

FRESHWATER REPORTER

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

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June 26 - July 16, 2024 FREE

The pitfalls of too much stuff

Garage sales: It's the little things

Story and photo by **GORDON BERG.**

How on Earth did we collect so much stuff in our homes?! Yes, we are a consumer society. Our very economy is based on it. But, really??

And, if you're in the latter part of your life, how are your grown children even going to find the time to sift through it all when you're gone? Their own lives are so hectic that quickly dispensing with all but a few treasures is the best they can do.

I blame our current predicament on us Baby Boomers. Our parents raised us in tiny, practical, post-war bungalows. In the '50s and '60s, we kids needed stuff. Bikes, hula hoops, croquet sets, badminton sets, lawn darts and more bikes to replace the ones we outgrew. Where did all that stuff end up? In the basement. Then, as we became teenagers, we needed bigger stuff. Dirt bikes, camping gear, maybe even a surfboard. Where did all that go? The garage. After 25 years and multiple kids later, our homes looked like some mad scientist's experiment gone bad, with stuff oozing out of our garages and onto our lawns and driveways. Our stuff was taking over.

Under these circumstances, there is only one thing to do. Have a garage sale!

Yup. According to Encyclopedia.com, we Americans host an estimated 6.5- to 9-million garage sales each year.

And according to a survey reported on YardSaleSearch.com, the vast majority of garage sales generate less than \$300. Looking at it another way, if you put 48 hours into finding, organizing and selling your stuff, you've just made a whopping \$6.25 for your trouble. You'd be better off flippin' burgers



at a fast-food restaurant.

But, undaunted by the data, I began my garage-sale gathering a few years ago by starting in the logical place — the garage. The random assortment of stuff piled up there was like looking at geologic layers of memories and detritus.

It was a beautiful summer day for garage-sale prep. An oldies station was pumping out surfing tunes. Our son was away at a music festival. My wife was mowing the lawn in front of our home.

Leaning on my organizational skills, I set up a triage on the driveway for it all. One pile of stuff to keep. Another to be sold. Still another to pitch. It was slow going at first, but I found that the more I put in the "pitch" or "sell" piles, the easier it got. Even better, I discovered things I hadn't seen in years.

After a few hours, my eyes fell on one such item in the deep recesses of the garage ... our son's old skateboard. It called to me. I remembered the skateboard my brother and

I made using a board and a pair of old roller skates. We shredded many a hill back in the '60s. How hard could it be now? Gotta be like riding a bike ... right?

I positioned it in the middle of the driveway behind the house. I could hear the lawn mower out front. I was alone. No one was watching. I placed my left foot on the board and gently shoved off with my right. It moved. I rode it. "Hey," I thought to myself. "You've still got it!" The second push with my right foot had more confidence. Some real hutzpah.

Before performing any unwise feat, it's important to remember the irrefutable laws of physics. With each action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The board flew forward and I fell backward. Instinctively, I held out both hands to catch my fall. (Gravity played a role here, too.)

There is a moment during such occasions that feels like slow motion. You wish you

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Local author begins a new chapter

By **PAT STINSON**

Since his retirement from teaching in 2017, Don Hansen has kept himself busy. He had three books published. He moved with his wife, Jayne, from their hometown of Ottumwa, Iowa, to Ludington last year. And he plans to submit another story for publication this summer.

His new book will include "Meg," the heroine of his 2020 children's story, "Meg and the Konkreet Krockadile", (PBL Limited). In his new story, Meg grapples with her wavering belief in Santa Claus. A sighting of Santa on a ship in Manistee and a friend's advice may or may not restore her faith in the spirit of Christmas.

"I wanted to address one of the 'growing pains' of childhood," Hansen said, adding, "Is Santa real?"

His character Meg is based on the real-life Meg (Meghan), whom he met while teaching in his home state.

"One of my students happened to be from Manistee," Hansen explained. "She had experienced a tragic sophomore year, losing her father and also enduring open heart surgery. She was placed in my class, where she achieved her credit for that term, but

the experiences left her short of graduation requirements."

As it happened, Hansen had joined the school's credit recovery program that enabled students to gain credit toward graduation.

"She earned her credits, graduated with her class, and moved on with her life," he said.

He and Meghan kept in touch. During one phone conversation, she told him she was in the E.R. with her mother, who had broken her arm after tripping over a concrete bumper in a parking lot.

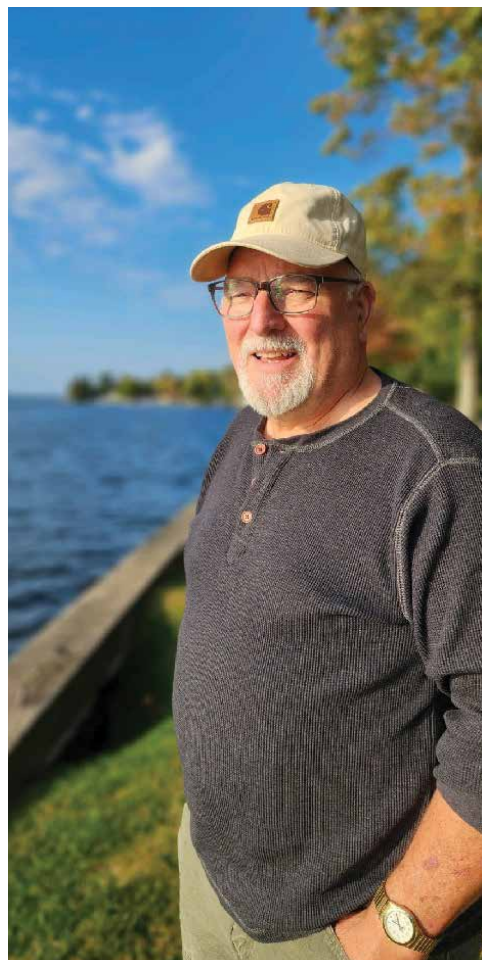
"I tried to lighten up the call with a joke about 'concrete crocodiles.' Meg and her mom became hysterical and begged me to stop because it hurt to laugh!"

The incident became the inspiration for his first children's book, "Meg and the Konkreet Krockadile", set in the Manistee/Bear Lake area.

"I have a dozen more stories to publish, most about Michigan Meg and the Manistee and Ludington area," he said.

His second children's book, "There's a booger in my book!", is based on his

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Author Don Hansen enjoys living near the lake in his retirement. Courtesy photo.

Area Events

ONGOING EVENTS

Wednesdays

Baldwin Farmers Market

3-7pm, Thru Aug 28. Parking lot behind Jones Ice Cream

Thursdays

Elberta Farmers Market

8am-12pm, Thru Oct 3. Dudley Penfold Memorial Marina Park, corner of M-22 & M-168

Fridays

Ludington Artisan/Farmers Market

2-7pm, Thru Sept 21. Legacy Plaza Pavilion, 112 N. James St.

Onkama Farmers Market

12-4pm, Thru Aug 30. Parking lot 4850 Main St. Info: patinamichigan@gmail.com

Saturdays

Frankfort Farmers Market

9am-1pm, Thru Oct 19. Open Space Park, 832 Main St.

Manistee Farmers Market

9am-12pm, Thru Oct 7. Wagoner Community Center, 260 St. Mary S. Pkwy.

Scottville Farmers Market

9am-12pm, Thru Oct 26. Miller's Marketplace, 202 N. Main St.

Thru June 29

"A Crooked Path" Art Exhibition, Ludington

Free. Solo show of 2D & 3D artworks by Matthew Mroz. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St.

"Lynda's Legacy" Art Exhibition, Ludington

Free. Celebrating the artwork of the late Lynda Blankinship. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S. Harrison St.

Thru July 26

Summer Members' Art Exhibition, Frankfort

Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Artists' talk July 25, 4-7pm.

Thru Sept 13

Summer Art Show, Arcadia

Free. Works by local artists. Pleasant Valley Community Center, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd.

June 17-Aug 16

Friday Kids' Cooking Classes, Frankfort

1:30-3:30pm. \$25. Kids 8-12 will learn basic kitchen skills & food safety while making tasty, healthy kid-friendly dishes each week. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Registration: oliverart.org, or 231.352.4151.

June 17-Aug 23

Weekly Kids' Summer Art Camp, Frankfort

10:30am-12pm, Monday-Friday. \$125/week for children ages 7-12. Each day will feature a new instructor and project. Register for one or multiple weeks. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Registration: oliverart.org, or 231.352.4151.

July 1-Aug 2

Finding the Light: Photography and Glass, Frankfort

Free. An invitational exhibit combining fine art photography with luminous art glass. Featuring Michigan artists. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd.

July 5-28

Gallery Events: Two Divas & the Tall Guy, Onkama

Artworks by Lynn Williams, Mary Wahr & Douglas Meier. Opening reception July 6, 3-5pm. Patina Designs, 4850 Main St.

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PORTAGE LAKE ASSOCIATION
FREE SUMMER 2024
Concerts in the Park

7:00 pm • Onekama Village Park
 Bring lawn chairs, blankets, picnic baskets and have fun!

Sunday, June 23
Special Sunday concert stage Grand Opening!
 Live music, food trucks and fun from 2-9 pm.

Monday, July 1
The Shrock Brothers feat. Terrence Massey & Danny G.
 West-Michigan based Americana/blues ensemble

Monday, July 8
Freshwater Roots
 Mesick-based duo playing rock, pop and country hits

Monday, July 15
Benzie Playboys
 Perennial favorites playing Cajun and zydeco tunes

Monday, July 22
Jim Hawley
 Nationally touring TC musician playing Americana, folk and classic rock

Monday, July 29
BVO Band
 Manistee trio playing classic rock and 60s & 70s faves

Monday, August 5
Michael Trixx 6 pm • Jake Slater 7 pm
 America's Got Talent rock 'n roll magician hits the stage, then the Nationally known award winning Elvis Tribute Artist

Monday, August 12
Fifth Gear Band
 Traverse City cover band playing popular covers from 60s to today

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ANISHINAABE PERSPECTIVES

An American icon reviews a book about an American icon

Reviewed by **LOIS BEARDSLEE**. Photo courtesy of Penguin Random House.
 "American Buffalo, In Search of a Lost Icon", by Steven Rinella, Spiegel & Grau (NY: 2008), 288 pp., illus. ISBN: 978-0-385-52168-0

I enjoy reading nonfiction. If you're a fan of John McPhee's often geology-based nonfiction ("Coming into the Country", "Control of Nature") then you'll like reading Steven Rinella's work. His writing is just as fluid, clear and captivating, but the language is looser, more in the vernacular. His storytelling style is more autobiographical, and his story of the history of our attitudes about the American buffalo is seamlessly interwoven with his own experiences learning about and hunting bison on public land, as opposed to on Ted Turner's ranch or in a game preserve.

As promised in his title, Rinella went beyond his hunting experience, delving into our relationship with the buffalo throughout our country's history. This is important to me because I'm a Native American, and my very livelihood and socioeconomic role in this country is heavily dependent upon iconic symbolism and America's perception of itself. So, as much as I enjoy nonfiction, I'm also critical of it and challenge it. I feel comfortable with Steven Rinella's thorough research and his attempts to address the relationship between America's self-perception and the role of the buffalo in extirpation of Indigenous populations. I always appreciate when a non-Indian author resists using damaging ethnic stereotypes.

Few people know that species that were extirpated from Michigan's prairie fringes included elk, prairie chickens and the American bison. Years ago, I read an article in an anthropological journal about how

many deer hides it would have taken to have sustained an Indigenous family in southern Michigan prior to European contact. The study itself was, of course, an artificial construct by a cultural outsider, a product of miseducation via stereotypes. And a budding non-Indian graduate student/scholar was, by means of his 1970s article, well on his way to promulgating myths and stereotypes. Northwest Lower Michigan wasn't always the home of dense populations of white-tailed deer that grazed without competition. The region's Indigenous Anishinaabe population was fluid, utilizing vast areas of territory, and did controlled burns that extended southern prairie habitats. Michigan's plant and animal populations were very different than they are today, prior to the environmental impact of logging, agricultural and industrial interests. Even the woodland caribou's southernmost range included the northern third of the Lower Peninsula, and the species persisted in the Upper Peninsula until it was wiped out by about 1880. Contemporary Anishinaabe people recognize the buffalo as a cultural icon, not because we've been forced into pan-Indianism or because Plains Indians lend themselves to more acceptable stereotyping than Great Lakes Indians. We do so because it's one of many species that continue to manifest themselves within our various means of cultural record-keeping.

Until the U.S. census changed the way it allows people to identify themselves, in 2020, the "official" Native American population in the U.S. held steady throughout my

lifetime at about .02%. That's a significant shift from the 100% that existed at the time of contact. Native American identity and affiliation is a convoluted issue that involves a complex history of attempts at extirpation and termination, as well as family and community ties. Not all people recognized as Native American have paperwork that officially ties them to government-recognized tribal entities. And, because we are so outnumbered, there's been a significant amount of intermarriage. There's also been a significant amount of gatekeeping in terms of what kind of art and literature created by Native people has been allowed a wide public audience. The explosion of people claiming to be Native Americans without actual ties to the community is a topic for discussion on another day by more-skilled scholars than me. What I want to address in this book review is how the .02% of Americans I've grown up with (Indians) have been impacted by representations of us in literature purporting to be nonfiction. And, since much of America's most-treasured art and literature have relegated Native Americans to icon status on a par with, and even intertwined with, the American Buffalo, I'd like to praise Steven Rinella's alternate approach. There is good reason for authors like this.

Sometime back in the late 1990s I was giving a cultural presentation in an elementary school in an exurb of the Detroit metropolitan area that has contributed

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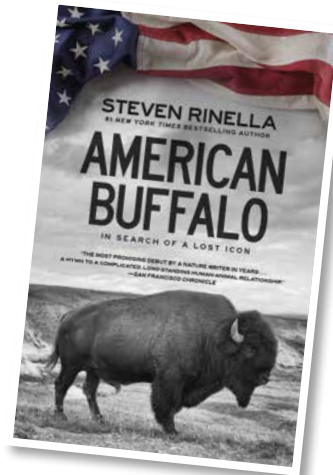


Photo: Pam Dohner Adams.

Your Radiant Longing to the hollyhock

By **Louisa Loveridge Gallas**
 Freshwater Reporter Poet in Residence

How ever did the wide-mouthed bells of your abundant blooms manage to invite the harsh 'hock' into your name when an elegant hollylou or eager hollygaga would capture your song, your choir, how you soar in summer's wind, reaching for the light!

We hear your anthem, your radiant longing for our higher angels to bring more illumination for our shared world.

We witness your loyal stem bear up the ladder of blossoms to remind us how you arise from the fertile womb of black soil

how the essence of our beauty begins in darkness.

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Review

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significantly to the growth of northwest Lower Michigan during the past two decades. The teaching staff and the student body were devoid of people of color. The students and teachers were great, but the principal was a flaming racist who left me feeling soiled by the experience. It was the one and only time I worked under one of many private booking agents who have contacted me over the years. It was also the point at which I stopped doing cultural presentations in schools. I don't feel bad about it. We're long overdue for integrating the teaching profession in Michigan's non-urban educational institutions. Offering Native Americans periodic gig-based employment as storytellers isn't a suitable alternative.

Michigan has one of the highest densities of Native Americans east of the Mississippi River, but I've found that most state residents know little about us. Because the teaching profession is almost exclusively white, children's literature and infrequent Indian guest speakers remain the predominant means by which Michigan's children are educated about the state's Native population. I often started out such presentations by asking the students what they knew about Native Americans. A nine-year-old's hand shot up instantaneously, and he blurted out, "They're people with special privileges." I think I visibly reeled, even though I've lived in Benzie and Leelanau Counties, where businesses posted signs that said, "No Indians" throughout the first half of my life, and where it's only been a few days since I was refused service in a whites-only restaurant. The gruesomely inaccurate concept of people of color as possessing "special privileges" is something that is usually learned at

the kitchen table. But it's unintentionally reinforced in classrooms and on library shelves by teaching materials that have been created by non-Indians. My challenge, as the only person of color in that school building, was to educate my audience without 1) denigrating the child, 2) infuriating and/or alienating his educators and 3) jeopardizing my own safety before I could get the heck out of Dodge. I was faced with the daunting task of sweeping aside welfare myths in a room full of youngsters who didn't have the vocabulary to understand the concepts. And, because I'd been doing that for a long time, I did a pretty good job. I was already on better footing than I'd been only a year before, when a secretary in an all-white elementary school outside of Chicago refused to let me (the featured speaker) into the building. At least back in the 1960s Harry Belafonte had had the option of going in the back-door service entrance of theaters, where he wasn't allowed to enter the front of the building to perform. In the mid-1990s I had to drive home from the far side of Chicago without a paycheck.

As a Native American author, my voice has been limited by non-Indian cultural gatekeepers. For years, most books about Indians have been limited to books by non-Indians; and Indians have been publishable only inasmuch as their work mimics the desires and expectations of non-Indian audiences. Few people are aware that I've written a significant amount of award-winning nonfiction. At one point in my career, I might have been considered one of the nation's leading scholars on the topic of racism in children's literature — if the subject were ever to have gotten past anything more than liminal status in a world of non-minority-dominated educational outreach facilities, like films and publishing, libraries, park interpretive centers, museum gift shops and tourist gift shops (which I find virtually

indistinguishable).

But I love reading good nonfiction. I don't like writing about nonfiction very much because I stress over every word, phrase and concept, lest I offend non-Indian scholars and a predominantly non-minority readership. That's why I quit working in schools. The kids were great. Many staff members were terrifying. And it only takes one or two staff members to turn a facility into a whites-only enterprise. So, here I am, a recovering Native American tool of the "Indian-as-Entertainment" genre, reviewing a book for adults that (at least in part) addresses Native American presence in the psyche of America. "American Buffalo" is a well-written stereotype-busting combination of scholarship and dialectical essays — writing that I find myself coming back to and reading over and over. The subtitle itself is telling: In Search of a Lost Icon. Early in the book, Rinella discusses the role of the American Bison as a symbol, not unlike the vanishing native, and he addresses stereotypes that have been promulgated in America's imagery of itself, comparing them to the realities of the historical record. The image of the beloved buffalo on the historic U.S. nickel comes along with a ghastly story.

Steven Rinella grew up in Twin Lakes, Michigan. He now lives back and forth between Anchorage, Alaska and New York City. A correspondent for Outside Magazine, he also writes for The New Yorker and other venues. After years of reviewing books for racial bias, as well as writing and teaching about the subject, I'm impressed with Rinella's efforts to write about Native Americans' relationship with the buffalo, naturally, as part of the story — without succumbing to popular biases and stereotypes. Fortunately, he's not limited to an ethnic genre that keeps him under the radar of cultural gatekeepers with subliminal socioeconomic agendas. Of course, a few biases have crept in because so

many of his historic sources were biased. It's not unlike the nine-year-old who was taught that Indians have "special privileges." Not all wombs are biological or even physical. Some are ideological, are steeped in history and give birth to profound socioeconomic repercussions.

But what I like about Rinella's book is that he doesn't exploit the idea of an acceptable Indian as one who is perfectly angelic when it comes to nature and wildlife. While reading "American Buffalo" I don't imagine bronze-cast sculptures of bronze-skinned, muscle-bound "bucks" on horseback, performing supernatural feats with a spear, while sucking up vast quantities of buffalo hoof dust. The book covers well-documented intentional extirpation of the buffalo to implement an anticipated subsequent intentional extirpation of North America's Indigenous population, purely for profit. Rinella also speaks of the irony of a dwindling and desperate Native population preying upon the few surviving individuals of a dwindling and desperate buffalo population. In doing so, Rinella allows us to be as human and faulty as members of any other ethnic group. That's important because, in my experience, non-Indians get downright huffy when I don't live up to dangerous stereotypes — especially ones that involve stoicism, docility and a genetic predisposition to living at the bottom of America's socioeconomic heap, in spite of my skills and academic credentials.

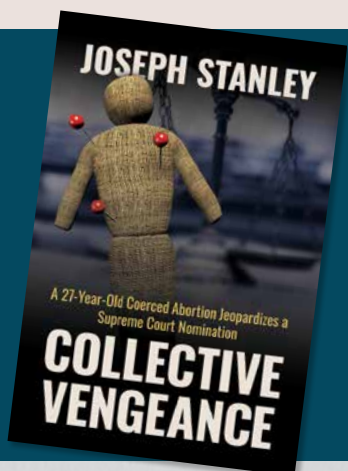
The details in this book are enlightening. Once I start reading "American Buffalo", even though I've read it before, I have a hard time putting down the book. Get your own copy. Read it more than once.

Lois Beardslee is an Anishinaabe award-winning illustrator and author of both fiction and nonfiction such as Michigan Notable Book "Words Like Thunder" and "Lies to Live By", among others.

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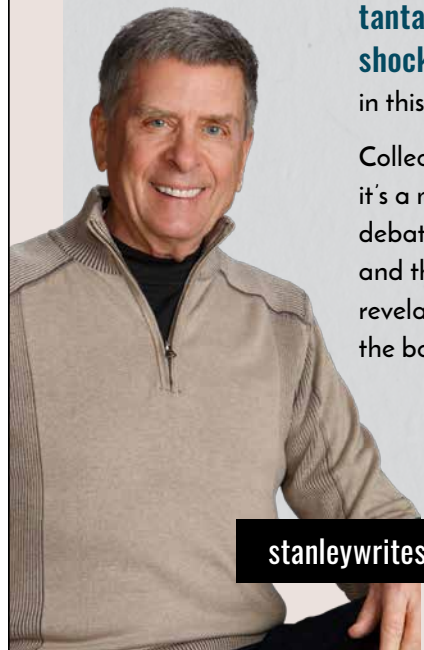
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Garage sales

continued from Page 1

could undo the goofy thing you just did. You know it won't end well. Then an instant later you hear a snap ... inside your body. I heard two.

"S**t**kd**n!" (My favorite run-on expletive I mutter under such circumstances.)

I went inside, still hearing my wife's lawn mower out front, climbed upstairs and laid down on the bedroom floor.

As I assessed the damage, I realized I couldn't hear the lawnmower anymore.

"Gord. Gord?!" My wife called up from the bottom of the stairs. "What's going on? Are you okay?"

I still laid there, hovering between the grown up I was and the child I felt like. I weakly replied, "I think I hurt myself. We may need to go to the E.R."

Somehow the doctor kept a straight face as I recounted what happened. A couple X-rays confirmed that I had indeed fractured both wrists in exactly the same places, and my elbow had a hairline fracture as well.

I emerged from the examining area and found my wife among all the other parents in the lobby whose kids had suffered similar humiliations. The only difference being that

they were actual kids.

"I called our son to let him know that you were being treated for a skateboard injury," she said.

"What did he say," I asked, eager for some sympathy.

She paused, looked at me and smiled. "He said, 'Awesome!'"

A few days later he and his girlfriend came by to present me with a get-well gift. "How very thoughtful," I said, curiously watching the grins they were trying to suppress. This I knew was not going to be a box of flowers.

No. It was a Tony Hawk action figure — the most famous skateboarder in the world.

Yup. I definitely had that comin' to me.

So be bold, folks! Fearlessly dive into those garages, those basements, those storage lockers. Get rid of all that stuff you'll never need again. But as you sift through it all, find and keep the little things. My son's skateboard is long gone. But that action figure? Oh, it's a cherished memory that'll never end up in a garage sale.

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. harryandthehurricane.com

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



What's up at the Onekama Guild Thrift Shop?

By PATTI SUCHOCKI, Store Manager

"The place to reimagine, recreate, and thrift."

The thrift shop in Onekama originated at the Memorial Hospital in 1953. Through the years the thrift shop was housed in various locations within Onekama. The current building's history includes one winter when it was moved across a frozen Portage Lake to its present location.

Our mission has always been to offer donated items at low prices to the less fortunate in the greater Manistee area. As a nonprofit, we are allowed the opportunity to make annual monetary donations to many charitable organizations. In five years, we have donated \$20,000 to many worthy charities.

The past three months have been very busy — dusting, polishing, sorting and rearranging inside the store. We're sure you'll be amazed at the changes. We have even added a "vintage" section, with true vintage items. The shop opened for the season in May. We hope you will stop in to see our fresh look.

This year, our terrific group of more than 30 volunteers has allowed us to add more hours for you to shop. Store hours are Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A successful season for the thrift shop means more monetary donations for more charities in our county. Please remember when decluttering at home to set aside and bring us your clean, gently used items. We gladly accept donations (except furniture and large items) whenever we are open.

Thank you for supporting your local nonprofit thrift store. We are located at 4830 Main Street in Onekama. We offer "little treasures, big smiles and discounted prices!"

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of Freshwater Reporter stories. Join the discussion on



with Station Manager Eric Hines & Stewart McFerran, F.R. contributing writer.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Bottle House Museum. Photo: C. Asiala.

Countdown to Kaleva's summer fun

By CYNTHIA ASIALA

Kaleva Heritage Days, this year taking place July 20-21, is always celebrated during the third weekend in July. Events will be held in the village park, downtown and at the Maple Grove Township Community Center.

The Kaleva Art Gallery is sponsoring the craft show taking place in the park this year. Arts and crafts, food vendors, kids' games, a car show and a 5k run/walk will happen on Saturday, and music will last into the night.

A treasure hunt for unique places in the village will take place Saturday and Sunday. The Kaleva Art Gallery and Bottle House Museum will be open from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

For everyone's convenience, a Dial-A-Ride bus will run from the park to downtown, with stops at the gallery, the bottle house and the community center.

There will be a yard sale to benefit the Brethren High School students' trip to Europe set up in front of the community center on Saturday. Plan to attend the spaghetti dinner with farm-fresh salad, homemade garlic bread and brownie sundaes. The cost is \$10 for adults, and children under 5 may eat for free.

The parade begins at 7 p.m., Saturday, at the community center, followed by fireworks over the park ballfield at dusk.

A full schedule of activities will be available closer to the date of the event. Keep checking the Facebook group page for Kaleva Heritage Days.

Heritage, food and music equals fun for all!

SEASON LINE-UP

JULY

- 12 **MANISTEE COMMUNITY BAND & CHAMBER CHOIR**
- 19 **GUITAR SUMMIT** w/ Dave Black, Brian Curran, Stephen Plummer & Kaedin Plummer
- 26 **FREDDY'S @ 5** Sam Rose Presents Comedians: Jerry Donovan & Nardo Osterhart

AUGUST

- 2-4 **MANISTEE CIVIC PLAYERS**
- & 9-11 **Present DYING FOR THEATRE**
- 13 **QUINTANGO**
- 16 **BACK TO BACHARACH** An Evening w/ Karen Curlee & Mark Stewart
- 23 **LANDSHARKS BAND** **JIMMY BUFFETT TRIBUTE**

SEPTEMBER

- 27 **HYEMIN KIM, PIANIST**

OCTOBER

- 5 **BIRDS FLY IN**
- 19 **BEN TRAVERSE & NEICK VEINE**

NOVEMBER

- 8 **THORNETTA DAVIS**


DECEMBER

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



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Author

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children's experiences and has a "surprise ending."

In his first published work, "Seven Who Served" (PBL Limited, 2020), Hansen tells the stories of his father and his father's six brothers, all of whom served in the military. He compiled their service records, from WWII through the Vietnam War, and their letters home, adding recollections from their wives.

"My storytelling has its roots with these men," he said, explaining that his creativity springs from his uncles and father, who made up stories he called folk tales. "You could tell they could lie their way through a noose," he added with a chuckle.

Hansen was ready to join the service, following in his father's and uncles' footsteps, even touring the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. However, his grandmother put her own foot down, saying, "You will not go there ..." and he didn't.

Instead, he yearned to be a history teacher and coach, but his counselors told him his



Don Hansen stands next to his three books on the shelf at the Book Mark in Ludington. Photo: P. Stinson

math skills would serve him well as an engineer. He attended school then worked in the construction trades for 15 years as an ironworker, carpenter and laborer. He describes himself as "an altitude junkie," and said he had no fear working 300-600 feet in the air on bridges, power plants and even a smokestack. When his first-born came along in 1985, he went back to school and worked summers in the trades.

"I had to do it for the kids," he said. "You just have to create a new chapter in your life."

He graduated with a teaching degree and eventually became a high school social studies teacher and wrestling coach. "As a teacher I found that history was much more interesting if the dull and drab facts were inserted in an interesting narrative. I also developed my own stories about my own children."

He spent the last two years of his career helping students earn credits toward graduation in an alternative school program. Many of the students were from Chicago, and his wife Jayne said, "The kids knew not to cross him ... they ended up being respectful."

"I took a job that few wanted and helped dozens of kids that would not have made it otherwise," he explained. "Even with all the drugs, gangs and violence, I believe these were two of the most rewarding years of my career. After I retired, writing became my passion."

Visits to a co-worker's house in western Michigan lured Hansen and his wife, both lifelong Ottumwa residents, to the Ludington area. Jayne said her husband always wanted to live in a cabin in the woods, and living near a lake appealed to them both. Hansen said walking his two dogs, visiting the state park and driving along M-22 toward Frankfort are some of his favorite pastimes. He currently owns five motorcycles and likes to haunt area "bike" shops.

"I'm kind of a motorcycle nut," he said, estimating he has owned 100 in his lifetime.

Where you're most likely to spot him, however, is in his local bookstore, the Book Mark, at 201 S. Rath Ave. All three of his books can be found there and in Manistee at Hoot and Honey, 358 River St.

Pat Stinson is the co-editor of the Freshwater Reporter.



Meghan (Meg) on her wedding day with Don and Jayne Hansen. Courtesy photo.

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'Go HIGH or go home'

By JOSHUA ELIE. Photos courtesy of the writer.

It's a good thing my parents had great medical insurance when I was growing up because my motto was "Go high or go home." Snow skis, skateboards, and anything with an engine on it grabbed my attention.

Long before scrapping metal became popular, I saved scrap metal — everything from broken lawn mowers to busses. As we junkyard dogs say, "Parts is parts." That neighbor with all the junk in their yard? I'm sure you have a special name or two for them. Well, I was never one to display such treasures out front where they could be seen from the road, and I would urge other collectors to simply tuck them somewhere out of sight.

But why, you must wonder, do people want to hold on to broken junk? The answer is simple: anticipation. Often, the anticipation of an event is much greater than the likelihood of the event occurring. Once the junk's newness has worn off, you automatically start anticipating the next event. You can buy something "new," but usually you will be making payments long after the "newness" wears off. Your expectation that you can put something together piece by piece, with your own

hands, often lasts far longer than you, your neighbors and family would like it to.

"Go high or go home" can often mean walking home because everything that goes up must come down, not necessarily in a graceful way. However, if you built it, you will know just how to fix it.

I had this old — when I say old, I am usually referring to something older than me — Yamaha 125 dirt bike running (most of the time), until a deer changed my mind about pushing my limits. I had a lot to think about: a broken thumb, wrist, arm, gouged ankle, and the skin from my chest left on a gravel road. And I had a lot of time to think during daily bandage changing. Then there was the local story going around that I hit a ceramic lawn ornament. No, it was a live deer that ran out and hit me, clipping my front wheel.

When I got home from the hospital, I looked at the bike and knew there was no way I was going to find another set of front forks for it. A while later, I realized my motto shouldn't be "Go high or go home;" it should be "Go fast



Elie's Famous Potato Salad

- 2 lbs (about 6 medium) boiled potatoes, chunked
- 6 hardboiled eggs, chunked
- 1 1/4 cups mayonnaise
- 3 Tbs mustard
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 small onion, chopped (about 1/3 cup)
- 4 thick slices bacon, crumbled
- 1/2 cup green salad olives, sliced
- 1/2 cup black salad olives, sliced
- 1 medium dill pickle, coarsely chopped

Mix and sprinkle with Hungarian Paprika. (I like to use a LOT.)

NORTHWOODS SAUCE BOSS

and don't look back!"

I started building a road bike, and by age 14, I was loose on the highways of northwest Michigan. I often say things were different back then, but one thing that hasn't changed is we still have some of the most beautiful road scenery in the world. I went from building bikes to fixing old bikes to get even faster, though they were not light and didn't have the aerodynamics of modern sport bikes. When traveling more than 100 mph (illegal and foolish, and I'm glad I lived to tell the story), you are at the complete mercy of the wind, and if you're familiar with places like Bear Swamp on Freesoil Road, hitting a deer there at anywhere near that speed would be "game over."

With a little help from our great police officers in Manistee and Wexford counties, I came to realize that by going so fast, I was missing much of the beauty these roads have to offer. My new motto became "Two wheels, wind on my face and a pretty girl on the back."

It's such a great adventure to get lost going down a road I haven't been down before and finding the perfect place for a picnic. Fried chicken, fresh fruit ... and, of course, no Midwestern picnic would be complete without potato salad.

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

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