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# NEIGHBORS

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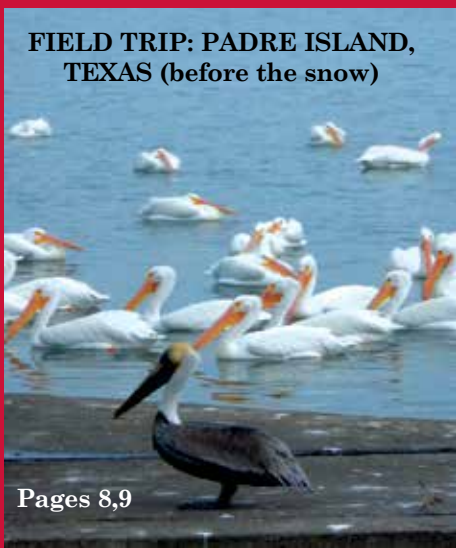
A regional newspaper widely distributed in Dowagiac, Cassopolis, Edwardsburg, Vandalia, Jones, Marcellus, Decatur, Union, Sister Lakes, Three Rivers, Elkhart and Mishawaka, with home delivery at Diamond, Eagle, Birch, Corey, Donnell, Indian, Magician, Shavehead, Baldwin, Long, Dewey, Cable, Juno, Christiana,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



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FIELD TRIP: PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS (before the snow)

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# REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

March 27 - Dowagiac Easter Extravaganza 10:30 am - 12:30 pm

May 21 - Dowagiac Memorial Day Parade, 10:30 am - Noon

April 6 - Fandom Fest, Dowagiac District Library library sponsored comic-con, 11 am - 7 pm the Mendel

Center at Lake Michigan College

April 21 - Henry Winkler at The Mendel Center, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, 7:30 pm, [https://www.themendelcenter.com/events/detail.html?calendarid=11Admission:\\$50-\\$80+applicablefees,269-927-8700](https://www.themendelcenter.com/events/detail.html?calendarid=11Admission:$50-$80+applicablefees,269-927-8700)

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

July 16 - Dowagiac Summer in the City Festival, 10 am - 5 pm

August 1 - 7 - Cass County Fair

August 21 - Dowagiac Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show, 7 am

- 4 pm  
October 9 - Dowagiac Under the Harvest Moon Festival, 10 am - 4 pm

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Due to the pandemic all events are subject to change or cancellation. Please check with event organizers prior to attending any events.

## March 2021 Programs - Cass District Library

All Month - **More Than a Book Club** (Edwardsburg Branch) - Do you miss in-person book discussions? Do you want suggestions on great books to read? Then stop by the Edwardsburg Branch to pick up a monthly book bundle. There will be a featured title each month but this "no pressure" book club allows you to read at your own leisure and keep track of your thoughts to share when we can meet again. Bundles include suggestions, read-alikes, activities, and more.

All Month - **We Fit Together Community Art Installation** (Edwardsburg Branch) - Interested in creating a community art installation? Visit the Edwardsburg Branch to customize a puzzle piece! Pieces will be distributed throughout the month and are due by March 31, 2021. The community art installation will be displayed at the branch through the month of April.

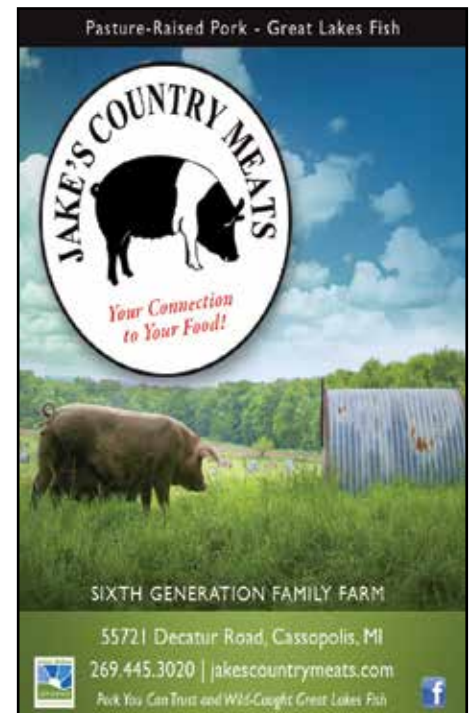
March 8-13 - **Lucky Beaded Bracelet** (Howard Branch) - Enjoy a fun St. Patrick's Day craft kit to create a beaded bracelet for the big day! These lucky bracelets feature a shamrock

charm, beads that spell "lucky" and, of course, plenty of green. Kit includes beads, charm, cording and instructions. Get a kit at the Howard Branch while supplies last.

March 15 - 20 - **Spring Fling Earrings** (Howard Branch) - Take a fling at spring crafting! This craft kit allows you to create handmade earrings. These easy-to-assemble kits are available at the Howard Branch while supplies last.

March 29 - April 3 - **3D Bunny Craft Kit** (All locations) - Make a fun homemade 3D Easter decoration! Paper cylinder, self-adhesive foam pieces, wiggle eyes, pom-poms and chenille stems are included. Stop by any branch for a kit while supplies last.

March 29 - April 3 - **Paper Bag Journal Kit** (All locations) - Customize your own paper bag journal! Bags and ribbon are included. Create a journal, seed organizer, scrapbook and more. These kits are available at all branch locations while supplies last.



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# LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

## A big, warm welcome to March!

by **Jane Boudreau**

**H**ello Neighbors and a big welcome to March! It's good to be back after the little break the paper takes after Christmas. I hope you all had a good one. I can bet it was a bit different for all of us with the Covid keeping us from being with our family and friends. To be honest, a lot about last year made me start to see many parts of life I not only took for granted, but my lack of seizing each day and making it the best day ever. And then doing it the next day and the next.

I've always been a bit laid back, just taking things as they come and never really having a plan. That's really not so bad when you figure in that I'm spontaneous also, so life is never really dull. But it takes days and weeks on end, like we have experienced, to really start to think of what you've missed and why you didn't take advantage of opportunities when you had the chance. Most times during winters, my husband and I would be happy to just hunker down in front of a nice fire with books to read and dogs snoring softly. Get moving to go out to dinner? Naw. This is fine. Invite friends over for cocktails? No ... we'd have to ditch the comfy clothes and tidy the place up a little. Oh, how we are eating our words now! I know some people who are meticulously planning out vacations with no real date in mind. And sadly, there are a huge numbers of families who lost a loved one to Covid that are planning outdoor memorials this summer. My daughter wants to have a big outdoor party to celebrate the holidays, birthdays, and everything in between we missed, all at once. Let's pray we are on the upswing by summer!



Just when I thought we were going to have a mild winter, February came along and brought snow and below zero temperatures. That didn't help with the cabin fever that had settled in to stay. I get antsy this time of year as I wait for blue skies, spring weather, and flowers. It's smart to put that energy to use, you can only blame your lack of motivation on the pandemic for so long.

Every January seems to start out with everyone focusing on organization. Covers of magazine boldly saying, "10,000 ways to organize your laundry room!" Or, "How to pack up everything you own to donate to Goodwill and start fresh!" I've often wondered if that ties in with the white sales — you know, when everyone stocks up on sheets and bath towels at bargain prices. Now if that doesn't prompt you to clean out that ratty looking linen closet. It's hard for me to part with anything that still works. I've been know to buy new towels to replace the

ones I can see through and then I hang on to them ... I might need them in a pinch. Or you might be that person who says, "Don't use the good stuff!" You just have to be strong. Close your eyes and shred those babies into rags. Donate them to a veterinarian's office or animal shelter. A car wash. Just know, somebody is in dire need of your crap.

And while we are ripping apart the linen closet, you have to have a place for all those little necessities like bandages, gauze, alcohol (and not the kind you drink ... unless you have a wee problem), toothpaste, pain reliever, and the assorted nail clippers, razors, and collection of travel sewing kits. You may have been told to gather up all these odds and ends in a pretty basket. How chic! How classy you will look if a stranger peeks in your linen closet, and they do, and comes away in awe at how orderly and attractive your incidentals are.

But I say forget the baskets ... get clear bins that you can see through. There's nothing worse than bleeding all over your clean new towels while you dig through a woven basket for the bandaids. Really? At some point you have to give up the fancy for the practical. This coming from a lifestyle blogger that won't use paper plates? Yes. You learn the hard way. You can find said clear bins at Michael's and Hobby Lobby.



Well look at this. The epitome of orderliness. I bet those spices are in alphabetical order. Who has time for that? Me. I know. Sick. We had our kitchen redone about 25 years ago and I asked if the carpenter could make me a built spice rack on a wall. He asked me how many shelves. I said 5-6 and he looked at me like I was nuts.

For a long time I used to make my own spice blends. You can find jars of all size at Amazon. A few years ago I stumbled upon a local Chicago shop that grinds their spices right there before packaging them to order. I started out with some basics and then expanded to some of their house blends that work well in stir fry, with barbecued beef, on steaks and burgers — you name it. The shop is called The Spice House if you want to have a peek online. And yes, I have to alphabetize everything. I do get hung up on names like Hungarian Paprika, Turkish Bay Leaves, and Saigon Cinnamon. Do you know that the best cinnamon comes from Vietnam?

So no, you don't need a carpenter to get organized in the kitchen. You can find simple bins and jars at the dollar store. I used to shop The Container Store for storage items but I'm finding that Amazon fulfills my needs and more. You don't want to fumble around in cabinets

to look for spices. Get a "riser", which look like a mini staircase. Stack your spice jars that way so you can see each one.

I may not have written about spices so much before because I truly like cooking with fresh food and that's where herbs come in. If you can grow your own, do a happy dance. If you can buy local, clap your hands. If you've got a great grocery store; sniff, smell, feel, and squeeze that stuff. Still, spices are wonderful. They add depth and character to your food. They take dishes to another level. You'll be surprised when you add cinnamon to your pasta sauce, a sprinkle of ground cloves to your pork chops, cardamon to your muffins or scones. Okay, Jane, move on.

Recipes.



### White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

I made these cookies for the first time at Christmas to gift some friends (victims) with. They were soooooo unbelievably good I had to make them again. What better excuse than to make them for your kind neighbors who dig you out of the snow day after day during a blizzard?

I'm not keen on baking. I like having my own way with food and baking is really math and science based. Measurements must be exact and although baking soda and baking powder sound darn much alike, don't substitute one for the other — I know. But cookies are fun for several reasons; they don't require a lot of ingredients, the process isn't long nor the baking time, and a small ball of dough creates dozens of delicious cookies. If you are a really "smart cookie," you can make the dough, refrigerate it for several days, or freeze it for a few weeks and there you go — when you hear the neighbor's snow blower in your driveway, bake up a batch! And take note so there are no surprises, this dough has to chill for a minimum of three hours so plan on that.

### White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

**Ingredients:**  
3/4 c butter, softened  
3/4 c dark brown sugar  
1/4 c granulated sugar  
1 egg, room temperature  
2 t vanilla  
2 c flour  
2 t cornstarch  
1 t baking soda  
3/4 c white chocolate chips  
3/4 c dried cranberries

### Directions:

Line a baking sheet with parchment

paper. In a large bowl cream the butter and sugars together until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla, scraping the sides of the bowl as you go. Mix in the flour, cornstarch, and baking soda. Finally, stir in the white chocolate chips and dried cranberries. Chill dough at least 3 hours and up to 3 days.

Drop tablespoon size balls of dough on the lined baking sheet spaced about 1 inch apart. They really don't spread much. Bake approximately 8-9 minutes until barely golden brown. They will firm up as they cool. Let them cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes then remove them to a rack or platter. If you are using the same baking sheet, make sure it has cooled down completely before dropping more dough.



### Baked Potato Tacos

Yes, you heard it right and of course my photo explains it all. Grab all the ingredients you'd use for tacos and bake a potato for your tortilla. If you make taco salads, which I love, it's basically the same thing. Here's the recipe but you can do any old way.

### Ingredients:

4 large baking potatoes, scrubbed clean  
1 lb. ground beef or turkey  
1 package of taco seasoning

### Directions:

Toppings: shredded lettuce, cheddar cheese, sour cream, jalapeños, tomatoes, scallions, guacamole, etc.

Clean and scrub the potatoes Bake in a 350 oven for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Meanwhile, sauté the ground beef in a medium size skillet over medium high heat. Drain and return to stove. Add the dry taco mix and any ingredients on the package to make tacos. Let simmer 15 minutes. You can make additions at this point of any veggies or spices that your prefer. Keep cooking until little juice remains. Remove the potatoes from the oven and carefully slice in half. Score the flesh, scoop out, and set it aside for another use.\*

I like to assemble this meal buffet style. Have the potatoes sliced and your beef mixture in a serving dish with your toppings in individual bowls. You can add refried beans, Spanish rice, and chips and salsa if you'd like. Enjoy.

\*Save the cooked potato for hash browns or mashed potatoes.

### Easy Focaccia Bread

A lot of people have started baking

Continued on next page. See:

JANE



# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## Spring is in the air! Time for a deep cleaning?

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

It's almost here! Can you smell it? Spring. The aromas that fill the air with the first budding flowers and those spring rains that give life to all the living things. There is just something about the first few warm days after a cold winter that just warms your soul.

With spring almost here, a lot of people take this time to give their homes a "deep clean". This always seems like a daunting task for me every year, so I thought I would provide a short checklist to help you get started. Before we start with the checklist, it is recommended that you have a few items on hand:

1. At least 3 boxes.
  - a. Donate/Consign. Anything you find during your deep clean that you want to donate or take to a consignment shop can go in this box. Now, if you decide that now is the time to donate or sell your couch, just keep a running list of those bigger items that won't fit in your box.
  - b. Repair. You may find some items that need repair or mending while you are cleaning. Just put those items in this box to come back to after you are finished with your cleaning.
  - c. Put away box. This box is used for items that you find while you are cleaning. Like that long-lost piece of jewelry that you are now asking yourself "how in the world did that get in here?". Resist the urge to stop cleaning out the drawer to go put that long-lost item where it belongs. Use this box for those items, and put them away after you are finished with that task.



2. A notebook or file on your computer to keep a list of projects that you eventually want to get to. Like painting the bathroom, sorting through that big box of old photos, organizing the basement/attic, etc.

For the cleaning checklist, I'll start with the basics:

1. Clean out the refrigerator. You know, the stuff that has gotten lost in the way, way back and might just work as your kid's next science project.
2. Tidy up the kitchen cabinets. Throw out any food that may have

expired. Take a few minutes to declutter your cabinets as well.

3. Weed out the junk drawer. This is something that I need to do more often than once a year but adding it to this list makes sure I get it cleaned out at least once a year.

4. Clean out the medicine cabinet. If you need to know what to do with your expired prescription meds, the FDA has posted guidelines on their website on how to safely dispose of them. And while you are in the bathroom, declutter and clean your bathroom cabinets.

5. Put away seasonal items. This is the time to change out your closet of all the heavy winter clothing for your spring/summer clothing. Wash your winter gloves, hats, and scarves to pack them away until next year.

6. Go through your shoes. Do you have some shoes that you do not wear any longer? Now is the time to do that. Maybe even donate your gently used shoes to your local shelter.

7. Wash the throw rugs and bathmats. After a winter in Michigan, we all know that the rugs in our entryways need a good washing!

8. Dust. Take a broom and clean any unwanted cobwebs out of the corners of each room. Take the time to dust your books, knickknacks, etc. in each room. Don't forget to clean your remote controls too.

9. Sweep. Once you have all your dusting finished, sweep, or vacuum all your floors.

10. Do you have pets? It's a good time to wash their bedding and throw out any toys that might be broken or just plain gross.

I hope this list helps you get started in your cleaning endeavors, and help it not seem like such a daunting task.

Spring is also a good time to for an insurance check-up. Call your agent to go over your insurance policies to make sure you have the proper coverage that fits you and your family. If you would like one of the insurance professionals at Kemner Iott Benz to look over your policies, please give us a call at 269.445.2425 or visit us at [www.kemneriottbenz.com](http://www.kemneriottbenz.com). We know insurance. You know us. Let's talk!

### JANE

*Continued from previous page*



bread, or have returned to baking bread during this time that we are sheltered in. I have made bread in the past but it seemed like a long process only to result in one loaf-my sons could make a sandwich with it. Another reason I wasn't keen on it also ties in

with baking. I detest cleaning up flour and washing dishes and utensils with clots of flour and dough. Weird? I think it's just in my blood that I'm one who should cook and not bake. Then you find a recipe that's easy and has your mouth watering before you've finished reading it. Hence this focaccia bread. It's a winner in more ways than one. The recipe turns out fab results with minimal hands on time. And for people like me who don't "get" the math and science of baking, its ridiculously easy. Shall I add that there is no kneading? So let's get on it.

- Ingredients:**
- 4 c flour
  - 2 t kosher salt
  - 2 1/4 t instant yeast (or 1 packet)

- 2 c warm tap water
- 1 t butter, softened (for greasing pan)
- 4 T olive oil, divided
- Italian seasoning or finely chopped herbs
- Flaky sea salt

#### Directions:

In a medium- large bowl, combine the flour, salt, and instant yeast. Stir well. Add the warm water. With a sturdy wooden spoon or spatula mix well until there are no small pockets of flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours and up to 24.

About two hours until baking time, lightly grease two round pans with a bit of soft butter, line them with parchment paper and then give that a drizzle of olive oil. Remove the bowl from the refrigerator, divide the dough in two and place them in the pans. Now just go on about your business and come back two hours later.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. The dough will have filled the pans and be ready to bake. Top the dough with another drizzle of olive oil. Poke a few holes in the soft dough (after you washed them of course), and then sprinkle with sea salt and whatever you have chosen as far as herbs and spices. I like the combination of rosemary and oregano. If you are using fresh herbs, chop them up finely, and for presentation, maybe use a whole rosemary stem or two decoratively on the surface.

Reduce the oven heat to 425 and bake for 22-28 minutes, until the tops are golden and the undersides crisp. Remove from the oven and using a spatula, remove the

rounds from the pans and transfer to a rack to cool. Cut into thin slices to serve.

This bread is delicious with meals or to make sandwiches with. I like it as an appetizer with company cut into two inch pieces and served on a platter with a small bowl of olive oil flavored with garlic and Parmesan cheese. You can also freeze the bread and when ready to use, thaw it, then heat it up in a 350 degree oven. Enjoy!

I'm always curious, which is just a sneaky way to say I'm nosy. I wonder what others are doing as we impatiently wait for spring and summer. I have a blogger friend in Canada who loves to crochet (she says it keeps her lap warm while she does her work). She has already finished up blankets, throws, hats, and mittens for her kids and grandkids for next Christmas! Another blog friend who lives in Southern California is working with her husband in making an open greenhouse in their garden. Can you imagine gardening year round?

For myself, I'm staying out of trouble by reading. Once a very avid reader, I slowed down quite a bit between by being involved in social media. Blogging is as much work as writing columns and I try to post once a week. I'm also on Instagram and Pinterest and this helps to promote the blog. If you write or contribute to one, you have to have the others in alignment at the same time. But I digress. I made a goal in January that I would read one book a week. So far so good. I've never been in a book club, actually, I've never been asked. I'm not big on clubs at all really. Commitments aren't my strongest point. So at the risk of adding something more to my column each month other than garden advice, recipes, and general rambling, would you, dear readers, be interested in some book reviews? I'd also like to hear what you are reading and I can include some of your titles monthly. I've also asked in the past for contributions of recipes. You see, my door is always open. Email me at [Blndy9@yahoo.com](mailto:Blndy9@yahoo.com).

Stay warm and healthy!  
**Jane Boudreau is a blogger and writer who lives on Diamond Lake as well as Chicago and a little place in the mountains of North Carolina. You can contact her at [Blndy9@yahoo.com](mailto:Blndy9@yahoo.com). All photos are by Jane unless otherwise noted. Please do not use without permission.**





# OUR CHILDREN

## Make the most of tests

by **SANDY FLEMING**

**S**tandardized testing is a fact of school life, and it's likely to be a part of the educational landscape for the foreseeable future. These tests (like the state assessments and other standardized tests) are closely related to funding and school performance evaluations. Right now, they are the best tools that we have available to get an overview of how well schools are doing their jobs. Most of the information is in aggregate, or about the entire building, district or state. It's also the source of district, area, and statewide statistics about the numbers of students performing at grade level, or mastering grade level standards.

And of course, such assessments have drawbacks and disadvantages. Most importantly, they measure a limited snapshot of student performance at the time of the test. Things like anxiety, energy level, and physical comfort can impact the results. And try as we might, educators have not yet completely solved the problem of bias for lower-income students, students of color, and other groups. Tests are much better than they were years ago, but they are not perfect. Background, especially language skills, vocabulary, and experiences outside of school, also can have a huge impact. Experience with literature and reading does, as well.

There is no way to study for these tests, either. The assessments are designed to measure a student's current understanding of global concepts, not individual facts. All of the cramming a person could do in a week or so will not impact scores. Much like preparation for the SAT or the GED, the path to success is long-haul learning, not quick cramming.

Since these tests give information about the overall performance of the school, grade, district, or state, what value do they have for individual students and families? The answer is "a lot!" If you can learn to interpret the information, your child's test results will provide insights into the student's educational progress and help you make a plan to improve learning. Test scores can also indicate when you should seek more thorough individualized evaluation or assistance.

Decoding the test results can be quite a challenge. Usually parents receive a slip of paper with a few numbers and graphs on it, and a vague indicator of how the child's scores stack up to others in the district, state, or maybe the country. There's an alphabet soup of abbreviations, and you might need to be able to translate statistics words like "percentile" into something you can understand.

So the very first step to using this information to actually help your child is to get it translated into something meaningful to you. Don't make the mistake of ignoring it – you can use this information in practical ways to help your child. In fact, you should save these papers from year to year – keep them in a file or snap a digital photograph or scan them into your computer. Comparing the scores from one year



to the next gives valuable information about your student's long-term progress.

If you find yourself befuddled or frustrated with reading the test results, be sure to get some help. The very best help will come from your student's teacher or other school official. In fact, they often have information not typically shared with parents that they might be willing to give you as well. If help from the school is not an option, try your adult friends with children in the same grade or school. They may be able to help you access the information.

If your child uses a tutor or learning coach, he or she can help. And finally, the testing websites themselves often have explanations about how scores are calculated and what they mean. Once you understand the information on the results page, you can use it to help plan ways to help your child.

Test results pages usually give an overall score for each subject. Check to make sure your child's results are at or at least close to the state or national average. This means your kid is likely to be meeting or exceeding expectations. This score may also be given in terms of "percentile." That just tells you how the score compares to a hundred kids who took the test (an "average" hundred kids). If a percentile score is 90, then your student outperformed 89 of those 100 kids. If the percentile is

below 50, then your child's score was better than less than half of the other students' scores.

A percentile score below 40 is cause for concern. It means that 60 or more kids got better scores on that test, and your child may not be keeping up well. Low scores like that warrant further investigation. If your child is consistently scoring far below others, a conversation with the teacher is in order. Work together to find the cause of the underperformance and make a plan to fix it.

The test scores pages also often give a breakdown of skills within a subject area. For example, your child may get a comprehension score and a word recognition score in reading. A low score in a subtest area gives you some idea of where to begin looking for problems. It's also possible for students to have widely varying subtest scores but a solid overall test score. This could indicate a budding problem that if addressed soon, may raise your child's scores overall (as well as his or her grades and school performance). If unaddressed, the problem can worsen and begin to pull down overall test scores.

Pinpointing weak areas or addressing overall low scores is best addressed with a home-school partnership. Ask the teacher to advise you about how you can help. Sometimes focused prac-

tice with basic skills like computation or phonics is the solution. But if additional practice is not enough, or if the teacher is unable to give the help your child needs, consider tutorial assistance. A good tutor can do a more detailed evaluation to identify weak skills and then design remedial exercises to fix the problem.

It's also possible that your student needs an evaluation for special education services. If you have concerns in this area, remember that parents have the right to request the school take a closer look at your child's learning and find out if something is standing in his or her way of success.

In any case, don't ignore those test results pages or file them under "U" for "useless." They are designed to provide a snapshot of your child's performance and progress. You can use them to know what questions to ask and to help you make a plan to pull them up. Save them from year to year so you can see trends. And most importantly, reach out to the school if you have concerns.

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Sandy Fleming is an educational consultant, tutor, and writer living in Edwardsburg. Visit her website at <http://sandyflemingonline.com> for more information about guiding your child's education.*



# LOCAL HISTORY

## Research Guide: Plat maps of Cass County

*In the Collections of the Local History  
Branch of the Cass District Library*

Provided by **Jon Wuepper**,  
Branch Manager of the Cass District Library  
145 North Broadway, Cassopolis, MI 49031  
jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us

One of the essential tools to anyone doing family research are plat maps. Plat maps are maps labeling property ownership and acreage in addition to locations of churches, homes, schoolhouses, mills, roads, water bodies and other features.

The following list of plat maps of Cass County, Michigan are arranged chronologically with the intention of assisting genealogists in their quest for knowledge of the past.

**Large size plat maps:** Cass County plat maps dating from 1860-1914, both original and reprints, were published in a large-size format, using 11x17 inch paper or larger.

1860. Map of the Counties Cass, Van Buren and Berrien, Michigan. Published by Geil, Harley, and Siverd. Philadelphia.

The oldest known plat map of Cass County was published 31 years after the county was established. Originally a wall map made of canvass and leather. This wall map-atlas was published the same year as the Eighth United States Census (1860), and the two documents complement each other well.

In 1983 the Cass County Historical Commission published the wall map in atlas form (black and white), complete with an index. Copies of this atlas are still available for purchase at the Cass District Library's Local History Branch.

The US Library of Congress has scanned and posted an original hand colored copy of the wall map. A link to this map can be found under the Local History Resources section of the Cass District Library website at [www.cassdistrictlibrary.org](http://www.cassdistrictlibrary.org)

1872. Atlas of Cass County, Michigan. From the actual Surveys by and under the directions of D.J. Lake, C.E. published by C.O. Titus. Philadelphia.

The second plat atlas of Cass County came twelve years after the first. The 1872 atlas was printed in a larger scale than its predecessor and is easier to read.

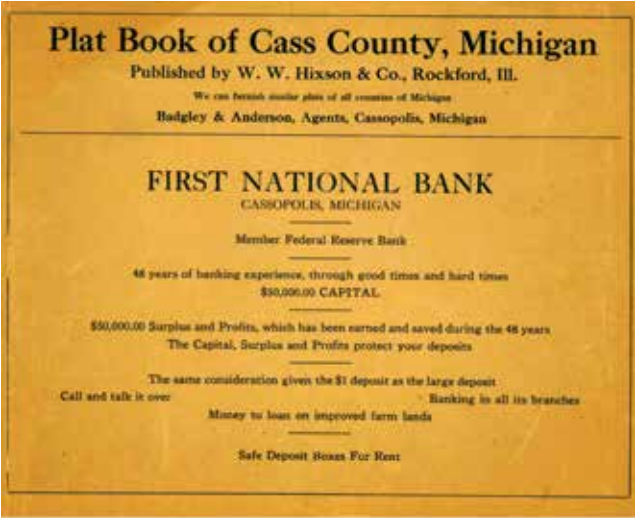
This was also reprinted by the Cass County Historical Commission in 1977 and again in 1996 (black and white both times), with an index. Copies are still available for sale at the Cass District Library's Local History Branch.

1896. Standard Atlas of Cass County, Michigan, Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities and Townships of the County. Compiled by George A. Ogle & Co. Chicago.

Reprinted by the Cass County Historical Commission in black and white, but without an index.

1914. Standard Atlas of Cass County, Michigan, Including a Plat Book of the Villages, Cities and Townships of the County. Compiled by George A. Ogle & Co. Chicago.

Reprinted by the Cass County Historical Commission in color, but without an index. Scale is larger, and thus more readable than the 1896. Note that this is the last of the "large" atlases.



**Small, or regular sized plat maps:** Cass County plat map published from the 1920s onwards appeared on standard 8 & 1/2 x 11 inch paper.

The following Cass County plat books located at the Cass District Library's Local History Branch are summarized by decade.

**1920s:** Two copies with handwritten date of 1920 published by W.W. Hixson & Co. Rockford, IL.; One copy with handwritten date of 1924, pub. by Hixson & Co., and six undated copies believed to have been published circa 1920s by Hixson & Co.

**1930s:** One undated plat map is believed to have been published circa 1930 by Hixson & Co.

There are no plat maps of Cass County in the collections of the Cass District Library published during the 1930s other than the one listed above.

**1940s:** None published during this decade are among the library's collections.

**1950s:** One undated plat book believed to have been published circa 1958 (published by County Plat and Directory Co., Inc) is among the library's collections.

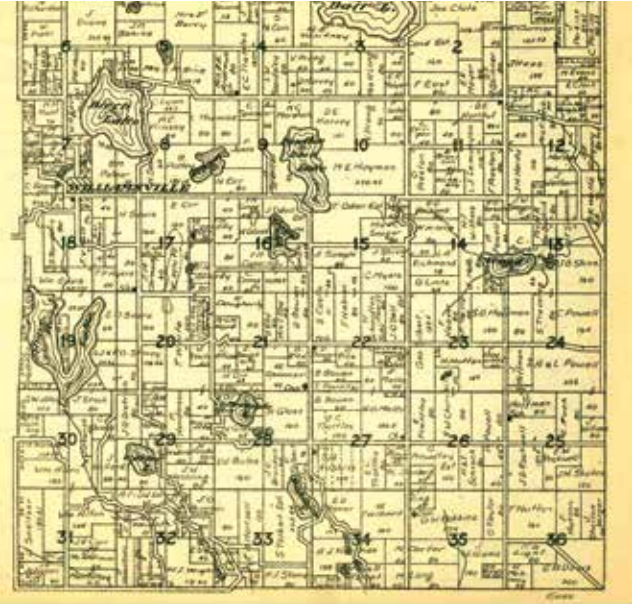
**1960s:** Undated, handwritten date 1960 (published locally?); Undated, handwritten date circa 1963 (published locally?); Undated, handwritten date c1963-1964 (published locally?);

Undated on the book, but confirmed published in July 1960 from a newspaper report (Rockford Map Publishers); Undated, believed published circa early 1960s. Color maps.

(County Plat and Directory Co., Inc); 1963 (Published by County Plat and Directory Co, Inc); 1967 (Rockford Map Publishers);

**1970s:** 1971 (Town & Country Publications); 1973 (Town & Country Publications); 1975 (Town & Country Publications); 1978 (Town & Country Publications); 1979 (Town & Country Publications).

**1980s:** 1980-1981 (Rockford Map Publishers);



1981 (Town & Country Publications); 1983-84 (Town & Country Publications); 1986 (Town & Country Publications); 1988-1990 (Rockford Map Publishers).

**1990s:** 1990-91 (Town & Country Publications); 1993 (Miller Manager Management Services, Inc.); 1997 (Rockford Map Publishers).

**2000s:** 2000 (Farm & Home Publishers, Ltd); 2005 (Athentic, Inc); 2007 (Athentic, Inc); 2008 (Athentic, Inc.).

**2010s:** 2012 (Athentic, Inc); 2014 (Athentic, Inc); 2016 (Mapping Solutions).

**2020s:** 2020 (Farm & Home Publishers).

**CORRECTION:** In the December 2020 issue of Neighbors, I ran an article on the winners of the Presidential races in Cass County, Michigan from 1836-2020. I incorrectly stated that Joseph Biden won Cass County in the 2020 race, when in fact Donald J. Trump was the winner. However, Trump did not carry the state of Michigan in the 2020 race. I sincerely apologize for this error and thank those who brought it to my attention. Respectfully, Jonathan T. Wuepper

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# HISTORIC POSTCARDS

## Historic postcards depict rich scenes of 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

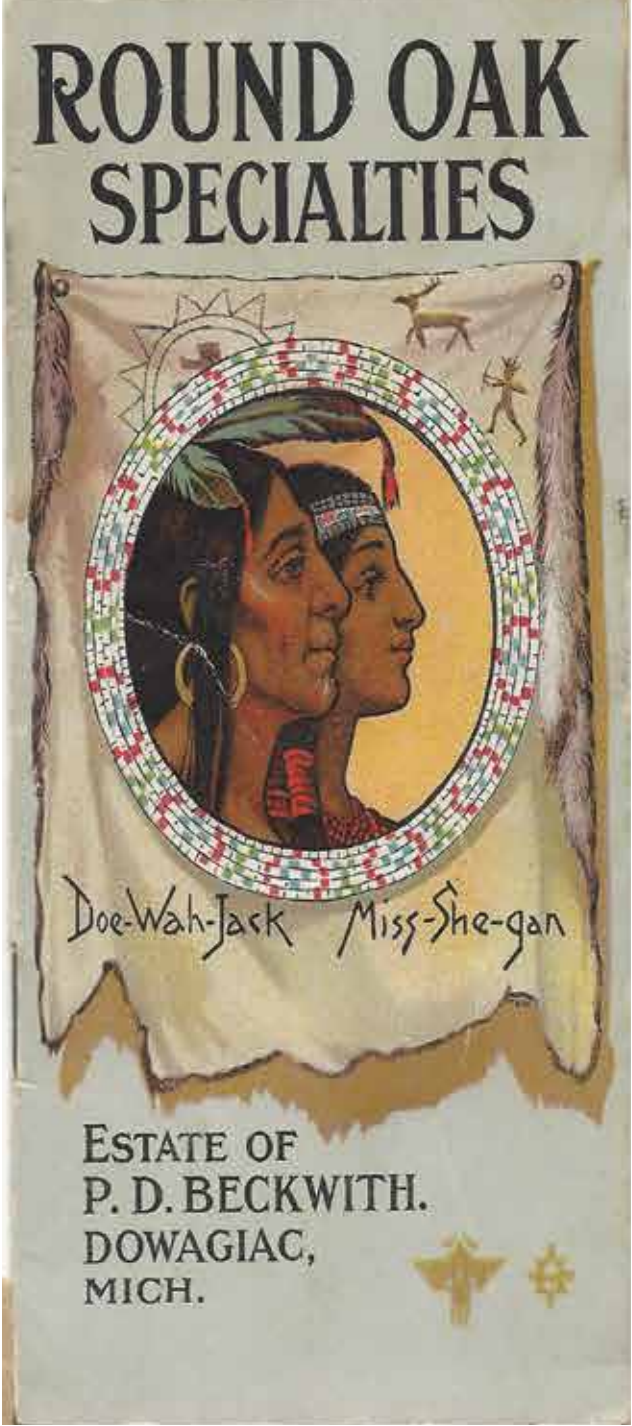
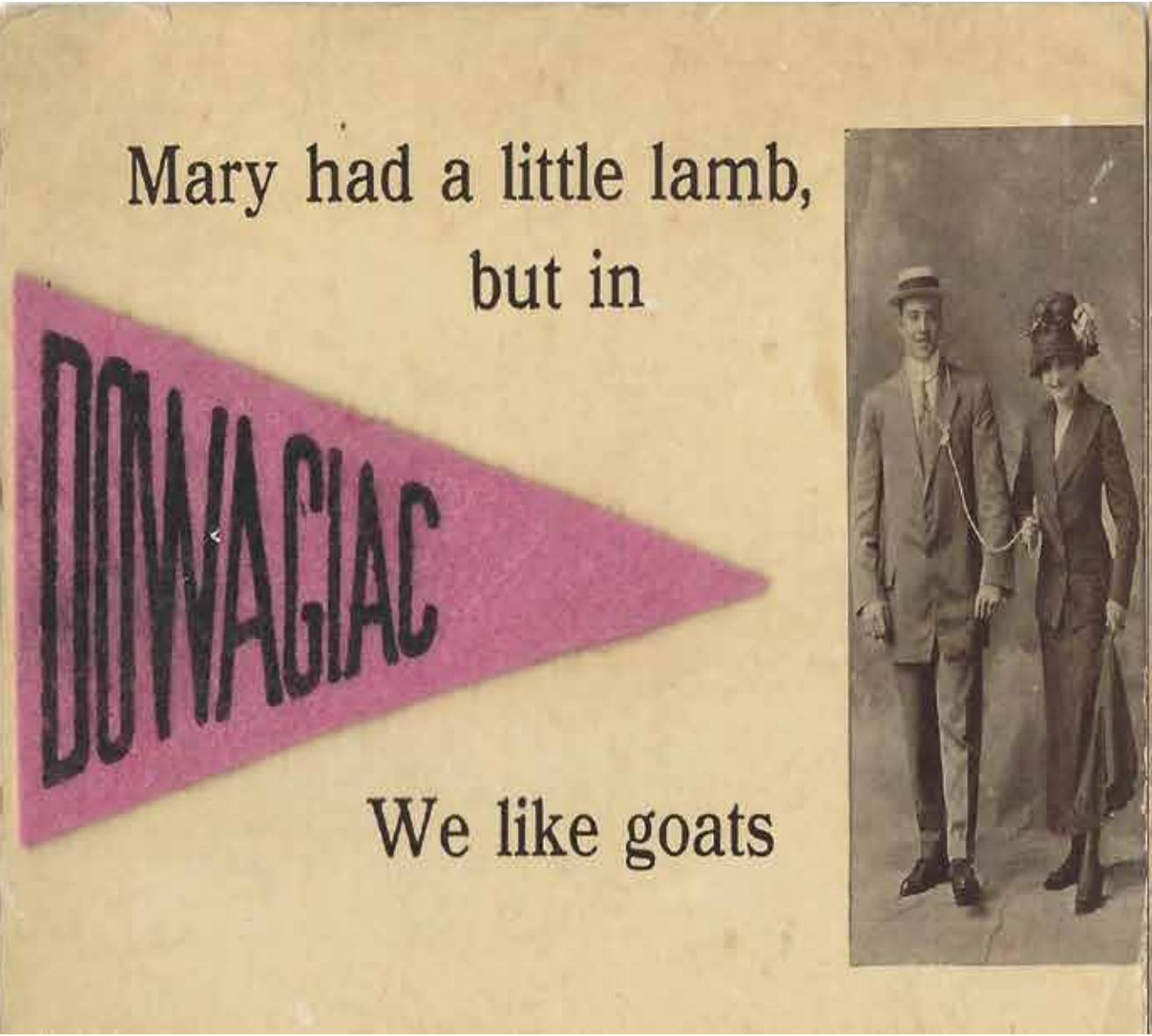
featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

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](http://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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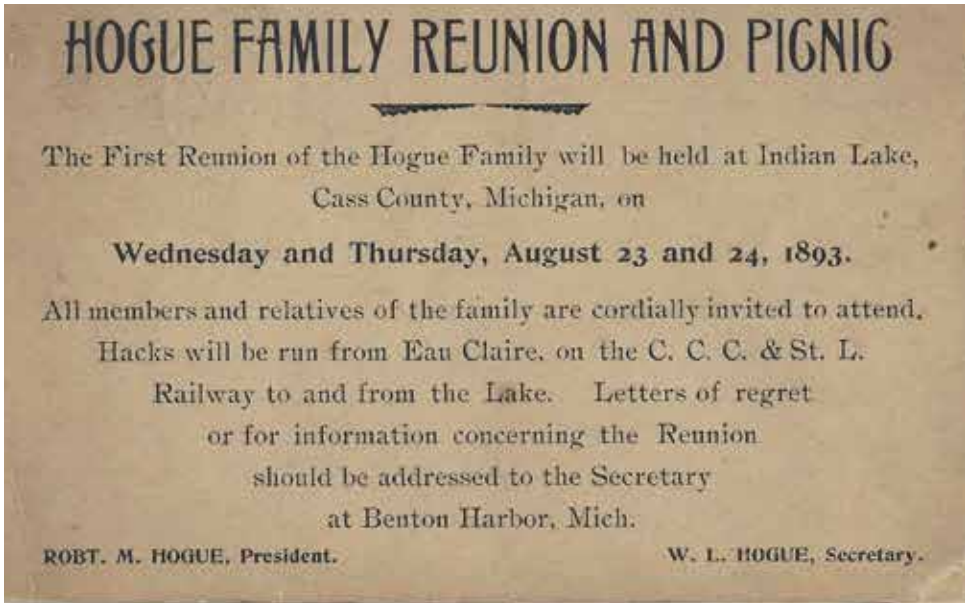
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# NATURE NOTES

## Winter sightings around the area

*Provided by Cass District Library  
Local History Branch*

Brad Anderson captured the image of a red-shouldered hawk on January 25, on the south side of Browntown Road, near the intersection of Baldwin Road in Chikaming Township.

The red-shouldered hawk is in the same genus, named *buteos* as our more common red-tailed hawk. The former is a hawk of woodlands, the latter hawk of open- and semi-open country.

During the summer months the red-shouldered hawk is found across the state of Michigan wherever there is suitable habitat, being large, healthy expansive woodlands. This type of habitat is mostly found in Michigan's Upper and northern Lower Peninsula, and to a lesser extent across the southern half of the Lower Peninsula. The red-shouldered hawk is very uncommon in the southeastern part of the state where farming and urbanization dominate the landscape.

In Southwest Michigan, mature second growth forests have regenerated across many areas of the county, especially along the Lake Michigan shoreline and the corridors of the Galien, Paw Paw, St. Joseph rivers, and Hickory creek. It is among these woodlands that the red-shouldered hawk lives in summer, successfully raising young, and increasing their population that had been reduced over much of the 20th Century due to habitat loss and the harmful pesticide, DDT.

Red-shouldered hawks are a species indicative of a mature, healthy forest. Two bird species often found among the same habitat are the barred owl and the pileated woodpecker. Both the owl and woodpecker have had population increases in the same way as the red-shouldered hawk where second growth forests have matured in recent decades.

Most red-shouldered hawks vacate the state for the southeastern US for the winter months, but a very few linger in the southern tier of counties, including Berrien through to March. Nesting may be in southern Michigan as early as late March.

Betty Timmreck of Eau Claire found a white-crowned sparrow at her feeder near in late January. While the white-crowned sparrow is an abundant spring and fall migrant in Southwest Michigan, and although there are always a few around in winter, it can be a difficult species to find from December through March.

In the summer months the white-crowned sparrow nests in far northern subarctic areas of Canada, and most of the eastern population winters, from Indiana and Ohio, southward to the Gulf states. Thus, Timmreck's find is noteworthy for our region.

In late January, a flock of approximately 15 common redpolls showed up at the feeders of Brad and Hannah Anderson of Bridgman. Brad was able to photograph one of these winter finches, featured in today's column. Of course, common redpolls are a winter finch, found from late fall through mid-spring in our area and vary in number each winter based in part on food availability in their summer range in Canada. This season they have been relatively scarce, but have become somewhat more visible now that colder weather has settled in in recent weeks.

Common redpolls prefer niger seed, more commonly called "thistle seed", though the seed does not come from the



*Top left: Red-shouldered Hawk on January 25, 2021 by Brad Anderson of Bridgman. Red-shouldered hawks are the woodland cousins to our common red-tailed hawks of open country. This one was seen near the corner of Baldwin and Browntown Roads.*

*Bottom left: Common redpoll, one of a flock of approximately 15 that have been visiting the feeders of Brad and Hannah Anderson of Bridgman in recent weeks.*

*Bottom center: American robin on January 22, 2021 in Royalton Township by Cheryl Ryno. American robins do spend the winter in Southwest Michigan but are less conspicuous than in the summer months by spending their time among thick stands of pine trees, coming out to feed on fruit bearing trees.*

*Top right: Carolina Wrens*

*Center right: Female (above) and male (below) white-winged crossbills, January 9, 2021, New Buffalo Township.*

*Third right: White-tailed deer foraging for food in the backyard of Bob and Pat Conrad, January 6, 2021. White-tailed deer can jump a standard four foot fence with little effort.*

*Right: Male northern cardinal, Van Buren County, January 2021. Greg Myrkle, Jr.*

thistle plant itself, but from the niger plant or African yellow daisy native to Nigeria.

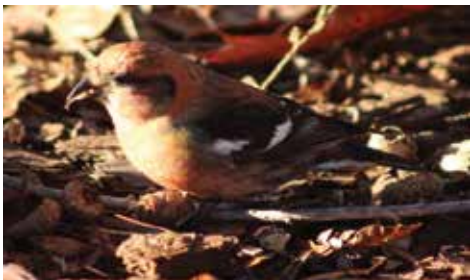
Cheryl Ryno of Royalton Township sent in a photo of an American robin, taken January 31 in her yard. Ryno says there were between 30 to 40 robins feeding on berries on one of the bushes in her yard.

I have received multiple reports, including photos, of both American robins and eastern bluebirds over the last couple of weeks from area readers! I thank you all! Many ask: "Is it normal for robins and bluebirds to be here in winter?". The answer is yes. Both species spend the winter in southern Michigan.

American robins may overwinter over much of the lower peninsula, southward to the gulf states, although numbers fluctuate every winter season based in part on food availability. In summer we are accustomed to seeing robins hopping about in yards looking for worms and insects, but don't realize their habits change during the cold months.

In winter robins flock together, sometimes in flocks numbering in the hundreds. One such flock was noted this past week, feeding as a flock on crabapples by Dick Schinkel near the intersection of Pokagon and Huckleberry Roads in Berrien Township.

Finally, Peg and John McCann of St.



Joseph had a pair of Carolina wrens visit the hot pepper log suet they put out for the birds on February 6. Carolina wrens are year-round residents in Southwest Michigan, which is at the northern edge of their range. The species is quite susceptible to cold weather, and thus suet cakes play an important role for these local birds survival.

A flock of white-winged crossbills were reported on January 9 in New Buffalo Township by Jackie Jensen of Union Pier. White-winged crossbills are a

*Continued on next page. See:*  
**NATURE**



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### NATURE *Continued from previous page*

species of finch that inhabit the northern coniferous forests of Canada and northern US during the summer months and in winter irrupt southward regularly, albeit in small numbers, into the Upper Peninsula and portions of the northern Lower Peninsula. However, white-winged crossbills turn up infrequently in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula, which makes Jensen's observation noteworthy.

Jensen reported a flock of 15 white-winged-crossbills and was able to capture photos of both male and female of the species. As you can see the male appears pinkish-red over much of its body while the female appears a dull green. Both sexes have dark wings with two distinct white wing bars for which the bird is named. Its bill is indeed crossed, and reminds me of a pair of tin-snips, enabling the bird to easily crack open pine cones.

The white-winged crossbill prefers the seeds of spruce trees, along with eastern hemlock, tamarack and fir trees. During the winter of 2007-2008, a large invasion of white-winged crossbills occurred into the northern tier of states. That winter there were hundreds of white-winged crossbills sightings throughout all of Michigan. I recall seeing a flock of about 30 crossbills near Edwardsburg in Cass County feeding on seeds from the cones of Douglas fir trees.

So far this winter there have been just a handful of white-winged crossbill sightings from southern Michigan, and Jensen's is the only known sighting from the southwest portion of Michigan.

Bob and Pat Conrad of Lincoln Township sent in some great pictures of a white-tailed deer jumping over a four-foot tall chain link fence in their backyard.

There are two additional deer visible in the photo seen foraging for food. These three deer likely represent a small family group.

During late winter into March, white-tailed deer will herd together in greater numbers. Over in Cass County, I have seen herds of deer in late winter numbering around 150 individuals.

Earlier this month, Greg Myrkle of Bangor took a nice, up-close photo of a male northern cardinal while visiting the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery in Van Buren County. Northern cardinals are welcomed and familiar birds to those of us who live in Michigan. As early as February, we will hear the male cardinal sing its familiar song on crisp, clear, sunny mornings. While cardinal nesting in Southwest Michigan won't begin in earnest until March, males begin to claim nesting territories as early as February.

Although no photo was obtained, it is worth noting that Glenda Davidson of Berrien Township reported an eastern phoebe on January 25, in the vicinity of her bird feeders. Davidson said: "The phoebe touched down on the feeder, bobbed his tail a couple of times and flew off".

The eastern phoebe is a flycatcher common to Southwest Michigan from April to October. The species winters in the Southeastern US, and there are a few winter records for Southwest Michigan, most occurring in December. Any remaining eastern phoebes in the area in December usually succumb to the elements by January.

I would like to make a correction to my January 16, 2021 column, in that the photos of the American kestrel should have been credited to Greg Myrkle, Jr. of Bangor.

Please report your sightings to Jonathan Wuepper at [wuepperj@gmail.com](mailto:wuepperj@gmail.com).



*White-crowned sparrow near Eau Claire in late January, Betty Timmreck.*



# THE LAST WORD

## Some things are only impossible until they're not



ne of my all time favorite fictional characters (Jean Luc Picard of Star Trek the next Generation) once told Commander Data "Something is only impossible until it isn't impossible anymore."

When I was a boy I remember people saying that humans would never walk on the moon, and the very idea of sending a rocket ship to Mars was an HG Wells fantasy best Dewey Decimated under the library's realm of science fiction along with flying cars, machines that think, robots and cloned sheep. And I'm not even going to begin discussing the politics of a functional congress, bipartisanship or such abandoned concepts as truth, justice and the American Way we baby boomers grew up hearing about.

Well, in the Hamlet where I grew up, there are now more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. And a lot of them were once widely considered completely impossible, at least until they weren't impossible any more.

I got to thinking about some of these things on a recent road trip to the great state of Texas. As my beloved spouse, our aging dog friend and I were zipping along a Texas highway at 75 mph (something my grandparents would undoubtedly have deemed impossible when they were young) on our second geriatric winter camping vacation of the year (something I would have considered impossible when the pandemic first hit), navigating via my wife's cell phone GPS app (what-ever the hell magic an app might be clas-

sified as), the stark landscape rolling by was punctuated by scrub cactus and the ubiquitous oil wells, creating a surreal vision that the early pioneers of Texas would surely have deemed impossible in the pre-Alamo era.

"We live in an amazing time," I told my dog as a Tesla zoomed by at 90 in the passing lane. She just nodded (even in the Quixotic world of impossible dreams, my dog still can't talk).

"There's a speed trap ahead," my car informed me in a nasal, feminine drone. I checked just to make sure my cruise control had me at a reasonable speed.

"See," I told the dog. "Electric cars, cars that talk to you while you're driving, I hear they're even making cars that drive themselves."

The dog just nodded.

Impossible! Until it's not.

My wife ignored my mumbling and the dog's nodding and handed me a piece of celery with peanut butter on it.

"What's this?" I asked.

"Lunch," she replied, knowing that I'd have preferred chowing down on a Double Mega-Monster Bad-For-You Burger and greasy french fries loaded with extra salt if I weren't still dieting.

"Some day they'll make a pill you can take that will remove fat and make you lose weight and skinny up without having to eat God-awful rabbit food like this," I grumbled.

She shook her head.

"That's impossible," she told me.

"Nothing's impossible," I countered.

My wife looked out the window at the oil wells and cactus that dotted the otherwise barren, brown and brutally boring landscape.

A roadside diner flashed by, it's neon sign blearing an ad for a three-pound rattlesnakeburger, all you can eat burro BBQ and a giant camel meat burrito smothered in habaneros.

I looked at the celery and nodded.

My mouth started to water. My stomach growled. A tear formed in the corner of my eye as I sneered at my diet lunch nibble. I can't live on this, I thought. Impossible.

I want one of those rattlesnakeburgers (but I can do without the other two)!

I drove on, thinking about impossible things and trying to ignore the noises coming from my stomach.

Up ahead (way up, and it's not easy to say how far ahead), the contrail of a jet plane made a huge white gash in the blue sky, stretching for miles.

They said man would never fly. The horseless carriage would never work.

Impossible, they said.

Light bulbs. Impossible!

The wheel. Telephones. Television. Transistors. The printing press. Photography. Computers. The Internet. Ipods. WiFi. All impossible. Once.

Then there's cell phones (some of us are still debating those ... can you hear me now?).

And that's just things. What about supposedly impossible human achievements?

Building the pyramids.

Sailing around the world.

The four-minute mile.

The A Bomb.

Vaccines that can eradicate deadly epidemics and maladies.

Decoding DNA and mapping the human genome.

Cloned animals.

Scaling Mount Everest.

Reaching the earth's magnetic poles.

Harnessing wind and solar power.

Tom Brady.

All impossible nay sayers shouted.

Of course we all know that there really are some things that actually are impossible and likely always will be.

Mostly.

UFOs and ETs.

Healthy fast food.

Peace in the Middle East.

A man understand what his wife means when she makes that "tsk" noise with her tongue.

Impossible!

Those things all gave me plenty to ruminate upon as I drove, but after arriving safely back home after our trip, I was stunned to discover that two things I had previously relegated to the realm of Never Never Land actually came to pass.

The first was just days after getting home, before my new Texas tan had even faded back to Michigan melanin pale, the area where I had just basked on 75 degree beaches and broke a BO-worthy sweat on a dozen wilderness hikes got blasted with a winter storm saw snow in areas where people had never seen it before, froze pipes as far south as Houston and forced the closing of causeways to tropical Padre Island.

Impossible, I thought.

But even more so than that was when I stepped onto the scale the first morning back and discovered that while I was on vacation, I actually lost a pound and a half. Who does that? No one loses weight on a vacation!

Impossible.



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# Don't leave money on the table.

## INVENTORY IS NEEDED

The affects of Covid-19 reach far and wide, and the real estate market is not immune. Prices are rising and inventory has fallen below half of what it was last year. With more people working remotely from home (*think: the setting of a spacious waterfront deck versus a two-bedroom in the city*) and families looking for alternative outings to canceled camps, sports and travel (*think: the lake life versus limited public access*), sellers are in a unique position as lake home demand has significantly increased. Market conditions are rapidly changing — call today for your free market analysis!

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