

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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FREE

The Miracle of 'Ridiculousness'

The Hearts That Saved the Arcadia Dunes

By **GORDON BERG**

You never know when a thought so full of hope-filled ridiculousness, so full of audacious impossibility, will hit you upside the head and stop you in your tracks. When it happens, you can't shake it. It follows you. All day. All night. A feeling of being on the precipice of the next big chapter of your life is so powerful that you must absolutely lean into it, and let it take you down its uncharted path.

Twenty-five years ago, Heather Shumaker had just such an epiphany.

Shumaker is a self-described "conservation geek." She was in her late twenties when she arrived in the area from Wisconsin in February 1998. Until then, the only other time she had been in Michigan was to hike Isle Royale. She was a new hire for the fledgling Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. You could say the ink was still wet on her master's degree in land resources from the University of Wisconsin. Those who might have thought her inexperienced would be overlooking an inner perseverance driving Shumaker to apply her academic studies by making a mark – a bold, audacious, green preservation mark – somewhere on Northern Michigan's landscape.



Photo by Jim Gibson, courtesy of GTRLC.

Her mentor and supervisor at GTRLC was its director, Glen Chown. His passion for conservation, according to Shumaker, is "quite unstoppable."

Eyeing the prize

This was at a time when Northern Michigan was in the crosshairs of

developers from all over the world. Still is. Big swaths of land needed to be set aside if conservation efforts were to stay ahead of more golf courses, more McMansions, and more profit-driven projects that deplete Michigan's natural forests and coastlines and restrict public access to them.

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Watch for Spring Ephemerals

By **EMILY COOK**



Top. Trillium. Photo: Shelly Stusick.
Bottom. Spring beauties and trout lily.
Photo: Shelly Stusick

Notes of spring are becoming readily apparent. Birds have returned to provide a chorus in the early morning hours, and spring peepers make their unmistakable call as the sun begins to set later each day. Sleepy trails become popular once more as nature-lovers begin to take advantage of the warmer and longer days.

If you take to the outdoors in the coming weeks, I encourage you to open your eyes to something else — the little arms of green that are beginning to drive themselves up through the forest floor, pushing against last year's fallen leaves. These special wildflowers are spring ephemerals, the first flowers to make an appearance post winter. Their blooms are brief but powerful and a sure sign that a new season is here to stay.

Before venturing out, I invite you to take a moment to set the scene for identifying Michigan's spring ephemerals. If it helps, briefly close your eyes and envision your favorite forest trail. Perhaps beech trees tower over you as warbler song fills the space. Maybe you can even hear the waves of Lake Michigan nearby. It's a warm late-April or early-May day, so you don't need a heavy coat for the first time in months. Take a deep breath and smell the fresh air

and new plants growing.

One wildflower you are likely familiar with is the trillium. A favorite among many, it needs little description. At first glance trilliums may all look the same, but there are 38 different species in North America — mostly found in the mid and eastern portion of the U.S. and Canada. Their colors and size vary greatly and can confuse even the best botanist. They are all members of the lily family, and if you take a closer look at the ones scattered along your favorite trail, you will see their signature blend of white and pink blooms and large "leaves of three."

Another of the first ephemerals of spring can often be found fighting for the open areas where sunlight shines into the forest. Spring beauties — with their light pink, star-shaped flowers — only grow to be about 6 inches tall, but like trilliums, a forest carpeted with them makes for a stunning sight. Another name for spring beauties is "fairy spud" because their tiny underground tubers can be prepared just like potatoes. Despite this, it's best to leave them be as removing wildflowers can be a great disruption to the balance of a healthy ecosystem.

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Area Events

Some events may change or be canceled due to weather, schedules or COVID-19. Always call ahead.

MARKETS

Thursdays

Elberta Farmers Market

8am-12:30pm, May - October. Dudley Penfold Memorial Marina Park, corner of M-22 & M-168

Saturdays

Frankfort Farmers Market

9am-1pm, May - October. Open Space Park, 832 Main St.

ONGOING EVENTS

Thru April 28

Modes of Abstraction Art Exhibition, Ludington

Free. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St.

The Manistee Civic Players present the comedy "A Bad Year for Tomatoes", Manistee

April 28, 29 7:30pm; April 30 2pm. May 5, 6 7:30pm; May 7 2pm. \$10-25. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Tickets: ramsdelitheatre.org

Tuesdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23

Brose Wii Bowling Night, Beulah

6-8pm, Free. Compete to win a \$20 gift card. No bowling shoes required. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd.

Wednesdays, May 3, 10, 17, 24

Comedy Hive Open Mic, Beulah

7-8:30pm, Free. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd.

Thursdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25

Open Mic Night with Jeff Louwsma, Beulah

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

Saturdays, May 6, 13, 20, 27

Drop-in Art Activities, Thompsonville

10am-1pm. Join artists/educators/staff/volunteers to create a "Michigan Blue" wood disk for our community art project, as well as other family-friendly activities at the Art Park entrance. Michigan Legacy Art Park, Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr.

May 3-June 17

Nanok & Kowaleski Art Exhibition, Manistee

Free. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Artist reception May 20, 5-7pm.

May 5-26

Art Snake Road Show Art Exhibition, Ludington

Free. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Artist reception May 5, 5-8pm.

May 5-28

Feinberg & Kivela: Passion, Purpose & Paint Art Exhibition, Ludington

Free. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Artist reception May 5, 5-8pm.

May 5-June 9

"Wordless Connections" Group Art Exhibition, Frankfort

Free. Artworks by Rebecca Casement, Cherie Correll & Susan Thompson. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Opening reception May 5, 5-7pm.

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Arcadia Dunes

continued from Page 1

One of the first things Shumaker did at the GTRLC was to get her hands on plat maps of Benzie and Manistee counties. She quickly spotted about 6,000 acres of undeveloped land with two miles of coastline reaching six miles inland.

The more she leaned over this map, the more it drew her in.

“This was what I had come to Michigan for—the chance to tackle conservation on a scale that made a difference. In the Midwest, where land was mostly chunked up in forty-acre squares, a 6,000-acre tract was something grand. Here was a rare opportunity to reknit the patchwork landscape. A chance to make a global contribution to habitat protection in our own backyard.”

(From “Saving Arcadia: A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes”, 2017, Painted Turtle Books, a division of Wayne State University Press.)

In this place was a wealth of species, from the big ones you see such as trees, birds and critters, to more overlooked ones like insects, fungi and plants. Entire ecosystems in need of saving and sustained nurturing.

Fortunately, she was young and starry-eyed. She had no concept of how impossible this task might be. If she had, she may have never started.

“You need that ridiculousness to plow ahead and do something that is quite out of the question,” she recently commented.

Connecting and collaborating

Shumaker dove in. During the next several months, questions raced through her head. What’s the history of this land? Who owns it now? A corporation?! CMS Energy Corporation? A public utility? Yikes! Who are the family farmers who used to own it? Where are they now? What do you mean the corporation won’t talk to us? How much do they want for it? How much?! Even if we could raise that much, would they accept an offer from us?

“Our first step of needing help was just to connect with people who were on the boards of various other organizations around Michigan who could let us know who to talk to and even try to get a meeting set up (with CMS),” she recalled.

“That took a long time,” she said, elaborating. “Because we were nobody.



Dune wildflowers, June 2018. Photo: Paula Dreeszen



Dump cleanup volunteers at Arcadia Dunes, 2010. Photo: Paula Dreeszen.

Little pipsqueak nobodies up in Traverse City, and it took a long time for people to take us seriously, to realize, YES, we wanted to talk, and we wanted to pull this off. There is a singlemindedness and an all-in feeling to all this and energy too.”

So, with the dawn of a new millennium came a laser-focused drive for GTRLC. Make this deal happen! The project became known as “The Coastal Campaign.”

A grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation — a Flint-based, influential philanthropic organization — enabled them to hire a full-time director of fundraising.

A meeting with the then CEO of CMS made them realize preserving Arcadia Dunes was not going to be a cake walk. CMS wasn’t convinced a fledgling nonprofit could raise the millions required and, besides, the corporation believed the land would be better “preserved” by selling it to private developers to build exclusive homes and a private golf course.

GTRLC doubled down on its networking. The President of The C.S. Mott Foundation and his family were given a personal walking tour of the land. They fell in love with it. Other influential donors were drawn in too.

Funding the project

By 2002 CMS announced a new chairman and CEO in charge, Bill Whipple. Knowing that one of his first orders of business would be to sell off properties to shore up their balance sheets, GTRLC raced to get his attention before developers did. By the end of the year, CMS was willing to sell, but the price tag was \$18 million. Mott came up with \$750,000 for the purchase option and GTRLC staff felt confident that the organization would also provide substantial future funding. Governor Granholm lobbied Whipple and other senior CMS executives to seriously consider the offer.

By May 2003 CMS agreed to the offer with one stipulation: 75% of the \$18 million had to be in their hands by September. The Mott Foundation agreed to a combination interest-free loan and a cash gift total of \$13 million but only if GTRLC could raise the first \$5 million by Labor Day.

When??

How much???

During this time Shumaker was running on adrenaline. She literally slept with the documents next to her bed, worried they might get lost. She dreamt about it. The fundraising goal was completely “in my soul and in my waking hours.” It was more than a job. It was a mission.

Major donors who signed on early felt the same way, waking up at three in the morning unable to sleep because this project was so important, yet still so impossible and overwhelming in its scope.

But \$5 million! How on earth...

Gathering the grassroots

That’s when something extraordinary happened. Thousands of people got involved and shared the dream that Shumaker, Glen Chown and the Conservancy had.

Shumaker attended town hall meetings. She met with farmers. She acted as an ambassador to make certain everyone who was “local” knew the details of the project. Chown made presentations in neighbors’ homes and enlisted others to do the same. Shumaker said it was part of the Conservancy’s “quiet campaign” to announce the project to a small number of people first and to receive input from them. Shumaker contacted local neighbors.

On the fundraising side, Conservancy staff connected with Camp Arcadia, Watervale and Crystal Downs — communities that donated — and many family foundations.

Everywhere she went she listened. Memories poured out to her of family hikes along Arcadia’s coast, of having a first kiss on Old Baldy (an open dune nearly 400 feet above Lake Michigan). She heard stories of generations of farmers who made their living from its rich soil.

Without knowing it and quite by accident, she and the efforts of so many others were building a community of those with a connection to the area. Across backyards, farms, towns and counties. Across the state and country. Even more importantly, across demographics and political ideologies.

It didn’t happen overnight.

“Community (building) takes time, trust, heart and listening to each other,” Shumaker noted recently. “I don’t think it matters how it’s done, so long as it’s genuine. People will make missteps and be honest and carry on from there.

“We didn’t have a blueprint. We weren’t intentionally building community, but if felt as if we needed allies and we had to respect the people around us. So, I know that I felt like nobody had taught this in school ... my work said you should just do this ... I just felt that the people who live locally should be the first to know, not the last to know. And that was just basic human respect, but because of that instinct, we gained so much more, I think. The design on the conservation project and its success (is) because we got people early on engaged, and they felt like they had a say and they helped us create it in a way that was better than it could have been.”



Author Heather Shumaker, formerly of GTRLC. Courtesy photo.

‘Arcadia Daze’ to offer autographed books

By GORDON BERG

Signed copies of author Heather Shumaker’s book, “Saving Arcadia: A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes” (2017, Painted Turtle Books), will be sold on July 21 during Arcadia Daze, a community festival to be held July 21-23, 2023.

Winner of the 2018 Next Generation Indie Book Award, “Saving Arcadia” is the page-turning, real-life story of how local individuals and thousands of others from

all walks of life and ideologies came together around one idea: to preserve a coastal landscape of stunning beauty and the rich farmland adjacent to it.

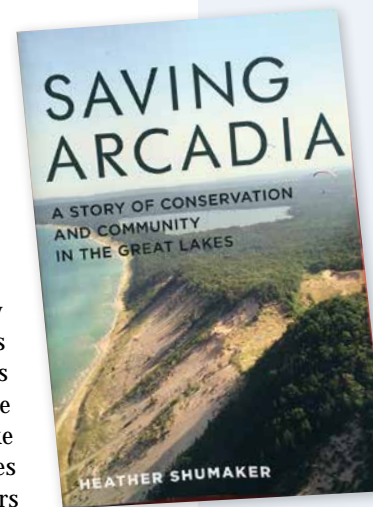
The Next Generation Indie Book Awards calls itself the largest international awards’ program for indie authors

and independent publishers which recognizes “the most exceptional independently published books in 80-plus categories.”

Shumaker is the author of three other books, “It’s OK Not to Share”, “It’s OK to Go Up the Slide” and the children’s book “The Griffins of Castle Cary”. She has made several appearances around the area and is available for public speaking engagements.

“Saving Arcadia” is available in Arcadia at Lily Pad gift shop and in Onkama at MacBeth and Company. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Arcadia Lions. The book is also sold through local independent booksellers.

To learn more about the author, go to: <https://heathershumaker.com>



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Patina to bring more art to Onekama

From **STAFF REPORTS**

ONEKAMA — Patina will open for its fifth season on May 12, and half the space will be dedicated to a new art gallery and workshop. Featured artists will rotate each weekend.

Owner Nikki Schneider said the schedule is filling quickly, and artisans confirmed so far are: Red Bush Breads, May 12-13; the Art Divas of Manistee, June 9-11; Sky Mage Pottery, June 30- July 2; and Artsy Goods with Cindy Swan-Eagan, July 14-16.

Local poet and author Louisa Loveridge-Gallas will read in the garden, and other events will be added as the season unfolds.

When Patina opened in 2019, the focus was on selling “found” vintage, eclectic and funky home and garden decor.

“The space organically and quickly transformed into a place of connection, inspiration and art,” Schneider said.

She explained that the Community Art Wall project came first, followed by small Covid outdoor markets (to assist displaced local artisans), workshops and indoor trunk shows.

“The energy seems to flow naturally from one thing to the next,” Schneider observed. “Our area is full of amazing artisans. I want to offer them a space in which they can share their work and inspire others.”

“Matisse said, ‘Creativity takes



Red Bush Breads. Courtesy photo.

courage,” Schneider said, adding that she encourages new artists to come into Patina.

“You are welcome to use our furniture and props to display your art,” she continued, “and we are happy to offer staging assistance as well.”

Patina is located at 4850 Main St. aka M-22. For an updated schedule of events, follow Patina Designs on Facebook and Instagram. For more information and to submit photos of your work, contact Nikki Schneider at patinamichigan@gmail.com.

‘Art Snake Road Show’ travels to Ludington

By **PAT STINSON**

LUDINGTON – Works from the region’s “Art Snake” artists will be featured during the ‘Art Snake Road Show’ to be held May 5-26 in the main gallery of Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St.

“I think this might be the 15th year for the Art Snake,” artist Jamey Barnard said.

The ‘Art Snake Road Show’ exhibit will highlight Manistee County artists from the Onekama and Arcadia areas. The exhibit’s name is a play on the artists’ annual “Art Snake” summer event in which members of the public snake their way around Portage Lake to view artwork at various locations.

Artists in the exhibit include Jamey Barnard, Susan Barnard, Jef Bourgeau, Mike Grant, Kristine Harvey, Andrew

Jagniecki, Judy Jashinsky, Phil Joseph, Susan Joseph and Les Scruggs.

“Les Scruggs and I had a two-person show there many years ago,” Barnard said of LACA. “We are looking forward to introducing Art Snake artists to the people of Ludington.”

The exhibit will include a mix of mediums — paintings, drawings, textiles, sculptural work and printmaking — in a variety of styles. Barnard said there will be “plenty of new works” from the artists.

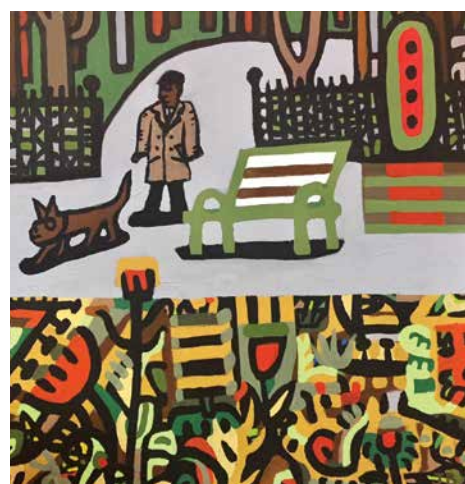
A public reception to meet the artists will take place 5-8 p.m., Friday, May 5, in the gallery.

“Attending the artist reception is a wonderful opportunity for community members to take in the exhibit as well as a chance to interact with the artists,” LACA Executive Director Andrew Skinner said.

LACA exhibit hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday; and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday. For more information, call 231-845-2787 or go to: ludingtonartscenter.org



Print by Andrew Jagniecki.



Painting by Jamey Barnard.

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Guided wildflower hikes offered in May

From **STAFF REPORTS**

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and Michigan Legacy Art Park will offer guided wildflower hikes in May. The hikes take place in southern Benzie County.

A statement on the conservancy’s website offers a warning about the early emergence and prevalence of ticks this spring. Tick-bite prevention includes staying on the trails, wearing long sleeves and pants, tucking pantlegs into socks and using a repellent specially formulated for ticks.

3 **May 3, Early Spring Wildflower Hike at Pete’s Woods, Arcadia Dunes**

10 a.m.-12 p.m. Paula Dreeszen will lead a 1.5-mile hike on the loop trail located along Swamp Road, south of Joyfield Road, in Benzie County. This trail is known for its unparalleled display of spring wildflowers. Participants are asked to wear hiking shoes and bring water and a snack. Sunscreen, bug spray, a camera and binoculars are suggested. The hike is free. To register, go to: gtrlc.org

17 **May 17, Mid-Spring Wildflower Hike at Pete’s Woods, Arcadia Dunes**

10 a.m.-12 p.m. Paula Dreeszen will lead a 1.5-mile hike on the loop trail. See the May 3 description and registration information.

21 **May 21, Spring Wildflower Walk, Thompsonville**

2 p.m. The walk is free. Required park entry fees are: \$10/adult, \$5/child, \$20/family. Caitlin Chism will lead an educational tour of the Michigan Legacy Art Park at Crystal Mountain Resort. She will identify wildflowers and their place in the park’s ecology. Meet rain or shine at Michigan Legacy Art Park Trailhead, a quarter mile from the parking area. Check the park’s Facebook page one hour prior to the hike for updates or cancellation due to severe weather. Crystal Mountain is located at 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr. Find the Michigan Legacy Art Park on the resort grounds at 7300 Mountainside Dr. For information, go to: michlegacyartpark.org.

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NORTHWOODS SAUCE BOSS



Yo mama wears combat boots

Story and photos by **JOSHUA ELIE**

Back in the '80s, when I was going to Baldwin schools, the "Yo mama" jokes were "king." Non-stop ribbing all the time about anything and everything. Some of us never grow out of it. Friendly sarcasm is just a way of blowing off steam and making heavy things "light." Often, it is the only way to keep your sanity when your job is so high stress, and you're seeing things nobody should ever have to see. This is what life is like for police officers, firefighters, medical professionals and soldiers.

With Memorial Day and Armed Forces Day coming up, I look up at my grandparents' generation's flags, all folded



Patricia and Joshua Elie. Photo by Peter Elie.

in their cases on a shelf I built above my front door. They were military — WWII and Korea. As we get out our BBQs and lift our glasses, remember our warriors and maybe even say a prayer of thanks for our military heroes doing things that need to be done, things few of us are capable of.

We have other heroes, too. Moms. Especially single moms. Just like there is



Mother and son on a sailing day. Photo by Peter Elie.

no such thing as an ex-Marine, there is no such thing as an ex-mom, even after the kids are grown and have started families of their own. I don't know how they do it; I don't think they even know how they do it. They just find ways, never looking for anything in return other than healthy, happy kids.

Moms I've known

JO: I met Jo about 15 years ago. She had just escaped back to the U.S. from the Seychelle Islands (Africa) where she had no roof, two babies to feed and a river for washing their clothes. You met Jo in my story, "Dancing in the Kitchen", and if you didn't, you can read it online at: freshwater-reporter.com/dancing-in-the-kitchen.

STACY: I haven't seen Stacy in, maybe, 25 years. She had a full-time job, went to school, and every Friday she would leave Wellston right after work, drive straight through the night (no stops) to Florida to pick up her kids, bring them back to Wellston, then get them back to Florida in time for school Monday morning, just to spend time with them.

TONI: Toni's husband abandoned her and their son Gabriel (Gabe) when he was 6, leaving them with nothing: no alimony, no child support and no communication. To make things worse, she had MS, but, somehow, she found "ways." She did all the traditional "mom" stuff, teaching Gabe how to cook and do laundry, and showering him with hugs, kisses, prayers and kind words. She did all the expected "dad" stuff, too, teaching him how to shave, fish, throw a ball, hunt safely, mow a lawn and shovel snow. She shared with him her work ethic for doing chores, took him to monster truck rallies, taught him about the "birds and bees" and even tutored him in survival techniques when

Elie's Lemon Bars

(My mother's favorite)

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sifted powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup butter (1-1/2 sticks)
- 4 slightly beaten eggs
- 1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 3/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 cup milk
- powdered sugar



Making sure you have everything prepped and measured before you start is vital to this recipe's success. In a 5- to 6-quart pot or kettle, melt the 6 tablespoons of butter over low heat. Gradually add the flour, stirring constantly. Cook over low heat until medium brown, about 15-20 minutes. This creates what is called a "roux," pronounced "roo."

Crust: In a large bowl, combine 2 cups flour, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until the mixture

resembles coarse crumbs. Press mixture into a parchment paper-lined 13" x 9" x 2" baking pan. Always remember to cut off the excess parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees for 18-20 minutes or until the edges are golden brown.

Filling: In a medium bowl, mix eggs, granulated sugar, 3 Tbs flour, lemon zest, lemon juice, and milk. Pour into hot crust.

Bake for 20 minutes or more, until the center is set. Refrigerate before covering in powdered sugar or cutting into squares.

their home burned down. She taught him how to cut branches to build a fire, how to cook and heat up water from the stream for cleaning and bathing, and how to use oil lamps for light and kerosene heaters for heat.

Today, Gabe has a great job, has held it for years, and he's always willing to take on double shifts, even if he must walk miles in the middle of winter, in the dark. In the last photo I saw of him, he was replacing the side mirror on his mother's Blazer.

"It wasn't always a picnic in the park, and it was rough more times than I care to count," Toni told me. "But we made it!"

Moms' appreciation day

How much sleep deprivation can a human handle? Ask a mom. Another question would be, when are men going to "man up" and take care of their families? Many do, though far too many do not.

Even with a great husband, my mother still worked full time, kept house and taught me basic spelling, reading and math before I even started kindergarten. She was always there for anything I needed and still is. Later, she taught me how to do my own laundry, got me started cooking and, in my rebellious teenage years, had blisters on her knees from countless hours of praying for me.

Some people get a few days or even a whole month of recognition, but moms only get one day a year. Show your appreciation. Flowers and cards are always great and, if you know her favorite treat, hook yo mama up. Her feet still hurt ... and you know it is all because of you! Make it really count this May 14.

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

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Is it here yet?

Ramblings of a winter-weary writer

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL

It begins when that goofy, ground-dwelling rodent pops out of a hole in February to predict the start of spring. That's the point when I'm ready for the cold stuff to just leave and the warming sun to return in full splendor, but without the torturous heat that comes later.

The gradual change from late winter to early spring is as favorite a time for me as the other side of the year, when the same torturous heat turns into the cooling, colorful days of fall. But this year's seasonal change to spring is just taking toooo long, which is a curious thing to say when I think of how fast the days, weeks and months seem to fly by as my own long years seem to shrink.

I start looking for those delightful changes about mid-March, about the six-week deadline mark of that damn rodent's gradual appearance and prediction. I keep a sharp eye out for the slow appearance of the luminescent green of woodland moss along the trail, the first backyard crocus that peeks up from the ground — it, too, wondering where spring is — and the first tiny, hopeful buds of trees slowly stretching into a spring day.

A sure sign that spring can't be THAT far away is when my wife Jean starts pulling out seed packets from their dark storage closet and rummages through them, muttering, "This year I'm going to plant you, and you, and you ... Wait, I thought I had some of those left!" When the urge to find the nearest garden-seed seller arises, you just know spring will be here soon.

But it's still March and this is Michigan. So, of course, it snows again and covers my poor little crocus until the next melt, and it struggles back to the surface — and then it snows yet AGAIN!

Another sure sign of the impending vernal season is the sound of thunder. No, not that silly imitator called "thunder snow," rather, the real thing that shakes the house and rumbles across the sky, shooting out lightning sparks and dragging torrential downpours of water in the sky behind it, e.g., a real spring thunderstorm, sans tornadoes, please.

As mid-March proceeds into late March and early April, loons — with their mournful morning tunes — return to the newly thawed lakes. Red-winged blackbirds, fluttering between yet-bare stalks of tall marshy grasses and cattails, sound off in twittering, tweeting, delightful song



Even Phoenix the dog is wondering when spring will get here. The luminescing moss is a good sign of things to come.



Squirrel getting his fill before spring sprouts a new food supply.



First backyard crocus poked up between snowfalls in mid-March.



The big lake is getting antsy for warm weather too — you can feel the anticipation.

across the fields, ensuring an approaching springtime burst of refreshed life.

Of course, an obvious sign of spring is the gradual return to Pure Michigan of that roving species of rolling avians, the snowbirds. But I can't have it all, and I can't let that interfere with my anticipation of the returning spring.

Just to test the waters, and encourage spring's full cooperation in returning another year, Jean and I went beach-rock hunting on a mildly warm and sunny but breezy April Fools' weekend. Now, we do venture out to the beach for a moment or two in mid-freezing-winter, but those visits are more like wow-isn't-this-gorgeous-jeez-it's-cold-out-here short ventures.

The early April trek was an actual stroll on the beach on a lightly breezy and sunny day. Much better! April is moving along now at a quicker pace as it approaches the midpoint, and it's looking positively like spring is going to arrive.

Hopefully, by the time this rambling rhetoric is published, spring will have sprung in all its glory. Enjoy it before it fades to those hot days of the season after.

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

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A Timely Revival

By Louisa Loveridge Gallas
Freshwater Reporter Poet In Residence

Do you sometimes feel low,
strolling along Melancholy Street
or even Misery Avenue?
You need a sweet song to carry you
back to joy whose ship has sailed?
As you pass by, right there in front
of Forget Me Not Flower Shoppe,
delightful window boxes reveal
Spring's first pansies, cheerful faces,
like how maybe God or Creator felt
when They decided to give us the world,
each delicate petal sends out
a Hallelujah,
You pause before them, enchanted,
your shadow self lagging behind.
Misty with dew,
radiant gospel of beginnings
choir of innocents,
those blossoms
call your name
to lift you up
the way any revival
rises
from righteous soil
soulful
as any praise song
or prayer.





Senior ecologist Angie Bouma talks to staff during the hike.



Above. Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy staff looks for a nest on the trail above Lower Woodcock Lake. Right. The author's staff.

A hike with staff

New trails at Lower Woodcock Lake

Story and photos by **STEWART A. MCFERRAN**

I first met a bearded Glen Chown near Lower Woodcock Lake in the early 1990s when my neighbor was giving him a tour of that large property just north of our little neighborhood. The conservancy movement was in its nascence, and the idea of raising funds to conserve land was just catching on. But our small group of neighbors was hopeful because our ski trail traversed the ridge above LWL all the way to Lake Ann Pathway.

Twenty years later I was hiking new trails on that same ridge between LWL and the Platte River. I was with the phalanx of talented folks Chown, executive director of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, had assembled to do the work of conserving and managing this place. The 230 acres surrounding the lake is only one property in a large portfolio of properties the GTRLC oversees in the region.

I was learning a lot from pros on staff, such as Angie Bouma. She and her team of botanists had surveyed the plants on the shoulders of the esker — a serpentine-shaped, layered glacial deposit — that made up the ridge between the lake and the

Platte River. There are 225 plant species on the list; 193 of those are native species. The botanists had made unique and important finds, such as 19 kinds of ferns.

Later, I asked Bouma to recall some of those plants' names for me. She replied:

"The two species I highlighted that were exciting (and ones I don't find very often and that indicate high-quality habitat) were James' monkeyflower, *Mimulus glabratus* (<https://michiganflora.net/record/1909>), an aquatic plant, and cuckoo flower, *Cardamine pratensis* (<https://michiganflora.net/record/633>)."

Also present on the trail was staff from the Conservation Resource Alliance. Biologists Nate Winkler and Kim Balke chimed in on the fish survey conducted at LWL. They told us about important ongoing work updating the intersections of streams where they pass under roads. Apparently, the culvert that had been used under Burnt Mill Road was part of an old steam engine. The alliance was instrumental in securing funds for the timber bridge that now allows water to flow freely from Upper to Lower Woodcock Lake.

I got to chat with GTRLC staffer Chris

Garrock, who manages the LWL property and others, as we passed the nest of the red-shouldered hawk and enormous trees gnawed by beavers. He pointed out the lack of understory plants, largely due to overgrazing by an outsized deer population.

At a stop along the trail, Chown pointed out that the Woodcock lakes are not named for the American woodcock (a bird) but for a civil war veteran named Woodcock who settled here. I added that his name was Silas Woodcock, and some have said he had a long beak and big feet, just like the woodcock.

Two state-listed mussel species were found in the connector streambed between LWL and the Platte River. That unnamed creek is replete with woody debris and features a beaver dam at the upstream end. Before the conservancy built a bridge, we would cross the creek on fallen tree trunks while listening to the delightful trickle of the flowing water. From the new bridge, water sounds can still be heard as one looks toward the confluence of the creek and the Platte River.

At another stop, Chown talked about how proud he is that the conservancy's staff has



set goals and taken action to achieve those goals at places like Lower Woodcock Lake. Those of us who live nearby are happy to be a part of the conservation efforts at this special watershed nature preserve.

NOTES: A portion of the Lower Woodcock Lake trail closes April 15–June 15 each year to protect nesting birds, such as the red-shouldered hawk.

For more about LWL, read "Lower Woodcock Lake: Summer and Winter" (August 19, 2020) and "Lower Woodcock Lake: a pristine jewel" (February 2020) online at <https://freshwater-reporter.com>.

Stewart A. McFerran illuminates current environmental issues in a historic context. He hopes readers will gain an understanding of and insight into ways people interact with their environment.

Ephemerals

continued from Page 1

You might spot a yellow flower growing among the trilliums and spring beauties. On a breezy day, the blooms on this new plant will "nod." With its green and brown mottled leaves, it can be identified as the trout lily, one of my personal favorites. These markings are why it has the name it does, because of its similarity to a brown or brook trout. In the warm sun of late April, the trout lily's petals are folded all the way back toward the stem, giving it a unique, unmistakable look.

Canada violets are another favorite. Fragrant and white, their bright yellow centers often match the trout lily blooms. If you look closely, you will see the five white petals are tinged a light purple. It's a sharp contrast to the dark green, heart-shaped leaves. In the forest, our native violets grow taller than the ones you find serving as a ground cover in your backyard. Also keep an eye out for downy yellow violets, aptly named because of their soft, fuzzy petals.

As you continue hiking through your favorite forest, the towering beech trees may have transitioned to oaks. The glacial moraines unique to our state provide an interesting landscape, one you can see well



Dutchman's Breeches. Photo: Shelly Stusick

as the budding trees have not yet leafed out.

One more unique spring plant may catch your eye. Like many species it is named for its appearance. The white blooms of dutchman's breeches look like tiny pairs of pantaloons hanging upside down. They're unmistakable once you know what to look for. While commonly found in forests like where you are, if they end up in cattle fields they can cause animals that consume them to drunkenly stagger around from the toxic

and narcotic substances in them. This is why they are sometimes called "Little Blue Stagers."

These are just a sample of the many spring plants that will soon be covering northwest Michigan. There are plentiful online resources where you can find images of native species. Also, phone apps like "Picture This" can be an excellent guide and point you in the right direction when attempting to identify a species while exploring.

We are very lucky to have a handful of natural areas in Manistee, southern Benzie and slightly beyond that seem to explode with wildflower diversity each spring. While not a comprehensive list, the following locations are great options for getting your ephemeral fix:

- **Arcadia Dunes C.S. Mott Nature Preserve (Southern Benzie)** – www.gtrlc.org – Hike the trails to see trilliums, trout lilies, spring beauties, and plenty of ramps
- **Pete's Woods (Southern Benzie)** – www.gtrlc.org – One of the most popular wildflower hikes in the region. The short trail off Swamp Road, south of Joyfield Road, includes nearly every spring ephemeral listed here, and more.
- **Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary (Manistee)** – www.michiganaudubon.org – This

Audubon property includes 70-plus acres with trails on the east side of Lakeshore Drive. Attractions at property owned by Lake Bluff Farms on the west side of Lakeshore include views over Lake Michigan and two Michigan Champion Trees, a giant sequoia and sycamore maple.

- **Magoon Creek Natural Area (Manistee)** – www.visitmanisteecounty.com – Invasive species removal efforts have been underway here for years, allowing the forest to transition into a more balanced, healthier ecosystem.
- **Loda Lake National Wildflower Sanctuary (Newaygo)** – www.fs.usds.gov – The only wildflower sanctuary in the Huron-Manistee National Forest system, diverse habitat types allow for an incredible array of different wildflowers to grow. Read the May 2022 Freshwater Reporter story, "May bursts with blooms at Loda Lake National Wildflower Sanctuary."

Emily Cook is a resident of Arcadia where she lives with her husband and two collies. She is a conservationist by training and a writer and artist when the time allows. She explores the nearby nature trails and Lake Michigan beach as much as possible.

Community Calendar

TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN FRESHWATER REPORTER!

To be included in our May 24 edition, submit your announcements by May 19. 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/be canceled due to weather/scheduling/Covid-19. Despite our best efforts, errors may occur.

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May 7-13

Frankfort & Elberta Restaurant Week

May 18, 19, 20

10 Minute Play Festival, Ludington

7:30pm; May 21 2pm. \$15 ADV, \$20 DOS. 8 short plays by Michigan playwrights. Cash bar on 19 & 20. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Tickets: www.ludingtonartscenter.org or at LACA.

DAILY EVENTS

April 26

Guided Bird Walk: Spring Migration, Onekama

9am, Free, registration required. Join bird expert Dr. Brian Allen on a tour through the park. North Point Park, 8999 Greenway St. Register: OnekamaTwp.org

Classic Movie Series: "The Wedding Singer", Manistee

10am&7pm, \$2. Rated PG-13 Romance/Comedy (1998) starring Adam Sandler & Drew Barrymore. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

April 27

UFOs Over Michigan with Bill Konkolesky, Manistee

6-7pm, Free. Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary S. Pkwy.

Live Music: Jerome Forde, Manistee

6-8pm, Free. North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St.

April 28

Live Music: Gabriel James, Ludington

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

WSSC's Humankind Movie Series: "The Cabin in the Woods", Manistee

10am&7pm, Free. Rated R, Horror/Comedy (2011). Humankind Series explores the future of work from multiple perspectives. Vogue Theatre, 383 River St.

10th Annual Pictionary Olympics, Manistee

7pm. Entry fee & regis. required. Manistee Golf & Country Club, 500 Cherry St. Sponsored by League of Women Voters-Manistee. Proceeds go toward educating voters/improving voting participation. To register, email Linda Albee: manisteelwv@gmail.com

April 29

Elberta Beach Cleanup, Elberta

10am-12pm. Volunteer to help the Benzie Conservation District. To register: jessica@benziecd.org or benziecd.org/events

Lake County Senior Expo, Baldwin

10am-3pm, Free. Event to help seniors learn about services that are available. Drawings will be held during the event. AmVet Post #1988, 1959 W.24th St.

Spring Market, Ludington

11am-4pm. Works by local, hand-picked artists, crafters & makers. Faire Heart Center, 3408 W. US-10

Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Champion (Terence Blanchard), Manistee

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

Book to Big Screen: Book & Film Discussion, Frankfort

3pm, Free screening of "Women Talking", based on Miriam Toewa's book. Discussion follows. Garden Theater, 301 Main St. Some book copies at Benzie Shores District Library.

Baked Potato Supper & Raffle Fundraiser, Baldwin

5-7pm. Tickets: \$8/person, available at door. Fundraiser for Lake County Community Foundation. Event takes place at St. Ann's Lake County Senior Services, 690 E. 9th St. OR purchase a potato to go. Call 231-924-5350.

Blast into Summer Party, Ludington

6-9pm, Admission by donation of cash/nonperishable food or hygiene item. Benefit for Alzheimer's Association hosted by Lakeshore Pyrate Heads. Tropical/pirate attire. 50/50 raffle, live auction, music by Two Dudes in Flip Flops. Sportsmans/The Mitten Bar, 109 W. Ludington Ave.

April 29

Live in concert: Ludrock's "Girls Rock", Ludington

6-9pm. Tickets/details TBA. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Hosted by Zonta Club.

COVE Birthday Bash, Baldwin

6-8pm, \$30. Benefit for Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters. Appetizers & COVE staff presenting history of & services provided by COVE. Donations encouraged. Pompeii's Pizza, 751 Michigan Ave.

Dancing with the Local Stars, Ludington

6:30-9:30pm, \$75. Fundraiser for the Oriole Foundation & Ludington students. Heavy hors d'oeuvres, award voting, cash bar. Lincoln Hills Golf Club, 1527 N. Lakeshore Dr. Tickets: Eventbrite.com

Live Music: Barefoot, Bear Lake

7pm, Free. Bear Lake Bar (newly resurrected!) with food by Southern Sin Thesis.12323 Maple St.

Live Music: Messin' Around Band, Manistee

9pm-1am, Free. Little River Casino Resort, 2700 Orchard Hwy.

May 3

GTRLC Early Wildflower Hike at Pete's Woods, Arcadia Dunes

10am-12pm, Free. Join Paula Dreeszen on a 1.5-mile hike on the loop trail, known for its unparalleled display of spring wildflowers. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Sunscreen, bug spray & a camera/binoculars are suggested. Info/registration: gtrlc.org

May 4

Poverty Simulation Workshop, Ludington

8:30am-12pm. Lakeshore Food Club, 920 E. Tinkham Ave. \$10/pers. suggested donation for non Food Club staff & volunteers. Reservations required. Space for 80. Lakeshore Resource Network conference rooms. Hosted by Access West Michigan. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8cfffk>

Near & Farr Friends Bridge Game Day, Onekama

2:30pm, Free. Cards provided. Basic knowledge of bridge required. Social/party bridge, not duplicate. Onekama Township Hall, 5435 Main St.

Live Music: Kyle Brown, Manistee

6-8pm, Free. North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St.

May 5

Live Music, Luke Voltanski, Beulah

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

Live Music: Meg Gunia, Ludington

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

May 6

Boosters Craft/Senior Bake Sale

9am-3pm. Wellston Community Center, 1273 S. Seaman Rd.

Bends & Brews with Lotus, Ludington

10:30am, \$20. 50-minute yoga class & pint of brew. Ludington Bay Brewing, 515 S. James St. Register: 231.907.1834

COVE Birthday Bash, Ludington

6-8pm, \$30. Benefit for Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters. Appetizers & COVE staff presenting history of & services provided by COVE. Donations encouraged. Scotty's Restaurant, 5910 W. US-10

May 9

Weed the Park, Ludington

10am-12pm. Volunteer to learn how to identify & remove invasive Garlic Mustard. Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, long-sleeved shirts. Bring gardening gloves, garden trowel, water. Meet near the dog park at the end of Rath Ave. Cartier Park, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr.

May 11

Guided Bird Walk: Nesting, Onekama

8:30am, Free, registration required. Join bird expert Dr. Brian Allen to learn about birds. North Point Park, 8999 Greenway St. Register: OnekamaTwp.org

Live Music: Lighting Matches, Manistee

6-8pm, Free. North Channel Brewing Co., 86 Washington St.

Benzonia Academy Lecture presents Some of Benzie County's Earliest Settlers, Benzonia

7pm, Free/Donations appreciated. Benzie Area Historical Society's Genealogist Mary Link will give a presentation at Mills Community House, 891 Michigan Ave.

May 12

Live Music, LaRose, Beulah

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

Live Music: Larz

5-8pm, Free. The Cabbage Shed, 198 Frankfort Ave.

COVE Birthday Bash, Manistee

6-8pm, \$30. Benefit for Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters. Appetizers & COVE staff presenting history of & services provided by COVE. Donations encouraged. Taco 'Bout It Mexican Fusion, 344 River St.

Live Music: John Merchant, Ludington

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

Live Music: The Westbound Situation, Ludington

7:30pm, \$15 ADV, \$20 DOS. A blend of chamber music, bluegrass & jazz. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St. Tickets: www.ludingtonartscenter.org or at LACA.

May 12,13

Pop In Artist: Red Bush Bread, Onekama

11am-2pm. Patina Designs, 4850 North Main St.

May 12-14

Mesick Mushroom Festival

Annual event for More! Mushroom Lovers. Info: mesick-mushroomfest.org

May 13

9th Annual North Mitten Half Marathon, 10k, 5k, & 1-Mile Fun Run, Thompsonville

Start times 8-11am. \$15-88. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr. Info/registration: crystallmountain.com/event/north-mitten

Legends of Labyrinth Disc Golf Tournament, Scottville

8am-5pm, \$40-\$60. Raffle, multiple CTP, State berth, ace pool. Labyrinth Course, West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Rd. Info/regis.: discgolfszene.com or at Grip N Rip Disc Golf, 5770 US-10, Ludington.

Stream Monitoring Program, Bear Lake

9am-2pm. Volunteers are invited to help collect macroinvertebrates from local rivers & streams. Gear and locations will be handed out to teams of 4 or 5. Bring waders if you have them. Waders provided for others. Manistee Conservation District, 8840 Chippewa Hwy (US-31). Register: Chelsea.cooper@macd.org or 231.889.9666

National Archery Day at the State Park, Ludington

10am-3pm, Free. No regis. required. Ages 8-100. Under 18 requires parent/guardian. History of archery, differences between bows & arrows, safety procedures & correct ways to shoot. Shoot at targets. All equip. provided. 8800 W. M-116. Meet behind the Amphitheater.

Barter Fair, Frankfort

12-5pm. Bring something(s) to trade: tools, clothes, crafted goods, plants, jam, kitchen utensils, etc... Two rules: nothing illegal & no money will be exchanged. Grow Benzie, 5885 Frankfort Hwy.

Bear Claw Epic Mountain Bike Race, Cadillac

West side of Cadillac Pathway. Info/registration: bearclawepic.net

Live Music, Bill Fray, Beulah

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

Live Music: April Wine & the Legendary Lita Ford, Manistee

8-10:30pm, \$40-50. Little River Casino Resort, 2700 Orchard Hwy.

May 14

Birdwatching Tour, Thompsonville

10am. Meet at Michigan Legacy Art Park Trailhead, 1/4 mile from parking area, rain or shine. Led by birding guide Angie Quinn. Bring binoculars if you can. Check Facebook 1 hour prior for severe weather cancellation. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr.

Live Music, Robert Feddersen, Beulah

2-5pm, Free. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S. Pioneer Rd.

May 17

GTRLC Mid-spring Wildflower Hike at Pete's Woods, Arcadia Dunes

10am-12pm, Free. Join Paula Dreeszen on a 1.5-mile hike on the loop trail to see an unparalleled display of spring wildflowers. Wear hiking shoes, bring water & a snack. Sunscreen, bug spray & a camera/binocs are suggested. Info/regis: gtrlc.org

May 18

Near & Farr Friends featuring speaker Joe Suchoski, Onekama

2:30pm, Free. Onekama Collaborative Recovery will be the topic. Onekama Township Hall, 5435 Main St.

Live Music: Scottville Clown Band, Baldwin

7pm, Free. American Veterans Post #1988, 1959 24th St.

May 19

Live Music, Kettle Belles, Beulah

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

May 19,20

Tight Lines for Troops, Manistee

Free charity fishing tournament for Michigan's disabled veterans. Info: tightlinesfortroops.com

May 19-21

51st Annual Blessing of the Bikes, Baldwin

Free. Join 1000s of motorcyclists for this event. Baldwin Municipal Airport, M-37, south of town, in Baldwin at the Downtown Market Place and the AMVETS Riders Post #1988, 1959 24th St.

May 20

Harbor Run 5k/10k Run, Ludington

9am-12pm, \$30. Waterfront Park, 391 William St. Registration: webscorer.com

Village of Elberta Spring Clean-up

9am-2pm, \$50/load (pick-up bed/comparable trailer - smaller loads priced accordingly). Must have proof of residency. Materials accepted: Trash, furniture, metal, junk, appliances, batteries. Not accepted: Oil, paints & solvents, yard waste, insecticides, fertilizers, multi-loads of construction waste, tires, chemicals. Village Garage, 151 Pearson St. Info/schedule a pick-up: Ken at 231.651.9626

Metropolitan Opera Live/Encore in HD presents Don Giovanni (Mozart), Manistee

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

Live Music, Barefoot, Beulah

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

May 21

Spring Wildflower Walk, Thompsonville

2pm. Entry \$10/\$5 child. Join Caitlin Chism on an educational tour of the park, identifying wildflowers and their place in its ecology. Meet at Michigan Legacy Art Park Trailhead, 1/4 mile from parking area, rain or shine. Check Facebook 1 hour prior for severe weather cancellation. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr.

May 22

Documentary film screening: "The Erie Situation", Frankfort

7pm, \$10. Exploring the confluence of science, politics, public sentiment, and the powerful farming lobby as Ohio wrestles with how to deal with toxic algae. Garden Theater, 301 Main St.

May 23

Spring Walking Tour at Cartier Park, Ludington

6-7:30pm, Free. Join botanist and bird expert Dave Dister for a tour of the park, featuring native plants and the work AFFEW has done to remove invasive species. Meet near the dog park at the end of Rath Ave. Cartier Park, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr.

May 24

Petunia Planting, Onekama

8am-12pm. Volunteer to help plant petunias along Main St.

May 26

Fun with Fungi, Scottville

8:45am-12pm, Free. Nature walk led by Josh Shields of Manistee & Mason-Lake Conservation Districts and Linda Scribner, a naturalist with Wild Mushroom Certification from MDARD. Fin and Feather Club of Mason County, 3276 N. Darr Rd. (Park near the main building.) Space is limited. Register by May 19: Joshua_shields@macd.org or 231.889.9666

Treat Farm's forest wildflowers

By P.G. MISTY SHEEHAN

My favorite place to walk in spring is at the Treat Farm, part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The farm is located south of the village of Empire on West Norconk Road, west of M-22. Park your car at the bend in the road and hike gradually uphill on a former road, now a gravel path, through the woods.



Bloodroot. Photo: Lynn McAndrews



Iris. Photo: Lynn McAndrews



Large flowered bellwort. Photo: Lynn McAndrews



Columbine. Photo: Mark Videan

Here, the roots of spring flowers have been gathering energy and nutrients during winter under bands of snow. Wildflowers are among the first harbingers of spring, letting us know that the beech-maple forest is about to bloom again. This first flowering period is a transitory event taking place between the rains of April and the full forest cover of June.

You'll find lots to observe along your hike. The best time to visit is usually in

May, when you might see yellow trout lily, hepatica, Solomon's seal, spring flowered buttercup, trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, columbine and wild iris.

Past the woods, when you reach the top of the gentle hill, you can explore the large farmhouse, barns, garage, root cellar and old sheds of the former Treat Farm. The 220 acres Charles and Martha Treat purchased were originally part of the Tweddle Farm, where John Tweddle built

a log cabin in 1840.

The Treats grew crops to feed themselves, including beans, potatoes, rutabagas and asparagus — an Empire area crop growing wild in ditches and the inspiration for Empire's annual asparagus festival. They also ate fruit from their apple and plum trees. Corn and hay crops were fed to their cows and horses.

If it isn't too hot and you've rested at the farm, you can walk a half mile up Old

Baldy, a giant sand dune, to the cliff above Lake Michigan. When visiting later in the season, watch out for poison ivy on the overlook. (Voice of experience.)

P.G. Misty Sheehan is a retired professor of humanities and the former executive director of the Benzie Area Historical Museum.

Arcadia Dunes

continued from Page 2

Reaching the goal

In the end 5,000 donors, volunteers and advocates pulled off the Miracle of Ridiculousness. More than \$5 million was raised by the Labor Day deadline.

The fundraising was not finished, however. More than \$15 million needed to be raised over two years to complete the Coastal Campaign, which included two other coastal properties and funds for long-term stewardship of the land. GTRLC reached this goal with the help of thousands of additional smaller donations and funding from The Dow Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, The J.A. Woollam Foundation and the Walmart Foundation.

When these goals were reached, all the other funding pieces fell into place. Papers were signed. Announcements were made. Sustainability plans were created with input from farmers, conservationists, hiking trail experts and more. Best of all, the land officially known as Arcadia Dunes: The



Baldy dune, August 2006. Photo: Paula Dreeszen.

C.S. Mott Nature Preserve is now protected forever.

Reflecting on how emotionally gratifying that goal-reaching moment was, Shumaker

said: "People who look back on it say it was one of the best things they did in their entire lives." Then she added, almost with a wink in her voice, "It always helps if you

work hard to have a little bit of luck here and there."

So, this summer stop by one of those Arcadia Dunes' trailhead signs on M-22 north of the village of Arcadia. Hike the trail to the shoreline. Go for a stroll along its magnificent coast. Gaze up at the beauty of Old Baldy. Fall in love with the land that so many fell in love with before you. Be filled with everything they achieved. It is now their timeless gift to you.

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy reports the organization has protected 46,875 acres of land and more than 150 miles of shoreline along rivers, lakes and streams. To donate in support of ongoing preservation efforts in Manistee, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Antrim counties, go to: <https://www.gtrlc.org>.

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

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