

Neighbors

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MARCH 2022

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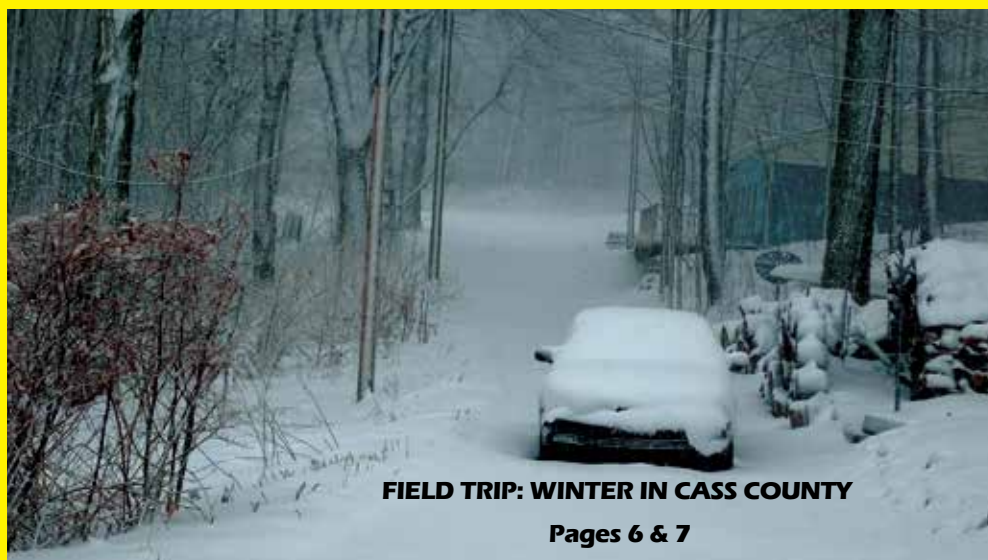
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FIELD TRIP: WINTER IN CASS COUNTY

Pages 6 & 7

REGIONAL NEWS

Beckwith to present Jeeves at Sea

The Beckwith Theatre Company will present "Jeeves at Sea," adapted by Margaret Raether on Friday and Saturday, March 4, 5, 11 & 12 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, March 6 & 13 at 2 pm.

Set sail for laughter as Bertie Wooster revels in life aboard the Vanderley yacht. Bertie is the pampered guest of the lively Lady Stella, accompanied, as always, by his peerless valet, Jeeves. If only Bertie's pal Crumpet hadn't assaulted a prince. In the blink of an eye, Bertie is masquerading as a romance novelist, Crumpet's posing as his own long-lost twin, and a sinister foreign count is challenging Bertie to a duel. Will this madcap case of mistaken identities end in Bertie's doom--or worse, his marriage? Have no fear; Jeeves will sort it all out.

The Beckwith Theatre is located at 100 New York Ave. in Dowagiac. Tickets are \$15 (call 269-782-7653 for reservations). For more information visit BeckwithTheatreMI@gmail.com or email www.BeckwithTheatre.com.

Federal employees to meet

The Southwest Michigan Chapter 572 of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees will meet on March 22, 2022.

For info, call Jean Rowe at 782 2769 or email jeanrowe70@comcast.net

Historical Society meetings

During 2022, the Cass County Historical Society will hold meetings throughout Cass County. The first meeting of the year will be at the historic Hudson Memorial Building, Marcellus.

The speaker will be the son of a rural mail carrier during the mid 1900's. Around 1950, he often rode along with his father on the mail route and has many fascinating stories.

The meeting will be on Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 pm, with John Mooy, speaking on "Stories of a Rural Mail Carrier" at 7 pm. The Hudson Memorial Building is located at 179 N. Jones St. in Marcellus.

The April 12th meeting will be held at the Cass County COA building with the Annual Meeting and SHOW AND TELL as the program.

The public is invited to all meetings.

Michigan fishing licenses

As spring draws closer, Michigan anglers are encouraged to purchase a 2022 fishing license now. The new license season begins April 1, and the 2022 fishing licenses are valid through March 31, 2023. Licenses can be purchased at Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses. By purchasing a fishing license online, anglers will have the opportunity to sign up for auto-renewal through the DNR eLicense system.

Sugar Damp Days

Bendix Woods County Park in New Carlisle, IN, is hosting its annual Sugar Camp Days festival on March 19 and 20, to celebrate the maple syrup season. You are invited to tour the sugar bush to see sap being harvested and visit the sugar house to discover how sap is transformed into golden syrup.

The New Carlisle Lions Club will host a pancake and sausage breakfast both days. The proceeds from the break-

fast support Leader Dogs for the Blind, cancer research, and community organizations.

At Sugar Camp Days you can watch historical crafters demonstrate their trades, enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride, and purchase delicious foods made with maple syrup, such as maple kettle corn, maple cotton candy and maple hot dogs. Maple syrup baked goods, maple candy, and Bendix Woods' pure maple syrup will also be available for purchase.

Sugar Camp Days hours are 8 am to 3 pm. There is an \$8/vehicle entrance fee. For more information, please call 574/654-3155 or visit www.sjcparks.org.

The main entrance to Bendix Woods County Park is located on Timothy Road in New Carlisle, 8 miles west of the U.S. 31 bypass from the State Road 2 Exit.

Free KN95 masks available

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCDHD) will be distributing free KN95 masks to organizations and community members in Van Buren and Cass Counties.

The following is a partial list of participating organizations that are distributing masks while supplies last;

- Van Buren Cass District Health Department - Lawrence & Dowagiac offices;
- Participating Fire Departments in Cass & Van Buren Counties;
- Van Buren District Libraries - all branches;
- Cass District Libraries - all branches;
- Van Buren & Cass MDHHS offices
- Cass County Council on Aging;
- Area Agency on Aging;
- Community Action Agency;

■ InterCare Community Health Network;

■ Cass Family Clinic;

■ Pharmacies including Meijer, Walgreen, and Family Fair

Please call to verify availability prior to arrival. If you represent an agency willing to redistribute masks to the public, please contact the VBCDHD at (269) 621-3143 ext. 1382.

Dowagiac River project honored

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) presented the 2021 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort award at its Board meeting on December 21, 2021 to the Dowagiac River Restoration/Water Trail Project. The award is presented annually for projects that exemplify cooperation between governments, non-profits, and private entities.

The project involved 19 miles of Dowagiac River Water Trail, the removal of Pucker Street Dam and the restoration of two Miles of the Dowagiac River. The Dowagiac River is the largest cold water trout stream in southern-lower Michigan.

With the removal of the dam, the 19-mile Dowagiac River Water Trail became possible, allowing for recreation development including a new kayak launch at Dodd Park, a new river access site at Peavine Street, and a park at the dam location for kayakers and anglers.

The partners worked through a 9-year process on the project. For the last four years, there have been bi-weekly meetings to ensure coordination and to navigate through the many obstacles encountered.

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REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

March 4, 5, 11 & 12 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, March 6 & 13 at 2 pm - "Jeeves at Sea," Beckwith Theatre, Dowagiac, \$15, 782-7653, BeckwithTheatreMI@gmail.com, www.BeckwithTheatre.com

March 15 - Cass County Historical Society presents John Mooy, speaking on "Stories of a Rural Mail Carrier," 7 pm, Hudson Memorial Building, Marcellus

March 19 - Bendix Woods County Park Sugar Camp Days festival, 8 am - 3 pm., \$8/vehicle, and New Carlisle (IN) Lions Club pancake and sausage breakfast

March 22 - Southwestern Michigan Chapter 572 of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees meeting, 782-2769, jeanrowe70@comcast.net

April 1 - Michigan Fishing License season begins, Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses

April 12 - Cass County Historical Society Annual Meeting SHOW AND TELL, Cass County COA building, Cassopolis

Cass District Library This month's programs

February 7 - April 28 - Infant and Preschool Story Time
Monday: Infant Story Time - Mason/Union Branch - 10 am; Tuesday: Preschool Story Time - Edwardsburg Branch - 11 am; Wednesday: Preschool Story Time - Mason/Union Branch - 10 am and Howard Branch - 1 pm; Thursday: Preschool Story Time - Main Branch - 11 am

March 2: 1 - 3 pm - Felt Bird Bookmarks, Howard Branch, Celebrate Read Across America Day by creating your own felt bird bookmark! In-person instruction is available from 1 - 3 pm on March 2. Take home kits will

be available the following day while supplies last. This craft is recommended for ages 10 and older. Younger participants may need adult assistance and supervision.

March 2: 6 pm - Dr. Seuss Birthday Party Main Branch. Come and celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday! Join us for a special evening story time, Seuss-themed treats and crafts.

March 3 - 6:30 pm - Of Icebergs and Inquiries: Michiganders on the Titanic, Local History Branch. When the luxury ocean liner RMS Titanic went down in 1912, many Michiganders tragically lost their lives. Within a week, U.S. Senator William Alden Smith of Grand Rapids convened the U.S. inquiry into the disaster. Join us to learn about the Michigan survivors and victims, as well as Senator Smith's far-reaching quest for answers. This program will be led by Bob Myers, Director of History Programming for the Historical Society of Michigan. Space is limited and registration is required. Call 574-314-6454 to register.

Tuesdays: 2:30 pm - Create and Connect Hour, Edwardsburg Branch. Spend an hour with other teens and tweens expressing yourself with games and art every Tuesday afternoon. Program intended for ages 12-17.

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1 - 3 pm - Let's Play Mahjong, Edwardsburg Branch. Learn this ancient Chinese tile based game. All skill levels are welcome.

Wednesdays: 4:30 - 6 pm - Needles and Hooks, Edwardsburg Branch. Join this lively bunch for knitting, crocheting and conversation every Wednesday evening. Bring a current or new project to work on. Newbies are welcome to come for instruction.

Fridays: 10 am - Play, Learn, Grow, Edwardsburg Branch. Join other 3-6 year olds every Friday for free play time to inspire growth and learning while increasing social skills, fine motor skills and early STEM skills.

March 9: 1 pm - Adult Craft Club, Main Branch. Join us at the Main Branch for a monthly craft club! Space is limited and registration is required. Supplies will be provided. Contact Stephanie at (269) 749-1384 for more information and to register.

March 10: 6 pm - Art Show Open House, Main Branch. Ross Beaty High School students' artwork will be on display during the month of March. Join us for an open house and refreshments on March 10 at 6 pm.

Week of March 14 - Gemstone Rings Take and Make Kit, Howard Branch. What better way to get introduced to the exciting world of gemstones than to make a ring from a gemstone you identified? Participants will learn gemstone classification and create their own gemstone ring. Kits are available while supplies last.

March 17: 11 am - More Than a Book Club, Edwardsburg Branch. The Hope Chest by Viola Shipman is about the discovery of one woman's heirloom hope chest that unveils precious memories and helps three people who have each lost a part of themselves find joy once again. Join us at the Edwardsburg Branch for a book discussion.

Week of March 21 - Wild Creativity! Howard Branch. Learn about wildlife through a variety of arts and crafts! Drop into the Howard Branch to create a snow leopard door hanger, tiger mask or other wild animals using different paper shapes. These activities give an opportunity for children to learn about the wildlife they love and the places they live. Activity pages, coloring sheets and other information about endangered animals will also be available.

March 23: 3 pm - Butterfly Suncatcher, Edwardsburg Branch. Celebrate the first day of spring by stopping in the Edwardsburg Branch to make a butterfly suncatcher.

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LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

We're back ... Did you miss us?

by **Jane Boudreau**

Hi Neighbors! Did you miss all of us at the Neighbors newspaper? We enjoyed our hibernation and now we're back with all the things. Well, maybe not me, I lean toward the useless drivel and the one page you don't mind using for kindling. But I'm working on my game and I hope to bring you exactly what you've been asking for in my column. Except you haven't. Seriously, if you'd enjoy more recipes, decor, garden tips, or pictures of my kids, my email is below.



So here's one of my better photos of tulips from my garden, last year of course. I thought we needed a pick-me-up. Man, we sure have been making up for the snow we didn't get in December. And the nerve of us to complain, "Where's the snow?" It came, we took the kiddos out to sled, snowmen appeared decked out with charcoal, carrots, and grandpa's best scarf. And then it got ugly, out came the shovels, snowblowers and salt. In the city I don't have a large lot, we are close to the street and we have an attached garage so a short driveway. Many years ago my hubby gave away our snowblower, it took longer to fire it up than to shovel. We have lovely neighbors who not only clear their sidewalks but continue down the street helping out others. I see our sidewalk cleared off and I start making cookies for these lovely people. My favorite recipe which is easy but beyond delicious is one of the recipes in this column.



I spend a lot of time on the Internet perusing the latest trends, recipes, and articles ranging from keeping pests out of your garden, to losing 40 lbs. in seven days. So I was particularly moved when I came upon a website that caters to tips for creating a beautiful home, which of course we don't need because we are all perfect, right? The perfect kitchen you see in this photo is my daughter's--totally magazine worthy. This article was called "30 Habits of People With Really Clean Houses." I swear I did not make this up like the previous. But still, with a title like this I was curious. So I gleaned a few of the tips to share with you.

1). They keep high-touch surfaces germ-free. This may sound a little fastidious but even I was amazed at some of these germ ridden spots that I've never thought to sanitize: light switches, remote controls, door pulls, banisters and doorknobs. I started to think about how I clean my kitchen or bathroom only to switch on a light or open a closet door, come back and undo all my hard work. What a waste of my Lysol.

2). They take off their shoes. I'm sorry. I just can't. I don't expect others to do what I've had to do when I've visited a home which had a "no shoe" rule. I've been caught with raggedy socks, no socks (while wearing boots), and in need of a good pedicure. I mean- it's so personal. Next they'll want us to take off our pants to keep the sofa clean.

3). They put their appliances away. I can hear my husband calling out, "Where is the toaster?" "In the basement, honey, next to the furnace and the my slow cooker." But seriously, don't you hate putting that slow cooker (monster) away. It almost makes me not want to use it just at the thought of pulling it out.

4) They organize their refrigerators. I see so many articles about organizing and of course, it's mostly to promote items for said organization like clear stacking bins and food storage containers. First, do they think we can't see that the refrigerator in the photo is mammoth size? It looks like the whole produce section of Aldi has been stored in it. And of course the food items are healthy and displayed in those clear containers like works of art. I look in mine and I see a plate with a crumpled piece of foil over two slices of old pizza. A small plastic bag with a pork chop and three Brussels sprouts. A half full liter of flat Pepsi. Cans of Ginger beer from three years ago

when Moscow Mules were all the rage. You may also see a stray orange or a bruised pear, from last fall most likely. Maybe I do need those fancy Nancy bins after all. And a huge fridge as well.

And finally, my favorite of all: 5). They regularly revisit their pantry. I know, check expiration dates, toss the empty boxes. But I never have to revisit my pantry. I visit it several times a day as that's where we keep the Pop Tarts, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese, and Oreos. The dust never settles.



I made my first Dutch Baby or German pancake recently for breakfast. I had been sort of planning to make one or two at the lake house for breakfast but people really don't want someone dabbling in the kitchen for hours when they want to get out into the sun. Hello Pillsbury Cinnamon Rolls.

Here's the recipe. It turned out lovely. Give this one a try and then do the toppings and all the goodies you love.

Jane's Dutch Baby

Ingredients:

- 1/2 c flour
- 1 c milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 t salt
- 1 T sugar
- 1 1/2 t vanilla
- 3 T butter

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a medium bowl whisk together the flour and milk til smooth, then add the eggs, salt, sugar and vanilla. Whisk to combine well.

Place butter in a 10 inch cast iron pan or a 9 inch cake pan and place in hot oven til butter sizzles. Add the batter, shut the oven door and don't even think about opening it for 18 to 20 minutes. It will deflate!!!! Once it is crisp on the edges remove form the oven. Slice into four quarters and serve hot. I do this with a squeeze of lemon and a generous sprinkle of powdered sugar. There are numerous and delicious toppings such as warmed jam, applesauce, butter and cinnamon, or berries. I've heard from some great people that they cook diced apples in the butter at the beginning of the recipe and pour the batter over. I really want to try this!

Serves 4, possibly 5-6 if you add bacon or sausage and some fruit to fill it out as a hearty breakfast.

And speaking of cast iron skillets, I never wanted one as they are heavy and cumbersome, and as I thought-hard to clean. All further from the truth. You can make the best toasted sandwiches in them if you want to keep it simple, or cook burgers or steaks that taste like



they just came off the backyard grill. It can also go from stove top to oven which I love. To clean it, just let it soak for a bit after it's completely cooled and then wash it with a mild dish soap. Give it a quick wipe down with coconut oil (it has anti-bacterial qualities). And most of all, the best thing you can do for a cast iron skillet is use it! The one I have and love is from the Lodge brand and I found it at Target. 12 inches is perfect for just about anything.

Buffalo Chicken Pizza



I think you guys know that I love making my own pizzas for a simple and quick meal after a busy day. I like to use mostly veggies, sometimes zero meat, and just a brush of olive oil on the crust rather than a tomato based pizza sauce. The toppings just shine this way. I buy thin pre-made crusts sold in the Italian section of my grocery store, no need to refrigerate and a long shelf life to boot. A tip here for thin crust pizza, don't forego the cornmeal on your pizza pan; a thin pizza can get mushy in the middle before it's done in the oven and it also prevents sticking as the cornmeal soaks up the liquid. As always, use the topping you like in addition to the chicken.

Ingredients:

- 1 store bought thin pizza crust
- 1 lb. chicken tenders
- 3-4 T Frank's Hot Wings Sauce
- 8 T butter, melted
- 1 T olive oil, divided
- 1 thin crust fresh pizza

Continued on next page. See:
JANE

BUSINESS & FINANCE

No Secrets when it comes to insurance

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

Today is cold, windy, snowy with some ice thrown in for good measure. It's a perfect time to stay inside and watch a classic movie or you could review your insurance policies. That won't be as fun as a movie but very worthwhile. You should really review your policies each time you receive the renewal documents from your carrier. This is do-it-yourself risk management that could result in mistake free coverage for your home, renters, or auto policy. It is time well spent.

Something else to think about is NOT keeping insurance information secret. Secrets can be good and fun as in the case of hiding a present, but secrets should not be kept when it comes to insurance policies. Insurance should always be discussed with the adult members of the insured's family. Knowledge is power, as they say and in the case of insurance, missed information could affect liability or cause misunderstandings and confusion surrounding coverage issues just for starters.

Homeowner policies, for instance, provide basic coverage but you may want or need to increase the amount or type of coverage. Insured spouses should always discuss any extra risks or values that may exceed the basic policy. You may live



in an area with a higher risk of damage from an earthquake or you may live in an area that is prone to flooding risks. These coverages will be at an additional cost and the premium will be affected by the level of risk in your specific location. If the policy does not include coverage for specific risks, all adult family members should be aware so there are no surprises in the event of a claim.

Similarly, personal possessions, jewelry, collectibles, etc. ... have values that both spouses need to be aware of in case there is a loss. For example, a husband may want to keep the value of the earrings he bought for his wife a secret, but high value jewelry needs to be discussed with the agent and then listed on the policy with an agreed value. Other personal property such as collectibles, guns, art and like items will need to have documentation showing the value of each item and will be insured for that amount.

All drivers in the household, especially new or young drivers need to be familiar with the coverage on their auto policy. The amount of liability the policy carries, what type of medical coverage (if any) there is for the insured and what coverage is on each vehicle. It's also very important for each driver to know what to do in the case of an accident.

Regardless of fault, an insured should never admit guilt. Even saying you are

sorry can be spun into an admission of guilt by an attorney. Always check to see if anyone is injured and seek medical attention if necessary. Contact the police so a misrepresentation of facts cannot occur. Take pictures of the vehicles involved, any damage, license plates, etc. Never offer to pay for damages out of your own pocket. Damage that appears to be small and inexpensive could turn into a much bigger and more extensive issue and you have no idea what type of injuries the other party may have; or say they have. Make sure all drivers have their insurance agents' contact information. You should always call your agent as soon as possible so they can document the incident. Many policies require claims to be turned in right away. Your agent can also advise you as to the consequences of filing the claim.

A discussion with aging parents is also important. If there is a claim or billing issue, you will need your parents to authorize you as a contact person with their agent. You may need to know where your parents keep their policies and other important papers. Home and auto insurance policies are often left out of that discussion but are also important if needed.

The friendly folks at Kemner Iott Benz will be happy to help or answer any questions you may have. Feel free to contact us about any of your insurance needs. We would love to help.

LAKE LIFE WITH JANE

JANE

Continued from previous page

1 T cornmeal

2 c of assorted veggies you have on hand such as sweet peppers, diced tomatoes, mushrooms, etc., thinly sliced

2 c Mozzarella cheese, divided

1/2 c crumbled, feta, goat, or bleu cheese

1/4 c Parmesan cheese

Dry mix ~ 1/2 t each Italian seasoning, granulated garlic, salt, fresh ground pepper, and a pinch of red chili flakes

Directions:

Slice the chicken tenders in half. Simmer in a saucepan of water to cover until cooked through and can be flaked with a fork and knife, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, mix together the sauce and melted butter. Drain the chicken in a colander and place in a medium size bowl. Slowly add the hot wing sauce and melted butter. Set aside.

Place the pizza crust on a baking sheet, preferably round and sprinkled



with cornmeal. Brush the crust with 1/2 tablespoon of olive oil. In a large bowl toss your veggies with the remainder of olive oil. Begin to layer the ingredients. Start with half the Mozzarella to form the 'glue' to hold the veggies. Next add the chicken evenly around the pie and sprinkle the mix of dry spices over that. The grand finale is the remaining Mozzarella, your choice of cheese crumbles and the Parmesan. Add a pinch of salt and pepper at the end. Bake in a

400 degree oven to ensure the crispiness, for about 10 to 15 minutes. We like our pizza well done so we leave it in longer or turn on the broiler for a few minutes. Let the cooked pizza sit for about five minutes and then slice by pressing down with a large carving knife as opposed to a rolling pizza cutter or serrated knife, a perfect way to keep the toppings from sliding willy nilly. Serves 2-4

White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

Ingredients:

3/4 c butter, softened

3/4 c dark brown sugar

1/4 c granulated sugar

1 egg, room temperature

2 t vanilla

2 c flour

2 t cornstarch

1 t baking soda

3/4 c white chocolate chips

3/4 c dried cranberries

Directions:

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl cream the butter and sugars together until light and fluffy.

Beat in the egg and vanilla, scraping the sides of the bowl as you go. Mix in the flour, cornstarch, and baking soda. Finally, stir in the white chocolate chips and dried cranberries. Chill dough at least 3 hours and up to 3 days.

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

It was nice to sit down and write for this month. We are on the verge of spring and that's always something to bring a smile to my face. I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and are keeping the home fires burning. See ya next month!

Jane Boudreau is a writer and blogger who has lived on Diamond Lake for thirty-five years. She also calls Chicago and North Carolina home. You can contact her at blndy9@yahoo.com



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OUR CHILDREN

Cooking up some kitchen fun

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Ever get really, really bored when the weather won't cooperate with outdoor activities for the kids? Wondering what you can do with them that takes little preparation and (if you teach them the right skills) little effort on your part? Look around your kitchen!

There's fun and learning everywhere you look, and the kitchen has a wealth of things to do. Whether you prepare food together, learn about kitchen chores, or try some kitchen science, you will be creating memories that will last a lifetime. Get started with some of these ideas.

Kitchen Fun for the Youngest Family Members

Babies and toddlers are the easiest folks to have fun in the kitchen with, because they can have fun almost anywhere, doing almost anything! Even the youngest infants long to be near the family, so be sure to include baby by putting the bouncer nearby when you are working in the kitchen, or even wearing your baby if it is safe to do so. As you work, be sure to explain exactly what you are doing and describe the textures, smells, sounds, and other sensory experiences. It doesn't even matter what you say- the sound of your voice and hearing language is good for your child.

When your baby is old enough to sit in a high chair, the fun can begin in earnest. Little ones adore being included. Trying giving baby a plastic bowl and spoon to practice stirring while you bake, or putting a little bit of flour and water into a bowl for them to really mix. Before you know it, they will be able to dump, pour, stir, and even crack eggs with just a little bit of guidance. All of these things can be done from a high chair.

Be sure to start all those great habits, too, like washing hands before cooking and after they go in the mouth (which they will!), and rinsing utensils that happen to hit the floor. Talk about the ingredients you use and what they do for the dish. Smell, feel, and taste everything (as long as it is safe for baby). As your child grows, work in directions to follow and explain how measurement works. Sure, there will be some spills and occasional messes, but the foundations you are laying now will help your child far into the future.

Remember, too, that many kitchen reactions that seem commonplace to you, like making dough from flour and liquid, will be brand new to your child. Be sure to allow time to explore, and perhaps make some homemade play dough or finger paint as some of your projects. Doughs that need to be kneaded strengthen little hands, mixing spoons help develop coordination, and dumping/pouring takes aim and muscle power. Icing cookies allows for creativity, too.

Cooking with Children

Like every other skill, cooking is learned, and learned gradually. No matter how old your child is, now is the time to start teaching these skills. The goal is that your child will be able to fully function in the kitchen as an



There's fun and learning everywhere you look, and the kitchen has a wealth of things to do. Whether you prepare food together, learn about kitchen chores, or try some kitchen science, you will be creating memories that will last a lifetime. Get started with some of these ideas.

adult, having honed skills such as planning nutritional meals, coordinating preparation activities so that the meal is ready all at the same time, using appliances and tools safely, and cleaning appropriately to keep food preparation safe and clean. And don't forget the clean up! Every kitchen user should understand that it is expected to clean up your mess and leave the area better than you found it.

Here's a run-down of skills to teach and a possible order of difficulty. Remember to adapt to your child's age, abilities, and experience!

- **Kitchen Basic Skills:** Everyone needs to learn to stir, mix, pour, and dump. Start with just hitting the target! Later you can tackle how to do these things with a little more finesse, such as pouring and dumping gently so things don't overflow, mixing with different levels of vigor, scraping the sides of the bowl as you mix, and "folding." When your child is ready, use a rolling pin, a bowl of coating to flour or bread foods, and try out the mixer.

- **Measuring:** This one is not only crucial to cooking skills, it's critical to many aspects of school success as well. Measurement is often children's first brush with fractions, too, so these concepts go hand in hand. Start simple, with dry measures. Show the kids how to level off the measuring cup or spoon, and how to pack the ingredient in if that is called for. Next, work on liquid measuring and eyeballing the liquid level straight across instead of looking down on it. Be sure to allow plenty of time for experimenting with measuring cups by seeing how many fourths are in a half and a whole, and similar experiments. Halving and doubling recipes is a part of measuring too. Show kids how to keep count of many cups by using toothpicks or other counters.

- **Cleaning Up:** Even the very young can put dishes in or near the sink, put away ingredients after use, and use a wet cloth to wipe (even if it

needs some touch up work later). Children can learn to wash and dry dishes as soon as they can be helped to reach the sink. Teach them to load and unload the dishwasher, and to use a broom and even a mop as soon as possible. And if they use up enough of an ingredient to warrant replacement, teach them to add it to next week's grocery list!

- **Using "Careful" Equipment and Appliances:** Teach skills related to safety very intentionally. Knife training can begin with butter knives and spreading, and progress to cutting with a plastic utensil, then a paring knife, then larger, sharper knives. Serrated knives take a slightly different skill set, and so does peeling. Start with a sharp peeler and progress to using a paring knife and a grater. Anything that gets hot takes training, too. The microwave and the toaster are some of the first heating appliances that younger children can learn to use. Progress to the stove top and finally the oven. Be sure to teach about what can safely go in the microwave, how to prevent hot steam from burning you, how to keep flammable items away from things that get hot, and how to prevent fires. Teach first aid for minor burns, and teach how to put out different types of fires, such as a grease fire.

- **Thinking Skills in the Kitchen:** At the heart of caring for self or family is a good understanding of nutrition. Be sure to talk about the nutritional value of foods and how to balance meals. You'll find some great guidance at the USDA website, and the Cooperative Extension/4-H people have some wonderful curricula, as well. Teach kids to balance each meal and encourage healthy eating at every turn. In particular, make sure that you stress the importance of watching the sugar, fat, calories, salt, and caffeine intake, since these can be so bad for people. Instead, help kids learn about spices that can liven up cooking without a lot of added

salt, discover ways to reduce sugar in baked goods, find out about cooking with less oil and fat, and so forth. You'll also need to teach the fine art of coordinating preparation needs for full meals. Have kids learn to gather all their ingredients before starting to make sure they have everything, look at all the recipes to make sure they can manage the prep and cooking steps when needed, and map out the timing so they can predict that they will need to prepare item A first and allow it to be cooking while they mix up item B that doesn't take as long.

Kitchen Science

Even when there's nothing to be cooked for the family right at the moment, there are loads of kitchen science experiments that will fascinate your kids. Here are a few ideas;

- **Dancing Raisins:** You'll need a clear jar, raisins, baking soda, white vinegar, and food coloring. Fill the jar with vinegar and add food coloring for fun. Put in some raisins. Mix in some baking soda (experiment to find out how much). The baking soda will react with the vinegar to form bubbles. The bubbles will stick to the raisins, causing them to float to the surface. When the bubbles pop, the raisins will sink again until they attract more bubbles. Adding more baking soda will speed up the reaction for a bit.

- **Cake!** You'll need aluminum foil, an oven, a cookie sheet, an egg, flour, oil, milk, vanilla, baking powder, and a bit of sugar. You'll also need a mixing bowl, measuring spoons, and a spoon. Make four small bowls from the foil. Grease them, place them on the baking sheet and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Label your containers (or make a map!) numbered 1 to 4. Now, in a clean bowl, mix dry ingredients: 6 T flour, 3 T sugar, and a pinch of baking powder (except in cake number one). Add in the wet ingredients, 2 T of milk, 1/4 tsp vanilla, 1/3 of the egg (except in cake 2), and 2 T of oil (except in cake 3). Make sure cake 4 has all the ingredients. Bake for 15-20 minutes, then cut cakes open to see how each one looks, feels, and tastes without the egg, the oil, or the baking powder.

- **Rainbow Fun:** Use coffee filters, a jar, and various items that use colorings or dyes. Wet a coffee filter and lay over top of the open jar. Place a colored item on it and see how the color spreads and separates. Try colored inks, colored candies, food coloring, and so forth.

Above all, have a great time in the kitchen! Remember that messes are a part of the process, just have the kids clean up when you are all done! It's the only way they will learn the skills they need to take care of themselves and their families, so be sure to spend kitchen time together.

Sandy Fleming is a tutor and writer from Edwardsburg. Be sure to visit her websites to find more ideas for fun and learning! <http://sandyflemingonline.com> and <http://learningnook.com>. See you there!

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.

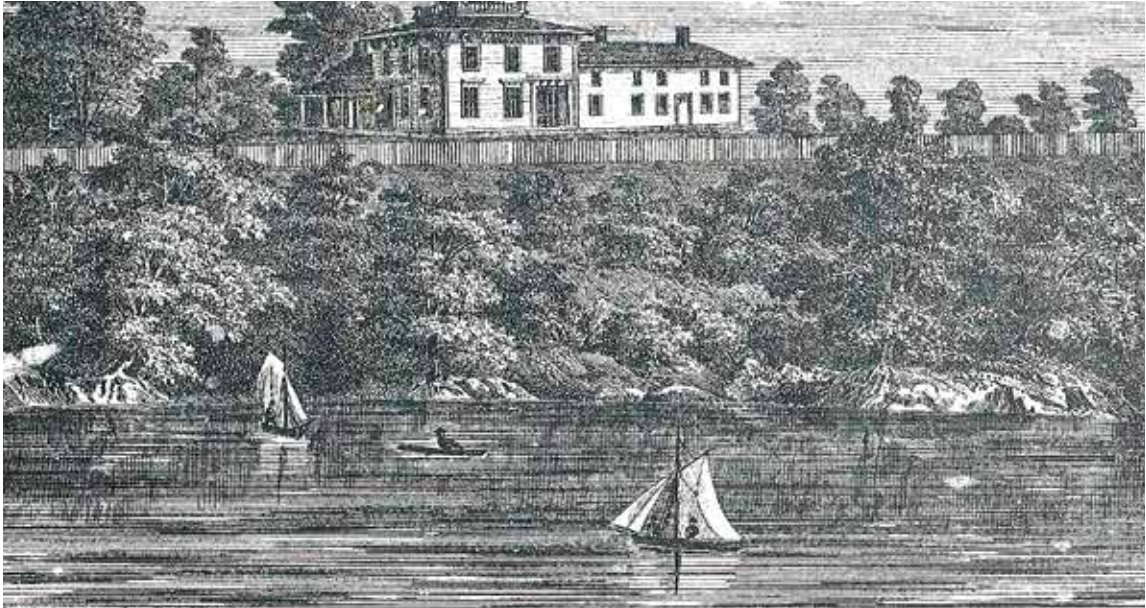
Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the

publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

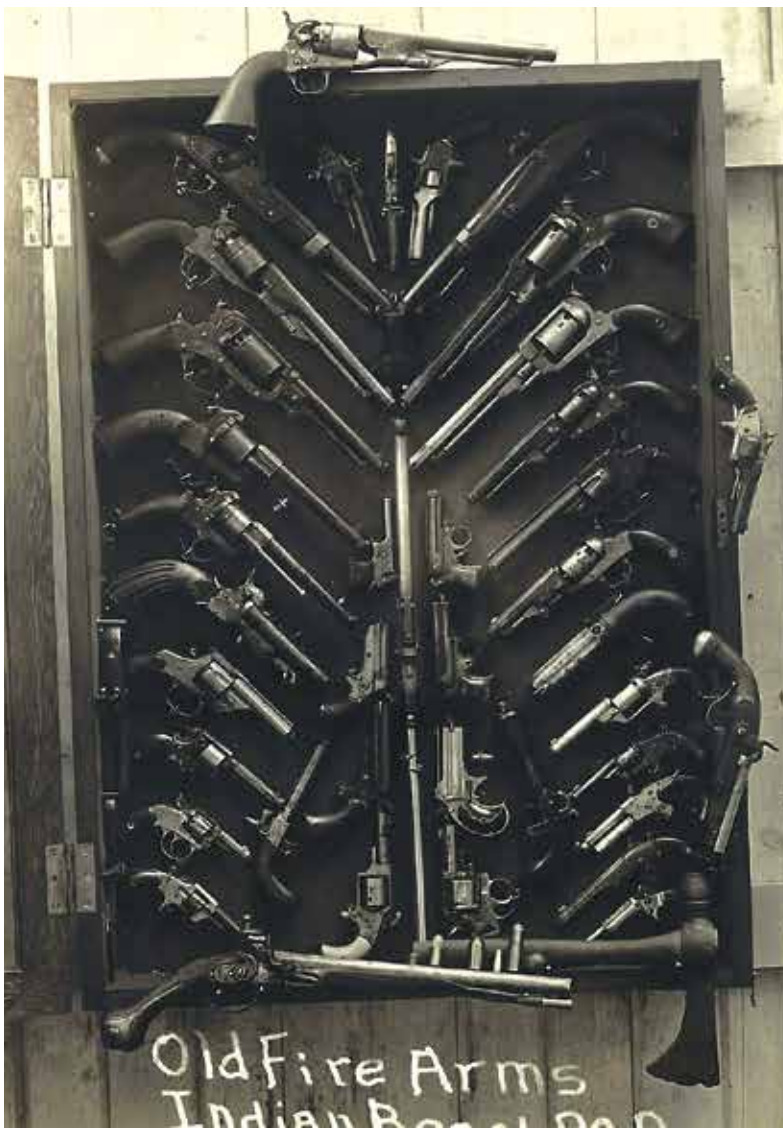
Among other places, the book may be purchased at the Jerdon Real Estate office on M-62 West, and at Whistlestop Gifts, which is operated by the Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce.

For more information or to get a copy of Jerdon's book, visit the website: www.arcadia-publishing.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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NATURE NOTES

Late winter wildlife in SW Michigan

*Provided by Cass District Library
Local History branch*

On January 30, a red fox made a daylight appearance inside the fenced backyard of Mark and Janet Zielke of St. Joseph. Mark was able to capture several images of the animal before it trotted away.

The red fox is one of three species of the Canidae (dog) family that currently inhabit Southwest Michigan, and it is the most common. The other three species are gray fox and coyote.

The red fox prefers a mosaic habitat of brushy areas interspersed with fallow fields, cultivated fields, and forest edges. The species is also attracted to the vegetation bordering the open Great Lakes shoreline. The red fox avoids large expansive, unbroken forests.

The red fox has a keen sense of hearing and has an acute sense of smell which it uses not only to track its prey of small mammals and birds, but also to detect potential danger.

In Southwest Michigan, the only enemies of the adult red fox would be the coyote and the domestic dog. I should probably include the bobcat on the list, even though that wild felid is still very uncommon here. Young pup red foxes may fall prey to eagles, red-tailed hawks, or possibly to great horned owls.

Between late December and mid-March, mated pairs of red fox work together to prepare an underground nursery den where young are born from late March to April. In Michigan, an average of five pups are born in a litter.

Post glacial fossil and archaeological records show the red fox has been a member of Michigan's fauna for a long time, and it will likely remain so for the foreseeable future.

The bird feeders of Liz Crouse of Lincoln Township were visited by a brown thrasher beginning Wednesday, February 2, and it continued to visit the feeders through at least February 4.

Brown thrashers are quite uncommon in our region during February, so I was surprised to receive Crouse's report. This particular bird likely had other, natural food sources prior to the major winter storm that hit on February 2. The storm likely forced the bird to find alternative sources and in doing so that's when it found Crouse's feeders.

Brown thrashers are common in our region from April through early October. Although they somewhat resemble thrushes, they are actually in the same family as catbirds and mockingbirds (Mimidae). The preferred habitat of the brown thrasher is brushy, shrubby areas as well as residential yards.

It regularly feeds on the ground in the warm months, using its long slightly curved bill to sweep aside leaves and twigs in search of worms and grubs.

I just recently became aware of a noteworthy December record, that being of a Baltimore oriole photographed on December 18 at the Still Waters Retreat in Buchanan Township by Mary Jo Canaday of Berrien Springs. The Baltimore oriole was observed by Canaday as she was censusing birds as part of the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count centered around Niles, Michigan.



At top, a red fox visits inside the fenced backyard of Mark and Janet Zielke of St. Joseph in broad daylight on January 30.

Lower level left, a brown thrasher turned up on February 2, the same day as the winter storm, at the feeders of Liz Crouse of Lincoln Township. Most brown thrashers overwinter in the Southeastern United States.

Lower level center, Baltimore oriole on December 18, at Still Waters Retreat, Buchanan Township. Mary Jo Canaday of Berrien Springs. By December, Baltimore orioles should be in the tropics!

Lower level right, while Niles Post Trooper Holly Higgs was in Boroda, February 14, a red-tailed hawk landed on her patrol vehicle's red bubble. Photograph courtesy Baroda-Lake Township police department.

What makes this record unusual is that by December, Baltimore orioles should be in the tropics and not in Michigan! There are just a handful of winter Baltimore oriole records from Southwest Michigan since 1984, but they all involve individual birds coming to suet or seed feeders over multiple days. Canaday's bird was seen away from any feeding station and to my knowledge, the bird was not relocated.

While a Michigan State Police Car was parked in the Baroda Village parking lot on February 14, a large red-tailed hawk landed on the red siren light and was photographed [by one of the maintenance crew.

The fact that the belly is streaked makes me think this individual is probably a juvenile that hatched in 2021. If it were an adult, it would have a more distinctive belly band. I could say with more certainty of its age if I could see its back and tail. Red-tailed Hawks don't acquire their distinctive red tails until their second year of life.

Although we don't know for sure, my

guess is that this bird hatched in Canada away from large human populations which makes it less fearful of humans. That may be why it landed on top of the

MSP car. It does not have the same amount of fear of humans as that of our local Red-tailed Hawks!



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LOCAL HISTORY

Historic Cassopolis filling station featured

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

This month's history article features the cobblestone filling station which was located at the southwest corner of State Street (aka M-60) and O'Keefe Street, Cassopolis. According to newspaper accounts, construction on the building began on Monday, August 4, 1924. The cobblestone was gathered locally, and under the direction of Elmer H. Black, a local contractor from Cassopolis.

The filling station was owned by the Cass Oil Company, of which local entrepreneur Joseph F. Hayden was principal owner. The station was one of many in the area to sell Texaco gasoline and oil. During 1924 in Cassopolis alone, Boughton's Garage, Walker's Garage, and the Ford Sales and Service Station all sold Texaco gas and oil besides the Cass Oil filling station.

According to the Vigilant (Aug. 7, 1924), one of the aspects that made this station attractive to customers was the fact it had a "projecting roof which will enable the autoists to stop in the dry in case they want to buy gas or oil during storms."

Just over six weeks from the beginning of construction, the filling station opened on Saturday, September 20, 1924 at 6am, as told by a half-page advertisement in the September 18 edition of the Vigilant.

The accompanying photo looks like it may have been taken just before or soon after the station's opening, as the concrete appears clean and free of oil stains. I assume the station did brisk business, being in a prime location of two major roads (M-60 and O'Keefe Street), but I am unaware of how long that particular building lasted. Memories have faded of



Photograph of Cass Oil Company Filling Station, Cassopolis, taken circa mid to late 1920s. Located southwest corner of O'Keefe and State Street (M-60). The man shown in the photo is Orris North, who, according to an advertisement in the Cassopolis Vigilant, was "in charge" of the station.

when the old cobblestone filling station was torn down. It was certainly gone by January 1969 when Larry Hartzell's new, modern Texaco Station opened on that site.

The old cobblestone Call Oil filling station shows up on the Cassopolis

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1925 and 1938. When the man "in charge", Orris North, passed away on July 8, 1946 his obituary appeared in the following Thursday's Vigilant and said: "In his later years he had been a valued employee at the Texaco filling station here."

The building apparently survived until at least the late 1940s. Any further information, especially photos, of this building would be welcomed. Please contact Jonathan Wuepper of the Local History Branch, Cass District Library at <jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us.

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THE LAST WORD

by Phil Vitale
aka sailorphil

Ain't technology great? For me, not so much ...



So far I have to say that this has been the stupidest, worst, mistake I've ever been gullible enough to let myself be talked into. For some reason (that to this date remains a mystery) over the last ten years or so just about everyone I know has been beating me up, berating me, belittling me and betting me that my life would be magically enhanced if I'd just join the crowd and break down and get a cell phone.

"You won't believe how much better your life will be," they'd say. "I don't know how you can live without a cell phone," they'd chide. "Trust me," they aver (which should have raised a red flag). "You won't be sorry!"

So as I near the 70th anniversary of my birth, having survived an admittedly misspent adolescence in the wild 1960s; having married (very) young and having raised two (beautiful and delightful daughters); having spent seven years as a full-time college student while working full time at a variety of jobs; having then enjoyed a lengthy, successful career as a journalist in two states; having travel around dozens of foreign countries and having sailed dozens of exotic and sometimes dangerous islands ... all without the alleged benefits of a cell phone the neo-problems of the pandemic began weighing on my mind in a most pressing manner.

So as I was preparing to captain a large sailing vessel in the British Virgin Islands Spring Regatta (a third attempt in three years, the first two having been canceled by COVID concerns), I was faced with a dizzying array of regulations, requirements, protocols and procedures that, the experts said would be almost impossible to negotiate without the holy grail of a cell phone.

At with the assistance of my youngest daughter (our family's tech guru), I reconsidered my resistance and finally succumbed to what I saw as the inevitable. A few days later I found myself in a cell phone store (I'm pretty sure that this is the 2022 equivalent of the Scotch Tape store from SNL reruns), where Sales Associate Bradley (who didn't look like he'd started to shave yet) asked me some completely incomprehensible and vague

questions about the number of Gees (which had nothing to do with the BeeGees), data usage (which doesn't involve the pale guy from Star Trek) and band width (which apparently has nothing to do with my either my watch strap or the size of my favorite blues group).

Fortunately my tech-savvy daughter was able to answer the questions for me after explaining to Bradley that I had just been returned to earth by the Mother Ship following an abduction 30 years ago in the Bermuda Triangle.

"He'll take that one," she said, pointing at a shiny black, Darth Vader-looking cell phone..

I had no idea how to turn it on, let alone how to make it do anything. Hell, I didn't even know what I wanted it to do, except I'd been told by the government of the BVI that before I go sailing I need to put my vaccination certificate on it (I thought maybe I'd just Scotch Tape it to the case, but dearest daughter pointed out that mistake), and give them my phone number so they could reach me if the test I was required to take before I could enter eventually came back as positive.

Bradley then asked me what the number my current phone was so he could transfer it ... thank God for daughter's acumen, or I'd have been there for days. After several hours of quality Bradley time, and after shelling out more than I did for my first two cars when I was a kid, I walked out of the phone store as the co-founded owner of a brand new cell phone.

My daughter came home with me that day and "programmed" my phone, connected it to my home Wi-Fi, and proceeded to give me a several-hour-long tutorial that touched (lightly) on cell phone basics.

She showed me how to hold it so my fingers don't hit buttons that do weird things I'll never be able to undo without her in the room. She showed me how to turn it on and off. She explained what an "app" is and how to find the ones I'd most likely use. She showed me how to change the settings so I wouldn't have to bother with things I'll never in my life use (even though I still have to pay for all that nonsense).

Then she went online on my laptop and ordered about \$500 worth of more things I'd need ... a plastic

screen saver, a hard case, a cloth carrying case that goes on my belt (if I ever take the darn thing out of the house); a charger (since the phone didn't even come with a plug), an assortment of wires with funny-looking plugs, most of which I haven't found a use for at all.

And then she left.

Since then it's rang three times (if you call that ringing), two of which were from some mechanical sounding robo-caller trying to get me to give them the keys to unlock my bank account. So far I've made three calls, one each to my three grandchildren to wish them happy birthday (although my wife had to show me how to use the "speaker" so we could both hear and talk without me holding the phone up to my ear like a tin can on a string). So far I've gotten two or three "texts" although that whole thing is pretty muddly, and I can't even read most texts since people don't write them in English. So far I've looked at my email half a dozen times, although I hate the email app since it doesn't work the way I've been using email on my computers for the last 30 years. And so far I figured out how to use the GPS (I'm good with GPS on sailboats on the ocean) to show me a route to a favorite watering hole or two (although I pretty much had the routes down without the cell phone).

Mostly, so far, the phone has cost me a lot of money and has spent a lot of time on my desk. I almost never take it anywhere, I have no intention of being available 24/7 (especially if I'm visiting a favorite watering hole). For the most part, even in the case on my belt, it's an unused nuisance, and for the most part, like a very bad gun slinger, I'd be embarrassed to draw it in a crowd ... I'd most likely shoot my eye out if I did.

Maybe some day (if I keep at it long enough) I'll catch on. Maybe some day I'll find out what all the couples I see in the restaurants are doing when they're sitting across from one another with their cell phones out without speaking to one another... but more likely, some day I'll end up following the a lemming off a cliff.

So far the only thing I know how to do is to keep paying the bill, and I'm hoping that for that much money, it will keep me from getting COVID in the BVI.



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