

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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Pumpkin for all seasons

By VALERIE CHANDLER

The Native American side of my family often lived off the land and learned how to preserve food for their large family, especially during the winter months when it was scarce. This led to our routine canning of fish and venison. My grandma would even can venison soup or stew.

My grandma's influences are evident in my Aunt Sandy, who lives in Oklahoma. She is always posting on Facebook her "foodie experiments" with canning or dehydrating. She has made everything from jams — using flowers and fruits we don't have here in Michigan — to pickled watermelon rinds, infused oils and honey, dehydrated carrots and herbs picked from her garden, canned soups and even butter.

Now, I admit I don't preserve many foods like my family did years ago, or how some currently do, mainly because it's just my husband and me. However, I do like to harvest pumpkins to make my own puree to use throughout the year. For some reason, my family never did anything with pumpkins, which surprises me. If you have an Instant Pot, a combination pressure cooker and slow cooker, you can easily follow my recipe to make your own pumpkin puree. I've included my favorite recipe for you to use later.

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The writer's granddaughter, Gracie, amongst the pumpkins during one of the family's pumpkin-picking adventures. Photo: Valerie Chandler



THE SAUCE BOSS



The only gig I ever missed

By JOSHUA ELIE

Growing up in a musical family, I learned early on that musicians don't get sick days. Come rain, sleet or flu, you still must show up, or lose your gig and reputation.

One time, I was hosting one of the Country (Music) Showdown programs (formerly "Star Search"), and my B-3 (organ) player John Lawson came back from a Cuban tour with what I dubbed the "Cuban Death Flu." He shared it with all of us in the band. COVID-19 is practically a runny nose compared to what we went through for those "kids with dreams of stardom in the music world."

Something not commonly known — though happens far more often than you would think to skinny, tall, athletic young males — is a scary condition called "spontaneous pneumothorax." This is caused by not having enough fat between the lungs and the rib cage. The lung blisters, a blister pops and the lung collapses, filling with blood. You may have seen the non-spontaneous version (resulting from an accident) on TV, in which they insert a tube into the side of the chest. I will spare you the gory details, though my doctor did tell me it is far more painful than what a woman giving birth experiences.

So, there I was, in the hospital, tube going from my lung to this portable suction box, and a gig to perform. This is how I learned the difference between a friend and a true friend. A friend will take you to the hospital, but a true friend will help you escape. I missed the Friday show, though after hospital staff heard me that night singing, playing guitar and harp (harmonica), they decided to let me perform my Saturday night concert, and no, not because I was being a nuisance. The patients on Friday were turning off their TVs, the nurses were bopping around, and the doctors were asking me if I had ever considered playing for patients professionally. Music therapy is a real job.

Saturday, I couldn't sing full out and had to sit in a chair, but I still played the

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Peace by Piece

By SUSAN HINTZ

With plantar fasciitis sidelining me from beachcombing, I was in search of a new hobby. One day, while canvassing the

local big box store, my eyes caught sight of a loon puzzle. Even at 1,000 pieces, the puzzle seemed perfect, especially when

I imagined it finished and framed for the bunkhouse at the Looney Bin, our summer cottage. So, into the cart it went.

A day or two later, I received a hobby store flyer advertising puzzles for sale "up to 40% off." Even I couldn't pass up that bargain, so I made a visit to the store. Once there, I found the puzzle aisle and scoped out what they had. There were several to choose from, but only a few were of interest. As I was contemplating which puzzle to take home, a fellow puzzler joined in the perusing. We got to chatting, and she highly recommended a particular manufacturer's puzzles known for their larger, sturdier pieces. And it just so happened I had one in my hand! She recommended going online to check out their selection. To my surprise HOLY Batpuzzleman! POW! BAM! They had some great Michigan-themed puzzles. I made my online purchase for the Michigan

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Susan Hintz pauses from a Colorado-themed jigsaw set up on her puzzling table at the Looney Bin. Photo: Dan Hintz.



This owl is the writer's most challenging puzzle to date. Note the animal shapes of the pieces. Photo: Susan Hintz.

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MI BACKYARD

Witch-hazel: not just for medicine cabinets

By JENNIFER DEVINE

With bright yellow flowers opening just as the leaves fall in October, Common Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is a native show-off during bleak months. The ribbon-like petals of its flowers, which tolerate snow and some sub-freezing temperatures, cast spooky shadow spiders or gnarled witch fingers in the light of the moon, lasting well into December.

Witch-hazel works well as an understory tree, a large shrub or a natural fence. Moist soil and partial shade are preferred, but this woody plant does well in other conditions, except severe drought. Left on its own, it can grow as tall as 30 feet and spread to a width of almost 15 feet with a single trunk or many twisted trunks from a single base. To maintain a smaller shrub, prune in late winter/early spring.

The aromatic flower is less than an inch wide with four crinkly yellow petals up to 1 inch long. The crinkly curl occurs in the cold, but on a warm day the petals will straighten. The flowers bloom with last year's mature fruit as they get ready to disperse, which is uncommon in the plant world. Hama is Greek for "together with" and melis means "fruit." Inside each fruit pod are two shiny black seeds with edible white interiors and with what the website of the Friends of the Mississippi River explains is "... a nutty flavor." The flavor profile is almost always described as pistachio. Once mature, brown and dried, the pods loudly explode, catapulting the seeds at least 10 feet.

The leaves are up to 6 inches long and



Photo: Laura Ockel, Unsplash.

shiny dark green. Alternate and ovate, they have wavy, toothed edges. Their colors change from green to golden yellow, fiery orange and scarlet red, before dropping in abscission, ("the natural detachment of parts of a plant, typically dead leaves and ripe fruit of trees," according to Oxford Dictionaries).

Modern uses

Witch-hazel's bark is smooth and gray. Using its bark, roots, twigs and leaves, manufacturers produce what we find on the store shelves. The Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) website states: "According to one source, witch hazel is one of the few native medicinal plants approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a non-prescription drug ingredient." Studies have found active compounds like flavonoids, tannins, and volatile oil which give the astringent action. A bottle of this liquid can be a substitute for hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol to stop bleeding, clean

wounds, tighten pores, reduce swelling and itching and fight bacteria. Savvy consumers use the liquid on cotton balls or wipes to remove makeup, clean jewelry, soak their sore feet and muscles, and more. You should keep a bottle on hand or make your own by soaking 1 cup witch hazel bark in water for a half hour. Bring to boil, then cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Let cool, strain and bottle the liquid. Keep the bottle in the refrigerator for up to three weeks. Apply with a cotton pad or ball.

Historical uses

The "witch" in witch hazel originates from "wych," meaning pliant branches. Early English settlers with Native American teachers, like the Mohegan, found the branches of witch hazel could be used as dowsing rods, much like hazel and wych elm were used to look for underground water in England.

In his story for *The Atlantic*, ("The Mysterious Past and Present of Witch

Hazel," Nov. 6, 2012), John-Manuel Andriote writes: "...The Osage used witch hazel bark to treat skin ulcers and sores; the Potawatomi steamed twigs over hot rocks in their sweat lodges to soothe sore muscles; the Iroquois (sic) brewed a tea to treat dysentery, colds, and coughs." In the same article, Andriote recalls the history of American Distilling, manufacturing leaders of bottled witch hazel extract.

Fun facts

- Universally found in medicine cabinets since 1866, witch-hazel was and still is a go-to choice for character names, especially for witches, which has nothing to do with this "wych".
- The Looney Tunes' character Witch Hazel first appeared in the episode "Bewitched Bunny", (1954).
- Disney had a nicer Witch Hazel that appeared in a 1952 Donald Duck episode, "Trick or Treat".
- Little LuLu comics/books had a witch named Hazel.
- A children's book was published last year called, "Little Witch Hazel: A Year in the Forest".

Jennifer Devine has a passion for writing and plants. She has lived in cities and homesteaded off grid. She likes to hunt, fish and forage and meet like-minded people. She is continuously learning, having adventures and making memories with her family.

Sauce Boss

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entire night. There are many different diets out there. Some people go on them for healthier living. Some, like me, have to for medical reasons, and some for religious beliefs. I have researched many and have yet to find one I could not only make palatable, but enjoyable.

I have always been thin, living in a world where it seems everybody else is trying to lose weight. I have a challenge going with Toni, a close friend, who has been extremely successful at losing weight on a Keto diet. I have been doing well on a diet to gain weight by boosting my ghrelin count. Ghrelin is known as the "hungry

hormone," and you can control how much your body produces by what you eat. I am up 25 pounds, and she is down 30 pounds, so Toni is winning, as usual. We trade recipes all the time, which is our thing, and she introduced me to a recipe that is fantastic. You can eat them like regular waffles, substitute them for any kind of bread, or enjoy them plain. They are gluten free, only one carb per chaffle (115 Kcal, 1 net carb per plain chaffle), and, best of all, they are simple to make.

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

Toni's Keto Chaffles

2 eggs
 1 cup shredded cheese (one that melts easily)

Heat your mini waffle iron. In a medium mixing bowl, beat 2 eggs until well blended and frothy. Mix in the cup of shredded cheese. Grease the inside of your iron with butter, (for the first one). Drop 2 tablespoons batter onto the hot iron, and spread it some. Close the lid and start your timer for 4 minutes. Be mindful when placing the batter on the iron; it will ooze over the sides of the iron if it's overfilled. Remove the completed mini chaffle and place on a cooling rack while you make the others. Chomp in and enjoy the practically zero-carb bliss.

Yield: 4 mini chaffles
 Prep time: 5 min
 Cook time: 20 mins

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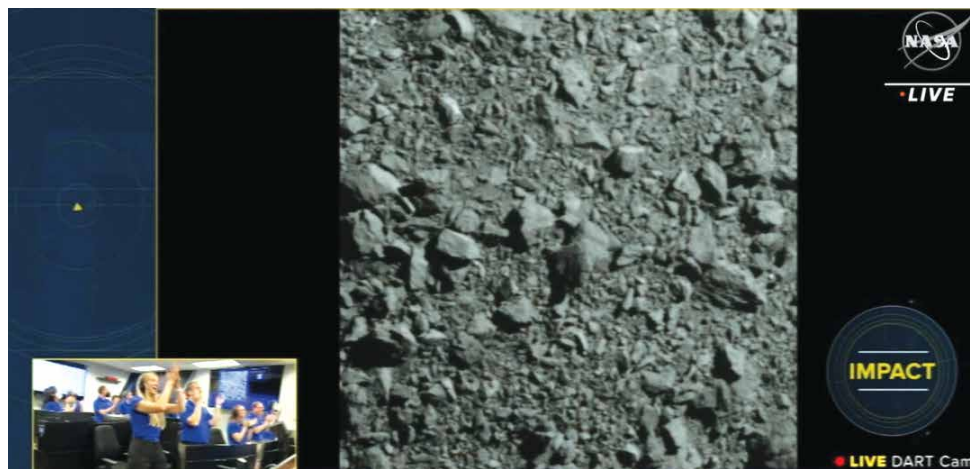
By **BROOKE EDWARDS**

Can you imagine sending a spacecraft to an asteroid just to crash into it? That is what the excited engineers and scientists at NASA got to do last month. On September 26, right on schedule, the DART spacecraft reached its target, the asteroid Dimorphos. At 7:14 p.m. EDT, DART collided with Dimorphos, and a relieved team at John Hopkins University erupted in cheers.

DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) was all in the name of planetary defense. Dimorphos is located seven million miles from Earth and orbits a larger asteroid named Didymos. This experiment was designed to measure how much the impact of DART shifted the orbit of Dimorphos around Didymos. Scientists hope this test will prove that we have the technology to redirect any asteroids we detect on a collision course with Earth.

How did the tiny DART spacecraft manage to change the orbit of an asteroid? During an interview on NASA TV, Dr. Lucas Paganini, from NASA's Planetary Defense Office, answered it this way: "You have an asteroid the size of a football field, and then you have this spacecraft (DART) which is 500 kg...It's all about momentum. Mass and velocity. If you don't have enough mass in the spacecraft, we really have to hit it hard, impacting it at 4 miles per second."

After watching DART crash into the asteroid, the team at NASA and John Hopkins University Applied Physics



Pictured here is the moment DART impacted Dimorphos. The coming weeks will reveal more data on the asteroid, including how much its orbit was redirected. Photo: NASA

Laboratory had much data to review. Ground- and space-based telescopes are measuring how much the impact affected Dimorphos' orbit of Didymos, sending the data back to the DART team to review.

DART used an onboard camera named Draco, as well as a star tracker, to navigate to the asteroid. To the delight of all, the camera beamed detailed images of the surface of Dimorphos before crashing into the asteroid. Due to its distance from Earth, Draco's images took 38 seconds plus a few seconds of processing time to reach the NASA live stream. A CubeSat (a mini satellite) from Italy was also on the DART mission. It released from the spacecraft prior to the collision and captured the impact from a distance, including the

flying debris. Space enthusiasts watched (almost) live as history was being made — humanity's first impact of an asteroid.

While asteroids do pass close to Earth occasionally, there are none currently known to us that pose a threat. Telescopes on Earth and in orbit are constantly keeping an eye on the sky for dangerous visitors. Should DART's technology prove successful, it will be a new planetary defense tool when a threat does appear.

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

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Slow Fire

By Louisa Loveridge Gallas

Now Earth is slow fire traveling toward winter's solstice in graceful relinquishing of spring's singing greens and summer-wet fruit.

Journeying toward a slower sparer land of silk-grey branch and snow-silence she is our shape-changer, Old Woman, in her vintage clothes, burnt scarlet, parchment yellows burgundy reds, she circles the blue-violet sky around her a cloud-swirling shawl of wind.

Autumn fire-bird, forging a new wingspread for the longest night, she is our elegant elder close to the edge with leaves and twig dry as old bone, she kindles the heart in her fading golden stove.

'Kiss the Ground': a film about saving the planet's topsoil

By **PAT STINSON**

MANISTEE – Chris Riley hopes people "who are questioning climate change, or who may not be as aware or educated about climate change," will attend the 7 p.m. Oct. 25, free showing at the Vogue Theatre of "Kiss the Ground." The 84-minute documentary, narrated by Woody Harrelson, focuses on approaches to reforming our current agricultural practices. The goal, according to Kiss the Ground, the nonprofit organization that produced the movie, is to keep valuable carbon in the ground and prevent its release into the atmosphere, where it contributes to the planet's greenhouse effect.

Riley, a retiree of the Huron-Manistee National Forest, was trained as a fisheries biologist and is a member of Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) of Manistee. CCL and Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club, based in Brethren, are co-hosts of the event. The title of the movie derives from Rumi, a poet and theologian, who said, "Let the beauty we love be what we



do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground."

Describing what led to Kiss the Ground's focus on regenerative farming, the organization's website states: "The way we currently grow the majority of our food, fiber, and fuel is actually damaging our planet's ecosystem at an alarming rate through loss of topsoil, loss of biodiversity, desertification, habitat destruction, and air and water pollution."

The website explains that Indigenous cultures have been farming in a restorative way for centuries, and modern farmers can

use those practices and science-based methods to improve soil health.

The movie will be introduced by Gene Lagerquist of Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club. A panel of three speakers will offer a question-and-answer session following the movie. Panelists include Elana Warsen, of Michigan Worm Works, a Manistee-based vermicomposting business; Bernie Ware, a local organic farmer; and Daniel Marbury, of the Crosshatch Farming Cohort, a northern Michigan-based peer-to-peer initiative offering workshops to "small groups of land stewards." Information about each of the groups will be available near the theater's entrance.

For more about the movie, go to kisstheground.com. Find the organizations online at: citizensclimatelobby.org, michiganwormworks.com and crosshatch.org. Find Spirit of the Woods on Facebook @SpiritoftheWoodsConservationClub. The Vogue Theatre is located at 383 River St.

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As I write, warm days still find us paddling, bicycling and hiking amid fall's pizza-colored palette. However, the last taste of autumn is only weeks away. In anticipation of shorter, colder days, we asked our writers to tell us about new books they've read in the last year, particularly those by local authors. Their assignment was not to write a book review but to explain to our readers why a book resonated with them or how it changed their perspective. We received a handful of responses about a variety of books. Our hope is that you'll find one or more to add to your reading or gift list this season.

The Arrow Tree: Healing from Long COVID

By Phyllis Weliver. Reviewed by **VALERIE CHANDLER**. Photo courtesy of Phyllis Weliver.

In January 2021, I was introduced to my uncle's friend who has a small summer cottage near him in Interlochen. Her name is Phyllis Weliver. She asked my uncle and me if we'd be interested in reading a draft copy of her new book and providing feedback on its Native American highlights. In fact, I was interested to take on a new endeavor during winter, especially since COVID-19 still had left so many businesses closed and restrictions in place that my ventures from home were few.

Phyllis Weliver is Professor of English at Saint Louis University in Missouri and a lifetime Fellow of Gladstone's Library in Wales, Great Britain. She was educated at the University of Sussex, University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, Oberlin College, Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Interlochen Arts Academy. She is originally from the Interlochen area but currently resides in Missouri with her family. She has authored several books and media and digital works in Victorian and English music, literature, science, politics, gender, ethnicity and religious identity.

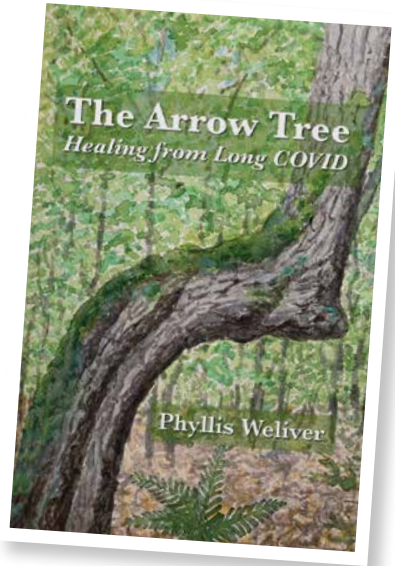
In "The Arrow Tree: Healing from Long COVID," (Exeats Imprints, 2021), Weliver provides a first-hand account of her swift travels back to the U.S. before international travel was closed at the start of the pandemic, followed by her discovery that her family contracted the virus. After their initial recovery, she and her young son continued to experience symptoms. Through much research, and after some frustrating medical appointments, she drew her own conclusions. She realized early on that she and her son had what doctors now refer to as long COVID.

Being a wife, a mother to a young son and a university professor, she wanted to do whatever it took to heal and attain the health and life she had pre-COVID. Since doctors at the time did not recognize that her long-lasting symptoms belonged to a COVID-related chronic illness, she was determined to treat herself. Weliver's treatment plan was holistic and natural — including forest bathing, acupuncture and journaling — and she drew inspiration from Native American traditions and ancient Chinese philosophies.

The story is remarkably vivid and, if you're a resident or frequent visitor to this corner of the state, you certainly can imagine the areas, animals and sights that Weliver describes during her healing process. Her reflections are not only informative, but they also invoke solace and self-awareness for the reader.

Life is a constant balance of health, mind, family, prayer, work and whatever else is important to you. Weliver's journey to healing and surviving COVID reminds us to stop, take a breath, evaluate and attain that balance.

On a personal note, I'm thankful my husband and I have escaped the virus, but I have countless family and friends that were not so fortunate, and some battled a second wave. Sadly, since 2020, I have lost family, friends and acquaintances to COVID, and several still struggle with long COVID. I highly recommend this book for a leisurely read, not only to gain a perspective on the wrath of COVID and the aftereffects experienced by "long-haulers," but for some thought-provoking healing from life, in general.



For information about the author, or to purchase the title in hardcover, paperback or e-book, visit www.phyllisweliver.com, www.Lulu.com, www.books2read.com/arrowtree or Amazon.com. Most local bookstores, including Horizon Books in Traverse City, will honor your request to order it.

Valerie Chandler lives in Wellston with her husband Matthew and their border collie/Australian shepherd. She is a citizen and employee of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. She is also a cancer survivor and loves to spend time with her family.



Sheldon's Journey: The story of a sweet-natured dog in search of his true home

By Tricia Frey. Reviewed by **CHRISTINE STAPLETON**. Photo of Tricia and Sheldon courtesy of the author.

I was excited to read this new book about a dog I already knew and loved. I met Sheldon in Tricia Frey's first book, "River Love: The True Story of a Wayward Sheltie, a Woman, and a Magical Place called Rivershire," (Mission Point Press, 2020). That story took place in our own Traverse City, along the banks of the Boardman River. Going through some of my own struggles and questions at the time, I related to the story and hugged my dogs even closer.

Recently, my life has seen a big change in that my nieces and nephews are now having children. Enjoying this next generation of

the family as a grand aunt has led me to dust off the books we loved and read when their parents were children. As an older and maybe wiser grey-haired aunt, I loved the message carried throughout Frey's new story for children, "Sheldon's Journey: The story of a sweet-natured dog in search of his true home," (Mission Point Press, 2022). That idea of being on a journey and not knowing what will happen along the way, and meeting new friends and, most of all, trusting. Trusting in nature and friends, and that our journey will take us to where we are supposed to be.

continued on page 5

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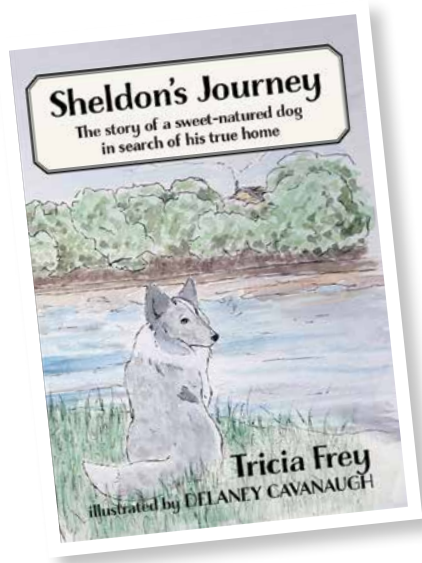
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The Healing Winds Trilogy: an interview with author Sally Stout (Cook)

By Sally Stout. Reviewed by **EMILY COOK.**

A version of this story originally appeared in *The Betsie Current* and is edited here for length.

Some of my earliest memories include books and reading. Well before I could string together letters into words and read for myself, my parents chose uniquely complex bedtime stories. My brother and I would sit tucked alongside them while we eagerly absorbed the worlds of Middle-earth, Narnia and Earthsea.

As I entered grade school, my mom and dad would show incredible patience when I wanted to practice reading back to them. It was at this point I was thoroughly caught by “the reading bug,” something that has provided a grounding element in my life.

It is an incredible privilege to have the exposure to reading that I did. Stories provide the opportunity to travel beyond our own communities. Our brains can temporarily forget what may be consuming our “real” lives and allow a needed reprieve.

In high school, my privilege was set in front of me once more when my mom began writing her own young adult fantasy trilogy. The first book, “The Changeful Map”, seemed like a gift to me, even though it was written for anyone with a love of the genre. The story develops as Kathe, a servant girl from Springvale Manor, enters a nearby enchanted forest to try to return home. She begins an astounding journey, guided by talking animals, and is joined by new characters along the way.

Together, the characters—which readers will quickly learn to love—meet enemies that challenge their mission and literally stop time. Dragons and some magical items also make appearances.

The pandemic provided the time necessary for my mom, Sally Stout—known locally as Sally Cook, though she chose to use her maiden name for the books, since there was already a published author with her married name — to finish “The Healing Winds Trilogy”.

In anticipation of the trilogy’s release, I wanted to get inside my mom’s head and determine where her own love of books, reading and writing came from.

EC: What is your earliest memory of reading and/or writing?

Sally (Stout) Cook: Reading has always been an escape for me. I read anything I could find at the library. (Sir) Arthur Conan Doyle, Madeleine L’Engle, and Carolyn Keene were a few favorites. As for



Author Sally Stout with her books. Photo: E. Cook.

writing, I don’t remember writing much beyond school assignments until high school, when my best friend and I teamed up to write a series of silly stories about the British aristocracy. In retrospect, I think these were probably inspired by our joint addiction to the novels of Georgette Heyer.

EC: Why did you choose young adult stories? Why fantasy?

Stout/Cook: I have always enjoyed reading fantasy. Anne McCaffrey, Ursula K. Le Guin, C.S. Lewis, and, of course, J.R.R. Tolkien were some of my favorite escape routes. When I started to write “The Healing Winds Trilogy”, my children were both young, and they loved reading fantasy, too. Thanks to them, I discovered and explored worlds created by Brian Jacques, Tamara Pierce, Garth Nix and others. Ultimately, I wanted to create the kind of book that my children would enjoy.

EC: From where did you pull your inspiration for characters and places in the trilogy?

Stout/Cook: Besides growing up as a reader, I have always been a walker. I grew up on a farm surrounded by woodlots and fields, and I would explore our pasture and woods, often with our loyal basset hound by my side. I’d stay away for hours, often imagining I was on a much longer journey,

like the heroes and heroines in the books I was reading. As for the characters, I honestly don’t know where they came from, but they quickly became real to me, and before long, they started to lead me through their stories.

EC: What writers have inspired you the most?

Stout/Cook: Novels by Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë always remain fresh. Elizabeth Strout, Ann Patchett, Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, and mystery writers like Ellis Peters and Dorothy L. Sayers — there are wonderful writers in every genre. So long as a novel has compelling characters who are grappling with real conflicts, it doesn’t matter when or where it is set. Even a world of fantasy will do.

(Note from interviewer Emily Cook: I’d also like to add Elizabeth Peters here, as our childhood dog was named “Amelia Peabody” after the main character in many of Peters’ books.)

“The Healing Winds Trilogy” is available online at SallyStoutBooks.com

Emily Cook lives in Arcadia, where she regularly hikes the trails in the C.S. Mott Nature Preserve. She is a conservationist and is Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator for the Benzie Conservation District.

Sheldon

continued from page 4

As adults, we have trouble asking for help, and we ask ourselves, “Why are we here?” and “What is our purpose?” And we worry about things that haven’t happened yet and may not happen at all, instead of trusting and being okay with not having all the answers. This book is a great reminder to us adults that the children we are reading to are watching us and learning how to act and respond to many things in life, good or scary. It is also a good reminder of how important it is that our children (and pets) always feel loved and wanted, and that they know they are right where they are supposed to be. These are some things that many of us adults long for.

Both kids and adults will enjoy the beautiful illustrations by Delaney Cavanaugh who brings Sheldon and his friends to life on the pages. I share the author’s love for animals and nature, as I live in my own magical place atop a hill with three rambunctious border collies, one barn cat and many sheep and chickens. I’m an aunt to 13 and grand aunt to 7 ... and counting!

You can meet author Tricia Frey and purchase her new book at the Portage Lake Association’s Christmas in Onekama craft show, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Nov. 19, inside the gymnasium at Onekama Consolidated Schools, 5016 Main St. Her books can also be ordered through your local bookstore or online at www.triciafrey.com or www.missionpointpress.com

A successful area real estate broker, Christine Stapleton enjoys life on her Benzie County farm, family get-togethers and playing outdoors in all seasons.



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Life on the Mississippi: An Epic American Adventure

By Rinker Buck. Reviewed by **RON SCHMIDT**.

I usually like to read fictional stories, novels with characters I can identify with or wish I were more like. But now and then I find an intriguing nonfiction book that grabs me by the ear and shouts, "Read me!" I just finished such a book that blends present-day human experiences with early American history.

"Life on the Mississippi: An Epic American Adventure", (2022, Simon & Schuster), by New York Times bestselling author and award-winning journalist Rinker Buck, tells the story of his building and piloting a flatboat like those used for river travel and commerce, mainly from 1800 to 1840. During that time, tens of thousands of pioneers used this type of boat to travel to the West and establish farms and plantations on land populated by Native Americans. Sadly, these pioneers pushed the tribes further west to places such as the Oklahoma reservation (Indian Territory), not a good farming area. You may have heard of the Trail of Tears which is part of that Indian removal.

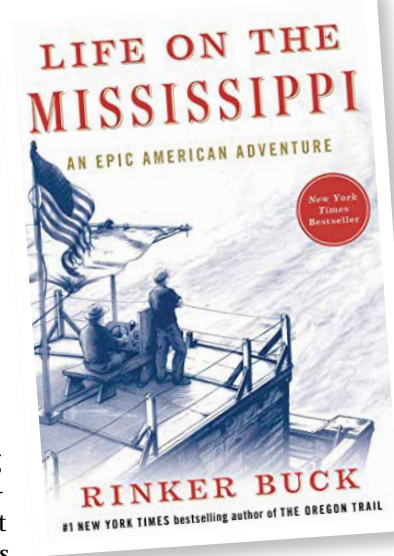
Buck brings together a crew of eccentric men and women to help him float 2,000 miles from present-day Pennsylvania to New Orleans on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. During this trip, he must learn how to pilot his boat and navigate the rivers

while avoiding the thousands of barges pushed by powerful tugboats going up and down the waterways. Buck and his crew camp on islands and riverbanks, wherever they can find a place to dock and rest. As he travels, he relates the history of the towns he passes and people he meets at night, when his flatboat is moored.

I learned a lot about the movement of African American slaves by river as well as their forced marches over the Appalachian Mountains. These eye-opening facts were never taught previously in U.S. schools and are a great stain on our country's past. As with any true historical writing, though, there is a mix of good and bad times. However, there are also interesting places and people to meet and learn from, which I really enjoyed.

If you like this book, try reading the author's previous historical and contemporary adventure tale, "The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey", (2015, Simon & Schuster), which follows Buck's travels with his brother as they head West on the original Oregon Trail in their covered wagon pulled by two mules.

Children's author Ron Schmidt lives in the north woods with his Leader Dog, Lila. This time of year, they enjoy long walks and the scent of autumn leaves.



The Lake Effect: A Lake Michigan Mosaic

By Fred Carlisle. Reviewed by **PAT STINSON**.

A representative of Mission Point Press in Traverse City told me she thought Freshwater Reporter would be "a great fit" for news of the Oct. 18 release of "The Lake Effect: A Lake Michigan Mosaic". I couldn't resist author Fred Carlisle's freshwater subject matter, so I gave it a read.

Carlisle's book, as described by award-winning northern Michigan author Anne-Marie Oomen, is "an exquisite essay, but feels like a love letter to water."

You can read "The Lake Effect" in stages, thanks to the episodic nature of Carlisle's chapters. You'll want to digest the book's thoughtful, more metaphysical passages. The work is sprinkled with images from Carlisle's summer vacations through the years. In this case, the old photographs also help make the author's point of the fluidity of the lake and its lakeside communities.

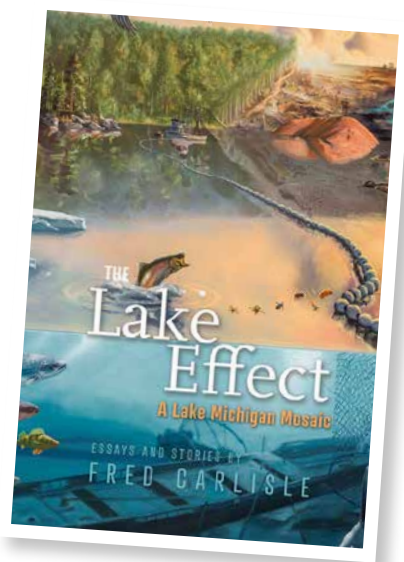
A visitor to Lake Michigan since he was two, but never a full-time resident of a waterfront community along the Great Lakes, Carlisle shares his recollections of lakeshore summer vacations spent beside Lake Michigan (and other Great Lakes) and of being mesmerized by the lake's beauty. He then examines how the places he visited were both nourished and threatened by the lake and by human interventions that

degraded the water sustaining those societies.

Carlisle pulls at the threads of our narratives about idyllic Lake Michigan communities. He describes their economies and histories and identifies the "dark side" of lakeside habitation, the pollution and damage, even as he spends weeks or months in those places. Yet he keeps his sense of wonder about Lake Michigan, which he recognizes as a beautiful but uncontrollable force of nature, both sustaining and threatening communities, as well as the ships, boats, swimmers and others in its waters.

"I am fascinated by this complex mosaic," he writes of the lake's effects.

I was most interested in his vacation experiences, his recollections of childhood visits to Ogden Dunes on Lake Michigan and trips to his grandparents' home



Community Calendar

TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN FRESHWATER REPORTER!

To be included in our November 2 edition, please submit announcements by October 24. Be sure to include the address where the event takes place, for visiting readers. Email your events/press releases to: editor@freshwater-reporter.com. Email any time for our online calendar. Always check with the venue before attending as some event dates may change or be canceled due to weather, scheduling or Covid-19. Despite our best efforts, errors may occur.

ONGOING EVENTS

Thru Oct. 21

Annual All-Media Juried Art Exhibit, Frankfort

Mon.- Sat. 10am-4pm, Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd.

Thru Oct. 29

Dark Matter Exhibition: Artworks by Christopher Fellows, Manistee

12-3pm Wed.- Sat. Free. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

Flora & Fauna Art Exhibit, Ludington

Tues., Thurs., Fri., 11am-4pm, Wed. 11am-6pm, Sat. 11am-2pm, Free. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St.

Call for Art Community Art², Manistee

All ages/artistic abilities! Help create a wall of 6"x 6" canvases to be sold during the holidays at the Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Cost is \$5 for 2 canvases, \$10 for 4. Pick them up via the First St. door entrance 10am-5pm, Mon-Fri. Artwork due by 10/29. Proceeds benefit RRCA's school field trips, workshops, theatre camp.

Thru Nov. 7

"Nurses & Doctors" Art Exhibition, Scottville

Mon.-Thurs., 9am-4pm. Fri., 9am-1pm. Also open during Center Stage Theater events. At the Manierre Dawson Gallery, West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Road. Artist Judy Jashinsky spent many hours in her Pines of Arcadia studio during the Covid pandemic painting doctors, nurses and other medical staff she saw on TV. More about the artist at JudyJashinsky.com

Thru Jan. 6

"The Seasons" Fall Art Exhibition, Arcadia

Mon., 9am-6:30pm; Tues., 9am - 5pm; Wed., 9am-6pm; Thurs., 9am - 9pm; Fri. 9 am-5 pm; Sat, Closed; Sun., 2- 4 pm. Pleasant Valley Community Center, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd. Info: 231.889.7069

Oct. 13, 20, 27

Live Music: Open Mic Night with Jeff Louwsma, Beulah

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

Oct. 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29

Ghost Ship, Manistee

7:30-10:30pm. \$12 per person, 6 & under, free. 5 decks of scares/fun on the historical car ferry S.S Milwaukee. Detroit Coney Cart in parking lot for hungry ghouls and zombies. Arthur Street, east side of US-31 www.manisteeship.com

Oct. 17-23

Cinema ART Exhibition, Frankfort

Mon.- Sat. 10am-4pm. Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Cinema-inspired artworks, coinciding with the Frankfort Film Festival.

Oct. 21, 22, 28, 29, 31

Harvey's Haunted Garage, Custer

7-10pm (6-9pm on Oct 31), Free with donations accepted. Haunted maze, family friendly. 320 S. Madison Ave.

Oct. 28- Dec. 2

Clagett, Kreiser, Rose Art Exhibition, Frankfort

Mon. - Sat. 10am-4pm. Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Opening reception Oct. 28, 5-7pm.

DAILY EVENTS

October 12

Classic Film Series: "Bell, Book & Candle" (1958), Manistee

10am & 7pm, \$2. Romance/Comedy starring Kim Novak, James Stewart, & Jack Lemon. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

October 13

Farmers Market, Elberta

9am-12pm, Penfold Park, 1098 Lakeside Blvd.

Live Music: Tarczon Brothers Band, Manistee

7-9pm, Free. North Channel Brewing, 86 Washington St.

October 14

Live Music: Luke Woltanski, Beulah

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

October 14

Live Music: Ben Traverse, Ludington

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

40th Anniversary Revival of Jay Stielstra's "The North Country Opera", Ludington

7:30pm, \$20 ADV, \$25 DOS. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Info/tickets: ludingtonartscenter.org

October 15

Farmers Market, Frankfort

9am-1pm, Open Space Park, Main St.

Crafting for Critters, Manistee

9am-6pm, donations appreciated. A fun day working on the craft of your choice that you bring with you at the Wagoner Community Center, 120 St. Mary's S. Pkwy. Dress in 60's tie-dye theme. Special prize for the gnarliest beatnik. Includes lunch, prizes, silent auction, more. Benefit for Homeward Bound Animal Shelter. Open to first 40 who register: <https://homewardboundmanistee.org/events>

Chief Day, Kaleva

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

Community Art² Project Workshop, Manistee

1-3pm, \$20 includes registration, 2 6x6 canvases, art materials & instruction by Onekama artist Bill Hattendorf. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

Live Music: Lynn Callihan, Beulah

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

Live Music: Crosscut Kings, Cadillac

7-8pm, \$17.53 Adults, \$9 students 13-18. Cadillac Elks Lodge, 122 S. Mitchell. Info/tickets: gopherwoodconcerts.org

Irish Night featuring Celtic band Crossbow, Manistee

7pm, \$35. Cash bar, small bites provided. Opens Ben Traverse & Nick Veine. In the ballroom, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Info/tickets: ramsdelltheatre.org

Whovilles Night in the Corn Maze, Kaleva

7-9pm, Bring a flashlight & find your way through the corn maze in the dark. Lutz Farms, 8576 Chief Rd. Info: 231.889.5594

Halloween Drive-Thru, Ludington

7-11:55pm. \$5 per person. "A Scream in the Night", a family-friendly holiday drive-thru event at Cartier Park, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr., (M-119). This is a benefit for Connexion Point, a local treatment and recovery program. <https://www.facebook.com/drugtreatmentprograminludington>

Live Music: REO Speedwagon, Manistee

8-10:30pm, \$70-85, Little River Casino, 2700 Orchard Hwy. Info/tickets: lrcr.com or 800.514.3849

October 16

GTRLC Color Hike at Pete's Woods, Arcadia Dunes: C S Mott Nature Preserve

1-3pm, Free. Mike Grahl will lead a hike on the loop trail. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Info: gtrlc.org

Fall Color Tour Walk, Thompsonville

2pm. \$5 per person park entry fee. Free for military families and children. Dogs on leashes OK. No charge for the walk, led by naturalist Caitlin Chism. 1.5-hour color and sculpture tour along the 2-mile rustic, hilly Michigan Legacy Art Park trail at Crystal Mountain. Meet at the trailhead. Info: <http://michlegacyartpark.org> or 231-378-4963 or kerry@michlegacyartpark.org

Michigan Mysteries Halloween Edition Event, Manistee

6pm, Free. Shipwreck hunter and Michigan Mysteries website author Ross Richardson will share thrilling, chilling stories about the Great Lakes State. Intended for adults. Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary S. Pkwy.

October 19

Classic Film Series: "Beetlejuice" (1988), Manistee

10am & 7pm, \$2. Fantasy/Comedy starring Michael Keaton, Geena Davis, Winona Ryder. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

October 20

Beyond Opioids: A Regional Symposium, Manistee

8am-3pm. Informative discussion on drug trends, current efforts to reduce drug use, and the impact of substance abuse disorder on the community. Held at the Little River Band Casino Event Center. For info, contact: Erin Coe, ecoe@dhd10.org.

GTRLC Fall Hike at the Lower Woodcock Lake Nature Preserve

1-3pm, Free. Cody Selewski will lead a hike to see the new trail around the lake. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Info: gtrlc.org

Near & Farr Friends, Onekama

2:30pm, Free. Mark Soloden, Manistee Road Commission, overview of the work of the commission and Q&A. Farr Center, Main St.

Live Music: Ryne Shyne, Manistee

7-9pm, Free. North Channel Brewing, 86 Washington St.

October 20-23

Frankfort Film Festival

Garden Theater, 301 Main St. Info/tickets: gardentheater.org

October 21

Live Music: Carrie & Roger, Beulah

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

Live Music: Benjamin Paetz, "Ukelele Guy", Ludington

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

WSSC Humankind Film Series: "Snowpiercer" (2013), Manistee

7pm, Free. Sci-fi/Action starring Chris Evans. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

October 22

Early for Christmas Craft & Bake Sale, Wellston

9am-3pm. Breakfast & lunch will be avail. for purchase. Norman Township Community Center, 1273 S. Seaman Rd.

Manistee UMC Marketplace & Craft Show Luncheon, Manistee

9am-3pm, lunch 11am-1pm. Manistee United Methodist Church, 387 First St. Info: 231.723.6219

GTRLC Color Hike at the Embayment Lakes Nature Preserve

10am-12pm, Free. Steve Lagerquist will lead a hike to see the new trail through incredible fall colors. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Info: gtrlc.org

Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Medea (Cherubini), Manistee

1pm, \$25 adult, \$15 under 18. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Info/tickets: ramsdelltheatre.org

Haunted Village, Ludington

2-5pm, \$12 adults, \$10 seniors, \$8 kids 3-13, Free 3 & under. Trick or Treat in the village. Historic White Pine Village, 1687 S. Lakeshore Dr.

Halloween Havoc Bump-n-Run & Demolition Derby, Onekama

3-8pm. Manistee County Fairgrounds, 7587 1st St.

Live Music: The Feral Cats, Beulah

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

Whovilles Night in the Corn Maze, Kaleva

7-9pm, Bring a flashlight & find your way through the corn maze in the dark. Lutz Farms, 8576 Chief Rd. Info: 231.889.5594

October 22-23

Art and Craft Show, Kaleva

9am-4pm. Soup Luncheon to benefit the Community Center from 11am-2pm on Saturday. Maple Grove Township Community Center, 9208 Kauko St.

October 23

GTRLC Fall Color Hike at Old Baldy, Arcadia Dunes

1-3pm, Free. Mike Grahl will lead a hike on the loop trail. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Info: gtrlc.org

Barter Fair, Interlochen

1:30-5:30pm, Free. Swap, trade, upcycle. Unwanted items to carefully crafted goods (food, art, tools, clothes, toys, etc.) No money will change hands. Bring items to exchange.

Greenlake Memorial Township Park, 5477 Karlin Rd.

October 24

Book Release Event, Ludington

4:30-6pm, Free. Author Fred Carlisle will present his new book, "The Lake Effect: A Lake Michigan Mosaic" followed by a Q & A. Mason County District Library, 217 E. Ludington Ave.

October 25

Port City Documentary Series: "Kiss the Ground" (2020), Manistee

7pm, Free. Activists, scientists, farmers, & politicians turn to regenerative agriculture to save the planet's topsoil. Hosted by the Manistee chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby & Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club. Discussion panel after the film will include Elana Warsen (Michigan Wormworks), Bernie Ware (Bear Lake farmer), & Daniel Marbury (Crosshatch Carbon Farming Cohort). Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

October 26

WSSC Humankind Film Series: "American Psycho" (2000), Manistee

10am & 7pm, Free. Horror/Thriller starring Christian Bale. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

October 27

Live Music: Keith Scott, Manistee

7-9pm, Free. North Channel Brewing, 86 Washington St.

October 28

Live Music: John Paul, Beulah

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

Live Music: Gabriel James, Ludington

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

October 29

Run For Your Lives 5k & 10k, Ludington

9am, \$30+, Legacy Plaza, 112 N. James St. Info/registration: downtownludington.org/runludington

Children's Costume Crawl & Downtown Ghost Hunt, Manistee

11:30am, Free. Event begins at the Manistee Library, 95 Maple St. Kids will walk parade-style to Port City Emporium to begin the ghost hunt. Bring bags (or get 1 at the library). Those who find all the blue ghosts hidden downtown will be entered into a prize drawing. Info: Facebook.

1st Annual Barrel-aged Brew Fest, Thompsonville

1-5pm, \$45 general admission, \$70 VIP (12pm access), \$15 designated driver. Cider, mead & beer aged in Iron Fish Distillery whiskey barrels from over 17 breweries. Live music. 100% of proceeds will support kids' programs of the Big Bear Sportsman's Club. Iron Fish Distillery, 14234 Dzuibane Rd. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/barrel-aged-brewfest-tickets-367053877027

Downtown Ludington Trick-or-Treat

2-4pm, Free, daytime trick-or-treating at participating businesses

Halloween Glow Doubles Disc Golf Event, Scottville

6:30pm, \$100 per team, "Fear the Bogey Man." The Edge at Riverside Park, 700 S. Scottville Rd. Register in store: Grip N Rip, 5770 US-10, Ludington or online at www.discgolfscore.com

Ludrock's "Night of Fright" Live Concert, Ludington

6pm, \$5, free for 12 and under. Costume contest. Beverages available. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Info: www.ludingtonartscenter.org

November 3-5

Peter Pan, Manistee

Conservatory of Dance. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Info/tickets: ramsdelltheatre.org

November 4

Live Music: Nick Veine, Ludington

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

November 5

Annual Arts & Crafts Show, Ludington

10am-3pm. Ludington Senior Center, 308 Rowe St. Info: 231.845.6841

Craft & Vendor Show, Ludington

10am-3pm. American Legion Post 76, 318 N. James St. Info: 231.690.4718

Puzzles

continued from page 1

Landmark puzzle (plus a few more), and I awaited their arrival.

In the meantime, I unboxed, started sorting and assembling the loon puzzle. Holy wow, this one was going to be challenging. Two days into it, I was still assembling the border. I would work on it for hours at a time, finding it hard to pull away. I would sort, resort and sort again.

After two months of being sidelined with COVID-19, I finally completed the puzzle. However, after admiring my work, I noticed I was missing some pieces! What a total deflator. I looked all around my work area, to no avail. A friend told me some puzzle manufacturers will send you the exact missing piece, whereas others will send you the whole puzzle. As luck would have it, this manufacturer wouldn't send just the missing pieces, leaving me to sort through a thousand pieces to find five! Not going to happen.

The disappointment didn't deter me from unboxing the next in the lineup. While the hubs was away, I set up my puzzle table and got to it. My intention was to work on it over a couple of days, however, once I

got started, I became a puzzle addict and couldn't stop until the last piece was placed at 1:30 a.m., well-l-l past my bedtime!

I've shared pictures of my completed puzzles with friends and family and overwhelmingly I get:

"You're nuts!"

"You're crazy!"

"You have way too much patience."

For me, though, it's challenging yet relaxing. Yes, it takes determination and patience. It's also strategic. With each new puzzle, I discover ways to tweak the process, resulting in faster completion times.

Puzzling, as it seems, is peaceful. It puts me in my own little world, where the outside world is tuned out, solitude is soaked up and a sense of accomplishment is achieved.

You may be a puzzler if you enjoy a challenge while seeking solitude.

Susan Hintz is a creative entrepreneur who loves beachcombing, photographing nature and writing about her hobbies and the outdoors.

Lake Effect

continued from page 6

in nearby Gary, Indiana, a steel town that employed his grandfather but also polluted the lake he loved. This push and pull throughout the book captured my attention.

Interestingly, I, too, lived in East Lansing for a time and felt drawn to visit P.J. Hoffmaster State Park near Muskegon. Just as Carlisle did, I drove hours from my home to Grand Marais, Michigan, only to turn around the same evening when cold temperatures, wind from Lake Superior and lack of gear (in this case, the tent poles!) dashed my enthusiasm for camping there.

Carlisle speaks of "water as comfort and water as threat." As someone whose father drowned in a boating accident on Lake Huron when my siblings and I were young, I understand the fury of the Great Lakes. Still, I also feel Carlisle's palpable pain when he leaves the Great Lakes behind to live in Virginia. In the last decade, my husband and I moved from Michigan to a city within a couple hours' drive of Rocky Mountain National Park. Despite our beautiful view and weekend trips to the

mountains, not one day went by when I didn't miss Michigan and its waters.

And that's the thing about "The Lake Effect". Each of us living or vacationing near the Great Lakes can identify with the author's love and longing for the lake. He speaks of his two-day float on the Pine River to Manistee. He stays in Suttons Bay, Traverse City, Whitehall and other communities familiar to us. Most of all, he shares author Wallace Nichols' concept of the "Blue Mind," defined as "a mildly meditative state characterized by calm, peacefulness, unity and a sense of general happiness and satisfaction with life at the moment." This is what Carlisle says he feels when he looks at Lake Michigan, and who among us hasn't felt the same while looking at the lake?

Author Fred Carlisle will be at Mason County District Library, 217 E. Ludington Ave., in Ludington, Oct. 24, from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. for a "meet and greet," reading and presentation, Q&A and book sales/signing. For more information, or to purchase his book, visit www.efredcarlisle.com or www.missionpointpress.com.

Why buy when you can borrow?

By MARK VIDEAN

Where do you go when your buddy or neighbor doesn't have what you need to borrow?

Everyone knows you can borrow books from libraries, and most people are aware that local libraries also lend CDs, DVDs, Blu-ray discs and audiobooks. But did you know you can borrow "things" as well?

The Manistee County Library, at 95 Maple St. in Manistee, now has a "library of things" that can be checked out. The list includes an automobile code checker, stud detector, metal detector, Blu-ray/DVD player, projector and screen, laptop, internet hotspots, happy light lucent therapy light, rock tumbler, steel tongue drum, ukulele, corn hole game, giant bubble kit, bocce ball set, horseshoes, giant yard dice, croquet set, pickleball set, nature



backpack, and a mini Bundt cake pan. More items will be added in the future. For more information, or to reserve an item, go to manisteelibrary.org or call 231-723-2519.

The Mason County District Library, at 217 E. Ludington Ave. in Ludington, also has a "library of things" that may be borrowed. Items include Chromebooks, internet hotspots, CD player, portable projector, USB turntable, telescope, fishing poles, ice skates, and more. To see the complete selection or for information to reserve an item, go to masoncounty.lib.mi.us or call 231-843-8465.

Mark Videan is co-editor of Freshwater Reporter and creates the community calendar and puzzles found in these pages.



Easy Pumpkin Puree

1 (2-3 lb.) pie pumpkin

1-1/2 cups water

Insert silicone trivet sling into Instant Pot liner. Place pumpkin on top of trivet and add water. Fold sling handles over, close and lock the lid. Set the release valve to seal. Press the Manual setting for 13 minutes on the timer. Let the pumpkin cook, and let the cooker do a natural pressure release. (Do not use the release valve.) When the pressure valve falls, remove the lid and carefully lift the trivet sling onto a baking sheet to slide the pumpkin off. Remove the stem. (It should fall right off.) Slice the pumpkin in half. Use a spoon to remove the seeds and center core. The rest of the flesh should pull away from the outer skin easily. Place pumpkin flesh in a food processor. Add about 1/4 cup water and process for 15 seconds or until smooth and the consistency desired. You may need to add more water and process again. Spoon puree into freezer-safe storage containers. The puree can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week or in the freezer for 6-9 months. Depending on pumpkin size, yields 1.5-2 cups puree.



Pumpkin Cream Cheese Dump Cake

2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese

1-1/4 cup sugar

1-1/2 cups powdered sugar

1 teaspoon salt

4 teaspoons milk

1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice

3-3/4 cups pumpkin puree

1 box dry yellow cake mix

1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk

3/4 cup butter, melted

4 eggs

Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9"x13" pan. Using a mixer, combine cream cheese, powdered sugar and milk until smooth. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine pumpkin puree, evaporated milk, eggs, sugar, salt and pumpkin pie spice. Pour into prepared pan. Put cream cheese filling into a resealable plastic storage bag and snip off a corner end to make a piping bag. Pipe the filling over the pumpkin, to cover. Pour the dry cake mix over the cream cheese layer, then poke holes through the cake mix, using a table knife, until you hit the filling (not the bottom of the pan). Pour melted butter over the dry cake mix. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until the top is browned and an inserted knife comes out clean. Let cool and serve with whipped cream. Store in the refrigerator. For variety and a little crunch, you can sprinkle chopped nuts or a cinnamon sugar mixture on top of the melted butter before you bake the cake.



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