

FRESHWATER REPORTER

Fresh community stories from Manistee, Mason, southern Benzie, western Lake and Wexford. Online at: freshwater-reporter.com.

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ALWAYS FREE!

AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS INSIDE

Mud: my old friend

By **SHANNON COURIER**. Photos courtesy of the author.

Mud ... What can I say? We've had a love affair since my childhood. The smell, the feel, the texture. It brings back so many fond memories.

The first experience I can remember was with my little brother in our yard as we "baked" mud pies — smashing and forming them into not-so-neat patties, the softness oozing through our small fingers, faces and clothes covered in it, and the look on Mom's face.

Over the years, the love of mud followed me. Growing up, we had Jeeps and dune buggies. The buggies were the best for overall mud coverage, tires spinning and slinging it in every direction. From thin and watery to thick and sticky. Sometimes with green algae floating on top and a not-so-pleasant aroma ... Those memories are so deeply engraved in my head and heart.

Many years later, in my ever-expanding young adulthood, I chose a career in horses. My first real farm position was with racehorses. The best day was when we had four winners. The track had been a sloppy, muddy mess. I couldn't have been prouder of my position at the farm than on that day. I had the privilege of walking each of those hot, sweaty, muddy, high-strung locomotives from the winners' circle back



Above: Puppy Hunny and I in the dune buggy. Left: My Bronco is stuck, yet again.



to the barns. Both the horses and I were kicking and splashing up mud with each step.

Covered from head to toe, I wore it like a badge of honor.

Sometime later I had the motherly opportunity to expose my children to the wonderful world of mud. I had a four-wheel drive of my own now, and boy, it sure loved the mud. Thick mud stuck to it; what didn't dripped in globs to the ground. My vehicle was often stuck and needed assistance to get out. Unfortunately, after having to help clean the old Bronco after such excursions,

my children didn't feel the same about mud as I did.

Fast forward and I was introduced to waterfowl hunting. This included a predawn trip across the lake by boat, then trekking through the swampy edge to our hiding place. After several hours of absolutely nothing but a beautiful sunrise, cold air on my face and a thermos of coffee in my tummy, we made the trek back through the swamp to the boat. All was fine and dandy until I stepped in the wrong spot and went face first into the thick and stinky, oozy cement. I was officially stuck. If it weren't

continued on Page 4

In This Issue

April is National Poetry Month, and we've included several original poems written by our talented contributors, as well as poems written by others.

We were inspired by our own experiences with mud to devote a portion of our pages this month to celebrate this amazing goo. We asked our contributing writers to share their experiences of mud: mud puddles and the slippery, oozing, liquefied dirt intentionally sought by back-riders, off-riders and curious children.

Last year, I had two memorable run-ins with mud. The first was while walking my friend's dog, Gert, off leash on her property. Old Gert ran off in pursuit of what I thought must be a chipmunk. Turns out, she was visiting one of her favorite places in the woods. I heard her high-pitched yelps echoing through the forest. Nothing prepared me for the sight of her, covered in mud from the tips of her ears to the tip of her tail — all that was visible of her above the deep, wide mud puddle in the middle of the walking path. Her yelps of delight kept coming as I waded in, felt to find her collar and clipped on her leash. She had my undivided attention for the next hour as I hosed her down and dried her.



Gert having fun. Photo: John Bruder.

Join the quarter paddle auction CRAZE

By **MARK VIDEAN**

Editor's note: Look for a second story about quarter paddle auctions in our May edition.



Onekama resident Joan Malmgren shows off her paddle ears at the Onekama Lions Club auction. Photo courtesy of Kathleen Bowers.

April is gearing up to be quarter paddle auction month in Manistee County. Three auction events are scheduled to take place in the next few weeks. Read to the end of this story to find out when and where. Meanwhile, discover more about them and why they are so popular with the auction organizers and the many people who attend these events.

What are quarter paddle auctions?

For those of you who, like me, are new to this phenomenon, quarter paddle auctions are "fun, fast-paced fundraising events that combine the excitement of an auction with the affordability of low-cost bidding," according to ourauction.hub.com. Bids are placed on items using quarters, and some of the prizes might include products from local businesses, gift certificates for area services, gift baskets and more. The atmosphere at these types of auctions is relaxed and informal, which makes them ideal fundraising tools for community organizations, schools and nonprofits hoping to reach a wide audience.

If you've never participated in one of

these popular events, you may be surprised at the spirit of generosity and camaraderie a quarter paddle auction can create. I wasn't sure what to expect the first time I attended one last spring. The multi-purpose room was packed with tables of people all excitedly chatting and waiting patiently for the auctioneer to welcome everyone and announce the first item up for bid. Paddles shot in the air for pricier items such as golfing and fishing outings and overnight resort stays. I had a bit of beginner's luck and won a gift basket of goodies for a youngster, a bottle of wine and a half pound of cheese, and a carton of local eggs. The second quarter paddle auction I attended in March was less lucrative for me, but both events were hugely successful for their organizers, and the mood was entirely upbeat, with people of all ages participating.

Why host quarter paddle auctions?

The Our Auction blog post reports that quarter paddle auctions appeared in the U.S. early in the new millennium. Low bids for great prizes are the key to their continued appeal. The auctions promote the

continued on Page 4

Last April I joined a friend on a walk through a Pacific rainforest to see and hear barred owl babies she had been watching. Midway down a hilly trail, my foot slipped and I pitched forward in the mud, my right side covered from my foot to my waist. My host, intent on her owls, barely acknowledged my mishap and I rose quickly and followed her, mud bubbling from my shoe. We never did find the babies.

My favorite stories take place in our swamp, where spicebush swallowtail butterflies land in muck to suck up nutrients, and where I once rescued a fluffy gosling, its feet stuck in mud, and watched it happily paddle away. Somewhere, Mother Goose was smiling.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Area Events Calendar	2,6
Area News: Arcadia, Copemish, and Onekama	3
Woolly Mammoth Sighting	3
The Sauce Boss	5
North Shore Dispatch	5
Mud Season Stories	5,6
Communities, Tree City USA's 50th	7
Poems: "Citizen Superpower", "Cocoon", "Feet of Clay", "Survivors: Letter from a Poet", "The Loyalty of Trout Lilies", "Trees"	7
Easter Bunny Egg Events/History	8

Area Events Calendar

TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN THE FRESHWATER REPORTER!

To be included in our May print edition, submit your announcements by April 16. Be sure to include the address where the event takes place, for visiting readers. Email your events/press releases to: editor@freshwater-reporter.com. Email any time for our online calendar.

Always check with the venue before attending as some event dates may change or be canceled. Despite our best efforts, errors may occur.

ONGOING EVENTS

Thru Apr 10

The Language of Women Art Exhibition, Manistee

Free. Works by women (or anyone who identifies as a woman) artists will be featured. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

Thru Apr 18

CONSTRUCTed: Works in Wood, Paper & Fiber, Frankfort

Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd. Artists' talk April 18, 2pm.

Thru June 12

Spring Art Show, Arcadia

Free. Arcadia Community Center, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd.

Apr 3-25

Modes of Abstraction, Ludington

Free. Annual abstract art exhibition. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S Harrison St. Opening reception: April 3, 4-7pm.

Apr 4-May 8

Bloom: A Celebration of Spring Art Exhibition, Frankfort

Free. Oliver Art Center, 132 Coast Guard Rd.

Apr 17-24

Manistee Student Art Exhibition, Manistee

Free. Artwork by middle & high school students will be featured. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St. Opening reception: April 17, 5-7pm.

Apr 17-May 29

Waterborne: Great Lakes Past and Present as Seen Through the Artist's Eye, Elberta

Free. Maritime history and culture of the Great Lakes through the works of regional artists. Historical & contemporary photos, paintings, sculpture, crafts & artifacts. Bridges the worlds of art galleries and historical museums. Elberta Labor Heritage Center, 704 Frankfort Ave./M-22. Opening reception: April 17, 5-7pm.

Apr 25-May 30

Local Color A to Z Art Exhibition, Frankfort

Free. Group show of works by the Lakeshore Artist Alliance in oil, acrylic, watercolor & mixed media. Opening reception April 25, 5-7pm.

SAVE THE DATE

May 16

Annual Gala, "Celebrating Broadway Musicals Throughout the Decades", Manistee

5pm. \$125. Ramsdell Regional Art Center fundraiser. All tickets include hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert, entertainment, auction, two cocktails and an evening champagne toast. Deadline to buy tickets is April 30. Info/tickets: RamsdellTheatre.org/gala

May 23

19th Annual Beer & Brat Festival, Thompsonville

4-8pm. Advance general admission tickets thru April 3: \$30, April 4 - May 22: \$40, May 23 (Day-Of): \$55. VIP tickets also available. Live entertainment & samples of Michigan's finest beers, meads, hard ciders, wine, liquor & gourmet brats. Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr. Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/2dv2npcm> or call 866.585.7029.

DAILY EVENTS

EASTER events are listed separately on page 8.

April 1

"The Endless Summer" movie, Frankfort

7pm. Free. Follows 2 young surfers around the world in search of the perfect wave. Garden Theater, 301 Main St.

April 3

Near & Farr Friends, Onekama

11am. Karen Goodman, Manistee County Commissioner, re: what the commission does. Onekama Township Hall, 5435 Main St.

April 4

In concert: Mick Blankenship with Driving Dawn, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$20. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

In concert: Bohemian Queen (Queen tribute), Manistee

9-10:30pm. \$20 at the door. Little River Casino Resort, 2700 Orchard Hwy.

April 6

WSSC Wind Symphony & Drumline, Manistee

7:30pm. Free. Manistee High School auditorium, 525 12th St.

April 7

Mobile Food Pantry, Scottville

10am. Free. Drive thru. Crossroads Church, 1463 E US-10.

April 9

"The History of Church in Benzie County," Benzonia

4pm. \$5 donation suggested. What do Morgan School and Church, Benzie Area Christian Neighbors & the Congregational Christian Assemblies have in common? Find out with Rev. Dinah Haag. Mills Community House, 891 Michigan Ave.

April 10

Near & Farr Friends, Onekama

11am. Deanna Marsh, of Northern Spice Co. and Manistee's DDA, will talk about her store and Downtown Development Authority plans. Onekama Township Hall, 5435 Main St.

Andrew Dost's Birthday Bash, Frankfort

7pm. \$27. Metal Bubble Trio & Little Dipper in concert. The Garden Theater, 301 Main St. Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/4cvmknc9>

April 10, 11, 12

Ten-Minute Play Festival, Ludington

7:30pm Friday & Saturday, 2pm Sunday. \$25 ADV, \$30 DOOR. Eight short plays by Michigan playwrights. Cash bar Friday. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S Harrison St. Tickets: www.ludingtonartscenter.org

April 11

Rust Remover Open Disc Golf Tournament, Beulah

Info/register: discgolfscene.com

6th Annual Ace Race Disc Golf Tournament, Manistee

9am. First Street Beach Family Disc Golf Course. Info/register: discgolfscene.com

Wildlife Baby Shower, Beulah

1-3pm. \$5 donation or purchase items from the Sleeping Bear Wildlife Fund wish list at Amazon and/or Walmart or bring paper towels, medium or large nitrile gloves, Clorox wipes, unscented baby wipes. Featuring games, crafts, an ambassador animal, silent auction, face & arm painting & \$1 off your first beer. Five Shores Brewing, 163 S Benzie Blvd. Proceeds benefit Sleeping Bear Wildlife Fund which offers wildlife education, restores habitats and rehabilitates injured animals.

In concert: Nick Veine presents "An April Serenade," Manistee

6-8pm. Free. Part of the Hardy Hall Series at Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St.

In concert: Subliminal Verses (Slipknot tribute), Cadillac

7-11pm. \$20. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 12 Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, Ludington

1-4pm. Free. Sexual Assault Awareness Walk & Educational Event organized by STRIVE team partner of COVE & LRBOI Victim Service Program. Men and allies of survivors of sexual assault show their support by literally walking a mile in high heels. The event will begin with registration at KRAVE Frozen Yogurt & Drink Shoppe, 103 E Ludington Ave.

ARTIFACTORY 2026: the Power of the American Flag, Frankfort

2-4pm. Free. The community is invited to a special showcase event. ARTIFACTORY participants will have the opportunity to read their original poems aloud and share their artwork with friends, family, and the public. Light refreshments will be served. Every poem created during the program will be published in a 2026 ARTIFACTORY Chapbook. This commemorative collection will be available for purchase, providing a lasting tribute to Benzie County's perspective on the American spirit during this historic year. The celebrated ARTIFACTORY 2026 chapbook will be available for purchase after the readings. More info: oliverart.org



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APRIL 18, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM



"BLOOM" EXHIBITION
INTERPRETATIONS OF SPRING
ON DISPLAY APRIL 4 - MAY 8



"LOCAL COLOR A to Z" EXHIBITION
LAKESHORE ARTIST ALLIANCE GROUP SHOW
OPENING RECEPTION APRIL 25, 5:00-7:00pm

MUSIC, ART, AND FUN ON THE SHORES OF BETSIE BAY
[132 COAST GUARD RD, FRANKFORT - OLIVERART.ORG](https://132COASTGUARDRD.FRANKFORT-OLIVERART.ORG)

April 14

Communication Skills Workshop, Frankfort

10:30am. Free. Dr. Remington Rice helps build stronger, more effective communication skills. How to listen with focus, ask better questions. Benzie Shores District Library, 630 Main St.

Bees Knees Book Club, Beulah

5-7pm. Laid-back no-pressure gathering of book lovers. No assigned books or schedules. Just good company & lively conversation about whatever you are reading or want to recommend. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S Pioneer Rd.

In concert: Ashes Remain with Stephen Stanley, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$25. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

WSSC Concert Choir, Scottville

7:30pm. Free. Center Stage Theater, West Shore Community College, 3000 N Stiles Rd.

April 16

WSSC Jazz Ensemble I & II, Scottville

7:30pm. Free. Center Stage Theater, West Shore Community College, 3000 N Stiles Rd.

April 17

Near & Farr Friends, Onekama

11am. Freshwater Reporter's North Shore Dispatch columnist Mark Banaszak and librarian Katrina Stierholz will present a "nature and observation book tasting" and suggest outdoor observation activities based on the documentary film, "Observer" (2025). Onekama Township Hall, 5435 Main St.

"Souper" Friday, Copemish

5-7pm. Suggested donation: \$15. Fundraiser to benefit the Marilla museum. Soup, salad, bread, dessert & tour of the museum. Marilla Museum & Pioneer Place, 9991 Marilla Rd. No registration required.

13th Annual League of Women Voters' Pictionary Olympics, Manistee

7pm. \$140/team of 4 players. \$10/person for nonplaying spectators. Fundraiser. A "People's Choice" award for the best team costumes. Snacks provided & cash bar available. A 50/50 drawing during the evening. Info/registration: www.lwvmanisteecounty.org

In concert: Whey Jennings, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$20. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 17, 18

Manistee Conservation District Native Seeding Sale Pick Up, Bear Lake

2-6pm Friday, 9am-1pm Saturday, both at 10417 Milarch Rd.

April 18

Lake Ann Open Disc Golf Tournament, Lake Ann

8am. PDGA-sanctioned singles, 2 rounds of 18. Almira Township Park, 7276 Ole White Dr. Info/register: discgolfscene.com

Guided Bird Walk, Onekama

8:30am. Free. Learn about spring migration, bird identification, and local habitats with Dr. Brian Allen. North Point Park, 8999 Greenway St. Registration required: <https://tinyurl.com/2dze7utp>

Ludington Lake Jump

8:45am-1pm. Participants raise money for a new organization each year and jump into the frigid waters of Lake Michigan. This year's jump benefits West Shore Amateur Hockey Assoc. Stearns Park Beach, 421 N Lakeshore Dr.

Quarter Paddle Auction, Brethren

12pm. \$5/paddle. Proceeds benefit Brethren Boosters scholarship awards for KND graduating seniors. Concessions available. Brethren High School, 4400 N High Bridge Rd.

Girls Rock 2026, Ludington

6:30pm doors, 7pm show. Female musicians & artists of all ages perform in a fundraiser to support LACA. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S Harrison St.

In concert: Willy Porter, Cadillac

7-9pm. \$14, 38-28, 29. Gopherwood Concert Series. Cadillac Elks Lodge, 122 S Mitchell St. Info/tickets: gopherwoodconcerts.org

In concert: Sanctus Real, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$25. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 19

Sunday Fun Day, Manistee

All day events benefit Rockhounds Baseball Club. Have lunch or dinner at TJ's Pub (399 River St.) & 10% will go to Rockhounds. Make a purchase at Alpine Chocolate Haus (378 River St.), mention Rockhounds & they will donate up to \$5/sale. 4pm. \$10/adults, \$5/kids for "You Gotta Believe" movie at the Vogue Theater (383 River St.) All ticket sales go to Rockhounds.

2nd Annual All Jazzed Up Paddle Auction, Manistee

10am: Doors open. Auction: 11am-4pm. \$5/paddle. Proceeds benefit the Mariners band students. Boxed lunches & light concessions available. Live performances by the Mariners Jazz Band. MMHS Commons, 525 12th St.

In concert: Exhorder with Skinlab, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$20. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 20-26

Downtown Ludington Restaurant Week

Participating restaurants will have exciting specials, showcasing the best of their culinary creations.

April 21

Bee Roll Movie Club, Beulah

5:30-7pm. Laid-back no-pressure gathering of movie lovers. No assigned films or schedules. Just good company & lively conversation about whatever you have seen lately or classics you want to discuss. St. Ambrose Cellars, 841 S Pioneer Rd.

April 22

Old-time Movies of Lake County, Baldwin

6pm. Free. Lake County Historical Museum, 915 N Michigan Ave.

Prairie Prophecy movie, Frankfort

7pm. Free. Documentary about Wes Jackson, an American geneticist who co-founded the Land Institute which develops perennial grain crops, builds resilient farming systems and supports innovations that help reverse agriculture's contribution to climate change. Presented by Elberta Labor Heritage Center/WUWU Radio at the Garden Theater, 301 Main St.

April 24

Near & Farr Friends, Onekama

11am. Lunch & Aging Well Forum. First Congregational Church, 4920 Spring St.

Arbor Day Celebration, Arcadia

5:30pm. Free. Recognition of tree volunteers, tree-themed poetry by the Girl Scouts, Arcadia Garden Club to speak about planned Grebe Park improvements, ceremonial tree planting. Grebe Park, 16966 First St.

ARCADIA NEWS



Arcadia townsfolk gather for their special Arbor Day celebration.

Arbor Day in Arcadia

By **KRISTINA STIERHOLZ**, Village Correspondent. Photos courtesy of Arcadia's tree committee.

Arcadia's 2026 Arbor Day celebration will take place at 5:30 p.m., April 24, at Grebe Park, 16966 First Street. The location this year highlights the major project for 2026 – the restoration of Grebe Park and the dedication of a memorial to Stacy Berkshire.

Berkshire was key to the revitalization of the Arcadia Garden Club by offering to be its president. She inspired others to join the club through her enthusiasm and love of nature. To honor the impact of her efforts, the Arcadia Garden Club developed a project for Grebe Park, which needs some love and attention. Fundraising for this project has begun, and contributions are gratefully accepted at the township hall.

Arcadia's program for Arbor Day

The Arbor Day event will include a ceremonial tree planting, recognition of the village's tree committee and its volunteers and donors. Among them are John and Carla Sievert, who provide a mobile watering tank that keeps trees watered all summer. The township supervisor will read a proclamation declaring Arbor Day for Arcadia, and then local students – this year it will be the Girl Scouts – will read poems they have written about trees. The Arcadia Lions will provide hot dogs, chips and drinks for the celebration.

Arcadia has begun regular Arbor Day celebrations to support the work of its tree committee. The committee was formed in the fall of 2023 to organize the planting of new trees that would replace those removed due to age and disease. The Lions Club donated \$15,000 from its Arcadia Daze profits to support this effort. In April 2024, Arcadia had the first planting of new trees and its first Arbor Day celebration in many years.

The rejuvenation of Grebe Park will use plants and trees beneficial to the native ecosystem to reflect Indigenous use of the area. Two historical markers are set in large boulders at the park. One of the markers commemorates the site of an Anishinaabek village reportedly located here until the late 19th century. The Grebe family is also honored with a

historical marker. Both markers will be highlighted with the addition of native plants. In addition, the current dry creek bed will be refreshed with new rocks, and the existing fishing statue will be repaired. Other areas in the park will be planted with clump birch and dogwood. Later this year, a crane statue will be installed to honor Stacy Berkshire's love of nature.

National Arbor Day history

Arbor Day is a day set aside to plant trees. It began as the vision of Nebraska City, Nebraska, newspaper editor J. Sterling Morton, who advocated planting trees on the prairie for their beauty and function. Nebraska was virtually treeless, and residents needed trees for shade, windbreaks, fuel and lumber. Trees would also help fill a void felt by those who had moved from forested areas and missed the beauty of trees.

Morton became the secretary of the Nebraska Territory and proposed a tree-planting holiday at the Board of Agriculture in January 1872. The first celebration was April 10, 1872, and it is estimated that more than a million trees were planted that day. Arbor Day was declared an official celebration in Nebraska in 1874 and by 1885 it was a state holiday. Over time, trees were seen as a valuable resource that needed to be sustained, and the annual effort to plant new trees spread.

Now a worldwide celebration, the date for Arbor Day is set by the locality's best planting season. In the United States, the most common date is the last Friday in April, which is the 24th this year. That is the date Michigan will celebrate. (Read about Arbor Day and the Mortons in our April 2020 story by P.G. Misty Sheehan: <https://freshwater-reporter.com/arbor-days-manistee-connection/>.)

J. Sterling Morton, the originator of Arbor Day, said "Arbor Day is not like other holidays. Each of those reposes on the past, while Arbor Day proposes for the future." Or, as the saying goes, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now." Arbor Day celebrates that spirit every year.

COPEMISH NEWS

Marilla's "Souper" Friday fundraiser to serve gourmet soup, dash of history

From a museum announcement.

COPEMISH – The Marilla Historical Society's "Souper" fundraising event will be held Friday, April 17, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at Marilla Museum and Pioneer Place, 9991 Marilla Road. The suggested donation for the museum tour and dinner is \$15 per person, and the meal features homemade soup, salad, bread and dessert. No reservation is required.

"It's a fantastic opportunity to tour our main historical museum and enjoy a gourmet meal," commented Marilla Historical Society President Douglas Glick. "The goal is to connect people in the community, raise funds to support the Museum and have a little Marilla history as a side dish."

The "Souper" menu includes creamy tortellini, tomato and spinach soup; corn and bacon chowder; roasted squash and spinach salad; everything bagel dinner rolls; and pineapple upside down cake with whipped cream.

Settled in 1866, the town of Marilla in northeastern Manistee County became a bustling logging settlement and stagecoach stop in the late 1800s. At one time, the village included a blacksmith, general store and train station along the Manistee and North Eastern Railroad. Standing in the center of this farming community today, you can still spot remnants of old buildings, and the nearby Marilla Museum and Pioneer Place provides a deep look into the rural life of



Souper Friday volunteer Lynda O'Shea. Photo courtesy of Marilla Historical Society.

what is now essentially a ghost town.

The Marilla Historical Society, formed in 1980, has meticulously preserved the stories and artifacts of old Marilla. Two log buildings from the settlement's history and a 100-plus-year-old "wagon barn" have been carefully reconstructed and are available for tours in the summer, beginning May 2. The main museum, located in a 1920s' schoolhouse, is open year-round on Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m.

For more information, visit marillahistory.org or call (231) 379-0040.

ONEKAMA NEWS

Children's art auction, outdoor activities announced



Children's artwork is displayed at First Congregational UCC. Courtesy photo.

Ukrainian Children's Art Auction. Ten original children's artworks, on display at First Congregational United Church of Onekama, are being auctioned online to raise funds for UCARE (Ukrainian Children's Aid and Relief Effort).

The Ukrainian Children's Art Auction is a new mission project of the church. Artwork can be viewed in the fellowship hall. The auction has already begun and ends at 5 p.m., April 18. Winners will be announced April 19 at a Spring Fundraising Brunch, featuring speakers George Kapitanec of UCARE and Paul Hoke of "Cars for Ukraine." UCARE benefits children living in institutions, orphanages and foster care whose parents are at war or lost in war — those internally displaced and homeless, as well as vulnerable youth.

To bid, visit: <http://fcuo.betterworld.org/auctions/ukrainian-childrens-artworks>.

The First Congregational UCC is located at 4920 Spring St. For more information, contact Pastor Alison at (802) 829-3211. ~Submitted by Pastor Allison Dutton Jacobs.

Outdoor recreational activities. The season begins with "Fun with Flight!" guided bird walks at North Point Park led by local birder Dr. Brian Allen. Scheduled walks are: 8:30 a.m., April 18; 8:30 a.m., April 29; and 8 a.m., May 13. Registration is required.

Register (see details below) for the following events beginning May 1.

The annual parks' clean-up is 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., **May 16**. All ages may volunteer to collect sticks, trim plants and move fire pits. Helpers receive a treat and coffee donated by Lake and Latte.

Onekama's Adventure Quest will run **May 22 through June 1**, dawn until dusk, at North Point Park. This program relates a tree's story with crafts and "nature" activities for all.

Save the dates for other events this summer:

- **Kids and Kites Fun Day.** Pop Up in June, Langland Park. Register to be notified of the date.
- **Rockhounding 101 with Leann Burger.** June 19, July 24, Pierport Beach.
- **Annual BioBlitz Citizen Science Event.** June 26, North Point Park.
- **Family Fun Day Beach Party.** Sandcastle contests, volleyball, kites, and nature discovery. Langland Beach. Stay tuned for a date.
- **Beach Yoga.** Gentle yoga. Mondays/Fridays beginning July 6, Langland Beach.
- **Onekama 30-Day Challenge.** July 9-Aug. 8. Walking, cycling, kayaking, sailing and swimming clinics.
- **Adventure in Glen Park.** August 7. Josh Shields and Leann Burger explore the natural/human history of the park.

continued on Page 4



NEWSFLASH! Researchers at U of M's Museum of Paleontology are enroute to Manistee County after a resident found an intact woolly mammoth carcass near his property during a recent thaw. Photo by Phil Joseph. April Fools!



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Onekama

continued from Page 3

- **Butterfly Palooza.** August 7, North Point Park. Celebrate butterflies through learning and crafts.
- **Community Fitness Classes.** Tuesdays/Thursdays beginning August 11. Held in township parks. An Arcadia Community Center partnership.

Additional events planned for Onekama Days include a Waterside Learning program, a parks' Scavenger Hunt, Historic/Modern Lawn games and the search for Onekama's Eldest and Youngest Citizen.

To register, visit OnekamaTwp.org and select Departments – Parks and Recreation – Events. Call 231-443-9101 or email: parks@OnekamaTwp.org. ~ Submitted By Michelle Ervin, Onekama Township Parks and Recreation



Sand castles at a Family Fun Day Beach Party, Onekama.

Quarter paddle

continued from Page 1

products and services of small businesses or vendors, they offer family-friendly auction entertainment, and they raise funds for worthy causes — a win-win-win.

How quarter paddle auctions work

Participants pay a small fee — \$5 per paddle, locally — to enter and receive one paddle. Each paddle is numbered, and an event may allow more than one paddle per participant, which increases their chance of winning and raises more funds for the organization. An auctioneer introduces items one by one, giving credit to the business or entity that donated it, announces the number of quarters required to bid and generally oversees the paddle bidding. This person keeps the event lively and on track. Other volunteers roam the room to collect quarters from bidders and to help relay paddle numbers to the auctioneer.

Before the event, the hosting organization asks for donations of auction items. Auction attendees may look over the items on the



Some items available for bidding at the Mason Stapley auction. Photo: Craig Stapley.



Several hundred people packed Stronach Township Hall for the Mason Stapley Memorial Scholarship Quarter Paddle Auction held last month. Photo: Craig Stapley.

day of the event, often an hour or so before the bidding process begins. Each donated item is designated a bid amount in quarters. The higher the value, the more quarters. When an item is presented, the auctioneer announces how many quarters are needed to bid. To bid, a person raises their paddle(s) to indicate their participation before dropping the designated number of quarters into a collection cup, bowl or basket provided by a volunteer. Attendees must spend the designated amount of quarters to be able to win. If they don't, they don't win the prize, even if their paddle number is drawn. After bidding on an item concludes, the auctioneer pulls a number from a container and announces it. The person holding the corresponding numbered paddle wins the item if they bid the required number of quarters. If the drawn paddle number was not used to place a bid, another number is drawn until a bidder for that item is chosen. Since these events take place over several hours, food and beverages are often

available for sale, and most auctions have \$10 rolls of quarters on hand for purchase.

Where to find quarter paddle auctions

Gather your five spots for paddles and your quarters for bidding and head to one or more of the following events taking place later this month.

April 18: Quarter Paddle Auction, Brethren. The event begins at noon at Brethren High School, 4400 N. High Bridge Rd. Entry is \$5 per paddle. Concessions will be available. Proceeds will benefit Brethren Boosters scholarship awards for Kaleva Norman Dickson (KND) graduating seniors.

April 19: Second Annual All Jazzed Up Paddle Auction, Manistee. Doors open at 10 a.m. and the auction will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Manistee Middle and High School Commons, 525 12th St. Entry is \$5 per paddle. Boxed lunches and light concessions will be available as well as live performances by the Mariners Jazz Band. Proceeds will benefit the Mariners band students.

April 25: Quarter Paddle Auction, Onekama. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. and the auction begins at 4 p.m. at the Onekama Lions Den, Manistee County Fairgrounds, 7587 First St. Entry is \$5 per paddle. No bid over 4 quarters. Food and cash bar available. Proceeds to benefit the Onekama Lions Club.

Mark Videan is a co-editor of the Freshwater Reporter. He enjoys cards and board games and added quarter paddle auctions to his list of fun ways to pass the time.

International Dark Sky Week is April 13-20, 2026

Bring back the Night and protect migrating Birds during GLOBAL ASTRONOMY MONTH

Keep Outdoor Lights to a minimum and window coverings closed at night in April and May.

Learn more at:
audubon.org/our-work/cities-and-towns/lights-out

"Dark Skies" is the theme for this year's Arcadia Daze, July 24-26.

Mud

continued from Page 1

for my waders I would have lost my footwear forever. But I managed to get up with a grin on my face and continued marching on, once again wearing the muddy badge of honor from head to toe.

As I was nearing my empty-nester era, I got serious in obedience training with Moose, my black Labrador. We spent all summer going to classes and learning. Our trainer took us on a mile-and-a-half obstacle course through fields, forests and, you guessed it, MUD! I couldn't sign up fast enough. There were nearly a hundred dogs and handlers there, but I wasn't discouraged. We were there to have fun. Halfway through the course, we faced our first mud obstacle.

This included crawling on my hands and knees through a box full of water gushing over me and into the mud. Well, Moose had other ideas and crawled above me and over the box, instead of rushing fearlessly into the water with me. I could hear people laughing in the background over the roaring of the water. Ultimately, Moose got his chance at it. We both had to crawl through the course's thickest mud, located under a tarp at the end. Yes, mud has been a wonderful, fun and nasty friend to me through the years. It never disappoints. And I don't regret one second of it. I think it's time to find a new adventure with my old friend.

Shannon Courier is a homesteader who lives in Manistee County with her dog, Otter. She loves Jeepin' and paddling.



Moose and I at the final mud obstacle.

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Love that mud

Story and photos by **JOSHUA ELIE**

The alarm rings. I roll over and push myself to my feet because my knees won't bend. It's just part of the job, and the only way to loosen up is to work it off. After waddling down the stairs, I see Uncle Jake (our boisterous, bald-headed, fearless leader) and Big Earl at the kitchen table talking about the day's plan. After quickly scarfing down a slice of cold pizza with lots of hot sauce and downing a beer, I'm out the door, ready for another day in the wonderful world of basement waterproofing, Detroit style.

We get to the job site and five of us (five today, tomorrow ... who knows?) climb out of this big, late '80s Suburban. Earl shoulders his jackhammer. It's not really his, but with his Hulk Hogan size and temperament if he says something is his, it's his! The rest of us grab 5-gallon buckets, shovels and pickaxes and into the basement we go. We put in our earplugs and pull on our paper masks as Earl begins cracking up concrete along the walls. With pickaxes and our hands, we dig up the big, jagged chunks, toss them into buckets, then up and out they go to the trailer. Once full, the trailer's mountain of rubble goes to the crushed-concrete business. Earl and I shovel it out of the trailer while the others start trenching. All the mud and muck (mostly clay) gets piled along the perimeter then carried out in the same fashion, via buckets, when we get back. This may sound like depressing slave labor, but we are all high on natural endorphins and the air is full of wisecracks and laughter.

Lunch time rolls around and we are all about two inches taller from the clay stuck to the bottom of our boots. We always go to the Wheat and Rye, known for their giant sandwiches, because it is my favorite and I am driving. Earl complained one time, but I looked way up at the bottom of his chin and reminded him that I was the foreman. Even he had to laugh at that one. We always try to kick the mud off as best we can in the parking lot, but we still track it everywhere. Restaurant staff never complain. For this I am grateful because I couldn't imagine getting

THE SAUCE BOSS



though the second half of my day without my two Heinekens, pound of sliced corned beef on rye bread and a big deli pickle.

By the end of the day, every day, we were full of mud, head to toe, from kneeling on the muddy banks and digging with our hands in the trench.

I have always loved playing in the mud. As a child I would come home full of mud and smiles, though the smiles came to a stop when I had to strip down to my skivvies in the front yard and wait to be sprayed with a garden hose in cold spring winds. After that there were dirt bikes: four-wheelers, three-wheelers ... "High five for still alive" if you can remember riding three-wheelers. It was a favorite game to see how much mud you could kick in the air in the direction of your fellow riders. After high school, my introduction to the building trades was learning how to build plaster walls, then drywall, stucco, concrete and so on. There are blocks and bricks made of mud bonded together with more mud, tile glued and grouted with mud, and stone embedded in mud. The chemistry behind mixing all these kinds of mud is extraordinary. We often wear our work like mad scientists if the mixture is too loose (too much moisture), or we grunt and groan trying to muscle it into cooperating when it sets up (dries) too fast. One thing's for sure, it's never "light work."

So, if having to spray the spring mud off your car (or kid) wears you out, try the corned beef. It has always gotten me through, even in the trenches.

Joshua Elie is the Irons area handyman, a homesteader and a musician. He is currently studying for his second builder's license.



Top: Corned beef fresh out of the crockpot. Above: Reuben sandwich.

Elie's Perfect Reuben

Did you know that corned beef was originally salt-cured beef, a necessary method of preserving the meat? Today, spices and sweeteners are often added.

- Crockpot corned beef, sliced 3/8" thick – against the grain.
- Rye bread, sliced and grilled
- Sauerkraut
- Swiss cheese, sliced 3/8" thick
- Thousand Island dressing

Cook corned beef with 1/2 cup of water in a crockpot on slow for 6 hours, or until tender. Thousand Island dressing is simply 1/3 cup of mayo, 1/4 cup of ketchup and a tablespoon of pickle relish. Melt the Swiss on top of the corned beef before placing it on the bottom slice of bread, then stack sauerkraut and dressing and cover with the top slice.

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NORTH SHORE DISPATCH

Mud season is maple season

Story by and photos courtesy of **MARK BANASZAK**

Not everyone knows mud season. Many places in the U.S. have no fifth season of the year between winter and spring. In our area, it's when melting snow and ice trigger "frost laws," limiting truck weights and speeds to protect the roads. In mud season, everyone either knows better than to take heavy equipment onto certain parts of a field between February and April, or they know to make popcorn when watching new neighbors try to cross the spots where it gets really soft.

Mud season also lines up with what Native Americans called "sugar month" or "maple moon." In "The Indigenous Origins of Maple Syrup," (American Indian Magazine, Winter 2022), author Tony Tekaroniake Evans wrote that the Haudenosaunee, including the Mohawk (a nation of Iroquois), held ceremonies dedicated to the maple, which included boiling sap, long before the arrival of the colonists. Today, these ceremonies have been revived and are held in early spring to honor the Creator for the return of the sap. In Henry Schoolcraft's time, Native Americans made birch bark boxes to store maple sugar, which became trade goods.

By the 1600s, European settlers began to learn the sugaring process from the Native Americans and to make their own sugar and syrup in the muddy woods. Like Native Americans, settlers found it easiest to boil the sap where it was gathered, so the tradition of sugar shacks developed.

In the fall of 1791, when Thomas Jefferson was Secretary of State, he received a letter from Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Surgeon General of the Continental Army. Rush wrote that "a material part of the general happiness of which heaven seems to have prepared for mankind, will be derived from the manufacture and general use of Maple Sugar."

Since then, maple syrup has been made in the U.S., sometimes on an agricultural scale, to be bottled and shipped across the country. Locally, syrup has been made using evaporators refashioned from oil tanks or barrels, on old pot-bellied stoves, on turkey fryers, or even just in a big pot on the kitchen stove.

In a good sap-running season, it's easy to make enough to last your family a year, with some left over to give to friends. And



Puddle in the woods.



Sap buckets.

it's a great excuse to put on warm clothes and our mud boots, wander around the woods and haul buckets of clear sap — until the cold hits again and we go back inside to warm ourselves by the fire.

Mark Banaszak spent over 30 years as a public school educator, urban community gardener, and outdoor enthusiast. Recently, he transplanted his city life to rural Manistee County.

Area Events Calendar

continued from Page 2

April 24

Ludington's Got Talent

6-8pm. \$20/adults, \$10/kids. Talent show of all ages. Every ticket sold & donation made goes toward Sandcastles Children's Museum's Roof Restoration Fund. Family-friendly event. Guests to enjoy a popcorn bar & beverages. Ludington Area Center for the Arts, 107 S Harrison St.

In concert: Green Jelly & Esham, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$20. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 24, 25

Mason-Lake Conservation District Tree, Shrub & Plant Sale Pick Up, Ludington

2-6pm, Friday. 9am-12pm, Saturday. Mason County Fairgrounds, 5302 US-10.

April 25

Old 'Brose Scramble Disc Golf Tournament, Beulah

One round singles tournament. Info/register: discgolfszene.com

Sportsman's Yard Sale, Kaleva

9am-3pm. Free to attend. New & used, camping, hunting, fishing, boating equipment. Sponsored by Big Bear Sportsman's Club. Kaleva VFW, 13300 9 Mile Rd.

Mason-Lake Conservation District Tree, Shrub & Plant Sale Pick Up, Baldwin

10am-12pm. Wenger Pavilion, 876 Michigan Ave. (behind Jones' Ice Cream)

AFEW's Earth Day Celebration, Ludington

10:30am-4pm. Interactive, in person, all-day event. Variety of speakers & info booths representing the community & our partners. Activities for kids, a guided hike & many fun events, including tours of U Dig It Community Garden located behind the church. Ludington United Methodist Church, 5810 E Bryant Rd.

Crowns & Capes Party: Where Princess Magic meets Superhero Power, Manistee

1-3pm. \$20. Meet Moana, Tiana, Elsa, Ariel, Captain America, and Spiderman. Dress as your favorite prince, princess, or superhero. Each young participant must be accompanied by an adult princess, prince or superhero. Enjoy an

activity with our characters. Say the Superhero Oath. Have your picture taken. Finger foods/drinks included. Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts ballroom, 101 Maple St. Tickets: ramsdeltheatre.org

Quarter Paddle Auction, Onekama

2:30pm Doors, 4pm Auction starts. \$5/paddle. No bid over 4 quarters. Proceeds benefit the Onekama Lions Club. Food & cash bar available. Onekama Lions' Den, Manistee County Fairgrounds, 7587 1st St.

In concert: Twiztid, Cadillac

7-11pm. \$29.50. The Venue Event Center, 902 W 13th St. Tickets: thevenueeccadillac.com

April 26

Gun Show, Kaleva

9am-3pm. Sponsored by Big Bear Sportsman's Club. Kaleva VFW, 13300 9 Mile Rd.

April 28

Weed the Park, Ludington

6-8pm. Free. Volunteer to help AFEW remove invasive plants. Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Bring garden gloves, water. Meet at the gazebo at the end of Rath Ave. by Lincoln Lake. Cartier Park, 1254 N. Lakeshore Dr.

April 29

Guided Bird Walk, Onekama

8:30am. Free. Learn about spring migration, bird identification, and local habitats with Dr. Brian Allen. North Point Park, 8999 Greenway St. Registration required: <https://tinyurl.com/2dze7utp>

An Evening with Matthew Burtner, Frankfort

6-8pm. Emmy Award-winning composer's work bridges music, science, technology and ecology. Known globally for transforming environmental data—such as the rhythms of glaciers, wind, & water—into immersive musical experiences. Hosted by Elberta Labor Heritage Center/WUWU Radio at the Garden Theater, 301 Main St.

April 30

Coffee with the Councilors, Ludington

12pm. Free. Learn about city updates, share ideas & connect with city council members. Book Mark, 201 S Rath Ave.

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Mud that does not kill you makes you stronger

Story and photos by STEWART A. MCFERRAN

"Out of Life's school of war – what does not kill me makes me stronger."—Fredrich Nietzsche, from "Twilight of the Idols."

A group of individuals engaged in outdoor pursuits can have meaningful experiences. Sometimes these include mud.

Like that time after a long day on the Appalachian Trail, we were all hot and dusty. The dust mixed with sweat on our faces. Rusty had a quite dirty face and was ready to give up and quit the course. As we talked, I found he was overwhelmed with family concerns. I admitted there was little I could do to ease his burden. But as I bent down to splash cool water on my face, the mud washed off, and I suggested he do the same. He insisted nothing would help; there was no solution. I stepped back and gave

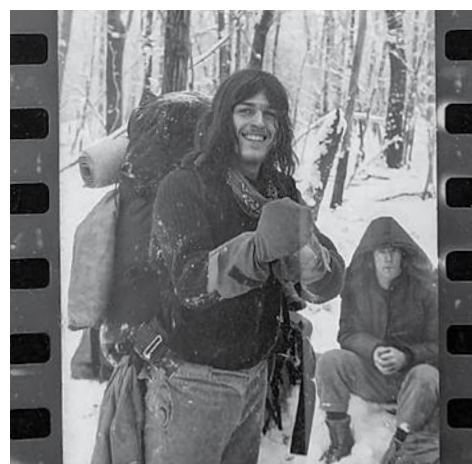
him space to listen to that mountain stream. After a while I saw him splash water on his face and sit down on a rock. He rejoined the group and finished the course.

In my time leading outdoor wilderness adventures, I have talked with many young hikers, climbers and paddlers who were confronted with what seemed like unbearable hardships. Many participants felt the benefit of an extended stay outdoors. Some of the positive aspects of such an experience came not just from the activities but from the interaction with a group of peers.

I led several 26-day wilderness courses for the Carlisle, Pennsylvania-based



Rock climbing.



Harry Christ, known for tying a dirty frying pan to the back of his pack, on the Appalachian Trail.

Appalachian School of Experience. The basic itinerary was to outfit the young folks with camping and hiking gear and drive to a trailhead of the Appalachian Trail in the mountains near Carlisle. After several days hiking on the A.T., we stopped to rock climb. Most students were thrilled to be roped up on a high cliff, and many felt a sense of accomplishment, if not relief, to rappel back down and have their feet on the ground.

We would hike for a few more days on the A.T. then load our gear into a van and drive to the Pisgah Forest in North Carolina with the small crew of 10. At a trailhead, the crew was given a map and compass and directed to navigate to a location where we would set up camp for the night. After more days on the trail, students would camp "solo" for three nights. Some students had difficulty being alone; others loved it and were able to relax and reflect. Three days later we would gather to "debrief."

Then it was off to the Chattooga River, bordering South Carolina and Georgia. Our river guide, Steve Scarborough, founder of Dagger Canoe Company and Dagger paddles, met us there. The students would be wearing lifejackets while paddling whitewater rapids in open canoes outfitted with flotation. Scarborough taught strokes

that required the paddlers to work together to steer the canoe.

On one trip, it rained heavily the final night, and we awoke to mud everywhere. After breakfast, we packed wet camping gear into the back of the van and piled in. The van got stuck in the mud. I asked the young men (there were no females on this trip) to get out and push. As the wheels spun, mud was thrown onto the pushers. They were filthy when they climbed back into the van. This process was repeated several times until we reached the gravel service road. The muddiness completely covered the passengers and seats of the van. As I looked in the rearview mirror, I could see smiles on the faces of these muddy young fellows who had met yet another challenge.

Stewart A. McFerran has led several extended wilderness courses, a college-level environmental field program, and trips into Algonquin Provincial Park, Isle Royale and the Boundary Waters. He notes that leading groups of sometimes volatile young folks in the outdoors with little support is a challenge he is still debriefing.



My NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) group.

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Presented in recognition of National Poetry Month

Survivors: Letter from a Poet

By Louisa Loveridge Gallas

To be a poet is a condition, not a profession. -Robert Frost

Dear readers.

In the café's refuge
or away, in quiet solitude,
huddled close to our journals
we poets thread the world's
bliss and breakage
through the needle
of language.
We often wonder
why this solitary craving?
What is our purpose
as we seek to discover the right
metaphor, rhythm, music, voice
to capture the distilled soul
of our common experience?
Release, for those of us in
an hour of crisis, or joy, or
simply to refresh our senses
like Van Gogh's star-lit cafe
beneath a star-flung indigo sky
painted after dark
by candlelight in his hat.
How we poets,
driven by a passion
as he was, to forge our art,
candles tucked
in our imaginations' caps.
We seek life's most ordinary,
unsung or profound moments
aware of the fragile grace of words
to explore a world where
so much is disappeared
mysterious, forgotten, broken,
betrayed.

Poems, themselves
are often lonely,
neglected
yet survivors.
Yes, poets carry on!
So much is revealed,
even rescued through
their generous
enduring radiance.

P.S. Dear Readers. We do humbly wish you to know we need your companionship!

The Loyalty of Trout Lilies

By Louisa Loveridge Gallas

Hello, friends, do you see how
Spring's early trout lilies always
keep their sunny heads bowed
as if singing the song
of their bloom to the soil?

I want to lower my head
to join their choir
for earth's rebirth.
Or perhaps
the lilies are listening
to the moist good dirt.
For what?

Sounds of new shoots
pressing above ground
after's winter's sleep?
Or in their abundance
are they like the humble
gatherings of kindly monks
in mountain retreats
who meditate constantly
for peace,
for our salvation?

O, may we understand
how truly desperately
these loyal lilies may sense
the urgent care we need
to redeem us from
the sorrows,
the peril we've created
for our earth, ourselves.
So strong is the lilies' belief
if they bend low enough,
pray hard enough
we will get the message?

And yet.
Do you see the gold
of their delicate petals?
Spring's bright promise
that rises again
from fertile darkness
to illuminate
in the human soul
a fresh hope
for renewal.

Cocoon

By Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas

Wearing gloves his mother knit
Earrings from a friend
An old wool work jacket
Shoes bought with a dividend
Flannel-lined pants from that outdoor place
Shirt from four Christmases past
An Army-Navy surplus bag
Craft-fair scarf and hat
Wrapped in wool and memories
Secure to face the day
All these pieces make me whole
Unfurled wings, then fly away

Citizen Superpower

By Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas

Register to vote
NOW or when eighteen
A right and a privilege
Be part of the process
Don't let others decide your fate
Vote, vote, vote
It's your citizen super power
For our present and our future
Mark the boxes
Because you can
Know your polling places!
Vote, vote, vote
Who are our representatives
And issues large or small?
What are the referendums?
It's your strength and power
Don't let others decide for you!
Vote, vote, vote
Vote for things you care about
New issues every year
Read to know decisions
Use your superpower citizen!
Before power uses you!

Feet of Clay

By Pat Stinson

New, shiny, black patent leather
reflects the sky, my forehead
as I kneel in the leaves,
lean toward the strap,
loosen the clasp
to relieve my sore foot.

I made my escape
from the stench of wood polish
and harsh echoes of
Mother's heels striking
the rigid church floor as she
readied the altar for Easter.

Quietly tip-toeing, so my own heels
wouldn't give me away,
I slipped out the side exit,
grasped the heavy metal door tightly,
prayed it wouldn't slam shut
like Heaven's gates
on sinful little girls.

Now, standing from my crouch,
pinched foot pulsing with relief,
I skip toward the wooded hill.
Sun lights the way
and leaves stick
to my soles not saved
from earthly temptation.

Before the ridge, a surprise.
In squishy mud my shoes sink.
My heart follows.
Mother's words bellow in my mind:
"PATRICIA ANN!"

Damned by my boredom,
double-crossed by Nature,
I await Hell.

Trees

By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

(This poem, submitted by Kristina Stierholz, is in the public domain.)



Judy Twigg and Steve Utic, chair of Arcadia's tree committee, help plant a tree during Arbor Day activities.

Communities join, receive awards during Tree City USA's 50th

From a Michigan DNR announcement
REGION—Ludington and Frankfort are among 14 communities to recently receive a Growth Award "for going above and beyond." Now in its 50th year, Tree City USA will give the winners some award materials for their efforts to promote and care for public trees in their communities.

Glen Arbor in Leelanau County is one of five new villages, cities and townships to recently join Tree City USA, an initiative of the Arbor Day Foundation.

Tree City USA communities located in our area of northwest lower Michigan include: Cadillac, Frankfort, Glen Arbor, Ludington, Manistee and Traverse City.

Learn more about Arbor Day Foundation's global programs and the Tree City USA initiative at: arborday.org.



Right: Watercolor and ink by Iris Replogle. Far right: Watercolor and ink collage by Louisa Loveridge Gallas, created for the upcoming "Blooms" show at Oliver Art Center, Frankfort.

History of the Easter Bunny and his eggs

By **GRACE GROGAN**

Most of us grew up with the Easter Bunny traditions and accept them, but have you ever wondered why a rabbit delivers eggs? Believe it or not, the symbolism of what many consider a pagan tradition during a Christian holiday has religious tones.

The Easter Hare tradition arrived in the United States with German immigrants in the 1700s. Still, it wasn't until 1951 when the popular song, "Here Comes Peter Cottontail," made it to No. 3 on the Billboard charts. What happened in approximately 250-plus years to get us from a live, brown hare to a white, animated candy-delivering creature hopping down the bunny trail?

Bunny background

In the Neolithic era in Europe, hares and humans were buried side by side. This was a religious ritual in which the hare represented rebirth. Julius Caesar declared in 51 B.C.E. that hares were not to be eaten because of their religious significance, (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-ancient-origins-of-the-easter-bunny-180979915/>).

In Greek mythology, Aphrodite, the goddess of love, considered hares to be sacred. Throughout the Renaissance period, hares were considered symbols of sexuality. The Virgin Mary was often pictured with a white hare or rabbit, symbolizing her overcoming sexual temptation.

Other traditions around the holiday varied. The Village of Hallaton in Leicestershire, England, holds a Hare Pie Scramble, where people compete for a piece of pie made with hare meat. The event is still held today, and the parish church blesses the special recipe. The event takes place on Easter Monday, and historically, the villagers would fight over food and drink, (<https://www.efds.org/learning/resources/beginners-guides/48-british-folk-customs-from-plough-monday-to-hocktide/3388-hare-pie#>).

Do you believe in Easter witches? Eating hare was used in folk traditions to scare away the witches. In Germany, Osterfeuer, or Easter Fire, were outdoor fires built to scare away witches. Over time, this pagan tradition was adopted by Christians and incorporated into their Easter services. The burning of the Easter Fire symbolized the beginning of a new Easter Vigil and the rebirth of Christ, (<https://www.hamburg.com/visitors/holidays/easter-bonfires-22822>).

In England during the eighth century, the month of April was called Eosturmonath, or Eostre Month. A pagan spring festival was named for Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess assimilated into the celebration of Christ's resurrection. The Easter Bunny is believed to also derive from pre-Christian spring



Easter Bunny. Photo: Grace Grogan.



Vintage cardboard Easter bunny in hyacinths with a paper basket of eggs. Photo: Pat Stinson.

celebrations of rebirth through blooming flowers, egg-laying and baby bunnies. (See the above Smithsonian link.)

Egg decorating

Decorating eggs goes back to the 13th century. A forbidden food during Lent, eggs would be decorated as the end of the fasting period approached, making their Easter feast with them feel more celebratory, (<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/easter-ideas/a31226078/easter-bunny-origins-history/>). The origins of the tradition of coloring Easter eggs are open to speculation. In 1290, King Edward I in England ordered 450 eggs colored or covered in fancy gold leaf to be presented to royal relatives, (<https://www.thekitchn.com/the-history-of-decorating-easter-eggs-243251>).

There are also stories of the Virgin Mary carrying a basket of eggs to the soldiers guarding Jesus, and of her tears staining the eggs red. Over the years, various methods of

coloring eggs have been used, including painting, wax and dye, and the mass-produced egg-dyeing kits of today. If you want to go natural, use onion skin, tea bags, purple cabbage and turmeric for color.

Easter symbolism

Both hares and eggs symbolize fertility and the chance of life in the spring. Tradition in Germany held that the Easter Hare would evaluate children's behavior. Good children would receive colored eggs, candy and toys delivered in a basket by the Easter Bunny. The Bunny and eggs symbolize the resurrection and new life of Jesus, (<https://www.chaseoaks.org/articles/the-easter-bunny-whats-the-history-behind-this-tradition>).

In our modern celebrations, the eggs and bunny symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This Christian belief differs from every other religion. Only in Christianity has anyone been crucified, died, and risen from the dead, then shown himself to hundreds of people. The egg has no religious connection, but some consider it symbolic of the stone blocking the tomb, which was rolled away, leading to the resurrection. (<https://www.history.com/articles/easter-symbols>)

Hunting and rolling

The Easter egg hunt began in Germany in the 1600s. Children hunted for eggs hidden by the Easter hare. (Stet, Smithsonian). The tradition arrived in the U.S. when German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania during the 1700s. They also brought the tradition of the hare traveling from home to home, leaving eggs and gifts in baskets set out by the children, (<https://bunniesbythebay.com/blogs/how-to-delight/the-unusual-history-of-the-easter-bunny>).

By the 19th century, decorating and hunting eggs were popular pursuits in the U.S. The first White House Easter Egg Roll was held in 1878 under President Rutherford B. Hayes, (<https://www.history.com/articles/easter-symbols>). The event usually includes egg-rolling races, live music, storytelling and picture-taking with the Easter Bunny.

We must not forget the beautiful gold chocolate bunny created by Lindt's chocolate. This Easter favorite was created in 1952 after a Lindt chocolatier's daughter saw a bunny hopping across the lawn during the Easter meal. When she went outside to play with it, it was gone. Not wanting his daughter to be upset, the chocolatier created a gold-covered bunny with a signature ribbon she would always be able to find, (<https://www.chocolate.lindt.com/world-of-lindt/gold-bunny-history>).

The history of the Easter Bunny and his eggs is a conglomeration of religion, folk tradition, adaptations and creativity. He has transformed over time from a traditional brown hare in Europe to our perky-eared

Area Easter Events

Compiled by **MARK VIDEAN**

April 1

Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny Visit, Ludington

2pm. Free. For kids up to age 12. Oakview Medical Care Facility, 1001 Diana St.

April 4

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Easter Egg Hunt, Arcadia

Breakfast from 9-11am with egg hunt to follow. Suggested donation for breakfast: \$12/adults, \$5/kids ages 5-12. Arcadia Community Center, 3586 Glovers Lake Rd.

Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny Visit, Frankfort

9:45am-12pm. Free. For kids 1-12. Bring basket or bag to put eggs in. Mineral Springs Park, 630 Main St.

Crystal Lake Community Business Association Easter Egg Extravaganza, Benzonia

1-1:30pm. Free. Memorial Park, 6869 South St.

Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny Visit, Benzonia

1-2pm. Free. Bring basket or bag to put eggs in. Memorial Park, 6869 South St.

Easter Egg Hunt, Ludington

1pm. Free. For kids up to age 12. Rain or shine. Cornerstone Baptist Church, 121 Nelson Rd.

Super Easter Scavenger Hunt, Ludington

1pm. Free. Ages 10-17 are invited for fun & candy. Solve the clue to locate the next prize. Hang out in the rec room for pool, ping pong & more. St. John's Lutheran Church, 209 N Rowe St.

Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny Visit, Baldwin

1-3pm. Free. For kids 1-12. Bring a basket to collect eggs. Duane E. Dewey AMVETS Post No. 1988, 1959 W 24th St.

Sauble, Eden, & Elk Fire Departments Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Bunny Visit, Irons

1:30pm. Free. For kids 1-12. Skinner Park, 5074 W 10 1/2 Mile Rd.

Love Out Loud Easter Egg Scramble, Ludington

4-6pm. Free. Event includes egg scrambles for all ages, prizes & candy-filled eggs, games & activities, free food & family fun, and giveaways for all ages. Living Word Church, 301 N Jebavy Dr. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/yxc994ev>

Egg My Yard, Mason County

\$25 for 30 eggs, \$45 for 50 eggs, & \$65 for 70 eggs. Empty baskets available for \$5 each. Ludington Area Jaycees will deliver/hide pre-filled candy and treat eggs to registered homes in the evening before Easter Sunday for a hassle-free Easter Egg hunt on Easter morning. Supporting the Ludington Area Jaycees community programs. Available to households in Mason County. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/ytvh4mxh>

white rabbit who delivers candy and eggs to children in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Grace Grogan was born and raised in Michigan. In 2019, she began living and traveling full-time in an RV with her partner, Paul Cannon. In 2025, she settled in Arizona, returning to the beautiful Great Lakes State every summer.

Where to find the Easter Bunny

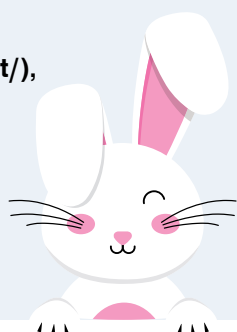
By **GRACE GROGAN**

If you have little ones, follow the Bunny as he delivers eggs and candy to children using the Easter Bunny Tracker: https://trackeasterbunny.com/easter-bunny-tracker#google_vignette.

Download the app "Text and Call Easter Bunny" to listen to pre-recorded messages at <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/call-easter-bunny/id978578573>.

Want to start a field-trip tradition? Kids can enjoy a 90-minute ride on the Bunny Train out of Coopersville (<https://mitrain.net/>), located north of I-96 between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids. Or try the Bunny Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth, (<https://www.bavarianinn.com/events/bunny-breakfast-easter-egg-hunt/>).

Check out area Easter egg hunts and events in the accompanying schedule.



FRESHWATER REPORTER

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