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NEIGHBORS

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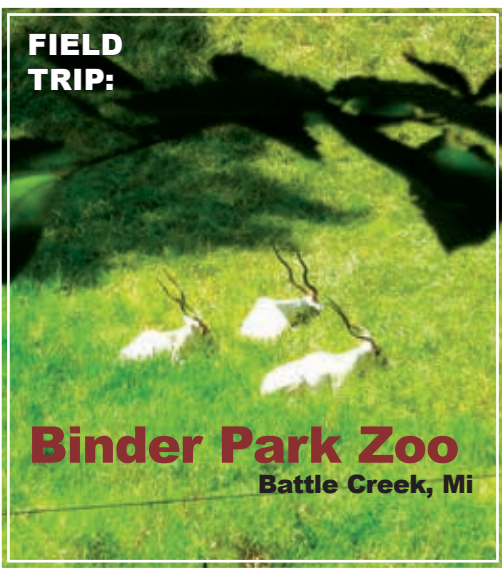


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REGIONAL NEWS

Cass County Shrine Club to host 2017 Fall Turkey Shoot

The Cass County Shrine Club will host the 2017 Fall Turkey Shoot beginning at 10 am each day on October 28 and 29 and November 4 and 5 at the club, 69185 Union Road in Union. The public is welcome.

All shells are furnished for 12, 16, 20 and 410 gauge shotguns. The event will award prizes including a \$1000 shoot on the second Sunday. The event will include line shoots, pie shoots, money shoots, in-house raffles, food and beer.

Proceeds from the event are for the benefit of the Cass County Shrine Club.

Medical Care Facility Auxiliary 2017 Annual Salad Luncheon

The Cass County Medical Care Auxiliary will hold its annual salad luncheon on September 21, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Cassopolis United Methodist Church. Parking is available on Rowland St. or in the church parking lot on O'Keefe. The luncheon will feature homemade salads, soup, rolls, drink and desserts. Cost is \$7. For more info call Joyce Settle, 445-3198.

Pancake & sausage breakfast at Cass Fellowship Bible Church

Cass Fellowship Bible Church at 64016 M-62, Cassopolis, MI will host a pancake & sausage breakfast on September 9 from 9-11 am. A free will offering will be taken. Bring a friend. For more info call Mary Neddeau. 574-206-6357.

We Can Ride 4-H Club Fun Show

We Can Ride 4-H Club will hold an open fun show at the Buchanan Western-

ers Riding Club Grounds on Saturday, September 9, 2017. Buchanan Westerners is located at 14665 Mead Road, Buchanan, MI 49107.

We Can Ride 4-H Club is part of the MSU Extension's Proud Equestrian Program that enables disabled youth to learn horseback riding skills, showmanship techniques and stable management. Benefits to the participants include improved balance and coordination, strengthened muscles, improved motor skills and increased self-confidence. As part of celebrating the end of summer and a successful riding season, the fun show will include a fun fair of activities and games for non-riders and spectators to enjoy. The event also serves as a fundraiser for the We Can Ride 4-H Club.

For the show flier and more information, please contact Show Chair Karey Sebasty at 269-240-8261.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Persons with disabilities may request accommodations by calling Karey Sebasty at 269-240-8261 by August 25, 2017 to ensure sufficient time to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be met when possible.

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.

Beautiful Bats at St. Patrick's County Park, So. Bend

St. Joseph County Parks will be hosting an evening with the "bats" at St. Patrick's County Park on Thursday September 14, at 7:30 at the Red Barn. Biologists will be demonstrating acoustic and thermal imaging equipment during bat emergence from the barn as well as capturing live bats from mist nets. Participants will also enjoy a bat-nana split while watching bats as they emerge from the Red Barn at dusk.

Program fee is \$3/person. Pre-regis-

tration and payment required by September 12. (Min. 10, max. 25). For more information or to register call 574/654-3155.

Park offers Fall Programs for Home School Families

This fall, the St. Joseph County Parks invite home school families to investigate the mysterious "Case of the Broken Shell"!

Three programs will take place in the Brown Barn at St. Patrick's County Park from 10 to 11:30 am. The fee is \$3 per child.

Wednesday, September 13: Explore the "crime scene" and figure out what animal the broken shell belonged to. Then canoe across the pond to gather clues about who broke the shell!

Wednesday, October 25: Examine the clues inside the mystery boxes to determine what animal group the shell-breaker belonged to! Use binoculars and compare animal silhouettes to gather more information about the suspects.

Wednesday, November 15: Go on a hike to look for the shell-breaker's home, and discover the solution to the mystery! Make a souvenir button to take home as a reward for solving the case.

Registration is required by the Monday prior to the program. To register or get directions, please call 574/654-3155.

Program content is geared towards students five through ten years old. However, older and younger students are welcome to register as well. Please note that children age seven and under must be accompanied by an adult in the canoes. Life jackets are required at all times. We do not have life jackets for children

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7743 Lovers Lane, Grand Junction MI, \$344,900, Custom Built Cedar Home! Floor to ceiling windows, private and year round!



61431 Alexander Drive Vandalia MI, Price: \$149,000, *Two lots for the price of 1 on Donnell Lake!*



61711 Channel Drive Cassopolis, \$449,000, Completely Remodeled, 75' frontage, 13' ceilings, oak hardwoods, granite counters, stainless steel appliances



Birch Lake - 63300 Birch Road, Vandalia, MI. Price: \$1,170,000 w/o guest house \$895,000. Every special amenity imaginable inside!



63101 Walnut Road Vandalia, MI, Price: \$399,000 *Sunsets and Sandy Beach* You're own private retreat!



21312 Sail Bay Road Cassopolis, MI \$749,000, Diamond Lake- Turn Key-68' lake-frontage- Over 6,000 square feet of living space!

80' frontage, Cable Lake



32361 Hillcrest Dr. Dowagiac, MI, Price: \$349,000 *4 bedrooms, sunroom, skylights, two fireplaces, and many more!



51086 Maple Road Marcellus MI Price: \$99,900 *60' of frontage on Pine Lake. Great fishing, and peaceful breezes*



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61857 Lake St Cassopolis \$565,000 Well maintained! Fireplace! 50' frontage!



65405 E Peninsula Drive Cassopolis, MI, Price: \$319,000 *Beautiful Lakefront! Sandy Beach and sunny skies on Shavehead Lake!*



11333 Elizabeth Drive Three Rivers MI 49093 - \$629,000 Open and Contemporary concept! Vaulted ceilings! Views from every room! 75' of frontage!



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REGIONAL NEWS

weighing less than 30 lbs.

St. Patrick's County Park is located on Laurel Rd. west of US 933 and north of Auten Rd. in South Bend.

Michigan Lake and Stream to host 57th Annual Conference

The Michigan Lake and Stream Association will host its 57th annual conference on Friday & Saturday, April 20 & 21, 2018 at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, MI. Registration for the 57th Annual Conference will start in January 2018. For more information email info@mlswa.org.

"The Company" to present A Como Cabaret Christmas



Date: November 3-4, 10-11, 17-18
Place: Battell Center Theatre, 904 N. Main St., Mishawaka, IN

Ticket Information: Tickets will go on sale September 20. There are 350 seats in the Theater, seating is limited. To purchase tickets, send a check & a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: "The Company" 50643 Sorrel Dr., Granger, IN 46530. Reference night of performance, seat preference, let them know if a wheelchair seat is needed, and please provide a phone number.

Ticket Prices: Seniors \$12.50, General Admission \$16. Any remaining seats will be sold at the door the night of the performance.

Box office and doors will open at 6 pm, warm-up starts at 7:30 pm, show begins at 8 pm. For information: call The Company at 574-229-0083 Mon-Fri 10 am to 5 pm, or visit <https://www.facebook.com/TheCompanyPlayers>.

SCORE seminar

The Michiana Chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) will host a seminar entitled "Taking Your Business Beyond You and Your Spreadsheet" on Tuesday, September 12 from 11 am to 12:30 pm at the American National University / SCORE Office 1030 E. Jefferson Blvd. in South Bend.

To register or for more information contact SCORE Michiana at michiana@scorevolunteer.org or call 574-310-8097.

Lots on tap for Antique Engine and Tractor Show

SOUTH HAVEN - A full slate of activities is on tap as the Michigan Flywheelers Museum hosts its 34th annual Antique Engine and Tractor Show Thursday, Sept. 7 to Sunday, Sept. 10.

Along with the hundreds of old tractors and engines that will be on display, the four day event features parades, entertainment, a large outdoor flea market, auction and plenty of things for the kids to see.

"A lot of our exhibitors have turned their displays into working demonstrations so that people especially kids can see how these old machines were once used," said museum president Patrick Ingalls.

One of the largest shows of its kind in the state, collectors from across the country attend the event each year bringing a wide assortment of antique farm machinery for visitors to see.

If looking at old farm equipment is not your thing, there's plenty of other things to do. The show features a large outdoor flea market with over 200 vendors, antique and garden tractor pulls, Thing-A-Ma-Jig parade, valve cover races and more.

"We have a full schedule of activities" said Ingalls. "This is a family-friendly event and there are plenty of things for kids to do like look for wooden nickels in our Sawdust Pile hunt, or play on the wooden tractor in The Barnyard which is our version of a playground."

A favorite activity at the show is eating locally grown sweet corn cooked by a 1923 Nichols and Shepard steam traction engine that was made in Battle Creek.

"Don't let the long lines discourage you -



it's worth the wait," admitted Ingalls. "It is pretty tasty."

The music line up includes high-energy, 50's & 60's Rock 'n' Roller Quentin Flagg on Friday and the southwest Michigan country band- the Bronk Bros. on Saturday. All evening shows start at 8:30 p.m.

Throughout the show, there will be performances by folk singer Joe Foster, Casco Band and jam sessions for anyone who would like to play.

Saturday is considered "Kid's Day" at the show. Activities start with Valve Cover Races at 9:30 a.m. followed by Kiddies Pedal Pull at noon, a sawdust pile treasure hunt at 3:30 p.m. and the John Dudley Magic Show at 7 p.m. Tractor games will be held for those children who have access to riding lawn

tractors, and returning for its seventh year will be the "Kids Night Time Lawn Tractor Cruise" at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

One of the popular activities for young and old is the "South Haven Tractor Cruise." Scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday, participants drive tractors of all makes and models into South Haven, cruise along the South Beach, and then stop downtown for an evening of dining and shopping.

Gates open at 8 a.m. rain or shine. Admission to the show is \$7. Children 12 and under are free with a paid adult admission. Thursday is Senior's Day and admission is \$3 for those 62 and over. This is a pet-free event for those paying admission.

Rustic camping sites are available on a first-come basis. Cost is \$10 per night plus daily admission per person. Pets are allowed with exhibitors, campers and vendors only. Personal transportation vehicles, such as golf carts and riding lawn mowers, will be charged a \$15 registration fee. ATVs, dirt bikes and firearms are not permitted.

For more information, contact 639-2010, michiganflywheelers@yahoo.com, or Facebook. A complete show schedule is available on Facebook or www.michiganflywheelers.org.

The Michigan Flywheelers Museum is located at 06285 68th Street, two miles east of South Haven.



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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

September (all month) - Celebrate Library Card Sign-up Month, All locations during business hours, Register for new library card accounts and/or update contact information in your current account at your local branch. All Cass District Libraries 866-808-7323

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

September 7 - 10 - 34th annual Antique Engine and Tractor Show, two miles east of South Haven on 68th St., www.michiganflywheelers.org

September 7 - Storytime Begins at Main Library, 10 am, will meet Thursdays this fall, recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

September 8 - Storytime Begins at Edwardsburg Branch, 10 am, will meet Fridays this fall, recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

September 9 - Can Ride 4-H Club open fun show, Buchanan Easterners Riding Club Grounds, 14665 Mead Rd., Buchanan, 240-8261

September 9 - Cass Fellowship Bible Church pancake & sausage breakfast, 64106 M-62, Cassopolis, 574-206-6357

September 12 - Infant Storytime Begins at Main Library, 1 pm, will meet Tuesdays this fall, recommended age 2 and under,

Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

September 12 - SCORE seminar "Taking Your Business Beyond You and Your Spreadsheet," 11 am to 12:30 pm, American National University / SCORE Office, 1030 E. Jefferson Blvd. South Bendmichiana@scorevolunteer.org or 574-310-8097.

September 13 - Case of the Broken Shell, 10 - 11:30 am, St. Patrick's County Park, \$3, 574/654-3155

September 13 - Movie Night: Captain Underpants, 6 pm, Popcorn and water will be provided at this free movie night! Cass District Library- Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821

September 14 - An evening with the bats, St. Patrick's County Park, South Bend, 7:30 pm, \$3, 574-654-3155

September 14 - Town and Country Garden Club, Dowagiac is planting mums to make downtown Dowagiac ready for fall! Time of meeting TBD. Call Janey Schulte at 782.5402 for updated info. New faces welcome.

September 15, 16 - Donnell Lake Estate Sale, 16440 Lakeview Dr., Vandalia, 9 am - 6 pm

September 17 - 10:30 am Missionary Appreciation Sunday & White Elephant Auction, proceeds go to increase Missionary Christmas Offering at the Cass Fellowship Bible Church, 64016 M-62, Cassopolis

September 21 - Cass County Medical Care Facility Auxiliary 2017 Annual Salad Luncheon, 1130 am to 130 pm, Cass United Methodist Church, \$7, 445-3198

September 25 - Lego Club, 6-7:30 pm, Anyone is welcome to build and play with the Legos provided by the library during this monthly program, Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

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

September 26 - Storytime Begins at Howard Branch, 10 am, will meet weekly for 8 weeks, recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

September 27 - Storytime Begins at Mason/Union Branch, 10 am, will meet weekly for 8 weeks, recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

September 27 - Family STEAM Night, 6 pm, Discover the fun of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) through hands-on activities for the whole family. Snacks will be provided. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

October 3 - Centerville Antique Show and Sale, 8 am - 3 pm, St. Joseph County (MI) Fairgrounds, \$4, 715-526-9769, [\[motions.com\]\(http://motions.com\)
October 14 - Under the Harvest Moon, 10 am - 4 pm, downtown Dowagiac, 782-8212](http://zurkopro-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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.

October 25 - Case of the Broken Shell, 10 - 11:30 am, St. Patrick's County Park, \$3, 574/654-3155

October 28, 29, November 4, 5 - Cass County Shrine Club 2017 Fall Turkey Shoot, 69185 Union Rd., Union, 10 am

November 15 - Case of the Broken Shell, 10 - 11:30 am, St. Patrick's County Park, \$3, 574/654-3155

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

April 20, 21 - Michigan Lake and Stream Association 57th annual conference, Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI, info@mlswa.org

HEALTH & FITNESS

Measuring progress not using a scale

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

Whatever you choose, these emotions are enemies of people trying to lose weight. Frustrated. Disappointed. Hopeless. Skeptical. It is hard, especially when you feel like you have done everything right. For people trying to lose weight and the scale stays on that same weight; look for other ways to measure your progress besides the scales instead of looking at it as a setback. Good health isn't always measured in pounds.

Losing weight usually involves a simple calories equation: Burn off more calories with daily activity than you consume through food. What happens if the scales don't show weight loss? Before you get all worked up consider why this

might be the case. You have been hitting the gym on a regular basis, working out with strengthening exercises and cardio. It is most likely that you have shed some body fat. But the scale might not indicate this because you have been building muscle. Muscle is dense (a small volume of muscle weighs more than the same volume of fat) the scale might not reflect your hard work.

4 Non-Scale Signs of Progress

1. See results by taking a trip to your very own closet. Take out a pair of pants that have been fitting tight. Are you able to put them on easily without lying down, yanking them up your leg, and squeezing your belly in to get them snapped? This is a sure sign of progress towards a leaner you! Try a shirt you could no longer fit into. Is it now a little

loose around your waist and arms? There are many everyday indicators that you are firming up your body, from how your clothes fit to sitting more comfortably in a booth or small chair.

2. Use numerical signs of progress. When you first start a losing program, take measurements of your waist, arms, neck and hips. Even if you haven't lost pounds, you may very well be losing inches all over your body as your body shape slims down and tones up with muscles. Measuring your body is more reliable than the scale alone. Other numerical indicators include a reduction of blood pressure or cholesterol, heart rate, and body fat percentage.
3. Keep track of your diet and regular exercise and how you feel. You should be able to work out longer; and even your

daily chores will become easier. Whether cutting grass or chasing your dog in the back yard, these should become easier. Think about all the regular activities you could use more energy for: grocery shopping, house cleaning, playing with your kids, and more.

4. How you feel emotionally. You have been working hard to reach your fitness goal. By now the hard work will come with a boost of happiness, self-esteem, and confidence. Feeling comfortable with your body is a positive motivator to keep moving forward.

Just because the scale has stopped moving doesn't mean that you have hit a plateau in reaching your goals. Don't let frustration win, keep working towards your goal, it is well worth the effort.

Are you a couch potato?

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

Is your life full of movement? It is important to be active throughout the day. If your job is sitting at a desk all day you may need to take several breaks throughout the day. You can walk up and down stairs, walk around the building, or just walk in place.

Is it possible to accumulate 10,000 steps a day, especially while eight hours of most days are spent working? If we're getting to the gym most days of the week, should that be enough to protect our

health? It seems that despite an increase in individuals exercising we have become a nation of couch potatoes. Even if you rarely sit on your couch in front of the TV, there is still a good chance you have little accumulated movement. There is a new name for it: the Active Couch Potato.

When we look back at how most of us spend our days compared to past generations, it is apparent how a steady decrease in daily movement has happened. Most people spend more time in

cars and sitting in traffic then in years past. We do more home-based entertainment such as TV, Netflix, video games, online shopping and browsing social media sites. Our jobs require little physical exertion. Modern conveniences such as automatic garage door openers, remote controls, kitchen appliances, electric lawn mowers, and even robotic vacuum cleaners allow us to minimize movement to get chores done. Children are moving less than in the past as schools cut back on the physical education and recess.

The risks of this sedentary lifestyle go far beyond weight gain. Researchers are discovering that sedentary behavior increases our risk for many diseases and early death. Sitting on our behinds all day increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and possibly colon, breast and endometrial cancers.

Keep in mind that when you are active, you feel more alive and tend to get more done in less time. Together, we can create a new way of staying healthy by moving throughout our days.

PASTA ITALIA CON CHEF DONATO

It's fresh basil time!

With the abundance of fresh basil this time of the year I want to revisit pesto again. Last fall, I did three different pesto recipes, and in this issue, we will do again the basic pesto recipe and different ways to use it. Pesto is great on pasta, fish pizza, bread, chicken, tomatoes and more.

Here are 3 ways to use pesto, but first, the basic recipe first.

Basic Pesto

Makes 4-6 servings of pesto, but double or triple this recipe and freeze what you don't use.

Ingredients:
2 cups of fresh basil leaves torn into smaller pieces
1/2 cup of olive oil
2 cloves of peeled garlic
1/2 teaspoon of salt
2 tablespoons of pine nuts
1/2 cup of Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons of butter softened

Directions:
Put the garlic and pine nuts in the processor at high speed until finely chopped.



Add the salt, basil and olive oil and evenly blend, but do not over blend where the basil loses its texture.

Add the cheese and butter and slightly blend some or add the cheese by hand and mix well

STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST

Directions:
Create a pocket in the boneless chicken breast by cutting deep into the breast from one end into the other

Add 2-3 tablespoons of finely chopped prosciutto into the breast(you could substitute ham but it won't have as much flavor

Add 2-3 tablespoons pesto on top of the prosciutto

Top with fresh mozzarella

Salt and pepper the outside of the chicken and bake in oven at 375 for 30 minutes or slightly longer depending on your oven.

SALMON WITH PESTO

Directions:
Slightly salt the salmon

Cover with pesto

Bake in oven at 375 for 10-12 minutes or longer if fish is thick, or put on your grill, cook with lid down but do not flip the salmon- do not overcook the salmon

CROXETTI PASTA WITH PESTO


Directions:
Croxetti means coin, and these pieces of pasta look like a roman coin and go great with pesto. You can get these at Bamber's Superette in SB, or at some specialty stores. Feel free to use spaghetti, bow ties or Strofia pasta.

Directions:
Bring a pot of water to a boil, add 3-4 tablespoons of salt to the water

Add the pasta, cook until al dente, drain and serve in bowls and cover with the pesto

I like to add a few tablespoons to the drained pasta back in the pot for a few minutes so the pasta absorbs the sauce , then serve in bowls and cover with the pesto






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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

Saying goodbye to summer

by JANE BOUDREAU

Hey Neighbors! If you are reading this with a long sigh, please know I wrote it with one. It's September and we have to wait nine long months for summer again. I just don't feel I did everything I wanted to do, from chores and projects, to plain old fun. We bought paddle boards a few weeks ago and I've yet to get out on the water and give it a shot. I am the biggest klutz in the world, so I know someone is just going to mistake me for a big old dolphin out there splashing around a paddle board.



The sun is flickering through the leaves of the trees as I write, soon the hazy days will take over. I really do enjoy this time of year, I think fall is my favorite month, but I still have a problem saying goodbye to summer. Come September and October, I think I actually get out more. The heat and humidity is almost gone and looking around, everything seems to have a softer edge. We like to have a little fire in the chiminea on the patio, it just smells heavenly and I love the crackling sound. It takes the chill off if you want to sit outside with just a sweater or sweatshirt on.



It's another season to start switching around your decor and making your home cozy now that you'll be inside more. I like to start out with candles in deep colors with scents like Cinnamon Apple, Pumpkin Pie, Chimney Fire, Wet Dog ... just kidding on those last two. My windows aren't open as often, so it's nice to have a pleasant scent and they look so pretty in the corner of your kitchen, or in a room when the lights are low.

Above is an old dough bowl I found a yard sale years ago. Apples go on sale about now and I buy them to make a pretty centerpiece like this. They actually last a few weeks until they start to get a little brown and bruised looking. You can find the leaves at any craft store, I toss mine in a zip lock bag and save them from year to year.

My house here on the lake has a breezy blue nautical feel, and while that is very



refreshing in the summer, I like to give it a little more of a snugly look in the fall and winter. Just adding some deeper colors here and there works really well. I thought some navy and orange/rust would mix well. I found this darling throw and the two toss pillows at HomeGoods. Right now I'm holding off on unpacking some of my bins but later in the month I'll add some cute little tabletop pieces I've collected over the years.



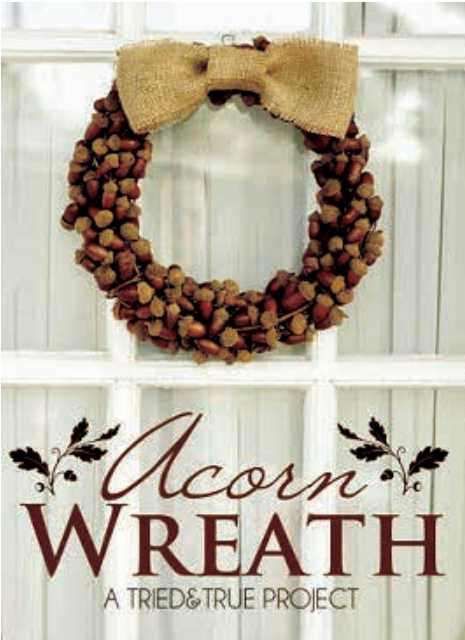
I love to make banners. I used to buy drop cloth from the hardware store and use it to cut out pieces. Now you can find pre-cut pieces in many shapes and sizes at places like Michael's and Hobby Lobby. Grab some plastic stencils, fabric paint (I get the stuff sold in small plastic bottles) and a round stiff brush. Place the stencil on the fabric, dip your brush into your selected color that you've squirted on a paper plate, dab some off until its not globby, and then tap, tap, tap. Once you've completed your word(s), fold the top half inch of the shape over a piece of jute string and add a few dots of fabric glue along the edge to hold it. Very simple.



I promised craft ideas last month so here are two more that are very simple and inexpensive. When you are grabbing up apples to make a centerpiece like I did, get a few extra. They make cute little candle holders. You can use tea light candles, just set it on top of the apple and trace around it with a marker. Use a paring knife to cut out the shape, then a melon ball scoop to remove the skin and apple and make a smooth edge. Just drop your tea light in, and ta da! You can jazz it up like this by setting it on a large candlestick with some

greenery. If you want the look of the wax dripping down, light a taper candle and work around the cut edge in the apple. You can also use taper candles in place of tea lights. Make a few, group them in three's, maybe add some of those faux leaves underneath.

This is soon cute. It's not my picture but I have made one. You can visit the Tried And True blog to see more. It is a simple grapevine wreath (sold at craft stores), that has acorns, either the ones you've collected or the fake kind you can buy, these craft stores have it all. Use a glue gun and attach the acorns just as you see. The blogger suggested adding some sparkly gold spray, which I think would look really pretty under your porch lights if you hang it on your front door.



I can't make a bow for the life of me but you can hang it up any way you'd like. I actually strung my ribbon through the grapevine before I glued on the acorns. If you want to see the instructions on this blog, send me an email and I'll give you the link.

I've got two great but totally unrelated recipes that just say, "Autumn" to me. The first is a soup that I saw being made on the show The Chew. I fiddled with the spices and I love it. It's fresh tasting with a nice bite. It's not a heavy winter soup so it's lovely this time of year. Enjoy!

Beef Noodle Soup with Soy and Ginger

Ingredients:

- 1 T olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped finely
- 1 T grated fresh ginger

- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup carrots, sliced matchstick style
- 2 cups cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1 quart beef broth
- 3 T soy sauce
- 1 t toasted sesame oil
- S & P
- 4 oz. noodles (spaghetti, Soba, egg noodle ... your choice)



Directions:

Cook the onion, ginger, garlic and scallions in the oil in a large stockpot over medium heat 5 minutes. Add the carrots, cabbage and broccoli and cook another 5 minutes. Pour in the broth as well as 2 cups of water, soy sauce and sesame oil. Bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Let simmer 10 minutes and add noodles. Cook 5 minutes or until they are tender. Serve with a pinch of sliced scallions sprinkled over the top.

This cooks up very quickly as you can see but the chopping takes awhile. I happen to love chopping, it's relaxing for me. You may want to prepare the veggies earlier in the day and then the whole soup will go together super quick in time for dinner.

I went on a granola making kick last year. When you buy all of the ingredients in bulk, you can make enough to have on hand at a teeny little fraction of the cost of what you pay in stores. You can vary the ingredients according to your likes. By making several pans, I can change each one up a little with different nuts and goodies. I always double or triple the recipe because it's like a fun project and you may as well mess up your whole kitchen at once.

Jane's Granola

Ingredients:

- 3 cups oats
- 3/4 c slivered almonds
- 3/4 c raw pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/4 c canola oil
- 1/2 c maple syrup
- 2 t vanilla extract
- 1 c dried cranberries
- 1 c dried apricots (chopped)
- (you may substitute any dried fruit you like chopped uniformly)
- 2 T honey

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees
In a large bowl mix the first 5 dry ingredients. In a small bowl stir together the oil, syrup and vanilla. Drizzle the syrup mixture over the dry and mix thoroughly. Spread on a parchment lined baking sheet and bake for 50 minutes, stirring every

once in a while to brown evenly. Remove and toss with dried fruit. Drizzle with honey and let cool. Store in an airtight container.

Have fun ... sneak in some chocolate or peanut butter candies!!! I package a cup or two up in small mason jars or cute bags from the craft store. Add a ribbon and watch your friends and co workers smile. This will keep about 3 weeks in a good container.

I hope all of you have a wonderful Labor Day. Pray or do a pow wow dance for an Indian Summer so we can keep those boats out, and the kiddies swimming. If you happen to see a dolphin over on Diamond Lake, that's probably just me trying to figure out that paddle board!

Jane Boudreau is a writer, columnist, and blogger. She has homes on Diamond Lake, in Chicago and in the mountains of NC. You can reach her at blndy9@yahoo.com



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

The most important asset; could it be you?

By Vicki Brossman
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency
of Cass County

Have you thought about your family's most important asset – your home, your vehicles, your boats? – Could it be you? How would your family manage without your income? Would they be able to maintain the standard of living they are accustomed to? Do you own a business? Do you have children that will want to go to college?

Life insurance is often purchased so “I can pay for my funeral.” While this is important, life insurance benefits can be used for much more:

- Income Replacement and Debt Repayment - the proceeds from a life insurance policy can be used for daily living expenses, taxes, mortgages, auto loans, credit card debt, student loans, utility bills, insurance premiums, children's activities, child care, business loans, and property maintenance. Remember the non-working spouse and the impact of what a stay-at-home spouse saves the family.

- Financial Goals – life insurance benefits can be used for the future such as college costs and supplementing the surviving spouse's income and/or savings. Would you want to leave a gift for a charity or establish an academic scholarship fund? Life insurance can be used for business succession planning – business debt, partner buyout,

or key person insurance.

- Final Expenses and Estate Costs – protect your heirs. Your life insurance benefits can be used for funeral expenses, unpaid medical expenses, estate taxes, probate costs, attorney's fees, administration costs, and executor's fees.

Are you confused on what type of life insurance is best for you?

- Term Life Insurance insures you for a specified amount of time. Term insurance is like paying rent, once you stop paying, your life insurance coverage ends. Term insurance is less expensive than permanent insurance. Some questions to ask if you are considering a term life policy are how long is the rate guaranteed for, is the policy renewable past the initial rate-guaranteed period without a physical exam, what will the premiums be, and can the policy be converted to permanent insurance without a physical exam.

- Permanent Life Insurance is more expensive than term insurance. A permanent policy builds cash value. Whole life, variable life, and universal life are types of permanent life insurance.

How much life insurance do you need? To calculate the amount of life insurance you need, include:

- Loans – mortgage, auto, personal, credit cards, etc.
- Daily Living Expenses – utility bills, groceries, child care, insurance premiums, home maintenance, etc.

- Final Expenses – including funeral and medical expenses.

- Education – total college costs times the number of children.

- Income – total income times the number of years you want to replace.

When should a review of your life insurance be completed? Below are some events that should prompt a review of your life insurance program:

- Life Event - a birth, death, marriage, divorce, or caring for an aging parent.

- Change In Your Financial Situation - whether it is increased earnings, the loss of a job, or retirement.

- Tax-Law Changes – keep informed of current estate tax laws.

- Every Two Years – review your life insurance to determine if changes are necessary.

Life insurance can be used to protect your business.

- Buy-Sell Agreement – provides the remaining owners the funds to buy the company interests of a deceased owner at a previously agreed price – the remaining owners are able to keep the business and the family gets the money.

- Key Person Insurance – protects the business in the event of the death of a key employee. The life insurance benefit is payable to the company allowing the financial flexibility needed to hire a replacement or work out an alternative arrangement.

If the fear of making a bad life insurance decision is preventing you from buying life insurance, know that failing to buy life insurance at all can be one of the most costly mistakes you can make for your family. Your insurance agent can help analyze your situation and design a program that will work for you and your family.



Vicki Brossman
Kemner-Iott Benz

“A man who dies without adequate life insurance should have to come back and see the mess he created.”
~Will Rogers



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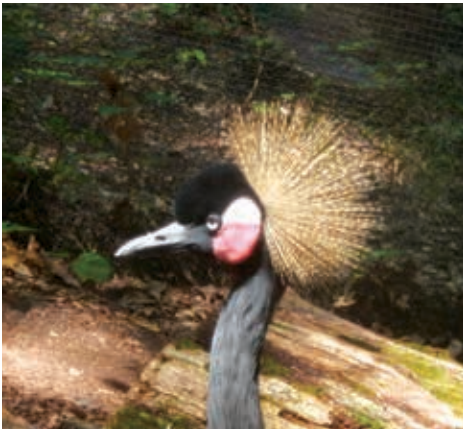
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Binder Park Zoo ... for the record

Binder Park Zoo is located at 7400 Division Dr, in Battle Creek. The zoo is open daily from April 13 to October 8, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday from 9 am to 6 pm and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm.

Admission is \$14 for adults, \$13 for seniors, \$12 for kids 2-10 years old (and free for kids under 2). Parking is free.

The zoo features a free tram ride back and forth to Wild Africa; the Z.O. & O. Railroad (\$2), and a Binda Conservation Carousel (\$2).

Tokens can be purchased for \$2 at the Zoo entrance booth and be used at the Z.O.&O. Railroad, Binda

Conservation Carousel, and Twiga Overlook, which is located between the ranger station and research camp in Wild Africa. At the overlook, visitors can purchase feed for the giraffes.

The zoo also has two restaurants, which are open Monday-Friday 9-5, Saturday & Holidays 9-6, and Sunday 11-6.

The zoo hosts a variety of special events with the animals, play days and educational programs.

For more information you can call the zoo at (269) 979-1351, Email: info@binderparkzoo.org, or visit the zoo's website at http://www.binder-parkzoo.org.



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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 Jones 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.





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OUR CHILDREN

Nurturing Creativity in kids

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Young children are a marvel-they play and play and it's hard to stop them. I'm sure you've seen little ones playing house and work and school and many more imaginary games.

Somehow, though, by the time they hit upper elementary school, middle school, high school, and even adulthood, they seem to lose this magical ability to move beyond themselves and imaging things that might be.

Maybe we tell them too many times that it's time to "get serious" and "buckle down." Maybe they feel like they no longer have the time to play since they are doing "more important, more grown up things." Maybe video games, social media, or computers take up the time and energy that they might otherwise use for creative pastimes.

Whatever the reason, they gradually lose the ability to use their imaginations and creativity suffers.

It suffers so much so that if you ask many older children or teens to "write a fiction story," they look at their papers blankly, completely devoid of ideas or notions about what they could possibly write. Or they launch off into a rehash of a movie they've already seen or a book they've already read.

Sadly, it's this creative spark that helps all of us get along better in life.

Creativity is at the heart of many adult hobbies, like art, photography, writing, and even making crafts or gardening. Creativity also gives us the capacity to work our way through tough problems and to come up with creative, outside-the-box solutions in our professional and personal lives. Creativity makes it easier to write for school, as well, so keeping that spark alive and well is in your student's best interests.

Fortunately, there are a lot of ways to rekindle that creative spark in yourself and in your child. All it takes is a bit of persistence and attention. No matter what age your child may be right now, you can give him or her the support and guidance needed to improve creativity. You can do this whether you are a parent, grandparent, teacher, care giver, neighbor, or friend. Anyone who cares about kids can take a hand, so hopefully you will get started this week!

So What Are You Waiting For?

Fortunately, most very young children haven't lost their creative spark yet. It's our job to nurture it and keep it alive in the coming years. Build a habit of creativity and using imagination during these early years, and you'll give the child a gift that will last a lifetime.

You can do this just by encouraging kids to do what comes naturally. Pretend with them as often as you can. It's not

just a silly game; it's a critical part of developing mental agility. Most of us will happily accept an empty cup from a toddler and drink when invited to do so. Somewhere along the way, though, we get too busy, or we believe they can pretend just fine on their own and they don't need our help.

That's not true.

If you get invited to play house, or school, or go on a pretend vacation with a preschooler, drop what you can and join in. You add possibilities to the play that your child will not have considered, and you will be teaching invaluable skills related to social interaction, give-and-take, and much more.

Just be very careful to let your child direct the play. Don't take over, and don't be bossy. This is their show, so let them run it. It doesn't really matter if they are pretending something that wouldn't really happen, and they actually learn quite a bit from pretending less than pleasant things, so that's ok, too.

Besides joining in with pretend play, there are other things you can do to nurture creativity with the little ones, as well. Provide arts and crafts materials and supplies, but not necessarily directions. Crafts are things where everyone follows directions and the products look more or less the same. These are important, but they are not creative. Be sure to give ample play time with the supplies and no direction/requirements. Coloring tools, pencils, clay and playdough, and more (yes, even if it's messy!) are all important.

Try puppets and dramatic play. Let the kids reenact real events, historical events, fictional events, and situations. Have them write and make books (or take dictation and let them tell you stories to write down). And be sure to read, read, read together, as long as your child will let you. Don't stop when they learn to read on their own-that's just your cue to keep one or two steps ahead of them in terms of reading difficulty. Read books you know they'll enjoy and books they've never even thought about. Read poetry, magazine articles, nonfiction, mysteries, and biographies.

And don't forget to have the kids memorize things like poetry, Scripture if that's a part of your family belief system, or jokes. Memory work will exercise pathways in the brain that will improve thinking and creativity. These bits of

information will also come in handy when kids need to write those high school essays that rely on evidence from history or literature as part of the proof of the thesis.

Get in the habit of asking your children riddles. The internet is full of them, and so is the library. Riddles encourage outside-the-box thinking as well as nurturing a sense of humor. Let them make up riddles for you to answer, as well. Word play of all sorts is a must for exercising creativity. Try making up poems and rhymes, too.

Want some mental challenges? Try having your child write their own math story problems. Have them create word problems covering math concepts and skills that they have mastered in school or that they are currently working on. Writing story problems (especially if they get to give them to a parent to solve!) is highly motivating and fun for most kids. Just make sure they create an answer key to go with their challenges, and you'll be all set (and they will be doing the work).

Try making up new games. You can riff off of familiar games, like Go Fish, Memory, or Duck, Duck Goose, or you can create an entirely new kind of game. The thinking skills involved in making up a new game are absolutely critical to other types of problem solving, and will easily transfer to other parts of life.

Finally, try some out-of-the-box thinking and list-making. How many words can you list that mean the same thing as a common, everyday word? How many ways can you think of to accomplish a simple task? How many uses can you think of for a common object? How many items in a large category can you come up with? All of these are ways to build fluency (speed of response) and creativity.

And have fun! Creative pursuits are supposed to be fun. Let your kids see you being creative and pursuing hobbies and activities that get you thinking. Be their example, and sooner or later, they will follow in your footsteps.

Sandy Fleming is a private tutor and freelance writer living in Edwardsburg. She loves waking up your brain! Please visit her website at <http://sandyflemingonline.com> to find more fun learning ideas.

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Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Senator
202-224-4822, www.stabenow.senate.gov

Fred Upton, U.S. Representative
202-225-3761, www.upton.house.gov

John Proos, Michigan Senator 21st District
517-373-6960, senjproos@senate.michigan.gov

Aaron Miller, U.S. Representative
517-373-0832, aaronmiller@house.mi.gov

Dave Pagel, Michigan State Rep.
517-373-1796, davepagel@house.mi.gov

Readers can find out how their legislators voted on congress.org for Peters, Stabenow and Upton; and at michiganvotes.org for Miller and Pagel.

NATURE NOTES

Young and small birds abound

One trait common to all woodpecker species is that adult males take active role along with females as egg incubator and care of young. One textbook example of this behavior is adult male red-bellied woodpecker, seen feeding grape jelly to a fledged young bird at the feeder of Linda Kotecki of Almena Township, Van Buren County. In the same photo an adult male rose-breasted grosbeak is seen partaking in jelly as well.

Red-bellied woodpeckers are common, year round residents in Southwest Michigan. The species has been expanding its range northward for the last several decades. Over the last 50 years it has moved into northern Lower Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.



Eleven American Avocets at Tiscornia Park, St. Joseph on August 1, 2017. Photo by Joanie Gentry of Bridgman.

On August 1, Joanie Gentry of Bridgman found eleven American avocets along the Lake Michigan shore at Tiscornia Park. These tall, slender shorebirds measure 18 inches in height with a long, up-curved bill. During the late summer through early spring, avocets sport a white head and neck, but during spring and early summer head and necks are orange colored.

Avocets nest on the Great Plains early in the spring, but by middle to late June southward migration takes place for the avocet. Southward migration is spread over a long time span from June until November. Look for them along Great Lakes beaches, sand bars and shallow ponds picking up insects and crustaceans for food.

Peg McCann of St. Joseph reported an interesting occurrence of a ruby-throated hummingbird which was caught in a spider's web. McCann reports "A hummingbird got snagged in a spiderweb near the house. We were able to reach and break the web, and off it went."

A family of Cooper's hawks have suc-



Young red-bellied woodpecker fed by adult male (left); and male rose-breasted grosbeak (right) at the jelly feeder of Linda Kotecki, Almena Twp., Van Buren Co., July 30, 2017.



Young Coopers hawk with first kill. Photo by Charlotte Wuepper. July 2017.

cessfully nested in the front yard of my parents, John and Charlotte Wuepper, of Royalton Township.

Cooper's hawks belong to the group of hawks called Accipiters. Red-tailed hawks have been featured recently in this column, which are common to Southwest Michigan, are in the group of hawks Buteos.

In addition to Cooper's hawks, the Accipiter family includes the sharp-shinned hawk and the northern goshawk. Of the three species found in our region, the Cooper's hawk is the most common and only species that regularly nests in the region.

Accipiters are known for their ability to fly quickly through and catch prey in forested areas. Larger hawk species from the Buteo family such as red-tailed hawk and others are not as agile and thus prefer to hunt over more open areas.

The Cooper's hawk nest in my parents yard is hidden among a large eastern white pine tree, which I estimate about 25 to 30 feet up in the tree.

This is at least the second year that the nest has been used by Copper's hawks, and we have noticed territorial behavior by adult hawks as early as March.

The nest itself is made of plant material, small branches, sticks, and bark.

This year we believe that three



Female ruby-throated hummingbird, resting on a branch in a remote area of Warren Dunes State Park. Photos by Brad Anderson of Bridgman.

young hawks fledged out of the nest, which is average. It appears that the young hawks were dependent on their parents for food up until the last seven to ten days.

My parents have told me they witnessed at least one of the young hawks take its own prey within the last week. My mother took a photo of one of the young Coopers hawks this week, as it fed on its prey beneath a tree.

Cooper's hawks prey on small birds and small mammals, such as the eastern chipmunk. My father has recently commented that he has seen few chipmunks around the house this summer, the decrease likely due to hungry Coopers hawks!

Shorebirds are migrating through Southwest Michigan. Most notable was a piping plover seen by Kip Miller at New Buffalo on July 29. Miller is director of Love Creek County Park and president of the Berrien Birding Club.

The ruby-throated hummingbird is the only hummingbird species, out of approximately 300 in the world, that visit and nest regularly in Michigan.

True of all hummingbird species, the males take part only with conception,

and it is solely the females' responsibility to build and care for nest, eggs, and rear young.

In Michigan ruby-throated hummingbirds return from the south in earnest in late April and the beginning of May. Occasionally a few early stragglers may make their way northward to our area but that is the exception to the average.

Males soon meet closely with females and then she must find a place to build a nest, usually in deciduous or mixed woodland, or semi-open areas. Over the past few nesting seasons, my parents who live in Royalton Township have found hummingbird nests among Eastern White Pines, the trees being roughly 40 to 45 years old.

The ruby-throated hummingbird nest is careful woven together of moss, lichen and spiders silk. Small leaves and bits of flower are also materials used in hummingbird nest construction. The nest is usually built not far from natural water sources such as rivers, streams or small lakes and ponds.

The female soon lays about two to three eggs in the tiny nest, being white in color and about only a half-inch in length.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds will consume nectar, both adults and later in the season, the young fledglings of the year.

As many readers already know, only the adult male has a ruby-throat of which the species takes its name. The adult female as well as young of both sexes lack the iridescent red throat feathers.

This week, Brad Anderson of Bridgman captured images of an adult female hummingbird, not far from her nest.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds arrive in late April and early May and may have two sets of young at our latitude before summer's end.

Adult males are the first of the species to depart in late summer and fall. Adult females are next, followed by the young of the year. Both male and female ruby-throated hummingbirds born during the year lack gorget feathers. In late winter, males will acquire their trademark ruby-throats.

The species wintering grounds consists mainly of Mexico and Central America. In recent decades scientists have found ruby-throated hummingbirds wintering on the Florida peninsula.

Northward migration begins in late March or early April and the cycle of life starts again.



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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 rural Cass County during 1870 are documented in this diary.

Tuesday, November 1, 1870 — Still cool but pleasant. Miss Churchill has come, McClouth in the evening.

Wednesday, November 2, 1870 — Very pleasant lectures by Hosford and McClouth. Hosford in the evening.

Thursday, November 3, 1870 — Coll and windy, some signs of rain. Hosford and McClouth. McClouth in eve.

Friday, November 4, 1870 — Cool and some signs of rain. Lectures till noon. Institute over, inspection in the PM. Had to walk home in the rain.

Saturday, November 5, 1870 — At home. Not much going on. Splitting wood. Went to Vandalia.

Sunday, November 6, 1870 — No meeting, no Sunday school and nothing else.

Monday, November 7, 1870 — A trial at [illegible] Easdam[?] East and a man by the name of Hichcock.

Tuesday, November 8, 1870 — Election day... [illegible].

Wednesday, November 9, 1870 - Tinkering at one thing or another.

Thursday, November 10, 1870 — Getting ready for winter. Went to Grims after feed. Got a load of pumpkins for one dollar.

Friday, November 11, 1870 — Hauled sawdust in the forenoon. One load went to Asil Northrups for potatoes, 1 dollar per bushel.

Saturday, November 12, 1870 — Fixing up getting ready for winter. At the [base] ball play in the afternoon, Edwardsburgh against Brownsville, Edwardsburgh victorious 46 to 32.

Sunday, November 13, 1870 — Started in the morning for Newburg. Stopped at Vandalia to dinner. Heard Johm Hurd preach. Rode to Zabes with Orr.

Monday, November 14, 1870 — The first day of my school is gone with tolerable success. Went to William Sickers after Samuel's watch. Got it. Mrs. E. Hastings is here.

Tuesday, November 15, 1970 — All as common school increases slowly.

Wednesday, November 16, 1870 — At school, still increasing very slow.

Thursday, November 17, 1870 — One more scholar making 19. Snow in the morning , rain in the eve.

Friday, November 18, 1870 — School going on very well. 19 scholars. The week has gone very fast.

Saturday, November 19, 1870 — Fixed up around the schoolhouse. Went to Vandalia in the eve, stayed all night. The air line track is laid to here.

Sunday, November 20, 1870 — Went to Newberg with

Reid and Hass Scot. Hear Skinner preach in the evening.

Monday, November 21, 1870 — School, all well. Cool in the morning. Rained last night, sleet.

Tuesday, November 22, 1870 — At school Aker, hung himself today. His wife cut him down, saved him. Insane.

Wednesday, November 23, 1870 — School as common.. Very pleasant weather for the season.

Thursday, November 24, 1870 — All is well so far with my school, although a great deal of noise.

Friday, November 25, 1870 — Still a great deal of noise. Still (not very still). after all though splendid weather, went home.

Saturday, November 26, 1870 — Went to Cass[opolis]. Got a bell. saw them making railroad. Nice weather.

Sunday, November 27, 1870 — A very fine day, went to Findleys. Went to Newberg, to my school, no meeting.

Monday, November 28, 1870 — School as ever except a great deal of noise. Very fine weather.

Tuesday, November 29, 1870 — Still a great deal of noise. Very fine weather.

Wednesday, November 30, 1870-- School. Very noisy. Remarkably fine weather.

The last installment of this diary will appear in the October 2017 edition of Neighbors.



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* Information provided by the Southwest Michigan Association of Realtors (MLS). Sales of inland lake properties in Cass County, Michigan, from 1.1.12 to 12.31.16.



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THE LAST WORD

Waiting for the eclipse ... or Godot, whichever comes first

The lake is a mirror, still as a Sunday morning, reflecting the distant shore and the unmoving trees and the quiet lives of the people who have yet to quit their beds and begin their days' journey. A lone loon sits in a ring of ripples, radiating the only blemish on the glassy surface.

The only sounds are the songs of early rising birds caroling the lake to brag their prowess in catching the early worms or soaring to some great heights in the early morning air.

Off in the distance a dog barks once, twice, then is still, having frightened off whatever imagined interloper dared break the boundaries into its territory.

The sun peeks over the trees behind me and the west shore in front of me is illuminated in brilliant colors that remind me of the hand-drawn opening letters of a medieval bible or an illustrated ancient manuscript.

The air is still chill and a cold dew covers the deck rails and tables and chairs, but the sun will no doubt soon warm the air, and by noon the sweat will be running down my neck and soaking the front of my shirt.

It is the doldrums of August, the dog days, the hot, lazy kind of days when an old dog like me is best left to loll in the shade and ignore the stock market and the chaos of politics and the fearful thundering of the self-righteous orators.

As the dawn reveals itself a fish leaps out of the water and a ring of ripples radiates across the otherwise still lake's surface, the very calm belying the

momentous event the day's passing promises to reveal.

Today there is going to be a solar eclipse, and the whole world seems agog with anticipation.

Except for me, the loon, the dog, the fish, and the yet-still lake as we share a few moments of naked existentialism.

And the sun, which continues its rise and lights the scene in front of me, and warms the air and goes about its arc as if the coming eclipse is of no more concern than the distant dog's bark.

The morning insects buzz about my head and swirl before my eyes, a lone chipmunk worries a fallen acorn into its burrow, a brown squirrel scurries up a tree to reinforce the nest its building to withstand the coming winter's fury, and all of nature seems oblivious to the pending once-in-a-lifetime extravaganza about to be displayed and recorded and no doubt interminably replayed for days and weeks and months as we sit on our posteriors and bask in our shared posterity.

I suppose I should be more anxious, more appreciative, but as I lazily scratch my dog behind her ears an approaching solar eclipse seems as far away as the stars, as inconsequential as the morning's dew. The dog doesn't seem to be paying any more notice than the bugs or the furry yard beasts.

I imagine the fear an eclipse might have brought to our shared predecessors, those one-eyebrowed, cro-magnon, knuckle-dragging hominids as they sharpened their obsidian blades and planned their assault on the nearest woolly mammoth ... only to be cast into darkness before the first spear could be thrown.

And I can imagine the religious ecstasy of dozens of dancing Druids and the hosts of assorted ancient builders of the huge stone monuments that recorded the movements of the stars as an earlier eclipse blackened the sun and turned the day to night.

But here on the deck in the weak mid-morning light, my dog and I are content to rest in the shade of the neighbor's maple tree and enjoy the calm serenity of the lake's reflections.

Here on our deck the sun is 92.96 million miles away, and the passing of the moon is of no more import than the passing of the jet who's stream of white gaseous exhaust streaks the otherwise virgin blue sky.

To the south a door closes, a car starts and a neighbor is leaving for work, doomed, no doubt, to be encrypted in their fluorescent and halogen chrysalis, obscured from natural light as the world outside evolves and revels in the spectacle of the still-approaching eclipse.

The dog turns and nuzzles my hand, as if to say "scratch me again, please" in her silent but completely understandable dog language.

Not an angst-filled "scratch me again before the sun goes dark and the world passes into shadow, scratch me again before the demon swallows the stars and casts us all down to our shard mortal doom," she's not that philosophical, not that theatrical.

Just "scratch me again, please."

And so we wait in silence as the sun arches higher and higher.

The breeze begins to blow across the surface of the lake, replacing the reflec-

tions with a dull, blue and gray chop.

And we wait, occasionally glancing skyward as if we could see the new moon as it marks the minutes until it passes before the sun.

A large, pillowy, white cloud crosses the horizon. Smaller, wisps of gray begin to move in, threatening to spoil our view of the monumental event.

The dog isn't worried. The eclipse will happen whether weather interferes or not.

So we wait. In silence.

Mostly.

An invisible cicada buzzes in the limbs of a tree. A trash truck rumbles down a nearby lane. A fishing boat motors across the lake to the quiet lily pads at the edge of the cove.

The sun arcs higher.

The suspense builds.

I scratch the dog's ears again and we wait in silence.

I check my watch. It's only 9:30. Hours to wait.

My stomach growls. The dog lolls. The sun shines on as if it didn't have a care in the world.

I shift to ease a cramp in my leg as my old muscles rebel at prolonged inactivity as much as they rebel at overly strenuous activity.

The dog turns her head and glares at me, as if to say, "Be still! Don't you know a momentous event is about to occur."

I stretch and settle.

And we wait.

This better be good.

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