

# FRESHWATER REPORTER



A fresh approach to storytelling in West Michigan

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**FREE**

## Loon Rangers: To Observe and Protect

By PAT STINSON

Editor's note: This is part one of our two-part Loon Ranger story. Look for part two in our Aug. 5 issue.

*From his living room window, Dale Doepker usually uses his telescope to spot loons in their nest on an island 100 yards from his dock. This year he cannot see them or their eggs, as he has in years past. As a Loon Ranger, this frustrated him a bit, when he had to jump in his pontoon boat and motor slowly around the island to keep tabs on the loon pair and their tan, speckled eggs and, later when they hatched, their chicks.*



A loon chick gets a lift from its parent on a Northern Michigan lake. Photo by Susan Hintz.

**L**oon Rangers are a group of 300-plus volunteers across the state who share a love of loons and agree to observe and protect them. They educate lakefront owners about the importance of loons, a threatened species in Michigan, by simply talking to lake owners and visitors to let them know of any resident (nesting) loons on the lake. They also post Loon Alert signs at boat launches to advise boat owners to keep at least 100 feet from the birds. In some cases, the rangers write about the loons for lake association or other newsletters. In all cases, they count and report on the loons, eggs and chicks they see.

A Loon Ranger does not have to live

on a lake, but the person must be able to observe loons on the same lake over time. Many rangers are "snowbirds" or weekend visitors only.

The Loon Ranger program is administered by the LoonWatch committee of the Michigan Loon Preservation Association, originally founded in 1986 as the Loon Registry by the Michigan DNR Nongame Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy. At that time, according to Michigan LoonWatch State Coordinator Joanne Williams, Michigan's loon population was declining rapidly. She said the state wanted to know why and what to do about it.

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## Now Showing: Comet NEOWISE

By BROOKE EDWARDS

There's a new light in the evening sky, and you have a chance to view it throughout July. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as the object won't pass this way again for a very long time.

On March 27, NASA's infrared space telescope NEOWISE discovered an object that would put on a show for us here on Earth. While the world was preoccupied with news of COVID-19, information about a cosmic visitor was hardly reported. Dazzling on the northeast horizon, comet NEOWISE C/2020 F3 was first visible just before dawn in early July. At 64 million miles from Earth at its closest approach on July 22, the comet poses no threat to us, yet it is close and bright enough to be visible to the unaided eye – and much clearer through binoculars. Just three miles in diameter, it is one of the brightest comets visible in the northern hemisphere since comet Hale-Bopp in 1997. Having two tails makes the sight even more amazing.

As an astronomy lover, even I was unaware of the coming show. Posts from fellow space enthusiasts caught my attention in the days following the Fourth of July. A comet was seen rising low in the northeast before sunrise. A few days later, I headed out on a clear morning to a spot with an unobstructed view of the horizon. For almost an hour I waited – no luck. I found I had made the same mistake as many. Look too early and the comet has not risen over the horizon yet; look too late and the view of the comet will be drowned in the light of the rising sun. This was going to be challenging.

Beginning July 12, the visible hours and location to view the comet shifted. Now, it can be seen in the evening sky, just above the northwest horizon, about 80 minutes after sunset. This was my chance to finally see it. Determined, I headed to a spot with a clear view, half an hour after sunset. My eyes adjusted to the dimming light as I set up my camera and astronomy binoculars and searched the sky for any sign. About an hour after sunset, I looked beneath and to the right of Ursa Major (Big Dipper) with my binoculars. Into view came a point of light with a tail: the comet! In a few more minutes, as the sky darkened further, I was able to

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## Artist Sally Manke: A many-layered life



Rare green-yellow Trillium at Arcadia Dunes. Photo by Sally Manke.

By PAT STINSON

An interview with Sally Manke is like a sprint down a nature trail, with quick stops at trail markers for lively descriptions of this observation and that.

Manke, retired from 25 years' teaching home economics at Onekama Schools, is a woman with many interests and an abundance of energy. Not only a teacher, she was also a publisher's representative for a yearbook company and a motel owner.

Her nature photographs appear regularly on a Facebook group page for the village of Arcadia, where she lives. Earlier this spring, her colorful closeups and artistic eye caught our attention, bright spots in an otherwise COVID-colored world.

Manke keeps busy as a volunteer for the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and as a fine-art quilter, pattern maker, creator of coiled baskets, national quilt lecturer and workshop presenter. She takes photographs during daily long walks, some of them along a portion of the Arcadia Marsh Preserve trail she oversees as a

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# Your Community Calendar - Manistee and Mason counties

Due to weather, schedule changes and COVID-19, some events may be canceled. Always call ahead.

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>July</b></p> <p><b>22 Fun Fish Competition, Portage Lake</b><br/>Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association<br/>6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish<br/>For more info: <a href="http://mcsfa.org">mcsfa.org</a></p> <p><b>22 L.A.C.A. Summer Concert Series with Tosha Owens / The Bobbie Murray Detroit All-Stars</b><br/>(blues, rock, R&amp;B, and soul) 7pm, free, (donations welcome), Ludington Waterfront Park, 391 S. William St., Ludington</p> <p><b>22 Crystal Mountain Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jim Hawley</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 &amp; under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>23 Living History Day with Abe Lincoln, by Lincoln presenter Rob Carley</b><br/>1-4 p.m., Historic White Pine Village, 1687 Lakeshore Dr., Ludington. 30+ exhibit buildings, 3 authentic steam locomotive cars, working sawmill.</p> <p><b>23 First Person Stories &amp; Songs with Bill Anderson</b><br/>"Women During the Civil War." 10am, free, Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee</p> <p><b>23 Garden Tours at Crystal Mountain</b><br/>10am, \$10, free for houseguests. 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville<br/>Reservations required. 888-968-7686 ext. 7000</p> <p><b>23 Live in the Plaza – acoustic music with Cheryl Wolfram</b><br/>5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>23 Sunset Beach Bonfires</b><br/>8-10pm, free, Stearns Park Beach, 420 N. Lakeshore Dr., Ludington<br/>Bonfire, music with Medium Well, sunset. Bring beach chairs, blankets.</p> <p><b>24 Opening of Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph</b><br/>through 9/25. Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Reservations required</p> <p><b>24 Ludington Farmer's Market</b><br/>3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>24 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Chloe Kimes</b><br/>6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>24 Live Music in the Tap Room with Jimmy Dodson</b><br/>Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington</p> <p><b>24 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar w/ Jesse Jefferson</b><br/>7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> | <p><b>24 Bluegrass Music Series with Brian Oberlin &amp; The Journeymen</b><br/>7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva</p> <p><b>24-26 Manistee Salmon Splash Fishing Tournament</b><br/>Info: <a href="http://www.tournamenttrail.net/manistee-splash">www.tournamenttrail.net/manistee-splash</a></p> <p><b>25 Manistee Farmer's Market</b><br/>9am-12pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee</p> <p><b>25 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>25 Earthwork Music presents Last Gasp Collective</b><br/>7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva</p> <p><b>26 Swan Lake by the Bolshoi Ballet</b><br/>filmed in Moscow, performance with extras, 1pm, \$20 adults, \$10 &lt; 18, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee</p> <p><b>28 Talks, Tunes &amp; Tours with William Hattendorf</b><br/>"Democracy; the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", 10am, free, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee</p> <p><b>28 "Dinosaurs" – documentary film</b><br/>2pm, \$15, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee</p> <p><b>28 Manistee Shoreline Showcase with Planet D Nonet</b><br/>(Midwest's premier swinging big band), 7pm, free, 1st Street Beach Rotary Gazebo 100-122 S. Lakeshore Dr., Manistee</p> <p><b>28 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with Mike Youker</b><br/>7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>29 Classic Film Series – Moby Dick (1956)</b><br/>10am, \$2, Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee</p> <p><b>29 Fun Fish Competition, Manistee Lake</b><br/>Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association<br/>6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish<br/>For more info: <a href="http://mcsfa.org">mcsfa.org</a></p> <p><b>29 L.A.C.A. Summer Concert Series with Planet D Nonet</b><br/>(Midwest's premier swinging big band) 7pm, free (donations welcome), Ludington Waterfront Park, 391 S. William St., Ludington</p> <p><b>29 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>30 First Person Stories &amp; Songs with Eden Foley</b><br/>"Memory and Identity, a Personal Journey", 10am, free, Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee</p> | <p><b>30 Garden Tours at Crystal Mountain</b><br/>10am, \$10, free for houseguests. 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville<br/>Reservations required. 888-968-7686 ext. 7000</p> <p><b>30 Live in the Plaza – acoustic music with Tom Zatarga</b><br/>5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>31 Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph</b><br/>Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee<br/>Reservations required</p> <p><b>31 Ludington Farmer's Market</b><br/>3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>31 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Mike Luusa</b><br/>6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>31 Live Music in the Tap Room: Ludington Bay</b><br/>at Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 6-9pm, 515 S. James St., Ludington.</p> <p><b>31 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with John Pomeroy</b><br/>7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>31 Bluegrass Music Series with Hayes Griffin</b><br/>7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva</p> | <p><b>5 Classic Film Series – The Blues Brothers (1980)</b><br/>10am, \$2, Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee</p> <p><b>5 Fun Fish Competition, Portage Lake</b><br/>Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association<br/>6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish<br/>For more info: <a href="http://mcsfa.org">mcsfa.org</a></p> <p><b>5 L.A.C.A. Summer Concert Series with Bill Hyde's Allstar Quintet</b><br/>(blues and soul-jazz), 7pm, free, (donations welcome), Ludington Waterfront Park, 391 S. William St., Ludington</p> <p><b>5 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jim Hawley</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>6 First Person Stories &amp; Songs with Donovan Reynolds</b><br/>"Jung's Story and Our Story", 10am, free, Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee</p> <p><b>6 Garden Tours at Crystal Mountain</b><br/>10am, \$10, free for houseguests. 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville<br/>Reservations required. 888-968-7686 ext. 7000</p> <p><b>6 Live in the Plaza – acoustic music with Fremont John</b><br/>5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>7 Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph</b><br/>Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee<br/>Reservations required</p> <p><b>7 Ludington Farmer's Market</b><br/>3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>7 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Brad Lee</b><br/>6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington</p> <p><b>7 Live Music in the Tap Room: Lynn Callihan &amp; Abe Kuzer</b><br/>Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington</p> <p><b>7 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with John Pomeroy</b><br/>7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>7 Bluegrass Music Series with Birds of Prey</b><br/>7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva</p> <p><b>8 Manistee Farmer's Market</b><br/>9am-12pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee</p> <p><b>8 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> |
| <p><b>August</b></p>  |  |  |   |
|   | <p><b>1 Manistee Farmer's Market</b><br/>9am-12pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee</p> <p><b>1 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Izzy Wallace</b><br/>7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p> <p><b>1 Earthwork Music presents Dede and the Dreamers</b><br/>7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva</p> <p><b>1 Run the Beach 5k</b><br/>Ludington</p> <p><b>4 Talks, Tunes &amp; Tours with Phil and Susan Joseph</b><br/>"Building and Creating, a Conversation on a Life of Art Making", 10am, free, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee</p> <p><b>4 Wunderkammer</b><br/>documentary about cabinets of curiosities around the world. 2pm, \$15, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee</p> <p><b>4 Manistee Shoreline Showcase with Bill Hyde's Allstar Quintet</b><br/>(blues and soul-jazz), 7pm, free, 1st Street Beach Rotary Gazebo, 100-122 S. Lakeshore Dr., Manistee</p> <p><b>4 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar w/ Jesse Jefferson</b><br/>7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville</p>  |  |   |



**We're celebrating Our First Year with this issue!**

We would like to thank our 18 contributors – the wonderful area writers, photographers and illustrators – who bring the stories in these pages alive. A special Thank You to our advertisers and donors whose support helped us increase our distribution in 2020. Many thanks to our talented graphic designer, our patient printer and our delivery helpers who spend countless hours making sure the paper arrives on time in one, neat, readable piece. Thank YOU, dear readers, for your kind comments and suggestions. What a year!

~ Pat Stinson and Mark Videan





Newly re-opened Emerson Lake Inn offers a view of Emerson Lake while dining.



Top. Emerson Lake Inn on US-10 east of Walhalla is under new ownership. Above. Meet the new owners of Emerson Lake Inn – Paul (L) and Lori Gerovac, and their son and restaurant manager Zachariah Gerovac.

# Lakeside dining returns

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL

*Renovations are complete, cocktails are flowing, and lunch and dinner are served at Emerson Lake Inn, east of Walhalla, along US-10. It's a relaxing place, where ducks, geese and occasional loons or swans swim nonchalantly across the 55-acre lake. Diners stretch out comfortably while sipping Frozen Walhalla Margaritas and Black Bear Mojitos before ordering from the menu.*



Choice of seating at Emerson Lake Inn includes a view of the lake from the screened-in deck out back.

Opening day, however, was a little rough for the new owners. On June 30, Lori and Paul Gerovac and their son Zachariah decided to do a “soft opening,” without any fanfare, to ease staff into their new routines.

“But the word got out, so we were really busy, more than we anticipated,” Lori said.

They opened their doors for lunch and, like a lot of businesses just getting started, ran into chinks to be filled and kinks to be ironed out. Lori said that by dinner time more customers were coming in than expected. Word had spread that the once-beloved restaurant was making a comeback.

She said they were short staffed, some of the kitchen staff were new and learning, and the point-of-service computer did not

place all the orders through to the kitchen.

“That first day was our worst day,” Lori said, during an interview a couple weeks after their opening. “We do have a wonderful chef and cooks ... that have a lot of experience, but they had to train, so here we are on our first day, running around.”

That’s all behind them, now.

The Gerovacs, who also own the Alpine Motel and Cabins across the road, purchased the restaurant in January and began tackling the overhaul it needed, after years of being shuttered. According to Lori, the restaurant has been around for decades and, back in the day, was a really nice place.

She said when they bought the restaurant there were trees and stumps from the aftermath of a tornado two years ago, and screens were missing in the lower, lake-

facing deck, exposing it to weather and animals.

“This has been quite a project, and that was just this little area (deck).”

In addition to that damage, she said the kitchen was in disrepair.

The issues have been corrected. The upper level of the restaurant has two dining areas. One seating area in the bar features views of a lawn and newly installed sandy beach, with tables and a fire pit. The rear, screened-in deck includes a corner area for local musicians to provide periodic entertainment.

The menu begins with appetizers such as house-marinated, deep-fried jumbo chicken wings or mushrooms filled with a house-made sausage stuffing, among other choices. Four salads – House, Caesar, Chef or Michigan Cherry – are served with or without chicken and salmon. Sandwiches run the gamut from a burger, BLT or Reuben to chicken, pulled pork, perch or black bean. Dinner selections include four seafood choices and three entrees, either beef or chicken. Pizza is served for lunch and dinner and includes a choice of gluten-free crust.

The beach and restaurant are “pluses” for their motel guests, Lori noted.

“We’ve had the motel since 2015 and it was a rehab – in very, very, bad shape...” Lori said. “...people in the area were really happy when we bought it, and now we’ve got it turned around and it’s going well.”

She said some ferry passengers stepping off the S.S. Badger in Ludington head out to the Alpine, because the prices are reasonable and the accommodations are

nice, with a choice of small but cozy rooms or roomier cabins.

Lori, a Wisconsin native, takes care of housekeeping and other duties at the motel. Paul, a lifelong Michigander, does maintenance and repairs. They moved to the area in 1996, and Lori worked as a home care nurse for the hospital in Ludington for about 20 years before trying the motel business. Paul has a long history of working in the rental business and doing fixer-uppers.

With the restaurant picking up steam – and the servers, cooks and chef settling in – everything is starting to run more easily. Paul, Lori and Zachariah hope to expand their hours in the future, as more “help” is found.

Paul said most of their employees “live within five miles of here.”

Lori added that she receives compliments on their employees – which currently number about 24 – all the time.

“They’re just wonderful,” she said.

Restaurant hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 4-9 p.m.; Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

For more information and a look at the menu, go to: [www.emersonlakeinn.com](http://www.emersonlakeinn.com), or call (231) 898-7003.

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. Reach him at [kevin@ytci.com](mailto:kevin@ytci.com).



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# Listening to loons

By RON SCHMIDT

The first time I really became aware of the calls of the Common Loon, I was fishing with my brother for walleye and northern pike at a remote Canadian lake. We spent 12 hours each day for a week floating in our aluminum boat. Since I always listen to everything around me, I had the opportunity to hear loons communicating with each other.

Through a combination of four different calls – yodels, wails, hoots and tremelos – loons keep in touch and let each other know if there is approaching danger. I learned these facts many years later but, at the time, I just listened and was enchanted by the sounds. I hoped one day to have my own cabin at a secluded lake, where I could live and listen to the loons calling six months each year, instead of one week.

My dream came true 20 years later when I bought a cabin in Alger County, near Grand Marais, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It was on a small lake surrounded by woods and marsh, and a pair of adult loons nested there each year. From April to October I took my meals outside on the deck and listened to my loons calling, their sounds echoing against the trees and across the bay.

I was in heaven, but it was not wine and roses for the loons trying to hatch and raise their chicks. I learned about the perils they faced when I met then 30-year-old Damon

McCormick bands a juvenile loon on a lake near Grand Marais. Bottom. Feather and blood samples help loon researchers assess the bird's mercury level. Courtesy photos.



Loon researcher Damon McCormick prepares to release an 8-pound juvenile, captured just minutes earlier using a canoe, a net and a lot of practice. Courtesy photo.

McCormick, a dedicated loon researcher working at Seney Wildlife Refuge and with an organization known as Common Coast Research and Conservation. McCormick was studying the effects of mercury poisoning on loon nesting and chick rearing. He traveled to dozens of small lakes throughout the north, many of which had acidic water. Acidic lakes lead to increased mercury levels in small fish the loons eat. The acid contamination is thought to have originated from coal-burning power plants located hundreds of miles to the west of Alger County.

(Editor's note: According to the National Atmospheric Deposition Program at University of Wisconsin-Madison, mercury deposited into lakes from contaminated rain and snow are converted into toxic methyl mercury through natural lake processes. Methyl mercury travels up the food chain as small fish eat contaminated flora and as larger fish – or in this case, loons – eat smaller fish, and so on.)

High mercury levels, it turns out, change learned behavior and the adult loons' ability



Ron Schmidt (L) touches a loon for the first time as researcher Damon McCormick prepares to run some field tests. Courtesy photo.

to hatch their chicks and, if they do hatch, to take good care of them. My cabin's previous owners said they noticed loon chicks on the lake only every five years. Whenever my friends from Lower Michigan would visit, they would look for chicks riding on the adults' backs or swimming alongside them, but it would be years before they saw any.

McCormick observed the loons and gathered the facts for the organizations which hired him. They would publicize his findings to raise public awareness and try to stop the source of the pollution.

McCormick and his friend "Joe" would spend their nights canoeing and capturing loons in nets. They would photograph the loons, weigh them, band them and take blood and feather samples to test for mercury poisoning and other potential health concerns. I was gratified to be included during one of their banding operations on my lake in late August, 2006. They arrived at 10:30 p.m. and paddled from my dock to find a chick that had been seen swimming in the lake that summer. In 20 minutes, they returned with the 8-pound juvenile – now nearly grown but not yet

able to fly. They brought him ashore to record his vitals. It only took them a few minutes, but I got the chance to touch the down on his neck before they placed him in the water and he swam away. When the loon's test came back, it showed he had high levels of mercury in his blood and feathers, but I hoped he would return in three years when he was old enough to find a mate and to try nesting in one of the nearby lakes. Using his leg band, researchers could keep track of what happened to him if he were spotted in the future.

I hope for a healthier environment and better future for all the loons, wherever they swim. Our children need the chance to hear the loons calling, and to come to know and love them as I have.

To hear the four loon calls, go to Loon Preservation Committee at [loon.org/the-call-of-the-loon](http://loon.org/the-call-of-the-loon).

Children's author Ron Schmidt lives in the north woods with his Leader Dog Lila. They enjoy listening to birds and catching the scent of wildflowers on their daily walks.



## Loon rangers

continued from page 1

The name of the program changed, but the mission did not. Protection is the number one goal of the rangers, Williams said, and they operate using guidelines of the Michigan Loon Recovery Plan published in 1994-96, under the direction of the MDNR.

Loon Rangers count loon pairs on their lakes – as well as eggs, hatched chicks and fledglings – and report losses as they observe them. They also pinpoint the locations of loon nests on lake maps provided by the MDNR and share information on loon habitat. Sometimes, they even build artificial nests for the loons. Williams retrieves this information from the rangers each fall and compiles the data for MDNR. She said the agency uses the data from the Loon Ranger program – specifically, the nesting information – in its permitting process, which includes reviewing lakeshore projects and making decisions about herbicide treatments, as well as managing of water levels.

"Our main goal is not to count loons," Williams said. "The main thing is to find and protect them; the statistics are an aside."

She said the organization is always looking for more volunteers.

Williams explained that loons are an ancient species, 65 million years old,



Retired USEPA biologist Ross Powers, recently retired from the Loon Ranger "corps," will help build an artificial loon nest this summer. Courtesy photo.

and remarkably intelligent. She said their presence on a lake is an indication of "good, clean water" as they are "sight" hunters, meaning they use their eyesight underwater to catch small fish.

Ross Powers, a recently retired Loon Ranger and retired U.S. EPA biologist, echoed her statement.

"Loons are an environmental indicator of a good, clean, healthy lake," he said. "If the water is cloudy, turbid or full of weeds, they can't follow the fish. It takes a good, healthy fish population (such as bluegills) to attract them."

He remarked that some anglers view loons as competition for big fish.

"It's a matter of education," he said. "They don't take the big fish; they'll do a good culling of some of the overpopulated



Loon Ranger Dale Doepker is also the Loon Watch Coordinator for 24 Loon Rangers in Mecosta County. He is also president of his local fishing club. Courtesy photo.

species."

He added that adult loons feed their chicks aquatic insects more often than minnows.

Williams said that loons will not eat anything too big, and larger fish sometimes will go after the loon chicks.

Powers noted that the presence of loons on a lake is a benefit to those living there.

"Real estate agents will tell you it increases the property value," he said.

To Be Continued...

To learn more about the Loon Ranger program, or to support the loon preservation effort, visit [www.michiganloons.org](http://www.michiganloons.org) and follow them on Facebook @ MichiganLoonPreservationAssociation

**Near Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**

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# Family tree bears fruit

By P.G. MISTY SHEEHAN

*Terry Connolly wants to re-establish the 40 acres his family originally owned in Manistee County. He is working hard planting apple, pear, plum, cherry and Asian pear trees, plus strawberry and blackberry bushes.*

Connolly has returned in his retirement to Dublin, Michigan, where he was born and raised. He and his wife Vera Ellen, good friends since their Grand Valley State University days, finally got married in their “Field of Dreams” here, and he has begun farming again. They bought the Harper Lake Resort, which Vera Ellen manages.

He is still good friends with his cousin, the actor James Earl Jones – best known, perhaps, as the voice of Darth Vader – who went to Brethren High School with him and acted in Manistee’s Ramsdell Theatre. Connolly and Jones were just two of their family’s generation to move away after the family’s acreage was divided and sold.

Connolly is interested in his genealogy, and his family has an interesting story. Theirs begins with Connolly’s discovery of his forebear “Bryce” who was captured in Africa with three brothers and brought to the United States around 1840. As a slave, Bryce was given no last name. He married a white indentured servant, Parthenia Connolly, and took her surname. About 10 children came from this union.

Parthenia taught their children to read and write, even though it was illegal at the time for slaves to learn these basic skills. Those abilities stood them in good stead when the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863 and slaves were freed. Despite laws preventing black citizens from owning land during Reconstruction, those legalities did not prevent Bryce’s children from reading and understanding their new rights. They signed their documents not with a slave’s “X” but with their own names. They became successful farmers and teachers in the South.

Connolly’s great-grandfather Wyatt Connolly, Parthenia’s son, married Charlotte Jeeter around 1919. The extended family had a farm in Mississippi at the time, but Jim Crow laws institutionalized economic,

educational and social disadvantages for African Americans living in the south. Once, when trying to sell their cotton, they were jeered at by the white people and spent the night in a ditch with their rifles, ready for the Klu Klux Klan to pay them a visit. The sheriff, who was a KKK member, told the clan the family was okay, so nothing happened. But great-grandma Charlotte said it was time to move.

They relocated to St. Louis, Missouri, to live without fear. While there, they bought a “subscription,” making recurrent payments for 40 acres in Michigan, but the purchase was never completed.

Their son – Terry’s grandfather, John Henry Connolly – moved to Gary, Indiana, where he worked in a steel mill and purchased his first new car: a 1929 Chevy. John Henry married Maggie Anderson and the family tells of her fierceness. You did not cross her.

After the stock market crash, his grandparents moved back to Mississippi for a time. Their thinking was that having a farm and growing their food was a better situation than being homeless in the city.

Michigan stayed in the family’s mind. Grandpa John Henry and Terry’s dad, Hubert B. Connolly, drove up to Dublin in 1936. To their surprise and concern, everyone was wearing red plaid coats and carried rifles. However, it was November 15, the beginning of deer season. They ended up buying 40 acres in Dublin, where the extended family (including cousins) lived for years.

They raised cows, horses, chickens and pigs and lived off the land, selling pickles as a cash crop. In 1938, Hubert sent for his love, Willie Eva Phillips, who was part Indian, and they were married. They got along well with their neighbors, except in church, where the minister gave a sermon about Black Sambo. They then designated a piece of their own land to build a church



Terry Connolly tends his garden in his birthplace of Dublin, Michigan. Photo by P.G. Misty Sheehan.

for their extended family.

This is where Connolly was born and raised. He went to Wellston Elementary School then graduated from Brethren High School with dismal grades, due to his lack of interest. Learning made more sense to Connolly at West Shore Community College, in Ludington, and later at Grand Valley State University, where he did extremely well. While there, General Motors offered him a job as a security guard – in a work-study type of arrangement – so he could finish his degree in accounting, which he did.

He wasn’t interested in being a CPA as, at that time, only about three percent of CPAs were black. After 14 years as a security guard at GM, Connolly was promoted to the accounting division. Eventually, he took

a special course in engineering provided by the company and retired as an Engineering Technician from GM.

Connolly said he was fortunate to know the right people, who aided him in his quest for success with his life’s goals. Having a lot of money wasn’t one of them, but he wanted enough to live comfortably and kick back, if necessary. He and Vera have two children, and their three grandchildren now keep them “young at heart.” As he works to resurrect the 40-acre farm his family once owned, his notion of easing off seems far from reality – but close to home.

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

## Lakefronts: The best course of nonaction

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN



Native and non-native plants on either side of the former grassy path take over as lake levels continue rising in 2019-2020. Photo by Pat Stinson.



In 2016, a mowed path of planted grass winds through marshland and ends at the lake. Photo by Mark Videan.

All waterfronts are unique. Some people own property on lakes, some on rivers and some are blessed with a bushy jungle on a swamp. Michigan has more than its share of waterfront, and those of us lucky enough to own a piece of it feel strongly about it. Most love the places where the water meets the land, and some love it to death.

The shoreline is the most productive area. Many kinds of wildlife reside there. I watch a muskrat come and go from what must be a muddy home under the bank, in a hollow cavity within the roots of cedar and yellow birch that hang over the water of “my” shoreline.

Ownership gives us rights to groom our shoreline, but all of us need to be aware of best practices concerning the area where land and water meet. Leaving native trees and vegetation can make a big difference in the water quality of our lakes and streams. Allowing shady pools encourages wildlife

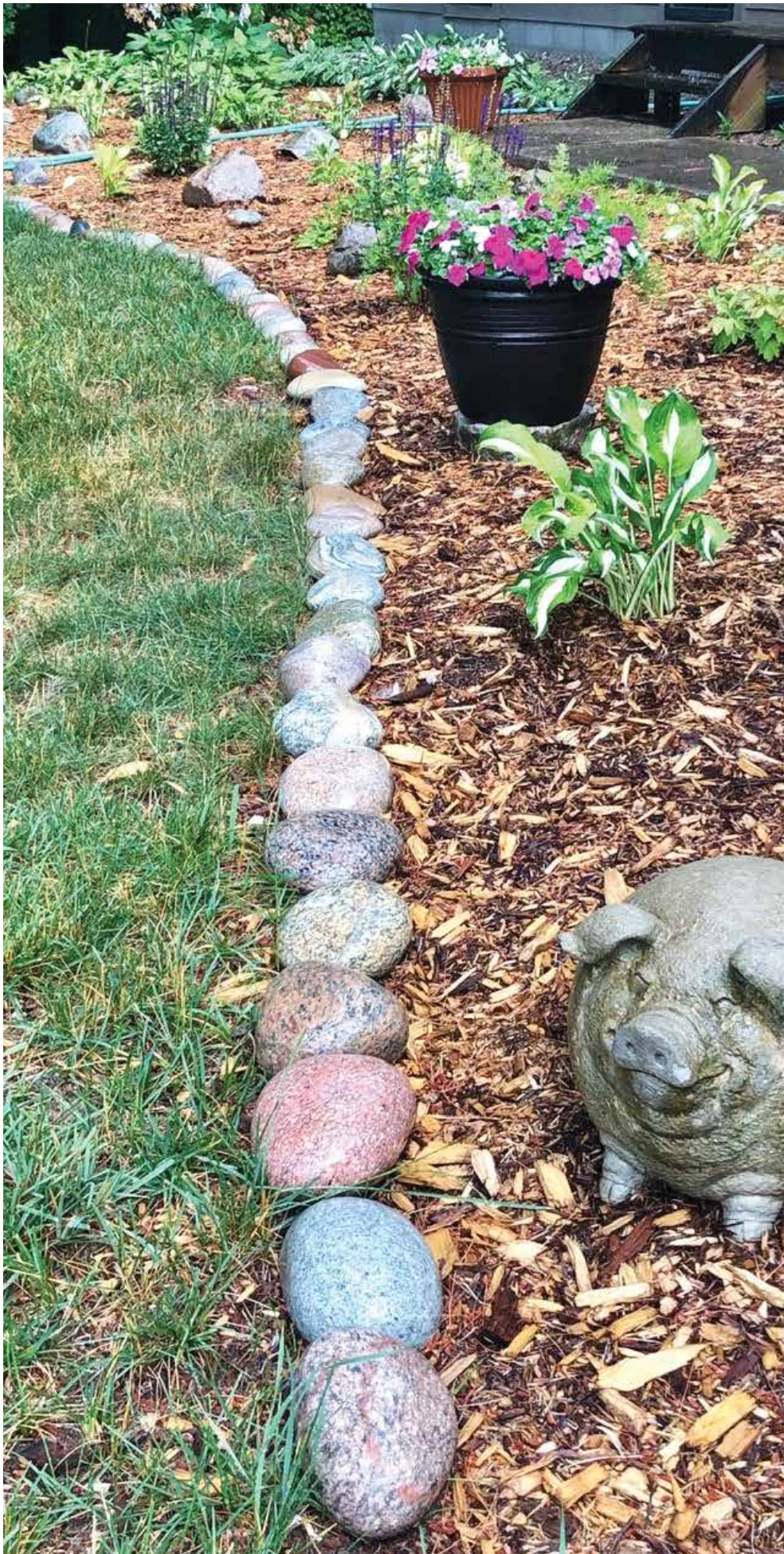


Armored lakefront. Photo by S.A. McFerran.

and fish to find places of their own.

Chemicals used on lawns, such as fertilizer and weed killers, may wash into the lake, resulting in “nonpoint pollution.” This is especially true if the lawn goes right down to the water. It is best to have some areas of waterfront planted with native plants and trees. When the waterfront has a bushy zone, it acts as a buffer – reducing chemical runoff and providing space for creatures to nest on the shore. Shady waterfronts are pleasant and cool the water. Many native fish thrive in cool water.

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Rain intensifies the colors of rocks lining the garden.



Petoskey stone, before and after polishing.

# Rockin' the beach: Shine on

Story and photos by SUSAN HINTZ

Editor's note: This is part two of the writer's account of her rock-collecting obsession.

So, what does one do with buckets of rocks gathered over the years and scattered about the garage and backyard? The possibilities are endless.

The first step, though, is to sort by stone, size and condition. Second, determine its use. Is it suitable for polishing? To fully enjoy the beauty of Petoskey stones, they need to be polished or placed in mineral oil to observe the detail. I've had a few Petoskeys polished professionally, but to give my entire inventory a beautiful buff would take years and more moolah than I'm willing to fork over.

Ready to explore the polishing realm, I Googled how to polish a Petoskey stone. It seemed relatively easy and required little investment. Basically, my purchases included different grades of wet/dry sandpaper, a mask or respirator – to avoid breathing in dust particles – water, cloth and some finishing powder. The local hardware store had the mask and sandpaper I needed, though I had to order the polishing powder.

I chose a stone of decent quality – the more pits and cracks, the more work – selected a coarse grit sandpaper, wet the sandpaper and put the sandpaper to stone. Working in a circular motion, I sanded then rinsed often, to evaluate my progress. Once I achieved my desired result, I moved on to a finer grit paper and repeated the steps until the stone was smooth and shiny. It was a process and took time. On multiple occasions I had to backtrack to a coarser grit and rework. It was hard on my fingers and wrists. The ole neck got a workout, too. Polishing all my rocks in this fashion would take me a lifetime! Back to Google.

This time I searched for rock tumblers. After much research, I decided on a vibratory tumbler. This piece of equipment is better suited for softer rocks, like Petoskeys, instead of the rotary tumblers made for polishing harder rocks. The latter tend to disintegrate Petoskeys, if not closely monitored. Using a vibratory tumbler took less time – two days per grit, instead of seven!

Using the directions that came with the tumbler, and Facebook group recommendations, I loaded up the first batch of stone, grit, media and water and let the machine run for 48 hours. Afterward, I cleaned out the barrel, rinsed the rocks and moved on to the next stage of grit. I did this four times. Finally, the stones were ready for their big reveal. I emptied the barrel, rinsed off the rocks and inspected. They looked great wet! They were smooth and detail was good. However, once dried, they did not retain their luster like I thought they would. Ugh! They required more polishing with compound and cloth. I tried all sorts of polishing compounds: powders, pastes and sprays. I just couldn't get the results I wanted. Back to Google.



(L to R) Rock tumblers, Pixie lapidary machine and a vibrating tumbler.

Enter the Pixie: a lapidary machine with six different wheels (grits) for grinding and polishing rocks/stones. This has been a game changer. It has greatly reduced the time needed to take a stone from start to finish. I still use the vibratory tumbler to prep a batch (13 pounds) of rocks, then I use the Pixie to finish them off. I have also added two rotary tumblers (4 barrels) for polishing the harder stones, such as quartz, granite and unakite.

Although the Pixie came with a saw attachment, I have yet to cut or shape stones. I may try this in the future, along with carving designs into rocks with a Dremel tool.

Back to those suggestions for what to do with an expanding collection of stones and rocks ...

Polished Petoskeys make great gifts. I have placed several smaller stones in a glass jar, corked the top and wrapped the jar with a ribbon.

Stones and rocks also make fun home décor. I have several dishes of stones – granite, quartz, unakite, etc. – on tables throughout our home. I've polished larger stones for bookends and door stops. I've used large Lake Superior rocks to line gardens, fill a drip edge and trim our firepit. I even personalized the base of our cabin steps with an "H" made of omars, stones with round depressions. (See [www.geo.mtu.edu/KeweenawGeoheritage/BeachStones/Omars](http://www.geo.mtu.edu/KeweenawGeoheritage/BeachStones/Omars).)

Some larger Petoskeys I deem too rough for polishing have found a home in my garden. When it's raining, it brings a smile to my face to look outside and see the "eyes" of Petoskeys peering back at me.

Susan Hintz is a creative entrepreneur who spends many hours on the shores of the Big Lakes. Her love of nature is reflected in her creations found at: [www.homegrownmichigan.com](http://www.homegrownmichigan.com) and [www.rockhoundthreads.com](http://www.rockhoundthreads.com)

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Canadian Geese Family in Lake Arcadia. We followed them over several days. First, there were three families of four, five and six young. Then there was this family of 10 with only two parents/caregivers. The next time we saw them, there were only seven young. Photo by Sally Manke.

# Manke

continued from page 1

GTRLC volunteer steward. Her digital pictures are inspiration for her “painted” landscape quilts and confetti art quilts. She creates the latter by layering thousands of small pieces of batik fabric.

“I walk every day,” she said. “I walk at the marsh, beach, Arcadia Hill and trails – no matter the season.”

She said some people who walk stay home on rainy or snowy days. Not Manke.

“My theory of that is, once you’re outside it makes a difference in your whole demeanor. I don’t know if it’s the light, even on a cloudy day.”

That get-up-and-go attitude extends to her trail stewardship duties.

“I remember being on a snowshoe hike, when it was absolutely freezing, and being asked why I do this,” she said. “I feel like I get way more from being a volunteer than they get from me.”

“I like to connect with nature,” she explained, adding that she notices the colors and design of the landscape where she hikes.

“I see the colors of trees, the winter blacks and grays, the cool greens in spring, bright greens in summer and how trees fall, how one is caught by another and lives. It’s kind of nature’s architecture. I like the simplicity.”



Frog using nature as cover at Arcadia Marsh. Photo by Sally Manke.



Burl in an otherwise straight tree trunk on Camp Trail, Arcadia Dunes. Photo by Sally Manke.

She recently posted a photograph of a burrow in a tree that she considers “textural, almost sculptural” and said she sometimes sees faces in them and likes to ask, “What do people see when they look at them?”

Manke said she posts “a lot” because she enjoys taking photographs and sharing her art.

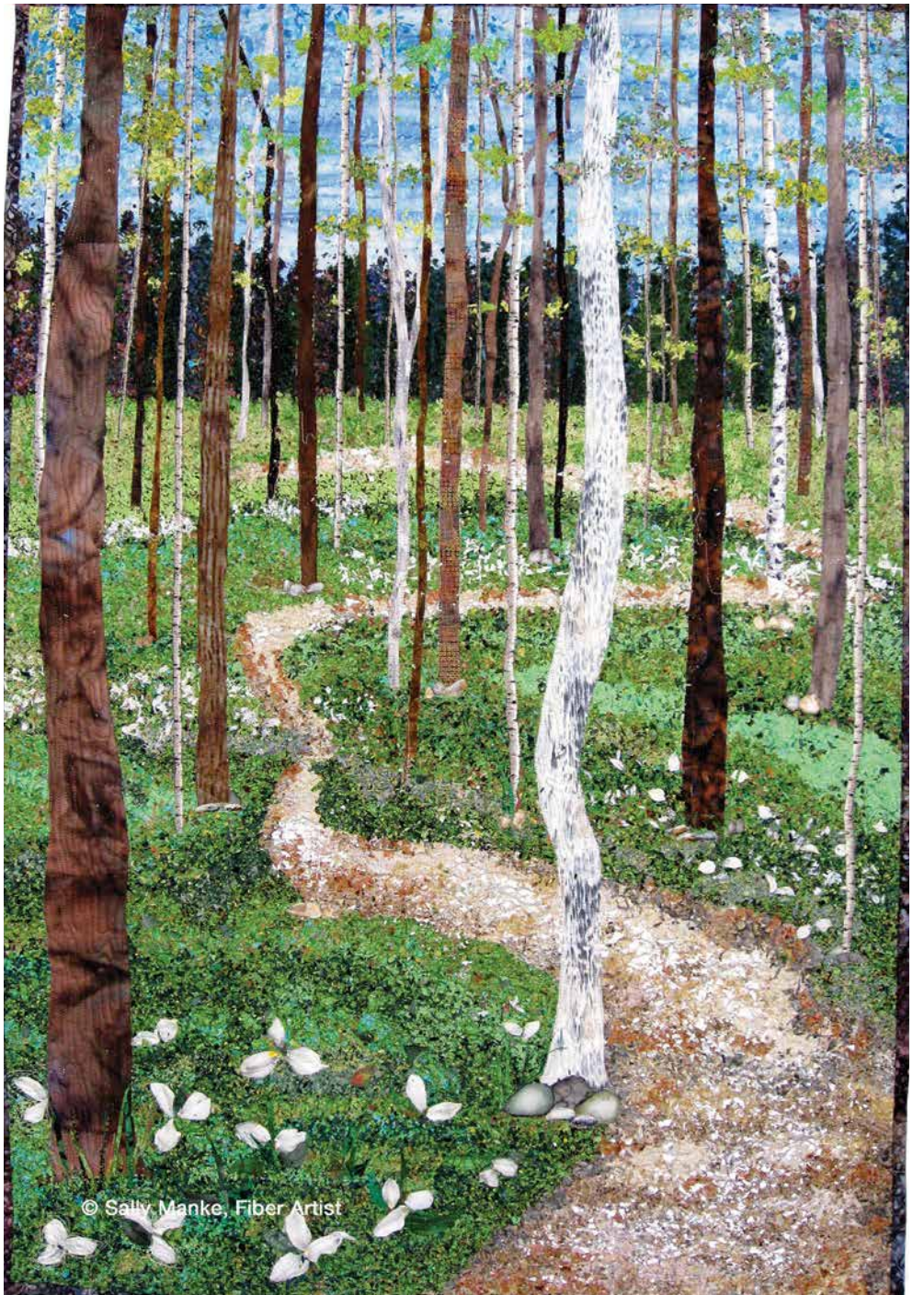
“My photos are an extension of that,” she observed.

She uses the camera on her new iPhone, a purchase she made earlier this year when the batteries of her “ancient” iPhone 6s finally gave out.

She especially likes feedback from people following the Arcadia group page who say, “It makes me feel like I’m there when I can’t be.”

The tone of some Facebook posts this year gave her pause. She said she likes to post photos as often as she can to “keep things positive.”

In her upstairs home studio, she said she has quilting supplies, machines and “too much fabric.” She used some fabric this spring to make 150 masks when her daughter’s best friend, a pediatrician,



Trillium Trails quilt by Sally Manke, inspired by a photo she took at Arcadia Dunes. Courtesy photo.



Forest Sunrise quilt by Sally Manke, inspired by a photograph she took at Arcadia Dunes. Courtesy photo.



Portrait of Sally Manke by Jacqueline Southby of [www.southbyphotography.com](http://www.southbyphotography.com)

needed them.

“I will make that trip up the stairs until it’s gone or I am,” she said, laughing.

For more about Manke and her artwork, go to <http://sallymanke.com>. Find her

on Pinterest and Etsy and follow her on Facebook @sally.manke.fiber.artist.

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# Lakefront nonaction

continued from page 5



Riprap (in this case, rocks), with spaces for vegetation, and beach grass are considered good ways of preventing erosion, while still allowing habitat at the shoreline. Photo by S.A. McFerran.

The "Shoreland Stewards" strongly endorse such actions. There is a long list of partners that work toward informing waterfront owners about these issues. The Michigan Lake and Stream Association is one of these organizations. There is also a long list of benefits for doing so, such as reduced erosion.

Over the natural course of events, trees grow at the waterfront. Some die and fall into the water. The trunks then become "woody debris." This submerged material provides habitat for creatures that visit the waterfront, including fish. This process can be interrupted by property owners who mow all the way down to the water. In that case, trees and shrubs never grow or fall into the water. Woody debris never enters the water or provides habitat for fish. Experts have studied this and will tell you that there will be more fish to catch if woody debris is present.

During this time of high water, lakefront owners are tempted to "armor" their waterfront with seawalls. This action may result in the erosion of adjacent properties. Experts recommend consulting a certified specialist in natural shoreline protection – find one at [www.mishorelinepartnership.org](http://www.mishorelinepartnership.org) – who will advise you on the best course of action or nonaction, which will undoubtedly include leaving or planting native vegetation. Shorelines with lots of rooted plants have been shown to be more resilient in high-energy zones caused by wind-directed waves.

The Hamlin Lake Preservation Society is registered with the Michigan Shoreland Stewards, along with 31 other lake organizations. The residents around the lake can connect with each other and promote healthy shoreland management on their lake. They will all reap the benefits of cleaner water.

Wayne Andersen, the president of the Hamlin Lake Preservation Society, said they have been taking water samples to

monitor the water quality of the lake for 18 years. For the past five, they have noticed algae (a.k.a. algal) blooms. Amanda Booth, of the U.S. Geological Survey, will be studying the Hamlin Lake blooms. The Mason-Lake Conservation District will be applying for grants to help the society reach out to lakefront owners. The goal is to educate them about best practices. These measures are expected to reduce the runoff which causes algae to bloom.

The Michigan Clean Water Corps' Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program has parallel goals to educate lakefront residents on best practices concerning shoreline management. MiCorps works with Michigan State University, part of the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership. MSU states on its website: "As the users and primary beneficiaries of Michigan's inland lake resources, citizens must take an active role in obtaining vital information and managing their inland lakes."

The waterfront at my house is a bushy jungle. One benefit that I have enjoyed year after year is the Winter Wren that calls out each morning. I feel that the wren would not return if I had groomed the yard down to the water.

Ecologists talk in terms of relationships between different kinds of organisms. The shoreline is where many of these relationships form. As good stewards of Michigan shorelands, we can do a lot to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and fish populations in our lakes and streams. Sometimes, the course of nonaction is best. If you see woody debris in the water at your lakefront, just leave it where it lays.

Non-action is the guiding principal at the Pokey Huddle Institute. S.A. McFerran founded the Institute in 2002, in the sauna where the think tank is. There is a very long list of things that have not been done, and the environment is better for it.

## NEOWISE

continued from page 1

see the beautiful sight with unaided eyes. This was a most memorable night. My only disappointment was that I had to leave to get some sleep.

Don't delay if you want to see it. The comet won't give us a show again for

another 6,800 years!

Brooke Edwards is a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. She lives in Manistee. Follow her group page on Facebook @ ManisteeStarParty.

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By MARK VIDEAN

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