

# FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

FREE Vol IV, No. 3

freshwater-reporter.com

Mar. 9 - Apr. 5, 2022 FREE

March 20-26

## Michigan's Severe Weather Awareness Week



By GORDON BERG

*It's easy to be complacent about tornadoes when you don't live in the midsection of the U.S. known as Tornado Alley. Especially if you live along the west central coast of Michigan.*

After all, tornadoes always occur somewhere else, hundreds of miles away, right? No. They happen here, too. Around 10 tornadoes have touched down between Manistee and Ludington in the last 75 years. Several along the coast. Others inland by only about 20 miles.

In advance of Severe Weather Awareness Week in Michigan, March 20-26, we pause to remember one of those big storms and steps we can take to prepare ourselves in the event of a recurrence this season and beyond.

**Bear Lake's goliath**

Many still recall the twister that touched down near Bear Lake in Manistee County on April 3, 1956. This F4 monster, packing winds up to 200 mph, cut a path of destruction all the way to Grand Traverse Bay. It was part of a huge storm system that struck nearly the length of Michigan's west coast.

People still remember and comment on a Facebook page dedicated to this storm system: "West Michigan Tornadoes of

continued on page 8

EVENTS  
CALENDAR  
PAGE 7



### Her Story

By CHRISTINA RYAN-STOLTZ



My younger sister, Jessica Ryan, building her yoga studio in Frankfort, Mich. Courtesy photo.

*"The women I love and admire for their strength and grace did not get that way because (sh)it worked out. They got that way because (sh)it went wrong, and they handled it. They handled it a thousand different ways on a thousand different days, but they handled it. Those women are my superheroes."*

— Elizabeth Gilbert

If you are a woman, or you know one, there's a good chance one of you has handled some difficulties, facing challenges that forced you to dig deep and find a way through to the other side, to keep going, to continue to face adversity, to pull out of, up and through situations that could easily hold a person back, down and out. It isn't a uniquely feminine trait to persevere, but we live in a world built for and around men, specifically, white men. A patriarchy — where the dominant ideology is that men hold the power, in the world and in the family. So, for women to find, claim and own their power requires them to push, resist and persist, despite this.

Our history, or herstory, (a word coined in print by Robin Morgan, editor of the 1970s anthology, "Sisterhood is Powerful"), radicalizes women who have dared to expect their rights to be equal to men. These "radical" women were labeled suffragette, feminist, activist; they were called man hater, lesbian, bossy, b\*tch, and referred to as emasculating. This is by no means an exhaustive list, yet it demonstrates the disdain some men, and even women, feel toward women who challenge the status quo.

In 2022, this should be another of those eye-rolling memories about our past, when we celebrate the progress of, and have a good chuckle about, how absurd it used to be. Unfortunately, that is not our current reality. Not everyone

continued on page 2

## Saps a-runnin'

By KEVIN HOWELL

Signs of spring are returning at area sugar bushes, including BrixStone Farms near Bear Lake. The farm's sap is running, soon to fill jars with sweet maple goodness.



BrixStone Farms maple products may be sampled during open houses to be held the last two weekends in March. Courtesy photo.

Established in 1903, the former Apple Valley Orchards focused primarily on growing apples and raising cattle. When current owner Keaton Foster spotted the farm on Milarch Road, he saw stands of maple trees on hilly slopes and knew it was where he wanted to land.

"I grew up maple-ing in Wisconsin," Foster, a Michigan State University graduate, told me. "I was living in New York for four years and learned the commercial side of the maple world, but I wanted to move back to the Midwest, to find a place where I could do maple and sell it roadside."

He saw the farm listed for sale online and decided to learn the apple business and produce maple syrup. Foster said the farm's new name, BrixStone (pronounced Brick-Stone), is a hybrid of the word "brix" — a unit measurement of the sugar content of fruit and maple syrup — and the word "stone," another name for the pit found

continued on page 6

# Snurfer Girl Wendy Poppen

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN

It's two years overdue, but the late Sherman "Sherm" Poppen, inventor of the first snowboard known as a Snurfer, was finally recognized for his achievement during a March 5 induction ceremony in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Poppen, a former Muskegon resident, was posthumously inducted into the Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2020.

Wendy Poppen, his daughter, said the pandemic delayed the ceremony, and she wishes the induction had taken place even earlier, before his death in 2019. She gave the acceptance speech for him.

"This is the last hurrah for my dad and the Snurfer," she said.

Our February 2021 story, "Dropping in on a Snurfer", prompted sliders and sledders to look in the attic for their old snurfer boards. I heard from many who found them in those dusty places. That they kept them all these years is a tribute to Poppen, the inventor of the Snurfer. The original snurfer board Poppen made for his daughters is on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.

## Snurfer evolution

I recently had an opportunity to chat with Wendy Poppen.

"The world's first person on a Snurfer was me," she said.

Wendy, age 10 at the time, vividly recalled the experience.

"He nailed my skis together that day,"

she said. "He just took my little wooden skis and my Cubco bindings (a brand of easy-release bindings for children under 50 pounds) and nailed four little pieces of wood, two on the tip and two on the tail. And then I got on it, and the rest is history — or I should say, it was herstory."

Wendy attended the Leelanau School in Glen Arbor and was an avid downhill skier. Two days after high school graduation, she said she drove to the mountains "and I've been here ever since." She taught skiing in Park City and Sun Valley, Idaho.

When she was growing up, she said her father worked as a salesman at Lake Welding and Supply Company in Muskegon.

"He just liked to tinker around and invent things," she remarked. "He invented some kind of a welding tool that ended up getting a patent, so he was familiar with what you needed to do to get a patent (from) the U.S. government."

After nailing Wendy's skis together, Poppen continued tinkering.

"He started tricking-out a water ski," she explained. "So, we started sliding



Wendy Poppen and her father Sherman (left) at the World Snow Surfing competition at the Muskegon State Park. Courtesy photo.

down the hill on a water ski. Then he contacted Brunswick, (maker of wood floors for bowling alleys).

"I will never forget the day he took me to a (gently sloping and snowy) hill on a golf course. Four guys in suits came out with my dad, who was in a suit, and me, all bundled up. They stood there and talked, and I just snurfed down the hill and pulled the Snurfer up (the hill). I did that, like, 15 times while they were just chatting away, so they could see what it was all about. And then they ended up purchasing the patent and then creating the board."

She said her dad was an avid skier at that time and understood how important edges were. She believes he suggested the use of a metal skeg on the rear end of the Super Racing Snurfer.

## Wendy's win

"Not many girls snurfed," Wendy recalled. "It (was) the era of girls-don't-do-sports-things, and I'm sporty and athletic. And



Ann Hovey, another Snurfer Girl of Muskegon, is a friend of Wendy Poppen. Courtesy photo.

I grew up with that toy (the Snurfer), so it was normal for me to do it.

Asked about her participation in the second annual Muskegon Community College snurfing competition, held near the Blockhouse at Muskegon State Park, Wendy offered: "I'm pretty sure I competed with the boys. I don't think there was a girls' and boys' division, just the Midget Division."

She has the ribbon she won. It reads: First Place World Snurfing Champ 1969, Midget Division.

Wendy remembered the time she and Jake Burton Carpenter raced.

"I beat him," she said. "I guess I wanted to beat everybody because my dad invented the toy."

Carpenter, from Vermont, traveled to Muskegon with a Snurfer he modified with a binding that attached his boots to the board. He was not allowed to compete with this board in the Snurfer championship at

continued on page 8

## Women

continued from page 1

is against our progress, of course. On March 8, 1911, a global celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women took place for the first time, and the United Nations has observed International Women's Day since 1975. President Carter gave us a whole week in 1980, and then, in 1986, we got the month of March to "reflect on and acknowledge the often-overlooked contributions of women to United States history." The actual celebration of Women's History Month was inspired after a weeklong celebration of women's contributions to culture, history and society organized by a California school in 1978.



My CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farmer and friend Carissa Savage from Lost Lake Farm in Honor, Mich. Courtesy photo.

Yet (insert eye roll) women are still paid less, still carry the brunt of domestic and child-rearing responsibilities (which also means some of us miss more work to care for children), continue to have their reproductive freedom threatened, receive less funding for medical research, and pay more than men do for personal care products, healthcare and insurance. We are underrepresented in areas of influence such as government, news media and the tech industry. We assess our safety at all times and remain at greater risk for violence. When we accuse men of violence, especially sexual violence, we are often held to a more rigorous standard as victims than men are as abusers. We are more likely to be living in poverty; forced into human trafficking; harassed and victimized as members of the military; and dismissed by doctors who don't listen to women's complaints, forcing us to make more doctor's visits to get the care we need. This, too, is by no means an exhaustive list.

And yet, it is exhausting.

"Nevertheless, she persisted." Women fight on (and on and on). We continue to manage (most of) it.

Throughout my life, I have been surrounded by women who kept going, and in their contributions and resilience, became guideposts for the little girls and young women who were watching. Several of my dearest friends were raised by single mothers with little to no help from the fathers. They worked multiple jobs, they made it to all the games and events, they kept their houses warm and refrigerators full, and now these friends have done the same with their children. My sixth-grade teacher was the first Ms. I met, and she helped all of us students — boys and girls — understand the importance of holding our own and taking ourselves seriously, while standing up for whatever we believed



My mother-in-law, Chris Bint, dominating the snow with her Kubota tractor in Lake Ann, Mich. Courtesy photo.

in; she inspired my first protest of a male chauvinist teacher. My mother and my grandmothers always demonstrated an enormous capacity to fix, organize, make, haul and do whatever they could with their own strength and determination, while remaining tender, nurturing and feminine. My mother-in-law was a drywaller and a school custodian and has always rushed to help her family on heavy labor projects without hesitation. My older sister was a women's studies minor in college and has always been a beacon for badassery, with physical and emotional prowess. My younger sister left a marriage that was not healthy for her or her children, never received child support, yet she provided for her children for several years on her own. My sister-in-law traveled to countries that are not safe for women, to serve communities in need from deeply embedded female oppression and violence.

My best friend is a banker with the wits for multimillion-dollar projects and the heart of a leader who is beloved and respected by her team.

I can no longer count how many of my women friends have become entrepreneurs, real estate brokers, health care heroes, advocates, educators, policy and change makers, community organizers and helpers. They've been harassed, gaslit, abused, raped, abandoned, betrayed, undervalued, underserved, denied or discriminated against. They did not wait for change to come before they took on the needs and responsibilities of their families, careers and communities. Repeatedly, I see that you do not have to be a feminist activist to make a difference as a woman. The "front lines" are just life, filled with women who are doing what needs to be done — showing up ready to be exceptional, while the patriarchy gets away with being mediocre, and prepared to do all the emotional labor in addition to everything else required of us. Though shifts are occurring all the time and women are empowering themselves more and sooner, we are not waiting for "progress" to "carry on." We never have.

"It's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah," as Leonard Cohen sang, but it still deserves an A(women)!

*"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is; I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat."* — Rebecca West

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

MARIE MARFIA FINE ART  
AND THE  
BONAFIDE GALLERY



Working artist's studio and gallery featuring local landscapes, portraits and skeleton art.

Ludington, Michigan  
Hours by Appointment

MarieMarfia.com • 904-566-4473



PROVIDING ACCESS FOR ALL:

GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL  
**LAND**  
CONSERVANCY

www.gtrlc.org

## BoxDrop Ludington NEW MATTRESS CLEARANCE CENTER

40-70% Less Than Retail!

Queen Mattresses  
start \$180

King Mattresses  
start \$210

New w/ Factory Warranties!

Located on US-10 just East  
of Ludington. It's by appointment  
to help keep costs down.

Call Jami at  
**231-342-7547**  
to set up a time to see us.

707 US-10  
Scottville, MI 49454



# A Q&A with 51st Circuit Court Judge Susan Sniegowski

By CARMELITTA TIFFANY

Susan K. Sniegowski broke the glass ceiling in 2005, becoming Mason County's first female prosecuting attorney. She didn't stop there. She is presently serving her second term as the first female circuit court judge in the 51st Circuit of Michigan, covering Mason and Lake counties.

Circuit courts are trial courts that handle civil cases seeking damages of more than \$25,000, all felony criminal matters, personal protection order matters, and all family matters. Family matters include custody, divorce, paternity and child support cases, among others. Circuit courts also handle appeals from district courts and some administrative agencies.

Sniegowski received her Bachelor of Arts in journalism from Michigan State University in 1990 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 1999.

### CT: What prompted you to enter the legal profession, and then politics, to become a district attorney and judge?

I have been interested in the law since I was a child. I was still in elementary school when I started reading books about lawyers. I had many different interests while growing up, and I followed a different direction in college. Several years after graduating from college I decided the time was right to go back to school to pursue a graduate degree. I was looking at law schools as well as graduate programs in English, and I decided that going to law school would present more opportunities for a varied career path.

My initial interest in the law was in criminal law. My first internship in law school was working for the Colorado State Public Defenders Office, and I started appearing in court with clients my second year in law school. I enjoyed the fast pace of criminal law as well as the concrete rules that govern criminal procedure. During my third year of law school, I worked as a research assistant to my evidence professor. I spent the year researching constitutional



Judge Susan K. Sniegowski is the first woman to preside over the 51st Circuit Court, serving Mason and Lake counties. Courtesy photo.

questions in criminal law in all fifty states. It was a great experience in how to research and find answers to complex legal questions. After returning to Ludington and passing the state bar exam, I started working in a general-practice law firm. During this time, I began representing defendants in felony and misdemeanor cases and started teaching a criminal-law course at West Shore Community College.

I decided to run for the county prosecuting attorney position because I wanted to focus my work on criminal cases, and I enjoyed the fast-paced environment of the courtroom. I thought I had the skills and experience necessary to do the job well.

Ever since I first started law school, the idea of running for a judgeship was always in the back of my mind. When Judge Cooper announced his retirement, I felt the time was right to run for the office. I had spent my career up till then appearing primarily in the circuit courts of Mason, Lake, and Oceana counties, and I had experience in all matters handled by the circuit court. By that time, I had been a criminal defense attorney and a prosecuting attorney, and I had represented clients in civil and family-law cases both as a plaintiff's attorney and a defense attorney. This variety of experience gave me the knowledge and training I needed to take the next step to become a circuit judge.

### CT: Please tell us about any mentors who encouraged you.

My parents, Sam and Doris Kasley, were always my biggest supporters and mentors.

### CT: What is the best part of your job? What about the most challenging part?

The best part of my job is also the most challenging. Because the 51st Circuit Court is a single-judge circuit, I preside over all the different types of cases within the jurisdiction of the circuit court, including felony criminal cases, civil cases involving claims over \$25,000, family-law cases, lower-court and administrative appeals, and requests for injunctive relief. Throughout the week my docket varies from family law to criminal to civil cases, and some days I have a mashup of all three types. Applying the different laws and procedures of each area of law is challenging, but I enjoy the variety of work I am exposed to. Now, more challenging still is working through the backlog caused

by the COVID-19 shutdowns and pauses in holding jury trials, but the work is always interesting.

### CT: What legacy do you hope to leave for future generations of women?

I think it is important for all people, but especially women, to realize that it is okay to go after what you want in life, and that the ability to be strong and assertive while also being compassionate and caring is a positive attribute. It is also good to step back at times to reflect on what you really want your impact in life to be. You cannot be all things to all people all the time. The most important thing is to decide what it is that you can and want to do and then pursue it with a passion.

### CT: I am hesitant to ask this, because if you were a man I probably wouldn't, but how do you manage being a mom and a judge?

I have to plan things in advance to make everything work. I think this is true of all parents, regardless of their gender or employment status. So, I don't think my experience is much different from any other parent's, whether working outside the home or at home. Parenting, as well as working as a judge, requires the ability to prioritize what needs to get done and the discipline to execute the plans to make it happen. Things don't just fall into place: You have to work at it.

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.

## 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. Go to "Full Issues" to read digital copies of each issue.

# Life-long lessons from a teacher

By **CHRISTINE BLACKLEDGE**

*I started substitute teaching in January. I couldn't travel overseas for USAID projects, so I decided I needed to find a worthwhile project helping people here. My intention was to teach high school students, since I had been doing college lectures. But the best-laid plans sometimes go awry.*

I find myself teaching preschoolers with learning disabilities. This was not something I had even considered, but these kids are fantastic and have taught me so much! They have sight and hearing impairments, learning disabilities, such as Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and others. Communication is a challenge, and we use lots of sign language and holding. When you see one of these children light up with excitement and understanding, it is like seeing a human rainbow emerge!

I started thinking of the impact teachers have on us and the long-lasting effects that follow us through life. Ester Bareham came into the life of a confused freshman girl that had moved north into a close-knit rural school and felt no connections. Mrs. Bareham was the new English teacher and had started a debate and forensic team. She and her husband Virgil owned a cherry farm in Suttons Bay and brought their family of six children to the small town of Marion to teach and coach.



Marion High School's 1967 debate team in action. Courtesy photo.

I was only a freshman, and she asked me to be part of the team. With my debate partner, Frank Ettawageshik, I spent hours creating index cards of quotes for both the "Affirmation" and "Negative" side of the debate topic set by the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association. (I remember the topic had to do with foreign aid and the Vietnam War.) We worked for hours, poring over magazine stories with different perspectives. No internet back



Ester Bareham, pictured in the 1967 Marion High School yearbook. Courtesy photo.

then. A couple of men's magazines had great editorials and insightful articles. Of course, they weren't published for readers under 18 years. We asked Mrs. Bareham if we could use them. She said it was up to us, but, if asked for references, we would have to divulge them. Oh, the hoped-for challenges of a teenager.

I don't remember the title of my forensics speech, but I do remember this small portion: "...tramp, tramp, tramp, the feet of the thousands of soldiers that had passed through the Arc de Triomphe." During the debate, as hard as I tried, I just couldn't remember the piece verbatim. But, in her usual supportive way, Mrs. Bareham said I had the meaning and passion down, so just do my best. I was surprised by how far I got through the tournament, and when I finally stood by the Arc de Triomphe in later life, those old feelings came surging back.

We traveled to invitationals across Michigan to debate with other high school teams



A yearbook photo of Christine Blackledge, member of the Marion High School Debate Club. Photo courtesy of Marion Public Library.



and made it to the state tournament. I learned things aren't always black and white. There are different reasonings, meanings, and understandings on all topics, depending on who you are. You can find just as many pros and cons for the same subject. Affirmative and negative sides were just a different set of index cards the team worked with. We needed factual accuracies, logical consistency and some emotional appeal to an audience to be convincing, no matter which box of cards were being used.

The last visit I had from Mrs. Bareham, known to me in adulthood as Ester, was when she came to see my Traverse City house. She was still that fun, warm, engaging person I knew in high school, and we had a great chat. At first, she needed to call Virgil; her car needed gas. I offered to help, but she explained to me that they had an understanding since they were first married. She took care of the kitchen; Virgil took care of the vehicles. He drove into town from the farm and did what was needed. Another lesson on a working team, boundaries and commitments!

I recently researched the Interscholastic Forensics Debate topic for the year I was a freshman. "Resolved: That the foreign aid program of the United States should be limited to

**GOLD N DEALS**  
We Buy Gold & Buy/Sell New & Pre-owned Merchandise  
(231) 936-1150 112 S Main St  
Mon-Fri 11-6 Scottville, MI  
Sat 11-4 49454  
goldndeals112@gmail.com

**HONOR ONEKAMA BUILDING SUPPLY, INC.** 50 Years  
www.honorbidgsupply.com  
Visit us for all of your Hardware & Building Projects!  
www.honorbidgsupply.com  
(231) 889-3456  
4847 Main Street, Onekama



Ester and Virgil Bareham were both teachers. Ester taught at Marion High School and coached the debate team in 1967. Courtesy photo.

non-military assistance." The affirmative stance advocated the adoption of the resolution, and obviously it shaped my life views. I owe to Ester my love of research and finding new information, looking at both sides of issues — no matter how uncomfortable — and enjoying a good debate.

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 10 years she has worked with USAID projects helping small farmers and processors to produce safe food for consumption and export.

# Tales of a St. Patrick's Day tradition

By **CHRISTINE STAPLETON**

St. Patrick's Day has always been special and fun in my family. My mom is a quick-tempered Irish lass with roots in Tipperary County in Ireland. My dad's tale, as told by my grandfather, has his family coming to the U.S. through Canada during the potato famine in Ireland. They changed their name from McEwen to Stapleton and came over as an English family, since the Irish were not welcome at that time.

In the early '90s, I moved back to the area after college, a career and a divorce. At the time, my dad was also single and we got to "hang out" as adults. My dad's favorite event was the Traverse City pub crawl on St. Patrick's Day. For many years, we started at noon and followed the bagpipe band through town in our green attire and full-on Irish attitude, singing and dancing and maybe drinking a pint or two.

One year we had a wee bit of a setback. Dad's ticker was acting up, and he was scheduled for a heart catheterization on



From left: Friend Barb Powell, my dad and I on the pub crawl in Traverse City. Courtesy photo.

his special holiday. I took him in for the procedure and waited hours in the recovery room with him, until they finally took the sandbag off his leg, which had helped his catheter wound heal. It was close to 5 p.m., and my dad begged the doctor to let me take him for a St. Patty's Day drink. The doc gave me a steely gaze then finally agreed — but just one.



From left: Christine Stapleton, Mom Eileen and brother David last year at Art's Tavern in Glen Arbor. Courtesy photo.

Dad had other plans. Several hours later, in Dill's Saloon, he was standing at a table and tapping his feet when who should walk by but Doc Rafferty. Oh, no. Doc picked up the leg of my dad's pants, to make sure he wasn't dripping blood, then he gave me the most icy glare I've ever received and stern instructions

to go straight home. I felt like a schoolgirl busted for smoking in the locker room, even though I'd managed to keep him off the dance floor. So, home we went, and all was well.

When Dad passed away in 2011, I couldn't celebrate for several years. Then our family found a new tradition in Glen Arbor at Art's Tavern, with great Irish folk music and lots of Irish cheer. Last year, with COVID-19, it was a small family gathering. We wore our green and celebrated our Irish heritage.

I can't help but think about my dad — and all our crazy and fun pub-crawling adventures — on March 17, and every time I hear "O' Danny Boy". Cheers, Dad. Hope it's St. Patrick's Day every day for you.

Christine Stapleton is an area real estate broker. She likes to write about life on her farm with her border collies, sheep and happy chickens.



Black bear. Photo by Sergey Pesterev, Unsplash.

## MI BACKYARD

# Understanding Michigan's Black Bear

By JENNIFER DEVINE

*Black bears are the only bear species found in Michigan. According to the MDNR, Michigan has around 12,000 bears, with approximately 2,000 in the Lower Peninsula and 10,000 residing in the Upper Peninsula.*

The North American Bear Center of Ely, Minnesota — found online at bear.org — identifies five annual stages of activity and hibernation for our region's bears.

Hibernation, as most refer to its state of torpor, begins close to or in December in Michigan. During this time, the black bear's heart rate and metabolic rate decreases. They don't eat, drink, urinate or defecate during this time. They mainly use body fat stored from summer and fall foraging for energy.

Mothers, known as sows, maintain near-normal body temperature and give birth in January to an average of two cubs. (Cubs live with and learn from her for about one-and-a-half years.) Sows will take up the cubs' urine and feces and also lick drops of meltwater, eat snow and icicles, urinate and defecate.

The next 2-3 weeks is called walking hibernation, when their body processes start returning to normal. During this time, they consume plants such as ferns, clovers and grass, but they eat and drink less and excrete less nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium than in later stages. If they can't find their normal food source, bears will resort to the ever-present and easily accessible bird feeder, trash can and outdoor pet food source.

Normal activity begins in spring. Bears eat 5,000-8,000 calories per day. Their foraging picks up. Besides grasses, their buffet includes fresh berries, fruits and insects such as ants, worms, larvae, moths, wasps and bees. They need water or can become dehydrated, utilizing muscle for energy and accumulating nitrogen waste in the blood, which can be fatal.

Excessive eating begins in fall. This stage is called hyperphagia. Black bears forage soft and hard mast (the edible vegetative or reproductive parts of plants) almost nonstop, up to 20 hours per day, to build up fat reserves for hibernation. Being omnivores, they will also eat dead

animals, small young mammals, chickens and birds, mice, reptiles and amphibians. After hyperphagia is fall transition.



Bears eat hard mast plants, such as black cherry, found in a variety of our Michigan forests. Photo by Jennifer Devine.

Bears eat less but continue drinking to purge waste. They become increasingly lethargic and slow, resting — usually near water — an average of 22 or more hours per day. Their active and sleeping heart rates start to fall.

Working at the local hardware, I've learned the residents of our area make sure birds are kept in seed and suet all year. Black bears can smell suet more than a mile away. Suet contains a high concentration of fat and protein, just what the bears crave. While they like to stick to their home area and are normally shy toward humans, bears will return to a yard offering an easy food source.

What can you do to help manage a safe bear or wildlife habitat? According to the MDNR, you should help maintain diverse forests and woodland clearings. Keep the downed logs and trees to support the ecosystem and woodland inhabitants. Keep native mast plants going and encourage more. Wildlife depends on, and humans can consume, these wild edible foods. Have you ever eaten a hazelnut or a cherry? Then you've eaten both soft and hard mast! Soft mast refers to plants that produce fruits and berries and contain sugars and carbohydrates. These include dogwood, blueberry, elderberry, blackberry, junberry, staghorn sumac, black cherry, crab apple, pokeberry, wild grape, chokecherry, pawpaw, persimmon, plum, raspberry, and mulberry trees and bushes plus ferns, clovers and grasses. Hard mast refers to high-protein, high-fat seeds and nuts from trees such as pine, maple, hickory, oak, hazelnut, walnut and beech.

Bear encounters are rare, but here's some simple advice from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, (fs.usda.gov):

**DO NOT RUN.** Remain calm. Always face the bear and back up slowly, talking calm and low. If the bear continues to approach, try to scare it away by making yourself large, stretching your arms overhead and making loud noises. Keep bear spray on you to deter a charging bear. Last resort: use your hands to try to fight one off. Remember: it's illegal to kill a bear, unless in self-defense or with a license during the designated hunting season.

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.

**ST. AMBROSE CELLARS**  
**OPEN DAILY AT NOON**

**OPEN MIC THURSDAY**  
**LIVE MUSIC FRI & SAT**  
**INDOOR SEATING!**

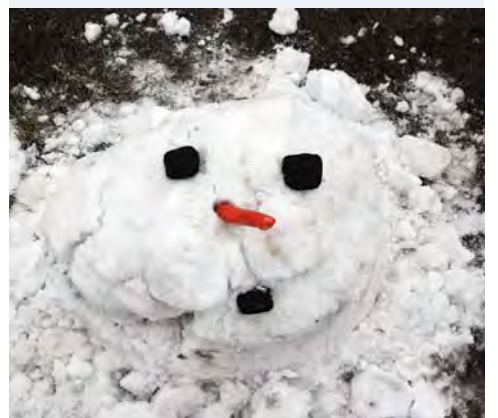
**WWW.STAMBROSECELLARS.COM**  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION!**



### Elegy For A Snowman

*The fierce north wind has demolished our snowman. Pine bough branches, once his arms, have fallen. That sweet pine-twig smile, three berry nose, are face down in the bitter cold. His plaid scarf an orphan, frozen stiff, no body to protect. Hard as we packed the snow to withstand the winter wind, he surrendered, even while our holiday lights flashed fast and bright with hope. During the night his smile endured as he dreamt of his pals, the birds, who would visit mornings to eat the black seed spread beneath him. As he stood watch on our street, even those dreary, sunless days, every moment peaked with the gift of life's abundance and brevity. When we turned over his head, the twig with his smile remained.*

— Louisa Loveridge Gallas  
Arcadia Poet



Melted Snowman, by photographer Grace Grogan

**YOU'RE JUST One Spice Away FROM PERFECTION**



**Northern Spice Co.**  
PREMIUM SPICES AND BLENDS  
ESTABLISHED IN 2016

*Find your perfect blend!*

- NATURAL SPICES AND HERBS
- HAND-MIXED BLENDS
- GIFT BASKETS - MORE

378 River St., Manistee, MI 49660  
Open Tue. - Sat. 10am - 5pm  
(231) 510-1768  
Order online at NorthernSpiceCo.com



**Stapleton Realty**

Serving Benzie, N. Manistee, Leelanau & Grand Traverse Counties

**In these times of VERY LOW INVENTORY:**

**GREAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS = TOP SELLING PRICE**

Contact us to learn more.

	Christine Stapleton OWNER/BROKER 231-499-2698 Mobile / Text		Shelly Lewis REALTOR® 231-492-3209 Mobile / Text
---	--	---	---

www.cd Stapleton.com

**Historic Downtown Thompsonville**

231-378-2554  
14848 Thompson Ave.

**WE ARE OPEN FOR DINING SERVICE.**  
PLEASE CALL AHEAD FOR SEATING AVAILABILITY, TAKE OUT.  
FULL MENU AVAILABLE.  
NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS

**Best BBQ Ribs In The NORTH!**  
Every Thur 5:30 - 9pm  
(Come early; they do go fast!)

**DAILY SPECIALS**  
Fish Fry Friday

**Gasoline ReFind**  
RESALE STORE

#RETROPETRO **GOOGLE IT.** #SORRYNOGAS

**OPEN EVERY SATURDAY**  
**10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

ERDMAN ROAD ~ BEAR LAKE  
3 MILES WEST OF US31  
1 MILE EAST OF M22  
IN BETWEEN POTTER & 13 MILE ROADS

(231) 268-4970  
APPOINTMENTS WELCOME DURING OFF HOURS

# Maple syrup

continued from page 1

in the area's renowned stone fruit, such as peaches and cherries.

Under previous ownership, the farm received verification as a Michigan Environmentally Assured Farm (MAEAP), and BrixStone's owners are proud the farm received re-verification in 2020.

"We bought it (in 2019), and in summer 2020 we started running the (sap) lines here," Foster said. "We had about 1,100 taps the first year, for the 2021 season, and this year we have 1,900. The goal is to get to about 4,000."

Sap collecting has graduated from buckets on tree taps and manual hauling, to installing plastic tubing from tree to tree and letting the sap flow to the sugar house, for boiling.

"With this modern tubing system, we can put a real small 5/16-inch hole in the tree; it's minimally invasive, much smaller than what they used to do with the buckets or other systems," Foster explained.

"Tubing is a great labor-saver and keeps everything clean, no mice or squirrels getting into buckets," he continued. "It's a closed system; we don't handle the sap at all. It goes into a tank; a machine puts it up into another tank then over to the evaporator. It's seamless, in that sense."

Foster said he has about 10 miles of tubing running through his sugar groves. He also incorporates a vacuum system to help draw sap from 800 to 900 trees.



About 10 miles of plastic tubing take sap to BrixStone's sugar shack. Photo by Kevin Howell.

"We get about 30% more yield that way," he said.

Collected sap goes through a reverse osmosis system that draws out more water before boiling. A side product is purified water used to clean equipment.

On a good day, Foster told me he can collect 3,000 gallons of sap, which makes



BrixStone Farms owner Keaton Foster checks the boil tank where sap turns into maple syrup. Photo by Kevin Howell.

30-45 gallons of syrup. That covers quite the pile of pancakes. He sells his syrup at his farmstand, along with peaches and more than 15 varieties of apples. He also distributes syrup to local stores such as Saddle Up Grocery in Bear Lake, Bear Lake Market, EZ Mart in Onekama, Redeemed in Manistee and Onekama's Portage Point Inn. In fall, BrixStone's syrup is also sold at various farm stands.

### Specialty products

Foster said the maple syrup industry is growing about 17% a year. He and other maple producers are finding unique uses for their real maple syrup. Saddle Up Grocery makes and sells BrixStone maple breakfast sausage. Iron Fish Distillery, of Thompsonville, began using maple syrup from Griner Family Sugar Bush, of Copemish, in bourbons and bourbon cocktails. The distillery also sells Bourbon Barrel Aged Maple Syrup. St. Ambrose Cellars, of Benzonia, uses Olds Brothers Maple Syrup, of Kingsley, in its honey lineup and popular X.R. Cyser beverage.

Area craft brewers sometimes include maple syrup in their beer recipes. Corey Wentworth, head brewer at Ludington Bay Brewing, of Ludington, said in the past he has used the syrup in darker beers, such as porters and stouts. Andy Thomas, owner-brewer of Starving Artist Brewing, located east of Ludington, includes maple syrup in a seasonal brew.

"Indeed, as soon as the sap starts running, we will do it again," Thomas said. "It's called Big Trouble In Little Can. It's a 16% stout with maple syrup, coffee and chocolate."

Back at BrixStone Farms, Foster will offer new products: granulated maple sugar, maple candies and pancake mixes.

The public is invited to taste BrixStone's syrup and take a tour of the operation during the farm's open house, to be held the last two weekends in March.

"We want to have a public place where people can see the process and tour the facility," he said. "It's the Tree-to-Table experience."

A bonus offering at the open house: ice cream with hot maple syrup.



Owner Keaton Foster at the barn and public room at BrixStone Farms. Photo by Kevin Howell

BrixStone Farms is located at 11240 Milarch Road, Bear Lake. From U.S. Highway 31, south of Bear Lake, take 11 Mile Road west to Milarch Road. Turn right at the stop sign (heading north) on Milarch. As you reach the bottom of the hill, the farm is on the left (west) side of the road.

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



Judy Cools with Peter, their last butterfly of the 2019 season. Photo by Gary Cools

## With love, gratitude and admiration

Writer Judy Cools, of Ludington, left us too soon in December. Sadly, we never had the chance to meet. Through her emailed messages and stories, we grew to know her as an exceptionally caring person. Judy approached us in our infancy in 2019 to ask if she could write about her experience rescuing butterflies. Other essays followed — her travels to visit her snowbird mother in Arizona, the mannerisms of her rescue dogs and why readers might consider adopting their pets, her personal travails dodging COVID-19 and why readers should mask, and a two-parter about her arachnid nemesis, the tick, and how to avoid the "beasties." She also wrote for us about holiday traditions, always mindful of being inclusive. Using her formidable writing skill, Judy injected warmth, humor and gentle lessons into each of her stories. We will miss her uplifting presence in these pages as she follows her beloved butterflies on their final journey home.



# Community Calendar

To be included in our April 6 printed edition, please submit your announcements by March 26. Email your calendar events or press releases to: 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

### Mar-Apr **Classes at Ludington Area Center for the Arts**

There are too many art classes to list! Please go to [www.ludingtonartscenter.org](http://www.ludingtonartscenter.org) and click on Workshops/Classes for a complete schedule.

### Mar 4-26 **Rabbit's Universe: Finding Joy Through Covid Conflict & Quarantine A Two-Year Retrospective Art Series.**

Artist receptions every Friday in March from 5-8pm, Main Gallery, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison.

### Mar 4-26 **Ruth Dimmitt's Weed Haven Whimsy: Poems, Paintings & Sculptures**

Artist reception March 4, 4-7pm. Performance Hall Lobby Gallery, Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison.

### Mar 4-Apr 1 **Cunningham, Hurd, Wink Art Exhibit**

Free, Oil paintings, fine art photographs, and ceramic sculptures. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd., Frankfort

## MARCH

### 9 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: True Stories (1986)**

10am & 7pm, \$2. Musical/Comedy starring David Byrne, Spalding Gray, Swoosie Kurtz, and John Goodman. 383 River St., Manistee

### 11 **Lenten Fish Frys in Baldwin**

4:30-7pm, \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, free for under 4. Dinners include cod and pollock, baked or fried, dinner roll with butter, French fries or baked potato, cole slaw, mac and cheese, and dessert. St Ann's Senior Center, 690 9th St.

### 11 **Live Music at the Brewery with Benjamin Paetz (Ukelele Guy)**

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

### 11 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Chris Michels**

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

### 11 **Performance of Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka Jr.**

7pm, \$12 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, Manistee High School, 525 12th St. For tickets, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8suhes>

### 12 **Spring Carnival at Crystal Mountain Resort**

All day. Events include building a sled using only cardboard and duct tape, racing those sleds, a slush cup race, a DJ playing tunes, a scavenger hunt, a candy jar challenge, live music, food specials, horse-drawn surrey rides, and laser tag. For more info, go to [crystalmountain.com](http://crystalmountain.com). 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville

### 12 **Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Ariadne Auf Naxos (R. Strauss)**

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

### 12 **Performance of Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka Jr.**

2pm and 7pm, \$12 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, Manistee High School, 525 12th St. For tickets, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8suhes>

### 12 **Finny Slam Fishing Tournament, Ludington**

\$10 entry fee. There is a 100% payout for the longest fish in each category: Pike, Steelhead, and Perch. You must be in line for measuring by 6pm. Free sloppy joes will be served at Sutton's Landing at the end of the tournament. For more info contact Pere Marquette Expeditions at 231.845.7285.

### 12 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Jedi Clampetts**

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

### 13 **Performance of Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka Jr.**

2pm, \$12 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, Manistee High School, 525 12th St. For tickets, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8suhes>

### 14 **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. "Is Democracy in Danger." 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)

### 15 **Beekeeping Class**

10am-3pm, Free but participants are asked to bring their own lunch and a canned/dried food item to donate to a local food pantry. Beekeepers of Mason County will teach using hands-on exercises. Mason County Reformed Church, 45 S. Amber Rd. For more info, go to [scottvillebeekeepers.org](http://scottvillebeekeepers.org)

### 16 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: What's Up Doc? (1972)**

10am & 7pm, \$2. Comedy/Romance starring Barbra Streisand and Ryan O'Neal. 383 River St., Manistee

### 18 **Lenten Fish Frys in Baldwin**

4:30-7pm, \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, free for under 4. Dinners include cod and pollock, baked or fried, dinner roll with butter, French fries or baked potato, cole slaw, mac and cheese, and dessert. St Ann's Senior Center, 690 9th St.

### 18 **Live Music at the Brewery with Tom Zatarra**

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

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

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

### 19 **Grip 'n Rip FAB 5 Disc Golf Tournament**

Check in from 8-8:45am, tee off at 9am, \$35, Leviathan Disc Golf Course, 517 N. Jebavy Dr., Ludington. For more info or to register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8nh82h>

### 19 **Celts & Kayaks at Crystal Mountain Resort**

All day. Events include racing kayaks down a ski slope, leprechauns skiing, a DJ playing tunes, a scavenger hunt, pot of gold challenge, a slush cup race, horse-drawn surrey rides, food specials, and laser tag. For more info, go to [crystalmountain.com](http://crystalmountain.com). 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville

### 19 **Family AfFair**

10am-2pm, Free, annual event where area businesses and community agencies provide resources, info, and fun surprises to local families. At this drive-through event, each car will be given 1 bag of goodies. Mason County Central School, 300 W. Broadway St., Scottville

### 19 **Mason County Young Farmers Tapping Day**

11am, Free. Join Mason County Farm Bureau Young Farmers, Kistlecree Farms, and West Shore FFA in making maple syrup. Participants will learn how to tap a tree, see how syrup is made, enjoy some treats, and spend time outdoors with neighbors. West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Rd., Scottville

### 19 **A Wee Bit Late St. Patrick's Day Celebration in downtown Ludington**

All day. Events include an Irish Jog (5k/10k run), Kegs & Eggs Breakfast, Follow the Rainbow Scavenger Hunt, Shamrock Parade, Pied Piper Pub Crawl, Green Parties and lots of live music. For more info, go to [downtownludington.org](http://downtownludington.org)

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

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

### 19 **The Sixties Sound featuring Mickey Dolenz & The Fab Four**

8pm, \$40-55, Little River Casino, 2700 Orchard Hwy., Manistee

### 21 **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. "People Communicating Across the Fence, or the Aisle. 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)

### 22 **Children of Summer: Artwork by Bill Knudstrup**

Free, opening reception March 26, 5-7pm. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee

### 23 **Classic Film Series at The Vogue Theatre: Hoop Dreams (1994)**

(not yet confirmed) 10am & 7pm, \$2. Documentary/Drama. 383 River St., Manistee

### 25 **Lenten Fish Frys in Baldwin**

4:30-7pm, \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, free for under 4. Dinners include cod and pollock, baked or fried, dinner roll with butter, French fries or baked potato, cole slaw, mac and cheese, and dessert. St Ann's Senior Center, 690 9th St.

### 25 **Live Music at the Brewery with John Merchant & Greg Miller**

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

### 25 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Andy Lynn & John G**

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

### 26 **Retro Day at Crystal Mountain Resort**

All day, Events include a costume contest with prizes, food specials, a DJ playing retro tunes, a scavenger hunt, a candy jar challenge, horse-drawn surrey rides, and laser tag. For more info, go to [crystalmountain.com](http://crystalmountain.com). 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville

### 26 **Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Don Carlos (Verdi)**

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

### 26 **Live Music at St. Ambrose Cellars with Sean Miller**

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

### 26 **Lantern-lit Hike at Orchard Beach State Park**

6-8pm, Free, Enjoy a hike through the Beech-Hemlock Loop Trail (0.7 mile). Meet at the Shelter Building and enjoy a hot beverage and a fire in the fireplace.

## APRIL

### 1- **Modes of Abstraction Art Exhibit**

Free, Artist Reception April 1, 5-8pm. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison.

### 1 **Lenten Fish Frys in Baldwin**

4:30-7pm, \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, free for under 4. Dinners include cod and pollock, baked or fried, dinner roll with butter, French fries or baked potato, cole slaw, mac and cheese, and dessert. St Ann's Senior Center, 690 9th St.

### 1 **Live Music at the Brewery with Serita's Black Rose**

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

### 4 **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. "A Mixed Economy." 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)

### 8 **Lenten Fish Frys in Baldwin**

4:30-7pm, \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, free for under 4. Dinners include cod and pollock, baked or fried, dinner roll with butter, French fries or baked potato, cole slaw, mac and cheese, and dessert. St Ann's Senior Center, 690 9th St.

### 8 **Live Music at the Brewery with Gabriel James**

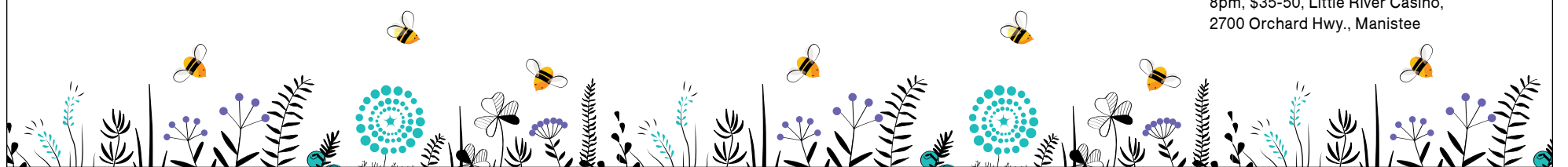
6-9pm, Free, Ludington Bay Brewery, 515 S. James St., Ludington

### 8 **The Accidentals live in concert at the Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts**

7:30, \$25-35 for adults, \$10 for under 18, presented in collaboration with the West Shore Community College's Performance Arts Series, 101 Maple St., Manistee

### 9 **Gin Blossoms live in concert at the Little River Casino and Resort**

8pm, \$35-50, Little River Casino, 2700 Orchard Hwy., Manistee



Read the results of

## MANISTEE'S CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by bird watcher and researcher Brian Allen,  
online at: [freshwater-reporter.com](http://freshwater-reporter.com)



Photo of White-winged Crossbill by Linda Scribner.



Snurfer inventor Sherman Poppen (left) goofs around with Jake Burton Carpenter, snowboard inventor, in this framed page from Vanity Fair magazine, date unknown. Courtesy photo.

# Snurfer

continued from page 3

the state park, but he went on to found Burton Snowboards.

Wendy said she returned to Muskegon in 2012 for the dedication of a statue honoring the evolution of the snowboard. The 14-foot-tall bronze, titled "Turning Point", was created by artist Jason Dreweck and his mother Teresa Hansen. The statue depicts an elegant ribbon of "snow" between a female snurfer at the top, symbolizing Wendy and her sisters, and a modern-day snowboarder at the bottom.

Stewart McFerran used to snurf down snow-covered Michigan sand dunes in Muskegon. He remembers being present when snowboarding legend Jake Burton Carpenter was disqualified from the 1979 Snurfer championship.

# Severe Weather

continued from page 1

April 3, 1956". Dozens more can be found on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service page dedicated to this severe weather event: <https://www.weather.gov/grr/1956TornadoOutbreakEyewitnessVT>

On these sites, you'll find stories, pictures and even home movies of this tragic event. And memories. So many memories. They express the terror and fear people experienced. Struggles to survive. Unimaginable destruction of life and property. And the sound of the twister itself — like a freight train — so loud, one person even remembers screaming as loudly as they could and still not being able to hear themselves over the ear-shattering sound of ruin all around them.

The NOAA's National Weather Service chronicled that day's weather system this way:

The afternoon of Tuesday, April 3rd, 1956, was warm and humid. Strong south winds had brought summer-like temperatures and humidity, with record highs in the upper 70s at Muskegon. Dew points were in the 60s even near Lake Michigan. But a strong cold front was approaching from the west and out ahead of it, a line of violent thunderstorms had formed over Wisconsin and Illinois...The U.S. Weather Bureau began notifying the public and civil defense officials that the risk across western Michigan was increasing. Some schools began letting out early, anticipating the severe weather to come.

The storms crossed Lake Michigan, and when they reached the west coast of Lower Michigan by late afternoon, they immediately began

producing tornadoes. Three hours of terror would follow. At least four powerful tornadoes would be spawned, tearing their way across the landscape. When it was over, areas from Saugatuck to Traverse City, and inland to Middleville and Rockford were dealing with unprecedented destruction. Almost 20 people were dead and hundreds injured. Dozens of homes were obliterated. Many people's lives were irrevocably changed.

### Learn and prepare

Tornadoes happen. Yup. Even along the "safe" west coast of Michigan. So, here's what you need to know. Go to <https://www.michigan.gov/miready>. There, you'll find dozens of life-saving tips for all sorts of emergency situations, including "Tornadoes." Rehearse it with your family and co-workers, so it all becomes second nature. This website offers advice about how to deal safely with potential dangers in a storm's aftermath, including debris, unstable buildings and downed power lines. And, it has wise tips for conserving battery life on your cellphone and photographing your home's damage for future insurance claims.

Spring and summer are coming soon to Michigan. Warmer days are ahead, but a doozy of a storm or two may come along with that wonderful weather. So, let's all prepare now and plan to stay safe ... together.

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](http://www.harryandthehurricane.com)

**FRESH WATER CANNABIS CO.**

**The Largest Store in Town!**

**wm**  
CHECK OUT OUR MENU ON WEEDMAPS!

**CURIOUS ABOUT CANNABIS? ASK THE EXPERTS WE ARE WEEDING FOR YOU!**

**GRAB THE COUPONS BELOW TO TRY US OUT!**

**8330 M37  
Baldwin, MI 49304  
(231) 238-3888**

**freshwatercannabisco.com**

**FWR** Bring this coupon in for 10% off your first purchase. For first time customers only

**FWR** Bring this coupon in for a free gift with your purchase.

**FRESHWATER REPORTER**  
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: Gordon Berg, Christine Blackledge, Jennifer Devine, Louisa Loveridge Gallas, Grace Grogan, Kevin Howell, Stewart McFerran, Christina Ryan-Stoltz, Christine Stapleton, Carmelitta Tiffany.

Freshwater Reporter is published by Freshwater Planet LLC of Manistee. We distribute free copies in Manistee, Mason, western Lake, and western Wexford counties. Advertising inquiries are welcome, as are suggestions, articles, poems and photos. ©2022, Freshwater Planet, LLC, all rights reserved. Visit our website at [www.freshwater-reporter.com](http://www.freshwater-reporter.com). Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Instagram.