

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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Happy Trails

By BRIAN ALLEN

Through the years, our family and guests have selected our favorite hikes in the area. We feel these are also the best in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Long Hikes

These are hikes of more than a couple miles, a bit too much for toddlers, aunts and uncles with bad knees, or people who can't delay gratification for ice cream. Bring water for thirsty hikers.

#1. **Treat Farm Trail**, part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, is south of Empire in Leelanau County. Park at the corner of Stormer and Norconk roads, about a half mile west of M-22. The trail begins at a gate, across from a restored barn. To park here, you need a National Park pass, available at the NPS Visitor Center in Empire.

The trail cuts for about a half mile through mature forests, with still-living ash and beech trees, and winds gradually uphill to the former Treat farm with its picturesque barns and an old Victorian farmhouse. The trail angles to the southwest here, past the barn and into an open meadow. At the end of the meadow, the trail passes through a copse of trees (watch for poison ivy) and takes you to the edge of a bluff on Lake Michigan, with the



Looking toward Bar Lake and Sleeping Bear Dunes from Treat Farm Trail. Photo: B. Allen.

first of many spectacular panoramic views of the lake and shore.

The best time to visit is on a sunny, cool mid-morning when the sun shining on the lake shows off beautiful aquamarine hues. Some hikers pause here and turn back, but the best of the hiking and views are farther along the trail that ascends the bluff face to the north. The trail climbs steeply in this section, but from this point there are no more difficult scrambles. Try to keep to the main trail (unmarked), as it braids with offshoots hikers use to climb to the top or

to look over the edge of the bluff. You will be on the right path if you pass along the edge and enter a cool, dark, cedar forest with an old, gnarled, spooky-looking white cedar. About one mile of the trail skirts the bluff, and if you continue you will reach the benches and overlook of the extremely popular Empire Bluff Trail. We usually turn around here, after taking a few photos of the Manitou Islands and Sleeping Bear Dune. Total round-trip time from the car is about 2-3 hours.

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THE SAUCE BOSS



An Alfredo Adventure

Story and photos by JOSHUA ELIE

I don't know why they called our job Ski Patrol — not at that resort, anyway. Granted, if somebody were to make a total arse of themselves it was a ski patroller's job to deal with it, but I never once saw that behavior. What I did see was little kids on the children's runs, people there for relaxed fun in the snow with friends, and thrill-seekers looking to push their limits, yet respectful of others. Everyone was there just to have a good time, and maybe that is a kind of kryptonite to negative people.

The job was almost all medical and rarely anything serious: put the injured on a sled and ski them into our little med shop, patch them up, and (practically never) call the EMS. Usually, our "patients" would catch a ride with friends to Urgent Care if they needed help beyond what we could handle. The



Ham fettuccine Alfredo.

pay back then wasn't much, and there weren't many hours, so it was basically ski for free at the coolest ski resort I have ever known, Caberfae Peaks.

The interesting part is why I was there for such a brief time. They are their busiest between Christmas and New Year's. I told them before I took the job that I would be sailing with my dad in the Florida Keys the week prior to Christmas and that I would be back in time, and I was. But that's not the entire story.

While I was in the Keys, I got stopped by the harbor police and ticketed for

continued on page 6

The changing face of our forests

By STEWART A. MCFERRAN



I have observed ash, beech and cedar trees dying on my property and in the adjacent state forest. I wonder what this means for our Northern Michigan woods. The Assisted Tree Range Expansion Project (ATREP) offers all of us concerned about the decline of our beloved forests a way to take action, by planting trees usually found in Southern or Mid-Michigan forests.

ATREP is a community science project, one that seeks to save our forests by helping us plant trees which can better adapt to predicted climate changes, such as warmer temperatures, recurring severe weather events, and diseases and pests. The project was founded by Madeline "Maddy" Barolie, M.S., Forest Conservation, while interning with the Leelanau Conservation District. She partnered in 2019 with Kama Ross — the former regional forester for Leelanau, Benzie and Grand Traverse conservation district offices — to offer trees at the northern end of their ranges to individual landowners and groups.

Barolie currently works for the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science as a climate adaptation specialist, and she manages ATREP with the help of Northwest Michigan nonprofit and for-profit partners, including five conservation district offices (Manistee, Benzie, Leelanau, Grand Traverse and Antrim), the Leelanau

Photo captions and story continued on page 6





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Spectacular September Night Skies

By **BROOKE EDWARDS**

Summer is winding down, and the days are becoming shorter. Though many are disheartened by this change in the seasons, stargazers are rejoicing. With the sun now setting well before 9 p.m., there is plenty of time to stargaze before bedtime.

Saturn

What was exclusively an early morning object is now slowly beginning to rise earlier in the evening. Look to the east after sunset to catch this planet rising. To the unaided eye, Saturn will appear as an unusually bright, unmoving “star.” You will need the aid of a small telescope to see its amazing rings. The views of Saturn (and Jupiter) are worth the investment.

Jupiter

Another pre-midnight object is rising earlier in the evening for your viewing pleasure. Look eastward after 10 p.m. to catch Jupiter, the planet with many moons.



Photo: Kendall Hoopes, Pexels.

Human eyes will see it as a super bright “star,” but binoculars will bring you views of its large moons. As Jupiter rises, Saturn will already be well into the southeast sky.

Mars

Mars rises in the eastern sky in the early morning hours. The planet with the red glow (due to its surface iron oxide) shines on night owls and early risers. Mars’ two

moons are too small to be visible, but its stunning red color is enough to make you look up.

On September 16 and 17, Mars will be near the waning gibbous moon in the Taurus constellation. This is a rare occurrence. If you happen to look up both nights, you will notice Mars is on one side of the moon on the 16th and appears on the opposite side on the 17th. This happens

because the moon rises at a different time each day.

Orion Constellation

Orion, the hunter, will be rising earlier in the morning as the month progresses. Look for three stars in a row; those are his belt. The rest should become evident. Betelgeuse, the flashing red supergiant star that is Orion’s right shoulder, is also hard to miss. The star has been the center of speculation, with rumors that it may go supernova. Astronomers have dismissed these rumors, claiming there is no evidence the star will be exploding anytime soon.

Moon

September’s Full Harvest moon rises just after 5 a.m. on the tenth. If you are an early riser, be sure to enjoy this beautiful once-a-month sight. With sunset occurring earlier, and planets and winter constellations returning to the scene, stargazing will only get better as the days progress. Let’s all hope for clear skies.

Brooke Edwards is a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador. She lives in Manistee and has given area presentations and hosted night-sky viewings at Fifth Avenue beach. “Like” her page on Facebook @Brooke-Edwards-Solar-System-Ambassador and follow brooke_of_stars on Instagram.

Ludington and Manistee performances

New plays promise laughter, drama

By **PAT STINSON**, using staff reports

When was the last time you watched a couple try to escape from a friendly alien abduction or listened to ancient microbes discuss life on Earth? Would you dare to weigh the merits of a painting created by Hitler or sip coffee flavors brewed from various disappointments?

These musings and many more are the subjects of “An Evening of New Short Plays” coming to Ludington and Manistee. The performances will be held at the Ludington Area Center for the Arts (LACA), Sept. 9-10, and at the Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts (RRCA), Sept. 13-14. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m.

The combination of 60-second to 20-minute works of local playwrights Maripat Allen and Dr. Rick Plummer will be performed by a cast of experienced local actors and directed by Plummer.

“The evening promises something for everyone, including zany comedies and hard-hitting dramas,” Allen said, adding, “Rick is an extraordinarily talented and experienced director and playwright. It’s a dream of a lifetime to have my plays staged alongside his, and directed by him.”

Allen indicated she is also impressed with the cast.

“I’ve watched or worked with almost all

of them, and believe me when I tell you, they are talented,” she emphasized, “(and they are) able to bring a depth to characters that is a playwright’s dream.”

Plummer echoed her praise.

“(I am) certain audience members can expect to laugh, cry, and feel everything in between.”

He said he appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with Maripat.

“Her work is always so thought-provoking and such great fun,” he remarked. “She is such a master storyteller.”

Maripat Allen has had various plays produced live and virtually in cities across the U.S. and abroad. Among her awards are two first place honors in the Community Theatre Association of Michigan playwrighting contest. She began her theater acting with the Manistee Civic Players, who produced her first play, “The Would-Be Lover’s Guide,” in 2015.

Dr. Rick Plummer is well known in the area as the former director of the performing arts series at West Shore Community College and as the director of many plays at the college and at Ramsdell Theatre. He is a professional actor, director and playwright with many credits in stage, film, video and television. He

taught theater for 40 years at colleges and universities and tours his one-man play, “Live from the Front: byline Ernie Pyle,” around the country.

Each evening’s performance includes 12 vignettes of varying lengths, with topics ranging from the historical and fantastical to the emotional and political. “It’s like a buffet of all kinds of delicious foods served up for them very quickly,” Plummer said. The playbill includes:

- “Preparing to Cross.” A woman and her husband face mortality as the woman packs a casket for her trip across the River Styx.
- “Monster’s Art.” A beautiful painting by Adolf Hitler is uncovered 70 years after WWII. Can we separate the quality of art from the life lived by the artist?
- “Lost and Found.” A woman struggles with the loss of her mother as she searches for her lost car.
- “Bitter Grounds.” A coffee shop specializes in coffees for every type of disappointment. Dee-lish!
- “Aufseherin”. A widowed grandmother at Chanukah is haunted by the ghosts of three female French resistance fighters.
- “What Happened in Greyston”. Sisters hear of the questionable death of a friend.



- “One-Minute Plays”. Two characters in three situations encounter unexpected twists and turns as they explore relationships.
- “Xiernon from Glixtar”. A couple try to escape a friendly alien abduction.
- “Becoming Zelenskyy”. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is interviewed, but is it an interrogation or something else?
- “Will of Steel”. A 93-year-old Ukrainian Holocaust survivor relives the horrors of a WWII massacre, as she endures a present-day bombardment of Kiev.
- “Aussie Hilltop”. It is 3.5 billion years in the past. Life on Earth has just begun, and microbial characters contemplate their future while watching the sunset.
- “Cry Ki Yippie Yi”. A man and woman are trapped in a dystopian world in which the state controls all reproductive rights—but not in the way you might expect.

LACA is located at 107 South Harrison Street in Ludington. RRCA is at the intersection of Maple and First streets in Manistee. For tickets and information, contact LACA at 231-845-2787 and RRCA at 231-398-9770.



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The wild WONDERS of walking

Story and photo by **CHRISTINA RYAN-STOLTZ**

Every morning I choose my own adventure by deciding where to take my daily walk. The first thing I do is to get myself quiet enough to hear precisely what my spirit needs. Is this a sidewalk, cityscape and bay view kind of day? Will I take the secret steps down to the big lake and stretch out my arms wide, as the eagles fly over my head on their morning hunt? Will I expand my lungs with a big deep breath in, followed by a full body exhale, releasing all my fears and anxieties into the wide-open arms of Lake Medicine? Or shall I drive into the woods, into the national park, so that I can gulp in the rich, moist cedar essence, and watch the golden rays of the brilliant sunshine through the branches, like a stained-glass wall of light and mist and lush green vibrancy, pushing past all the resistance I've built up, flooding me with beauty and light and the hope that comes from a new morning's fresh start?

There is a wisdom in walking daily, a surrender to a higher power, a blind trust that whatever comes up in a day, a walk in the wild wonder of this spinning planet can lend us its strength. A walk fortifies the soul and the body, it provides fresh air, fresh perspective, a change of scenery, the option to change pace or course. A walk is good alone or with another; walking and talking, or walking in silence, can deepen any relationship with our two- or four-legged companions.

When we walk our heart pumps faster, oxygenating blood and sending it to our limbs, enlivening us in entirety—tip top to tip toe. Our muscles strengthen and build endurance, our joints loosen; the synovial fluid that lubricates them increases its production, keeping us from our natural inclination to stiffen up with the assistance of gravity and time. Our sense receptors open, taking in all the information as we walk through the flora and fauna, the textures beneath our feet, the presence of other beings, the weather and the terrain. Walking fires up our metabolism and

improves sleep, both of which enhance every single body process we have.

Beyond the physical benefits, which are many, the improvements to mental health are off the charts! Walking releases those natural painkillers, endorphins, and increases production of serotonin and other feel-good hormones, helping to elevate our mood and decrease incidences of depression, while simultaneously decreasing cortisol production, related to chronic stress. Age-related memory decline improves, and the incidence of Alzheimer's is reduced by HALF from walking daily. Enhanced creativity and problem solving are well known "side effects" of walking as well.

I feel most alive when I am out in nature. Most myself. Who I am is solidified by the earth — sturdy underfoot, primal, clear, centered and mighty. A remembering of my self comes through. Whenever I am outside for very long, I have a difficult time returning indoors, in all seasons. I can breathe better, the clutter in my mind gets unpacked, priorities and needs come forward. I am kinder, softer, and I move with more ease. My role models are trees. I find I can reflect on the interior processes and sort the seed from the hull, so to speak. Before I knew walking as my superpower and birtright, I was full of pent-up feelings that had no safe space to spread out. I shudder to think of ever returning to that way of being.

So much has been revealed to me on my daily walks that I may never have had access to otherwise. I say to anyone who will listen: If you want to change your life, start taking a walk every day.

Prove me wrong!

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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Why are so many evergreens turning brown?

Story and photos by **JOSH SHIELDS, Ph.D.**, Forester and Wildlife Biologist, Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) – Manistee and Mason-Lake Conservation Districts

Editor's note: Earlier this summer, we asked Josh Shields if he could explain to our readers why we were seeing so many brown evergreens in our county and neighboring counties. He was quick to respond and, unfortunately, we weren't as quick to publish his story, which originally appeared in the Manistee Conservation District newsletter. Reprinted here by permission, with minor edits.

This summer I have been getting many questions about the "browning evergreens." While it may seem like there is one simple answer, the answer is quite complicated!



A stressed Colorado blue spruce tree (native to North America but not native to Michigan) being attacked by needlecast fungi (and other fungi) and cooley spruce gall adelgid.

In some cases, environmental stressors are the cause. For example, when trees are located close to roads and the brown coloration is mainly found on the portions of the trees facing the road, the likely cause is damage from road salt. Winter injury is also common, whereby trees typically exhibit browning needles on the portions facing the prevailing winds. This is especially noticeable on trees that grow close to Lake Michigan. With winter injury, there is also sometimes a zone of green needles below the brown needles. This zone is indicative of the snow depth, whereby needles below the snow depth do not turn brown the same way as exposed needles above the snow. When summer drought is the factor, you will notice a progression. Just a few needles are brown at first, followed by all the needles turning brown, followed by the death of the tree

if the tree is not able to access adequate water.

Pests and diseases can also be factors, and environmental factors play a role in this. Non-native invasive species, such as the white pine blister rust fungus and the



A stressed Douglas-fir tree (native to North America but not native to Michigan) being attacked by needlecast fungi and other fungi.

insect hemlock woolly adelgid, can impact otherwise healthy trees. However, in most cases, pests and diseases are affecting trees that have already been weakened due to environmental stressors. One well-known example is the statewide decline of Colorado blue spruce. This species was widely planted as a Christmas tree, with tight spacing between tree trunks. However, many of these Christmas tree plantations were abandoned before the trees were harvested, and the trees have continued to grow and compete with one another, causing much stress on each tree. In addition to the stress caused by this competition, there is stress associated with the fact that the climate in Michigan is not the same as the climate in the Rocky Mountains, where Colorado blue spruce originates. (Native evergreen species, as in native to Michigan, are best adapted to our environmental conditions). In response to this stress, Colorado blue spruce gets attacked by numerous types of needlecast fungi, tip blights, canker diseases, gall adelgids and spider mites. There are numerous other examples as well, such as stressed red pine trees in plantations

that have not been properly thinned being attacked by native *Armillaria* spp. root rot fungi and native pine engraver beetles.

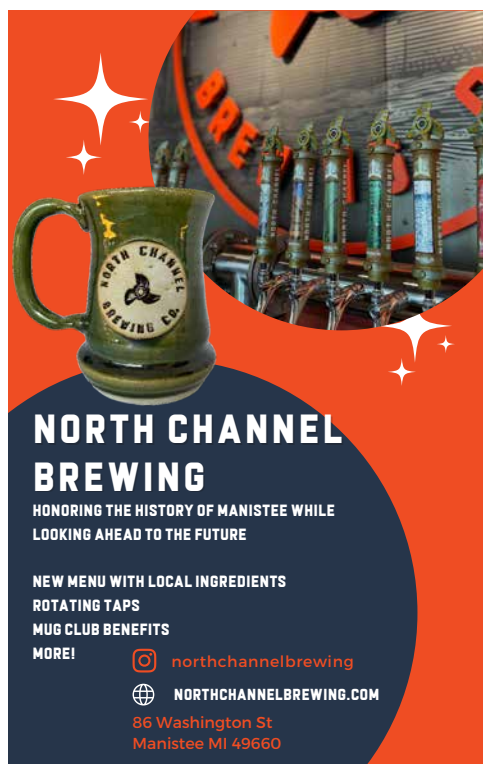
Because the browning of evergreens is such a complex issue that depends on numerous factors, it is best to contact a professional and have a discussion, based on the specific case in question, before making any conclusions and proceeding with management.

For more information, contact Josh Shields, forester and wildlife biologist with the Manistee and Mason-Lake Conservation Districts, at 231-889-9666 (Office) 989-220-9236 (Mobile), or via email at joshua.shields@macd.org.

An eastern white pine seedling that died from drought stress.



Josh Shields, Ph.D., is also a Certified Forester with Society of American Foresters, Certified Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), Certified Inspector with the American Tree Farm System and Tree Risk Assessment Qualified with ISA. Additionally, he serves as a Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicator in Michigan and a Certified Wildlife Biologist with The Wildlife Society.



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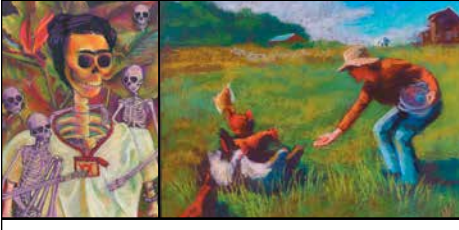
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Elie's Alfredo Sauce

1/2 cup butter
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2 tsp garlic powder
2 cups milk
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1/8 tsp ground black pepper

Mush the cream cheese a bit, and let it come to room temperature. Melt butter in big saucepan, and stir in garlic powder. Add the cream cheese and stir, adding milk a little at a time until smooth. Rarely does the recipe need the entire 2 cups of milk, though it's good to have that much on hand. Careful not to overheat, which can cause separation and curdling. Add black pepper. If it doesn't thicken enough after cooling, add a little more cheese.

Sauce Boss

continued from page 1

not having a "noise-producing device," basically, "no whistle on my dingy." Anyway, this setback behind us, off we went sailing the next day. Maybe a mile out of Boot Key Harbor, the pin that secures the front main stay popped out, allowing the mast pole to come crashing down. For those of you who don't know much about sailing, the tall pipe rising from the middle of a sailboat is that "mast pole," and it is held in place by a bunch of cables called "stays." When the mast pole came down, it was only by divine intervention that it didn't fall on any of us, but the sheet fell in the water and got caught in the prop. Now, all the Florida Keys are sand ... except for this one tiny island-sized hunk of hard shale. It's like a big, sharp rock they call "Gilligan's Island", so we ended up literally stranded on ... Yep. My wallet, with all my I.D., including my BLS (Basic Life Saving) certification, was lost on that mournful day, the last the Gypsy Wind would ever sail. Skipping ahead, the only identification I had left to catch my flight home was that dingy/whistle ticket! I called the airport,



Alfredo omelet.

told them what happened, they called the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Coasties confirmed it.

When I got back to Caberfae, owner Tim asked for my BLS. Of course, I had lost it, and when I tried to tell him what happened, he wasn't buying the stranded-on-Gilligan's-Island bit. I don't blame him; I wouldn't have bought it, either!

Through everything, I was still able to frequent my favorite restaurant for breakfast in all the Florida Keys, the Stuffed Pig. Their kitchen's seafood omelet paired with a Bloody Mary is like waking up in heaven. You have probably tasted Alfredo (the Italian cream sauce) on pasta



The Stuffed Pig.

or pizza, but have you ever had it in an omelet? That's the way they do it at the Pig, using the best crustaceans, like crab and shrimp; mollusks, like clams and oysters; and fresh spinach. The best thing about this and other Italian sauces is that they are so multi-purpose. Boil noodles or break some eggs ... and anchors away!

Joshua Elie is a musician and retired building contractor. He now enjoys life as a homesteader.



Tulip tree, swamp white oak and other saplings (in brown wrapping) were purchased from the Benzie Conservation District office. Photo: S.A. McFerran.

Photos on page 1 (left to right, top to bottom), ATREP founder Madeline Baroli above a shagbark hickory sapling, one of the southern Michigan tree species sold by some area conservation district offices. ATREP courtesy photo. A tulip tree planted in Manistee 10-plus years ago is thriving, even in partial shade. Photo: P. Stinson, Mature shagbark hickory trees bear fruit: hard-to-crack, flavorful nuts. Photo courtesy of The Perfect Pantry. This hackberry tree grows in Niles, along Michigan's southern border. The trees are now offered for sale in the Northwest Lower Peninsula. Photo: P. Stinson.

Forests

continued from page 1

Conservancy, the Conservation Resource Alliance, Intercoastal Ecological Services and Design, Barker Creek Nursery and Four Season Nursery.

Some of the trees I planted this spring are named in the Assisted Tree Range Expansion Project. They were offered for sale by the Benzie Conservation District office. When I planted them, I became a citizen scientist and part of an effort to reinforce the tree canopy with new tree species that, according to ATREP's stated goals, will "offset tree die-offs" and "increase ecosystem diversity."

Barolie said she has been "really swamped" as "people are finally realizing that they need to plan" for climate changes and take measures that will assist in the adaptation of forests.

"We consult with all sorts of groups about climate adaptation, in general, within our forested ecosystems," she said.

Land managers, the parks, the National Forest Service and others are realizing that assisted migration and range expansion will help maintain a robust forest.

One of the trees on my list from the Benzie Conservation District is the tulip tree. I had seen huge ones growing in the Great Smoky Mountains on a college botany trip. The tulip tree is one of the species predicted to

thrive in Northern Michigan under future climate conditions. Among the 35-plus others ATREP suggests planting are swamp white oak, sassafras, American sycamore, hackberry, black tupelo and shagbark hickory. My hope is that one day these trees will tower over the sites where beech and other compromised trees now stand.

A chalky white substance on beech tree bark, a scale caused by an insect called *Cryptococcus fagisuga*, concerns me. Once invaded, branches on the big beech lose their leaves and the dead trees come crashing down during windstorms. I have felt the ground shake when large trees fall.

Upstream from my house, the cedar die-off is heartbreaking. The lush foliage of cedar, a tree species which has thrived in the riverine since the glaciers pulled back, looks brittle and bleached. I recently planted swamp white oak, one of the ATREP trees. I hope they thrive along the riverbank.

I am encouraged by young ash trees thriving near the river outside my window. But I have heard the thud of ash windmills, scoured by emerald ash borers, as they hit the ground. The threat to hemlock trees at my place is real, too. The insect invader known as woolly adelgid is moving north and can kill hemlock trees.

In addition to these threats, the growing season is changing.

"Leaf-out and flowering dates have already moved about a week earlier," Baroli said. She added that compromised tree

regeneration, when younger trees in the understory struggle to thrive and survive, is another major concern. This is "a result of forest health issues, browse pressure from high deer populations, (and) ... higher temperatures and drought."

The Northern Institute of Applied Science has produced an "Adaptation Workbook" to help landowners and others define and assess the effects of climate change.

The Assisted Tree Range Expansion Project (ATREP.net) is not the only effort along these lines. Forester Joshua Shields, Ph.D., of the Manistee Conservation District, said his office has been selling trees with a native range slightly south of Manistee County for years. At its plant sale in 2016, the district sold the following tree species: 100 tulip, 200 eastern redbud, 100 American sycamore and 100 shagbark hickory. This year, Manistee landowners purchased 475 paw paws and the same number of black gum trees.

Adaptation to changing conditions is a key ecological concept. Our forest is changing, and to survive it must adapt. We can help by planting trees which are slowly migrating here, and enjoy the diversity they bring to the forest.

Stewart A. 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.

Trails

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#2. Old Baldy Trail is within the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's Arcadia Dunes, just north of Arcadia. The trailhead is on the west side of M-22, about a half mile north of the state highway turnout and overlook. This is the favorite hiking trail of all our guests and is popular with others, too. From the parking lot, it is a little more than a level mile through a pine grove and deciduous forest (with a stop at the kids' climbing tree) then up some steep steps to the open dune. The trail branches, with the trail to the north, or straight ahead, leading to a bowl dune. Here, you'll find views of Lower Herring Lake and Frankfort. The trail to the left, heading west, leads to a bluff about 300 feet above Lake Michigan. You'll see Elberta Bluffs and Frankfort to the north, and a perched dune with balsam firs and views toward Manistee in the south. Adventurous and fit hikers descend the bluff here to the lake for a swim in summer and a tough climb back up.

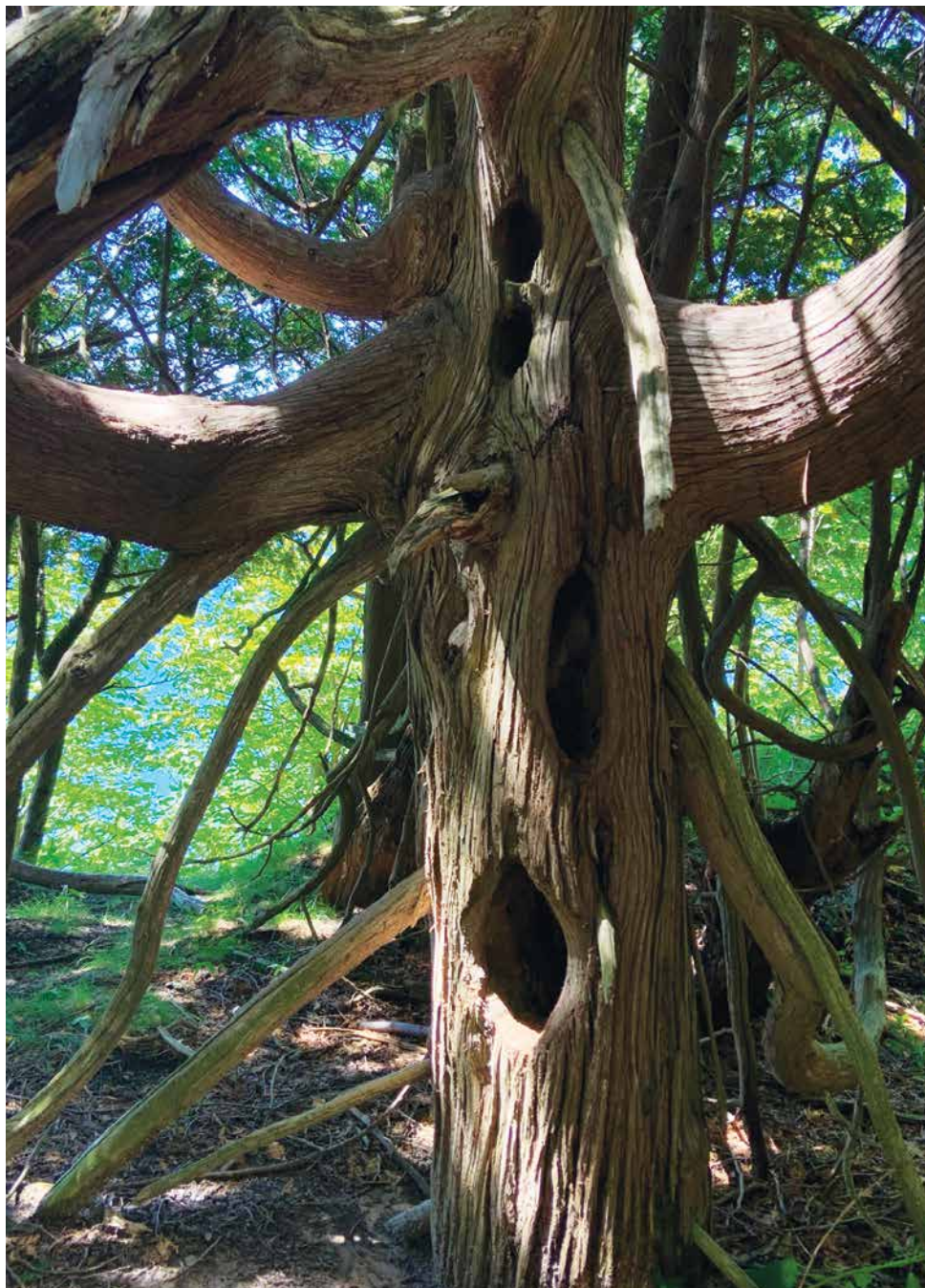


Old Baldy Trail, looking south. Photo: B. Allen.

#3. Manistee River Trail is in the Manistee National Forest. Catch the trailhead at Red Bridge (over the Manistee River) on Coates Highway, about 9 miles east of Brethren. The trail follows the Manistee River mostly along a bluff from the Hodenpyle Dam south to Coates Highway. This is the best fall color hike in the area and, in my opinion, the entire Lower Peninsula. Our favorite time to hike is in early October when there is still a bit of green background for all the flaming orange, red and yellow maples and poplars. The views across the river and toward the ridge on the opposite side remind me of more hilly or mountainous landscapes of West Virginia or Kentucky. From Red Bridge, the trail heads north on the east side of the river, with many spectacular overlooks, and descends to the crystal-clear Arquilla Creek, where a foot bridge brings you to the next climb and even more gorgeous viewpoints. Another access to the trail is reached by driving Coates Highway east to Warfield Road and driving north to a two-track, Cottage Road. This heads west and intersects the trail in about one mile. Hike north from here across the high footbridge over Slagel Creek.



Manistee River Trail overlook. Photo: B. Allen.



Ghost tree, Treat Farm Trail. Photo: B. Allen.

From the north, you can get to the trail by following Hodenpyle Dam Road then turning onto Upper River Road. About a mile down the road is a parking area under the power line. Park here to get to the trail that goes to the "Little Mac," a suspension footbridge over the Manistee River that connects the Manistee River Trail (MRT) to the North Country Scenic Trail on the west side of the Manistee River. Cross the suspension bridge and follow the MRT south. After about a mile, you will cross numerous streams with cascades over the claybanks to the river below, some of the only waterfalls in this part of the state. For more specific and detailed directions for the MRT, check with the Manistee National Forest ranger station off M-55 in Wellston.

Short Hikes

#1. Arcadia Marsh Boardwalk. This is a Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy preserve in Arcadia, Michigan. There are two trailheads. One is on M-22, just south of the village of Arcadia. The other is on St. Pierre Road. This relatively new boardwalk was constructed by the conservancy with the help of many generous donors. The wide boardwalk crosses almost a mile of the Arcadia Marsh, one of the only intact coastal wetlands on the shore of Lake Michigan. The boardwalk is open all year, other than the middle section which is closed to protect nesting waterfowl from mid-April to mid-July. This is the place to show your kids turtles, muskrats, dragonflies, ducks, Sandhill Cranes and Trumpeter Swans without getting muddy and usually without mosquitoes. I have been on the boardwalk hundreds of times and almost never had any problems with biting insects, despite the marsh environment. There are several elevated platforms with benches offering front-row views of the marsh and wildlife. Lucky visitors have even encountered otters and bobcats. The boardwalk is most well known for being one of the best bird-watching sites in Michigan, with 254 species of birds seen

here from the date of this writing. Another not-to-be-missed attraction nearby — and a real kid pleaser after a visit to the boardwalk — is the Arcadia Ice Shop, an old-fashioned ice cream parlor on M-22.



Rare sighting of a bobcat, Arcadia Marsh. Photo: B. Allen.

#2. Arcadia Dunes Accessible Trail – Lake Michigan Overlook. This is another Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy preserve. From Old Baldy trailhead, follow the above directions to Old Baldy Trail, Long Hike #2. This is a short, (a little more than a half mile long), wide, wheelchair-accessible trail to the bluff above Lake Michigan. Take the trail to the left of the parking area. This easy trail passes through beautiful deciduous forests, especially attractive in spring with trillium and other wildflowers. Within the forest is a boardwalk switchback with a deck and benches and, at the end of the trail, a platform with many benches and views of Lake Michigan. This is a favorite spot for those with limited time who want a quick hike to a quiet sunset, or for those wanting to show someone with limited hiking ability one of the most beautiful spots in the Lower Peninsula.



Trumpeter Swans, Arcadia Marsh. Photo: M. Videan.

#3. Misty Acres Trail. Misty Acres: The Borwell Preserve is also maintained by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Take County Line Road east of US-31 and west of Crystal Mountain, a ski/golf resort. The parking area is on the north side of the road. The trail loops for a total of 0.7 miles through mature forests of maple and hemlock. About half the trail follows an exceptionally deep ravine, with a clear, babbling brook cascading over logs and gravel bars until it joins the Betsie River. Despite the steep terrain and views, the trail is mostly level.

Honorable Mention Trails

#1. Lake Michigan Ridge Trail, (Long Hike), is part of the Huron-Manistee National Forest, in the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area. The trailhead is near the Lake Michigan Recreation Area campground at the end of West Forest Trail Road in northern Mason County, about 20 minutes southwest of Manistee. This trail follows the ridge above the lake and climbs up and down dunes, heading south into the wilderness area. Within the wilderness are many trails for choosing long or moderate hikes. This is a great hike in late summer when the wild blueberries are ripe on the ridges, and the lake waters are warm and inviting for a post-hike swim.

#2. Pete's Woods is part of the Arcadia Dunes Preserve, (Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy). From US-31 in southern Benzie County, turn west on Joyfield Road and go about 2.5 miles to Swamp Road. Turn south and take this gravel road to the bottom of the hill; the parking lot is on the right. Wildflower enthusiasts would rank this trail number one, especially in the peak season in May. Trilliums steal the show, but all types of wildflowers will capture your attention. This is an exemplary forest with no over-browsing by deer, so far, and few invasive species, thanks to the efforts of volunteers from the conservancy. The trail is loop of 1.5 miles with some moderate hills.



Trilliums at Pete's Woods Trail, Arcadia. Photo: M. Videan.

To learn more about Sleeping Bear's trails, go to: www.nps.gov/slbe. For Huron-Manistee National Forest trail information, visit: fs.usda.gov/hmnf. Find maps and more about Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy preserves at: gtrlc.org.

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

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Moon Trees to fly again

By PAT STINSON

In May, I hugged a Moon Tree.

The tall, healthy-looking sycamore was grown from a seed that flew to space in 1971 and was planted in Niles, Michigan in 1976. Many seeds flew to space on the Apollo 14 mission in an experiment to compare the effects of seeds sent to space with their counterparts on the ground. The seeds were germinated, and young seedlings were planted throughout the U.S. to commemorate the country's Bicentennial and were also given to other countries.

Michigan is said to have received and planted four trees (astonishingly, detailed records were not kept), but only this one near the Indiana border survived. You can find it at the amazing Fernwood Botanical Garden. I visited in early May when the red trilliums and other spring flowers were blooming. The Saint Joseph River flows beside the grounds, with creeks, ponds and sculptures throughout the wooded and sunny garden settings. The temperature was 90 degrees by 11 a.m., so I stuck to the shady walking trails.

The Moon Tree reportedly was to be planted in the arboretum but instead found a happy, moisture-laden home in a former nursery outside the Japanese garden. Specifically, the tree is growing alongside a gravel drive overlooking the grounds' building, an inauspicious site for a tree with a celebrated past. Even with directions from Sue Miller at the reception desk, it took a bit of sleuthing to find this historical figure. At a bend in the road, I stopped at a greenhouse, where "Joanne," a volunteer, helpfully pointed to the next landmark.

Ed Stephenson left the shade of his maintenance garage to greet me as I parked alongside it. I shouted my reason for being there to him, and he walked to one of a few trees opposite the building. A small sign at the tree's base simply states, "Moon Tree", along with a picture of the moon. We took photographs and talked about the tree's history, its modest home and lack of visitors.

Here's a bit of trivia for you. When it launches toward the moon this month or next, the Artemis 1 rocket will carry tree seeds, echoing that Apollo 14 experiment. Last time, the tree species were selected from southern climes, and many did not survive. Some that did weren't thriving in



our northern states. However, Michigan's Moon Tree in Niles thrived. And touching something living that traveled to space, even 50 years ago, is the next best thing to being in space to this gal.

To read more about the interesting story of NASA's original "moon trees" and the experiment, go to: https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_tree.html.

For information about Fernwood Botanical Garden, visit: fernwoodbotanical.org.



Vitalie Adutska / Unsplash.

Ode to Peaches

By Lousia Loveridge Gallas

Peaches do not need a self-help manual to become themselves! Simply hold one in your palm. Do you sense confusion, distress? Or simply pure delight in its own skin. The peach, so proud of "Rosacea," the family name, germinates with ease to bloom even from its tough center. Your mouth aroused by a peach's self-esteem, that first dreamy bite culminates the ancestral destiny of its fragile blossoms to be adored, once worshipped to ward off evil spirits.* With further bites glorious juice fascinates your fingers, rolls down your chin onto your new white shirt which humbly feels joy to receive such sweetness.

You are so enchanted! All sadnesses, sorrows, shadows disappear right down to your baptism in a full moist finale and, at last, the sturdy confident pit brings you home.

*In ancient China, peach blossoms decorated doorways at the new year, symbols of longevity; warriors carried them to protect the Emperor in public from evil spirits. In Korea, the peach tree is considered to be immortal. From Nick Musica's "The Weird and Wild History of Peaches", FruitStand.com, Nov., 2020.

Community Calendar

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September 23

Live Music: Performer(s) TBA, Ludington
 4-7pm, Free. Legacy Plaza, 112 N. James St. Bring lawn chairs/blankets.

Live Music: Dede Alder, Beulah

5:30-8:30pm. Free. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd.

Live Music: Nate Dill, Ludington

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

Live A Cappella Ensemble: Tonic Sol-fa, Manistee

7:30pm, \$25-35 adults, \$10 under 17. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Info/tickets: ramsdelltheatre.org

September 23-24

Octoberfest in Ludington

5-8pm Fri, \$10 for 5 stops along the pub crawl with games & souvenir. 1pm (advance ticket holders) or 2pm (same day ticket holders) Sat., \$10 includes 1 drink token. Steins are \$10, additional tokens \$5. Designated drivers & those 16-20, \$5. 15 & under, Free. Beer from Bell's Brewing & Ludington Bay Brewing, wine, cider, sodas, food vendors, games, & live music. Legacy Plaza, 112 N James St.

September 24

Manhattan Short Film Festival, Ludington

11am, \$10. Filmgoers will each be able to vote for their favorite film and actor. Results from showings across the country will be sent to NYC festival headquarters to determine winners. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/manhattan-short-film-festival-tickets-404289900977 or in the LACA gift shop.

Apple Smash Fest, Kaleva

12-8pm, Live Music, Northern Natural Cider House & Winery, 7220 Chief Rd. Bring lawn chairs/blankets.

Live Music: High Lonesome, Ludington

1pm, Free. Big Sable Point Lighthouse, Ludington State Park, 5611 N. Lighthouse Dr. Bring lawn chairs/blankets. Michigan Recreation Passport required to drive into the park.

Live Music: Keith Scott, Beulah

5:30-8:30pm. Free. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd.

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