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October 2018

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Neighbors is published monthly from
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REGIONAL NEWS

Giveaways planned

The First Church of God, 21083 Spencer Rd. in Cassopolis will hold the annual "Warming Hearts and Hands" giveaway on Nov. 9, from 10 m to noon in the Hardings, Cassopolis, parking lot. The church will also host the Compassion Cupboard food give away on Nov. 16, and Dec. 20, from 9 am to 11 am.

Holiday Craft Bazaar

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Edwardsburg will host its annual Holiday Craft Bazaar on November 3, from 9 am to 3 pm at the church, 24832 US 12 E.

This free event will feature over 80 crafters, homemade baked goods, unique gifts and seasonal decorations, breakfast, lunch, snacks, and a raffle for beautiful gift baskets. For more information call 476-2159.

CUMC Community Fall youth fest

The Cassopolis United Methodist Church invites all to a FREE FALL YOUTH FEST, Saturday, October 13, from 4-6 pm. The fun will take place on the South O'Keefe St. side of the church, located at 209 S. Rowland St., Cassopolis. Wear your best costume and win a prize! There will be hot dogs, snacks, apple cider, trick-or-treat stations, music, pumpkin decorating, crafts, games, a basketball hoop, an obstacle course, a bounce house for little ones, and more. Prizes will be awarded! Direct inquiries to cass-cumc@frontier.com.

Calvin Township special meeting

The Township of Calvin will have a special meeting on Oct. 9, at 5 pm at the William J. Robinson Community Center, 18727 Mt. Zion St. Cassopolis, MI. 49031, for the purpose to inform the residents of the 2.5 road millage request for 5 years for local road and culvert repairs to be on the Nov. 6, ballot.

Michigan Inland Lakes Convention

The 3rd biennial Michigan Inland Lakes Convention sponsored by the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership (MILP) and the Michigan Clean Water

Corps (MiCorps). The Convention will be held October 4-5 at the Crowne Plaza Grand Rapids - Airport. Registration is open now through September 28. This year's theme is Working Together for Healthy Lakes. The Convention will focus on current and emerging research, policy, and management strategies for conserving and protecting inland lakes. Included in the agenda will be a plenary session with keynote speakers, workshops, concurrent sessions, field trips, a poster session, educational displays, and plenty of networking breaks and receptions.

Session themes include: Invasive Species, Lake Management, Lake Monitoring, Water Law, Lake Levels, Fisheries Management, Public Health/Septic Systems, Lake Stewardship, Aquatic Plants, Natural Shorelines, Volunteer Monitoring/Citizen Science, Water Conservation and Contaminants.

For additional information contact ANR Event Services at events@anr.msu.edu or 517-353-3175. For content related questions please contact Lois Wolfson at wolfson1@msu.edu or 517-353-9222.

Christmas at the Barn Swallow

Come prepared to learn and perform a song and dance. All audition material will be taught at the audition so there's no previous preparation needed. Casting requires children and adults, ages 11 and up. Simply bring a list of schedule conflicts between Oct. 15 - Dec. 9.

Auditions will be held Oct. 11 at 6:30 pm and Oct. 13 at 10 am, performances will be Dec. 6, 7 and 8 at 7:30 pm, and Dec. 9 at 2 pm.

Tim Dudley - Tribute to the King

On Oct. 20 at 7:30 pm., Elvis tribute artist, Tim Dudley, is coming back to Edwardsburg for a "one-night-only" show at the Barnswallow Theatre. Tim has traveled all over the US and parts of Canada with his tribute to Elvis Presley. Two special, guest singers will be opening for Tim: Side Ottman and Jessica Smith. Sid owns Just for Fun Entertainment based in Granger and will be singing some of Frank Sinatra's hit songs. Jessica enjoys participating in local community

theatre, and will be singing a mix of different styles of music.

Tickets \$12 (Adults), \$10 (Seniors aged 55+) and \$5 (12 and under).

For ticket reservations call 269.228.6672 -or- Email tickets@barnswallowtheatre.com.

Deer management program at Spicer Lake Nature Preserve

St. Joseph County (IN) Parks will continue the deer management program at Spicer Lake Nature Preserve in New Carlisle this November.

Spicer Lake consists of 320 acres, much of which is wetland. The uniqueness of the kettle hole lake habitat harbors several threatened plant and animal species. Evie Kirkwood, County Parks Director, says that park staff has noted a decrease in key indicator plant species such as trillium and sweet cicely correlating to an increase in the white-tailed deer population.

The deer management hunt will take place on November 17 and 18. To emphasize deer population reduction, the management program will be an antlerless hunt.

Five hunters will be selected by a lottery to participate. Hunters must possess a valid Indiana Deer License and a minimum of one Antlerless Tag. Applications for the lottery will be available on the St. Joseph County Parks web site and must be received by the end of the work day on October 9. The drawing will take place October 10. Hunter's Meeting will take place on October 31.

In addition to being a county park, Spicer Lake is also a state dedicated nature preserve, a classification given to high quality ecosystems. Review and approval for the deer management program was required by the Division of Nature Preserves of the IDNR.

The decision to implement an deer management plan was based on several factors: (1) the staff observed more deer and deer trails within the park property, and has observed increased damage to landscaping trees and herbaceous ground cover; (2) neighbors communicated they were suffering deer damage to their land-

scaping, but efforts to cull the deer population were hampered when deer retreated into the park property; (3) the staff wants to act proactively, to protect the forest ecosystem and woodland wildflowers within the nature preserve.

More information and Hunter Application Forms are available at www.sjcparks.org

Edwardsburg Museum events

The Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum's presentations will conclude Thurs., Oct. 18, when Edwardsburg Resident Edward Patzer discusses growing up in Edwardsburg, and the progress made on the development of the Not-For-Profit Edwardsburg Sports Complex. Patzer founded the sports complex in 2005 and serves as its president. The event begins at 7 pm. There is no admission charge but donations are welcome.

The season's final exhibit will open on Nov. 7 with a new 10-foot high Christmas tree. The season will close on Dec. 15.

School backpack program

With Cassopolis's Sam Adams elementary students just back in school, organizers of the Food Backpack program are beginning their third year of providing six meals plus snacks, free of charge, each weekend to needy children throughout the school year.

The program, begun in January of 2017, initially sponsored by four local churches, now includes two more sponsors. The United Presbyterians, United Methodists, Penn Friends, St. Ann's Catholic Church, Christ's Temple and Helping Hands are now working together to increase the number of students served each week from 20 in 2017 to 46 when the 2018 school year ended. Each sponsoring organization shops, packs and delivers six meals and snacks per student every weekend for their assigned month. Food packs are delivered on Friday mornings to the school where teachers disperse them to the children before they head home. There is no cost to the participating organizations, as food costs are covered by donations.

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REGIONAL NEWS

The need for food during school holidays, Christmas and spring break, was handled by providing food vouchers to each family unit, allowing them to get staples; bread, eggs cereal, milk and a roast or turkey at Harding's Supermarket, the cost of which was reimbursed by the Backpack Program.

The financial costs of the program are covered through donations from the community as well as grants from corporations and local organizations. Midwest Energy & Communications and Helping Hands in Cassopolis, Bayer International, and Cass County Michigan 100+Women who Care have provided generous financial support.

There will be more children needing weekend food assistance in the 2018-2019 school year.

For more information on the Sam Adams Backpack Program, or to become a sponsor or volunteer, contact Barb Strlekar at 269-501-3402 or at bstrlekar@hotmail.com. Donations may be made to the Michigan Gateway Foundation, 111 Days Avenue, Buchanan, Mi. 49107, attention Backpack Program.

Home School Adventure

This October, the St. Joseph County (IN) Parks invite home school families to join in a fall adventure and learn about the unique adaptations of some of native nocturnal animals and go on a one-mile hike through the woods to listen and look for owls. Round out the evening with s'mores by the campfire!

This program will take place on Thursday, October 11 from 7 to 9 pm at the Hardwoods Picnic Area at Bendix Woods County Park. The cost is \$5 per

person (adults and children.) Registration and advance payment are required by October 9. To register, call 574/654-3155.

Bendix Woods County Park is located in New Carlisle, on State Road 2, 9 miles west of the US 20/31 Bypass.

Business management seminar

The South Bend Chapter of the Service Corps for Retired Executives (SCORE) will offer a free presentation by Thryv, led by Maria Sikes, a digital marketing strategist on Tuesday, October 9, from 5:15 to 6:45 pm at the American National University / SCORE Office 1030 E. Jefferson Blvd. in South Bend.

Thryv is an all-in-one business management tool that helps local businesses save hours every week. They handle everything from customer relationship management, text and email marketing, online booking, and even social media management.

The presentation is FREE, you should register at michiana@scorevolunteer.org or call 574-310-8097

MEC offering education grants

Today's students are tomorrow's business and community leaders, and Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) supports the important work of regional teachers and schools with the Strengthening Schools Grants Program. The program is provided in partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative. In 2018, we awarded 22 grants totaling \$30,000.

Any teacher, administrator or school official in a public elementary, middle or high school serving students in the MEC service territory may apply for a grant of

up to \$2,500 to support classroom needs and special projects, technology, or academic clubs and organizations. School districts may be awarded multiple grants, not to exceed a total of \$5,000 during the annual award cycle.

Schools districts within the MEC service territory include Addison, Adrian, Bangor, Blissfield, Brandywine, Britton-Deerfield, Cassopolis, Clinton, Colon, Constantine, Covert, Dowagiac, Decatur, Edwardsburg, Hartford, Hudson, Lawrence, Lawton, Madison, Marcellus, Mattawan, Morenci, Onsted, Paw Paw, Sand Creek, Schoolcraft, Tecumseh, Three Rivers, Van Buren Skills Center, Vicksburg, Volinia, Watervliet and White Pigeon. If your district is not listed, please contact us to determine eligibility.

The application period for the 2018-19 school year is April - Oct. 15, 2018. Funds will be awarded in January 2019. Applications are evaluated and funding decisions made without knowledge of the school or district, by a committee of MEC members. Awarded projects must be completed and final reports submitted before April 30, 2019.

For more information, email the Community Relations Department or call MEC at 800.492.5989.

Two new invasive species

Spotted lanternfly, a leaf-hopper native to China and India, and Japanese chaff flower, a plant from East Asia, have been added to the state's invasive species watch list due to the threats they pose to agriculture and the environment.

Already found in Delaware, New Jersey and Virginia, spotted lanternfly is spreading through eastern Pennsylvania.

Nymphs (immature insects) and adults suck sap from stems and leaves of more than 70 plants and crops including grapes, apples, hops, walnuts and other hardwood trees.

Spotted lanternfly nymphs are wingless and beetle-like, with black and white spots, developing red patches as they mature. Adults are roughly 1 inch long. Their folded wings are gray to brown with black spots. Open wings reveal a yellow and black abdomen and hind wings that are bright red with black spots transitioning to black and white bands at the edge.

Though spotted lanternflies cannot fly long distances, they lay eggs on nearly any smooth surface, including cars, trailers and outdoor furniture. Freshly laid eggs have a gray, waxy, putty-like coating, while hatched eggs look like rows of brownish, seed-like deposits.

Japanese chaff flower, a plant from East Asia, has also been added to Michigan's invasive species watch list. Japanese chaff flower displaces native plants by forming large, dense stands in floodplains, forested wetlands and disturbed habitat. It currently is found along the Ohio and Big Sandy rivers, reaching counties in nine states including Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Japanese chaff flower grows up to 6 feet tall, with opposite, simple leaves and a bottle brush-shaped green flower with no petals. Deer heavily browse this plant, and seeds spread by attaching to animals and clothing.

For more information or to report sightings of either species, visit michigan.gov/invasives or contact Joanne Foreman, 517-284-5814.

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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

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

October 5 -- Infant Story Time, 11 am on Fridays, recommended age birth-2 yrs old, Children are introduced to stories, rhymes, music, and more. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

October 5 - 'A Magical Evening of Wizardry,' 4-7 pm, Chapin Mansion/Fort St. Joseph Museum & at the Niles District Library, Niles, MI

October 6 - Pie Auction & Variety Show; Performers of all ages and pie donations are needed for annual variety show and pie auction on Nov. 3 at 7:30pm . Contact Karen Hackel by Oct. 6 to perform in the Variety Show,g pairautroupers@outlook.com

October 9 - Calvin Township special meeting on road millage, 5 pm, Robinson Community Center, 18727 Mt. Zion Rd., Cassopolis

October 9 - SCORE seminar on Thryv management tool, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, SCORE office, 1030 E. Jefferson, South Bend, 574-310-8097
- October 10 -- Fall Cards Class, 1-3 pm, Call the Main Library to register for this fun card class taught by Deb Wiggins. Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

October 10 -- Movie Night: Hotel Transylvania 3, 6 pm, Free popcorn and water provided at this family friendly movie night! Cass District Library- Main Library, 357-7822

October 11 - Home School program at Bendix Woods County Park (South Bend, 7 - 9 pm, 574-654-3155

October 11, 13 -Auditions for Christmas at Barn Swallow, Edwardsburg

October 13 - Fall Youth Fest, Cass United Methodist Church, Cassopolis, 4-7 pm, casscumc@frontier.com

October 16 -- String Art Class, 6-8 pm, Call to register for this fun class, limited space available for teens and adults, participants bring some supplies. Cass District Library- Howard Branch, 487-9214

October 17 -- Fall Family Fun Night, 6 pm, Join us for stories, games, crafts, and making caramel apples. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215
- October 18 - Edward Patzer on growing up in Edwardsburg and the Edwardsburg Sports Complex, 7 pm, Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

October 18, 19 - Lubeznik Art Festival, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, Michigan City, IN , \$5/day, 219-874-4900, lubeznikcenter.org

October 20 - Elvis Tribute by Tim Dudley, 7:30 pm, Barswallow Theatre, Edwardsburg, 228-6672

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

October 23 -- Sew What? Card Class, 6-8 pm, Call to register, space is limited to 12 people, participants will stitch part of their card design with a sewing machine. Cass District Library- Edwardsburg Branch, 487-9215

October 29 -- Beaded Spider Craft Night, 6-8 pm, Call to register, limited space available for teens and adults. Cass District Library- Mason/Union Branch, 357-7821
- November 3 - Annual Holiday Craft Bazaar, Our Lady of the Lake, Edwardsburg, 476-2159

November 7 - Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum final exhibit of 10-foot-high Christmas tree. Season closes Dec. 15

November 9, 10 - Annual "Warming Hearts and Hands" giveaway, Hardings parking lot, Cassopolis, 10 am to noon

November 9 - 11 - Christmas Open House Weekend, Dowagiac, 10 am - 5 pm, 782-8212

November 16, December 20 - Compassion Cupboard food give away, 9 - 11 am, First Church of God, 21083 Spencer Rd, Cassopolis

November 17, 18 - Deer management program at Spicer Lake, www.sjcparks.org

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

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

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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- SMC is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, www.higherlearningcommission.org.



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TO YOUR HEALTH!

Healthy Mouth: Window to a Healthy Body

Have you ever found yourself wondering what's the point of having regular dental checkups and cleanings, especially if you feel like you have good teeth? Besides a professional cleaning and ensuring your teeth and gums are healthy, dental professionals also check for abnormalities and symptoms of larger health issues.

Our mouths truly serve as windows into the health of our body. A healthy mouth and healthy body go hand in hand, meaning good oral hygiene can actively improve your overall health and reduce the risk of serious disease.

Research has shown the connection between some chronic health conditions and gum disease. While it may not be clear whether one drives the other, there is definitely a mouth-body connection. In this article we will explore that connection and identify some of the most important reasons why you should see your dentist regularly.

Cancer Detection

Ever wondered why your hygienists looks under your tongue and feels under your jaw and around the sides of your neck during your visit? This brief but effective exam is to inspect for signs of oral cancer and swollen lymph nodes. Oral cancer is a serious disease that can manifest itself in various ways. Dental professionals are specifically trained to recognize these signs and symptoms. So with regular dental checkups every six months the likelihood of catching oral cancer in time is dramatically higher.

Checking around your neck and jaw will help us find any swollen lymph nodes or other lumps. These are areas that do not necessarily hurt or seem out of the ordinary, but abnormalities could be a sign of a major health issue that your dentist will alert to you and refer you to the appropriate medical professional. This brief exam could mean an extremely serious condition is identified early enough to make a huge difference.

Lowering Risk of Heart Disease

Did you know that chronic inflammation from gum disease has been associated with the development of cardiovascular problems, including heart disease, artery blockage, and strokes? Researchers haven't found a cause-and-effect relationship, but the link has been shown in many studies.

We have more than 300 different kinds of bacteria that live in our mouths. While some of these are beneficial and help protect us from disease, others can cause an infection in our gum tissue. These bacteria develop in plaque, which is a sticky film that's always on our teeth,



and can irritate your gums. If left unchecked this infection can lead to periodontal, or gum, disease that affects the tissues and bone that support your teeth. This is the most common reason that adults lose teeth.

Most people aren't aware when they have gum disease. The early stage is called gingivitis and is characterized by red, tender gums that may bleed when you brush and floss. The good news is that gingivitis can be reversed. You may simply need a professional cleaning and follow a strict oral health routine of flossing and brushing.

As the disease progresses, it's known as periodontal disease, and is characterized by inflammation of your gum tissue and infection below the gum line. Signs of periodontal disease include bad breath, puffy or receding gums, loose teeth, and pockets of pus between teeth and gums.

Since periodontal disease is an inflammatory condition, if left untreated it can trigger an immune response in the body. Recent research shows that people with periodontal disease have three times the risk of heart disease and stroke. So treating and preventing periodontal disease can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Link to Diabetes

There is also a link between gum disease and diabetes. Having diabetes can make you less able to fight off infection, including gum infections, that can lead to serious gum disease. And some experts have found that if you have diabetes, you are more likely to develop more severe gum problems than someone without diabetes. That, in turn, may make it more difficult to control blood sugar levels.

This occurs for a variety of reasons. First, diabetes sufferers are more prone to infections, and it reduces the body's resistance to infection. Second, periodontal disease elevates blood sugar levels in the body. Diabetics with periodontitis are more likely to suffer from high blood sugar levels. Lastly, high glucose levels promote the growth of gum disease-causing bacteria.

Reducing your risk of gingivitis by protecting your oral health may help with blood sugar control if you have been diagnosed with diabetes. When these patients undergo treatment for their periodontal disease, their diabetes status significantly improves.

What can you do to keep your mouth healthy?

The phrase "healthy mouth, healthy you" really is true. Taking the following preventative measures can help lower your risk of developing these systemic health problems and may be an important step in maintaining overall health.

- Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day.
- Clean between your teeth with floss or another between-the-teeth cleaner every day.
- Your dentist may recommend using a germ-fighting mouth rinse.
- Eat a balanced diet and limit snacks, which may reduce your risk of developing tooth decay and periodontal disease.
- Don't use tobacco in any form.
- Inform your dentist of any changes in your overall health, including recent illnesses and any medications you are taking.
- And schedule regular dental checkups. Professional cleanings are the best way to prevent gum disease and identify early warning signs of illness.

If you are considering skipping a dental checkup because of cost or another factor like time or dental anxiety, make sure to consider all the risks. It may not seem like a big deal, but oral issues can develop and progress extremely quickly whether or not you notice it. By keeping on top of your dental cleanings and checkups you're doing yourself a big favor in the long run.

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

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PASTA ITALIA CON CHEF DONATO

Spaghetti squash with eggplant & it's Keto friendly!

by Chef Dennis Bamber

Squash season is upon us and here's a little twist to making it Italian Style.

I noticed several people who have lost weight on the very popular keto diet, so I got on it myself. Pasta is not allowed on the diet and being of Italian heritage and a restaurant background, this is my substitute for pasta. You don't have to be on the Keto diet to enjoy this dish, I would eat it anytime.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 spaghetti squash cut in half lengthwise
 - 1 eggplant- ends removed and cut into a dice-do not peel
 - 1 red onion cut into a dice
 - 5-6 cloves of garlic peeled and sliced thin
 - 1/2 teaspoon of red pepper seeds
 - 4 tablespoons of butter
 - 1 can of whole tomatoes crushed by hand in a bowl
 - Olive oil
 - 1 cup of Parmesan cheese, grated



Step 1- prepare the eggplant

Put the diced eggplant into a colander and salt liberally and mix it up.

Let drain for 1-2 hours to remove the bitter juices. After the allotted time, rinse thoroughly to remove the salt and pat dry with a clean towel or paper towels.

Step2-prepare the squash

Preheat oven to 375- remove the seeds and pulp from the squash with a spoon and discard. Place the squash on a cookie sheet, put 2 tablespoons of butter in each cavity and drizzle a little olive oil on the upper sides. Cover with foil and bake for one hour. Test for doneness with a sharp paring knife or fork. The squash should be very soft. If still too firm, bake another 15 minutes. Let cool

Prepare the sauce

Put 1/4 cup or so of olive oil in a large skillet on medium high heat. Add the onion and cook about 10 minutes until it starts to soften. Then add the garlic and pepper seeds for 3 or 4'. Then add the

eggplant and cook stirring often for 15-20 minutes until the eggplant is soft. Add the tomatoes and cook about 20 minutes or more until the sauce thickens stirring every few minutes.

Using a fork-shred the squash creating spaghetti like strands. Add to the skillet with its butter and juices, stir to absorb the sauce, then add the cheese and stir until the cheese is absorbed.

You are now ready to serve in bowls. This serve 2-3 for a main course.

~Boun Appetito

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.



Correction from last month

Due to a production error the photos printed with last month's Neighbors' recipe by Chef Dennis Bamber were incorrect. We have reprinted the correct photos here. Our apologies to Chef Bamber and to our readers.



LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

Happy October Everyone!

by **Jane Boudreau**

Hey, Neighbors ~ Happy October! I am so loving this weather; cool hazy days and a little dip of temps in the evening as the sun goes down a bit earlier. The days of going to the many farmer's markets are also dwindling down, but right now the abundance, and this really is the season of abundance, and variety of apples, pears, and root veggies is so wonderful. Figs are in season as well, I have few good recipes for those little gems. They pair so well with cheese as nice little appetizers. Perhaps next month I'll share some quick ideas.

Decorating with fruit is also fun. If you love apples, oranges and pears, you can make a pretty display like the one above (and don't be shy to buy the faux plastic variety found in craft store). I used an old dough bowl and filled it with fruit, pine cones, and some faux leaves. Very pretty, and if you tuck a few cinnamon sticks in around the fruit, it smells so homey.

I like to make small changes in the



house with each new season. I recently took all the summery pieces off my mantel and hearth (seashells, starfish, a beach sign and a retro tabletop fan) and then added a few little things that remind me of autumn. I like different textures, such as the 'pretend' pumpkins on the hearth, some simple plants in rustic and weathered pots, and a little banner that spells out H-O-M-E. These can be made very easily with pieces of leftover fabric, some stencils and fabric paint. Birch logs in a basket have us looking forward to warm inviting fires this winter, and the earthy colors make us want to nest. So, have you started to jazz up your home for fall? There are so many ideas that you can get just by taking a walk. Gather simple branches in a mason jar, pine cones, and acorns in a basket, flowers to dry. Use old chippy china to showcase your finds. Have fun ... celebrate!

The hydrangeas in my garden are starting to turn from green to pink. In another week or so, they will be a little



es of celery, carrots and a halved onion. These heat up and steam and make for a moist bird. Bake covered about 15 minutes per pound and then remove the cover or foil during the last 20 minutes to brown it well. Let cool about 10 minutes and discard the vegetables. Yum!

Now here is the cornbread stuffing:

Jane's Cornbread Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of crumbled cornbread muffins or loaf (whatever recipe you choose)
- 8 oz. bulk pork sausage
- 1 medium red onion cut into wedges
- 4 cups fresh spinach
- 1 t. fennel seeds
- Salt & pepper
- 1 to 1 1/2 c. chicken broth

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. Spread crumbled cornbread on a baking sheet and bake 10 minutes, tossing once. Set aside to cool.

In a large skillet, cook sausage until browned. Drain fat reserving 1 tablespoon. Set sausage aside and in the same pan with the drippings, cook the onion for 3-5 minutes. Off the heat and add the spinach, fennel and S&P.

In a large bowl, combine the cornbread, sausage and spinach mixture. Drizzle with chicken broth until moist, tossing well. Spoon into a 2 quart baking dish and bake uncovered about 45 minutes. Serves 8

And now for something fun. This is an oldie but goodie that I've shared before. I made this for a party last fall and I had so many people really loving it not only for how cute it is but it tastes great, too. If you've never made a cheeseball before, try this. You will probably never buy another from a store again.

Pumpkin Cheeseball

Ingredients:

- 16 oz. cream cheese
- 20 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup blue cheese crumbles

Continued on next page. See:

JANE



crisp and that's the perfect time to cut them and bring them inside. Display them in a pretty vase (no water) or arranged in a rustic basket. I've been growing sedum forever, and it's pictured here. It turns a soft pink about now and then the color deepens as the weather gets colder. I bring little bouquets in each week as the colors change. Like the hydrangeas, you don't want to keep them in water. These are pretty tied into little bouquets with a piece of ribbon or jute string and hung upside down from a cabinet knob or a wall hook. I love bringing nature inside.

I wanted to share my recipe for cornbread stuffing. We recently made this with a roast chicken, and it was so good. I especially love to roast a whole bird on a Sunday afternoon. In a nutshell, I brush about 2 tablespoons of olive oil over the whole bird, give it a nice sprinkle of salt and pepper (and whatever else you'd like, be creative), then I stuff the cavity with 2 inch pie-



JANE
Continued from previous page

1/2 t. celery salt
1/2 t. onion salt
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 1/2 T paprika

Directions:
Blend the first 5 ingredients with a mixer until smooth. Pat into a ball, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, crush walnuts with the paprika in a plastic bag using a rolling pin or mallet until very fine. Shape cheeseball into a pumpkin shape, a little wider than a ball. I did this by setting it on plastic wrap and bringing that up and around the cheese so it didn't stick to my hands. Once you get the shape you like, gently pat the walnut mixture all over it. Using a butter knife, make vertical lines from top to bottom to resemble those of a real pumpkin. For the stem I just cracked one off a little baby pumpkin I had (I have no mercy!). I wrapped the bottom of the stem with plastic wrap so that it didn't come in contact with the cheese. You can also use a piece of celery for the stem but that's no fun. And that's it. Serve with crackers.

There are a lot of little ways you can create edible goodies that don't require a lot of work or ingredients. I like to melt white chocolate or almond bark, spread it on a parchment lined baking sheet. Top with candy corn and walnut pieces, maybe some festive colored sprinkles. Pop it into your freezer for a half hour, take out and break it up into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

Frost cupcakes or cookies in white. Add crushed Reese's Pieces over the

tops. Dip long pretzel sticks into melted white chocolate or almond bark, then add whatever sort of yummy adornments you want. I dip just half the pretzel rod, add the candies over a large bowl, and let set on waxed paper. I arrange them candy end up in a large jar. They go so quick!

Lastly, I really enjoy this time of year. Bringing out the sweaters and boots, making hearty soups and stews and reading in a chair near the warmth of the fireplace. Our area of Michigan is rich with color as the leaves change. Pick up a pretty mum plant for your porch (please remember that mums need a lot of water. Insert your hose or watering can deep into the flowers to get right to the soil in your pot. A sprinkler or spray hose simply won't work and many of us wonder why they die off so quickly). Add a basket of Indian corn and some pumpkins, treat yourself to some of the great fall and Oktoberfest happenings every weekend this month. Or just take a long walk and smell the wood smoke in the air. Heavenly. And I now give you permission to rake up a big colorful pile of leaves and jump in!

I have a lot of great fall decorating ideas on my blog this month as well as some cool weather recipes. Visit me at Blondiesjournals.blogspot.com and you can have my blog come straight to your email box. If you have any questions or ideas for an upcoming column, email me at Blondiesjournal@gmail.com. Happy Fall Ya'all!

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP)

By Dean Johnson
Kemner-Iott Benz Agency
of Cass County

The Medicare Annual Election Period "AEP" is rapidly approaching and I want to share a few frequently asked questions and answers with you.

Q. When is the AEP?
A. The AEP begins on October 15, 2018 and ends on December 7, 2018.

Q. What can Medicare Beneficiaries do during this AEP?
A. During the AEP, Medicare Beneficiaries can join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. Any plan changes you request during this AEP will be effective January 1, 2019 as long as your request is received by December 7, 2018.

Q. Can I make changes to my plan after December 7?
A. Yes, but with limitations; NEW for 2019 there is an Open Enrollment Period "OEP" between January 1 and March 31, 2019, if you are in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan, you can leave your plan and switch to Original Medicare. If you switch to Original Medicare during this period, you'll have until March 31, 2019 to also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to add drug coverage. Your coverage will begin

the first day of the month after the date of your enrollment. During this OEP you CANNOT switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan or switch from one Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to another, join, switch, or drop a Medicare Medical Savings Account Plan.

Q. Are there any other times I can change my Medicare Advantage Plan or Prescription Drug Plan?
A. Yes, in certain situations you may be able to join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare Prescription Drug Plan during Special Enrollment Periods know as "SEP." You can use the SEP if you move out of your plan's service area, if you have Medicaid, if you qualify for extra help, or if you live in an institution like a nursing home

Q. How are Medicare Advantages rated and who does the rating?
A. Medicare uses information from member satisfaction surveys, plans and health care providers to give overall performance star ratings to the plans from 1 to 5 stars. A 5-star rating is considered excellent. These ratings are updated each fall and change every year. You can switch to a Medicare Advantage Plan that has a 5-star plan rating from December 8, 2018 through November 30, 2019. Regretfully, there are no 5-star rated plans in our area and very few in the entire country.

Q. When can I initially enroll in a

Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage Plan or Prescription Drug Plan?
A. You can join a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Supplement Plan during a 7 month period that begins 3 months before the month you turn 65 and ends 3 months after you turn 65. If you are still working past the age of 65 and if you have Parts A and B of Medicare, you can also join these plans when you lose your Group Health Insurance Benefits when you stop working.

Q. If I am receiving Medicare as a result of a disability, when can I initially enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan or Prescription Drug Plan?
A. If you receive Medicare due to a disability you can join a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan during a 7 month period that begins 3 months before your 25th month of disability and ends 3 months after your 25th month of disability.

Q. Is the "Coverage Gap" or "Donut Hole" changing in 2018?
A. Yes, there are some changes regarding the amounts the enrollee will pay for their Prescription Drugs once they enter the Coverage Gap or Donut Hole. In 2019 you will pay 37 percent of the cost of the Generic Drugs and you will pay 25 percent of the cost of the Brand Name Drugs. Please be aware, by the year 2020 the maximum you will pay for the Generic and Brand Name Drugs during the Coverage Gap or Donut Hole will be 25 percent of the cost.

Q. Are there changes in the Drug Formulary for 2018?
A. No, however, remember that the drugs covered by each plan may vary, so there is no single drug list that applies to all plans. The Formulary includes Generic and Brand Name Drugs, but does not include any Over the Counter Drugs. All Medicare Prescription Drug Plans must have at least two drugs in each category of drugs, but the Plans can choose which specific drugs are covered in each category.

Q. Is financial help available for people with limited income?

A. Yes, Medicare Beneficiaries may be eligible for "Extra Help" if they have limited income and resources. The amount of extra help they receive is based on their income and resources. If a member qualifies for "Extra Help" and joins a Medicare Drug plan, the member may get help paying the monthly premium, the annual deductible and prescription copays/co-insurance until the end of the year. Medicare will let enrollees know when they lose the "Extra Help" status.

Beneficiaries will automatically qualify for "Extra Help" if they have Medicare and meet the following conditions:

1. have full Medicaid Coverage;
2. get help from their state Medicaid program paying the Part B premiums, or;
3. get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits. You can apply for "Extra Help" by calling Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 anytime.

Q. Is the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA) part of Medicare? A. No, the ACA is a program for health insurance for eligible persons under the age of 65 and not covered by Medicare. The open enroll period for the ACA begins on November 1, 2018 and ends December 15, 2018.

Please remember this AEP beginning on October 15 through December 7, 2018 is the only time during the year most of you can join or switch your Part D Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. This is a good time to analyze your prescription drug usage to make sure you are getting the most benefits from your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. This is also a good time to review your Dental Insurance Plan, we are finding that there are many more companies that are offering Dental Insurance to Seniors and some of these plans also including coverage for bridges and dentures.

Please be watchful for the Medicare Scams to Medicare Beneficiaries, therefore, I would suggest that you contact your independent insurance agent for questions regarding this AEP and the plans available in your area for 2019. As always, this is a time to do business with people you know and trust.

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OUR CHILDREN

When Reading Seems Hard

by **SANDY FLEMING**

The process of learning how to read normally goes off without a hitch, which is amazing when you consider just how complex it really is. Young children must be fluent speakers and listeners, understand a host of positional and sequencing relationships, master the sound-symbol code, and much, much more, all by the age of seven or eight or so. When you look at it from that perspective, it's amazing that so many children do just fine with acquiring literacy. Hats off and kudos to all of the early educators and parents who work together to help the kids succeed!

But there are enough children who don't succeed with reading, or who partially succeed with learning to read, that it's worrisome for our society and for our educators. Most of the public has heard about the push to make sure all children are reading on grade level by the end of third grade. Most are familiar with the endless stream of standardized tests designed to help schools and teachers assess their success with imparting knowledge, particularly knowledge about how to read. These things are important, because the research shows that children who are behind with reading skills by the end of grade three are far less likely to "catch up," even as adults. They tend to remain struggling readers all of their lives, and this impacts their employability, limits their career options, and interferes with their capability of managing adult tasks.

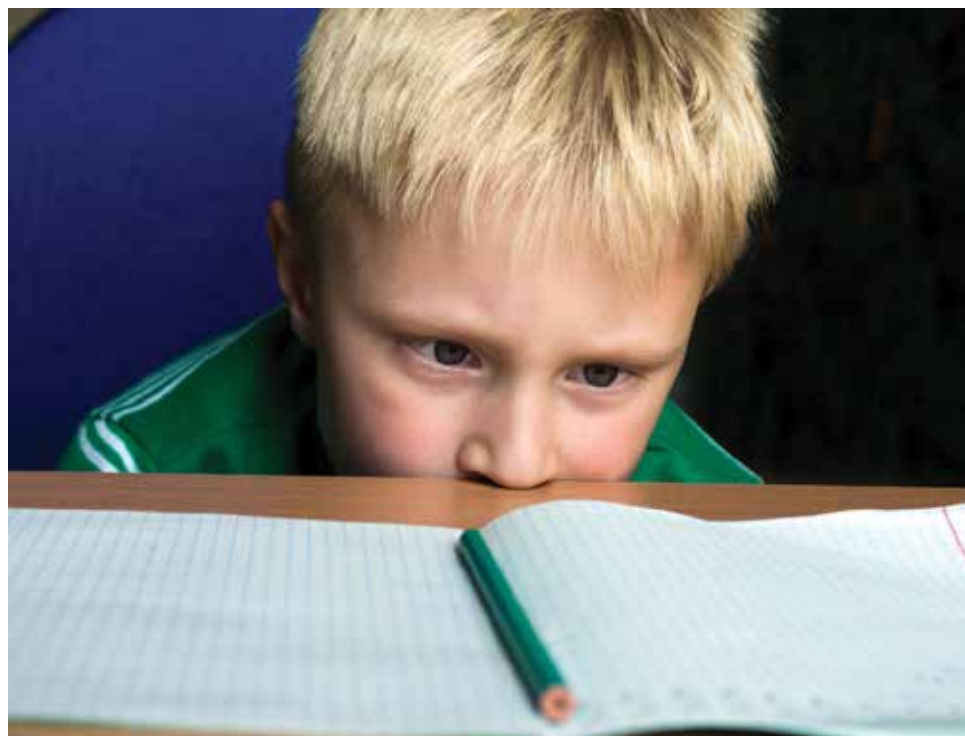
As students move out of the early elementary grades, where reading is taught as a separate subject, and into upper elementary, middle, and high school, inadequate reading skills can masquerade as all sorts of other problems. Children may have lower grades than they should in the content classes, such as science and social studies. They might do poorly on tests though their homework grades are stellar. Struggling readers might have a habit of not turning in difficult assignments. Reading problems can even be at the root of many children's behavior problems, attendance problems, and even physical ailments that could be related to stress.

Adults who have reading problems are often very, very good at hiding the issue. In fact, it is quite likely that you know at least one adult who has trouble reading. There may even be an adult struggling reader in your family. Adults with reading problems tend to avoid reading all together. They may not write things down as most people would. They may use the internet, but rely on word processors' spelling and grammar checks. That frequently works well enough, but tends to leave messages with one or two strange words embedded where the spelling was so far off that the computer couldn't recognize the intended word. And as text-to-speech software and apps improve, many struggling readers avoid the problem all together simply by taking advantage of this technology.

Noticing a Reading Problem in Young Kids

Like many issues, reading problems are most easily corrected if they are diagnosed at an early age. Potential reading problems can often be spotted even before kids traditionally learn to read! Early intervention can head these off all together in many cases.

Preschoolers should be well on their



way to mastering readiness skills before they hit the door of the kindergarten classroom. They need to know lots of words (and lots and lots of words) when they hear them. They need to understand that words are made of distinct and separate sounds, that the sounds can be separated and blended back together, and that letters represent those sounds. In other words, simply teaching kids to recite the alphabet is not nearly enough to be sure your child is on track for early reading. Other skills, like recognizing similarities and differences, spotting and repeating patterns, recognizing and naming capital and lower case letters, learning some of the letter sounds, and uncovering the mechanics of print such as reading from left to right and top to bottom, are also critical skills.

One of the best ways to support early reading readiness skills is to read books and more books to the kids. Hopefully you are providing a steady and varied diet of books to those in your care. If you have concerns about your child's reading readiness skills, be sure to contact a professional at your local school district or preschool. Most counties have programs to assess children's development from infancy onward, and they also offer effective programs or suggestions to families to help them be sure these critical skills are in place before age five.

In the early years of elementary school, there are several facets of literacy development that should be on track. Kids need to learn beginning phonics skills that allow them to decode printed words. They also need to learn to recognize a few hundred of the so-called "sight words." These are very common, high-frequency words that make up much of printed language but that do not necessarily follow the simple phonics rules that are taught at first in school. Words like "said" and "come" show up early in the process. And finally, children should be developing writing and spelling skills right along with reading skills. If any of these skills are not being acquired at a pace that matches most of the children in the grade, there is cause for concern.

Yes, maturity does matter, but it's also very important for parents and teachers to recognize when children are not succeeding for whatever reason, and provide some intervention. Do NOT trust that time will take care of the problem. Often a little bit of the right kind of teaching can prevent a lifetime of reading struggle if applied during this critical time.

If your young elementary child seems to be having trouble keeping up with the school's expectations for reading and writing, there are some things to try on your own. Make sure phonemic awareness skills are intact. This is the child's understanding of letters and sounds, the ability to separate words into single sounds (like can your child tell you that the word DOG has three sounds?) and to blend sounds into words (can your child tell what word you say when you say single sounds in order that make a word when put together?). Does your child know enough words? Continue to read aloud, and try to read books that are a step or two ahead of the ones your child can read on his or her own. And of course, if skills seem to be lagging, consider talking to a professional teacher or tutor with expertise in literacy development.

Dealing with a Reading Problem in Older Students

Once children pass into the middle elementary grades, emphasis starts to shift away from teaching the basics of reading and onto teaching the tougher skills. Children learn about syllables, roots, and less-common phonics rules such as recognizing letter clusters like -tion and -sure. If they do not have the foundational skills taught earlier, however, these lessons are often not nearly as effective. This is when reading problems might begin to show up and when reading problems begin to interfere with other parts of learning. Watch for a pattern of falling grades, poor writing and spelling skills, reluctance to complete homework, poor test-taking skills, and so forth. Most struggling readers will tell you that they "hate reading." They read as little as possible and when you hear them read aloud, you will often notice halting words and misread phrases. They read laboriously in a monotone voice and often seem to ignore punctuation. There are struggling readers who read fluently, as well, but they do not comprehend or recall what the text said.

Intervention at this stage is a must. This is where the statistics say that if students do not get the help they need to master reading at this middle and upper elementary level, they slide farther and farther from the norms and many eventually either give up all together or do not come close to reaching their full potential in high school. If you have concerns about your child's progress, talk to his or her teacher and also consider get-

ting some outside help. Kids become surprisingly good at hiding their reading problems even at this young age, and it's not uncommon for the classroom teacher to be unaware of the child's struggle.

Unfortunately, some children with reading problems are labeled as "lazy" or as behavior problems. Within my experience, children never set out to do poorly in school. There's some reason for the problems, and it frequently is an unrecognized problem with reading.

Be careful how you are helping with homework at this age. You don't do the child any favors if you complete the homework for them or even correct their work consistently before they turn it in. Watch for homework that routinely takes hours and hours, too. Check with the teacher and ask how long the typical assignments should be taking and compare that with reality at your house. Talk to the child's teachers if you find yourselves working on homework for 4-6 hours each evening with barely time to take a break for supper. This is NOT how most teachers want homework to be completed!

This is the age to help your struggling reader begin to learn some compensatory strategies, as well. He or she will likely need some work on following directions completely and carefully. The student will also need to have guidance about study strategies to prepare for tests. Help them understand how to take full advantage of text features in the books, such as bold faced subtitles, pictures, graphics, and captions, and so forth. Read textbooks together instead of expecting your child to plow through a section on their own. Use study strategies such as making flash cards, learning and practicing subject vocabulary, and so on. When reading is limited, studying becomes even more critical than for most students.

Finding Help When Needed

No matter what age a person discovers that reading is problematic, there is help available. It's a matter of finding the right kind of help that will address the underlying problems. Teachers and tutors with expertise in helping struggling readers will evaluate each student and find strengths and weaknesses. The goal should be to teach skills to improve weak areas while maximizing the strengths and teaching compensatory strategies to get the job done on a day-to-day basis. There's no such thing as a person who is too old to improve reading skills, and no such thing as a person who cannot learn to read. If a student is willing to put the time and effort into the process they can find a teacher willing to find the best combination of strategies, the team will be successful. Poor reading skills are almost NEVER the result of poor intellectual capacity - in other words, disabled readers are not stupid. Your local school, the public library, the adult education program, or even friends might know just the solution to the problem. The important thing is to reach out for help when needed for children and for adults.

Sandy Fleming is a writer and tutor in Edwardsburg. Contact her today for help with reading issues by emailing sfleming1235@gmail.com or visiting her website at <https://sandyflemingonline.com>.

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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.

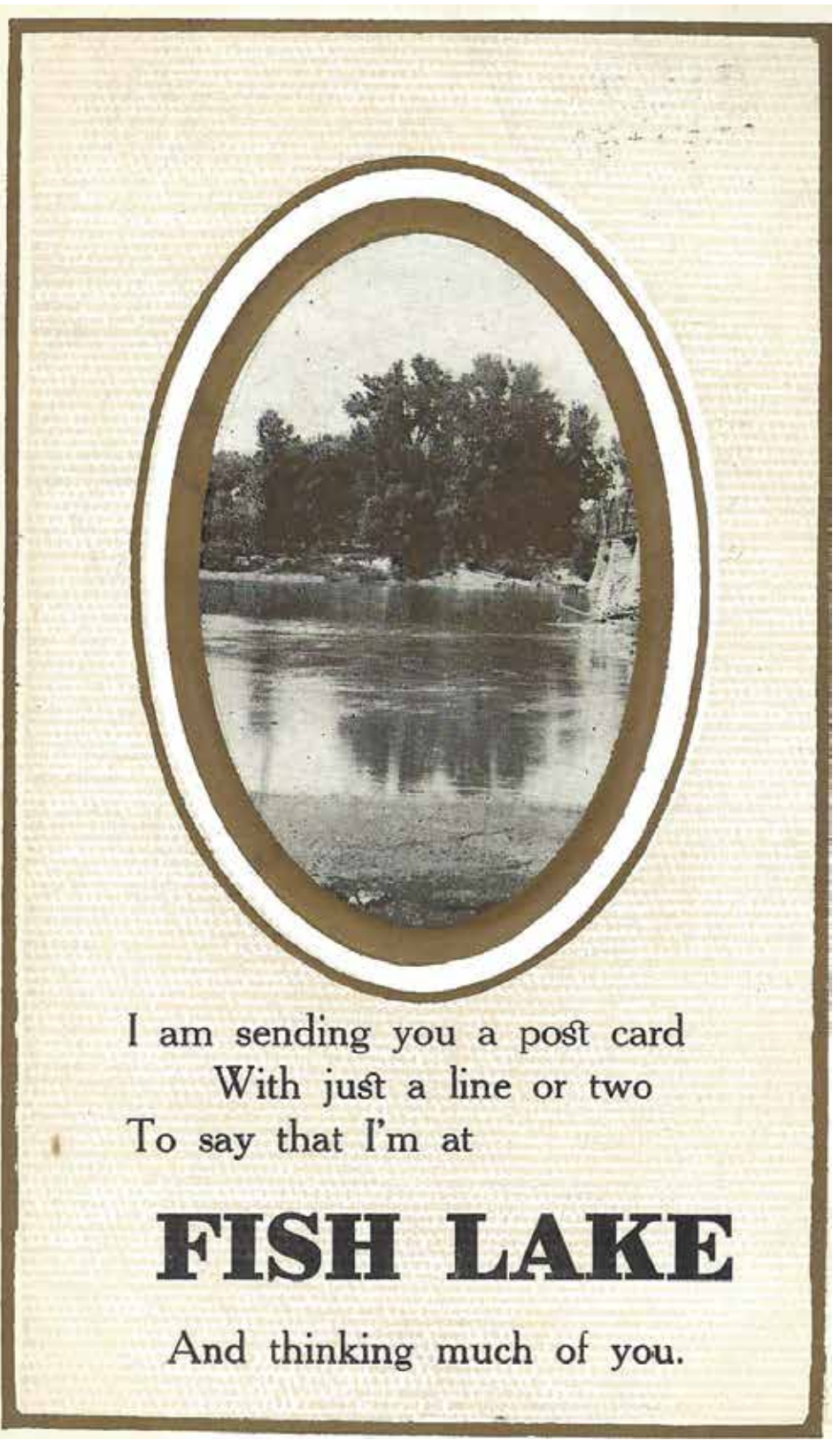
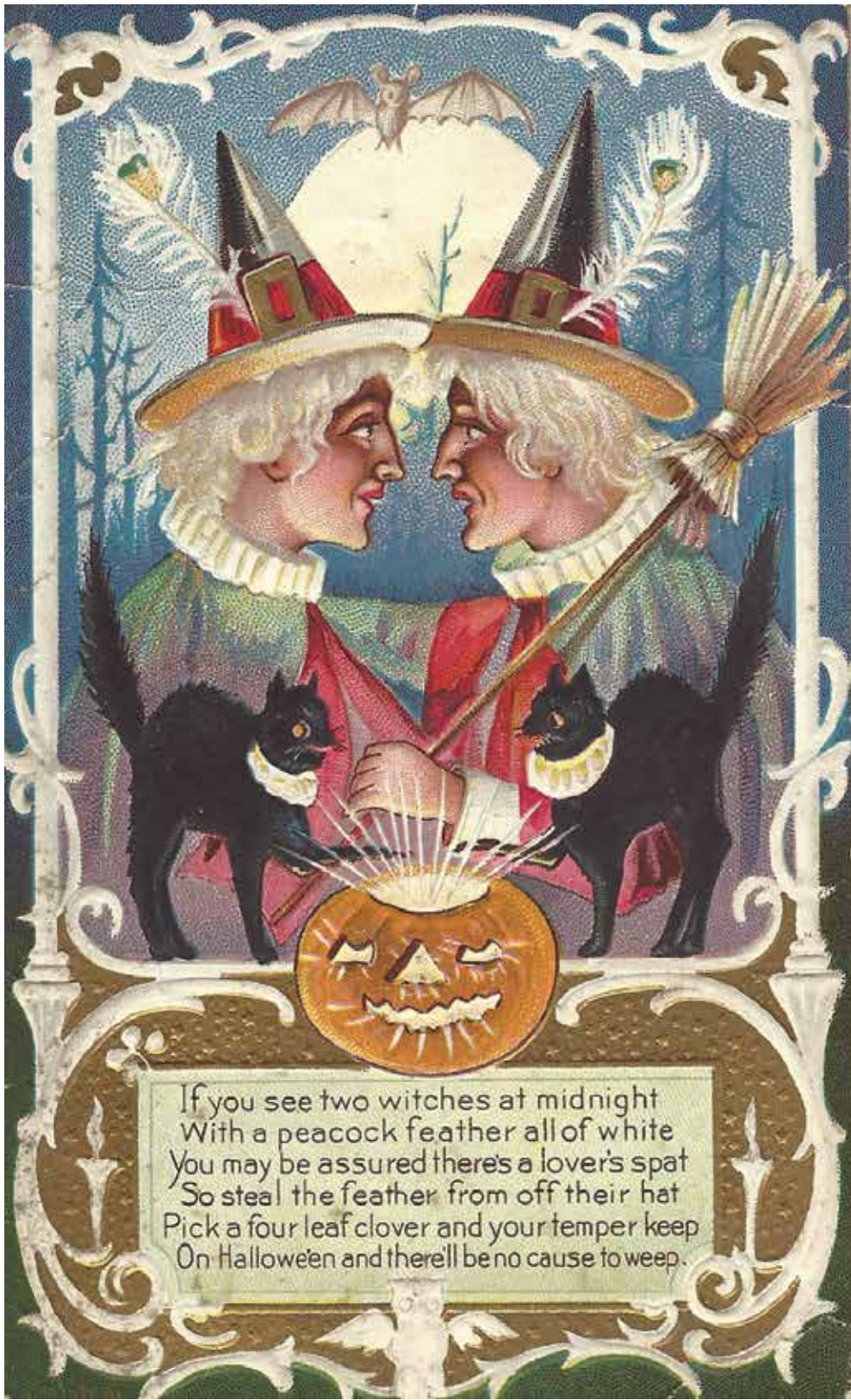
Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

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 Marcellus, 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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NATURE NOTES

Hummingbird, vulture, ovenbird and nuthatch

Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch

A perennial question asked at this time of year is, "when should I take my hummingbird feeders down?". Certainly not during September, a very busy month for our smallest bird.

From July to September, ruby-throated hummingbirds consume as many calories as possible before the long journey southward to their wintering grounds.

Because adult male ruby-throated hummingbirds do not assist their mates in the construction of nests, or rearing of young, they are free to head southward beginning in late July and peaking in early September.

Only the adult male ruby-throated hummingbird has the red iridescent throat feathers for which the bird is named. Young males acquire the red-throat feathers beginning in fall, with the set being complete during the following spring.

Adult females and young of the year begin vacating the northern latitudes in August and September. In Cass County, hummingbird migration peaks in the middle of September, and by the last five days of the month, the species becomes scarce.

Since email has come into use, reports of late ruby-throated hummingbirds, present locally during October have become annual. In 2012, 47 reports of Ruby-throated hummingbirds were logged in October statewide, with 7 reports after October 15.

I recommend keeping hummingbird feeders up until October 10, or two weeks after the last observation.

Brad Anderson photographed a turkey vulture at Warren Dunes State Park last week. During September and October turkey vultures start to form large flocks, or kettles as they are referred, in Michigan. Sometimes turkey vulture kettles number in the hundreds. One large gathering place for the species in fall is downtown Cassopolis, where I have seen around 150-200 vultures at once circling above.

Majority of turkey vultures in Michigan vacate the state by early



Ruby-throated Hummingbird, likely a young male that hatched in 2018. Taken on September 5, 2018 in Bridgman by Brad Anderson.

December and spend the winter in the southern US. However it is not uncommon to find the species overwintering in Michigan, particularly in the southeast part of the Lower Peninsula.

On average, the date at which the last turkey vulture is seen each fall in Cass County is around November 20.

A sure sign that autumn is approaching is hearing the nasal, tin horn sounding vocalization of the red-breasted nuthatch coming from pine stands and woodlots.

Over the last week, dozens of red-breasted nuthatches have been reported along the south end of Lake Michigan, including many in Berrien County. One such individual was photographed by Brad Anderson as it perched on a coniferous tree in Anderson's yard.

The birds black cap, white stripe beneath it, called a supercillium, and black stripe through the eye are distinct features found on the red-breasted nuthatch.

The species prefers evergreen trees and is a common nesting species in Canada south into the northern part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

In Berrien County, red-breasted nuthatches are found very infrequently during June and July almost always

along the Lake Michigan shoreline in evergreens. Individuals from the north migrate into our area in the fall, with an average arrival date of August 24. During some years the influx of red-breasted nuthatches is greater than in others, correlating with the depletion of coniferous seeds in the north.

During the summer months the species feeds mainly on insects but transitions to seeds as autumn progresses. Although the red-breasted nuthatch is closely related to chickadees, they often irrupt southward with crossbills, pine siskins, redpolls and evening grosbeaks.

Red-breasted nuthatches, white-breasted nuthatches, black-capped chickadees and tufted titmice all visit feeders and take one sunflower seed at a time away from the feeder before consuming it. They never sit at a feeder for more than a few seconds.

Brad Anderson also sent in a photo of an ovenbird as it sat dazed on a deck after hitting a patio window last week. Anderson says the bird regained its flight, apparently unharmed after about fifteen minutes of rest.

Ovenbirds are a species of wood warbler that are quite common in the Northern Lower Peninsula, northward into Canada during the summer months.



At top: Turkey vulture in flight over Warren Dunes State Park on September 16, 2018. Brad Anderson.

Above left: An ovenbird recovers on the deck of Brad and Hannah Anderson of Bridgman after hitting the window. Brad Anderson.

Ovenbirds are a species of wood warbler heading south

Above right: Red-breasted nuthatch sits on a limb in Bridgman, September 8, 2018. Brad Anderson.

A few nest in large forest tracts in the Southern Lower Peninsula including Warren Woods State Park.

The ovenbird that hit the Anderson's window is heading south to its wintering grounds of Florida, the West Indies, Mexico and Central America. Most ovenbirds clear out of our area by the end of September, with a few lingering migrants until October 10.

Oddly, Michigan has 19 winter records of this long distant migrant from 1961-2013, with 2 winter records from Berrien County. One was seen on December 8, 1973 at Andrews University and another from 4-7 January, 2013 in Shoreham. There are no winter records of ovenbird for Cass County, Michigan.

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

LOCAL HISTORY

A letter from Abraham Lincoln

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.

Over the past several months, excerpts of Cass County pioneer John Coulter's recollections of the early days in Howard Township have been featured.

John Coulter lived in Howard township, but used the nearest post office, located in Niles Michigan. Niles was the social hub for the mid-19th

Century rural population of southwest Cass County. It was likely there that Coulter read in a newspaper about Abraham Lincoln securing the Republican party nomination in June 1860.

On August 29, 1860 that Coulter wrote to Abraham Lincoln, presumably asking about Lincoln's experience in public office in the Illinois legislature and US House of Representatives.

We will never know the precise contents of the letter Coulter wrote to Lincoln as it has been lost. However the reply written by Lincoln to Coulter survived long enough to be transcribed by the St. Joseph Daily Press on October 21, 1910, which ran a story on the Coulter-Lincoln correspondence.

The letter, which appears verbatim below, is the only known surviving document which Abraham Lincoln addressed to anyone in Berrien or Cass Counties.

**Private John Coulter, Esq
Springfield, Ills --**

Dear Sir: Sept. 4. 1860

Yours of the 29th. I received; and I presume I understand what has prompted you to write it. In 1832 I was first a candidate for the Legislature, with some ten or a dozen other candidates. Peter Cartwright, and three others were elected, of whom I was not one. In 1834 he, and I, and several others, again become candidates; he declined before the election, I saw the race through, and, with three others, was elected. In 1835 he became a candidate to fill a vacancy in the State Senate, and his sole competitor, Job Fletcher, beat him by near six hundred majority.

In 1836, 1838, & 1840, I was successively elected to the Legislature -- he not being a candidate at either of those elections.

I then ceased to be a candidate for anything till 1846, when I ran for Congress. Mr. Cartwright was my competitor, and I beat him, as I recollect 1511 majority, being about double the party majority of the District.

I was never a candidate for congress at any other time, and never had any contest with Mr. Cartwright other than as I have stated.

Please do not make this public.

**Yours truly,
A. LINCOLN**

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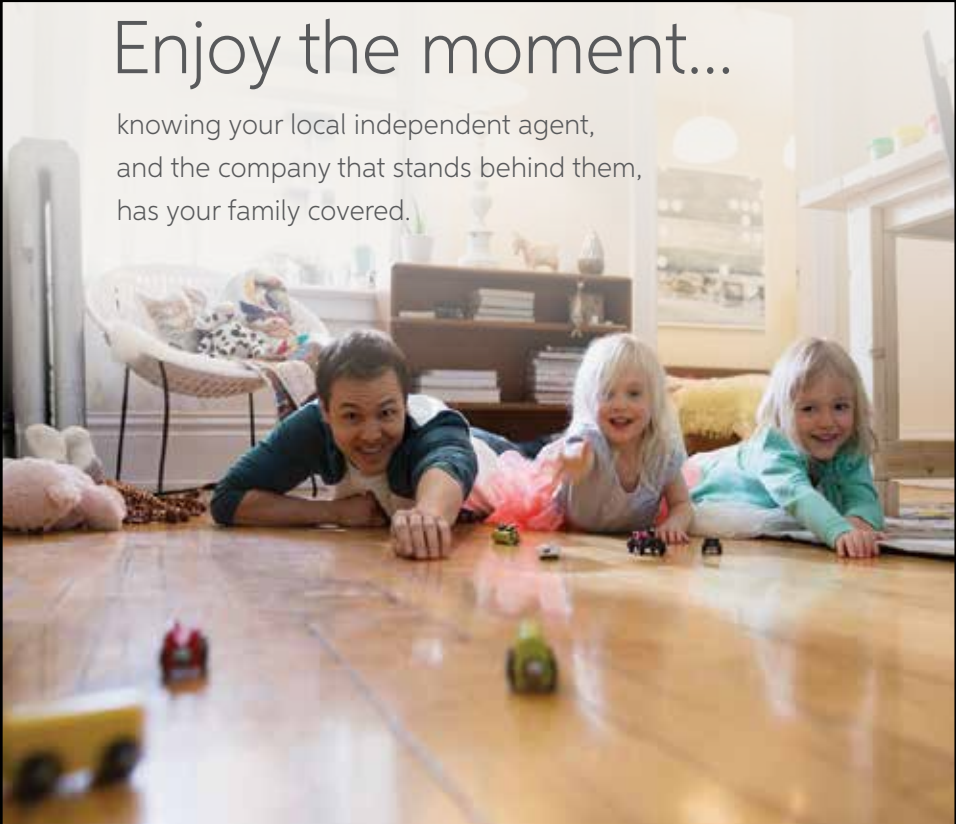
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THE LAST WORD

Have you heard about mixed blessings?



As a matter of course I guess I had just gotten used to apologizing for my lousy, age-induced hearing loss. And like thousands of old people everywhere, as a matter of course (and as a matter of stubborn pride), I had resisted doing anything to correct it.

Contrary to prevailing wisdom, most people my age don't eschew hearing aids because of vanity. When you get my age, the pot belly, white hair, wrinkles, bald spot and shuffling walk pretty much take us over the top when it comes to vanity issues. In fact, I'm 99.9 percent sure that even though the good looking checkout girl at the supermarket smiled at me, she doesn't really have a secret desire to start a passionate affair with a slovenly old dotard who had to ask her three times how much the groceries were.

Vanity aside, there were other factors in play in my reluctance.

First of all was good-natured denial.

No, I heard you fine, I was just ignoring you. I don't really care what you have to say anyway!

I think you were making the mistake of talking into the ear that stuff's supposed to out of ... as in "in one ear and out the other ...

Doesn't everyone keep the TV volume setting at MAX ... you know how quiet all of the actors talk when they switch to a commercial!

Added to that, hearing aids are expensive. Expensive enough that the hand that automatically covers my wallet when anything medical is discussed got

even more hyper-sensitive when I went on Medicare you see, Medicare won't have anything to do with the cost of hearing aids. Seems that the cabal of governmental overseers, doctors, and insurance companies (the people who really decide what medical care we can have and how much we have to pay for it), in their infinite wisdom (ok, that's an oxymoron) agreed that poor hearing, like bad teeth and vision are not real "medical" problems that affect our health ... so we really don't need them and they refuse to pay for any of them.

When I first heard their logic, my answer was what everyone expected.

"I'm sorry, I didn't catch that ... what did you say?"

"Nine bajillion dollars, give or take a few cents," was the reply I heard.

Hard to miss a reply like that, even when you can't hear a train wreck ... but also pretty easy to ignore for a long time.

"Huh?" is much more palatable to say than "no problem, here's the money, since I'd much rather spend money to hear the Geico lizard on TV than eat dinner tonight ... or ever again."

So like cell phones offers, time share vacation properties and phone solicitors with great rates on credit cards, I just said "NO." I guess I resisted as a combination of financial protest, personal pride, and simple cantankerousness.

Instead, I turned the TV up louder and say "huh" a lot, both of which infuriated my wife and irritated the heck out of my neighbors.

Until one day *they* rebelled.

I guess you could call it an interven-

tion of sorts, but one day after a neighbor had a good experience with a hearing aid company, another neighbor decided she was going to make an appointment for me ... then a third neighbor sent me a link to a website or thirty ... and then my wife asked, point blank, "have you gone to that appointment yet?"

I was trapped. Resistance was futile. No amount of crustiness or foot dragging was going to work. It was time.

But in the back of my mind I thought, I'll show them! I'll go and get checked and they'll see, the darn things won't work on me! I'll never use them!

But much to my surprise, they did. And I did. And just like that, I could hear again.

For a while I loved being able to hear the birds singing in the morning and the cicadas and crickets chirring away the afternoon. I loved being able to hear the wind chimes melodiously tinkling in the breeze and the sound of slamming car doors heralding visitors. For a while.

But now, even though I still like hearing some things, I'm realizing it's something of a mixed blessing.

Sure, I love hearing the rain rattling the roof and the wind whistling across the lake ... but not so much the rustling of the leaves as they blow across the drive and pile up in the corner by the steps and across the lawn where I'm going to have to rake them up and get rid of them in hours of back-aching, cal-lous-making, yard-raking, plain bad luck.

And I love being able to carry on a conversation with my wife in a restaurant or bar, but I hate it when we argue

(especially when she's right), and I really hate it when the waiter cha-chings the cash register total and slam-swipes my whimpering credit card into a pitiful, simpering pile of molten plastic.

And though I love being able to hear the contented sighs and occasional whimpers as my dog wanders through her puppy-like dreams beside the bed, I'm not so happy to hear her whimpering at 5 am to get me to go out with her in the rain so she can spend 15 minutes sniffing every puddle and wet blade of grass the neighbor's dog passed the night before.

And while I love hearing the chants and songs of my angelic grandchildren, not so much so when their gentle voice turn to banshee-squeals as they summon their mother with a repeated chorus of "he started it ... No, she hit me first."

In fact, it's gotten to the point where I almost wish there was a big "OFF" switch ... so I could mute things like the idiot box (why in the world does everyone else in the house need the damn thing blaring like that, especially when there's so little worth watching anyway?).

And I wish I could go back to ignoring those "helpful" hints about where I left my dirty socks (beside the bed, of course) or the reminders that the flapper on the toilet needs to be replaced again, or the deck furniture needs to be put away before it snows ...

And while I enjoy being able to hear most voices again, I hope I don't start hearing "*those*" voices again ... you know, the ones my wife is always jealous of because they only talk to me.

Hee, hee, hee.

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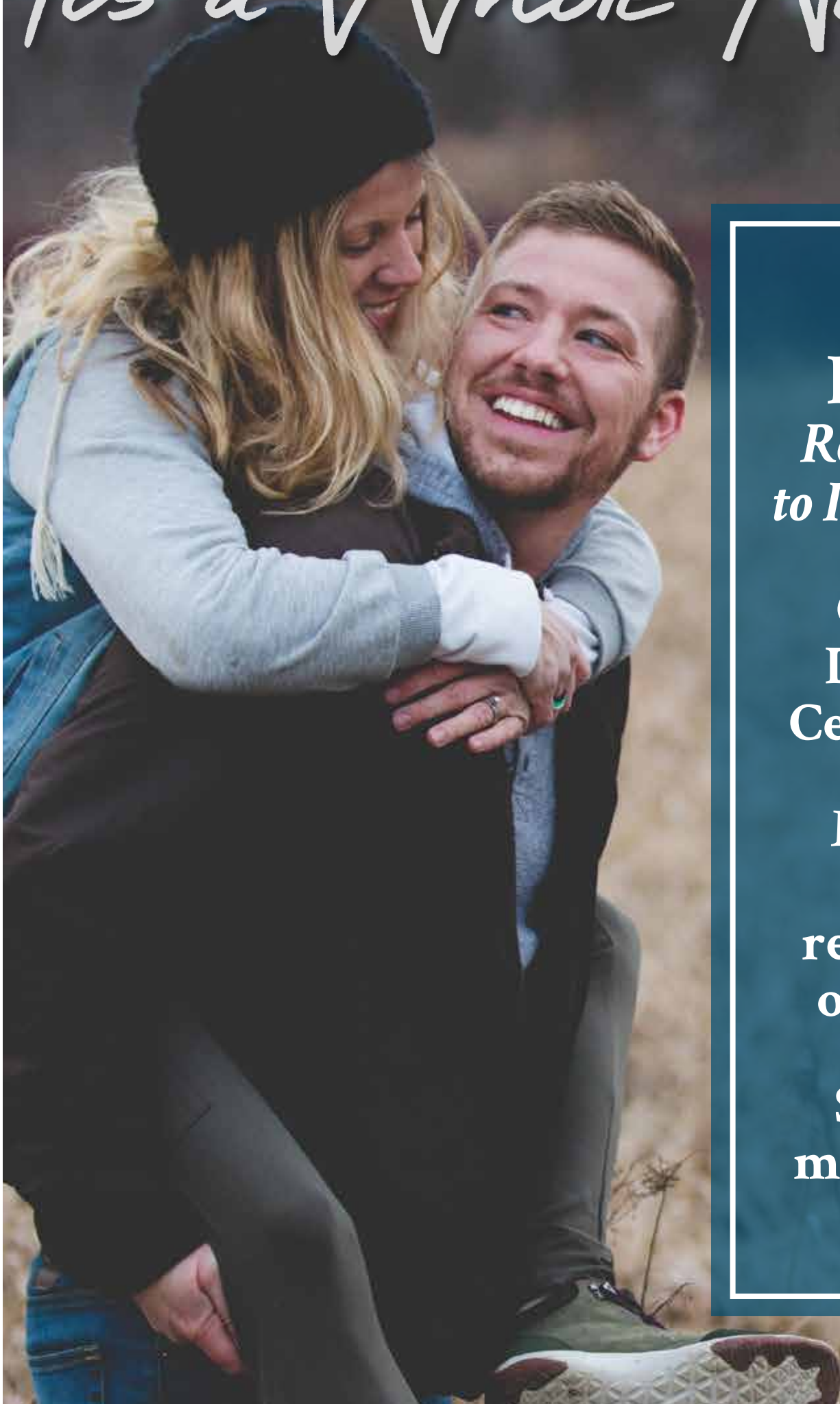
by showing even more of our traditions. More items are made from scratch, and we are putting a little more love into the food and service. We added new menu items, offering healthier choice options, gave the kid's menu more thought, and are doing new, exciting specials. Follow us on Facebook to see the National Food Holiday's we are celebrating. It's a new twist on our classic menu, giving our guests something to try in a fun way.

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