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Hope unfurls in a spiraling world

Story and photos by Robyn Schmidt

I have always been attracted to things that swirl. Spirally objects, like cresting waves, octopus tentacles and snail shells. Curly patterns consistently find their way into my artwork, my handwriting and my thoughts. The design is unavoidable for me and has many different meanings around the world. In Maori culture, this “koru” design resembles the unfurling fern frond and is said to represent new beginnings and hope.



I try to focus on the small, beautiful gifts right in front of me.

Today they were everywhere. The fiddlehead ferns! You would never be able to notice them from a moving car. In the past, I’ve pulled over on my bike to attempt to photograph these furry little spirals, but if there is even the slightest breeze they wiggle uncontrollably, causing blurry images. Luckily, this afternoon the air was extremely still, so I was able to practice my close-up shots. These hairy, sensitive, creature-like ferns held my attention for hours.

I just revel in the complex, tightly coiled fiddlehead fern getting ready to unroll into a new leaf, a new beginning. I share my entire afternoon with the fuzzy, circular creatures of the forest, snapping picture after picture, lining up my bike wheels and curvy handlebars in the background. Everything in the frame is swirly, just how I like my art to be – symbolizing harmony in



a world full of chaos and calm.

Robyn Schmidt was raised in northern Michigan and lives in Portland, Oregon, where rainforests nurture a fairyland of fern. She prefers traveling by bicycle, bus and surfboard.

Social Distancing for the Soul

By Kevin Howell



Tall pines are a common feature on sandy uplands at the Holly Nature Sanctuary. Photo by Kevin Howell.

Down a backroad in rural Mason County lies a pristine 80 acres of varied terrain and a sanctuary where, in these troubled times

of the virus, one can find a bit of peace for the soul.

The Franklin F. and Brenda L. Holly

Nature Sanctuary – once a family retreat owned by the Hollys’ grandfather, the farmer and artist Henry Millwood – is located on Dewey Road about a third of a mile west of Peterson Road.

The property was donated to the Michigan Nature Association in December 2018. Of 175 sanctuaries cared for by the MNA in the state, it is the first one in Mason County.

The MNA is slowly developing a trail system with blue (south trail) and yellow (north trail) diamond markers that show the way through upland stands of tall pines to lowland hardwoods, swamps and bogs.

“The property is entirely wooded, with the exception of two wetlands in the southeast corner – a bog and a northern shrub thicket,” noted Robb Johnston, MNA

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From the Editor

Trees and Other Comforts

“There’s nothing wrong with having a tree as a friend.”

– Bob Ross

By Pat Stinson

Recently, I was on my honor to complete the Michigan DNR and Bob Ross Foundation’s Happy Little 5K Run/Walk for the Trees. The April event raised funds to help state parks replenish trees lost to storms, invasive species or disease.

In a prescient move last fall, the event partners had decided that people could either meet at parks and participate together or complete the 5K solo. As a walker and an intermittent jogger, I opted to go solo long before Wuhan became a household word.

For those unaware, Bob Ross was a beloved painter who taught many “The Joy of Painting” through his PBS television show. He shone with the kind of simplicity and enthusiasm that endear us to Mr. Rogers. His hair was the stuff of legend and whenever I happened on his show, I expected a bird to fly out of that



nest atop his neck. Maybe his love of trees and the outdoors had gone to his head.

In my usual style – like waiting until the last minute to write my one and only draft of a story – I walked my 5K in the late afternoon on the final day of the five-day event. It was sunny, with a cold wind off Lake Michigan. I headed north along Lakeshore Drive in Manistee County. Bar Lake Outlet was desolate, no fishermen, and I didn’t mind. I walked as swiftly as my shins would allow, making stops

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Beginning a New Era in American Spaceflight



Crew Dragon being prepared for the Demo-2 mission in May. Photo from SpaceX and NASA.

By Brooke Edwards

It was July 8, 2011 – a hot day at Kennedy Space Center – when the Space Shuttle Atlantis launched for the final time, taking its crew to the International Space Station (ISS). STS-135 was not only the final mission of Atlantis, but the final mission of the space shuttle program. The three aging space shuttles in service, Atlantis, Endeavour, and Discovery, were retired and sent to museums around the country for public display. The spacecraft that played a crucial role in the construction of the ISS was now a memory. Nine years passed without a crewed launch from this continent as engineers worked on a replacement.

On Friday, April 17, 2020, as the world battled COVID-19, astronauts Jessica Meir and Andrew Morgan landed in Russia aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft. They returned to a completely different world, after less than a year aboard the International Space Station. Not only had a new strain of a virus taken humanity by surprise, but they were now to be the last astronauts to launch and return onboard a Soyuz.

SpaceX has been tirelessly working with NASA to design a spacecraft that will once again launch astronauts from the U.S. The same day Meir and Morgan landed, exciting news hit the internet. NASA announced that the wait was finally over and shared a new launch date of May 27. SpaceX's

Crew Dragon, the vehicle designed to carry passengers into orbit, will launch astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley to the ISS on a Falcon 9 rocket from Kennedy Space Center.

This groundbreaking mission, Demo-2, is the first test flight of the Crew Dragon. Once the flight to the space station and back is completed, Crew Dragon will be certified to ferry NASA astronauts to the ISS on a regular basis. The astronauts will continue scientific research that will help life on Earth as well as prepare for human expeditions to the moon and beyond. Behnken and Hurley will be part of the Expedition 63 crew on board the space station. At this time, the length of their mission is yet to be determined.

The launch might be live streamed so the public can watch. NASA is urging people, because of COVID-19 health concerns, not to attend the launch in person. While waiting for this historic event, the public is encouraged to follow the mission on Twitter using #LaunchAmerica. If all goes well, astronauts will fly to the ISS from the U.S. once again. Make sure not to miss American history in the making!

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



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Social Distance Birding

By Brian Allen

It's a dark, snowy day – one of those so disappointing in early spring but darker yet from the COVID-19 pandemic that is like a sinister cloak over the country. We have been told to wash, don't touch our faces and keep social distance. No more movies, no more eating out and even no more visits to friends and family. Like everyone, I am struggling with this new circumstance yet have found that there is still joy in the world.

My most joyous moments are being with my wife and visiting with our family via FaceTime on the smartphone, despite the disappointment of not being able to hold our grandchild. My other joy is getting out birding and hiking to experience another spring that will advance, no matter what.

I have even read directives this week (March 8-14) to those going birding to keep social distance. Admonished not to share rides or binoculars, I prefer to look forward to being outside and, even with social distancing, sharing the experience and joy of spring. Although we stay apart to avoid contagion when I meet people on the Arcadia Boardwalk, our enthusiasm for the ducks and geese is a more welcome contagion. When we see a group of Sandhill cranes spread their wings to take flight and bugling their wild call, we all

feel a surge of joy that displaces the sore feeling of the incessant COVID-19 news. The world seems fine again when talking with friends and seeing the newly open waters and arriving migrant waterfowl.

We need to keep learning about our world to feel good and do good, and not just the world of TV news, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We are fortunate to live in this part of Michigan with so many state parks, national forest lands and conservancy preserves, the great libraries of land. I hope you can take some time to experience their trails and paths. I was astonished at the full house at the Manistee Vogue Theater recently for the film "Fantastic Fungi." Many were turned away, as there were not enough seats. Now we can get out, guidebook or app in hand,

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Below. Photo of Brian Allen by Andrew Allen. Bottom. Before social distancing, Brian Allen led a class of young students on a birding excursion to Lake Bluff Audubon Center, north of Manistee.





Pointers for planting trees

By P. G. Misty Sheehan

1

Decide why you are planting your tree. Is it to provide shade? Is it for pure beauty? Do you expect nuts or fruit from the tree?

2

Select an appropriate planting site:

- Keep the site away from the house, garage, outbuildings, septic field, wellhead, power lines and property boundaries.

- Look up the tree's canopy size at maturity to ensure there is enough space for it on either side and above the site, (unless you are planting a windbreak).

- Give the roots lots of room to grow.

- Check the amount of light and shade the tree will receive.

- Make sure the site can be watered regularly.

- Be aware that air pollutants from the road can slow the growth of your tree.

3

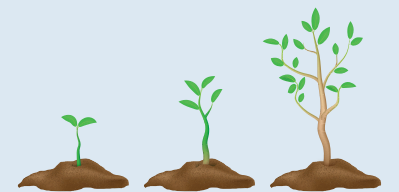
Check that the soil is the proper type and pH for the tree species.

4

Look for the hardiness zone of the trees you want to plant. Upland trees that are native to northern Michigan include sugar maple, red maple, white pine, northern red oak, aspen, birch, black cherry and hemlock.

5

Be aware of invasive insect species that can harm your trees. The Asian longhorned beetle will prey on maples, emerald ash borer on ash and wooly agelid on hemlocks.



Make every day Arbor Day

By P.G. Misty Sheehan. Photos by Mark Videan.

Thirteen thousand years ago the ice cap over Michigan was melting. Native Americans hunted megafauna on dry tundra amongst juniper, ash, aspen and spruce.

Time went on and Michigan became a massive forest. Native Americans cultivated the forest, picking plants that they ate and used in medicine, but only enough plants – others were left to grow and provide new plants for next year's harvest.

Then Europeans came to Michigan and cut down the virgin forest, selling plank boards to Chicago and places beyond. On the barren land, they planted fruit trees and sold the fruit here and out of state. More recently, the temperate climate and sandy beaches of Lake Michigan have enticed tourists to come to this area for summer vacations. Some relocate here permanently or build second homes on the lakes and the rivers. Michigan forests continue to make way for us.

Today, we sit back a moment and think about what our responsibility is to the land. We worry about global warming after this very warm winter. We think about planting more trees on our land to stave off global warming. Trees take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen, slowly

eliminating CO2 and other greenhouse gases that cause global warming. Trees create the oxygen we breathe and filter airborne pollution.

The trees that are around us today are secondary growth. The big white pines that once filled our forests were felled by lumberjacks. They came to Michigan in the nineteenth century to make money and to provide lumber to build homes for America's burgeoning population.

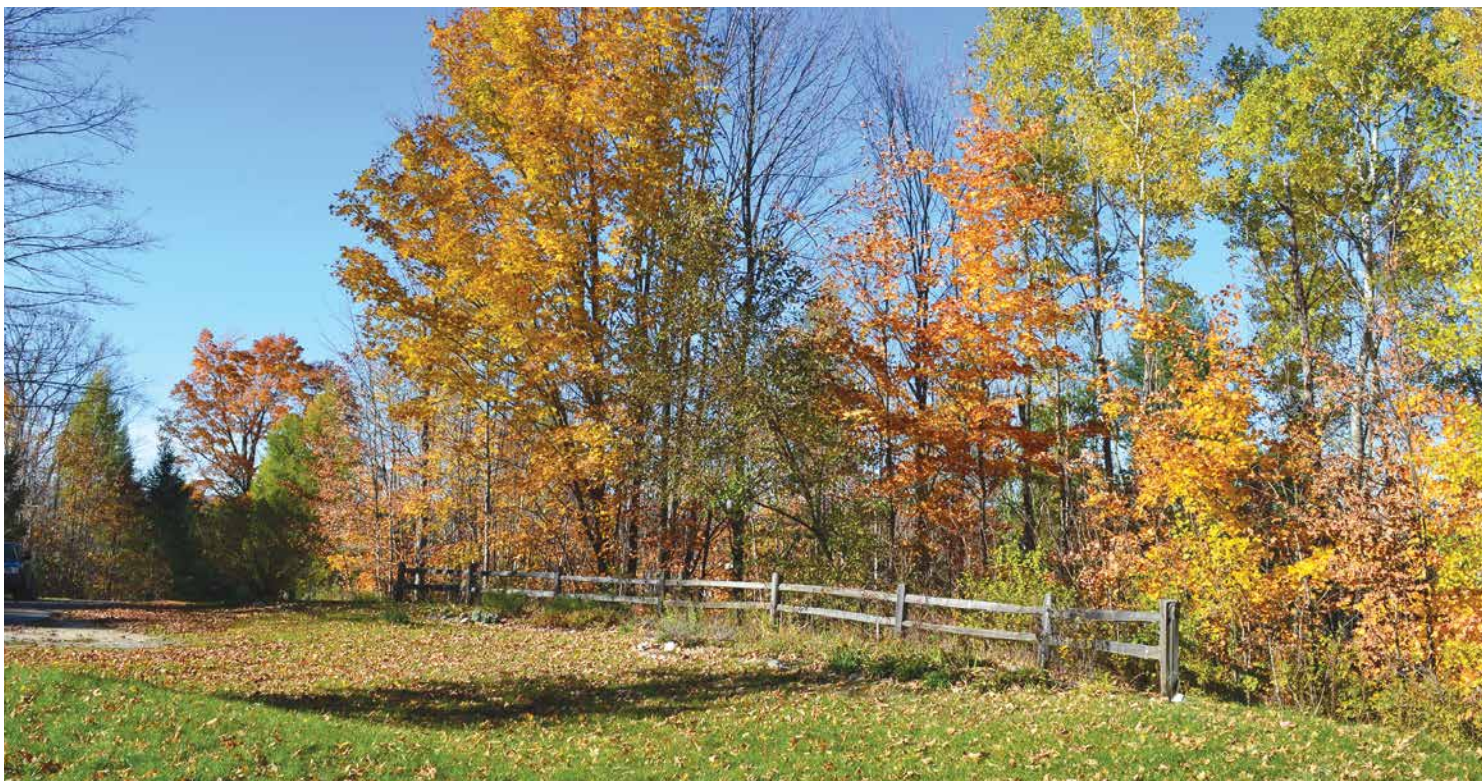
We can note the secondary growth of the trees planted in rows by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, and tree rows planted to protect crops from west winds which can topple corn and wheat. We also can note untrammled secondary growth – that deer like so well – on land left empty by logging. Here, clusters of locust and aspen grow with bushes, maples and white pines.

Hartwick Pines, near Grayling, is one of the few places where we can see old growth trees, those pine trees that were here when the lumberjacks came. Giant white pines

thrill visitors to the Keweenaw Peninsula's Estivant Pines Wilderness Nature Sanctuary in the Upper Peninsula. Virgin white cedar trees, some at least 500 years old, tower over hikers on South Manitou Island in Lake Michigan. These pockets of our once-massive trees have taught us that the larger the tree, the more efficient it is in providing benefits such as cooling (from shade and evaporation), among others. Planting several small trees does not make up for the loss of one, giant tree.

The land is always changing. It will take a good hundred years to foster trees the size of old growth trees again. It can be done, if we nourish the trees that are here now, and if we plant more trees to provide homes for the creatures – from insects to bears – that comprise the web of life in the forest.

P. G. Misty Sheehan is a retired Humanities professor and former Executive Director of the Benzie Area Historical Museum and Society. She lives on a portion of a former Christmas tree farm.



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Finding humor in unexpected times

Channeling Erma Bombeck

By Judy Cools

Well, the pandemic is still here – and so am I. From the governor’s first stay-at-home order, we’ve been compliant and creative. “We” are my husband, myself, and our trusty canine beast. The beast is beside himself with happiness that we are home all day, and I’m afraid he’ll become unlivable when we start having a life again.

On a whim, I got him an extra water dish for the deck, where he likes to spend time. I was thrilled that he drank from it right away and that he stops there every time he goes out. Then he decided that outdoor water is far superior to indoor water. Now he wants to go out-and-in and out-and-in an extra thousand or so times a day. Hopefully, the novelty will wear off.

Everyday tasks take on new meaning in a pandemic. My hand froze when reaching for a pot of lip balm the other day. No, I really don’t want to dip a finger in this pot and wipe it on my lips. Touching your mouth is something they specifically tell us to avoid. I’ve replaced all the pots of gloss with sticks now.

The pandemic means we wear masks outside the house, indoors and out. We carry

Mainstays of life during a pandemic.
Photo by Pat Stinson.



wipes with us everywhere, trying to follow our own fingerprints and wiping surfaces before and after use. The usual doorknobs and light switches, remote controls and kitchen handles. There are wipes in the car, wipes in our pockets, wipes in the house. I made an embarrassing mess one day by having a too-wet wipe in my jacket pocket. It leaked through and made a huge spot on my clothes, which I then had to explain to the staff at my doctor’s office, back in the day when we actually went to the doctor’s office. Since then, my single transportable wipes are each contained inside a sandwich baggie in my pocket. I also discovered that’s a great way for one wipe to last a much longer time without drying out.

When the stay-at-home order was issued, I grocery shopped by planning phases, like we were going to go camping in the wilderness for a month. Tender fruits like blackberries and strawberries for immediate use, apples for the next week, oranges for longer storage, and canned/dried fruit for after that. We always have plenty of dry pasta and rice, no worries there. Fresh potatoes for a few weeks, then dried, frozen, and canned potatoes for the long term.

I use a bread maker at times and make my own homemade mixes. At the time of the stay-home order, I had enough mixes in the freezer for about 20 loaves of bread. I bought some extra cookies and sweets for the freezer and brought them out when the pantry was starting to look bleak and depressing around week 3.

Going “out in the world” is a major event



The thirsty beast gives me “the look” from the other side of the screen. Photo by Judy Cools.

these days. Either I go myself, with a list of errands, or Gary is the driver as I pop in and out of stores. He has more pre-existing conditions than I do, and we’ve decided this is the best way for us to approach the world right now.

We collect errands and do them in a mad dash all at once. I grab door handles with a wipe or catch the closing door with a toe, if I can. I did that at the post office one day and earned a smiling nod from a young man. It said to me, “Nice save, old person. Good job.” Yeah, the old girl’s still got it.

Since I’m the one going into places, I dump my clothes in the washer on the way into the house, then I head to the shower

for a total scrub-down. The car gets wiped down both inside the passenger area and the outside door handles. Once we’re in the house, our list starts anew for our next trip to the world, perhaps 4 weeks hence.

So far, so good. We’ve remained healthy (if a bit paranoid) and happy (if a bit testy on occasion). Here’s to keeping the bubble of protection – for the benefit of us all.

Judy Cools has been a columnist for area newspapers, a web designer, feature and business writer, and an editor for nearly 30 years. She and her husband make their home in the woods near Ludington. Read more at: judycoolsmoondance.blog

Social Distancing for the Soul

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Regional Stewardship Organizer for the western Lower Peninsula.

“The woodlands themselves contain a rich mosaic of uplands and wetlands, with a variety of canopy types that host a wonderful diversity of plants, animals and fungi underneath.”

He said the two trails are connected and provide access to the entire sanctuary. A note to hikers: though the trail will be completed later this year, it’s best to wear boots to traverse the wetland areas.

But, first, you have to find the sanctuary entrance.

The road less traveled

Dewey Road runs east and west between Victory Corner Road and Jebavy Drive, an estimated five miles north of US-10. This stretch of Dewey is sand/gravel and, especially west of Peterson Road, it gets narrower and, in my experience, it can be rougher than a cob, with low mud holes, ruts, and just general rough roadbed.

Heading west from Peterson about a third of a mile, there is an obscure two-track drive on the north side with a rather beat-up mailbox close to the road. That’s the entrance. Parking is minimal – with room

for one vehicle, two tops, in the drive just off the road. There is a barrier not far off the road to prevent further vehicle travel, so access from there is by foot.

The adventure of finding the sanctuary is well worth the effort, though, and the first steps lead under a tall canopy of white and red pines, beech trees, dogwoods and smaller shrubs and undergrowth. Following blue diamond trail markers around the top of a small hill, hikers are led back to the east near the road, then down through wetlands before turning north through the woods.

The property is such a pristine setting that it’s easy to understand the Hollys’ love for the land. Like much property in Michigan, it was logged in the state’s early years but has been making a comeback since.

“The land had been in their family since 1872, when their great-grandfather, John Millwood, acquired it,” explained Johnston, who pointed out that John owned a farm a mile and a half from the sanctuary.

“The land was clear cut during the late 1800s and used as pasture until the 1940s by John and his stepson, Henry. Henry passed the property on to his daughter Doris Holly, and her husband Birdsill.”

Johnston said Doris and Birdsill eventually

passed the property to their children, Frank and Brenda Holly, who wanted to see this beautiful woods preserved in its natural state and made available for the community to enjoy.

There is a small cabin on a hill, not far from the entrance, that overlooks a wetland area below. Per Johnston, near the cabin a visitor might find “some really nice witch hazel and Tupelo – or black gum – trees.”

Johnston said options for the cabin’s use are being considered, along with other possibilities for the sanctuary.

“There are plans to install interpretive signage and bog bridges, as well as a parking loop to provide easier access for visitors,” Johnston said.

“Currently, MNA is working to promote Holly Nature Sanctuary as a destination for outdoor learning and place-based education by reaching out to community organizations and local schools. We will also be hosting hikes and volunteer workdays.”

Holly Nature Sanctuary is definitely a place to visit to take a break from staying at home – with plenty of space for social distancing – and to find a little peace in the natural world.

Holly Nature Sanctuary is located at 4384 W. Dewey Rd., Ludington. For more information about the sanctuary or MNA, visit the organization’s website: www.michigannature.org. To become



Coming from the east on Dewey Road, the post and mailbox help indicate the hidden entrance to Holly Nature Sanctuary.
Photo by Jean Howell.

involved, contact Robb Johnston at (517) 643-6864 or email him at: rjohnston@michigannature.org.

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



Left - Susan Hintz with her quarry. Photo by Ed Merchant. Second from left: Susan's father uses a box call to attract male turkeys. Chalk is placed between the lid and the box. Moving the lid's handle to the side creates the call. Photo by Susan Hintz. Second from right: To produce a sound using a slate call, Susan's father scratches the slate with a striker. Photo by Susan Hintz. Right: Roosting turkey. Photo by Fontana, Pixabay.

The Spring Strut

By Susan Hintz

Anticipation begins building in January when my dad and I apply for the spring turkey hunt. It's coupled with the excitement of opening the cabin for the season and spending some quality daddy-daughter time in our favorite place, the great outdoors. It's customary for my dad to draw the first hunt and I the second. So far this has proven to be a good strategy, and this particular year proved to be no different.

At dusk on the eve of my hunt, we each claimed a front window, pulled up a chair, and scanned the field in hopes of sighting some feathered guests. Movement was soon detected at the back of the field and we quickly confirmed that turkeys were in the hood and moving in our direction! We remained motionless and watched intently as they methodically strutted up the two-track between the ponds, passed by the front of the cabin and around to the west side. One by one they flew up and into the towering hardwoods to roost for the night. We were beyond stoked. Going to bed knowing that the turkeys were right outside gave us confidence that a successful hunt was imminent.

The alarm sounded at 5:30 a.m. Dad was quick to silence the alarm, upright himself and make his way to the kitchen to ignite the gas globe light and perk a pot of coffee. Being the morning person that I am, I rolled over to catch a few extra winks. Eventually my senses were triggered by the aroma of fresh-brewed coffee, and I found myself trading the comforts of my warm bunk for a hot cup of joe and a doughnut (the breakfast of champions) before gearing up.

It was still dark when we exited the cabin. With turkeys roosting nearby, we needed to make our move without alerting them to our presence. We walked the same path they did, between the ponds, and followed the east side of the field until we reached the "dog house" – our blind. I entered and got situated while Dad paced off the distance and put out a few decoys. Once inside the "house" I was seated on the left and Dad

on the right. He would be the keeper of the calls and chief turkey talker.

As daylight broke, we could see the turkeys were still roosting in the trees. Little by little they became more vocal, and it was just a matter of time before they would leave their roost. We waited. We watched. We listened. And then the fly-down cackle, accompanied by the thump-thump-thump of flapping wings, and they were off the roost! Once their feet hit the ground their vocalization increased. We couldn't see them, but we knew their general location. It wasn't long before we heard a "GOBBLE!" Dad grabbed his slate call. It was time to see if Mr. Tom wanted to hook up. Dad put striker to slate. Mr. Tom answered. GAME ON!

After a bit of back and forth, Dad caught movement to his right. Sure enough, there was a big Tom at the edge of the pines, the rye field just steps away. Tom was leery about stepping into the open, so he hung tight to the edge.

Excitement was building as courting continued. He gradually made his way in our direction and into range, but he remained partially obscured by a pine. One more step and a clean shot could be made. However, since I was on the left side of the "house" and the turkey was to my dad's right, I needed to adjust my setup to shoot from the right window. Unfortunately, doing so meant I would need to shoot off hand (no rest for the firearm), which I had successfully done in the past. However, due to a recent wrist injury, my strength was compromised.



View from the hunting blind. Photo by Susan Hintz.

Preparing for Tom's next step, I shouldered my Remington 1187 12-gauge, holding aim while trying to keep steady as I waited for him to step out. Finally, he made the move I had been waiting for. I adjusted my aim, took a deep breath, relaxed and pulled the trigger. A clean miss! Spooked, he bolted – not in the opposite direction as one would expect, but directly toward us! Before I could get off another shot a window change was necessary, but he was upon us now and too close for a shot. As he ran past the front window of the blind, he looked in and glared at me, square in the eyes, mouth open as if to say, "What are you trying to do, kill me?" Tom was so close I could have reached out and grabbed him. Once he was past the blind he put on the afterburners, took flight and disappeared, never to be seen again.

Totally disappointed, I sat back and repeatedly replayed the scenario in my mind, trying to figure out what to do differently should another opportunity present itself. I knew the likelihood of getting another chance was probably slim, but, with my dad's encouragement and my determination and need for redemption, calling it quits wasn't an option.

After regrouping, my dad picked up the box call and began calling.

Nothing.

Another call.

Silence.

A series of calls.

Nothing.

Okay, take a break. Resume calling.

GOBBLE!

We looked at each other with a glimmer of hope in our eyes. Dad continued to call. Tom kept answering. He was getting closer and closer. Suddenly, a group of Toms stepped out of the pines into the field. Initially out of range, they slowly grazed, fanned and strutted their way toward the decoys. Sizing up the birds, we counted four Jakes (yearling males) and two nice-sized Toms trailing behind. Although I had a nice, open shot at the Jakes, the Toms didn't offer the same. They strategically positioned themselves ahead of the right

corner of the blind – unreachable from either the right or front window. Thoughts of the previous episode ran through my mind as I waited for the two Toms to fully present themselves. Once they cleared the corner and came into view, I shouldered my gun, took a deep breath and pulled the trigger ... BIRD DOWN! Smiles ensued.

Although the accompanying birds stopped dead in their tracks, they were not spooked. To our surprise, they looked back at the downed bird and ... GOBBLED! They came together, lined up and began walking down the rye field like The Monkees. (Editor's note: Check out this sixties-era band on YouTube.) They took a few steps, fanned and then in unison, with necks outstretched, GOBBLED! They did this a few times before one Tom must have said to the rest of the gang, "Hold on," and they all stopped. Spokesman Tom turned around and returned to the lifeless bird, stopping just short of the carcass. He looked over his fallen comrade, as if paying his respects, then he suddenly pounced on him – repeatedly.

Whether he was trying to revive him, had a vendetta against him and was saying "Take that!" or felt the need to tenderize the meat for me, his intent remained unclear. Whatever the case, after the final pounce, Spokesman Tom rejoined the chorus line and they resumed their perfectly choreographed strut-fan-and-gobble routine until they exited stage left.

Once out of sight, we were finally able to celebrate and laugh out loud about what we had just witnessed. We gathered our belongings, closed the blind and retrieved my harvest. I slung the bird over my shoulder and, with smiles on our faces and a spring in our steps, we walked side by side back to the cabin. It was another cherished hunt with my dad and definitely one for the books.

Susan Hintz is a creative entrepreneur who enjoys life in the outdoors – beachcombing, hunting and photographing nature. Find her latest projects at: www.HomegrownMichigan.com



Once the only game in town

By Mark Videan



Regular and custom Carrom boards at Grateful Heart & Home in Ludington. Photos by Pat Stinson.

LUDINGTON – In February, I found myself transfixed by a display in the shop window of Grateful Heart and Home. There, in bright-red and black on pale wood, were two lovely Carrom boards – a sight I had not seen in decades.

My brothers and I had received one for Christmas when I was 10 or 11. Many rainy days were spent playing the dozens of possible games the Carrom board provided. We loved using the mini cue sticks, just the right size for our small statures, to shoot colored rings into the four corner-pocket nets. It was our inexpensive version of a pool table. The board came with instructions for around 100 games. We tried many, played our favorites repeatedly and invented new ones.

I entered the store to take a closer look. The boards and game pieces were mainly as I remembered them, with small changes. I was surprised to see they were made right in Ludington. I was intrigued and decided to do some research.

U.S. Carrom board history

In 1883, at the age of 20, Henry L. Haskell, a businessman in Ludington, had established a basket factory in the city. This became the Ludington Novelty company in 1889, producing a variety of items, including

games. It is claimed that Carroms (as it was called then) was invented in 1889 by Haskell. A little investigation suggests that Haskell somehow became aware of the game – which had been played in India since at least the 18th century – and decided to make his own version in America. He was granted a U. S. patent for the game on October 26, 1897.

The Carroms games were originally made by hand. In 1892, 2,500 were made, (about 10 per day). Mass production started the following year with the game selling more in Iowa than anywhere else. By 1901, Carroms were sold in 10 states, in the tens of thousands. In its heyday the company employed over 200 people, including Ludington housewives who made the string pockets for the four corners of the game board. In 1902 the Ludington Novelty company bought Archarena Manufacturing Co., a game maker located in Illinois, becoming Carrom-Archarena. In the 1900s, it was one of the largest employers in Ludington. The name was changed to the Carrom Company in 1912, and sales were expanded to Europe and Asia.

Needing room for his various business interests, Haskell bought the corner building in 1916 at 801 N. Rowe St., Ludington. The building stands largely unchanged. In October of last year, the current owners of

the now-vacant, three-story building, Ron and Dawn Sarto, donated the old factory to help create an affordable housing project known as Lofts on Rowe.

From Carroms to canoes

In 1917 the new Haskell Manufacturing Company was formed. Housed in its new headquarters, the company made Carroms boards, waterproof plywood (Haskelite), and Haskell canoes, originally called “Arex,” king of the water. (See our accompanying story.) The company continued to prosper and produce diverse products, including the Carroms games. In the first 63 years, it is estimated board game sales exceeded \$4 million. Woodworking Digest estimated the company sold five million boards by 1958. Over the ensuing decades there have been mergers, buy-outs, name changes, lawsuits and moves to other manufacturing facilities.

By the 1980s, through toy and department stores, annual Carrom game sales were between 80,000 to 100,000. Now owned by Merdel Manufacturing Company, the Carrom Company moved its production of recreational products, including the Carrom Game Board, back to Ludington in 1996. Today, Carrom can still be found in the Merdel Building, 218 E. Dowland St. Carrom boards and other classic games are available there for purchase. They can be reached at: 800-223-6047 or online at www.carrom.com and on Facebook.

Carrom boards and custom, hand-painted Ludington versions of the board

are available at Grateful Heart and Home, 119 W. Ludington Ave. The company's phone number is 231-425-4477 and email address is gratefulheartandhome@icloud.com. Grateful Heart and Home is also found on Facebook and Instagram.

The above information was compiled from patents found online, www.carrom.com, U.K. Carrom Federation, Carrom History by Ubergames.co.uk, and multiple articles and references found on Wikipedia.

Mark Videan enjoys board games, card games and trivia. He creates the word puzzles found on the back page of Freshwater Reporter.

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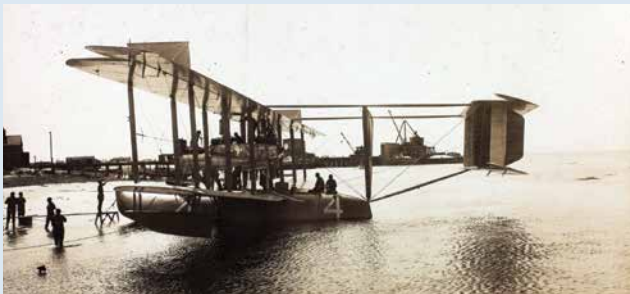
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From aircraft to canoe: Haskell's ingenious glue

By Mark Videan



Above. Curtiss NC-4. Right. Haskell Canoe weight test. 3200 lbs. supported by a 57 lb. canoe. Henry Haskell is third from right in a bowtie. Photos in the public domain.



also devised, Haskell was able to mold a canoe out of one piece of this plywood. Due to the properties of his Haskelite – extremely strong, durable and waterproof – the canoes were made without any internal framing or ribs. Incorporated in 1917, the Haskell Boat Company, in the building on Rowe Street, made 600 canoes in its first year and sold them for \$50 each.

Haskell had a second factory in Grand Rapids. It stopped making canoes in 1918 to make plywood exclusively for the U.S. government and its allies during World War I. His plywood was used to produce over 3,000 military airplanes. From 1923 until 1934 the factory returned to making canoes, boats, paddles and oars. At the same time, Haskell was also producing shaped wooden aircraft parts for commercial airplanes. For the next 30 years, most

of the parts the company made were the wings and fuselage, based on Haskell's patents from 1920. In 1919, the first aircraft to fly across the Atlantic Ocean, the Curtiss NC-4, was made with Haskell's plywood. Although the flight was not non-stop, it was the first flight between North America, Europe and Great Britain.

Haskell and his wife Elizabeth, who taught Latin at the Ludington High School, had three children and belonged to the Congregational Church in Ludington. Haskell served on the Ludington School Board and the Ludington Library Board and was the county probation officer. He remained with the company he founded until 1930 and died in Detroit at age 78.

Carrom boards are produced and sold by Merdel Manufacturing in Ludington. Photo by Doug Coldwell, Creative Commons by SA 4.0.



LUDINGTON – Along with his patent for the Carrom game board, Henry Haskell held three others: one for the design of an “Aero-plane body” granted in 1920, one for a wooden shoe insole (1922) and another for a waterproof glue material (1924).

He had applied for the glue patent in 1918 and was producing and using it since 1913. The glue was made from a mixture of water, dried albumin (a protein found in blood) and sodium silicate. He obtained the blood from the Chicago stockyard slaughterhouses. Using this glue, he constructed a layered composite of crossed grains of wood sheets, today called plywood. He branded this material Haskelite.

Using hydraulic presses in an ingenious process he

Millionaires of Manistee: Society Man Edward Wheeler

This is the fourth installment in our series of stories about some of Manistee's most influential early citizens.

Special thanks to Mark Fedder, Manistee County Historical Museum.



Story by P.G. Misty Sheehan. Photos courtesy of Manistee County Historical Museum.



Michigan Masonic Home Association. He was nominated for senator in 1888 but refused the position. He was known to be "cautious in business affairs, and conservative, but he was fond of society".

He married Cora P. Randall of Joliet and had two children from that marriage, Kittie Belle, and Edward Randall. When Cora died he was married again two years later to Emma A. Sayre, and they had a son, Harold Sayre.

Both Wheeler brothers and John Canfield set a high standard with their three houses designed by renowned Chicago architect William LeBaron Jenny. The houses were located across from each other on 4th Street. Edward Wheeler's house was elegant, with evidence of refined taste and love of home comforts. The three homes were some of the first to use steam heat and electricity.

Wheeler's many business connections made Manistee the important city it became. His work on the railroads opened western Michigan to more settlers who homesteaded in droves on the clear-cut forest land and began growing fruit – the next major product of the Manistee area – for consumption in the cities.

P. G. Misty Sheehan is a retired Humanities professor and former Executive Director of the Benzie Area Historical Museum and Society.

One family dominated the upper crust of Manistee in its early years: John Canfield and his in-laws, the brothers A.O. Wheeler and Edward Wheeler.

Edward Wheeler worked as a clerk in a drugstore in his early teens. Wanting adventure, he pleaded with his parents to go to fight in the Civil War, but he was too young. In 1862, at age 14, his family sent him to Manistee to work for brother-in-law John Canfield, who owned a sawmill there. Canfield did not take pity on the boy but started him at the lowest possible position at the Canfield Mill. Ed soon proved himself, and a couple of years later

he became a foreman.

Soon he was bookkeeper for Canfield's mill and was in charge of the entire lumbering and shipping interests of Canfield. In 1871, at age 28, he purchased interest in the firm of Canfield and Wheeler for the purpose of lumber manufacturing and general merchandise. He and Canfield operated their large mill with virgin wood from their own pinelands, and wood from Manistee, Wexford and Missaukee Counties.

The partners owned a farm of 300 acres in Manistee. And we can't forget the salt. Their wells brought considerable amounts of this "white gold" to the surface to be processed and sent to Chicago. From

there, it was shipped to the prairies and used by settlers for cooking. Wheeler was instrumental in establishing the logging railroad, M&NE to haul lumber from their pinelands to their sawmill. Two years later, it became standard gauge in order to haul passengers.

Canfield sold his sawmill to Wheeler in 1886.

That should be enough, but Wheeler added to his credentials by becoming president of the Manistee Water Company and he was also a large stockholder in the Manistee Boom Company.

In his personal life he was a Mason, serving on the Board of Trustees for the

Manistee's Millionaire Historian: Emma Wheeler

By P.G. Misty Sheehan



Historical records finally give us an image of a millionaire woman in Manistee. Now, despite the adage of the time that a lady's name should only be in the newspaper for her obituary, Mrs. Edward "Emma" Wheeler was an important historian of Manistee. She edited the anniversary edition of the Manistee Daily News, "The Salt City of the Inland Seas," in May 1899.

Her comments in that edition range from tragic to humorous. She recounts that in 1849, "a pioneer, returning from a trip to Chicago, brought two young ladies." Immediately, all work in this male-dominated lumbering town was suspended, as all the workers ran down to the ship to see two young ladies aboard!

She gives people a sense of pride when she claims the name Manistee refers to "The Spirit of the Woods," an Odawa term for the sighing of the breezes through the forest.

Manistee was destroyed by fire on October 8, 1871, the same day that fire destroyed the city of Chicago. She writes of Manistee:

"All was a scene of confusion. The pulling of

the tugs, the screeching of the whistles, the loud voices of the sailors...the roaring of the flames, the burning slabs and sawdust hurled through the air by the gale, combined to make a scene that can never be erased from the memory of those who witnessed it."

In 1899 she was President of the Lakeside Club. The club was organized by Mrs. E.B. Fairfield in 1885, ostensibly for "intellectual and social culture." But the real reason, a charter member admits, was to keep the young ladies of Manistee from frequenting a roller-skating rink. Club members read, listened to music and supported the library with funds from their events.

Erosion at popular fishing spots

Tunk Hole: Restoring a riverbank for the greater good

Editor's Note: This article was written prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of May 1, the fishing area on the north side of the Manistee River near Tippy Dam is closed and the launch ramp on the Tippy Dam pond is closed.

By Stewart A. McFerran

WELLSTON – The U.S. Constitution guarantees your right to pursue happiness. Catching fish makes lots of people happy. Many have favorite fishing spots.

But a “tragedy of the commons” is playing out on the bank of Tunk Hole at the Manistee River, below the Tippy Dam. Anglers access Tunk Hole on bandit trails. Boots on the banks have shifted the sand, and erosion from river currents has become severe.

The land surrounding the bend in the Manistee River at Tunk Hole is held in common. The lands are held as a public trust as are the waters of the river flowing into and out of Tunk Hole. Both are part of the Manistee National Forest.

“We have several access sites along the Manistee River,” said Jon Thompson, Natural Resource Specialist with Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District. “Three (are) in close proximity to Tippy Dam: Tunk Hole on the south side, and Suicide Bend and Sawdust Hole on the north side of the river.”

Economists proposed a theory that any land shared in common will be spoiled. The theory became known as “The Tragedy of the Commons” and was based on observations of pasture lands in old England.

More recently, others have shown that tragedy on common lands is not inevitable. While Elinor Ostrom may never have stood by Tunk Hole with a fishing pole, her work is playing out there. Ostrom won the Nobel Prize in economics for her paper on “economic governance and especially the commons.” She showed that people come together and cooperate to manage commonly held lands and waters.

Cooperation is benefitting riverbanks near Tippy Dam, including Tunk Hole. The U.S. Forest Service has community partners committed to restoring the popular fishing spot. Thompson said the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, while not a direct partner in the restoration, is supportive of the project and the U.S. Forest Service is partnering with others directly on riverbank restoration.

“The Forest Service provided funds from the Stewardship Program (and) Trout Unlimited provided funding that they (obtained) from two DNR grants (DNR Habitat Improvement Account, Great Lakes Fisheries Trust),” Thompson said. “Project Funding broke down approximately as follows: USFS Stewardship funds (25%), DNR Habitat Improvement Account (60%), Great Lakes Fisheries Trust (15%).”

He estimated the cost of the project at somewhere around \$250,000. (Trout

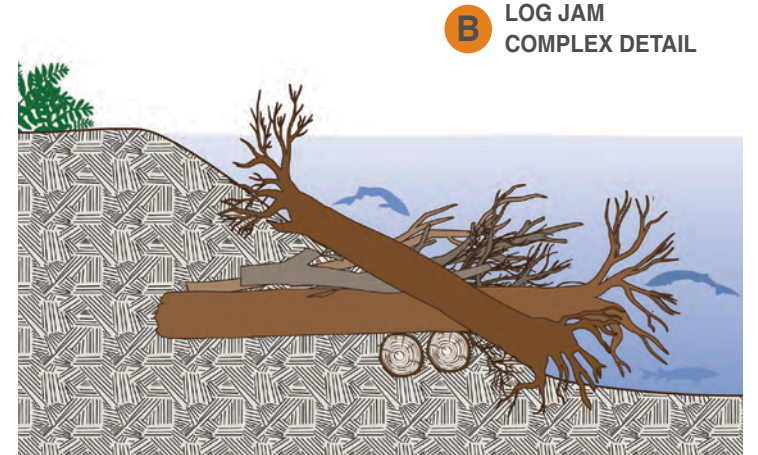
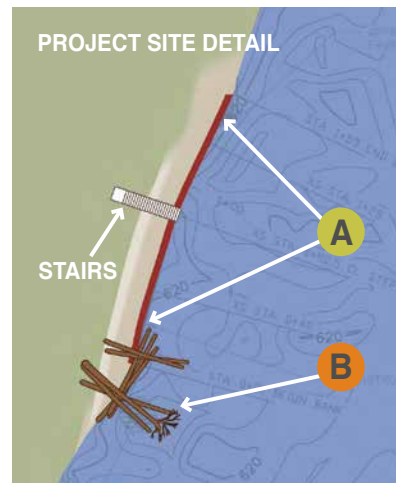
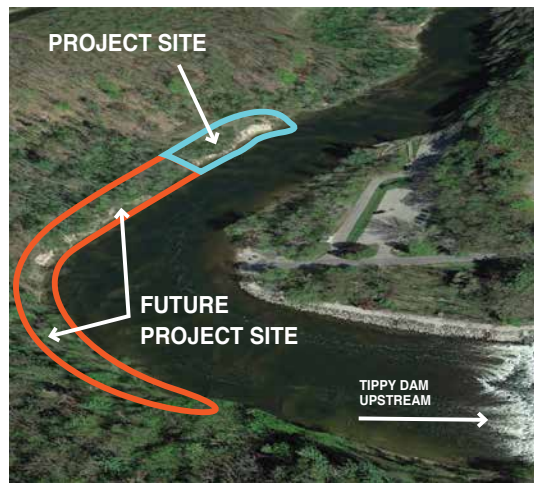


Photo and illustrations courtesy of Huron-Manistee National Forest and Trout Unlimited.

Unlimited, which administered the contract, could not be reached to confirm this figure.)

Phase I of the Tippy South restoration, completed last fall, has stabilized a long section of the Manistee riverbank.

“Phase II has not been scheduled yet,” Thompson said. “This is a new technique and we want to observe it for a year or so to make sure the project continues to be successful.”

“Once we are satisfied with that, we will begin planning Phase II – if I were forced to guess, I would say 2-4 years out.”

Prior to recent efforts, a stairway was replaced in 2016 at the South Tail Waters at Tippy Dam. The new stairs provided a safe way for anglers to approach the river and prevent erosion.

Erosion in state streams

The Betsie River – a state-designated Natural River that flows through Manistee, Benzie and Grand Traverse Counties – has seen riverbank erosion from river currents, river-road crossings and other sources. According to a 2017 River Care™ plan outlined on the Conservation Resource Alliance website, a stretch of the Betsie River in Manistee’s Springdale Township received 580 linear feet of woody debris to divert the river current and provide cover for wildlife and fish. At the same time, 40 cubic yards of fieldstone were laid to prevent erosion, and seedlings were placed in new topsoil on 200 feet of log terrace to help stabilize the riverbank.

The increase in fishing and the activity of anglers has contributed to streamside erosion in other west Michigan streams.

On the Muskegon River, this writer witnessed a riverside frenzy of fishers during one of the first salmon runs in the '70s. It was shoulder to shoulder, boot to boot on the bank. Snagging was allowed at that time

and fishermen would launch weighted treble hooks with giant poles on unbreakable cables into the churning mass of kings. The biggest fish anyone had seen were returning from the “big lake,” where they had gorged themselves on alewives.

That frenzy was harnessed by the state to sell trout stamps, by industry to sell fishing gear, and by communities to sell themselves.

Somewhat fewer anglers visit Tunk Hole, but the fragile riverbank along that stretch of the Manistee River is vulnerable to strong stream currents and every footstep.



Drift boats below Tippy Dam. Photo by Stewart McFerran.

Thompson said an estimated 60,000 people access the river around Tippy Dam each year – mostly from the state access sites.

“Tunk Hole sees less traffic as it is not as developed as the state (land) on the north side of the river,” he said. “River access at Tunk Hole is by primitive, and mostly native, surface footpaths,” Thompson added.

Those random footpaths are part of the problem.

It is the nature of anglers to congregate where the fish are, in pursuit of happiness. Large species of fish raised in state hatcheries travel up the Manistee. Their nature is to swim upstream, but, since they can’t jump over Tippy Dam, they congregate in the water below it – and at Tunk Hole – as they have since 1918 when the dam was built.

In rivers all over the world, the question of fish passage and dams is being pondered. Ecologists and ichthyologists are attempting to address this issue as it becomes problematic. Closer to home, a project on the Boardman River, called “Fishpass,” will attempt to allow some fish to bypass the Union Street Dam. Other fish will not be able to pass upstream. Fish will be sorted using lasers and other technology. The

multimillion-dollar facility will become part of the rebuilt Union Street Dam in Traverse City. The success of the project remains to be seen and no such system has been proposed for Tippy Dam.

Making progress at Tunk hole

Has there been improvement in terrestrial and aquatic habitat at the Tunk Hole since remediation efforts began?

“Yes,” Thompson replied. “The project was designed to rehabilitate eroding banks as well as manage the spider web of social trails (a.k.a footpaths or ‘bandit trails’) that lead to water.”

Thompson explained that most of the riverbank erosion at the Tippy South project is due to the “scouring by the current at the outside bend of the first turn of the river downstream of the dam.”

Temporary fencing at the site will help hold vegetation on the banks.

“The restoration project will provide sustainable routes toward known popular sites in the project area and hardened access points where people may access the river to fish,” he continued. “The desired future condition at project completion is restored and rehabilitated banks with improved aquatic habitat providing cover for critical species.”

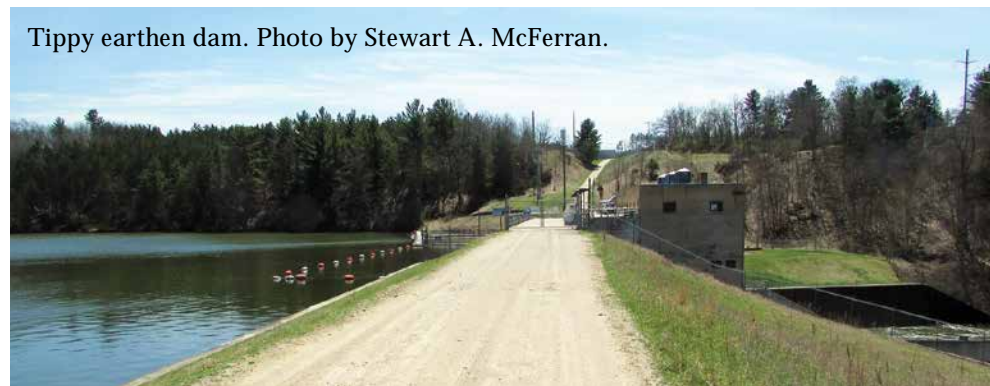
“In addition, we’ll keep the right amount of trails that protect the terrestrial habitat and provide sustainable access to the river.”

He stated that the goal is to halt riverbank erosion, over-widening of the channel and sedimentation – which will indirectly benefit brook, brown and steelhead trout and salmon, and produce some benefit to nongame fish species.

“We used native vegetation in the upland site restoration efforts and many of those plants will have some local benefit to pollinators such as butterflies and bees.”

A tragedy of the commons appears to have been averted here.

Stewart A. McFerran earned a bachelor’s degree in Environmental Studies from Antioch College. He has led an Environmental Field Program to the Great Lakes, worked as a naturalist and wilderness leader, labored as a deckhand in the Manitou Passage, taught at Northwestern Michigan College and written for various publications.



Tippy earthen dam. Photo by Stewart A. McFerran.

Lessons from Rising Tide

By Stewart McFerran

Rising Tide, written by John M. Barry, is a book about America's greatest river, the Mississippi.

In the 1850s, sandbars prevented shipping to New Orleans. The Army Corps of Engineers struggled mightily for years to establish a 20-foot-deep channel. Dredges broke down and were ineffective.

In 1874, James Eads promised Congress he would construct a shipping channel 28 feet deep and 350 feet wide. He planned to build jetties that would direct the current, increase its speed and scour the sediment from the river bottom. It worked, and the commerce of the entire Mississippi Valley was opened.

When restoring rivers in northern Michigan, the goal is much the same. Working with the natural tendencies of a river, using principles of fluvial geomorphology – or stream form and dynamics – river restoration specialists direct energy from the river flow and sediment load into the center of the channel,

Restoration in progress: Toe wood, rocks and netting were placed along the riverbank as part of the Tippy South Project, a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service (Huron-Manistee National Forest, Cadillac Division) and Trout Unlimited. Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited.



while slowing water at the edges to prevent erosion on sandy banks.

Toe wood – see explanation in the illustration on the previous page – and other energy dissipation techniques are widely used in many river restoration projects.

Toe wood is placed below the water surface elevation, typically at the outside bend of a stream, and anchored into the streambank with the root fan facing out, providing habitat and a slowing of energy. Other log structures can be placed into the flow of the river, at an angle to the streambank, with the log (or rock structure) placed with the instream portion facing upstream and toward the bed of the river. These features roll the channel-forming flow (often referred to as “bankfull” discharge) into the center of the stream.

James Eads used logs to channel the current at the mouth of the Mississippi River to create a deep-water passage for navigation. In this case, the wooden jetties were placed to maintain a specific portion of the river at its delta, where it meets the Gulf of Mexico. Further upstream in the watershed, successful restoration must incorporate the natural tendencies of the river.

Carolyn White, Conservation Director at Memorial Park Conservancy in Houston, Texas, has studied fluvial geomorphology. She said that if the goal is to prevent erosion and provide instream habitat within a stable channel that does not aggrade (fill with sediment) or degrade (erode its bed), the bankfull channel must be shaped to carry the river's flow and sediment load from the watershed. River shape has three dimensions: cross section (as viewed downstream); meander pattern (as viewed from above); and longitudinal profile or



The eroded bank of the Manistee River, south of Tippy Dam, before restoration. Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited.

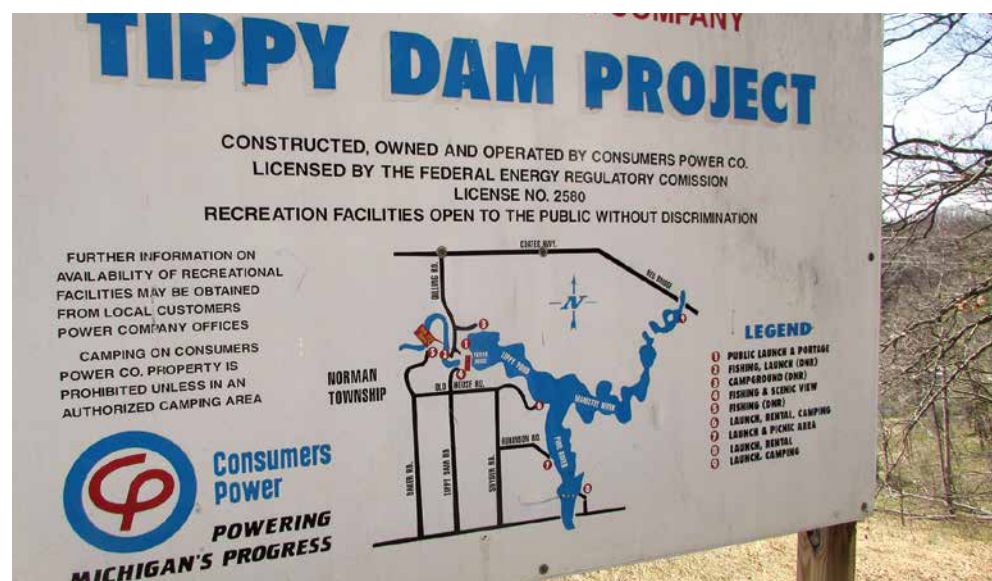
bedform that it takes flowing downstream (riffles, pools, etc.). Toe wood and log structures assist channel stability by directing erosive forces to the center and they also provide aquatic habitat. While studying Buffalo Bayou and other creeks and streams that run through Houston, Ms. White has advocated for stream restoration and streambank stabilization projects that incorporate natural channel design. The goal is to create sustainable waterways that allow for increased recreational opportunities while also meeting flood damage reduction needs.

Those interested in preventing erosion in Michigan's streams by dipping their “toes” in the river could heed White's words and learn from Houston's experience: direct flows toward the center of the stream and shape the channel's dimension, pattern, and profile to dissipate energy and effectively carry its flow and sediment load.

Stewart A. McFerran spends a considerable amount of time on the water, either paddling his pirogue on wilderness streams and lakes or plying Lake Michigan waves in his sailboat.

Fewer Bobcats prowl Tippy Dam

Story and photos by Stewart A. McFerran



Consumers Power is the owner of Tippy Dam and partners with Kaleva Norman Dickson Schools to bring elementary students to the dam to pick up trash.

Bobcats have made a clean sweep of the Tippy Dam site for 17 years. Kaleva Norman Dickson elementary schoolkids love their mascot, the Bobcat, and are treated to a picnic after picking up trash along the banks of the Manistee River. But this year school is canceled, and all the little Bobcats are at home.

Normally, the Bobcats would ride the school bus to the Tippy Dam – right down the road from the school – to pick up garbage dropped along the river. One year they filled a whole dumpster with trash. Consumers Power provides the bus ride for

the students.

Consumers also manages a bat project at the dam.

There is a hibernaculum (a place to shelter) at Tippy Dam where the bats stay all winter. It is in a hollow chamber in the



Tippy Dam spillway, where 20,000 bats hibernate in hollow chambers within the concrete structure.



Bat, neither in a belfry nor at Tippy Dam.

spillway. Allen Kurta of Eastern Michigan University has counted 20,000 bats and identified four kinds of bats, including “Indiana bats” which are endangered. The little Bobcats would have learned about all this, but the outing was canceled due to COVID-19 which is thought to have originated in bats.

Consumers Power staff has educated the students about electricity and the turbines in the dam that are turned by the falling water of the Manistee River. Maintenance of the dam and riverside natural habitat were discussed last spring when the kids visited the dam.

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club and the Conservation Resource Alliance are also involved in the school project.

Normally, the Bobcats would stop at the dumpster with their haul, followed by the bus ride to Brethren Park for lunch, before heading back to their classrooms.

School is not the only thing that is closed. The Tippy Dam access sites on the Manistee River are closed as well. Presumably, the bats and other wildlife – such as bobcats – come and go, as always.

By the way, if you visit the Brethren School you can see a Bobcat in a glass case catching a football.

Note: "Pirogue" is a term meaning small boat. While it is often associated with "hard chinned" boats paddled in Louisiana swamps, Henry David Thoreau paddled a pirogue in the Maine woods. Pirogue refers to the wide variety of personal watercraft now deployed on Michigan lakes and streams and includes the round-bottomed canoe.

Expert Pirogue

Story and photos, unless otherwise noted, by Stewart A. McFerran

Traditionally, Native American canoe builders peeled birch bark in Spring. A large piece of bark is required when building a birch bark canoe. The birch bark canoe is iconic, yet rare today. A canoe, however, is not rare and many people have an old one covered with a tarp or stashed under the deck in the backyard. Why not turn it over, clear away the cobwebs, put together some paddles and take it for ride on one of our awesome rivers? It is not too early, or too late!

If you were to build a birch bark canoe, you would have to get the book, "Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America," written by E.T. Adney and Howard Chappelle. It covers canoes, kayaks and umiaks (an open boat used by Inuit peoples and others) and is replete with fascinating details on traditional boat design and materials. The book will add value to your paddle trip. The regions where pirogues were made and people who made them are featured.

Of course, you don't need to build a birch bark canoe. With the wide range of high-tech materials, all colors and shapes are available to you. But the shape of the aluminum, kevlar or plastic pirogue in your garage was inspired by a type of canoe or kayak built in North America. Those craft were once the "wagon train of the North."

The Têtes de Boule is a type of canoe built by a "band" of Native Americans that were referred to as "wild indians" by native Algonkians. The Têtes de Boule were hired to build birch bark canoes for the Hudson Bay Company in the Canadian Province of Quebec. They were expert canoe builders living in an area near the Ottawa River where big birch trees and other materials needed for canoe building grew. They cut their hair



Cushioned by their life preservers, Stewart McFerran paddles his pirogue with brother-in-law Babu Daya and his sister Martha Daya McFerran, who took the photo.

short and were given the nick name Têtes de Boule, meaning "round head".

At that time, during the fur trade, there was a high demand for canoes. Tons of furs and other products were transported over thousands of miles of rough terrain in bark canoes. The Têtes de Boule built many of those pirogues.

Explore spring, early summer paddling

It is a great time of year to paddle. The water is high, which means that creeks known for low water, such as Bear Creek, can be paddled. Views from the streams are unobstructed by leaves. There are few bugs, but the water is cold. If you are concerned about tipping over, you could take your pirogue down to a lake, instead of a river, and launch on a calm, sunny day. Take life jackets along for each person and wear them.

Paddling a pirogue along the margin of ice that is receding from a lake is a great joy. Birds abound and the water is clear. On a cold morning, if there is a skim of ice on the lake, it is a sensory delight to crash through the brittle, glass-like ice. Or maybe the ice is slushy, and it is like paddling across the top of a Tasty Freeze.

Native Americans outfitted their canoes with "canoe shoes" that protected the bark skin from abrasion.

Adney's book describes pirogues of all shapes and sizes and how they were built. Coauthor Chappelle offers details on skin boats of the Far North. Tools and materials needed to build them are discussed. Birch bark is just the start. There's cedar to split, spruce roots to sew. Spruce gum and animal fat were mixed until gooey enough

to waterproof the seams of canoes. But the brilliance of these traditional pirogues is that all the materials to make them are found in the locations where these small boats were used, and some were not so small. The "North Canoe" was 25 to 30 feet long. Freight canoes were even longer and wider.

Care was taken to prepare the materials. Precision was employed to establish building frames that gave the boats their form. Ingenuity helped to create a boat that was fixable and durable. Durable when guided by experts, that is. Materials that make up the canoe or kayak hanging in your garage are much more durable than birch bark or animal hide. You can bounce off rocks all day long in a Royalex canoe and just keep going, while one such encounter with a rock in a birch canoe could mean a whole day of repair.

The lightweight bark canoes were built for rapids and open water. They were portaged over land from lake to river. Experts guided their craft up and down rocky streams and across wide stretches of open water. The skill of the paddlers was a factor and the builders had logos that were applied to the stems of the canoes.

Both skill and knowledge are now in short supply to build a birch canoe or a skin umiak. Authors Adney and Chappelle fill this gap in a volume that documents a tradition.

The umiak is the kayak's larger cousin. While solo hunters stalked prey among icebergs in the slim, traditionally skin-covered kayak, whole families loaded into wide umiaks for long trips from village to village. The umiak was paddled and rowed

or sailed from Siberia to Greenland but perfected in remote parts of Alaska, where the skins of large prey such as the walrus were processed and stretched over wooden frames. Chappelle indicates that moose hides were used to cover frames of the Labrador umiak. Once again, boat builders used materials found within reach.

At the Chippewa landing on the Manistee River, near Manton, ranks of pirogues are piled high on racks ready for summertime paddlers. The durable materials are formed to perform to the demands of recreationers. Plastic hulls of kayaks give way to, and slide over, rocks and sand bars from Cameron Bridge on down. Intrepid expert canoeists can find wilderness and camp overnight in it along the Manistee, Pine or Pere Marquette rivers.

As you guide your pirogue in the freshwater of our lakes and streams, imagine it was made of birch – and paddle with the care and expertise of the tradition.

Stewart A. McFerran currently teaches boating safety at Grand Traverse Bay YMCA. He has guided pirogue trips in the Boundary Waters (Minnesota), Algonquin Provincial Park (Ontario, Canada), and on numerous rivers around the area: Boardman, Manistee, Platte and Crystal.



Birch pirogue, donated by Robert Fitzgerald in 1968 to Besser Museum, Alpena.



Mid-ships pirogue. Cedar ribs press thin cedar planks against birch bark. From the collection of Besser Museum, Alpena.



Birch pirogue. Spruce roots are dug and split. They are used to lash birch to gunwhales. From the collection of Besser Museum, Alpena.

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“All hands on deck” at the Maritime Museum

Editor’s Note: Contributor Kevin Howell made a pre-pandemic visit to the museum, now temporarily closed.



Site manager Eric Harmsen guides the Pere Marquette Carferry into the Ludington Harbor from the pilot house in the Ludington Maritime Museum.

Story and photos by Kevin Howell

Stepping into the pilot house of the Pere Marquette car ferry, the captain agrees to hand over the controls of the ship to Eric Harmsen, site manager and my tour guide for the day at Port of Ludington Maritime Museum.

“So, you want to assist me in navigating into the Ludington Harbor, eh?” the captain asked. “The most important thing to remember is that I am the captain.”

Harmsen took over the controls and with the captain – portrayed by an actor in a holographic-style projection – offering bits of advice, managed to guide the boat’s course and speed safely into the harbor.

The pilot house exhibit is just one, if not one of the most fun, of hundreds of artifacts, exhibits, displays and hands-on experiences in the museum.

During our 45-minute run through the former Coast Guard Station at the south end of Lakeshore Drive at the harbor, Harmsen explained that the main front room was originally the boathouse for the

Coast Guard boats.

“At the back of the building (harbor side) are three large doors,” Harmsen said. “The room we’re standing in was the boathouse, where they stored three of their rescue craft; the doors would open up with fold-down tracks right into the channel.

“In the 1960s they replaced that with the boat basin out there now,” he explained. “The boats just got too big to store inside.”

The room is entered from the street side of the building, and visitors are welcomed by another holographic projection of an actor portraying Captain Nels Palmer, one of the first Coast Guard captains in Ludington and who led the campaign to get the building constructed in 1934.

The building served its purpose from 1934 until 2004 when a new Coast Guard station was built next door. As Harmsen understands it, the building was still owned by the Coast Guard and sat unused for some time.

“Right around 2010 it went to the city of

Ludington, which still owns the building,” Harmsen said.

“It got listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, and ideas were floating around about what to do with it – a bed and breakfast, a restaurant, things like that – but it was pretty quickly decided on a maritime museum.”

Harmsen said work began around 2012 to return the building to its 1934 “look,” and final designs were approved in 2015.

“The Mason County Historical Society, which also operates Historic White Pine Village south of town, worked with the state historic preservation office to return the building as much as possible to what it was in 1934,” Harmsen explained. “As part of it being a historic building and part of it being a maritime museum, they wanted to re-create what it looked like when it opened in 1934.”

The museum finally opened its doors to the public in 2017 and is set to celebrate its three-year anniversary on June 6, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

Beyond the front entrance, the main room on the first floor houses artifacts and exhibits explaining the history of Ludington as a lumber town, Coast Guard Station and west Michigan port of shipping. Included is an introduction and history of car ferries – a theme that runs throughout the museum – leading up to the present-day S.S. Badger car-and-passenger ferry to Wisconsin via Lake Michigan.

Be forewarned: tours go by quickly. There are lighthouse replicas large enough for kids (and adults, such as curious writers) to crawl through, large-scale models of sailing ships and car ferries, and mock-ups of the Pere Marquette 22 captain’s cabin and pilot house. From the historic, 95-foot-long Lundy scroll – a panoramic painting of Ludington by Jacob Lundy, circa late 1800s to early 1900s – to the electronic, real-time display of commercial vessel traffic on the Great Lakes, the attractions on Harmsen’s

tour of the three-story museum are way too engaging to be experienced in a mere 45 minutes.

For the admission fee of \$11 for kids 4-13, \$13 for adults and \$12 for seniors, a visit (or three) to the museum is well worth it, and is time well spent learning the history of this part of west Michigan.

Oh, don’t forget to say “hey” to the captain in the pilot house. He may even let you take the boat into the harbor!

More museum information is available at: ludingtonmaritimemuseum.org. The museum’s opening day is subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



The front room of the Ludington Maritime Museum, as seen from the second-floor balcony, once served as the boat house for the former Coast Guard Station.

Museum staff buoyed by shipwreck sighting

By Kevin Howell

Port of Ludington Maritime Museum personnel, when not greeting museum visitors or leading tours through the facility, have other work to keep them busy.

Last month, they received a call from the Michigan Shipwreck Research Association announcing the discovery of shipwreck remains near the Ludington State Park entrance, north of Ludington.

The wreck was first reported to the MSRA by local residents Jen Tooman and Chris Brandt, and word was passed to museum site manager Eric Harmsen by the evening of April 24.



Eric Harmsen, site manager for the Ludington Maritime Museum, measures and documents details of ship wreckage recently discovered near Ludington State Park. Photo courtesy of Mason County Historical Society.

By the next morning, Harmsen was out taking photos and surveying the piece of wreckage in the hope of identifying the original ship.

“Shortly after we announced our survey of the wreckage, MSRA was contacted by the Epworth Historical Society, who let us know that in the 1980s a large wooden rudder had come ashore at Epworth, just to the south of the wreckage we surveyed,” Harmsen said.

“Also, a few years ago, workers at the Ludington State Park recovered a large wooden windlass that had washed up on the beach. It is possible that those items and the recently uncovered wreckage may be related.”

The latest find is not the first ship wreckage museum staff has investigated, according to Harmsen.

Last winter they worked with MSRA on some remains uncovered by erosion at White Lake Channel near Whitehall. The wreck was identified as possibly being that of the schooner *Contest* which sank in 1882.

Harmsen noted that high waters like those in Lake Michigan in recent times tend to uncover shipwrecks on a fairly regular basis, especially between Big and Little Sauble Points.

“Dozens of ships have become total losses between the points,” Harmsen said. “Some in deep water offshore, but many more grounding near shore. Some were salvaged, if not too badly damaged, others were left to break up in the surf.”

He added that more than 300 ships have grounded on the west coast of the state over the past 170 years,



Sections of ship wreckage were found along Lake Michigan near Ludington State Park in late April. Photo courtesy of Mason County Historical Society.

20 of those between the points.

The latest wreckage is a hull fragment from a wooden vessel approximately 32 feet long by 8 feet wide. It consists of 15 ribs of a vessel with planking on both sides measuring 8-11 inches wide.

“Unfortunately, there are no centerline timbers such as the keel, keelson, or centerboard trunk – the backbone of the vessel – which could give us a much better idea of the size and type of the vessel,” Harmsen explained. “The construction and measurements are consistent with schooners built between the 1850s and 1880s.”

The museum and MSRA worked together to identify the wreckage and determined it could be one of four ships: the *J.B. Skinner*, built in 1841; the *J.O. Moss*, built in 1863; the *Eclipse*, built in 1852; or the *Orphan Boy*, built in 1862.

My 5K

continued from page 1

to glimpse giant waves at hidden accesses along my route. The walk was brisk but uneventful and left me time to ponder



again about this new kind of normal, the one without many people in it.

As you read through this issue of Freshwater Reporter - at 12 pages, our largest to date - you may notice a theme emerging. From Robyn Schmidt's bicycle rides in the land of ferns to P.G. Misty Sheehan's ode to trees. From Kevin Howell's nature walk to Brian Allen's birdwatching. The outdoors is our soul patch.

Nature is a reassuring, steady presence. A silent gift that isn't quiet - turkeys gobbling in Susan Hintz's hunt, watery sounds from Stewart McFerran's paddle as he propels his pirogue, laughter as we share the indignities in Judy Cools' COVID essay, even the explosion the Falcon 9 rocket needs to launch the Crew Dragon capsule into space. (After all, humans and space are "nature," too.)

We need noises like these to drown out the chatter.

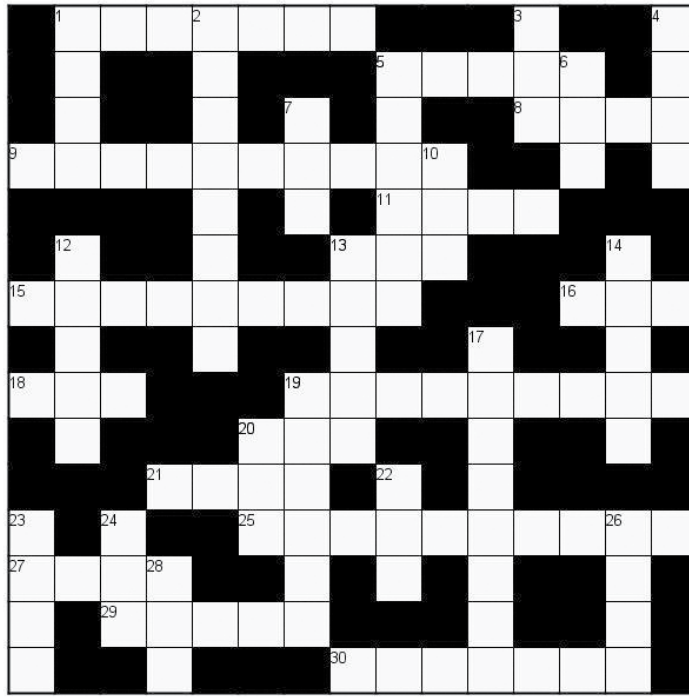
Bring them on.

TREES

by Mark Videan. Find the solution on our Facebook page on June 5.

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- 5 Quaking _____
- 8 Future flowers
- 9 Tree that grows along streambeds
- 11 Tree anchor
- 13 Composer/musician Brian who recorded "In Dark Trees"
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- 2 Tree specialist
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- 6 Fruit of #30 Across
- 7 Nocturnal hooter
- 10 Follows Ski or Scooby
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- 13 Humorist Bombeck and others
- 14 Wood used for chests, shingles, cigar boxes
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- 24 Freddie Krueger's tree?
- 26 Snug
- 28 Cooper's wood

Social Distance Birding

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My most joyous moments are being with my wife and visiting with our family via FaceTime on the smartphone, despite the disappointment of not being able to hold our grandchild. My other joy is getting out birding and hiking to experience another spring that will advance, no matter what.

I have even read directives this week (March 8-14) to those going birding to keep social distance. Admonished not to share rides or binoculars, I prefer to look forward to being outside and, even with social distancing, sharing the experience and joy of spring. Although we stay apart to avoid contagion when I meet people on the Arcadia Boardwalk, our enthusiasm for the ducks and geese is a more welcome contagion. When we see a group of Sandhill cranes spread their wings to take flight and bugling their wild call, we all feel a surge of joy that displaces the sore feeling of the incessant COVID-19 news. The world seems fine again when talking with friends and seeing the newly open waters and arriving migrant waterfowl.



We need to keep learning about our world to feel good and do good, and not just the world of TV news, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We are fortunate to live in this part of Michigan with so many state parks, national forest lands and conservancy preserves, the great libraries of land. I hope you can take some time to experience their trails and paths. I was astonished at the full house at the Manistee Vogue Theater recently for the film "Fantastic Fungi." Many were turned away, as there were

not enough seats. Now we can get out, guidebook or app in hand, to learn about all the fungi/mushrooms, mosses, lycopods, ferns, and spring flowers that are out there. And there is room for all of us.

I'm sure you know a local woods well and can go and immerse yourself in the gradual show of spring over the next couple of



Left. Brian Allen - with scope, binoculars and camera - watches birds at Arcadia Marsh in Manistee County. Photo by Andrew Allen. Above. Brian Allen watches a new "lifer" bird near Port Mansfield, Texas. Photo by Greg Bodker.

months. I walk the trails behind my house at Arcadia Marsh in Manistee County. I usually now, take comfort in the old friends I see that are always waiting under sun or clouds. First is the grove of old, white pines that tower above me with parental power and grace. Then, a grove of juniper, too old to care about

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THANK YOU!

CONTEST

Each issue we have featured a photo of something fun and unusual in Manistee or Mason County. We are suspending the contest until the stay-at-home order is lifted.

PLEASE BE SAFE, EVERYONE!

*Congratulations to
WAYNE ANDERSEN,
of Ludington.
He correctly identified the
photo
location (Village of
Fountain)
of the sculpture of horses
pulling logs.*

We hope to resume our contest

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