

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

Vol III, No. 5

freshwater-reporter.com

May 19 - June 8, 2021 **FREE**

A Timeless Waltz with the Manistee River

By GORDON BERG

They say life is like a river. Rivers are always in motion, ever changing, always yearning for what's around the bend.

Rivers capture our imagination. They inspire and sustain us. We are baptized in them. We are said to cross over them when we pass to another life. We fish in them. We drink from them. We swim in them. We canoe them. We make memories with friends and loved ones by them. They can lull you to sleep as you dream about where life is going to take you, or help you ponder where it has already been.

Jay Stielstra is like a river. And his song, "Manistee Waltz," is arguably one of America's best river songs.

Jay grew up in Ludington, Michigan. He was into sports. Football. Basketball. He set records in high school track and field. Later, at the University of Michigan, he was even presented with an award by Olympic legend Jesse Owens. He coached high school football in Ann Arbor. He taught American History and Social Studies.

For some, a lifetime of those pursuits would have been fulfilling enough. Not Jay. His waters ran deeper.



Jay Stielstra and Judy Banker & Friends performing for the Stockbridge Summer Market Music Series in Stockbridge, Mich. L to R: Drew Howard, Jay Stielstra, Judy Banker and David Roof. Photo courtesy of JudyBanker.com

He had a keen interest in civil rights. He took summer classes at Spelman College, a distinguished black liberal arts institution in Atlanta. In the early 1960s, he was one of the first two instructors in Ann Arbor to create guidelines for teaching black history within that school system's American History curriculum. And, he taught the first-ever high school course in Ann Arbor about black history.

But like a river, Jay kept yearning for big water. He learned to play guitar. Just songs for his kids at first. His early efforts were slow and awkward. In time, it came more naturally. He found himself in a creative flow. He performed at festivals and venues around Michigan. He even recorded four CDs of his music with some of Michigan's finest musicians.

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State park 'Friends' step up

By GREG GIELCZYK

Everybody needs a friend, and the state parks are no exception.

That's why the nonprofit Friends of the Ludington State Park was formed in 1992.

A little more than two years ago, another nonprofit group was organized in support of the state park in Manistee. Its members call themselves Friends of Orchard Beach State Park.

The goal of area "Friends" organizations is to help state parks in ways they cannot help themselves. Volunteers step in and accomplish tasks the state sometimes cannot do in a timely manner, mainly due to budgetary constraints.



Chloe Kimes and Eli Perron perform at the Lake Michigan Beach House during Ludington State Park's 2019 summer program, made possible by Friends of Ludington State Park. Photo by Steve Begnoche.

Friends of the Ludington State Park, Ludington

"We just help get things done in a way, I guess," said Steve Begnoche, a charter board member of the 78-member Friends of Ludington State Park. "(We) just improve the park, improve the environment (and) make it a good experience for visitors"

Begnoche added that the state is capable, but there's a lot of work to be done.

"Like we tell people, it's a big, popular park," he said, explaining that the state is preparing to build more bathrooms at Ludington State Park. "When they do those two bathrooms this fall, that will blow their budget for the year.

"Other (smaller) projects can never make it up to the top of the list. All the big projects eat up all the money, so we help in those (smaller) ways."

Among the larger projects the Friends

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Kittens on the Lakeshore

Story and photos by P.G. MISTY SHEEHAN

I foster kittens for the Community Cats of Benzie County organization. So many kittens are born each year that have no home. I get them used to being around humans until they grow to two pounds, when they can be spayed and go to their forever homes.



Priscilla, a foster kitty, plays hide-and-seek.

The first kitten I fostered was an orange-and-white tabby named Butterscotch. He played in my house until he grew big enough to be spayed. Then he went to his forever home with his all-black brother, Licorice.

We talk now about cat colonies, in which several feral cats (those not used to being around human beings) will live near someone who puts out food for them. Some feral cats make their home near garbage cans, where they scavenge for scraps. That seems like a solution, but dangers exist too. They can acquire rabies, feline leukemia or feline immunodeficiency from other cats. Coyotes can eat them for breakfast. They can get hit by vehicles. I remember visiting a friend's farm and playing with a kitten there. When I came back outside later, the kitten had been run over. I held him while the light went out of his eyes.

Cats have been a part of farms since the Egyptians, who were said to worship them as gods. Cats have never forgotten that.

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Community Calendar

Some events may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules and COVID-19. Always call ahead. **Email your June calendar events or press releases by May 26** to: editor@freshwater-reporter.com. Or snail mail them to: Freshwater Reporter, P.O. Box 188, Manistee, MI, 49660.

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| <p>May
Thru 21 ComeOnComeOnComeOn – featuring local abstract artist Jef Bourgeau
Fridays 4-6pm, Saturdays 12-3pm, free. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee.
To register, go to: ramsdelltheatre.org</p> <p>Thru 23 Native Plant Preorders
AFFEW of Ludington is taking preorders for Garden & Single Species Flats. Preorders can be picked up at their Native Plant Sale on June 12.
For info, go to: www.affew.org</p> <p>Thru 28 Two Art Exhibits
May Laura Gajewski: Abandonings and Larry Pazol's A Splash of Color to Brighten the Spirit
Free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington</p> <p>Thru 3 Invasive Species: Garlic Mustard Dumpsters
Free dumpster provided to safely dispose of garlic mustard plants. Please double-bag all plants. Manistee Conservation District, 8840 Chippewa Hwy. (US-31), Bear Lake</p> <p>Thru 18 Art Exhibit: Ron Gianola, Cara O'Brien, Diane Zoellmer
Free, Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort</p> <p>19 Pop Can Drive to benefit Lake County 4-H
2-4:30pm, MSU Extension Office, in the back of the Baldwin Business Center, 830 Michigan Ave., Baldwin</p> <p>19 4-H Learning Kits for May
After 2pm, available at: Chase Township Library, Luther Area Public Library, Pathfinder Library, and NA-TAH-KA Corner Store in Irons. Kits for ages 5-10 will contain supplies for making terra cotta windchimes and wooden puzzles. Kits for ages 11-19 will contain a STEM surprise.</p> <p>19 AFFEW Beach Sweep
7-8pm, free, gloves and garbage bags provided. Join other volunteers to clean the beach and dunes west of the playground. Masks required until participants disperse. BYO green drinks for after the cleanup. No glass. Stearns Park, 420 N. Lakeshore Dr., Ludington</p> | <p>21 Manistee Star Party
9pm, Fifth Avenue Beach, Manistee. Check out celestial objects through a telescope or bring your own. Dress warmly. Hand sanitizer onsite. Hosted by Brooke Edwards, NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador.</p> <p>22 Butterfly Monitor Training
10am-12pm, Learn how to identify butterflies. Presented by Kalamazoo Nature Center. Online event open to all in Michigan. Local participation is encouraged in preparation for a planned butterfly count by the Arcadia Butterfly and Nature Group at the Arcadia Marsh this summer.
Register here: https://naturecenter.doubleknot.com/event/butterfly-monitor-training/2806390.</p> <p>22 Spring Big Cup
at Manistee Golf and Country Club, 500 Cherry St., Manistee. 9-10 am start, \$50/person, 18-hole scramble with a shotgun start
For more info, go to https://manisteegolfandcc.com or call the pro-shop 231.723.2509</p> <p>22 2021 #RunLudington Harbor Run 5k/10k
9am-12pm, \$30 includes a custom finisher's medal and a race T-shirt. Race packet pickup is at Waterfront Park Pavillion, Ludington.
Registration and course map at eventbrite.com</p> <p>22 Plant-a-Sapling
12 noon, free, North Point Park, 8999 Greenway, Onekama. Help make North Point Park a greener place by planting native saplings. For each one you help plant, you will get one to plant in your yard.
Registration appreciated, but not required, at parks@onekamatwp.org</p> <p>22-23 Craft & Vendor Fair
9-4, Nash Bros. Market, 2391 US-10, Custer, 25 local crafters and vendors. From Paparazzi to homemade goods. Email: e.c.stakenas@gmail.com to reserve a vendor/crafter booth.</p> <p>26 Pop Can Drive to benefit Lake County 4-H
2-4:30pm, MSU Extension Office, in the back of the Baldwin Business Center, 830 Michigan Ave., Baldwin</p> | <p>28 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jen Sygit
5:30pm, free, 841 Pioneer Rd., Beulah</p> <p>28 "Hollywood Who Dunit Murder Mystery" Dinner
\$55/person in advance, \$60/person at the door. Cash bar. The Portage Lake Association Annual Fundraiser. Portage Point Inn at the Resort, Portage Point Dr., Onekama. For more info and tickets, go to the PLA Facebook page or contact Kevin Wolverton 231.889.4281, kevin@alpinemotorlodge.com or Julie Lapinski 269.832.2392, julielapinski@gmail.com</p> <p>28 Live music at Iron Fish Distillery with Chris Sterr
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville</p> <p>29 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Ted Alan & Friends
2:30pm, free, 841 Pioneer Rd., Beulah</p> <p>29-31 Memorial Weekend at Crystal Mountain
Activities and events include: Crystal Cup 36-hole Ryder Cup format golf tournament, scenic chairlift rides, live music, family campfire, North Mitten Half Marathon, 5k, 10k, pool party, family movie. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
For more info, go to crystalmountain.com</p> <p>30 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jeff Bihlman
4:30pm, free, 841 Pioneer Rd., Beulah</p> <p>30 Blessing of the Drivers, Demo Derby and Bump n Run Races
5pm, \$10 grandstands, \$20 pit passes, children 5 and under free, Manistee County Fairgrounds, 7587 1st St., Onekama</p> <p>31 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with The Feral Cats
5:30pm, free, 841 Pioneer Rd., Beulah</p> <p>June
4-5 Art Exhibit: Ellen Nelson's "The Infinity Between Zero & One"
Tuesdays-Fridays 11am-4pm, free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Artist reception Friday, June 4 from 5-8pm.</p> | <p>5 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Delilah DeWyld
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville</p> <p>7 Honey Bee Market at St. Ambrose Cellars
1-7pm, free, featuring local vendors' art, crafts, food and more. 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah</p> <p>7 Weekly Junior Golf Clinic
4pm, Public event held every Monday through Aug. 30, Manistee Golf & Country Club, 500 Cherry St., Manistee.</p> <p>7-13 Frankfort-Elberta Restaurant Week
Special pricing at local restaurants</p> <p>11 Onekama Lions Club Community Dinner and Settlers & Shorelines Celebration
For more information about this and other upcoming events, visit onekama.info/onekama-onefifty</p> <p>12 Citizen's Sportsmen's Club of Fountain Annual Summer Fishing Tournament
Held during Free Fishing Weekend.
For info, go to their Facebook page.</p> <p>12 S.S. Badger Shoreline Cruise
8:30-11pm, \$42/person, children 4 & under are free. Cruise will sail rain or shine.
For more info and tickets, go to: ssbadger.com</p> <p>12-13 Free Fishing Weekend throughout Michigan
All fishing license fees will be waived for the weekend. All fishing rules and regulations still apply.</p> |
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Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy group ready to work at the Lower Woodcock Lake Trail. Photo courtesy of Stewart McFerran.

Lake trail sees improvements

By STEWART MCFERRAN

BENZIE COUNTY – A group of 14 met earlier this month at the Lower Woodcock Lake trailhead on Burnt Mill Road, west of Lake Ann. They used loppers, handsaws and rakes to clear the trail corridor. The group also built sections of boardwalk and installed signs along the new trail established last year.

The trail is slated to expand around the east side of the 22-acre lake as part of the Lower Woodcock Lake Nature Preserve,

which also includes a half-mile of Platte River frontage. Approximately 70% of the preserve is surrounded by state land.

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy curates outdoor experiences such as these for those seeking to do good things in Northern Michigan. Persons interested in joining others outdoors as volunteers may email Jon Throop: JThroop@GTRLC.org or call him at (231) 922-1259.

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'Sit' and 'Stay' at the Yellow Dog Café

Story by NIKKI SCHNEIDER. Photos by Pat Stinson.

Editor's note: I love good food and great coffee and finding new sources for both. While tooling around Onekama two years ago, I spotted a quaint storefront with a catchy name and cute sign. Inside, the aroma of fresh-brewed coffee bored straight into my brain's happy place and the sight of healthy wraps, quiches and baked treats shot me past the Moon to Mars. We asked writer Nikki to share the story of Yellow Dog Café and its talented owner with our readers.



Yellow Dog Café owner, baker and head barista Bonnie McPhedran is the third generation of her family involved in food service.



In a past life, while living in Chicago and “stuck” working in Corporate America, I befriended another misplaced soul. Who would guess that 24 years later we would each have a small business next door to each other in Northern Michigan?

I caught up with Bonnie McPhedran for a “chat” before she opened Yellow Dog Café for the season.

FR: Why did you relocate to this area from Chicago and choose Onekama as the place for your business?

YD: I wanted a smaller life. The idea of not needing as much stuff and living a simpler life was appealing. I had friends with property in the area and frequently visited. It is beautiful here and checks off many of my personal boxes, including great garage sales!

After looking at job opportunities for my skill set, I realized that I could provide something that, at the time, was missing from the area. I loved how the village of Onekama felt and knew that the potential for it to be a more thriving community was great, but it needed a start. The idea that people gather as community around food is intriguing. Opening a place where people could meet or hang out and chat with a good cup of coffee seemed a good place to start. I added a healthier version of food and internet as incentive for them to stay longer.

FR: Were you exposed to cooking and baking at a young age?

YD: I grew up in a food-centered

household. Both my grandmother and mother worked in food service and loved to bake. My grandmother was a beloved lunch lady at the high school, the mess hall cook for a Boy Scout camp, and later she prepared meals in a small Presbyterian elder home for ladies. My mother replaced my grandmother when she retired from the elder home. I have fond memories of preparing meals and baking together from a very early age.

FR: Does feeding people feed your soul?

YD: I love everything about feeding people. The planning, preparation, and experience is very fulfilling.

FR: Why did you choose Higher Grounds of Traverse City as your coffee roaster?

YD: Higher Grounds is a great roaster along with being socially responsible when sourcing coffee.

FR: Why did you choose Z&N Farms in Bear Lake for your produce?

YD: Supporting local community is very important to me, as well as eating food as close to where it is grown as possible.

FR: Do you provide organic or gluten-free menu items?

YD: I use as much organic as possible. I

try to have gluten-free, vegan, and dairy-free options in both sweet and savory categories.

FR: What made you decide to include an art gallery in the café?

YD: I wanted to give our community of artists a venue for their work and expose tourists to the diversity of the area. In my past life I had many creative outlets. I was an avid gardener, worked with textiles, did pottery and was a graphic designer for many years.

When I worked at Whole Foods my co-workers nicknamed me “Martha,” because I hosted a craft night once a month for them. Now I create in my kitchen through my baking and cooking.

FR: How did you choose the name Yellow Dog?

YD: Everybody here seems to have a dog. The dog (in the logo) is actually green, my favorite color.

Nikki: As it turns out, I am the friend who Bonnie came up to visit. I am grateful to her for paving the way for me in Onekama and convincing me to lease the space next door. She comes by my shop for fun junk, and I go by hers for great coffee.

Seems we have the perfect recipe for our friendship.

Nikki Schneider is co-owner of Patina, a resale gallery in Onekama offering the “found, flawed and fabulous.”

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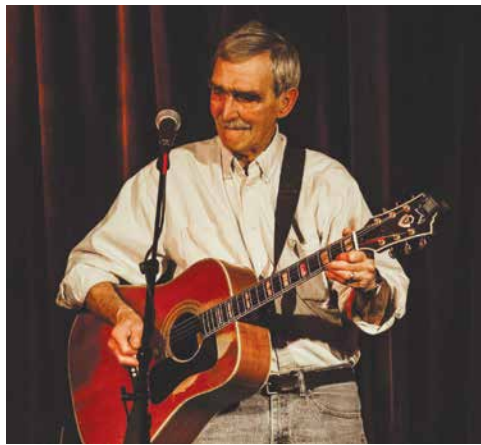
Timeless Waltz

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Still, the current carried him ever onward. He wrote a one-man musical for himself — “Old Man in Love”. He was only 55 at the time but played the part of a much older man with a lot to say. About women. About the beauty of the Great Lakes. About life’s joys and heartaches. Where he’d been and where he’s going.

His efforts didn’t go unnoticed. The Ann Arbor News awarded him Best Actor in 1993. The Washtenaw Council presented him with the prestigious Annie Award in 1995. It wasn’t until he achieved the age of his character (then 80, in real time) that he performed it for the last time.

Jay’s creative catalog is so significant that the State of Michigan presented him in 2017 with a legislative tribute at that most famous of U.S. folk music venues, The Ark, in Ann Arbor. The tribute honors his lifetime of “...countless artistic accomplishments and profound appreciation for the State of Michigan... His songs, musicals, and poems are timeless, reflecting a deep admiration for



Jay Stielstra at The Ark in Ann Arbor. Photo courtesy of Judy Banker.



Photo of Jay Stielstra (taken last fall) by Barbara Schmid.

the natural wonders of our great state and will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression well into the future.”

A life of song

“Boats Come into Ludington” is a song of Jay’s about young men who hear the siren song to work aboard ships on the inland seas. “Linebacker from Muskegon” is a poem about the kind of love that can heal even the greatest of generation gaps.

“Manistee Waltz” is a musical montage of fishing memories: some made with family, others with buddies, still others made simply by being immersed in the gentle beauty of Michigan’s north woods.

Throughout the song, the Manistee touches those memories with running waters that smooth the hard edges of stone, even when one of those memories is the loss of a good friend.

She flows, I know, when we’re thinking out loud
And she flows when nobody’s caring.

The Manistee River is a constant in our lives. Even when we’re far away or our lives are too busy, we can draw comfort from knowing her waters are always moving.

So, as we celebrate summer, show the Manistee some love. And the Pine, the Betsie and the Pere Marquette. Even the Muskegon and the White. Take a moment. Spend some time in, on, or by their waters. Like Jay, you might just make your own memories with them — some that will last a lifetime.

You can hear Jay’s recording of his “Manistee Waltz” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaRn5O1FWUY>

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

Manistee Waltz

By JAY STIELSTRA

Reprinted with the songwriter’s permission.

Will the whippoorwill call by the river tonight
And the big trout rise for the fly
Will old friends gather in the campfire light
As we have in the years gone by

Will we talk small as we always have done
And pretend to change not a thing
Will one of us there strum a guitar
Pick out a song and sing

*The Manistee River runs through Deward
And the Manistee runs through Sharon
She flows, I know, when we’re thinking out loud
And she flows when nobody’s caring*

Will she run clear as Stolichnaya
From Yellow Trees to the Ranch
Will the beer stay cold in the Mecum Bar
When the mayflies rise to dance

Will the weather be as unpredictable
And the fishing as well the same
Will we carry on as we’ve always done
And scarcely mention his name

*The Manistee River runs through Deward
And the Manistee runs through Sharon
She flows, I know, when we’re thinking out loud
And she flows when nobody’s caring*

Will a solitary mink hunt on her bank
And the coyote sing out tonight
Will bank beavers gather at their favorite holes
In the warm June’s late twilight

Will the Manistee River give us a nod
To tell us that she really knows
We’re weaker and fewer this year by one
And trying to not let it show

*The Manistee River runs through Deward
And the Manistee runs through Sharon
She flows, I know, when we’re thinking out loud
And she flows when nobody’s caring*

State Park

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Collage of proposed ADA accessible playground equipment to be installed by Friends of Orchard Beach State Park near the Shelter House at the state park in Manistee. Courtesy photo.

of Ludington State Park have tackled are the construction of a warming shelter at the park entrance and a handicapped accessible (not quite universal access) \$200,000-plus playground at the Hamlin Lake Beach.

“We’re getting ready to put in a universal-access kayak and canoe launch ... in June on Hamlin Lake,” Begnoche said. “It will be right near the playground.”

He said the organization also supports the summer programs held on Wednesday and Saturday nights, programming that the state used to bankroll, then pay half of (with the Friends paying the other half), before budget cuts.

“This year I think we have 20 programs planned, if COVID doesn’t cause us to cancel like it did last year,” he said. “We’re going to announce (the schedule) real soon. We’re just waiting on a few more (confirmations from) artists.”

The group has helped in other ways. It purchased a groomer for the park’s cross-country ski trails and equipment for the interpretive programs.

The Friends also help with the park’s lighted snowshoe hikes held every other Saturday night in winter. Volunteers line the trails with lanterns and host a couple of bonfires to roast marshmallows. (The pandemic nixed those events.) The group also provides volunteer assistance when and where needed.

Half the park’s summer programming is funded with can and bottle returns redeemed by Friends’ volunteers, with the other half generally coming from passing the bucket. Neither could be done last year, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Friends of Orchard Beach State Park, Manistee

Friends of Orchard Beach State Park was formed in January 2019 by current and former park employees, as well as retirees who relocated to Manistee.

“(We offer) that little additional manpower for help with programs or setting up things for the community,” Friends Vice President Edward Kolanowski said. “Just to be a support group.”

He added that the organization has about 10 active members who attend monthly meetings and approximately 140 members included in its mailing list.

The Friends sponsored a couple of lantern-lit snowshoe hikes in the winter of 2019-2020. When the pandemic hit, campground hours were reduced and the group’s ability to help was limited.

According to Kolanowski, the organization’s energies the last year have focused on constructing an ADA accessible playground to replace equipment that had deteriorated substantially through the years.

Now that the Shelter House is relocated from the eroding bluff to a secure spot



Mike Winczeski and MaryAnne Renier, members of the Friends of Ludington State Park, pick up trash along M-116. Photo courtesy of Steve Begnoche.

closer to Lakeshore Drive, a grand re-opening is planned. The Shelter House opened in 1947 for community events such as weddings and reunions.

“I see having the Shelter House moved to its new location as a good thing,” Kolanowski said. “It makes it more accessible to people who are challenged to climb up a hill.”

“Our plan is to have the playground built near to the Shelter House, so people can socialize together or just sit while the kids play.”

Future events under discussion for the Shelter House include game days and programs of interest, which formerly included talks on birding, local history and invasive species. The group is considering hosting a major event to celebrate the park’s 100th anniversary as part of the building’s grand re-opening.

Once an apple orchard in 1887, the land that is today’s state park was purchased by real estate broker George A. Hart who developed the acreage into a “model farm” where apples grew. Now, visitors camp where a dairy farm once stood. Hart sold the Lake Michigan waterfront



The Shelter House, pictured here on May 12 in its new location at Orchard Beach State Park. In progress are sidewalks and stairs. Photo by Pat Stinson.

property to the Manistee, Filer City and Eastlake Railway to be used as a park. The Manistee Board of Commerce bought the park in 1920, and it was later deeded to the newly formed state park system in 1921.

Greg Gielczyk was the sports editor at the Manistee News Advocate for over 30 years and currently writes about local sports for area media.

Birding in Spring

By BRIAN ALLEN

Getting up before dawn, I find the ground around the feeders is already attended by small societies of juncos and tree sparrows eating their breakfast before the Cooper's Hawk wakes up. It's been really cold and the ground is frosted, but cardinals are singing in the distance. The woodcock is finishing up his courtship flight, whistling high above the apple orchard.



Herring Gull. Photo by T. K. McLean, Pixabay

I head to Tippy Dam, hoping to find early migrants. They shelter there from the cold north wind, along steep banks that warm early in the morning sun. When I arrive it's still cold, 13 degrees, and the sun is just breaking over the hills. Hundreds of fishermen have beat me to their stations, gear already unloaded, wading in the stream and casting for steelhead.

A couple of years ago, about this time of year, my friend Doug Cook and I found a Say's Phoebe here. Say's Phoebe is a black, brown and peachy-colored bird normally found in New Mexico and Arizona. So, we were a bit astonished by finding it poking around the rocks at the foot of the dam. That week, dozens of birders from around the state would drive up to Tippy to share in the excitement of seeing this desert bird

that had migrated off a wrong compass.

It's a quiet morning. A lone Herring Gull is cruising up and down the river, perhaps hoping the fishermen leave a little treat from a catch, calling along the way and connecting the river with Lake Michigan by its seashore call. Around the bend, a Belted Kingfisher rattles in excitement over a prime nesting bank or a school of tasty-looking minnows in the clear water. I'm not finding much, seeing only my frosty breath and crystals of ice coating the unopened aspen buds. A small group of Golden-crowned Kinglets are searching the trees, too, calling "zee-zee-zeet" repeatedly. I'm always impressed that kinglets, only slightly larger than hummingbirds, can survive such cold weather. Researchers have found that they will sleep together in little groups, huddled up from the cold along a sheltered evergreen branch.

Looking over the backwaters, now completely ice free and steaming in the golden sunrise, I hear geese honking and see mergansers diving for their meals. Most of the ducks have headed north, with only a few Goldeneyes and Bufflehead reminding me of the wintering flocks. I head back to my car as some fishermen already leave for the day, loading their truck as a country music song blares. I guess they assume everyone here likes the song. I drive up the hill over to Sawdust Hole campground, where the sound of birds mingles with tinkling spoons of campers' breakfasts.



Baltimore Oriole. Photo by Mark Videan

Despite a low of about 10 degrees last night, there are several campers here and even a tent. These guys know how to enjoy the outdoors! Hiking down the hill to the riverside, I come out of the shadow of the hillside and into the wonderful warming sunshine. A pair of sky-blue Eastern Bluebirds are enjoying the sun too, the male singing its "cheerful charmer" song at the top of an ash snag. Distant Flickers and a Pileated Woodpecker are drumming in the spring down the valley, and mated pairs of geese are shattering the quiet with their panicked honking. I'm hoping to return here later in spring when the willows and aspens have produced their bright new green leaves, and more songbirds like the bright yellow-and-chestnut-striped Yellow Warblers are on territory.

This spring, like so many others, has been too warm and then too cold as the jet stream, tortured by a warming arctic, fluctuates wildly. As I write in early April, the trees and shrubs have started to bud a month too early. I'm perhaps one of the only people around that hopes this recent cool weather holds (well, probably the

orchard owners too), so the leaves are not grown out, making it harder for the migrant songbirds to find freshly emerging caterpillars.

We are right in the middle of spring now, with some great days behind us and hopefully a lot more to come. I'm looking forward to some more calm sunny mornings, perhaps at Magoon Creek, Lake Bluff, North Point Park in Onkama or Chamberlain Road in Arcadia. These parks and places can offer you the wonderful spectacle of sunshine, new green trees and the gems of recently arrived birds that have migrated here all the way from the tropics. The orioles, tanagers and warblers, with their rainbow colors and their chorus of mingled songs, will be here in May, and I hope that you too can enjoy them.

Brian Allen is a long-time birdwatcher and bird researcher based in Manistee County. Each spring he counts birds and bird species from Bear Lake to Wellston as a volunteer with the U.S. Geological survey. Reach him at manisteebirder@gmail.com

High Bridge: How high was it?

By MILTON F. WHITMORE

Driving on High Bridge Road in Manistee County, south of Brethren, you come to the Big Manistee River. The roadway spans the width of the stream over the High Bridge. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to quickly determine that the bridge is not high above the river, and you might ponder why the span was given such a seemingly inappropriate name. The road is even called High Bridge Road, which seems to double down on the odd name.

Did some long-forgotten road commissioner, suffering from acute acrophobia, name the structure? Perhaps delusions of grandeur played a role in the designation. To understand the apparent dilemma, you must go back to the pre-1955 years and visualize what was in that location.

From a position on the north end of the present-day High Bridge, look upstream to a point about a half-mile to the east.

You can see the brow of a slope that drops steeply downward toward the river, directly below. Now comes the hard part. Visualize, if you can, a long, high railroad trestle that spanned the Big Manistee River from this point, due south, to the far bank — now hidden by trees.

In the latter part of the 19th century the U.S. lacked a viable road network to carry goods, merchandise and people from one place to another, except in and near larger cities. Railroads were the main mode of transportation. Small towns with railroads quickly sprouted and, if they were at the junction of two or more rail lines, they held potential for greatly expanded growth.

Today's communities of Baldwin, Copemish, Thompsonville and Mesick were seen to be on the fast track, so-to-speak, for rapid growth. The hurdles of terrain, and especially rivers, could be engineered to carry track. In the case of rivers, bridge

spans — with trestle-style construction — were the key to carrying heavily laden rail cars safely over these waterways.

In the late 1880s, a 100-foot-high by 1,200-foot-long iron truss railroad bridge, called High Bridge, was constructed by the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad across the Big Manistee River. The Wisconsin Bridge Company was the construction agency and work was completed in 1889. The bridge was used primarily for the then-Pere Marquette Railroad and later Manistee and Northeastern Railroad. This

continued on page 8

High Bridge railroad trestle, circa? Photo courtesy of Manistee County Historical Museum.





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Big Month for Big Science

By BROOKE EDWARDS

On April 23, the International Space Station passed over the Florida coast. Just over a half hour later, the SpaceX Crew Dragon Endeavor launched on top of a Falcon 9 rocket to catch up with it. On board were NASA astronauts Megan McArthur and Shane Kimbrough, as well as European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Pesquet and Akihiko Hoshide of the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency.

In addition to interesting science, this mission brought us a true space romance story. Last May, Bob Behnken piloted the same Crew Dragon Endeavor on its first flight: the Demo-2 mission. Although not Behnken's first spaceflight, this was the first launch of astronauts from American soil in almost 10 years, since the end of NASA's shuttle program. Before launch, Behnken and his crewmate Doug Hurley said goodbye to their wives and sons. In a romantic twist, "space dad"



This illustration depicts helicopter Ingenuity during a test flight on Mars. JPL/NASA photo.

Behnken just happens to be the husband of astronaut Megan McArthur, whose turn it was to say goodbye to him before her launch last month. Now Behnken is on the other end of this couple's cosmic long-distance relationship.

McArthur and her crew (known as Expedition 65) will be on the International Space Station for about six months, taking part in research that will help us on Earth and also with humanity's expansion into space. One of the crew's duties is to update the solar-powered system with a roll-out solar array. Their focus, however, will be continuing studies, begun by earlier crews, on a project called Tissue Chips in Space. An explanation on the NASA website states:

Tissue chips are small models of human organs containing multiple cell types that behave much the same as they do in the body. These chips may make it possible to identify safe and effective therapeutics – drugs or vaccines – much more quickly than the standard process. In addition, many changes occurring in the human body during spaceflight resemble the onset and progression of aging and diseases on Earth but occur much more quickly in microgravity. Scientists use specialized tissue chips in space to model

diseases that affect specific organs in the human body but that might take months or years to develop on Earth.

It was in the weeks following the Crew-2 launch that long-awaited news broke in another area of human space exploration.

The Perseverance Rover (affectionately known as Percy by space enthusiasts) that landed on Mars last year recently reached two major goals. A mini robotic helicopter on the rover, known as Ingenuity, achieved the first powered flight of an aircraft on another planet. The atmosphere of Mars is about 100 times thinner than Earth's, making powered flight there challenging. Many scientists doubted there would be enough "air" to achieve the required lift to fly. Nine years of research, building and testing by NASA's Ingenuity team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California were rewarded. On April 19, the rotorcraft made its first 39.1-second flight. The ability to survey the Martian surface from above will be a huge advantage for future exploration.

Adding to the excitement, an experimental device known as MOXIE (Mars Oxygen ISRU Experiment) on board Perseverance converted carbon dioxide from the



Ingenuity, a mini helicopter, traveled to Mars on the Perseverance Rover and is pictured about to make the first powered flight on another world. NASA photo.



Crew-2 astronauts strike a pose during training. SpaceX/NASA photo.

Martian atmosphere into oxygen. Oxygen is essential for any manned missions to Mars, both for breathing and spacecraft fuel. Producing oxygen on Mars will reduce the amount of oxygen future missions will need to transport from Earth. These accomplishments are major advancements in the goal of getting humans to Mars in the coming years.

Brooke Edwards is a NASA/JPL (Jet Propulsion Lab) Solar System Ambassador. She will host the season's first Star Party on May 21 at Fifth Street Beach in Manistee. Follow her on Facebook: @BrookeEdwardsSolarSystemAmbassador.

Kittens

continued from page 1

Trap-Neuter-Release

The organizations listed far below attempt to eliminate the failure of humans to take full responsibility for the animals they domesticated thousands of years ago. Neutering these cats can keep the size of a cat colony down, which also benefits humans who can catch diseases or infections (notably rabies and CSD, cat scratch disease) from them when bitten or scratched.

TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Return. TNR organizations do just that. Two years ago when we had two and-a-half feet of snow, I was going through McDonalds in Benzonia and saw two kittens in the snow. The people at McDonalds had been feeding them kitchen scraps. I tried to catch them, but they were too wary. I called the Frankfort TNR organization and they came out with live traps and trapped them. Once neutered, they could be sent back to the area or relocated, but they could not breed.

Cats get rid of mice and rats on farms, which is useful. But now our environment is more urban and suburban, and many so-called barn cats have transitioned into being highly social lap cats, the center of a family. Even so, feral cats still exist, living in continual predator-prey mode — predator when stalking mice and birds, potential prey when larger animals or humans approach them. Constantly in danger of a violent death, feral cats live a life that is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," as philosopher Thomas Hobbes said. And they continue to have kittens, which in turn have kittens, which in turn have kittens. Today 69 million stray and feral cats wander the globe. It is now May, when the first litters of kittens are born, followed by another and another through September.

Four organizations up and down Lake Michigan address the problem.

Community Cats TNR, Ludington

PO Box 384
Ludington, MI 49431
communitycatstnr.org
231 845-7888
Find on Facebook: communitycatstnr

Since 2012, when the organization began, it has neutered 1,050 cats in Mason County. They trap free-roaming cats, have local vets look at them, check for worms, fleas, and earmites, then neuter them. The cats are marked with a cut on their left ear, then they are returned to where they were found. This is classic Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). They have a long list of caregivers, people who assist free-roaming cats. They work with two local veterinarians: Country Veterinary Clinic, between Ludington and Scottville, and the Animal Hospital of Ludington.

The Munchkins Mission, Kaleva

PO Box 764
Suttons Bay, MI 49682
Find on Facebook
themunchkinsmission@gmail.com

Andrea Slater of Kaleva also uses Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as her motto for her 501(c)3 organization. She said that cats can have as many as three litters a year. She set up a go-fund-me page for neutering kittens. Otherwise, she can spend \$400 a month for food, vet bills and litter. She would like people to make a good home for cats and kittens that she has neutered.

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Foster kitty Kibbles gets ready to play.

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A Pass on FishPass?

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN

In 2016 when the Great Lakes Fishery Commission was conceiving of and planning for the FishPass project, they considered 12 sites within the Great Lakes region. They narrowed it to six rivers and then decided on the 28-mile-long Ottawa River, renamed for Captain Boardman. The Boardman River winds its way through downtown Traverse City.

Scott Heintzelman, Michigan DNR Fisheries Unit Manager, recalled the selection process.

"I was involved in some of those site visits," he said. "The Little Manistee (River) was seriously considered."

"The weir site (on the Little Manistee is) where we want fish passage, and we want to stop lamprey. The core mission of the project (if relocated from the Boardman to the Little Manistee) would be the same. We do have a lot of people that like to visit the weir. It has some of that outreach and education component. That's why (the Little Manistee) was ranked pretty high."

GLFC found some support from the City of Traverse City for the \$19 million research facility on the Boardman. In theory, FishPass would sort fish — allowing some to pass and stopping others. But the support was far from unanimous. Public meetings were held, and there were questions regarding which fish would be allowed to pass upstream. There was vocal opposition to FishPass from a certain school of fishers and city residents at a 2019 public meeting held at the Traverse Area District Library.

Trees in the park were recently marked to be cut next to the Union Street Dam. In the plan, the FishPass facility would be built on parkland in the shadow of new downtown Traverse City condos. Contractors were revving up their bulldozers this spring when city resident Rick Buckhalter filed a lawsuit asking that Traverse City residents

have a chance to vote on FishPass. He argued that a research facility is not a normal use of park land. According to the Traverse City Charter, residents must vote on such questions.

Why FishPass?

The promise of the FishPass facility is ecological connectivity. The need for this is real and widespread wherever there are rivers with dams. Fish and many other creatures that dwell in the riverine environment pass upstream and downstream to the safety of estuaries. With the seasons, on currents, on flotsam and jetsam, they breed and come in productive ways that have historically resulted in teeming fish populations in the Great Lakes.

The FishPass project proposes to use technology to return the watershed to that bountiful state, by allowing fish to bypass dams. In the Great Lakes Echo, Dr. Marc Gaden, GLFC communications director, shared his opinion.

"I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say I think this could help solve a global problem."

The Little Manistee River is more than 60 miles long, with a watershed larger than the Boardman River. As one of the six rivers that met the GLFC criteria, it was a top contender for FishPass.

Steelhead are harvested in spring and Coho in the fall at the Little Manistee River. Ponds at the weir hold the fish for imprinting



Dam at the fish weir on the Little Manistee River, Stronach Twp. Photo by Mark Videan.



A concrete fish ladder at the Little Manistee River fish weir, next to the dam. During spring and fall salmon runs, the fish ascend the steps to holding ponds where eggs are gathered and fry are raised. Photo by Mark Videan.

(raising them in a water-controlled system), before they're released. The fish weir in rural Stronach Township has at least one advantage over the downtown Traverse City location. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, a FishPass partner, operates a fish-take facility there.

Yet, the lure of Traverse City is strong. During years of project planning, engineers, planners and fisheries' experts worked in that popular city. Dr. Daniel Zielinski, the "Principal," has nailed down every detail of the plan — except for land use in the Traverse City park. Judge Power recently ruled that a three-fifths majority of Traverse City residents must vote to allow the FishPass facility in the city park on the Boardman River.

GLFC may appeal this decision. Gaden said, "We were disappointed. There are options, like I said ... we are not deterred... everybody knows this is needed... so we will consider the options and chart a path forward."

Heintzelman took a different tack.

"I don't think anyone is going to speculate on what the next move might be if it does change, and it doesn't happen in Traverse City," he said. "I don't know if they will revisit that list and look at some of those other sites that were high on the list, or if they will abandon the project."

Traverse City residents may reject

FishPass. If they do, the GLFC and the DNR could revisit the Stronach Township weir, where the research could take place and an outreach program could be established.

"There are a lot of people that enjoy going down to the (Little Manistee) weir now and being able to see fish and see the work that goes on there, the fisheries management-type work," Heintzelman said.

Stewart A. McFerran has followed the restoration work on the Ottawa (Boardman) River for many years. He has written several articles on the dam removal projects there and conducted an interview with the son of the Brown Bridge Dam keeper Farris Glass. He also interviewed Jack Robbins, who lives next to the site of the former Boardman River Dam on Cass Road. To read his accounts, go to the Grand Traverse Journal online at:

<https://gtjournal.tadl.org/2017/jack-robbins-and-the-tortured-landscape-of-the-boardman-river-valley/>

<https://gtjournal.tadl.org/2016/damsfail/>

<https://gtjournal.tadl.org/2018/restoring-fish-populations-on-the-boardman-1920-to-the-present/>

Mail Call in Onekama

By ROSALIND JAFFE

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of Onekama's post office. The story of mail delivery in the area is one of strong backs, swift paws and heavy hooves.

Before 1855, mail heading to northwest Michigan came from Grand Haven, the nearest post office, then by ship to Manistee. The mail was given to any ship that might be coming this way, and occasionally letters made detours to Milwaukee before landing in Manistee. When navigation closed in the fall, no mail was sent until spring.

By 1855, mail arrived weekly in Manistee by an overland route. There were almost no permanent settlers before the mid-1850s around Portage Lake, but transient workers could pick up their letters on Manistee trips.

As part of the establishment of the Traverse City post office, Joe (or Jake) To-pe-sah was given the contract to carry mail from Manistee to Traverse City for \$400 a year. He carried the mail on his back once a week and walked along Lake Michigan to Portage Creek, where the Portage Lake Mill was located. After



Birds Eye View of Onekama Village - date unknown. Photograph from the photo and card collection of Mary Kuipers.



Kuth Drug Store, 1935. Photograph from the photo and card collection of Mary Kuipers.

dropping mail at the mill, he continued north around the lake, and then northeast to Traverse City. The trail he blazed basically became the route U.S. Highway 31 travels today.

In later years, mail was carried by sledges driven by dogs and then by ponies carrying mailbags on their backs. By 1868, a village had sprung up around the mill property at Portage Creek and around Portage

Lake. Mail was arriving daily in Manistee by 1870 and then carried by horseback once a week to Portage by Billy Scott, who carried the mail for many decades.

On May 8, 1871, the first post office was established at the little mill village along Portage Creek. The postal authorities requested not to use "Portage" as the town name, as there were already Portages in both Michigan's lower and upper peninsulas. Because the lake had been referred to as "O-nek-a-ma" as early as the 1840s, the name chosen for the village was Onekama. ("Ona-ga-maa" was an Anishinaabe word said to mean

"singing water.")

Augustine W. Farr was appointed postmaster. He was also the manager of the Porter & Company mill, which manufactured lath and shingles. The first post office was located in the Porter & Company store by Portage Creek. After the Chicago mill owners sold the mill to A.W. Farr, the store was renamed the Farr & Company store and was moved across the ice in the winter of 1879-1880 to what is now the Onekama Village Park. The post office moved with the Farr & Company store.

Over the decades, the post office changed location multiple times, from the Krahe Drugstore to Wendel's Hardware Store to the Burmeister General Store and the Maccabee Building. It finally migrated up Mill Street to its present location.

Special thanks to the Manistee County Historical Museum and its collection of Elsket Chaney materials.

Rosalind Jaffe is the event facilitator for OneKama, OneFifty programming, which kicks off June 11 with the Onekama Lions Club Community Dinner and Settlers & Shorelines Celebration. For more information about upcoming events, visit onekama.info/onekama-onefifty.



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Kittens

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Spay Neuter Action Group (SNAG)

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SNAG takes dogs as well as cats. Kristie Harless said they trap and neuter both and that, as a result of their TNR program, she notices fewer stray cats along the Riverwalk in downtown Manistee. The organization has a voucher program. If someone cannot pay to get their pet or feral animals spayed, SNAG will send a voucher for part of the cost of spaying their animal(s). Vouchers are accepted at Manistee Veterinary Hospital and Parkdale Animal Hospital, both in Manistee, and Irons Animal Hospital in Lake County. It costs \$30-35 to spay a female cat, less for a male cat; \$25-\$50 or \$60 for a dog, depending on the size.

If you call about feral animals, volunteers will come out and trap them, neuter them, then return them to the locale. They raised \$6,500 this year through donations, personal funding and grants, and can use donations any time.

Kristie gave me a hint about keeping feral cats comfortable in winter. Build a shelter for feral cats by cutting a hole just big enough for a cat in a styroform

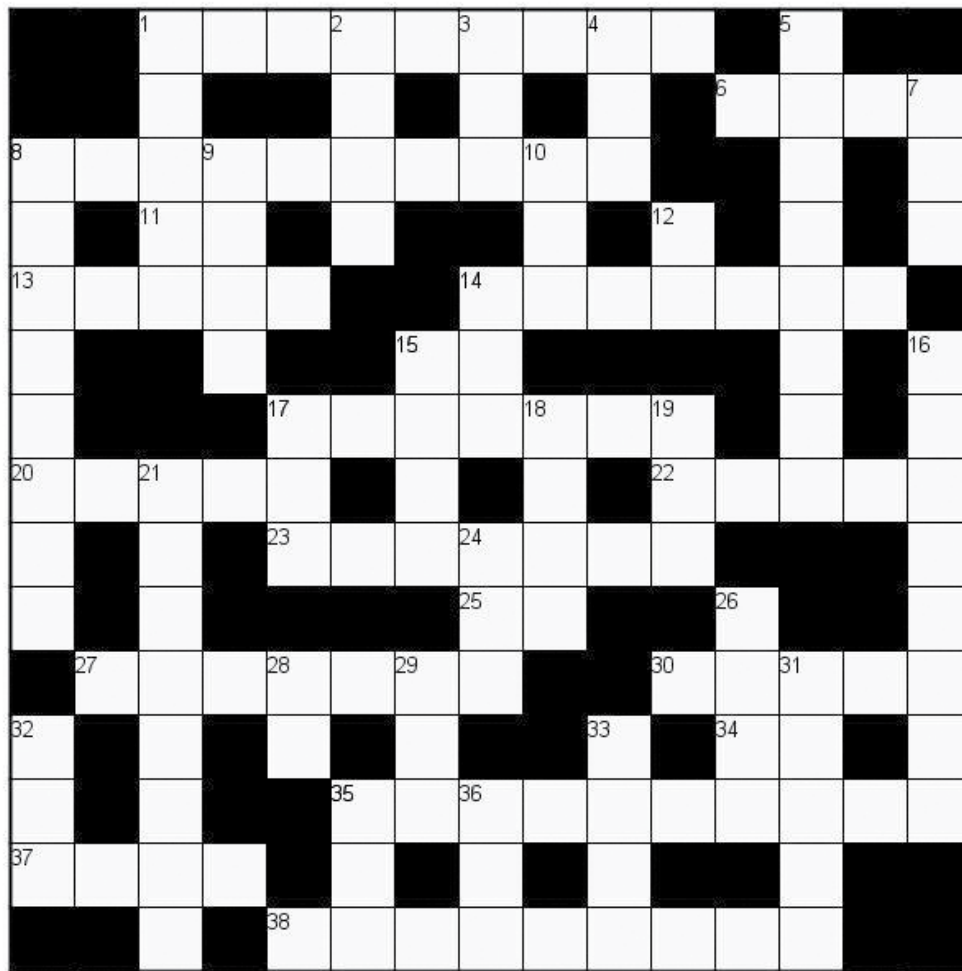
container, lay straw in the bottom (no blanket, as it will get wet and freeze), then wrap this shelter in a plastic garbage bag (leaving the hole open, of course). This can save a cat's life.

Community Cats of Benzie County

801 Main Street, Frankfort, MI 49635
(231) 383-3639

info@benziecats.org, benziecats.org
Carol McKee, a retired veterinarian, founded this organization in 2016. Inside the surgery room of their building is a new \$8,200 anesthesia machine funded by donations. CC Benzie's mission is to lower the homeless cat population in Benzie County. The organization finds new homes for cats it has neutered or returns them to the same environment, if they are feral. Help is given to caregivers of cat colonies, if, in return, caregivers agree to care for the cats daily and provide a minimal standard of care for them. Once kittens are neutered, their photos and information are placed online on an adoption page. CC Benzie has been quite successful in finding homes for them.

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



THE MERRY MERRY MONTH

By MARK VIDEAN

ACROSS

- 1 Podophyllum peltatum, commonly known as wild mandrakes or ground lemons
- 6 "I'll have the turkey sandwich, hold the _____."
- 8 Chuck Berry's first hit single
- 13 Triangular road sign
- 14 Dance around the _____
- 15 Male pronoun
- 17 Vocal distress signals used by aviators and mariners
- 20 Moscow money
- 22 Famed writer of fables
- 23 Spider Man's father's brother's wife
- 25 Exists
- 27 German beverage made with white wine and sweet woodruff
- 30 Beaujolais nouveau grape
- 34 Los Angeles, for short
- 35 Not disheartened
- 37 Once around the sun
- 38 Pilgrim ship

DOWN

- 1 Perhaps
- 2 Up to the task
- 3 "The Raven" poet
- 4 Center of a hurricane
- 5 Short-lived adults, hatching in swarms, are loved by trout
- 7 Nocturnal bird of prey
- 8 Barney Fife lived here
- 9 Asteroid _____
- 10 Intel org.
- 12 Skyward
- 14 T-shirt size, Abbr.
- 15 Song sung on Sunday
- 16 Arranged troops strategically
- 17 _____ culpa
- 18 Prepares to shoot
- 19 "_____. cheese"
- 21 Doctor of astrophysics, lead guitarist of Queen
- 24 Make a knot
- 26 Big to-do
- 28 Us
- 29 Trent Reznor's band, Abbr.
- 31 Elected head of a town
- 32 Theme of this puzzle
- 33 Norway's capital
- 35 A, in Spanish
- 36 _____ Leppard

High Bridge

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was the highest rail bridge in Michigan at the time.

My father, Arthur Whitmore, told the story of how he and his cousin, Fred Swart, hopped a freight train in Grand Rapids, Michigan and rode it northward to Traverse City. This was during the Great Depression and their intent was to go north and get jobs picking cherries. They were teenagers at the time and even back then teenaged boys would be, well, teenaged boys. They weren't the only rail runners on board, as several others, mainly adult men, were also heading north on a free ride.

It seemed to my Dad and Fred that the keenest way to ride was atop a boxcar. All went well for a short time, until they learned that from the smokestack of a coal-burning train engine there comes more than just black smoke. The smoke also contained hot coal cinders. The train made a quick stop in Sparta, Michigan, just north of Grand Rapids. The boys made a change in their travel accommodations, into an open boxcar, where they joined their fellow travelers who were much more experienced, if not smarter.

Their route took them roughly parallel to today's M-37 — through Kent City, Newaygo, White Cloud and Baldwin — before the railway swung more to the northwest, eventually leading to the High Bridge crossing of the Big Manistee River.

As the long line of cars, pulled by a stout and vigorous steam engine, began to cross the river, the train slowed to lessen the strain of the long line of rail cars on the bridge's structure. Looking out the open door of the boxcar, as related to me by my father, the boys were impressed — and also cautious — about the view presented by their position high above the Big Manistee River. I'm sure that they took several deep gulps.

As a young lad, while on a week's vacation with my family on Lake Mitchell outside Cadillac, I saw that most-impressive high railroad trestle from the present-day area of the High Bridge Highway. It was a sight, I must tell you.

After nearly seven decades of use, the bridge was torn down in 1955. The foundations and a few pilings are the sole remnants of the once-magnificent structure. I am pleased that it sits back there in my personal memory banks, and I hearken back to it and smile in awe of that wonderful span on the Pere Marquette Railroad as it crossed the Big Manistee River.

Milton Whitmore lives in the Arcadia area with his wife Mary Grace and their four-legged canine companion. He taught middle school science and math in Onkama until his retirement. He is active with the Arcadia Lions Club and Arcadia Area Historical Society.

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P.O. Box 188, Manistee, MI 49660 231-835-0867 editor@freshwater-reporter.com
 Publisher/Editor: Pat Stinson Co-conspirator: Mark Videan
 Graphic design/layout: Amy Hansen Advertising Sales: Stewart McFerran
 Contributors: Brian Allen, Gordon Berg, Brooke Edwards, Greg Gielczyk, Rosalind Jaffe, Stewart McFerran, T.K. McLean, Barbara Schmid, Nikki Schneider, P.G. Misty Sheehan, Milton Whitmore.

Freshwater Reporter is published by Freshwater Planet LLC of Manistee. Free copies are distributed throughout Manistee and Mason counties. Advertising inquiries are welcome, as are suggestions, articles, poems and photos. ©2021, Freshwater Planet, LLC, all rights reserved. Visit our website at www.freshwater-reporter.com. Like us on Facebook.

