

# FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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## Woodstoves and Lumberjacks

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN

*My great-grandfather was a lumberjack in Northern Michigan. My great-grandmother was the cook at his logging camp. I inherited the conviction that there is a bounty in the woodlands that will provide. And it does, each time I load logs into my Lopi woodburning stove.*

Maybe it was those lumberjack stories Dad read to me when I was a kid or our time together chopping firewood for the fireplace. There was that time a storm blew down a big oak tree in our front yard. We cut it up for firewood, and we had another big oak milled into planks.

Now I have my own portable sawmill and 13 logs waiting to be milled. The milling process is most satisfying. Slab wood created while squaring the logs helps feed the Lopi and heat my house.

### The wonder of woodstoves

Technologies designed to get the most heat out of each piece of firewood have come a long way since the fireplace. Inside woodstoves, gases emitted by burning wood recirculate in clever ways and burn at high temperatures before going up and out the chimney. A woodburning stove's exterior is designed to transfer heat, and sometimes built-in fans circulate that warmth into the room.



Chris Richardson, owner of Positive Chimney in Ludington and Cadillac, said that woodburning stoves sold today are more efficient than stoves built 20 years ago. Each cord of firewood provides more heat and lasts longer when burned in one of the new certified stoves.

"They improved over the years, little by little, with governmental changes that were enforced," Richardson said. "The EPA rules have been upgrading woodstoves. Today's '2020 rule' stove is 30% more efficient than an old woodstove that was made prior to EPA regulations. It's a savings of firewood and a cleaner environment."

Higher temperatures in the stove's interior create a cleaner burn, and some stoves include catalytic converters to



Above. Stewy and his dog Brownie after a windfall in the front yard of the writer's boyhood home. As others cleared the tree, Brownie swiped a meatloaf off a tabletop – a second windfall. Photo by Warren A. McFerran. Top. The writer's Lopi woodstove. Photo by Stewart A. McFerran.

reduce chimney smoke emissions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires a cordwood test to measure the amount of particulate material in the smoke. The new stoves release less than 2.5 grams of

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## January 1 'X' marks the spot

By CHRISTINA RYAN-STOLTZ

The energy and hype of a new year has inspired humans to make declarations, promises and resolutions since ancient Babylonia. Those early new year's celebrations, held in the spring, honored the planting of crops and with it, the promise to make good on debts.

In Rome, Julius Caesar changed the date of the new year in 46 B.C. to January 1. The month was so-named for Janus, a two-headed spirit who inhabited doorways and arches and symbolically watched over both the previous year and the future. The Romans made promises in the new year to be good citizens.

Christians began celebrating "Watch Night" or "Covenant Renewal Service" in church on New Year's Eve or Day, reaffirming their faith and resolving to become better servants of Christ in the new year.



### Making personal promises

In modern times, these resolutions have moved away from sacred declarations to a god and into a more secular promise to the self. To improve the self, to course correct, to become the best version of oneself. For many, this promise becomes a starting line for showing up differently to take better care of oneself. Weight loss is often at the top of the list, especially following a holiday season filled with overindulgence, heightened emotional triggers and a need to clear out the debris of the previous year. The first day of a new calendar becomes the X that marks the spot. A commencement.

Despite all the excitement and determination, inevitably these potent self-proclamations lose their luster when the effort required to sustain them becomes too challenging or the

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## Three Generations of Golden Deals

By CARMELITTA TIFFANY



Nick Franklin (center), owner of Gold N Deals in Scottville, with his father Paul (left) and grandfather Dale (right). Nick is the third generation of his family in the resale and loan business. Courtesy photo.

Establishments that serve as pawnbrokers are important parts of the community. Nick Franklin owns Gold N Deals in downtown Scottville. He avoids the term "pawnshop" when describing his establishment.

"We just call ourselves 'resale and loan,'" Franklin said. "It allows people in a hard spot that can't always get a cash loan the chance to make some money, by using an item of value as collateral for a loan or just to sell."

The store is filled with a vast variety of merchandise, from collectibles to furniture, sports and outdoor gear, household items and jewelry. On a recent visit to Gold N Deals, I found a collection of framed Beatles album covers, fishing lures, and antique furniture and dishes.

"I like to say it's more than your average pawnshop," said Nick. "We do offer loans, but we also buy, sell, trade, loan and consign new and used merchandise. We buy gold and silver. We buy and sell as well for under retail, and everything we sell is negotiable."

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Inspecting a vat of wine at Pere Marquette Winery. Photo by Kevin Howell.



North Branch Winery offers a variety of flavors to sample. Photo by Kevin Howell.

# Small-batch wineries, big flavor

By KEVIN HOWELL

Over time, I've developed a taste for hoppier beverages, but my palate has recently taken favor with the fruity flavors of some wines. Two new area wineries, which opened in July, offer their own take on grape-derived beverages, with tasting rooms unique to their establishments.

## Pere Marquette Winery

Pere Marquette Winery is located on a bluff above Lake Michigan and found along Iris Road, south of Ludington. Owner Wes Morton makes his own wine in a converted horse barn there and grows the grape varietals used in his wines. In a small but comfortable tasting room across from former horse stalls, my navigator Jean and I sampled several of Morton's flavors. We began with Badger White, a blend of Chardonnay, Riesling and Seyval grapes. To my amateur palate, it had a nice flavor — smooth but definitely dry. Next, with a name I could better relate to, due to my background in distilled spirits, Hooch turned out to be a nice fruity, sweetish white wine blend. In fact, extreme blending is how the wine came to be.

"It's a blend of every white grape I've ever made wine from, (drawn from) the ends of tanks when I'm finished blending," Morton

explained. "It's sweetened white wine."

Tending toward sweeter wines, I liked it.

"A couple years ago when my partner (since deceased) was still here, we had a couple of glass carboys with leftovers that were maybe two years old," Morton said, of the origin of Hootch. "I was going to throw them out just to get rid of them, but Rocky (his partner) was pretty frugal and said, 'We can't waste that much wine.' I said, 'I'm not selling this crap,' so we dumped it all together, added some sugar, added some fresh juice, some preservative, and I put a piece of duct tape on the side and called it Rocky's Hooch."

A couple months later, Morton tried it again and decided it was pretty good after all. With a few modifications, Hootch remains on the wine list.

Morton, a retired world-traveling photographer, serves about 11 flavors of wine, including Pinot Noir Rose, Red Pinot

Noir, Cayuga White and more. His wines are made from grapes he has grown for 30 years.

Pere Marquette Winery's tasting room is closed until April, but Morton may have a few wines available if a customer calls.

## North Branch Winery

North Branch Winery opened last summer, just two days after Pere Marquette. Owned by Indiana transplants Tom Doughty and Toni Biggs-Doughty, the couple lives in the Shelby area on the North Branch of the White River, hence the name of the winery. They chose the small town of Scottville to make their wines because of traffic heading through town to the Ludington beach. They also thought of campers and fishermen along the Pere Marquette River. All told, they have been making wine for about seven years, and they currently use the back portion of their small shop for



Toni Biggs-Doughty and Tom Doughty, co-owners of North Branch Winery of Scottville, raise a toast to 2022. Courtesy photo.

this process.

Not long after they opened, Jean and I happened across the tasting room and stopped in for a sampling. We walked out with a bottle of Riverside Blend, a slightly sweetish blended wine with Barbera grapes.

"California doesn't have any more Barbera (grapes) right now so we can't get any more Riverside Blend made right now," Tom explained on our most recent tasting trip.

Unlike Pere Marquette Winery, Tom and Toni do not grow their own grapes.

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# Fruit rules at Backwoods Homemade Wines

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL

Like so many producers of alcoholic beverages I've met over the years, Russ Nicewander and his wife Melody began making home brews for personal consumption.

"It just kind of took off," Russ commented, "I started making beer for myself. My wife liked her wine and she said 'Well, you make your beer, and you won't make me wine.'"

"I said, 'I don't know how to make wine.' Well, I guess I learned."

From backroom production, the winemaking business has been growing for the Nicewanders, with products distributed to several smaller mom-and-pop businesses in the area and farmers markets in season. Lynn and Perin Mercantile in Frankfort, Shop N Save in Ludington, the Dublin Store near Wellston, Quenchers in Stronach, Up North Market in Pentwater and others carry Backwoods wines.

Differing from some other wines, Nicewanders' contain a variety of fruits but no grapes.

"Caribbean Cruise, yeah, that's mango, banana, coconut, pineapple," Russ chuckled at the unusual blend. "Yeah, I know; it's sort of like a pina colada, it's really popular, if you can believe it."

In all, there are 25 flavors, including Russ's favorite Black

Cherry. Pear is a big seller, and there are unusual flavors too such as Sumac ("It's really good, I was surprised"), Rhubarb, Tomato, Banana and Lavender.

"If it's a fruit, I'll make wine out of it just to try it," he said.

According to the Nicewanders, the wines are handcrafted the old-fashioned way — made in small batches from hand-picked, hand-washed and processed real fruit. Russ said 90% of his wines are semi-sweet and 10% are dry.

The couple began making wine sometime prior to 2011 when a license was obtained.

"We were making wine a little before that, then everybody started buying it - guys at work stopping by - it just took off."

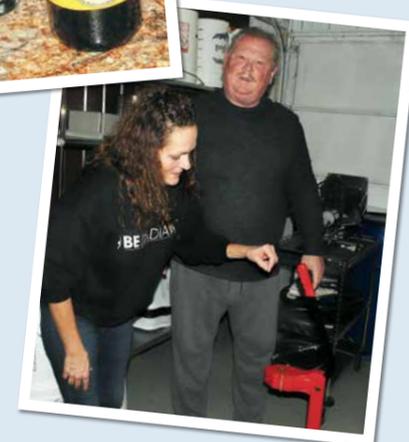
"You'd be surprised at the amount of wine we make and sell; it's crazy," Nicewander said.

For my own taste buds, I enjoyed Russ's favorite Black Cherry, but their Chocolate Cherry and Honey Crisp Apple wines were also tasty.

Although there isn't an official tasting room yet, there is one in the planning stages, and tasting is available at farmers markets or by contacting the Nicewanders. Follow Backwoods Homemade Wines on Facebook.



A taste of Black Cherry, the favorite fruit-wine flavor of Backwoods' co-owner Russ Nicewander.



Russ and Melody Nicewander, owners of Backwoods Homemade Wines near Irons, with their bottle-corking machine in their home winery.

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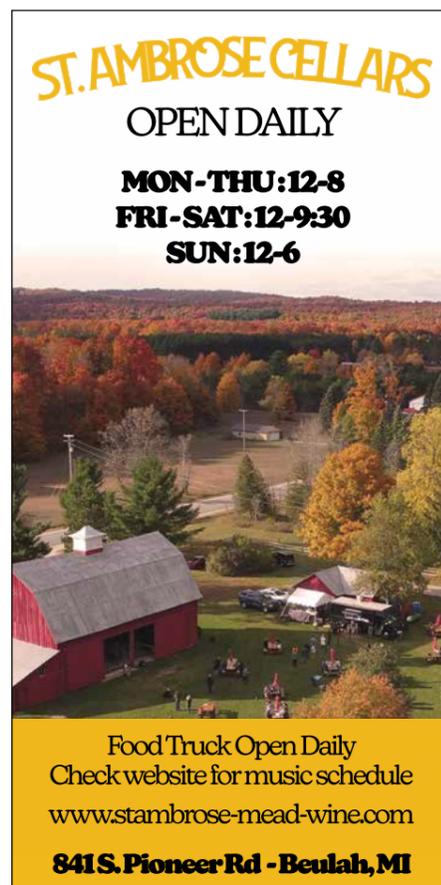
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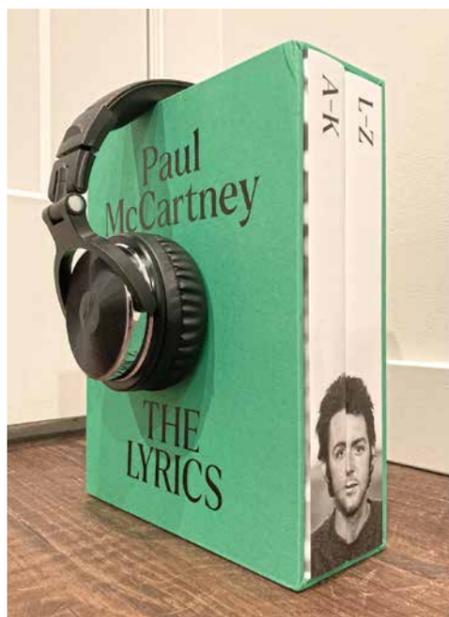
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# Wishes for 2022 from a Beatles Nerd

Story and photo by **GORDON BERG**

Okay. I confess. I am a Beatles Nerd. As a kid I had a Beatle wig. I had a six-inch-tall stack of Beatles trading cards. And of course, there was the music.

As an adult, I soak up podcasts about The Beatles like a sponge in an octopus's garden. I even admit that I've looked into getting an online master's



degree in The Beatles Music and Heritage from the University of Liverpool.

Yup. That's me. Beatles Nerd. All that said, I was not prepared when Paul McCartney's new two-volume collection of his lyrics found its way under our Christmas tree last month. A generous gift from my sister-in-law, brother-in-law and their daughter. I guess they know me better than I know myself.

I've barely scratched the first couple dozen or so pages, but so far, I am transfixed. You see, what really fascinates me about The Beatles' songs are their origins. Who or what inspired their creation? What was going on in their lives at the time? What was the songwriting process like? It's all there in these books.

One such morsel stopped me in my tracks. Recalling the origins of one of the first songs he ever wrote, "All My Loving", McCartney said:

With songwriting, you conceive of it in one genre (because you can't conceive of things in thousands of genres), and you have one way

of hearing it. If you get it right, however, you realise it has a certain elasticity; songs can be flexible. And when other members of The Beatles would get into the studio, often that's when that elasticity would kick in.

McCartney might present to the other members of The Beatles a song he wrote, hearing it in his head initially as a country song, but then John Lennon may suggest a tweak he hears, and it then becomes a rock song. Elasticity.

Famously, McCartney heard a song in a dream and the only words that fit at first were "scrambled eggs." Later, he replaced those placeholder words with one word, "Yesterday." Even reading just that one word, I bet you can hear the song in your head. In that moment, he was being elastic.

In his creative process, he is open to new possibilities, open to others' ideas, and possesses a willingness to let others influence his work.

Wow. Elasticity. This word hit me like "Maxwell's Silver Hammer". Maybe it

was all the 2021 year-in-review segments on TV. Maybe it was how everything, everything has become so politicized. Maybe it was the behavioral studies that report the PTSD-like impact of Covid on young and old alike.

Elasticity. Maybe we as a nation and as individuals need more elasticity in our lives. Maybe we should be less judgmental and more forgiving of each other. Maybe we can be a little more compassionate. Maybe we can let our egos be a little more vulnerable. None of us are going to break if we do this. We're elastic. When we stretch, we grow. We get bigger. We become a better version of ourselves. A better song.

Elasticity. We can work it out. Let's at least try this year.

All my lovin' to you. Happy 2022.

Gordon Berg is a descendant of Manistee's Bergs, Swansons and Martinsons. His debut book, "Harry and the Hurricane," is about his father's life as a young boy and how he survived the Miami Hurricane of 1926. www.harryandthehurricane.com

## Resolutions

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fun wears off before the desired results are achieved. Doing the hard work of changing a pattern or establishing a new habit can feel unnatural because it is new. Our minds can flip a switch and suddenly be against the very thing we clung to so desperately just weeks before.

In the face of our human nature, what can we do when we want to change but our "get up and go, got up and went"?

### Find your calm

Research into the psychology of change suggests that we start small. Forming new habits changes the neural pathways in our brains. To do this successfully, the brain must not be forced into fight, flight or freeze — indications of being overwhelmed, which override the nervous system to protect/survive. So, the very first step would be to create a sense of calm within the mind to begin to observe the needs of our whole self. Overweight, for example, can certainly be a health concern that needs attention to dissuade chronic illness, but it can also be about self-image/self-worth. Or emotional satiety. Or connection to others.

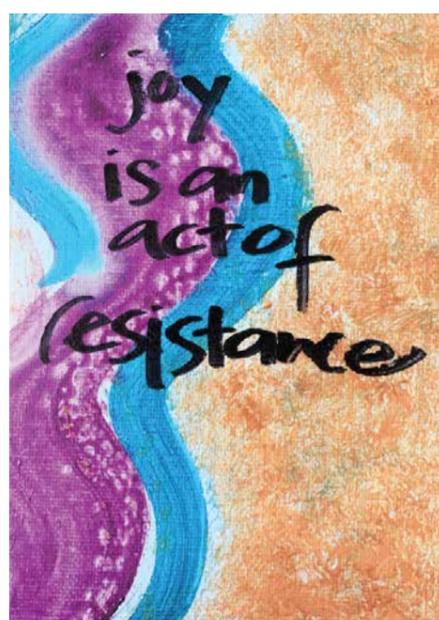
To begin to address the cause (aforementioned unmet needs) rather than

the symptom (excess body weight), is an approach that is gaining traction because it gets to the root of the "problem" and allows the mind, body and spirit to work together to bring about change. This is what holistic health is really all about. Addressing the WHOLE being. You can begin by making and keeping small but intentional promises to yourself every day which honor and support your well-being in body, mind and spirit. These micro promises may lead toward an overall goal you have set, but they break that objective into actionable steps you can take, one day at a time.

### Ask yourself this

Let's stick with the example of this essay: weight loss. If I want to lose 20 pounds, I could restrict my eating and burn extra calories by working out, and I would likely see results as long as I stick with that calculated formula. If I get hungry, I either deny my body's hunger cues or I give in to the cravings and believe I have ruined my day — so I may as well eat whatever I want, and there goes my resolution.

Sound familiar? This can be a vicious cycle, a hamster wheel that feels impossible to jump off. It can go on like this for decades. Recycling the same 10 pounds over and over again, to infinity. This is a well-established neural pathway, like a rut on a two-track that pulls the Jeep in



the same direction every four-wheeler has gone before.

An alternative approach is to remove that internal pressure entirely. You know, the one that says, "I must lose 20 pounds by Spring Break" or "I cannot be happy until \_\_\_\_\_." Replace it with, "What Can I Do Today That Is Aligned With My Vision For Living My Best Life?" Making choices from a space of empowerment is a radical shift away from the degrading self-dialogue that usually accompanies

our efforts to change. How Do I Want To Feel? Healthy. What Will Help Me Feel That Way Today? Movement, greens, mindfulness, breathing when I want to yell, drinking a glass of water before deciding how hungry I am. Asking questions like: How can I nourish my body with foods that also comfort my spirit? What other ways can I comfort myself today? What needs comforting?

### Reframe the change

If you're a few weeks into your resolutions and already floundering, or you didn't even set any this year because they've never worked in the past, I encourage you to consider that you don't need a new year to start a new habit AND you don't need more willpower. All you really need is to reframe the way you approach yourself when you want to make a change. Start with "How Do I Want To Feel?" and then do the things that will help you feel that way. Ask yourself this question every day and I promise you, your life, your habits and your neural pathways will find a new groove.

Christina Ryan-Stoltz has been a writer since fifth grade. She is also an artist, herbalist, resilience coach, founder of SHESkool.com and ordained minister. She lives near the lakeshore and spends most of her time dreaming.

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# Woodstoves

continued from page 1

particulates during one hour of operation. The EPA website "Burn Wise" has more information.

Homeowners are encouraged to get a new efficient woodburning stove, thanks to a 26% tax-credit incentive offered by the federal government. Only certain stoves qualify for the tax credit. Richardson said brands such as Hearthstone, Blaze King, Vermont Castings and Regency all have stove models with a "high heat value" of greater than 75%. The stove's installation is included in the tax credit.

The new stoves come in assorted colors. Some Vermont Castings' stoves sport a shiny enamel finish in bright red and green, and I have seen blues ones. Soapstone stoves made in Norway by Norsk Kleber are available in unique shapes.

Nectre offers a woodstove with a cooktop and oven compartment for baking. Hearthstone also offers a cookstove model called the "Deva." Some new Lopi stoves



Stewart McFerran's great-grandfather James Samuel Brady at the hunting camp he named Pokey Huddle. Photo courtesy of Stewart A. McFerran.

are equipped with "Green Start," a device that starts the fire with the push of a button after wood is stacked inside. It reduces the need for crumpled-up newspapers and other kindling.

The cost of firewood has risen, but, as always in Northern Michigan, firewood is available. One area woodcutter sells dry firewood at a mill on a river for \$150 per face cord. Green wood is \$65 a face cord.

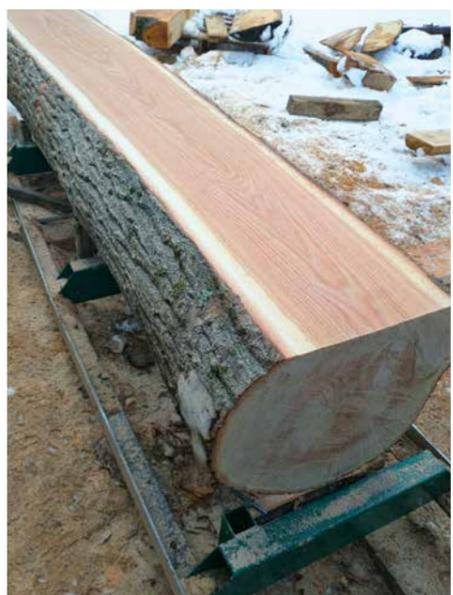
"Michigan still grows more wood than is being harvested," Richardson said. "The state owns a lot of woods. And, honestly, they are not harvesting it fast enough because it's dying, which is wasteful. It is a renewable energy ... It just has to be processed faster."

Fuelwood permits to cut dead and downed trees on state forest lands are free. Five full cords (a cord is 4 x 4 x 8 feet) may be cut for personal use. Contact Doug Heyme, Michigan DNR, at 517-284-5867 for information. See Michigan.gov/Fuelwood for a map.

I choose to claim energy sovereignty, building a fire with wood I gather from my own property. I put large chunks of wood in my Lopi stove and the heat it kicks out warms me up, even on the coldest winter nights. How many times do I handle each chunk of firewood? It can be five or six before the log goes in the stove. But I just remember that Monty Python skit and sing, "I'm a lumberjack and I'm OK."

Lumberjack stories I love: "Paul Bunyan and His Blue Ox", a children's story by Patricia A. Jensen; "To Build a Fire", a short story by Jack London; "Danny and the Boys", by Robert Traver; and "The Cremation of Sam McGee", a poem by Robert Service.

Stewart McFerran illuminates current environmental issues in a historic 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.



A log at the beginning of the milling process, after the first cut. The slab taken off the top of the log makes great firewood. Photo by Stewart A. McFerran.



Planks milled from an oak log. Photo by Stewart A. McFerran.

# Making soap with ashes

Story and photo by **CHRISTINE BLACKLEDGE**

Legend has it soap was first discovered by women washing clothes along the Tiber River at the bottom of Sapo Hill in Rome. Clothes became cleaner there, with far less effort. What was happening? Animal grease and ashes from sacrificial fires at Sapo Hill mixed with rainwater and ran down the slope as soap. Saponification, the chemical name for the soapmaking reaction, bears the name of that Roman hill.



Christine Blackledge (foreground) teaches soapmaking in African villages.

hydroxide), since sodium hydroxide (lye) is not readily available. Many African countries depend on wood fuel for their energy consumption. Dried palm branches, dried banana peels, cocoa pods, kapok tree wood and oak wood (or for brilliant white soap, apple

tree wood) make the best lye ashes, but ordinary wood used in cooking fires will do.

Water from a spring or rain shower is called "soft water" because it lacks metallic or acidic chemicals. Soft water is useful for soapmaking, as there are no other chemicals in it which would interfere with the process. "Ordinary" bore, well or river water can be used for making soap, but some of the chemicals in the water may adversely affect the outcome. I once used my bottled drinking water, and everything turned black! It was a good lesson in not trusting water just because it's bottled.

To make soap, gather ashes in a non-metallic container and add water. If an egg will float on the surface, just below halfway, then the lye water is at the right strength. If the egg will not float, then the lye water could be boiled down to make it stronger. Next, measure the oil and slowly add the caustic solution. Stir until it starts to thicken, then add any oils for scent or function. In African counties, Neem oil is added for mosquito protection.

I have never made the same soap twice in any African village. Something is always different, from the cooking pots to the oils used. My soapmaking time there has been a wonderful adventure of art and science that provides a much-needed product for hygiene, food safety and income in countries that have little options.

### Water + Caustic + Fat/Oil = Soap

Yes, it really is that simple. All soap consists of the same basic components.

My interest in soap began about 50 years ago, when I couldn't find a soap to wash diapers that didn't cause my babies' bottoms to burn. They couldn't tolerate the caustic chemicals and perfumes in modern detergents. My grandmother encouraged me to make my own soap. I started with a washing soap of lye and lard because they were available. The hard white soap left flakes on the clothes if you didn't put the bar in a sock. But my children didn't have reactions to their clean clothes.

### Fat/Oil + Sodium Hydroxide/ Potassium Hydroxide + Water = Soap (Saponification)

Soap making is about Balance. It is a Science and an Art.

I began teaching soapmaking in Africa about 12 years ago. At first, my students were intimidated by the idea. But once I told them they had already done this hundreds of times, scooping ashes and scouring greasy pots with them, they were ready to start. The medicinal African black soap is made from the ashes of medicinal plants (potassium

Christine Blackledge was a northern Michigan dairy farmer. She obtained master's degrees in International Business Administration, Public Health and Food Safety, along with certificates in Hazard Analysis, Critical Control Points (HACCP) and International Food Laws and Regulations. For the past 10 years she has worked with USAID projects helping small farmers and processors to produce safe food for consumption and export.

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# Protect your oaks: prune them now

Story by **JENNIFER DEVINE**

*Oak wilt has become a widespread invasive nuisance that can rapidly kill red oak trees, as well as other oak species. While white oaks can become infected, their ability to recover is far greater.*

The presence of oak wilt was addressed in western Michigan counties during a 2016-2019 treatment and study period made possible through the Michigan DNR Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program. Read a synopsis of this study by Josh Shields, Ph.D., conservation district forester for Manistee, Mason and Lake counties, in our online oak-wilt story.

**What is oak wilt?**

Caused by the fungus *Bretziella fagacearum*, oak wilt is a lethal disease that infects open wounds of oak trees, most often from mid-April through mid-July but at other times as well. The fungus is carried by the primary culprit sap beetle (Nitidulidae) or other spore-carrying insects that transmit disease to healthy trees. Leaves of infected trees wilt because the tree's water-carrying system is affected, according to a University of Wisconsin oak wilt bulletin. A single infected tree can infect others when beetles carry the fungus from tree to tree or through the trees' shared root systems. Eventually, if left untreated, oak wilt will kill the host oak and possibly surrounding oaks. The disease can also be transmitted when infected oak trees are cut for firewood and moved.

**Which oaks are affected?**

Oaks in the red oak family are the most susceptible and can die within weeks. This

group has pointed leaf tips and in northern Michigan includes northern pin oak, northern red oak and black oak.

Oaks with the best chance of survival belong to the white oak family. The leaf tips of this group are rounded. Michigan's white oak family includes bur oak, white oak and swamp white oak.

**How do I identify oak wilt?**

The first clue is if an oak tree has browning leaves or a majority of leaves in the crown are shedding and falling to the ground. Leaves suddenly wilt and fall from the top of the tree first. Wilted or downed leaves may be either brown or green or include both colors, according to the MDNR.

Second clue is the fermented fruit fragrance that can emanate from behind a bumped-up cracked area of bark in a tree infected the previous year. You should be able to easily peel the bark and see the 2-inch ovular gray area of infection known as a fungal mat or pressure pad.

Third clue is the presence of dying oak trees surrounding an already dead oak. This may be evidence that the host tree has already been killed by oak wilt, and the infection has spread to surrounding oaks through spore-carrying insects or via the roots.

Josh Shields, Ph.D., forester with the Manistee and Mason-Lake conservation districts, said it's important not to confuse

oak wilt with oak decline, and a Michigan State University bulletin, written by Bill Cook, can help you spot the differences, though a professional should also be consulted: <https://tinyurl.com/4s2bc78m>

**How can I help stop the spread of disease?**

The highest risk period for oak wilt infection is April 15-July 15, with lower risk from March 15-April 14 and July 16-Oct. 31. It is recommended that you do not cut or prune oak trees on your property during these times. Cutting oak trees is also restricted on public lands in these same periods.

There is no risk of spreading the disease in winter.

"Beetles that can carry the disease from tree to tree are not very active now, and the trees are not vulnerable to infection," stated Simeon Wright, forest health specialist with the DNR Forest Resources Division, in a December press release. "The beetles are attracted to fresh bark damage or wounds where tree limbs have been removed."

If you **MUST** trim an oak tree during high-risk times, or you accidentally hit one with a weed whipper, take care to immediately use a professional pruning sealant on the wound. Sealants can be found at any hardware store. Shields said the sealant provides a physical barrier between the wound and sap-feeding beetles which can spread the infection.

After cutting an oak tree for firewood, MDNR suggests placing a plastic tarp around the logs and burying the edges underground, to keep beetles which spread the fungus from reaching the wood. Leaving the tarp in place for 6-12 months (until the bark falls off) kills the infection.

To help reduce the spread of disease, buy firewood only from the immediate area in which you are living or camping. Do not bring firewood from home to a campsite and do not transport firewood from campground to campground.

**What do I do if I suspect my oak tree is diseased?**

For help with identification and reporting, email the Department of Natural Resources Forest Health Division: [DNR-FRD-Forest-Health@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-FRD-Forest-Health@michigan.gov) or call 906-203-



Oak leaves with oak wilt. Photo courtesy of MDNR.

9466. Report infections at [Michigan.gov/ForestHealth](http://Michigan.gov/ForestHealth). DNR requests that you take one or more photos of the invasive species you are reporting and make note of location, date and time. This aids in verification. You may be asked to provide your name and contact information if follow-up is needed.

A laboratory can test for oak wilt. As of Dec. 1, Michigan State University's Diagnostic Clinic has suspended tests for suspected oak wilt infections and will resume in spring 2022. Go to [CANR.MSU.edu/PESTID/](http://CANR.MSU.edu/PESTID/) or call 517-355-4536.

Other ways to report include the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) online reporting tool or download the smartphone app: <http://www.misin.msu.edu/tools/apps/#home>

**What treatment methods are most effective?**

Always consult with your local conservation district forester or a contractor approved for oak wilt management. Inoculations, trenching and installing barriers, as well as other methods, are currently in use to combat the disease. Visit [MichiganOakWilt.org](http://MichiganOakWilt.org) for a list of oak wilt-qualified experts.

Special thanks to Josh Shields, Ph.D., Forester and Wildlife Biologist, Forestry Assistance Program (FAP)-Manistee and Mason-Lake conservation districts, for his science-based review of the above article.

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.



Woodpile covered to help stop the spread of oak wilt disease. Photo by Josh Shields.

## Golden Deals

continued from page 1

### A short history of pawn brokering

According to the National Pawnbroker's Association ([www.nationalpawnbrokers.org](http://www.nationalpawnbrokers.org)), the practice of loaning cash for merchandise held as collateral is not new and appeals to more than one social class. Pawn loans can be traced back at least 3,000 years to ancient China as well as early Greek and Roman civilizations. During the 14th century, King Edward III of England is said to have frequented pawn stores in Europe. Queen Isabella is reported to have pawned her royal jewels to finance Christopher Columbus' voyage to the New World.

The practice carries far less stigma in the 21st century. Today's customers are ordinary folk who may wish to borrow a small sum of money for a short period of time. They pledge property that they own and consider the loan as simply turning their goods temporarily back into cash. Fully secured, straightforward, transparent credit in minutes — from themselves.

### Fulfilling a family legacy

The third generation to endeavor in the trade, Franklin follows in his father's and grandparents' footsteps.

"My grandparents were newly married and trying to find something to do with their (lives)," Franklin began. "My grandpa Dale used to sell anything he could find. He bought a truckload of jeans and my grandma Darlene thought he was crazy! But he sold every pair and, from then on, my grandma had faith and followed him. They went in with a friend on a business and eventually bought him out — (this) was in Grand Rapids in the 1960s, and



From left: Jessica Curtin, Nick Franklin and his grandparents outside Gold N Deals in Scottville. Photo by Carmelitta Tiffany.

they were there for over 35 years."

The business wasn't always easy. Grandpa Dale was robbed at gunpoint once, but Franklin explained why Dale persevered.

"He said he loved the people and everyone they came to meet," Franklin recalled. "They had my father (Paul) and he followed in their footsteps. My dad moved us to Ludington to get me away from the city and opened his first store there 25 years ago. I grew up with my dad running his shop and (I) used to clean showcases and vacuum and watched (him) as I grew."

In 2016, Paul expanded with another

store, Picker's Paradise in Manistee, and Franklin took over the Ludington location. Later, he and his girlfriend Jessica Curtin decided to move to a bigger location in Scottville, on the main street in the heart of town.

"I started my own store, built from nothing to what it is now, with the help of my loving girlfriend," Franklin said. "It's been better than ever."

The success of the family business depends upon making sure people leave happy.

"We try to build a relationship with all our customers and try to know and call everyone by name," Franklin said.



A young shopper turns his gaze away from furniture and bicycles to look at the fishing poles, lures and golf clubs. Photo by Carmelitta Tiffany.

"I love the people, as well as being a part of helping the community. We sell new and used items and give a chance to find items at an affordable price for a wide variety of people in the community. We have something for everyone — anything anyone would buy anywhere else, like big box stores."

The future looks bright for the Franklins. A trend toward reusing and recycling products has brought in a different type of clientele, those who would rather purchase quality used items and keep them out of the landfill than buy new.

As with any business, it all circles back to how the customer feels.

"My grandparents say it continues to work because we always treat people kindly and with respect," Franklin affirmed. "And my father would definitely say it's all about customer service. That's one thing we have always done and continue to do."

Carmelitta 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.

## Night owls: Do you give a hoot?

By **RON SCHMIDT**

If you've been outside at night the last month or so, like me, perhaps you've heard the distant hoot of a barred or great horned owl. They are magical to me, and I've listened for them for 25 years. It really makes me happy when I hear one, especially the barred owl calling with its distinctive who-cooks-for-you or who-cooks-for-you-all. The great horned owl has a deeper sound and a different rhythm, with two lower-pitched hoots followed by a one-second pause, then a single hoot and another one-second pause, and the last single hoot. The sounds are hard to describe in words, but you can use your smartphone or device to ask for the sounds to be played and listen to recordings of their actual calls.

The last month, owls in our woods have been bonding with their mates in preparation for nesting, which they do in late February and early March. It's hard to believe they can hatch eggs that time of year when we are shivering and hoping our woodstoves or furnaces do not fail us. Sometimes you can hear the mating pair talking to each other in separate trees and making many different sounds. Hearing them is a special treat.

I first fell in love with barred owls when

I bought my cabin in the woods south of Grand Marais in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. While sitting around my first campfire, I heard a barred owl calling about a quarter of a mile away. I listened for them each night of that late August and heard one or two calling nearly every night, before I had to head across the Big Mac for winter.

The next summer, when I was at my cabin for a longer period, I heard two young owls nearby making their own unique sounds, raspy calls rising in pitch. I learned their parents put them in their own patch of woods to learn how to hunt for food and take care of themselves. Of course, they aren't happy about this arrangement and "mine" made pitiful calls most of the night for a few weeks. Their parents stay close though and keep an eye on them to be sure they are safe.

You may have heard the old story that if you hear an owl calling it means your death is soon to follow. To me and my friends, that's a silly tale. We've all been hearing them for more than a quarter century and we're all still healthy and wise.

In 2016 I sold my cabin and moved for a year to Portland, Ore., where my twin daughters live. It was a big change moving



A barred owl surveys its woodland in a suburb of Portland, Ore. Photo by Robyn Schmidt.

to the outskirts of a city with a half-million people. Happily, there was a big wilderness park surrounding my dwelling, and I was overjoyed to begin hearing barred owls again nearly every night, hooting right outside my window. Daughter Robyn still lives in that house and hears them after returning home from work. She has seen them catch prey occasionally, and we both like to think they're keeping watch over her.

Now I live in the woods in Benzie County. I haven't heard barred owls in the five years I've lived here. It's disappointing since my friends near Manistee hear them all the time. Last night, though, while taking my

lab Lila outside, I heard in the northwest a great horned owl calling. It lightened my heart and made me very happy. I had to stay outside for a long while listening to its distant hooting.

Even if you don't have a reason to be outside after dark, it might be worth spending a half hour or so after sunset in a quiet location to listen for the joyous call of owls.

Children's author Ron Schmidt and his Leader Dog Lila live in the north woods, where they listen to birds and music and wait patiently for the call of owls.

### RECEIVE A FREE ONLINE AD

when you purchase a print ad in Freshwater Reporter. All ads rotate across our web pages and appear indefinitely online in our digital issues. Go to [freshwater-reporter.com/advertising](http://freshwater-reporter.com/advertising) to learn more and "like" us on Facebook.

# Community Calendar

To be included in our Feb. 9 printed edition, please submit your announcements by Jan. 29. Email your calendar events or press releases to: [editor@freshwater-reporter.com](mailto:editor@freshwater-reporter.com). Always check with the venue about upcoming events. Some events listed in our calendar may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules or COVID-19. Despite our best efforts, errors may occur. This calendar is continuously updated online at [freshwater-reporter.com/calendar-2](https://freshwater-reporter.com/calendar-2)

## ONGOING EVENTS

### Thru **Winter Members Art Exhibition**

Jan Mon-Sat: 10am-4pm. Sun.: 12-4pm. Free.

14 Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort.

### Thru **January Series: Listen, Learn, Discern.**

Jan Noon-1pm, Free, Brought to you by Calvin

28 University via free livestream. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. For more info, go to: <https://calvin.edu/january>

### Thru **Lecture Series from Calvin University**

Jan Noon-1pm, Free, video streamed live in the

28 LACA Performance Hall, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. For more info, go to: <https://calvin.edu/january>

### Thru **Quill Redpath: "Once I Was Like You"**

Jan Photographs of homeless people by retired

28 Ann Arbor police officer Quill Redpath, who worked tirelessly to get people off the streets. Ludington Area Center for the Arts Performance Hall lobby gallery. Artist's reception: 5-8pm, Jan. 7. Artist's talk: 6pm, Jan 21, all Free. 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington.

### Thru **"Humanity" Portrait Exhibit**

Jan An all-media show at Ludington Area Center

29 for the Arts, Free, 107 S. Harrison, Ludington. Artists' reception Jan 7, 5-8pm.

### Thru **Downtown Ludington Ice Skating**

Jan Skate for Free 7 days a week on a 30'x56' synthetic surface at Waterfront Park. Need skates? Check a pair out for free at the Ludington Library by going to: <https://downtownludington.org/check-out-skates>

## JANUARY

### 12 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: Grand Hotel (1932)**

10am & 7pm. \$2. Drama/Romance starring Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery. 383 River St., Manistee.

### 14 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

1pm, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 14 **Sled Dog Derby, Baldwin - Manistee National Forest**

4:30pm. Super Sprint Race and racers' mandatory meeting. Next to St. Anne's Catholic Church, 1001 Michigan Ave. Hosted by the Great Lakes Sled Dog Association.

[https://events.bytepro.net/registrants/index/event\\_id/818](https://events.bytepro.net/registrants/index/event_id/818)

### 14 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Blair Miller**

6-9pm, free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

### 14 **Live Music at the Brewery with Meg Gunia**

6-9pm, Free, Ludington Bay Brewery, 515 S. James St., Ludington

### 14 **Diego Rivera Quartet live in concert at LACA**

7:30pm, \$25 adult/\$20 55+/\$15 under 18, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. Jazz and Latin influenced music from the Associate Professor of Jazz Saxophone and Associate Director of Jazz Studies at Michigan State University.

### 15 **Guided Snowshoe Hikes at Ludington State Park**

1-2:30pm and 6-7:30pm, Free, Hike through dunes and forests, snow or no. 60 pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come, first served (sizes fit ages 8 and up). Event cancelled in event of severe or icy weather. Updates at Ludington State Park Facebook page. Meet at the Warming Shelter at Ludington State Park, 8800 M-116, Ludington

### 15- **Sled Dog Derby, Baldwin - Manistee National Forest**

9:30am both days. Sled dog races at Wingleton and Stearns Rd. Follow signs from the Wesco gas station. Hosted by the Great Lakes Sled Dog Association.

[https://events.bytepro.net/registrants/index/event\\_id/818](https://events.bytepro.net/registrants/index/event_id/818)

### 16 **Grip N Rip Ice Bowl Disc Golf Singles Tournament**

Check-in 9-9:45am, event starts at 10am, \$20 to register by 11:59pm on Jan.15. To register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/4rksw493>. Hot cocoa & chili available for \$5. Benefit for Lakeshore Food Club, Ludington, a local food bank. Please bring a minimum of 5 of: boxed food, canned food items, or household essentials (such as toothpaste, baby food, body wash, etc.) Ice bowl discs and apparel will be available for sale.

### 17 **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (observed)**

### 17 **Happy 100th Birthday, Betty White!**

Make a donation to a local animal shelter, sanctuary, rescue or area zoo in memory of the actor and animal-lover on what would have been her 100th birthday.

### 17 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

11am, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 17 **Shifting Landscapes - Lecture Series at LACA and on Zoom**

7-8:30pm, Free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Available via Zoom at [mcdl.pub/sl-zoom](https://mcdl.pub/sl-zoom). Sponsored by the Mason County District Library and the Abondia Center, January's talks focus on education. "Critical Race Theory: What Is It? Do I Support It or Fight It?" Registration is encouraged at [mcdl.pub/sl-register](https://mcdl.pub/sl-register). For more info, contact [ttrahey@mcdlibrary.org](mailto:ttrahey@mcdlibrary.org) or [baportmann312@gmail.com](mailto:baportmann312@gmail.com)

### 19 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre, Manistee: Moonstruck (1987)**

10am & 7pm. \$2. Romance/Drama starring Cher, Danny Aiello, Nicholas Cage. 383 River St., Manistee

### 21 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

1pm, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 21 **Live Music at the Brewery with The Whiskey Charmers**

6-9pm, Free, Ludington Bay Brewery, 515 S. James St., Ludington

### 21 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jesse Jefferson**

6-9pm, Free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

### 21 **Artist's Talk with Quill Redpath at LACA**

6pm, Free. Presentation by photographer and retired Ann Arbor police officer Quill Redpath who worked to get homeless people off the street. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison, Ludington.

### 22 **Winter's Hike at Arcadia Dunes, Abby's Woods**

10am-12pm. Free. You MUST pre-register with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. [www.gtrlc.org](http://www.gtrlc.org). Space is limited. Snowshoes recommended.

### 22 **Guided Snowshoe Hike at Ludington State Park**

1-2:30pm, Free, Hike through dunes and forests, snow or no. 60 pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come, first served (sizes fit ages 8 and up). Event cancelled in event of severe or icy weather. Updates at Ludington State Park Facebook page. Meet at the Warming Shelter at Ludington State Park, 8800 M-116, Ludington

### 22 **Lighted Snowshoe Hike at Orchard Beach State Park, Manistee**

6-8pm. Free. Snowshoe or hike, depending on the weather. Lights hung on trees guide the way. Meet at the Shelter House along Lakeshore Rd for a fire, hot chocolate and coffee. For more info, email: [lorrietiger@gmail.com](mailto:lorrietiger@gmail.com)

### 22 **Lantern-lit Ski and Snowshoe at Ludington State Park**

Start times between 6-7:30pm, Free, Self-guided snowshoe hike or cross-country ski along a one mile loop of trail lit by kerosene lanterns. Bonfires will be at the Warming Shelter (where participants should start the hike) and the Amphitheater to warm up. Free warm beverages available at the

Amphitheater. 60 pairs of snowshoes available to use, first come, first served (sizes fit ages 8 and up). Event cancelled in event of severe or icy weather. Updates at Ludington State Park Facebook page. Ludington State Park, 8800 M-116, Ludington

### 23 **Fat Chance Snow Bike Pre-ride**

11am-2pm, The ride is Free, bike rentals are \$25 for 2 hours, food and drink are extra. Meet at Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibanek Rd., Thompsonville, and ride to Crystal Mountain Resort to complete a few laps on the Fat Chance Race Course, then ride back to the distillery for food and drink specials.

### 24 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

11am, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 24 **Shifting Landscapes - Lecture Series at LACA and on Zoom**

7-8:30pm, Free, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Available via Zoom at [mcdl.pub/sl-zoom](https://mcdl.pub/sl-zoom). Sponsored by the Mason County District Library and the Abondia Center, January's talks focus on education. "How Do Teachers Teach K-12 Children and Youth About Uncomfortable Truths?" Registration is encouraged at [mcdl.pub/sl-register](https://mcdl.pub/sl-register). For more info, contact [ttrahey@mcdlibrary.org](mailto:ttrahey@mcdlibrary.org) or [baportmann312@gmail.com](mailto:baportmann312@gmail.com)

### 25 **Port City Documentary - The Vogue Theatre**

7pm (To Be Confirmed) ... The Alpinist (2020). Marc Andre Leclerc, 23-year-old Canadian solo climber. 383 River St. Manistee.

### 26 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: Fiddler on the Roof (1971)**

10am & 7pm. \$2. Musical/Romance starring Topol, Norma Crane, Leonard Frey, Molly Picon, Paul Mann, Rosalind Harris, Paul Michael Glaser and more. 383 River St., Manistee

### 28 **Furniture, Fiber, Photography, and Sculpture Art Exhibition**

Thru Feb Mon-Sat: 10am-4pm. Sun.: 12-4pm. Free.

25 Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort.

### 28 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

1pm, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 28 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Chelsea Marsh**

6-9pm, Free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

### 29 **9th Annual Iron Fish Distillery Fat Chance Fat Tire Bike Race**

10am-2pm, \$50, registration closes noon on Jan.28. Cash prizes, medals, awards in numerous categories. For details and to register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pd8kn>

### 29 **Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Rigoletto (Verdi)**

1pm, \$20 adults/seniors, \$10 students, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee

**Family Opera Days.** \$20. While adults see the performance, students participate in art projects that relate to the opera, (a gondola and a colored paper mosaic.) At the end of class students will be picked up or escorted to the Ramsdell Theater so they may experience the end of the opera with their parents. Open to students even if the adults do not attend the opera. Class includes all materials and admission to the opera for the student and one parent/guardian. Tickets can be purchased for additional family members. Instructors: Mary Wahr, Certified Michigan Art Teacher, K-12, and Lynn Williams, Certified Michigan & Colorado Art Teacher, K-12

### 29 **Guided Snowshoe Hikes at Ludington State Park**

1-2:30pm and 6-7:30pm (lantern lit), Free, Hike through dunes and forests, snow or no. 60 pairs snowshoes available, first come, first served, for ages 8 & up. Event cancelled in event of severe or icy weather. Updates at Ludington State Park Facebook page. Meet at the Warming Shelter at Ludington State Park, 8800 M-116, Ludington.

### 29 **7th Annual Brrewfest by Pure Ludington**

1-6pm, \$35 in advance/\$40 at the door, includes 6 tokens for 6 tastings. 25 Michigan craft brewers, featuring beer, mead, and cider. Music, a warming tent, and festival food. Additional tokens, 5 for \$5. Legacy Plaza, corner Ludington Ave. & James St., Ludington. For tickets, go to: [mynorthtickets.com](https://mynorthtickets.com)

### 29 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Blake Elliott**

6-9pm, Free, 841 S. Pioneer Rd., Beulah

### 29- **Stearn's Siding Sled Dog Race, Baldwin**

8:30am-4pm each day. Stearns & Wingleton roads. Hosted by Great Lakes Sled Dog Association.

### 31 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

11am, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

## FEBRUARY

### 2 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: Groundhog Day (1993)**

10am & 7pm. \$2. Romance/Comedy starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. 383 River St., Manistee

### 4 **Indoor Walking Group, Manistee**

1pm, Free, Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary's Parkway.

### 4 **Live Music at the Brewery with Brett Mitchell**

6-9pm, Free, Ludington Bay Brewery, 515 S. James St., Ludington

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## Onekama is ‘going to the dogs’ in 2022

ONEKAMA – Organizers of last year’s award-winning Wall of Art are asking community members to dig into their art supplies again this winter and help decorate the east side of the old Vern’s Emporium building at 4850 Main St. (M22) for a May art show of dog-related works.

The Wall of Art spans the west side of the community garden next to Yellow Dog Café and last year received a Beautification Award from the Portage Lake Garden Club.

In its press release, organizers stated: “Our community loves dogs, we do fundraisers for Homeward Bound (Animal Shelter), and our café is called Yellow Dog ... duh. Let’s redo the wall with a dog theme!”

At the start of the pandemic in 2020, Yellow Dog Café and Patina launched a quarantined Community Art Wall Project. The owners of both businesses encouraged local residents to use “found” materials around their homes, or help themselves to items placed outside by Patina, to create their masterpieces.

“Art therapy helped many of us during those difficult times and made for a fun winter activity,” said co-organizer and Patina co-owner Nikki Schneider. “We were delighted to see the response and the

creations!” She explained the wall became a conversation piece and a popular spot to take “selfies.” Residents and visitors were encouraged to submit artwork throughout the summer.

This year’s theme for the wall was inspired by local resident Diane Wemlinger, who brought a dog-mural idea back from her winter trip to Florida. As organizers began scouting locations to launch the new project, Schneider noticed the artwork on the current wall was “looking weathered.” That prompted her to suggest they refresh the wall with the new “dog” artwork.

To enter the show, community members are asked to repurpose an item to use as a canvas, such as a cupboard door, screen or old board. Alternatively, residents may look for materials in the box on Patina’s porch after January 25. On this canvas, participants are asked to create a dog-related work, such as a dog, dog bone, paw print, fire hydrant or tree and apply several coats of outdoor polyurethane to protect it. Works will be collected in April for the May show and a fundraising reception will be held in June. For more information, contact Nikki Schneider, of Patina, at (312) 909-0115.

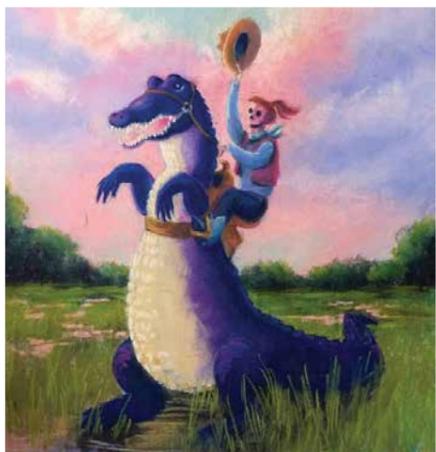
## Local artist featured in international pop-surrealism art show

“Forever Your Gator Girl,” a whimsical painting created by Marie Marfia, of Marie Marfia Fine Art in Ludington, has been accepted into the Surreal Salon 14 international show held this month at the Baton Rouge Gallery-Center for Contemporary Art in Baton Rouge, La.

“I’m so honored to be included,” Marfia said, adding that she just shipped her work, and the show “is going to be epic!”

Surreal Salon 14 is named for the 14th annual show celebrating the pop-surrealism/lowbrow art movement. The show features works from artists across the globe and gives audiences the chance to experience a diverse collection of works in what Marfia’s release calls “an exciting movement of contemporary art.”

For more about Marie Marfia, her fine art studio and her Bonafide Gallery body of work, visit her website at MarieMarfia.com



“Forever Your Gator Girl,” a painting by Marie Marfia. Photo courtesy of the artist.

and follow MariaMarfiaArt on Facebook and Instagram.

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- Wooden It Be Nice, Kaleva
- Yellow Dog Cafe, Onekama

## Wineries

continued from page 2

They outsource their grapes mostly from Michigan producers — with the exception of a few from California, like the Barbera.

On this second tasting occasion, we tried a Chardonnay, a white wine with hints of melon, peach and other fruit; Blueberry Blush, made from local blueberries and North Branch Chardonnay, a little dry balanced with a little sweetness; and Barbera, a full-bodied red with touches of strawberry, watermelon and hibiscus. All were tasty, but I really liked the fifth sample, a warm mulled wine with peach, Pinot Noir, a little sugar and spices. It hit the spot on a chilly day.

North Branch Winery will remain open this winter, and next summer there are plans to use the neighboring space of a vacated business.

“We plan to expand to the south, next door; there’ll be a door here,” said Tom, pointing to an area behind the tasting bar. “And in the back there’ll be (an area) to increase production size too. Then there will be tables and chairs, another bar — we’ll start some sandwiches too, so if they (customers) need some extra sustenance we



Pere Marquette Winery owner Wes Morton with a taste of Badger White. Photo by Kevin Howell.

can offer something light.”

For more on Pere Marquette and North Branch Wineries, follow their Facebook pages and visit their websites: peremarquettewinery.com and northbranchwinery.com

Kevin is a freelance writer residing in Mason County. He loves the Michigan woods, lakes, people and Michigan craft beers — not necessarily in that order!

## FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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