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Neighbors

<http://www.cassneighbors.com>

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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Neighbors is published monthly from March through December.

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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Editor's Note: In light of the precautions and restrictions that have arisen during the coronavirus pandemic, many local and regional events have been changed, postponed or canceled. Check with organizers prior to attending event.

Known postponements, closings changes and cancellations:

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that **ALL MICHIGAN SCHOOLS** would close until at least April 13. Additionally, many schools have officially canceled **ALL SCHOOL SPORTING EVENTS** scheduled through April 1. Gov. Whitmer has also temporarily shut down **ALL BARS AND RESTAURANTS**. Restaurants are still permitted to prepare food for carry-out and delivery service, and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer ordered all **BARBERSHOPS, HAIR, NAIL AND TANNING SALONS AND OTHER NON-ESSENTIAL PERSONAL CARE BUSINESSES** to close through April 13. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources announced that it is closing multiple areas until at least April 13 including **STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS, OVERNIGHT LODGING FACILITIES AND SHELTERS**. State parks and recreation areas will remain open to provide residents with opportunities to get outdoors, as long as all visitors follow proper social distancing of at least 6 feet between yourself and another person.

CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT FACILITIES will be implementing enhanced access changes in response to the Governor's Emergency Declarations and Executive Orders. All Essential Services will Continue. If you have an emergency, dial 911.

The **CASS COUNTY BUILDING** will be closed to public access without advance appointments via phone to each office. Residents are

encouraged to make use of this Website both for updates and for conducting of business. A drop box for payments and further guidance will be available outside the entrance.

The **CASS COUNTY LAW AND COURTS BUILDING** will allow limited Public Access. People with business before the Courts are encouraged call in advance.

All **CASS DISTRICT LIBRARIES** are closed until at least April 5, but that could extend longer due to the outbreak. The library has canceled almost all upcoming programs.

The **CASS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING (COA)** will be closed until (hopefully) Monday, April 6, but will re-assess as we get closer to that date. The COA will continue to provide essential services during this time, including Meals, In-Home Care, Medical Transportation, and Adult Day Services.

THE CASS COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION is closed, but open for essential services: www.casscoroad.com

The Cass County Parks Department announced the cancellation of the **SPRING EGG-STRAVAGANZA** event which was originally scheduled for April 4th at Dr. T.K. Lawless Park.

THE STAR PARTY AND CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY DESIGNATION OF LAWLESS PARK, originally scheduled for April 24-26 has also been postponed to a date that will be announced later. For more information, call Scott Wyman, Cass County Parks Director at 445-4456.

CASS COUNTY 4-H AUCTION AND NELSON DINNER FUND-

RAISER has been postponed until May 30, 2020. Dinner ticket refunds will be offered for those who cannot make it to the new date

MIDWEST ENERGY has announced the closing of its lobbies at all district service centers effective. The Cassopolis drive-through remains open for regular business hours. If you have a special need, call 800.492.5989.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES will cancel, postpone or adjust several public meetings and events. Visit the DNR closures webpage (<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr>) for information.

Also, all events at the **DEBARTOLO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER** at Notre Dame are canceled at least through May 10

The weekday **SOUTH SHORE LINE** train schedule, available at mysouthshoreline.com, will have fewer trains overall but service focused in the morning and afternoon rush hours. The new schedule will be in effect until further notice. Weekend schedules are not affected at this time.

Please check on the following previously scheduled events:

April 17-26 - Happy Little 5k/Run for the Trees virtual race, \$34, michigan.gov/dnr

May 1, 2 - Michigan Lakes and Streams Association's 59th Annual Conference: Protecting Michigan's Lakes and Streams, Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, <http://www.mymlsa.org>

May 22 - Dowagiac Community-wide Garage Sale weekend, 8 am - 5 pm 782-8212

May 25 - Dowagiac Memorial Day Parade, 10:30 am - noon, 782-8212

June 3 - Dowagiac Farm & Artisan Market, 9 am - 2 pm, 782-8212

June 6 - Porter Township Cleanup Day, 8 am - noon, American Waste, Union, 641-2375

June 13 - Diamond Lake Annual Public Meeting (all lake residents welcome), 10 11:30 am at the Diamond Lake Yacht Club

June 19, 20 - Diamond Lake All-Lake Garage Sale, 9 - 2 pm on Friday; 9 am -noon Saturday

July 4 - Diamond Lake Association Fireworks, Firework's Island, Rain/Wind delay date will is Sunday July 5

July 17, 18- Summer in the City Festival, 10 am - 5 pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212

July 25 -Steve's Run, 9 am - 1 pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212

August 2 - August 8 - Cass County 4H Fair, Fairgrounds, Cassopolis

August 15 - Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show, 7 am - 4 pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212

August 29 - Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow, 9 am, Dowagiac, 782-8212

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

November 13, 14 - Christmas Open House Weekend, 10 am - 5 pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212

November 28 - Small Business Saturday, 10 am - 11pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212

December 4 - Candle-light Christmas Parade, 7 - 9 pm, Dowagiac, 782-8212



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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

There's nothing 'normal' about it ...

by **Jane Boudreau**

Hello Neighbors! I'd normally say Happy Spring, but the past few weeks have been anything but normal. I hope everyone is staying safe, and I send good wishes to you and everyone you know who may have contracted the coronavirus. The world has turned into a very unimaginable place...we are trying to navigate our way with so much uncertainty. I don't think there is much more I can add that hasn't already been said. Practice good hygiene, stay at home as much as possible and accordingly with state and government mandates, and keep a look out for anyone you know who is at a high risk and needs help.

So this isn't the best time to talk butterflies and gardens, but our lives are going on, the sun is going to shine, and being positive is actually a healthy thing. In spite of being a little chirpy, I'm actually pretty much a homebody. I also tend to be lazy so having all this time in one place gives me ample time to work on projects and squeeze in a few naps or hours on Netflix. But I've taken some time to put together something that may inspire you to get outside in your garden, do some spiffing up of your house before (or after) Easter, and I'm throwing in some recipes that are light and easy.



My tulips haven't come up yet but I have nice green sprouts. These in an old crock are from last year. It's such a joy to see signs of spring popping up in the yard. I was smart last year to add more tulips, daffodil, and crocus bulbs so I'm looking for a real showstopper of a border. If you don't grow them, you can usually find them at your grocery store and Trader Joe's has them at insanely low prices.

I want to work on adding more perennial plants here at the lake and in Chicago. Obviously, I can't be in two places at once and if you throw in a vacation (or two), you might come back to some dried up and withered plants. It happens a lot with my potted plants and I know better than to use clay pots--they really absorb any hint of moisture from the potting soil. If you really like the look of clay or stone pots, leave the plant in its plastic container and set it on the pot. You can also "plant" a few smaller plants in a larger pot while still in their containers.

I did some research on plants that do best in the Midwest. I'm not going to list all that I found, just the ones I like! Columbine has always been a favorite and it does pretty well in partial shade. You can find the plants in their bare root form (I list sources below). When planted in spring, Columbine may come up that first year. A plus is that it self seeds.

There are two more that I think are really pretty and suitable for our area: Blue sage and Spiderwort. Blue flowers are something we don't see a lot, and I



love the blowzy look of the sage. I have spiderwort in a flower bed, it's small so you might want to plant it in clumps and/or along a border. Veronica, also known as Culver Root, is absolutely a hands down winner if you live near the water. I've been thinking of planting something right near my dock. Finally, Swamp Milkweed (pictured) will make a nice addition to the Milkweed plants we have here in Michigan, but look at this color! It does spread easily so I thin it out and sometimes plant it in other areas. The butterflies love and need the nectar.

You can find any of these plants online at these websites:

Michigan Bulb.com

Brecks.com

Eden Brothers.com

American Meadows.com

Easter is right smack in the middle of the month this year and I'm hoping we can be together as we always have. I'm doing a little cleaning and fluffing to get that out of the way. There was a time that I had spring decorations on every surface in my house. Not this year. I have been doing a big cleanup of all my holiday and seasonal things, mostly just before said holiday. I couldn't believe I had twenty-three strands of Christmas lights. I've collected bunnies over the years as well; ceramic, stone, straw, fabric...and they are large. I'm passing some of them on to my kids and donating some as well. I'll definitely save a few of my favorites though.

I'm finding that lightening the load even though I'm nowhere near clearing

them. I'm on that journey right now. When it comes to decorating, it actually makes you become even more creative when you have narrowed down what you choose to use rather than using everything you have. Does that make sense. It makes me think of the show Beat Bobby Flay, where the chefs are given one ingredient to work with and around. Less is just more challenging. So the single-most important message I want to convey on my blog and in my articles for Neighbors, use what you have, do the best with it, and no matter, have fun!

On to some recipes. I have a little sampling of some quick, easy, and spring-like recipes for you this month. If it's not



yet balmy outside, at least we can feel like we aren't still stuffing ourselves with comfort food.

Artichoke Hearts and Bean Salad

I've been on a roll with salads that are slightly off the board. Beans are so full of protein, as well as cheese (as long as you are not eating it in chunks) and I love the texture they add to all sorts of dishes. This salad was simply a 5 oz. jar of marinated artichoke hearts, drained, and slightly rinsed. Brown them in a

usual glorified baked omelet with cheese and broccoli. I wanted a good punch of flavor and vegetables that did more than add texture. The key was cooking up a few veggies for just a minute to let the natural flavors come out before adding to the egg mixture. Another overhaul was using small chunks of hard cheeses rather than the standard grated cheddar. What an incredible difference it made. You will like this for dinner with a salad and bread, and if you have leftovers, for breakfast.



Quiche with Roasted Red Peppers and Asparagus Tips

Ingredients:

1 T butter
7 large eggs
3/4 c milk
1 c chopped shallots
1 c asparagus tips
3 green onions, chopped
1 c roasted red pepper (from the jar packed in olive oil)
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 c of dry cheese such as a Parmesan, Romano or pecorino, roughly chopped
A few pinches of dried seasonings such as thyme, tarragon or rosemary.
S&P to taste

Directions:

Whisk together the eggs and milk. Set aside.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan and saute the veggies on low for about 2 minutes. Do not allow them to get limp. Whisk them into the egg mixture along with the cheeses. Stir in seasonings.

Bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 and bake another 30-40 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serves 4.

Creamy Cranberry Brie Flatbread



skillet with a little drip of veggie oil. Add a clove or two of minced garlic and stir for a minute. Toss with the Canellini beans and serve over fresh baby greens with a squeeze of lemon and a drizzle of olive oil. Top with shaved Parmesan cheese. You can have this as a side salad or as a healthy dinner with a loaf of fresh bread.

Light and Fluffy Vegetable Quiche

I fiddled with this quiche a bit because I was just getting tired of my



out the storage room, is quite freeing. As a lifestyle blogger I had accumulated so many dishes, glasses, napkins, various decorative pieces, wall art, mirrors, etc... all of which to set a stage to inspire readers to decorate and entertain. And this is illustrated by the picture of my 2017 Easter table. Thankfully, I was frugal in that I purchased a large percentage of these items on sale, at thrift stores, or yard sales. Trends come and go and people can try to keep up or simply learn to embrace what they have that works for

Continued on next page. See:

JANE

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Floods and earthquakes - are you covered?

By **Charlie Retherford**
Kemner, Iott, Benz Agency

Many people assume they have coverage on their homeowners policy for floods and earthquakes. However, homeowners, condo, and renters insurance policies do not provide coverage for damage caused by flooding and may not provide earthquake coverage.

Flood Insurance – Don’t find yourself floating down the river!

- What is a flood? A flood is a general and temporary condition where two or more acres of normally dry land or two or more properties are inundated by water or mudflow. Some causes of flooding are fast melting snow, ice jams, heavy rainfall, and outdated or clogged drainage systems. Damage caused by a sewer backup is only covered by flood insurance if it’s a direct result of flooding.
- What is covered by flood insurance? Physical damage to a building or personal property “directly” caused by the flood is covered by a flood insurance policy. Flood insurance coverage is limited in areas below the lowest elevated floor, (including crawlspaces) and in basements. Coverage on a flood policy is not as broad as coverage on a homeowners policy. Take the time to review the policy so you are prepared should you have a flood – no one likes a surprise after the damage is done.
- Will the coverage begin immediately?



ly? Since there is usually a 30-day waiting period from the date of purchase until the policy goes into effect, it is important to be proactive. Don’t wait for the snow to begin melting or the heavy spring rains to begin. There are some exceptions such as making, increasing, extending or renewing your mortgage.

- How much will flood insurance cost? Rates are set by the National Flood Insurance Program and do not differ from company to company or agent to agent. Some of the factors that affect the rate are the date and type of construction of your home and whether you live in a high-risk area or a moderate-to-low risk area.
- Can I get disaster assistance if I do not have flood insurance? The federal government will only aid if the President declares a disaster. Even then, the help is in the form of loans that must be repaid with interest.

Earthquake Insurance – Shake, rattle and roll!

- Does my homeowners policy cover earthquake damage? A basic homeowners policy does not have coverage for earthquakes. You may be able to add an endorsement to your policy or have to purchase a separate policy.

- Is earthquake insurance expensive? Some factors that impact the cost are: The age of your home – older homes cost more to insure. A wood home will withstand an earthquake better than a brick home. The type of soil in your area and your proximity to a fault line will also determine the cost.
- We just had an earthquake – can I get coverage now? Like flood insurance, you may want to plan. Most companies will not provide coverage for a specified period after an earthquake in your area.
- What is covered by earthquake insurance? Remember, it is not just the earthquake that causes damage. If there is a flood after the earthquake, you will want to notify your flood insurance agent. If your house catches fire after the earthquake, you should be covered by your standard homeowners policy.

What you don’t know can hurt you.

Remember that flood and earthquake insurance are for a specific cause of loss. You will want to know if your detached garage is covered as well as your home. Will your personal property be covered? Will your policy pay replacement cost or actual cash value on your home and personal property? Are there limits or exclusions you need to be aware of? Get the facts so you can weigh your risk with the cost of the insurance. Your insurance agent will be able to help you in making an informed decision.

JANE

Continued from previous page

These look so delicate and pretty but the flatbread gives it a lot of substance with a crispy bottom. The cheeses play so well with the cranberries and rosemary. You'll be making this a lot!

Ingredients:

- 1 package of naan flatbread*
- 1/2 c fresh cranberries
- 6 oz. Brie cheese
- 2 T cream cheese
- 2 rosemary sprigs

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Spread the cream cheese evenly on both of the flatbreads. Top with the Brie, you can do this easily by breaking it into chunks. Next top each with half the rosemary and cranberries respectively. Place on a baking sheet and bake 8-11 minutes or until bottoms are browning. Let cool a bit and then slice in strips as shown in the picture.

*You can find naan in your bread aisle in most large grocery stores. The brand I use has two pieces per package. Play it by ear.

Spring Almond Bark

I think I make some type of themed almond bark for every holiday. It's so simple and you can customize it with your own favorite toppings. I use the vanilla flavor (you can find this near your baking chocolate, it goes by different names). Heat it up in a large bowl in your microwave, stirring at thirty second intervals. Once smooth, spread with a large spoon on a parchment paper lined sheet pan in a thin layer. Top with your favorite candy pieces, even dried fruit if desired. Refrigerate for 15 minutes until no longer sticky, then break in to pieces. Store in an airtight container and it lasts for days. Mmmmmmm...



Sending good wishes to everyone for a happy start to spring, a blessed Easter, and prayers for an end of this virus and suffering.

Jane Boudreau is a writer and blogger who splits her time between Diamond Lake, Chicago, and North Carolina. You can reach her at blndy9@yahoo.com

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WACHA-MA-CALL-IT?



This item was used for transporting precious cargo in 1920 and was heated with hot water.

What is it?

Answer on Page 14
Local History Page
of this edition of Neighbors

Courtesy of the Pioneer
Log Cabin MUSEUM,
Cassopolis, MI

Update on COVID-19 locally

As of March 27, 2020 at 10:00 AM: One (1) confirmed positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Cass County; Two (2) confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Van Buren County, 2,294 positive cases of COVID-19 in Michigan (43 deaths)

Earlier this week, MDHHS ordered all health professionals to conduct testing for novel coronavirus in accordance with the COVID-19 prioritization criteria originally published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [attached]. We are asking all of you to help the community-at-large understand that testing in our communities is happening but in order to protect our vulnerable community members at highest risk for severe illness and make best use of the limited supplies and capacity available, hospitals must prioritize. This means that individuals who are presenting mild symptoms may not be tested or if tested, their results may be delayed to ensure high risk tests

can be performed and reported expeditiously.

Latest State and Local Updates:

Bronson and Ascension Borgess are both welcoming community donations of unused personal protective equipment, supplies, homemade masks and monetary gifts.

As the situation continues to change rapidly, we recommend referring to these sites for the most current information: Van Buren/Cass District Health Department: www.vbcassdhd.org/covid-19 Michigan: www.michigan.gov/coronavirus National: www.cdc.gov/COVID19 United Way of Southwest Michigan (local): for emergency updates, links to trusted sources, food distribution sites, and self-care strategies: <https://www.uwsm.org/emergency-preparedness-response>


The Van Buren/Cass District Health Department continues to respond to the rapidly evolving COVID-19

outbreak. We are continually partnering with state and federal agencies for communication and guidance on COVID-19 to the public and healthcare professionals; coordinating and communicating with local community organizations impacted by the announcements and executive orders over the past week, including consideration for how they will impact our community-at-large.

VBCDHD will keep our website (www.vbcassdhd.org/covid-19) and Facebook (@VBCDHD) as up-to-date as possible with the latest information, including access to Michigan.gov/coronavirus data.

As our community responds to a global pandemic here at home, let us remember that we are all in this together - doing the best we can, with what we have, to protect the community and people we love.

For weekly updates on the local situation see <https://vbcassdhd.org/covid-19>



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OUR CHILDREN

Raising resilient kids

by **SANDY FLEMING**

No matter what is going on in the world, some things are constant and never change. One of these things is advice about how to help your children learn to weather crises of different sizes and causes. There are some crucial things parents can do right now to help give their children the tools to manage when life is far more stressful than we want it to be.

Security

Children need to know that they are safe and that they are loved. This is true no matter what their ages are. From this foundation, they can reach out into the world and accomplish what they need to accomplish. Especially in chaotic, stressful times, it's very important to keep this part of your life in good repair.

How do you make them feel secure? First of all, tell them. Remind them (daily or even several times daily) that you love them more than anything and that you are doing your best to take good care of them. Now, this doesn't have to be done using those words. Instead, tell them what you appreciate about them, their personality, what they say and do, and so forth.

Examine your words to your children today. Keep records, or record yourself if you need to! Too much of the time, our words to kids are directive or corrective. We tell them to brush their teeth or we reprimand them for not cleaning up their mess. In some households, directive and corrective words outnumber other types of talking by 10 or even 20 to 1 instance. Now, see if you can change that ratio. Be intentional about conversing (and really listening) to children as they talk about what matters to them. Set a goal to say more positive, supportive things than corrective or directive things.

That's not to say that you can stop saying corrective and directive things, though. For most of us, it means talking more to the children. They still need to brush their teeth and pick up their mess, and they are not likely to do these things without prompting. So the answer is to intentionally converse and use positive comments and praise in addition to the correction and direction. And it is possible to phrase your necessary correction more positively, as well. For example, instead of saying "Don't run in the house," try saying "Please walk!" Teachers have been using this trick for time immemorial, and it works like a charm.

When you find ways to increase your positive verbal interactions with the kids, you will also find that their behavior and self-esteem usually improves. You are building a foundation for security which will lead to resilience.

Consistency

Another foundation of resilience is a sense that life goes on even when events



are chaotic and stressful. Parents play a crucial role in helping children develop this feeling, and one of the key tools is to maintain consistency in the household. Kids thrive on routine because it lends a sense of security. Most parents know this, and they hold things like bedtime rituals and regular meals to be sacred. These will help kids grow into resilient adults.

When life is stressful, schedules and routines become all the more important. First of all, parents know that kids with too much time on their hands tend to get into trouble. They fight with siblings, they concoct crazy ideas that are unsafe or damaging to pursue, and they develop bad habits and selfishness. This can all be minimized with a structured schedule.

Set expectations early that the kids will have responsibilities and things they need to do each and every day, like clockwork. For times when schools are out of session, set up a daily routine that includes a balance of academic work, physical exercise, household chores, and pursuing learning for learning's sake. Don't forget to build in some time for family fun, down time or personal time, and time for caring for someone else's needs.

In some families, a written down or posted schedule is most effective. Start it off when the kids get up in the morning (and keep that wake up time regular-sleeping until noon is not healthy for anyone!) and move through the day in regular intervals all the way until bedtime. In other families, it is most effective to make a list of daily goals. Family members (yes, include the adults, too!)

can divide their day up as they wish but will try to accomplish items on their personal to-do list.

Rewards

Don't make the mistake of sucking all of the fun out of life during stressful times. Everyone needs mental and physical breaks, and families need shared fun to bond most effectively.

It's not bribery to offer rewards in exchange for cooperation, either. Think about it for a moment. Why do most adults go to work in the morning? They are rewarded! They are rewarded with a paycheck, they are rewarded with support from their coworkers, and they are rewarded with the feelings of self-satisfaction that jobs bring to most of us. Can you think of these things as "bribing you to go to work"? Sure you could. But mostly we think of them as positive outcomes for desirable behavior.

People are people, no matter what their ages are. They tend to want to do things that get them the desired outcomes. And as a parent, it's perfectly fine to manipulate the outcomes of a child's behavior so that they reward or do not reward it. Be intentional about the kinds of behaviors you reward, and you will see positive changes in the kids' behavior.

So it's perfectly fine to offer kids some free time, some personal screen time, or some adult attention for doing what is expected and needed. You're teaching them that good behavior has its rewards. It's only AFTER they have experienced these artificial rewards that they can develop the internal management systems that make good behavior rewarding because of the feelings of accomplishment it brings. We all have to start somewhere!

Some will say that they've tried this and it doesn't work. They feel forced to resort to punishments of various sorts to change kids' behavior. They use time out, grounding, removing privileges, and even yelling or spanking to change children's behavior. The most likely outcome, though, is a child who is afraid of getting caught. Kids don't usually learn much through punishment other than that they want to avoid it. So while your child

may stop running in the house when you are watching, chances are good that the running happens when you are not looking and the kids just got better at avoiding detection.

Try an experiment, if you are one who is convinced that punishment is a better way to manage bad behavior. Choose two behaviors that your child tends to indulge in and that you want to change. For one, set up a punishment system. For example, if your child bickers with a sibling, send them to their rooms for increasing amounts of time. For the other behavior, set up a reward system. Reward an opposite, desirable behavior that cannot be done when the undesirable behavior is happening. For example, if your child consistently does not follow your directions, try praising and rewarding them any time they DO what you have asked, and intentionally set up times when you can reward them. Keep track of how often you see each behavior. Chances are almost certain that you will see an increase in the behavior you reward and little change in the one you are punishing.

Fun

One last thing that is important in times of stress or chaos that is out of our hands is to keep a sense of fun in your relationships. This means all of our relationships, not just with the kids. Strong relationships are kept that way by shared, enjoyable experiences. When life is stressful, find ways to bring joy to those you care about.

Families are in especially good position to do this. Share good food with family meals, play games together, sing songs together, and laugh together. All of these things will help you to hold everything in place and minimize stress in your household. They will also go a long way to helping you eventually launch adults who know how to weather life's storms, be they large or small.

Sandy Fleming is an educational consultant and writer. Please get in touch if you or your child have educational needs. Visit the website at <https://sandyflemingonline.com>.

FACTOID:

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FIELD TRIP



Every year in the spring, the Birch Lake Yacht Club sponsors a road cleanup around the lake. Since I moved here almost 20 years ago, anywhere from 10 to 20 of us pick a Saturday morning to walk the roads and pick up the trash that has accumulated over the winter. We usually call the County Road Commission and tell them we're doing it, when and where we'll leave the bags of trash so they can send a truck to pick it all up at one place.

This year, since most of our good neighbors are still snow-birding in Florida, Arizona, California or wherever else it is that snowbirds go to in the winter, and since we have no idea when it might be safe and prudent to return to their lake homes, and since we couldn't go anywhere else for a field trip, my wife and I (and our dog) started noticing on our daily walks that since the trash was not taking a coronavirus holiday, the job of cleaning up was looking more and more like it needed done ... so we did it.

Over the past week we've cleaned up about two-thirds of the roadsides around the lake, amassing several bagfuls of beer and soda cans and bottles, fast-food wrappings, cups, napkins and straws, chewing tobacco tins, and an odd assortment of miscellaneous litter that some surprisingly personal and/or intimate items that made us wonder why such an item might be discarded alongside a road and who might be so brazen and uncaring as to toss them in such a manner in the first place.

As disgusting as it may have been, it's done, and we're headed home to take out our own trash.



That's spouse Sandy getting up close and personal with a discarded plastic bag at the left ... Sandy takes road cleanup very seriously ... and at right, that's Superdog Saba sniffing out non-edible garbage that she wants me to get from the other end of the leash.



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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.

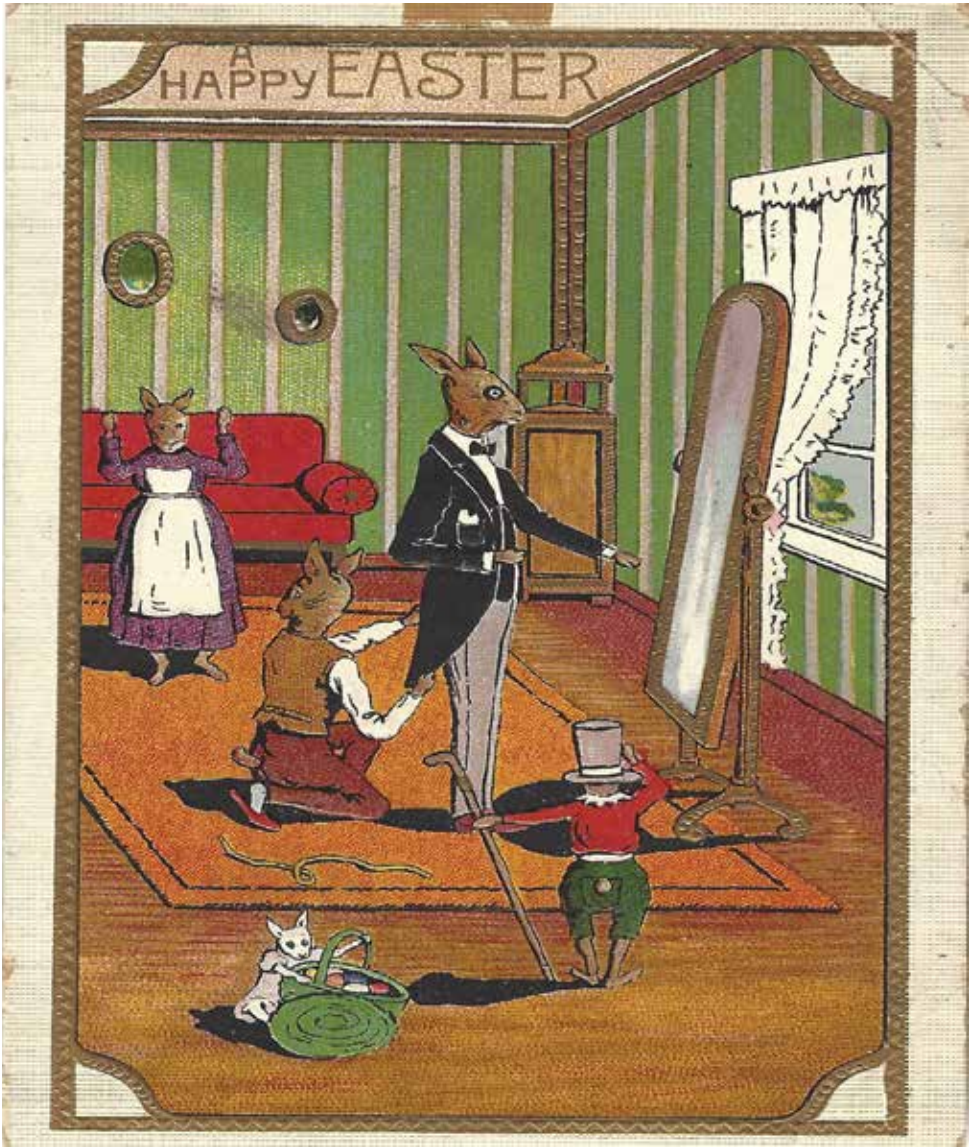
Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher,

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 web-site: www.arcadiapublishing.com

In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of various places around Cass County. 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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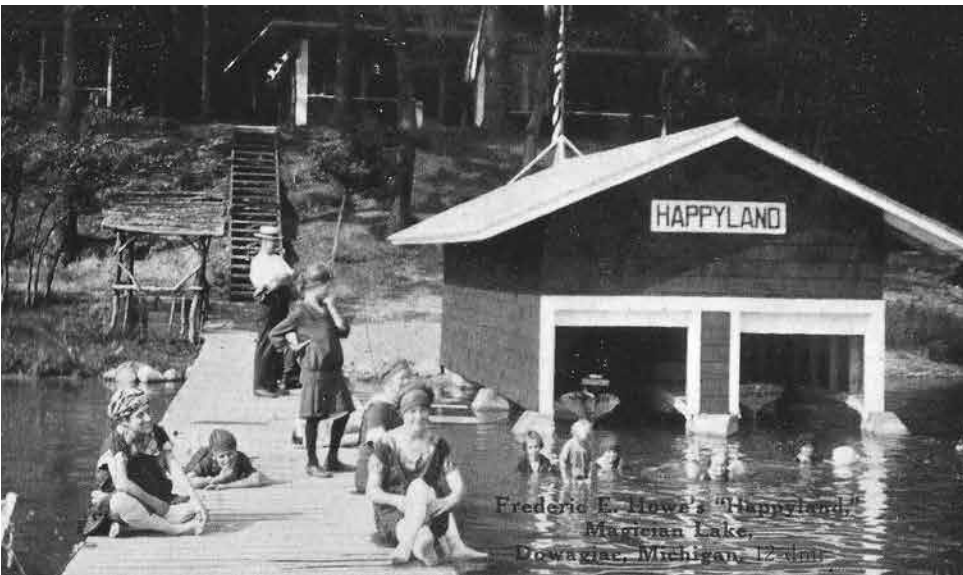
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NATURE NOTES

Spring birds returning

Provided by Cass District Library
Local History Branch

Instantly recognizable as a harbinger of spring is the American robin, sporting red breast, white eye-ring and sooty black back. While the species is present year-round over the southern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, numbers are greatly reduced during the cold months as the majority leave the state for the south.

The feeding habits of the American robin differ locally between the warm and cold months. During spring through fall Robins can be seen hopping through yards searching for worms and other invertebrates. But when the ground is frozen, the robins that remain here switch to eating berries, the red colored berries of the staghorn sumac being one of the most commonly eaten by the robin and other birds during winter.

The portion of the robin population that does leave Michigan in winter begins to arrive back in Southwest Michigan during late February or early March, but most arrive during April. Concentrations of American robins along the Lake Michigan shoreline during spring migration may number in the 1000s.

In our region, robins nest from April through August and generally raise two broods. The species has adapted well to suburbia and nests regularly in shade trees and shrubs. Away from human habitation, robins prefer forest edges and areas near streams and lakes.

In Michigan, pairs of robins claim an average of about one-third of an acre for their nesting territory, but studies have



shown that these territories may shift or overlap as the nesting season progresses. By September, robins that nest in

northern Michigan start passing through Southwest Michigan for the south. By November or early December all the robins that remain here will spend the entire winter, as long as the food supply lasts.

Notable sightings this past week include the first American woodcock, observed by Mike Mahler at dusk on March 7 as a male performed its spring territorial display in the fields of Sarett Nature Center in Benton Township.

On March 8, I visited the Brown Sanctuary located off Wood Street in Benton Township, which is a 100+ acre wetland preserve owned by Sarett. Here I saw several species of migrating waterfowl including common goldeneye, northern shoveler, and hooded merganser.

A pair of mute swans was also present, one of which appeared to be preparing a nest among the cattails. This would be a couple of weeks early for mute swans to be building their nests at this latitude.

Mute swans are native to Europe, and were first introduced in Michigan during the late 1910s, in the Grand Traverse Bay area and are now found across the state.

Additional sightings of note include a flock of eight greater white fronted geese on March 5 at the Three Oaks Wastewater treatment ponds.

A single Ross's goose was observed on March 9, by Brad Anderson, on the grounds of Pebblewood Golf Course in

Lake Township.

Anderson also photographed a pair of Sandhill cranes that same day along Jericho Road south of Bridgman. The species has nested in that vicinity over the last several years.

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



LEFT: American robin perches on a staghorn sumac at Chikaming Township Park, March 2, 2020. Brad Anderson.

TOP CENTER: Ross's goose in foreground, as Canada goose stands close by. Pebblewood Golf Course, Lake Township, March 9, 2020. Brad Anderson.

ABOVE: Sandhill cranes photographed on March 9 along Jericho Road, south of Bridgman by Brad Anderson.





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LOCAL HISTORY

Unraveling the history of the Cass Courthouse

Provided by **Jon Wuepper**,
Cass District Library,
Local History Branch

The Cass County Courthouse which stands today at the northeast corner of Broadway and State Streets, Cassopolis is currently undergoing renovations so that it may serve county offices once gain in the near future.

Much of the history surrounding the 1899 Cass County Courthouse and its predecessor, built 1839-1841, is scattered, or leaves many questions unanswered, so I decided to do a little research into the buildings.

The Greek Revival style wooden frame building was built between by "the Court House Company", made up Darius

Shaw, Asa Kingsbury, Jacob Silver, Joseph Harper and Alexander H. Redfield. The company built the courthouse for \$6000, completing it by 1841.

Greek Revival style buildings were popular in the United States beginning circa 1820 until the 1860s. The 1841 Cass County courthouse was just one of several area Greek Revival courthouses, including Berrien County in 1839.

In May 1898 the Cass County Board of Supervisors authorized the sale of the 1841 courthouse, but did not include: "railings, bell, furniture, carpets and heating apparatus."

On May 2, 1898 a crowd gathered to witness the auction sale of the courthouse, but the Cassopolis Vigilant reported in its May 5, 1898 edition: "...the only bid, made by Esquire Kectam of

Dowagiac, was \$30, and the sale was postponed until May 10th."

The Vigilant reported in its May 12, 1898 edition that the courthouse was sold on May 10 to G.M. Kingsbury, for the sum of \$25.00, and that he had plans to move the building not more than two blocks from the northeast corner of Broadway and State Streets, and gave free use to Cass County for holding court after the building was moved until the new courthouse was completed.

The contract for moving the courthouse was let to C.S. Williams of Elkhart who began work on Monday, May 16, 1898. When the building reached the intersection of Broadway and State all the telephone lines crossing the intersection had to be cut.

On May 26, the Vigilant further

reported: "The old court house is still on the move, having been taken only about half its journey." Presumably the old courthouse reached its final destination in late May, for there were no more reports of any delay.

During its journey from its original to final locations, the Cass County Board of Supervisors met in the offices of the Village of Cassopolis.

Several images of the old 1841 Cass County Courthouse exist. To date, I am aware of only one photo which shows the building close up at it original location of Broadway and State Streets, which accompanies this article. In the photo you can clearly see the old stone foundation beneath the portico, not present in all photos of the building taken after May 12, 1898.



1841 Cass County Courthouse, at northeast corner of Broadway and State Streets. This photograph was taken before May 16, 1898, being the date workers began moving the 57-year old building off the site so that a new courthouse could be constructed. Notice the stone foundation that supports the portico, not present in any photos of the building taken after the move to West State Street. Credit: Cass District Library.



1841 Greek-Revival style Cass County Courthouse, photo taken sometime after May 1898 (probably around 1905) after it was moved from corner of Broadway and State Streets to the south side of West State Street. The original photo is labeled "Old Court House" so that it was not confused with the new \$40,000 stone courthouse, constructed over 1898-1899. Notice brick foundation of portico. Credit: Cass District Library.

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THE LAST WORD

To die ... in the rain ... without toilet paper

Try as I might, I can't seem to wrap my brain around the bizarre, savage turn of events that have so disrupted all of our daily lives and sent us scurrying inside to self-isolate ourselves in our disinfectant and sanitizer-scented sanctuaries.

Just a couple of short weeks ago I woke one morning in one of the most beautiful Caribbean harbors I've ever visited. The sun was shining, the air was tropically warm and the unfamiliar scents of a thousand foreign flowers wafted over our balcony as we sipped coffee and waited for a ferry to take us to a cab that would take us to a jammed airport where we'd stand in long lines in a throng of what now I see was an almost criminally dangerous gathering of potential carriers of germs, viruses, cooties and zombie-apocalypse, plague-causing tourists, travelers and biological terrorists.

Little did I know on that particular morning that less than a month later we'd be prisoners in our homes, warned in the most dire of tones that we weren't going to be allowed to gather in groups larger than 10 people, let alone frequent any restaurants or bars, public buildings or schools.

And little did I know that my wife, a retired surgical nurse who has always been an expert on disinfectants, asepsis and sterile technique, was about to be exhibiting her awe-inspiring array of techniques for scouring, scrubbing, cleaning, rubbing and cleaning our home.

And little did I know that by now even churches would close to the public in favor of online sermonizing and drive-by confessions, that doctors' offices and

clinics would close and doctors and receptionists would warn well patients not to visit for routine checkups, and sick patients not to bother to come in to have tests done to see if they might have the disease.

And how could anyone have ever expected that we would need to take extraordinary precautions if we dared to visit the corner grocery for now hard-to-find items like meat.

And milk.

And eggs.

And toilet paper.

Toilet paper?

Really? Toilet paper?

I guess I can understand panic shopping ... I live in Michigan after all, and whenever the weather report storm team calls for a snowfall, people storm the stores and buy out essentials like cigarettes, beer and, now, marijuana (I hear the dispensaries are offering drive-throughs and home deliveries since this started). And even though I chose not to arm myself, I guess I can understand the hysteria that has spurred an increase in the sale of guns and ammunition ... I even heard from one neighbor who stocked up on fishing lures and bait in case the supermarkets closed and he had to start eating the fish out of the lake in front of our houses (can bluegill and bass even get the virus?).

In a way it's a little like the mania that swept the world when the famed Y2k bug was looming at the turn of the century. When computer geeks around the world began to warn that computers and computerized applications like bank accounts, electric and water utilities and credit cards wouldn't be functional on 1/1/2000 because programmers hadn't

built in numbers larger than 1999 for dates on most of the world's computers at that time. As I recall, a number of otherwise sane, rational, sensible people began manically buying and hoarding food, stockpiling water in kitty litter containers and assembling emergency kits of matches, hatchets and batteries, and storing them all in their garages, basements and outdated and non-functional nuclear fallout shelters that were hastily constructed during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War (I remember being instructed how to properly crawl under my desk in Mrs. Flack's third grade classroom, and to put my head between my legs in the event that an atom bomb would ever be dropped on James Monroe School in South Bend).

But I don't remember a thing about emergency toilet paper.

I read a news article on the Internet the other day (I'm reading the Internet every day because they aren't delivering most newspapers anymore ... I guess because people might be tempted to use them for toilet paper ...) about a group of thieves in North Carolina who were caught on some highway with a semi truck they stole from a supermarket ... and in the back, they found 18,000 pounds of toilet paper ... and not a single hot dog or gallon of two-percent milk.

Really? You're going to risk prison over a truckload of toilet paper?

That's a bunch of ... ahem ... crap.

Let's be realistic. Even if one of history's greatest, most prolific authors had devised such a plot and written it into a novel, I submit that there isn't (and has never been) an editor ever, anywhere who would have accepted it, or a single publisher who would have committed to

paying for the ink to print such a story.

Imagine Charles Dickens writing, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the time of no toilet paper."

How would the London literati have taken that?

And if Emily Bronte has written, "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same ... and all souls need toilet paper," Wuthering Heights would have been banned much sooner!

And I doubt a publisher would have accepted Lord Tennyson writing "Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find ... toilet paper."

And I doubt Gatsby would have been nearly so great if F. Scott Fitzgerald had written "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone ... just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had. Like toilet paper."

And I shudder to even think of Ernest Hemingway ever writing, "To die ... in the rain ... without toilet paper."

If you'll pardon just a couple more ... here are a couple famous literary quotes that sum up my feelings on this subject.

For example, William Shakespeare's Hamlet suggests "There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

And in 1922 James Joyce wrote in Ulysses "History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake."

And let's not forget history's most quotable TV adman, Mr. Whipple, telling us all to, "please don't put the squeeze on the Charmin."

And after that ... %#@\$, as Forrest Gump so eloquently put it, "That's all I've got to say about that ..."

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Information provided by the Southwest Michigan Association of Realtors (MLS).

*Gross sales of inland lake properties in Cass, Berrien, St. Joseph, and the southern half of Van Buren and Kalamazoo Counties, from 1.1.19 to 12.31.19.