

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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Many hands make light straw-clay work

Story and photos by STEWART A. MCFERRAN

What if you could find materials on your own property that you needed to build your home? Vonnie Sage found a seam of clay on her 39-acre farm in northern Manistee County. She is using it to build a house overlooking her fine field. She is approaching the project as an artist would, with an aesthetic eye, and as a person who cares deeply about living in a structure that is eco-friendly.

Water and loose straw will be added to the clay harvested on her acreage. This mixture will form and insulate the walls of her round house. At a recent work bee, Vonnie had help turning that clay and straw (wood, too) into the beginnings of a home that is unique, especially in these parts. As I watched, many helping hands stuffed the mixture between branches with diameters the size of arms. The branches were gathered on her property, cut to size, and fastened diagonally to the wooden frame.

Thomas Hersh, of Bungalow Builders in Benzonia, calls it leichtlembau (pronounced ly'-shlem-bow, from the German), or light straw-clay. He explained that it is an age-old technique. Information found on Natural-Building-Alliance.org states that the method evolved from the ancient wattle-and-daub technique used in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the American Southwest. Wattle-and-daub construction was heavier, denser, and included woven sticks or twigs and straw mixed with mud or clay. Following the second World War, a lighter mixture was developed due to "energy concerns." In the U.S., Robert LaPorte began to use the lighter weight, better insulating light straw-clay method in 1990 in his timber-frame



Top: Vonnie Sage is building a light straw-clay house on her Manistee County property. The clay behind her was excavated on site. Above: Vonnie's house takes shape.

homes. He is said to have been the first person to adopt the method in this country.

Lydia Dolman, author of "Light Straw Clay Construction" (New Society Publishers, 2017), explained that straw is made of cellulose and, due to its chemical composition, is "45 percent carbon." The light straw-clay building method, therefore, has "the capacity to sequester carbon." This ability to keep carbon from being released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide can, in the words of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Climate Portal, "help fight climate change."

A flyer printed by Bungalow Builders describes the practical advantages of using the light straw-clay technique. Clay protects the straw from fire, vermin and mildew while providing thermal mass qualities that

allow the wall to regulate temperature and humidity within the building.

"We will build 12-inch walls to provide protection from the elements, summer and winter," Vonnie said. "Straw provides thermal resistance (R value) and binds with the clay. The vapor-permeable wall system acts as a heat exchanging/air filtering medium."

Addressing her other concern, she said, "Extraction and transportation aside, there is no petroleum used to manufacture these basic building materials."

I encountered Todd Gerardot, of Bear Lake, standing ankle deep in mud in a large steel tank. He was breaking up chunks of clay and using 5-gallon pails to scoop it. That soupy mix was passed along to others

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Casino entrance today. Photo courtesy of Little River Casino and Resort.

Casino resort marks 25 years

By VALERIE CHANDLER

MANISTEE – The Little River Casino Resort (LRCR) is planning a three-day, 25th anniversary celebration, July 19-21, that is open to the public. In the parking lot — you won't miss the signs and tents — there will be live music with multiple bands and vendors, and lots of giveaways.

As a tribal employee, part of my job is to issue temporary tribal business tax licenses to anyone selling merchandise on tribal properties. Lately I have issued and signed a great number of tax licenses for a variety of vendors whose goods will be on display during the celebration. I am excited to peruse the booths for unique finds, deals and, of course, a delicious meal or snack from a food vendor or two, especially since I already know a Native American food truck will be on site.

Then and now

Five days a week I pass by the flashing marquee that advertises the performers coming to LRCR. I know I will have paperwork come across my desk from those performers who sell concert t-shirts and memorabilia.

Often, I reminisce about the progress the tribe has made during the last 30 years since achieving federal reaffirmation in 1994. My grandma, Margaret Chandler, was a vital leader for our Anishinaabek people decades before I was born and until she passed in 1997. (Read "The Enduring Legacy of Margaret Chandler", Freshwater Reporter, March 3, 2021.) I started working for my tribe in 1996, and I am confident that my grandma is proud of me for carrying on her legacy. I was present 25 years ago when the casino resort held its grand opening on July 23, 1999. It's amazing to think back to when the land at the corner of U.S. Highway 31 and M-22 was an old apple orchard and veterinary office, and to watch its transformation into a resort destination for visitors to Manistee County.

In 2002, construction began for an upscale hotel and larger gaming floor. During the next 15 years, expansion continued in multiple phases. The resort now encompasses more than 350,000 square feet, offering over 1,100 slot and video poker machines as well as dozens of table games. Our lodge-themed resort includes a total of 292 luxurious rooms and a 1,600-seat event center, with nationally headlining acts performing there throughout the year. The resort

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Highway 31 Cabins: a shady haven

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL



Top: One of seven guest cabins the Shobes rent. Above: Andra Shobe is waiting to assist travelers in the office.

Charlie and Andra Shobe weren't particularly looking for a business to buy.

Driving north toward Manistee, where their daughter Sophia attends school, they spotted a group of rustic cabins along U.S. Highway 31.

So many small mom-and-pop roadside traveler cabins are gone now, but a few miles south of Manistee in Mason County, Highway 31 Cabins is still alive and thriving. For the past seven years the cabins have been owned and operated by the Shobes. Before they relocated to Michigan, Charlie was working as a carpenter and Andra as a schoolteacher.

"My husband and I moved up here in 2015 from Ohio," Andra recalled. "We kind of took a chance and both quit our jobs and bought a place on the Big Sauble River to pre-retire."

Their ties to Michigan helped make the move easier. Andra, a native from the thumb area north of Detroit, said her parents had moved to Traverse City in 1988, and Charlie's parents had a vacation cottage near Irons.

Cabin history

Some of the cabins were built in the '40s, Andra figures, and have gone through several owners. "I know they were built between 1940 and 1960," she began. "Someone told me that the newer ones from the 1960s were kit cabins. I did try researching those at one time and found some photos that look similar to cabins number 2 and 7."

Andra said she thinks there might have been a restaurant on the property at one time as well.

Originally named Plantation Lodge Cabins from the '40s through

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Casino

continued from Page 1

offers multiple indoor amenities, such as a relaxing spa and salon, buffet and deli restaurants, a sports bar, a gift shop, (12) 24-hour sportsbook kiosks plus pools and gardens. Outdoors are more gardens, including a unique glass pyramid crowning a beautiful winter garden with water features, and a 95-space RV park with hookups and offering guest access to the resort's pools, sauna and fitness center.

Off site, the resort operates Wolf River Golf Park in Bear Lake, an 18-hole golf course serving all levels of players. New this year at the golf park is a 1.5-acre putting course with changing weekly challenges. A nature path that will loop around the property for walkers and runners is coming soon, too.

Additionally, the tribe offers an online gaming experience through BetRivers.com which features a variety of slots and table games with live dealer options, and includes blackjack, roulette, baccarat and millions of sports-betting possibilities.



Tents are welcome at the RV resort located across US-31 from the casino. Photo: M. Videan.

Tribal community investments

Gaming revenue has allowed the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to invest in infrastructure projects, including a wastewater treatment plant that supports many nearby community facilities. The tribe also built a Justice Center, providing judicial and public safety services, including our K-9 unit. Our Natural Resources Department is integral in supporting a sturgeon program, reintroducing the historic species to the Manistee River. Access to healthcare has improved, thanks to the construction of a pharmacy that is open to the public and a physician-staffed clinic for the tribal community. The tribe has also invested in education by offering scholarships, vocational education assistance and free tutoring. Housing opportunities have helped tribal members move back to the reservation area and have provided affordable housing to our elders, including an apartment complex.

Providing for others

The Ottawa tradition has always included the sharing of resources and taking care of others. We are proud of the growing success



Ribbon cutting at the official grand opening of the Little River Casino on July 23, 1999. Middle left is then-Tribal Ogema (executive leader) Robert Guenthardt. Wearing a teal blazer, middle right, is Joan Spaulding, tribal council speaker. Photo courtesy of Melissa Zelenak.

of the Little River Casino Resort because it helps the Manistee community. The tribe is the largest employer in in Manistee, Benzie and Wexford counties, with more than 800 tribal and non-tribal employees. It also provides many jobs indirectly by contracting goods and services from hundreds of vendors statewide.

Through a compact with the State, LRCR distributes 2% of the casino's electronic gaming profits as grants to support public safety organizations and other local beneficiaries such as the public schools, West Shore Community College, Dial-A-Ride, Manistee County Conservation District, Manistee County District Library, 911, Manistee Medical Care and the Council on Aging as well as Manistee Township, to name a few. Since 1999, the Little River Casino Resort has provided more than \$45.7 million in distributions.

Each year, the resort sponsors Tight Lines for Troops, a charity fishing tournament for Michigan veterans and Thunder at the River, a memorial motorcycle-riding event honoring veterans. The Little River Casino Resort is a main sponsor of the annual Manistee National Forest Festival, and the LRCR annual charity golf tournament benefits various local charities. LRCR's staff sponsor community drives for food, coats, school supplies and other items to help



Casino floor the day of the Grand Opening on July 23, 1999. Photo courtesy of Melissa Zelenak.

KALEVA NEWS



Grossnickle Farms' strawberries.

Farm girl

Story and photo by **CYNTHIA ASIALA**

I grew up on a farm in Marilla, a real farm with horses, cows, pigs and chickens. I experienced all that happens when farm animals are born, nurtured, butchered or sold.

When I was 13, I got a job at Roy Howes Farm in Marilla. I picked strawberries for about 10 cents a quart and got so sunburned my grandma put mayonnaise on my legs. I graduated to the next level quickly, which meant that I hoed strawberries, picked blossoms off new plants and trimmed evergreen trees for eight hours a day, five-and-a-half days a week. These jobs were easier on the back but still required a great deal of stamina. No one knows how hot the sand gets under the summer sun, and we often went barefoot. The best part of the job was that I worked with other girls during the four summers of my high school years. I also earned money to buy clothes, even a horse! Maybe a little for college.

Today, I work on a farm north of Kaleva, Grossnickle Farms. My brother Allen and his wife Candy own the farm along with my nephew Nathan Grossnickle. They grow strawberries, asparagus, garden vegetables, cucumbers, sweet corn, squash and pumpkins. I don't have to work in the fields, but I sure appreciate the migrant farmworkers that do such a great job on the farm. I work in the market, selling produce to the public. I really enjoy the work because it's only part time and I can work when I want. I also enjoy selling the beautiful produce they grow. It's fun meeting people and hearing comments like, "We always come here because you have the best ..." or "Look at those strawberries; they are like a picture!"

So, 60 years after I started as a farm girl ... I still am!

ARCADIA NEWS



Music featured at Arcadia museum

By **KRISTINA STIERHOLZ**

The Arcadia Area Historical Museum is a long-standing feature of Lake Street in Arcadia. Housed in a three-story building moved to the site in 1999, the museum offers vignettes of the work, family and recreational lives of the town. Each year, the museum's featured exhibit focuses on a different aspect of life in Arcadia. This year's exhibit showcases the musical artists and instruments that brought enjoyment to a hard-working community.

Together, the exhibits weave a story of the people that have inhabited Arcadia from prehistory to the present, and how they survived and thrived here. If you want a view of how a small town has adapted to each era, the Arcadia Area Historical Museum is a great stop.

The economics of Arcadia are fascinating, as the town has hosted multiple factories, and each use built on the past. Lakes and rivers, resources now used primarily for recreation, made it possible to move massive logs from interior forests to sawmills and furniture manufacturers. Railroads moved logs to the furniture factory and the furniture back out to market, providing more jobs that supported Arcadians — and then the railways abandoned the tracks in just a few short decades. Tourism is the latest industry, taking advantage of those same natural and manmade features to offer excellent boating, fishing and hiking to visitors.

Open from 1-4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays in July and August, the museum offers free entry. You can also check out the website (www.arcadiami.com) for walking tours, articles, maps and more. Whether your interest is in the original Native American inhabitants or the industry, home life or education of the settlers who followed, you can spend an enjoyable afternoon learning about Arcadia's past. Then head to the beach for a swim!

BEAR LAKE NEWS



Fresh in Bear Lake

By **TERRY AND DIANA LONGTON**

Summer brings to mind fresh air and fresh experiences. In Bear Lake, we also think of fresh foods from local farmers and bakers. When you take a back road in our area, you'll find many opportunities to pick up delicious items cultivated by hardworking community members.

On Chief Road there is the wonderful **Z&N Farm** that provides a variety of naturally grown vegetables from early spring through fall and sometimes into winter. A little further south on Chief, you will run across the market at **Calvin Lutz Farms** offering seasonal fruits and veggies and the opportunity to cut your own Christmas tree.

Along Milarch Road, north of South Shore Drive, **Brown's Poplar Ridge Orchards** sells freshly picked vegetables and fruits and just-baked pies and cookies. There's even an opportunity to get a scoop of ice cream made by Cream Cup Dairy, which plans to move in next door. Travel a little further southwest on Milarch and you will discover all the apples, peaches and maple syrup your heart desires at **BrixStone Farms**.

When wandering down the famous M-22, west of Bear Lake, you can find fresh, seasonal produce at two more farm markets, both owned by the Millers, as well as smaller stands of select fruits and veggies.

In addition to the farm markets, those traveling around the Bear Lake area will be pleasantly surprised at all the small "pop-up" style stands on various side roads. Homemade sourdough breads, fresh eggs, baked goods, and even an opportunity to purchase baby bunnies, are just a few more of the amazing things you can discover.

Bear Lake village has an open-air market for all the entrepreneurs to come together, 3-7 p.m., Thursdays, at the corner of U.S. Highway 31 and Lynn Street. You'll find bread, baked goods, treats from the ice cream truck and even some fun tie-dyed fashions.

Welcome to Fresh in Bear Lake!

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This series is funded in part by grants from:
Lowell Arts Council, Michigan Arts and Culture Council,
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For more information call:
Lake County Historical Museum
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Farewell and welcome

By **PAT STINSON**

Contributing writer Jennifer Devine, our MI Backyard columnist, is moving on and has already moved out ... out West, that is! On June 10, she sent us this email:

Hey Pat (and team),

I just wanted to let you know how much it has meant to me to be a part of this paper for the last four years. I've learned much about Michigan and myself in the process. In a couple of weeks, maybe less, we are moving to Montana for a new opportunity which will also entail writing about the area. Fun!

Thank you for everything,
Jen

We received many positive comments through the years about her columns. Some of her most popular stories were about bears ("Understanding Michigan's black bears", March 9, 2022), milkweed ("Got Milkweed? Yes, in Michigan", Nov. 3,

2021), and stinging nettle ("Stinging nettle: friend, not foe", April 6, 2022). Other stories, such as the one about snow fleas ("Look to springtails, not groundhogs", Feb. 15, 2023), received a cascade of comments and numerous shares on social media. The story was something of a trendsetter, too, as a slew of other stories about snow fleas sprang up after hers was published.

We wish her and her family all the best in Montana, where there's plenty of writing inspiration and many wonderful places to play outdoors.

We're excited to announce that contributing writer Emily Cook has agreed to write the MI Backyard column for us in the future. Emily has penned several outdoors-related stories for us. Her education and background in conservation, and her ability to look at nature with an artist's eye, will give the column a fresh approach we think you'll enjoy. Our MI Backyard column will resume with the Aug. 14 issue.

How they roll

By **PAT STINSON**, Co-editor

LUDINGTON – Outside Hamlin Grocery, at the corner of Dewey and Jebavy roads, Thane Whitscell, 64, and Sue Riedlinger, 51, were taking a much-needed beverage break during their bicycling trip. The pair had begun their journey on June 21 in Alpena, where Sue is a high school counselor and Thane works in the school's media department. A friend drove them to Muskegon to catch the Lake Express ferry to Milwaukee. From there they pedaled to visit family in Chicago, stopping at mom-and-pop motels along the way. They returned following almost the same route from Chicago, according to Sue. She said she is a believer in using printed maps and considers the production of print maps "a dying art." Onokama was the next stop on

their route, and Thane's online map had indicated it was 60 miles away, a day's average cycling distance for them, while Sue's showed the mileage closer to 70.

Thane is a long-time cyclist. Before he met Sue, he toured across the U.S. on the TransAmerica (Bike) Trail. "The one with the '76 signs on 'em," Sue interjected. He had put his bicycle away before he met Sue, who convinced him to get back on it. Cycling together since 2015 or 2016, the pair escape for two weeks every summer to a different destination. Sue listens to audio books, comedy or music while traveling. "It clears your head," she said of the cycling experience. "It's your only job." Thane said he prefers to "hear the birds." They like to host cyclists at their home as part of Warm Showers, a program that invites touring cyclists to spend the night at the homes of other cyclists. They have hosted people from Germany, Poland,

Scotland and across the U.S. "They notify us on apps that they're coming," Sue said.

Both were still reeling somewhat from their experience the night before in Whitehall and Montague, where 146,000 residents were without power, according to Thane. They were traveling behind the big June storm. In Whitehall, they had to lift their bikes over tree limbs and said the only place with power was a fitness center. This wasn't their first trip through a storm. They mentioned taking shelter once in portable outhouses in the U.P. and dodging fireballs in a café caused by lightning. "Crazy stuff," Thane said. "For those of us who enjoy this, it's part of the draw," he added. They agreed that the wind, particularly a north wind, was the most challenging. "Cyclists and fishermen are the only ones who pay attention to the wind," Sue said. "And newspaper delivery folk," I added, smiling.

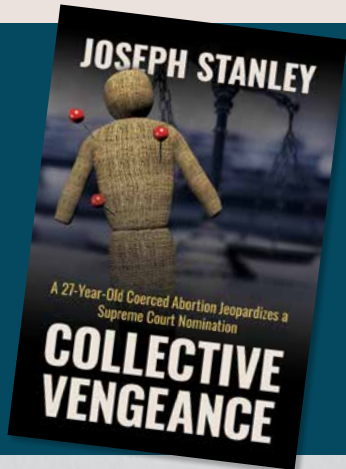


Sue Riedlinger and Thane Whitscell at Hamlin Grocery. Photo: P. Stinson.

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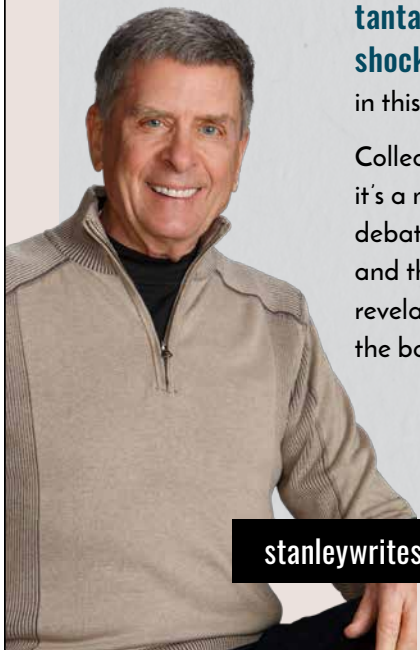


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Release

By Louisa Loveridge Gallas
Freshwater Reporter Poet in Residence

Unlike the tears that come in a strong wind as we stroll along the beach, or as we peel onions for our morning omelet, our tears of emotion have their own special chemistry. Like bright streams released from a mountain's heart, the bitter salt sea, fresh water lakes, rivers of our unrelenting sorrows and luminous ecstasies.

If we hold back these natural flows, our rivers lose their current oceans' tides lose rhythm, stagnant lakes build a film on their dark surface; streams reverse their flow to overburden the mountain's heart.

O, let tears surrender to our body's wet, timely wisdoms the way Summer arrives to refresh our spirits with her downpour of release,

her tender rain.

Hot Enough for Ya?

Story and photos by JOSHUA ELIE

Contrary to popular belief (of folks living in the south), it gets really hot in northern Michigan too. They often ask, "How do you stay warm in winter?" That's easy; dress warmly. February is not a fashion show. The real problem is when it gets into the 90s and even 100s — with heat indexes of "who knows what" — there is only so much you can take off.

Exploring past the Mason/Dixon line, I noticed that the farther south I went, the more people seemed to slow down. On Beale Street in Memphis, you could buy beer on the street, but good luck trying to find a public restroom without paying a cover charge. The Grateful Dead (minus Jerry) were playing at the theater, so the sidewalks were lined with kids just sort of sitting around. I asked, and they pointed me in the direction of a club that would let me in for free. I wasn't being cheap; I just didn't want to pay \$20 to "use the facilities" and leave. I walked into the bathroom and this older southern gentleman asked me where

I was from. I proudly stated northwest Michigan. "Ah hell," he said, "a Yankee. Well, there's two kinds of Yankees. The ones that come down here, have fun, then leave. Then there's the damn Yankees that come down here to stay." I think he meant that in a jovial way. Hmmm. It was difficult to tell because it seemed to take him five minutes to say those few words.

Down in the French Quarter of New Orleans, after my "wake up" beer and shot of bourbon in the Voodoo Lounge, I would make my way out to the sidewalk, sit on a bench and listen to a jazz ensemble. Then I would get up and saunter until I found another bench and ensemble to enjoy for a while. Maybe the next stop would be a cafe or the steps of the St. Louis Cathedral. The jazz is everywhere, but you don't walk, you saunter, unless you want to look like a tourist. (If this sounds familiar, it's because I wrote about my visit there in my



Steps of St Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square.

Freshwater Reporter story, "Some Like It Hot", April 23, 2023. See above photo.)

I've never been much of a bicyclist, but I have seen people ride around here, just pumping away like they have somewhere to be, like yesterday. My first time in the Florida Keys, I noticed this man on a bicycle with a little cart of fruit in tow, pedaling barely fast enough to keep from falling over.

I heard something last summer that I never thought I would hear from a doctor. She said I was drinking too "much" water, and it was flushing all the nutrients out of my system ... ?

Maybe this summer we can all try talking, walking and riding a little slower, and hydrating a little more on nutrient-rich gazpacho, a chilled soup.

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



Elie's Gazpacho

(No flame required!)

- (2) 28-oz cans diced tomatoes
- 1 cup V-8 juice
- 1 cup beef broth
- ½ cup cucumber, peeled and chopped
- ½ cup green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves

- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon Red Hot hot sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

Mix in a big bowl and let chill for at least two hours to overnight.

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ONEKAMA DAYS 2024

August 2nd - 5th

Friday, August 2nd

- 9am Yoga on the Beach @Langland Beach
- 10-1 Glen Park History & Adventure Walk
- 1:30-3pm Science Fun for Kids @Glen Park
- 4-7pm Onekama Lions Steak Dinner & Lions Raffle Drawing @Lions Den

Saturday, August 3rd

- 8:30am 1 Mile Fun Run @Village Park
- 9am 5K Run/Walk @Village Park
- After Race: Prince/Princess/Queen/King | After Race: 30 Day Challenge Finale
- 8-12 Onekama Lions Breakfast @Lions Den
- 9-2:30 Car Show @Village Park
- 9-3 Church of the Brethren Yard Sale & Onekama Dye & Design
- TBA Pies, Plant & More Sale @5th & Main
- 10-3 Arts & Crafts Fair @Main Street
- 10-5 Parks Scavenger Hunt @Village Park
- 10-5 Onekama History info @Village Park
- 11am Blessing of the Pets @St John by the Lake
- 11-2 1.Rocks Rock Painting @Park
- 2pm Cornhole Tournament @Lions Den
- 4-7pm Craft Beer Tasting @Village Park
- 5-7pm Pig Out for Onekama School Pig Roast @Village Park
- 5-6:30pm Music: Feral Cats @Village Park
- 6pm Bump N' Run & Demolition Derby @Fairgrounds
- 8pm Onekama Days Parade **NEW DATE & TIME**
- Dusk Fireworks over Portage Lake

Sunday, August 4th

- 8-12 Onekama Lions Breakfast @Lions Den
- 11-12:30 Butterfly Palooza @NorthPoint Park
- 2pm Book Talk w/ John Wemlinger "The Cut" @Congregational Church

Monday, August 5th

Monday Concert in the Park @Village Park

- 5:30pm Michael Trixx, Magician
- 7pm Elvis Tribute Artist Jake Slater

Stay posted for up dates!

Onekama.info or Facebook: 1, Onekama, MI & Onekama Community Connection

ONEKAMA DAYS IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Portage Lake Association, Onekama Lions Club, Onekama Athletic Boosters, Manistee County Fair Board & Onekama Township Parks & Recreation

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“Let us tenderly
and kindly cherish
therefore, the means
of knowledge. Let us
dare to read, think,
speak, and write.”
– John Adams

Many hands

continued from Page 1

and then added to a drum mixer, along with straw.

“I’m part of the mud-mixing crew,” he explained. “It’s a fun day. It’s a cool place to meet like-minded people.”

Vonnie said the crew shovels clay into the barrels, adds water, then uses “massive” mixers until the right consistency is reached.

“I’m excited ... everything I am using here is going to be natural,” she said, adding, “This is a piece of art!”

After the leichtlembau tumbles out of the mixer, it has a reddish hue. A team of “wheelbarrowers” are waiting to catch the



Todd Gerardot is part of the mud-mixing team.



The drum mixes clay and straw.

mix and trundle off to the walls that are ready for stuffing. Once the walls are filled, a lime plaster mix will be applied to them.

Vonnie described the home’s foundation to me. “(It) is “Aero Aggregates” which is recycled glass and it’s very light and very insulative. There’s no vapor barrier; it doesn’t need it.”

She said her house will have an earthen floor. The roof will be covered with a product called Enviro Shake that looks like a wooden shake but is made entirely of recycled materials. The shakes come with a 50-year warranty. The conical roof will have a ring at the center with a “Vella Tube” to provide day lighting for the house. South-facing windows will take advantage of the sun and provide passive solar heat. Additionally, the 754-square-foot home will be heated with wood.

“I designed the house,” she said. “It takes time to get the engineers involved, making sure we are doing everything we need to do.” She added that it also took time to get the building permits and land permits. (State and local building codes vary.) Building a cob-type home fulfills her

desire to live in harmony with nature.

“I want to live in a natural environment. The walls: They are not airy, but they will breathe. It’s all natural ingredients inside, out, upside, down.”


Vonnie attended the recent Natural Building Summit in Traverse City.

“It was fantastic!” she said. “There is so much crossover between the arts community, the agricultural community, the building community even. There is a lot that can happen in terms of collaboration.”

Back in her field of dreams, Vonnie and her friends from LEAP (Leadership in Education and Action Partners) are working hard to finish her eco-friendly home. As author Doleman observed, “What better way for a building to fit into its environment than being built from materials found on the site?”

Stewart A. McFerran illuminates current environmental issues in a historic context. Listen to him discussing our stories on WNMC 90.7 FM with Station Manager Eric Hines, usually the morning after an issue is published.

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Roaming with Ramona

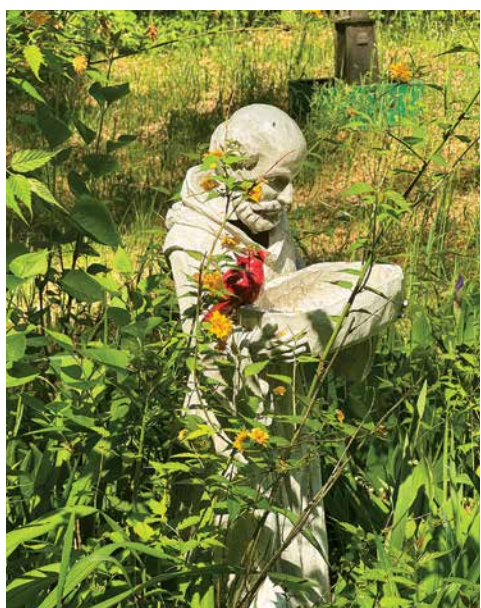
Get rolling with Meals on Wheels

Story and photos by **RAMONA DEGEORGIO-VENEGAS**.

I deliver meals three days a week for Meals on Wheels (MOW). Most MOW volunteers deliver meals and friendly greetings to homebound seniors on a pre-determined route. It's rewarding work that is sorely needed in our county and beyond.

MealsOnWheelsAmerica.org describes MOW as "a nationwide network of community-based, nonprofit programs" which helps enable seniors 60 and older to remain living in their own homes, "where

I "heart" garden statuary.



they want to be." This support is offered to those with mobility or socialization issues or to seniors who are unable to shop and/or cook. A MOW visit is a combination of a "typically" nutritious meal, "a friendly visit and a quick safety check."

According to the Manistee County Coalition on Aging (manisteecountycoa.com), each prepared meal includes a protein-rich entrée, two servings of vegetables, one serving of fruit, one side of bread, a roll or biscuit and a half pint of skim, 2% or chocolate milk.

The following statistics and statement from the MOW website may surprise you.

"Nine million seniors in the United States struggle with hunger, 15 million live in isolation and 18 million live in or near poverty. This problem will only become more serious as our senior population increases. Families disperse and their elders may be left behind, often struggling to remain self-sufficient."

Volunteer duties

Typically, in Manistee County, volunteering for MOW involves picking up meals at Manistee High School and delivering them directly to the homes of seniors on your list. My route has 17-26 clients. Some are couples, so figure 15-20 stops. Certain clients are only seen once a week and receive seven frozen meals. Most receive a



Winter driving is challenging and beautiful.

hot meal and three frozen meals to carry them through the weekend. Once the meals and smiles are delivered, you return the delivery containers to the school and end your route.

MOW volunteers and staff may only deliver meals for one or two days. Challenges might include heavy container maneuvering, driving on icy roads and rousing a client to come to the door. Benefits include a feeling of purpose and connection, and there's the rural scenery to enjoy. I have seen bear, fox, turkey, hawks and eagles and more of the "usual" critters.

My "out county" route is 75-100 miles long, depending on the location of my MOW clients. I start in Stronach and East Lake and drive to Dublin, Wellston and Brethren before heading back to U.S. Highway 31 and Manistee. It takes me 3-4 hours. You learn where the bathrooms are and where the best coffee is along your route.

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Hansen will sign his new children's story, **Meg and the Manistee Christmas** and his children's books, **Meg and the Konkreet Krockadile** and **"There's a booger in my book!"**



continued on Page 12

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FREE ESTIMATES

Cabins

continued from Page 1

the '60s, the condition of the cabins suffered over time. "They went dark and overgrown throughout the 1970s," she said.

The next owners, Cathy and Vern Beeman, took over in the 1980s and renamed the place Lazy B. Sometime later, the cabins again changed hands and were used as more of a family retreat before the Shobes came along. "The cabins had been redone but just needed some TLC," Andra said.



Sophie Shobe, 15, keeps the cabins sparkling.

Cozy and convenient

Since 2017, the Shobes have been designated Airbnb Superhosts. Their care is evident in the seven cabins they rent.

Tucked beneath pines and hardwoods, the log cabins are arranged in a half-loop around a large lawn and central fire pit. This semi-circle grouping of cabins is typical of motor courts that sprang up in the 1930s and were popular through WWII, before roadside motels offering more modern amenities became the rage, according to VintageRoadside.com. Still, many motor courts continued operating well into the 1960s, when some of my generation stayed there as children while vacationing with their parents. So, the idea of staying in vintage roadside cabins holds some nostalgia for those my age, while Millennials might consider them "retro cool." (Check out some of the 600 reviews they've received from people of all ages.)

Six of the Highway 31 Cabins can accommodate one to four people. The seventh cabin is suitable for up to six people. They may look rustic on the outside, but inside are modern amenities such as satellite



Cozy cabins have modern amenities.

TVs, microwaves, small refrigerators and coffeemakers. All are cleaned by daughter Sophia, are fully furnished and may include twin, double and queen beds or a combination, depending on the cabin. The cabin I toured was sparkling clean, and the wood walls and vaulted ceiling gave it that true cabin feel.

The business is open year-round. In the office, you'll find an assortment of cross-country skis to rent in winter and a cornhole game for fairer weather.

Most of the cabins are pet friendly, an amenity that draws some interesting critters sometimes. "We accept pets in four of the cabins, dogs, and we have had cats occasionally," Andra told me. "People have asked about birds, but (we say) no to that." Well, except for the time they allowed a duck to stay with them. It had ridden from Wisconsin on the S.S. Badger car ferry with its person. (Think about that for a minute: taking a duck for a ride across the lake.)

Of course, it's the north woods and an occasional bear has stopped by the grounds to rattle the trash cans or briefly hang out in the yard.

This is not a resort with hiking trails, playground equipment or swimming pools. It's a place with a mellow atmosphere and a convenient location, a comfortable spot to land after a day of driving or seeing the local sights.

"Our main clients are people passing through on the highway," Andra said. "People go out during the day and just come back for the night and sit out by the fire in the evening."

Things to do

In any direction, within a few miles, visitors can check out the area's attractions: Nordhouse Dunes and the Lake Michigan

Recreation area to the west, farm-fresh produce at Orchard Market to the south, Manistee's historic downtown and beaches to the north, and a cold beverage and burger at the Hof Bar and Grill to the east.

On the fourth weekend in August, the nearby Forest Trail Music Festival, located on Forest Trail Road west of U.S. Highway 31, will kick off its 5th annual three-day event. Plenty of musical talent will be performing on the outdoor stage.

In October, around the Halloween season, you can have your wits scared out of you at the Cages of Carnage haunted house at Camp Sauble, a former work camp-turned-incarceration facility east of Free Soil. Highway 31 Cabins is a sponsor of this yearly event that supports the local volunteer fire department.

No higher praise for the place could be given than this, by a Yelp reviewer who wrote, "If I were an out-of-stater I would have received the full-blown charm of Michigan. My cup was full. You could tell a lot of work was put into the project, with generous care and loving detail. I would be



Guests may meet around a group campfire ring.

blessed to return again some day."

Highway 31 Cabins is located at 10400 N. U.S. Highway 31, Free Soil. For more information, visit: www.highway31cabins.com. Call them at 231-464-5351 or email them at highway31cabins@gmail.com. Follow their Facebook and Instagram pages. Learn more about the music festival at www.foresttrailmusic.com and about Free Soil's haunted house at: www.campsaublecagesofcarnage.com

Kevin Howell writes from Mason County. He loves the Michigan woods, lakes, people and, especially, Michigan craft beers - not necessarily in that order!

SUMMER SOUNDS

July 19, 7pm - Shouting Bones-unique indie rock
 July 26, 7pm - Trillium Groove-eclectic, female forward trio

Outdoor Amphitheater, located at 7300 Mountainside Road, Thompsonville, MI. Advance tickets are \$15 for adults.
<https://michlegacyartpark.org/events/summer-sounds> Tickets at the Door are \$20 for adults.

Michigan Legacy Art Park

Area Events Calendar

DAILY EVENTS continued

August 3

Sounds from the Forest Concert Series: Dawn Campbell and the Bohemians, Baldwin
7-9:15pm. Free/donations. Wenger Pavilion, 876 Michigan Ave. (behind Jones' Ice Cream). Rain or shine. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

STIX Summer Concert Series: That Arena Rock Show, Ludington
7:30pm show, 5:30pm doors. STIX Ludington, 1963 N. Lakeshore Dr. Tickets: stixludington.com

Blue Oyster Cult in concert, Manistee
8-10:30pm. \$65-80. 18+ only. Little River Casino Resort, 2700 Orchard Hwy. Tickets: lrcr.com

The Venue Summer Concerts: Keith Anderson, Cadillac
8pm. \$30.75. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

August 4

1st Annual Golf Tournament 4 Person Scramble, Baldwin
8-9am registration, 9am shot gun start. \$80 includes 18 holes, cart, lunch, dinner. Rain or shine. BYOB: no alcohol served on the course. Prizes, raffles. Lake County Sportsman's Club & VFW Post 5315 host at Marquette Trails Country Club, 6409 W. 76th (Star Lake Rd.) Dinner & raffles at VFW Post after golf.

August 5

Concerts in the Park: Michael Trixx, Magician, Onekama
5:30pm. Free. Onekama Village Park. Rain site: Onekama Consolidated Schools, 5016 Main St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Jammin' Mondays on Betsie Bay: Joseph & the Velozians, Elberta
7-9:15pm. Free. Waterfront Amphitheater, Elberta Waterfront Park, 1120 Furnace St. Rain site: Waterfront Park Picnic Pavilion. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Concerts in the Park: Jake Slater - Elvis Tribute Artist, Onekama
7pm. Free. Onekama Village Park. Rain site: Onekama Consolidated Schools, 5016 Main St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

The...Clam Lake...Silver Cornet Band, Cadillac
7pm. Free. Volunteer concert band. Rotary Pavilion, 100 S. Lake St.

Howard Hornung/Tom Thomas Memorial Band Concert, Ludington
7-9pm. Free. Waterfront Park, 300 S. William St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

August 5-10

Western Michigan Fair, Ludington
Fun for the whole family. Mason County Fairgrounds, 5302 W. US-10. Event schedule: masoncountyfairgrounds.com/fair-events

August 6

Talks, Tunes & Tours, Manistee
10am. Free. "Climate Change and What You Can Do About It" by Gary Madden. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

Chamber Concert, Frankfort
3pm. Donations. Members of the Benzie Area Symphony Orchestra & special guests. St. Ann of Frankfort Catholic Church, 508 Crystal Ave.

August 6

Manistee Shoreline Showcase: Joseph & The Velozians, Manistee
7-9:15pm. Free. Rotary Gazebo, Douglas Park, First Street Beach. Bring lawn chair/blanket

Programs in the State Park: Live Birds of Prey, Ludington
7pm. Free/donations. Park Amphitheater, 8800 West M-116. Rain site: Lake Michigan beach house. Bring lawn chair/blanket/bug spray. MI Recreation Passport required for vehicle entry.

August 7

Classics on the Coast: Manistee Community Band & Chamber Choir, Manistee
7pm. Free/donations. 1st Street Beach Lions Pavilion. Rain site: Manistee United Methodist Church, 387 1st Street.

LACA Concert Series: Joseph and the Velozians, Ludington
7-9pm. Free. Waterfront Park, 300 S William St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Echo Through the Timber Concert Series: The OI Microtones, Baldwin
7-9:15pm. Free/donations. Wenger Pavilion, 876 Michigan Ave. (behind Jones' Ice Cream). Rain or shine. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

STIX Summer Concert Series: Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute, Ludington
7pm show, 5pm doors. STIX Ludington, 1963 N. Lakeshore Dr. Tickets: stixludington.com

August 8

First Person Stories & Songs, Manistee
10am. Free. "A Conversation with Louisa May Alcott" by Tina Vivian, artist and Alma College costume designer, retired. Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St.

Live in the Alley: Harv & Sons, Ludington
6-8pm. Free. East end of the alley behind Timbers/Mitten Bar-100 block of S James St. between Rath Ave. & James St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Music in the Street: Dig a Pony, Beulah
7pm. Free. Downtown. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Roots on the River: Ben Traverse Band, Manistee
7-9pm. Free. Jaycees riverfront bandshell at Veterans Memorial Park. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Upbeat Cadillac Music Series: Joseph & The Velozians, Cadillac
7-9:15pm. Free/donations. Rotary Performing Arts Pavilion, 100 S. Lake St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

STIX Summer Concert Series: Chris Janson, Ludington
7pm show, 5pm doors. STIX Ludington, 1963 N. Lakeshore Dr. Tickets: stixludington.com

Downtown Ludington's Movies in the Park
Free outdoor movie, "Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie". Free Baby Badger rides for kids from 7:30-8:45pm when the movie begins. Concessions avail. Rotary Park, 500 W. Ludington Ave.

August 9

Live in the Plaza: Meg Gunia, Ludington
6-8pm. Free. Legacy Plaza, 150 N James St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

August 9

Quintango: Art of the Tango, Frankfort
5-9pm. \$79.50 Quintet of 5 chamber musicians & a bandoneon player performing tango music. Join the after-party, a "milonga" dance social. Mingle with performers, savor Argentine bites and wines, and watch (or try!) tango with fellow enthusiasts. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Tickets: oliverart.org or 231.352.4151.

Folk Fridays: Chris Vallillo, Baldwin
7pm. Free. Lake County Historical Museum Boat House Stage, 915 Michigan Ave. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Log Cabin Concerts: Mary Sue & Mark Schrock, Kaleva
7pm. Free/donations. Corner of Walta & Panu Streets. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Summer Concerts in the Park: Grosse Ile Quintet, Frankfort
7-9pm. Free. In the pavilion at Mineral Springs Park, 630 Main St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

STIX Summer Concert Series: EMO Night with All American Throwbacks, Ludington
8pm show, 6pm doors. Free. STIX Ludington, 1963 N. Lakeshore Dr.

August 9, 10

Sidewalk Sales, Manistee
Downtown stores offer savings all weekend.

Local Author Book Signing, Manistee
11am-1pm. Free. Meet Don Hansen, who will be signing copies of his books, "Meg and the Konkreet Krockadile", "There's a Booger in my Book" & "Seven Who Served". Hoot and Honey Bookstore, 358 River St.

August 9-11

Hoxeyville Music Festival, Wellston
Annual Americana and Roots festival. Over 20 performers on 2 stages. Camping available. 11130 W. 48 1/2 Rd. Info/tickets: hoxeyville.com.

August 10

Guided Birdwatching Hike, Thompsonville
10-11:30am. Art Park admission: \$10 adults, \$5 kids over 5 or \$20 for families. Meet at Mich. Legacy Art Park Trailhead, 1/4 mile from parking area, rain or shine. Bring binocs if avail. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr.

Crystal Lake Solo & Team Marathon, Beulah
7am-1pm. Race around Crystal Lake. Begin at Beulah Park, 284 S. Benzie Blvd. Registration ends Aug. 8 at 12pm. Info/register: runsignup.com/CrystalLakeTeamMarathon

Love Out Loud Community Block Party, Ludington
4-6pm. Free activities, giveaways, hot dogs & tacos. Sponsored by Living Word Church. Blodgett Park, 318 N. James St.

Music in the State Park: J & O Junction, Ludington
7pm. Free/donations. Park Amphitheater, 8800 West M-116. Rain site: Lake Michigan beach house. Bring lawn chair/blanket/bug spray. MI Recreation Passport required for vehicle entry.

Sounds from the Forest Concert Series: Joseph and the Velozians, Baldwin
7-9:15pm. Free/donations. Wenger Pavilion, 876 Michigan Ave. (behind Jones' Ice Cream). Rain or shine. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

August 10, 11

Gold Coast Artisan Fair, Ludington
10am-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun. Over 170 artists and crafters. Rotary Park (City Park), 500 W. Ludington Ave.

August 11

Ludington Lighthouse Triathlon & Duathlon, Ludington
7:30am. Info/register: runsignup.com

Weed the Park, Ludington

10am-12pm. Free. Volunteer to remove invasive plants. Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants and long-sleeve shirts. Bring work gloves, trowel, water. Meet near the dog park at the end of Rath Ave. Cartier Park, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr.

August 12

Not So "Hole-Y-One" Golf Fundraiser, Ludington
9-hole, 2-person scramble. For the ongoing maintenance/preservation of Pere Marquette Memorial Cross. Register for the scramble and/or dinner: zeffy.com. Lincoln Hills Golf Club, 1527 N. Lakeshore Dr.

Jammin' Mondays on Betsie Bay: Jeff Haas's "Big Fun" Band, Elberta
7-9:15pm. Free. Waterfront Amphitheater, Elberta Waterfront Park, 1120 Furnace St. Rain site: Waterfront Park Picnic Pavilion. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Concerts in the Park: Fifth Gear Band, Onekama

7pm. Free. Onekama Village Park. Rain site: Onekama Consolidated Schools, 5016 Main St. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

August 13

Talks, Tunes & Tours, Manistee
10am. Free. "America's Place in the Global Economy" by Dr. Kevin Christ. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

Manistee Shoreline Showcase: Jeff Haas's "Big Fun" Band, Manistee
7-9:15pm. Free. Rotary Gazebo, Douglas Park, First Street Beach. Bring lawn chair/blanket.

Music in the State Park: Canopy Space, Ludington
7pm. Free/donations. Park Amphitheater, 8800 West M-116. Rain site: Lake Michigan beach house. Bring lawn chair/blanket/bug spray. MI Recreation Passport required for vehicle entry.

Quintango Concert, Manistee
7:30pm. \$10-40. Quintet of 5 chamber musicians & a bandoneon player performing tango music. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Tickets: ramsdelltheatre.org

August 13-17

Manistee County Fair, Onekama
Fun for the whole family. Manistee County Fairgrounds, 7587 1st St. Event schedule: manisteecountyfair.org/events



FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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Contributors: Cindy Asiala, Valerie Chandler, Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas, Joshua Elie, Louisa Loveridge Gallas, Kevin Howell, Terry and Diana Longton, Stewart A. McFerran, Robyn Schmidt, Kristina Stierholz.

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SEASON LINE-UP

JULY

- 19 GUITAR SUMMIT w/ Dave Black, Brian Curran, Stephen Plummer & Kaedin Plummer
- 26 FREDDY'S @ 5 Sam Rose Presents Comedians: Jerry Donovan & Nardo Osterhart
- 26-28 MANISTEE CIVIC PLAYERS Present: DYING FOR THEATRE

AUGUST

- 2-4 MANISTEE CIVIC PLAYERS Present: DYING FOR THEATRE
- 13 QUINTANGO
- 16 BACK TO BACHARACH An Evening w/ Karen Curlee & Mark Stewart
- 23 LANDSHARKS BAND **JIMMY BUFFETT TRIBUTE**

SEPTEMBER

- 12 KALIMBA **EARTH, WIND & FIRE TRIBUTE**
- 27 HYEMIN KIM, PIANIST

OCTOBER

- 19 BEN TRAVERSE & NICK VEINE

NOVEMBER

- 8 THORNETTA DAVIS

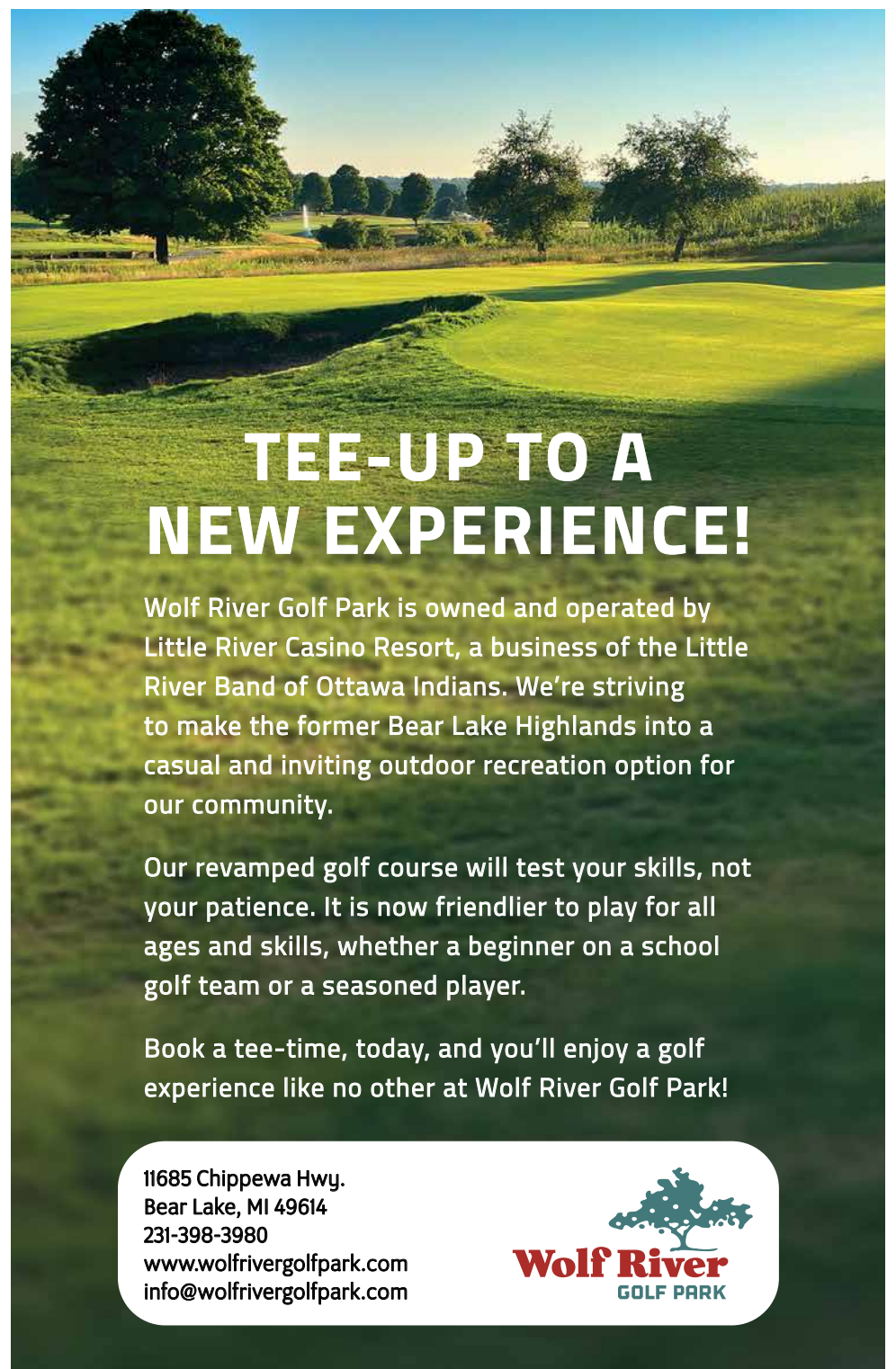
DECEMBER

- 6-8 & 13-15 MANISTEE CIVIC PLAYERS Present: MATILDA



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'Early railways' is Arcadia Daze topic

From staff reports



Photo: Mark Videan.

ARCADIA - The 43rd annual Arcadia Daze celebration will begin at 7 p.m., Thursday, July 25, when the Railroad Historical Society of Northwest Michigan will host an hour-long panel discussion about the early railways in northern Michigan. The event will take place at the Arcadia United Methodist Church, 4th and Division streets, and is sponsored by Arcadia Historical Society.

The event coincides with an "Arcadia and Betsey River Railroad" exhibit at the Arcadia Historical Museum, 3422 Lake St., on Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Then, on Friday, July 25, the events will kick off with a pickleball tournament from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Pleasant

Valley Community Center, 7th Street and Glovers Lake Road. Pre-registration is required. The Arcadia Daze opening ceremony will take place at 4:30 p.m. in Finch Park on 5th Street and features members of the VFW Post. In the park immediately following will be live music by Barefoot until 8 p.m. and pulled pork sandwiches plus a beverage tent with domestic and craft beer, and St. Ambrose Cellars' X.R. Cyser, a type of mead made with fermented honey and apple juice. Attendees can catch a free horse-drawn carriage ride at Trinity Lutheran Church (3rd and Mill streets), then dance to Bent Carrot under the pavilion from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., with a break at dusk to watch the fireworks above Lake Michigan at the

Sunset Station, at the end of 5th Street.

Saturday's events include a pancake breakfast, auto muster, 5k run, free kids' fishing, children's story time about trains, kids' vision trailer, arts and crafts fair, ham-and-German-potato-salad lunch, beverage tent, cornhole tournament, barbecue chicken dinner, more carriage rides, more music by Barefoot and another chance to dance to the music of Bent Carrot.

The spotlight on Sunday is on a take-out-only pancake breakfast, the arts and crafts fair, a kids' balloon artist at Finch Park, a 12:30 p.m. fife and drum concert march from Finch Park to the marina, the popular village parade at 1:30 p.m., and raffle drawings and the Scottville Clown Band performance at Finch Park.

Arcadia Daze is hosted by the Arcadia Lions Club and is their major fundraiser for the year.

Follow Arcadia Daze updates on Facebook @ArcadiaLions and visit the website: www.townshipofarcadia.org/arcadia-daze.



File photo courtesy of Arcadia Lions.



Illustration by Robyn Schmidt.

Prepare for the Perseids

By MARK VIDEAN

The Perseids — named for the constellation Perseus, where they appear to originate — are visible from mid-July to at least mid-August. They are our most spectacular meteor shower of the year and can appear all over the night sky.

The number of meteors per hour will peak Aug. 12-13. At that time, the moon will be half full, though it will set around midnight. This will leave us with dark skies in the wee hours. The later you look, the more you'll see. However, the earlier you look for them, the more likely you'll see long tails. That's because they graze Earth's atmosphere then, instead of plunging straight downward.

Want to learn more about them? Read "The Perseids phenomenal performance", by Brooke Edwards, Freshwater Reporter, Aug. 29, 2021, and "Get ready for a night-sky show," by yours truly, Freshwater Reporter, Aug. 7, 2019.

Mark Videan is the co-editor of the Freshwater Reporter. He lives among other night owls in Manistee.

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Integrate: add value when you can, and be willing and able to find new markets—not just producing food, but labeling, marketing, and distribution too.

Network: connect with other farmers, the larger local and regional food and farm networks, and beyond to learn and collaborate. We're stronger together.

Diversify: new production opportunities, including uses for land outside of the pasture and field/garden, diversity of market strategies, and diversity of energy sources—not to mention diversity of farms and farmers.

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MUSIC FESTIVAL M22 - ARCADIA AUGUST 30th & 31st

FRIDAY EVENING - 6pm

Domestic Beer Tent | Local Food Trucks

TC Knuckleheads | The Ride with Jake Allen

SATURDAY - 11am

Craft Beer Tasting | Local Food Trucks | Beer Tent

Cross Cut Kings | Jake Allen Duo | Darin VanderMolen | Djangophonique | Nick Veine | Mark Lavengood Band | Sean Kelly | Dye Jones and The Get Down | Jim Cummings Band |



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Meals

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The visits

I enjoy visiting for a bit with many clients. A banana for dessert makes one client's day; no raisins, please. The resident living in the easy-to-miss home off Pine Creek Road always reminds me if I'm early. There's the gentleman who comes to the door and explains that his wife is off in the woods ... I never have seen her. Another couple has a fancy doorbell that's hard to reach without dropping a dessert, and the couple in the lovely log cabin is appreciative and friendly. A Wellston client shares her crafts and completed puzzles and says she loves my stories. A stealthy Wellston gentleman usually surprises me before I get the food in my arms. A woman east of Brethren enjoys her cup of tea and always has a sweet smile. A field of daffodils and a beautiful wisteria bush greet me when I visit with a client living near Coates Highway.

I can't forget the beloved animals on my route. There's the pup living with its human along M-55 who always wants attention, and the pooches I pet east of Dublin that are owned by two humble and kind clients who always seem glad to see me. There's the kind couple living along the Little Manistee River on a farm with barn cats that sometimes like to be petted. One client says he loves his "ladies" — the hens in his backyard who lay the eggs he sells.

Volunteer information

In most locations, volunteers who deliver meals drive their own cars. If you are interested in volunteering, you'll want to ask your local Meals on Wheels program about transportation when you are setting up your volunteer assignments.




I get to love on my clients' companions.

Schedules are typically flexible with appropriate notice for requested days off. Once you're connected with your local MOW program, you'll be able to work with them to manage your volunteer schedule.

Those from Manistee County interested in volunteering may contact Hilary or Sarah at (231) 723-6477. MOW is now called The Senior Nutrition Program here. Information about the Mason County MOW program can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/46hh344j>. For information about the program in Wexford County, call (231) 775-9781 or (800) 632-7334. Lake County residents are served by Lake County Council on Aging & St. Ann's Lake County Senior Services. Call (231) 745-7201 or email shelly@carrinter.net for more information.


Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas is a retiree of the Manistee Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forest, where she worked in recreation and as an outdoor recreation planner.



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