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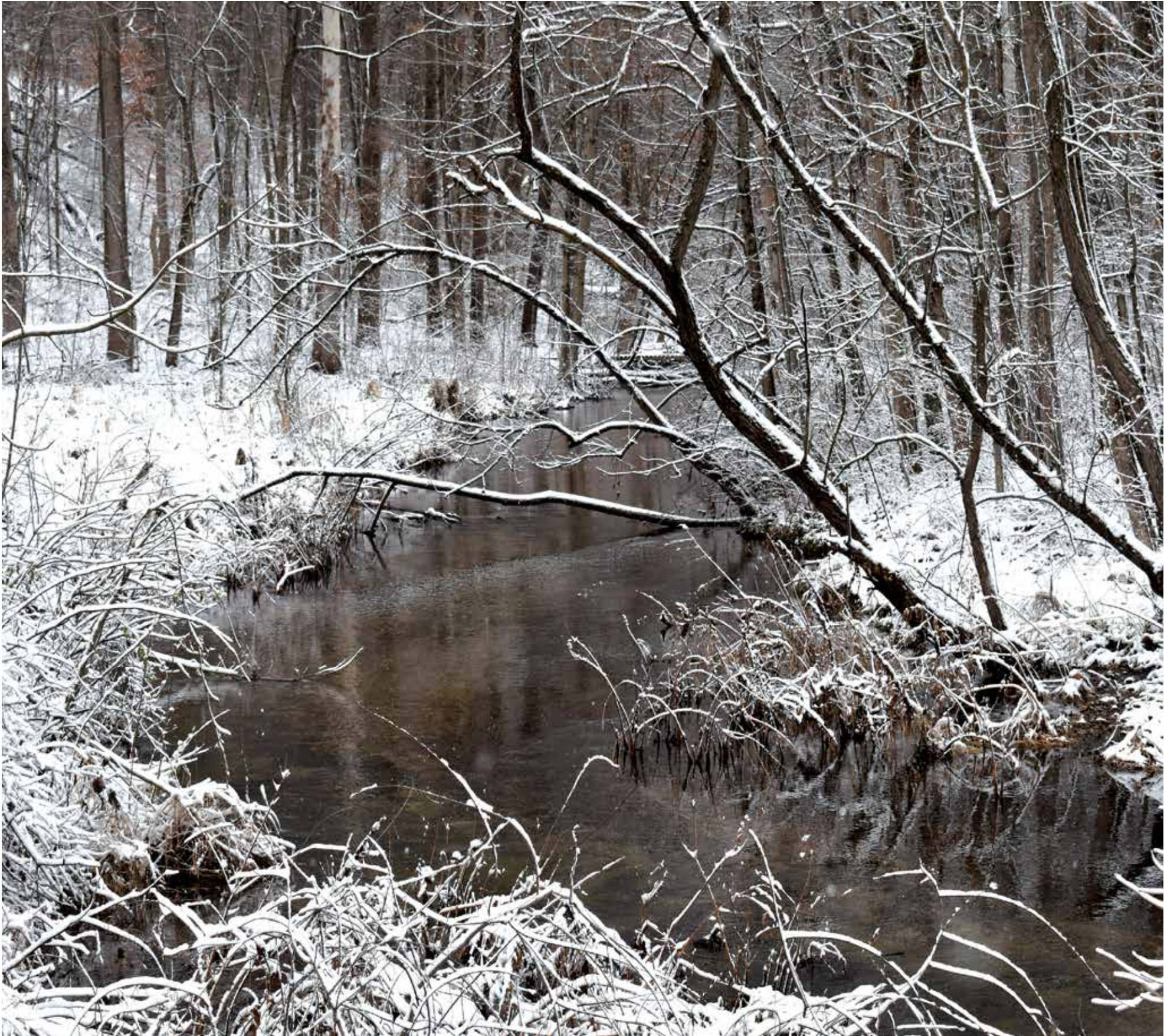
December 2018

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A regional newspaper freely distributed in Dowagiac, Cassopolis, Edwardsburg, Vandalia, Jones, Marcellus, Decatur, Union, Sister Lakes, Three Rivers, Elkhart and Mishawaka, with home delivery at Diamond, Eagle, Birch, Corey, Donnell, Indian, Magician, Shavehead, Baldwin, Long, Dewey, Cable, Juno, Christiana, Painter, Paradise, Stone, Buck, Lewis, Big & Little Twin and Bair lakes



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REGIONAL NEWS

Candlelight Christmas Parade

On December 7, at 7 pm, Kris Kringle returns to Dowagiac for the Candlelight Christmas Parade, presented by Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital and the Chamber of Commerce. Hear the tolling bell of a Town Crier, inspired by the Victorian-era, and attend live performances at Front and Beeson streets. While you await the grand procession, savor the sweet delights of street vendors. More than 100 parade entries, featuring lighted floats, costumed characters and marching bands, makes this an enchanting evening you'll long remember. To receive a parade registration form call 782.8212.

Dowagiac Ice Time Festival

Artisans compete for cash prizes, as they create street sculptures from more than 10,000 pounds of ice at Dowagiac Ice Time 2019 on Saturday, February 2 from 9 am - 4 pm Watch timber and wood carvers, gather 'round the campfire for warm and chocolaty S'mores, or sample southwest Michigan's spiciest chili during the professional chili cook-off. Be sure to arrive early for the Out of Hibernation Sale and the deep discounts shopkeepers offer. The Chamber of Commerce is the host of the winter arts festival. For more information call 782.8212.

Christmas at the Barn Swallow

Ring in the holiday season with Christmas at the Barn Swallow, 22334 US-12, Edwardsburg. The show will feature a local cast (ages 11 and up) that will be performing some of your favorite holiday hits, as well as some short vignettes from some of the most beloved Christmas stories. We hope you'll join us for a fun evening that is guaranteed to get the whole family in the mood for the Christmas season! For reservations call 269.228.6672 -or- Email tickets@barn-swallowtheatre.com Performances will be Dec. 7 and 8 7:30 pm and Dec. 9 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors 60 and over, and \$5 for children 12 and under.



The Victorian James E. and Sarah Bogue Bonine House at the corner of Penn Rd and M-60 in Vandalia, MI is decorated for Christmas and will be open Saturday and Sunday, December 8 and 9 from 1-7 pm. All are invited to tour the lovely home decorated by members of the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County. Santa, Mrs. Claus and elf Jingles will be on hand for kids of all ages. This annual event has become a family tradition for many, and a festive way to start the holiday season. Admission and parking are free, donations are appreciated.

Cure for Cabin Fever Indoor shop

The Sweet Charity Sewing Group of Niles will hold its "Cure for Cabin Fever Indoor Shop Hop" on February 16, 2019 at St. John's United Church of Christ, 601 Sycamore St., Niles. It will be open Saturday, February 16 from 10 am to 4 pm. Admission will be \$5. At the Indoor Shop Hop you will be able to purchase quilting-related items from vendors traveling from Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, receive raffle tickets with paid admission and enjoy food provided by Brew Ha Ha of Niles,. For additional information contact Cathy Marsh at 362-4314 or Sherri Wade at 782-9384.

A Capella Christmas

If you like a Capella music, you're going to love "A Capella Christmas," a benefit performance during which three Michiana choruses will join to perform Christmas classics and more. Bring in

the holiday season in four-part harmony with the River Bend Sweet Adelines, the Lighthouse Chorus and the Valleyaires. The performance will begin at 7 pm on Thursday, December 13, at the Battell Center Auditorium, 904 N. Main Street, Mishawaka, IN. Net profits from the performance will be donated to the Beacon Children's Hospital in South Bend. All three Barbershop Harmony choruses, as well as chapter quartets, will perform Christmas favorites and then join together in song to bring on Santa! Open-seating tickets are \$12 each and can be obtained through EventBrite. For info or tickets visit the website: www.eventbrite.com/e/a-capella-christmas-tickets-51566813728

Costume exhibit opens

Whether costume design, big-screen cinema, or famous film stars are fancied, The South Bend History Museum's trav-

eling exhibit CUT! Costume and the Cinema is a must-see. The exhibit, featuring over 40 costumes worn by stars in 25 films of the past two decades, is open through Sunday, January 6. CUT! Costume and the Cinema offers a journey through 500 years of fashion history, complete with all of its allure and artistry. The cinematic culture in CUT! Costume and the Cinema represents craftsmanship and creativity as interpreted by award-winning costume designers. The exhibit is produced by Exhibits Development Group in cooperation with Cosprop Ltd., London. The History Museum's presentation of CUT! Costume and the Cinema is made possible by the generous support of presenting sponsors Linda and Bipin Doshi, as well as the South Bend Tribune, Community Foundation of St. Joseph County's ArtsEverywhere, Visit South Bend Mishawaka, and 88.1 WVPE Public Radio.

Gowns worn by Keira Knightley in The Duchess, Emmy Rossum in The Phantom of the Opera, and Sandra Bullock in In Love and War capture settings like 18th century England, 19th century Paris, and World War I-era Italy. Angelica Huston's gown from Ever After takes us to fairy tale England while Kate Winslet's costume from Finding Neverland and Johnny Depp's from Pirates of the Caribbean exude the fantasy of the films. Likewise, Colin Farrell's costume from The New World and Daniel Craig's from Defiance demonstrate the films' adventure perfectly. Ticket prices to The History Museum are \$10/adults, \$8.50/seniors (60+), and \$6/youth (6-17). Members receive free admission. Prices include admission to all History Museum galleries and the Oliver Mansion. For an additional amount, tickets can also include a visit to the Studebaker National Museum, which adjoins The History Museum. Museum hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, noon to 5 pm. For ticket information, visit history-museumSB.org or call (574) 235-9664.

REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

December 5 -- Holiday Story Time, 10 am on Wednesdays (3 weeks), recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821

December 6 -- Holiday Story Time, 10 am on Thursdays (3 weeks), recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/craft, and more. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

December 6 -- Holiday Crafts Family Night, 6-7 pm, A variety of holiday themed crafts and ornaments will be available to create! Adults, a wine glass for one of the crafts. No registration required. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

December 07 - Candlelight Christmas Parade, Dowagiac, 7 - 9 pm, 782-8212

December 7 -- Holiday Story Time, 10 am on Fridays (3 weeks), recommended age 3-5 yrs old, enjoy stories, songs, activity/ craft, and more. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

December 7-9 - Christmas at Barn Swallow, 7:30 pm Friday and Saturday, 2

pm Sunday, \$12 adults, \$10 seniors, \$5 children

December 8 -- Cookies and Cocoa with Santa, 10 am, Visit Santa at the library and enjoy hot cocoa and decorating a cookie. Free and open to the public. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

December 11 -- Holiday Crafts Family Night, 6-7 pm, A variety of holiday themed crafts and ornaments will be available to create! Adults, a wine glass for one of the crafts. No registration required. Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

December 18 -- Holiday Centerpiece Workshop, 6 pm, Space is limited to 15 people, teens and adults only, cost is \$5 due at registration, Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

December 22 -- Santa Visit and Bake Sale, 9 am - 1 pm (Santa arrives at 10 am), Visit with Santa and purchase tasty treats at the Mason/Union Friends Holiday Bake Sale, Cass District Library- Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821

December 26 -- Movie: The House with a Clock in Its Walls, 1 pm, Popcorn and

water provided at the movie! Free and open to the public. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

December 27 -- Cookies and Canvas, 2 pm, Paint a winter scene of your choice, Kids only, Space is limited to 15, Call to register, Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

2019

January 2 -- Crazy Concoctions STEAM Spectacular, 1 pm, Kids will enjoy hands-on science activities including making slime, Free and open to the public, Cass District Library- Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821

January 2 -- Pizza Family Fun Night, 6 pm, Enjoy playing pizza themed Bingo, games, stories, and eating a pizza supper! Call to register. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

January 3 -- Movie: AXL, 1 pm, Popcorn and water provided at this free movie! Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

January 3 -- Gaming, 3 pm, Enjoy playing Wii games and a variety of board games at the library. Free and open to the public.

Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

January 4 -- Lego Day, 10 am - 3 pm, Enjoy building on your own or trying out a challenge, Popcorn also provided. Free and open to the public. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

January 16 -- Fitness Class, 5:30 pm, Workout at the library for FREE during this five week series that meets on Wednesdays. Call for details and ask for Stephanie, Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

January 18 -- Fitness Class, 9 am, Workout at the library for FREE during this five week series that meets on Friday mornings. Call for details and ask for Stephanie, Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

February 02 - Ice Time Festival, Dowagiac, 9 am - 4 pm 782-8212

May 3, 4 - Michigan Lake stewardship Association (formerly Michigan Lakes and Streams Association) 58th Annual Meeting, Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI, mymlsa.org

PASTA ITALIA CON CHEF DONATO

Cioppino for Christmas ... Buon Natale!

by Chef **Dennis Bamber**

Cioppino is an Italian-American dish from San Francisco. It is actually a seafood stew that you can use almost any type of seafood available. There are several ways to make this dish, and with my recipe, I added carrot to "sweeten" the acidity of the tomatoes, and red pepper for additional flavor and texture.

The French have their bouillabaisse, the Asians, seafood soups, and here is the Italian version of a seafood stew or soup. Serve this with crusty bread, either garlic or plain for dipping.

Holiday Note - Traditionally and because of religion, Italians never eat meat on Christmas Eve, always seafood. This would be a great dish to serve, just add more of the ingredients, and make sure you have a big pot. I made this once for 25 people using a deep fried turkey fryer and burner outside. I made the broth inside and then cooked the seafood outside in a huge pot.

INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons of olive oil
1 small carrot diced very small
(I put in a food processor)
1 red pepper diced small
1 yellow onion diced small
1 or 2 shallots diced small
1 teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper
1 teaspoon of dried oregano
1 28 ounce can of crushed tomatoes
1/4 cup of tomato paste
4 cups of seafood broth
1 cup of chicken broth (optional) or substitute 1 bottle of clam juice and 4

cups of chicken stock
1/2 cups of dry white wine
1/2 cup of chopped Italian parsley

SEAFOOD - I used this time the following;

30 mussels
10 shrimp cut into pieces
1- 8 oz piece of halibut cut into pieces
8 oz of calamari cut into rings

Feel free to add or delete any of the seafood listed below. Use what's available, any white fish such as Cod, or Snapper. Do not use Salmon for this dish - it is too oily.

Manila or little neck Clams
Fresh Crab
Scallops

DIRECTIONS MAKE THE BROTH

1.) I put the cut up carrot, shallots and onion into a processor and processed into small pieces. Then I put into a pot with the olive oil and cook for 10-15 minutes under medium high heat, until they start to soften. Then add the peppers and cook for 5 minutes more, stirring often so it does not stick.

2.) Next add the minced garlic red pepper flakes and oregano and cook for 3-4 minutes more.

3.) Now add the tomato paste, cook for a minute stirring often, then the tomatoes, and their juices, salt and parsley. Cook stirring often for about 5 minutes or so.

4.) Now add the seafood broth (or chicken broth, clam broth) and white wine and let cook for 30-40 minutes to blend all the flavors.



5.) When you are ready to eat, then turn up the heat and add the mussels or clams, or both, and cook until they start to open. Then add the calamari, followed in a minute or 2 by the white fish. Lastly, add the shrimp because shrimp cooks very fast. If adding scallops, add with the fish.

6.) Using a slotted ladle, put into bowls and then use a soup ladle to add the broth as much as is desired. Serve with crusty bread.

PLEASE NOTE - Feel free to substitute or omit some of the items. You could make this with either shallots alone or onion alone. You could omit the carrot, red pepper or both. Add a bay leaf, add chopped fennel. Any combination of sea-

food will work. Make it hotter by adding more pepper flakes. Add cut up lobster, but like shrimp, at the end, as it cooks quickly.

~Buon Natale.

Dennis Bamber is an avid cook. He grew up in the restaurant business and has traveled extensively worldwide as well as being a partner in a business in Paris for 9 years. He is a second generation Italian-American. He is currently a Realtor with Cressy & Everett, licensed in Michigan and Indiana, and specializes in lake property.



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The gift of a beautiful smile

There's just something about the holiday season that creates a warm, happy feeling, giving us many reasons to smile. Maybe it's the bright and colorful decorations everywhere, or the Christmas music being played on the radio, or a chance to spend time with family and friends.

But is an unattractive smile putting a damper on your holiday spirit? Teeth that are discolored, broken, crooked, or even missing can have a dramatic impact on our confidence and desire to smile. If you or a loved one are unhappy with how your teeth look, you may want to consider the gift of a cosmetic dental procedure.

A smile makeover is long-lasting, life-changing, and can be the perfect holiday gift to yourself or a family member. In this article we will discuss some simple procedures that can boost a person's confidence and give them a beautiful smile for not only the holiday season but also for years to come.

Teeth Whitening:

The most common complaint many have about their teeth is that they are not as white as they used to be. Teeth tend to discolor with age, even if you are diligent about brushing, flossing and using mouthwash. Teeth whitening, sometimes called "teeth bleaching," is a simple process that is a quick and affordable way to get a brighter smile.

Over time, teeth can become stained or discolored, especially after smoking, taking certain medications, or consuming foods and beverages such as red wine, coffee, and tea. Using a chemical process, your dentist can bleach your teeth with an in-office procedure, a system to use at home, or a combination of the two.

While there are over-the-counter whitening kits you can purchase, for the best

results you should be treated by a dentist who will use only the best and safest procedures. If you try to whiten your teeth on your own, you may damage not only your teeth but also your health.

Keep in mind, your teeth can become stained again if you continue exposing them to the same substances that originally stained them. Because whitening products are not meant to clean teeth, it is still important to continue practicing daily oral hygiene.

Tooth Bonding:

Bonding is a process in which tooth-colored materials are adhered (bonded) to the tooth. This is a simple procedure that can be used to repair or improve the appearance of a tooth that has been badly stained, worn down, broken, or chipped. Bonding can also help protect any exposed roots that occur when teeth start to recede.

Dental bonding is a quick procedure that can be completed in just one visit. During the appointment, your dentist will lightly roughen up the surface of the designated teeth to prepare for the bonding. Then a composite material is used to fill in and reshape the surface of the tooth. Finally, your dentist will shape the bonded tooth to blend in naturally with the rest of your teeth.

Although bonding can last for several years, it is more likely than other types of restorations to chip or become stained or just wear down.

Dental Veneers:

If your concern is more about chipped teeth, then getting veneers will improve your smile while also helping to protect and strengthen your teeth. These chips if left untreated could lead to bigger cracks so it is not just an aesthetic problem. Veneers last longer than bonding and provide a superior appearance.

Veneers are a thin shell made out of porcelain or composite material. They are custom made and cemented to the front side of the tooth. Besides chipped teeth, a veneer can be used to treat other dental conditions such as a slightly crooked tooth, discolored teeth, or even to cover spaces in between the teeth.

Before inserting veneers, your dentist will take an impression of your tooth, then buff the tooth before cementing the veneer in place. A beam of light helps harden the cement, which secures the veneer to your tooth. All of this can be done with only mild anesthetic and very little time out of your busy schedule.

The veneers will look just like your natural teeth and they will be bonded securely to your tooth. To enjoy your new smile for years to come, it is best to limit your intake of some food and drink like red wine, coffee, and tea that may stain the veneers.

Dental Crowns:

Crowns, also referred to as caps, are custom made to fit over your whole tooth, helping to restore your holiday smile. They are usually made out of acrylic or porcelain that has been fused to metal to withstand biting pressure. Crowns can be used to treat teeth that are poorly shaped, badly decayed, broken, chipped, have had large fillings, or to cover spaces in between teeth.

Your dentist will prepare your tooth for the crown, then make a mold of the tooth or take a digital impression. Many dentists will often provide you with a temporary crown. A second appointment is scheduled to install the permanent crown. Crowns can have a long life if you take proper care of them.

Dental Implants:

Are missing teeth making you feel

self-conscious, especially around the holidays? Then a dental implant may be the treatment that brings back your Christmas spirit!

A dental implant is basically an artificial tooth attached to a small titanium post that your dentist surgically implants in your jaw. You can get an implant to replace a single tooth, or more to provide a stable support for replacing several teeth. They are designed to match your existing teeth and are safe, comfortable, and attractive.

There are a number of benefits to dental implants over other tooth replacement procedures. First, they support your existing teeth and help keep them from getting loose. They also allow you to enjoy your favorite meals without any discomfort, functioning just like your original teeth.

Implants are more permanent than dentures and bridges and the best part is that none of the surrounding teeth have to be modified in the process. Once the implant is secure, it can act as a normal tooth root and can anchor artificial teeth such as a bridge, or denture. In order to be eligible for implants, your gums must be healthy and there must be enough bone to support the post.

The trees are bare, the air is crisp and the forecast is calling for snow. With the holiday season in full swing, the only thing missing are the beautiful smiles. So whether you or a loved one just need a simple whitening treatment or to replace missing teeth, there are many cosmetic dentistry options to choose from. Now is the perfect time to embrace the holiday spirit with a beautiful smile.

This article was provided by Roger Pecina of Afdent, 605 West Douglas Rd., Mishawaka, IN 46545, (574) 277-7770.



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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas!

by **Jane Boudreau**

Ho, H,o Ho, Neighbors! I really love writing this year end column, and nooooooo, not because I have a little break! It's that I truly love to do my spin on an event, party, or holiday. It's time for experimentation and self expression. I really love to make something out of nothing, put time in making people feel special, or in a crunch, make it look like it took a lot of time.

Seriously, just as the women's movement going back 50 years ago sought equal opportunities and wages for women in the working world, we now have a whole new tribe of women who stay at home raising their little ones, who are not satisfied with just scrubbing floors and having the whitest laundry, and are saying, "Take a look at what I can do!"

As a young mother raising four rug rats, I found myself somewhat lonely and lacking a sense of purpose and direction for myself. But soon the simple activities I gravitated toward became the base for many of the interests I have that I now love to share on my blog, in my columns, and with anyone who might want to listen. I learned to cook because it was absolute boredom to make Mac 'n Cheese from a box, boiled spaghetti with jarred sauce. Biscuits from a can (you know-- the ones that you bang on the counter and have a near heart attack when they pop open). I picked up magazines and clipped out the recipes, bought my first couple of cookbooks, and made a huge mess in the kitchen.

I can say the same for gardening and my love of nature. If I had to sit on the front porch watching my children play, I might as well pull weeds, cut the lawn, or even plant flowers. Again, I read what I could get my hands on and asked a lot of questions.

So where am I going with this? I think we can choose our direction. And if your legacy is having your recipes passed down to generations or having them printed in a newspaper, it's all good. When you create, you are giving back to the world. And you have a valid reason for patting yourself on the back.

That said, I'm a huge proponent of getting great things done without killing myself or breaking the bank. Since I'm very lazy and usually broke, I have excelled at this. I hope in this column I can take some of the pressure off by inspiring you to make or improvise some of your own personal gifts, holiday decorations, and maybe just tossing flour around the kitchen to get that pie just right.



I have had this old, wood carved goose forever. I think I found it at a gift shop in Paw Paw, MI. Somehow it made it back to the city, as if we see geese here all the time. One December it was sitting on a shelf looking totally out of place and I mindlessly tied a green velvet ribbon around the neck. Voila! It is now

a favorite Christmas decoration that comes out in December, and only in December. You know what you can take from this? Get some pretty ribbon from a craft store or your stash, and jazz up some of the everyday objects you have in your rooms. Tie a pretty red ribbon around the top of your cookie jar for the kiddos to see. Wind a wider festive ribbon or piece of fabric around a pot holding a plant to dress it up. Twist a wired piece and make a garland as a window valance of sorts. I like to wrap thick ribbon around a bundle of logs to place on the hearth. I stack the bundles up and we just toss them in when we want to start a fire. Inspired?

I have so many blog friends all over the world who do handiwork such as knitting, crochet, quilting, sewing, crafting -- the list goes on. I'm in awe, as I can't do any of these things but I will tell you, many of us, especially myself, wish we could gift our loved ones with treasures we create. So if you are one of those talented ladies, please know you can give a gift that is above and beyond anything store bought.



We tend to get together with family and friends a lot during December. We might have office parties or a girlfriends night. Be ready for these celebrations as well as people who drop in uninvited ... I mean casually. I know there are magazine articles that have you freezing little puff pastry cheese sticks and mini hand-made pizza puffs, but keep it really simple. Have some chips and crackers in your cupboard, assorted nuts, bread sticks and jarred olives. I love store-made dips, like spinach and artichoke, onion, dill ... such a great variety and so flavorful. Keep that in your fridge. No need to slave over it when you don't know if anyone is going to come around and you'll find yourself eating it in the forgiving light of the fridge at 1 am.

Now, the people you don't like ... I mean didn't really expect, are here. Dash off to the kitchen and make an arrangement on a tray, or in my case, a piece of chalkboard on which you can write what sort of cheese or what have you on it. A cute little trick I found was to take a few slices of cheese and make a cutout. Just a few as it wastes a perfectly good slice of cheese, just to make everything look very Martha Stewart-ish. Use a variety of ways to serve your little tidbits (or snick-ie snackies as my late mother in law called them). In the picture above you can see I placed the bread sticks in a glass candle jar, and the creamy veggie dip from the grocery store is in a bright red pottery bowl. Please don't serve it in the plastic container it came in. It's tacky and clearly, you can't claim it as your own. If you want a garnish and don't have any fresh parsley (or edible flowers), use the leaves at the end of a celery stalk. A sprinkle of dried basil looks pretty. Be creative. Have fun.

I'm not much of a baker. I'm actually really bad. I don't like to measure things and there is nothing more aggravating to



me than cleaning up flour off the counters. I would use a wet dishcloth and turn it to glue, forget to sweep the floor and have footprints tracked through the house, and my little black dog looked like she was left out in the snow. Naw, I'm bad. So -- when I bake, I try to make something reaaaaaaaly fancy. Yep. Here's why: 1). I never bake so when I serve an intricate dessert or insanely gorgeous cake, people think I save my talents just for them. 2). I love a challenge because sometimes I get bored with simply jazzing up meatloaf topped with crumbled bacon instead of ketchup. 3). It's still a tasty sort of punishment when it fails in appearance.

But I regress. For years I've been making little gift boxes for friends, neighbors, and the little boys who knock on your door offering to shovel for \$1 and you don't want to admit you pay \$25 to a guy with a plow on his pickup. Give the little dudes a box of cookies.

So my hack on giving food gifts is to make no more than two types of baked sweets, like cookies, fudge, brownies, gingerbread. Don't do a lot of decorating on top because it's just going to fall off. Use food coloring or sprinkles to lend color and some differentiation. Make some simple candy like almond bark topped with peppermint, chocolate pieces, crushed pretzels--the sky is the limit. Dip pretzels in melted almond bark, tie them in bundles with ribbons.

Now you need to get crafty. Get a large bag of mixed nuts and bundle them up in a piece of netting with a gold twist tie. Get some Hershey Kisses and toss them in. Fancy Pepperidge Farms cookies or even better, some fancy European candy or confections.

I found these boxes (pictured) at Michael's and know you can get them at any craft store. I have gone larger in past few years because I like to add some tissue paper to line the box and fold over. This is so simple and fun because you are having more fun assembling the box than you would slaving in front of an oven.



A couple of years in a row I made granola. A lot of people like this sort of thing but some don't. And it's usually a BIG love or BIG hate. I loved jazzing up simple Ball jars with a piece of muslin and a gold lettered top. So festive. If you are going to go through the trouble of making something with so many ingredi-

ents, although very quick to toss together and bake, you need to double, even triple the recipe. This was a hit, and several friends and coworkers of my daughters wanted to buy a few jars to give as their own gifts.

So here is the recipe ...

Simple Granola with Fruit and Nuts (Blondie's Version)

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.

Jane's Simple Dropped Sugar Cookies



I love, love, love this recipe because you don't need cookie cutters, icing, or any extra effort to make them fancy. They are perfectly crispy on the outside and soft on the inside. The key is rolling the dough balls in sugar before baking. The flavor is smooth and buttery. This recipe will become a keeper for you.

Ingredients:

- 3 c flour, sifted
- 1 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1 t salt
- 2 sticks softened butter (1 1/2 c)
- 1 1/2 c sugar + extra for rolling
- 2 large eggs
- 1 T vanilla

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line 2 baking pans with parchment paper.

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, don't skimp here!

Add eggs and vanilla and continue beating until well blended.

Slowly add the flour mixture in and beat on low to mixed well.

Add about 1/2 cup granulated sugar to a small bowl. Shape the dough into small balls, try not to handle too much-

Continued on next page. See:

JANE

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Tips for celebrating a safe holiday

By Charlie Retherford
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency
of Cass County

Greetings! Bah-Humbug! I just looked out my window and “what to my curious eyes should appear?” but sleet all over everything! It would appear that we have already made our way over, under or around autumn and landed in the middle of winter.

Clyde and I already miss the hot days when we spent our favorite hour of the day enjoying a cool breeze in the best shady spot we could find. But always one to find the bright side of a situation, we are now snuggled up in front of the crackling fireplace enjoying a warm beverage.

Snow, cold, the fireplace ... Those things always put me in the mood for Christmas and when I was a kid that was a wonderful, magical time of year. As adults, we now understand how busy and stressful this season can be. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, The Winter Solstice or Christmas, I’m sure you will be very busy and though you don’t always have time for everything.

I have a few very important tips and tricks that really could be a “life-saver”.

I’m sure you have many activities and celebrations on your calendar but keep in mind that all the fun, flash and festivities can be fraught with danger. Here are a few of those dangers and a little bit about how to “minimize your risk” or eliminate the hazards altogether.

Fire Safety

We worry about fire anytime but especially in the winter with the use of heaters, fireplaces and even decorations. We all know about Christmas trees and how much of a fire hazard a real tree can be so please remember to keep them watered every day and keep all trees (real or fake) at least 3 feet away from any heat source like stoves, registers, or radiators. Be sure that you have your tree in a sturdy, supportive stand to lessen the chance of a “Timber!” situation.

An even bigger culprit when it comes to fire is candles. There are more candle-related fires in the month of December than any other time of year and most of us have used them at Christmas. The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) did a 5-year study where they found that 52 percent of decoration-related fires started with candles. Please never leave a burning candle unattended, always keep them at least 12 inches from surrounding objects, and keep the wicks trimmed to a quarter inch.

While the fireplace can be a special gathering spot in the winter, there are ways to keep it safe as well. Never burn anything in a fireplace other than logs. Some decorations, in fact, even wrapping paper, can cause sparks and the smoke from many can actually be hazardous to breath because of the metallic content of “shiny” paper products. This can also lead to a more rapid build-up of creosote in the chimney that is very flammable

and can easily start a chimney fire....or worse. At the end of the evening, always be sure the fire is out and dispose of hot ashes in a metal bin at least 25 feet from the house and remember; all working chimneys should be cleaned and inspected at least once a year.

And while we are talking about fire safety; did you know that closing your bedroom door while you are sleeping can help slow the spread of fire, smoke and heat during a house-fire? On average, you only have approximately 3 minutes to safely escape your home if there is a fire so every minute counts.

Christmas lights are beautiful but be sure to buy UL-listed lights and only use lights that are properly rated for outdoor use, for example. Never attach more than 3 strings of lights together and be sure that you are not overloading an outlet or power strips with too many strands of lights. Always check older lights for frayed wires and replace lights older than 3 years with new ones and remember to unplug all decorations when they are unattended.

Pet Safety

It is so much fun to see a child’s eyes light up at the sight of Santa or a shiny toy but keep in mind that small parts from toys can be a choking hazard for little ones. In 2013, over 250,000 toy-related injuries were reported in American ERs so always be vigilant. Don’t forget to keep all small batteries up and out of the reach of children. Holiday decorations can also be dangerous for young children

and pets. (Clyde was wondering when I would get to his part of the conversation.) Broken glass ornaments are an obvious safety concern. (Did you know you can pick up small shards of ornament glass with a damp piece of bread?) Tinsel can be dangerous for a pet to ingest as it can cause severe intestinal injury.

Holly, mistletoe and poinsettias are all toxic to pets. Candy canes can present a choking hazard and sugar free candy canes may contain xylitol which is poisonous to dogs. Angel hair (spun glass) and artificial snow can cause breathing difficulties if they get into the lungs of a person or animal.

Food Safety

The lack of proper food storage and preparation can lead to food poisoning. Protect you and your guests by using food thermometers when cooking and refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours of service. You can keep those refrigerated leftovers up to 4 days if properly handled. Be sure the holiday season does not turn “sour” for you!

Hopefully some of these tips will help you have a safer and happier winter! The entire Kemner Iott Benz family sends you our Best Wishes for a Wonderful Holiday Season!

Meanwhile, I’ll be fireside with my best friend Clyde and we wish you and all your four-legged friends a Merry Christmas!



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JANE
Continued from previous page

it's delicate. Roll the balls in sugar and place 2 inches apart on your pan. Bake 9-11 minutes until softly golden. Let cool on pan. I added some simple sprinkles just in the center. Makes approximately 3 dozen.

I shared a recipe for Turkey Pot Pie last month -- I mean we can only eat so many turkey sandwiches. This month I have a recipe for Turkey Chili which is simple and warming with a nice twist. I did not share a photo of it as it was awfully disgusting looking. Or maybe it's my photography skills! Enjoy!!

Leftover Turkey Chili
Ingredients:
2 T vegetable oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 red pepper, chopped
1/2 poblano pepper, diced
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 packets of McCormick Chili Seasoning***
4 cups dark turkey meat, roughly chopped and/or shredded
1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
2 cups chicken broth
1 15 oz. can black beans
S & P to taste
Sour cream and chopped scallions for garnish
Directions:
Saute the onion and peppers over medium heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and continue to stir an additional minute. Sprinkle in both packets of seasonings and stir to combine with the veggies. Add the turkey, tomatoes and broth, scraping up the bits off the bottom of the pot. Simmer over low heat, covered for approximately 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the

undrained can of beans during the last ten minutes and heat through. Adjust seasonings if necessary and serve in shallow bowls with a dollop of sour cream and a bit if sliced scallions. Serves 6

***I like individual seasoning packets made by McCormick, Lawry's and the like. They have all of the components you need if your spice cabinet is lacking something. These mixes also contain a little bit of flour which thickens the chili slightly. There are no preservatives and there is not a lot of sodium, in fact, I added about 2 teaspoons of salt. Want to use your own spices? You will need 1/4 cup chili powder, 2 tablespoons ground cumin, 1 tablespoon dried oregano, 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes. Simmer uncovered so that you can let some of the liquid evaporate for a thicker chili.

This winds up my December Christmas column. I'm hoping by now you are almost finished shopping, are sitting by your lit tree with a nice blanket, mug of cider, and a dog or two at your feet.

As always, its such a pleasure writing for Neighbors, and I hope I give you a little something to think about each month, maybe an idea or two.

From myself, Al, Milo & Layla,

*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year!!*

Jane Boudreau is a writer and blogger who lives both in Chicago and on Diamond Lake in Cassopolis, Michigan. Jane writes about her love of cooking, gardening, decorating and everything under the sun. You can reach her at Blondiesjournal@gmail.com or visit her blog at Blondiesjournals.blogspot.com. All photos are take by Jane Boudreau and can only be used with permission.

OUR CHILDREN

18 ways to keep kids busy this holiday season

by **SANDY FLEMING**
At some point during the run-up to the Big Holidays this month, at least one child will come to you with a complaint of being bored. Or, two or more children will need an adult to distract them from picking at and bickering with each other. You need a bag of tricks to keep the peace in the household and to save your sanity!

Here are some great ideas for easy games and activities. They don't need much in the way of supplies: just some common household items you are likely to have on hand or that are inexpensive to pick up. Many don't even need your sustained attention; just set the kids up and let them go so that you can get back to holiday preparations and feel less stressed. Most of these pastimes work for a wide range of ages, too, so everyone can enjoy many of the same activities. Best of all, the kids will be making holiday memories!

I've grouped these activities roughly by age, but remember that many are great fun no matter how old the kids are. Be sure to scour all the lists to find gems for your family!

For the Youngest

Little ones are often the most excited about the holiday, and their lives feel the most disrupted. Help fend off the grumps with these fun toddler and preschool activities!

- Make a holiday tree! Cut a large (several feet tall) pine tree shape from felt and hang it on the wall. Provide some felt decorations, like colorful circles and stars, and let your child decorate and redecorate their very own tree. Heavy yarn pieces or braided yarn can make great garland, too. Your youngster can arrange and rearrange their very own decorations over and over again.
- Window stickies are great fun at this age, as well. Check your local craft store or buy a set of premade holiday shapes made of thin plastic. These will stick on glass and peel right off. Provide a child-sized step stool so your little one can reach the window and you have an instant decorating idea. There are even recipes to make your own homemade stickies online.
- Create some sparkling art. This one takes a bit more time and attention, but the result is well worth the effort. You'll need foil, plastic wrap, a bit of tape, a coloring page, and a piece of cardboard. You'll also want permanent markers in an array of colors (the kind that smell funny). Place the coloring sheet on the cardboard and tape into place. Wrap

plastic wrap over the front tightly and tape in back.
Let your child color the picture with the permanent markers (you'll want to protect the table surface and wear old clothes or a paint smock). Color right on the plastic wrap! When your child is done being creative, trace the outline of the coloring picture yourself with a black permanent marker. Let the creation dry for a few moments, then gently take the plastic off of the cardboard and remove the coloring sheet.

Get a piece of foil large enough to wrap completely around the cardboard and crinkle it up gently. Smooth it out again, and wrap it around the cardboard. Secure in back with tape. Stretch the colored plastic wrap over the front of the cardboard and secure in back with tape.

The finished art work will sparkle and shimmer through the colors creating a cool "stained glass" look. This project is especially forgiving of out-of-the-lines coloring style, and ends up looking great no matter what the skill level of the artist.
• Help the little ones keep track of the number of days until Christmas with a Christmas chain. Make a paper chain by connecting loops of colorful paper. Put a loop on the chain for each day from now until Christmas. Make a ritual out of removing a loop each day and counting the ones that are left. It's a very active and visual way to help your child conceptualize the passage of time-as the chain gets shorter and shorter, Christmas gets closer and closer.

• And while you're making paper chains, remember that kids just LOVE these and can make them at a very, very early age. They are fascinated with seeing the chains grow, and many will happily create miles and miles of it when given thin strips of scrap paper and a little bit of glue. Use your chains to decorate the tree, doorways, or even entire rooms. Or hang lengths of it from the ceiling or door frame to form curtains.
• Have some online fun with this great site: <http://claus.com>. (Be sure to type the address in EXACTLY and consider bookmarking it for young kids to return on their own-there are several not-so-nice sites with similar addresses). This is Santa's home online where you'll find tons of kid-friendly games and activities, as well as a very psychic "Naughty or Nice" rating. It has wowed my children for many years, until they put the dog's name in and Santa told him to "pick up his socks."

For the Elementary Kids

- Have a holiday scavenger hunt!

Make a list of holiday-themed items to find over the course of a day or even the entire season. Your list can include things like a live Santa Claus, a red bell, a multi-colored star, a house with blue lights, and so forth. Modify the game by setting up like a bingo game if a plain list won't do, or encourage the players to take photos of their finds using disposable cameras or cell phones.

• Get creative for a good cause. Find a care facility that would welcome donation of placemats for their holiday dinner ahead of time, or one that has residents who would appreciate hand-made cards. Get some paper (12 x 18 works well for placemats) and let the kids mass produce cards or placemats. Placemats should use waterproof media like crayons or colored pencils (marker ink will run when wet). Draw holiday pictures, make designs, trace old cookie cutters, or cut up old cards to decorate. Add a personal touch by writing a holiday message and signing the child's first name. Deliver them around Christmas time and consider staying a bit to sing carols, play games, or otherwise interact with residents. It's a great feeling to spread holiday cheer!
• Play hide and seek with a decoration. Choose or acquire a special decoration just for this game. Start off with one family member hiding it on December first. When a player finds it, he or she hides it again in a new spot. Whoever knows where it is on Christmas morning can have a special treat or privilege, like opening the first present or choosing the main course for breakfast.

• Write the lines to carols on paper and then cut them apart into sections (a line or more). See who can put the carols back into their proper order most quickly.
• Make your own wrapping paper. Use butcher paper or even old newspaper. Color and decorate it as desired, then use it to wrap the presents.
• Create a holiday publication. Use digital tools or old fashioned paper and pencil, and create a family newspaper, holiday edition. Kids can interview family members about their memories or their dreams, create fictitious advertisements, do a weather report, make some comics, and even do a holiday advice column!
• Hold a holiday Olympics. Create some themed competitive activities, such as stacking (unbreakable) ornaments or filling a stocking with the most items, then see who in the family can "win" at each game.

For Tweens and Teens

- Create a holiday memory or scrap

book. Put your older kid in charge of keeping memories for the entire family by documenting your group's holiday festivities. This can be in any format you like, but it's a serious job, and one that your older child may relish. If you do this year after year, you'll end up with a priceless set of keepsakes, or you can share your memory book with distant loved ones.

• Christmas is a time for giving, so help your child set up a service project that is manageable. It's great practice if your teen or tween makes the calls, gets permission, and generally does the organizing. Some ideas include collecting non-perishable food for the local food pantry, collecting books for local or international organizations, collecting unwanted toys to donate, setting up a caroling activity at an assisted care facility, or making a "coupon book" for an elderly neighbor with coupons that can be redeemed for some teen-appropriate chores, such as shoveling snow, raking leaves, cleaning windows, or helping with pet care.
• Put your older kid to work helping occupy the younger kids. Try having him or her watch a favorite Christmas movie or television show with an eye toward creating questions about the plot, setting, characters, and so forth. Then have the younger kids watch to find the answers to the trivia questions.

• Play holiday trivia games. There are tons of versions of this online and in your favorite bookstores and game stores, or you can easily create your own.
• Research and try new Christmas traditions. Other cultures have a wealth of traditions, recipes and so forth that are fun to learn about. How about finding one or two to try this year? Put your teen or tween in charge of doing a bit of research and picking one or two ideas for your family to try out. You just may find something to add to your holiday routines!

No matter what you choose to do this holiday season, be sure that you enjoy time together as a family. This is the very best way to create those happy, treasured memories with the kids. Take the time to be in the moment with the people you love and don't fall into the trap of letting busy-ness crowd out the Spirit of Christmas! Happy Holidays to everyone!

Sandy Fleming is an educator, author, and private tutor living in Edwardsburg. Find out more about treasuring your family holiday at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wGg9MGfrDM>.

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FIELD TRIP

Oh, Canada!

Last summer when my friend Denny told me about a performance he and his kids Philip and Lorrie were going to play at L'Assomption just outside of Montreal, I was intrigued. The Snyders (as they call themselves) play an interesting mix of blues, jazz, rock and whatever they want (and they do it well!), and ever since Denny played under the name of "South Side Denny,"



I've been a big fan of his ... and when his kids joined, the music just got better and better. Combine that with a life-long desire to see Montreal (where they live) and visit the province of Quebec, and the allure overwhelmed me, so I made plans to go on a road trip. Ok, it was a long drive (and it suddenly became winter), but it turned out to be really great trip, with a lot of neat things to see and do along the way ...



This is L'Oasis du Vieux Palais de Justice (old courthouse) at L'Assomption, northeast of Montreal, where the band (left) played, and where we spent the night. The building was built in the 1700s, and is now an Inn. It is said to be haunted (we only heard a non-existent cat in the middle of the night). Nice place ... and très français.



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FIELD TRIP



Along the way we stopped for a couple days in Montreal and visited the Notre Dame Basilica, a spectacular cathedral built from 1824 to 1829.



We also visited Niagara Falls on the trip ... twice, once on a very cold, snowy, sleety, wet nasty day in Buffalo, NY on the way there, and the second time on a beautiful day on the Canadian side of that side of the falls where our room overlooked the falls, and the first night of the annual the festival of lights ... they even shot off fireworks for us at night.



From the breathtakingly beauty of old world Montreal to the seamy underside of a huge 21 Century city, we took it all in as we drove, visited and enjoyed a good, old-fashioned road-trip vacation across Ontario and into Quebec ... in all, we had a truly bonnes vacances. Merci Canada!



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.

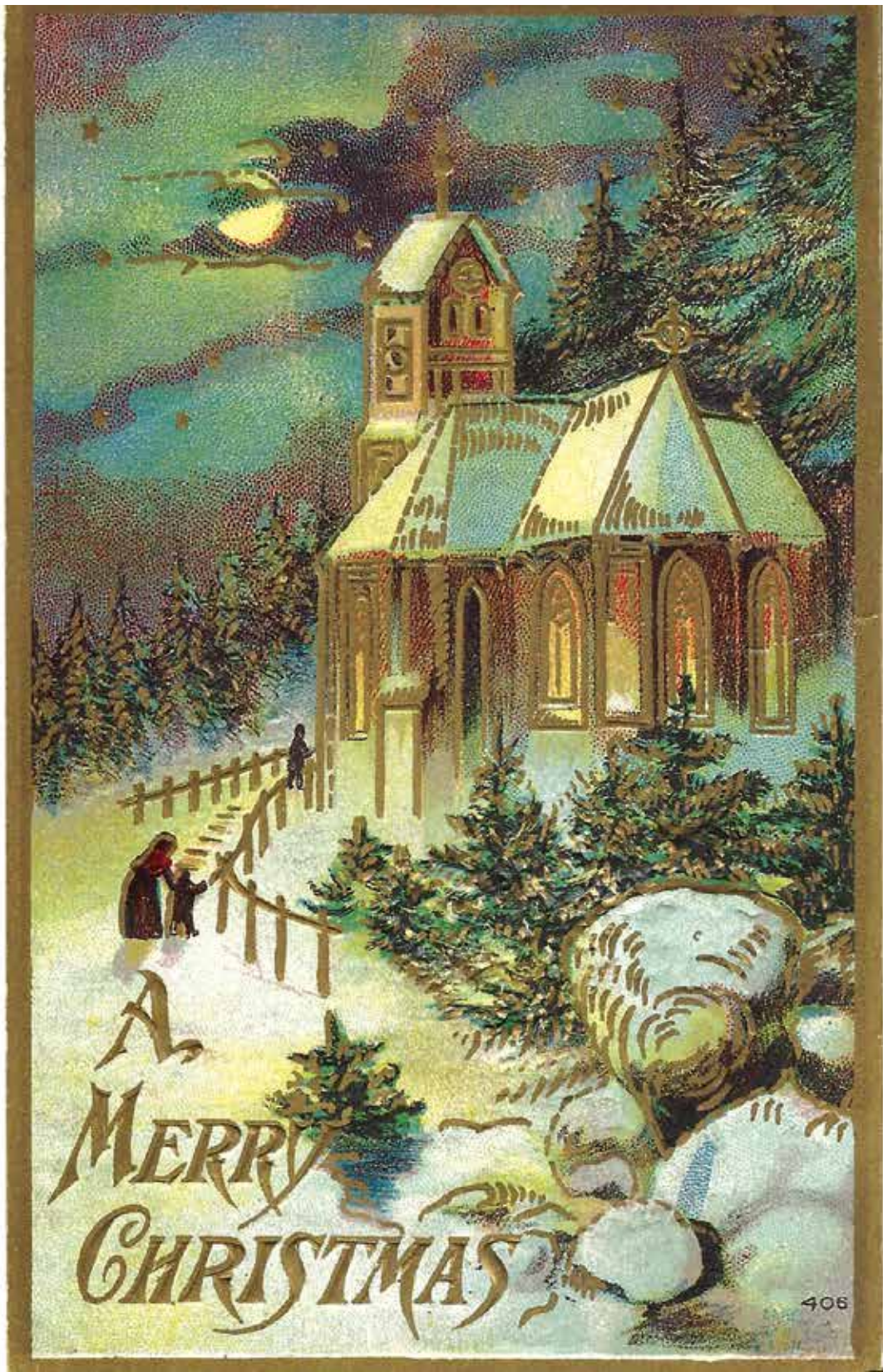
Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

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





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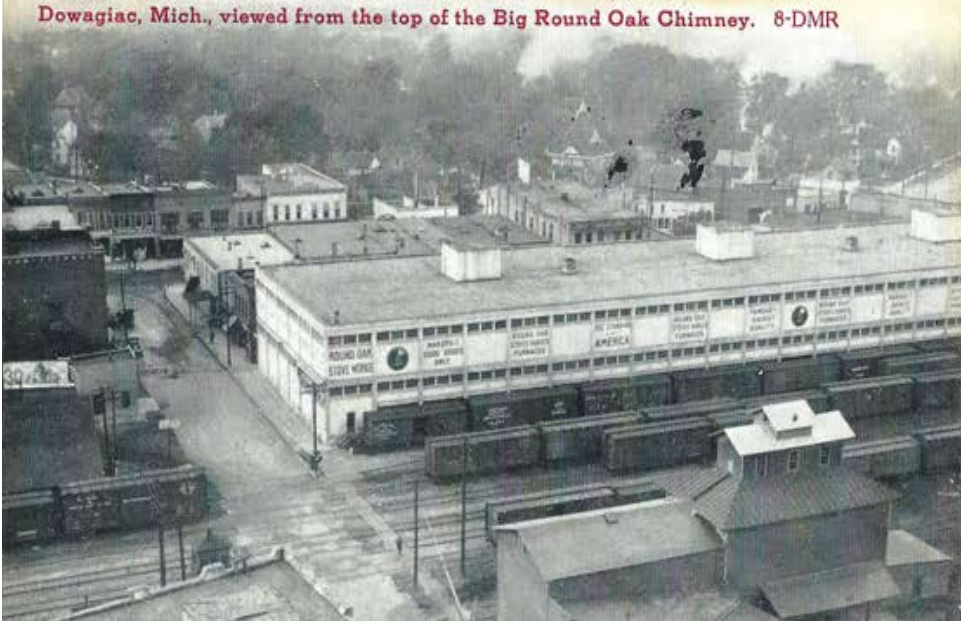
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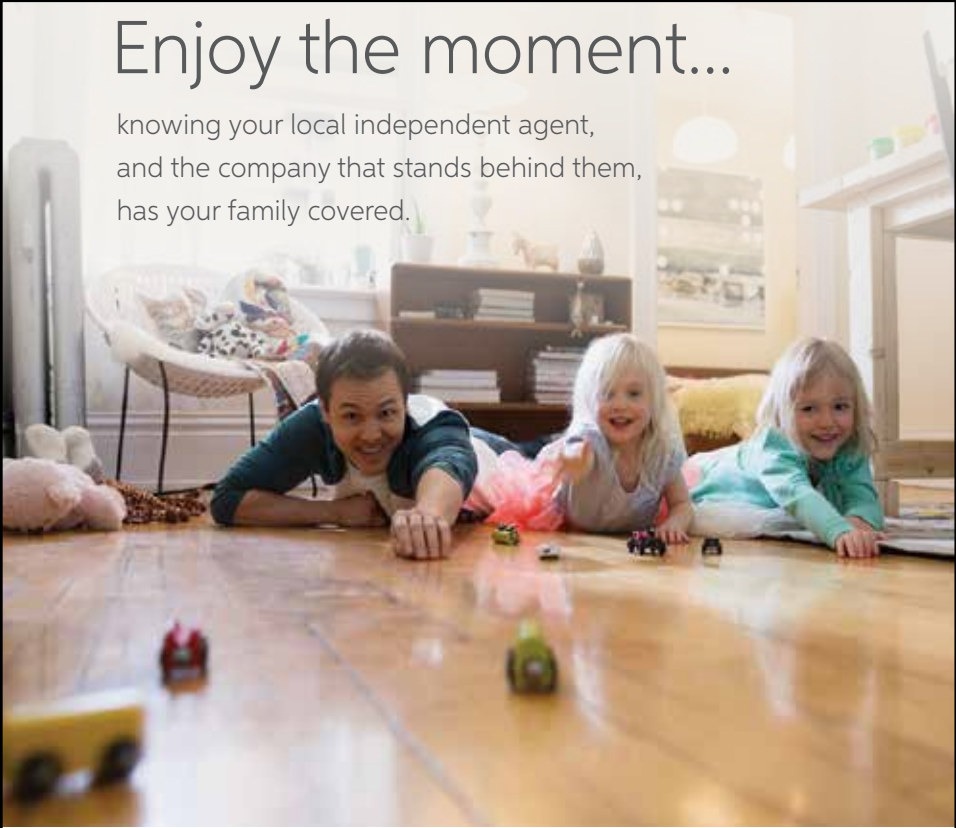
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NATURE NOTES

Late fall, early winter birds

Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch

November is not generally thought of as a month for hummingbirds in Michigan, but veteran bird watchers know that it is when things get interesting! Robin and Rick Maxon of Shoreham have hosted a lingering ruby-throated hummingbird, which has been visiting their feeder for the past three weeks, up through at least Wednesday, November 14, 2018.

The ruby-throated hummingbird in the photo by Robin Maxon is a young male of the species, having hatched during the 2018 nesting season. It will soon molt into its adult plumage, sporting iridescent red gorget, or throat, feathers. The molt into adult plumage will be completed by December or January.

There have been higher than average numbers of reports of Ruby-throated hummingbirds in Michigan during October and November this year, possibly due to a cool wet May and June, which in turn delayed nesting. Relatively mild weather conditions this fall may have contributed to later than average lingering hummingbirds.

Another hummingbird, unidentified to species, was reported at a private residence in Lincoln Township on November 10.

According to Allen Chartier, director of Great Lakes Hummernet research project, a rufous hummingbird was confirmed in the southeastern part of Michigan on Monday, November 12. Rufous hummingbirds are native to western North America, ranging in summer from southern Alaska south to California. The species is more adaptable to sub-zero temperatures than our ruby-throated hummingbird. Rufous hummingbirds live in very cold conditions among the Rocky Mountains, adapting to cold temperatures by going into torpor, being a state of lowered metabolism.

Readers should keep an eye out for any remaining hummingbirds, report them immediately and try to obtain clear photographs.

Another western bird called a Townsend's solitaire has once again turned up in Warren Dunes State Park. This species of thrush is native to western North America, and every fall a few turn up east of the Mississippi.

Kip Miller, chief naturalist at Love Creek County Park, Berrien County, reported a single Townsend's solitaire on November 4. Since then up to two of the species have been found inside Warren Dunes, around eastern red cedar trees. The eastern red cedar is actually in the juniper family, and juniper berries are a favorite food of the Townsend's solitaire.

Several bird watchers from three states have come to see the Townsend's solitaire, including John VanOrman of Grand Rapids who took a great photo of the bird. In VanOrman's photo you can see the distinctive white eye-ring of the bird.

Michigan's first record of Townsend's solitaire is from winter 1957. Over the sixty-one years since the first Michigan sighting, nearly 90 records in the state of Townsend's solitaire have occurred.

Berrien County's first records came



Photos, at top left, Sandhill Cranes on November 5, 2018 gather at staging area along Oak Grove Road in Pokagon Township, Cass County. Brad Anderson of Bridgman.

Top right, Greater White Fronted Goose in Lake Township, November 2018. Lisa Schaller of Bridgman.

Left, Ruby-throated hummingbird, male that hatched last summer, is seen at feeder owned by Rick and Robin Maxon of Shoreham, November 13, 2018.

Far Left, below, Townsend's Solitaire present from November 4 to at least Nov 12 at Warren Dunes State Park. Photo was taken November 7 by John Van Orman of Grand Rapids.

Immediate left, Fox sparrow on November 11, 2018 at Bridgman feeder of Brad and Hannah Anderson. Photo by Brad Anderson.



in late fall 2012. Since then, one or two Townsend's solitaires have been found locally during the cold months, most from Warren Dunes State Park.

Cass County's first Townsend's solitaire was found in December 2007 in Howard Township by Jonathan Wuepper.

Sandhill cranes are once again congregating in large numbers among fields along Oak Grove Road in Pokagon Township in Cass County. These three and one-half foot tall birds gather late in the fall and feed on waste corn left behind in fields, putting on calories for the final push southward to their wintering grounds in the southern US.

Early November is usually the time at which the maximum number of cranes can be seen usually in afternoon along Oak Grove Road, about 1/2 mile north of Kingsbury Road. This location is approximately one and one-half miles northeast of Cassopolis.

Last weekend I counted several hun-

dred cranes at this location, and bird were located on the east and west sides of Oak Grove. Brad Anderson of Bridgman estimated about 900 cranes at the same location on Monday, November 5.

Lisa Schaller of Bridgman photographed a greater white fronted goose on November 5, located just south of the intersection of Holden and Linco Roads, in Lake Township.

Greater white fronted geese nest in the Northwest Territory and Nunavut in Canada and along Greenland's southwest shoreline.

In Berrien County greater white fronted geese appear during late fall, and again in the spring usually among large flocks of Canada geese. The species usually heads farther to our south for the winter months, but occasionally it turns up here in December. Geese begin moving northward in late February, which is the time when the first local observations of the species are made for the year.

Schaller also saw a snow goose in the same flock that contained the greater white fronted goose and multiple Canada geese.

Evening grosbeaks were spotted on November 6 at a bird feeder belonging to Sherry Hilden of LaGrange Township in

Cass County.

Evening grosbeaks are finches that nest primarily in Canada and irrupt south of the border in varying numbers each fall depending on the abundance of food. The species often goes unreported in Southwest Michigan, especially in recent decades, having been more numerous prior to the 1980s.

Evening grosbeaks look like a giant American goldfinch with a large conical bill. They eat sunflower seeds at feeders, often devouring a feeders entire content.

Betty Bongiorno of Benton Harbor took down her hummingbird feeder on October 29, and was surprised the next day when she saw a hummingbird at her butterfly bush. The bird had vanished by the time she got her camera, so the bird will be logged into the records as a hummingbird, unidentified to species.

By late October onward, any hummingbird sighted in Michigan has the likelihood of being a species other than our common ruby-throated hummingbird. Thus, ornithologists require clear photographs of late fall hummingbirds before they can be identified to species.

According to Allen Chartier, director of the Great Lakes Hummernet research organization, a hummingbird being either a rufous or Allen's hummingbird, was present last week at a feeder in the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek area. Both species are closely related and identification to the naked eye is exceedingly difficult.

Please report your wildlife sightings to Jonathan Wuepper at wuepperj@gmail.com.

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LOCAL HISTORY

Spelling contests in Edwardsburg

Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch

Hardships and Incidents of a Pioneer Life in Howard Township, as told by John F. Coulter, who lived most of his life in the area. Provided by Cass District Library's Local History Branch.

The Coulter home and farm were located on both sides of the intersections of Coulter Street and M-60. During the early 1900s, John F. Coulter reminisced about the early pioneer days in Cass County during the 1830s-1860s, which the Cass District Library has transcribed here.

It was in the winter of 1856-1857 when a little harness maker from Edwardsburg by the name of Dilley, came to teach the Coulter School. Dilley was a pretty smart fellow and quite a politician. Had spoken considerable in the Fremont campaign -- was a good

scholar and made the youngsters keep their place.

We had to then get out of the old log schoolhouse into our cozy brick one, and of course were putting on some "airs". Dilley one night had a spelling school, and a few came over from Edwardsburg. We were then spelling in Saunders revised speller, which was not an easy book; while the school at the 'Burg used Saunders old series. They couldn't do much with us. A Miss Colcord who was with them, said if we would take the old "series" they would give us "goss", but we didn't propose to accommodate them in that way.

A few weeks later Dilley had another "spelling", and it was good sleighing, and Edwardsburg knew all about it. And they

all got there near the same time, and some didn't come in as still as Dilley thoughtly they should, so he got cross and everything got quiet.

They came in big sleighloads -- every boy who could get a lady to accompany him got one, and if he didn't have a girl he would get a boy and they would come together and have a high old time. Some came to have a good time; some came to spell; some came to "see" and some to "rassle."

Among those who came were Orville Coolidge and his sister, Helen; Lowell Glover, now of Cassopolis, and his brother, Harrison, I think; Russell Allen and the Misses Colcord and Sherwood, and a great many more I didn't know.

To be continued ...

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THE LAST WORD

Hear the one about the analog watch and the cell phone?



e were somewhere along the south edge of Toronto in Ontario, cruising along at 100 kph (about 60 mph)

when my wife's cell phone (which was held in a plastic, aftermarket cell phone gimmick that was clipped to the air vent in the middle of the dashboard) suddenly began displaying a weird bed-of-snakes-looking image of green, yellow and red lines that represented the highways in the immediate vicinity. For over an hour before that the only thing on the screen had been a single, horizontal green line with "401" printed on it at various places.

Not being terribly familiar with cell phones (and admittedly being a world-class cell-phone-ophobic), I snapped a photo of it, thinking I might need proof that this cursed bane of 21st Century life had gone off the edge of cellular sanity.

Much to my surprise (alright, and much to my chagrin, I'll admit), the snarky, snaky lines coalesced into a coherent pattern that mimicked (in miniature) the freeways, and directed us safely through the maze of intersecting and merging roads, ultimately sending us in the right direction to find the US/Canada border.

It was at that very point in the trip that I admitted to myself (and even more surprisingly I admitted aloud to my beloved spouse) that I had finally discovered a legitimate use for cell phones.

If you are a regular follower of this column (and I suspect there are at least three or four misguided readers who actually enjoy following this printed proof

of my accelerating mental decay), you probably know that I am something less than cell-phone-friendly. I can't even count the number of times I have had bad experiences with a cell phone. Usually I need only to touch one to cause it to go to darkened screen mode, lost data alerts or to switch to some other otherworldly function that I fear is going to ultimately connect me telephonically to long-dead heads of state or show detailed maps of the Bermuda Triangle.

At any rate, to this day I still don't own a cell phone and will only use one when it is forced upon me. Truth is I just don't like them, and judging from their reaction when I'm around, the feeling is obviously mutual. So it goes without saying that when my beloved spouse suggested we use her cell phone for navigating our recent road trip, I was leery. As a life-long traveler and adventurer, I've always made my way using maps, charts and even by stopping for directions (I am proud to say that I am sufficiently secure in my masculinity that I can do that).

But the world has continued to rotate without consulting me, and I have discovered that many of the tried-and-true idiosyncrasies of my youth have joined dinosaurs, Elvis and the Baiji White Dolphin in extinction (and I also discovered that my quest to find a map at a gas station was futile, considering I wasn't up for paying \$12.95 for the damn thing). So, being a baptized and confirmed contrarian, I grudgingly agreed to her proposal to let her Samsung be our guiding light, while secretly Map-Questing the entire route, printing the

maps and directions, and stashing the 68 sheets of printer paper in my luggage in the back of the car as a physical, I-told-you-so, just-in-case backup.

Once I had agreed, operating in similar secrecy, my beloved spouse contacted her cell phone carrier (I thought she was the one who carried the phone, but what do I know) and arranged for her phone to work when we were out of the country. Apparently cell phones know when they cross a border, which enables their carriers to extort money from anyone foolish enough to leave the United States, and you can only make them "work" on foreign soil by changing some internal setting to "roaming," a poorly defined and totally nebulous concept that a user has to blindly stumble across by changing an unlabeled parameter from "*won't work*" to "*might work but it's going to cost extra*." And, if that isn't enough, as it turned out we had to find this hidden setting while we were negotiating a border crossing, flashing our passports, and trying to not draw the attention of a surly, underpaid and under-appreciated border guard who as every seasoned traveler knows, has the ultimate power to detain you for no obvious reason, to search you, your luggage and car, and for whatever reason to look into places on a human body that even your family doctor hesitates to get involved with.

Anyway, we took the cell phone, and ultimately it worked well enough to get us where we wanted to go. I will admit I nearly coughed up a lung twice when it lost its signal and stopped talking to us, both times in a snowstorm in the dark as

we tried to negotiate rush-hour traffic in the unfamiliar and congested cities of Buffalo NY and Montreal, Quebec (the latter being exacerbated when the cell phone began throwing very poorly pronounced street names at us ... in French ... and compounding our confusion by switching to kilometers and meters instead of miles and feet, a system that any American can tell you makes no logical sense and in all cases is just plain wrong).

But, hey, we got there, no dents, no mindless wandering through Chinatown (on past trips we always used to somehow manage to find the uncharted Chinatown in most large cities) and without ever once having to stop and ask directions (especially helpful since my broken, spoken French is about as easy to understand as my written Sanskrit).

And now that we are safely back in our beloved Michigan (where miles are miles and ounces are ounces), I am willing to admit I not only survived the cell phone experience, but that I actually accept that there might be at least one legitimate use for them ... but until a cell phone can learn miles and feet, to pronounce "Rue Rene Levesque," or to prepare General Tso's Chicken to go, I'm not rushing out to buy one.

Of course I never was very good at refolding a map, either.





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