

# Neighbors

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NOVEMBER 2022

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A regional newspaper serving Cass County, Michigan and the surrounding area, and distributed at homes and businesses in Dowagiac, Cassopolis, Edwardsburg, Vandalia, Jones, Marcellus, Decatur, Union, Sister Lakes, and Three Rivers, with mail delivery at homes on 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

[HTTP://WWW.CASSNEIGHBORS.COM](http://www.cassneighbors.com)

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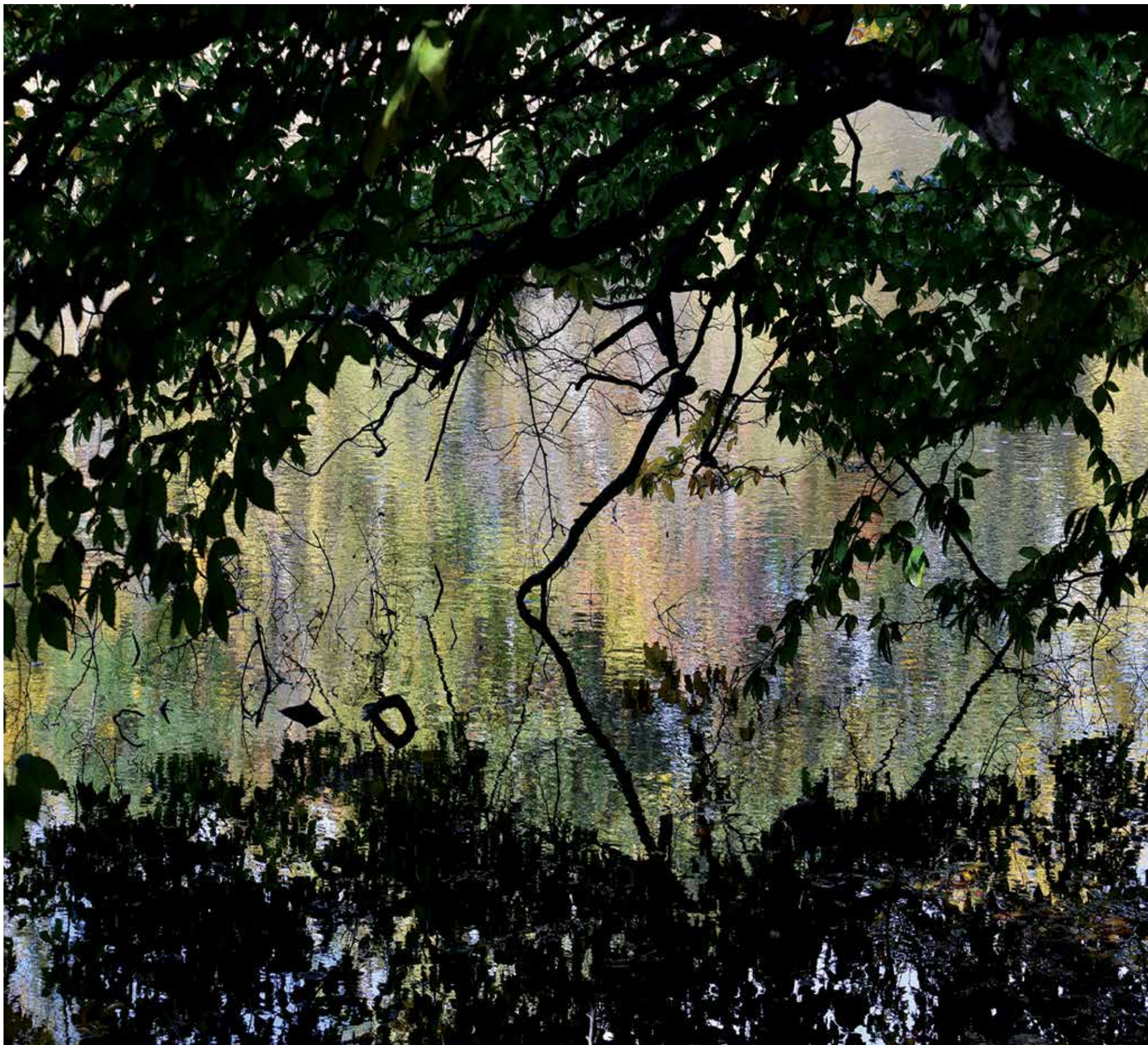
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**FIELD TRIP: Three hidden gems for an Autumn hike**

# REGIONAL NEWS

**Annual Holiday Bazaar**

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Edwardsburg will host an annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 5, from 8 am – 2 pm at the Church Social Hall, 24832 US-12 East, Edwardsburg, MI 49112

The event plans to feature over 80 talented crafters, homemade baked goods, unique gifts & seasonal decorations

The first 250 visitors have chances for door prizes. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks will be available for purchase.

For more information contact: Amy Traxler (574) 329-3097 or Laurel Ward (574) 855-8829.

**Christmas by Candlelight**

The Cassopolis United Methodist Church will present Christmas by Candlelight on December 5 at 6 pm. Dessert will be served. All community women are invited. RSVP to Char at 268-7066 or to CUMC at 445-3107. This is the 36th year CUMC has hosted this event.

**White Reindeer Bazaar  
Holiday Bake sale**

A Holiday Bake Sale - White Reindeer Bazaar is planned from 9 am - 2 pm on Nov. 12 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 305 W. State Street, Cassopolis featuring holiday baked goods, a used book sale, Christmas decor and more. "The Best Lunch in Town" A soup and sandwich lunch will be available from 11 am - 2 pm. Carry-outs are available. For more information visit the website [www.stpaulcass.org](http://www.stpaulcass.org)

**Beckwith Theatre Company**

The Beckwith Theatre Company will present Lady Windermere's Fan by Oscar Wilde on December 2 & 3 at 7:30 pm, December 4 at 2 pm, December 9 & 10 at 7:30 pm, and December 11 at 2 pm

For more information see <https://www.beckwiththeatre.com/>.

**Nominations for Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Award**

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is seeking project nomination applications for its Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award. The Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award was established in 1987 and is presented annually by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC).

Awarded projects exemplify intergovernmental cooperation by local units of government. More specifically, it is an award for cross-jurisdictional, regional cooperation between at least two governmental units and can include non-governmental organizations as well. The multiple governmental units can include multiple levels of government including federal, state, county, tribal, and units of local government. The criteria used to evaluate the applications are: 1) relative degree of effort by local units, 2) project scope, 3) methodology, and 4) project dimension.

They expect to include the award in the SWMPC Board Meeting on December 20. Accordingly, the schedule for the award process is as follows. The applications will be due on November 14 (they should be sent to Maria at [vettrainom@swmpc.org](mailto:vettrainom@swmpc.org)) They can also be mailed to

the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission at 376 West Main Street, Suite 130 Benton Harbor, MI 49022.

You can see the application online at [https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/gw\\_nomination\\_form\\_2022.pdf](https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/gw_nomination_form_2022.pdf) or [https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/gw\\_nomination\\_form\\_2022.doc](https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/gw_nomination_form_2022.doc)

For more information contact Maria Vettraino at [vettrainom@swmpc.org](mailto:vettrainom@swmpc.org) or 269-925-1137 x 1520. To learn more about past award recipients visit [www.swmpc.org/gwhistory.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/gwhistory.asp).

**Deer management in Indiana**

The St. Joseph County (Indiana) Parks will implement a deer management program at Bendix Woods County Park and at Spicer Lake County Park, both in New Carlisle, IN.

The deer management hunt at Bendix woods will take place Saturday November 19 and Sunday, November 20, 2022. Bendix Woods County Park will be closed to the public on these dates.

To emphasize deer population reduction, the management program will be an antlerless hunt.

Bendix Woods County Park consists of 195 acres with 27 acres dedicated as a state dedicated nature preserves, a classification given to high quality ecosystems. Review and approval for the deer management program was required by the Division of Nature Preserves of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The district biologist for the Division of Fish and Wildlife assisted in the assessment.

Spicer Lake Nature Preserve will be closed to the public Saturday, November 12 and Sunday November 13. The Park

will also be closed to the public Saturday, December 3 and Sunday, December 4.

The decision to continue with the deer management plan was based on several factors: (1) the staff observed more deer and deer trails within the park property, and has observed increased damage to landscaping trees and herbaceous ground cover; (2) neighbors communicated they were suffering deer damage to their landscaping, but efforts to cull the deer population were hampered when deer retreated into the park property; (3) the staff wants to act proactively, to protect the forest ecosystem and woodland wildflowers within the nature preserve.

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# REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

November 5 - **Our Lady of the Lake annual Holiday Bazaar**, 8 am - 2 pm, Edwardsburg, 574-855-8829

November 12 - **Holiday Bake Sale White Reindeer Bazaar**, 9 am - 2 pm, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Cassopolis. [www.stpaulcass.org](http://www.stpaulcass.org)

December 5 - **Christmas by Candlelight**, Cassopolis United Methodist Church, 6 pm, RSVP to 268-7066, 445-3107

## Cass District Library

### Infant and Preschool Storyline

**Through November 17.** This program provides opportunities to have social interaction and to develop a love of reading. Each week will feature new stories, crafts and activities centered around a theme.

- **Mondays** - 10 am, Mason/Union Branch, Infant Storytime (Birth - 2 years)
- **Tuesdays** - 11 am, Howard Branch & Edwardsburg Branch, Preschool Storytime (3 - 5 years)
- **Wednesdays** - 11 am, Mason/Union Branch, Preschool Storytime (3 - 5 years)
- **Thursdays** - 11 am, Main Branch, Preschool Storytime (3 - 5 years)

### Family Gratitude Jars

Howard Branch. Stop by to pick up and decorate a Family Gratitude Jar with provided supplies. Leaf shaped papers will be in the jar. Each day leading up to Thanksgiving, family members will write down one thing they are thankful for on a leaf. On Thanksgiving, families can take time to read each entry and reflect on the items they included in their jar.

### Cupcake Decorating Workshop

**November 3**, Main Branch, 6 pm. Join us at the Main Branch to learn how to decorate jumbo highland cow cupcakes with Christina's Cakery! All supplies will be provided. Registration and payment required. Cost is \$10 per person. Register at any branch location or call Stephanie at 269-749-1384.

### Holiday Market

**November 19**, Main Branch, 9 am - 1 pm. Join us to browse, shop and prepare for the upcoming holiday season. Calling all craft vendors and small business owners! There is no cost to participate in this event.

Vendors interested in participating must fill out a digital or paper registration. Forms are available at [www.cassdistrictlibrary.org](http://www.cassdistrictlibrary.org) or at any branch. Contact McKinzie at 574-314-6454 or [mckistler@cass.lib.mi.us](mailto:mckistler@cass.lib.mi.us) for information.

## Dowagiac District Library

November 7 - **The Legacy & Memory of Emmett Till**, 6- 7:30 pm

November 3 - **Make & Share Cookbook Club**. 5:15-6:30 pm, the November cookbook of the month is Martha Stewart's Appetizers: 200 Recipes for Dips, Spreads, Snacks, Small Plates, and Other Delicious Hors d'Oeuvres by Martha Stewart. Make a recipe from the monthly cookbook selection, then join us at the library for a recipe share & book discussion. To reserve your spot, call the library or email (Att: Erin) at [dowagiadlibrarystaff@gmail.com](mailto:dowagiadlibrarystaff@gmail.com)

November 3 - **Story Squad**, 5:30 - 6:30 pm. Children 6-9 are invited to join Story Squad, a new book club where an age-appropriate novel will be read aloud with a discussion to follow. Kids are encouraged to attend weekly! Due to capacity limits, only children 6-9 may attend the program. Parents and younger children will be asked to enjoy other areas of the library during this time.

November 5 - **Saturday Story Time**, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Saturday Story Time features the same books and crafts from the Tuesday Preschool Story Time. It is geared toward children 3-5 years old and focuses on developing early literacy skills and fine motor skills through listening to one or two stories and participating in fun-filled age appropriate crafts and/or learning activities.

November 7 - **The Legacy & Memory of Emmett Till**, 6 - 7:30 pm Presented by: Jim Herm. The story of Emmett Till was silenced for over 50 years after his brutal murder on August 28, 1955. Since 2005, new information has been discovered about what really took place after Emmett made the famous whistle to Carolyn Bryant after purchasing candy at Bryant's Grocery in Money, Mississippi.

November 8 - **Preschool Story Time**, 10:30 - 11:30 am.

November 8 - **Teen Tuesday: Teen Cooking 101\*** 3 - 4 pm. Turkey Rollups: Teens will learn how to make a quick, easy and delicious turkey rollup—perfect for lunch or an after-school snack! \*Registration is required for this event. Sign up in the youth department by Friday, November 4. Teen Tuesdays are for teens 6th through 12th grade and meet each Tuesday at 3 pm in the Pokagon Room on the second level of the library.

November 10 - **Story Squad**, 5:30 - 6:30 pm.

November 11, - 14 - **Ladies Library Book sale**, Annual Ladies Library book sale in the Community Room, Friday, 9 am - 5 pm. Saturday 9 am - 2 pm, Monday 9 am - 5 pm (bag sale)

November 12 - **Local Author Visit**, 11 am - Noon. Local author Thelda Mathews will read her children's book The Squeeze. Children are invited to make a "Squeeze with Toes" craft after the reading. All ages are welcome!

November 15 - **Preschool Story Time**, 10:30 - 11:30 am

November 15 - **Teen Tuesday: Arts & Crafts**, 3 - 4 pm The November Arts & Crafts project is TBD. More info coming soon!

November 14 - **Board Meeting**, 6:30 - 8:30 pm (NEW DATE)

November 17 - **Story Squad**, 5:30 - 6:30 pm

November 19 - **Saturday Story Time**, 10:30 - 11:30 am

November 22 - **Preschool Story Time**, 10:30 - 11:30 am

November 22 - **Teen Tuesday: Trivia**, 3 - 4 pm

November 24 - **Closed Thanksgiving**

November 26 - **Saturday Story Time**, 10:30 A-M 11:30 am

November 28 - **OMG Book Club for Tweens**, 3 - 4 pm

For more information visit <https://www.dowagiadl.org/>

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TEAM

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## A tribute to Charlie from her co-workers

By **Kristen Goodwin**  
Kemner, Iott, Benz Agency

**A**s most of you know, Charlie was the regular author for the Kemner Iott Benz insurance article for many years. She loved writing to all of you, letting you all know about coverage you should consider and what to look out for in case of a claim. She also loved inserting her favorite sidekick, Clyde, into her stories. After Charlie passed, I asked her fellow team members to send me some of their favorite memories of working with Charlie in the office. Here is what they had to say:

Charlie always took a lot of pride in not only her work, but her second family the KIB Family. There are so many memorable moments that is for sure. Charlie was a go getter when it came to competitions that involved food. The famous chili and soup cookoffs were always her favorite. A more recent memory I have is the day Charlie called me to thank me for giving her the opportunity to go back into what she loved most, insurance claim handling. We were both crying happy tears because even though Charlie was in her biggest fight, she still wanted to continue to work doing what she loved most when I was trying to tell her to enjoy life to the fullest. Never gave up!

— Jen Haracourt, VP Client Services

I did not know Charlie all that well but what I did know of her is that she was a very nice and kind....

— Marci Glynn, Customer Service

I have a few and maybe the story I have used the most about Charlie. Is telling her clients, claimants and friends is they do not come any tougher than Charlie, prior jobs to harden her shell include bartender and prison guard!

— Dan Herman, Account Executive

I don't have a Charlie story as I had only met her a few times, but one of things that I can say is that she was dedicated to Kemner Iott Benz and was a genuinely a kind person.

— Debbie Powers, Customer Service

Charlie's husband Gary became one of my best friends and we ate lunch together 3 or 4 days a week at the Council on Aging. I recall one day at lunch she came into the dining room while we were eating and came behind Gary and gave him a big kiss, I promptly asked where my kiss was, she told me to find my own "old bag" as the room was half full of them!

In meantime, she was a constant supporter of our community and our agency. Her customer relationship was the best. She had the ability to make peo-



ple love her in time of adversity.

The other side of Charlie was that if she did not like what you were doing, she could tell you off at the drop of a hat, then in the next minute she was still your friend and ready to help you with anything.

I admired her the way she supported her family, her children, and grandchildren.

I spent a lot of time with her and Gary during his final days, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying. Gary could not leave his bed, so I always made it a big deal to bring him and Charlie lunch each week, we would talk and eat together, repeating the local gossip, those are great memories and so hard not to be able to do them all over again.

She will always in the hearts of Karen and me. She deserved the best, sometimes got more than her share and sometimes not her share.

One of her final remarks to me, was a trip I made to bring her home from a treatment; "I am afraid of what will happen to my family when I am gone, and I know they are afraid too. I have wonderful children and grandchildren and a husband who deeply loved me and more friends than I know what to do with. She told me to count my blessings and she was counting hers."

None of us have an enough "Charlies" in our lives!

— Dean Johnson, Medicare,  
Life & Health Account Executive

The way she would always say "Ahhh Patti" when we finally figured out a solution to a problem we were working on.

Each year Charlie, Amy and I would volunteer to do the Christmas parade in Dowagiac for the Chamber. Freezing our tails off with a flashlight in hand, so many laughs while finishing the night with a beer at the Minnow trying to "warm" up our bodies. In return I would help her with the Cassopolis Chamber's Christmas party the next day.

Enjoying girls' day once a month with Charlie, Amy, Vicki, and our special girlfriend -Mark Siskaninetz.

Charlie, Stacey Hollenbeck, Christina Baur, and I decided on a whim we should all go to Vegas, so we hopped on a plane for the weekend. I bet we walked

over 10 miles each day wandering, seeing the sights and oh so much food! Of course, the cocktails were good as well (insert smile).

Charlie was an awesome co-worker, one of my closest friends and will be missed in so many ways.

-Patti Middleton-Badner,  
Account Executive

My favorite memory of Charlie will always be her amazing Halloween costumes! She never went to the store and bought a pre-made costume; she always picked different items from different places and threw together the best costumes. My favorite had to be when she dressed as the Mad Hatter. Complete with bird feathers she found outside and attached to her hat, face paint, several colorful scarves.... she went all out for Halloween, and I always loved that about her.

-Kim Parsons, Customer Service

When I think of Charlie, I think of fierce determination, loyal friend, always giving to others. She loved "porch time" at my house. Charlie, my dear friend, I miss you so much.

-Vicki Brossman, retired

Charlie made everyone around her happy. She took great care in listening and getting to know people and it was genuine. I always loved her big laugh and sense of humor. She was one of the best people I've ever met.

-Dave Herriman, President/CEO

My favorite memory of Charlie was her infectious laugh. She was always ready for a good time and no matter where you were in the office, if she started laughing, you could hear her and couldn't help but smile. She loved Halloween and anything fun that she was able to do with her team.

One time I was in the office helping train a new hire and Charlie came out to chat with us. During that conversation, I remember Charlie telling this new employee that being hired at Kemner Iott Benz makes them a part of the KIB family. Charlie believed and lived this. Her team members were her family. She celebrated their accomplishments, cried with them during hard times, supported them when they needed it, and told them to shape up when they were not quite 'in line'. Charlie was a great addition to our office and is missed severely.

I hope you enjoyed getting to know Charlie a little more from her family at Kemner Iott Benz. Thank you for reading.

-Kristen Goodwin,  
VP Information Systems.



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| <b>Thursday, November 10</b> | <b>9am – 5pm</b> |
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| <b>Saturday, November 12</b> | <b>9am – 3pm</b> |

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# AREA REAL ESTATE

## The housing market in southwest Michigan

In September, sales in the Cass housing market slipped 11 percent for overall housing types, and individually for waterfront and non-waterfront houses. All average selling prices showed major increases, especially for non-waterfront houses.

Last month 67 houses were sold compared to 75 in September 2021. Waterfront house sales were down 11 percent compared to September 2021 (17 vs. 19), and non-waterfront house sales fell 11 percent (50 vs. 56).

Year-to-date, the overall housing market sales were down 13 percent (455 vs. 523). Waterfront house sales decreased 7 percent (122 vs. 131), and non-waterfront houses declined 15 percent (333 vs. 392).

The overall average selling price in September increased 29 percent based on the selling prices of non-waterfront houses compared to September 2021 (\$381,351 vs. \$294,638). The overall median selling price in September at \$292,000 increased 50 percent from \$195,000 in September 2021.

The average selling price for waterfront homes rose 13 percent to \$711,870 from \$628,474 in September 2021. The median selling price for waterfront homes increased 57 percent to \$660,000 from \$420,000 in September 2021.

The average selling price for non-waterfront increased 48 percent to \$268,975 from \$181,372 in September 2021. The median selling price soared 29 percent to \$233,750 from \$150,500 in September 2021.

The median price is the price at which 50 percent of the homes sold were above that price and 50 percent were below.

In Cass County, there were no bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a part of all closed transactions in September. The highest percentage in September previously was 14 percent in 2016.

In all of SWMI housing market that, includes home sales across Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and the westerly 2/3 of Van Buren Counties, the number of bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage of all transactions, there was only one house that was bank-owned or foreclosed which took the percentage back to 0 percent after five months at 1 percent. In January, the rate was 0 percent. The previous lowest percentage in September was 1 percent in 2021. The highest percentage in September was 37 percent in 2009.

At the end of the third quarter of 2022, the SWMI local housing market lost ground in sales while selling prices set records each month. The housing inventory at 4.1-months supply reached the highest level for the year. We started the year with 470 houses for sale across Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and the westerly 2/3 of Van Buren Counties and at the end of September had 895 houses for sale.

In September, the number of houses sold fell to 339 from 398 in September 2021, for a 15 percent drop in sales. Year-to-date sales were down 13 percent from 2021 (2524 vs. 2895).

The average and median selling prices in September and the year-to-date selling prices set records in the year-over-year comparison, which dates back to 2006.

The average selling price rose 5 percent from that in September 2021 (\$340,600 vs. \$324,171). The year-to-date average selling price of \$336,160 was 5 percent higher than the \$319,758 price in September 2021.

The median selling price increased 10 percent to \$252,000 from \$230,000 in September 2021. Year-to-date, the median selling price rose 9 percent (\$245,000 vs. \$225,000).

The total dollar volume fell 11 percent



in September 2022 (\$115,463,412 vs. \$129,020,263). Year-to-date total dollar volume at the end of September 2022 dropped 8 percent (\$848,468,979 vs. \$924,741,988).

The inventory of houses for sale dropped 3 percent from September 2021 (895 vs. 922). With fewer houses selling, the inventory of houses for sale increased to a 4.1-months supply of inventory available for buyers, up from the 4.0-months supply in August 2022. For comparison, in September 2010, there were 3574 houses for sale and a 17.3-months supply of inventory.

Nationally, the Freddie Mac mortgage rate in September was 6.70, up from 5.50 in August for a 30-year conventional mortgage. A year ago, the rate was 3.01.

### When Selling a Home...

This is the time of the year when you may need to hire contractors to help with fall cleanup or to take on maintenance projects to keep your home in top shape. While the majority of contractors are honest professionals, it is still important for homeowners to be aware of scammers. Consumers should be wary of contractors who ask for money upfront. According to the Better Business Bureau, contractors who say they need a significant percentage of the project price in advance are more likely to disappear with the money or do sub-par work with the impression they can't be fired as they are already in possession of most of their payment. Ten percent of the job total, or \$1,000, whichever is less, is enough to establish someone as a serious customer and have the contractor work them into their schedule.

In addition, homeowners should never take the word of a contractor: get everything in a legal contract. Details on specifications, upgrades, and extra touches should all be included in the contract; otherwise, the contractor is under no legal obligation to include them in the finished project.

### When Buying a Home...

The journey to finding your dream house should start by finding a REALTOR that you think knows your community well, and you can trust the advice he or she will give. Your REALTOR® can advise you about getting pre-approved for a mortgage, the second most crucial step to getting your dream house. Your REALTOR® will have experience with local lenders and can explain the differences between the types of lenders.

The following are other tips for making your home-buying experience easier.

1. Don't overwhelm yourself by seeing every lender in town. Select a few options to compare so you can process and assimilate the differences.

2. Get a Fees Worksheet so you will have each lender's direct fees for comparison.

3. The numbers on the worksheet are estimates and not locked in. Interest rates are fluid and change daily or even more often. After you have a contract with a seller, the loan estimate and loan application are where the information is binding, barring structural changes to the loan. Make sure the information reflects previous discussions with and disclosures by the loan officer.

4. Third-party fee estimates are included on the worksheet. Two lenders could each produce different estimates for the title, escrow, or appraisal fees. But not all are

negotiable. For instance, the seller chooses the title company, so the lender doesn't control the choice or the fees. The lender could be choosing the high or low end of a range, but it's only an estimate.

5. Make sure lenders use the same time frame for locking in pricing and that it will extend through the closing. A lender might offer a rate that's a lock for three weeks, but if you anticipate or know your closing date will be five or six weeks out, that could be a problem.

6. Consider applying for a loan approval before finding a property. Many lenders will not do this. But some will allow borrowers to go through the formal underwriting process - not just pre-approval - without having a property. The borrowers can get a bona fide mortgage commitment with all of the main buyer financials truly underwritten at that point. Then when borrowers make an offer, they can close more quickly.

To view properties that are for sale in your local area, go to [www.swmar.com](http://www.swmar.com) and click on "Search". The Southwestern Michigan Association of REALTORS®, Inc. is a professional trade association for real estate professionals who are members of the National Association of REALTORS®, and ancillary service providers for the real estate industry in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. The Association can be contacted at 269-983-6375 or through their website at [www.swmar.com](http://www.swmar.com).



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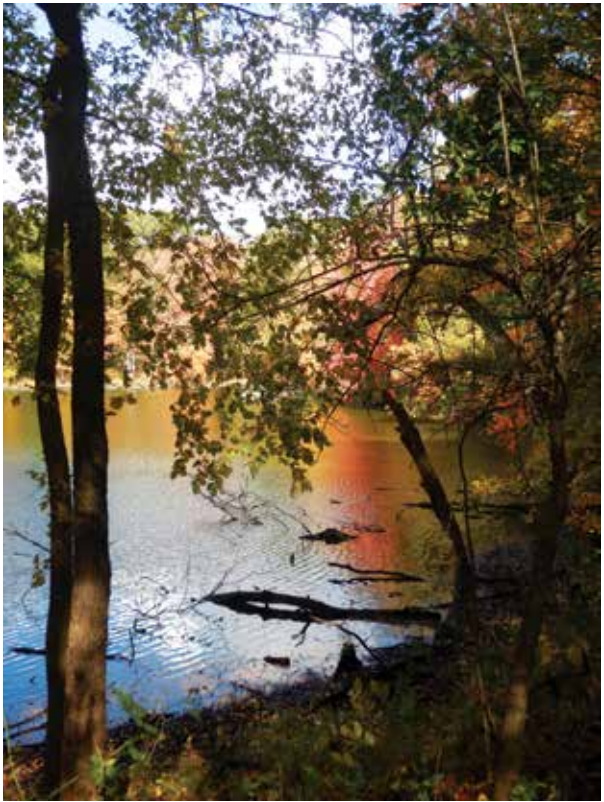
# FIELD TRIP



## FIELD TRIP: Three hidden gems for an Autumn hike in the woods

Most people who have lived in southwestern Michigan for any length of time will tell you the geography is pretty spectacular in many areas, and it is seldom more spectacular than in autumn when the colors of fall emphasize the natural beauty of the fields, hills, lakes, rivers and parks. Although the beauty is not hard to find, there are quite a few off the beaten path spots known to locals that might surprise you. On a recent sunny day my wife "Googled" hiking trails near me and uncovered three spots we had never hiked before ... and all three turned out to be real autumnal gems. For the record, the spots we visited were

**Hidden Marsh Sanctuary** on the edge of Three Rivers (<https://swmlc.org/project/hidden-marsh-sanctuary/>), **Mill Creek Park** near Constantine (no website, just Google it), and **Spirit Springs Sanctuary** in Marcellus Township off Dutch Settlement Road (<https://swmlc.org/project/spirit-springs-sanctuary/>). They were all a bit difficult to find (be sure to put the addresses into your GPS and drive slowly when you approach or you'll zip past without seeing them ... but trust me, if you're looking for a nice, easy autumn hike in the woods, you'll thank me for these hints! They are all beautiful!



# FIELD TRIP



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# OUR CHILDREN

## Family games for the holidays

by **SANDY FLEMING**

**T**he holidays are fast approaching, and before we know it, many of us will have housefuls of company. Others may be faced with long rides to visit family and friends. This all means that adults and children will be looking to you for fun activity ideas. Why not play some family games while you all are together?

Games are so much more than recreational activities. They exercise the mind and sometimes the body, but they also build lots of important academic and life skills in the bargain. Folks who play games regularly build social skills, conversational skills, interpersonal skills, and values. They learn about patience, strategy, planning, and sportsmanship. And of course, they develop reading, math, logic, and other important mental skills.

### Board Games and Card Games

If your group is smaller, board and card games can be a perfect tool to make memories and spend happy time together. And they are inexpensive! Try Candyland or Chutes and Ladders for the littlest game players, and Monopoly or Life for middle-sized kids.

Cards and dominoes are among the least expensive and most versatile games. You can grab decks of cards at your local dollar store for next to nothing, and keep them nearly forever! There are card games and domino games for every level of age and ability, and many that children can easily play on equal footing with adults. Dig back into your childhood, or do a quick computer search to learn the rules for favorites such as Rummy, Crazy Eights, War, and Skip-Bo. Older kids and adults will love more complex games like Hearts, Spades, Euchre, and Pinochle.

Dominoes are nearly as versatile. The traditional game, where players lay down dominoes so that the sides match to form a line and double dominoes go sideways to start new lines, is called “Muggins.” You can score if you wish by counting up the spots on the dominoes that end each line and seeing if the total is divisible by five. Change the scoring multiple, and you have a fabulous way to help upper elementary kids and up get good at divisibility rules. There are other domino games, as well, such as “Train” and “Chicken Foot.” Do just a bit of research in books or online and you are sure to find a new family favorite.

### Paper and Pencil Games

If you have small numbers (or can pair people up with partners) or have limited space and materials to work with, try some traditional paper and pencil games. These are also great for spur-of-the-moment occupiers for bored people, and they won’t break the bank!

For younger kids, try Tic-Tac-Toe. The game builds logical thinking skills as well as planning and prediction skills. Hangman is another oldie but a goodie – Put a line for each letter of the word and have the group take turns guessing letters. Fill them into the word if the guess is correct, and draw the traditional hangman if a guess is wrong. And if anyone finds the theme disturbing, it’s easy to rename the game and draw a different cartoon image one step at a time.

Don’t forget about the game of Boxes! You’ll need a page filled with regularly spaced dots and a different color of writ-



ing tool for each player on the same sheet. Players take turns connecting two adjacent dots with horizontal or vertical lines, and when they completely create a box, they can add their initial to it and claim it for a point.

Try drawing games for even more fun. Line everyone up and tape a blank paper to their backs. The person at the back of the line draws a picture or writes a word on the next person’s paper, and the drawing gets passed to the front of the line in this fashion. This is the visual version of the old game of “Telephone!” Compare the last drawing to the first and see how close you came.

### Party Games for Groups

Looking for ways to occupy the family while some of the adults are in the kitchen preparing the family meal? Try party games! Pick games and activities that take little to no set up and that will work for the range of ages in your group.

Traditional carnival games, like bean bag toss, ring toss, and clothespin drop, are simple to set up and can be created from household items you quite likely already have on hand. If you want to get a bit more elaborate (and make your activities suitable for a wider age range), try searching for “Minute to Win It” challenges. They are similar but a bit more challenging for everyone.

There are also games for the entire group to enjoy at one time, either on teams or as one big group. Try Charades, Two Truths and a Lie, Never Have I Ever, or Twenty Questions. These games have become traditions because they are so much fun, so give them a try!

Try this one for great fun for larger groups of nearly any age: a plastic wrap ball! You’ll have to set it up ahead of time. Wrap a collection of candy, coins, or other small goodies in plastic wrap, then add some layers and wrap more small

items between some of the layers. Keep going until you have a ball of wrap that has small trinkets that will fall out every few layers and a bigger set of treats at the very center. Have players sit in a circle and take turns removing one layer of plastic or one sheet of plastic. Whatever falls out is theirs to keep!

Play a guessing game by writing a person’s name, a color, or other category of word (or picture for younger players) on a sticky note or a piece of paper, and tape them to each player’s back so they can’t see them. Players then ask others yes-no questions to try to get clues about what is on their own back.

### Commercial Party Games

Check your local toy or game store for boxed party games, too. There are murder mystery games, escape room activities, and lots of slightly risqué games that really are not as questionable as the game’s titles would indicate. Be sure to check the age range to make sure it will be suitable for all players, though.

One of the most interesting categories of these types of games are the ones that encourage players to make up answers out of whole cloth, then opponents need to choose the answer that is most likely real. It takes great talent to pull the wool over everyone’s eyes, and it is often surprising who is best at it!

### Games for Travel

Whether you are on a long car ride, a flight, or just sitting around with nothing better to do, these games will fill odd corners of time and most can be played literally anywhere.

Travel Bingo is a favorite. Just make a list of things you are likely to see on your journey and put them onto a standard bingo board in random places. Cover them up or cross them out when they are spotted and see who can get a

Bingo the fastest.

If you are in a car, try the License Plate Game. There are lots of variations, but the core is to watch the plates of passing cars and either collect states or collect letters from A to Z. Do you want a real challenge? Have players find factors of the numbers on the plates or prime factor to see who can find the largest prime number.

Try a rousing game of “Jellyfish” with a group that is gathered in one spot. This is a counting-off game. The challenge is to have players say the next number in sequence without making a mistake. It’s not so easy! Choose a “jellyfish” number, like 5 or 9. Just don’t choose a number that is equal to or a multiple of the number of players. Start counting off in turn, but when the group comes to the jellyfish number, the player must say “Jellyfish!” instead of the regular number. And each time the group comes to a multiple of the Jellyfish number, the player must continue to say “Jellyfish” without actually saying the number that they should say. Make the game even more challenging by using “Jellyfish” on multiples and ALSO numbers that contain that digit. So if you are Jellyfishing on 7, don’t say 7, 14 OR 17, and so on. See how high the group can count without a mistake.

Games are great fun for all ages, and playing together will build bonds that will last a lifetime, as well as make the kinds of memories that you want for your family. Spend a little time playing this holiday season while you have the chance!

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Sandy Fleming is a tutor and writer living in Edwardsburg. Check her websites for more great ideas for learning and family fun at <http://learning-nook.com> and <http://sandyflemingonline.com>.*

# 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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# LOCAL HISTORY

## Hampton Sawmill, Glenwood, 1890s-1910s

Provided by  
**Jonathan Wuepper**  
Branch Manager of the Cass District Library  
jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us

In the nearly 20 years I have been writing historical articles for Neighbors, I have never featured an article on Wayne Township until this month.

The boundaries of Wayne Township were surveyed during March 1827 by William Brookfield and the subdivision lines by John Mullet in April 1830.

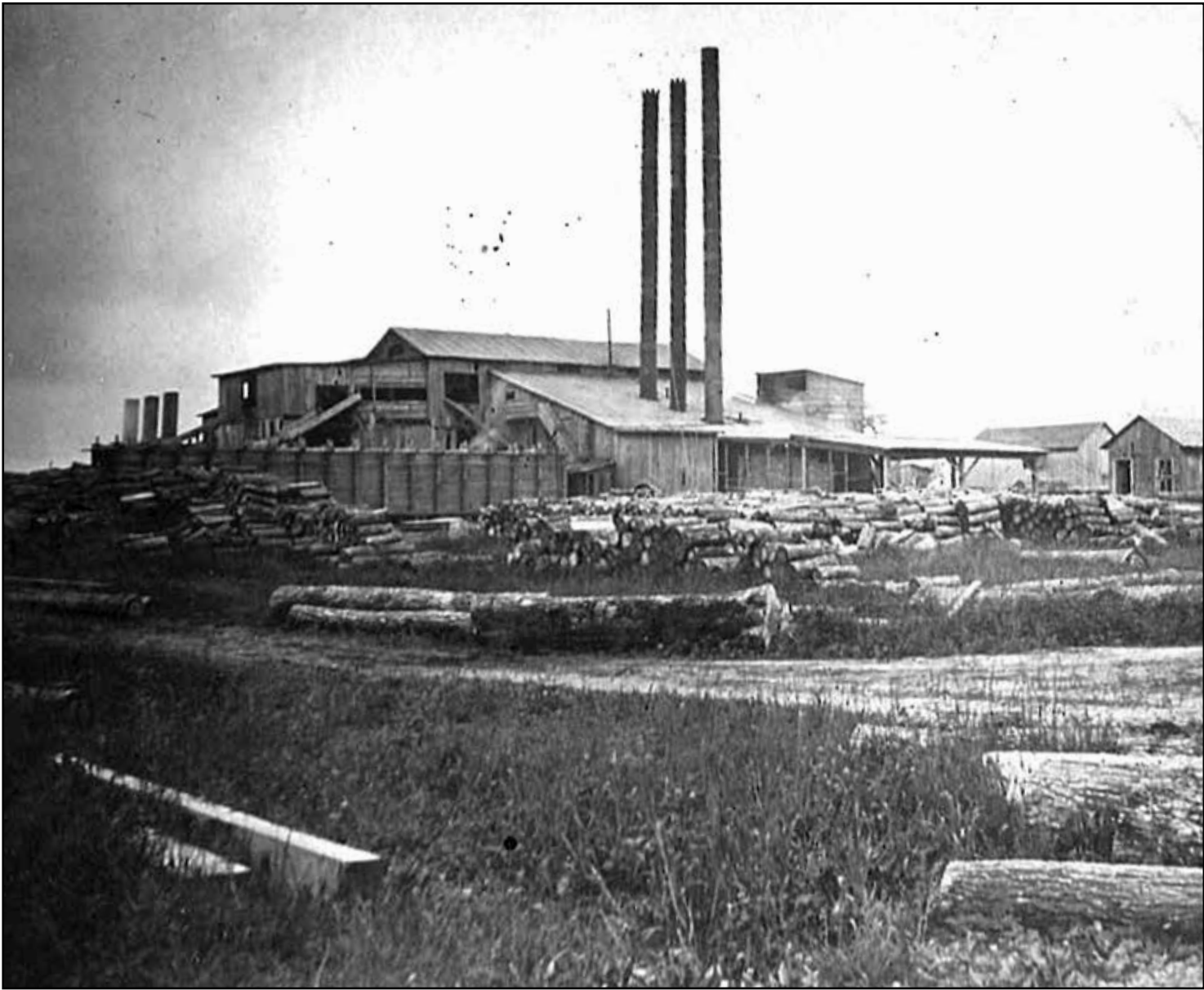
The township's first European-American settler was Joel C. and Elijah W. Wright in section 24 in 1833.

Wayne Township was attached to LaGrange Township for political and tax purposes until it was organized on March 17, 1835. It was named Wayne Township by pioneer Cornelius Higgins, after Major General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, famous in the Revolutionary War.

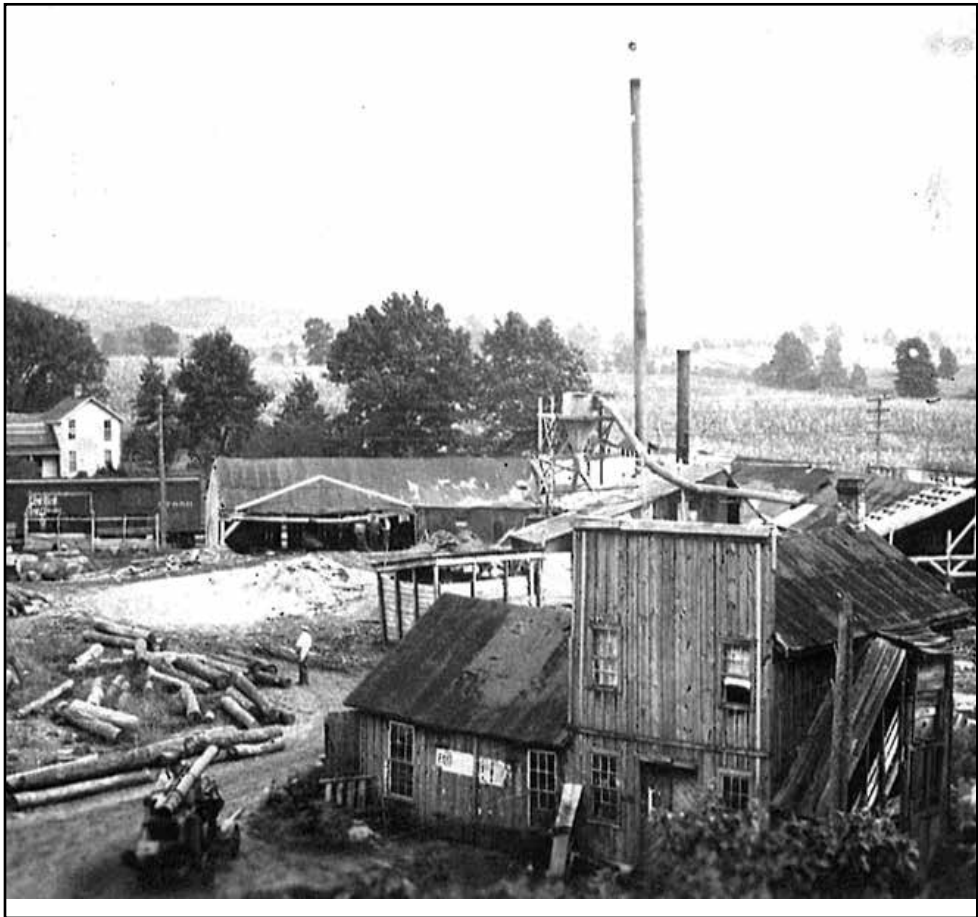
According to "Michigan Place Names" by Walter Roming (1972), the village of Glenwood, Wayne Township, was: "First called Tietzort's Crossing after Abram 'Big Abe' Tietzort. He had a store here in Wayne Township and the Michigan Central Railroad named its station here Tietzort's [in 1848]...it was given a post office named Model City, but the office was renamed Glenwood on December 10, 1873".

"History of Cass County, Michigan" by Walter Matthews (1882) says the first steam saw mill was built in 1855 by Worden & Foster at Tietzort's Side Track.

Matthews also states that in 1874, Craigie Sharp, Jr.; Thaddeus Hampton, and Edwin Barnum laid out and platted the village of Glenwood, (in section 10).



The accompanying photos were donated to the Local History Branch of the Cass District Library by Barbara Patrick of Glenwood. They show the Hampton Sawmill of Glenwood, but there is no date listed. I suspect the photos were taken sometime between 1890 and 1910 based in part by the fact there are no motorized vehicles in either photo.



Top right: Hampton Sawmill at Glenwood Wayne Twp 2 date unknown possibly early 1900s.

Above: Hampton Sawmill Glenwood Wayne Twp. Cass date unknown, circa 1910s

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# NATURE NOTES

## October brought sparrows, woodpeckers

*Provided by Cass District Library  
Local History branch*

October is the month that white-crowned sparrows show up in large numbers in Southwest Michigan from the north, heading towards the Southeast US where they winter. Adults are instantly recognizable by their distinct black-and-white striped crown. Juvenile birds that hatched earlier in this calendar year sport a reddish and buff-colored striped crown.

Brad Anderson of Bridgman captured both adult and juvenile white-crowned sparrows in one image on October 6 at the Chris Thompson Preserve, owned by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, on Warren Wood Road in Chikaming Township, which accompanies this weeks' column.

White-crowned sparrows often show up at bird feeding stations, or more accurately out, beneath bird feeding stations on the ground as they feed on waste seed. While the majority of this species passes through our area and spends the winter to our south, a small segment of the population will remain here, but it can be difficult to find locally during January and February.

A yellow-rumped warbler was photographed by Anderson, also on October 6 at the same site as the white-crowned sparrow.

Like the white-crowned sparrow, the yellow-rumped warblers also migrate through Southwest Michigan on their way to the Southeastern US for the winter, with the exception of a small portion of the population that remains here through the winter.

The few individuals that remain here feed on berries, particularly poison ivy berries and the red berries of the staghorn sumac. If these food sources become scarce, over-wintering yellow-rumped warblers may visit backyard suet feeders, especially in extremely cold weather.

By late October, most of the 30+ species of wood warblers that nest in, or migrate through Southwest Michigan will have passed to our south and the yellow-rumped warbler is the most likely species to be seen from late October through spring.

Back on June 4 a female pileated woodpecker was photographed at the feeder of Marilyn and Les Herrman of St. Joseph Township. We can tell this is a female pileated by the fact she does not have red "mustache" feathers on the side of her face, as the male does, nor does the red from her head extend down onto her forehead as so on the male.

On September 13, Brad Anderson photographed a male pileated woodpecker at Paw Paw River County Park in Watervliet. This male has the red "mustache" feathers and red extending down the forehead to the base of the upper bill.

The last ruby-throated hummingbird of the season in Berrien County that I am aware of was seen on October 6 at the home of Kristen Chism of Niles Township. Any hummingbirds seen in our area after October 20 should be reported immediately to Allen Chartier of Inskter, Michigan, amazilia3@gmail.com. Chartier has been studying Michigan hummingbird migration for over 25 years.



*Top right: Two adult and one juvenile white-crowned sparrow on October 6 at Chris Thompson Preserve, Chikaming Township. Brad Anderson.*

*Top Left: Yellow-rumped warbler on October 6, Chris Thompson Preserve, Chikaming Township. Brad Anderson.*

*Above Left: Female pileated woodpecker on June 4 at feeder of Marilyn and Les Herrman of St. Joseph Township.*

*Above Right: Male pileated woodpecker on September 13, at Paw Paw River County Park, Watervliet. Brad Anderson.*

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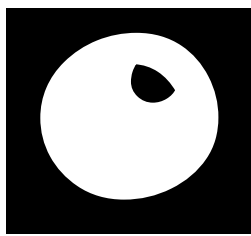


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# THE LAST WORD

by Phil Vitale  
aka sailorphil

## Once upon a time there was a tavern ...



nce upon a time there was a tavern ... I've wanted to start a column with that phrase. You see I'm a tavern kind of guy. My paternal grandparents owned a tavern when I was a kid, so I kinda grew up in a tavern, hanging out with the regulars from a corner table (when the excise guys weren't in town) or in the kitchen when that was more appropriate, sucking down grandma's spaghetti and a grape Nehi or a glass of grandpa's vino rosso (grandpa always let us have a glass of the wine if it was from the year we helped him pick and crush the grapes).

I guess the reason I'm starting with that line now is that for the last couple of weeks I've been finding myself reminiscing about a lot of things, and when I get into a reminiscing mode, I tend to remember the 60's song by Mary Hopkins that started with that line. Wasn't a great song, but in 1968 it made enough of an impression on me that I can still sing all the lyrics when I get into a funk. And of late, I've been in a world-class funk.

That's because two weeks ago I had to put down my dog. I loved that dog, and I know it's going to take more than two weeks (and more than one tavern) for me to get over losing her, but still today, it absolutely sucks. Anyone who has ever lost a dog knows the feeling.

And they know how much it sucks.

After my last dog, I promised myself a long time ago that I'd never get another dog, but when we moved to the lake, my wife disagreed. I resisted as long as I could, but like any long-term husband, I lost, and when my wife told me that if I didn't get a dog soon she was going to adopt the whole litter of puppies that was in the paper (back in the days when there was still a daily paper), so I broke down and went to the shelter.

Just to see.

Bad idea. If you know me at all, you know that I'm not the kind of guy who can go to a shelter and not come home without a dog.

I'm not sure my family was ready for the dog I came home with. Saba was a big dog by most peoples' stan-

dards. At one year she weighed nearly 100 pounds and stood tall enough that I could pet her without bending. She was awkward and feisty and very dog-aggressive, and my family was worried.

"What the hell were you thinking," my wife said when they first met.

"Better than a litter of puppies," I chided.

I'll admit that even I had reservations, but in the first few days she passed all the tests required for her to stay (although in retrospect I would have been pretty hard pressed to even think about taking her back).

First, from day one, she got the no-icky-stuff-on-the-floor requirement. First test passed.

The second day she was with us, a young couple down the road brought their newborn son over and laid him down on a blanket next to Saba.

She licked his head and lay down next to him. I was a nervous wreck. But she passed the kid test.

A week or so later, my then-young granddaughter came to visit after a very busy week at summer camp ... and ended up sleeping in Saba's bed with her for several hours to recover. I think they both enjoyed it.

Another test passed.

We soon learned that though her dog-aggressiveness wasn't a big hit with the neighbors ... one neighbor actually called and told me a dog like her had no business on our lake.

I didn't swear at all. "Dog's staying," I told her.

I guess I passed that test.

Soon our other (much younger) grandchildren started coming to visit. These two weren't the kind of kids who would lie down and take a nap with the dog, they were the kind who always seemed to want to take the bone out of her mouth, and to touch her eyes (her eyes were a spectacular red-orange color).

Didn't matter. She passed those tests too.

And even though we don't require any tests for someone to become part of our family, in a very short time she had become a part of our family.

Over the next 13 years, we never set a place at the table for her, but she was always there, always grateful for the veggies the kids didn't want (even though people

food was forbidden for the dog), and always in the way, always under foot and whenever anyone tried to move their chair back to go fetch another bottle of vino rosso or dessert (no, neither of those for dog, damn it).

Underfoot was just part of her charm I guess.

For as long as my grandchildren can remember she was part of our family ... and everyone in the family has a memory of her. Some good. Some not so much.

I still have a scar on my hand from the time she decided a neighbor dog had gotten too close so it needed to be eaten ... and I was stupid enough to grab the leash as it was running away.

Leash burn. Ouch.

My wife still tells the story of when Saba pulled her off her feet going after a different neighbor dog ... and she still complains about wrenching her knee.

Bad dog.

But she was mostly a good dog. At home.

But most of all, she was mostly my dog, so my memories of her are the ones that have me in that lost-dog funk I mentioned earlier.

Not to be morbid, but I remember how she used to put her head on my knee and look up at me with those beautiful eyes when it was time for her treats (even though it was my wife who gave her the treats).

And I remember how she stayed by my side after I had my second stroke, and how she comforted me after my shoulder surgery (even though I couldn't pet her with my right hand for a month).

She got me through some rough times.

I loved that dog. And she loved me.

It's hard to believe she's gone. I miss her as much (and in a lot of cases more) than I have ever missed any living creature, human or not. I hope I never have to have another dog. Too hard to say goodbye.

For now, I'm getting through, both hating and cherishing all those memories that keep flooding in, and waiting for the memories to go away and let me be.

And after putting this down on paper 40 times in the last two weeks, I think it's time to go find that tavern from the song and raise a glass or two, like it says.

Good bye Saba. This round's for you.



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