

# Neighbors

**MAY 2025**

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A regional newspaper serving Cass County, Michigan and the surrounding area, and distributed at homes and businesses in Dowagiac, Cassopolis, Edwardsburg, Vandalia, Jones, Marcellus, Decatur, Union, Sister Lakes, and Three Rivers, with mail delivery at homes on Diamond, Eagle, Birch, Corey, Donnell, Indian, Magician, Shavehead, Baldwin, Long, Dewey, Cable, Juno, Christiana, Painter, Paradise, Stone, Buck, Lewis, Big & Little Twin and Bair lakes

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

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# Regional News

## Vandalia Underground Railroad Days Festival is July 12, 13

The Underground Railroad Days Festival, a weekend celebration on the second weekend in July promises a soul food dinner, a classic car show and arts and crafts booths from 11 am on July 12 to 5 pm on July 13 in and around the village of Vandalia.

First conceived in 2009 by Bill Ayers, a Quaker who was public works director for the Village of Vandalia, Underground Railroad Days celebrates the heritage of Vandalia as part of the Underground Railroad. URSCC and Vandalia partner in the weekend celebration the second weekend in July. The Village sponsors a soul food dinner, a classic car show and arts and crafts booths. URSCC conducts guided tours of UGRR sites telling the story of the Kentucky Raid, hosts displays and presentations about various aspects of the UGRR; and schedules music, poetry, art and crafts at the “Ramptown Cabin” in Milo Barnes Park. There is a Civil War Living History Encampment that includes the 102nd Colored Troops, an outdoor Community Church Service on Sunday morning, and the Bonine House is open for tours.

The weekend starts with “Opening Night” on Friday evening with a play created and acted by Dr. Von and Fran Washington at Ross Beatty High School. UGRR Days is fun, interesting and educational for the whole family.

## Christmas at the Bonine House

The Underground Railroad Society of Cass County invites the community to Christmas at the Bonine House from Mon, December 1 to December 14.

Guests are invited to tour the Victorian home at the corner of Penn Road and M-60 in Vandalia any time between 1 and 6 pm.

## Cass County Historical Society Lecture & Event Series

The Cass County Historical Society has announced its 2025 lecture and event series. Events include:

**Tea Time at Newton House - Decatur - MAY 10,** 10 am – 3 pm. This is a ticketed event featuring traditional tea time food and refreshments, live music, lectures on tea etiquette and a “Best Hat Contest.”

**Caruso’s Candy & Soda Shop – Downtown Dowagiac - MAY 20,** 6:30 pm. Caruso’s Candy & Soda Shop has been a beloved staple since Antonio and Emilia Caruso opened it in 1922. Now operated by their granddaughter, the shop continues to serve handcraft chocolates and serve classic fountain treats.

**Edwardsburg History Museum – Show & Tell - JULY 15,** 6:30pm, Location: 26818 Main Street, Join Edwardsburg and Cass County Historical Societies for a Show ‘N Tell of artifacts, heirlooms, and tools. Neil Hassinger will give a short lecture on “What’s Underfoot in Edwardsburg” discussing items discovered at Village sites.

**Bob Lehigh Property – Decatur AUG 19,** 6:30pm, 53333 Gards Prairie Road, Decatur. Visit the Lehigh family farmstead established in 1837. Step back in time and explore the rich history of our community at this unique lecture event surrounded by artifacts from a local iconic DX Gas Station.

**Newberg One Room School House - SEPT. 16,** 6:30 pm, 13020 Born St, Jones. Visit the 1856 one-room schoolhouse for a

unique opportunity to hear firsthand memories from former students who attended this historic school.

**Annual Fall Festival – Newton House - OCT. 11,** 11 – 3 pm, 20689 Marcellus Hwy., Decatur, MI 49045 (Adjacent to Fred Russ Forest Park). Come to the annual Fall Festival at Newton House, a free, family-friendly event featuring kid’s activities, pie-eating contests, puppeteers, free snacks, house tours, wagon rides through Fred Russ Forest Park with Civil War reenactments.

**Christmas at Newton House – DEC 6,** 1 – 4 pm. Experience the magic of the season at historic Newton House, beautifully decorated for the holidays. This exclusive, ticketed event offers a festive escape in a historic setting. Watch our FB page and website for more details!

Unless otherwise stated, there will be a short Society Business Meeting at 6:30 pm with lectures or tours beginning at 7 pm. For more information write to the Cass County Historical Society, PO Box 21, Cassopolis, MI 4903, email - ccmihistoricalsociety@gmail.com or visit www.ccmihistoricalsociety.org.

## Edwardsburg Museum displays

The 2025 season at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum’s next exhibit will be “Sauk Trail: Echoes of the Past,” from July 22 to Nov. 1. That display will be highlighted by two glass cases of artifacts that the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians will loan to the museum and set up. Other museum areas will showcase items that would have been used when the Village of Edwardsburg was first settled in the 1820s, such as grinding wheels and stones, woodworking tools, and old axes.

“Tis the Season,” will end the year. It will highlight all items that revolve around the holidays, with trees, garlands, and many ornaments. That display will run from Nov. 4 through Dec. 13.

The museum hours are 1 to 4 pm Tuesdays through Fridays, and 11 am to 2 pm on Saturdays. It also will be open on the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm. It will close on Dec. 13 and re-open in mid-spring, 2026.

## Wild plant tastings

For those who enjoy tasting wild plants--whether in a pizza, frittata, or as a digestion-stimulating drink--opportunities will be available when Jim Meuninck presents the “Forager’s Dozen” at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum at 7 pm, Thurs., May 22. There is no admission charge.

Meuninck, who lives at Eagle Lake, is an author, biologist, counselor, and mycologist (who studies fungi), will entertain guests with his knowledge of twelve wild plants that, he notes, ‘provide superior nutrition, are easy to identify, and make tasty substitutes for conventional ingredients.’ He has spent at least 60 years foraging and makes annual trips out west to collect information for his guides on wild plants. His guides and films have received high ratings from several organizations and publications.

His video presentation will highlight his work, along with demonstrations, tastings, and ideas for life-changing habits as well as a few ‘health-stimulating laughs.’

Meuninck grew up in Mishawaka and graduated with degrees in biology and counseling from the University of Hawaii. He taught biology and science for







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# Regional News

eight years for the Department of Defense on military bases in several countries. He also taught in South Bend.

**Plant sale starts May 16**

Peonies, roses, lilies, grasses, and other favorites will be sold when the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum holds its yearly perennial plant sale fundraiser from May 16 to May 31 on the museum grounds in Edwardsburg.

The sale will include more than 1000 plants. A wide selection of potted annual plants, suitable for patios and cemetery placements, will also be available. Plant prices range from \$1 to \$30 each and include several contributions from community members. Volunteers will manage the sale; all proceeds go to the museum's general fund.

**Athletic Boosters' 30th Annual Big Hole/Glow Golf Scramble**

The Cassopolis Athletic Boosters will host the 30th Annual Big Hole/Glow Golf Scramble on Saturday, August 9 at Diamond Lake Golf Course, 22041 M-60 East, Cassopolis. Registration will be at 3:30 pm, shotgun Start 4:30 pm. Cost is \$320 per team (includes cart & 1 glow ball per player). Dinner & refreshments provided.

Registration forms available at <https://cassopolisathletics.com/main/otherbooster/> /57623058

**Cassopolis/Vandalia Golf Outing**

The Cassopolis/Vandalia Chamber of Commerce will host its annual golf outing on Friday, June 20 at Four Lakes Country Club in Edwardsburg.

Golfers can register online at

[cassvanchamber.com/golf](http://cassvanchamber.com/golf). Cost for a four-person team is \$400.

Contact Tracy Mast with sponsorship and team Registration questions at 269-240-3530 or [tracymast1980@gmail.com](mailto:tracymast1980@gmail.com).

**Lerner Theater Tuesday Tours**

The Lerner Theater, 410 S. Main St., Elkhart will also offer Theatre Tour Tuesdays on May 13, June 17, July 15, August 12, September 16, October 14, November 18 and December 16. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased in advance or at the Lerner Box Office on the day of the tour, proceeds to benefit the Lerner Theatre Volunteer Group..

Tours begin every hour on the hour from 10 am-3 pm. No reservations are required.

**Lerner to host World Ballet Co. performing The Great Gatsby**

The Lerner Theater in Elkhart will host the World Ballet Company: The Great Gatsby on Friday, October 3 at 7 pm. Tickets are on sale now at \$89, \$75, \$55 or \$39 plus fees.

Step into the jazzy world of the Roaring Twenties with this new Broadway-style ballet by the World Ballet Company. See the glitz, glamor, and tragic romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald's timeless novel on stage, featuring a multinational cast of 40 professional ballet dancers, an all-star creative team, original jazz-inspired score, multimedia effects, acrobatics, dazzling costumes, and lavish sets.

The World Ballet Company is based in Los Angeles, and led by Sasha Gorskaya and Gulya Hartwick, the World

Ballet Company presents the most beloved and iconic ballets of our time in cities nationwide. Driven by the belief that ballet is for everyone, performances appeal to newcomers and seasoned ballet goers alike. The company attracts many international artists and comprises renowned professional dancers representing over ten countries.

The World Ballet Company has traveled to more than 300 cities, reaching an audience of more than 450,000, many of whom are first-time attendees to a ballet.

For more information see <https://worldballetcompany.com>

**St. Joseph County (IN) Parks' Summer Nature Camps**

St. Joseph County (IN) Parks is taking registrations for "Outdoor Adventures" summer nature camps at St. Patrick's County Park in South Bend.

Five camps are offered for children entering kindergarten through eighth grade.

Dates for the camps are:

June 11: Escape Room: The Eradicator (ages 11-14)

June 23-27: Splish, Splash, Splatter! (ages 5-6)

July 2: Outdoor Skills (ages 11 -14)

July 7-July 11: Who Done it? (ages 10-11)

July 28-August 1: Junior Indiana Master Naturalist (ages 9-12)

For more information, or to request registration materials, please call 574/654-3155, or visit [www.sjcparks.org](http://www.sjcparks.org).

**Harwood Lake and Eurasian watermilfoil eradication**

The Van Buren Conservation District has reported that surveys of Harwood

Lake found no Eurasian watermilfoil following two years of hand pulling.

Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) was first detected in Harwood Lake in August 2021 by SWxSW Corner Cisma Coordinator Alex Florian of the Van Buren Conservation District while surveying around the lake's boat launch.

After researching and planning through the winter, the Harwood Lake Association held two hand-pulling events in the spring of 2022. A followup survey on June 6, 2024 by Michigan State University Extension found no Eurasian watermilfoil near the boar launch, however, a small patch was found on the opposite side of the lake. This is a promising result showing the lake is on the path to being free of Eurasian watermilfoil.

Aquatic invasive species are easily spread by fragments hitchhiking on boating and fishing equipment. Boat launches are the most common place to find new invasive species in a lake. The Harwood Lake Association has also held boater outreach events every year to help encourage boaters to clean, drain, and dry their boats.

This success was aided by Cass County Conservation District, the Michigan Clean Water Corps, Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Michigan State University Extension, and the SWxSW Corner Cisma Team (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area).

For more information about invasive species, contact Cisma Coordinator Alex Florian at [InvasivesED@VanBurenCD.org](mailto:InvasivesED@VanBurenCD.org) or 633-9044, to learn about Harwood Lake's efforts, contact Jim Kings at [jim-kings.harwoodlake@gmail.com](mailto:jim-kings.harwoodlake@gmail.com).

# EXPERIENCE

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# Regional Calendar

## MISC. AREA EVENTS

**EDWARDSBURG AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM YEARLY PERENNIAL PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER** - May 16-31, at the museum

**EDWARDSBURG AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM PRESENTS "FORAGER'S DREAM" BY JIM MEUNICK** - May 22, 7 pm, free admission

**ST. JOSEPH COUNTY (IN) PARKS' SUMMER NATURE CAMPS** - June 11-Aug. 1, for children entering kindergarten through eighth grade.

Dates for the camps are:  
June 11: Escape Room: The Eradicator (ages 11-14)  
June 23-27: Splish, Splash, Splatter! (ages 5-6)  
July 2: Outdoor Skills (ages 11 -14)  
July 7-July 11: Who Done it? (ages 10-11)  
July 28-August 1: Junior Indiana Master Naturalist (ages 9-12)  
For more information, or to request registration materials, call 574/654-3155, or visit [www.sjcparks.org](http://www.sjcparks.org).

**CASSOPOLIS/VANDALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL GOLF OUTING** - June 20 - Four Lakes Country Club, 240-3530, <https://www.cassvanchamber.com/golf>

**DIAMOND LAKE FIREWORKS** - July 5 (rain date July 6), dusk

**UNDERGROUND RAILROAD DAYS FESTIVAL** - July 12, 13 Vandalia, 11 am - 5 pm

**CASS COUNTY 4-H FAIR** - July 27 - August 2, 445-8265

**CASSOPOLIS ATHLETIC BOOSTERS 30TH ANNUAL BIG HOLE/GLOW GOLF SCRAMBLE** - Saturday, August 9, Diamond Lake Golf Course,. Registration at 3:30 pm, shotgun start 4:30 pm. \$320 per team (includes cart & 1 glow ball per player). Dinner & refreshments provided. Registration forms available at <https://cassopolisathletics.com/main/otherbooster/> /57623058

**WORLD BALLET COMPANY: THE GREAT GATSBY** - October 3, 7 pm, Lerner Theater, Elkhart, \$39-\$89, <https://worldballetcompany.com>

**CHRISTMAS AT THE BONINE HOUSE** - Dec 1-14, 1-6 pm.

## DOWAGIAC EVENTS

[www.dowagiacchamber.com/events/upcoming-events](http://www.dowagiacchamber.com/events/upcoming-events)

**MEMORIAL DAY PARADE**, May 26, 10:30am - 1 pm

**FARM & ARTISAN MARKET**, May 31, - October 04, 9 am - 2pm

**MUSIC IN THE PARK**, June 05, - August 21, 7:30 - 9 pm

**SUMMER FESTIVAL & BBQ COMPETITION**, July 18, 2025 - July 19

**STEVE'S RUN**, July 18, 6 - 9 pm

**ED'S OPEN HEADER CRUISE**, July 24, 5:30 - 8:30pm

**ROD & ROLL CLASSIC AUTO SHOW**, August 16, 8: am - 3 pm

**SISTER LAKES FIREWORKS**, August 30, 9 - 11 pm

**UNDER THE HARVEST MOON FESTIVAL**, October 11, 10 am - 4 pm

**CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND & THETA MU CRAFT SHOW**, November 14, 15, 10 am - 5 pm

**SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY**, November 29, 10 am

**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS PARADE**, December 05, 7 - 8 pm

**ICE TIME FESTIVAL**, February 07, 2026, 10 am - 4 pm

**CASS CO. HISTORICAL SOCIETY TEA TIME AT NEWTON HOUSE** - Decatur - MAY 10, 10 am-3 pm

**CARUSO'S CANDY & SODA SHOP** - Downtown Dowagiac - MAY 20, 6:30 pm.

**EDWARDSBURG HISTORY MUSEUM SHOW & TELL** - JULY 15, 6:30pm, 26818 Main Street, Edwardsburg  
**BOB LEHIGH PROPERTY** - AUG 19, 6:30 pm, 53333 Gards Prairie Road, Decatur.  
**NEWBERG ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE** - SEPT. 16, 6:30 pm, 13020 Born St, Jones.  
**ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL** - OCT. 11, 11 - 3 pm, Newton House, 20689 Marcellus Hwy., Decatur,  
**CHRISTMAS AT NEWTON HOUSE** - DEC 6, 1 - 4 pm.

**EDWARDSBURG MUSEUM MAY 13 - 4TH GRADE FIELD TRIP**

**MAY 16-MAY 31 - PERENNIAL PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER**

**MAY 22 - SPEAKER: JIM MEUNINCK**, 7 pm.

**MAY 26 -MEMORIAL DAY KIDS' CARNIVAL** following the parade.

**JUNE 25-HACIENDA FUNDRAISER**

**JULY 15 - CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING**, 6:30 pm, at the museum.

**JULY 17 - SPEAKER: NEIL HASSINGER**, 7 PM.

**JULY 22-NOVEMBER 1 -DISPLAY: 'SAUK TRAIL: ECHOES OF OUR PAST**

**JULY 26-MUSIC AT THE MUSEUM**, 7 pm.. No admission charge.

**AUGUST 7-10 - US 12 GARAGE SALE FUNDRAISER.**

**AUGUST 17 - OPEN HOUSE AFTER THE ALL-SCHOOL REUNION**

**AUGUST 21-SPEAKER: EDWARDSBURG AUTHOR JIM PAULEY**, 7 PM

**SEPTEMBER 27- SAUK TRAIL FESTIVAL: ECHOES OF THE PAST**

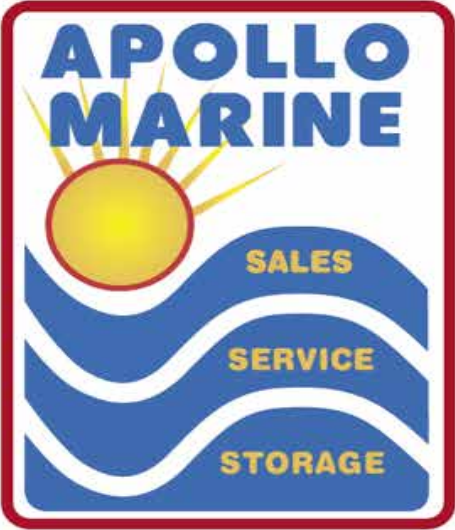
**OCTOBER 16-SPEAKER: OWEN WRIGHT**, 7 pm. **OCTOBER 31-WITCHES ON THE PORCH**

**NOVEMBER 4-DECEMBER 13:**



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# Regional Calendar

**DISPLAY: “TIS THE SEASON.”**

**DECEMBER 4-CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING,** 5:30 pm, followed by open house.

**DECEMBER 13: MUSEUM CLOSES UNTIL SPRING 2026**

**CASS DISTRICT LIBRARY**  
\*Registration required

**T’AI CHI** with Alyse Knepple, Mason/Union Branch, Mondays @ 11 am. Join Alyse Knepple at the Mason/Union Branch for T’ai Chi. T’ai Chi is a series of gentle physical exercises and stretches. Alyse will offer a free introductory class, followed by four weekly classes which will cost \$40..

**CARDIO DRUMMING,** Howard Branch, Mondays @ 5 pm. Cardio drumming is a fun and fast-paced way to get your heart rate up, improve your rhythm and burn calories all while having fun! Please bring a bucket, exercise ball, drumsticks and 1 to 2lb weights. There are four sets of materials available, these are available on a first come first serve basis. This program is free, but a gratuity of \$5.00 is encouraged for the instructor but not required to participate. Registration is required, please call the Howard Branch at 269-487-9214 to register.

**MOTHER’S DAY CERAMIC DISH PAINTING\*** Howard Branch, Thursday, May 1: 4 - 6:30 pm. Are you looking for the perfect Mother’s Day gift? The Howard Branch has you covered! Join us anytime between 4:00pm and 6:30pm for a special Mother’s Day craft event. Create a beautiful, personalized ceramic jewelry dish for mom that will show your love and appreciation. While you’re here, be sure to make a heartfelt card, too! All materials will be provided, all you need to bring is your creativity. This program is intended for children. Registration is required, please call the Howard Branch at 269-487-9214 to register.

**YOUNG INVENTORS,** Howard Branch Saturday May 3: 10:30 am. Explore and learn about inventors and their remarkable creations on the first Saturday of every month at 10:30am. Get ready to create a fun project inspired by the featured inventor of the month! Young Inventors is ideal for adventurous individuals aged 7-14.

**ROAD SCHOLAR VIRTUAL LECTURE:** Exploring Easter Island, Howard Branch, Monday, May 5: 1 pm. Join us for a virtual presentation by Road Scholar, the world’s largest and most innovative creator of experiential learning opportunities. In this lecture unravel the ancient riddles of Easter Island with a live lecture from experienced travel guide, Nicole Flores! Questions? Call the Howard Branch at (269)-487-9214.

**FLORAL TRINKET TRAYS\* EDWARDSBURG BRANCH,** Tuesday, May 6: 5:30 pm. Make a beautiful spring-themed trinket tray with dried florals and air dry clay. Choose to keep it for yourself or give it to someone special! All supplies will be provided. This program is intended for ages 10 and up. Registration is required, please call

the Edwardsburg Branch at 269-487-9215 to register.

**MOTHER’S DAY CELEBRATION\*** Main Branch, Wednesday, May 7: 5 - 6 pm. Stop by the Main Branch to celebrate Mom! Capture a keepsake photo with mom that can be cherished this Mother’s Day and forever. While you’re here, be sure to make a fingerprint art flower pot and fill with the plant of your choice. Registration is required, please call Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 to register.

**TEEN MAKER MONDAY,** Edwardsburg Branch, Monday, May 12: 2:30 pm. Intended for ages 12-18. Enjoy creative expression through arts and crafts! Whether it be an art project, STEAM activity or mixed media craft, materials will be available for you to express your creativity and explore your artistic pursuits.

**EVENING STORYTIME** Special Guest: Author + Illustrator Leslie Helakoski, Howard Branch, Tuesday, May 13: 6 pm. Join us for an enchanting storytime with our special guest reader, the award-winning author and illustrator Leslie Helakoski! Known for her beloved titles like When the Rain Came Down, Woolbur Goes to School, and Hoot & Honk Just Can’t Sleep, Leslie’s appearance promises to be an unforgettable experience! If you have any questions, feel free to call the Howard Branch at 269-487-9214.

**ADULT CRAFT CLUB: BOOK PAGE FLOWER\*** Main Branch, Wednesday, May 14: 1 pm. Join us at the Main Branch each month for a new craft project with Adult Craft Club. This month, make a recycled book page flower for spring! All materials will be provided. Registration is required, contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 to register.

**INTERNET SAFETY CLASS\*** Mason/ Union, Wednesday, May 14: Session 1: 1 - 2 pm , Session 2: 3 - 4 pm. No matter how long you’ve been using the internet, it’s never a bad time to brush up on scams, hackers, and how to stay safe online. In partnership with Midwest Energy and Communications you can learn how hackers work, how to recognize a scam and how to know if you’ve been hacked. Please bring your own device to class. Registration is required, call the Mason/Union Branch at 269-357-7821 to register.

**VILLAGE BOOK CLUB,** Edwardsburg Branch, Thursday, May 15: 5:30 pm. Village Book Club meets every third Thursday of the month at 5:30pm. Join us for a lively book discussion of The Book of Doors by Gareth Brown. Please contact Molly Harwood at 574-314-6454 for more details.

**HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT,** Edwardsburg Branch, Monday, May 19: 1 pm. Looking for a fun way to meet other homeschoolers? Then look no further! Join us at the Edwardsburg Branch for a STEAM related activity. This program is open to youth ages 5-12. All materials will be provided.

**SAVAGE READERS BOOK CLUB,** Savage Bean Coffee Co. Tuesday, May 20: 10 am.

Enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and book discussion every third Tuesday of the month! Join Savage Readers Book Club hosted by Cass District Library and Savage Bean Co. Contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 for more details and the current month title.

**CROSS STITCH FOR BEGINNERS SERIES\*** Howard Branch, Thursday, May 22: 5:30 pm. Whether you’re crafting for fun, relaxation, or a DIY gift, cross-stitching is a wonderful way to express your creativity. Bring a friend or come solo to meet fellow crafters. All materials are provided, and no experience is necessary—just come ready to relax, learn, and create! This program will run January - May on the Fourth Thursday of every month. Registration is required call the Howard Branch at (269)-487-9214 to register.

**STORYTIMES:** Edwardsburg Branch - Tuesdays @ 11 am  
Howard Branch - Tuesdays @ 11 am & 6 pm  
Mason/Union Branch - Wednesdays @ 10 am  
Main Branch - Thursdays @ 11 am

**DOWAGIAC DISTRICT LIBRARY PRESCHOOL STORYTIME.** (TUESDAYS, 10:30am). The Dowagiac District Library offers this weekly story time each Tuesday at 10:30 am. Preschool Story Time is geared toward children 3-5 years old.

**MAKE & SHARE COOKBOOK CLUB.** (THURSDAY, May 1); 5:30-6:30pm. May’s Book: Pick Your Own. Create a recipe from the monthly cookbook selection, then join us at the library for a recipe share & book discussion.

**S.T.E.A.M FOR TWEENS.** (WEDNESDAY, May 7); 4 pm. Chocolate Rocks. Children ages 8-12 are invited to join this science program designed to engage young minds to think like a scientist. Space is limited, please register by calling 269-782-3826 or email (att: Pam) at dowagiaclibrarystaff@gmail.com.

**LITTLE BEAKERS.** (SATURDAY, May 10); 11-12 pm. How to Blow Up a Balloon Without Using Your Mouth. Children ages 4-7 are invited to join Little Beakers. Little Beakers meets in the Pokagon Room on the 2nd level of the library. Space is limited, so please register by calling 269-782-3826 or email (att: Pam) at dowagiaclibrarystaff@gmail.com.

**SIP & SHARE BOOK CLUB AT SISTER LAKES BREWING.** (WEDNESDAY, May 14); 6 -8 pm. May’s Book: Never Lie by Freida McFadden. Join us for the Sip & Share Book Club at Sister Lakes Brewing Company. This event is being held at Sister Lakes Brewing Company 92500 CO RD 690 Dowagiac, MI 49047. For further information, please call Erin at 269-782-3826 or email erin@dowagiacdl.org.

**MICHIGAN NOTABLE BOOKS TOUR 2025-AUTHOR DANIEL J. CLARK.** (TUESDAY, May 20); 6 -8 pm. We are excited to welcome Michigan Notable Book 2025 Author Daniel J. Clark. He will discuss his book Listening to Workers: Oral Histories of Metro Detroit

Autoworkers in the 1950s. Using interviews and archival research, Listening to Workers uncovers the personal and often overlooked lives of Detroit-area autoworkers in the 1950s. The book explores the complexities of their experiences, addressing issues like poverty, divorce, workplace dangers, and personal struggles, challenging the notion of the 1950s as a time of widespread prosperity. Offering a humanizing perspective, it presents workers as multidimensional individuals, with rich, personal stories that go beyond traditional labor history. For more information, email erin@dowagiacdl.org

**CRAFT NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY: QUIET COLORING NIGHT.** (THURSDAY, May 22); 5:30-6:45 pm. This May, we will have the community room set up for a fun and relaxing evening of coloring. Coloring pages, colored pencils, crayons, and markers will be available to sit and enjoy either by yourself or with friends.

**THE CLASSICS BOOK CLUB** (TUESDAY, May 27); 5-6 pm. Revisit those classics from school or discover something new to expand your horizons! Copies of the current book available at the front desk.

**ADVENTURES IN BOOKLAND BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS.** (WEDNESDAY, May 28); 4-5 pm. May’s Book: Bibsy Cross and the Bad Apple by Liz Garton Scanlon. The Adventures in Bookland Book Club is for kids 6-8 years old. For more information, stop by the Youth Services desk located on the second floor of the library.

**THE INKWELL EXPLORERS BOOK CLUB FOR TWEENS.** (THURSDAY, May 29); 4-5 pm. May’s Book: Matilda by Roald Dahl. The Inkwell Explorers Book Club is for tweens 9-12 years old. For more information, stop by the Youth Services desk located on the second floor of the library.

**YA FOR ADULTS BOOK CLUB.** (THURSDAY, May 29); 5-6 pm. May’s Book: The Dead Will Never Haunt Me by Stephanie Kuehn. The YA for Adults Book Club is for adults 18+ years old. The club features a YA (young adult) novel each month. Participants register and pick up their copy of the month’s selection at the beginning of the month and then meet and discuss the book on the last Thursday of the month. For more information, stop by the Youth Services desk located on the second floor of the library.

For more information on these events, visit: <https://www.dowagiacdl.org/events>.

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To see the upcoming events for April visit <https://www.marcellus.michlibrary.org/>



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# Lake Life with Jane

## The tulips are in full bloom!

by **Jane Boudreau**

**H**ey Neighbors! And Hello May! Although the daffodils are fading a bit, the tulips are in full bloom and I just love seeing green everywhere. I read somewhere that your tulips will do exceptionally well if you've had a long, cold winter. They need the dormancy. Come to think of it, I felt a little dormant. I remember now that the few times we had mild winters my tulips were a little scraggly. So that's one good thing we have going for us after this hellacious winter.

Sometimes you have to focus on the joys in life. First--we made it! I feel good about some of the positive things I accomplished. I read a lot more books than I usually manage to do, and also picked up some gardening and home decorating magazines to peruse through and give me ideas for spaces I don't have. I fiddled with some new recipes (I'm including two for you in this column), and plowed through some organizing projects. Of course, as with anything you organize, you have to keep it that way or it just goes back to being unorganized and then you stop believing in the whole concept of organization.

As lazy as I can be, it drives me crazy when I have to face the plain old truth: if I were more organized, life would be much easier. Actually, it would be much easier if I had someone to keep me organized but that hasn't happened yet. I look at magazines and blogs and everything looks perfect. I know for a fact, having blogged for over 15 years now, that a lot of effort goes into making rooms and spaces look picture perfect even when they're not. Fresh fruit and flowers are brought in, and children are hidden in closets. In any case, I still feel this insecurity that maybe I'm not keeping areas as neat and organized as I should. The main living areas I see in the media looks open, clean and on point with the current decorating trends (I'll save that for another day), and well, perfect. I think: I want that! But do I? There's something else, I don't know if I have it, maybe you don't know if you have it. My late mother in law wasn't fancy, she didn't try to be anything other than who she was. The same with Papa. But when you walked into their home for a Sunday dinner or a visit and a cup of coffee, it just felt good. It had all the feels. Nana was neat but wasn't into "stuff", her china, crystal, and figurines were stored in her china cabinet, which she just loved. If a home was an outfit, her cabinet would be the statement piece. But really, walking into their home, it was never about the "oohs and ahhs" over inanimate objects, you were greeted with warm "Hello's!", hugs, the smell of something mouthwatering cooking in the kitchen ... and that's where you headed, to sit at the familiar kitchen table in the same place, same chair that you had and would for years and years to come. That was comforting. That was cozy. That was home. And all the pretty pictures on my walls and yours will never give us this if our decor and objects become our focus. We always think it's in the details and not in the picture as a whole -- I learned that much from my time with Jane (yes, her name was Jane). Sort of funny coming from a lifestyle writer and someone who basically has a HomeGoods in her basement from photo styling! So where am I going with this? Let your people feel comfortable in your home, let them feel relaxed. Don't play show & tell! My sister-in-law, who is years younger than me, once confided that I made cooking and entertaining look effortless. I was incredulous! It will never be effortless, but if your home is a haven, with good food, good company,



even a place for someone to lay their head (and in my case, drop off their dog for a few days), and you might find people will think of you and remember you in the best way.



You probably know how much I love summer at the lake. Well actually I love any time at the lake. May is a lot of scrambling around getting the boats and toys in the water, the beach looking purdy, the outdoor furniture-- well, out. Oh, don't forget washing windows, getting the garage, and shed organized, weeding and feeding the lawn and garden, and so on. When I'm grumbling about this frenzy of not-so-fun activities, I think of a quote I heard somewhere: Your worst day could be someone's best. Now go feed the birds!

A tall, chunky Collins glass sits on a bar top, and holds a dark amber liquid and a few large ice cubes. On top, a curved orange zest floats on a thick layer of foam.

### May's Signature Drink - Nightcap

Lest you think I'm suggesting you have a dinner party or get-together and your signature drink is a subtle hint towards a sleepover, you can't be more wrong. It's become increasingly more interesting to me as I explore the world of cocktail making, the history behind the drink (which can go back a century or more).

With good intent not to take up too much space in the newspaper, a short bio on how the drink came about: A bartender (and self-professed rum expert and coffee "geek") started with espresso, rum (Gosling's Gold Seal is recommended for it's notes of butterscotch and vanilla), maple syrup for sweetness, Angostura bitters which lends complexity, and San Pellegrino tonic water. And again,



despite the name, Nightcap is generally more of an energizing, party-starter, at least that's what caffeine does for me. I'm also wondering, after considering the ingredients, if I might make Nightcap a bit more like my favorite summer iced coffee by adding some caramel syrup. Hmmmm ...

### NIGHTCAP

#### Ingredients:

2 oz Gosling's Gold Seal rum  
2 oz cold brew coffee  
1/2 oz maple syrup  
Zest of 1 orange  
1 dash of Angostura bitters  
San Pellegrino tonic water to top  
Garnish: orange peel

#### Directions:

1. Add the rum, cold brew, maple syrup, orange zest, and bitters to a shaker with ice and shake until well chilled.
- 2 Strain into a highball glass over large ice cubes
- 3 Top with the tonic and stir gently. Garnish with an orange peel.

### Jane's Imaginary Book Club

It's been awhile since I've read a good mystery or suspense novel, and I never turn away from one of those! I shall be serving Nightcaps to all of my guests, which I think sounds just perfect for this book, a little dark, but keeping us on our toes! Moving on, I was delighted when a friend on Instagram recommend-

ed this novel by London based writer, Katherine Faulkner, Greenwich Park. The story is told through three points of view which makes it rather interesting and creates quite the cat and mouse chase. Helen and her husband live a well to do life with a beautiful Victorian home and their first baby on the way, when Helen meets Rachel at a prenatal class. Helen finds Rachel somewhat fascinating in that she smokes and drinks and is a single mother, and she's drawn into an unlikely friendship with her. Helen enjoys having a friend although Rachel's behavior becomes more and more suspicious. The book begins to pick up its pace as Rachel's presence begins to affect those around Helen, and rattle the .

Recipes this month are keeping in mind that we will be celebrating Memorial Day at the end of the month. I think they can carry you all through the summer. Enjoy!

### Fresh Mango Guacamole

I've found this wonderful dip in my



grocery store but it wasn't only overpriced, it's a cinch to make yourself. I really love the tanginess of the mango without being overpowering, and it's a colorful dip as well. Make this dip ahead of time and save the avocado pit. Place it right in the middle of the dip and it will keep the avocado from turning brown.

#### Ingredients:

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

#### Directions:

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



### Grilled Pork Burgers

This is such a fantastic burger, I can't believe can't don't find them in restaurants! The spices really take it over the top--you might think coriander and curry sound odd but they add such an incredible flavor to the burger along with a subtle bite from cayenne pepper. The peaches are an integral part of this recipe. Use ripe but somewhat firm peaches. They will caramelize as they cook and add a nice sweet flavor to the meat. The spicy ketchup is a game changer, I think you will like it.

#### Ingredients:

2 1/2 lbs. ground pork  
2 t ground coriander  
2 t curry powder  
2 t Worcestershire Sauce  
1 t cayenne pepper  
3 scallions, chopped

See  
**JANE**

on the next page



# Our Children

## Learning how to prep for tests

by **SANDY FLEMING**

**T**his month and next are the last few weeks of school, and students should be getting ready for semester or year end tests in middle school, high school, and college. One of the most well-kept secrets is that they don't need to wait for the study guide that gets passed out a week or so before exam day. Students have it in their power to prepare for tests ANYTIME! And they should. Staying ready for tests will help them do better overall in school, and will help them improve grades on the unit tests, mid-terms, and other assessments. Here's a quick run down of what stellar students already understand about going to school: test preparation happens daily instead of right before the exam!

### Make a Plan

Students can make plans to improve grades any time, but the absolute best time is early in the marking period or school year. The next best time to being is right now, as opposed to putting this off for another year all together. How does one plan when you don't know the upcoming concepts or curriculum? Easy! You pay attention to the clues and tools that teachers always give out. Many middle school, high school, and college teachers provide a syllabus that summarizes what will be covered in class. If there is a text book or other reading material, that will relate to the ideas the teacher wants students to master. During most class periods or sessions, teachers either lecture or have students doing activities that relate to the concepts to be learned. Pay attention to homework assignments as well, because these also relate to the material that is to be mastered. Unit tests, weekly quizzes, and other smaller assessments also give clues about what the teacher considers most important to learn. Approach the whole class as a unified whole that is trying to accomplish the goal of having you learn specific things. Teachers are not random people, nor do they often waste time. It's tough enough to cover required topics without spending days "doing nothing" like some students perceive.

One way to keep tabs on what the

teacher thinks you are learning is by keeping a journal for each class. Jot down a few sentences each day about what you believe the teacher wanted you to learn, understand, or practice. Date your entries, so that you can match them up later with class notes and assignments. These little notes about what happened in class will help you to see the progression through the material and the ways the teacher has been trying to help you learn it.

### Use a Study System

Systematic study is important when trying to master academic material. One organized system is SQ3R (though there are plenty of others!). In this system, students should quickly look over the material for the class, and formulate questions that they believe will be answered in the readings. Then they read carefully, looking for (and writing down) answers to those questions. The last 2 Rs stand for Review and Recite. Say the answers out loud, both to your own questions and any study questions provided from the text. Do any related homework.

Another part of studying that is frequently overlooked is vocabulary. Be intentional about learning vocabulary for the subject. Sometimes the teacher will provide a list, sometimes it's in bold print in the textbook, and sometimes students just need to find the words on their own. However you choose words to learn, make sure you follow through. Try using the words in sentences, writing out definitions, and even playing word games with them. Vocabulary is crucial because items on the tests will use those words, as will instructions. If a student does not know what they mean, there is greater chance of getting things wrong.

### Take and Organize Notes

In class, while the teacher is talking or lecturing, it's important to write down what is being said. If he or she uses a visual aid like a digital presentation, the job is pretty easy – jot down the main points and the details from the bullet points under each one. If the teacher is simply talking, you'll need to listen for cues and clues. If you pay attention, you'll hear those transition words (like

from English class!), like "furthermore" (another important point coming), "in contrast" (an opposite point coming), and so on.

Many teachers also are speaking from an outline. Try to pick out the main ideas of each section and jot them down. Write down their details that they use to support their main ideas. Pay close attention to phrases with numbers in them, like "There were three causes" or "Let's look at five factors." It can also be helpful to recall that people's brains typically work well with ideas in groups of three. One need look no farther than traditional childhood stories to see this: three bears, three pigs, three wishes. You'll find groups of three all over once you begin to look for them.

And the final hint is to include names, dates, and other specifics in your notes. These details will give you the information you need to pass the test! Repetition is also a key. Listen and watch for repeated words and phrases. These are important.

Once you take your class notes, don't just file them away until the day before the test. It helps many people to copy them and expand upon them soon after class. Add in things you recall that you did not write down at the time. Include information from readings or other supplemental sources. Put questions in the margins – what would you like to know more about? What do you think the teacher believed was important? In other words, put your notes to work for you. The more you interact with information, the more you will remember.

### DIY Study Guides

Teachers, particularly in the earlier grades of middle school, often hand out study guides. These might be summary versions of the material that has been covered, questions that will guide your understanding of what was important, or even questions that might be on the upcoming test. As you mature as a student, however, it is expected that you will learn to study on your own. The farther you go in school, the fewer study guides you are likely to see. You are supposed to be making your own!

Look over notes, assignments, quiz-

zes, and readings for each class. Try to predict what the teacher believes is important. Pretend you are the teacher for the class, and write your own questions. Now, answer them! Write down the answers, and presto! You have a study guide. It takes practice, but you will get pretty good at making these predictions.

Make sure you consider vocabulary. Learn the terms associated with the class. Look for these in your text book (they might be highlighted in there), in your assignments (they are often presented in the form of crossword puzzles or word searches), and in your notes (look for repetition to find them there). Use index cards to make flash cards. My recommendation is NOT the read-and-flip flashcards that are so common, where you put term on one side and definition on the other. It's way too easy to plow through those without them ever passing through your brain. Instead, try putting the term on one card and the definition or example on another. Make sure you can't see the information through the back! Now, lay them all face down and mixed up to play a game of Memory. This way, you will be mentally connecting word with meaning or examples. For math or science in particular, try to find or write extra practice problems. Repetition is the key to learning here. Solve a few problems of each variety every day to build a habit of success.

### In Closing

There you have it! Practical, hands-on suggestions will help any student from middle school on up to improve their grades and test performance. Once you are prepared, you'll find your confidence will rise. Once you make a habit of preparation, you may even enjoy the process. Learning can be fun and challenging, and it's very rewarding in its own right. It's a life-long skill that you can nurture!

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Sandy Fleming is a private tutor and writer from Edwardsburg. Check out her websites at <http://learningnook.com> and <http://sandyflemingonline.com> for loads of ideas to help students of all ages achieve success.*

## JANE

Continued from previous page

2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped  
S & P  
2 T olive oil  
3 peaches, sliced  
6 hamburger buns  
2-3 tomatoes, chopped  
1/2 c ketchup + 1-2 t Sriracha mixed together  
1 head iceberg lettuce, torn into large leaves  
Condiments of your choice

### Directions:

In a large bowl mix all of the burger ingredients right up to the peaches. Cover and place in the fridge until ready to grill. Prepare the ketchup/Sriracha sauce, you can control the heat-make it to taste, and it's optional.

Fire up the grill and arrange the sliced peaches over the direct heat. Sear on both sides, about 3 minutes each, then move to the indirect heat side or the upper rack to cook until tender. Shape the pork mixture into 1/4 in. rounds to make 6 burgers. Sear on both sides and move them to the indirect heat side of the grill. Cook until the internal tem-

perature is 170 degrees. Serves 6

### Pound Cake with Fresh Berries and Whipped Cream

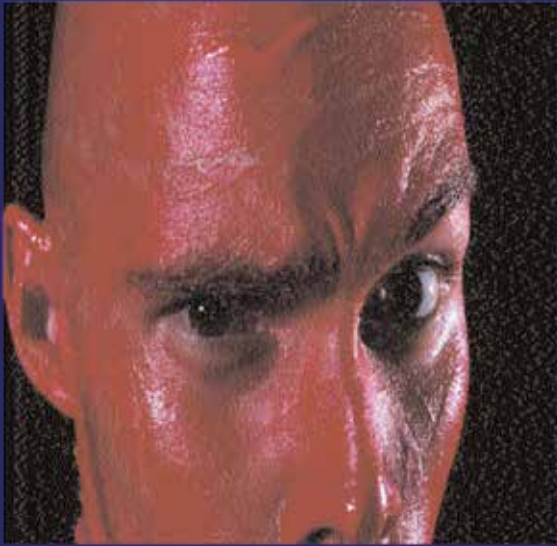
This dessert needs no holiday as far as I'm concerned! And no directions. You can purchase a pound cake or make your own. Use fresh berries and whipped cream. I would suggest using a stabilized whipped cream like Cool Whip if you aren't going to be serving it right away as it will support the layers better.

This winds things up for the month of May! We can honestly say that summer is in full swing next month and I can't wait! See you then!

*Jane Boudreau is a writer, blogger, and newspaper columnist who lives on Diamond Lake, as well as in Chicago and Asheville, NC. You can contact her at [blndy9@yahoo.com](mailto:blndy9@yahoo.com)*



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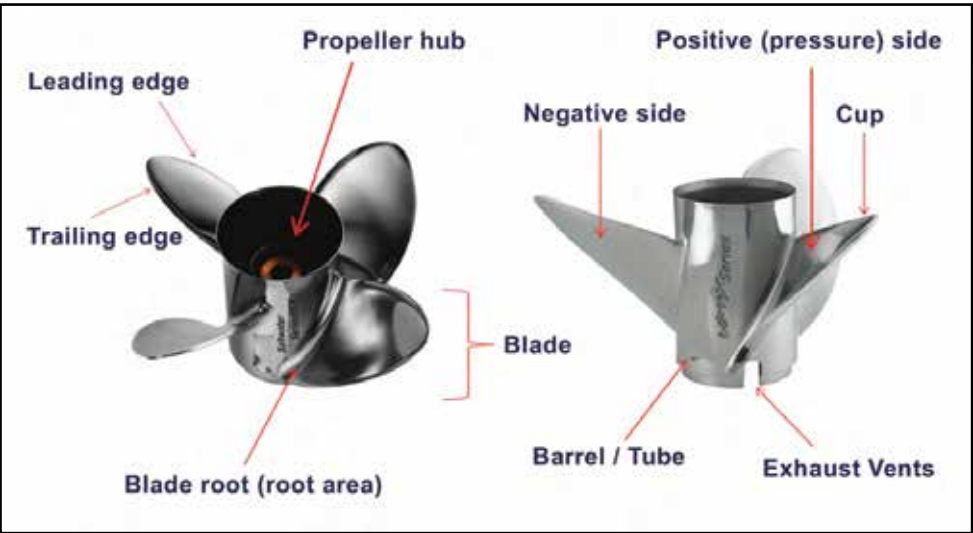
## Let's talk propellers for performance!

By **RUSTY COLLINS**

In the past couple of months we have covered maintenance items to ensure that your time on the water is as problem free as possible. This month we are going to dive into a topic that relates to unlocking full performance from our boats, propellers.

Propellers, obviously “propel” your boat through the water by harnessing power from the engine and transferring that power to the water, pushing us across the lake full of smiles and sunshine. Whether you’re hauling the crew to the sandbar in your pontoon or pulling riders all day in your inboard, the right propeller can truly make or break your experience on the water.

Stainless, aluminum, brass, a propeller comes in thousands of shapes and alloys, with each having different applica-



tions. The design of the propeller has many elements. Propeller diameter, cup shape and size, blade pitch, leading and trailing edge shape and blade count, just to name a few. The metal alloy the propeller is made of can affect performance based on their rigidity and flexibility and depending on your needs. Science has

studied how and why each of these variables affect your experience on the water. We could go into those design details in great length, but today we are going to focus on how to select the right propeller and what it can mean on the water. Luckily, we have some great tools to help us make the right selection.

The first step in determining the right propeller for your boat starts with RPM (revolutions per minute) range of your motor. We want to use the full RPM potential of our engines. If we have a propeller that isn't allowing our engines to spin at their designed speed, we are leaving a lot on the table.

Did you know that a propeller can even affect the way your boat steers and handles? That's right, it's not all about hull design or speed.

Boats sold are typically paired with a propeller that has been found to work well with that setup, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's what's best for you and the way you use your boat.

Scenario: your engine has a Max RPM of 6000. When running your boat at full throttle, your gauge is only showing 5500 RPM. Changing blade pitch, even 1 degree, can get you closer to that full 6000. Maybe a slight change in diameter is needed. Or your current propeller is the right size but it's worn down and has lost its shape, which results in poor performance. A fresh propeller in the same size can almost feel like a new set of tires.

Next, we want to look at how you are using your boat. Are you cruising mid-range most of the day? Are you pulling boarders and tubers? Are you rushing to that next fishing spot? Are you near rocks or other hazards often? All of these variables play a factor in fine tuning your propeller selection for maximum proficiency. But don't fear, there are tools to take the guesswork out of this process.

The most inclusive of these tools is the Mercury Propeller Selection Tool (<https://www.mercurymarine.com/us/en/propellers/mercury-propeller-selector>).

This tool is priceless, and it doesn't matter if you have a Mercury, Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda or some other motor, all the major brands are available in the tool. It begins with selecting your boat type and following a list of questions to allow the tool to lead you in the right direction of the correct propeller. If only the pioneers of marine propulsion could see us now! Decades of experience are all collected within this single platform, allowing us to make the right choice.

Another great resource is your local marine service provider. They can help tailor your experience on the water making sure you're getting what you need from your boat! Call them and ask them what options you may have when it comes to your setup.

See you on the lake!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Rusty Collins is general manager of Boat Butler Marine. Contact him at [rusty@boatbutlermarine.com](mailto:rusty@boatbutlermarine.com)**




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# Field Trip

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The museum is open Tuesday-Friday from 10 am—5 pm, Thursday 10am—7:30 pm, and weekends from Noon—5 pm. (closed on Good Friday, but open Saturday and Easter Sunday, closed on Mondays and major holidays). Admission is free.

The Raclin Murphy Museum of Art is located on St. André Way (corner of Eddy Street and Angela Blvd) at the University. For more information visit: [raclinmuseummuseum@nd.edu](mailto:raclinmuseummuseum@nd.edu).



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# Historic Postcards

## Historic postcards depict rich scenes of the past

In this issue of Neighbors, Jerdon Real Estate of Dowagiac, owned by Floyd Jerdon and his son Tom, have again provided antique postcards of a few of the many lakes and towns 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 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 web-site: [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)

In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of vari-

ous 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

# Early photos of Cass County Poor Farm House discovered

**by Jonathan Wuepper  
Manager  
Local History Branch  
Cass District Library  
145 North Broadway St.  
Cassopolis, MI 49031  
jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us**

This month I am happy to share two photographs recently located among the collections of the Local History Branch of the Cass District Library depicting the Cass County Poor House, located on the Cass County Poor Farm in sections 2 and 3 of Jefferson Township.

The photos were discovered, or rediscovered, by Terry Proctor as he was going through some files at the local history library during March 2025. This discovery was just days before Adam Oster of the Library of Michigan came to give a talk on county poor farms in Michigan.

These two photos depict the front and rear views of the then recently completed county poor house. There is no identification as to who took the photos, but it is believed that these photos are albumen prints, being a process of photography that used egg whites in developing the prints. Albumen photography was popular in the United States from roughly 1865-1880.

Cass County histories and newspaper articles indicate that the four-story large building in the photos was built in 1870-1871 at a cost of \$5000. The money was raised from a tax levy approved by Cass County voters in April 1869. This building, second empire in style, replaced an earlier brick structure which housed the poor on the site, built in 1854.

According to "A Twentieth Century History of Cass County, Michigan" by Lowell H. Glover (1906:214): "In 1871, the asylum, a brick addition two stories high, was constructed, its cost being about the same as the outlay of the other buildings, so that the county invested about \$15,000 in this institution during the early '70s."

I believe the two-story brick building located to the left-front of the main building is likely the two story brick "asylum" mentioned in Glover's book. The chronology of the construction of the two buildings, in conjunction with the fact that the photos are albumen prints (which reached the height of popularity in the US in the 1870s), indicates the photos were probably taken in the early 1870s.

The two albumen prints of the Cass County Poor Houses are among the ten



*Above: Colby Mill, photographer unknown, taken circa 1940s, LaGrange Township. Donated to the Cass County (now Cass District) Library by Charles Springsteen, July 1978. These photos depict the front (left photo) and rear (right photo) views of the then recently completed county poor house. There is no identification as to who took the photos, but it is believed that these photos are albumen prints, being a process of photography that used egg whites in developing the prints. Albumen photography was popular in the United States from roughly 1865-1880.*

*Left: Section 6, LaGrange Township. "G.M." = Grist Mill in the northeast portion of that section. From Map of the Counties, Cass, Van Buren and Berrien by Geil, Harley and Siverd (1860). Courtesy Library of Congress.*

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# Nature Notes

## Long tailed weasel, adult bald eagle spotted

by Jonathan Wuepper  
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Paul Westmaas of Lincoln Township submitted a photo of an apparent long-tailed weasel, seen and photographed March 27 at the gazebo at the end of Sundance Path.

We have only one photo of this weasel, showing the face and the front legs. The long-tailed weasel, the ermine, also known as the short-tailed weasel, and the least weasel have similar facial, chest and front leg color patterns. Because there are no additional photos showing the animal's side, length and tail, which hold features essential in determining identification to species, there is no confirmation as to which species of weasel was photographed.

Westmaas wrote that "the end of the tail was black" and estimated the length of the animal at 12 inches long " These traits are consistent with both a long-tailed weasel and ermine. However, Southwest Michigan is at the extreme southern edge of the ermine's range.

I showed Westmaas's weasel photo to several naturalists, all of whom declined to say with certainty as to what species is seen in the picture.

Larry Heaney, head of the mammalogical department at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago commented on the photo: "Great photo of the weasel! Two of the primary characters that distinguish the three weasels in this general area are overall body size and tail length. My guess from the size of the shingles [the wooden panels in the photo in relation to size of the weasel] is that this is a fairly large weasel; together with the estimate of 12 inches in length, suggest to me that this is a long-tailed weasel. The tail is not visible, so that will not help us. If there are more photos from other angles, especially one showing the tail, that would help a lot."

The similarly appearing, and more or less expected species are the least weasel, being only 6 inches in length and has a short, brown tail. The long-tailed weasel, which also inhabits Southwest Michigan, is roughly 16 inches in length and its tail being 3 to 6 inches long also with a black tip.

All three weasel species in question (least, ermine, long-tailed) are carnivores, and typically feed on mice, voles, shrews, birds and bird eggs, reptiles and amphibians. Actually, all weasels are carnivores including skunks, mink, otters, and Wolverines.

In Michigan the ermine is found throughout the Upper Peninsula and in the Lower Peninsula, south to the second southernmost tier of counties. I am unaware of any verified records of the ermine from Berrien County, although range maps show it occurring in the northern townships. Historically, ermines have been recorded in Kalamazoo, Eaton, Ingham and Washtenaw Counties.

On March 23, Brad Anderson photographed an adult bald eagle as it flew above Warren Dunes State Park. In recent years bald eagles have nested at a few locations in Berrien County. As a breeding species, they are more widespread in Cass and Van Buren Counties.

During February I discovered an old bald eagle nest east of Niles in Howard Township, Cass County. The nest did not



Bottom photo: A weasel, likely a long-tailed weasel, March 27, at the gazebo at the end of Sundance Path, Lincoln Township. Photo by Paul Westmaas of Lincoln Township.

Top photo: Adult bald eagle on March 23, Warren Dunes State Park. Brad Anderson.



seem to be active at the time, but I plan on revisiting the area and checking later this spring.  
Look for bald eagle nests around large lakes and rivers. If you see a bald eagle in flight with a branch in its talons, it is very likely making or repairing a nest site nearby.



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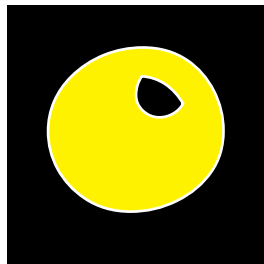
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nce upon a time, in a time a long, long time ago, traveling in an airplane was a relatively easy and not terribly frustrating proposition. To get from point "A" to point "B" by plane, you could simply buy a ticket and go. Back then you could get a ticket directly from the airline at the airport or by call-

ing a person at the airline, or you could use a travel agent (remember those helpful folks?), who would do their voodoo and find the best days to travel and for the best price. Then you'd just show up at the airport on the day of your flight, give your bags to a clerk who'd throw it into the hold of the plane, climb a short ladder and get into a seat that you could actually fit your butt into, and buckle in. Once you were in the air a smiling and friendly stewardess (remember them?) might bring you a cocktail, light your cigarette and take your order for the meal that would come while you were winging your way to Wanderlust, Westros, Waterloo or wherever else you might be headed. When you got there you'd jump off the plane, meet your wife and kids right at the gate, stroll to the baggage claim, grab your suitcase and be on your way. Easy, peasy ...

Done. Over. Gone. Forget it. Deader than the dodo. Unfortunately, those days (and all of those easy-to-use methods, procedures, and processes) have died, a victim of fear, over-zealous safety precautions, airport and TSA regulations, and most of all, modern technology (which the airlines try to make us believe is necessary to make our travel experience more efficient but are in fact it is being used to shift the drudgery to the consumer so the airlines can keep more of our money instead of having to pay their employees to do it for us).

Once upon a time, granted.

It was a long time ago, long before smoking was banned; before 911 terrorists hijacked those planes; before gate lice and seat squatters; before TSA agents first screamed at us to take off our belts and shoes and dump our water bottles; before we had to make our own travel arrangements online, electronically filling in the countless forms with name, address, passport number, expiration date, birth date, place of birth, nationality

and shoe size; and a hellova long before the advent of the one-eyed, money-time-and-brain-sucking cell phone had become everyone's most indispensable, antagonistic and difficult traveling companion.

Ok, I'm just back from my annual spring sailing trip in a part of the world where cell phones and Internet services work even worse than they do in Cass County, Michigan (if you can imagine that), but let me tell you, due to the draconian international travel requirements, I tried my best to comply but ...

Now, I'm a pretty good sailor, my friends tell me. I have on more than one occasion threaded a 50-foot sailboat into a narrow, reef-lined channel entrance through big winds before GPS was invented; I have successfully navigated through rock-strewn passages in unfamiliar island chains using old paper charts and hand-held compasses; I have found my way across miles and miles of open ocean and anchored in strange harbors in full dark, but I am forced to admit, when it comes to working a cell phone to make travel arrangements, grab a Mae West, because I suck, so trying to "check in" 24 hours before a flight from the deck of a sailboat in the Caribbean is even more daunting than trying to get a human being to answer the phone and speak in English when you call the airline's customer service number.

Ain't gonna be good for anyone.

See the agent at check in at the airport, the cyclops' bright phone screen eye told me. And be sure to arrive at least three hours before your flight ...

It wasn't promising to be a pleasant travel day.

Unfortunately most airports on most islands in the Caribbean aren't open three hours before the day's first flight, and even if they were, I'm pretty sure any agent at check in was likely to be unpleasant (in spades) and was going to tell me I should have checked in online.

Catch 22, anyone?

And then, as if fate wanted to drip lemon juice into the paper cut of my despair, after being herded through the 4-mile-long, maze-like lines filled with tired-eyed, grumpy people like me who all agree we're starting to feel like hogs being herded to "that" room at the abattoir, the big board notified us that the flight had been delayed, so the cushy 1-1/2 hour layover I was supposed to have in Miami was now sleeping with Luca Brasi's fishes at the bottom of the Sir Francis Drake Channel.

And now, instead of that 1-1/2 hour cushion I'm down to 21 minutes to deplane (en masse along with the other 9,000 or so mega-jet passengers who were on the same plane), ride a bus half a mile so I could walk another 1-1/2 mile to stand in another long line to clear customs, then walk to another long line for immigration, then grab my bags and walk through another 1-1/2 mile abattoirish queue so I can take off my belts and shoes again and be scanned, then grab my bags again (and get dressed again) and walk another 1-1/2 mile to re-check my bags, then walk 41 gates to where I hoped my plane might still be waiting for me.

So much for any chance at a quick (but most likely tasteless) burger and a \$25 beer in the terminal (why do beers in airports cost more than they do at Wrigley Field?) while I waited ...

As it turned out my wife and I made it to the plane just as it was boarding.

Panting.

Sweating.

Grumpy.

Blood pressure soaring.

No water, no burger, no beer.

But we made it.

I shudder to think what would have happened if we hadn't (last year when we got delayed it involved a jail-cell-size "hotel" room in Charlotte, North Carolina, scarfed down a bag-o-fast-food wholesomeness from the Quicky Real Pork BBQ and Burlesque Parlor in the parking lot next door and listened to a broken air conditioner hum the Star Spangled Banner in Chinese and drip smelly water onto the floor below the window).

But we made it to the plane, it took off and flew us to the next city where we arrived just before midnight.

I'd like to say it was a good flight, but I'd be exaggerating. There wasn't any turbulence or rough weather, the flight crew were pleasant enough and I finally got that beer (no idea what it cost, I'll check later). But there wasn't any in-flight entertainment unless I wanted to try to scan a QR code and make it connect to the in-flight WiFi with my phone. Good luck with that.

They say any landing you walk away from was a good landing. We landed and got home, so like Bill Murray said after he talked to the Dalai Lama ...

"At least I've got that going for me."





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