

Neighbors

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AUGUST 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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REGIONAL NEWS

Hazardous waste, tire collection

A household hazardous waste collection will be held on August 17, 2022 from 3pm to 6pm at the Cass County Road Commission, 340 N O’Keefe St, Cassopolis. The event is sponsored by the Cass County Board of Commissioners.

In addition, Cass County has received a grant for the collection of used passenger car/pickup truck tires. No appointment is necessary. Proof of residency is required. The event will be held on August 17, from 3 to 6 pm at the Cass County Road Commission, 340 N O’Keefe St, Cassopolis.

Beckwith Theatre Company

The Beckwith Theatre Company will present Unnecessary Farce by Paul Slade Smith on August 19 & 20 at 7:30 pm, August 21 at 2 pm, August 26 & 27 at 7:30 pm and August 28 at 2 pm

Two cops. Three crooks. Eight doors. Go. In a cheap motel room, an embezzling mayor is supposed to meet with his female accountant, while in the room next-door, two undercover cops wait to catch the meeting on videotape. But there’s some confusion as to who’s in which room, who’s being videotaped, who’s taken the money, who’s hired a hit man, and why the accountant keeps taking off her clothes.

Tickets are \$15.
The company will also present Lady Windermere’s Fan by Oscar Wilde on October 7 & 8 at 7:30 pm, October 9 at 2 pm, October 14 & 15 at 7:30 pm and October 16 at 2 pm

This play has all of the expected Wilde satire, irony, and witty dialogue, but he also intended the piece as a psychological study. It is a heartwarming

story full of wisdom, drama, excitement, and sensitivity, hinging on the extent of a mother’s love and sacrifice that she is willing. Tickets are \$15

Additional performances that are to be determined at a later date are scheduled for 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/>.

Rock the Block

The Rock the Block Summer Concert Series at Stone Lake Beach, hosted by Cassopolis Main Street and sponsored by Sunset Coast Provisions will feature the following events:

August 13 from 4-7 pm, band Take 2; 8-11 pm, band Indiana Gravel Road; Food Trucks from Wood, Stock, & Grill (@ Sinclair Station), Drive Thru Q (@ Beach), Curly Q’s BBQ (@ Beach); Beer Garden, Sponsored by Pier Perfection from 4 pm-midnight @ the Sinclair Station (200 S Broadway). 21+ only, valid ID required. Beer, specialty mixed drinks, frozen cocktails. Cash & card accepted, \$5/drink; Tap Takeover Cassopolis Athletic Boosters, all beer garden tips will be donated to their program.

On September 10, bands will be from 4-7 pm, Over the Top; 8-11 pm, Shock Roxy; Food Trucks will be Wood, Stock, & Grill (@ Sinclair Station), Drive Thru Q (@ Beach) and Taqueria Don Chepe (@ Beach). Beer Garden, sponsored by Wightman from 4 pm-midnight @ the Sinclair Station (200 S Broadway). 21+ only, valid ID required. Beer, specialty mixed drinks, frozen cocktails. Cash & card accepted, \$5/drink; Tap Takeover

Cassopolis Band Boosters. All beer garden tips will be donated to their program.

On October 8 bands will be 4-7 pm, Zach Schick; 8-11 pm • Memphis Underground (featuring Cassopolis Jazz Band). Food Trucks will be Wood, Stock, & Grill (@ Sinclair Station), Curly Q’s BBQ (@ Beach) and Taqueria Don Chepe (@ Beach). Beer Garden, sponsored by AEP Foundation from 4 pm-midnight @ the Sinclair Station (200 S Broadway). 21+ only, valid ID required. Beer, specialty mixed drinks, frozen cocktails. Cash & card accepted, \$5/drink. Tap takeover Project Graduation. All beer garden tips will be donated to their program.

Let’s Paddle the Creek

There are lots of opportunities to enjoy a canoe/kayak trip at Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Park this summer! Rentals are available through the end of September, Wednesday-Sundays 11 am to 4 pm, all equipment must be returned by 7 pm. Patrons will have the opportunity to paddle on Baugo Creek as well as paddle out to Baugo Bay. Rental packages include the vessels, paddles and required life jackets.

Renters must be at least 18 years old and show a valid picture ID. Adults must accompany anyone under 18. This activity is not recommended for children 3 years of age and younger. For more information visit our website; sjcparks.org.

The park is taking reservations during public hours on a limited basis. To check availability call 574/654-3155 at least three days in advance. Payment will be required to secure vessels. Large group reservations of five or more vessels are only available on weekdays or before

public hours. No refunds will be issued unless rental closes due to weather.

To make a group canoe reservation or for more information on canoe and kayak rental, log onto www.sjcparks.org or call 574-654-3155.

Ferrettie/Baugo Creek County Park is located at 57057 Ash Road, Osceola, Indiana.

US 12 garage sale Aug. 12

The US 12 Heritage Trail Garage Sale will take place on August 12, 13, & 14 2022 (Friday–Sunday).

Anyone interested in hosting a garage sale is encouraged to register on the new US 12 Heritage Trail website www.us12heritagetrail.org prior to the sale. You can also visit the website to contact folks who offer spaces for rent.

Edwardsburg Historical Museum

The Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum has scheduled the following:

August 1 to August 5 - Celebrating Michigan (display), Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 9 to October 29: Collectibles, Kick Knacks, Doo Dads, Oh My!! (display), Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 11-14: U.S. 12 Garage Sale fundraiser, Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum grounds

August 18: Chris Rosselit, first generation farmer from Edwardsburg. Presentation on past and current farming practices, 7 p.m., Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 21: Open House after the Edwardsburg All-School Reunion, 3 p.m., Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum





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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

July 31-August 6 - **Cass County Fair**, Cassopolis

August 1-5-**Celebrating Michigan** (display), Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 9-October 29: **Collectibles, Kick Knacks, Doo Dads, Oh My!** (display), Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 11-14: **U.S. 12 Garage Sale fundraiser**, Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum grounds

August 12 - **US 12 Garage Sale**

August 13 - **Rock the Block summer concert** at Stone Lake, bands 4 - midnight, Stone Lake, Cassopolis, www.CassopolisMainStreet.com

August 17 - **Hazardous Waste and Tire Collection**, Cass County Road Commission, Cassopolis, 3-6 pm, 445-4420

August 17 - COA Annual Cookout, 11 am - 2 pm, Cass County Fairgrounds, Cassopolis, register at <https://myactivecenter.com/#centers/USA.MI.Cassopolis.The-Lowe-Center/activities/58>

August 18: **Chris Rosselit**, first generation farmer from Edwardsburg. Presentation on past and current farming practices, 7 p.m., Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

August 21: **Open House after the Edwardsburg All-School Reunion**, 3 p.m., Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum

October 15 - **Sandhill Crane Half Marathon**, Dr. T.K. Lawless Park

October 22 - **Harvest Fest/Trunk or Treat**, Dr. T.K. Lawless Park

Cass District Library

August 3-5 - **Cass District Library Annual Book Sale**, 9 am - 7 pm, Main Branch, Cassopolis.

Dowagiac District Library

August 3 - **Make & Share Cookbook Club**, 5:5-5:45 pm, The Complete Summer Cookbook: Beat the Heat with 500 Recipes that Make the Most of Summer's Bounty by America's Test Kitchen, The Make & Share Cookbook Club first Wednesday of the month from 5-5:45pm at the Dowagiac District Library. 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 dowagiadlibrystaff@gmail.com

August 4 - **Game Day is Back!** 3-5:30 pm. Teens & Young Adults (ages 13-21) are invited to play together on our PS5 in the Teen Area. We have multiplayer PS5 games and four controllers. Each round lasts 30 minutes so that everyone gets a turn.

August 5, 12 - **Messy Time Friday!** 11am-noon. Kids of all ages are invited to join us for Messy Time Fridays throughout the summer. Projects and activities might involve paint, chalk, water and other "messy" materials, so please wear older or play clothes. We're often in direct sunlight, so please remember to put sunscreen on before leaving the house. Please check the website's calendar and/or Facebook page for Messy Time dates. In the event of inclement weather, Messy Time may need to be canceled. If in doubt, please call us at 782-3826.

August 9, 16, 23, 30 - **Preschool Story Time**, 10:30-11:30 am. The Dowagiac District Library offers this weekly story time each Tuesday at 10:30 am. Preschool Story Time is geared toward children 3-5 years old and will focus 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.

August 9 - **Read & Share Book Group**, - The Heart of the Deal by Lindsay Macmillan 1-2 pm. The Read & Share Book Club reads a variety of titles, and meets every 2nd Tuesday at 1pm in the library Community Room. To sign up email us at dowagiadlibrystaff@gmail.com

August 9 - **Teen Tuesday : Teen Cooking 101***, 3-4 pm No need to go to the mall when you can make soft pretzels on your own! Teens learn how to make easy pretzel bites using only 3 ingredients! *Registration is required for this event. Sign up in the youth depart-

ment by Friday, 8/5/22.. 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.

August 13 - **Sensory Story Time** with Miss Susanne, 11am-noon. The Dowagiac District Library is now offering Sensory Story Time on the second Saturday of each month for families with children ages 2-5 who are on the autism spectrum or who have multi-sensory needs. Through books, music and hands-on play, concepts such as colors, shapes, numbers, ABCs and feelings will be explored in a welcoming environment. If your child has difficulty sitting through a "traditional" story time, this program might just be what you're looking for.

August 16 - **Teen Tuesday: Arts & Crafts**, 3-4 pm. DIY Journals: Teens will learn how to create a personalized journal using a composition notebook, mod podge, and scrapbooking paper. No two will be alike! 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.

August 23 - Teen Tuesday: Taste testing! 3-4 pm. Well, it's "o-fish-al"—we'll be blind taste testing Goldfish crackers this month. It's not considered real seafood if you can't see it! 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.

August 29 - **OMG Book Club for Tweens**, 4-5 pm. August Book: TBD The OMG Book Club is a book club for tweens 9-12 years old. The club features an OMG (Outstanding Middle Grade) novel each month. Tweens register and pick up their copy of the month's selection at the beginning of the month then meet and discuss the book. There is also usually a fun game or activity to go along with the book's theme. For more information, stop by the Youth Services desk on the second floor of the library. You may also email Melissa, the Youth Services Coordinator, at mphillips@dowagiadcl.org with any questions you have.

August 30 - **The Once and Future King**, 5-6 pm. To sign up, email Matt Weston at mweston@dowagiadcl.org

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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

In the heat of the summer

by **Jane Boudreau**



Hey Neighbors ... it's just me. We are SO in the heat of the summer. And I don't mean just weather-wise...the heat is on to get out, soak it up, eat it up- because we are now heading downhill toward the end of the summer season. I know, I hate to be the bearer of bad news (or maybe good news for those of you who despise the heat), but its time to shake it up and start making plans-real plans, to squeeze all we can out of this Season 'O Plenty!

We live on a smallish bay or what some call a cove. We have an inlet which takes us out to the lake. We like it here as we can have a sandy beach. We extend the sand out a good 20 feet so when we swim and goof around, it's a nice feeling for the tootsies. The water is quite calm as well which is conducive for a smooth kayak or paddleboat cruise. We recently found some affordable paddle boards (if you want one or two, check out Walmart), and as we are just learning, a beach launching spot and smooth sailing is the key. If you love umbrellas on your beach for yourself or for the kiddos to have a break from the sun, I highly recommend getting a beach umbrella sand anchor. My son, who has a home on Lake Michigan passed that on to me and they can be found on Amazon at super prices. They just twist into the sand like a corkscrew and will keep that umbrella from toppling over in a hurricane.



What is it about sand that keeps kids busy for hours? They absolutely love it here.



We recently had our front porch and the balcony above torn down and redone. Many thanks to Jones Construction out of Vandalia. It's such a nice size I

thought I would jazz it up with some outdoor furniture and we've had some wonderful moments sipping coffee in the morning and watching the sky change colors as the sun goes down. We had family up over the 4th of July and one morning everyone managed to find a spot to sit on the porch, sip coffee and orange juice, and pass a platter of cinnamon rolls around. If you'd like sources for anything send me an email.

While I love grabbing low prices on flowers and plants this time of year, my enthusiasm for being outdoors is waning by now. If it hasn't rained in two weeks I may put the sprinkler on. I have no patience to clean the grill nor go in and out of the house to cook on it so its back to meals on the stove most of the time in the coolness of the a/c. With company, I simply can't shuffle food and drink from my kitchen to the patio or beach. If someone wants something, well hello, I trust you to go into my house without stealing the silver.

I'm disgusted with the sand on my floors. It may or not be my fault seeing that we have a beach. I had the brilliant idea to place a tub of water near the door where our people could step in and rinse off their feet. And then hubby pointed out we would then have water all over said floors. Hmmmmm...I curse the day men were allowed to have wise thoughts.

I love my garden when I am doing cartwheels in the spring to get going on digging, planting and watering. In August it's the survival of the fittest. I'm parched and the flowers are parched, but I'm all out for me so I pacify myself that rain will come eventually. I think live or die as I sip my second hard seltzer.

So now you have it. I'm a fair weathered gardener but I think we all feel a bit of the same sometimes. Mid summer is tiring, physically and mentally. If we truly want to view the fruits of out labor, its best to do it early in the morning. Late evening is also good. Wander around with that glass of Pinot Noir and you will find it's a wonderful distraction from the mosquito bites. Like a hang-over, you'll only notice in the morning.

So, here are some appetizer recipes that still fit the bill during the coming weeks. Nothing needs to be heated or served hot. Most are quick to make and don't require a lot of ingredients. Don't worry if the picture or ingredient looks 'weird'. I have often found that these are the most sensational dishes you can try. The compliments will be sincere.

Fresh Mango Guacamole



I've found this wonderful dip in my grocery store but it's not only overpriced, it's a cinch to make yourself. I really love

the tanginess the mango makes without being overpowering. It's a colorful dip as well, and it comes together quick. This is a make ahead recipe, too. The key is to save the pit of one avocado and keep it in the container you store the guac in.

Fresh Mango Guacamole

Ingredients:

- 4 avocados, pitted
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 cup mango, diced small
- 1/2 c each chopped red pepper, green onion, and tomato
- 2 T chopped cilantro
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- S & P to taste

Smash the avocados in a large bowl with a fork until soft but with a bit of chunkiness. Slowly fold in the remaining ingredients very gently until well combined. Chill at least 1 hour before serving.

Ricotta Lemon Prosciutto Bruschetta



Don't let the idea of using Prosciutto daunt you. It is simply ham that has been cured and sliced thin (handle it carefully as it can tear and shred). I find it in the meat and cheese section of the grocery store. A package can run under \$5.00, but the more you pay, the better quality meat you get. And finally, ricotta cheese is an unsung hero, I'm guilty of using it only in lasagna. Try this recipe and I think you'll come up with new ideas for this exceptional cheese.

Ingredients:

- 1 baguette of good bread, sliced in 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 T olive oil
- 1 c fresh ricotta cheese
- S & P to taste
- 1 lemon, zested*
- 2 T fresh basil, roughly chopped
- 2 T honey

Toast the slices of bread in a 450 oven until lightly browned (about 7 minutes) Flip over and drizzle the olive oil on each slice and return to oven until browned.

Meanwhile, zest your lemon*. This simply involves using a cheese grater or vegetable peeler to remove ONLY the yellow part of the lemon. The white section under, or the pith, is very bitter. Chop the pieces until very fine. Mix the zest with the ricotta cheese and add a little salt and pepper, the cheese can be a little bland. (Note: The cheese mix can be made ahead of time and stored in a tightly covered container for a day or two. The bread will get soggy otherwise).

Top the toasted bread slices with the

ricotta mixture and prosciutto, sprinkle the basil on each one and then drizzle with the honey. Heavenly. Save some for your guests.

Watermelon 'Pizza' with Feta and balsamic glaze



This is a beautiful sight! I can't begin to tell you how refreshing and delicious the flavors are. The ingredients look a little odd, but hey, you have to step outside of the box and be open to new things. Food included. Everything compliments each other. And besides being visually pleasing, you will be hooked on how delicious this is.

Ingredients:

- 1 large watermelon, cut in the middle to get the three biggest slices, 1 inch thick (the remaining will not be wasted if you have kiddies around!)
- 3 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- 15 pitted kalamata olives, sliced
- 2 T mint leaves, chopped
- 1 to 2 T balsamic glaze*

Cut the rounds of watermelon into 'pizza slices' and arrange on a round pizza pan or dish as seen in the photo. Randomly sprinkle on all of the remaining ingredients and then drizzle the balsamic glaze* over. I use a small plastic bottle found at a local craft store that has a cooking/baking aisle. You can use a teaspoon but it tends to look sloppy. Serve cold.

You can purchase balsamic glaze in your condiment or salad dressing aisle, but if you want to save a few pennies, make it this way:

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 c balsamic vinegar
- 1 1/2 to 2 T honey
- 1 clove garlic, chopped finely
- 1 t salt

Mix all of the ingredient in a small jar with a lid. Use what you need and save the rest for a nice salad. Keeps in the fridge about 3 days.

Jane Boudreau is a writer and blogger who lives in Chicago as well as on Diamond Lake for the past 31 years. She also has a home in the mountains of North Carolina where she is working on a book of short stories. You can contact her at blndy9@yahoo.com

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Count down to college ... does your insurance add up?

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

Getting ready for college is an exciting and stressful time for students and their parents. A conversation with your insurance agent should be on the list of tasks to make sure the college student, their family and the family's assets are adequately protected in the event of serious injury or a liability claim.

• **Will my homeowners insurance cover my student's personal property?**

Insurance companies consider a college student a resident of their parents' home, temporarily living elsewhere and will cover up to 10% of personal property, off premise. If you have \$80,000 of contents coverage at home, your student will have up to \$8,000 for their contents in their dorm room. If the value of their belongings exceeds the coverage offered through your homeowner's policy, you might want to consider a separate renters insurance policy.

A good time to take an inventory of your student's belongings is when they are moving into their dorm or apartment. The inventory will be a tremendous help should your student suffer a loss.

If your student is living off campus, a renter's insurance policy may be needed. Some insurance companies consider an apartment a permanent residence meaning there is no contents or liability coverage under a parent's homeowners policy. A student could be held liable for damage to the apartment they are renting or to someone else's property. It is important to remember that if you sign the lease, you will be held liable if someone is injured on your student's leased premises or by their property.

Renter's insurance usually costs less than \$250 a year for about \$15,000 in coverage and covers the possessions in the unit in the event of a loss. It also protects the individual from liability if he or she causes damage

to the rental unit.

• **Will your student be taking a car to college?**

If your student is not taking a car to college, you may be eligible for a reduced insurance rate. Many companies offer a "student-away-at-school" discount depending on how far the college is from home. You and your child will still have coverage when home for holidays and vacations as well as if he borrows a car while away at school.

Students taking a car to college need auto insurance coverage whether it's under their own policy or a parent's. If a parent co-titles the car or the student still lives at home when not at school, the student may be able to remain on the parent's insurance policy. You should notify the insurance company that the car will be garaged at a different location.

• **How will my current health insurance apply at college?**

Under the ACA, children are allowed to stay on parent's health insurance until the age of 26. For many students, this is the way to maintain coverage, but you need to make sure it fits your needs. Coverage could be completely waived if your student attends a college out of state. Your student could have higher co-pays and

deductibles as well as limited availability of in network providers. Check with your insurance company to see if there are any limitations for your student.

Other options include an individual health plan or a plan offered by the college your student will be attending. The majority of colleges offer health insurance for college students. As your student prepares for school, sit down and compare your family health plan with the individual plan and student health insurance offered by the school. You may save money and have better coverage with the school plan.

• **What if my student studies abroad?**

Studying abroad may present a multitude of insurance issues. Some of the areas where you need to make sure your student has coverage are: theft of personal property, trip cancellation/interruption, emergency medical evacuation and/or repatriation coverage, and health and/or hospitalization.

With the help of your insurance agent, you may discover your current coverages respond to all or the vast majority of your concerns and little need be done. If change is needed to assure your current protection will be there at time of need, you and your agent can make those choices at the best possible time—now, before that need arises.



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OUR CHILDREN

Word Power ... choose and use your words carefully

by **SANDY FLEMING**
We've all heard how much power words can have. Words can make or break relationships, they can heal or hurt others, and they can help us get our ideas across to the people around us. Choosing your words carefully is a big part of choosing how to interact with friends, family, employers, coworkers, and community members. But words also have a huge impact on academic success as well. Let's take a look.

Subject-Specific Vocabulary

Each subject or class in school has its own special vocabulary. When kids are in elementary school, the subject-specific vocabulary is pretty commonplace. The words are the basic ones we all use to discuss that aspect of the world. Parents and teachers all speak the same language, so it's easy to talk with a child in kindergarten or second grade about what they've been doing in school. The tests and assignments are also pretty simple for most adults. The concepts are basic, and so the words used to talk about them are basic, too.

The farther students progress in school, however, the more complicated the words become. Students often underestimate the importance of learning the specialized words that their teachers introduce. This leads to mistakes on assignments and tests. It interferes with learning. Starting about grade 4, the words for ideas in the different subject areas become more specific, and by middle school, the word lists are unique and somewhat difficult for many.

Teachers and textbooks introduce the new vocabulary, but that is often about as far as instruction goes. The assumption is that the introduction is enough and students will incorporate the new terms into their base of knowledge about the subject area. They should be able to recognize the words, know their meanings, and apply them to the concepts from there on out, right? For most people, that just doesn't work. More teaching is needed, but often is overlooked in favor of covering the next concept and the one after that. The specific vocabulary words get lost in the never-ending shuffle of meeting standards and covering academic ground as quickly as possible.

Instead, many students need more guided experiences with the subject-specific vocabulary to retain it. It is a proven fact that new words need repeated exposure and used to become a part of a person's working vocabulary (the words people can access and use whenever they want, and words that get remembered after class is over). Words learned to this level will be available for understanding later assignments and for tackling those cumulative final exams, too.

How can parents and caregivers help students master subject-specific vocabulary? Teach your students to pay close attention when new words are introduced, whether it's formally in class or in bold-faced print in a textbook. Copy the new word and write down its definition as soon as possible. Put it in the class notes. Later, spend some time working with the word and its meaning, such as playing matching games or categorizing the words based on the concepts to which they are related. Keep a running list of vocabulary for each class, and save it from year to year. Words that are taught in fifth grade math will still be needed in eighth grade math and beyond, but the teacher will be assuming the students remember them.

What if your student doesn't make notes about new words or write down the terms for the class? Parents can fill in some of the gaps using the internet. Use a search term such as "Math vocabulary for grade 4" and you should be able to find a starting place for words to review with your students.

Reading Comprehension

We know that reading is a vast and complex set of skills, and everything needs to be working well for comprehension to happen. One big piece of the puzzle is a broad and deep vocabulary. Simply being able to decode the words is not enough. You can decode nonsense words like "mab." Just because you can say it, there is no reading

happening because there is no meaning attached to the word for you.
Comprehension is the whole point of reading, but many of our students don't understand this. They believe that if they can say most of the words, they are accomplishing the goal. Sometimes parents get into the act, too, thinking that because their child says the words correctly, they read well. The trick is to find out what your student actually knows about the text after reading it. Can he or she explain what it was about? Can he or she answer questions about it? Only then can you say they truly have been reading.

There are many reasons comprehension may break down, but one thing is for sure: Students won't be able to read and understand text that's filled with words they do not know in their oral vocabularies. If they encounter unfamiliar words, they may be able to rely on phonics and other word-analysis skills to pronounce the word correctly, but much like the word "mab" above, it's meaningless if they don't know the word in other contexts. In fact, there was even an experiment done with young readers several years ago, where researchers took part of an inner-city first grade class to a farm to experience farm things, and had part of the group learn about farms in the classroom without the hands-on learning. Later, children from both groups were given a text to read about life on a farm. The children who had actually experienced the farm outperformed their peers with the reading later in the school year. Knowing the vocabulary made a big difference in their performance.

So you can see how important it is for young readers (and older ones) to know as many words as possible. A wide vocabulary will help students improve reading comprehension, and improved comprehension will help students get better grades and be more successful in school. It's an easy and ongoing way that parents and caregivers can build foundations for success.

Written Expression

Finally, knowing more words helps students with writing skills. First and foremost, a wide vocabulary will help with writing fluency in general. This is the measure of how quickly writers can plan and put ideas on paper. If the students' oral vocabulary is larger, then the process of writing becomes easier and more efficient. Authors do not have to search for the exact right words because they have a wealth of words that they use in everyday conversation.

A wide vocabulary can also help students express themselves more accurately. Most learn the basics of self-expression by early elementary school. They know the common words used in everyday situations. As they grow, the goal is to help them learn more nuanced and specific words for the ideas they need to express. They learn synonyms or more specific words that convey more specific meanings. The process starts when they are very young, as they learn to name German shepherds or collies instead of simply calling it a dog. They also learn more specific words for colors. Instead of calling everything "blue," they learn that there are colors like periwinkle, navy blue, and indigo. The word "blue" gets the general meaning across, but more specific shades help others to understand exactly what the writer is trying to convey.

Kids also need to learn about various forms of words. For example, the verb "perform" is useful to describe the action someone does, and a "performance" tells what they did. A "performer" is someone who puts on a show. Using affixes is a way to change the usage of a word while retaining a similar or related meaning.

The Greek and Latin roots are hugely helpful, as well. Most classes begin learning about these in upper elementary school, and continue the lessons through high school. These roots allow students to add entire groups of words to their vocabularies in big chunks and cause their vocabularies to grow exponentially. Words such as "bicycle," "cyclone," and "recycle" all have related meanings that will be obvious to a student


who understands that "cycle-" means "a circle or a wheel."
Students who use age-appropriate (or beyond) vocabulary correctly are more likely to achieve better grades in school because their teachers will see they can express what they know. Students who have these words at the ready will be able to produce exemplary writing whenever they need to for an assignment or a test without having to think much about word choices.

Tips to Build Vocabulary

Hopefully, I've convinced you that building vocabulary should be high on your list of ways to help your student succeed! So once you decide that this important, what can you DO about it? Here are some ideas:
• Have real conversations. When kids and adults talk about nearly any topic, the adults almost always use a higher level of vocabulary than kids do. You might need to stop and explain some words, but be careful not to lower your vocabulary level to help your kids understand. Instead, use your normal level of language and explain when necessary. That's how they learn!
• Have real conversations, Part 2: Remember that conversations are give-and-take discussions about any topic you'd like. What they are not is directive or teaching talking. Telling your child to pick up their dirty clothes or letting them know that dinner is ready are not conversations. They are necessary communications, but they are not helping build vocabulary.
• Learn new words as a family. Find words that none of you already know. Check dictionary sites online for some great ideas or subscribe to a "Word of the Day" program. Once you have a target word to learn, be intentional about using it in conversation over and over again and about providing your kids with opportunities to use the word. You might even want to set up an incentive program to encourage its use, such as keeping


score for the day and reward the family member who worked the new word into conversation the most. Remember that the experts believe the only way to remember vocabulary words and make them a part of your working language is to use the word numerous times.
• Play word games and do word puzzles: Commercial games are great! Play with your kids regularly. Many have Junior versions suitable for younger kids or for beginners, or you can modify the rules to help your child compete successfully. For example, in a word game like Boggle where players compete to make words quickly, you could limit yourself to words with four or more letters while allowing your child to make words with two or more letters.
• Spend some of your car ride time brainstorming words in categories. These can be functional categories, beginning letters, phonics attributes like having long A sound, or whatever categories you like. Take turns with each family member to add a new word to the group. When the kids run out of ideas, be sure to add a few more that you know.
• Read, read, read: Authors always use a different set of words than your children will hear in conversation around the household. The more you read, the more words you will learn. Read aloud to the kids as long as they will let you, and then keep reading aloud even after they protest. Keep them interested by reading books that are just a little bit too difficult for them to read on their own, or pique their interest by reading the opening few chapters of a book together, and then stop at an exciting point. Leave the book laying around and watch them pick it up to satisfy their curiosity.

Sandy Fleming is an educational consultant, writer, and private tutor. You'll find more information about helping kids succeed in school at <https://learning-nook.com/>



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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

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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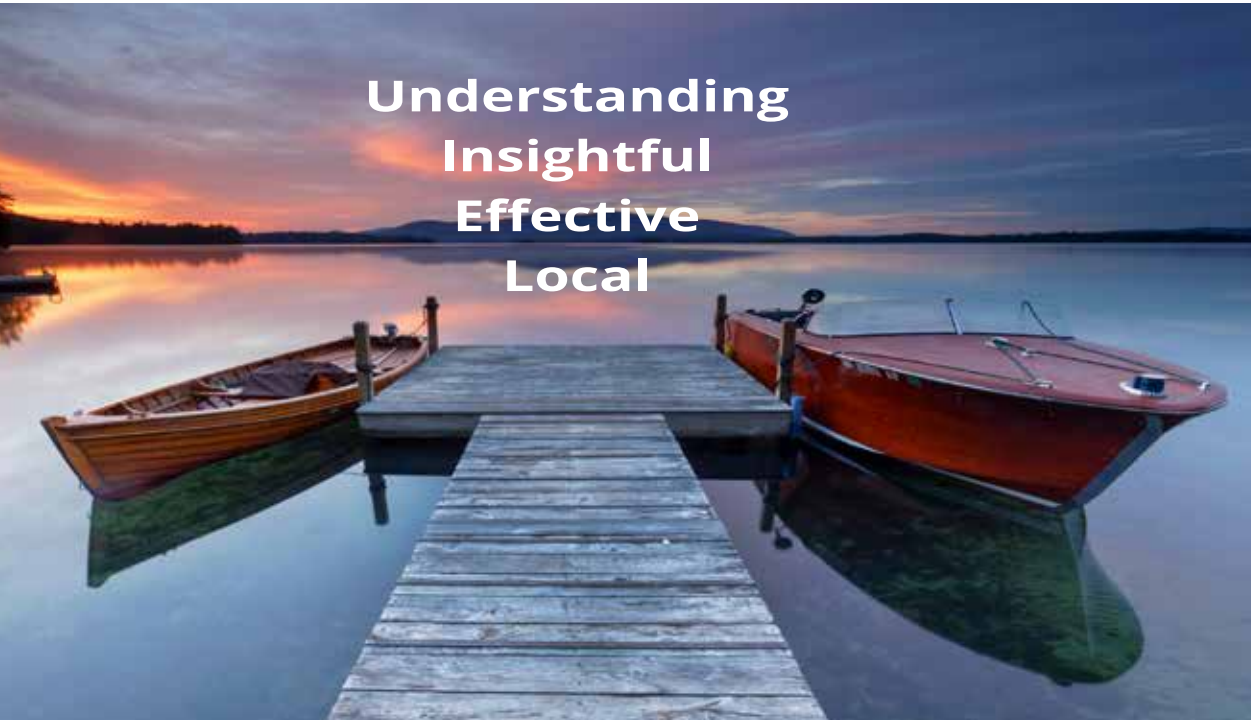
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LOCAL HISTORY

Daguerreotype in Cass County

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

This month I'd like to feature a scan of a Daguerreotype photo that is owned by Mary Ellen Thompson of Gambrills, Maryland. The Daguerreotype is an early photographic process that became commercially available in France in 1839.

It didn't take long before the first Daguerreotype studios appeared in Michigan. Detroit newspapers carried ads for Daguerreian studios by October 1841. While permanent studios were apparently not present in Berrien or Cass Counties until the mid to late 1840s, Niles newspa-



Daguerreotype of Levi and Esther Lawrence of Volinia Township, taken shortly after their marriage in February 1849. Courtesy Mary Ellen Thompson of Gambrills, Maryland.

pers carried ads for traveling Daguerreian artists, as early as 1842. These traveling Daguerreian artists would often set up a tent, where they would "capture someone's likeness" (take their picture). These Daguerreotypes were the earliest photographs ever taken in Southwest Michigan.

The subjects of the accompanying Daguerreotype are Levi B. Lawrence and Esther E. Copley, both born in upstate New York. Their respective families moved westward, ending up in Volinia Township, Cass County, Michigan Territory by 1833. Levi helped clear his father's land, and later Levi bought his own farm in Volinia Township in 1840 in section 12.

The Copley's and Lawrence's were neighbors, so it's not surprising that Levi and Esther were married on February 4, 1849 in Niles, Michigan. It was not long after they were married that the Daguerreotype was taken. If you look closely you can see a wedding ring on Esther's left hand. Three children were born to the



Home of Levi B. and Esther E. Lawrence. Built for \$10,000, May-November 1874. Photo taken circa 1980s, courtesy Mary Ellen Thompson, Gambrills, Maryland.

marriage: Linneus (1853); Archie (1855); and Austin (1858).

Levi B. Lawrence became one of the most prominent farmers in Volinia Township during the last half of the 19th Century. One interesting side note of Levi's life not mentioned in any of his bios is that on August 27-28, 1856, he went to Kalamazoo, Michigan to a Republican rally. It was at this rally that a relatively unknown lawyer, Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, Illinois, spoke in favor of John C. Fremont, the Republican Presidential nominee for 1860. Thus, Levi Lawrence saw

Abraham Lincoln speak in Kalamazoo!

In May 1874, Esther Lawrence wrote in her journal that work had commenced on the foundation of their new brick home. She mentioned the progression of the construction of the home throughout the summer and fall. Levi and Esther moved into their new brick home, which cost \$10,000 in 1874 (\$269,000 in 2022) that fall and would live there the rest of their lives.

Levi B. Lawrence died August 13, 1895. Esther E. Lawrence died April 28, 1904.

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NATURE NOTES

Bluebirds, kestrels, sparrows

*Provided by Cass District Library
Local History branch*

Pat Conrad sent in several nice photos, taken in her Lincoln Township backyard July 5 showing an adult male eastern bluebird feeding his three hatchling young. Pat and her husband Bob report they had watched the adult male and female bluebird since May 2, making use of the nest box in their yard.

While only the adult female eastern bluebird attends to the eggs, the adult male sticks close by to help defend the nesting area from predators. Four to five eggs are average per clutch, and thus the three young we see in this family are just less than the average number.

Once the eggs hatch both adults take part in the feeding of the young. The adult female is not shown in Conrad's photos, but was certainly nearby. Adult female eastern bluebirds have a similar color pattern as their male counterparts, except their colors appear duller than the male. The female bluebird's belly will appear white and her throat will appear rusty-colored.

In southern Michigan, mated pairs of eastern bluebirds typically raise two broods of young per season, occasionally three per season. Nesting can begin in Southwest Michigan in late March, but the majority of first nests start in April to early May. Second nests are begun in June or July and third nesting attempts in July or August. It is not uncommon for the young of the earlier nests of the year to help out mom and dad with the next batch of young once they hatch.

John Skowronski photographed an apparent fledgling American Kestrel on June 26 at his home in Bainbridge Township. American kestrels are also known as sparrow hawks and are the most common species of falcon that inhabit Southwest Michigan. Kestrels are birds of open country, and semi-open country, preferring prairies, cropland, hayfields, old fields, orchards, and young pine stands. In winter the American kestrels in Canada and northern Michigan augment our resident populations.

American kestrels are cavity nesters, preferring dead tree cavities or nest boxes built specifically for them. In Southwest Michigan they produce one brood per season, with four eggs being the average number.

The diet of the American kestrel is small mammals, primarily meadow voles which are common in grassy open areas.

Beth Wolf of St. Joseph Township sent in some nice shots of a nesting house wren, taken in June in her backyard. House wrens can be found throughout Michigan but are most common in the southern part of the state where there is the most open habitat. This small songbird is also a cavity nester and utilizes natural cavities such as fallen dead trees as well as nesting boxes in which to build their nests. The male house wren will build dummy nests before the female chooses the one she wants to use for actual nesting.

House wrens raise two batches of young before departing Southwest Michigan for the Southeastern US and Mexico where they winter.

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



Top: Adult male eastern bluebird feeds his fledglings on July 5, 2022, in the backyard of Pat and Bob Conrad of Lincoln Township. Photo by Pat Conrad.

Left: American kestrel, also known as the sparrow hawk, on June 26 in Bainbridge Township. Photo by John Skowronski.

Above: House wren in June 2022, St. Joseph Township by Beth Wolf.

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THE LAST WORD

by Phil Vitale
aka sailorphil

Take another little piece of my heart now Chester



When I was growing up my family had a dog named Chester. I say my family had this dog, but the truth is that this dog really allowed my family to pretend that we were the superior creatures, but that's a different story. Chester was a Cocker

Spaniel mostly, in the way that almost all of the dogs in my neighborhood were only mostly one breed or another. Back then there were no designer breeds with made-up, mix-and-match names like Schnitzeldoodles or Jack Dingo Terriers. Most folks (at least folks in my neighborhood) didn't care if a dog had a pedigree, and as long as a dog didn't bite the mailman or do it's business on the rug, we'd feed it and put up with it barking at the milkman or chewing up a shoe or two in exchange for a little companionship on dark days and the probably misguided security popular at the time that just having a dog in the house would keep burglars at bay.

When I say that Chester was the family dog, the truth is that despite the fact I grew up with two brothers, Chester was pretty much my dog. Maybe it was because I was the middle kid, but usually when it came to a Chester chore, it ended up on my plate. Didn't matter whether it was a doggie bath, dinner at night (Chester particularly liked left-over spaghetti, even when the marinara stained the blond hair around his mouth into a horrific Kujo-looking maw), or the dreaded yard clean up (a particularly unpleasant experience that my father called a good learning experience), whenever it came time for a Chester chore, my older brother would point out that he took out the trash since he was the strongest, and my younger brother would whine and hold onto mom's leg until dad would aim that Italian evil eye at me and point his index finger at the dog. Matter settled.

Of course spending that much Chester-chore time also meant that Chester was more likely to hang around with me than he did with my sibs. Whenever I was sent to my room as a punishment for one minor prank or another, Chester would come hang with me there ... he

used to lie against my leg and let me scratch behind his ears, and he always told me in dog-speak that even though I may have broken a window or gotten caught swiping tomatoes from the neighbor's garden again, my parents had over reacted, and that next time all I had to do was run faster like he always did when he was in trouble, and they'd never catch either of us ...

I really don't remember where Chester came from or how he got named Chester (it might have been because Gunsmoke was on TV back then and Chester, Matt Dillon's buddy, walked with a limp, kinda like our Chester did when he ran), but as far back as I remember anything, I don't remember a time before Chester.

Family trip to the lake to see the grandparents; and there was Chester sitting on the back seat of dad's Studebaker right next to me, his head on my lap and his wet nose nuzzling my hand for a pet as we rolled past the seemingly endless miles and miles of the most brain-numbingly boring Indian corn.

Walking along a dark path through the scary woods in the UP; there was Chester right next to me so he could warn me if any of those pesky bears were about to pounce out and bite off my arm or tear me to a million bloody pieces ... and even though we never actually encountered a bear in the woods (probably because he barked at every leaf that rustled in the wind), he did save me from more than one scary-looking squirrel, a thunderously noisy porcupine and a decidedly unpleasant-smelling skunk on that trip ... which prompted a Chester chore (before we were allowed back in the Studebaker) that involved bathing a skunk-perfumed dog in a very cold and fast-running river, another good learning experience, thanks to dad.

Watching wistfully out my bedroom window at the guys playing sandlot baseball in my backyard while I was quarantined with itchy chicken pox; and Chester was there beside my bed, and even though he was too short to see out the window, he shared my emotions as I willed myself pox-free so I could scratch back out to shortstop instead of sitting on the edge of the bed and fighting the urge to scratch both me and him.

And then one day Chester just wasn't there. I've

repressed the memories of how and when he checked out, but I remember that it left a big hole in my life. Eventually I got over it as much as anyone ever gets over losing their Chester. Eventually I got married, went off to college, raised a couple of kids, and that sharp pain shrunk a dull ache, then turns into a smile whenever I'd see a dog that reminds me of him.

I hadn't thought about Chester for a little while, but recently as I watch my current bud Saba, drag herself up the stairs and limp around as the arthritis takes more and more of the bounce out of her steps, I am reminded of Matt Dillon's old bud and of my Chester.

And, just like it was with Chester, despite all the baths and all the trips to the vet and the piles of ... ahem ... yard lessons that I've had to deal with during the now self-imposed Saba chores, when the end comes for her, as it inevitably comes for every creature, I hope it's peaceful. And I hope that when she finally does pass through the doggie pearly gates, that she and Chester can find a way to hold a place for me. I think I'd rather spend eternity with them than with a lot of living people I've known, but that's another story.

If it's my lot to live to a ripe old age (and yes, some people say I'm pretty ripe already) in the future when I pass the sign on my living room wall, right by where her bed is now, it will bring back good memories. I originally saw the sign on a wall outside a sleazy bar in Key West after a wild sailing trip followed by a wild night in the bar that ended with me buying a beer for a stray dog that I'd seen hanging out by the door (but that's another story, too) That dog had reminded me of Chester when I saw it, and I asked my artistic daughter to recreate the sign for me after Saba came into my life... it reads:

"It came to me that every time I lose a dog they take a piece of my heart with them, and every new dog who comes into my life gifts me with a piece of their heart. If I live long enough all of the components of my heart will be dog, and I will become as generous and loving as they are."

In the end, Italian evil eye and index finger pointing notwithstanding, I guess dad was right about learning experiences. But that's another story ...



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