

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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Aug. 25 - Sept. 7, 2021

FREE

Backroads and Beaches



Story and photos by **KEVIN HOWELL**

Standing near the small boat ramp at Victory Park on Upper Hamlin Lake, my navigator Jean and I watched as a pontoon loaded with people drifted by. The 'toon slowly made its way to a tie-up near a picnic pavilion and swings.

"The kids wanted to swing, and the dog needed a break," a woman on the boat told Jean, as the crew climbed ashore.

Victory Park on Hamlin Lake

Victory Park is near grassy headlands at Upper Hamlin Lake's east end and is accessed by land along dirt roads winding through meadows and wooded hillsides. It's one of several small parks, put-ins and beaches we were "backroad" to find.

The boaters were the Sutphen family from Owosso. Mrs. Sutphen and her husband raised four boys, who were all Boy Scouts. Victory Park has a nice trail system developed by scouts that climbs ravines and hillsides overlooking the lake.

The park also has a well-tended veterans' memorial high on a bluff. The Sutphens found the park during the initial days of



George Schwartz windsurfs to shore at Duneview, a stop on the writer's drive.

the pandemic.

"After the Covid hit, we were vacationing and searched out parks where there weren't many people," Mrs. Sutphen told me. "We liked it because of the scouting association and its relative isolation from crowds."

Victory Park was the first stop on the second half of Jean's and my backroad endeavor. A few days earlier we had begun our trek along Lake Michigan's coast, north of Ludington.

continued on page 6

'Good berries' grow wild in Hamlin Lake

By **STEWART A. MCFERRAN**

"Old man turtle ambles along the deerpath, seeking breakfast. A strand of wild rice grass dangles from his pincer-like beak." Edward Abbey, "Hayduke Lives!"



Wayne Andersen, president of the Hamlin Lake Preservation Society, ready for a paddle to the manoomin bed on the northeast arm of Hamlin Lake. Photo by Stewart A. McFerran.

Chewy, nutty, and nutritious when cooked, wild rice is sought after for its texture, flavor and heartiness. Traditionally, wild rice growing in lake beds is harvested by Native Americans in late August and early September. In fact, the Menominee Tribe of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and elsewhere was named after "manoomin," the native word for the wild rice growing there.

First peoples living in the Upper Midwest use canoes or slow-moving boats to approach wild rice stands. They carry short sticks to gently prod the plants, dislodging the seeds (rice). Some land in the water to reseed next season, and some fall in their watercraft to be prepared and eaten later or stored.

In Mason County, a large stand of wild rice growing in Hamlin Lake is managed by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI). The stand attracts birds and piques the curiosity of area visitors.

Wild rice history

There are a lot of "ists," such as botanists, conservationists and geneticists, who

continued on page 8

Area Events

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

AUGUST

Thru **More or Less. VanWyck:**

Aug **Generations of Creative Expression**

27 Showcase of works by one family. Prints, paintings, sculptures, mixed-media, photography and writing. Free (donations gladly accepted), Main Gallery, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Opening reception 5-8pm, Aug. 6

Thru **My Backyard: Paintings by**

Aug **Judy Peters**

27 Artworks in watercolor, acrylic, collage and mixed-media showcasing the natural beauty of Hamlin Lake and the Nordhouse Wilderness area. Free (donations gladly accepted), Performance Hall Gallery, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Opening reception 5-8pm, Aug. 6

Thru **Small Works, Big Impact**

Aug **community collage project**

28 Sale of 200 6"x6" donated canvases done by local artists to benefit Art Center operations impacted by Covid-19. Finished canvases may be purchased for \$40/each. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort. Available for purchase at oliverartcenterfrankfort.org

Thru **Professors of NMU Visual Arts**

Sept **Department Art Exhibit**

10 10am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, free, Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort. Featuring the work of Taimur Amin Cleary, Brian Kakas, Christine Lenzen, Michael Letts, and Jason Schneider

Thru **Celebrating the Art of Ken Cooper:**

Sept **A Fifty Year Retrospective**

15 12-5pm Tues-Sat, opening reception 6-8pm Aug. 6, free, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee

25 **Classic Film Series: "Victor, Victoria" (1982)**

10am, \$2, The Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee

25 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**

5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

25 **Summer Music Series with Guitar Group**

6-8pm, free, Purchase Pavilion, 301 N. State St., Luther

25 **LACA Summer Concert Series with U'Neek Soul**

7-9pm, free, Waterfront Park 300 W. William St., Ludington

25 **Echo Through the Timber with the Headwinds Blues Project**

7-9:15pm, free, donations gladly accepted. Wenger Pavilion, downtown Baldwin

26 **Elberta Farmers Market**

8am-noon, Waterfront Park, Furnace St., Elberta

26 **First Person Story and Songs: "Jammin' at the Old Kirke" with The Old Kirke Band & Friends**

10am, free, Old Kirke Museum 304 Walnut St., Manistee

continued on page 2

Community Calendar

Some events may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules or COVID-19. Always call ahead. **Email your September calendar events or press releases by September 1 to:** editor@freshwater-reporter.com. Or snail mail them to: Freshwater Reporter, P.O. Box 188, Manistee, MI, 49660.

Our online calendar is continuously updated at freshwater-reporter.com/calendar-2

continued from page 1

AUGUST

- 26 Music Live in the Plaza with Nick Veine**
5-8PM, free, Legacy Plaza, 112 N. James St., Ludington
- 26 Autumn Olive Community Workshop**
5:30-7:30pm, Orchard Beach State Park, Lakeshore Drive, Manistee. I.D. invasive autumn olive & learn removal methods. To register: ecook@gtcd.org Presented by the NW MI Invasive Species Network.
- 26 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Wink**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 26 Live Music with The Accidentals**
7pm, free, Downtown Beulah (not in the park)
- 26 Sunset Beach Bonfire with Sunset Groove**
8pm, free, Stearns Beach Park, Stearns Outer Dr., Ludington
- 27- Forest Trail Music Festival**
29 \$50/person full weekend, \$20/person single day. \$10/12 and under-weekend admission includes overnight camping. Over 20 bands/performers. 352 W. Forest Trail Rd., Freesoil
For info, tickets and band lineup, go to foresttrailmusic.com
- 27- West Michigan Boat, RV, Outdoor & Home Show**
29 9am-5pm, free. Live music. Food & beverages will be available for purchase. Ludington Municipal Marina, 400 W. Filer St., Ludington
- 27 Music Live in the Plaza with Road Less Traveled**
3-6PM, free, Legacy Plaza, 112 N. James St., Ludington
- 27 Ludington Farmers Market**
3-7pm, N. James St. Legacy Plaza, Ludington
- 27 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Keith Scott Blues**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 27 Music Live in the Plaza with Eric Engblade Band**
6-9PM, free, Legacy Plaza, 112 N. James St., Ludington
- 27 Live Music at the Brewery with the Michigan Mafia String Band**
6-9pm, free, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington. Enjoy Rockinacousticbluesgrass. The street will be shut down outside the Bay. Bring a chair.
- 27 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Blair Miller**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 27 Log Cabin Concerts with Awesome Distraction**
7pm, free, donations gladly accepted, Log Cabin Theater at the corner of Walta & Panu Sts., Kaleva. Bring a lawn chair.
- 27 Live music at Northern Natural Cider House & Winery with Fauxgrass**
7-10pm, free, 7220 Chief Road, Kaleva
- 27 Live Music at Portage Point Resort with Soulpatch**
On the deck. 7-11pm, free, 8567 Portage Point Dr., Onkama
- 27 S'Wonderful: an Evening of Gershwin featuring Karen Curlee**
7:30pm, \$12-20, \$10 for 18 and under, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 28 Big Bear Butt Cruise**
Big Bear Sportsman's Club's Annual Bike Ride through Benzie and Manistee Counties Registration fee \$65/person includes breakfast and dinner on race day, T-shirt, campsite. Four rides available: 70, 130, 170, 210 kilometers. All rides start and end at 8927 Puustinen Rd., Kaleva. For schedule, route maps, registration and details, go to bigbearbuttcruise.com

- 28 Family Fun Car Show and Cruise**
9am, Admission is a donation to the VFW Nation Home for Children and Camp Trotter or a nonperishable food item for our local food banks. Silent auction, 50/50 raffle, games, and music. Food & beverages will be available for purchase. Custer VFW Post, 5096-2022 E. State St., Custer
- 28 Manistee Farmers Market**
9am-12pm, parking lot on the corner of Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 28 Pine Forest Freedom Market**
9am-4pm, free to attend, \$6/space to sell. Crafters, bakers, makers, food trucks, etc. Pine Forest Campground, 10169 M-37, Irons. For more info, call 231.742.6934.
- 28 Downtown Scottville Farmers Market**
10am-2pm, sidewalks of Main St., Scottville
- 28 Backpack Giveaway by Mike & Debbie Shaw**
12-3pm, The Shaws will be giving away backpacks and school supplies at West Shore Bank, 107 W. State St., Scottville
- 28 Music on Bear Lake with The Real Ingredients**
1-4pm, free, Bear Lake
- 28 Michigan Reptiles & Amphibians Presentation**
at Ludington State Park. 2-5pm live display, 7pm program, free, Lake Michigan Beachhouse, 8800 M-116, Ludington
- 28 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Ted Alan**
from 2:30-5pm, **Delilah DeWyde** from 5:30-6:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 28 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Steve Leaf**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 28 Sounds from the Forest with U'Neek Soul**
7-9:15pm, free, donations gladly accepted. Wenger Pavilion, downtown Baldwin
- 28 Live music at Northern Natural Cider House & Winery with Peter Madcat Ruth & The C.A.R.M.A. Quartet**
7-10pm, free, 7220 Chief Road, Kaleva
- 29 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Keith Scott**
3:30-5:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 29 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Chelsea Marsh**
4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 30 Honey Bee Market**
1-7pm, free. Numerous arts, crafts, and other goodies for sale by local vendors. On the grass at St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd. Beulah
- 30 Yoga in the Barn at Iron Fish Distillery**
5:30-6:30pm; \$10 cash, check or Venmo, bring your own mat, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 30 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Ah My Goddess**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 30 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Pat Niemisto**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 30 Movies in Barr Park at Crystal Mountain Resort**
9-11pm, free. Bring a blanket and lawn chairs for a family-friendly movie. 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville
- 31 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Freshwater Roots**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

- 31 Manistee Shoreline Showcase Summer Concert Series with Headwinds Blues Project**
7-9pm, free. Douglas Park Gazebo at First Street Beech, Manistee. Wind/rain site: Armory Youth Project, 555 First St., Manistee
- 31 Courtyard Concert series with Mike Lenich**
7pm, \$5, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Outdoors in the courtyard. Bring your own chair. Tickets available at the LACA Box Office or call 231.845.2787 or go to <https://ludingtonartscenter.square.site/>

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 1 LACA Summer Concert Series with Headwinds Blues Project**
7-9pm, free. Waterfront Park 300 W. William St., Ludington
- 2 Elberta Farmers Market**
8am-noon, Waterfront Park, Furnace St., Elberta
- 2 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Wink**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 3- Minnehaha Brewhaha**
4 6-11pm Fri, free to attend. 11am-midnight Sat, \$30 in advance/\$35 at the door for music and tasting, \$15 for music only. Music and beer festival, Arcadia Marine, 17073 Northwood Hwy, Arcadia. For band lineup and tickets, go to: music-moves-me.org
- 3- Brethren Days**
5 8pm-midnight Fri with beer tent and live music. 9am Sat Highbridge Hustle 5k walk/run starting at Brethren High School. All day Sat & Sun with arts & crafts; cornhole, softball, and horseshoe tournaments; drag car show; parade; fireworks; beer tent, live music. Dickson Township Park, Brethren
- 3- Annual LACA Members Art Exhibit**
30 11am-4pm Tues, Thurs, Fri; 11am-6pm Wed; 11am-2pm Sat, free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- 3 Ludington Farmers Market**
3-7pm, N. James St. Legacy Plaza, Ludington
- 3 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with The Microtones**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 3 Live Music at the Brewery with Lynn Callihan**
6-9pm, free, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 3 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Cousin Curtiss**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 4- Grab a Piece of Ludington Second Annual Fundraiser for LACA**
TBD 10am-4pm Sat, 11am-4pm Tues-Fri, \$35 each, 8" x 8" artworks on canvas donated by area artists are for sale on a first-come-first-serve basis. 100% of proceeds will benefit the arts center. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington
- 4 Manistee Farmers Market**
9am-12pm, parking lot on the corner of Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 4 Laborfest 2021 Classic Car & Motorcycle Show**
9am-2:30pm, free to attend, \$15 to show a vehicle. Awards, door prizes, live music with Salt City Rock & Blues. 1st Street Beach Boat Launch, Manistee. For more info, contact Tom Volkema 231.889.4786 or 231.690.2635
- 4 Pine Forest Freedom Market**
9am-4pm, free to attend, \$6/space to sell. Crafters, bakers, makers, food trucks, etc. Pine Forest Campground, 10169 M-37, Irons. For more info, call 231.742.6934.
- 4 Downtown Scottville Farmers Market**
10am-2pm, sidewalks of Main St., Scottville
- 4 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Ted Allan**
2:30-5pm and **Soul Patch** at 5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 4 Sounds from the Forest**
20-piece orchestra plays Jazz, Pop, & Show Tunes, honoring late founder/director Tom Sheppardson. 7-9:15pm, free, donations gladly accepted. Wenger Pavilion, downtown Baldwin
- 5 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jabo Bihlman**
4:30-7:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 5 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Broom Closet Boys**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 6 Yoga in the Barn at Iron Fish Distillery**
5:30-6:30pm; \$10 cash, check or Venmo, bring your own mat, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 6 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Lena Maude**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 7 Courtyard Concert series with Bog Wizard**
7pm, \$5, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Outdoors in the courtyard. Bring your own chair. Tickets available at the LACA Box Office or call 231.845.2787 or go to <https://ludingtonartscenter.square.site/>
- 9 Elberta Farmers Market**
9am-noon, Waterfront Park, Furnace St., Elberta
- 9 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Wink**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 10 Ludington Farmers Market**
3-7pm, N. James St. Legacy Plaza, Ludington
- 10 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jake Frysinger**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 10 Live Music at the Brewery with Josh Field**
6-9pm, free, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 10 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Wink**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville
- 10 Live Music at Portage Point Resort with John Merchant**
7-11pm, free, 8567 Portage Point Dr., Onkama
- 11 Manistee Farmers Market**
9am-12pm, parking lot on the corner of Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 11 Downtown Scottville Farmers Market**
10am-2pm, sidewalks of Main St., Scottville
- 11 Scottville Fall Celebration**
12-5pm. Farmers market, taste beer/wine, pumpkin painting, cornhole, bounce houses, drawings, choo choo, tractor pull, music by Cats 'n Jammer and Scottville Clown Band, ceremony for Mason Co. first responders, etc. The 100 blocks of S. Main St. and S. Blaine St., Scottville.
- 11 Bus Day & Music: Big Sable Point Lighthouse**
12-5pm bus transportation to the lighthouse, 1-3pm music with **Joe & Mark**. Ludington State Park, 8800 M-116, Ludington
- 11 Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Chelsea Marsh**
5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 11 Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Blake Elliott**
6:30-8:30pm, free, 14234 Dzuibane Rd., Thompsonville



Group on a June walk at North Point Park, Onekama. Photo by P. Stinson

The best local birding place I know

By **BRIAN ALLEN**

I love the look of wonder on someone's face when they experience something in nature for the first time and you see that look of interest click on, like a switch. I see it most often when I am leading bird hikes. In addition to the very popular Arcadia Marsh Preserve boardwalk, my other favorite location for leading and doing bird hikes is at North Point Park in Onekama Township. Thanks to the organizational skills of Michelle Ervin, of the Onekama Township Parks and Recreation Commission, I have had the good fortune of being able to lead well-attended birding tours at North Point for the past couple years.

North Point Park particulars

What makes North Point unique? There are so many public lands and parks in the Manistee area, but I find none that can compare with North Point Park. This struck me several years ago when I first heard about it and explored the three trails there. The habitat is not exceptionally diverse, but there is a cedar/pine forest, a poplar/cottonwood wetland, some open grassland and a great amount of what I would call juniper/cherry savanna. The park occupies the middle of a peninsula that points southward into Portage Lake and is very near the shore of Lake Michigan. This geography makes the park attractive to migrating songbirds that rest there in spring and fall, as they avoid the open water of Lake Michigan and Portage Lake.

In the storm's wake

A few years ago, in the peak of spring migration, I arranged a birding tour for a group of birders from Leelanau County who wanted to check out the Manistee area. Unfortunately, we had to cancel as a strong thunderstorm rolled across the area and a rain-filled morning was forecast. As is typical, the storm passed more quickly than predicted and by mid-morning the sun

came out. I asked my wife Maripat if she wanted to join me exploring the park, and she agreed to come along. As we parked in the lot and opened the car doors, it struck me that this could be one of the best days I might experience for birding.

There were birds everywhere, and the trees were full of birdsong and call notes! We walked the outer loop trail and then



Photo of a Scarlet Tanager by The BirdBird, Pixabay

decided to head back on the paved trail, as it was still very damp. Maripat is not a birder like I am, but she appreciates birds and loved seeing the Indigo Buntings, Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers that morning. I was able to show her more than 20 brilliant Scarlet Tanagers in just about an hour there.

The sky turned blue with the bright spring sun, and the towering receding thunderclouds seemed to make the newly leafed-out trees even more emerald green. I was able to pick out dozens of warblers of more than 20 species that day, in what we birders call a "dropout." When conditions are just right, the migrating birds will pause in their flight and wait out a storm, and we had just happened upon it. There are far fewer birds now than I experienced 20 or even 10 years ago, so it was a delight to see this many again, and Maripat and I appreciated this increasingly rare spectacle.

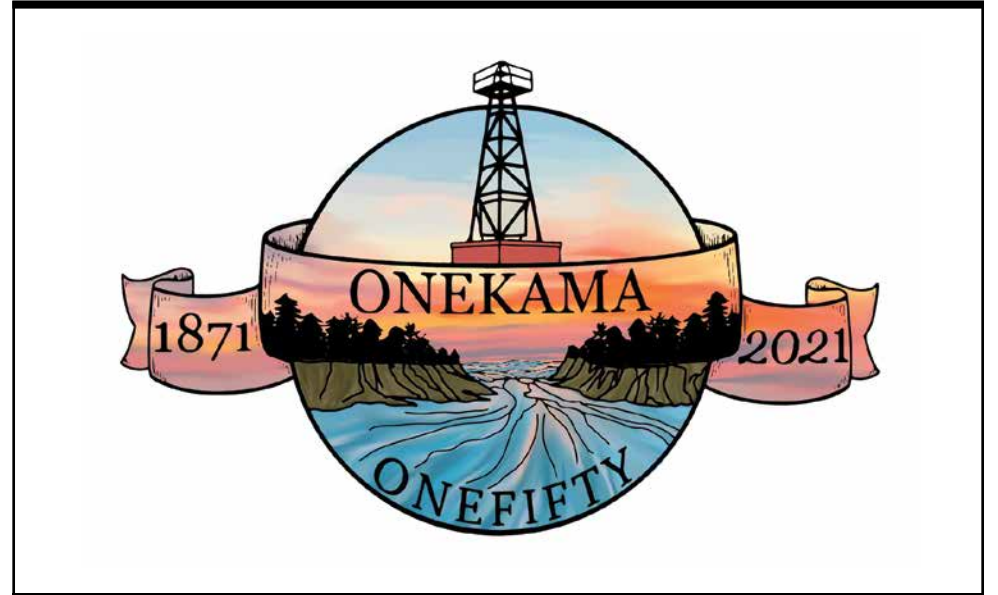
Lengthening the birding list

Later that year I often returned to North Point and noticed that what made it easy to show birds to Maripat that day would make it easy to show groups that wanted to learn about birds. The paved paths make it possible to avoid risks like ticks, the open park-like savanna makes it easy to spot birds and show them to a group, and the



Photo of Indigo Bunting by Israel Alipag, Pixabay

continued on page 8



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Above left. The Stoops' snazzy new food truck. Above right. Another fantastic Arcadia Daze fireworks show. Photos courtesy of Sue Stoops.

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DAILY SPECIALS
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Moving to the sound of Stoops' music

How one music-loving Arcadia family worked to create community, honored their husband and father, and beat the Gypsy Curse.

By MILTON F. WHITMORE

When he and Sue Keillor were married, Ron Stoops told his bride he didn't want to work for someone else and would rather be self-employed. Sue, raised south of Frankfort, already knew about her new husband's love of music. Born and raised in Benzonia, Ron taught himself how to play the guitar at an early age and fell in love with it from the get-go.



Sue Stoops (middle) in front of the old Ice House ice cream stand used years ago during Arcadia Daze. Photo courtesy of Sue Stoops.

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After a 1968-69 stint in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, he returned home. Ron and Sue settled in the Arcadia area, began their family, went into business and explored the local music scene. In 1968, the area's salmon fishing boom began, and anglers, many in very inappropriate boats, flocked to ports along northern Lake Michigan in pursuit of the exploding population of silver bullets. A mechanical tinkerer, Ron, together with Sue, founded Arcadia Marine in 1975 at the north end of Arcadia Lake, in the old Arcadia Mirror Works building. The property had docks, a small shop and a campground. The young couple leased the property from a local fellow and things worked out, despite a hiccup or two along the way.

Their family grew to five, with the addition of children Amy, Rachel and Jim, and the kids were constantly on the scene. Ron, a talented guitarist, played every night at home and spent time in local bars where bands played. When he was in a bar, Ron would always, ALWAYS end up on stage playing with the band. Before long, Ron became a key instrument in a local group called The Galaxies, and they flourished on the Manistee/Benzie music scene. Not a musician, Sue faithfully attended Ron's gigs, and the children soon picked up their own bits of musical expertise.

Bringing up the business

Being a bit crowded in the Mirror Works building, the mechanical part of the enterprise was moved to M-22, and from there the business grew. As a young lad, Ron's son Jim took a natural interest in the mechanical aspects of boating to work alongside his father. At 15, he earned his outboard motor mechanic certification.

Daughters Amy and Rachel were always there to lend their hands when needed. Sue soon took to the idea of furthering the business venture and added the Lily Pad Gift Shop. Things were busy indeed. By 1989, the gradual move of the enterprise to M-22 was completed. This gave Ron and Sue more freedom to expand their business ideas.

In 1981 the Arcadia Lions Club began sponsoring a weekend summer festival called Arcadia Daze. The festival was typical of such events throughout northern Michigan. After a few years, the Stoops saw a need. The festival lacked sweets, and ice cream came to mind. After a bit of searching, they bought a used soft-serve ice cream machine from a used car salesman (strange, but true) near Baldwin. By building a small, red-and-white wooden kiosk and setting it up on Lake Street during Arcadia Daze, the family offered Arcadia something it didn't have — a sweet frozen treat during a warm July weekend. Thus, was born the Arcadia Ice House, which today serves ice cream as well as soft serve.

I asked Sue what the impetus was to open the Ice House. She said Ron saw her standing around the gift shop, doing nothing, and thought an ice cream shop would keep her busy. Realistically, Sue can easily find things, perhaps too many, to keep her occupied. For instance, Sue doesn't serve one brand of ice cream in the parlor; the shop's product comes from a variety of vendors. Once again, the Stoops stepped up to fulfill more than one need. In this way they are atypical and extremely independent.

The ice cream parlor building is anything but typical in its construction. It was

built with recycled lumber from the early 1900s, retrieved from Arcadia Lake, the Betsie River, and local old buildings and barns. Most of the lumber was milled and handcrafted by Sue's father, Vy Keillor, a local, lifelong builder and cabinet maker. He created the one-of-a-kind moldings and trims, including the hand-carved maple leaves.

With their expansion of Arcadia Marine to include boat storage facilities, the Lily Pad Gift Shop and Arcadia Ice House, the Stoops family offered some products and services the community didn't have. They fulfilled a variety of previously unmet needs and, in doing so, performed a community service.

Music ... and fireworks ... moved them

Meanwhile, music remained a key element in the Stoops' lives. Ron bought Jim a set of drums during his pre-teen years, and the lad took to them right off the beat. He'd play his drums on warm summer afternoons in their Arcadia home, and with the windows open, Jim shared his love of the drums with the neighboring townfolk. Adding to the serenade, Amy played trumpet and Rachel played clarinet in the Onekama High School band.

Ron continued to play his guitar wherever he could, including jam sessions at the Ice House. In the week before Christmas, Santa Claus, who closely resembled a Stoops, would make a guest appearance in the ice cream shop, courtesy of the Arcadia Township Fire Department.

One Fourth of July, about 2012, Rachel



Rachel Stoops with daughters Julie and Meghan. Photo courtesy of Sue Stoops.

was watching the fireworks display in Frankfort, to the north. Of course, the city's display dazzled the eye, but what is more, it created a spark in her mind.

"Arcadia Daze needs fireworks," she thought.

In a typical mind, this would be but a passing thought. In the mind of a member of the Stoops family, it was like a spark igniting a Roman candle. A committee was formed, meetings were held, the process of putting on such a show was investigated with thorough attention to detail, and fund raising commenced. The result was, beginning in about 2013, a Friday night fireworks display offered annually during Arcadia Daze to the community and its visitors. The event is a version of Friday Night Lights unparalleled in any northern Michigan town, save for Traverse City, and I'm not sure about even that town.

Musical legacy lives on

In 2016 Ron began showing symptoms of health problems. He was diagnosed during a brief and rare winter vacation in Florida. The diagnosis brought news of brain cancer. Surgery would be performed in Orlando. However, before surgery, Ron asked Jim to drive across town to fetch his guitar. He wanted to play one last time before the operation. The guitar was brought to the hospital room, and Ron strummed for, perhaps, the last time. He died later that year and now strums with the angels.



Ron Stoops playing guitar with The Galaxies in the 1970s. Photo courtesy of Sue Stoops.

Through the years, "Music Moves Me" was a recurring theme with Ron and his family. They were never verbal about it, but quietly did their own musical thing. After Ron's passing, Sue and the children had a desire to "elevate the musical experience" and at the same time honor their husband and father. The idea for a music festival was born, coupled with the public's growing taste for craft beer, known as the Minnehaha Brewhaha. Minnehaha refers to a 19th century schooner, a shipwreck found almost on the Lake Michigan beach at the end of Oak Street in Arcadia.

Festival planning was dense, thorough and exhausting. No stone, no idea, no scenario was unexplored. The family's undertaking would dwarf their other life and business experiences. They had no idea how to put together such an event, but they forged onward with the help of friends and community members. It all came together on Labor Day weekend, 2019.

The festival is a fundraising event sponsored by the family's nonprofit, Music Moves Me, Inc. Its mission is to promote music by providing a venue for local musicians, to enhance and enrich the teaching of music to local students, and to educate the public about the benefits of music. Profits from the first festival generated over \$40,000 to create the Ronald Stoops Memorial Scholarship endowment at Interlochen Arts Academy. With this year's event, the Stoops family hopes to raise another \$10,000 to complete the \$50,000 endowment which will sustain the annual scholarship. The organization has provided funding and hopes to increase funds in support of the music departments of Onekama, Bear Lake, and Frankfort schools.

I gotta million of 'em

Music! Arcadia Marine! Lily Pad Gift Shop! The Arcadia Ice House! The Minnehaha Brewhaha! One would think that was enough for one family, but we're dealing with the Stoops of Arcadia.

Last autumn, concrete workers were hired to pour a new floor in one of the boat storage buildings. Without a local restaurant, Arcadia could not feed the crew; they would have to eat elsewhere. The Stoops would have none of that and bought pizza for them from another town.

"We need a place to eat here in town," they remarked, and thus was the birth of the food truck known as Ketch 22. The family had no experience in such an endeavor, but that didn't deter them. With the idea that a food truck would serve Arcadia, the family dove into the research, planning, and implementation with the idea of offering a quality food truck experience to residents and visitors. Last winter, while in Florida and elsewhere, Jim's wife Brandy Stoops, Shelby Dusseau and others researched menu items. Jon and Jackie Grommons were brought in as menu planners and cooks, bringing their experience and expertise to the enterprise. As for the name, a ketch is a two-masted schooner; one mast is shorter than the other, and the wheel is positioned aft (behind) the mizzen, or shorter mast.

The family's latest enterprise, perhaps aka Stoops' Sloop, is a food truck located between the Arcadia Ice House and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's boardwalk across the Arcadia Marsh Preserve. The menu is varied and a bit different, one might say elevated, from typical food truck fare, including skewered shrimp, BLTs, mahi sandwiches, fried green tomatoes and more. This latest venture fits nicely into the family's philosophy of providing something the community doesn't have, while adding a bit of flair.

Aaarrgh, begone, ye curses

"What does all of this have to do with the Gypsy Curse?" one might ask. As the story goes, Sue Keillor Stoops was raised south of Frankfort. Back then, the area was serviced by the Arcadia Post Office. Sue's mother and grandmother told the story of a gypsy

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family that came into the area around 1933. At first, they were welcomed with open arms by the community. After a while some accusations were made, and it became clear that group was no longer welcome. Before leaving, the gypsies put a curse on Arcadia that warned the town wouldn't grow for 100 years. That legend became the Gypsy Curse on Arcadia.

During the past 30 or more years, the Stoops family has put a lot of thought, work and time into the community. All the while, they've been moved by music and brought music to many of their friends, neighbors and visitors.

The Stoops are beating the Gypsy Curse.

In addition to music, Minnehaha Brewhaha Music Fest will offer more than 70 Michigan beers and spirits, selections from 7 food trucks, kids crafts, and games for all ages. Saturday music-only tickets are \$15. Presale tickets for music and tasting are \$30, or \$35 at the gate. To purchase tickets online, go to: <https://mynorthtickets.com/events/minnehaha-brewhaha-music-festival-2022-9-4-2021>

Milton Whitmore and his family moved to the Arcadia/Onkama area, where he taught middle school science and math until his retirement. He is active with the Arcadia Lions Club.

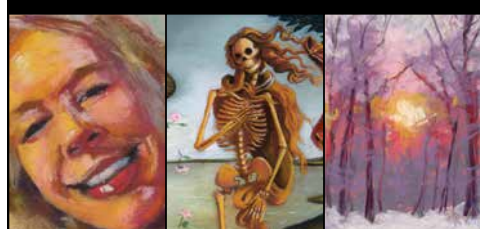
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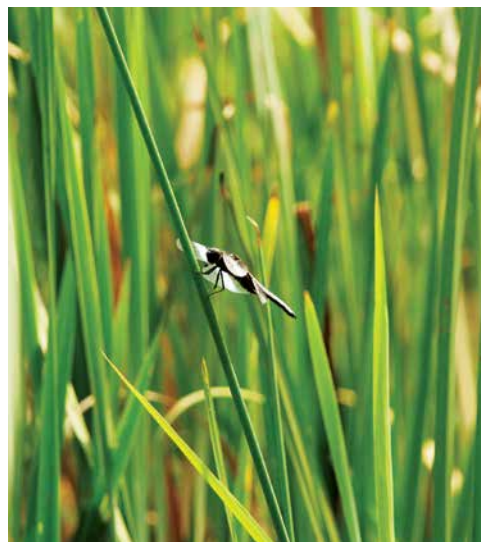
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Dragonfly among grasses, Upper Hamlin Lake boat landing.



Above. Sutphen family at Victory Park. Left. Caught the writer taking pics, Upper Hamlin Lake boat landing. Photo by Jean Howell.

Backroads

continued from page 1

Nordhouse Dunes

On that drive we traveled sandy, gravelly Nurnberg Road west of Quarterline Road to Nordhouse Dunes Trailhead at Lake Michigan. Driving through the (gorgeous!) tree-tunneled forest was an experience. You must want to go there to travel the rough washboard trail. But, in the end, you arrive at a parking area in the dunes where several trails head to the lake, about 1.5 miles by foot. We didn't hike that day, but we ran into Tim and Kris Johnson from Byron Center.



The Johnsons at Nordhouse Dunes.

"We came back to the car to get something," Kris told Jean, who had noticed her Purdue T-shirt.

Jean and I are both Purdue grads, and one of the Johnsons' kids is a student there. The Johnsons were camping out on the beach with four teens and loved the site.

"The water's so beautiful, so nice and clear," Kris said. "Our tent faces the lake and getting up in the morning to that view!"

Backtracking on Nurnberg, we met a county truck grading the road, making the ride back a bit easier.

The road to Nordhouse is 6.5 miles, and halfway along on the south side we spotted a two-track to a boat landing. We turned in and wound through more woods and vegetation. We found a small, wooded area with a few primitive campsites and a landing.

What a find! The landing is close to where Big Sable (aka Sauble) River enters Hamlin Lake. Tall grasses, cattails and wild rice, stretch into the lake. Narrow water trails lead from the landing, and any number of colorful butterflies float in the air. No other souls were there, just we two and the critters, making for a peaceful stopover.

Veterans Memorial at Victory Park.



Not all our finds are like that. Victory Park was certainly one, but our second stop after Victory was a letdown, for us anyway.

Wilson Hill Park, a few miles west of Victory, can be reached by paved Jebavy (aka Barnhardt) road. The first stretch, from Victory Park Road, follows unpaved Fountain Road.

Approaching Wilson Hill, our first impression was of a lake resort. There's a nice open grassy area with a swing set, covered picnic pavilion and grills. However, the boat ramp to Hamlin was a tight squeeze, with numerous boats on trailers jockeying in or out, as well as boats already moored.

Time to move on. One last stop to make on this trip.

From Wilson Hill we headed down Jebavy Drive to Mavis Road, a real two-track! We got about 100 yards down the track and came to a wide puddle (small lake?) covering the track from last night's heavy rains. Having encountered one bottomless puddle in my little truck on this trip, Jean suggested getting out and checking the depth.

"It doesn't seem deep, but it might be a little soft," she said.

Never mind.

We backed out, went back to Jebavy and took the long way around to find Duneview on Hamlin Lake's North Bayou Park.

The park is no more than a parking lot and porta-potty located near a trailer resort, summer cottages and vacation rentals.

Smolen and Schwartz at Duneview.



From the parking area down a narrow street to the boat landing, the lake opens out in front of you at its widest point.

Duneview is an apt name. In an arcing panorama, state park dunes are visible all around, with towering yellow sand contrasting a blue sky and clear waters.

We met Earl Smolen and Ron White. They were keeping an eye on George Schwartz, windsurfing not far offshore.

Smolen noted, "It's a good place to try windsurfing."



View of the (what else?) dunes at Duneview.

"It's different than kiteboarding," he explained, when boarders are more often in the air than on water.

"Most news reporters get it wrong."

Smolen is a nice chatty guy, and the conversation about the lake — "I've been coming here for 30 years" — was interesting as we waited for Schwartz to come into the landing.

"How was it out there?" I asked Schwartz, as he carried his board and sail to shore.

"When the wind gusts, it was good," he replied.

And that was where we parted.

Jean and I headed back home to think about the next backroad trip.

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! Contact him at kevin@ytci.com.

How to get there

Nordhouse Dunes. From Ludington, head north on Jebavy Drive to northeast on Angling Road to east on Fountain Road to Stiles Road. At the stop sign, turn left on Stiles, heading north. At the T intersection, jog right then left onto Quarterline. Watch for Hamlin Grocery. Turn left (west) on Nurnberg Road to Nordhouse.

Victory Park. From Ludington, head north on Jebavy Drive to northeast on Angling Road. Follow Angling to Fountain Road and turn left at the curve onto Fountain Road. Turn right onto Victory Park Road, a gravel road. It makes a sharp curve to the left. Continue straight and watch for a sign for Victory Park, straight ahead. (Do not make the right turn to Sunset Bluffs Resort.) The park is at the bottom of the shady hill.

Duneview. From Ludington, take North Lakeshore Drive (M-116) until you come to a Y intersection by the appropriately named Y Country Store. Stay on Lakeshore past South and Middle Bayous (Tamarac Village) to Duneview on North Bayou.

Or grab a Mason County map and follow your nose!

The Perseids' phenomenal performance

By BROOKE EDWARDS



A shooting "star" flies across the West Virginia sky during the Perseid Meteor shower of 2015. Photo By: NASA and Bill Ingalls

At 4:30 a.m., Aug. 12, I was treated to a meteor flying across the sky. With smoke from western wildfires a problem for weeks, and previously cloudy days, I had forgotten all about the Perseid meteor shower. Seeing this unexpected cosmic show before I left for work made my day and reminded me to slow down and enjoy the universe.

The Perseid meteor shower occurs every year in mid-August as Earth passes through the path of the comet Swift-Tuttle, which orbits between the sun and Pluto. Not to be confused with an asteroid, which is made of rock, a comet is made of dust and ice. Fragments from the comet are called meteoroids. When a meteoroid travels to our neck of the solar system and enters Earth's atmosphere, it creates a spectacular shooting "star" known as a meteor. Most meteors burn up in the atmosphere and never land on Earth.

The event got its name from meteors originating around the Perseus constellation, which appears in the northeast in the early morning hours. Perseus sits above and to the left of the constellation Taurus, the bull of stars that hosts the Pleiades star cluster. It is also below the constellation Cassiopeia, which appears as an unmistakable left-facing sideways "W" of stars.

Your chance of seeing meteors is never

truly as great as predicted and depends on many factors. For example, it may be predicted that observers could see up to 70 meteors per hour, yet one should expect to see far fewer. This high number is an estimate by astronomers of what to expect during the peak of the shower, and your view of the show depends on your location and situation. Factors such as light pollution, moonlight, cloud cover, and even smoke can reduce visibility. Living in a bigger city, such as Traverse City or Grand Rapids, you would never see that many meteors. It was not until I moved to Manistee and had access to dark skies that I first saw a meteor with my own eyes!

Brooke Edwards is Manistee's NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. You can contact her at brookeofstars@gmail.com and follow Manistee space activities @Brooke Edwards - Solar System Ambassador on Facebook.



MI BACKYARD

Golden Waterfalls

Story and photo by JENNIFER DEVINE

Note: Safely foraging wild plants for home use takes practice. Always go with an experienced forager to learn how to identify plants in the field.

The first of its kind to bloom, early goldenrod (Solidago juncea) is a single stalk composed of a few stems of yellow, cascading butterfly attractant. These waterfalls can hold over 400-plus golden flower heads. The leaves are large at the bottom and get smaller as they reach the blooming tip.

This showy fall of bold gold is an herbaceous perennial that spreads underground from rhizomes. Part of the sunflower family, early goldenrod blooms from late June through August. You can find lovely specimens in most Michigan counties. While we're at it, let's bust a popular myth about this beauty: goldenrod does not cause hay fever.

There is a solitary plant in my yard, right next to a tree. However, if you drive east on M-55, from Manistee toward Cadillac, you will see splotches of this golden beauty interspersed with pink, white and purple wildflowers.

How do you harvest its yellow flowers? Walk right up and cut the stem like you would for a bouquet. Just remember to leave some for the next person.

How do you use it? Strip the flowers and sprinkle them into your honey or on top of a fresh summer/fall salad. Take the leaves and cook them like spinach or add them to your soups and casseroles. To make a soothing herbal tea, place a mix of 1 tablespoon of fresh or dried flowers and

leaves into 1 cup of boiling water for about 15 minutes.

Can it be medicinal? Some drink goldenrod tea, said to help prevent urinary tract infections and kidney stones. It is also said to calm inflammation, skin irritations and eczema. There is no scientific evidence for or against these purported benefits, but there is anecdotal evidence.

Goldenrod is a mostly tolerated "weed" full of antioxidants, therefore, I can safely say, please use this responsibly. Allergic reactions can happen, so start with small doses of tea at first.

To learn more and view additional photographs, go to ontariowildflowers.com.

Get out and enjoy MI backyard.

Jennifer Devine is a homesteader living on 20 acres. She and her husband are licensed to sell black cherry, white oak and white pine trees. They live with their homeschooled children off grid and have chickens, ducks and rabbits, a large garden and a lot of woods.



Early goldenrod, shown here in the writer's backyard, brightens any corner.

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Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month
 Some bookstores and publishers offer discounts in September on books and periodicals they sell to writers and editors.
 We bet some coffee shops might offer discounts, too.
 Cut your scribblers some slack in September!

'Good berries'

continued from page 1

study wild rice. Add the “ologists” — the ethnologist, ecologist, limnologist, sociologist and biologist — to the league of experts studying this plant. Wild rice, a type of grass, still grows in the shallow lakes of Michigan and other Great Lake states, such as Minnesota.

The story of wild rice is intertwined with the story of Native peoples. The Anishinabek continue to be guided by a prophecy of a homeland where food grows on the water. The rice blooms atop a long-stemmed grass waving above the surface.

Manoomin — “good berry” or “harvesting berry,” as Native populations call wild rice — has been tended in shallow water for millennia. Historically, care was taken by the Anishinabek to see that it spread and thrived in watery stands. In that way, this tasty crop of grain was cultivated, making the name “wild” a bit of a misnomer.

The Anishinaabe people recognize the central role manoomin plays in the lives of their people. The traditions of gathering have been reestablished and celebrated, affirming that the process of gathering from a canoe result both in the reseeding of the plants and collection of the grain. The traditions have helped the bands of Ojibwa, Odawa and Potawatomi to retain a degree of food sovereignty. Including this high protein grain in their diet, sometimes cooked in deer broth or maple syrup and sometimes roasted, is a healthy way to respect and carry on the traditions of their people.

A LRBOI tribal citizen and current Tribal Tax Officer, Valerie Chandler is also a former Historic Preservation Coordinator.

“Historically, as legends or tales have been told through generations, the Three Fires (Ottawa, Chippewa, Potawatomi) people were told to settle ‘where food grows on water,’” Chandler explained. “This food is wild rice in the Great Lakes area and has sustained our people for centuries. It was (and for some, still is) a significant staple to the traditional diet because it could be stored for long periods, especially when fresh food was not available.

“It’s a truly natural and healthy grain that our ancestors harvested in the local waters, where the villages and camps were located. It provided for social interaction because of the laborious process involved in harvesting and processing the rice. Because it was a traditional staple food, it was often incorporated into many dishes, and today at feasts and ceremonies, it can be found as a way to remember our ancestors and given as offerings.”

Hamlin Lake’s stand

I recently took a boat ride through one of the largest stands of wild rice in Michigan. Wayne Andersen, president of the Hamlin Lake Preservation Society, launched his boat on the northeast arm of Hamlin Lake, and I rode along. At the boat launch there is



Sutphen family of pontooners ready to disembark at Victory Park. Note the large wild rice bed behind them in Hamlin Lake. Photo by Kevin Howell.

a sign indicating the presence of manoomin. We climbed in his boat and paddled through tall fronds of rice. He pointed out the public access used by people living in subdivisions on the south side of Hamlin Lake. The sign reminds boaters to be careful not to disturb the manoomin that grows all the way across the lake.

Alexis DeGabriele, a LRBOI aquatic biologist, weighed in on the longevity of the wild rice stand in Hamlin Lake.

“There are a lot of factors that play into whether or not wild rice still grows in an area that it historically grew in,” she began. “One of the things about Hamlin Lake is the fact that where the Big Sable (River) comes in is a lot of Forest Service land; it provides protection from development. That really helps that stand (of rice) to be there.”

The rice grows in shallow water. Water levels can change, affecting the growth of the rice. The ownership of these areas on the margins of land and water was and still is marginal. For the Anishinaabe, it may have been a question of who was allowed to harvest, rather than who owned the bottomlands or where the highwater mark is located.

Michigan’s two varieties

Manoomin is the name the Anishinabek people use to refer to “Zizania.” The botanists tell us there are four species, two found in Michigan: *Zizania aquatica* and *Zizania palustris*. The wild rice on Hamlin Lake is *Z. palustris* (northern lake rice). *Z. aquatica* is found near riverbanks, where currents move slowly.

In Barbara Barton’s book “Manoomin: The Story of Wild Rice in Michigan,” the author tells us that *Z. palustris* is more abundant in Michigan. *Z. aquatica* is only found in small stands in limited areas and is considered a threatened species. A permit must be obtained to harvest *Z. aquatica*. Both types of wild rice are susceptible to changing water levels and disturbances in shallow water areas. Each needs good water quality to thrive.

Allison Smart, project manager for the LRBOI wild rice stand, said that *Z. aquatica* is more affected by poor water quality and water levels than *Z. palustris*. This may account for *Z. aquatica*’s limited range.

“It’s a complex history that’s difficult to (explain),” Smart said. “It is also a species

that needs very specific parameters to grow. If the water quality is off, you’ll see issues in your wild rice beds. A lot of different species that are not plants — ducks, different types of birds, a lot of different types of fish — are using wild rice beds for different life stages, so it’s got a lot of ecological value.”

Monitoring wild rice locally

According to DeGabriele, the Little River Band has intensively monitored the local wild rice beds “since the early 2000s.” LRBOI also partnered with Central Michigan University prior to 2016 to conduct a survey of both types of wild rice in the state’s streams and lakes. The team sampled 20 wild rice habitats to try to determine the ecological requirements for a hardy stand.

“Hamlin has had a really healthy population since we started doing the intensive monitoring,” DeGabriele explained. “We’ve also been able to find a lot of other locations in the area that have wild rice, whether it is *Z. aquatica* or *Z. palustris*.”

Threats to wild rice

German carp were introduced into Sandusky Bay in Lake Huron in 1888. The species has since spread throughout the Great Lakes.

“They were notorious for spoiling wetland areas, streams and rivers because they uprooted vegetation and left muddy, murky water in their wake. They liked wild rice most ...,” wrote Margaret B. Bogue, in her historical account of damage to fisheries called, “Fishing the Great Lakes.”

Draining wetlands and damming rivers are actions that cause changes in water levels. Those changes historically led to the loss of large stands of wild rice.

Smart and DeGabriele have experienced some ups and downs.

“One of the really cool restorations was up in Arcadia Marsh,” DeGabriele said. “As the re canalization of Bowens Creek happened, *Z. aquatica* population there increased by quite a bit. Our efforts to restore *Z. palustris* in Manistee Lake also was impacted by the high-water levels in the Great Lakes.”

The monitoring and study of manoomin continues and gives the Natural Resources personnel at LRBOI the information they need to protect stands of this remarkable plant.



Science and Culture of Wild Rice

By **STEWART A. MCFERRAN**

Science does not operate in a vacuum. The exception may be deep space, but even there the gadgets traveling through the vacuum of space are guided by teams of our fellow humans. Decisions those teams make can have repercussions back on Earth. Similarly, decisions to pursue genetic modifications of manoomin have had repercussions.

Alexis DeGabriele, aquatic biologist for the LRBOI, said the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities worked hard to reestablish relationships with tribal communities in their state and the region after trying to genetically modify wild rice seeds in the 1990s for the “big seed companies.”

“So, I think it’s a two-fold kind of interest,” she said. “One is (that) tribal natural resources departments, governments and citizens are interested in protecting and preserving manoomin, which allows natural resources departments to work with universities to fund and co-lead research.

“The other piece of it is the dark side of wild rice, and that is the history at University of Minnesota at Twin Cities, the industry trying to create rice that was easily harvestable (that) didn’t shatter all of those issues of genetic modification of a culturally sacred plant to the indigenous communities of the Upper Great Lakes region.”

According to DeGabriele, “true” genetic modification wasn’t successful, but some places use a kind of rice like those grown in rice paddies, a cultivated variety of *Z. palustris* grown in California, Canada and, to a lesser extent, Minnesota.

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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Birding

continued from page 1

abundant wild food — including juniper berries, wild cherry and wild grapes — brings the birds in late summer and fall.

In the last few years, several other birders and I accumulated a bird list at the park of nearly 150 species, which is excellent for a place with no marsh or shoreline. We found rare birds like the Olive-sided Flycatcher and more common but just-as-exciting birds like Red-shouldered Hawks and Blackburnian Warblers.

Thanks to Michelle Ervin and the Onkama Township Parks and Recreation Commission, the trails and birdhouses

continue to be well maintained and new native plants are being added to the arboretum. Dozens of people have joined me to walk the park’s trails, and I’ve had the pleasure of seeing that look of wonder many times on the faces of people who are really seeing birds for the first time. I hope you, too, can join us some day, or get out on your own and explore the best place I know to learn about birds.

Dr. 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