

# FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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FREE

## Backroads and Beaches: Along Lakeshore Drive

By KEVIN HOWELL

*Salmon were making their way upstream on the Little Manistee River at the DNR's Little Manistee River fish weir, an egg-take and salmon harvesting facility.*

They drifted back down due to closed gates on the upstream end of the weir. When open, a gate directs fish through concrete holding ponds on one side of the weir. DNR personnel will gather their eggs here for later hatching in Michigan waters.

We, my Navigator Jean and I, had made a side trip to the weir from our lakeshore driving route.

The weir's egg-gathering facility wasn't open to the public for this season yet, but DNR Fish Technician Robert Kerry said it would be by the end of September.

"We'll be doing tours, but we just haven't opened up for the year," Kerry explained.

"People will be allowed in there this fall, though. When we turn the pumps on, the fish will come into the facility, and then it will be roughly a couple weeks before they come into the stage where we actually start taking eggs."

Jean and I will try to get back there in early October.

The weir is off Stronach Road, on Old Stronach Road, on the east side of Manistee Lake. Old Stronach changes from



Magoon Creek in Manistee County must be a good rock hunting beach. Photo by Kevin Howell.

pavement to gravel and follows the Little Manistee atop a bluff through thick woods with few residences. The trees finally thin above the facility to an impressive vista.

On this day, aside from the weir visit, we were heading north of Manistee along Lakeshore Drive to check out Orchard Beach State Park and other little hidden beaches. It was an extension of other excursions via backroads. On our way

from the weir, we picked up a fast-food lunch. In our naivety, we thought we would eat near the beach, only there isn't public access to the beach anymore. Evidently, former high waters in the lake caused erosion around the steps to the beach and threatened a pavilion on the bluff that had to be moved.

However, there were picnic tables overlooking the lake, and we met some



The Princess Manistee Harbor cruise past Magoon Creek. Photo by Kevin Howell.

friendly visitors from our old stomping grounds in northern Indiana.

"It doesn't get any better than this," Chris Sheppard said, as she and Ronee Pumfrey — from North Liberty, Indiana and New Buffalo, respectively — walked by our table.

Sheppard was "campground hopping" and had been traveling on the west side of Michigan to Petosky and other areas.

Pumfrey noted she was a "beach walker" and "beach glass collector."

After a lunch overlooking the lake, we checked out a public access beach about a half mile further on. It turned out to be a short narrow strip of sand with large rocks along the waterline. Moving on.

We continued north on Lakeshore

continued on page 6

## It All Begins at the Boat Launch Ramp

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN

The boat launch ramp is where people's hopes and dreams meet. It is literally a slippery slope, where water meets the land. The high expectations of boaters meet mechanical limitations as heavy equipment is launched into the water. Instantly, water is displaced by the hull, causing each craft to float. Boaters step aboard, shove off and begin their adventure on the water.



Jan and Dave Doerr at the launch ramp with their boat named Two Doerrs. Photo by Stewart McFerran.

There are more than 1,300 boat launches in Michigan. All kinds of boats are launched: power boats, sailboats, kayaks and canoes onto the big water of Lake Michigan, the calm inland lakes and the flowing current of our fine rivers. The kind of journey is built into the shape of your boat and the length of your paddle, the cut of your sail or the power of your inboard, outboard or jet ski.

Regardless, that moment when the hull meets the water is special, because it marks the beginning of a journey on the water. Throughout history all kinds of journeys have begun this way, from the fateful RMS Titanic voyage to a frail corical (a round, woven watercraft) of the Irish mystic setting out on a journey guided only by the hand of God.

Backing up with the boat on a trailer is

a skill that some have perfected. Others have not and seek divine intervention. But it needs to be said that backing up with a large heavy boat on a trailer is a difficult operation. That is where the rubber meets the water, and don't forget it is slippery there. More than one rig — including the trailer, truck, boat, everything — has ended up in the drink.

The guys and gals that are good at it do it all the time. They are practiced. Somehow the complexity of the angles, distance and vectors reversed on an admittedly short trip down the ramp and into the water all compute in their brain, as they turn the steering wheel this way and that. They have a procedure which includes putting the plug in, throwing ice in the cooler and hopefully finding lifejackets for everyone on board, as the Coast Guard requires.

Janice and David Doerr have launched their boat Two Doerrs many times. They spent three weeks this summer at the Veterans Memorial Marina in Arcadia after launching at the ramp there. Despite the apparent ease with which they launch, they opted to keep the Two Doerrs at a slip in the marina. This meant they did not need to launch their boat for each fishing trip into Lake Michigan. They enjoyed picnics and fish boils at the marina with other boaters this summer.

continued on page 8

# From the gridiron to iron rails

By CARMELITTA TIFFANY

“I don’t really consider myself an historian,” commented Mike Hankwitz, from his makeshift collection room overlooking Hamlin Lake on a gorgeous September afternoon. Dozens of bankers boxes line a wall, each labeled neatly. Binders fill bookshelves in his living room, intermingled with historical reference books and memorabilia of Mike’s illustrious football career. His recent move from Indiana upon his retirement from Northwestern University has added to the collection.

“I’m just a guy who found an interest in my hometown, who wanted to know more about how it became such a special part of my life,” Hankwitz said.

The former college ballplayer and assistant coach/coordinator was raised in nearby Scottville, where he discovered his interest in the area’s past at a young age.

“I would go out into the woods with my cousin, fishing or small game hunting, and there were these huge stumps everywhere!” Hankwitz said. “I asked him why they were there, and he explained that without those big trees, we probably wouldn’t be there.”

His cousin was referring to the lumber boom, which had drawn the first white men into the area.

Hankwitz was intrigued. That thirst for knowledge remained with him as he grew older. He eventually went away to college, seeking a career in education. His plans changed when he had success in college football. (See accompanying story.) When he could, he would delve deeper into his love of local history.

There were numerous historical subjects for him to focus upon, but a fateful stop at an antique store paved the way to his passion: railroads.

“I stopped at this shop between Scottville and Ludington just to look around,” he recalled. “And there was this box of picture postcards that caught my attention, because they weren’t your regular tourist-type postcards.”

The postcards were from the lumbering era, old sienna-type images of lumber camps, lumbering crews, and the trains and railroads that carried the crews into



Mike with some of his collection. Photo by Carmelitta Tiffany.

the forests and hauled the lumber out. Hankwitz bought the box of cards. Little did he realize that it was the beginning of a life-long adventure.

Now he has acquired thousands of photos and postcards, through purchase and trade amongst his fellow collectors.

“Each image has a story behind it,” he explained. “It’s often a puzzle, trying to figure out which train and what railroad company are represented in the sometimes out-of-focus, faded scenes.”

However, and this is the difference between a collector and a historian, Hankwitz doesn’t keep his treasures to himself. After some often-extensive research, he will find out where the photos were taken and donate copies and/or scans to the local historical society from the vicinity where the images were made. He



Hankwitz with his fellow enthusiasts at the former Manistee & Northeastern RR Riverview depot located just east of Grayling. It is now owned by the Riverview Rod & Gun club. Seated l to r, Jerry McGowan, Sonny Miller and Mike Hankwitz. The team sometimes go out into the countryside to find old railroad grades and routes which are overgrown and forgotten. Photo by Carmelitta Tiffany.

has donated thousands of hours and photos to organizations from Benzie County south to Oceana County and east to Lake County. He is an active volunteer at many historical organizations, as well.

He doesn’t spend all his time indoors, though. He and a few of his compatriots enjoy outings in the woods. Using their maps, shovels and metal detectors, they dig for artifacts and plot out long-gone railroad grades and lumber camp sites. Sometimes they go on a road trip just to see other venues. He spends a lot of time away from home, but he says his wife Cathy doesn’t mind his hobby much.

“It keeps me out of her hair,” he said. “We’ve been married 34 years, but I was always working so she was used to me being gone a lot.”

“I enjoy meeting people who share my interests,” he said.

For example, one time he came across a box of railroad items at one of the research libraries where he volunteers. He attempted to contact the donor, to no avail. Later, while working as a docent at another museum, he noticed the name of a guest who had just signed in as the donor from the other museum. He introduced himself and asked if she could give him some information on the items she had donated. They had a long conversation in which she told him her great-grandfather was a locomotive engineer for the Mason

& Oceana Railroad and was killed in an accident. Hankwitz did some research, unbeknownst to her, and presented her with a binder of the information, copies of newspaper clippings, and photos of the type of locomotive her great-grandfather had driven.

“It’s all part of the passion, to be able to share the stories with others,” he said.

He hopes that sharing the stories will lead to more of the younger generation becoming interested in their past and where their community came from.

“Ideally, it would be great if high schools taught local history,” he suggested. “But, hopefully, parents and grandparents will show their children and grandchildren how interesting the past can be.”

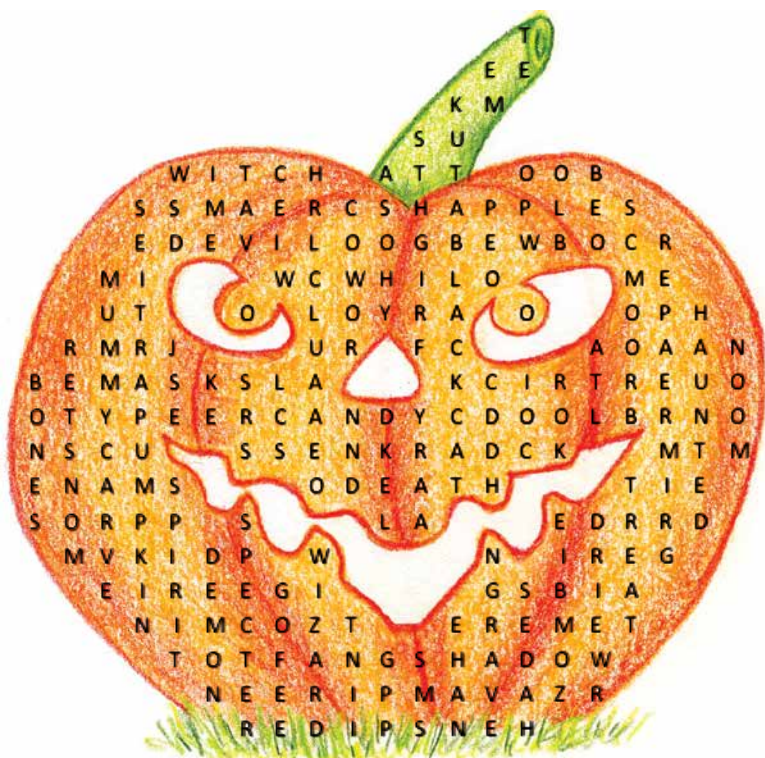
He also suggests that members of the public become more involved in their local historical societies and other organizations.

“It doesn’t take much time or money to do your part in keeping history available to the public for generations to come,” he said. “My plans are to continue what I am doing and eventually donate my collection to the various places they belong.”

Carmelitta Tiffany resides in Mason County, where she spent the last 30-some years enjoying the blessings of rural life. She is a semi-retired journalist who serves those needing “wordy” advice through her business, West MI Editorial Services.

## HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

By MARKVIDEAN



- |          |            |         |
|----------|------------|---------|
| APPLES   | EERIE      | PUMPKIN |
| BAT      | FANGS      | SCARY   |
| BLOOD    | FOG        | SCREAMS |
| BONES    | FRIGHTS    | SHADOW  |
| BOO      | GHOUL      | SPECTER |
| BROOM    | GRAVE      | SPIDER  |
| CANDY    | GRIMREAPER | SPIRIT  |
| CARVE    | HADES      | TREAT   |
| CASKET   | HAUNTED    | TRICK   |
| COBWEB   | HOWL       | VAMPIRE |
| COSTUME  | MASKS      | WEIRD   |
| CREEPY   | MONSTER    | WITCH   |
| DARKNESS | MOON       | WIZARD  |
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# Acclaimed coach returns to his roots

By GREG GIELCZYK

Born in Ludington and raised in Scottville, George Michael “Mike” Hankwitz, 73, was a record-setting basketball player as well as track competitor in addition to being an all-state football player at Mason County Central High School.

When Hankwitz started receiving scholarship offers to play football in college, it was a done deal. He eventually signed with the University of Michigan and got to play in his senior year for legendary coach Glenn “Bo” Schembechler.

Originally beginning his college career as a linebacker, Hankwitz finished it as the Wolverines’ primary field goal kicker and started on the 1969 Big Ten championship team that played in the Rose Bowl.

Hankwitz said that remains the high point of his playing career.

“When Bo came in, he wanted to meet with every player to get to know them,” Hankwitz recalled. “He wanted to know a little bit about you.”

“He asked me, ‘What are you going to do when you graduate?’ I said, ‘Well, I’m going to coach.’ I was thinking of basketball initially, because I liked basketball, and there is a lot of teamwork, and stuff.

“So he goes ‘Well, have you thought of being a graduate assistant? You’re helping us. You’re breaking down film, you’re helping coach, you’re scouting. You’re learning football thoroughly.’

“I was blessed to be around a lot of great people. I never felt like it was work. It was like I was still playing. You’re still competing.”

“I thought, ‘Wow, that sounds pretty interesting.’ So I did it, and I was hooked. By the time I was a graduate assistant, we were coaching the (junior varsity team), getting them ready to play a game, calling plays. That was a blast.”

Hankwitz said he would have been happy coaching high school sports, but Michigan assistant coach Jim Young was hired as the head coach at Arizona and

invited Hankwitz to go with him.

That began a 51-year run as an assistant coach at 11 different stops for Hankwitz, including a 10-year stint at University of Colorado under Hall of Fame coach Bill McCartney. He also coached at Texas A&M, 1997-2002, under another Hall of Famer, coach R.C. Slocum. There, he helped guide the Aggies’ famous “Wrecking Crew” defense.

He also returned for a time to Colorado and was defensive coordinator at Wisconsin before being hired at Northwestern in 2008 and retiring in 2020.

The numbers are there, of course ... 400 victories as an assistant coach, two stints as an interim head coach, all the bowl games and being part of nearly 40 winning teams.

But what was the most rewarding part of his coaching career?

“You’re coaching a group of players. You get to know them a lot,” Hankwitz said. “You see them grow and develop. I was a DB coach, I was a linebacker coach, I coached D-ends and then I became a coordinator where I coached a position, but I oversaw the whole defense, called the plays and stuff.

“So, I had different responsibilities as I went along. I interviewed for some head coaching jobs. Looking back, I wish there were some things I would have done prior to that to prepare myself for it.

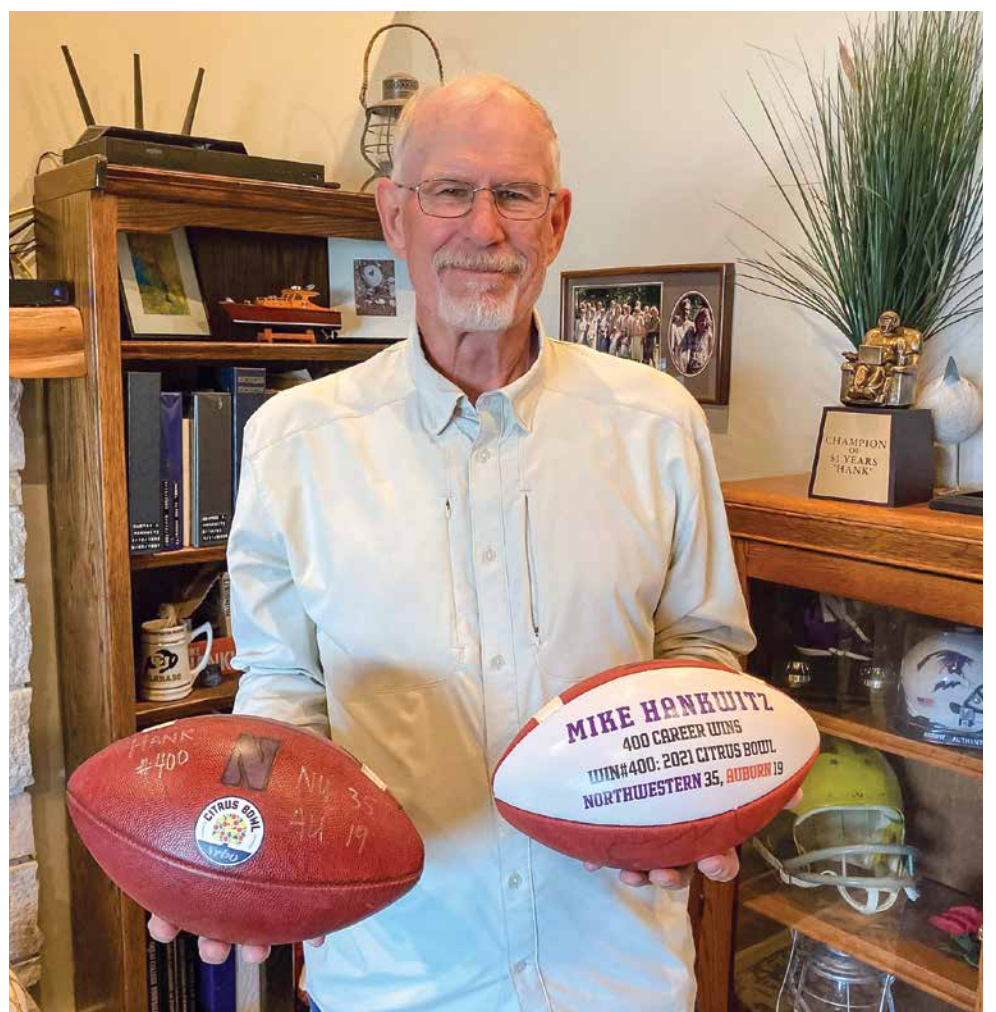
“But, when it didn’t happen, I just said I was going to be the best coordinator I can be. As the game changed, the offenses changed, you always had to change and come up with new ways to stop them, new ways to defend them.

“So, it was always fun. I was blessed to be around a lot of great people. I never felt like it was work. It was like I was still playing. You’re still competing. You don’t think about the hours. You just enjoyed what you were doing.”

Greg Gielczyk was sports editor at the Manistee News Advocate for 36 years and currently covers high school athletics for area media.



Northwestern defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz looks on from the sidelines during a game last year. Hankwitz retired after the 2020 regular season with 400 victories as an assistant coach for 11 teams. Photo courtesy of Northwestern University.



Recognized for his years of coaching service as well as his wins, Mike Hankwitz is shown here with some of his trophies. Photo by Carmelitta Tiffany.

# His soul goes marching on

By MILTON F. WHITMORE

*Manistee County's last Civil War Union veteran, James Wood Gear (1845-1934), was honored last month in Arcadia with a memorial dedication attended by 100 or so residents, representatives of historical and service organizations and various public officials. The Robert Finch Camp No. 14, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War conducted a most auspicious graveside ceremony.*

Born in the United Kingdom, James Wood Gear's life took him from Bristol, England to Wisconsin and eventually to Arcadia Township in Manistee County. Census records indicate that his family lived north of Milwaukee in Saukville and Port Washington. His father worked in the flour industry as a miller, and Gear eventually took employment as a teamster.

He enlisted in the Union Army in 1864 and was assigned to Company D of the 35th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment. The 35th was shipped out of the Milwaukee area to New Orleans and then to Port Hudson, Louisiana through Arkansas and eventually to Alabama. Gear's regiment participated in the assault against the defense of Mobile, Ala., the siege of Spanish Fort, as well as other actions in the state. The war ended in April 1865 with the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House and later that month with General

Joseph Johnston's Army of Tennessee at Bennett Place, a farm near Durham, North Carolina.

The 35th, with Gear in tow, moved to Texas, where it was mustered out of the army in March 1866.

After his Civil War service in the Deep South, Gear returned to Wisconsin and later married Josephine Osgood in November 1871. By 1880 the family, including two adopted children, had migrated to Arcadia, where Gear took up farming. From the Milwaukee area, the family's choice of Arcadia as a home destination was a natural fit, given that the township had its roots in the port city on the western shore of Lake Michigan.

Documents, including early plat maps of Arcadia Township, show that the Gear Farm was located on acreage straddling the present-day Gear Road south of the village of Arcadia. The property, now a part of David Smeltzer's Westwind Orchards, sits midway down Gear, about



The grave of James Wood Gear, the last Civil War Union soldier buried in Manistee County. Photo by Milton Whitmore.

a half mile due south of the road's junction with M-22. Documentation of Gear's residence in Arcadia Township is wide and varied and includes the 1890 U.S. Veterans schedule, the 1894 Michigan Census of U.S. Veterans of the Civil War, as well as census data.

Gear's agricultural activity on the farm continued for more than 40 years. His wife, Josephine, died in June 1917. On March 30, 1918, Gear married Clarissa Borden and a son, James Lester, was born in 1919. In the 1930 U.S. Census, the family was still listed with the father's occupation as a farmer. Clarissa was 50 and son James was 11 at the time.

Manistee County's last Civil War veteran ended his earthly journey on March 23, 1934, at age 88. Pvt. James Gear, an Arcadia Township resident for more than 50 years, was laid to rest in the township's Conway Cemetery, located on St. Pierre Road. A headstone was promptly placed at the burial site.

For those present at last month's ceremony — some from Arcadia Historical Society, Arcadia Lions Club, Manistee County Historical Museum and others — the dignified honoring of James Wood Gear held historical significance but also offered posthumous prayers of thanks to this former member of a grateful community.

The soul of Pvt. James Gear of Arcadia Township, indeed, goes marching on.

"The enduring realization that when a great challenge comes, the most ordinary people can show that they value something more than they value their own lives. When the last of the veterans had gone, and the sorrows and bitterness which the war created had at last worn away, this memory remained." — Bruce Catton

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.

# Inspiring new era in human spaceflight

By BROOKE EDWARDS

It may seem like science fiction, but the future is happening now, as the first crew of non-professional astronauts launched into space on September 15. The crew orbited the Earth for three days, flying higher than the Hubble Space Telescope and capturing amazing views of the earth from a newly installed cupola (window) on their Crew Dragon Resilience spacecraft. This was the same spacecraft that flew NASA's Crew-1 mission last year, the first routine flight of NASA astronauts on a SpaceX vehicle.

This time, however, not a single NASA



Crew of Inspiration4, the first all-civilian spaceflight. Photo courtesy of SpaceX.

astronaut was on board. Billionaire Jared Isaacman, founder of Shift4 Payment, approached SpaceX to inquire about the first all-civilian space mission. He would bankroll the flight and take the Leadership

seat as the mission's commander. He added three more seats named Hope, Generosity and Prosperity to benefit a charity, St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Isaacman wanted the first seat to go to an individual who represented Hope, and no one could fill that seat better than 29-year-old Haley Arceneaux. Years after overcoming childhood bone cancer with the help of St. Jude Children's Hospital, Arceneaux was now working her dream job as a physician's assistant at the same hospital that saved her life. When St. Jude approached her about the opportunity to take the Hope seat as part of the fundraiser, she jumped at the chance to join the mission, hoping to prove to the children at the hospital that there can be a fantastic life after cancer. Arceneaux also broke down barriers, being the first person to fly to space with a prosthetic in her leg. In the past, this would have been impossible with strict physical standards to qualify for space flight. With the private sector entering the playing field, walls to spaceflight are coming down.

Many applied for the Generosity seat by donating to St. Jude. That seat went to space advocate, engineer, and air force veteran, Chris Sembroski, who served as the crew's mission specialist. Sembroski has been a huge supporter of human space flight his entire life, even serving as a Space Camp counselor to inspire youth. When he was offered the seat, the husband and father of two took the opportunity to inspire the world.

You could also enter by creating a Shift4 Payment business. This is just what Dr. Sian Proctor, a geoscientist and science

communicator, did by creating space art for her Space2Inspire business. This effort landed Dr. Proctor the Prosperity seat, and her lifelong dream of flying to space. Dr. Sian Proctor was a finalist for the NASA astronaut program in the past, yet never gave up on her dream since being turned down. Piloting the Crew Dragon for Inspiration4, Dr. Proctor became the first African American female to pilot a spacecraft, as well as only the fourth African American female to fly to space.

While orbiting Earth, the crew took many photos and videos to share the experience. They also partnered with Translational Research Institute for Space Health (TRISH) to study the effects of space on the human body as well as smaller medical testing equipment that can be used down here on the earth. This includes a device that can perform an ultrasound on organs without the assistance of a medical professional. On Earth, a device such as this could be a lifesaver in a remote medical center without a specialist, enabling scans that could detect life-threatening conditions.

Once the crew splashed down off the coast of Florida exactly three days later, they had just hit their goal of raising \$200 million for St. Jude. This goal was achieved when SpaceX founder Elon Musk pledged \$50 million on Twitter. Positive feedback from the public poured in.

As many, including myself, watched the Falcon 9 rocket rise into the Florida sky at 8:02 p.m., Sept. 15, we felt that the crew carried the hopes, dreams and curiosity of all of us. If anything, this was evident in the



An aurora formed in the sky as the crew flew into the twilight. Photo by Brooke Edwards.



The Falcon 9 lifts off from Kennedy Space Center, Fla., on Sept. 15, 2021. Photo by Brooke Edwards.

aurora that the last gleam of twilight created as the Crew Dragon hit the atmosphere. The crowd cheered and cried as a new era in human space flight officially began.

Brooke Edwards is a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. She lives in Manistee and has given area presentations and hosted night-sky viewings at Fifth Avenue beach. Follow her group on Facebook: @Brooke-Edwards-Solar-System-Ambassador



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**MI BACKYARD**

# Edible red velvet, no chocolate

By **JENNIFER DEVINE**

*Middle Eastern spice, dye and lemonade. What do these three things have in common? They come from the same tropical-looking deciduous shrub located all over Michigan.*

The staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) has gnarly, crooked, twig-like trunks that can twist upwards or sideways and reach heights of 30 feet. Often the ones we see don't reach those heights. It's a colony shrub, and the largest in the middle will always be the "mother" with the youngest and smallest the furthest away. It can be invasive if left alone.

Leaves run parallel until the very end leaf. They are long and ovular with finely serrated edges and come to a point at the tip. They are bright green in hue, and from September to November give us a spectacular show with the changing autumn colors, turning a brilliant red.

Branches are covered in velvety rust-red colored hairs, much like a stag's antlers, hence the name.

Flowers show up in June and are vibrantly red, sticky, fuzzy and cone shaped, pointing toward the sky. At the end of August, as the rainstorms grow to be an almost weekly occurrence, the flowers will start losing their vibrancy, quite like being "washed out" and will be less potent in their uses. However, those same flowers can stay on that shrub from winter through spring, leaving the fuzzy red cones atop bare twiggy branches.

Female staghorn sumacs produce the fuzzy flower-seed clusters called drupes. Cherries, peaches and apricots are also

drupes. Staghorn drupes are low fat and oily, which help preserve them well into the winter months for birds and foraging animals to nibble when food is scarce. Insects also eat and nest in them.

Speaking of their low fat and oily content, those properties are what makes them tart, sour and vinegary, and what gives them the nickname of Indian Lemonade. Wait. Lemonade? Yes. Those red clusters need to be soaked in cold water for at least 12 hours, if not longer. Then, strain the water through a coffee filter, thin tee shirt or cheesecloth to remove the seeds and particles, so all you are left with is the sour liquid. Make sure you use cold water, because hot water will make it lose all its vitamin C. Other recipes say to boil water and steep like a regular tea bag for 5-10 minutes, then strain and add lemons, sugar and other ingredients to make the lemonade. You could try both ways and see which you prefer. However, if you're in the wilderness, you probably don't have lemons and sugar in your backpack.

Now if you'd rather eat it as a spice, you can find it pre-made in specialty markets or make your own. Ground, dried sumac tastes great on lamb, fish and chicken. Mix the ground spice with pepper and get something like zesty lemon pepper. Middle Eastern chefs use sumac as a topping for fattoush salad, hummus or anything else that calls for a burst of flavor and color. We



The red staghorn sumac flower is surprisingly sticky. Photos taken on Seaman Road, near Wellston, by Jennifer Devine.



Tropical-looking staghorn sumac is a colonizer and spreads easily.

must remember that our American shrubs are not exactly like the Middle Eastern shrubs, just a close cousin that holds almost the same flavors and benefits. Our seeds are much harder and denser.

To make the spice, you'll need a food processor. Process the drupes so the fuzz comes off the seed. Pour into a sifter and watch the sticky fuzz fall away, leaving you with the seeds. Take the fuzz and dry it at 300 degrees for about 6 minutes, let cool, then store in an airtight container for up to a year and use to garnish your dishes. Take the seeds and grind them into a powder that resembles paprika and it's ready to add to any recipe.

To make dye, simply boil water and add drupes for an hour or two. Periodically use a stick to push down and smooch them to release tannins. Sift out the drupes, let cool and add your wet yarn or fabric. Voila! It's a very muted orange-brown. Experiment and have fun! Adding alum will brighten your colors.

Staghorn sumac is in the same Anacardiaceae family as cashews, mangoes and pistachios, so if you are allergic to any of these please do not eat or touch this.

Poison ivy, poison sumac, and poison oak are all in this family as well. They can cause a fantastic amount of itchiness and discomfort through the production of an oil called urushiol.

Now that we know this, why is staghorn sumac edible and not poisonous? The answer is that poison sumac and staghorn sumac belong to different genera. You will also find them in very different habitats. While poison sumac loves the wetlands and swamps, it is also solitary. Staghorn sumac loves the sun and dry roadside ditches with many around just like it. Their berries are drastically different as well. We know the red drupes of the staghorns, but poison sumac has single (no clusters) white, hard-skinned, almost-flat berries that point toward the ground.

Use caution, explore your area 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 and their children live off grid and have chickens, ducks and rabbits, a large garden and a lot of woods.



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# Backroads

continued from page 1

Drive toward Onekama, referencing our Michigan Gazetteer for other little access points. The drive winds along on the backside of dune bluffs, past nice houses perched between the road and water.

We finally found, thanks to Mme. Navigator, a hidden access and parking area at the end of Crescent Beach Road, where Portage Lake enters Lake Michigan.

At this point we ran into a small glitch. I had stopped on the road with the motor running and Navigator waiting in the truck, and I walked on a paved path to where Portage Lake and Lake Michigan meet.

After a few photos of a marvelous view, I headed back only to hear Navigator yell, "Kevin, we're in trouble!" She had gotten out to stretch and closed the door, inadvertently locking the truck.

First thoughts: "Oh, crap. No extra keys outside the truck. What now? Call a locksmith?"

She had looked through her window to see if the driver's side window was down. No luck, or so she thought. An inspiration made me double check the driver's side. A-ha! The window was all the way down, something not noticeable from the other side. Disaster averted, it was time to head back.

## Rock-hunting beaches

Lakeshore drives on other days have taken us to lesser-known places along the Big Lake. On Lakeshore Drive, on the south side of Ludington Harbor, is Buttersville Park Beach, a nice strip of sand. Parking is just steps from the water. It's one of our favorite rock-hunting beaches tended by Pere Marquette Township. Joined by Indiana friends Eric and Janice, we spent time recently strolling and picking up interesting rocks.

Between Ludington and Manistee we found Filer Township's Magoon Creek on Red Apple Road. A natural area with blufftop parking above Lake Michigan,



Never know what kind of rock you'll find on a Backroads and Beaches journey. "What EYES you have!" Photo by Jean Howell.



Found a discreet public access to Portage Lake. It was a great day for a little fishing and boating. Photo by Kevin Howell.

Magoon's trails lead through pines and oaks and down to another rocky beach. There we ran into Lisa Atkinson, from Saginaw, picking over rocks.

"This is gorgeous country," she said, admitting she didn't know much about rocks, just likes how they look.

North of Magoon is Sundling, another Filer Township Park on Lake Michigan. We pulled into the parking area for a quick look and will be back for closer inspection.

At the northern boundary of our lakeshore drives so far is Pierport Beach, mentioned in "The Unsung Stretch of M-22," Freshwater Reporter, Vol. III, No. 9. It's another great rocky beach with easy access. There, we found a surprise: a red, flat, tile sort-of rock with a message: "Please Post to Shine On for Shelby Rocks FB. Re-hide in memory of Shelby."

Check out her Facebook page. We did, and re-hid the rock.

You never know what you'll find on Backroads and Beaches travels.

Visit Little Manistee Weir online at: <https://www.michigan.org/property/little-manistee-river-weir>, or <https://www.visitmanisteecounty.com/project/little-manistee-river>

Get the skinny on Orchard Beach State Park: <https://www.michigan.org/property/>



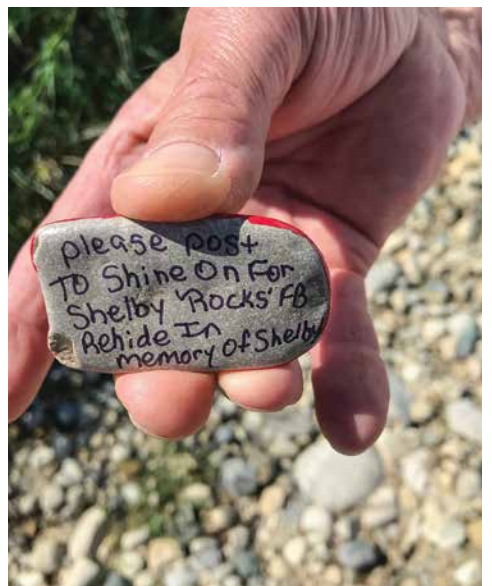
Lisa Atkinson from Saginaw found a nice rock at Magoon Creek. Photo by Kevin Howell.

## orchard-beach-state-park

Kevin Howell is a transplanted freelance writer in Mason County. He loves the Michigan woods, lakes and especially Michigan craft beers, not necessarily in that order. Contact him at: [kevin@ytc.com](mailto:kevin@ytc.com).

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A memorial tribute. Photo by Jean Howell.



New friends and fellow rock lovers Chris Sheppard and Ronee Pumfrey, at Orchard Beach State Park. Photo by Kevin Howell.



The weir at Little Manistee River. Photo by Kevin Howell.

# Community Calendar

Some events may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules or COVID-19. Always call ahead. **Email your October calendar events or press releases by October 25 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](https://freshwater-reporter.com/calendar-2)**

## OCTOBER

- Thru **Mentorships Can Be Life Changing**  
**15** 12-5pm, Tues.-Sat., free, Life-size bronze statues of James Earl Jones and his mentor, high school English teacher Donald Crouch were commissioned by the Arts and Culture Alliance of Manistee County to be placed in front of the KND public school in Brethren where Crouch taught and Jones attended. The works, by sculptor Bernadette Zachara-Marcos, are on display at Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- Thru **Art Works by Hank Feeley and Nick Preneta**  
**22** 10am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, free, Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort
- 6** **Classic Film Series: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1957)**  
 10am & 7pm, \$2, The Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee
- 6** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**  
 4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 7** **Elberta Farmers Market**  
 9am-noon, Waterfront Park, Furnace St., Elberta
- 7** **Onekama OneFifty Grand Finale Gala**  
 6-10pm at Portage Point Resort, 8567 Portage Point Dr., Onekama. \$35/person, \$300/table of 10. Tickets on sale now. Festive evening of food, live music and tributes to Onekama's past 150 years. Guest speaker Loreen Niewenhuis, author and Great Lakes adventurer. Email Onekama150th@gmail.com or go to Onekama.info/Onekama-onefifty
- 9** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Wink**  
 5:30-8:30pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 8** **Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Wink**  
 6-8pm, free, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville
- 8** **Live Music at the Brewery with Gabriel James**  
 6-9pm, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 8** **Live music at Northern Natural Cider House & Winery with Airborne or Aquatic**  
 6-9pm, 7220 Chief Road, Kaleva
- 8** **The Swon Brothers live in concert**  
 7:30pm, \$25-35 adults, \$10 under 18, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. For details and tickets, go to: ramsdelltheatre.org
- 8** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 8** **Rusty Fish 100 Gravel Bicycle Race**  
 8am, \$115 for men, women, teens 15-17, \$195 for tandem, registration is limited to 250 cyclists must be done by Oct.1, and includes: T-shirt, socks, water bottle, cycling cap and more. Race starts and finishes at Manistee National Golf & Resort, 4797 Grant Hwy., Manistee. Halfway point is Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville. For details, route map, registration, go to: rustyfish100.com
- 9** **Michigan Adventure Race: Ludington**  
 All day, \$109-129. In teams of 1-4, complete a 5 or 10 hour adventure race (bike, paddle, trek, navigate with map and compass) in Ludington State Park. Reservations end Oct.7 at 5pm.  
**For info, go to [miadventurerace.com](https://miadventurerace.com)**
- 9** **Scottville Optimists' Annual Fall Garage Sale**  
 9am-2pm, Scottville Optimist Hall, 105 W. State St., Scottville. For more info, email dianne@wattsgroupinc.com
- 9** **Onekama Fall Festival**  
 10am-2pm, Art & Flea Market fundraiser at 4850 Main St. for Homeward Bound Animal Shelter. 10am-4pm: Food, FREE Games & Face Painting in Village Park. 12 pm, Pet Costume Contest. 2-4pm, Feral Cats live music. Follow Patina on Facebook for updates.
- 9** **Frankfort Fall Festival Craft Fair**  
 10am, free, Open Space Park, 727 Main St., Frankfort. Crafts and/or booths are fall-themed.
- 9** **The Metropolitan Opera Live in HD presents Boris Gudunov (Mussorgsky)**  
 1pm, \$20 adults, \$10 students, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Special Family Opera Days \$20 for 1 adult and 1 student - while adults attend the opera, students will participate in an art project that relates to the opera, creating Matryoshka Dolls & Architectural Onion Domes
- 9** **Fabulous Fall Honey Bee Market**  
 1-7pm, Numerous arts, crafts, and other goodies for sale by local vendors. Lord of the Gourd pumpkin carving and music in the barn. On the grass at St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd. Beulahks of S. Main St. and S. Blaine St., Scottville
- 9** **Chief Day: Live music at Northern Natural Cider House & Winery with Earth Radio and The Go Rounds**  
 7220 Chief Road, Kaleva. Bring blankets/ chairs. No dogs/outside food or drink.
- 9** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 10** **Michigan Legacy Art Park Fall Color Tour**  
 10-11:30am, free with park admission of \$5/ adult, kids free, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville. Naturalist Caitlin Chism will lead the tour of 50+ sculptures along with expert insights on the park's natural environment, including tree identification. Light refreshments provided. Meet at the Art Park trailhead.
- 12** **AFFEW Invasive Plant Identification Walking Tour**  
 10-11am, free, Ludington Central Bark Park (meet at the end of Rath Ave.) Hosted by North Country SISMA and AFFEW, Dave Dister will lead a tour of Cartier Park focusing on identifying and treatment methods for invasive plant species. Masks required. This is a fair weather event.
- 13** **Let's Talk Mason County History!**  
 8:30-10am, free, Ludington Senior Center, 308 S. Rowe St., Ludington. Mason County Historical Society and the Ludington Senior Center present special guests James Jensen and Jim Fay discussing the rich history of Mason County, from the lumbering era to today's tourist industry. Program includes breakfast, socializing and discussions. Open to all Mason County residents
- 13** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**  
 4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 14** **Meet the Author: Charles Kraus**  
 7pm, free, Weldon Township Hall, 14731 Thompson Ave., Thompsonville. The author, an area resident, will discuss the research he did for his book, *Thompsonville in Time*, and answer questions. Books will be available for signing and purchase.
- 15** **Live Music at the Brewery with Brett Mitchell**  
 6-9pm, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 15** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 16** **Sweet Taste of Mason County**  
 10am-3pm, free, Hosted by the Scottville Beekeepers Association at the Ludington Senior Center, 308 S. Rowe, Ludington. Sample over a dozen different honeys, view an observation hive with live bees, learn from beekeepers. Activities for kids and honey for purchase
- 16** **Western Michigan Old Engine Club Tractor Pull**  
 10am Garden Tractor dead-boat pull, 1pm transfer-sled pull. WMOEC Grounds, 700 S. Scottville Rd., Scottville
- 16** **Live Music at Iron Fish Distillery with Jack Pine**  
 6-8pm, free, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville
- 16** **Live Music at North Channel Brewing with Redux**  
 6-9pm, North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St., Manistee
- 16** **Haunted Forest**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$5 per person, under 3 free, Cartier Park Campground, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr., Ludington. Drive through Halloween scenes set up throughout the campground. The theme is "Howl at the Moon"
- 16** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 19** **Courtyard Concert series with Cheryl Wolfram**  
 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/>
- 20** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**  
 4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 20-24** **Clue (A Theater Production)**  
 7:30pm Oct. 21-23, 2pm Oct. 24, \$25 adults, \$20 seniors, \$15 under 18, Center Stage Theater, West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Rd., Scottville. Play is based on the popular board game and the film
- 21** **Intro to Vermicomposting Workshop**  
 6-7pm, free but donations are welcome, Michigan Worm Works, 1965 Pine Creek Rd., Manistee. Worm Works, in partnership with the Manistee Conservation District, will give a presentation on the benefits of vermicomposting, followed by a workshop, including a take-home kit with all necessary equipment and supplies to get you started at home. Registration is required by Oct. 7 to participate. Contact the Conservation District at 231.889.9666 or manisteedcd@macd.org to register.
- 22** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 23** **15th Annual Founders Peak2Peak Mountain Bike Classic**  
 Various times, \$25-85, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville  
**For race info, registration and more, go to [crystalmountain.com](https://crystalmountain.com)**
- 23** **The Metropolitan Opera Live in HD presents Fire Shut Up In My Bones (Terrence Blanchard)**  
 1pm, \$20 adults, \$10 students, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 23** **Irish Night featuring Crossbow**  
 7:30pm, \$20, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 23** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 27** **Let's Talk Mason County History!**  
 8:30-10am, free, Ludington Senior Center, 308 S. Rowe St., Ludington. Mason County Historical Society and the Ludington Senior Center present special guests James Jensen and Jim Fay discussing the rich history of Mason County, from the lumbering era to today's tourist industry. Program includes breakfast, socializing and discussions. Open to all Mason County residents
- 27** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**  
 4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 29-30** **The Built Environment Art Exhibit**  
 Works depicting human-made surrounds that provide the setting for human activity. 10am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, free, Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort
- 29** **Live Music at the Brewery with Van Mason**  
 6-9pm, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 29** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 30** **Run for Your Lives 5/10k**  
 9am-12pm, \$30-35, Choose the length of your run. Costumes optional. Registration includes a finisher's medal and race T-shirt. Package pickup from 8-9am. Legacy Park, 112 N. James St., Ludington.  
**For more info, go to [eventbrite.com](https://eventbrite.com)**
- 30** **Live Music at North Channel Brewing with Redux**  
 6-9pm, North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St., Manistee
- 30** **Manistee Ghostship!**  
 7:30-10:30pm, \$10, S. S. City of Milwaukee, 99 Arthur St., Manistee. Haunted house attraction on the historic car ferry. 5-6 decks and takes 25-45 minutes to walk through.
- 31** **Downtown Ludington Trick-or-treat**  
 2-4pm, daytime trick-or-treating for younger children at all downtown Ludington businesses

## NOVEMBER

- 3** **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Bill Frary**  
 4-7pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah
- 5** **Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper live in concert**  
 7:30pm, \$25 adults, \$20 seniors, \$15 under 18, Center Stage Theater, West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Rd., Scottville
- 6** **Live Music at North Channel Brewing with Sugartips Duo**  
 6-9pm, North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St., Manistee

# Launches

continued from page 1

“Jan and I have owned boats all our life,” Dave began. “For the most part, we have boats that are trailered, and we normally just go for the day and launch and recover that day. Over at Arcadia, it’s far enough away (that) we just leave it there for the month. For the rest of the year, we’re launching it and bringing it home the same day.”

Jan chimed in.

“As far as a learning curve on launching that boat, I learned many years ago that (with) a long rope with a loop at the bow and the back ... I can control the boat by myself from the dock,” she said. “As long as I have got a rope that goes from the front to the back, I can push out with a foot or pull in as I need to. It’s pretty easy to launch it with just the two of us.”

Dave shared a couple of anecdotes.

“You have got to make sure your tie-down straps from the back are unhooked,” he explained.

“We did that once,” Jan said. “(The boat) wouldn’t come off the trailer, because it wouldn’t come loose, and we finally realized, ‘Oh, hey, the tie-down straps are still on the back!’”

“And when you go to recover, with my boat I’ve got that kicker motor, so that has to be up when you pull it out (of the water),” Dave said. “With a lot of people, they take their plugs out. We don’t. But I have seen people launch it and forget to put the plug in the back of the boat, and that’s a problem. The boat tends to sink that way.”

While sitting at the boat launch ramp this summer, I had time to contemplate ancient texts regarding the patron saint of boats, Saint Brendan, who launched his currach from his home in Ireland. Its hull was covered with cow skins. According to his written account, the crew reached the New World in the fifth century A.D. They sailed among icebergs and stopped at the Faroe Islands and Iceland. It has been established that they found Newfoundland well before Columbus did.

We boaters are a bit like the baby Moses after we launch our boats. We don’t know how the journey will go, who we will meet along the way or where the journey will end. But we do know it all begins at the boat launch ramp.



The public boat launch on the Manistee River access to Lake Michigan offers multiple ramps. Photo by P. Stinson.

### Finding Michigan’s launches

The Michigan Recreational Boating Information System is online at Michigan.gov. Using MRBIS, boaters can find launch ramps all around the state.

Non-motorized craft can be launched at special access points in state parks and state forest campgrounds.

There is a new universal access launching facility between the Hamlin Lake beach and the Ludington State Park boat launch. The EZ Dock launch has a transfer station that allows those in wheelchairs to board small boats such as canoes and kayaks. Rollers on the ramp make a smooth launch and easy exit for boats with passengers. The Friends of Ludington State Park raised



Leo Hesting is the first to launch a kayak from the all-access launch ramp, shortly after its dedication last month. Photo by P. Stinson.



The new all-access universal launch ramp at Hamlin Lake. Photo by P. Stinson.



A fisherman with his fishing boat at the launch ramp. Photo by Stewart McFerran.

funds that also came from the Michigan State Parks and Mason County Community Foundation, among others. FLSF President Bob Sasin said the new access will make launching easier for kayakers and canoeists.

Stewart illuminates current environmental issues in a historical context. He hopes readers will gain an understanding and insight into ways people interact with their environment. He is our Freshwater Reporter Ambassador-At-Large.



This boater traveled from Tennessee to launch on the Betsie River. Photo by Stewart McFerran.

# Lowry’s Landings

By PAT STINSON

Boat landings were like church services. Be quiet. Don’t breathe heavily. Above all, don’t talk, offer comment or advice. Our family of seven piled into a 14-foot fiberglass boat, sometimes loaded with lumber, always powered by a 5-1/2 horsepower mint-green Johnson motor. We putt-putted our way to our shell-of-a-cottage on a lake in northern Ontario.

As we approached our rickety wooden dock at the lowest possible speed, all hands on deck would clench nervously. Occasionally, the youngest onboard would lose patience and holler, “Left ... left ... No, the OTHER LEFT!”

Our speed was so slow, the wake from our approach could throw us off course. The captain, my nervous-nellie of a stepfather, (a former priest), would boom, “Everyone, SHUT UP!” My mother would lean over the side of the boat, soundlessly affixing the soft plastic bumpers to hooks along the boat’s side. Clenching the aft rope in her hands, she jumped from the boat deck to the dock’s gangplank and tied a single loop through the nearest dock ring before running the weathered planks to the bow. There, she caught the rope the nearest shipmate threw to her. The second youngest of us would scramble out of the boat to tie the chain-link “knots” we kids learned during drills from our fearful captain.

A vacation at the cottage always began with these 3-mile trips down the lake through rock-infested waters with perilous landing attempts at our dock. I returned several times as an adult, each boat trip piloted by my stepfather. The rules did not change, and practice never did make perfect.

Pat Stinson, her mother, her siblings and the family schnauzer miraculously survived years of northern Ontario boat landings. To this day, she prefers to drive the family car and pilot her own kayak.

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

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: Jennifer Devine, Brooke Edwards, Greg Gielczyk, Kevin Howell, Stewart McFerran, Carmelitta Tiffany, Milt Whitmore

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