

# FRESHWATER REPORTER

Serving Manistee and Mason County Communities

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## Starving Artist: Masterpiece in a pint

By Kevin Howell

Andrew “Andy” Thomas is enthusiastic and energetic, with a boisterous laugh. That good humor is reflected in the names of his beers, which he crafts with the seriousness of a scientist and the creativity of an artist.

Thomas is co-owner, with wife Michelle, of Starving Artist Brewing, a destination nanobrewery in an almost-secret location east of Ludington.

A small sign – Brewery Open – and wooden beer kegs are all that designate the craft brewery’s entrance along Stiles Road, south of US-10.

In his nanobrewery, Thomas has the potential to brew up to five batches of beer per week. Think homebrewer, taken to the next level of production, with the means to share his successes with customers, many of whom are friends, friends of friends and their friends. His beer menu is packed with mind-bending flavor combinations made not just for the sake of outrageousness, but for taste-bud explosions of deliciousness his followers know and love.

Recently, Thomas was busy cleaning and sanitizing boil and fermenter tanks in preparation for new batches of beer, including a triple India Pale Ale he’s naming



Starving Artist owner/brewer Andy Thomas flames an orange that was destined for one of his holiday sour releases. Courtesy photo.

Alpha Slayer.

“I’ve tried to release this beer for six months, but every time I brew it, it doesn’t live up to the name, so I’m giving it another shot,” Thomas explained.

Hops have a component known as alpha acid which, when boiled, brings the bitterness to the beer. So, essentially, the brewer is boiling or “killing” a bunch of hops to make that batch of beer. Thomas plans to kill his until he has a killer beer.

### FROM HOMEBREW TO PRODUCTION BREWER

Thomas, originally from Missouri, moved to Ludington while in high school. After graduation, and a period spent in Marquette, he returned to Ludington and began working with newly established Jamesport Brewing Co.

“I fell in love with craft beer around the turn of the 2000s and got a job at Jamesport

continued on page 4

## Results of Manistee Christmas Bird Count

By Brian Allen

Each year, volunteers and members of the Manistee Audubon Club participate in the annual National Audubon/Cornell University Christmas Bird Count. We survey an area of Manistee County that is centered on the corner of Fisk Rd. and US-31 and extends seven-and-a-half miles to form our count circle.

Included in the area of the circle are the city of Manistee and towns of Onekama, East Lake, Stronach, Filer City and Parkdale, and the countryside out nearly to Bear Lake and Brethren.

Other counts are held during the same time of year in Ludington, Cadillac, Benzie and Traverse City, as well as all across Michigan and the country.

In Manistee this year, there were 12 observers in the field and 14 observers at yards/feeders. In previous years, we have found as few as 44 species of birds and as many as 81 during our best year. This was a fairly typical year, with 65 species found during the day of the count and an extra two species during the week of the count, including the rare Barrow’s Goldeneye duck that seems to have returned to Manistee again this winter.

The early, bad winter storms may have had an effect on the number of birds this year. Numbers of most ducks were greatly reduced. We often count several thousands of Long-tailed Ducks out on Lake Michigan, but this year there were

continued on page 3

## Trails groomed for expansion



Riders along the trail in Manistee County last year. Courtesy photo.

By Greg Gielczyk

KALEVA – As this goes to press, significant snowfall is finally in the forecast. Up to this point in mid January, it has been a green winter for the Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds, a snowmobile club headquartered in this northern Manistee County village.

Traditionally, the organization has

groomed approximately 1,000-1,500 miles of trails by now. By Jan. 14 of this year, no trail grooming was logged.

Wet and heavy snow that fell in November and December caused downed limbs and trees, before it quickly melted. It forced the club to do some extra maintenance on the trails.

“They are clear and open, and ready to ride, but we’re waiting on snow,” said Mark Coe, vice president of the Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds. “We’ll take three inches at this point.

“It’s a bummer. We put a lot into the snowmobile trail systems in the three counties that we manage. The Snowbirds take care of Manistee, Benzie and Leelanau counties.

“So, it’s sad for us. All the work that we do over the course of the year to get ready for this, and then to have this kind of season. But, you know, it’s Mother Nature.”

Each year, the Snowbirds host some memorable events, including the Vintage Show and Swap meet held the third weekend in July – no snow required. This year, the club had planned to hold a Vintage Weekend, Jan. 10-11, but lack of snow resulted in its cancellation.

“We were going to have vintage snowmobilers (snowmobilers on vintage snow machines) attend and ride for two different types of rides,” Coe explained.

“The same weekend, on the north end of

continued on page 8



Male cardinal. Photo by Mark Videan.

### WHAT’S INSIDE

Your Calendar .....	2
Captivated by Snowy .....	3
Christmas Birds .....	3
Bird Book .....	3
Starving Artist Brewing.....	4
Spirit of the Woods.....	5
Gourmet Mushrooms.....	6
Manistee Millionaire .....	7
Space Exploration in 2020.....	7
Snowbirds, Contest, Puzzle.....	8

# Your Community Calendar for Manistee and Mason Counties

Please call ahead or check with the venue before heading out, as dates and times may have changed. Some venues may charge admission, not indicated in their announcements. Please send calendar event notices to [editor@freshwater-reporter.com](mailto:editor@freshwater-reporter.com)

## January

- Jan 31** **Cocoa and Crafts**  
11 a.m. until close, Free, Arcadia Branch of the Manistee County Library, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd., Arcadia. Supplies are provided. Just bring your creativity.
- Jan 31** **The Offbeat Band**  
7-11 p.m., Live at Vista Lounge, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
- Jan 31** **Blair Miller Blues**  
7-9 p.m., Live at Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville

## February

- Feb 1** **Breakfast in the Valley**  
8:30-10:30 a.m., Pleasant Valley Community Center, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd., Arcadia
- Feb 1** **Snowshoe Stampede – Stomp Out Cancer**  
11:30-6 p.m., Manistee VFW Hall, 1211 28th St., Manistee. Snowshoe walk, bake sale, chili/soup cook off, raffles, silent auction, live music, fire pit, outdoor kids' activities, indoor corn hole tournament, celebrity bartending. For costs and registration info, call Jessica @ 794.9474 or Rachel @ 510.9690
- Feb 1** **Metropolitan Opera Live in HD: Porgy and Bess**  
Open Thurs., Dec. 5–Sat., Dec. 21, with 1-5 p.m., \$5-\$20, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- Feb 1** **Lego Block Party**  
1-4 p.m., Ludington Public Library, 217 E. Ludington Ave., Ludington
- Feb 1** **Guided Snowshoe Hike**  
2-3:30 p.m., Free, Ludington State Park Beach, 8800 M-116, Ludington. Meet at the warming hut. Sixty pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come – first served (fit ages 8 and up) For more info call 231.843.9261
- Feb 1** **Lantern Lit Ski and Snowshoe Hike**  
6-8 p.m., Free, Ludington State Park Beach, 8800 M-116, Ludington. Meet at the warming hut. Sixty pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come – first served (fit ages 8 and up) For more info call 231.843.9261
- Feb 1** **Circle Rocking S Children's Farm Benefit Soup Supper Auction**  
6 p.m., Free will donation. Free to special needs' persons. St. Bernard's Church, 5734 W. 10 1/2 Mile Rd., Irons.
- Feb 1** **Foraged Feast**  
6:30-10:30 p.m., \$50, Scottville Optimist Club Building, 105 W. Green St., Scottville. Wild game dinner, drinks, craft beers, fellowship, raffles, auction. Proceeds benefit Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital Culinary Medicine Program.

- Feb 1** **Comedy Night**  
9-11 p.m., Timbers Bar and Grill, 320 S. James St., Ludington. \$10
- Feb 2** **Art Park Snowshoe Tour and Iron Fish Whiskey Tasting**  
2:30-5 p.m., Michigan Legacy Art Park, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville. Learn about the Art Park on a free, volunteer-led, one-mile hike. Dogs and children are welcome. Meet afterward at Iron Fish Distillery (3 miles away), 14234 Dzuibanek Rd. for discounted flights of spirits.
- Feb 4** **Elements of Art visual art class**  
5-7 p.m., Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. \$30.
- Feb 4-29** **heART of LOVE Themed Art Exhibit**  
Tue-Fri, 11-4 p.m.; Sat 12-3 p.m., Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- Feb 5** **Pentwater High School Band Festival Concert**  
7-8 p.m., Pentwater High School, 600 E. Park St., Pentwater
- Feb 6** **Tween/Teen Movie Night – Howl's Moving Castle**  
6-8 p.m., Scottville Library, 204 E. State St., Scottville
- Feb 7** **Fourth Annual Boots 'n Bows Daddy Daughter Dance**  
5:30-8 p.m., Graystone Event Center, 4079 W. US 10, Ludington. \$15/person
- Feb 7** **Johnny P**  
7-11 p.m., Live at Vista Lounge, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
- Feb 7** **Olivia Manville**  
8-11 p.m., Live at Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville
- Feb 8** **Guided Snowshoe Hike**  
2-3:30 p.m., Free, Ludington State Park Beach, 8800 M-116, Ludington. Meet at the warming hut. Sixty pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come – first served (fit ages 8 and up) For more info call 231.843.9261
- Feb 8** **Lantern Lit Ski and Snowshoe Hike**  
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- Feb 8** **Moonlight Ski and Fat Tire Bike Ride**  
7-9 p.m., Big M Trail, 4 miles south on Udel Hill Rd. south of M 55 near Wellston  
**See [skibigm.org](http://skibigm.org) for details and a map**

- Feb 8** **Barefoot**  
7-9 p.m., Live at Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville
- Feb 8** **Sean Miller Music**  
7 p.m., Live at North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St., Manistee
- Feb 8** **Johnny P Band**  
7-11 p.m., live at Vista Lounge, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
- Feb 8** **heART of LOVE Exhibit Artist Reception**  
5-8 p.m., Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- Feb 8 & 15** **Winterfest in Pentwater and Hart**  
Two weekends of activities including the Snowman Scram 5K Run/Walk and 1 Mile Fun Run, polar dip, fishing tournament, gallery stroll, cross country skiing, sledding, wine tasting, and craft beer fest.  
**Go to [www.visitpentwater.com](http://www.visitpentwater.com) for more information**
- Feb 9** **Dale Wicks**  
6-9 p.m., Live at Ludington Pub, 209 S. James St., Ludington
- Feb 10** **The Garden Club, with Layla Wallis and Tom Woodson**  
1-2 p.m., Free, Manistee County Library, 95 Maple St., Manistee
- Feb 11** **Valentine Wreath Crafting**  
4-6 p.m., Kaleva Branch of the Manistee County Library, 14618 Walta St., Kaleva Family friendly activity
- Feb 11** **Ludington High School Winter Choir Concert**  
7:30-9:30 p.m., Peterson Auditorium, Ludington High School, 508 N. Washington Ave., Ludington
- Feb 11** **Elements of Art visual art class**  
5-7 p.m., \$30, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- Feb 13** **An Intimate Evening with Serita's Black Rose Duo**  
7-9 p.m., \$5, live at Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- Feb 14-15** **The Broom Closet Boys**  
7-11 p.m., Live at Vista Lounge, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
- Feb 14 & 16** **Go with the Flow Acrylic Pour Workshop with Don Paone**  
5:30-7:30 p.m., \$35/class or \$60 for both, materials included, Classroom A, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee

- Feb 14** **Heart Day Party**  
4-5:30 p.m., Free, Ludington Public Library, 217 E. Ludington Ave., Ludington
- Feb 14** **Jeff Bihlman**  
7-9 p.m., live at Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville
- Feb 14** **The Diaries of Adam and Eve Dinner Theatre Production**  
6 p.m., \$35, Ludington Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- Feb 15** **The Diaries of Adam and Eve Matinee**  
3 p.m., \$10, Ludington Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- Feb 15** **Frostbite Chili Crawl**  
3-5:30 p.m., Downtown Manistee
- Feb 15** **Tony Orlando**  
8-10 p.m., \$30-45, live at Little River Casino, 2700 Orchard Hwy., Manistee
- Feb 15** **Guided Snowshoe Hike**  
2-3:30 p.m., Free, Ludington State Park Beach, 8800 M-116, Ludington. Meet at the warming hut. Sixty pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come – first served (fit ages 8 and up) For more info call 231.843.9261
- Feb 15** **Lantern Lit Ski and Snowshoe Hike**  
6-8 p.m., Free, Ludington State Park Beach, 8800 M-116, Ludington. Meet at the warming hut. Sixty pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come – first served (fit ages 8 and up) For more info call 231.843.9261
- Feb 15** **Zakopane Exhibit and Reception**  
(February 15 - March 27) 1-5 p.m., Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Zakopane 1918 – 100 Years of Polish Independence (traveling show) 2 p.m. lecture by Dr. Kate Wroblewski, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies in University of Michigan's History Department. Polka to some lively Polish music after the lecture
- Feb 15-16** **Free Fishing Weekend in Michigan**  
**For more information go to [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)**
- Feb 15-16** **Gettin' Jiggy Fishing Tournament**  
Pere Marquette Expeditions, 1649 S. Pere Marquette Hwy., Ludington. Fishing tournament coinciding with Free Fishing Weekend
- Feb 16** **Jimmy Grant Trio and Third Coast Swing**  
2-6 p.m., Live at Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington

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# Captivated by “Snowys”

Story and photos by Susan Hintz

*School had just let out for the day and, like most grade-school kids, I was anxious to get home. First, I had to make it past security! Back in the day, security was the outstretched arms of the safety patrol “officer” that helped us cross the street. When his arms went down, he was signaling to the kids gathered at the street corner that it was clear to cross. Once his arms dropped and he stepped aside, the neighborhood kids and I proceeded across.*

Reaching the other side, I noticed several classmates congregating at the base of a utility pole and gazing upward. To my surprise, there sat the most beautiful bird I had ever seen. It was a pure-white owl, perched on the arm of the pole, peering down at us with piercing, golden eyes. The snowy owl’s look was so intent, it was as though he could see through us. I was in awe of this bird, and I could have gazed at it forever ... until another classmate, presumed older, warned us not to get too close, as the bird could swoop down and get us. Yikes!

That changed everything for this scrawny seven-year-old, who was about as tall as the



owl. Thoughts of being attacked or nibbled on was something I, and apparently some others, didn’t want to experience. Several of us dashed across the street – parallel to where the owl was – and briskly began walking home while keeping watch over our shoulders.

I recall looking for the bird the next day and the days following, but ... nothing.

Remnants of that day still come to mind when I travel that street, along with thoughts of my fifth-grade teacher who lived on the corner. But any thought of, or interest in, seeing a snowy, or even knowing where to find one, was the furthest thing from my mind – until 2019. That’s when Facebook lit up like a Christmas tree with reported sightings and photos of snowy owls from all over Michigan, including my hometown of Traverse City. The photos were stunning, and they instantly took me back to the corner of Seventh and Wadsworth and my first sighting, decades earlier.

I knew I just had to see one.

Mission activated!

I became a “member” of several Facebook photography pages, as well as a snowy owl page where people could document the day, time and location of a sighting. Alas,



there were few local sightings. Although the locations were outside my normal travel, they were not too far out of the way to swing by and scope things out.

It was a cold, blustery, gray day when I first decided to stop by a reported location on my way home. Not really knowing where to look, I drove slowly, scanning for anything that looked out of place. Something I learned as a deer hunter: you look for horizontal in a forest of vertical. Here, I was looking for something vertical in a field of horizontal. Soon, I spotted a snowy perched on a fence post. SCORE! I watched her for a few minutes before she flew off, swooped down to hunt, then landed in a nearby spruce. The white against the evergreen was absolutely breathtaking. Its beauty and grace had me hooked.

Snowy owls have returned to the area

again this winter, and I find myself taking the long way to town or home, in hopes of catching a glimpse. I have had the pleasure of observing and photographing them on several occasions and have concluded that each new sighting is just as thrilling as the first.

Despite decades between sightings, “who” would have expected that my level of excitement and awe would be the same today as it was as a grade schooler?

Snow(y) days are the best!

To learn more about snowy owls, visit: [www.owlresearchinstitute.org/snowy-owl](http://www.owlresearchinstitute.org/snowy-owl) and [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snowy\\_Owl/overview](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snowy_Owl/overview)

A homegrown Traverse City gal, Susan Hintz is a creative entrepreneur and an avid beachcomber and photographer.

## Bird Count

continued from page 1



Bald eagle. Photo by Pat Stinson.

only 280. Another duck, Bufflehead, was at its lowest total ever with only six found; the average is closer to 60. Bald Eagles continued their good numbers with 15 found, but most other hawks were in lower numbers. This was the first year ever that we didn’t have one of the Accipiter hawks, such as Sharp-shinned Hawk or Cooper’s Hawk, on the count.

All of what are called “the winter finches” – such as Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins – were not found this year, and it is reported that the food availability up north is so good they did not venture south. There is no explanation that we know of, however, for the low number of Tree Sparrows (25) this year or Purple Finches (4). One possibility for the lower number of Purple Finches is the loss of the ash trees over the last several years. Purple Finches feed on the seeds of ash trees, and this may be why they have declined.

Some unusual findings for the winter season included two Wood Ducks found along the Manistee River by the group that canoed from Bear Creek to Manistee. Some lingering birds found in the field

included Catbird, Winter and Carolina Wrens, a late Red-winged Blackbird and Grackle, and a surprising seven White-throated Sparrows.

Three species of owls were found on the night-time owling efforts, including Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl and Eastern Screech-Owl.

Field observers met after the count for some hot chocolate and warm chili and reviewed the adventures of the day.



Pileated woodpecker. Photo by Mark Videan.

The next Christmas count will be held on December 14, 2020, and we are always encouraging more to join us either at home at your feeders or counting in the field.

Brian Allen is a long-time birdwatcher and bird researcher based in Manistee County. He counts birds and bird species as a volunteer. Reach him at [manisteebirder@gmail.com](mailto:manisteebirder@gmail.com).

## Local birding expert releases new book

By Pat Stinson

LUDINGTON – A comprehensive new book about birds in Mason County is available from local author and Sable Dunes Audubon Society member David C. Dister, a biologist, educator and longtime bird researcher.

“The Birds of Mason County, Michigan” is the culmination of Dister’s years

of birdwatching experience, including conducting bird censuses and surveys.

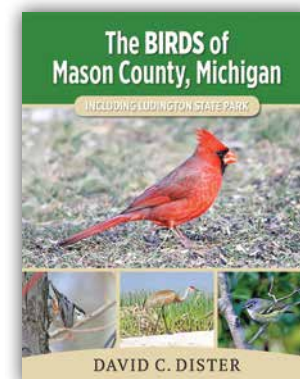
In his About the Author book statement, Dister explained that he “...moved to Ludington in 2008 after my research and explorations revealed great birding potential in Mason County.”

Dister elaborated some more in an email response to our question about his motivation for writing the book.

“... I knew that my 10-year goal was to determine migratory patterns of birds as well as the status of local breeding birds in all 16 townships,” Dister wrote. “I have been birding more than 50 years and have lived in four Great Lake states.”

The newly published book includes documented accounts of 308 bird species, their breeding range and habitat, as well as extreme dates for migrants, maximum daily numbers, weekly frequencies, seasonal bar graphs, histograms and more.

Of special interest to bird watchers are color maps and photographs of birding hotspots and tips for identifying what the author calls “tricky species”. His



photographs of unusual bird sightings may spark the interest of those keeping “life lists”.

The book also contains sections on climate, topography, geology, glaciology and habitat throughout Mason County, including miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds as

well as thousands of acres in Ludington State Park and Manistee National Forest lands, such as Lake Michigan Recreation Area and Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area.

In his career, Dister has been an assistant director at the Roger Tory Peterson Nature Center in Jamestown, New York, editorial assistant for Birder’s World magazine in Holland, Michigan and an environmental scientist with a consulting firm in Dayton, Ohio.

Each year, he compiles information obtained from the Ludington Christmas Bird Count and the Mason County Migration Count. He also conducts a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service annual Breeding Bird Survey Route through parts of Mason, Lake and Newaygo Counties.

Total cost of the book is \$21.15 (\$19.95 plus 6% Michigan sales tax). It is available from the author, who will ship individual copies via USPS media mail for \$4 per book. Send a personal check to: David Dister, P.O. Box 615, Ludington, MI, 49431. Email him with questions at: [david.dister@gmail.com](mailto:david.dister@gmail.com)

# Starving Artist

continued from page 1



A small “open” sign hangs near the road, the only indication you’ve reached Starving Artist Brewing. Photo by Kevin Howell.

right out of college dropout,” he explained, with a laugh. “I worked there three or four years and fell in love with craft beers through Tom Buchanan.

“Tom’s a great guy; we call him the Beer Father. He’s gotten a lot of us into craft beer.”

Buchanan is currently Brewer Emeritus and public relations specialist with Ludington’s third brewery, Ludington Bay Brewing Co. He remembered Thomas’



Repeat customers Randy and Kari Patton, of Alto, beam from Starving Artist’s beer garden. Photo by Mark Videan.

tenure at Jamesport.

“Andy went to work there early after its opening,” Buchanan said. I think he was a server, then got into brewing and bartending – did about everything there was to do there.”

Thomas pursued a beer judge certification and started home brewing in the same barn behind his house that now houses his brewery. After working at Jamesport and later as owner of an art supply business and gallery, Thomas opened Starving Artist, with Michelle, in 2015.

They began the business as production only, meaning customers could try small beer samples before purchasing and carrying out a favorite – like Hop Marley, a double IPA with 9%-10% ABV, or alcohol by volume. That changed last summer when the brewery was permitted to sell pints for consumption on the premises. Customers can now gather in a beer garden, select their beer from a chalkboard menu as tall

Dannee Hoffman, of Starving Artist Brewing, holds one of a series of three sour beers called Fine tART. Photo by Mark Videan.

as the door, and enjoy a pint or two in the company of others doing the same.

## KEEPING IT CLOSE

Thomas likes to use local products and services. About 40 percent of the hops for his beers are grown in Michigan, and he has plans to grow his own hops on a two-acre plot behind the brewery. He’s hoping for his first harvest next fall.

He also uses juices in his beers from Bear Lake jam maker Wee Bee Jammin’, operated by Mike and Sarah Iseringhausen.

“One of the byproducts (of jam) is juice, Thomas said. “When they cook fruit down, if they don’t take the juice out it makes jams too watery, so we get that from them as often as we can.”

He uses rhubarb juice in Sophistofunk, a sour beer named after a Syracuse, New York band he likes, as well as juices from pineapples, grapes, and blackberries. Mangos will be the featured ingredient in a new beer coming soon: Mango Excess, described as a Mango Milkshake IPA.

Mike Iseringhausen also maintains Thomas’ tap system through his business Northern Draught Solutions which, coincidentally, was formerly B&R Services, founded by Buchanan and his wife, Pat.

“By cleaning and balancing a tap system regularly, we make sure every sip of beer tastes exactly the way the brewer intended,” Iseringhausen explained.

And beer quality is exactly what Thomas enthusiastically pursues in his brewing.

“We’re still small production,” Thomas said, “and though we’re five years old, we’re still in experimentation mode – trying to find the best recipes and the best quality ingredients to make sure if we can brew a better quality beer, we do.”

Kevin Howell is a transplanted freelance writer from Indiana currently residing in Mason County. He loves the Michigan woods, lakes, people and, especially, Michigan craft beers – not necessarily in that order! Contact him at kevin@ytc.com.



## Fun Facts:

- Starving Artist is located at 634 S. Stiles Rd., east of Ludington and south of US-10. Hours are: 4-7 p.m., Thursdays; 12-7 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays.
- Products: A variety of craft beers in quart and half-gallon growlers, 22-ounce and 750-milliliter bottles, 16-ounce and 12-ounce cans, depending on the beer style.
- Brewery: Three-barrel system, 31.5 U.S. gallons per barrel, with potential production of about five batches a week.
- Flavors can change on a weekly basis. Examples include:
  - **Blood Forge**, a blood orange double IPA, 10% ABV. Named Best Beer, 2017, by mlive.com editors
  - **Motor City Joe**, a coffee cream ale, 5% ABV
  - **Hop Marley**, a double IPA, 10% ABV
  - **Son of Maize**, a Belgian cream ale, 5.5% ABV
  - **Flogging Red**, an imperial Irish red ale, 8% ABV
  - ...And much more.
- Online: Check out Starving Artist on Facebook and at [starvingartist.beer](http://starvingartist.beer).

# Meet the “Starving Artist”: Andy Thomas

By Pat Stinson

LUDINGTON – When she worked at TJ’s Pub, in Manistee, Danette “Dannee” Hoffman, who helps out at Starving Artist Brewing, said the brewery was one of the pub’s first tap takeovers.

Considering the “nano” size of the brewery, located behind owner Andy Thomas’ house, and its country location, this seemed a phenomenal feat.

“Andy is just an original,” Hoffman said, while giving a tour of the barn brewery’s three rooms, its metal walls boldly painted with artwork rendered by artist friends.

The tour followed an explanation of the extensive beer menu, with plenty of sampling and waffling before pint choices were finally made.

Asked about Thomas’ description of “nanobrewery” to describe the size of his operation, Hoffman replied:

“Nanobrewery, for sure. He’s not even a microbrewery. He’s really, technically, a one-man operation. It’s why he’s open three days a week. He’s brewing the other days.”

She holds up a 750-milliliter bottle called Fine tART, one in a series of three limited-edition “kettle sour” beers brewed with fruit as well as malt, hops, “spices and unfermentables”, according to the brewery’s website.

“The day this was released,” Hoffman began, “a film crew came out and shot (footage) for a documentary TV show focused on the salt-of-the-earth guys who are really doing it, you know?”

Hoffman explained that it’s Thomas’ dedication to his craft and cooperation with others, including Ludington Bay Brewing, that set him apart.

“He’s our champion,” she said. “We love him.”

A voice from the taproom is heard more than once saying, “He’s an evil genius.”

Back in the beer garden, customer and friend Randy Patton was talking with others about the beer pick of the day: Schoggigeissli, (10.5% ABV), described by the brewery as “a chocolate-cherry Doppelbock that is so full of both, your tastebuds will climb out of your mouth just to shake your hand.”

Patton explained that he met Thomas four years ago. For three of those four years, Patton and his brother, Brian, have brewed a batch of beer with Thomas. Brian owns a brewery in Switzerland called Barfuss Brauerei. When he brings his family to Michigan each July, he also carries Swiss chocolate to concoct a high-octane, chocolate brew at Starving Artist.

The first year they brewed together, Patton said they used 600 pounds of grain, an insanely over-the-top quantity, considering the three-barrel size of Thomas’ brewing system. That beer weighed in at 11% ABV.

In 2018, he said they brewed a raspberry wheat wine (by definition, a higher-alcohol brew, not an actual wine) with “rusty” Swiss chocolate and coffee. Rusty chocolate is pink and has an almost raspberry flavor, according to Patton’s wife, Kari.

One year, Brian did not bring enough chocolate bars and the trio had to supplement the mixture with store-bought, individually foiled-wrapped chocolates.

“Oh, my gawd,” Patton said, his voice trailing off as he remembered the task of peeling the foil wrappers.



Starving Artist owner/brewer Andy Thomas (right) and his friend Jake Flood sample a couple beers before opening the brewery for business. Photo by Kevin Howell.

When they reach their fifth year of brewing together, Patton said Thomas will change things up by visiting Brian’s brewery in Switzerland for their annual chocolate brewing blow-out.

Eric Rose, another Starving Artist beer fan and helper, has been listening.

“I love beer,” he said. “Everyone always asks, ‘Why don’t you brew beer?’ and I’m like, ‘Because everyone does it better. There are so many good beers out there.’”

When he drinks beer in a tasting room, Rose said he prefers smaller spaces.

“I don’t want to go to the big brewery,” he explained. “I want to go to that tap room...I drank (Thomas’) beer and started coming out to the brewery.”

“The more you come out and talk to Andy, the more you want to come back.” Patton chimes in.

“The menu flips constantly,” he said. “For the most part, he just keeps coming up with new things.”

“He’s a super nice guy. I’m happy I met him.”



# Traditional music takes center stage at Spirit of the Woods

Story and photos by Stewart A. McFerran

**BRETHREN** – Tim and Wanda Joseph are folk with spirit. Forty-two years ago, they were instrumental in founding the first Spirit of the Woods Music Association event, because, as Tim, who is originally from Onekama, explained, “There was nothing going on.”



Spirit of the Woods' Music Association founders Tim and Wanda Joseph outside their home.



“Groupies” dance to music by the Mudskippers at Spirit of the Woods Folk Festival.

The music association was the couple's effort to make something happen in northern Manistee County. Over the years, the association has hosted hundreds of concerts and contra dances. Its premier event, however, is the annual Spirit of the Woods Folk Festival, held rain or shine each third Saturday in June, at Dickson Township Park.

For a time, when the festival had moved from Brethren to Onekama and admission was charged, things seemed to get a bit too complicated. As the organization's website states:

“By 1987, the annual festival was a solid success, but burnout had set in. Budgets, crowds, ticket prices and planning had taken its toll. Not to be undaunted, and true to our credo, (we're only in it for the fun), a bold idea was proposed: let's bring the festival back to Brethren and quit charging admission! Back to basics. Back to the park. Not as many hassles. And it worked. We're still at the park, years later.”

After all this time, the music and the performers continue to inspire them.

“It's fun being on the booking committee,” Wanda said, “because I get to choose the acts.”

So, which ones have been her favorites? “That is a hard one,” she replied, explaining that The Chenille Sisters performed at the 40th annual festival, along with favorites Ray Kamalay and Joel Mabus.

“We had the Chenille Sisters way back

in the '80s, before they got big,” Tim said. “They played for us (again, in 2017) for less money than they would normally get, 'cause they like us.”

The 40th festival was a “review” of performers from past events and also included festival newcomers, such as clog dancer Nic Gareiss, The Palooka Brothers, Jutta and the High Dukes and Breathe Owl Breathe.

## MUSIC ROOTS

Tim said he “got into” folk music when he was quite young. Asked if there were musicians in his family, he replied:

“There were, but those things tend to skip a generation. I had a great uncle who was a five-string banjo player. My uncles used to sing cowboy songs, but by the time we came along they just sang in church.

“I don't know why I glommed onto folk music. I used to listen to the radio, Oscar Brands. His show was sponsored by the United States Army. He would play stuff like ‘Skip to My Lou’ and ‘The Fox went out on a Chilly Night.’

“My mom and my uncles knew lots and lots of songs and the other thing is, we sang in church all the time, four-part harmony

... We went to church two or three times a week, Church of the Brethren (in Onekama). I think I came by that folk music honestly.”

Tim said he began playing ukulele when he was ten, guitar by the time he was 12.

“It (the guitar) would make your fingers sore to play it, but I was just avid, and I was lucky to have my cousin Byron,” he said. “To this day, we still play music together: that's ‘The Nephews’.

“We're like the Everly Brothers, these brother duets, sister duets,” he continued. “I'm fortunate to have the same thing – I never knew I was fortunate, but I guess that's the way it was.”

Tim said he and his “old” band, Dekalb, performed at the first Spirit of the Woods festival, back in 1978. Dekalb was looking for places to play in Traverse City. The Cattle Company occasionally booked some acoustic acts and The Sawmill, downtown, hired them once.

“We showed up and they had booked someone else,” he said. “We went home with our tail between our legs.”

He said only two places in Traverse City even booked live music – other than rock and roll.

“Now look at it,” he marveled. “Live

music everywhere, live music everywhere.”

As we talked, Wanda was on the phone with the band Barefoot.

“We heard them at Brethren Days last year,” she said. “It's sorta jazz, blues, with a really powerful singer ... we have got to negotiate yet, but ...”.

A question to Wanda about her favorite bands must have popped in his head, because Tim paused to comment on his.

“Larry Bialik's Ramblin Band, we had them play the dance,” he said. “They are a local country-rock band; they've been around forever. I love those guys.

“We did ... concerts in honor of Pete Seeger,” he continued. “Those were put together by (area musicians) Victor McManemy (‘Land of the Free’), Pat Niemisto (member, New Third Coast), Lou Ann Lechler (the ‘Leelanau Song’) and myself.

“We involved all kinds of different musicians. It was really a lot of fun.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

Membership in Spirit of the Woods Music Association, (\$5 for active members, \$10 for “sustaining” members who cannot volunteer their time), is open to all who are interested. Wanda said they have an active, working group of about a dozen member volunteers.

“Jack Buchanan was one of the early members,” Wanda said. “Every Friday before the festival he shows up with his truck to load up the stage.”

A mailing party was planned on this night, to send cards to more than 400 on the organization's mailing list.

Tim explained that a lot of local people attend the festival, as well as those from outside the area – including a faithful group from Ann Arbor.

“Some families make it part of their tradition, as part of Father's Day,” Wanda said.

“We always get a lot of people who tell us it is their favorite festival,” Tim said, adding, “I think the reason why some people feel that way is: no tickets, no cops, (and) you didn't have to pay to get in, so you don't feel like you have to stay all day.

“We want to keep it that way.”

Stewart A. McFerran first attended the Spirit of the Woods Folk Music Festival in 1987. He has hosted “Folk Aire” on WNMC and served on the concert committee of the Bayside Travellers Dance Society. To date, his favorite Spirit of the Woods' act is the Mudskippers.



## The Manistee woods are full of spirits

Story and photo by Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas

There are four unique groups in the area whose first name is Spirit of the Woods. That shouldn't be much of a surprise, since the very name “Manistee” may have derived from a combination of Ojibwe words. Manitou or “manidoo” is the native word for spirit, woods is “mitig” and river is “ziibi”.

The first group to use the name is the **Spirit of the Woods Garden Club**, organized in early 1937 and federated with Michigan Garden Clubs in 1944. Over 50 members enjoy, and some have received awards for, their gardening and Master Gardener projects. In 2019, they met 12-3 p.m. on the second Monday, April-December, at Oak Grove Hospitality Center in Parkdale. For 2020 information, contact Beth at (616) 401-3387.

Left. Deer mural in clubhouse of Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club.

## Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club

began in December 1939. The group's clubhouse is located along Bear Creek, just west of Brethren, off Coates Highway.

Members meet the last Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend and enjoy the hiking trails and creek on the 43-acre property. Each summer, the club provides a conservation day camp for youth, with volunteers sharing knowledge about the environment and offering nature sports. In September, members host an annual banquet and raffle drawing. Check out the club's Facebook page or call (248) 930-2817.

If you've ever been to the Spirit of the Woods Folk Festival, held the third Saturday in June at Brethren's Dickson Park, you can thank the **Spirit of the Woods Music Association**, which has offered and supported live music since June 1978. Thanks to donations and ad sales, entry to the annual music festival remains free. Two stages of musicians play from noon

until evening. Find concert and event information at: [www.spiritofthewoods.org](http://www.spiritofthewoods.org). Members usually meet at people's homes the first Friday of the month to organize and plan concerts, and support music events. Call (231) 477-5381.

The following group helps to maintain over 80 miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail – a linear National Park – most of which, in our area, meanders through the Huron-Manistee National Forest. The **Spirit of the Woods Chapter of the NCNST** was chartered in September 1998 and offers member-led hikes the first Saturday of the month. To learn more, visit: [www.northcountrytrail.org/spw](http://www.northcountrytrail.org/spw), email [bachlobach@gmail.com](mailto:bachlobach@gmail.com) or call (231) 729-0544.

So, whether you plant, support nature, enjoy music, hike or “do it all” in 2020, have fun!

*Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas is a retiree of the Manistee Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forest, where she worked in recreation and as an outdoor recreation planner. She has been involved with three of the four Spirit of the Woods' organizations.*



Top. An employee loads containers of substrate into an autoclave which acts like a pressure cooker to sterilize the growing medium before it is cooled and inoculated with fungi “spawn”. Photo by Mark Videan. Above. Alba clamshell™ mushrooms reach for the light in the growing room. They offer a “mild shellfish flavor” and “crisp to crunchy texture.” Photo by Mark Videan.



Top. Maitake are harvested. Below. Retail packages. Photos courtesy of Gourmet Mushrooms, Inc.

# Wild about mushrooms

By Pat Stinson

*Mushrooms help mark the seasons. Morels arrive in spring, puffballs in fall. Except for random encounters at farm markets or specialty grocers with more exotic varieties, most of us (except for forest foragers) eat ubiquitous grocery-store mushrooms: button, crimini, portabella and the occasional shiitake or oyster.*

That’s why when Gourmet Mushrooms, Inc., of Scottville, announced it would host a facility tour, we jumped at the chance to learn more. All we knew was that somewhere inside the giant, white buildings of the plant someone was packing “gourmet” mushrooms, as the sign read. What kind, why and for whom we had no clue.

Turns out the Scottville facility not only “packs” them but also cultivates seven varieties of specialty mushrooms at its indoor farm along East State Street (US-10), at the site of the former Roach and Company canning factory, (which later became “Stokley” under various ownerships).

Gourmet Mushrooms, with a second farm in California, is the largest grower of organic culinary and nutraceutical mushroom varieties of any farm in the U.S.,

according to the company’s website. At its Scottville location, the company employs 75, (80 during November and December), making it the second-largest employer in Scottville after Mason County Central Schools.

It’s worth noting that the company uses wood products from a nearby sawmill in some of its growing media (substrates) and the spent materials are used locally as compost, reducing waste and minimizing the facility’s carbon footprint.

In our tour group were two tavern owners, two sales representatives from a food service distributor and an executive chef. All were curious and asked questions. During our visit, we took copious notes and multiple photographs, expecting to take readers on a step-by-step journey through the growing process. However, we realized this intensive operation is best described by biochemist and general manager Gary Mills, Ph.D.

Until public tours are offered again, take a video “tour” by clicking on the “Explore the farm” tab at [www.mycopia.com](http://www.mycopia.com). You can also read Mills’ description of the mushroom-growing process on his blog post found here: [www.mycopia.com/blog/gourmet-mushrooms-michigan](http://www.mycopia.com/blog/gourmet-mushrooms-michigan).

### THE “FUN”GI FACTS

Mills said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in 2018 that mushrooms were a \$1.23 billion industry (in 2017-2018), consisting mostly of sales of “agaricus” mushrooms: buttons, criminis and portobellas. He added that specialty mushrooms accounted for \$100 million of that figure or 30-million pounds of roughly 792-million pounds of mushrooms produced each year.

As huge as the numbers seem, American consumption of mushrooms is far below that of other countries. Mills said the per capita consumption in the U.S. is three pounds, in



Europe it is six pounds, and in Asia it is five times those numbers, combined.

Still, consumption of mushrooms is rising worldwide, according to a 2017 report by Gro Intelligence. In Asian countries, the phenomenon is attributed to rising income and population. In the U.S., Americans are paying increasing attention to health benefit claims and looking for plant-based sources of protein and alternatives to meat.

“Mushrooms are about as close to giving you that meaty taste,” Mills said, “and not quite as expensive and more sustainable.”

### SEVEN WONDERS OF THE MUSHROOM-LOVER’S WORLD

The 79-acre Scottville farm includes two warehouse buildings housing, among other things, 27 growing rooms. The rooms are climate controlled for temperature, humidity, air movement, lighting and other parameters. Behind the closed doors of the 110-by-25-by-12 nursery rooms, the mushrooms are in various stages of growth.

The company harvests up to five-and-a-half times more of the popular maitake mushrooms, also known as “Chicken of the Woods” or “Hen of the Woods”, than its other six varieties. Mills explained the yield another way: 10,000-13,000 pounds per week of maitake frondosa versus 2,000-3,000 pounds each of alba clamshells, brown clamshells, trumpet royales, forest nameko, nebrodini bianco and velvet piopinni – all trademarked names.

The mushrooms are different shapes and sizes, with distinct flavors enhanced by proper cooking.

“They’re like people,” Mills said. “They have their own personalities.”

Descriptions of the varieties – their textures, tastes and colors – and recipe suggestions for each can be found on the website.

Mills said Sanders Meats, in Custer, uses the company’s mushrooms in some of their meat products. We found that Ludington Bay Brewing, of Ludington, serves a mushroom pizza topped with several varieties.



Pizza with Gourmet Mushrooms is served at Ludington Bay Brewing Co. Photo by Pat Stinson.

Mushrooms are sold seasonally under the company’s Mycopia brand at area fresh food markets such as Orchard Market on US-31 in Free Soil and The Market on Stiles Road in Ludington.

The company has resumed sales of its mushrooms, 1-3 p.m., Fridays, at the farm, located at 506 E. State Street (US-10).

In Grand Rapids, find them at Bridge Street Market. In Michigan’s eastern region they are sold at Meijer stores. Mills said they are also shipped all over the country and can be found at participating Whole Foods as well as Safeway and Hy-Vee stores.

Gift baskets and “educator’s” mushroom kits are sold through the website at [www.mycopia.com](http://www.mycopia.com).

Find them on Facebook at Gourmet Mushrooms Inc./Mycopia

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# Millionaires of Manistee: John Canfield, Lumber Baron

This is the first in a series of five articles about Manistee's influential early millionaires. Special thanks to Mark Fedder of Manistee Historical Museum.



By P. Misty Sheehan

When asked if Manistee once had more millionaires than any other U.S. city, Mark Fedder, Executive Director of the Manistee Area Historical Museum, laughed and said, "That's a myth, but during the logging era, 'the grand old days' when lumber was king, Manistee had many millionaires."

One of the earliest of these was John Canfield, (1830-1899), who came to Manistee with little cash and ended up with a fortune.

In his teens, John left school and worked as a clerk for his father (Roswell Canfield) who owned a mercantile establishment in Racine, Wisconsin. His father was also interested in lumber manufacturing and sent John, then 17, over to Manistee, Michigan, to look at the prospect of logging here. The trip was successful, and the Canfields established their first Manistee mill in the

late 1840s.

At that time Manistee was all virgin timber, as far as one could see, and predominantly pine, the lumber most in demand. The Ottawa people held a majority of the timber, using it in their traditional practices of hunting and gathering.

By 1850, John Canfield was in charge of the mills. One year later, at age 21, he and his father became partners in the firm R. Canfield and Son. In 1851, John bought Indian lands filled with virgin timber to maximize the productivity of his mills.

Having never finished school, he was interested in improving himself and was known to read at night from technical books on lumbering, history, politics, science and other topics. Though he did not consider himself "political", he was a Republican. His principle was to leave others alone but to pay strict attention to his own business.

In 1855 he married Helen M. Beach of New Marlborough, Massachusetts. From their union, three daughters were born: Ida (Frost), Carrie (Caroline Thorsen) and Nellie (Blacker). After Helen died, he remarried. From this marriage in 1865 to Frances V. Wheeler of Berkshire, Mass., he had a son, Frank Wheeler Canfield, and daughter, Margaret "Daisy" Canfield.

Filled with ideas, he next started the Canfield tug line to assist his lumbering business. He also partnered with Edward Wheeler on the Canfield and Wheeler Store, and in 1869 his business became Canfield and Wheeler.

In those days, mills often burned down. Sawdust was everywhere. Branches of trees were placed in piles to be burnt, and sometimes the fire from the piles engulfed the mills, themselves. In 1871, tragedy struck. The same fire that destroyed Chicago burnt down the Canfield mill for the fourth time. But, undeterred, Canfield rebuilt again.

From 1875 to 1876, he turned his eyes toward building a proper house for his family, one that would fill the block between Fourth and Third, Cedar and Elm. He used a Chicago architect, William LeBaron Jenney, to design the house. Jenney was later credited with building the first skyscraper and his apprentices, Louis Sullivan and Daniel Burnham, became famous architects, themselves.

The three-story Canfield home was the "Downton Abbey" of its time. The first floor included a parlor, sitting room, dining room, fernery, library, conservatory, family sitting room and family bedroom. This is where the servants worked, in the kitchen, and they had their own dining room.

The second floor was for sleeping, with five bedrooms and a wing with four more bedrooms.

The third floor had a ballroom, billiard room, and two storage rooms. From here, it's said one could climb up the tower for a view of Lake Michigan that stretched almost to Wisconsin, to see the smoke rising from the Frankfort Iron works, and to look upon thousands of acres of timber land below.

In 1876 Canfield purchased two lots, just east of the mansion, for a barn. A visitor is said to have commented, "If that is a barn, what stately structures your churches must be, comparatively speaking."

Still brimming with new ideas, in 1880 he became one of the original subscribers to fund the salt beds. Eventually, he became the largest stockholder in the Canfield Salt and Lumber Company.

Besides his industries, Canfield was interested in improving his community. He gave a large sum of money for the construction of the first Mercy Hospital and to help build the Congregational Church.

He died in 1899 and left his estate to family living in the city. However, great mansions lost their attractiveness, as the cost of running them became prohibitive. Too, the next generation was not as circumspect as John Canfield and his wife. His son Frank was divorced by his wife, Belle Gardner Nye, for desertion. She was awarded a large sum from the divorce, custody of their children, and ownership of Canfield Cottage in Onekama, a.k.a. "The Moorings." She traveled to Europe with the children, as wealthy families did then. She tore the mansion down and used the bricks to build her smaller house on the same site. It was the end of an era.

Still, John Canfield built a legacy in Manistee as one of the leaders of the city that continues to this day.

P. Misty Sheehan is a retired professor of humanities and former executive director of the Benzie Area Historical Society and Museum.

## Exciting times ahead for space exploration in 2020

By Brooke Edwards

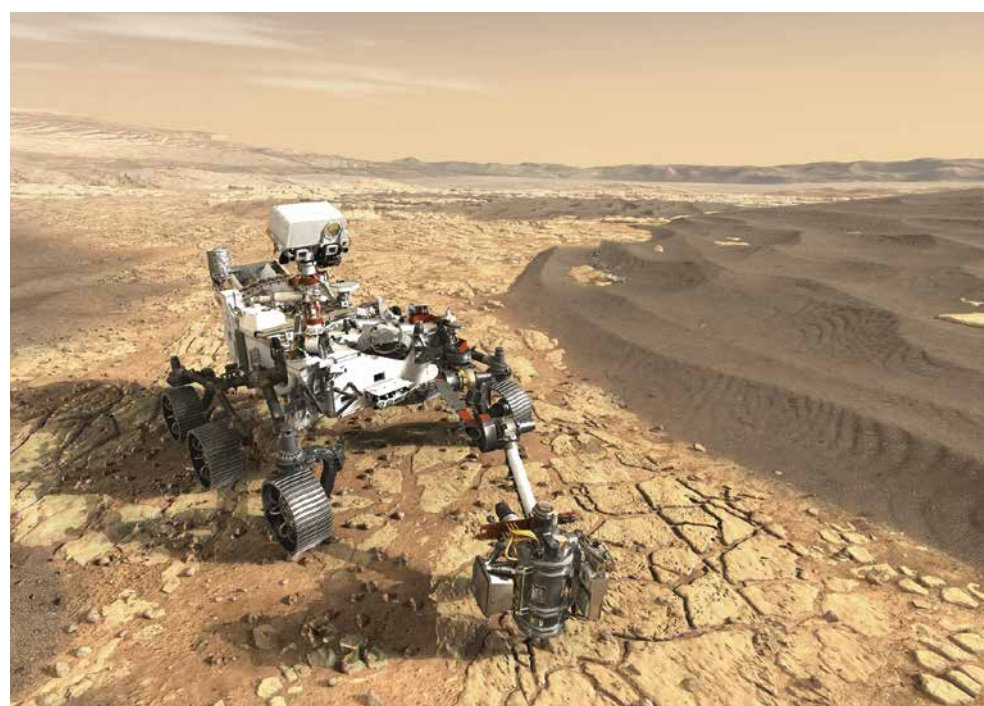
Last year was an eventful one for space news. From controversy over the Space X Starlink satellites to the unveiling of the Artemis program, 2019 is a year that will not be forgotten by space enthusiasts.

This year promises to be even more memorable.

### MARS 2020

If all goes as planned, the Mars 2020 Rover will launch from Cape Canaveral in July or early August. In February, 2021, the rover will land in an area known as the Jezero Crater, where it will study the planet's soil. This will be the first time a rover carries a coring drill for collecting Martian soil and rock samples. There is hope that later missions could retrieve these preserved samples.

The rover also boasts an upgraded landing system and wheel design to increase its effectiveness and, therefore, the mission's success. The anticipated findings are truly



Mars Rover 2020 is based on the previous Curiosity rover design. It weighs less than a compact car but is car sized at approx. 10 feet long (not including the arm), 9 feet wide and 7 feet tall. Artist rendering courtesy of NASA/JPL—Caltech.

exciting, as four main areas are being studied: the Martian soil, for evidence of past microbial life; the weather; the geology; and our ability to produce oxygen from the soil. All results will be vital for future human missions to Mars.

### TESS DISCOVERIES

TESS has made many exoplanet discoveries

in the past year it has been in service. TESS, which stands for Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, looks at changes in the brightness of stars caused by planets passing in front of them.

As the data comes in, discoveries are being made every day. Earlier this month it was confirmed that a planet orbiting the star TOI 700 (TESS Object of Interest)

named TOI 700d is in the habitable zone. This means the planet is at the right distance from the star to contain liquid water. The discovery comes after months of data from both TESS and the Spitzer Space Telescope. Worlds we could only dream were out there are becoming a reality.

We can only imagine what TESS will find in the coming months!

### MANNED LAUNCHES FROM THE US

Astronauts have not been launched from American soil since the retirement of the space shuttles in 2011. Since then, America has been working with Russia to give U.S. astronauts access to the space station. This might be the year the American launch hiatus ends.

Private space companies Boeing and Space X made major progress with crew capsule designs. Space X's Crew Dragon reached the space station on an unmanned test flight last year while Boeing's Starliner made major progress as well.

If these companies continue to be successful, they could find themselves partnering with NASA to send astronauts from U.S. launch sites to the space station once more.

Only time will tell what else this year can bring!

Brooke Edwards is a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. She lives in Manistee County.

# Snowmobile Club

continued from page 1

the trail system (in) Empire, they have the snowmobile drags at the Empire Airport, and that had to be cancelled.”

The drags, known as the Empire Snowmobile Drag Race/Roy Taghon Memorial, in southwest Leelanau County, has been rescheduled for Feb. 29. Coe said this annual race has turned out to be quite an event. Last year, there were about 150 snowmobile racers. The Snowbirds groom the track for them.

In fact, not only do the Snowbirds attend to their own club’s duties, they are a member of the Northwest Michigan Snowmobile Council, a group of 10 snowmobile clubs.

“We all meet and discuss different things going on in our region,” Coe said, “(such as) trail development and equipment costs. We work with the DNR and U.S. Forest Service on trails and trail maintenance.

“It’s good to have input from the different clubs in the area. We occasionally share equipment or labor forces, if it’s needed, to do some work on the trails and that type of thing.”

The Snowbirds celebrated their 50th birthday in 2018, and the Northwest Michigan Snowmobile Council has been around for about 30 years, according to Coe. Clubs are also located in Grand Traverse, Wellston, Irons, Peacock and Baldwin, with two clubs in Cadillac.

“We’re uniting trail systems,” Coe added. “We’re trying to be connected all the way around. Our trail system is quite lengthy, spanning the three counties.

“So, we’re working with Grand Traverse on expanding and getting a connector into their system. We’ve recently connected with Cadillac through Copemish and Mesick.”

Coe added that the Snowbirds are currently working with Manistee County planning and recreation groups on trail



Vintage Show, third weekend in July, in Kaleva. Courtesy photo.

expansion in Manistee County.

The overall objective, Coe said, is to make snowmobiling better for people in the state of Michigan.

“A few years ago, we became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so we do fund raising for different organizations,” Coe said. “We’re new at that, and we’re developing some of the different things as we go. (With) our vintage show, we raise money for different groups.”

The Snowbirds are a volunteer organization that meets monthly at their club house in Kaleva, and the executive board meets just about every month as well, according to Coe, while the Northwest Michigan Snowmobile Council meets about eight times a year.

“We’re also members of what was the Michigan Snowmobile Association (and) is now called the Michigan Snowmobile and ORV Association,” Coe said.

“MISORVA is a group that unites snowmobiling and ORVs across the state, both upper and lower Michigan. We’re active in that. We attend meetings, and work with the DNR on issues.

“We’re a pretty well-connected group, and we try to stay informed on the pulse of a recreational winter sport that we enjoy here in the area and state,” Coe said.

Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds meet at 7 p.m., the first Wednesday of the month, at the clubhouse: 14121 Industrial Dr., Kaleva. For more information, visit: [benziemanisteesnowbirds.com](http://benziemanisteesnowbirds.com) and follow them on Facebook.

Greg Gielczyk currently covers Manistee and Manistee Catholic Central athletics for the Ludington Daily News. He also writes a weekly column for the TV 9&10 website, MISportsNow.

## AROUND THE COUNTIES

### CONTEST

Each issue, we will feature a photo of something fun or unusual in Manistee or Mason county. **CAN YOU GUESS WHERE IT IS?**

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# Crypto Quotes for Winter

by Mark Videan

A crypto quote is a quotation by a well-known person that has been encrypted by substituting one letter for another. See if you can solve the puzzle to reveal the quote and its author.

CRYPTO QUOTE 1 DE PWWQNJMPDN DGN XNPODV EY P HZEIYUPAN, MD MH ZNJNHHPQV DE HDPZT EOD MZ DGN JEUT. -PQMHDUN

CRYPTO QUOTE 2 GX NUI CABZIGNSFOA BUVBXP JPOI SN PBX, PJGGOA TAEZIP VEUU GOUS BVBX UEYO PJGGOA PZNV, HJS VEZSOA TAEZIP BAO TAEZIP TNAOKOA. -CONACO A. A.

CRYPTO QUOTE 3 OPP AWR XKKI EJ PWMK. ZRS O PESSPK LDWLWPOSK XWG OXI SDKX IWKJX'S DRNS. -LDONPKJ V. JLD RPU

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Crypto quote Solutions

- To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold. Aristotle
- My old grandmother always used to say, summer friends will melt away like summer snows, but winter friends are friends forever. George R. R. Martin
- All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt. Charles M. Schulz

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