

Neighbors

AUGUST 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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To contact Neighbors

(269) 228-1080
(269) 476-1680

www.cassneighbors.com

sailorphil@philvitale.com
Brazilstein@gmail.com



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Field Trip: The Lerner Theatre

Elkhart, IN

Regional News

And then there were none

The Beckwith Theatre Company will present "And Then There Were None" by Agatha Christie. Directed by Jack Gannon on Friday and Saturday, August 8 and 9 at 7:30 pm, and on Sunday, August 10 at 2 pm.

Play synopsis: Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None is the best-selling mystery of all time. The story begins when eight disparate guests arrive at an isolated mansion located on an island off the coast of Devon and are tended to by two married domestics who prepared the house for their arrival. During the first evening a gramophone recording accuses all ten people of past crimes that went unpunished by the law. Soon they start dying one at a time, and the remaining guests deduce that the murderer is one of their own.

The Beckwith Theatre Company is located at 100 New York Ave in Dowagiac. Tickets are \$15 (reserve online at www.beckwiththeatre.com/box-office). For more information contact BeckwithTheatreMI@gmail.com or phone (269) 782-7653.

And Then There Were None is produced by a special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

Pauley to speak on retirement

"From There to Here: How You Can Do Anything After Retirement" is the presentation theme of Edwardsburg Author Jim Pauley when he speaks at 7 pm., Thurs., Aug. 21, at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum.

He was a flight attendant for 45 years before publishing his first memoir and first book, Bumpy Rides and Soft

Landings. That publication has won numerous awards, including a second-place award in the Humor Genre from the International Book Publishers Association. And now? In addition to authoring An Unconditional Friendship, another award-winning book, he teaches the art of creating writing at the Forever Learning Institute in South Bend.

Pauley has traveled extensively on behalf of the Bumpy Rides book, including New Orleans, New York, and Denver, as well as to several cities in the region.

An Edwardsburg native, he is the son of the late Barbara Long Pauley and the grandson of the late Harley E. Long of Adamsville. After graduating from Edwardsburg High School in 1974, he earned a bachelor's degree in German and Spanish from Albion College, where he minored in education.

He had planned to enter the field of international business but instead, spent 35 years working as a flight attendant for American Airlines. On one of his last flights before retirement, a passenger handed him his business card. A year later, he got in touch with the man and spent another 10 years flying for a privately-owned airline.

Pauley will relate his many life experiences and the versatility that comes with remaining open to change. He believes, "You can do anything you want after retirement."

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:

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.

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

Lerner Theater Tuesday Tours

The Lerner Theater, 410 S. Main St., Elkhart will also offer Theatre Tour Tuesdays on 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 events listed

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.

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/>

Additionally, the city of Elkhart and The Lerner Theatre will present Celebration Under The Stars featuring







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Regional News

Kool & the Gang and special guest, The Commodores on Saturday, September 6th, at 7 pm. This free performance, presented by The Elkhart County CVB is envisioned as a groundbreaking event that blends Elkhart's musical heritage with world-class production.

Celebration Under The Stars will feature an inspiring atmosphere that activates Elkhart's Central Green in ways never seen before as an extension of The Lerner's 100th anniversary celebration. This event will showcase Elkhart's spirit, commitment to placemaking, and tradition of exceeding expectations.

For details visit <https://thelerner.com/event/celebration-under-the-stars/>

Tips to Prevent Heat-Related Illness as Temperatures Rise

With high temperatures forecast, the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCHDH) is urging residents to take precautions to avoid heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Residents are encouraged to follow these best practices during extreme heat:

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water and avoid sugary or alcoholic beverages.
- Limit outdoor activities. Try to stay indoors during the hottest parts of the day, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Dress appropriately. Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid sunburn. Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply as needed.
- Find air conditioning. Spend time in air-conditioned buildings. Even a few hours can help prevent heat illness. If you do not have access to air condition-

ing, text or call Michigan 2-1-1 for information on local cooling centers. Cooling centers can also be located at the 2-1-1 website by typing in "Extreme Heat Cooling Programs" in the "I am looking for:" bar.: <https://mi211.org/>

- Check on vulnerable individuals. Older adults, young children, and people with medical conditions are at higher risk of heat-related illnesses.
- Never leave children or pets in a parked car, even with cracked windows. Temperatures inside vehicles can rise to life-threatening levels within minutes. Know the warning signs of heat-related illness, which may include:
 - Heavy sweating
 - Muscle cramps
 - Weakness and dizziness
 - Headache
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Fainting
 - Body temperature above 103

If you suspect someone is suffering from heatstroke, call 911 immediately and take steps to cool them down. For more information and resources on staying safe during extreme heat, visit the MDHHS Heat Awareness and Safety Fact Sheet.

Grant money available

Van Buren County is now accepting proposals for the Opioid Settlement Grant Program. They have up to \$300,000 available over two years to support local efforts that prevent and respond to opioid use. These funds come from national settlements with companies involved in the opioid crisis. The County Board of Commissioners formed a

Steering Committee to guide this process. The Steering Committee's funding priorities focus on

- * Access to treatment and recovery support, especially follow-up care after release from jail or court programs.
- * Transitional and supportive housing to fill critical gaps.
- * Transportation solutions for rural residents.
- * Education and stigma reduction so people understand and back clinics and programs.
- * School-based prevention programs for youth.

Who can apply: Nonprofits, schools, local governments, tribal entities, recov-

ery coalitions and faith-based groups.

Funding details:

Total pool: \$300,000 over two years (2025-2027)

Grant term: January 1, 2025-December 31, 2026

No matching funds required

Quick facts:

Deadline: August 15, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. EDT

Award notifications: By September 30, 2025

View the full RFP and application materials at www.vbopioids.com.

For questions, email communityservices@vanburencountymi.gov or call (269) 657-8200 X 1073

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Regional Calendar

MISC. AREA EVENTS
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. 57623058

Car Show, Cass Medical Care Facility, 10 am - 2 pm

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, August 21, 7:30 - 9 pm

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 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 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 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.

MATH SCOOPS All Branch Locations, August 4- August 30. Get rewarded for learning! During the month of August join Math Scoops, an ice cream math club. Sign up at any branch location during the month of August and bring your completed packet back for an ice cream treat. This program is intended for those in preschool through grade 6 to help practice math skills before the new school year begins.

YOUNG INVENTORS Howard Branch, Saturday, August 2: 10:30am. 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.

XERCES SOCIETY PRESENTS: XKIDS AND INCREDIBLE INVERTEBRATES SERIES* Main Branch, Session 1: Tuesday, August 5: 1:00pm, Session 2: Tuesday, August 12: 1:00pm. The Xerces Society protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Learn how to become an XKid and uses your superpowers to protect incredible animals! Go on an adventure with Blue the Butterfly to meet other invertebrates and learn about their superpowers. All materials will be provided. Participants should plan to attend both sessions. Registration is required, contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 to register.

ART CONTEST RECEPTION Mason/ Union Branch, Saturday, August 9: 1:00pm. Join us in celebrating local artists and their achievements! The Friends of the Mason/Union Branch Library will announce the winners of their annual art contest with an exciting reception. Questions? Call the Mason/Union Branch at 269-357-7821.

ADULT CRAFT CLUB: DIY MOD PODGE BOOKMARKS* Main Branch Wednesday, August 13: 1:00pm. Join us at the Main Branch each month for a new craft project with Adult Craft Club. This month, create a unique bookmark out of paper napkins and blank wood bookmarks! All materials will be provided. Registration is required, contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 to register.

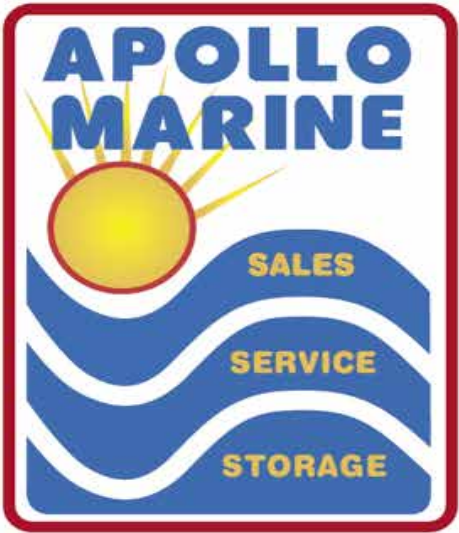
HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT Edwardsburg Branch, Monday, August 18: 1:00pm. Looking for a fun way to meet other homeschoolers? Then look no further! Join us at the Edwardsburg Branch for a STEAM related activity. This program is open to youth ages 5-12. All materials will be provided.

SAVAGE READERS BOOK CLUB Savage Bean Coffee Co. Tuesday, August 19:



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Regional Calendar

10:00am. 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.

DROP-IN PROGRAM: BACK TO SCHOOL ESSENTIALS – DIY PENCIL CASE Edwardsburg Branch, Wednesday, August 20: 10:00am – 12:00pm. Get ready for back to school by designing a unique cloth pencil case. Drop-in from 10:00am to 12:00pm to decorate your very own pencil pouch using a fun crayon transfer technique! This program is intended for ages 5 - 18 and is available while supplies last. We'll see you there! Questions? Be sure to call the Edwardsburg Branch at 269-487-9215.

VILLAGE BOOK CLUB Thursday, August 21: 5:30pm. Village Book Club meets every third Thursday of the month at 5:30pm. Join us for a lively book discussion of Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson. Please contact Molly Welsch at 269-487-9215 for more details.

AUTHOR VISIT: MICHAEL DELAWARE PRESENTING MURDER IN VICTORIAN WESTERN MICHIGAN Howard Branch, Thursday, August 21: 6:00pm. Join us for an intriguing and informative presentation by author Michael Delaware on his new book Murder in Victorian Western Michigan at the Howard Branch. Mr. Delaware will share a story specifically about true crime in Berrien County from his book! Copies of the book will be available for sale and author signing. You will not want to miss this!

To see the upcoming events for August visit <https://www.cassdistrictlibrary.org/events/>

DOWAGIAC DISTRICT LIBRARY SUMMER READING ends on August 9, 2025. We will have Teen and Tween game days,

audiobook listening events for ages 6 years old to 12 years old, Disney movie days, and so much more. For more information on these events, visit <https://www.dowagiacdli.org/events>.

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME. TUESDAYS: 10:30-11:30 am. The Dowagiac District Library offers this weekly story time each Tuesday at 10:30 am. Preschool Story Time is geared toward children 3-5 years old.

MAKE & SHARE COOKBOOK CLUB. (THURSDAY, August 7); 5:30-6:30pm. August's Book: The Pasta Queen: The Art of Italian Cooking by Nadia Caterina Munno. 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, August 6 & WEDNESDAY, August 20); 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 dowagiaclibrarystaff@gmail.com.

MESSY TIME FRIDAYS. (FRIDAY, August 1, August 8); 11-12pm. Kids of all ages are invited to join us for Messy Time Fridays throughout the summer. Please wear older or play clothes. We're often in direct sunlight, so please remember to put sunscreen on before leaving the house. In the event of inclement weather, Messy Time may need to be canceled. If in doubt, please call us at 782-3826.

TOTALLY RAD 80'S PROM GONE

BAD MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT AT SISTER LAKES BREWING. (WEDNESDAY, August 6); 6pm-8:30pm. Picture this: It's the mid-80's and it's Prom Night at Mayhem High. You're dressed to impress in a puffy sleeved prom dress or sporting your best Don Johnson look, what could possibly go wrong? How about a murder? Join us at Sister Lakes Brewing for "Totally Rad 80's Prom Gone Bad" Murder Mystery Night and spend the eve-

ning solving the case, or maybe even be the victim yourself. From the preppie to the punk rocker, the jock to the jilted - all attendees are suspects but only one is to blame. This event will be held at: Sister Lakes Brewing Company 92500 CO RD 690 Dowagiac, MI 49047. This event is for those 21 years old and free to participate in. Registration is required, call 269-782-3826 or email erin@dowagiacdli.org for more information.

CEMETERY RESTORATION WORKSHOP AT RIVERSIDE CEMETERY. (SATURDAY, August 9); 10am-1pm. Please join us on Saturday, August 9 at Riverside Cemetery for a cleaning and preservation workshop. Professor Thomas Henthorn and students of the University of Michigan-Flint's cemetery preservation program, will provide hands-on instruction in proper cleaning of these historic monuments. Registration is required, email erin@dowagiacdli.org or call 269-782-3826.

SIP & SHARE BOOK CLUB AT SISTER LAKES BREWING. (WEDNESDAY, August 13); 6pm-8pm. August's Book: How to Read a Book by Monica Wood. 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@dowagiacdli.org.

CRAFT NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY. (TUESDAY, August 19 and THURSDAY, August 21) 5:30pm-6:45pm; In August, we will have TWO sessions of Craft Night at the Library! Tuesday, August 19 kicks off with a pot painting evening. Then on Thursday, August 21 we will be creating DIY mini beaded plants to fill the pots. Join this viral craze that creates cute plants with glass beads, wire, and clay pots to create an adorable masterpiece—no green thumb necessary. We've got all the supplies covered, so just bring your imagination and a dash of creativity. For further information, please call Erin at 269-782-

3826 or email erin@dowagiacdli.org.

THE CLASSICS BOOK CLUB. (TUESDAY, August 26); 5pm-6pm. August's Book: The Jungle by Upton Sinclair. Revisit those classics from school or discover something new to expand your horizons! We meet the last Tuesday of the month in the Community Room, bringing our life experiences to the discussion.

ADVENTURES IN BOOKLAND BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS. (WEDNESDAY, August 27); 4-5pm. August's Book: Blast Off! By Nate Ball. 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, August 28); 4-5pm. August's Book: Redwall by Brian Jacques. 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, August 28); 5-6pm. August's Book: Forging the Sword by Hilari Bell. 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.dowagiacdli.org/events>.

MARCELLUS TOWNSHIP WOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY
To see the events for August visit <https://www.marcellus.michlibrary.org/>

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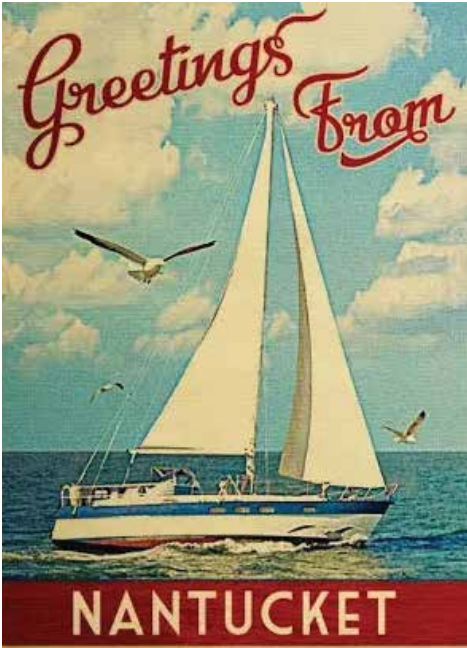
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Lake Life with Jane

Can it be August already?

by **Jane Boudreau**



Hello Neighbors! Can it be that it's August already? July is fading away like a lingering postcard in a rearview mirror. Summer is absolutely still here, but there's a feeling in the air that we are nearing the last of it. I am not feeling melancholy (baby) at all, mind you, we have plenty of beautiful days and nights ahead ... it's all rather a state of mind. Maybe I'm thinking I missed the boat, and not the one tied up at the dock. I had some feverish ideas about escaping alone for a few days and of course, as with all things in life, everything has a way of not working out. I dreamed of Nantucket: dune-backed beaches, blinking lighthouses, sunsets. Cobblestone streets lined with restaurants, boutiques, and steepled churches. Long and simple days, one after another, walking (or renting a bicycle) and exploring. I love the East coast and I love islands. But it just wasn't in the cards, at least for now. Once I resigned myself to that, I sort of sat there shaking my head, visions of past vacations floating around in one of those comic strip bubbles above me. All the reminiscing, the photos, "Good Lord, why weren't you paying attention at the time?"



I've spent this summer so far in cotton dresses, sandals, my curly hair all over the place and worse for the wear in the heatwaves and humidity, so I wear a straw hat. In my garden I'm deadheading flowers, bending to pull a few weeds, and clipping some overgrown vines. I cut a few roses for vases, all the while Poppy (seriously) chases butterflies and then runs from them and the hummingbirds. I miss my running clothes and Nike's. I have yet another back surgery in early

October and I'm counting the minutes until I'm back to normal again. So I just rest my sore back, soak in all the lake life I can, and find that every moment leads to another memory and that's as good as it gets.



August Signature Cocktail

For a drink that first gained its popularity in the early 19th century, the Tom Collins definitely has staying power. And in the Collins family of drinks, it's arguably the most popular. A Collins simply means a sour cocktail (those involving a spirit mixed with sugar and citrus) served in a tall glass over ice, topped with soda water. It might be interesting to note that the origin of the drink is a little sketchy and it very well could have been called the Bill Collins. Seems a barkeep who worked for the Limmer's Hotel in London, named Bill Collins, decided to name the concoction after himself. Whether he actually had any part in inventing the final combination of ingredients, a gin named Old Tom seemingly did and thus, we have a refreshing, citrusy, sparkling cocktail called the Tom Collins. This is now a favorite summer drink of mine. I can see myself sipping one al fresco, at a table outside a seafood restaurant housed inside an 18th century whaling captain's home. Or wait, I'm relaxing on my dock, drink in hand, wearing a simple sundress, straw hat, barefoot. My latest book, sunscreen, and Poppy at my feet. Diamond Lake ripples and sparkles in the bright afternoon sunlight. I'm home.



Tom Collins

Ingredients:

- Ice
- 2 oz. London Dry gin
- 1 oz. fresh lemon juice
- 1 oz. simple syrup*
- 3 oz. plain or lemon seltzer water
- 2 cocktail cherries
- Sliced lemon for serving

Directions:

1. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add gin, lemon juice, and simple syrup and vigorously shake until outside of the shaker is frosty, about 20 seconds.
2. Pour gin mixture into an ice filled Collins glass (or whatever you have on

hand). Pour seltzer water over, and garnish with a lemon wedge or twist. Let's upgrade the traditional, artificially dyed maraschino cherry with a dark red cocktail cherry that's been candied or preserved.

*Simple syrup is, well, simple. Do not buy the premade s*it. Mix equal amounts of sugar and hot water and stir until the sugar dissolves.

Recipes for August are on the lighter side because why not? And a little on the elegant side. Company ready and can I suggest you offer a Tom Collins as your signature drink? So far we've had some very proper guests who have the custom of being offered a drink at first greeting, and then moving on to their choice of beverages. But you might have someone problematic arrive at your home. Enter, Mr. Bill Collins.

Melon Prosciutto and Arugula Salad

A refreshing, simple salad that's perfect for a light lunch or accompanied with dinner. I love the combo of the salty prosciutto and sweet melon.

Ingredients:

- 1 small cantaloupe melon
- 2 T lemon juice
- 1 t honey
- 1/4 t Dijon mustard
- 1 T olive oil
- 4 c arugula
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella pearls or pieces
- 3 oz prosciutto, roughly torn (I actually use about 6 oz as it is sooooo good!)

Directions:

Use a melon baller to portion out melon or simply slice and cut out 1 inch pieces. (Perfect for lazy and un-fancy people like me).

In a small bowl whisk together lemon juice, honey, and mustard. Gently whisk in olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Place arugula in a large bowl, add the dressing and toss gently.. Toss in the melon, cheese, and prosciutto, gently combine. May be served chilled or at room temperature. Serves 4-6



Pan Seared Scallops with Bacon and Spinach

This is a dish you might expect to see in a lovely restaurant in Nantucket. I've kept this on rotation for nights when I really want to put together something simple, light a few candles, and pour some white wine.

Ingredients:

- 2 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled.
- 1 T reserved bacon drippings
- 2 large shallots, diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, diced small
- 1/2 lb. fresh scallops, coarsely chopped
- 1 12 oz. package of fresh baby spinach
- Juice of 1 lemon half
- 1 T olive oil combined with 1/4 t balsamic vinegar

Directions:

In a large skillet heat the reserved bacon drippings. Sauté the shallots for about two minutes over low heat. Do not cook until they are wilted, you want a little crunch. Add the garlic and cook an additional minute. Add the scallops and stir until cooked through, about two minutes. Remove mixture from pan and keep covered and warm.

Add half of the spinach to the pan and add the lemon juice. Toss until barely wilted. Add the remaining spinach and the balsamic mixture. Toss gently until heated through but not wilted--- again you want a slight crunch. Remove the spinach to 4 salad plates. Top with the warm bacon bits, shallots, and scallops. Garnish with a lemon wedge if desired. Serves 4.



Puff Pastry Zucchini Tart

Ingredients:

- 1 sheet of puff pastry, thawed but cold*
- 2~3 small zucchini, thinly sliced
- 3/4 c ricotta
- 2 T grated parmesan cheese
- 2 t lemon zest
- 2 t olive oil
- 1/4 t red pepper flakes
- 1/2 t salt

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Roll out the sheet of puff pastry on a floured surface just to thin it out a bit. Pinch and score a 1/4 inch border all around and then using a fork, prick the surface randomly. Bake for 10 minutes, checking occasionally to press down any large puffs with a spatula.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix together the ricotta, parmesan, and lemon zest. When you take the pastry crust out of the oven, spread the ricotta mixture on it while it's still warm, getting all the way to the edges. Top with the zucchini slices overlapping slightly. Brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and red pepper flakes.

Bake for another 20 minutes until zucchini are cooked through and the pastry has browned. Cut into slices and serve.

*Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry has two sheets per box. Double the ingredients if you happen to have extra zucchini lying around!

Jane's Imaginary Book Club

This month I bring to you The Briars

See
JANE
on the next page

Our Children

Making lasting memories

by **SANDY FLEMING**

There are a few weeks left in summer vacation, so now is the time for memory-making with your family. You know all those fun things you've been putting off because it wasn't quite the right time? August is a great time to squeeze them in. Before you know it, school will be back in session, and your family fun will be limited to weekends. So let's get going!

All the Ingredients

Do you know what it takes to create a memorable event or outing for your kids? If you answered "money", you are wrong. Your kids will most likely recall the times when you did things together. Your time and attention are the two most important items in the equation for fun. After all, you are the most important person in that child's life!

The most memorable fun times will end up being those times when you dropped the everyday busyness and devoted your attention (your whole attention) to the kiddoes. The times when you put down the cell phone, left the housework go a few days longer, and spent time enjoying each other's company will be what they remember when they are older.

It hardly matters what you do or where you do it, as long as it's together. Being relaxed helps too, so a bit of pre-planning will go a long way, as will being flexible and able to change the plan on the fly. Finding that balance between overplanned and stressed and underplanned and chaotic is the magic secret. So is staying within your family's budget — no one will have a good time if you choose outings that stress you financially. One idea is to save up the money you'll need to spend over a period of weeks or months. Just put aside \$10 or \$20 every paycheck, and before you know it, you will have a stash of entertainment money that won't cause you to miss paying other bills.

Think of Everyone

Family-friendly trips or activities are suitable for EVERYONE in your family. If you have very young children, plan them so their routines are not disrupted. Mealtimes, nap times, and bed times should stay on track, because that's where their sense of stability and security come from. Plus, if you mess with the usual routine, you are far more likely to have grumpy children instead of happy ones, and your activity will become memorable for all the wrong reasons.

Middle-sized kids will enjoy active pursuits, like swimming, hiking or hands-on museums. They'll love games and other interactive fun. If they have a



passion, try to incorporate it. Every second does not need to be devoted solely to their wants and needs, but it will help a lot if you include lots of "wow" factor items in your day.

Older kids and teens will feel more engaged if you include them in the planning. What would they like to do? It can work really well to set up a budget and let them pick the fun within that framework.

A Family Adventure

If you have the resources, taking a family vacation (even if it's only a day trip) can be exciting and interesting. Everyone will try out new experiences, taste new foods, and see new sights. Do some quick research online and on social media, and you are quite likely to find a host of local and nearly-local attractions that have escaped your notice before. Look for zoos, water parks and splash pads, historical sites, museums, parks, nature preserves, and even libraries! There's a great resource online called "Only in Your State" (<https://onlyin-yourstate.com>) that boasts information about roadside attractions and other interesting destinations that are nearby, or that will be in the areas that you plan to visit.

Another fabulous family outing can be based around geocaching. If you've not done this before, it's actually a ginormous world-wide scavenger hunt! There are a few organized websites and apps for your phone to get information, such as <https://www.geocaching.com/play>. The nutshell version is that there are literally millions of 'caches' hidden all over the world, including in your home town or any place you'd care to visit. These are small containers hidden from casual view. For example, I've found geocaches inside the poles of road signs, tucked in the corners

of flower gardens at roadside rest stops, and nestled in branches of shrubbery outside of our local library. They often contain little trinkets to trade, or a place for you to sign your name that you've found them. You can also register your finds on whichever website you choose to use. The caches are hidden mostly on public property, like in cemeteries, parks, public library grounds, and so forth. A quick check of the app on your phone (there are free versions and subscription systems that have even more things to find) will reveal where the hidden 'treasures' are located. Now, go find them! A slightly easier version of the game is at <https://www.letterboxing.org/>. This one might be more suitable for beginners or families with younger children. Before you know it, your family just might become addicted to the largest treasure hunts in human history!

Check out the libraries in your area for some great summer activities, too. Besides their reading programs, many offer special shows and presentations, story hours, game groups, and more. Often, you do not even have to be a library card holder to participate. Museums and parks also often offer free programming. Check the websites of the various attractions near to you.

For Home Bodies

You don't have to pack up and go anywhere to have some great family fun yet this summer. Try some of these memory-makers with your children when you don't have the time, money, or inclination to take off for a trip.

- Have a family game night. Grab some favorites from the game closet, or hit the dollar store or a local garage sale to find a new challenge. The important part is to play together and have fun.
- Try a unique picnic. Eat together out-

doors or even in another room than you usually do. Try the living room or even a bedroom! Try spreading a blanket or making a tent out of sheets and furniture to share your meal.

- Choose a movie that has a few different versions, and have a critique party. Watch two or more movies with the same title (remakes are great!), then have a family chat about which was better and why.

■ Have a read-aloud party. Choose a book everyone can enjoy hearing aloud, like some of the classics that have been made into familiar movies. Read a chapter or two each day during quiet moments or while riding in the car. Series like "Mary Poppins" or "the Wizard of Oz" are actually quite different from the popular movies, and it's a great mental exercise to spot those differences and think about why the movie directors and producers chose to make those changes.

■ Set up a family challenge in an area of your choice. Everyone in the family needs to participate, and you'll need a way to "keep score". It could be a reading challenge, a writing challenge, a fitness challenge, or even a "housework" challenge where everyone competes to get the most chores done. Whatever you choose, make sure that everyone participates at their own level. You can help this to happen by setting individualized goals for the challenge.

■ Cook up some fun by choosing a new dessert from another culture each week. Use the internet or a cookbook from the library to find culinary delights to try out. Bonus points if you can involve the kids in the research AND in the cooking/preparation!!

■ Choose a holiday from another season or from another culture and celebrate it together before school starts. You can help the kids make crafts, play games, or honor other traditions to learn about new ways to celebrate.

No matter what you choose to do together, remember that the key word is "together." The very best way to make memories with your children is do memorable things. They don't have to be fancy or expensive, just fun. And remember that the key ingredient, no matter what you choose to do, is YOUR time and attention. That's the very best gift you can give your kids this summer, and for the rest of their childhoods.

Sandy Fleming is a private tutor and writer living in Edwardsburg. Check out her websites at <https://learningnook.com> and <https://sandyflemingonline.com> for some great ideas about making learning fun!

JANE

Continued from previous page

Club by Kate Quinn. I have really been hitting on some winners lately. My intent is to bring you the best I've read, I mean, why would I fill this space with a book that really sucked?



Then again you must think, "How much does this Jane read?" On top of cooking, mixing up drinks, and daydreaming about island vacations? Well, I average about two books a month. A lot of the books I review here are ones I've read a while back. And I think I've been honest when I say there are aspects overall that I dislike. But it's all subjective. As I do when a friend, someone from the Blogger or Instagram community, or my evil sister-in law. Moving on to The Briar Club. Fiction with some historical fiction thrown in for good measure. I've read two historical fiction books by this author and they were excellent. It's not an easy genre to write. Tons of research and cre-

ativeness, and bringing real and imaginary people to life. Set in 1950's Washington D.C., a woman rents a room for herself in a house filled with reclusive boarders. She gradually brings five of the boarders to her room through her vivacious personality and pot luck dinners, and their interesting lives are woven together. A murder in the house takes place, which tests the strength of each of the women. Set during the McCarthy era, mirroring so many present issues, this is a hard book to put down. Quinn is known for her lengthy novels, clocking in at 432 pages. Still a page turner. Get takeout.

Wishing you all a fantastic August!

Keep those boats roaring across the lake, the good smells coming from the grills, ladies-read under a hammock under a tree, cotton sundresses floating around, hubby mixing up a shaker of Tom Collins for a pre-dinner, pre-game, pre-sunset. Do a staycation in the best place of all, says this Lake Girl!

See you in September!

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

'bout boats and boating

Robert Youens' voyage of the Great Loop in a Jon Boat

By RUSTY COLLINS

Robert Youens (71) has captured the attention of boating and adventure communities across North America with his bold attempt to complete the Great Loop—a 6,000-mile circumnavigation of the eastern United States and parts of Canada—using one of the most unorthodox vessels for such an undertaking: a Jon boat. His voyage is not only a test of endurance and seamanship but also a demonstration of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and a love for challenge.



The Great Loop is a massive inland waterway route that includes parts of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, the Hudson River, the Great Lakes, inland rivers such as the Mississippi and Tennessee, and the Gulf of Mexico. Most “Loopers” use motor yachts, trawlers, or other sea-worthy vessels equipped with comfortable cabins, navigation systems, and robust engines. Robert Youens, however, chose a Jon boat—an aluminum flat-bottomed boat typically used for fishing in calm inland waters—as his vessel of choice.

Youens’ Jon boat, while modest in appearance, is finely tuned for the journey. His vessel is a 16-foot AllWels, made from rugged aluminum, custom front wave guards and 84 gallons of fuel. It’s powered by a 60 horsepower Tohatsu outboard engine, giving him enough thrust to navigate both narrow canals and open

water stretches. For navigation, Youens equipped his boat with a Garmin GPSMAP chartplotter and depth finder, essential tools for identifying channel markers and avoiding shallow hazards. His safety equipment includes an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon), marine VHF radio, life jackets, and a small solar panel system to power electronics and charge essential devices.

The voyage began in Pensacola, where Youens launched his boat and started heading Southeast around Florida and has currently rounded and headed up the Atlantic coast, through the Great Lakes and finally through the Mississippi River, navigating through locks and dams while encountering strong currents, barge traffic, and unpre-

dictable weather at every section of the trip. He often camps on sandbars, marinas, or public docks, documenting his journey on social media and YouTube, where he has gained a devoted following inspired by his perseverance and minimalist approach.

What makes Youens’ journey particularly remarkable is how it compares to other record holders and Loop veterans. Most Loopers complete the journey in boats ranging from 30 to 50 feet, taking about a year to complete the full circuit. Notable record holders include Ken and Ellie Schlachter, who completed the Loop in the smallest known vessel at the time—a 14-foot Sea-Doo—prior to Youens’ attempt. Currently two other notable Loopers include a man attempt-

ing on a 17’ canoe and a woman attempting on a PWC!

Youens’ journey is ongoing, and while mechanical issues, fatigue, and weather challenges have tested his resolve, he continues to press forward. His progress represents not only a unique entry in the annals of Great Loop history but also a broader message: that adventure is accessible to anyone with determination, creativity, and the willingness to push beyond conventional boundaries. Robert Youens is not just completing the Great Loop—he’s redefining what’s possible on America’s great waterways.

You can track his journey on his Facebook page Robert Youens and there is also a gps tracker <https://share.garmin.com/robertyouens>


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Field Trip



The Lerner Theatre in downtown Elkhart, Indiana is a historical gem. On March 31, 1923, Harry E. Lerner, announced a plan to build a modern “theatrical palace” on the corner of Franklin and Main Street. The Lerner became a reality with the Grand Opening on November 27, 1924. It had 2000 seats and was host to a variety of vaudeville, big band, and theatrical reviews as well as the exciting new movies!

The City of Elkhart purchased the building in 1990 in an attempt to save it from deterioration caused by vacancy. A local group negotiated with the City to operate the facility as a performing arts center. In 1995, a matching grant was received from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Following months of preliminary design and fundraising, the City of Elkhart approved the \$18 million Lerner Theatre renovation in 2008. Construction was completed in June 2011.

Today the facility hosts a wide variety of events for the entire community.

For more information on the Lerner Theater and a schedule of upcoming events visit <https://thelerner.com/about-the-lerner-theatre/>



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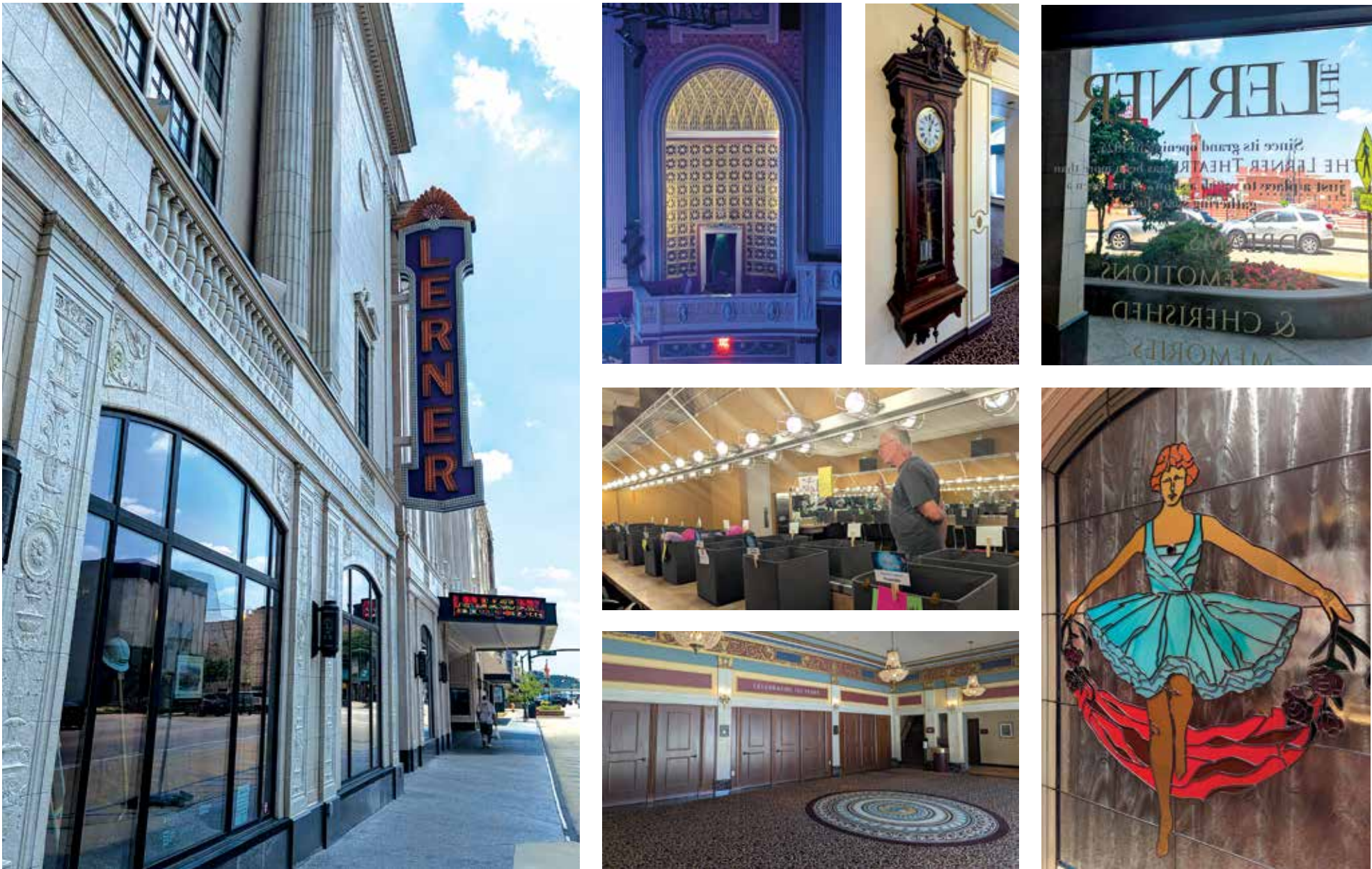
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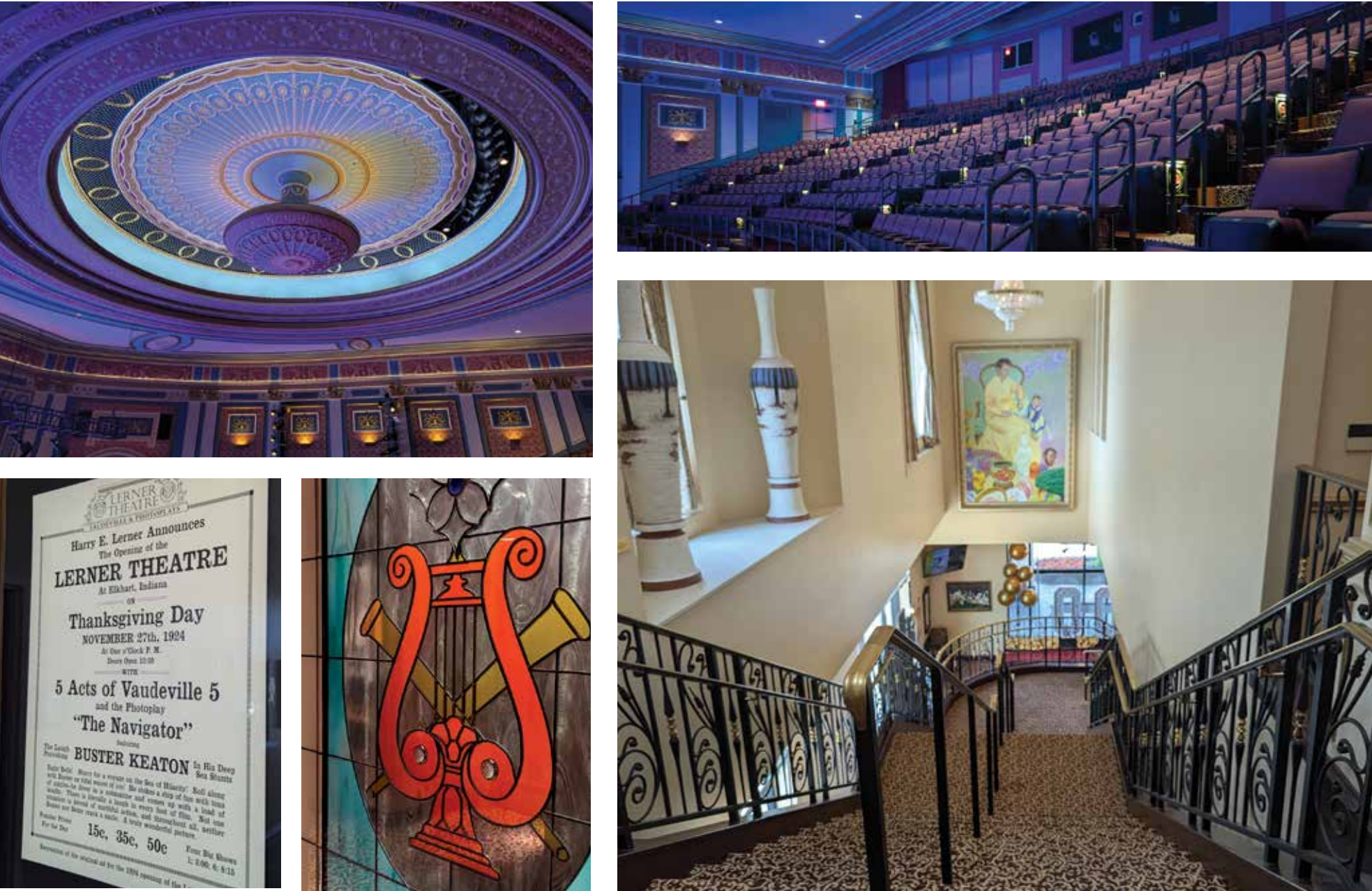
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Field Trip



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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, has 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 \$ \$39.95, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

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

For more information or to get a copy of Jerdon's book, visit the website: www.arcadiapublishing.com



In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of various places around Cass County. In future issues, we will couple additional

cards from one or more of the area's lakes with views of nearby communities, lakes and countryside.

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Nature Notes

Uncommon visitors seen in July migration

by Jonathan Wuepper
Manager

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The month of July is when south-bound shorebird migration begins in earnest and when birders look to the Lake Michigan shoreline in Southwest Michigan for rare and uncommon species. To some, the month of July may seem early for "fall," southbound migrant birds. Many shorebirds that turn up in Michigan in July represent individual shorebirds that had an early and sometimes failed nesting attempt, or adult individuals that never found a mate.

While there has yet to be any "rare" shorebird sighted locally this year, several uncommon species have been photographed by Donald Estep of New Buffalo at and near the mouth of the Galien River.

On July 12 a whimbrel was present among a flock of American avocets at the New Buffalo Beach. This is a species of curlew measuring roughly 17 inches in length with a wingspan of 12 and 1/2 inches. A long, down curved bill and a striped head are diagnostic marks of the whimbrel.

In western North America, the whimbrel nests in Alaska, east through the Yukon and Northwest Territories. In the east it nests along the western shore of Hudson's Bay. The species winters along the temperate latitudes of the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

In addition to the whimbrel found by Estep on July 12, single whimbrels were noted by several bird watchers on June 1 and July 2, both at New Buffalo. Southbound whimbrels generally pass through Southwest Michigan between early July and late September. Locally, peak migration occurs between August 10 and September 10. Whimbrels sighted in Southwest Michigan are nearly always found along the Lake Michigan beaches.

American avocets are another noteworthy shorebird that have begun showing up on our beaches. The American avocet nests in western North America, on the Great Plains and mudflats and marshes of the far west. The American avocet stands 18 inches tall with a



Left: Whimbrel on July 12 at New Buffalo beach. Photo by Donald Estep of New Buffalo.



Top right: American avocet, July 7 at New Buffalo. Photo by Donald Estep.



Bottom right: Piping plover, July 8 at New Buffalo. By Donald Estep.

31-inch wingspan. It has a relatively long, slightly upcurved bill. At all seasons the American avocet sports a black-and-white feather pattern. During the breeding season, adults of both sexes have an orange wash color over their heads, throats and necks. The orange coloration is not present on juvenile birds or on the adults during the winter, non-breeding season.

American avocets winter along the southern Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, and in Mexico. In Southwest Michigan, southbound migration of the

American avocet is noted from the last days of June through September. Most fall migrant avocets pass through during July and August.

Like the whimbrel, the American avocet is almost always seen in Southwest Michigan along the Lake Michigan beaches, although it has on rare occasions been reported at inland occasions. So far this season, the largest flock of American avocets seen in Southwest Michigan was 18 individuals on July 12 at New Buffalo.

Estep also photographed the much

beloved and Federally Endangered piping plover on July 8 at New Buffalo.

The Great Lakes piping plover population is slowly starting to rebound thanks to Federal and State protection. The last local nesting pair of piping plovers was reported in 1980 near New Buffalo. The piping plover in Estep's photo is not believed to be an individual that was nesting, but just passing through, likely from nesting territory farther north on its way to wintering grounds along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

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Local History

Eighth annual reunion of Chapel Hill School featured

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 feature two photographs found recently at the Local History Branch of the Cass District Library, depicting the Chapel Hill School House during the eight-annual reunion of students and teachers on Wednesday, August 10, 1921.

The Chapel Hill School, aka Porter District #12, was located in section 5 south Porter Township at the southwest corner of the intersection of Baldwin Prairie Road and Chapel Hill Street. The exact year of the establishment of the district and original log schoolhouse was likely 1848.

Newspaper accounts say the walnut logs used to build the original Chapel Hill School came from Gabriel Eby's farm, just west of the school site. "Uncle Gabe" Eby is said to have arrived in Cass County in 1848. At the 1921 Chapel Hill reunion, William Allen was the oldest of the 600 people in attendance at the 1921 Chapel Hill reunion, having attended the school in 1848.

According to those who attended the Chapel Hill school during the 1867-1868 school year, noted Michigan poet Will Carleton (1845-1912) taught there during that term. An article in the Cassopolis Vigilant issue dated September 10, 1914 informs us when the log building was replaced by the frame building. This paragraph was part of a longer article on the first Chapel Hill School Reunion:

Twelve of the past teachers were present, the oldest being Mrs. Joseph Hartman of Union, then Eliza A. Rinehart, who taught in 1867 in the Log schoolhouse. The following term was taught by Wm. M. Carleton, our poet (the winter of 1867-8) the first in the present schoolhouse. His register shows fifty-seven enrolled, and on roll call from the same eight were present and responded. A few others are living but were not able to be present. The oldest pupil present was Mariah Hunt Joy of Chicago, aged eighty-two years, who attended school here in 1843.

In 1947, the Chapel Hill School closed when Porter School District #12 consolidated with the Constantine School District. The frame schoolhouse was eventually incorporated into the Chapel Hill Missionary Church building.



The Chapel Hill School House, Porter Township School District #12. Possibly taken during the August 1921 annual reunion. Credit: Cass District Library.

Chapel Hill School reunion. These photos may date from the eighth annual reunion, August 10, 1921.

Pioneer Gabriel Eby (right) arrived in Porter Twp in 1848. The logs used in the construction of the original Chapel Hill Schoolhouse are said to have come from "Uncle Gabe's" farm. Photo from Cassopolis Vigilant, August 2, 1906.



Annual reunions of the former students and teachers were held through at least 1985.

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nything is better than nothing, my dear departed (and much missed) mother used to tell me whenever I uttered an audible adolescent pliant bemoaning the meagerness of a reward or a payment I was expecting to be more substantial. I remember getting a Cross pen and a

used typewriter from my parents as high school graduation presents when so many of my better heeled classmates' parents were handing over keys to Mustangs and airplane tickets for their kids to take month-long trips to Europe ... Not to be ungrateful, but I felt like Charlie Brown getting a rock. I'm sure I whined.

I understood and accepted, mind you, even if I wasn't thrilled. My family wasn't what anyone would have called wealthy when I was a lad. Dad worked a low-paying civil-servant job, mom was, well, a mom who worked at raising three rowdy (and ungrateful) sons and keeping the house running (laundry, sewing, cleaning, three squares every day, etc. etc. etc.).

My folks were of the generation after the Great Depression. They survived and participated in the activities of WWII. Dad fought in North Africa then in the invasion of his hometown in Southern Italy; mom worked at a munitions factory). Both were pretty financially strapped when they met and married, but they had been well schooled in frugality, so they made sure their sons also learned the ABCs of frugality.

No sense giving away hard-earned money.

They always made it a point to point out to my brothers and I that we needed to turn off all the lights when we left rooms, save all the leftovers for later consumption, keep all our bikes, baseball gloves and other personal items in good working order and always safely secured after we were done with them so the neighborhood thieves wouldn't purloin our goodies.

Mom made most of our PJs, blue jeans and school shirts with Simplicity Patterns on her used Singer sewing machine, and dad strung his own fishing lures using penny-apiece rubber night crawlers (from Brite Way Discount) and worn monofilament fishing line he stripped off our reels after we got the lines so tangled and knotted we couldn't cast a lure with them anymore.

Our family vehicles were always used (very much so) Studebakers that we used for our infrequent trips out of South Bend to places like my maternal grandparents' cottage near Syracuse or on our rare trips to the Upper Peninsula (no European vacations for us!).

My brothers and I never got to go to summer camp. We had to mow lawns and shovel walks if we wanted money to go to the root beer stand or the public swimming pool or to buy a hot dog when the neighbor guy took the whole gang once a summer to Comiskey Park (an irony we endured as Cubs fans).

My family wasn't dirt poor, but I could pretty much see dirt from my bedroom window.

My own story is a bit different. My wife and I grew up fast, had good careers and made relatively good pay compared to my parents. Not to brag but we've had the good fortune to be able to afford a more comfortable lifestyle for us, and our two daughters (who got to go to camp every summer, but still were ... ahem ... strongly encouraged to earn their own money for snacks and tee shirts at camp).

But neither my wife nor I have ever forgotten -- or forsaken -- the frugality of our former lives. Maybe that's why I pick up and occasionally claim things I find alongside the roads when I walk.

I used to laugh about it when I first started slogging my way around Cass County with my "picker-upper" and Menards bag. For a long time I didn't find much that I'd consider keeping ... lots of empty beer cans (not that I'd have drank from a full one I found on the road), plastic Coke, Pepsi and water bottles, disgusting half-eaten sandwiches and french fries smothered with ant-infested ketchup and half-wrapped in dirt-smeared Mickie-D's or Burger Doodle wrappers mostly.

Today I still pick up other peoples' trash (another holdover from mom's teachings), and every once in a while I get a reward I didn't expect, some minor jackpot (kinda like hitting a \$2 winner on a Lotto ticket).

One day I might find an open-end wrench or a Phillips screwdriver that probably bounced out of the back of someone's pickup truck, or even a decent framing hammer or a carpenter's level, but those are rare.

One day I found several unopened, brand new, sealed bags of different kinds of fresh veggies scattered over a couple miles as I walked along Harvey Street.

I'm sure my parents would have been proud of the soup I made for dinner that evening.

YAHTZEE! BINGO! PRAISE BE!

That story amuses my neighbors, although few of them understand. I've tried to explain that I am hoping to one day find a pot of gold, that maybe someday a rich guy wearing an ascot cruising by in a Ferrari will get his watch stuck on the car window as he's pointing out one of our Cass County Road Rats (deer) to his spoiled and uninterested Fauntleroy kids in the back seat, and the band on his Rolex Mariner will break and fall onto the ground in the perfect spot where me with my picker-upper might be walking the next day.

I'm pretty sure a Rolex would last longer than the \$12 Roy Rogers watch my folks gave me for Christmas when I was 11 years old, and I'm pretty sure it will look great on my wrist (even though I'm pretty sure I'll never have an ascot or a Ferrari).

But I keep on walking, not for the goodies, for my health (my Cardiologist is proud of me), and until recently I was pretty sure I'd never find a pot of gold.

Then, two things I found on two successive days improved my mood.

The first was this Menards receipt with the 11% rebate portion intact. I alway watched for those, but the few I've found in roadside ditches have been so weathered that the ink had run into and the amount was unreadable ... unredeemable, unfortunately. But one day there one was, just sitting silently on Sears Street waiting for me, and I could read the numbers. Sure, the rebate was only for \$3.54, but hey, big win, win for me. I know it was only one in a row, but I was on a roll. I was riding high for a day. Not a pot-o-gold or a Rolex, but I had a good feeling about it.

Then, the very next day, I was still feeling the glow of the Menards hooey-hooey, when Holy Grail Indiana Jones, just as I was walking up the hill by the public landing at the lake where I live, there it was, wrapped in a protective zip-lock, waterproof bag ... a brand new, unused, yellow, black and red slip bobber. Something I could actually use! MINE! I shouted. ALL MINE!

Ok, maybe it's not a Rolex either, but like my spiritual mentor (Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama) might point out ... at least I've got that going for me. And at least it's not a rock, so it's better than nothing.



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