

FRESHWATER REPORTER

A fresh approach to storytelling in Manistee and Mason counties...and a bit beyond.

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FREE

Smart feet don't fly (without wings)

By RON SCHMIDT

We just had our first big snowstorm of the season and I have been reminded of one of my favorite cold-weather songs, "Walking in a Winter Wonderland." The lyrics make it sound so peaceful and relaxing. There's no hint of the danger of falling on slippery sidewalks and roads, missteps that can lead to bruises, sprains, broken bones and a sudden trip to the hospital.



Spikes were mandatory to make the climb at Pyramid Point on New Year's Day, 2020. Photo by Christine Stapleton.

We live up north and, if you like to walk as much as I do, then your mental and physical well-being and fitness depend on walking year-round. When snow and ice arrive, that's when it's time for me to head to the closet. Not to hide, but to find my Yak Tracks, which have waited patiently for me since April. Mine are only one brand of shoe gear known generically as spikes or cleats. Once strapped onto my running shoes – I like to feel the ground when I'm walking, so I don't wear boots – I can walk safely.

My first pair were given to me by friends more than 10 years ago. Mine have rubber webbing that stretches beneath each shoe or boot, from my toes to my heel. The brand I wear uses rolled wire on the bottom for traction and a strap across the bridge of my foot to keep them from popping off as I walk over uneven ground or deep snow. There's nothing more annoying when walking confidently on a slippery surface

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Waiting for This Moment to Arise

By GORDON BERG

If we're lucky, sometimes we get that one Christmas gift that sticks with us into January of the new year ... and far beyond. For me that Christmas was 1968, when I was 18. The gift was The Beatles "White Album" or #0817032, for those who remember that each pressing in the first batch had a serial number.

Among the gems on that album that have stood the test of time: "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," "Back in the U.S.S.R.," "I Will," and a 2:20 track that has comforted me through the decades. Of course, it's Paul McCartney's "Blackbird."

This song was originally inspired by civil rights' events unfolding in Little Rock, Arkansas in the 1960s and earlier. McCartney was specifically struck by the courage of the Little Rock Nine – the first nine black students to enroll in all-white Little Rock Central High School as a result of the Supreme Court decision to integrate schools. What impressed McCartney even more was that two of the students were girls – "birds," as they called them in England back then – just teenagers. He imagined how scary that must have felt to them. He longed to give these young women, and others like them, a song of hope, strength and encouragement. So, from the civil rights movement here in the states, "Blackbird" was born.



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Gordon Berg and guitar. Courtesy photo.



Finding Balance

Editor's note: "That's the Spirit" is a new column by bartender Chelsea White, who infuses her drinks and her writing with wisdom that comes from practical experience and life's lessons.

By CHELSEA WHITE

When you're creating a cocktail, the key concept you need to cling to is "balance." Too sweet, too acidic, too boozy? You need a better balance.

What I've learned in cocktails is: you usually need more acid and less sugar. Margarita? One ounce lime juice, a quarter of agave. Whiskey sour? Two ounces booze, (you always need more booze), an ounce lemon juice, half an ounce simple syrup. Manhattan? Booze, more booze, and bitters. (Manhattans resonate with me on a very primal level.)



I don't think this is a super-separate concept from life in general. We could all use a little more balance.

This year has been rough for me. I think it's been such for most of us. I've dealt with uncertainty, I've lost a workplace, I've wondered how I'll pay the bills. That's the acid. That tart, overwhelming taste that presents on its own is almost painful. It hurts your stomach, it makes you gaggy. It's too much.

I've also fallen in love this year. I've made up for so much lost time with my kids. I've survived thus far, (I'm not challenging you 2020, I know you're not done!), and I am so proud of that. A lot of sour happened this year and I'm grateful for the sweet that balanced it.

I'm also thankful for the booze. Because I'm a bartender, and we kind of depend upon it as a livelihood.

I read all these articles about this pandemic and the emotions we are all feeling about it. We're scared. We're lonely. I hear a lot about how you all miss me and my cohorts, and boy do I appreciate what we mean to your lives. But what I pull from all of this is that

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Community Events in Manistee & Mason Counties

Some events may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules and COVID-19. Always call ahead.

Email your February calendar events or press releases by Jan. 18 to: editor@freshwater-reporter.com or mail them to:

Freshwater Reporter,
P.O. Box 188, Manistee, MI, 49660.

January

1-25 Winter Snowman or Scarecrow Contest

Make a snowman or scarecrow, visible from the road. Free to all special needs families, group and nursing homes. Businesses and the general public may enter for \$25. For Manistee, Mason and Lake counties. Judging for prizes on Jan. 25.

For more info/entry requirements go to <http://circlerockingsfarm.org>

8-29 New Beginnings Art Exhibit

Free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington

10 Winter Trails Day

Free 2 hour trail pass and equipment rental, 1-3, 2-4, 3-5pm, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville. Learn to snowshoe or cross country ski for free. Advanced reservations required for Cross country skiing 888-968-7686 ext. 4000

18 A Civil Rights Tribute virtual experience

presented by West Shore Community College theater department. Free, 7:30-8:30pm, A collection of inspirational readings from civil rights heroes

www.westshore.edu/community/performing-arts/about-the-series/

February

18 Furniture, Fiber, Photography, Sculpture Art Exhibit

Free, Elizabeth Lane Oliver Center for the Arts, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort

'Simply Folk' show host has local roots

By RAMONA DEGEORGIO-VENEGAS

I had a very friendly conversation with Dan Robinson, host of Wisconsin Public Radio's "Simply Folk" show and a former resident of Manistee County. He gladly answered my questions about his connection to Manistee, his Wisconsin move and the music he enjoys.



In 1996, Robinson, a guitar player and singer, relocated with his family to Manistee from the wide-open skies, lakes and fields of Indiana, where they began a family and where Dan had worked as a public speaker, concert presenter and event promoter.

Robinson was called to leave his birth state to become director of the Guardian Angels, a music ministry, and his wife's new work included youth ministries for Manistee's three Catholic parishes of the time: Guardian Angels, St. Joseph and St. Mary.

His background in music made Robinson a solid candidate for the position. He studied music at Western Kentucky University and graduated from Purdue with a sociology and social work degree. Later, he obtained his master's degree in theological studies

from St. Norbert.

While in Manistee, they loved alternating "beach time" with their children, from First Street's Rocket Park to 5th Avenue. Other favorite places were The Ramsdell, Lighthouse Park and Sleeping Bear Dunes. They enjoyed local festivals such as the Victorian Christmas, 4th of July and Lumberjack Days, and their children participated in the parades.

In 2002 they relocated across the lake to Shawano, Wisc., where he hosts WPR's "Simply Folk." program.

Dan's been with Wisconsin Public radio almost five years and said he enjoys sharing music and interacting with his listeners. He mentioned appreciation for requests from people like "Ron from Beulah" and shared that he feels fortunate to work with a great, flexible organization and boss.

Robinson is the fifth host of the "Simply Folk" program, which began in 1979 with hosts such as "Becka" and "Tom," who emphasized live performances. Asked what some of his favorites are in the folk music realm, he replied:

"In traditional music, I really enjoy Doc Watson. In singer-songwriter music, I'm a big fan of John Hiatt and Carrie Newcomer. With younger folk artists, I'm big on Raye Zaragoza. Of course, I love Pete Seeger, too, and not just his music. His life and work were focused on social justice

and protecting the environment, which I'm very grateful for."

Last spring, Robinson started another program, The Great Lakes Spirituality Project, which is found online at: glspirit.com.

"It's a project that promotes connecting with and protecting the lakes from a spiritual perspective," he explained.

Robinson's other projects and programs can be viewed at: notesbydan.com

He explained how grateful he was for his family's time spent living and working in Manistee, though return trips have been few.

"While we've loved our visits to Manistee," he shared, "we've only been able to make it back a couple of times ... very special times they were, though!"

His children and music are now spread across the airwaves and across Midwest fields. Listen to "Simply Folk" on Sunday evenings from 6-9 p.m., EST. Livestream the program at simplyfolk.org.

I know I will.

Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas is a retiree of the Manistee Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forest, where she worked in recreation and as an outdoor recreation planner. She has been involved with the Spirit of the Woods folk music organization in Manistee County.

Smart feet

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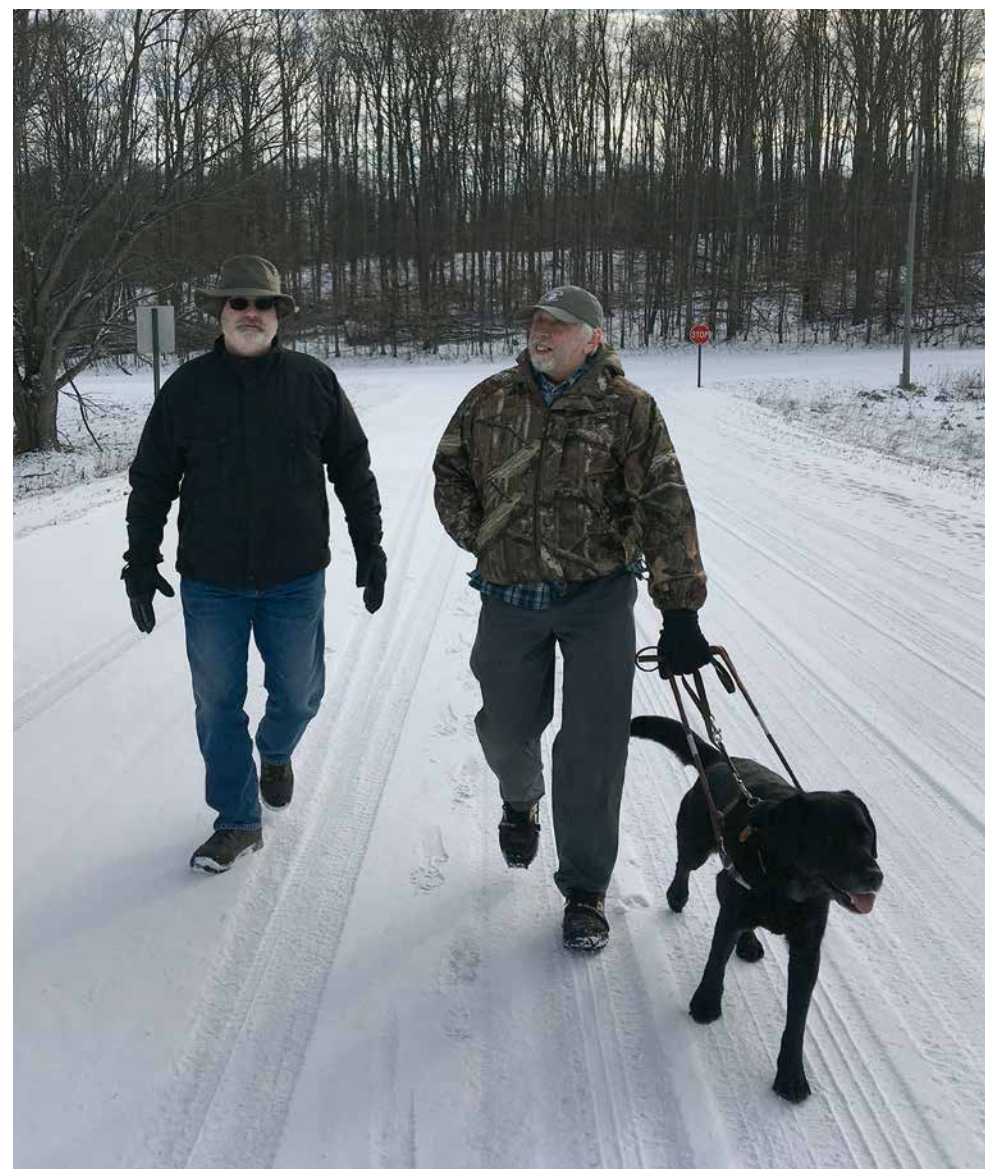
Cleats make it easy to walk in snow, ice and frozen sand. Photo by P. Stinson.

than feeling a sudden loss of traction in one foot or glancing down at your feet to find one cleat missing. Some brands use chains or triangular spikes on straps, which offer even greater traction for steep hills or walking on ice, as most winter anglers already know.

I walk mostly on a snow- or ice-covered dirt road, where I live. But I've also used them on packed trails and frozen fields.

They are simple but amazing gadgets I am glad to promote. I hope whoever invented them became wealthy or at least gratified to have saved thousands of serious injuries or deaths resulting from falls.

If you do not yet own a set, please consider buying them for yourself and a friend. You can find them in area sporting goods stores and sometimes feed and



Ron Schmidt (at right) and friend Mark Videan walk confidently wearing cleats while walking on a snowy road with Leader Dog Lila. Photo by P. Stinson.

tractor stores or places selling hardware. Amazon also carries them. They start at \$19 for a basic set without straps and can cost \$30 or more for sturdier gear.

Consider them the best investment for walking in our northern Michigan winters safely and enjoyably - maybe accompanied

by a good song brought to your lips by the season. Enjoy those winter walks.

Children's author Ron Schmidt enjoys long walks in the northern Michigan woods with his Leader Dog companion, Lila.

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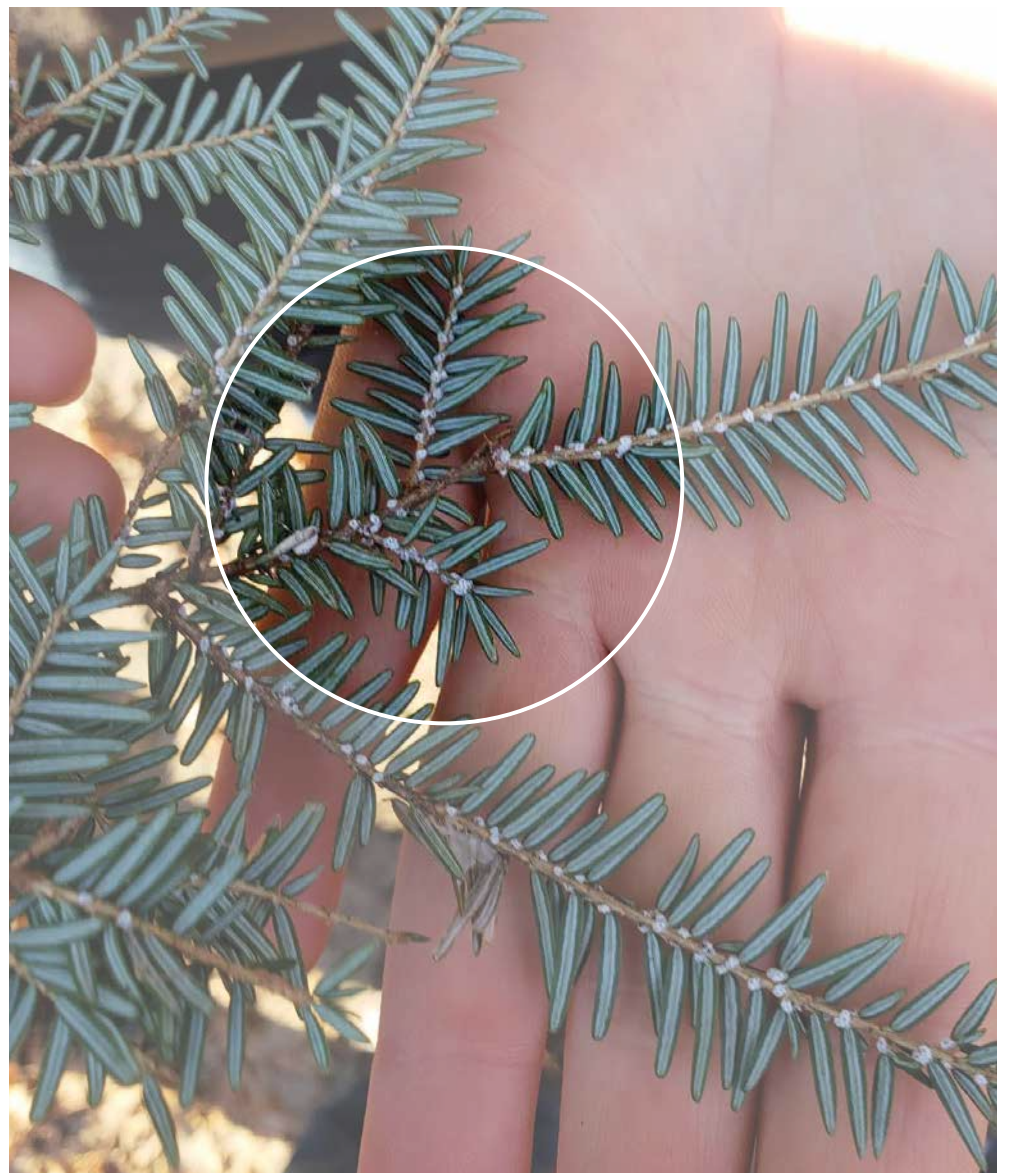
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Above. Keith Ferguson examines the branch of a hemlock tree on a ridge near the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Photo courtesy of the NW Invasive Species Network (ISN). Right. Egg sacs from Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, an invasive insect, on a sprig from a hemlock tree. Photo by K. Gresziak, courtesy of Ottawa County Training.



Ludington State Park sees coastal invaders

Little acts can stop this hemlock hitchhiker

By EMILY COOK

I did not grow up in northern Michigan. My home, a few hours south, was tucked next to state park acreage in the middle of the state. The landscape was rolling hills previously cleared for row crops. Despite being a “nature kid,” who later went on to get a degree in conservation, I cannot tell you if we had any hemlock trees. I can close my eyes and walk the same trails in my mind that I did when I was 10 or 11. I see monstrous beech trees, towering maples and quaking aspen leaves, but the dark-green needles of the eastern hemlock tree elude my memory. I’m sure the trees were there, more sporadic and as a rarity, but they are mostly reserved for shorelines.

When I relocated to Manistee County nearly five years ago and began to explore the natural areas, hemlock trees moved to the forefront of my mind. Entire swaths of forest are shaded with these incredible evergreens. After a new snowfall, a favorite spot to rest during a winter hike is where dense hemlock stands provide natural shelter against the elements. If you pause and look up, birds flit from branch to branch. Creeks and rivers are often lined

by hemlocks and provide essential shade to the aquatic world below. Catch the setting sunlight filtering through them and it is practically magic.

As my eyes follow the birds, however, I am also subconsciously searching for any sign of something that should not be there. Author and environmentalist Aldo Leopold wrote, “One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.”

I have felt this weight since I began working with invasive species more than a decade ago. If I am hiking during peak spring ephemeral season in May, I am always scanning for garlic mustard. As I shop at garden centers for vegetable seeds and wildflowers, I notice the stockpile of invasive Japanese barberry. While my breath catches every time I walk within a grove of native hemlock, my brain has also been trained to think of the threat to them. In this case, an invasive insect called hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA).

I am not writing this to tell you about all the bad things lurking in our landscapes. One of my greatest pleasures is exploring

our forests, lakes, dunes and shorelines, even with the knowledge that a lot of what I am seeing could be problematic. However, I think it’s possible to move beyond the “world of wounds” by joining forces and working to protect our special places. I have become certain of one thing while living in northern Michigan – many of the people who live or visit here are truly passionate about the health of our land, water, and the plants and animals that live here.

Stopping the spread of hemlock woolly adelgid is just the sort of battle that can be won with the unified efforts of passionate people. This aggressively hostile insect has been creeping its way north along the Lake Michigan shoreline, and it was most recently discovered in Ludington State Park in Mason County. It is small and wingless, and resource managers believe it is unintentionally hitchhiking on recreational vehicles – think the top of a camper brushing the branches of a hemlock tree in Grand Haven and then driving north to another campground. In a new location, the adelgid uses its sharp, piercing mouth parts to suck nutrients from hemlock stems and twigs. Die off is gradual and can often take more than five years, which is why there is hope. Treatment is possible, unlike most cases of another invader – the infamous emerald ash borer.

Catching hemlock woolly adelgid populations early is critical. It is the reason I cannot help but scour pine needles when I should otherwise be enjoying a hike with my dog. Eastern Hemlocks are special, not only to me personally, but because they are such a critical component of the ecosystem. They also protect dunes and riparian systems from erosion. The northern Michigan landscape is scattered with thousands of them, a pocket of forest among the estimated 170 million hemlock trees across the state. Losing them is too heartbreaking to consider.

State-wide efforts are currently underway

to stop HWA in its tracks. Locally, the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network (ISN), along with partners within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, Forestry Assistance Program, National Lakeshore, and more, are teaming-up to conduct surveys along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

This is where you can get involved. Learn how to identify the signs of HWA. Focus your eyes upward as you pass beneath a hemlock grove on your next snowshoe hike. (Winter is the best time to spot the ovisacs, or egg sacs.) Watch for signs of a sick tree. Clean your camping gear and vehicles before moving to another location. Little acts of vigilance can make a big difference.

As I wandered through Arcadia Dunes last night, I paused at one of my favorite spots. The trail loops along a short ridge and in winter you can look down into a snowy valley. The light is dim, shrouded by branches of mature hemlocks. The ridge puts the tree branches at eye level and, as always, I flipped a few over, just to check. Nothing. Only a bit of snow falling and landing at my feet. A poem by Robert Frost slipped into my mind:

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow from a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood and saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

A reminder that time spent in the woods is practically magic, and hemlock trees are worth fighting for.

Emily Cook works as Outreach Specialist for the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network. She and her husband reside in Arcadia and can often be found exploring nearby trails with their two collies.

See if you qualify for a free Hemlock Woolly Adelgid site inspection of your property at: www.HabitatMatters.org/hemlock-woolly-adelgid

Otherwise, I encourage you to join ISN for a webinar.

WHAT: All about hemlock woolly adelgid, including its history, identification tools, look-a-likes and how to report a potential sighting.

WHEN: 6 p.m., Thurs., Jan. 14, 2021

HOW: Registration is available via www.HabitatMatters.org/events

Saving public access to Lake Michigan

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN

Many shoreline communities in West Michigan feature their views of Lake Michigan, welcoming visitors from far and wide. They come to see the fresh water and to swim in it and recreate on it. However, much of the shoreline of our Great Lake is privately owned. Public access to the lake has been limited in many places.

Lake Michigan looms large if you are anywhere near it, but just how do you access it if you do not own waterfront? One way is by boat. Launch ramps for boaters have been provided by local communities. Public access points – such as Sunset Station in Arcadia, Bar Lake Outlet in Manistee Township and Ludington Waterfront Park – provide fine views of the big lake.

Government grants have helped to provide access to the lake, and land conservation organizations have been able to buy land on the water to provide access. Local governments that accept grants are required to maintain them.

U.S. Department of Agriculture grants were obtained to improve the turnaround at the end of Lake Street in Arcadia and the Bar Lake Outlet in Manistee Township. These “Explore the Shore” grants were intended to provide access to the lake, as well as a viewing platform that would accommodate persons with mobility issues.

Former Arcadia Township Planning Commission Chair Brad Hopwood



The viewing platform at the Sunset Station in Arcadia was damaged by wave erosion. Photo by S.A. McFerran.

wrote in 2015: “The approval of this grant was crucial to sustaining our momentum to make Arcadia a must-visit site by those who appreciate the beauty and special resources of our coastal community.”

Arcadia resident Greg Mathieu and his dog Vinnie walk to the Sunset Station in Arcadia every day. The view to the west, across Lake Michigan, is ever changing and waves roll in with a fierce energy. Some days there are no waves at all.

About \$400,000 was spent on the platform, playground and bathrooms in Arcadia. High water cracked the cement and mangled the steel railing at the viewing platform. It is no longer a safe place to watch the big lake.

Mathieu – who was involved in the Sunset Station project, and until recently was chair of the township’s Parks and Recreation Committee – said the township council had decided that damage to the viewing platform should be fixed to save public access to Lake Michigan. Contractors had been lined up to build steps down to the lake in May. However, the restoration effort stalled. Meanwhile, waves continued to crash into Sunset Station. The playground area was further undermined by wave action.

The Sunset Station is heavily used by local residents and people from far and wide. Greg and Vinnie see license plates from all over the country at the turn-around.



Greg Mathieu and Vinnie at the Sunset Station in Arcadia. Photo by S.A. McFerran.



Bar Lake Outlet’s viewing platform was recently shored-up by steel, but the wheelchair ramp and stairs to the beach were destroyed by waves. Photo by Pat Stinson.

A fence has been put up to keep everyone away from the dangerous drop-off into Lake Michigan.

Many shoreline locations have been dealing with the effects of high water and erosion. Manistee Township’s Bar Lake Outlet and the Ludington Waterfront Park have also sustained damage. But efforts have been made in both places to stabilize public footholds on the Big Lake.

Dennis Bjorkquist, Manistee Township Supervisor, said it has been a struggle, but the township signed a contract in July to install additional sheet piling to stabilize the platform at Bar Lake Outlet. Before this issue of Freshwater Reporter went to press, contractors were on site to keep the public access safe. He added that the grant the township received requires maintenance of the viewing station, but that the original work was not done according to design.

Ludington resident Alayne Speltz takes regular walks to the waterfront park in Ludington. She said the city has repaired the erosion damage at the waterfront park twice.

“They added a seawall the first time; it looked like an extensive repair, but the fall wind and water tore up the land and sidewalk,” she explained, adding, “The latest sidewalk is more narrow, like a single-person sidewalk, as opposed to a



At the Ludington Waterfront Park, the city has twice made repairs. You can see where the high waterline pushed debris on land this season. Photo by Alayne Speltz.

three-person width.”

Back in Arcadia, Mathieu and Vinnie still walk to Sunset Station, but their easy Lake Michigan access is quickly vanishing. Without it, the village can no longer welcome visitors with its sunset lake views.

Stewart A. McFerran seeks to illuminate environmental issues in an historic context. As with his investigations into earthen dams, sand dunes and fisheries, he hopes readers will gain an understanding of and insight into ways people interact with their environment.

The Starke Legacy and Shifting Sands

Story and photos by STEWART A. MCFERRAN

The legacy of Henry Starke is Arcadia, the town on Lake Michigan that was once called Starkeville. He laid out the streets and built a boarding house where those building the town could stay. They cut the trees and started the blades spinning at a sawmill that stood at the edge of Bar Lake, now known as Arcadia Lake. Henry Starke was one of the founders of the Lutheran community in Arcadia that raised the steeple of the church on Third Street.

The 1,000-foot pier that once extended into Lake Michigan is gone, as is the railroad that connected the village to Copemish. The harbor Starke built remains, as does the railroad grade at the site of the popular Arcadia Marsh Preserve trail.

In “The History of Arcadia,” it is stated: “Mr. Starke, whose ambition was to aid in establishing a flourishing and prosperous community . . . was not actuated by the mere accumulation of wealth, but by a broader and more philanthropic motive.”

Henry Starke’s great-great grandson, Curt Burkhead, still lives in Arcadia. He has a summer home on Starke Point. I asked

him what Henry Starke’s greatest challenge was while establishing Arcadia.

“I would say founding a Lutheran town, church, school, (and) business that had at its core the Lutheran faith...The stained-glass windows in the little Lutheran church in Arcadia, I think, were imported from Germany; they are gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous German stained glass.”

“The History of Arcadia” points out that Henry Starke owned most all the land in Arcadia in the 1890s. I asked Burkhead about the eight acres he owns on Starke Point and what had happened to the rest of the acreage his great-great grandfather Starke owned.

“Charles J. Starke (Henry’s son) gave all that land for that church camp, (Camp Arcadia, in 1922), all the way up to the north end of the church camp. That’s almost a mile of lakefront . . .”

Burkhead said he ended up with the farmhouse in Arcadia. In the early ‘60s, his grandfather Bob Starke sold the remaining land to four purchasers. The DeVos family bought the south bluff. What Burkhead



A stained-glass window in memory of Henry Starke is found in the Trinity Lutheran Church, Arcadia.

calls the “island” (Starke Point) was sold to Bob Lucas, a developer, who subdivided the point into 40 lots.

“I would sit out under the big oak trees with my grandfather,” Burkhead began. “I asked him why he sold off all this land. His answer to me was, ‘This is a very poor community.’ He said, ‘This town was on the verge of dying.’”

“For fifty years the channel had been filled in with sand, because the federal government decided not to dredge it out. He said, ‘I wanted to do something for the township. If these developers can build some houses, it will give employment to drywallers, plumbers, electricians and roofers and landscapers.’ That’s what he told me directly.”

Today, many structures along Arcadia’s shores – personal residences, historic structures and Sunset Station at the end of Lake Street – are threatened by record-setting high water levels in Lake Michigan.

Along the edge of the Arcadia Harbor – where Henry Starke once loaded lumber onto sailboats, such as the Minnehaha – lies the road to Starke Point. The road now spans the gap that was the original outlet to Lake Michigan. That outlet was formed by the energy of the waves and the current

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Coping with change: Copemish Family Market

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN. Photos courtesy of the SCHNEIDERS.

If Goldilocks were asked to choose a grocery store, she would probably shop at Copemish Family Market in northern Manistee County or Honor Family Market in Benzie County. Not too small, not too large, but just right.

Both markets, founded some 40 years ago by Roy and Rose Schneider, are now owned by their children.

We recently interviewed one of the owners and managers, Marilyn Edginton, to learn more about the markets and how the family's grocery business is coping in the time of coronavirus.



Owner/Manager Marilyn Edginton with Santa Claus.

"We are a small, family-owned market specializing in fresh and smoked meats: 20-plus varieties of fresh bratwurst, homemade hickory-smoked sliced bacon, jerky, hotdogs and snack sticks," Edginton began.

The sausage and bacon products smoked in-house are legendary with locals, seasonal residents and tourists, according to comments left on the markets' Facebook pages. Fun fact: Josh, the market's butcher, uses a knife blade of Damascus steel he forged and hammered on his grandfather's anvil.



"We have been very busy," she continued. "Our business is up about 25% since March."

Edginton said staff constantly communicates with customers at both markets, so they know their customers' habits.

"We've been out here for 40 years," she explained, "and we've had to reinvent ourselves over and over again ... Anybody's that's in the grocery industry right now, that's got a store like the two stores we have, if you don't change what you're doing a little bit you might as well lock your doors."

Edginton said customers are "doing the right thing" by not bringing children to the store and by sticking close to home, instead of traveling to shop in larger stores in Cadillac or Traverse City.

"We have older people who don't want to go to those places," she said.

According to Edginton, their markets provide plenty of curbside service and they even deliver to a couple folks. The pandemic has necessitated some of these changes, but it's also a personal way of conducting business that their customers appreciate.

"They call in for orders," she said. "We physically speak with them and offer different things. Then we put their order up and someone takes it to their car."

She said maintaining inventory to fulfill their customers' needs has not been an issue. Only once did they have trouble obtaining a popular brand of meat products, when the company making them temporarily couldn't meet demand.

The Schneiders' family markets are large enough to maintain stock but not so large that they deter shoppers from entering.

"Once again, that store (in Honor) and this store (in Copemish) are the right size for older people to shop in, because they don't want to walk all over heck to get what they need," she explained. "They can come in and get the same stuff they buy all the time and leave."

Edginton remarked about the number of people lingering in the area past the fall season.

"...Honor has had people that are just coming and staying, and there are a lot of people that are not going away this winter," she said. "They're going to stay here."

The markets would like to hire more staff and add to their current "family" of 35 employees. Edginton said they easily could have hired five more workers for



Tim Schneider, an owner and store manager, encircled by fire rings.



Above. Original owners Roy and Rose Schneider, parents of the current owners. Right. "Butterfly" is Prudy Pulido, Deli and Bakery Manager, and Darlene Clay, Head Cashier, at Copemish Family Market.



the Honor market this summer – had they been able to find them. Some employees are working 3-10 hours of overtime each week.

"So, we struggle with what we do if we can't get enough people," she said, adding, "... and everywhere you go, people are looking for help."

Copemish Family Market is located at 18541 Cadillac Highway (M-115). Reach

them at (231) 378-2440. Honor Family Market is found at 10625 Main Street (US-31). Call (231) 325-3360. Follow both markets on Facebook.

Stewart A. McFerran is Freshwater Reporter's roving reporter in Northern Manistee County and also the paper's sales ambassador. Reach him at samcferran@gmail.com.

Meet The Beer Father: Tom Buchanan

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL

When home brewing gave rise to the craft beer industry in the 1990s and early 2000s, Tom Buchanan, Brewer Emeritus at Ludington Bay Brewing in Ludington, was at the forefront of the movement.

Since then, he has been an avid promoter of craft beer and a mentor to craft brewers in Michigan.

My wife Jean and I first met Tom around 2018.

Before moving to Michigan in 2019, we searched for a craft brewery that could fill our two little five-gallon corny kegs.

On one visit to Ludington, prior to our move from Indiana, we stopped at Ludington Bay Brewing, which had opened a year or so before. There we found our source for good-quality brew, thanks to Buchanan.

An all-around nice guy with a fondness for good craft beer, he came out front to talk to us as we ate lunch and drank a beer, and he set up regular refills for us with the lead brewer, Corey Wentworth, whenever we visited Michigan.

I'd run into Tom occasionally at the brewery and we would chat over a beer. But as I was writing a story about another area brewery, Starving Artist, (read "Masterpiece in a pint," Freshwater Reporter, Jan. 2020), I learned he was



Tom Buchanan serves a beer at Ludington Bay Brewing.

more than "just" a brewer emeritus.

Starving Artist owner and brewer Andy Thomas knew Tom when both worked at Jamesport Brewing in Ludington.

"I fell in love with craft beers through Tom Buchanan," Thomas said. "Tom's a great guy; we call him The Beer Father (a play on The Godfather) and he's gotten a lot of us into craft beer."

I went to Tom and his wife Pat's home in Mason County not long ago – socially distancing, of course – and they filled me in on how they got into the craft beer industry.

Buchanan, originally from Grand Rapids and an avid home brewer from 1991 until 1999, accidentally (literally) joined the professional league of brewers around the

time Jamesport Brewing Co. got started.

"I was (home) brewing some pretty good beers, just having fun with four or five guys, and they wanted to open a brewery – we had a pretty good following," Tom said.

That was in the early to mid-'90s when they still lived in Grand Rapids, and Pat may not have been quite as enthused as Tom back then.

"It was kind of annoying, to tell you the truth," Pat laughingly admitted. "They would come to the house and bring their brews and try to get me to drink them. I was a Bud Light drinker and I was perfectly happy drinking Bud Light. They would be, 'Here, taste this, taste that.'"

"One time one of them actually gave me

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In the Northern Manistee County Woods

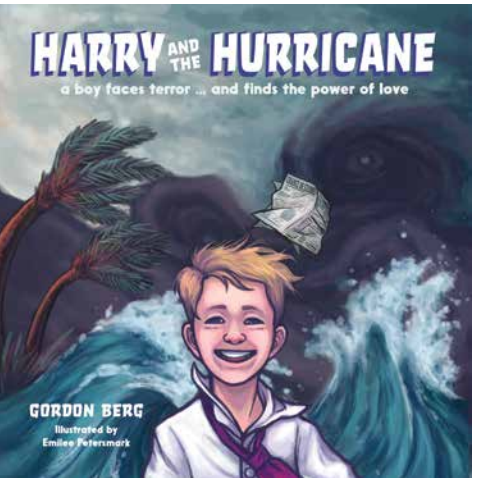


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A Tap Takeover

By KEVIN HOWELL

Mike Iseringhausen, owner of Northern Draught solutions, still spends days cleaning and servicing tap systems for bars, restaurants and breweries, even though the pandemic has slowed these businesses.



Mike Iseringhausen, owner of Northern Draught Solutions, beams after cleaning the tap system at FrankZ, a Frankfort brewery. Photo by Joey Barcheski.

Iseringhausen typically schedules monthly cleanings for tap systems – taking apart, cleaning and reassembling them – and handling service calls for troubleshooting and repair. He also designs and installs new systems.

"Last year I installed a beautiful 12-tap tower at the Arcadia South Course, in the

main restaurant area," he said. "It has beautiful views, and the food is incredible there, so that was a project I feel lucky to be a part of."

"I also put in an 8-tap system at Iron Fish Distillery in Thompsonville. They are now doing cocktails and wine on tap, which I think is a really great idea from a

service aspect."

Iseringhausen is also involved in jam-making for his mother-in-law's business, Wee Bee Jammin', near Bear Lake. WBJ has provided leftover jam juices – rhubarb, for example – for use in craft beer brewed at Starving Artist Brewing, east of Ludington.

A lover of good beer from a wee age, he stumbled into the tap business while sipping a brew in downtown Manistee.

"One day I was having a pint at TJ's and a guy comes in and sits at the bar not far from me," he explained. "I had recently moved to the area from Columbus, Ohio and I had spent some time in the U.P. We got to talking beer and work, and on and on, and that guy would turn out to be a great friend of mine and my mentor, Tom Buchanan."

That was in or around 2012, as Buchanan (see accompanying story, "The Beer Father") was brewing craft beer at Jamesport Brewing.

In addition to brewing, Buchanan also owned a tap service company, B&R Services. The two men shared their love of craft beer and Iseringhausen ultimately worked for B&R.

Like Buchanan, Iseringhausen was around when craft brewing was in its earliest stages.

"Being of German heritage, I first became interested in beer around the age of 3. At that point it was mainly traditional lagers and the occasional bock, as the craft beer scene was fairly sparse in the early '90s. Fast-forward a couple of decades, and amidst the craft beer boom, I found myself tending bar at The Mitten Bar in Ludington. That was a really exciting time for beer in Michigan."

"So drinking beer turned into serving beer, then brewing beer, and now, ultimately, my business and livelihood is

centered around keeping beer tasting as fresh and delicious as possible."

Around 2014, Iseringhausen left his bartending job at The Mitten and headed up to Traverse City to work at Right Brain Brewery, before brewing at Stormcloud Brewing in Frankfort. All this time he also worked with Buchanan, learning the tap service trade.

Iseringhausen speaks highly of Buchanan's mentorship and all he did to help other craft beer brewers and beer lovers.

"He really is responsible for the beer scene in our area. He was the first, and the best, to do all things beer around here."

"In 2017, with Tom opening Ludington Bay Brewing Company, it (B&R Services) was something he needed to get out of, so naturally I jumped at the opportunity and bought the business from them."

"I did rename the company Northern Draught Solutions, but other than that, I have kept everything the same. Tom really was the best in the business, so it's been important to me to continue his legacy."

In addition to the work he has done at Arcadia and Iron Fish, he also services tap systems for Starving Artist and locations in Silver Lake, Frankfort and "everywhere in between."

"I'd say around 50 locations. Pretty much every bar in Ludington and Manistee, a handful in Frankfort, Arcadia areas. I really do enjoy it, and my relationship with my clients is definitely the best aspect of what I do."

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

Starke Legacy

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of Bowens Creek. The shifting stream was filled in when Henry Starke built the present channel into Arcadia Lake in 1893.

The road is the only access to Burkhead's farmhouse and the approximately 30 homes on Starke Point, between Lake Arcadia and Lake Michigan. The low dune on the isthmus between Arcadia Harbor and Lake Michigan is slumping. During the past year, First Street residents with homes opposite Grebe Park gained a view of Lake Michigan beyond the steadily eroding dune.

A breach in the isthmus that connects Starke Point is possible this winter. If that happens, waves from Lake Michigan would roll right into the harbor.

"I am scared to death that there is going to be a breach at the north end of my property," Burkhead said.

Steel pilings were put in next to the road. They were paid for by the Starke Point Homeowner Association.

"I contributed (to that effort). The road is owned by the Muldavin family, but there is an easement (for the residents of Starke point)."

Burkhead armored his own beach property with rock this summer.

"It was a 10-week project – 2,000 tons of limestone, 3,000 cubic yards of sand, with approvals up and down."

Kraig Geers, president of the Starke Point Homeowners Association, is also concerned about a breach at the narrow point where the road crosses.

"It got within fifteen feet of our road," Geers said.

The conditions that will lead to a breach are well underway. The process of erosion may speed up due to high water in Lake Michigan. The shore to the south and north of Starke Point Road has been armored with

rock and steel. While steel walls and rock deflect the energy of waves, they also lead to increased erosion on nearby beaches.

What Henry Starke's great-great grandson calls the "island" could truly become an island if winter storms on Lake Michigan wash away the narrow dune.

Burkhead has been in touch with the archivist at Camp Arcadia. When the water level is high, sand becomes liquefied. Liquefied sand loses its ability to support heavy things, such as roads and buildings. That is why Camp Arcadia is raising funds to remove water from the sand located under camp buildings. There is more at stake than mere structures. Camp Arcadia was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.

Burkhead said the folks at Camp Arcadia are "sweating bullets" too.

"They just put in (a) pump-out water system to keep water out of the common buildings."

Camp Director Chip May confirmed this. "We are pumping about 1,200 gallons a minute into Lake Michigan," May said.

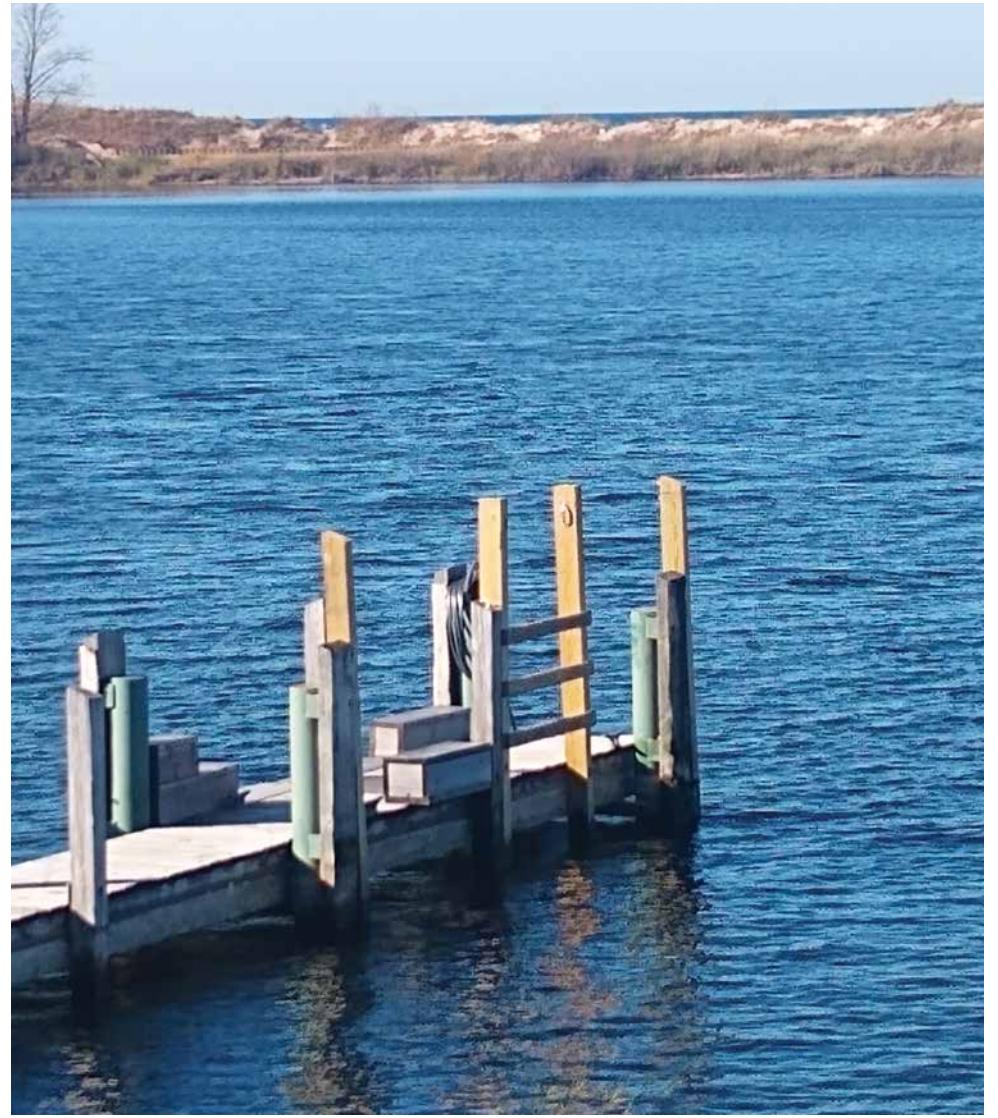
Back in the day, Burkhead's grandfather said that the major employer in Arcadia had been the furniture factory he ran.

"There was a bank, a drug store, a barber shop, a food store, a couple saloons and a hotel," he said.

Then the steel tracks were torn up and the factory was closed. The harbor closed, a result of sand build-up in the channel. Things were bleak in the 1960s when he sold off the property.

In "The History of Arcadia," at the time the post office was established in Starkeville, it was stated: "The post office department suggested changing the name to Arcadia."

According to conventional wisdom,



The low-dune road to Starke Point runs between Lake Michigan and Arcadia Harbor.

Arcadia is a land where a rustic people live in harmony in a beautiful setting. Henry Starke hoped for a harmonious community in the Pleasant Valley that opens to Lake Michigan. While sands shift under Arcadia and the water rises, the bells still ring out from the steeple of the Lutheran church, reminding all of Henry Starke's legacy.

Stewart A. McFerran seeks to illuminate environmental issues in an historic context. As with his investigations into earthen dams, sand dunes and fisheries, he hopes readers will gain an understanding of and insight into ways people interact with their environment.

Beer Father

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something I thought was pretty good, and you would have thought I'd given him the Nobel Prize or something."

The idea of opening a brewery fell through at that time. Then, a serious auto accident laid Tom up, ending his career as a truck driver.

That accident also opened the door to his next career in the craft beer industry.

"I'm recuperating from surgeries and coming up here where I owned some land," Tom told me. "I went into Ludington wearing a Founder's (Brewing) shirt and I was at the gas station. A guy got real excited, saw my shirt and said, 'Hey, we're building a brewery here in Ludington.'"

Tom went to see where they were building the brewery, called Jamesport Brewing Company.

"I walked in, checked it out and decided I wanted to work there," he said.

He became Jamesport's assistant brewer, working for free, and a few months later went to work part-time as a regular, with a wage. When the head brewer moved West, Tom took over as lead brewer production manager, a position he held for the next 16 years.

During that time, he also set up tasting dinners and worked with others talking to state congressional representatives to help expand interest in the craft industry. That was a time, in the early to mid-2000s, when craft brewing was still growing and brewers were a tight-knit group.

"In early days it was (about) introducing people to craft beers," he explained. "People were just drinking conventional lagers. I was constantly selling craft beer, doing brewer's dinners.

"Yeah, I got in in the early days in the craft beer industry, fortunately," he



Tom (R) and Pat Buchanan have a refreshing beer at their home in Mason County.

continued. "Founder's was around, me and Larry Bell (of Bell's Brewery). We had a few nights together," Tom said, reminiscing, with a big smile on his face.

Pat was involved in the craft beer movement, too, via Tom and remembers those days well.

"Back then there weren't that many breweries," she said. "Those were crazy days, though. That was when all the brewers were like brewer-owners, really. Those guys would be at all the beer festivals and they would all be their own salesmen."

Tom was elected vice president of the Michigan Brewers Guild in 2002, when there were 46 breweries in the state. Now there are more than 300.

Brewing wasn't the only endeavor for Tom and Pat. Around 2002 they also started a business, cleaning and servicing

beer tap systems around the area.

Tom had been doing his own tap care when a couple of beer distributors asked who he had servicing his taps.

"I said, 'Well, I am,' and they said, 'You ought to start a business, because no one else around here is doing that.'"

He took a course on draft beer dispensing in Illinois and founded B&R Services, (for Buchanan and Robinson, Pat's brother-in-law).

He also hired and trained an employee, Mike Iseringhausen, who later took over the business. (See the accompanying story, "A Tap Takeover.")

At Jamesport Brewing, Tom became friends with Ted Gedra, and gradually the move from Jamesport to Ludington Bay Brewing began.

"He wanted to open a brewery," Tom said, "and he really enjoyed my German

beers – my Alts, my Kolsch – and asked me to come with him."

At first, the idea was to set up a production brewery down the street for Jamesport and serve appetizers in the new brewery's taproom that were made in the original brewery's restaurant.

"After about a year of negotiations with the other (Jamesport) owners, that deal fell through, so we decided to just do it ourselves and we became Ludington Bay Brewing Company," he said.

Tom was to be head brewer there, but a stroke in 2016 waylaid that plan. After a long period of recovery, he went back to Ludington Bay, but as Brewer Emeritus, and handled some of the sales of beer and essentially served as a sort of liaison between the brewery, its customers, and other pubs and beer outlets.

Tom said he "sort of" retired in February 2020 and took some time to travel to Alaska and Florida and hoped to get to Scotland and Ireland, but the pandemic cancelled those plans.

He spends time at Ludington Bay every other week or so and helps out where he can – and he's still on the payroll.

Tom said he retired in February, but not officially.

"I kinda missed my retirement party, so I'm not retired yet," Tom said with a chuckle.

His party on hold, thanks to the pandemic, the 30-year veteran of the brewing industry and his wife hang out at their 10-acre wooded property south of Manistee. There, Tom and Pat enjoy tasting different beers at home.

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

Finding Balance

continued from page 1

sometimes you just have to find the balance and enjoy the results. Cocktail or not, balance goes a long way toward improving palatability.

Chelsea grew up in the service industry, working regular shifts hosting and bussing as well as in the kitchen in her parents' former restaurant on Beaver Island. She's been behind the bar on and off since she was 20 and is passionate about all things alcohol, most recently diving into the wide world of beer to further her education. When she's not "behind the pine" or on the beach, you can find her navigating homeschooling with her daughters, dabbling in writing or experimenting with new cocktails at home.



New York Sour

- 2 oz whiskey
(I like a spicier one in sours, so think rye or Irish.)
- 1 oz lemon juice
(Just get a bottle. It's way easier than juicing.)
- ½ oz simple syrup
(Know why it's called that? It's literally that simple: one part water, one part sugar, boil until dissolved, store in the fridge for literally forever. Or two weeks. Your call.)

Listen, you should shake this with ice. Use that long-forgotten blender bottle, if you need to. Trust me, it's worth it. Worst case: build the ingredients and stir. It'll be okay. Once you've combined these guys, add ice all the way to the top of your glass and carefully float a dry red wine like merlot or cabernet on top. Just gently pour it and the wine will gladly do the rest. If you want to get super bourgeoisie, make yourself a flag garnish with a cherry and an orange slice on a pick. Enjoy the aesthetics then sip and enjoy this super-classic cocktail – responsibly and in moderation.



Learning to play "Blackbird," by The Beatles, on his guitar was an unintended consequence of Gordon Berg's social distancing during the 2020 pandemic. Courtesy photo.

Waiting for this moment

continued from page 1

Of course, as a white kid living in rural Michigan, I knew none of this song's history. But its lyrics resonated with me.

Teenagers as a breed are often confused and uncertain. That was true for me back then. This song gave me comfort and hope. I needed to learn it. I tried to multiple times and failed. I was a decent fingerstyle guitar picker back then, but its style eluded me. Even more, the chords were all wonky. I gave up and moved on, still carrying the strength of the words with me...

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment
to arise

Flash-forward to 2020. A year not too dissimilar from 1968. Civil unrest. A contentious presidential election. And even a pandemic. Yes. A pandemic. The H3N2 virus killed one million people, globally.

This year found us all struggling with lockdowns, social distancing, masks, fear, paranoia, frustration and heartbreak from the loss of loved ones. For me, the emotional struggle meant the postponement of our son's wedding. The geographic distance between us means not being able to see him and his fiancée for 14 months and counting.

So, like millions of others, we turned to video chats to stay connected.

And then a miracle happened. My son offered to teach me how to "solo" on guitar. Through weekly lessons on Zoom, he taught me the guitar solo from Pure Prairie League's "Amie" and George

Harrison's guitar solo from "Let It Be." And then out of the blue, during one lesson, he asked, "Hey, Dad. How would you like to learn "Blackbird"? My first instinct was to pass, but he encouraged me to try. Just like 52 years ago, it was a struggle. Yet, through his gentle encouragement, each week a new measure or two revealed itself to me. I was learning "Blackbird"!

After about six sessions, I was able to play it. It was clunky, but recognizable. A major achievement. What I didn't know was what he had in mind for me.

A recital. Yes. A recital. For those reading this who did the math earlier in this piece, I am 72. While I have performed in public over the years, I have never performed in a recital. It generates a whole new level of anxiety. Just ask any eight-year-old who's done it. Plus, I would be the oldest person in this session. In fact, I bet I was older than any of the grandparents who tuned in to watch their granddaughters and grandsons perform.

That evening, student after student bravely performed what they had learned. There were guitarists, drummers and keyboardists. Each giving it their all. Then, it was my turn. My teacher introduced his father to everyone. I began playing "Blackbird."

And in those brief two minutes, everything awful about this crazy, messed-up year melted away. I had played "Blackbird."

Whew. Who could have predicted 52 years ago that it would take a pandemic to make this miracle happen? Who knew that I was only waiting for this moment

to arise? So, as a new year begins, may 2021 be filled with Blackbird miracles for all of us.

Gordon Berg is a descendent of Manistee's Bergs, Swansons and Martinsons. His debut book "Harry and the Hurricane" is about his father's life as a young boy and how he survived The Great Miami Hurricane of 1926. Ask for it in your local bookstore or go online to www.HarryandtheHurricane.com

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