

Neighbors

JUNE 2025 **NOW IN OUR 22nd YEAR** **FREE – Take one**

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:

A sailing trip to the Virgin Islands
Pages 6, 7

Regional News

Clue, The Musical

The Beckwith Theatre Co. is presenting Clue, The Musical on June 6 and 7 at 7:30 pm and, June 8 at 2 pm at the theater, 100 New York Ave, Dowagiac. Based on the classic board game, Clue, The Musical is a murder mystery that invites the audience to help solve the mystery of who killed Mr. Boddy, in what room, and with what weapon. Clue is a family-friendly delight from start to finish, a lovely and light 90 minutes of silliness.

Tickets are \$15 (Reserve online at www.beckwiththeatre.com/box-office) For more information call 782-7653 or email BeckwithTheatreMI@gmail.com, Clue, The Musical is produced by a special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

Cassopolis Summer

June 6 and 7 will see another great weekend of fun at Stone Lake Beach in Cassopolis. On Friday the listen to live music from One Man Band and Size Matters. The Beer Garden will be open at 4 pm at the Sinclair Station, 200 S Broadway. 21+ only, valid ID required. Cash & card accepted, \$5/drink. Food Trucks will be serving from 4 pm-sellout, some are cash only. Trucks will be O'Neals Smokehouse; BBQ @ Beer Garden; Taqueria Don Chepe • Mexican @ Beach; V's Glizzys • Hot Dogs and More @ Beach; Diana Kitchen • Soul Food @ Beach. Fireworks will start at 10 pm over Stone Lake.

On June 7, Broadway between State St and Water St will be closed from 8 am to 11:59 pm.

That day the Vendor Market will run from noon - 6 pm on Broadway, with art, antiques, crafts & unique goods. The Free Kids Area will be open from noon - 3 pm on Broadway. Face painting, balloon art, cotton candy, snow cones, inflatables, crafts and more! Live Music that day will be One Man Band Entertainment and Blammo. The Beer Garden will open at noon @ the Sinclair Station, 200 S Broadway. 21+ only, valid ID required. Cash & card accepted, \$5/drink. Food Trucks will serve from noon - sellout, some are cash only. Trucks will be O'Neals Smokehouse BBQ @ Beer Garden; Taqueria Don Chepe • Mexican @ Beach; V's Glizzys • Hot Dogs and More @ Beach; Diana Kitchen • Soul Food @ Beach; Drive Thru Q • BBQ @ Broadway Street; Simply Rolled • Rolled Ice Cream @ Broadway Street. A Drone Show will start at 10 pm over Stone Lake.

Dowagiac Outdoor Farm and Artesian Market

The Dowagiac Outdoor Farm and Artisan Market will be on June 25 from 9 am to 2 pm. Fresh local food, fruits, veggies, eggs, honey, jam, syrup, plants, flowers, baked products, handmade crafts, and much more will be available at this market. There will be live entertainment, delectable food, artist booths selling homemade goods, and more! The Market will be at the Dowagiac Area History Museum 201 E. Division Street, Dowagiac Admission is free..

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. Conceived in 2009 by Bill Ayers, a Quaker who was public works director for Vandalia, Underground Railroad Days celebrates the heritage of Vandalia as part of the Underground Railroad. 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. 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 the remainder of its 2025 lecture and event series. Events include: **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







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Regional News

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 Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum's next exhibit will be "Sauk Trail: Echoes of the Past," from July 22 to Nov. 1. It 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.

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. 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.

Lerner Theater Tuesday Tours

The Lerner Theater, 410 S. Main St., Elkhart will also offer Theatre Tour Tuesdays on 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. and Steven Curtis Chapman

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>

The theater will also host Steven Curtis Chapman's SPEECHLESS '25 Tour on Sunday, September 21 at 7 pm.

VIP Package includes Early Entry, VIP Tour Laminated, Exclusive VIP Poster and \$5 Steven Curtis Chapman Merchandise Voucher with early shopping access. For tickets and information visit <http://www.thelerner.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.

The camps are 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.

Art Barn events announced

The Art Barn School of Art in Michigan City, IN has announced the following events for the summer:

■ Luminous Paintings in Watercolor Workshop with Betty Carr on June 20 - June 22 from 9 am - 4 pm for ages: 18+ Betty Carr's use of color, light and shade accentuate her subject matter while showing her love of nature and its forms.

■ Prints in Nature* M-F, 9 am - noon, June 16-20, Ages: 5-11

■ Origami & Paper Play* M-F, 9 am noon July 7-11, ages: 8-12

■ Youth Clay Camp, M-F, 9 am - noon, July 7-18, ages: 10-14

■ Creative Nature* M-F, 9 am- - noon, July 14-18, ages: 6-12

*Art Barn School of Art is offering a limited number of spots at reduced tuition to these select Summer Art Camps, supported by the Das Family Scholarship Fund, for families who qualify for their district's free/reduced school lunch program. Visit our <https://www.artbarn-school.org/> to apply!

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Regional Calendar

MISC. AREA EVENTS
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.

BOATER'S SAFETY COURSE - June 14 - 9 am - 1 pm, led by DNR., Diamond Lake Yacht Club, <https://www.dlacassopolis.org/dlaevents/boaters-safety-course>
Front Porch Music: Friday, June 20th

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

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 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 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: 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 , Mondays: 11 am. Join Alyse Knepple for T'ai Chi, a series of gentle physical exercises and stretches. Alyse will offer a free introductory class, followed by four weekly classes which will cost \$40.

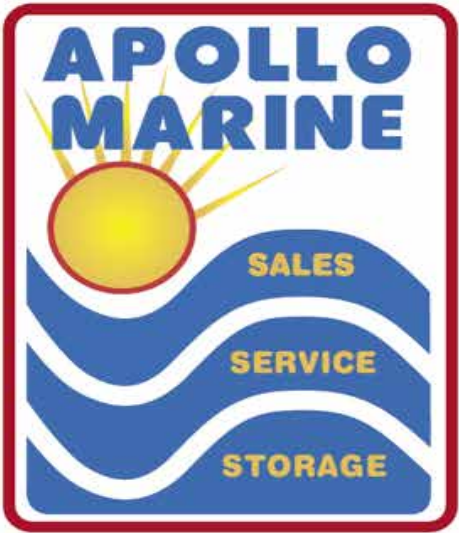
CARDIO DRUMMING, Howard, Mondays: 5 pm. Cardio drumming is a fun and fast-paced way to get your heart rate up, improve your rhythm and burn calories all while having fun! Bring a bucket, exercise ball, drumsticks and 1 - 2 lb. weights. This program is free, but a gratuity of \$5 is encouraged for the instructor but not required. Registration required, call the Howard Branch at 487-9214.

HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN TO READ PARENT INFO NIGHT, Howard, June 5: 5:30 pm. Help your child become a confident



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Regional Calendar

reader at a special workshop featuring local reading interventionist Mary Kane. She'll share practical tips and strategies to support early reading development at home. Thanks to the generous support of the Optimist Club and Psi Iota Xi, the first 24 registered families will receive a free take-home Word Work Practice Kit to extend the learning experience. Registration required, call the Howard Branch at 269-487-9214.

SUPER FUN COLOR RUN, Cassopolis COA Track, June 7: 9 am. Splash into summer with a burst of color! The 2025 Color Our World Summer Reading Program celebrates how colorful our world is. Gather your friends and family for a lively walk or run around the COA Track. Registration required, contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384.

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

FRIENDS OF THE MASON/UNION BRANCH ART CONTEST SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED, Mason/Union, June 9 - August 6. Create a new original work of art that reflects the summer reading theme Color Our World using any medium (crayons, pencils, markers, paint, mixed medium, etc.) Print your first and last name, age category and phone number on the back of your entry. Entries can be any size up to a standard poster (22"x 28"). Prizes will be awarded for each age category. Entries must be turned in at any branch by Monday, August 4 by 5 pm or Wednesday, August 6 by 5 pm at the Mason/Union Branch. Join us for the Art Contest Reception at the Mason/Union Branch on August 9 at 1 pm. Age Categories: Preschool - Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-4, Grades 5-6, Grades 7-8, Grades 9-12 and Adult.

ROAD SCHOLAR VIRTUAL LECTURE: D-DAY ECHOES OF VALOR & VICTORY, Howard, June 10: 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 learn about the beginning of the end for Nazi oppression in Europe. This lecture is given by award-winning historian, Spencer Jones! Questions? Call the Howard Branch at (269)-487-9214.

ADULT CRAFT CLUB: STENCILED CANVAS BAG. Main Branch, June 11: 1 pm. Join us at the Main Branch each month. This month, make a stenciled bag to carry your library books! All materials will be provided. Registration required, contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384.

DIAMOND ART BOOKMARKS, Howard, June 12: Session 1: 4 - 5 pm, Session 2: 5 - 6 pm. Bring the whole family to Diamond Art Bookmark Craft Program, where all generations come together to create beautiful, sparkling bookmarks! . Pick a time slot and call the Howard Branch at 269-487-9214 to register.

STORYTIME WITH AUTHOR DENISE HALGREN "THE CRAZY CAT LADY" Edwardsburg, June 13: 11 am. The Crazy Cat Lady returns to the Edwardsburg Branch library! Edwardsburg educator and author, Denise Halgren will share her newest book, "The Crazy Cat Lady Takes a Vacation." Join us for a great story and other CAT-tastic fun! Questions? Call the Edwardsburg Branch at 269-487-9215.

STORY SKETCHING WITH SHARRON OTT SESSION 1, Mason/Union, June 16: 1 - 3 pm. Dive into the magical world of The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum! Join us for story sketching, a great activity that is perfect for all ages, so round up the whole family! Everyone gets a shot at bringing characters and scenes to life with brushes and pencils, while swapping stories and memories about the book. All artwork will be transformed into a dazzling compilation video. At the video premiere, watch your masterpieces come to life while you enjoy refreshments. Registration required, please call the Mason/Union Branch at 269-357-7821.

HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT, Edwardsburg, June 16: 1 pm. Looking for a fun way to meet other homeschoolers? 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., June 17: 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.

MR. JIM'S JUGGLING SHOW, Mason/Union June 17: 1 pm. Juggling is a great activity that involves lots of motion, learning and fun. Mr. Jim has created a simple system of learning that begins with only one ball; there are many ways to juggle with one ball, which is the foundation for learning how to juggle more balls. Welcome to all ages, we'll see you there!

SPORT CUP STACKING WITH MR. JIM, Edwardsburg June 17: 3 pm. Join us at the Edwardsburg Branch for a fun and interactive program to learn the art of cup stacking! During this fast-paced program, Mr. Jim will share his tips and tricks to make a variety of formations out of colorful cups. All ages welcome.

BIG TRUCK DAY FEATURING POTAWATOMI ZOO, Main Branch, June 18: 10 am - 2 pm. Get a hands-on experience with the big trucks of Cass County in the library parking lot ready for your little ones to touch, sit and honk the horns. Be sure to visit the animal ambassadors from Potawatomi Zoo and enjoy our bouncy slide while you're here.

GET CREATIVE WITH LORI, Edwardsburg, June 24: 5:30 pm. Learn how to create small works of art using recycled materials and a simple weaving technique. Let local artist Lori Caskey-Sigety teach you in this easy-to-learn and fun medi-

um! Just bring is your imagination. This program is open to ages 18+ only. Registration is, call the Edwardsburg Branch at 269-487-9215.

Craft Day with Caricaturist Pigtail Polly. Main Branch, June 25: 1 - 3 pm. We're having a craft day with a special guest Caricaturist Pigtail Polly and a host of local organizations offering crafts while you wait for your caricature. Caricatures are limited and are based on a first come-first served basis.

Village Book Club, Edwardsburg, June 26: 5:30 pm. Village Book Club meets every third Thursday of the month at 5:30pm. Join us for a lively discussion of The Book of Doors by Gareth Brown. Contact Molly Harwood at 574-314-6454 for details.

PICASSO MAGIC SHOW WITH JOEL TACEY. Howard, June 26: 6 pm. Art-themed books of all sorts are brought to life with amazing magic, wacky stunts, and LOTS of audience participation. All ages are welcome!

Story Sketching with Sharron Ott Session 2, Mason Union, June 30: 1 - 3 pm. Get ready to dive into the magical world of The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum, a great activity that is perfect for all ages! Everyone gets a shot at bringing characters and scenes to life with brushes and pencils, while swapping stories and memories about the book. All artwork will be transformed into a compilation video. At the video premiere, watch your masterpieces on the big screen while you enjoy refreshments. Registration = required, call the Mason/Union Branch at 269-357-7821.

STORYTIMES: Edwardsburg: Tuesdays @ 11 am; Howard: Tuesdays @ 11 am and 6 pm; Mason/Union: Wednesdays @ 10 am; Main: Thursdays @ 11 am

DOWAGIAC DISTRICT LIBRARY SUMMER READING kicks off June 19 and runs through August 9, 2025. We will have Teen and Tween game days, audiobook listening events for ages 6 years old to 12 years old, messy time Friday's, Disney movie days, and so much more. For more information on these events, visit <https://www.dowagiadl.org/events>.

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME. TUESDAYS, 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.

S.T.E.A.M FOR TWEENS. June 18, 4pm. 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 dowagiadlbrarystaff@gmail.com.

SIP & SHARE BOOK CLUB AT SISTER LAKES BREWING June 11); 6 - 8 pm. June's Book: Funny Story by Emily Henry. For further information, call Erin at 269-782-3826 or email erin@dowagiadl.org.

MESSY TIME FRIDAYS June 13, June 20, 27; 11 am - noon. Kids of all ages Please wear older or play clothes and remember to put sunscreen on. Check the website's calendar for additional information. In the event of inclement weather, Messy Time

may need to be canceled. If in doubt, please call us at 782-3826.

THE CLASSICS BOOK CLUB, June 17; 5 - 6 pm. June's Book: The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper.

THE INKWELL EXPLORERS BOOK CLUB FOR TWEENS., June 19; 4 - 5pm. June's Book: The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb by R.L. Stine. For tweens 9-12 years old.

YA FOR ADULTS BOOK CLUB, June 19); 5 - 6 pm. June's Book: Fall of a Kingdom by Hilari Bell. For adults 18+ years old.

ADVENTURES IN BOOKLAND BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS, June 20; 4 - 5 pm. June's Book: Eva's Treetop Festival by Rebecca Elliott. For kids 6-8 years old.

CRAFT NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY: DIY FLOWER CROWNS, June 26; 5:30 - 6:45 pm. All materials are provided. Registration required, email erin@dowagiadl.org or call 269-782-3826.

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

MARCELLUS TOWNSHIP WOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LEGOS AT THE LIBRARY - all ages, every Friday, beginning, June 6 from 3 - 4:30 pm:

CRAFT SWAP during Main Street's First Friday, June 6 from 5-7 pm:- Bring your unused craft supplies to donate...select materials for your next project from the collection!

SUMMER CRAFTS FOR ALL AGES: June 11 at noon: Nature Bookmark- use leaves, flowers, stems, etc. to create your very own bookmark with special paper.

COMMUNITY READ, June 12 at 6 pm: - Pick up a copy of Women of Copper Country by Mary Doria Russel to read before the event, then join us to watch a short clip of the author before engaging with a group discussion.

LEGOS AT THE LIBRARY, June 13 from 3 - 4:30 pm: - all ages, every Friday!

CASS COUNTY CHRONICLES, June 17 at 5 pm: -Join us at the library for an engaging presentation by Rose Mary Wood as she discusses her newly published book, Chronicles of Cass County, Michigan, which brings to life the rich heritage of Cass County, emphasizing its role in Michigan's broader history.

SUMMER CRAFTS FOR ALL AGES, June 18 at noon: : Canvas Yarn Art- grab a canvas, glue and yarn to create your masterpiece.

LEGOS AT THE LIBRARY, June 20 from 3 - 4:30 pm: - all ages, every Friday!

SUMMER CRAFTS FOR ALL AGES, June 25 at noon, Butterfly/Dragonfly Felt Bookmark- create a butterfly or dragonfly bookmark using felt--feel free to decorate however you wish.

BIRDS & THREATS, June 26 at 5 pm: Gail Walters of the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo, discuss the threats that birds face, and what we can do as a community to prevent harm to our flying companions.

LEGOS AT THE LIBRARY - all ages, June 27 from 3 - 4:30 pm every Friday!

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



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Lake Life with Jane

It's June! Time to rock 'n roll

by **Jane Boudreau**

Hey Neighbors! It's June, it's finally June! Time to rock 'n roll! Time to fire up the grill and throw on some burgers and brats (check out my recipe for Pork Burgers in last month's Neighbors), pack up the coolers for the boat (and an insulated bag for all the snacks and goodies), Line up the chairs on the beach and all the sand toys for the kiddos cuz This Is How We Do It!



Our little place on Diamond View Bay

There's no better month than June. The weather is sublime. It's truly good for the soul to see people everywhere; on the water, walking down the streets, and just hearing laughter coming from your neighbor's homes. I actually look forward to putting my column together, wondering what you'd like to read about on a warm sunny day while you relax in a hammock, in the shade of your patio, stretched out getting some rays on your pier.



One of the things I love right now is early morning coffee outside on the patio or beach. It gives Poppy time to scare off all the turtles on our dock (and everyone else's), and then snoop around looking for something to roll in. All of this will require a good long nap. There's an energy here, Isn't that the way it is at the lake? After that coffee, you're planning your day, whether it's time on the water, in your kayak or on a wave runner, a trip to Dussel's for fresh veggies, fruit and maybe some plants and flowers. Friends stop by and cocktails move out to the patio to catch up and have a lot of laughs. Life is good. In our younger days with four kids, it was all about getting them fed, into the boat with the correct number of beach towels and life vests, and then spending most of the day tubing and hanging out at the sandbar, stopping at Park Shore Marina for gas, candy, maybe a six pack of beer if the cooler was running low, and of course, all the kids wanting to look at the live bait. Sometimes we were still out when the "golden hour" came around, and then you understood

the real meaning behind Diamond Sparkles. Bonfires, s'mores, and carrying limp little bodies to bed ended the day. These are the memories that are crystal clear, the oldest ones.



Your years living on the lake unfold like chapters. Sometimes I can close my eyes and hear the laughter of those crazy kids, the sound of the boats zipping across the lake, our bonfire crackling and everyone singing along to Kenny Chesney's "When the Sun Goes Down," sitting on the patio drinking beer with friends and neighbors on a hot afternoon, watching the grands make castles for their Barbie's in the sand. Oh, and I can't forget the ice cream truck coming around the corner playing the nursery rhymes, making all the little ones jump into action (long ago mine, and now the grands. And finally, closing my eyes and conjuring up these lovely, long ago memories, I'm usually sitting outside alone with just the dogs for company, a good book and a glass of Pinot Grigio. The water is still and I can hear laughter across the bay. These are the good days. They were all good days.



June's Signature Cocktail

The Hugo Spritz originated from Italy as an alternative to the Aperol Spritz. I searched and couldn't find how it got its name, maybe a bartender somewhere along the way attached his name to it (or the name of the establishment). It's light and refreshing-something you can sip in the afternoon or throughout the evening if you don't want anything heavier to weigh you down and/or before you switch to your favorite cocktail. If you've retained anything from my herb gardening tips, mint grows prolifically, so if you have it in your garden or know someone with it, you are set for an afternoon of these cocktails.

Ingredients:

5 mint leaves, plus more for serving

Juice of 1 lime
1 oz. of St. Germain Elderflower Liqueur
Ice
4 oz. Prosecco
1 oz. soda water
1 lime wedge

Directions:

In a wine glass, combine mint leaves, lime juice, and St. Germain. Gently muddle mint leaves until they begin to break down. Fill the glass with ice and add the Prosecco and top off with the soda water. Garnish with more mint and a lime wedge.

Recipes this month are centered around what can I throw together easily when people are coming over and the same when you need to bring something to a party or get-together. Very few ingredients, less time, portable and delicious! Nothing fancy and perfect for June!



Warm Goat Cheese in Marinara

This app is about as easy as you can get with very few ingredients which means you can throw it together in a New York minute when you have people over and it's portable if you feel comfortable assembling it wherever you're bringing it. So let's get started. Did I mention it's delish?

Ingredients:

1 log of goat cheese (4 oz.)
1 c. marinara sauce
2 T fresh minced basil
1/4 t fresh cracked pepper
Toasted French baguette bread slices

Directions:

Freeze cheese for 15 minutes. Unwrap and cut into 1/2 inch slices. In an ungreased small shallow baking dish, combine marinara sauce and basil. Top with cheese slices and black pepper. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until heated through. Serve with toasted baguette hot, warm, or at room temperature. This can be prepared ahead and reheated. Enjoy!



Strawberry Cabrese Pasta Salad

I've been following the blog and Instagram feed where this recipe origi-

nates, and I'm never disappointed with any of Ali's recipes and her all around enthusiasm for all things food and photography. Here she was hell bent on making a summer salad that didn't have mayo or Greek yogurt (the usual substitute). I brought this to my daughter's home on Mother's Day and it was a huge hit.

Ingredients:

1 lb dried pasta (farfalle)
1 pint fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
1 ball fresh mozzarella, diced
1/2 c loosely packed, torn fresh basil
3 T balsamic glaze*

Directions:

Cook pasta in a large pot of generously salted water boiling water according to package directions until al dente. Drain and immediately rinse with cold water to stop the pasta from cooking.

Toss the pasta with the strawberries, mozzarella, and basil. Pour half the pasta into a large serving bowl and drizzle with balsamic glaze. Then pour the remaining pasta on top and drizzle with the balsamic glaze. Toss the whole salad together well. Sprinkle with extra basil if desired. Also, if the pasta seems dry, you can add a tablespoon of olive oil and mix it in well.

*I use Alessi Balsamic Reduction. I like that it can be used in so many ways, from salad dressings to Asian recipes.



Gooey Chocolate-Peanut Bars

This is such a winner for kids and adults-one of those treats that once you try, you keep going back for more! And like the other recipes this month, very few ingredients and easy to transport to a party or get-together. (Make sure to leave some behind for yourself!).

Ingredients:

1 package 16-1/2 refrigerated cookie dough
2 c chocolate covered peanuts
1 c miniature marshmallows
1/2 c butterscotch ice cream topping

Directions:

Press cookie dough into an ungreased 9 x 13 baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 14 to 16 minutes until edges are slightly browned and center is set. Sprinkle with peanuts and marshmallows, drizzle with ice cream topping. Bake 6-8 minutes longer or until marshmallows are puffed. Let cool and cut into squares. Have one and then step away.

Jane's Imaginary Book Club

This book has deserved a place on my bookshelf for the longest time, but to be honest, I've had a personal issue with Kristin Hannah books forever. It's rather unfair and not like me at all, but it's all because of one of her earlier books that I

See
JANE
on the next page

Our Children

Navigating behavior challenges

by **SANDY FLEMING**

Summer break is nearly upon us, and with it will come inevitable behavior challenges and stresses that are common when people spend more time than usual together. It is a given that the children's and the teens' wants and desires will conflict with your own at least sometimes. It's normal, and it's uncomfortable for everyone. But the most important thing to remember is that you are the adult in the room. The kids are learning how to respond to conflict, so you can help guide them. If you keep that in mind – you are the teacher and the guide – and your child is the learner (even if they don't know it). Just this little bitty change in your approach will work wonders with your child.

Common Reasons for 'Misbehavior'

Notice that I put the word, "misbehavior" in quotation marks. That was intentional. If you think about it, WE define "misbehavior" based on what we want to see or not see from the child or teenager. Underneath it all, your child or teenager is simply doing a behavior. Behaviors are things that we all do to either get something we want or to avoid or stop something we don't want or like. So if you look at all of a person's actions as behaviors, you can get away from the judgment call about if the behavior is "bad" or "good." It's more important to uncover the reason for the behavior. What is causing or motivating it? Examine what happens after the behavior too...is it an outcome that the child or teen will consider "successful?"

Let's look at a simple example together. Think about a child who constantly interrupts adults speaking. We consider this behavior to be rude and unacceptable, but why might a child do this? Usually it's because they want our attention. So take a child who wants attention and interrupts, and give in to that behavior a few times (even unintentionally), and suddenly interrupting seems like a great solution to their need. Carefully examine how you respond to unacceptable behaviors, particularly your consistency. Do you allow the behavior sometimes without thinking or in certain situations? Do you give attention to the interrupting child or teen (even "nega-

tive" attention like correction or consequences is still attention, and may be inadvertently rewarding an undesirable behavior). Behaviors that seem successful to people WILL be repeated (child or adult). In fact, successful behaviors are far more likely to be repeated than punished behaviors are to be decreased. Positive reinforcement (i.e. meeting the unspoken goal) is far more powerful than nearly any consequence or punishment.

Most undesirable behaviors have roots in unmet needs. Children have lots of needs. Which could be triggering the behavior that is bothering you? They need their basic physical needs met, like having adequate, nutritious foods and plenty of water (not pop or sugary drinks). If kids are hungry or thirsty, they often will act out. They need to feel safe and loved. If adults in their lives are consistently finding fault, correcting, or yelling, this unmet need can cause behavior problems. They need consistent limits. The rules in their lives need to stay the same and the responses to behaviors need to be reliable (not punitive). If this need is not met, children and teens will continually test the boundaries of the current situation (and your current level of patience). There's always going to be some testing that goes on – children are continually growing and learning, and so will need to see if that has changed anything. But this unmet need can only be countered by consistency and transparency. Kids should always know where they stand, as well as what behaviors will be acceptable as well as what is not acceptable. Kids need attention. They need undivided attention from adults at times. This means that parents and caregivers play games, read stories, have conversations, and so forth and focus solely on relationship-building with the kids (no phones, no other chores, no side conversations with others). When this need goes unmet, children often conclude that the only way to get your attention is to act out. Punishment and consequences are still forms of attention, and children frequently conclude they are better than nothing! Children also need to feel successful and like they are valued as human beings. Be sure to separate the behavior from the child. This means calling out behaviors you don't like and ALSO praising those that you do like. In

fact, studies show that positive comments should outnumber the negative or corrective comments by something like ten to one. Take a good look at what you say to your child and when. Kids with this unmet need may shut down and conclude that there is no way to please you. They feel like everything they try is unnoticed or misunderstood. Sometimes it helps to put criticism or correction inside a "compliment sandwich": Praise some aspect of what the child has done ("Thank you for noticing _____. That was very observant."), give a gentle reminder of acceptable behavior ("But remember that you should wait until I am done talking so you can have a turn, too."), and then close with another compliment ("I do love hearing what's on your mind, and I am looking forward to your turn to talk after we are done.").

Behavior Management Basics

These principles from behavior management might help you in navigating behavioral challenges from children or teens.

- Clearly name the behavior you desire and the one you don't. Behaviors are observable and specific. Any adult looking at the situation should see and know exactly what you are talking about. Words like "be good" or "don't cause problems" are not observable or specific. My vision of a child being good is likely totally different than yours. Stick to things that can be seen and heard.
- Behavior always has a reason. No one "misbehaves" solely for the sake of misbehaving or bothering others. Look for an underlying unmet need or an outcome the person finds desirable.
- Immediate rewards or consequences are more powerful than delayed ones. Be sure to examine what happens immediately after an undesirable behavior. Losing phone access for tomorrow is a delayed consequence that won't be as powerful as whatever is happening immediately after the behavior.
- Tangible rewards are more powerful than intangible. If you are really struggling to change a behavior, consider using a tangible reward for a while. Tangible rewards include a small treat, a toy, money, or even (for an older kid) a card that can be turned in later for a privilege. Intangible rewards are useful

as children begin to grow up. Things like getting better grades, feeling satisfaction with a job well done, and so forth are intangible rewards. Sometimes you need to start with the basics and work your way up to them.

- Positive outcomes are more powerful than consequences. Choose the behavior you want to eliminate, and find a more positive action to substitute instead. Reward this action and as far as possible, ignore the one you don't want to see.
- State what you do want instead of what you don't want. Remember to word rules in positive ways ("please walk" instead "don't run") because it's easier for the brain to process what to do than what not to do.
- Focus on controlling the triggers and outcomes of behaviors. It will work better if you can avoid the triggers or control the outcome. You can't actually "control" another person's behavior, just your preparation for it and your response to it.
- Be consistent. Make a plan and stick to it. Many behaviors have become habits and they will take time to change. Apply your new plan consistently for at least a few weeks before you decide to change it.
- Be transparent. In a calm moment, discuss the plan with the person. Clearly identify the objectionable behavior (not turning in math homework, for example), and state the goal behavior clearly (not "get better grades" but "turn in your assignments in math"). Set a clear goal (no missing assignments in math when I check your grades at the end of each day), and a reward for achievement (If you have no missing assignments, I will put a star on the calendar. If you get four stars of five, we can go out to eat on Saturday). Clearly outline the consequences (If you do not get at least four stars by the end of the week, you will not have video game time on Saturday).

These nuggets together will help you develop effective ways to respond to undesirable behaviors that you want to change. Remember that your actions and reactions are the key to changing behavior (not the child's).

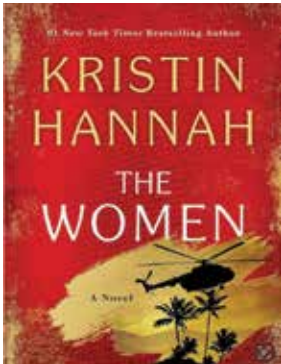
Sandy Fleming is a tutor and writer living in Edwardsburg. Visit her websites at <https://learningnook.com> and <https://sandyflemingonline.com> for more great tips on helping children learn and grow!

JANE

Continued from previous page

found to be so badly written, from the plot, to the bad storytelling, to the predictability in the ending. Said book went on to launch her fan club and she churned out book after

book, and while they were excellent, I turned a deaf ear. Several people recommended this to me and when I read the bio, it reminded me of the television series back in the late 1980's called China Beach, which centered around a nurse stationed in South Vietnam during the war. This spurred me on to read the book and I couldn't put it down. There were men in Vietnam and they served

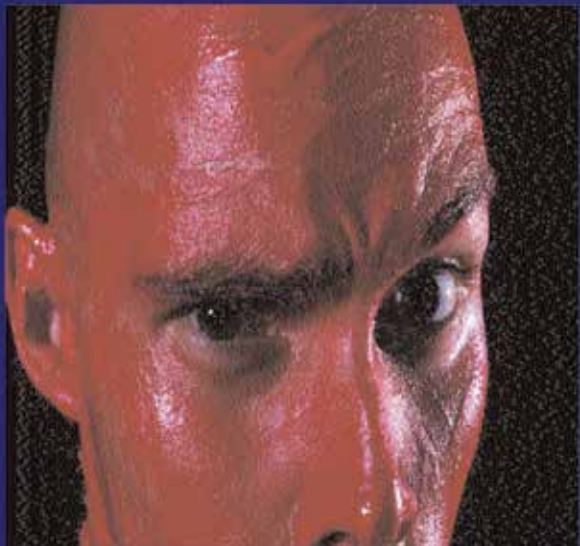


our country, and this book follows the story of a young naive girl, a nurse, who decides to enlist. The book expands a 20 year journey where Frankie seeks to overcome PTSD, addiction, and feelings of betrayal as she tries to fit back into the life she had before she left for the war. I don't think I'll ever doubt Kristin Hannah as anything other than a very gifted writer and I hope you pick up this book if you haven't already. Raise your glass of Hugo Spritz after our discussion as we nibble on the Warm Goat Cheese in Marinara, or hell, the Gooey Chocolate-Peanut Bars. Lick your fingers girls!

This wraps up another highlight of your downtime at the lake, perusing Neighbors. Be sure to cut out a few ads and my recipes before you toss this into your bonfire! Happy start to your summer. Start making those memories!

Jane Boudreau is a writer, blogger, and newspaper columnist who lives on Diamond Lake as well as in Chicago and Asheville, NC. You can reach her at blndy9@yahoo.com

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'bout boats and boating

Boating safety: It's all fun and games till it's not

By **RUSTY COLLINS**

Boating offers us a break from the day to day grind, whether it's a leisurely cruise on a lake or surfing and boarding for hours. However, safety should always be the top priority to ensure that every trip is both enjoyable and incident-free. Here's a comprehensive guide to boating safety best practices.

Did you know DNR and other water authorities do not need probable cause to stop you on the water for a vessel safety check? Making sure you have all the boxes checked not only keeps everyone happy legally, but it's just the right thing to do!



1. WEAR LIFE JACKETS

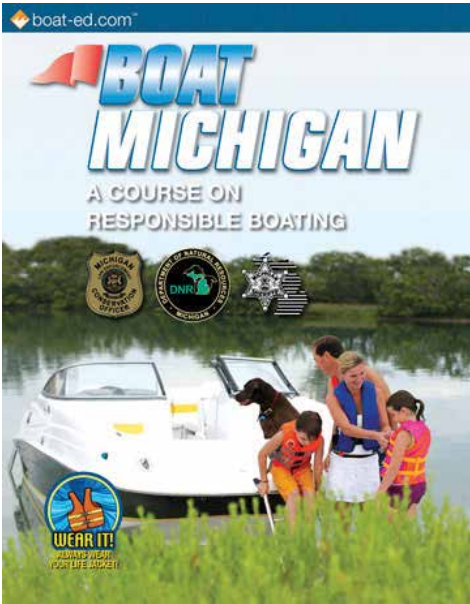
Life jackets are non-negotiable. Every person on board should have a properly fitted, Coast Guard-approved life jacket. This is the first thing DNR is asking when they pull alongside your boat for a safety check. Children should always be wearing a life jacket.

2. AVOID ALCOHOL

Boating under the influence is not only illegal but also highly dangerous. Alcohol impairs judgment, coordination,

and reaction times — essential skills for safe boating.

Forty percent of accidents on the water are alcohol related. This is the largest contributing factor to accidents on the water and at the boat ramp. Designate a driver just like on the road!



3. CHECK THE RULES

Before boating on a body of water, check the rules for that state. Every state has different rules and mandates that sometimes change annually. We forget the rules sometimes. Check them out at: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/boating/rules-and-regs>

4. SET THE TONE

When heading out for a trip on the lake, make sure you inform your passen-



gers of any safety rules they should be aware of. Reading your passengers and knowing their skill (or lack thereof) on the water is very important. You are the captain, and even though this isn't the ocean, all passengers need to know it's your rules right now.

5. INSPECT YOUR VESSEL

Regular maintenance checks can prevent mechanical failures. Ensure the engine, fuel system, electrical components, and safety gear are in good working order before every trip.

6. TAKE YOUR CELL PHONE

A cell phone on the boat is an important safety tool. Although we are all trying to disconnect from distractions, take a phone for safety

7. CARRY SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Essential items include:
Fire extinguishers
First aid kit
Visual distress signals (flares, flags)
Sound-producing devices (whistle, horn)
Anchor and emergency rope

8. FOLLOW CAPACITY LIMITS

Overloading your boat can lead to instability and capsizing. Always adhere to the manufacturer's capacity recommendations for both weight and passengers.

9. BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

Learn basic first aid and CPR. Talk with your family about what your plan is if something happens on the water. Quick, confident responses can save lives.

10. RESPECT THE LAKE

Follow eco-friendly practices like proper disposal, avoiding sensitive marine areas, and minimizing wake near shorelines to protect wildlife and lake health. And, respect your fellow boaters! We are all out here trying to do the same thing. Be kind.

We all love the lake. We all love boats. But most of all we love our friends and family. Take the time to make your boat safe and educate yourself!

Safe Boating!
See you on the

lake!

Rusty Collins is the general manager of Boat Butler Marine. Contact him at rusty@boatbutlermarine.com





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Field Trip



A quick sailing trip to the Virgin Islands

Last month a couple friends joined my wife and me for a quick sailing trip to the British Virgin Islands. When we rose on the morning we were to leave, Mother Nature blasted Cass County with the last snowfall (I think) of the season (see photo at left), just to let us know we were making the right choice.

After driving to Indianapolis Airport, we boarded a plane that had a stop in Miami, where we were able to OJ-run our way through the airport to get on the next plane to Beef Island, Tortola. The next stop was a

local rum distillery, followed by the charter base in Road Town, where we finally boarded and sailed off into the Caribbean. The weather was perfect, the seas were calm and the wind was ideal for sailing.

If you've never been there, take it from me (I've been there a lot, this was my 28th visit to the BVI), there are few places on earth that are a better place to visit when the snow and wind make spring in Cass County something less than enjoyable.

Oh, by the way, the rum's pretty good, too!



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Field Trip



The BVI has something for everyone - great roads with little traffic (sometimes), plenty of family fun, secluded beaches, modern boats, friendly wildlife, local, natural food (they grow their own lobsters there), fun bars, uncrowded wading pools ... but just in case you don't like the bathing or sleeping arrangements, file a complaint ... one flight up.



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After more than 20 years of publishing Neighbors, Fred and Phil, the founders and operators of Neighbors have started thinking that we've become a couple of old, worn down septuagenarians, and maybe it's time to start thinking about retiring.

But we'd hate to see this thing just ... End.

So we're hoping somewhere in this wide world there's someone with a bit more energy who might be interested in carrying on in our place; someone with fewer miles; someone with a background in newspapers, magazines or advertising; someone with skills in publishing and a desire to own and run a newspaper and to be an integral part of this community.

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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

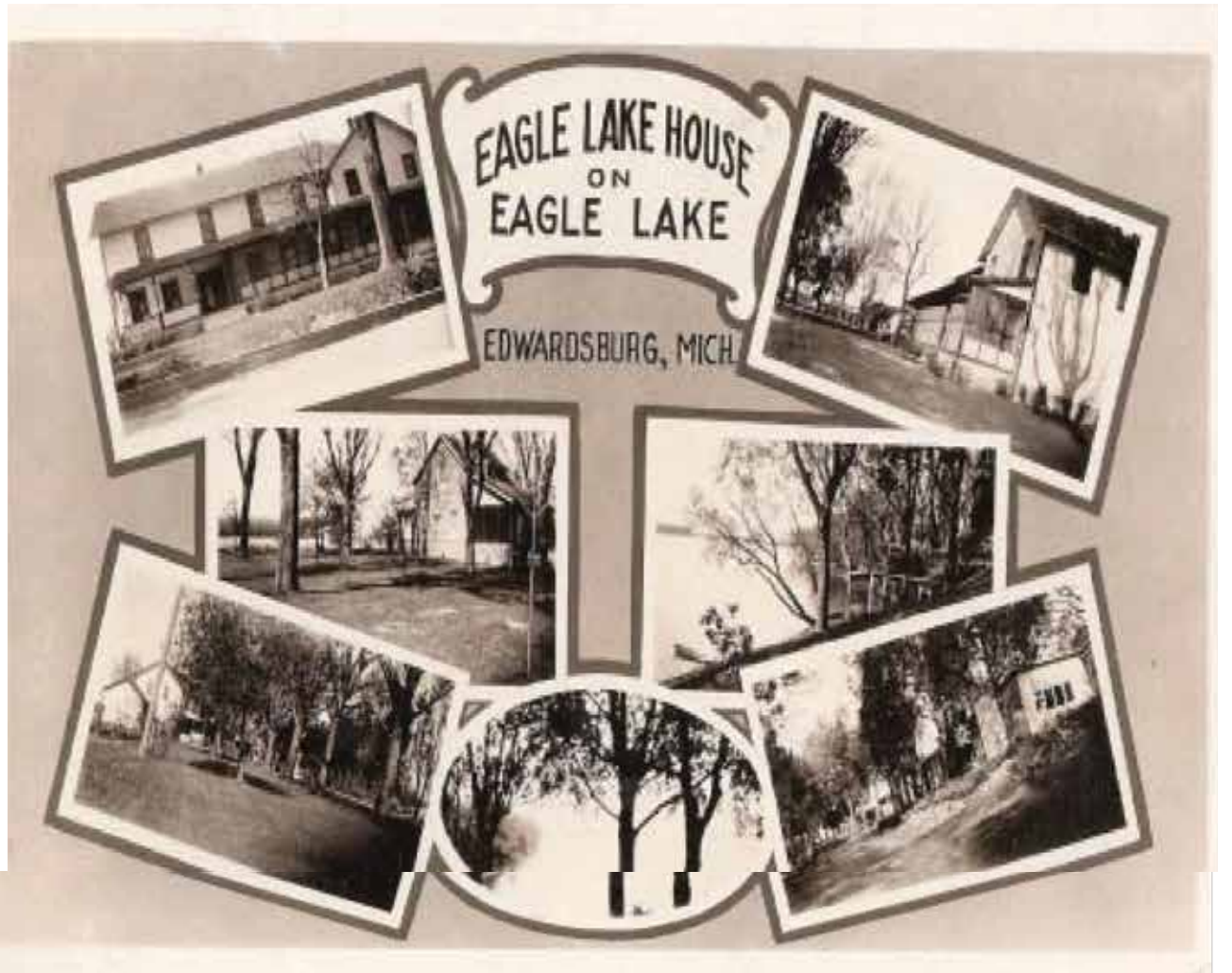
Publishing.

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 website: www.arcadiapublishing.com

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In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of various places around Cass County. In future issues, we will couple additional cards from one or more of the area's lakes with views of nearby communities, lakes and countryside.



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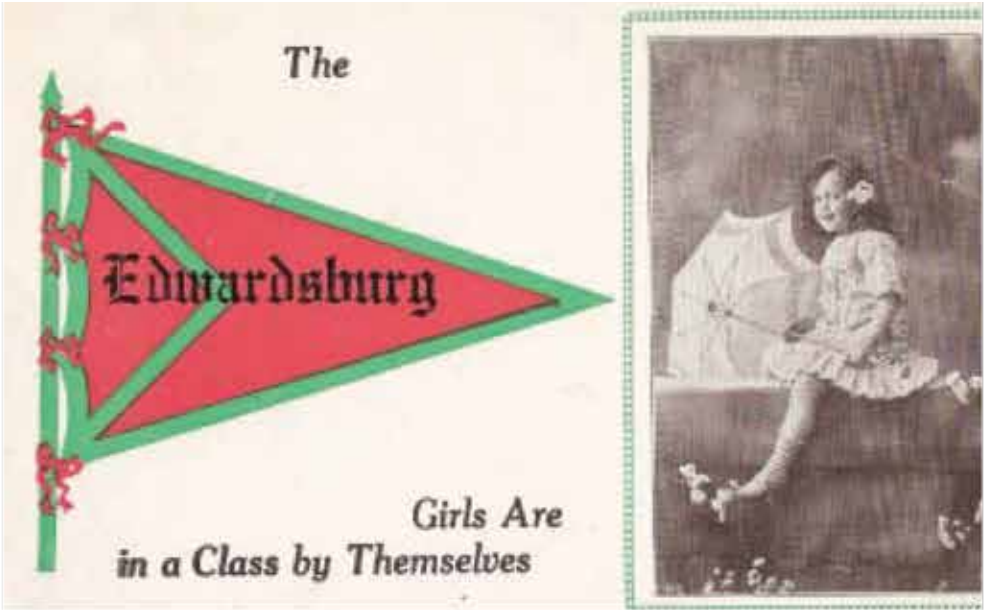

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Nature Notes

Spring birds bring color to local feeders

by Jonathan Wuepper
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Local History Branch
Cass District Library
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Cassopolis, MI 49031
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On May 2, a male yellow-headed blackbird turned up at the backyard bird feeder of Denise Martin of St. Joseph. Yellow-headed blackbirds are common west of the Great Lakes, north to Alberta and Manitoba and south to Oklahoma and southern California. The yellow-headed blackbird nests in Michigan in small, disjunct populations around the state. It is a regular nesting species, albeit in small numbers, in the Saginaw Bay region. The species has also been known to nest at times in the Muskegon area and at several locations in the Upper Peninsula.

The species has been an uncommon spring and fall migrant and are a rare winter visitor in Southwest Michigan. Most sightings in Southwest Michigan involve single individuals, usually males, as they stand out with their distinct yellow head and throat feathers among flocks of red-winged blackbirds, common grackles and brown-headed cowbirds. Female yellow-headed blackbirds are slightly smaller than males and are brown in color with the exception of a yellow wash on their throat and chest.

Most records of the yellow-headed blackbird in Berrien County occur April 15-May 15. Although there have been local records during the breeding season, no nesting pair of yellow-headed blackbirds are known from Berrien County. Earlier this spring, a male yellow-headed blackbird was present April 20-25 at the Three Oaks Wastewater Ponds.

I have received multiple photographs of both male rose-breasted grosbeaks and Baltimore orioles over the last several weeks. Most notable was a photo of three male rose-breasted grosbeaks taken on May 2 in Hagar Township by Art



Top left: Male yellow-headed blackbird at the feeder of Denise Martin, May 2, St. Joseph.

Top right: A nice male Baltimore oriole sits on a hummingbird feeder, April 29, at the home of Dave Bach of Coloma Township.

Above left: A male blue grosbeak on April 25, on Buffalo



Road, Galien Township is only the third record of this southern species for Berrien County. Photo by Josh Duis of Niles.

Above right: Three of five male rose-breasted grosbeaks are seen in this photo taken May 2 by Art Herman of Hagar Township.

Herman. Rose-breasted grosbeaks are common migrants and fairly common in our woods during the nesting season.

A male Baltimore was photographed at the hummingbird feeder of David Bach of Coloma Township. Baltimore orioles, like the rose-breasted grosbeak, are much beloved Neotropical migrants and their return each spring is anticipated by both seasoned and novice birdwatchers. The

Baltimore oriole will frequent hummingbird feeders and eat orange slices if they are put out on wires. As spring progresses, the Baltimore oriole relies less on hummingbird nectar and more on insects and other small invertebrates for its sustenance.

A male blue grosbeak was photographed on April 25 along Buffalo Road in Galien Township by Josh Duis of Niles

and represents the third record of this southern species for Berrien County. The previous two records from Berrien County were

one on May 18, 1991 at St. Joseph and the second record, involving a single individual on May 5, 2010 at Warren Dunes State Park. In 2011 I discovered a male blue grosbeak that was defending nesting territory in Pokagon Township, Cass County. An adult female was never seen with the male. Presumably the same male returned to the same site in 2012 and 2013. There is one record of the blue grosbeak from Decatur Township, Van Buren County, present July 4-10, 2011.

Note that blue grosbeaks strongly resemble the indigo bunting, an abundantly common species in our area from May through September. Thus, identification of blue grosbeaks should be made with care.

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

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I don't miss TV but I miss Norm's zingers



When I was growing up in a mostly middle-class family in a mostly middle-class city in the almost middle of the heartland of our mostly great country, something very unexpected and unusual occurred almost overnight when this metaphorical, behind-the-curtain magician waved his magic twanger

across my Oz and out of nowhere, a television elbowed its way into my consciousness and into my world.

I was pretty young when my family first got a TV, so my memory is blurred by the years, miles and reruns, but I seem to remember being relatively unimpressed. Except for some early westerns and Saturday morning cartoons (and a couple dramas like Sea Hunt and Sky King), the new electronic televised offerings of the late 1950 were less than electric for a pre-teen.

I remember suffering through a few soap operas (thank God mom wasn't a fan), mediocre-at-best game shows (where it seemed like Bob Barker gave every winner a washing machine), an assortment of inane variety shows, Topo Gigio and the plate-spinning guy on Sullivan's show, a lot of really bad commercials, and that infamous native American caricature "test pattern" thing that came on every night about 10 and stayed on until the Today Show came on the next morning.

As television and I matured together, some things got better. Star Trek, Steve McQueen, Sky's niece Penny, Annette and the kids on Art Linkletter's House Party helped me get through weekdays, and when God invented color, Disney and Bonanza made Sunday nights tolerable ... but about that time TV (whether it was in color or not) got particularly ugly, and even the antics and sanitized images of Donald Duck's newsy nephews, Walter, Chet and David, couldn't keep the horrors of war and social upheaval from turning my youthful nightly dreamscapes from ice cream cones and unicorns into the now graphically televised violence and social mayhem that bubbled the churning amphora of my newfound TV-inspired adolescent angst.

Despite my initial and sustained disdain, for longer than I wish to admit, I abided the medium, even occasionally plugging my tube and myself into a few of the

Nielsen chart toppers. A few stand out (everyone my age can name half a dozen or more favorites from back when), but after high school my world got rocked pretty quickly. In 1970, just after I graduated, while the world was watching Viet Nam almost live on TV, I moved out of my parent's home, started college classes and took a job at a local grocery store (oh, yeah, I also got married that year), so I didn't really have a lot of time for watching television. I remember hearing a comedian a few years ago say that if you remember the 1970s, you weren't there. I was there, but I don't remember much of the 1970s, at least not the TV shows of the era.

The 1980s found me much more traditional. I was through college, had two kids, working at a newspaper all day (and too many evenings), and, like most of middle America, I was coming home to a fast-food dinner (we were both working, Nurse Sandy even more than I), downing a couple beers and collapsing in front of the tube when we could stay awake past sunset.

I remember being particularly fond of a few shows of that decade. Sandy and I watched shows like Soap, Mash, All in the Family, Barney Miller, Taxi, Mork and Mindy, and from time to time we enjoyed a show set in a Boston tavern called Cheers.

Although a lot of the episodes were forgettable, having grown up spending a lot of time in my grandfather's tavern, I could relate to the characters. For the first time, I wasn't seeing made-for-TV heroes and villains, queens and crooks, I was seeing people who looked and acted like people I'd known all my life. Sure their names were different (I doubt TV writers would have used names like Sneaky Pete, Swede or Rozplochowski), and the actors didn't look like they'd just spent a shift on the line at Studebaker, but there they were, ordinary guys having a beer, right on my TV in my living room.

There was one character, Norm, that I particularly liked. Norm was played by George Wendt (RIP George), who had what I still consider to be some of the best comedy lines ever spoken on television. In almost every episode Norm would walk into the tavern and everyone there would yell "NORM." Then whoever was bartending that night would set up Norm with a straight line, and Norm would zap them with a zinger.

"Can I draw you a beer, Norm?"

"No, I know what they look like. Just pour me one."

"Hey Norm, how's the world been treating you?"
"Like a baby treats a diaper."

"Whatcha up to, Norm?"

"My ideal weight if I were eleven feet tall."

You get the picture, zingers that made you laugh out loud, made you want to tune in next week. But that changed and somewhere I lost interest and reduced my worshiping of the one-eyed monster to near zero.

I think it started with television news. As a journalist I became disenchanted with the changes and the commercialism of the news. If it bleeds it leads; get the widow on the set; quiz show scandals; Fred Friendly resigning over I Love Lucy, and Howard Beale urging us to yell "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore" as we throw out TVs out onto the streets.

Then I totally blew my cork at the overuse of the canned laugh track, that annoying, recorded, fingers-on-chalkboard noise they play on shows that aren't taped in front of a live audience. It's supposed to sound like a studio audience laughing, but when they play it after nearly every spoken line, for me it becomes not only ridiculous sounding ("Hi honey, I'm home." "Hahahahaha"), it also creates exactly the opposite effect.

I just can't stop hearing it (YAAAAAAA! Please stop!)

Anyway somewhere around Y2k I gave up on television. I still stream movies and a few episodic shows like GOT or Breaking Bad, but I watch no regularly broadcasts, and absolutely NO NEWSCASTS from either side (when and why did news choose sides?).

All that having been said, I admit that I will miss Norm, and I definitely miss his zingers, so I'm particularly grateful when someone zings me in real time.

Most recently I got zinged when my mortician neighbor responded to, "Hi Pat, good to see you," with, "Better to be seen than viewed."

The best I've heard lately though was neighbor Ed's zinger when I asked how his health was.

"Pretty good," he said with a wry smile. "I get up every morning and go to the bathroom. And I'm glad when I do those things in that order ..."

Nice zingers, Pat and Ed. Thanks.

And there wasn't even a laugh track!





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