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April 2017

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REGIONAL NEWS

Webb Miller to be discussed

The next presentation of the Dowagiac Area History Museum Spring Lecture Series, will be on April 5 with World Wide Webb Miller by Jim Bussler, which tracks the amazing life of Cass County native Webb Miller, who went on to cover the world as a reporter from the 1910s to 1940.

While the May 3 program has yet to be determined, Baseball, Amusement Parks and Faith: A History of the Israelite House of David by Archivist David Kohrman closes out the series on June 7.

The programs are free to museum members and costs \$5 to non-members. Children under 18 years of age are also free. Membership will be available at the museum for those interested. The museum is located at the corner of Division and West Railroad Streets. For more information, call the Dowagiac Area History Museum at 269.783.2560 or visit www.dowagiacmuseum.info.

MLSA Annual Conference set

Michigan Lake & Stream Associations (ML&SA) 56th annual conference “Bridging the Resource Gaps: Enhancing the Ability of Lakefront Communities to Prevent and Manage Aquatic Invasive Species” will open at Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI on Friday, April 21 at 10 am with keynote addresses by Jon Allan, Director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, and Lisa Brush, Executive Director of the Michigan Stewardship Network who will discuss state and local efforts to prevent and manage aquatic invasive species.

For more information about the ML&SA 56th Annual Conference, contact Scott Brown, Executive Director, at sbrown@mlswa.org, or call 989-831-5100 Extension 105.

Edwardsburg Museum season

The Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum will feature three displays and a record eight speakers during its 2017 season which opens Wednesday, May 17, with the history of railroading in Edwardsburg and collections of model trains.

The season’s speaking engagements, all on Thursday evenings, will include six interviews with individuals who will share their growing up years and/or public service careers in the area as well as two presentations on railroading and one on collecting antique clocks.

The train exhibit will showcase actual artifacts from the Grand Trunk Western Railroad, including historical documents and colorful photographs from the Grand Trunk and its successor company, the Canadian National Railroad. There also will be a display of photographs from the Big Four Railroad. The Big Four operated in early years between Indianapolis and Benton Harbor, with stops in Elkhart, Granger, and Truitt Station in Milton Township. Remnants of the Big Four’s railroad bed still exist in the area today. Several individuals also will display their model railroad collections.

A highlight of the three-month-long exhibit will be appearances by two speakers with a history in railroading. On Thursday, June 1, Joe O’Brien, the president of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad Historical Society of Shelby Township, Michigan, will speak on the history of the Grand Trunk and how it came to operate through Edwardsburg.

On Thursday, June 15, Chuck Hart of Edwardsburg will speak on model railroading. A Michigan City, Indiana, native, and president of the Elkhart Train Club, Hart is a United States Navy veteran who has been a model railroader

since childhood.

On Thursday, July 6, Stan Disher of Edwardsburg, will give a presentation on his collection of antique wall 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 evening, 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 week-end 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.

See the Real CSI

Come and see what the "Real CSI"s do to solve a crime in this Crime Scene Investigation Mystery. Test your personal skills and help investigate who killed the victim. Cass County Sheriff Deputy McKenzie Kreiner will be there to help assist you during the investigation.

This class will be held at the Cassopolis Lowe Center, Tuesday, April 18 from 6-9 pm. Trust us this will be an experience unlike any other.

The COA will also be offering an advanced CSI class in May for anyone who has completed the first class and is interested in a more advanced investigation.

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.

Locals to compete at History Day

"We Will Not Give Up Our Land," a play developed and performed by Ross Beatty Jr. High Students, will compete in this year's Michigan History Day finals on April 29 in Bay City. Students Kennedy Brooks, Anna Leach, Savannah McDougle, Keith Porter and Jadin Wolfe began working on their project last October. They conducted research as to why the small band of Pokagon Potawatomi was able to stay on their land when almost all other Potawatomi Indians were sent west on the Trail of Death in the 1830s. Their questions led them to the Dowagiac Area Museum of History, the Language and Culture Dept. at the Pokagon Tribal Headquarter, the Sacred Heart of Mary

Chapel, and the Notre Dame Historical Archives and Log Cabin. The team is coached by volunteers Ruth Andrews, Marcia Gregg and Margie Yarger.

Spring Egg-stravaganza

Spring has barely arrived on our calendars quite yet, and in anticipation of an “eggs-traordinary” spring season, you are invited to join the Cass County Parks and Recreation Commission and The Friends of the Cass County Parks to celebrate our “Spring Egg-stravaganza” at Dr. T.K. Lawless Park on Saturday, April 8, from 11 am until 2 pm for just \$2 per person.

Hopefully we will have some warmer temperatures (and no more snow) to help our little hunters find the thousands of filled eggs that will be hidden through the fields of Lawless Park! To ensure everyone has the best opportunity to be successful finding eggs, the hunt will be divided into two groups: Ages 2-4 will be held at 11:30 a.m. (approximate time) Ages 5-10 will be held at 12:30 p.m. (approximate time).

As participants find out from time-to-time, rain and snow can sometimes help to make the event rather “egg-citing” and unpredictable to say the least, so please dress appropriately. Rest assured the fire-place will be going with plenty of hot food and beverages available to help warm the body and soul.

An “egg-ceptional” line-up of activities are planned this year including an inflatable slide, face painting, crafts, wagon rides, and a nice warm bonfire for young and old. Returning by popular demand, Mesko Farms bring their petting zoo for everyone to enjoy. Sure to be one of the highlights of the day, the Easter Bunny will be making a special appearance for photo opportunities and interaction with the participants, along with Miss Cassopolis and her court.

For more information, or if you would like to volunteer, contact the Cass County Parks and Recreation Commission at 445-4456, see us on Facebook, or email Scott Wyman at scottwy@cassco.org

Cass County CASA Program Director Announces Retirement

James Ward, Program Director of Cass County CASA has announced his retirement for June 2017.

Cass County CASA is a non-profit organization established in CASS County in 1995 by the Honorable Susan L. Dobrich. CASA is an acronym for Court Appointed Special Advocates. A CASA provides a unique one-on-one relationship with youth that are in foster care. They volunteer their time to make sure their assigned child has a safe permanent home, has an opportunity to thrive, and, most importantly, they act as a voice for abused and neglected children while in the court system.

For the past eight years, Jim Ward has been building the awareness of CASA throughout Cass County. He holds many successes during his reign including the CASA KIN (Kids In Need) Program. This program, underwritten by the McLoughlin Family Foundation, supports all foster children in Cass County with goods and services that help them grow into young adults, provide them with well-deserved recreation, entertainment, and educational support, contributing to their emotional growth and self-esteem.

Another of Ward's successes is the financial stability of the program. He increased donors and resources available to both the organization and youth in foster care. In 2008 when he became Director,

Cass County CASA relied on local, state, and federal funds to support 70 percent of its budget. Today, with those

funds drastically reduced the program consistently generates over 60 percent of a growing budget from the private and commercial sector.

“Year to year, I have no doubt we are the best funded CASA program in the state, thanks to the wonderful residents of Cass County,” Ward said.

The biggest achievement Ward has made may be the increase of CASA volunteer advocates and children served. When he first started in 2008 there were only 9 active CASA volunteers. Today, there are 22 with 6 more in training. Ward personally hired and trained 36 advocates in those 8 years. In 2008 CASA served 20 foster children. In 2016, approximately 60 foster kids were lucky enough to have a CASA.

The Board of Directors of Cass County CASA is currently searching for a new Program Director. If you are interested in this position, please submit your resume to: CASA Director Search, 26887 Nubour Road, Dowagiac, MI 49047 or visit the website www.casscocasa.org.

Volunteers needed for the annual DNR frog and toad survey

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is seeking volunteers throughout the state to assist with its annual frog and toad survey. The annual survey efforts help biologists monitor frog and toad abundance and distribution in the state.

The surveys are conducted by volunteer observers along a statewide system of permanent survey routes, each consisting of 10 wetland sites. These sites are visited three times during spring, when frogs and toads are actively breeding. Observers listen for calling frogs and toads at each site, identify the species present, and make an estimate of abundance.

New volunteers are needed in all parts of the state, and the continued success of the survey is dependent on strong volunteer support. Those interested in volunteering should contact Lori Sargent at 517-284-6216 or SargentL@michigan.gov. More information on the frog and toad survey and other projects supported by the Nongame Fish and Wildlife Fund is available at mi.gov/wildlife.

Invaders threaten butterflies

Swallow-wort has been reported in small populations in Southwest Michigan since 2012, and is still being found in new areas. This invasive creeping vine grows very quickly and very densely, meaning that it can swamp and smother other vegetation and trees. It also is poisonous to monarch butterflies, which are attracted to the vine because of its distinctive seed pods. The butterflies will lay eggs on the vine, but the larvae will be poisoned when they hatch, killing entire generations of the butterflies. Because of this, it is highly encouraged to manage populations as soon as they are found.

The SWxSW Corner Collaborative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) is a grant-funded program to manage invasive species in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. With funding from the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program, the CISMA aims to help landowners and stakeholders in Southwest Michigan manage invasive species. If you believe you’ve seen swallow-worts, report to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) at misin.msu.edu. If you have questions contact the Cass County Conservation District at 445-8641 ext. 5 or Kimberly.barton@macd.org. If you’re interested in volunteering for the Cass County Conservation District please contact Korie Blyveis at korie.blyveis@macd.org or at 445-8641.

REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

April 3-7, Spring Break Activities, daily in kids department. Call for info and ask for Stephanie, Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 3 and 10 – Kids Drawing Course (Grades 1-12, min age 6), Mondays from 4-6 pm, free and materials provided, Register by calling 357-7822

April 3 and 10 – Adult Drawing Course, Mondays from 6:30-8:30 pm, \$12 per class, materials provided, Register by calling 357-7822

April 4 – Storytime (ages 3-5), 10 am every Tuesday, Explore a variety of topics with stories, crafts, and more, Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 487-9214

April 4 – Wiggles Storytime (ages birth-2 with caregiver), 10:30 am every Tuesday, Children enjoy finger plays, songs, short stories and more, Cass District Library-Main Library, 357-7822

April 5 - Dowagiac Area History Museum Spring Lecture on World Wide Webb by Jim Bussler, 783-2560, www.dowagiacmuseum.info

April 5 – Storytime (ages 3-5), 10 am every Wednesday, Explore a variety of topics with stories, crafts, and more, Cass District Library-Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821

April 6 – Storytime (ages 3-5), 10 am every Thursday, Explore a variety of topics with stories, crafts, and more, Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

April 7 – Storytime (ages 3-5), 10 am every Friday, Explore a variety of topics with stories, crafts, and more, Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

April 8 - Spring Egg-stravaganza, Dr. TK Lawless Park, Vandalia, 11 am - 2 pm, \$2 p/person

April 8 - 2017 Kal-Haven Trail Run. Kal-Haven Trail State Park, 4143 10th St North, Kalamazoo, kalhaventrailrun.wordpress.com

April 8 - Sarett's Annual Spring Stampede 5k, Sarett Nature Center. 2300 Benton Center Road. Benton Harbor, sarett.com

April 11 – Book Club, 5:30 pm, Join us to discuss Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult, New members welcome, Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 487-9214

April 12 – Card Making with Deb Wiggins, 1-3 pm, Call to register, Class is limited to 12 people, Cass District Library-Main Library, 357-7822

April 12 – Movie: Monster Trucks, 6 pm, Popcorn and water are provided at this free movie night, Cass District Library-Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

April 15 – Fandom Fest, 12-5 pm, Join us for exhibi-

tors, gaming, door prizes, costume prizes, maker space, and comics, Cass District Library-Main Library, 357-7822

April 18 - Cass County Democratic Party meeting, Headquarters 804 E State St, Cassopolis, 6 pm, 445-1651, www.casscountydems.com

April 18 – Family Movie: Sing, 6 pm, Popcorn and water will be provided at this free movie night, Cass District Library-Howard Branch, 487-9214

April 18 - "Real CSI's" presentation at Cassopolis Lowe Center, 6-9 pm, 445-8110

April 21 - Michigan Lake & Stream Association 56th annual conference "Bridging the Resource Gaps: Enhancing the Ability of Lakefront Communities to Prevent and Manage Aquatic Invasive Species," Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI, 20 am, 989-831-5100, Ext. 105

April 22 - Earth Day Celebration and 5K Run, 9 am, Kalamazoo Nature Center, 7000 North Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Free, naturecenter.org, 381-1574

April 22 - The Color Run, 10 am, Arcadia Creek Festival Place, 145 East Water Street, Kalamazoo, thecolorrun.com

April 25 – 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 jean-rowe70@comcast.net

April 29 - Wakarusa Maple Syrup Festival - 5K Run and Walk, 8 am, Behind Elementary School, Wakarusa, IN, wakarusachamber.com

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

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

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

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, 8:45pm, Lifeline Center, 174 State Street, www.tworivers-meettrace.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

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 Kohman, 783-2560, www.dowagiacmuseum.info

June 10 - 2017 Diamond Lake Association meeting, 10 am

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 jean-rowe70@comcast.net

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

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

August 12 - Barron Lake Decorated Boat Parade, 2 pm (rain date Aug. 13, 1 pm); theme: Music

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 jean-rowe70@comcast.net

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 jean-rowe70@comcast.net

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 jean-rowe70@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

Get on the ball!

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

What do you mean get on the ball? That could mean either you better get moving or you need to sit on an exercise ball. What can you do with this big ball? LOTS!!

Have you heard about using your core muscles? What are your core muscles? The abdomen, chest and back are core muscles and very important ones.

Balance is the word – you focus on stability and your core muscle is the area you work to keep from falling down or off the ball. So how does the ball fit in this picture?

By sitting on the ball it makes you use the deep core muscles and they work as stabilizers and movers. Core stability involves sitting and standing while moving the torso. Think of your core as a strong column that links the upper and lower body together.

Having a solid core creates a founda-

tion for all activities, and is especially important when you add a heavy load, such as weights, to your workout. It is important when you are strengthening the core that you create balance between the muscles of the abdomen and the back.

Many people will naturally have an imbalance between the strength of their abdominal muscles and the lower back muscles. Exercising with stability balls helps to develop and strengthen those muscles.

Besides providing balance training, stability balls work the core muscles in almost every exercise that is performed. By concentrating on the abdominal section, your posture will improve and you will find that you are generally more balanced and aware of your body movements. Your core will be more prepared to support the rest of your body in whatever activity you choose to do.

How do I choose a ball?



It is important to buy the right size ball and maintain the proper air pressure. The firmer the ball, the more difficult the exercise will be. If you are just beginning, overweight, and an older adult or you are generally out of shape you may want to consider using a larger, softer ball. When sitting on the ball, your knees and hips should align at a 90-degree angle. If you fol-

low the general guidelines for buying the right size stability ball you will enjoy the challenge using it.

Remember use it safely and use a chair beside you until you get used to the ball. The floor can come very fast and you won't know what happened. So work out smart and think smart when using the ball and you will really enjoy using it.

Take action with exercise

By **BRENDA HARRIS**
Cass COA

Ibet you have heard the saying “use it or lose it.” In other words, by keeping physically active, you can maintain your health; If you stop exercising, you'll lose the benefits.

For people with a chronic health condition, exercise might seem like a low priority, if not something to avoid altogether. People with such illnesses as cancer, diabetes, or heart disease mistakenly think that exercise is unsafe for them.

Ongoing research is making the opposite case, that regular activity is not only safe for most people with chronic illnesses but an important treatment that can boost vigor, increase longevity, and reverse some symptoms of many conditions.

Strength training, once considered risky for people with certain conditions, is now a standard part of rehabilitation for most illnesses.

Benefits of regular exercise even extend to people who are too frail or cognitively impaired to live independently. Here are answers to some questions about getting and staying active with a chronic illness.

HOW DO I START?

Even if you don't have a chronic illness, it can be hard to get started on an exercise routine. No matter what the illness or age there can be joint pain or weakness, reasons for not exercising, regardless of overall health.

Exercise doesn't have to be uncomfortable or strenuous to provide benefits. It is important to start with small amounts of exercise.

Even a little can make a difference.

If you're inactive, start at a level that feels comfortable, even if it's only 5 minutes a day, and gradually build up overtime. A goal you should aim for is 30 minutes of moderately intense aerobic exercise five days a week, plus two 20 minute sessions of strength training with weights, exercise bands or resistance machines. Do what you can without causing undue fatigue or discomfort.

Exercising can actually help boost your energy, in part by elevating your mood. And strength training can make it easier to do everyday tasks like climbing stairs, carrying groceries, or getting in and out of a car.

One easy way to get going is to add activity to everyday routines. Stand up while reading a newspaper. Do light

calisthenics while watching television. Turn off the computer and walk to the park with a friend.

HOW HARD SHOULD IT BE?

Moderate intensity is generally defined as enough to cause a light sweat and elevate your heart and breathing rate, but not so much that you can't talk. For most people, doing a brisk walk will reach that level. Other suitable activities include cycling, dancing, swimming, or using an elliptical machine.

You don't have to tackle it all at once, in fact splitting up exercise into several shorter, easier segments might be more effective than pushing yourself to do more at one time.

For strength training, muscles only need to be worked at 60 percent of their maximum capacity for you to see results.

That means using a weight or resistance that allows you to do about 15 repetitions. Choose 8-10 exercises that work the arms, legs, shoulders, chest, abdomen, and back, including both pushing and pulling movements.

HOW CAN I AVOID INJURY?

Only a few conditions make exercise too risky. It is best to consult your doc-


tor first to go over concerns you may have. Example, people with diabetes who begin exercising might need to adjust their medication and diet to keep their blood sugar from falling too low.

More suggestions, follow these tips:

- Wear well-fitting athletic shoes.
- Always warm up five to 10 minutes to get the blood flowing. You can do walking, or light calisthenics.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercising.
- STOP if you feel dizzy or nauseated, break out in a cold sweat, or experience muscle cramps or severe pain in your joints, legs or feet. Get medical attention if you have pain in your chest, jaw, or neck; unusual shortness of breath, dizziness, or a skipping, racing, or thumping heartbeat.

To stay motivated, choose activities that are fun and keep track of your progress. Keep a log of changes in your energy level, mood, pain, sleep, and your movement.


If you don't feel confident exercising on your own, ask your doctor for a referral to a physical therapist who works with people that has conditions or look for an exercise class geared to your needs.



Fitness Close to Home

Fitness Centers offer cardio fitness machines and weight training equipment. Centers are led by trained instructors.

It's time to get in shape. Join today!




Cass County COA
Enhancing Life

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Cassopolis, MI 49031


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PASTA ITALIA CON CHEF DONATO

Tonno peppe con salsa di acciuga Peppered tuna with anchovy sauce

Suggestion- don't turn up your nose at the mention of anchovy. It is used in this dish much the same way one would use herbs in cooking for flavor. You won't want to eat fresh tuna another way.

INGREDIENTS:
2- 6 OUNCE FRESH PIECES OF TUNA AT LEAST 1" THICK -this is for 2 people
2-3 tablespoons of anchovy paste or
4-5 fillets of anchovies

4 tablespoons of butter, or more.
2 finely minced garlic cloves.
3-4 tablespoons of chopped capers
2 tablespoons of fresh squeezed lemon
1/4 cup white wine
Freshly coarse,ground pepper
Handful of chopped Italian parsley
Olive oil

PREPARATION:
Step 1.
Put two flat dishes side by side. Put



pepper in one, enough to cover the bottom of the plate, and olive oil in the other. Put one side of the tuna in the oil and then press down on the plate with tuna to cover one side with pepper. Do the same for the other side, adding more pepper and oil as necessary. The tuna should be covered in pepper on both sides now. Make sure you take the tuna out of the fridge at least 30' before doing this so it gets to room temperature.

Step 2
Make the sauce- Put the butter, garlic, 2 tablespoons of olive oil and anchovy in a sauce pan and cook 2-3 minutes. Add the white wine, lemon and cook over medium heat until the smell of alcohol goes away. Add the capers and the parsley and cook a few more minutes, keep warm.

Step 3
Cover the bottom of a skillet with olive oil, not too much, just enough to cover the pan and turn heat to medium high. Add the Tuna and sear on both sides. I like mine rare in the middle, but cook until your desired doneness. Then slice the tuna into strips like a Chateaubriand.

Step 4
I serve the tuna over a little bit of angel hair pasta and then cover it with the sauce. Pasta is optional but you won't want to waste the sauce.

Cooking options
You can also sear the tuna under



a broiler or on an oiled grill, but please don't overcook. This isn't your tuna casserole type of dish.

Taste the sauce before putting over the tuna, if you want more anchovy flavor add a little more, same for lemon. If you need more sauce, add more butter and a little olive oil.

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.

At Tuesley Hall Konopa, we've built our reputation providing quality legal services to businesses throughout the community. Along the way, we've learned one universal truth. Business as usual seldom is. That's why we work hard to make sure we thoroughly understand the unique needs of each and every client. This enables us to provide relevant strategic insights and, ultimately, identify the most effective solutions to their specific needs.

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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

Happy April Neighbors!

by JANE BOUDREAU
Happy April, Neighbors! I hope everyone is getting out more after months of hibernation. We don't have much furniture out on the patio, but I love to pull an old plastic Adirondack chair out into the sun (when we have it). And the dogs bask in it as well when they aren't rolling in the grass or something worse. Sadly, as soon as the sun passes over the trees westward, it gets chilly. We have logs burning in the fireplace soon after coming in. I can't complain. Fall and spring get a bad rap with their unpredictable weather. Just put on a few extra layers and look for signs of flowers popping up or the beautiful colors of the leaves changing and you will feel a bit more lighthearted. Works for me.

A few weeks ago we were fooled into thinking we were going to have an early spring and then we had a huge snowstorm. That was fun. I've been sorting through my veggies seeds, there are some that really don't mind cold weather, actually do better such as radishes, carrots and some lettuces. I plant these as I really use them a lot. Last year I planted carrots in mid May, actually a little late, and I didn't have any big enough to pull until September. Okay, stew it is! I have a lot of shade in my yard so I do much container planting. I can plant my seeds in about 3 minutes. Seeds in the ground survive cold temps much better with the warmth down deep in the earth. For containers I would suggest you keep them out of the wind, yet in a place where they get at least 6 hours of sun.



Lawn care is important now, too. I've always had crab grass and it's a tough one. When it sprouts you only make it worse by trying to pull it...the seeds spread everywhere and you get even more. The key is to get it as soon as it emerges...usually April or May in our area, then I use a crab grass preventer. If you don't care for chemical, you can dig it up at this very early stage as well. I also use a 'spring' weed and feed in May. If you want to get outdoors more and work on your lawn, regular raking eliminates the dead grass and leaves room for the new grass to grow. Good exercise, too.



I think we can safely say its spring in April. Sure, we can get snow or a freeze but that's the joy of living in the Midwest.

Change is interesting, keeps us on our toes. As a blogger with a lot of followers in the South, I often hear, "How can you stand the cold and snow?" Outside of the dangers of driving in it, I really love it. I think I wouldn't appreciate all those sunny, warm days on a regular basis if I lived in a warm climate. Maybe I would take it for granted? Here, we have that first bite into a juicy hamburger cooked on the grill. We have that first beautiful snowstorm where we all exclaim, "It's snowing?" like we've never seen it before. So, Happy Spring!



It's time to 'springify' indoors, too. I love this old wicker basket I found at a yard sale, it moves around the house. I'm not crazy about silk flowers but sometimes you have to do it when nothing is blooming in your garden. Lighten things up with linen table runners and tablecloths, lighter curtains, or maybe just some inexpensive sheers. A few pastel throw pillows, and a new houseplant or two, and you will feel lighter yourself.



These beauties are called Blue Globe Thistle. They dry very well and then I plant the seeds in the spring. But I really love having them in the house to brighten things up until May. You can bring in many varieties of flowers in the fall; lavender, peonies, hydrangeas, Celosia, larkspur, and if you live on a lake, don't forget to cut a few stalks of cattails to display in a tall container.

Easter is arriving quite early this year so I thought I'd pass on some recipes for goodies. Desserts are one thing that change quite a bit from year to year on holidays around here. Do not mess with the traditional turkey, ham or roast beef, but new desserts are fun to try. Many of my guests bring cheesecake, cupcakes and pies. I like to make cookies. Grab and go. Great for the kiddos.

This is the best sugar cookie recipe I've ever used. I don't know what it is but they are crisp on the outside and soft on the inside. I use a store bought frosting, vanilla or butter cream, and tint portions so I have a rainbow of cookies. Top them with malted milk eggs or M&M's. A winner!

Best Sugar Cookies Ever

- 1 c butter
- 1 1/2 c sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 1/4 c flour
- 1/2 t baking powder
- 1/2 t salt

1 t vanilla
1/4 c sugar for rolling
Cream together butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg and mix until combined. Add flour, baking powder, salt and vanilla. Beat well.
Scoop dough by tablespoons and form into balls. Roll in sugar and place on a parchment paper lined baking sheet about 1 1/2 inches apart. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes. When cool, frost and add decorations.



These beauties are simple and you can make them year round by decorating them differently for other occasions. How easy can it get? You may want to double the recipe, although 1 or 2 of these cookies are quite enough for little ones.



Chocolate Dipped Oreo Cookies

1 package of white almond bark (or white chocolate bars)
1 package Oreo Cookies
Icing, sprinkles, or any sort of decorations of your choice
In a large bowl melt almond bark in your microwave in 15 second intervals, stirring in between. Do not overcook...if you do add a teaspoon or so of vegetable oil to smooth out. Using tongs, dip each cookie in the almond bark and place on parchment paper. Smooth out any of the tong marks with a spoon. When almost cool, decorate with icing (I used the store bought icing in tubes). Sprinkles are a nice touch, too, especially in pastel colors for spring.

I wanted to add a couple of recipes that just make you feel light and healthy and ready for spring. These are not complicated although they may not be anything you've made in the past. Let's try something new. They may become a regular on your table or a Go To when you have company. And look at this color!



Cream of Spinach Soup

1 pound fresh spinach, stems trimmed
1 bunch of green onions, tops and bottoms trimmed and roughly chopped
3 c chicken broth
1 t nutmeg
Pinch of salt & pepper
1 c heavy cream plus 1/4 c for swirling
In a large saucepan bring spinach,

onions and broth to a boil. Lower heat to a bubble and let simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until spinach is tender.
Turn off heat, add nutmeg, cream and S&P. Let cool for a few minutes. Puree in batches in a blender or food processor until smooth. Return to saucepan and gently reheat. Pour into serving bowls and swirl a teaspoon or so of the remaining cream on the surface of the soup. Serve immediately.



Tomato, Avocado & Black Bean Salad

A final recipe that is as colorful as it is healthy. And don't forget delicious. No salad should be boring. Have this for lunch or dinner with some good bread topped with herbed butter. * This recipe serves 2 as a side salad so you may want to double for more.
1 English cucumber (seedless), diced
1 c black beans, rinsed
1 1/4 c corn
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
1 c cherry tomatoes, halved
1/2 c tightly packed cilantro, chopped
1 lime, juiced
1 avocado, seeded and diced
S&P

Place the cucumber, beans, corn, red pepper, tomatoes and cilantro in a bowl. Squeeze the lime juice over and toss well. Gently fold in the avocado and S&P. Enjoy!

*I mentioned the addition of bread and herbed butter to accompany the salad. Herbed butter is simple. Simply bring a stick of salted butter to room temperature. Add 1 to 1 1/2 t of your favorite dried herb such as basil, oregano, dill or tarragon. Your choice. Cream the herbs well into the butter in a medium size bowl. Chill for 10 minutes. Shape the butter in a log and refrigerate until ready to serve. Slice pieces of the butter log into 1/4 inch pieces and arrange on a small plate to pass at the table. You will feel like the ultimate hostess. You can also keep it on hand smooshed into a small bowl to have a zillion ways.

I hope I've given you some ideas for getting outdoors, bringing the outside in, and sprucing up your Easter dessert table. Healthy eating is perfect this time of year with all of the fresh produce coming into our markets. My soup and stew is very refreshing now, but will take you all through summer. If you have any questions about these recipes, please email me.

Happy April and have a Blessed Easter.

Jane Boudreau is a writer, blogger and newspaper columnist for your local Neighbors as well as The Reporter in Chicago. She divides her time between Diamond Lake and Chicago. She does her best with cooking, gardening, decorating and giving pushy advice. Contact her at blndy9@yahoo.com, and read her blog at Blondiesjournals.blogspot.com.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Tax tips for college costs

Provided by **Greg Schoenfeld**
Compass Wealth Advisors

College is expensive, and the costs continue to rise. For the 2016–17 academic year, the average cost of in-state tuition, fees, and room and board at a public university is \$20,090. At a private school, the average cost is more than double at \$45,370.¹

Fortunately, the federal government offers tax benefits that can help ease the financial strain. These tax provisions apply to tuition and fees required for enrollment or attendance, but not for room and board expenses. You cannot take more than one education tax benefit for the same expense or for the same student during a tax year.

Qualified expenses may be paid by the parents, the student, or even a third party. In order for parents to claim the expenses on their federal tax return, the student must be claimed as an eligible dependent. If the student is not claimed as an eligible dependent on anyone else's return, the student may claim the expenses. A credit reduces your tax liability dollar for dollar, whereas a deduction only reduces your taxable income.

Education Credits and Deductions
American Opportunity Tax Credit — a maximum annual credit of \$2,500 for each eligible student's first four years of undergraduate education. It is calculated as 100 percent of the

Income Limits						
The following thresholds for education tax credits and deductions apply for the 2016 tax year based on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI). For most taxpayers, MAGI would be the same as adjusted gross income (AGI).						
Filing status	American Opportunity Tax Credit		Lifetime Learning Credit		Tuition & fees deduction	
	Full	Partial	Full	Partial	Full	Partial
Single, head of household, qualified widow or widower	\$80,000 or less	\$80,000 to \$90,000	\$55,000 or less	\$55,000 to \$65,000	\$65,000 or less	\$65,000 to \$80,000
Married filing jointly	\$160,000 or less	\$160,000 to \$180,000	\$111,000 or less	\$111,000 to \$131,000	\$130,000 or less	\$130,000 to \$160,000

Education credits and deductions cannot be claimed by a married taxpayer filing separately. In 2017, the Lifetime Learning Credit thresholds increase to \$56,000 and \$112,000 (full credit); \$56,000–\$66,000 and \$112,000–\$132,000 (partial credit). The American Opportunity Tax Credit thresholds remain the same.

first \$2,000 of qualified expenses plus up to 25 percent of the next \$2,000 of such expenses. In addition to tuition and fees, the credit may be applied toward expenses for books, supplies, and equipment required for attendance. The student must be pursuing a degree and enrolled at least half-time for one academic period during the tax year. If the credit reduces tax liability to zero, up to 40 percent of the credit (\$1,000) is refundable.

Lifetime Learning Credit — a nonrefundable credit limited to \$2,000 per year (20 percent of the first \$10,000 of qualified tuition and fees), per tax return, even if you have multiple students in the household. It applies to all years of post-secondary education, so the credit can be used for graduate

school or for undergraduate education after the student uses all four years of the American Opportunity Tax Credit. It also applies to job-development courses even if the student is not pursuing a degree.

Tuition and Fees Deduction — an “above-the-line” tax deduction of up to \$4,000 for qualified tuition and fees (scheduled to expire at the end of 2016 unless Congress takes action). The deduction is typically used for a student who is not eligible for an education tax credit.

Determining Qualified Expenses
If you paid tuition and fees during a tax year, you should receive Form 1098-T, Tuition Statement, by January 31 of the following year. Generally, you must

reduce the amount of qualified expenses shown as paid or billed on the form by the amount of tax-free educational assistance, such as grants or scholarships. However, if scholarships or grants are reported as income on the student's return and the funds may be used for non-qualified expenses (such as room and board), they do not have to be subtracted from qualified expenses on the parents' return.

Education credits and deductions are subject to income limits (see chart). If you have questions about the appropriate treatment of educational expenses on your return, be sure to seek advice from a tax professional.

1) College Board, 2016

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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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Everyone talks about the weather ...

By Vicki Brossman
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency of Cass County

"In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours." – Mark Twain

Sounds like Michigan weather! Along with the warmer weather comes melting snow, severe thunderstorms, high winds, and tornadoes. If you have damage to your home or property, you may need to contact your insurance agent.

Here are some tips to help with the claim process:

Notify your insurance agent of the loss immediately. Get the names and contact information from everyone you speak to about your claim. Review your coverages with your agent or claims representative. Some questions to ask are:

- Am I covered for the loss I am describing?
- What are my responsibilities and how long do I have?
- When will I receive the claim forms and when do they need to be completed and returned?
- What is my deductible?
- What additional coverages does my policy contain?
- When will the adjuster be scheduled to see the damage?
- How will this affect my premium?

Make temporary repairs to prevent further damage. Do not make perma-

nent repairs until the adjuster has inspected the damage. The adjuster is authorized to make payments to you and others for the necessary repairs.

Document the damage. Photos and videos are an excellent way to document the extent of the loss or damages. Write down what happened as soon as possible so you can give this information to the adjuster. Keep receipts for any temporary repairs or other expenses due to the loss such as restaurant meals and hotel room expenses. Make a list of lost, destroyed, or damaged belongings. Having a home inventory before you have a claim will make the task much easier.

Get estimates from a reputable contractor. Don't be rushed into signing a contract. Get a written estimate for the repairs. You can use the estimates to determine the fairness and accuracy of the claims settlement you are offered. Sometimes adjusters will accept your contractor's estimate which in turn will speed up the claim process.

When the adjuster is inspecting the property, make sure you are present. Provide them access to the damage they are to inspect and answer questions associated with the damage. Point out damage that the adjuster may have missed. Take notes regarding the adjuster's comments and actions.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" – Benjamin

Franklin

Routine spring maintenance may prevent or lessen the severity of a claim. Some tips are:

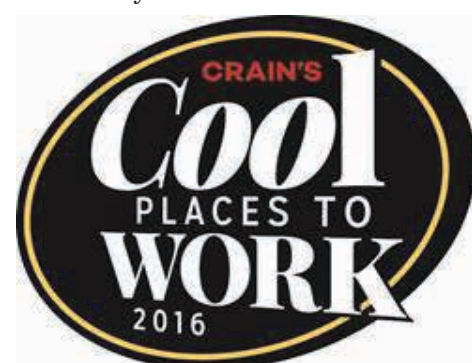
- Roofs and Gutters – Have your roof inspected. Repair or replace loose and/or missing shingles. Clean off any leaves, moss, or other debris. Check gutters and downspouts removing the leaves and debris. Direct your downspouts away from the house's foundation. Cut back any trees or shrubs touching the exterior.
- Siding and Trim – Clean moss and mildew from your siding. If paint is peeling, scrape loose paint, and sand before repainting.
- Windows and Doors – Fill cracks, caulk edges, repaint or replace window sills, door sills, and thresholds. Clean screens and check for holes, patching or replacing if needed.
- Foundation – Inspect your home's foundation. If you find any cracks or imperfections, seal them or call a contractor to make repairs. Look for low areas in the yard near the foundation where water could pool during a heavy rain or melting snow. Remove leaves from around the house.
- Chimney – Examine the exterior of the chimney for signs of damage. Have the fireplace and/or woodstove and chimney cleaned and serviced as needed.
- Patios, Decks, Sidewalks, Driveways – Inspect wood decks, steps, and rails for sharp edges, splintered,

rotting wood, and rusting or loose nails. Repair the steps and railings if they are not secure. Exterior concrete slabs should drain away from the home's foundation. Spring is the best time to seal cracks in the driveway and other concrete.

Experiencing a loss and filing a homeowners claim can be inconvenient and stressful. If you have a claim, your insurance representative is there to assist you through the process. By following these tips and working closely with your representative, you should be able to settle your claim in a fair and timely manner.



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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.

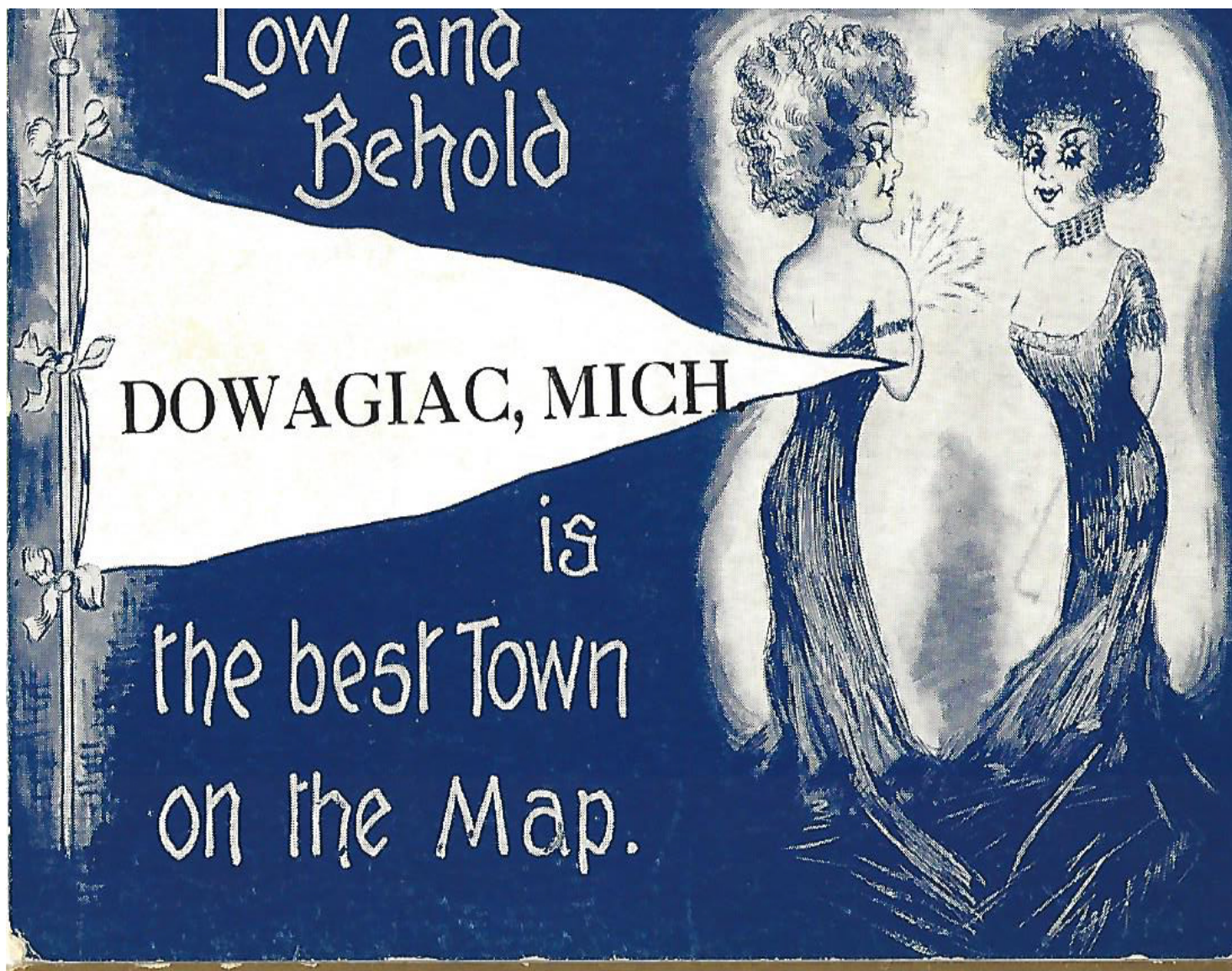
Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

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 Dowagiac and nearby 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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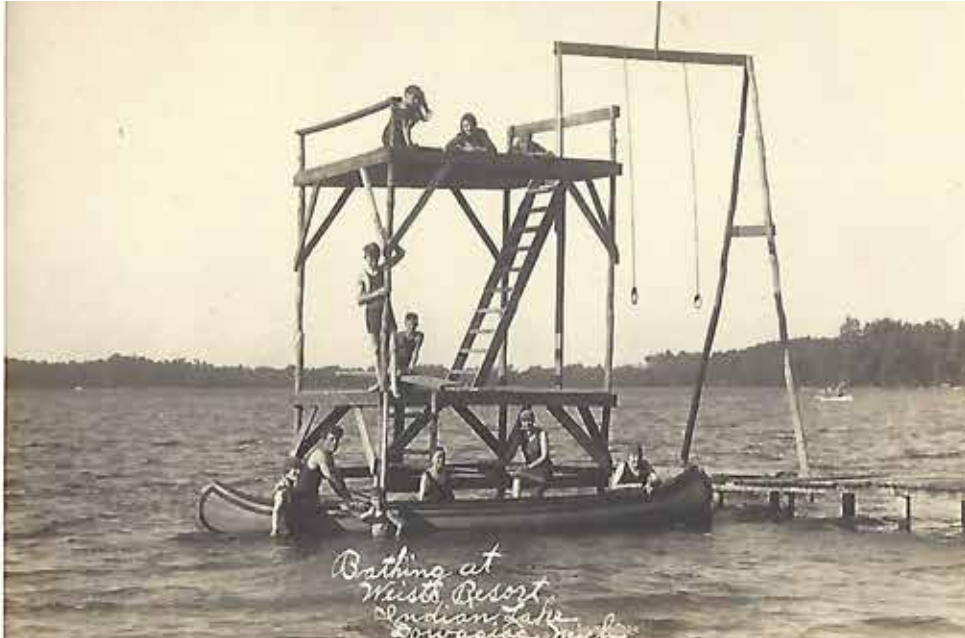
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* Information provided by the Southwest Michigan Association of Realtors (MLS).
Sales on of inland lake properties in Cass, Berrien and St. Joseph Counties, Michigan, from 1.1.12 to 12.31.16.

HISTORIC POSTCARDS



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 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 (whipping) of students.

Wednesday, June 1, 1870 -- At school, all as common except National books begin to come in.

Thursday, June 2, 1870 -- At school. Things rough and tumble. Punished one boy, thins cool off.

Friday, June 3, 1870 -- At school, no rain yet wheat is turning yellow around the roots. Went home. PS- Punished two girls.

Saturday, June 4, 1870 -- At home. Worked on the roads in the forenoon, it rained in the afternoon. I had the sick headache.

Sunday, June 5, 1870 -- Cool and pleasant. Went to school in the morning. Lydia went to Quaker meeting with Father. Concert in the eve.

Monday, June 6, 1870 -- At school, things go smoothly along. I am not very well in the evening, at Bishop's. Not much study tonight.

Tuesday, June 7, 1870 -- Things go on very much as common. No rain. At Bishop's.

Wednesday, June 8, 1870 -- Damp and cloudy. Rain set in about half past 9, and kept it up all day.

Thursday, June 9, 1870 -- At school, nothing extraordinary. At home in evening.

Friday, June 10, 1870 -- School goes on middling well, went home in the evening.

Saturday, June 11, 1870 -- At home tinkering in the forenoon, at the ball play in the afternoon. Father, Mother, and Ida Fourman came down. Hard rain.

Sunday, June 12, 1870 -- Cool and cloudy at Sunday school. Father Fourman and folks went home.

Monday, June 13, 1870 -- Very rainy. Hard to walk to school in the rain.

Tuesday, June 14, 1870 -- Rain part of the day. Very cool all day. Punished Munro, went home.

Wednesday, June 15, 1870 -- Cool. Still things as common.

Thursday, June 16, 1870 -- At school, as common. Warm.

Friday, June 17, 1870 -- At school, as common, warm. At home in evening.

Saturday, June 18, 1870 -- At the ball play, made myself sick. Phins bat made.

Sunday, June 19, 1870 -- At Sunday school. At home in the AM. At the brick [school?] in the PM. warm. Not well, hoarse.

Monday, June 20, 1870 -- At school, pleasant weather. Punished C. Johnson.

Tuesday, June 21, 1870 -- At school. Pleasant weather, health no better. Punished Melina Samson (?) commenced. John Thomas Stewart was barred.

Wednesday, June 22, 28170 -- At school, nearly sick all day. Punished Charles Johnson by whipping for fighting.

Thursday, June 23, 1870 -- [illegible].

Friday, June 24, 1870 - At school. Corn is half out.

Saturday, June 25, 1870 -- Vacation commences. Went to father Fourmans at the squirrel hunt. Very hot.

Sunday, June 26, 1870 -- At Sunday school in Newberg. Came home in the evening. Cool and pleasant.

Monday, June 27, 1870 -- Took Slomton[?] and Ron to board.. Very warm, signs of rain in the afternoon.

Tuesday, June 28, 1870 -- Went to Cass[opolis], a little rain there in the afternoon. It rained hard at Brownsville.

Wednesday, June 29, 1870 -- At home tinkering around. Rain in eve.

Thursday, June 30, 1870 -- Coll and pleasant, warm towards noon. Hard rain in the afternoon.

To be continued...

OUR CHILDREN

Ye Olde Library Quest

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Are you looking for a unique and challenging activity for spring break (or any time you want something fun to do)?

Let's try a Library Quest! Hopefully everyone in your family has a library card, but if not, they are free at your local branch for nearly everyone. And best of all, this activity is easily adaptable to use on the Internet, so even if you can't get to the library regularly, you can join in the fun online.

Think of the Quest as a sort of a treasure hunt. There are questions to answer, things to read and try out, and more. The goal is to try to complete each item within whatever time limit you've set. Grab a notebook or pad of paper to keep track of the details as you complete all of the steps.

The purpose of a Quest, in the educational world, is to encourage people to explore something they may not be so familiar with, and to coax them into building new skills. Our Quest will help people explore many kinds of literature, gain some good, solid research skills, and develop a good, solid and positive relationship with reading in general. It will also add to everyone's general store of knowledge, so there are lots of perks to completing the Quest.

Now, of course, everyone comes at this from a different level of expertise and experience. This Quest, therefore, has levels. Younger children or those who don't have solid reading skills as yet, will likely need to work with a mentor or parent. So you can pick the level (or levels) that is/are right for your family. Have fun!

- Level One Quest (prereaders and struggling readers of all ages)**
- Read, or have someone read to you, one example from each of the following genres (types of books): a realistic fiction story, a mystery, a poem, a biography, a fantasy fiction story, a science fiction story, and a nonfiction book. That's seven different books or stories. Ask the librarian to help you find books at the correct level. Or, if you are working online, try some free ebook sites, such as <http://gutenberg.org>, or <http://openlibrary.org>.
 - Write or dictate a sentence or two telling what is special about each of the seven types of books. What makes it unique?
 - Choose one story and write or dictate a summary of the book with at least four sentences. Tell what happened or what is going on, and why it is important.
 - Choose one story and write or dictate five things that happened and put them in the correct order.
 - Read or have someone read a book by a woman.
 - Read or have someone read a book that is over 100 years old.
 - Read or have someone read a book that was written in this century.
 - Read or have someone read a book that is related to a favorite movie.

- Level Two Quest (Young readers Grades 2-4 and those with limited reading skills)**
- Read one example from each of the following genres (types of books): a



- realistic fiction story, a mystery, a poem, a biography, a fantasy fiction story, a science fiction story, and a non-fiction book. That's seven different books or stories. Ask the librarian to help you find books at the correct level.
- Or, if you are working online, try some free ebook sites, such as <http://gutenberg.org>, or <http://openlibrary.org>.
- Write a sentence or two telling what is special about each of the seven types of books. What makes it unique?
 - Choose one story and write a summary of the book with at least six sentences. Tell what happened or what is going on, and why it is important.
 - Choose one fiction story and write five things that happened and put them in the correct order.
 - Read a book by a woman.
 - Read a book and create an illustration for the beginning, middle, and end (3 pictures).
 - Read a book about something you'd like to learn.
 - Read a book that is about a famous person.
- Level Three (Upper Elementary/Middle School)**
- Read one example from each of the following genres (types of books): a realistic fiction story, a mystery, a poem, a biography, a fantasy fiction story, a science fiction story, and a non-fiction book. That's seven different books or stories.
- Ask the librarian to help you find books at the correct level.
- Or, if you are working online, try some free ebook sites, such as <http://gutenberg.org>, or <http://openlibrary.org>.
- Write three-five sentences telling what is special about each of the seven types of books. What makes it unique?
 - Choose one story and write a summary of the book with at least two paragraphs. Tell what happened or what is going on, and why it is important.
 - Choose one fiction story and pretend you are the teacher. Write 5-10 comprehension questions that you would give to your class (and an

- answer key on a separate page!).
- Read a book by a scientist.
 - Read a book about how to do something that you want to do.
 - Read a book about a special time in history.
 - Read a book about a secret.
- Level Four (high school and adult)**
- Read one example from each of the following genres (types of books): a realistic fiction story, a mystery, a poem, a biography, a fantasy fiction story, a science fiction story, and a non-fiction book. That's seven different books or stories. Ask the librarian to help you find books at the correct level.
- Or, if you are working online, try some free ebook sites, such as <http://gutenberg.org>, or <http://openlibrary.org>.
- Write a paragraph telling what is special about each of the seven types of books. What makes it unique? Who would like to read it? Which ones would you recommend and why?
 - Choose one story and write a book review. Summarize the book, setting, characters, and plot. Speak about the themes that you notice when reading and the devices that the author used to grab and keep the readers' attention or imagination. Give your opinion about the book, telling what you liked and did not like.
 - Read three books written by three different female authors.
 - Read a book about a different culture.
 - Read a book about something you'd like to learn.
 - Read a magazine article, a newspaper article, a journal article, and a comic book.
 - Find three reliable sources of information about a medical condition or other situation where advice might be needed.
- What Now?**
- Guess what? You can design your own Quests and Challenges that are perfect for your kids or family. Here's how:

- Set Your Goals**
- Why should they complete your quest or challenge? Is it supposed to be fun, educational, or something else? What do you want them to accomplish? How will you motivate them to complete the challenge? Will you offer prizes, or other incentives? Set your goals, and your challenge or quest items will fall into place.
- Get Specific**
- Come up with 5 to 10 things for your players to do to complete the quest or challenge. Make sure there are a variety of levels of difficulty and effort required. You don't want to make them all too easy or too long and drawn out.
- Set a Start and Ending Date/Time**
- It's great to have a beginning and an end. If you want to get a bit competitive, you can even make the quest into a race. First one finished gets some sort of kudos or a prize.
- Give Some Feedback**
- If your goal is to help folks learn or practice academic skills, feedback is good. That way you'll be able to see if your quest or challenge was effective. Did your participants meet the goals that you set? Have Fun!!!

*Sandy Fleming is an educational consultant and private tutor in Edwardsburg. Watch for TWO new books coming out this spring: **Active Minds** and **My Summer Fun Memory Book** that are both chock full of ideas to keep kids learning and moving all through summer vacations. Get on the list to get advance info (and get in on promos) by visiting <http://www.traffic-wave.net/lcp/tutor1235/activeminds>.*

NATURE NOTES

Spring signs abound, interspersed with blasts of winter

Provided by Jon Wuepper,
Cass District Library
Local History Branch

Mother Nature has turned against us and has given us blasts of winter interspersed with fine springlike days.

Brad Anderson of Bridgman found the smallest gull in the world, during March 2017, called a "little gull" at Three Oaks Reclamation ponds, which was associating with other species of gulls, namely our common ring-billed gulls.

In Anderson's photo, the little gull is seen at the right of the other gulls. The gull is in basic, also known as non-breeding plumage as told mainly by the facial patterns. Notice dark spot behind the eye, and dark cap. As spring progresses, the little gull will molt into its summer, or breeding plumage, which will consist of all dark head. Little gulls hatched last year will acquire black wings, while full adults will molt into pale wings.

The little gull's nesting range is along the shores of the Hudson Bay in Canada. The main bulk of the populations winters along the Atlantic seaboard from New England, south to the Carolinas.

Brad Anderson also sent in a photo of our state bird, the American robin.

Robins are members of the thrush family, and are in fact present all year long in Southwest Michigan, but habits differ from winter to spring and summer.

During the cold months, American robins flock together in thick stands of trees, often the eastern white pine as they offer protection from the elements.

Robins can be seen eating ornamental berries in suburban yards during winter storms, or in orchards, among fruit trees still bearing fruit.

Beginning about March, American robins break up from flocks and males seek out an area where they would like to nest. By this time much of the snow has melted and the ground begins to thaw.

This happened late last month and I began to hear male robins singing their cheerful song in the morning. Many readers, myself included, noticed robins foraging on the ground, rather in trees, for worms, insects and other invertebrates.

In March when winter- and spring-like weather go back and forth, birds adapt to the changes, as do our reptiles and amphibians.



*Little gull in basic (non-breeding) plumage at Three Oaks, March 9.
Photo by Brad Anderson.*



*American robin ground feeding in snow, Weko Beach, near Bridgman.
Photo by Brad Anderson.*



Red Fox, March 7, 2017 at Grand Mere Brad Anderson.

During late February we featured an eastern tiger salamander emerged from hibernation in Baroda Township. I also heard a chorus of frogs in March when the air temperature was in the upper 20s Fahrenheit, below freezing. The frogs were in water that was about 32 degrees, warmer than the air temperature. The tiger salamander would have found a secluded place and went back into hibernation until warm weather returns.

Cheryl Tollas of Baroda Township sent in a photo of an eastern tiger salamander, found outside her Baroda Township home on the evening of March 7.

Eastern tiger salamanders are the most adaptable of the 8-10 species which

inhabit Michigan, found in woodlands, meadows, suburban areas, farming areas especially near water sources. It is not uncommon to see salamanders out in early March in Southwest Michigan, especially on warm, humid rainy nights.

The eastern tiger salamander is identified by its irregular spot pattern and yellow underbelly, adults being seven to eight inches in length. Most of the tiger salamanders time is spent in shallow burrows underground. I have accidentally

dug up the species in my yard during the spring while planting flowers and vegetables.

Other sightings this week includ-

ed a red fox, seen as it ran past Brad Anderson March 7 at Grand Mere. Red fox are the more common of the two fox species found here. The Gray fox also inhabits the region. The former species prefers open country, interspersed with fields. Gray fox prefer wooded areas, and are able to climb trees if in danger. Both fox species are preyed upon by coyotes.

Waterfowl continue to move through the area, most notably are the snow geese and greater white fronted geese, reported in higher than average numbers. Among the higher totals were 167 snow geese at Three Oaks wastewater ponds last week, by Lisa Schaller of Bridgman.

Mike Mahler of Sarett Nature Center reported a flock of 20 greater white fronted geese migrating over the nature center last week.

Both snow geese and greater white fronted geese are headed to northern Canada where they nest.



Eastern tiger salamander, Baroda Township, March 7, 2017 by Cheryl Tollas. The eastern tiger salamander is the most common salamander in Southwest Michigan, adapting itself to woodlands, meadows and even suburban areas.

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Please look on back page for examples of Household Hazardous Waste items accepted.

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- **Used Eye Glasses Collection (Free)** - given to Lion’s Club to be recycled
- **Hearing Aids (Free)** – donated to Lion’s Club to be recycled

When: Saturday May 20, 2017 (Rain or Shine)

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon (No Appointment Needed)
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Where: Cass County Fairgrounds
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Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Items That Will Not Be Accepted

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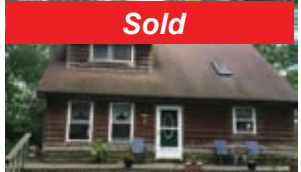
20767 Watson Road, White Pigeon, MI 49099, \$299,000, **Klinger Lake**/ Golf Course, 6+ garage Newly remodeled; contemporary open concept w/ fireplace



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Cleopatra's Hair Hut	12	445-2686
Tuesley, Hall, Kanopa	5	574-232-3538 http://www.thklaw.com
Vetter-McGill Chevrolet	7	278-1485 http://www.vetterchevy.com

How to contact your Michigan legislators

Gary Peters, U.S. Senator
202-224-6221, www.peters.senate.gov

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.



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THE LAST WORD

Scary noises and the pajama party from hell

Ok, it wasn't the shot heard round the world echoing in the night from the North Bridge in Concord. It wasn't the hair-raising guttural growl that Bengal tiger made at the Indianapolis Zoo as he paced back and forth behind the high-strength wire just a foot away from my face. It wasn't the long, low whistle of the mechanic under my car looking up at the aged and broken suspension. It wasn't even the barely audible "Oh oh," the surgeon uttered when he nicked an artery as he was performing a rather intimate procedure on my, ahem, private parts.

But it was undeniably one of the scariest sounds I'd ever heard in my life, and it didn't make it any the less frightening that it occurred just before midnight, waking me and my sailing companions from a sound sleep.

Let me explain.

It was the first day (or rather the first night) of a seven-day sailing charter out of Fajardo in Puerto Rico. My wife and I and our BFFs, Steve and Sherri Deranek had just made a difficult and dangerous crossing from the mainland to the beautiful island of Culebra, battling 25 mph winds and 5-7 foot waves upwind for over four hours.

We were tired. We were weary. And after carefully attaching our boat to what we thought was a relatively new and secure Department of Natural Resources mooring ball and a great dinner of grilled, BBQ chicken, we were more than ready for a good night's sleep.



My buddy Steve Deranek and I at anchor near Culebra, Puerto Rico after a sleepless night showing the broken line on the mooring ball that scared the bejesus out of me.

My companions all went below to their cabins to settle in while I, as is my custom, settled onto the cushions in the cockpit for a bit of first-night star watching and open-air sleep ... ok, so they all decided that they would prefer I take my ear-wrenching snoring as far away as possible ... and since the dinghy hanging on the back of the sailboat was still about 4 inches deep in salt water, this was the best I could manage.

So, anyway, there I was after just a couple of umbrella-decorated boat drinks, out like a light, sprawled across the starboard side bench, head back, eyes closed, mouth open, trying not to wake myself with my own snoring, when ...

There was a loud thump that rever-

berated right through my slumber deep into that spot in my brain where the noises came from that the monster under my bed used to make when I as seven.

Now, I haven't feared the under-the-bed-beasties since the time my dad made me crawl under there in the dark with a flashlight to look for them (it was either that, he'd told me or I could go sleep with my dog, Chester, outside).

Unsure of what I'd just heard, I opted to roll over as best I could in the cramped space and ignore it.

That's when even more really scary sounds started, the sounds of the keel and the hull of the boat I was sleeping on bouncing off the rocks and coral on the bottom of the ocean.

It wasn't a real loud noise. It wasn't eerie or macabre. It was just a grinding, thumping, bashing noise that sounded more and more like a noise that could get very, very expensive if I continued to ignore it ... no matter how badly I wanted to go back to sleep.

I quickly sat up and looked into the darkness nearby where the boat that had picked up the mooring next to us should have been.

It wasn't there.

My sleep-addled brain quickly surmised that despite having trusted my life dozens of times to very similar moorings, tonight we were adrift and about to turn what should have been a week-long charter of fun in the sun into a wet and unpleasant one-nighter.

For only the third time in my life I called "All hands on deck" and my friends and I began the Pajama Party from Hell.

Well, to make a long story short, I was able to maneuver the boat away from the rocks and find a spot to safely anchor. The boat sustained no damage, and we were able to continue on the next day to a great vacation after getting rid of the mooring ball with the tether line that had broken below the waterline.

Ok, it would have been a great vacation if I could have fallen asleep a little easier for the rest of the week ... Don't know what it was, but for the rest of the week, every time I tried to lie down to go to sleep I kept hearing the monsters under the bed calling my name.

Next time I go sailing I'm definitely not going to invite those noisy little critters ... they keep me up at night!

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The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a diner's food service area. It features a large, white, multi-tiered food warmer or display case. Inside the warmer, a whole pepperoni pizza sits on a wooden rotating stand. To the right of the pizza, there are several pieces of golden-brown fried chicken. The background is a solid light yellow color.

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