expenses can help subsidize a home purchase. Homeowners must itemize deductions on Schedule A of their federal tax returns instead of claiming the standard deduction.

The deduction for mortgage interest applies on up to \$1 million for first mortgages — plus up to \$100,000 on home-equity loans — for a primary residence and a second home such as a vacation condo, mobile home, boat, house trailer, or any structure with sleeping, cooking, and toilet facilities (if it is not rented for income).

The property owner can also deduct real estate taxes in the year they are paid, as well as mortgage points (origination fees) — even if the seller pays them for the buyer.

Protected Profits

When a principal residence is sold, losses are not tax deductible, but a prof-

Average Itemized Interest Deduction, by Adjusted Gross Income



Source: CCH, 2016 (based on taxpayers who claimed itemized deductions in tax year 2013)

it of up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for married joint filers) may be excluded from the federal capital gains tax. To qualify for the exclusion, the home must have been owned and occupied as a principal residence for two out of the five years before the sale.

Owners who cannot pass this test may be eligible for a reduced exclusion, but only if the home sale resulted from an employment relocation, health reasons, or certain other unforeseen circumstances.

Different Rules for Rentals

Because rental property is considered business property, mortgage interest, property taxes, insurance, maintenance, depreciation, and other expenses are tax deductible and can be used to

offset some or all of the rental income. Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis over 27.5 years, which means about 3.63 percent of the entire purchase price may be deducted each year, even if the property is largely financed.

Under IRS Section 1031, when a qualified (non-owner occupied) investment property such as a rental home is exchanged instead of sold, the capital gains tax may be postponed indefinitely as long as the transaction is documented and conducted properly. The seller must purchase 'like-kind' property (i.e., real estate must be exchanged for real estate, but it need not be the same grade, quality, type, or class) of equal or greater value within 180 days.

IRS rules mandate that the pro-

ceeds from the sale of the original property must be held by a third party (such as a qualified intermediary), and the exchange process must meet a number of other specific conditions.

There are inherent risks associated with real estate investments and the real estate industry, each of which could have an adverse effect on the financial performance and value of a real estate investment. Some of these risks include a deterioration in national, regional, and local economies; tenant defaults; local real estate conditions, such as an oversupply of, or a reduction in demand for, rental space; property mismanagement; changes in operating costs and expenses, including increasing insurance costs, energy prices, real estate taxes, and the costs of compliance with laws, regulations, and government policies. Real estate investments may not be appropriate for all investors.

This information 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 Broadridge Advisor Solutions. © 2017 Broadridge Investor Communication Solutions, Inc.



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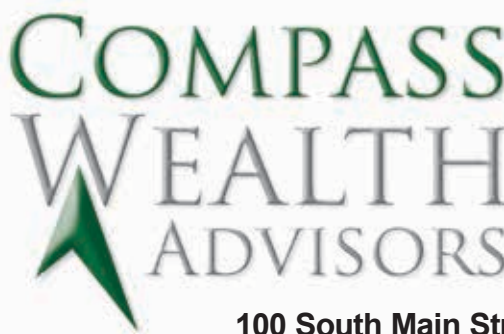
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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Do you insure your paycheck?

By Vicki Brossman
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency of Cass County

Most of us insure our home, cars, toys, and our lives, but not our paycheck. Have you thought about what would happen if you suddenly were unable to collect your paycheck due to sickness or injury? How long would you be able to pay your bills?

What do you think of the following statements? –

1. I don't need disability insurance because I am covered by workers' compensation.
2. If I am unable to work, I can use my accrued sick leave or paid time off.
3. I have enough money saved to cover my living expenses if I can't work due to a sickness or injury.
4. Since I have medical insurance, I don't need disability insurance.
5. My short-term disability will cover a portion of my wages for a year.
6. I will apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

The truth of the matter is –

1. Workers' compensation benefits only apply to an injury or sickness that happens on the job. Less than 10% of disabling accidents or illnesses are work related meaning the other 90% will not be covered by workers' compensation. What if you are having a baby, break a bone or hurt your back while playing sports or working around

- the house, suffer from depression, or have a health issue such as arthritis, cancer, heart attack, stroke, or surgery?
2. One statistic says that you have a three in 10 chance of being disabled for 90 days or longer during your working career. Another says that 1 out of 4 workers, ages 35 – 65, will be disabled for 90 days. Would you have enough sick leave or paid time off should this happen to you?
 3. The majority of workers will exhaust their savings within only two months. Daily living expenses such as your mortgage, food, clothing, and utilities will continue. More than likely, you will have additional expenses due to your disability including medical bills and transportation and living expenses.
 4. Medical insurance will only respond to your covered medical expenses. It does not protect against the loss of your paycheck.
 5. Short term disability policies limit the length of time you can receive benefits. The typical benefit period is 6 months.
 6. Only 35 percent of workers applying for SSDI benefits are approved with the average monthly benefit \$1,171 a month which is just above the 2017 federal poverty line for an individual.

How will disability insurance protect my paycheck?

1. Some disability policies consider you

- disabled if you are unable to perform the duties of any job while better plans pay benefits if you are unable to do the usual duties of your occupation.
2. Short term disability policies have a limit on the amount of time you can receive benefits. This can vary from 3 months to 2 years.
3. Long term disability policies normally provide benefits until age 65, though shorter or longer terms are available.
4. Most policies have an Elimination Period. The elimination period is the number of days you must be disabled before you will receive any benefits. Some common elimination periods are 30, 60, and 90 days.
5. Disability insurance pays a percentage of your salary, usually 40 to 60 percent. When purchasing a policy, you will want to find out if benefits will be reduced by Social Security disability and workers' compensation payments. Will the benefits be adjusted for inflation?
6. The disability policy offered by your employer may not meet your needs. What percentage of your income will you receive if you are disabled? What is the elimination period? Will this plan pay if you are unable to do the usual duties of your occupation?
7. While purchasing disability coverage at work may be easier for you to qualify for than an individual policy, you won't be able to take the coverage with you if you change jobs.

8. If you are self-employed, disability insurance may be even more important. Often a self-employed individual is not covered by workers' compensation; therefore, would not have coverage on the job as well as off.
- The loss of your paycheck can be devastating to you and your family. Check with the human resources department where you work to see what type of coverage, if any, is available through your employer. Helpful websites are www.lifehappens.org and www.usa.gov.
- With this information, your insurance agent will be able to help you determine your individual needs.



Vicki Brossman
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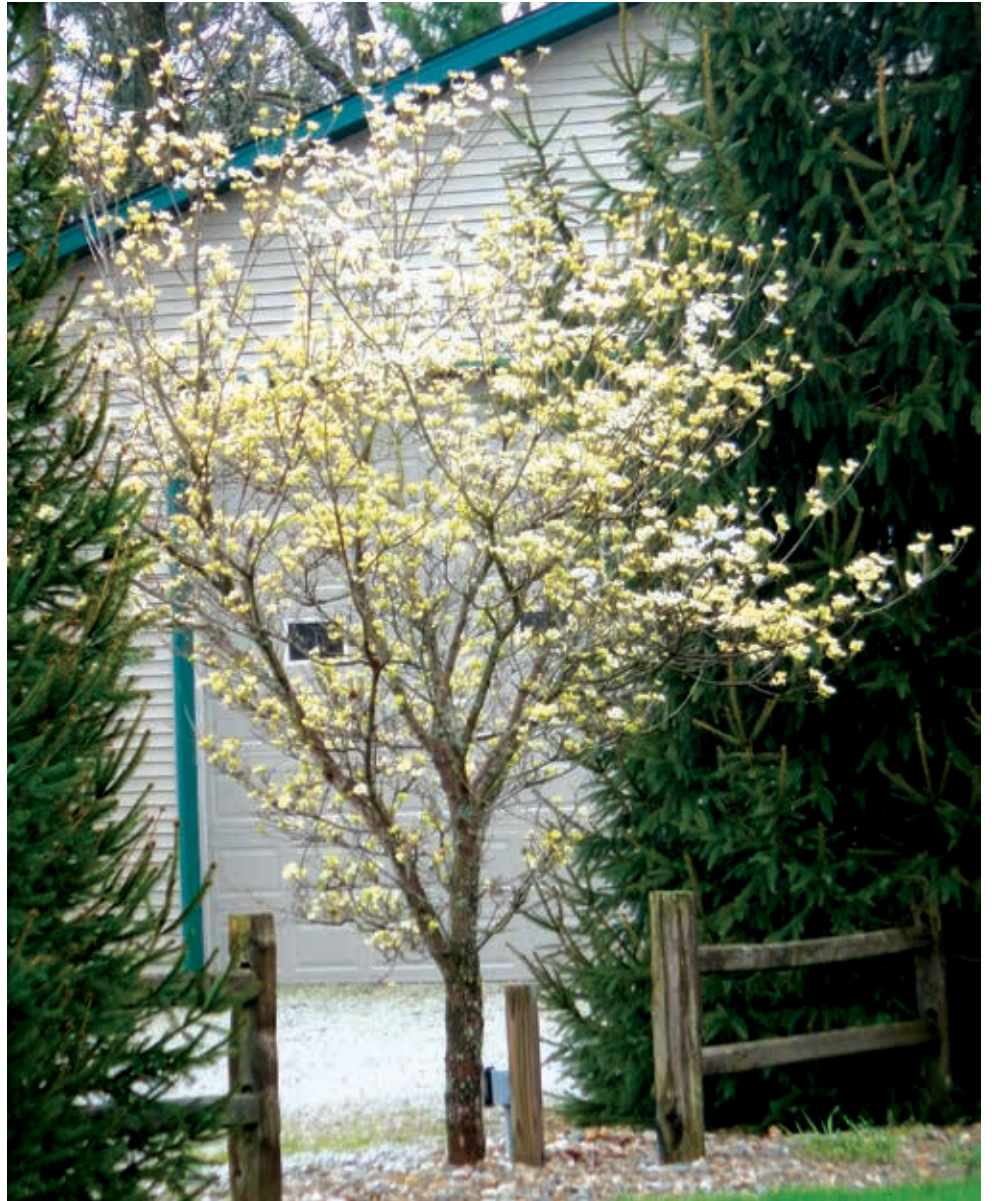


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HISTORIC POSTCARDS

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.arcadiapublishing.com

In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of Three Rivers and the nearby area and lakes.

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



This is the first postcard that Floyd Jerdon collected in his now-huge collection of postcards from Cass County. The card is postmarked Sept. 27, 1875 in Dowagiac.

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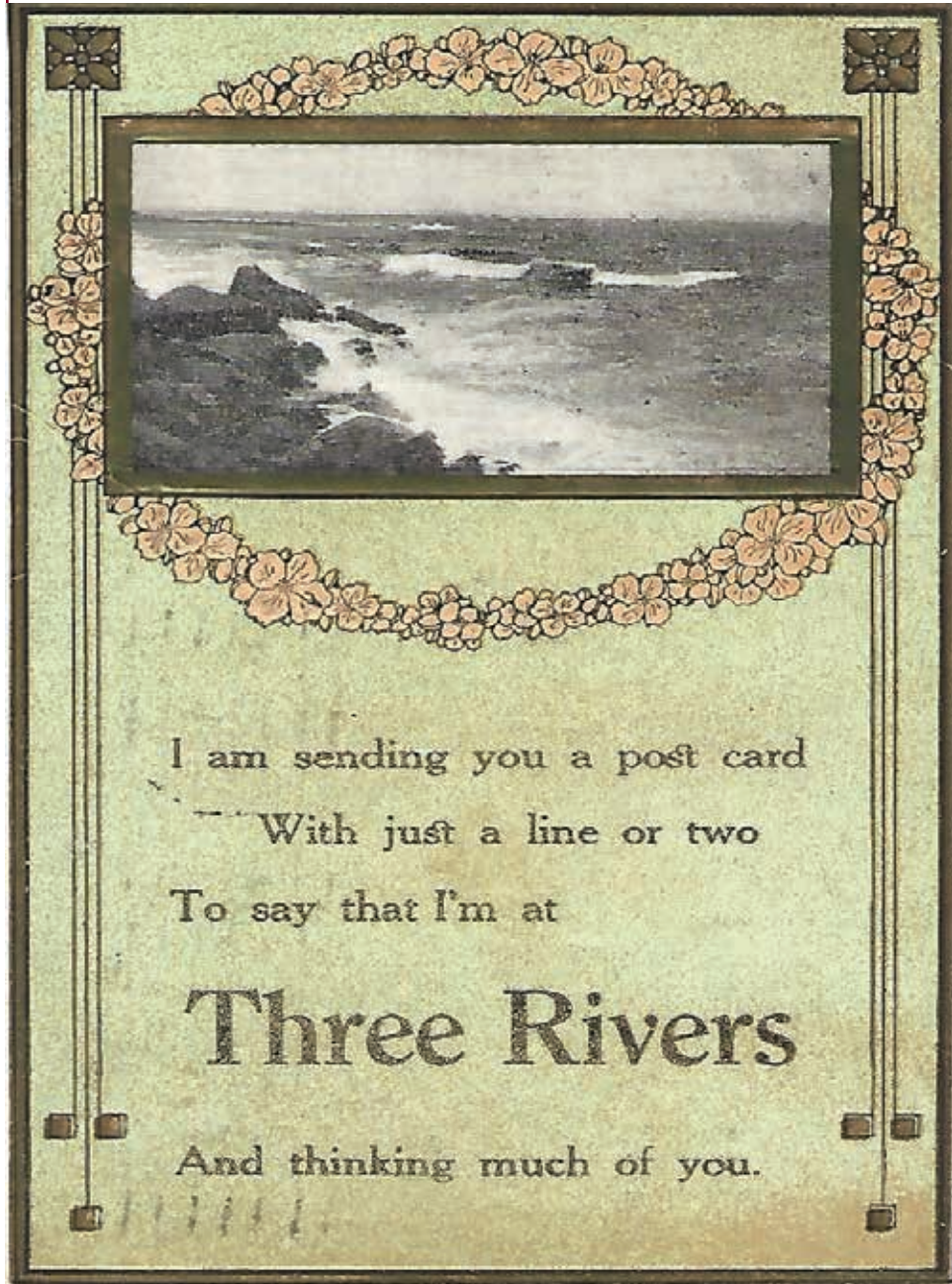
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OUR CHILDREN

Adding structure to your summer days

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Summer vacation from school is just around the corner, and those long, lazy days will seem like they stretch out forever. To our adult eyes, however, we see those days as fleeting and passing far too quickly. We want the kids to squeeze every ounce of fun out of their summers, but we also want to use the time wisely to help them grow, learn and mature. How can families accomplish both goals?

The answer is to build some structure into their days. Even if you work full time and the kids are home on their own, you can still set some parameters that will help them reach goals over the summer while they have fun and relax. Structure also helps children's sense of security, their self-esteem, and other aspects of their mental health. Structure helps them develop the kinds of self-control, attention, and follow-through that are so desperately needed for success in school and later in life for job success. You can start this summer to build successful habits in your children.

Most parents realize early on in their child's life that a structured and predictable schedule helps the baby to settle into a predictable routine. In fact, most babies get quite testy when their routines are disrupted. This is because they derive a great deal of security from being able to predict when mealtimes, naptimes, and playtimes will be happening. Structure adds order to their world and that frees their minds for other kinds of learning that are so critical in early development.

Somewhere along the way, however, many families lose this aspect of their household routine. Especially as the kids get busier with their own unique activities and schedules, as parents head back to work after taking time off to be with kids in the first few weeks, months, or years, and as kids grow up and want more independence, schedules tend to become more haphazard. Often, the only predictable parts of the child's day is school and perhaps a homework routine, and that falls by the wayside as soon as that last school bell rings in June.

This year, why not try things a little bit differently? Try setting up a summer schedule for the kids (and the family) with time built into it for fun as well as various kinds of work and learning activities. It certainly doesn't have to be rigid—we all need room for the spur of the moment trip to the lake or the unexpected visit from grandma or Aunt and Uncle. In fact, structure doesn't even have to be based on a clock or a calendar at all. Structure can be based in expectations, goals, and accomplishments which will also help your child to feel quite successful by summer's end.

Set Some Goals

Before school lets out, have a one-on-one meeting with each child. What sorts of goals can the two of you set for the summer? These can be academic goals, personal responsibility goals, habit-breaking or building goals, or



whatever is needed. Think of them as a recharge for New Year's resolutions. What would you like to see from your child for the upcoming school year? What would your child like to accomplish before the school bell rings in September?

Some ideas you may want to consider include mastery of some grade level basics appropriate to your child's grade completed (like memorization of math facts or writing paragraphs or essays), exploration of topics coming up in the next grade, reading a specific amount on a regular basis, working on school-related tasks for a certain amount of time each day, doing creative and thinking projects, such as designing things, and so forth. You can also set goals for breaking or building habits—get rid of the troublesome habits or create new, better habits. Could you set a goal about housework or other helpful tasks? Of course you could!

Break the Goals into Manageable Bits

Most goals seem huge and overwhelming. That's why many people give up on them. One way to encourage completion of a goal is to break it down into manageable pieces or stepping stones. For example, if you want your child to learn the 100 multiplication facts, try working on and mastering ten at a time. You could do all the facts that include x2, then x3, and so forth. By the time you are done, you'll have all 100 ready to go. If you want to break a habit, try setting a goal for doing it less often each day or week. Want to build a habit? Try setting a little goal of increasing a small amount.

Reward Small Successes

Everyone works best when rewarded for reaching goals. Be sure to set up an incentive system for the kids when they reach a milestone on their goal, as well. Think outside the box! Rewards do not have to be edible, or even tangible. Something as simple as extra time with a parent, extra privileges, or other desired situation will work great. You don't need to spend money on these. And before you dismiss this as "brib-

ery," think about what we adults work for—paychecks! No reason why kids shouldn't also work for something they want.

Plus, positive rewards are a whole lot more effective than punishments. Which is more pleasant for you? People in general will comply more happily and willingly when they are working for something instead of trying to avoid something bad. Keeping it positive will go a long, long way to making life more pleasant at your house.

So Now What?

You've got the goals in place and all mapped out. How do you move the kids from point A to point B, especially if you're not physically around to make it happen? That's where the structure and scheduling comes in. Create a daily routine that includes work on the new skill and monitoring the old or new habits. Make a checklist to help the kids keep track of what they are supposed to be doing. Your checklist could include things such as doing a certain number of workbook pages or practice exercises, reading time, writing time, household chores, and even times for various types of play (to pull kids away from electronics) like 60 minutes of outdoor time.

Checklists will work best if there's a carrot to be obtained for compliance. If you're around to physically monitor the routine, then do so. If you're not around to monitor what's actually happening, be sure to set up tasks that "leave a trail" such as completed worksheets, written responses to reading sections of books, diaries or journals about what was completed or how successful the day's effort was, and so forth. And when the checklist is being completed as requested, set up a reward. This might need to be daily for a while, but you should be able to drop it back to weekly, especially for older kids. And remember that rewards don't have to be expensive or edible! Typically, time and attention from parents is the most positive thing you can give your child. They crave your attention, and most will work very hard to get it (yes, even those teens). Just give

the attention in a positive way and share an activity that you both enjoy. Try playing a game together, going for a walk or a drive, riding bikes together, or even working on a chore or project together. Keep things very positive, and you both will look forward to the experience.

Handling the "What Ifs ..."

Most noncompliance problems have solutions, even if they are by "remote control." The biggest problem I hear about is that unsupervised kids tend to spend too much time with their gadgets. Limit screen time by physically making the devices inaccessible. You can take phones or tablets with you when you leave, lock them up, or remove the cords or batteries. You can set parental monitors on most devices that will "tattle" if your kids are engaging in unauthorized usage. Computers, tablets, phones and video games are all privileges, and as such, you the parent control their use and access.

If you are having trouble with compliance in general, it is likely that you haven't found the right reward. Not all kids are motivated by the same things, so choose a different way to coax your child into doing what's needed. Some of the most powerful rewards (besides your time and attention) include privileges like social time and outings, access to rewarding activities, access to electronics, and "free time" (where you take a day off every now and then from your structured plan for the summer). Most kids will work for some combination of these things.

Remember that the positive is far more powerful than the negative. Don't fall into the trap of "taking away" or punishing. Instead, offer incentives and rewards for compliance on a regular basis, then randomize the reward so your child never knows when something great will come from their actions. Be consistent, and your whole family will reap the rewards.

Sandy Fleming is a private tutor and educational consultant living in Edwardsburg. Visit her website for more fun ideas: <http://sandyflemingonline.com>

NATURE NOTES

Bald Eagles take up residence in Cass County

Provided by Jon Wuepper,
Cass District Library
Local History Branch

Cass County is now home to several pairs of nesting Bald Eagles. During April, Eagles and other birds of prey are still migrating northward to nesting grounds.

Eagles are of course, birds of prey, also called raptors. Hawks and eagles are closely related, and hunt for food by day, also called diurnal raptors.

Falcons were once thought to be closely related to other hawks and eagles, but recent DNA research shows that they are more genetically aligned with songbirds. Regardless of scientific classification, falcons are still considered diurnal birds of prey.

Owls are also raptors, but they are generally nocturnal, or in other words active by night.

Vultures, such as our common Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture of the south, are often listed by ornithologists as raptors, however vultures do not kill prey but feed on carrion. Carrion is the dead or decaying flesh of animals. Some believe that the increase in roadkill an-



Adult Bald Eagle at Riverview Park, April 14, 2017 by Mark Parren.

imals has been one contributing factor to the northern range extension of turkey vultures over the last half century.

Bald eagles take four calendar years to mature into their adult plumage, being brown body with white head and tails. The bird appearing in Parren's photos is obviously an adult. However, I am uncertain as to whether the bird has two legs. Only one leg is visible in all the photographs provided by Parren.

It is possible that the eagle in the photo has one healthy leg tucked under its body, or possible that it lost a leg due to an injury, or was born with just one leg. Birds of prey that loose a leg

are quite adaptable to their situation.

Middle spring report...

The recent warm weather and south winds have brought several migrants to the area, including some long-distant migrants from Central and South America.

One April 16, Dick Schinkel of Oronoko Township reported a male Baltimore Oriole, which had come to his hummingbird feeder. Baltimore orioles are long-distant migrants, wintering from Mexico to northern South America. The average spring arrival date of Baltimore oriole in Berrien County is April 21.

On April 15, Sandra Brant of Ben-



ton Center reported a male rose-breasted grosbeak, seen in a tree adjacent to Sarett Nature Center. The species winters mainly in the tropics. On average, rose-breasted grosbeaks are reported locally in the spring by April 24.

Several other spring migrants have been reported for the first time this week including indigo bunting and green heron, both reported from Berrien Springs area, both reported a few days ahead of spring average arrival dates.

Peak bird migration in the Michigan region occurs in the early and middle part of May. Things taper off by Memorial Day, and a few lingering migrants are sometimes found in early June.

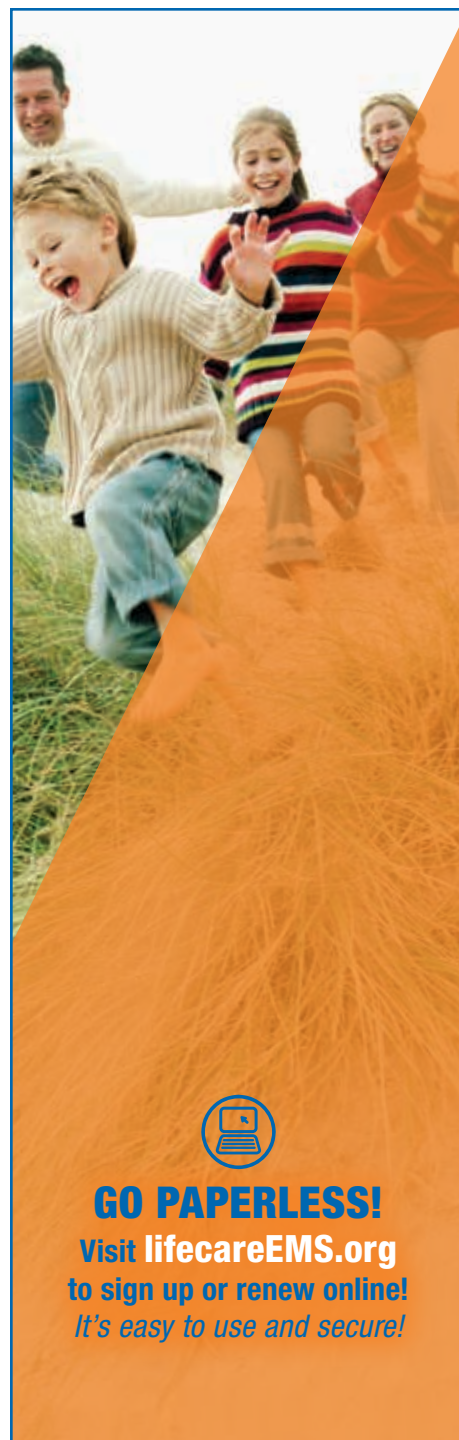
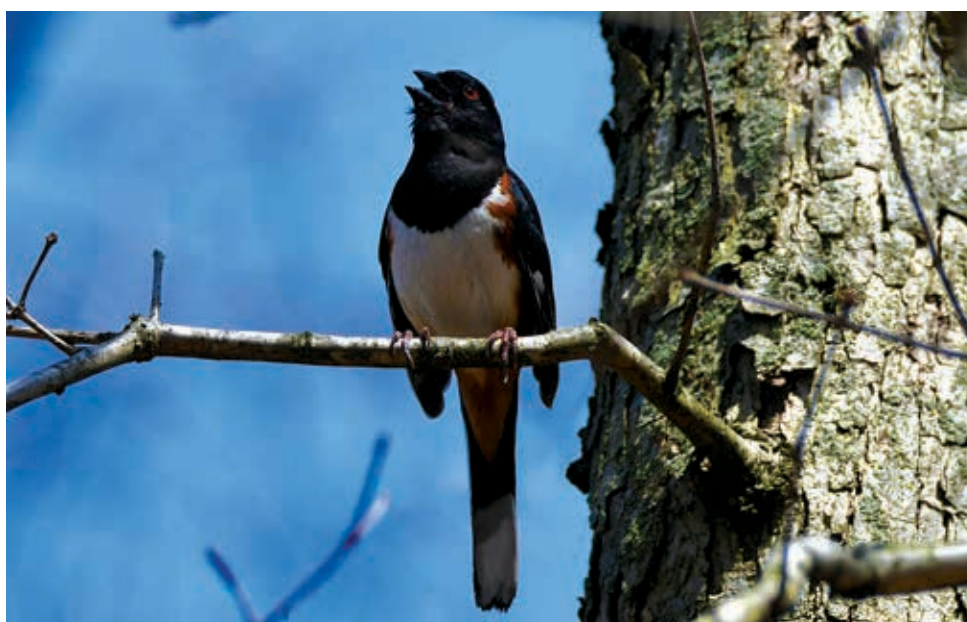
Seasonally, ornithologists (those who study birds) look for general trends. As of April 19, which is just over half-way through ornithological spring (March, April, and May) spring migrants are roughly a few days ahead of average.

More next month ...



Above: Male Wood Duck on Saint Joseph River, April 2017. Mark Parren.

Below: Male Eastern Towhee sings on a sunny day in April, in Berrien County. Photo Mark Parren.



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LOCAL HISTORY

The diary of Dr. Phineas Gregg

Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch

Continuation of the diary of George Franklin Gregg (1848-1932). In February 1870, Frank Gregg lived in Newberg Township, but had family in nearby Brownsville, Calvin Township. In the spring of 1870, Gregg moved to Brownsville when he became a school-teacher. Insights on daily life in a rural schoolhouse are documented in Gregg's diary, particularly punishment of students and day to day activities.

Friday, July 1, 1870 -Cool and cloudy. I went to the [?] Center, got the vacation prolonged. Got Halsey's things. Sent them by Houghtel [perhaps "Hotel"?]. [Note: Silas, Helena, Edward and Laura Halsey lived in Penn Township, Cass Co, according to 1870 US Census].

Saturday, July 2, 1870 -Bound wheat for Finley Chess. [Note: Finley and Amy Chess were heads of household in Calvin Township, Cass County, according to 1870 US Census.]

Sunday, July 3, 1870 -At Sunday School. At Brownsville, meeting in the evening. Jack, Bud, Jane and Mary.

Monday, July 4, 1870 -Bound wheat for Finley. Very warm. [No mention of 4th of July celebration. Wheat was likely grown on land owned by Finley Chess in sections 8-9 of Calvin Twp.].

Tuesday, July 5, 1870 -Bound wheat for Finley, still warm but pleasant.

Wednesday, July 6, 1870 -Bound wheat for Finley.

Thursday, July 7, 1870 -Bound wheat for Finley, finished.

Friday, July 8, 1870 -Hunted, sawed wood and done chores.

Saturday, July 9, 1870 -Worked in the garden in the forenoon. Went hunting in the afternoon. Lydia and Mary went to Newburgh.

Sunday, July 10, 1870 -Singing in the forenoon, no Sunday school concert in the afternoon. Rain in eve.

Monday, July 11, 1870 -At school. Hard rain in the morning. Caught cold and had a chill in the eve.

Tuesday, July 12, 1870 -Cold. Pretty well at school, cloudy in the morning, pleasant rest of the day.

Wednesday, July 13, 1870 -Had a chill in the morning, about 9 and 1/2 o'clock. Warm rain and some hail in the morning.

Thursday, July 14, 1870 -Went back to school. Things go off well till in the afternoon when I am compelled to punish Atlanta Vaughn. [Note: Greg had mentioned punishing Atlanta Vaughn by whipping in May 24, 1870 entry. Punished other children by whipping in June 1870].

Friday, July 15, 1870 -Felt bad in the morning but did not have a chill. We cleaned the school house and oh! such a job.

Saturday, July 16, 1870 -At home, went to whortle berry marsh of Finleys, got 6 quarts.

Sunday, July 17, 1870 -At Sunday School. Asil Northrope superintended. Russel preached in the afternoon, Sam in eve.

Monday, July 18, 1870 - At school. Very warm, not many scholars.

Tuesday, July 19, 1870 -At school. All as common. Pretty warm.

Wednesday, July 20, 1870 -As common, still very warm. School is small this week. Rain and hail in evening. Went to the hall in eve.

Thursday, July 21, 1870 -Nothing unusual only not quite so warm. School very small.

Friday, July 22, 1870 -At school. The school is very small today, weather warm. Went home in evening.

Saturday, July 23, 1870 -At home most of the day. At Cass[opolis] in the morning. Painted the telescope in the afternoon.

Sunday, July 24, 1870 -At home in the forenoon. No Sunday school. Went to the funeral of W. Seongs [?] child [of] J. Borton died in the night. [Jesse Borton, age 30, listed in 1870 US Census].

Monday, July 25, 1870 -At school. Pleasant in the forenoon, some rain. Very warm in the afternoon. Number of scholars increasing

Tuesday, July 26, 1870 -Still very warm. Number of scholars, 15, went to J Bortons burying in eve.

Wednesday, July 27, 1870 -At school. The school is very small. Went home in the evening. Rain in the night. I walked home in 40 minutes.

Memo - Jacob Charles took [illegible] out and went lame during [illegible]. will be treated as deserter.

Thursday, July 28, 1870 -At school. Not quite as warm today as it was yesterday.

Friday, July 29, 1870 -School small. Weather warm. Went home in the evening.

Saturday, July 30, 1870 -Went to Cass[opolis] in the morning. Got Jones' stereoscope. Went to see ball game in PM.

Sunday, July 31, 1870 -Went to Sunday school in the morning to sing in the forenoon. Fowler's meeting in the evening.

To be continued....

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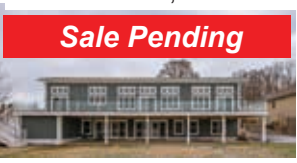
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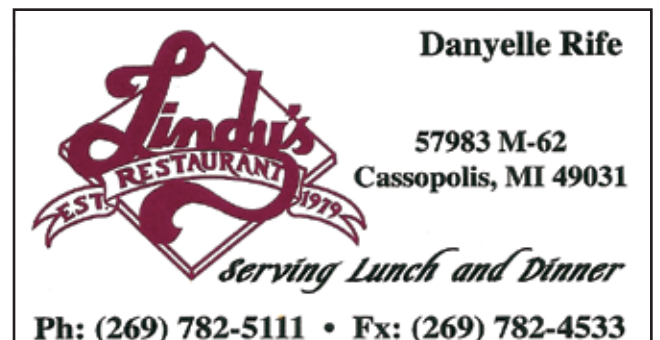
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THE LAST WORD

Memories of getting hooked on a spring fishing trip

On first glance it seemed pretty unlikely that an acorn could have fallen off an old oak tree hanging over the edge of the lake and had somehow landed on top of the flat rock just above the waterline and managed to stay there without rolling into the lake.

Pretty unlikely, I thought as I reeled in my lure and cast it out again. What are the chances that an acorn could end up there on top of that rock and just sit there, I wondered, peering up into the tree limbs that were gently swaying in the light, warm spring breeze.

It was ten, maybe fifteen years ago but the events of that day are forever imprinted on the engrams of my memory. It was nothing short of being one of the most glorious, spectacular spring days a human being could pick to be alive.

The sun was gloriously beaming from a sky so blue it hurt my eyes, its warmth making even the light tee shirt I was wearing seem like a winter coat.

The breeze was warm and pleasing, wafting a bouquet of lilac and hyacinth scents to my spring-heightened senses and completely masking the earthy musk reeking off the can of worms my fishing buddy was digging through as he searched for the perfect worm to catch the perfect monster bass.

We'd been at it for a couple of hours but not only had neither of us boated a fish, neither of use had even registered the first bob of a bobber, the tiny wooden floats floating irritatingly still on the still lake, silently and stilly mocking our

angling machinations.

My boat-mate that day, a longtime friend and frequent fishing partner, had been unusually quiet, even more so than his traditional early morning tight-lipped demeanor caused by what he called "the mother of all hangovers."

"You alright Mike?" I asked, not really feeling any sympathy since he so frequently sported these particular symptoms on morning fishing expeditions.

He flinched and glared and dropped another baited hook into the water, this one just a couple of feet from shore, right next to the rock that was balancing the unlikely acorn.

"Harumph," he harumphed, flexing his shoulders and rolling his head to ease the strain in his neck.

I went back to staring at my bobber.

"See the acorn on that rock?" he asked. "Kind of reminds me of the time I was fishing up in Wisconsin and saw the very same sort of a setup."

He broke off abruptly and fell into silence, his head nodding so violently I wondered whether he was trying to recall a difficult memory or having a stroke.

After a bit he finally continued.

"I watched that acorn for the better part of an hour that morning," he went on. "Couldn't believe that it had fallen off that tree and landed just so perfectly on top of that rock."

He fell quiet again, watching his bobber and glancing occasionally at the acorn. The quiet grew until I wondered if he'd fallen asleep.

Finally he continued.

"Yep, it was like one of those great

philosophical questions that the great thinkers like to pose. You know, the ones that don't have answers. Like why is there air? What's the meaning of life? How in the hell could an acorn land on top of a rock and not roll into the lake?"

He chuckled a bit and let out a snort that sounded like he'd just aspirated one of his fishing worms.

"But then I saw the squirrel."

Silence again. It grew in the still morning air until it was almost painful.

"And I saw that he'd seen that acorn on the rock," he finally went on.

I waited.

"I could tell that squirrel wanted that acorn, but he didn't want to jump into the lake and swim out to the rock to get it," he said, rubbing his eyes with his free hand and smearing worm dirt in a wide swath across his face.

I waited.

"So this squirrel, he starts edging out onto the limb hanging over the rock, see, and the limb slowly starts bending down toward the water ..."

Another irritating pause.

"And he edges out a little farther and farther, and each time he moves out, the limb bends down and gets a little lower and a little closer to the rock."

Another pause, this one so long I had to turn to see if he was still breathing. After what seemed like an eternity, he went on with his story.

"And then, just before the limb got down all the way, that squirrel jumped off right onto the rock and snatched up that acorn in his jaws."

Yet another pause.

"Yep, he seemed pretty pleased with himself ... at least until he looked up and saw that tree limb had sprang back up into the air and was out of reach, and he was going to have to swim back to shore."

Pause.

"So after scurrying around the rock a few times, he sucked in a deep breath, grabbed the acorn in his mouth, jumped into the water and made for the shore with these furious little squirrel strokes. And that was when one of the most amazing things I've ever seen happened."

I could barely stand the suspense.

"Just at that second a huge northern pike swam up from the deep water and grabbed the squirrel and in his jaws and swallowed him whole in one bite, just like that, nothing left but the acorn bobbing in the water."

I couldn't hold back.

"No way," I shouted.

"Yep, way," he chided. "But that wasn't *the* most amazing thing I saw that morning."

Pause again for effect.

"Yeah, what'd you see?" I bit like blind goldfish going after a kernel of popcorn thrown from a glass bottomed boat. My buddy turned toward me with a sadistic grin. He knew I was hooked.

"*The* most amazing thing happened about two minutes later when that pike came back and stuck his nose up and gently nudged that acorn back onto the rock. I swear he was looking right up at that limb ..."

And that was the day I learned that in Wisconsin you can be fined \$100 for assault and battery with an oar ...



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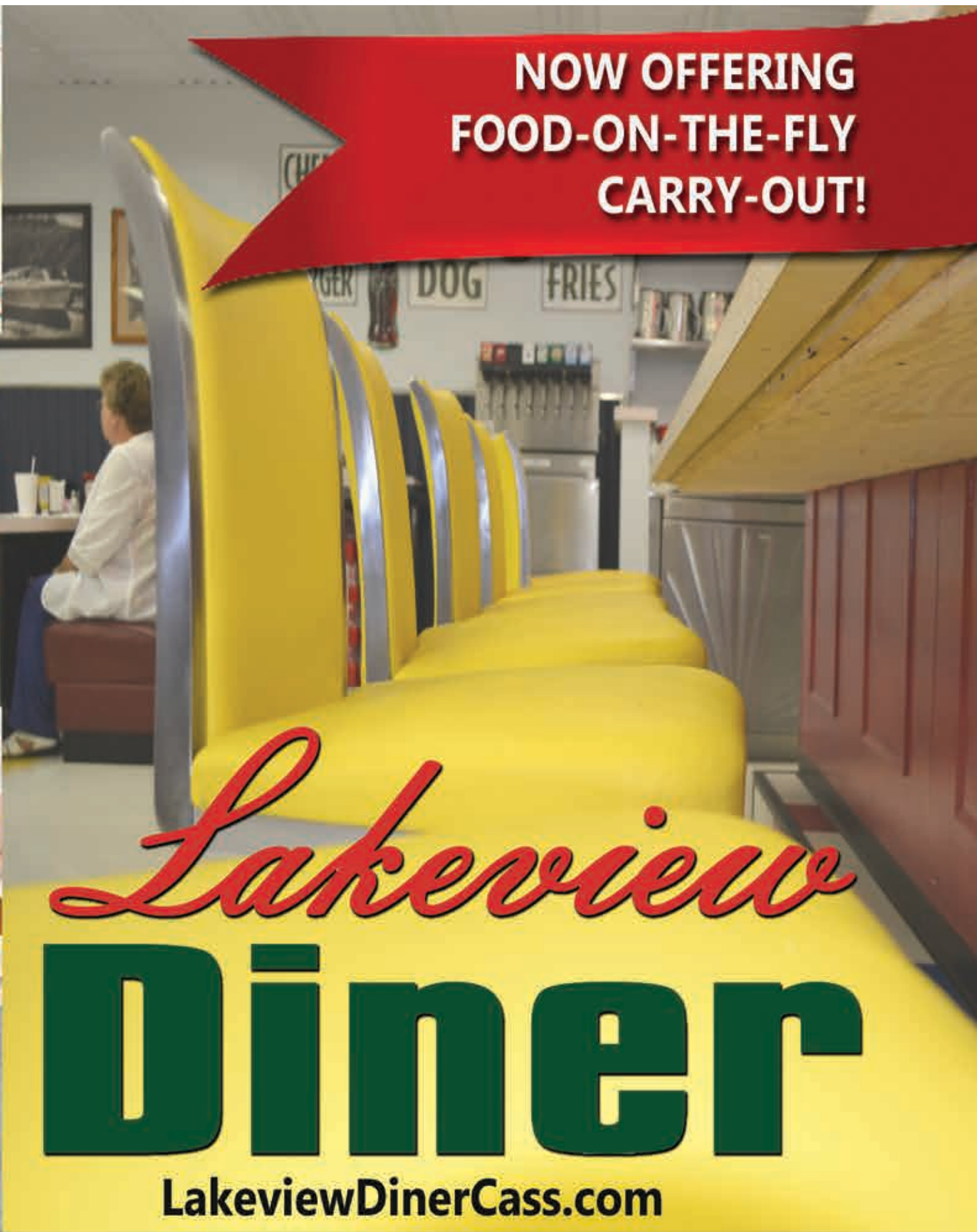


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