

# Neighbors

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**MARCH 2023**

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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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Neighbors is published monthly from March through November.

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## FIELD TRIP

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# Regional News

## Beckwith Theatre 2023 season

The Beckwith Theatre, 100 New York Ave., Dowagiac, has announced its 2023 season. This year's shows are:

**Sylvia** by A. R. Gurney on April 14 - 23 - A man deals with a mid-life crisis, not by falling in love with a younger woman but with a dog he befriends (played onstage by a woman).

**Jeeves in Bloom** on June 2 - 11 , adapted by Margaret Raether - The nearly perfect valet Jeeves and his comically flawed employer Bertie Wooster get entangled in comic situations both romantic and financial.

**An Inspector Calls** on July 21 - 30 by J. B. Priestley - A classic, compelling mystery, which moves us to examine our consciences and remember to look after one another.

**The Outgoing Tide** on Sept. 8 - 17 by Bruce Graham - In a summer cottage on Chesapeake Bay, Gunner has hatched an unorthodox plan to secure his family's future but meets with resistance from his wife and son, who have plans of their own.

**Second Samuel** on Oct. 27 - Nov. 5 by Pamela Parker - In the small, Southern town of Second Samuel residents seem to care about each other until the town's shocking secret is revealed and they are driven to examine what caring really means.

Tickets are \$15 per person for all events and are reserved by calling the box office at 269.782.7653. Season tickets are available for \$60.

For more information visit BeckwithTheatre.com. or call 782-7653.

## Improv Comedy Night

The Beckwith Theatre Co., 100 New

## Brownsville School to be restored

Underground Railroad Society of Cass County has recently purchased Brownsville School #1, 20559 Osborn St. in Cassopolis. This Calvin Township one-room schoolhouse was built in the early 1840's, and was integrated from the day it opened, until it closed in 1957, making Brownsville #1 among the longest integrated public school in Michigan, and perhaps the first one.

Friends of Brownsville School (FBS) has been formed to carry out this project, chaired by Jennifer Ray, retired Cass District Library Director. This group will guide the restoration of the school as a repository of photos and artifacts from all integrated, public, one-room schools in Cass County. Brownsville will also be a demonstration site for Michigan prairie education, inviting tours and education events.

Brownsville School is a legacy of the Underground Railroad, operating primarily in Calvin, Penn and Porter Townships, from 1830s to 1850s. Over 1500 fugitive slaves, now called freedom seekers, were said to be helped on their journey to Canada. Many Free Black families arrived in the area in mid 1840s and early 1850s. They bought property, primarily in Calvin Township, and established thriving farms, becoming respected members of the community. Many descendants of these pioneer Black families still reside in the area. The 1850 census for Calvin Township shows both Black and white children going to school. The 1860 plat map of Calvin Township shows over a hundred Black owned properties, and four one-room schools, Brownsville School #1 is one of them.



URSCC purchased the school and two acres of property in November, 2022 from the Richard and Dennis Wooden family, whose relatives went to the school. It was part of the Wooden family farm since 1960's, and required three years to clear title and zoning issues. URSCC has taken steps to save the structure during this interval, tarping the roof and shoring up the foundation.

The extensive restoration will require funding from various sources. Friends of Brownsville School will take on this challenge, as well as historical research and collecting memorabilia from other integrated, public, one-room schools in Cass County. If you would like to support this project or join Friends of Brownsville School, go to [www.urscc.org](http://www.urscc.org)

York Ave, Dowagiac, is hosting a night of improvised comedy! March 3 and March 4. 7 pm shows are Family Friendly, 9 pm shows are Adult 18+. Cash bar available at all shows. For more information visit BeckwithTheatre.com. or call 782-7653.

## Lucky Turkey 10k 5k

The Lucky Turkey 10k 5k is being run to fill the CANCELED 55th running of the classic Dowagiac All Trail Turkey

Trot (Canceled due to snow last November). The event will be held Sat, March 11 at Southwestern Michigan College on Dailey Rd, Dowagiac, Michigan. The event will return to the trails of Southwestern Michigan College – Dowagiac campus. The 10K Run/Walk will start at 10 am, the 5K Run/Walk will start at 10:15 am and a kids fun run will start at 11:15 am. The race will use chip timing and all finishers who registered

by March 5 will receive a long sleeve custom designed tech shirt at packet pickup. The event is hosted by Southwestern Michigan College and is being directed by Ron Gunn of Cairn Stone Adventure Tours. Fore more info see <https://www.raceplace.com/events/127185/sham-rock-turkey-trot>

## Sugar Camp Days weekend

Bendix Woods County Park in New











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# Regional News

Carlisle, Indiana, is celebrating the 50th annual Sugar Camp Days on March 18 and 19 from 8 am - 3 pm, to celebrate the maple syrup season. You are invited to celebrate the maple syrup season by touring the sugar bush to see sap being harvested and visiting 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 breakfast support Leader Dogs for the Blind, cancer research, and community organizations.

There is an \$8/vehicle entrance fee. For more information, call 574/654-3155 or visit [www.sjcparks.org](http://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.

## Putnam County Spelling Bee

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee will take place at Southwestern Michigan College, 58900 Cherry Grove Rd, Dowagiac, on Thu, Mar 23 – Sun, Mar 26. A spoof of the contests that pit children against children to determine who has the best command of their voluminous vocabulary.

For more info see <https://www.broadwayworld.com/detroit/regional/The-25th-Annual-Putnam-County-Spelling-Bee-2970929>.

## Melting Mann Bike Challenges

The Tenth Annual Melting Mann Dirt Road Bike Challenge will be Mar 25

beginning at 2:15 at 13421 Mann St, in Jones, MI. The course is an open road race. For more info see <https://local.aarp.org/event/melting-mann-dirt-road-bike-challenge-2023-03-25-jones-mi.html>

Also on Mar 25, from 8-9 am a gravel road race will be held in Vandalia as part of the Michigan Gravel Race Series. For info see <https://meltingmann.com/>

## Graham Woodhouse Award

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission presented the 2022 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort award at its Board meeting on Dec. 20, to the Imagine Cass-Embrace the Vision, Cassopolis Transformation Project. The award is presented annually for projects that exemplify cooperation between and among governments, non-profits, and private entities. It was established to recognize and reward the partners who execute complex, regional problem solving that optimizes the use of limited resources. The award was given to project partners that included the Village of Cassopolis, Michigan State University Extension, Cassopolis Main Street, Midwest Energy & Communications, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, Cass County, and Cass County Economic Development Corporation.

## Ernest Hemingway's grandson to lead writers retreat in Michigan

WALLOON LAKE, MICH. - The grandson of literary giant Ernest Hemingway will lead a special retreat in

Northern Michigan this spring aimed at guiding writers in honing their craft.

Writer and journalist John Patrick Hemingway is to be the special guest and moderator at the second annual Walloon Lake Writers Retreat, a three-day event on April 13-16 at Hotel Walloon in Walloon Lake, the Northern Michigan village where Ernest Hemingway spent his summers as a child.

Retreat highlights include talks and writing leadership sessions lead by John Patrick Hemingway and other published writers, a guided caravan tour of nearby Hemingway locales hosted by the Michigan Hemingway Society, access to unique locations around Walloon Lake for private writing time, a group dinner, networking and collaboration, and more.

For package details and reservation information, contact Hotel Walloon at [hotelwalloon.com](http://hotelwalloon.com).

## Kalamazoo Winter Craft Show

The Kalamazoo Winter Craft Show will take place at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center, 2900 Lake St, Kalamazoo, on March 4 – March 5. For two days artists will display and sell their work, providing you with the opportunity to find a unique piece of artwork. It's a great way to beat the winter blues, whether you end up buying something for yourself, getting a gift for someone else, or just decide to browse.

## Butterflies Blooming

The annual Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming exhibition at Meijer Gardens is the largest temporary

tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation. About 7,000 tropical butterflies from around the world fly freely in the Tropical Conservatory.

Butterflies Are Blooming, will run from March 1 - April 30 at Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids; [www.meijer-gardens.org](http://www.meijer-gardens.org)

## Dowagiac events

The Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce has released information on the following events in 2023:

**Easter Eggstravaganza**, April 1, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm; **Memorial Day Parade**, May 29, 10:30am - Noon; **Music in the Park**, June 1, 7:30pm - 8:30pm; **Dowagiac Farm & Artisan Market** June 3, - October 14, 9 am - 2 pm; **Dowagiac Home & Garden Tour**, June 24, 9 am; **Summer in the City Festival**, July 14, - July 15, 10 am - 5 pm; **Steve's Run**, July 14, 6 - 9 pm; **Ed's Open Header Cruise**, July 27, 5:30 - 8:30 pm; **Rod & Roll Classic Auto Show**, August 19, 7 am - 4 pm; **Under the Harvest Moon Festival**, October 14, 10 am - 4 pm; **Christmas Open House Weekend & Theta Mu Craft Show**, November 10, 11, 10 am - 5 pm; **Small Business Saturday**, November 25, 10 am; **Candlelight Christmas Parade**, December 01, 7 - 9 pm.

For more information on these events, visit <https://www.dowagiacchamber.com/events/upcoming-events>

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# Regional Calendar

**Cassopolis Main Street Summer Band Lineup**  
**BEACH BASH @ STONE LAKE BEACH**

(+ Food trucks, beer garden, kids area, kayak rentals, and fireworks!)  
**Friday June 2**, 3-5, 7-8 DJ H2, 5-7 Starlord, 8-11 Blammo  
**Saturday June 3**, 3-5, 7-8 DJ H2, 5-7 Zero, 8-11 Ultrafab

**ROCK THE BLOCK SUMMER CONCERT SERIES @ STONE LAKE BEACH** (+ Food trucks & beer garden)

**Saturday, July 15**, 5-7 Top Secret, 8-11 The 1985  
**Saturday, Aug. 12**, 5-7 Head Honchos, 8-11 TBD  
**Saturday, Sept. 9**, 5-7 Roosters, 8-11 Memphis Underground  
**Saturday, October 7** (@Cass County Fairgrounds), 5-7 Dart Board Compromise, 8-11 P.S. Dump Your Boyfriend

March 3, 4 - **IMPROV COMEDY NIGHTS**, Beckwith Theatre Co, Dowagiac, see page 2 for details

Mar 4, 5 - **For the Love of Art - Indoor Art Fair**, <https://allevents.in/south%20bend/for-the-love-of-art-indoor-art-fair/10000481702514187>

March 11 - **LUCKY TURKEY 10, 5K**, SMC, see page 2 for details

Saturday, March 11, 25 - **CASSOPOLIS FARMERS MARKET**. The Vault, 105 Broadway St., Cassopolis, will host an indoor farmers market from 10 am to 1 pm the second and fourth Saturday through November.

Saturday, March 11 - **YOUNG FARMERS CHILI COOK-OFF**. The Southwest Michigan Farm Bureau Young Farmers will host the 6th Annual Chili Cookoff + Belt Sander Race and Young Farmer Discussion Meet at 4 pm Saturday, March 11. The event will take place at Griner Farm, 13120 Born St., in Jones, and will feature prizes, music, games and more

March 18, 19 - **BENDIX WOODS COUNTY PARK SUGAR CAMP DAYS**, see page 2 for details

March 23 - 26, **PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE**, SMC, see page 2 for details

March 25 - **MELTING MANN BIKE CHALLENGES**, Jones, Vandalia, see page 3 for details

Saturday, March 25 - **VOLINIA MAPLE PANCAKE BREAKFAST**. The community is invited to Volinia Outcome School on Saturday, March 25, to witness maple syrup being processed. Guests will be able to take advantage of student-guided sugar bush tours, take a look into the sugar shack, taste and purchase maple syrup, and enjoy a pancake breakfast. Cass County Parks and Recreation will also offer wagon rides from 9 am to 11:30 am. Breakfast includes fluffy pancakes, sausage, combread, fresh juice and hot coffee. Cost is \$7 for adults, and \$3 for children 10 and under.

April 14 - 23, June 2 - 11, July 21-31, Sept 8 - 17, Oct. 27 - Nov. 5 - **BECKWITH THEATRE PERFORMANCES**; see page 2 for details.

May 5, 6 - **62ND ANNUAL MLSA CONFERENCE**, Protecting and Restoring Michigan's Lakes and Streams. Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, MI. <https://mymlsa.org/mlsa-events/annual-conference-2023/>

May 19, 20 - **SPRING VINTAGE, ANTIQUE, AND CRAFT MARKET**, Michiana Event Center, 455 East Farver StreetShipshewana, IN, <https://www.michianaevents.com/event/spring-vintage-antique-and-craft-show>

July 31, 2023 - August 6 - **CASS COUNTY FAIR**, info tba

**Cass District Library**

**All Locations, Month of March - Money Monsters Learn to Become Good Borrowers**

**Mondays at 11 am, T'ai Chi**, \$40.

**March 4, LEGO @ The Library 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, Edwardsburg Branch**. For ages 5-17

**Week of March 6, Edwardsburg Branch, Avocado Fleece Pillow Take and Make Kit**

**March 6 - April 27, Mondays, Mason/Union Branch - 10 am, Infant Storytime**, For children birth-2 years old. Storytime will run for 8 weeks fro.

**March 6 - April 27, Preschool Storytime**  
Tuesdays: Howard and Edwardsburg Branches, 11 am

Wednesdays: Mason/Union Branch - 11 am  
Thursdays: Main Branch - 11 am  
For children ages 3-5 years old.

**March 9 - 1 pm, The 1910 "Road Trip" of the Abernathy Brothers, Local History Branch**  
Space is limited and registration is required for this program. Call 269-357-7823 or visit any branch to register.

**March 9: 5:30 - 6:30 pm, Ross Beatty High School Art Show, Main Branch**

**March 16 - 5:30 pm, Village Book Club, Edwardsburg Branch**. Intended for adults.

**Week of March 20. Spring Craft Take and Make Kit. Howard Branch**

**March 21 - 9 am, Savage Readers Book Club, Main Branch**

**March 21 - 6 pm, Local Author Visit: Samantha Wilcoxson, Edwardsburg Branch**

**March 22 - 1 & 5:30 pm, DIY Doormat Craft, Main Branch**. Registration and payment are required. Call 269-749-1384 to be added to the waitlist. Registration will be completed once payment is received online or at any branch location. Intended for ages 15+.

**March 28: 4:30 - 6:30 pm, Easter Bunny Visit and Eggs-plorers Hunt, Main Branch**

**March 30 - 5:30 pm, Easter Bunny Book Folding, Edwardsburg Branch**

Registration is required. Call 269-487-9215 or stop by any branch to register.

**April 3 - 1 pm, Roz Puppets: George the Dragon, Main Branch**

**April 4 - 2 pm, Magic Show with John Dudley, Mason/Union Branch**

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# Business & Finance

## Enjoying technology with peace of mind

By **Kerry Davis**  
Kemner, Iott, Benz Agency

While we sit in our homes, minding our own business, there is a whole world out there working hard at trying to have what we have. Some do it legitimately and truly want to emulate what you might have and work hard to achieve it. Others, unfortunately, are literally trying to take what you have- money, possessions, piece of mind, etc. They work hard at not working hard. They can come in all forms and when we least expect it. It could be a phone call, text, email, mailing, or even a spy balloon.

Social engineering scams, ransomware attacks, and cyber extortion are some of the ways your business or you as an individual could be harmed. Whether we like it or not, technology is here to stay and getting more complex every day. It has huge benefits with ease of doing business, expediting work and communication. With that, it also leaves us vulnerable in some areas. Our lives have fundamentally changed as technology has advanced.

Cyber risk is real. I would bet that you have or for sure know someone

**Social engineering scams, ransomware attacks, and cyber extortion are some of the ways your business or you as an individual could be harmed. Whether we like it or not, technology is here to stay and getting more complex every day. It has huge benefits with ease of doing business, expediting work and communication. With that, it also leaves us vulnerable in some areas.**

that has somehow been a victim of a cybercrime. Personally, I have had to get a new debit card twice in the last 6 months because someone else was using it while it was in my possession. Luckily, it was caught quickly on both occasions and was taken care of immediately. I also received a text this last week from someone claiming to be someone I know and asking for "help." It can happen to any of us at any time. Luckily for me, my issues were minor.

For businesses, these expenses can get out of hand rapidly. Not only can they financially be harmed, but their data can be stolen. We all can think of instances when big corporations have had information leaks and customer data compromised.

Ideally, we would like all cyber-crime to completely stop. But we also know we can only control what we can control. Just like insurance can protect you if your house has a fire and your car crashes, cyber insurance can help you recover from a cyber-attack. Cyber insurance is ever-changing as it keeps up with new cyber criminals.

- Cyber insurance can cover:
- Legal Fees
  - Financial loss from fraud, ransomware, targeted extortion
  - Re-creating data
  - Claims for loss of confidential data
  - Costs for notifying individuals that their information was compromised
  - Getting your business up and run-

ning following a cyber event

- Many cyber policies also have experts that can aim to improve security before a crisis strikes

Purchasing some sort of cyber insurance can help us feel a little more at ease. We can go back to relaxing at home knowing there is something looking out for us when we may not even know we need it. We can enjoy our technology and have that peace of mind that we are protected.

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# Local Real Estate

## Home sales, prices both up this year

**T**he 2023 Cass County housing market kicked off the year with a slight increase in the number of houses sold and a significant increase in prices.

When we refer to all or overall housing types, we combine results for waterfront and non-waterfront houses. So in total, 33 houses were sold in January 2023 compared to 31 in January 2022. Separately, sales of waterfront houses drove a slight increase of 2 houses sold (5 vs.3), and non-waterfront houses stayed the same each year at 28.

The overall average selling price in January 2023 increased 34 percent to \$296,321 from \$217,658 in January 2022. The overall median selling price in January at \$232,777 rose 37 percent from \$169,900.

The average selling price for waterfront homes grew 34 percent to \$518,800 from \$386,360 in January 2022. The median selling price for waterfront homes soared 252 percent (\$705,000 vs. \$200,000).

In January, the average selling price for non-waterfront increased 47 percent to \$249,727 from \$169,500 in January 2022. The median selling price rose 37 percent to \$223,888 from \$163,500 in January 2023.

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

In Cass County, there were three bank-owned or foreclosed as a part of all

closed transactions in January 2023. In 2023, there were no houses included. The highest percentage in January previously was 35 percent in 2015.

For comparison, there were three bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage of all transactions in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and the westerly 2/3 of Van Buren Counties in January. The highest percentage in January was 57 percent in 2009.

The fast and furious pace across the SWMI housing market has run out of steam. In January 2022, the market started with a record low inventory of houses for sale at 514 houses, and in January 2023, the housing inventory ticked up to 639 houses. So our housing inventory is still at a very low level for buyers in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and the westerly 2/3 of Van Buren counties. So what could we expect the market to do in 2023?

January usually tends to be the least productive month of any given year. January 2021 was the last time sales in January peaked and ended with setting new all-time records for sales, selling prices, and total dollar volume in the year-over-year comparison that dates back to 2006. Then January 2022 closed with a 23 percent drop in sales from January 2021 (210 vs. 271). Now January 2023 closed with a 28 percent plunge in sales from January 2022 (151 vs. 210). From our last peak in January 2021 to this January of 2023, the market has stepped back 44 percent from its

peak.

The average selling price declined to \$299,531 from \$301,017 in January 2022, which was less than a 1 percent change. The January 2023 median selling price tumbled 4 percent (\$202,000 vs. \$210,000).

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

The total dollar volume at \$45,229,257 was down 28 percent from

the \$63,213,613 collected in January 2022.

At the end of January 2023, there were just 639 houses for sale, providing the market with a 3.3-month inventory for homebuyers. In 2013, the market had a 9.5-months supply of houses for sale.

Nationally, in January, the Freddie Mac mortgage rate was 6.13, down from 6.42 in December 2022 for a 30-year conventional mortgage. In January 2022, the mortgage rate was 3.55.



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# For the Table

## What to cook in March

by **Julie Frank**

Owner, **Ploughman's Market & Deli**  
Cassopolis, MI

Weather folklore tells us that if March comes in like a lion, it goes out like a lamb. Regardless, March is unpredictable in Michigan. The daylight hours are noticeably longer, suggesting the promise of spring. But then, we are hit with a blast of freezing rain, lest we have forgotten about winter. But what to cook? Are you tired of hearty stews and cheesy casseroles and ready for something fresh and light? This collection of recipes will help you with your March cooking dilemma. Even though local produce has not arrived at your farmer's market, you can choose the right produce from the grocery store to satisfy your "fresh" craving no matter the time of year. Here are three recipes highlighting grocery store produce that will not disap-



point.

### Southwest Stuffed Peppers

Green bell peppers can be found in the grocery store year-round and are the star of this dish. I use the green variety but red or yellow would also work! They are stuffed with cilantro lime rice, black beans, roasted corn, salsa, and gooey cheese. Top with some sour cream and you have a quick and fresh weeknight meal.

#### Ingredients:

- 6 large green bell peppers, halved and seeds removed
- 2 cups of cooked rice (brown or white)\*
- 1 15 ounce can black beans, drained
- 1 15 ounce can of roasted corn, drained\*
- 1 jar of prepared salsa
- 2 cups of shredded cheese, divided (cheddar, monterrey jack, or a blend)
- ½ cup of fresh, chopped cilantro
- Zest and juice from one lime
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt, divided
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground chili powder
- ½ tsp ground black pepper

#### Directions:

Halve the peppers and remove the seeds and membranes. Place in a microwave safe bowl with ½ cup of water. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and microwave for 10 minutes. Carefully remove and uncover to cool enough to



handle.

While the peppers are cooking, mix prepared rice, drained black beans, drained corn, ½ cup of the shredded cheese, cilantro, lime zest & juice, ½ tsp of salt (save the rest to salt the peppers), cumin, and chili powder. Mix well.

To assemble, place your cooled peppers in a 9x12 baking dish, cut side up. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tsp salt and the pepper. Distribute filling evenly to each pepper halve, pressing gently to pack the filling into the pepper. Top with salsa and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and top with the remaining cheese. Return to the oven until the cheese is melted, about 10 more minutes. Serve with sour cream.

\*Note-If you cannot find roasted corn you can use a can of regular corn or ever thawed,frozen corn. A rice mix, such as Mexican rice, can be substituted for the cooked brown or white rice. If you choose to use a prepared mix, then omit the ½ tsp salt, cumin, and chili powder.

### Tilapia with Roasted Tomatoes

Are you longing for summer tomatoes? In this recipe, bland winter tomatoes are transformed into sweet, juicy bits of joy. The secret is roasting them low and slow with a splash of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt. They make the perfect topper for this oven roasted tilapia.

#### Ingredients:

- 4-8 ounce Tilapia fillets
- 1 cup dry white wine, divided
- ½ cup chicken stock (can substitute vegetable stock)
- 4 slices of lemon
- 2-4 sprigs of thyme
- 1 shallot, finely minced
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- 2 tbsp. capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped
- 2 tbs. butter
- Olive oil
- 1 tbsp. parsley, chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (see instructions for roasting)

#### Directions:

To make the oven roasted cherry tomatoes, cut them in half and toss them with a drizzle of olive oil, salt and pepper. Put them on a sheet pan and roast at 400 degrees until softened, about 20 minutes. Set aside for later use in the sauce.

Turn the oven down to 375 degrees. Spray a baking pan with cooking spray and lay the fish in the pan in a single layer. Sprinkle each fish filet with kosher

salt (not more than 1 tsp total), a few grinds of freshly ground pepper. Top each piece with a lemon slice, and the sprigs of thyme. Pour a cup of the wine around the fish. Bake the fish, uncovered, for 15-18 minutes and it flakes with a fork and it reaches 145 degrees.

While the fish is in the oven make your sauce. In a sauté pan, heat 1 tbs. olive oil, add the shallot and garlic, cook for about 2 minutes, over medium heat. Add the remainder of the wine and the broth. Increase the heat to high and reduce the broth by half. Add in the capers and cook for another minute. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the cold butter, parsley, and oven-roasted tomatoes. Ladle sauce over each fillet.

\*\*If your fish is done before the sauce has reduced, remove the fish from the oven and cover to keep warm.

### Kale and Mushroom Pappardelle

You may be thinking, "kale? I'm not eating kale!" Give it a chance, this recipe may turn you into a kale "lover." I use Tuscan Kale (also called lacinato kale) which is much different in taste and texture than the more common curly kale. Tuscan kale is similar to collard greens or swiss chard in texture and is delicious year-round. Here kale melts down with mushrooms and nutty Parmesan to give this pasta a very earthy quality. The cheese clings to the pasta and hides in the folds of the kale; it's a beautiful thing. Serve it with crusty bread and a glass, or two, of fruity red wine.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large bunch of Tuscan Kale
- 1 pound Mushrooms (button, baby portobellos, your choice)
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed and minced
- ¼ cup of chopped fresh Italian Parsley, optional
- 2/3 cup white wine (replace with vegetable or chicken broth, if preferred)
- 1 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 cup of the pasta water
- 3-4 tbsp. olive oil
- 12 ounce pappardelle, or pasta of your choice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

#### Directions:

Slice the mushrooms and prepare the kale by washing, removing the rib, and tearing or cutting into bite-size pieces. Heat 2 tbs. of olive oil in a large sauté pan and cook mushrooms until they soft-

en. Season with a little kosher salt and pepper. Don't worry if the mushrooms appear to suck up all the oil, they will release their juice as they cook. You may have to cook your mushrooms in two batches if your pan is small. Remove the mushrooms from the pan and set aside.

Put 2 more tablespoons of oil in the pan, add garlic and cook for a couple of minutes. Add the kale to the pan and sauté for a couple of minutes with a pinch of salt and pepper. Go light on the salt because you will be adding salted pasta water to create a sauce at the end. Add the white wine and cover. Braise the kale until tender, approximately 12 minutes. If the liquid cooks out before the kale is tender, add a few more tablespoons of wine or water.

After the kale cooks for about 7-8 minutes, put the pappardelle in salted boiling water and cook for 6-7 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta water before draining.

Add the drained pasta and reserved mushrooms to the pan. Then add ½ of the reserved pasta water. Turn off the heat and add the cheese. Toss to combine. Add enough of the pasta water to create a sauce. Take the pan off the heat and add the cheese and toss well. Now add in the reserved mushrooms. Check for salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the chopped fresh parsley and serve immediately.



*Julie Frank grew up in the restaurant business starting as a dishwasher in her mother's restaurant making \$1.25 per hour. She left the family business and went into education for over twenty-five years. Julie has returned to her roots to open Ploughman's Market, Bakery, and Deli in Cassopolis, Michigan. She lives in Dowagiac, Michigan with her husband and a mischievous German shepherd.*



# Our Children

## Having fun with holidays

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Sometimes this time of the year seems like it will never end! The weather is often unpleasant, and school has one of the longest stretches with no holidays of the entire year. One way to keep the fun alive in learning and family life is to tap into some of the great (but weird) holidays that abound on the calendar year round.

Month-Long Celebrations in March March has its share of commemorations and month-long celebrations. You can tap into these nearly any time throughout the entire month. You can also dream up longer projects and learning opportunities for the whole family that are themed around them. Check out these ideas:

March is National Women’s History Month! This means it’s a great time to dig into the women from around the world who have impacted our lives and those who continue to do so today.

Choose a field that your child is interested in, and see what the family can find out about women who have contributed. Take a closer look at female leaders in countries around the world and their current contributions. Learn more about famous women of the past, as well. There are a LOT of them, and they usually get skimmed over in traditional history programs. It’s particularly important for your daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and other girls in your life to see just how many huge contributions have been made by women throughout history.

It’s also a good time to educate yourselves about the current state of women’s rights and treatment in such important areas as healthcare, employment, and education. Statistics for inclusion are rising, but they still do not reflect the same percentages (or pay!) as for males. Make comparisons, examine, and dream about a better world.

March is also American Red Cross Month. This worthy organization could always use a donation hand and children can benefit from the challenge of orchestrating small fundraisers among friends and families. Try having a \_\_\_-a-thon where sponsors donate based on getting something done or doing something for a length of time. Think “Jog-athon” or “car-wash-athon.” Use your imagination to set them down a path where they could raise money for the Red Cross and then help them donate it. You can also help them put on a show for charity. March is a great time to learn more about what the Red Cross does and where they work. It’s quite an interesting story.

Also in March, we have National Nutrition Month. Help the kids learn about nutrition, about requirements for healthy eating, and learn to make some healthy recipes together. Cooking is not only great fun for kids, it also helps them develop skills ranging from understanding fractions to reading comprehension. Examine your family diet by keeping records of what everyone eats and when for at least a week. How does the diet stack up to the recommendations of experts?

March is also a great month for specialized weeks or seasons. Basketball fans will know that March is famous for March Madness. Open the doors to math and statistics as children keep track of



their favorite teams and players. Girl Scout Week is always the week of March that includes March 12th, so if your daughter or other girls in your life are participating in this organization, there will be some celebrations happening. National Poison Prevention Week is March 19-25, so it’s a great time to get the kids to make some poisoning awareness posters and help educate others.

### Daily Celebration Ideas

And then we come to daily celebrations. There are some important and serious (or not so serious) days during the month that you can use to help your family learn and grow. Check out this list:

- March 1 is World Compliment Day. Why not have a competition to compliment the people in your life that you appreciate? You could keep score and see who can make the most compliments, or you could write compliments onto slips of paper and pull them out of a bag at the end of the day to read for the whole family to hear.
- March 2 is World Book Day and Dr. Seuss Day. What a great day to share stories with the kids!! And if they are getting a bit “beyond” the read-aloud days, try having a family reading time, where everyone takes turns reading, or do some silent reading together.
- March 3 is World Wildlife Day. If the weather allows, why not head out to your local park and see what you can find? And if the weather is not so nice, try choosing an animal that is local to your area and learning about it through books or Internet.
- March 4 is March Forth and Do Something Day as well as World Maths Day. How about Marching Forth to find math out in the real world?
- March 5 is Mars Day – great day for astronomical pursuits!
- March 6 is Fun Facts about Names Day, so go and find out what everyone’s names mean.
- March 7 is Organize Your Home Office Day. This would be the perfect time to set up that homework area for the kids that you’ve been meaning to get going on.
- March 8 is International Women’s Day. What if each family member learns about a famous woman today, and shares what they know at dinner?
- March 9 is World Kidney Day. What do your kidneys even do? What does it take to keep them healthy?
- March 10 is International Bagpipe Day. Can you find some good bagpipe

music to listen to?

- March 11 is Johnny Appleseed Day. Grab a book or two from the library or do a quick search online, then teach the kids about the legend of Johnny Appleseed.
- March 12 is when Daylight Savings Time begins once more. Why is this so controversial? Have the kids express their feelings about the issue. Which time do they prefer and why?
- March 13 is Donald Duck Day. Can you learn more about his beginnings and history? How about watching a few of the earliest cartoons?
- March 14 is International Ask a Question Day. What would happen if everyone in the family brought a tough question to the dinner table or to a family gathering? You could search for answers together!
- March 15 is the day the Buzzards Return to Hinkley! For those of us who grew up in Ohio (where Hinkley is), it was an exciting time. Find out the whole story by doing a bit of research online.
- March 16 is Panda Day. I can’t think of a better animal to celebrate! Do you have any toy pandas around the house? How about having a Panda Party?
- March 17 is World Sleep Day. Spend some time learning about good sleep habits, and examine the family’s sleep hygiene. What can you do to get better sleep? Make a plan and set some goals!
- March 18 is International Sports Car Racing Day. Spend some time researching race cars, reading about them, coloring them, or playing with them.
- March 19 is Poultry Day. Use the Internet or your local library to learn more about “fancy chickens” – you know, the cool ones that you see at chicken shows and fairs. What is the most unique example you can find? Write a paragraph to describe what is cool about it.
- March 20 is World Storytelling Day. This is a great day to explore stories, folktales, and myths from other cultures. We all know the common stories from western culture, but how about reading some Asian stories, or African stories?
- March 21 is World Puppetry Day. Everyone can make puppets; try sock puppets, stick puppets, bag puppets, or cutout puppets. If you want to be more elaborate, try putting on a puppet show!
- March 22 is International Goof Off Day. What a day to celebrate! What is your favorite way to goof off? If you can’t

indulge today in particular due to other obligations, at least make a plan to goof off soon!

- March 23 is World Meteorological Day. What can you learn about the weather? One interesting path to explore is folk weather signs. People have been predicting the weather based on clouds, animal and insect behavior, and even “feelings in their bones” for thousands of years. Which of the weather signs seem to be accurate? Try a few out over the next few weeks and see what you think!
- March 24 is Chocolate Covered Raisins Day. Grab a few and munch while you ponder what your favorite candy is. Write at least a paragraph describing your favorite candy.
- March 25 is Pecan Day. Spend some time in the kitchen making a new kind of treat with pecans in it. Check your favorite recipe book or online – there are huge numbers to choose from!
- March 26 is Purple Day. How many purple things can you find in the house? What is the history and significance of the color purple? It has a rich history – What can you learn about it?
- March 27 is World Theater Day. If you can, go to a show! If you can’t get to one, trying making your own skit, play, or variety show at home.
- March 28 is Barnum and Bailey Day. Circuses are grand fun. Spend some time learning about circuses and their history. Try making your own circus and then inviting friends and family to your very own “Big Top”!
- March 29 is Smoke and Mirrors Day. What a great day to try out some magic! There are loads of how-to books and websites. What if everyone in the family learns a simple magic trick to share? Remember it takes practice (and it also exercises reading comprehension and thinking skills). Who knows, maybe someone will discover a great new hobby!
- March 30 is Pencil Day. Stretch your creative muscles and try to think of new and different uses for a pencil. For example, you could use one as a straight-edge to help you draw a straight line. You can also put folded paper on the top with a pin and make a pinwheel. What else can you think of? Offer a small prize for the family member who comes up with the most creative ideas!
- March 31 is Crayon Day. Spend some time today coloring as a family. It’s fun, relaxing, and a great way to share some art and creativity. If you don’t have any coloring books right now, just head to the Internet and download a few pages that are right for each family member. There are tons to choose from! And I didn’t even mention the more traditional holidays in March, like St. Patrick’s Day on March 17, or Pi Day on March 14. There are also a huge number of other commemorative and special days throughout the month; I just picked a few highlights to share. Holidays can be loads of fun, and you can use them to liven up your family life and learning on nearly any day of the year. I hope you’ll grab some of these ideas this month and get your family started on an adventure that could last a lifetime!

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Sandy Fleming is a writer and educational consultant living in Edwardsburg. Check out her websites for more fun activities to keep the whole family learning and growing! <http://learningnook.com> and <http://sandyflemingonline.com>.*



# Field Trip



## Auburn, Cord, Dusenber Museum, Auburn, IN



The Auburn Cord Dusenber Museum is an automobile museum in the former administration building of the Auburn Automobile Co., which operated on the property from the early 20th century until its closure in 1937. The museum was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2005. This complex was recognized as one of the nation's best-preserved examples of an independent auto company's facilities. The museum is organized into seven galleries that display over 120 cars and related exhibits such as restored Auburn offices. For info see <https://automobilemuseum.org/>



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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.arcadia-publishing.com](http://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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# Local History

## The Dowagiac 'Wheat Day' photograph



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

The famous "Wheat Day" photograph taken in Dowagiac, Michigan has graced the dust jacket of the book, "A Dowagiac Collection" by Bernice E. Vanderberg (1982), and has also appeared in other history books concerning Dowagiac and Cass County, Michigan.

The photo depicts a large gathering of farmers along Beeson Street where it intersects with the Michigan Central Railroad tracks in the (then) village of Dowagiac. The farmers are loading sacks of wheat onto a conveyor belt which in turn carries the wheat sacks onto railroad box cars. During the mid-19th Century, wheat was the most lucrative grain crop in Southwest Michigan.

Prior to November 2022, I knew of two original copies of this photo, one of which is in the collection of the Dowagiac Area Museum. Then in November of last year I received an email from a gentleman from Chico, California who sent an electronic scan from his original copy of the photograph. He said he had the photo in his collection for years, and that he had not

been able to identify the location at which it was taken until he used the Google Lens app, which told him it was the "Dowagiac Wheat Day photo". His copy of the photo was much clearer than any of the original versions I had ever seen.

One thing (among several) on the "Chico, California" version of the photo that stood out to me was that I could now read the banner attached to the side of the conveyor belt. It seemed to read: "GREAT TRIPLE COMPANY".

The Great Triple Company appears to have been a comedic opera, possibly combined with athletic demonstrations similar to circus acts. In layman's terms it may have been a combination of an opera, circus and a vaudeville act.

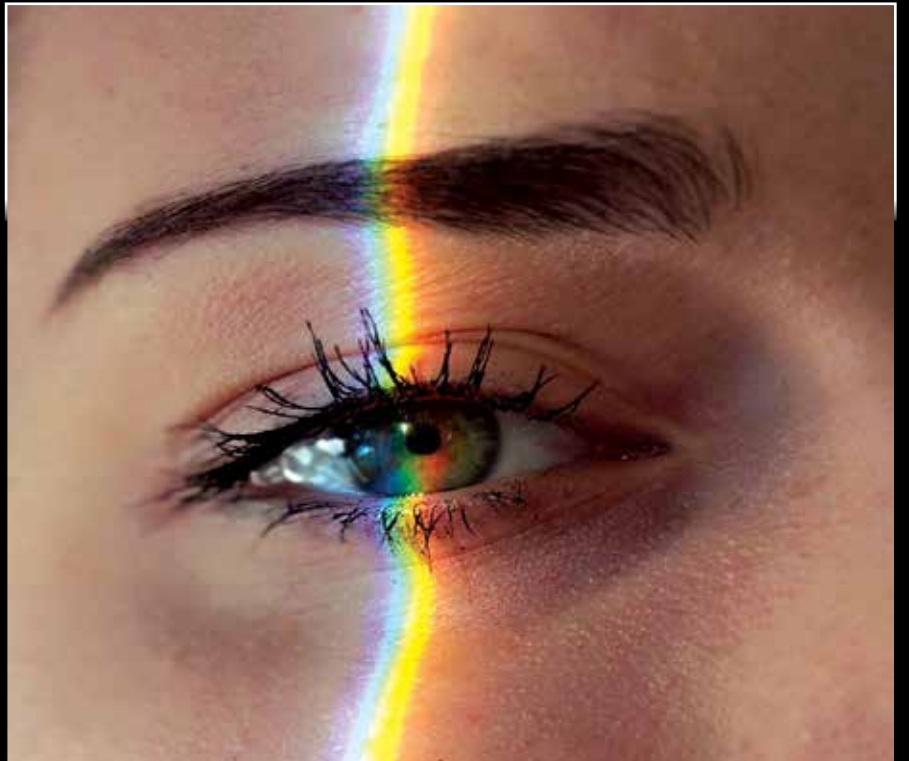
A search of the term: "Great Triple Company" on Newspapers.com shows that it was playing in Washington, DC in 1862, but was not touring the country at the earliest, until the late 1860s. The first newspaper advertisement from Michigan for the Great Triple Company is from the Detroit Free Press in August 1870, stating it would be performing for one night only on August 27 at the Young Men's Hall. Since Dowagiac was a stop on the Michigan Central Railroad, the only railroad in Cass County between 1848-1871, it seems plausible that the Great Triple Company would have played in

the village had they been on tour in the area at that time.

There is no mention in the newspaper, the Cass County Republican (published at Dowagiac), 1858-1864, of the Great Triple Company performing in Dowagiac during that time period of news coverage.

Thus, the famous Dowagiac "Wheat Day" photo has to date from the later 1860s to 1870, rather than to 1860, which is the date generally given as to when it was taken.

**ABOVE: Famous "Wheat Day" photo, Dowagiac, Michigan. Taken circa late 1860s-1870. An electronic version of the photo was sent to the Local History Branch of the Cass District Library recently by a citizen of Chico, California. The version presented here shows greater detail than any other version of this widely circulated photo that I have ever seen.**



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# Nature Notes

## Mild winter brings diverse bird sightings

*Provided by Cass District Library  
Local History branch*

Conrad Anderson photographed a **northern flicker** on February 4 at his home feeder in Bridgman. The northern flicker is a common summer resident across Michigan, and is found among open woodlands, clearings, old fields, pastures, suburban settings and other areas with scattered trees. One habitat it tends to avoid are expansive tracts of unbroken forests.

The northern flicker is a common summer resident across Michigan, perhaps more numerous in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula where there are less unbroken forests. Beginning in August northern flickers begin to pass through Southwest Michigan to spend the winters in the Southeastern US. Most flickers that migrate are individuals that nest north of us. The species does remain all winter in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula, though in reduced numbers than in the summer, where it is often seen at feeders eating suet or black oil sunflower seeds.

Northern flickers that do over winter in southern Michigan have a higher risk of mortality should they get caught in extended periods of severe winter weather. There were noticeable declines of the species on Federal Breeding Bird Survey Routes in Michigan after the severe winters of the mid to late 1970s.

Around March 20, northbound migrant flickers arrive in Southwest Michigan, most passing as they travel farther north. Nesting does not generally start in our region until late April or early May and will last through June.

On February 12, Alice and Bob Bilton of Bainbridge Township noticed an **American kestrel** peering out of the window of their old hen house. Alice was able to snap a photo before Bob opened all the doors, allowing it to escape.

American kestrels are the most common species of falcon over the eastern half of North America. Like the northern flicker, the American kestrel is found throughout Michigan during the summer months but most of the northern population from Canada south to the northern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula migrate south for the winter.

More American kestrels harbor in Southwest Michigan during the winter months than breed here in the summer due to a decline in suitable habitat. The kestrel's preferred habitat is that of old fields, meadows, pastures, prairies, or any open area that would attract mice or other small rodents which are its primary prey. Over the last several decades there has been a decline throughout most of the US and Canada of such habitat and therefore, a decline in kestrel populations.

A **red-shouldered hawk** perched on the bird feeder of Hannah and Brad Anderson on Valentine's Day. This hawk species inhabits our state in summer, but only a skeletal population remains here during the winter months.

The red-shouldered hawk inhabits extensive flooded swamps where it feeds on frogs, snakes, crayfish and small birds and mammals. Obviously frogs, snakes and crayfish are not above ground in February in Michigan so the individual at the Andersons' feeders might be there because it is attracted by mice, squirrels or small birds.



*Top left: Northern flicker on February 4 at Bridgman feeder of Hannah and Brad Anderson. Photo by Brad Anderson.*

*Top right: American kestrel on February 12 that somehow made it into the old hen house owned by Bob and Ann Bilton of Bainbridge Township. Photo by Ann Bilton.*

*Above: Red-shouldered hawk on February 14 at the feeder of Hannah and Brad Anderson, Bridgman. Photo by Brad Anderson.*

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# The Last Word

by PHIL VITALE  
aka SAILORPHIL

## What could possibly go wrong, right?



hey tell me that it's perfectly normal to have at least one irrational fear, or phobia, that no matter how hard you try to shake, no matter how much you feel you should be able to rationalize and overcome the dread, you just can't lose that completely out-of-body paralysis that takes over and turns you into a quivering mass of jelly whenever your old nemesis raises his head.

I've seen it in friends many times, and in myself. I used to have a good friend named Jerry who was afraid of snakes. Before he passed away and went to that special heaven where there are no snakes slithering among the clouds, Jerry was horrifically afraid of snakes. Not just common-sense avoidance kind of thing, I'm talking 1960s-era monster movie, leave-the-theater before the expendable new guy gets horribly killed, childish kind of afraid. But that didn't do it justice for Jerry. His fear was a deep, primal, jelly-belly fear that took over his entire being like satanic possession. I once saw Jerry, a six-foot-six, 280 lb. bulldozer driver, turn into a tiptoeing, pre-teen girl as he ballet-danced out of his own garden where he had apparently mistaken a section of garden hose for a garter snake.

Jerry got even that day, though. After a couple of beers and a cigarette to calm his nerves, Jerry grabbed a garden spade and went back into that garden (very slowly and cautiously) and chopped that hose into a thousand tiny pieces (take that, thou slinky serpent!).

According to the Internet, the fear of snakes is called ophidiophobia (one of those big, multi-syllabic words that somehow frightens me, but that's for another time). Being afraid of snakes is not a rare condition, Google says somewhere between 30 and 70 percent of humans are afraid of snakes.

Maybe it's that whole apple thing ... who knows. Another good example is my next door neighbor Bad Patty. Patty is afraid of snakes too, but despite the bluster of her name, Bad Patty is a tiny cupcake com-

pared to Jerry in his prime, so I guess we can't blame her for some fears ... and Bad Patty is quick to point out that she is also afraid of almost all non-domesticated living creatures. When I moved into my home more than 20 years ago, the first time I really met Bad Patty was when she came to my house in tears one bad evening and said there was a wild animal in her house and could I PLEASE FOR GOD'S SAKE HELP!

Not wanting to upset her further with a lot of questions (she was pretty hysterical already), I told her to wait in my house. Not knowing what to expect, I armed myself with a rusty, dull machete from my shed, a short-handled sledge hammer, three sticks of TNT I just happened to have left over from a hunting trip and a piece of raw steak (to lure it out if it was hiding so it could jump out and scare the hell out of me before it decided if it was going to eat me). Turned out ok ... the toad hiding under her sofa didn't put up much fight.

Bad Patty still hasn't overcome her fears, and I'm absolutely sure that no matter how "bad" she becomes, to this day she would never go into the shed and grab a garden spade to try to resolve her fear.

There are mice in the shed, after all. Wild mice. One of my long-time besties, Sherri, is now and has been as long as I've known her, been deathly afraid of small spaces. Claustrophobia, Mr. Google says. Forget caves, elevators and crawl spaces, Sherri can barely tolerate being cooped up in an airplane or stand sitting in a dimly lit booth in a crowded restaurant. I once saw Sherri extricate herself from the dim, crowded galley of a sailboat by crawling over the food-laden table so she could get to the hatch ... which was nothing compared to the time her husband and I watched her nearly knock a hole in the side before nearly knocking half a dozen people off a ladder so she could get out of a docked (and floating) vintage submarine we were touring. She still can't explain why in the world she even thought she wanted to see the inside of that big dumb boat anyway.

Another common and (mostly) irrational fear that I see regularly is a fear of spiders. Living at a lake, we have our share of spiders in the summer (where they go

in the winter is anyone's guess, I'm guessing they migrate south to Florida or Mexico like the birds and butterflies do). Visiting friends and neighboring trunk slammers unused to our eight-legged guests frequently break out with advanced arachnophobia at the very sight of a web, particularly if it is covered with an appetizing array of insects either struggling to free themselves or in some state of spider-drained desiccation.

My now-adult granddaughter Morgann went into hysterics at a young age whenever she'd see a spider while on a "toodle" around the lake on what one of our neighbors calls our "Adams Family" pontoon boat.

Not wanting Morgann to fear spiders, I pulled a nasty PopPop trick and told her that what she was seeing was just my pet spider, Reggie.

Ok, I'm not particularly afraid of spiders, but I will admit I was just a bit creeped out putting that first spider on my hand and soothingly telling Morgann it wasn't going to hurt me because we were friends ...

It seems to have worked. Morgann loves the pontoon boat (she still won't touch a spider but now I tell her that means mental health isn't an oxymoron).

Which brings me to my own irrational fear. You see I'm a basket case at places like the Grand Canyon, and the odds getting me on that evil glass shelf they stuck on that skyscraper in Chicago are about as good as the odds of the Cubs winning the next five world series. No. Hell No. I don't even do step ladders above the second step very well and getting on a one-story roof causes severe gastrointestinal problems. For me, the word acrophobia just doesn't do it justice.

Maybe I'm not really afraid of heights. I'm afraid of hitting the ground from said height.

Splatophobia, maybe. At least I know how to solve. This year I'm going to learn to fly. Not airplanes, mind you, real flying.

I read all about this in "The Hitchhikers Guide" a long time ago. I'm going to start practicing by throwing myself at the ground ... and missing.

As long as I keep missing, there's nothing to fear! What could possibly go wrong, right?



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