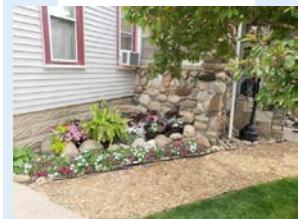




page 6

Main Street Housing



page 9

New distillery



page 8

Funny Book Forum



page 10

\$1.00



The clover lawn takeover

by Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

On Thursday, June 1, 2023, Megan Getz posted the following comment to the Lowell MI Community Chatter Facebook group page: “I’m not sure if you’re here, but to the house with the planted clover lawn on Woodbushe, I love what you’re doing!!” It was an uncommonly kind post, and of the 45 comments it garnered, none were negative. This is an accomplishment on a Facebook group rife with trolls bullying people they disagree with, attacking anonymous posters, and lambasting people’s desire for marijuana shops and Aldi, as it is for Facebook as a whole, where people are emboldened to say horrible things to their peers that they would never say face-to-face. Jeff and Ali Lambert were quick to take credit for the lawn in question. Recent transplants from Colorado, the Lambert family, Jeff, Ali, and daughters Reagan (9), Charlotte (7), and Natalie (2) moved into a house in a development so new there

was no native grass.

“My husband said, ‘Hey, we’re in Lowell Chatter,’ and I was like, ‘Oh no, what did we do?’” Ali said. “When that sweet lady did that, and all the positive comments, it made my whole month. It was so sweet.”

Jeff noted that the Lamberts are now “Lowell Famous”, which is funnier still from a neighbor moving to Lowell from a big city like Denver, Colorado. Yet, Getz’s comment is not the only acclaim the Lambert residence has received for their clover lawn. Jeff has caught a number of neighbors checking out his lawn, and while some among the old guard think it looks bad, the vast majority have responded like Getz. Jeff works from home every now and then, and his office is at the front of the house, so he has witnessed the cars slowing down as drivers admire his lawn.

Four days after the post in question, the City of Lowell, Michigan Facebook

Clover,
continued page 2



Reagan (9) and Natalie (2) Lambert race through the clover, and though clover is often described as more delicate than grass, it does not seem to have any problem bouncing back from these two children’s constant play.

Finding the dark sky: A trip to the Veen Observatory

by Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

The sun sets over Kissing Rock Avenue, a dirt road on the outskirts of Lowell, still far enough from the sprawl to be unobtrusive

to the impending dark sky. Volunteers, some, perhaps, not old enough to drive themselves, usher automobiles into grass parking spots. At the foot of the hill is a Grand Rapids

Amateur Astronomical Association (GRAAA) member with a fold-out table. He is part-cashier, collecting admissions before ushering guests up the hill, and part-hype man.

“Ask lots of questions,” he says to a pair of children, as if it is a solemn oath. The kids have never been here before, but everyone who walks up that hill for the first time is a lifelong member in potentia. The future, like the moon in the sky, is bright, if the clouds do not intervene and the city does not assimilate.

The James C. Veen Observatory is a narrow one-story building with an Ash-Dome, housing complex scientific instruments at each



Observatory
continued page 8

Let me be dead: The dark side of deepfake

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

In the preamble to his *Esquire* article, titled “The Unbridled and Mildly Horrifying Evolution of CGI Luke Skywalker,” writer, Brady Langmann, makes an odd request: “When I die, do not resurrect me via CGI. Do not reproduce the monotonous sound of my voice via a voice synthesizer. Do not hire, and digitally alter, a body double that vaguely looks like me. Please. Let me be dead.”

Langmann’s quote is a response to Disney’s current position on artificial intelligence (AI). Luke Skywalker’s appearance in the second season finale of *The Mandalorian* brought a new understanding to the phrase “return of the

Jedi,” but the decision is less a means of including actor Mark Hamill in the future of *Star Wars* than it is a means of phasing him out. In *The Book of Boba Fett*, actor, Graham Hamilton, did motion-capture work and served as the canvas upon which AI-reconstructed images of young Hamill were painted, which prompted fan outrage because Hamilton is a dead ringer for 1982 Hamill. Twitter user @JohnXuandou summed it up best: “Imagine finding the most perfect human that could ever exist for this role, a statistical anomaly, and then deciding that you’re gonna cover his face in a bunch of CGI goop

AI, continued
page 3

Clover, continued

page issued its own post, announcing “an odd-even outdoor water restriction for municipal customers that goes into effect immediately through Sept. 30.” This controversial measure is a follow-up to similar restrictions in 2022, due to limited capacity at the city’s water treatment plant, compared to population and usage expansions in Lowell and Vergennes townships. Clover lawns, like that of

the Lambert family, are “drought-tolerant... staying green year-round, even in northern hardiness zones,” according to an article by Lori Lovely on Bob Vila’s website. Perhaps lawns like these are worth the city’s notice.

Lowell City Manager, Mike Burns, has been planning for this summer’s drought since the drought of 2022, working diligently to seek solutions for the

community’s water needs, but for the Lambert family the word “drought” is not a word you use for minor sprinkler limitations and green-brown grass. Living in Colorado, droughts were much more severe than in the Great Lakes region. There, a drought means that the rivers are emptied of their water, and hard, cracked riverbeds are left in their wake.

The Lamberts are bright - anyone talking to them would know; Jeff works in IT, and Ali is a pandemic power mom with a knack for research.

However, to say that they came to Michigan in order to spread the good news of clover lawns is not just an overstatement; it is flat-out incorrect. In fact, the Lamberts became clover lawn stewards completely by accident.

“No body intentionally wanted it,” Jeff said. The whole thing was a comedy of errors beginning in spring of 2022, when a neighbor hired a company to hydroseed their yard, and the yard was accidentally seeded with clover. When the neighbors noticed the error, the company removed the seed and replaced it with grass, but clover is opportunistic - it expands wherever it can - and before the Lamberts knew, it had overtaken their own yard.

The Lamberts debated whether or not they wanted to keep the clover, and this is where Ali’s exemplary research skills came in; she scoured the internet, joined

Facebook groups all over the country, and watched clover TikToks, and earlier this year, prior to the Lowell Chatter post, they decided to keep their lawn as is.

The accidental clover lawn recipients have transformed into some of the biggest advocates for clover in the area, and now, with a *Lowell Ledger* article as well, a public accident followed by a public social media post has extended the reach of their message. Not only is clover drought-resistant, the Lamberts note, but it is softer and more affordable too. The Lamberts lamented paying a pretty penny to hydroseed their lawn with grass, when, according to Facebook commenter, Sara Hood, they could have purchased “an acre’s worth of clover seed at [Tractor Supply] for less than \$25.” Clover attracts bees and other pollinators, whose absence and presence are intimately connected to scarcity and abundance in the food chain, and it attracts rabbits, as well who, in addition to being adorable, provide fertilizer for Ali’s garden. Clover lawns are also low-maintenance. “Clover is great for the lazy family,” Ali boasted.

“We really don’t have to mow every week,” Jeff added. “We could go two or three weeks without mowing, and it still looks pretty decent... The clover fits into my lifestyle of having a green lawn and still spending time with my kids.”

The Lamberts have more time as a family, and they are more healthy, as well. Ali and the girls suffer from grass allergies, but the clover prevents the coughs, sneezes, and skin irritation they used to experience after playing outside or gardening.

The city of Lowell has entertained a number of solutions to its water crisis. Council members are



Natalie Lambert (2) dons a pair of fairy wings and a contagious grin as she plays on her soft, green clover lawn.



The Lambert family, on Woodbushe Drive, may have become accidental owners of a clover lawn, but they have also become advocates for the features and benefits clover offers compared to grass.

Correction

In the June 28, 2023 edition of the Lowell Ledger, the Prior Noon: LowellArts Artist of the Month story misspelled the name of the lead singer, it should have read McKenna Grody, not Gordy.

the lowell ledger

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AI continued

so that instead of looking like the real person he is, he looks like a weird unnatural version of himself.”

Even amidst the 2023 Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike, where union writers protest the practice of AI scriptwriting, Disney has doubled-down on its use of “deepfake” and other generative AI technology. A deepfake is a video of a person in which images, and occasionally audio, have been digitally altered to impersonate someone else. Many are fun, like those of Nicolas Cage’s face superimposed over every actor in every movie ever, but far more are used to harass, demean, and spread false information. It is no wonder that Disney features

AI-generated images in the opening credits of the Marvel miniseries *Secret Invasion*, which depicts fan-favorite characters replaced by alien Skrulls. The Lola VFX de-aging technology, used to transform Hamill into Luke Skywalker, has been used in nearly every Marvel movie since *Iron Man* in 2008, a trend that is unlikely to end in the near future.

Hamill may be popular for *Star Wars*, but he has received much more critical acclaim for his voice acting work, such as his depiction of The Joker in *Batman: The Animated Series* and beyond, and yet Disney chose to replace his voice using AI voice cloning software designed by Ukrainian

start-up Respeecher. In fact, Respeecher synthetic-speech artist, Bogdan Belyaev, was hard at work de-aging James Earl Jones’ voice for the Obi-Wan Kenobi miniseries, when the Russian army invaded his home town of Lviv on February 24, 2022. Belyaev’s work is only possible because Jones, contemplating retirement from the role, gave permission for Disney to use archival recordings of his voice to keep Vader on life-support for years to come.

At Megacon Orlando, actress Katee Sackhoff expressed interest in similarly preserving her character Bo Katan. She told ComicBook.com’s Chris Killian, “I mean, if my family reaps the benefit of that? Yeah, of course.”

For Sackhoff, this is an investment in the people who matter most to her, but her statement assumes consent, integrity, and payment, which are rarely present in the production of deepfakes. In fact, the term “deepfake” was coined by a Redditor in 2017 who posted a number of doctored depictions of Wonder Woman actress, Gal Gadot, generated using machine-learning algorithms. Similar falsified, nonconsensual videos have surfaced featuring Emma Watson, Natalie Portman, Taylor Swift, Sophie Turner, Maisie Williams, and Meghan Markle. Actress Scarlett Johansson, who has seen her own likeness soiled by internet deepfake videos, sports a pessimistic view on the subject.

“The fact is that trying



Actor Graham Hamilton’s face is covered with reflective dots so his movement can be tracked by motion capture software in order to recreate Return of the Jedi-era Luke Skywalker using deepfake technology designed by Lola VFX. Fans wonder why Hamilton, who so greatly resembles Mark Hamill, is not simply recast in the role of Luke Skywalker.

Girl Scouts honored

Lowell Girl Scout Troop 3986 honors seven seniors. These young women have been actively involved in scouting for the last 10 to 13 years. They not only earned badges, traveled, learned many skills, but also spent countless hours volunteering to make the Lowell community a better place. As a troop, they persevered during the COVID pandemic by having their meetings on ZOOM, while continuing to earn several badges. These young women show how to continue and lead through difficult times.

All of them received their Bronze and Silver Awards and were recently honored at a ceremony for their years in scouting and as graduating seniors. Two troop members, Caydence Pawloski and Makayla Socall, were also honored for earning the highest award in Girl Scouts, the Gold Award.

Jodi Socall has been the leader of this troop for 13 years. Her assistant troop leader, Erin Pawloski, has been with the troop for the last seven years.



(L-R) Makayla Socall, Caydence Pawloski, Emma Proctor, Samantha Cazier, and Jenna Scott (not pictured) Alyssa Aguilar and Delaney Viewig.



Gold Award Recipients: Makayla Socall and Caydence Pawloski.

to protect yourself from the Internet and its depravity is basically a lost cause,” Johansson said. “The Internet is a vast wormhole of darkness that eats itself.”

Langmann’s request not to be resurrected by deepfake technology was hyperbolic, if not entirely sarcastic, but the cries of, “That’s not me,” coming from thousands of victimized girls and women across social media, are deeply serious. Disney is not directly responsible for the proliferation of deepfake technology, and if they did not use it, someone else certainly would.

However, it is impossible to dissociate public acceptance of deepfake Luke Skywalker from public acceptance of deepfake technology as a whole, including its seedier applications that make up the vast majority of its use. Mark Hamill has not commented on the similarity in technology between the algorithms that keep him artificially youthful and the algorithms that debase castmate Daisy Ridley, but if the consequences include the rampant victimization of girls and women worldwide, a responsible viewer must wonder who benefits from fan silence.

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Book Corner

By Sierra Hieshetter
contributing writer

Cloud Cuckoo Land, by Anthony Doerr, is a complex, weaving story spanning multiple timelines, characters and storylines. It feels like an intimidating story to get into, and at first, it definitely felt overwhelming. But once I fell into the story, the pages flew by and the book became an enthralling narrative that I couldn't put down. The story centers the ancient legend of Aethon, a humble peasant who longs to turn into a bird and ascend into the paradise city of Cloud Cuckoo Land, a heaven-like city in the sky. Aethon's story is already centuries old, when children Anna and Omeir use it to endure the invasion of Constantinople in the 15th century. Aethon's story then comes to mean hope and promise for a group of middle schoolers presenting a play version of the story, in a small town in Idaho,

in the present day. Finally, Aethon's story inspires Konstance, a child living on a spaceship in a not-so-distant future. The weaving of these people's lives with Aethon's legend creates one of the most beautiful stories I have ever read. It was honestly refreshing to read a story that was unabashedly happy to be a story. The intricacies of the writing were so easy to get lost in, and I was genuinely sad to finish this book!

Plot Details (via Goodreads):

When everything is lost, it's our stories that survive.

Constantinople, 1453:

An orphaned seamstress and a cursed boy, with a love for animals, risk everything on opposite sides of a city wall to protect the people they love.

Idaho, 2020:

An impoverished, idealistic kid seeks revenge on a world that's crumbling around him. Can he go

through with it when a gentle old man stands between him and his plans?

Unknown, Sometime in the Future:

With her tiny community in peril, Konstance is the last hope for the human race. To find a way forward, she must look to the oldest stories of all for guidance.

Bound together by a single ancient text, these tales interweave to form a tapestry of solace and resilience and a celebration of storytelling itself.

This is definitely not a book for everyone, as it was admittedly hard to get into. The story bounces back and forth between the timelines, characters and stories, in a way that was disorienting at first. However, once I grasped the pattern in the writing and became invested in each individual character, the book felt more like a mysterious adventure than an arduous journey. Doerr does an impeccable job of balancing each storyline together to make the plot seem absolutely cohesive. It sounds impossible, but Doerr excels at not only making the story understandable, but

making it one I was invested in almost from the very beginning.

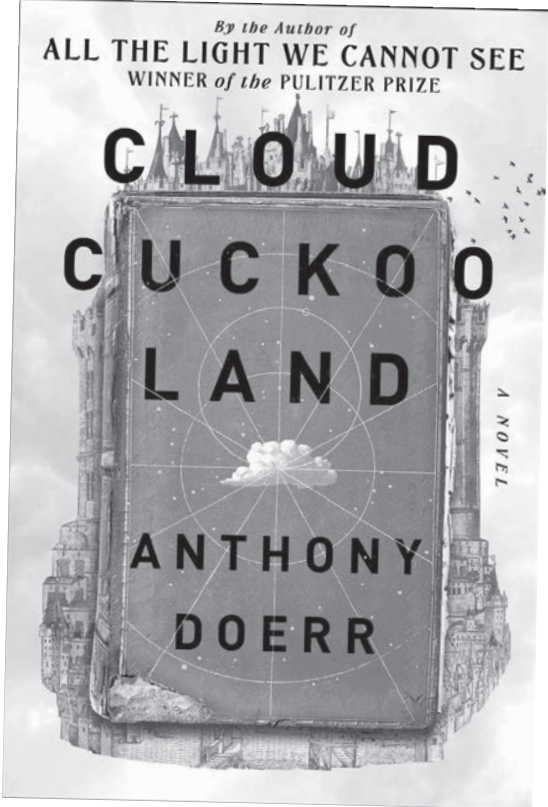
Anna and Omeir's lives weave together within their own time. Anna is an immediately likable character with a fierce love for learning and a quick temper. Her enthusiasm for knowledge and self-preservation is admirable, even as her entire life seemingly crumbles around her when her home of Constantinople comes under siege. Omeir's life starts in a precarious place, and it continues that way when he and his beloved oxen are conscripted to join the siege of Constantinople. The two of them set out on a journey in tandem, and waiting for their stories to connect is tantalizing and exciting.

Zeno is a kind, empathetic, and selfless man who takes his role as the director of a troupe of unruly middle-schoolers very seriously. His history as a Korean War veteran, and his love for ancient Greek texts, leads him to the helm of a production of the *Cloud Cuckoo Land* story starring enthusiastic middle-schoolers. The present-day timeline also centers Seymour, a troubled teenager struggling with his changing world. This part of the story is the one that centers generational storytelling as vital to preserving societal knowledge. The strength and wisdom Zeno carries into his proteges is truly inspiring.

Finally, Konstance's story is the one that is intriguing and mysterious from the beginning. Only a child, she has to use Aethon's story to discover hard truths about her own life on an interstellar

spaceship, hurtling through the cosmos with a generational purpose. This part of the story, more than the others, showcases the importance of storytelling. The centuries old story weaves through all of the timelines that came before

I was able to read this story from a physical book. I really enjoyed that experience; I thought it made the interweaving plots easier to understand, and I appreciated the ability to go back to different chapters and track how time



her, giving Konstance the knowledge she needs to succeed.

I love Doerr's writing style. It prioritizes deep character descriptions, interpersonal connections, and vivid settings to further the plot. It is a detailed-oriented story, and I loved it. I can see how it would be tedious to some readers, and I'll admit that the many specifics could slow down the story at times, but the intricacies of the story also allow you to get lost in the lives of each character, which I see as a major plus.

Let's talk about the best way to read *Cloud Cuckoo Land*. I am a huge advocate for audiobooks as a perfect option for busy readers, but surprisingly,

and place was changing. However, my mom (who recommended this book to me), swears that the audiobook adds some wonderful aspects to the overall experience. So choose whichever fits best in your routine!

I would highly recommend this book. Even if wide-sweeping stories aren't always your cup of tea, this book does a wonderful job grounding the huge swaths of time and space around characters that feel real and human. The character work is truly what makes this story shine for me, and it is the reason this book is one of my favorites of the year so far.

college news

Albion College recognizes Class of 2023 graduates, recipients of academic awards, and Dean's List and Albion College Fellow honorees. Saranac student, Chase Potter, graduated summa cum laude with a degree in biochemistry. This degree

was awarded with Phi Beta Kappa honors. Potter also received recognition for having the highest GPA among the Class of 2023 at the College's annual Honors Convocation. Potter is the child of Jodi Potter of Saranac and is a graduate of Saranac High School.

Saranac student, Megan Chipman, was named to Albion College's Dean's List for the Spring 2023 semester. Chipman is majoring in English and is a member of the Prentiss M. Brown Honors Program. Chipman is a graduate of Saranac High School.

Lowell student William Neeley was named to Albion College's Dean's List for the Spring 2023 semester. Neeley is majoring in

combined engineering/physics. Neeley is a graduate of Lowell High School.

Albion College is a private liberal arts college of approximately 1,500 students and is nationally recognized for its academic excellence in the liberal arts tradition, a learning-centered commitment, and a future-oriented perspective. The College is a leader in preparing students to anticipate, solve, and prevent problems in order to improve the human and global condition. Albion immerses students in the creation and processing of knowledge, and graduates skilled architects of societal change, active citizens, and future leaders. The College is dedicated to the highest quality in undergraduate education and is committed to diversity as a core institutional value.

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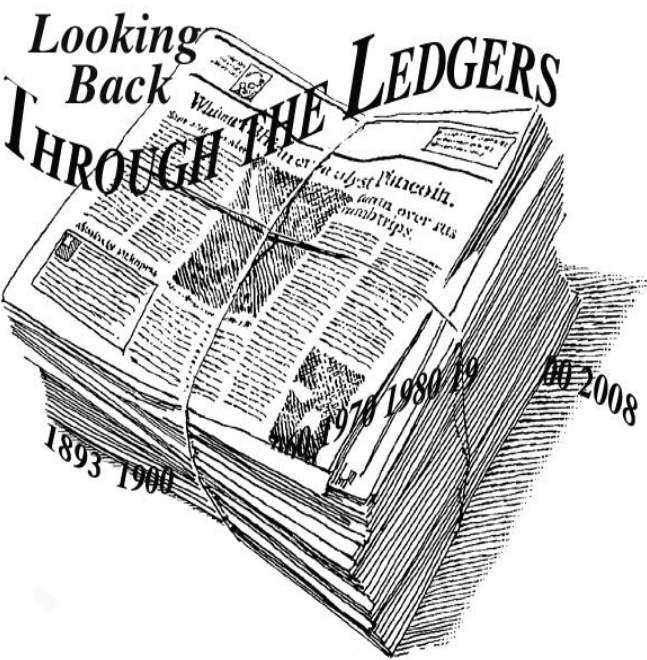
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viewpoint



150 years ago The Lowell Journal July 2, 1873

The last day of school passes with recitations and declamations by students for a small audience of visitors. Prof. Hicks awards Ida Cogswell \$3 in silver, first prize and Edwin Stevens, second prize, \$2 in silver.

The marshal complains of “handsome but immodest” young men bathing in Flat River.

Husted’s Nursery is one of the largest and finest in the state, noted for peach trees.

“Hampson’s ‘Sea Foam’” is a fine thing for the hair. A bottle of this article was left at our office the other day, and we haven’t seen a sign of Dan Druff since.”

125 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 7, 1898

James Rawson & Son, of Grand Rapids, will build the new ward school building for \$2,500, finishing by September 1. The fine for late completion is \$25 per day.

The Hooker Pioneer Society has its annual dinner and social. They mention the myriads of mosquitoes in the summer of 1852.

Be sure to attend the annual school meeting next Monday, or the new state textbook law will force a wholesale change in textbooks.

Dr. S.S. Lee is appointed by the University of Michigan to be resident house physician in the Calumet & Hecla Mining Co. Hospital in the U.P.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 5, 1923

Fourteen people drown in Michigan over the weekend and four die in auto accidents.

The State Fair at Detroit will award \$100,000 in premiums and have the Highland Kilties Band from Scotland, plus elephants ridden by Hindus and giant fireworks displays.

Sectional bookcases are advised for the home library.

This week’s radio articles include a diagram and discussion of the “reflex circuit.”

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 1, 1948

The Lowell Showboat amateur try-outs will be held on Saturday night, July 17, according to C.H. Runciman, amateur night chairman.

Michigan’s dairy industry, first among the farmers’ money-makers, brought state dairymen a total of approximately 228 million dollars in 1947.

Two-hour parking signs have been placed on Main Street, between Hudson and Washington, to make more space for out-of-town cars.

The National Safety Council estimates that there are 10 vehicles for every mile of street or road in the U.S.

The Ledger reminds readers that state law doesn’t allow any toy devices in which explosives are used.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life July 5, 1973

Saturday night, July 14, will find over 35 of Michigan’s most talented, non-professional show-business acts competing for 12 coveted spots to appear on the Lowell Showboat, during the two weekend performances, July 19-21 and 26-28.

City of Lowell’s new ordinance requires “any structures within the City in which sanitary sewage is originating...to be connected to said system...within 18 months after the system is complete...or before August 1, 1975.

Saturday, June 30, marked the end of a long career in the practice of medicine for Dr. Ruth Herrick, who has treated her patients in her office, at her residence on East Main Street, in Lowell, for the past 12 years.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 8, 1998

Francis Swearingen claims the lot the city deeded over to Habitat of Humanity is hers. The resident at 206 S. Pleasant is not interested in giving up the property, she claims is hers.

By a slim 3-2 margin, the council overturned a planning commission recommendation. Todd Landman expects to complete construction on the self-storage warehouse this construction season.

Scott Carpenter, owner of Blue Ribbon Feed, was recently installed as Lowell Rotary’s 1998-99 president. Rotary presented Roger LaWarre a check for \$15,000 for the Flat River Ministries Food and Thrift Shop. Lowell Rotary Club names Roger Chapman, the recipient of the 1998 Paul Harris Fellowship honor.

outdoors

campground etiquette Dave Stegehuis

Camping has become very popular in recent years. RVs and tents of all kinds are set up on public and private campgrounds all around Michigan. This brings people, from all walks of life, together in one place with a common interest, but each has their own agenda and expectations. Campsites generally have limited space and are located close together. This creates a situation where your behavior directly affects the camping experience of others.

Most campgrounds have a posted set of general rules. In addition, common courtesy and common sense go a long way in having positive interaction with other people. The following are issues to consider when camping with others.

At the top of the list is limiting unnecessary noise. The rules will specify a time window, where there should be very little noise of any kind. Radios and generators are common offenders. Alcohol is banned from some parks, but drunken behavior is a problem in any social setting. Campsites are almost considered private property to the camper. Avoid taking shortcuts through an occupied campsite. Keep your gear on your lot and pay attention to where slide-outs and awnings extend.

Children need to be supervised according to age and behavior patterns. Little one’s safety can be compromised by roads and fires. Kids on bikes can be hazardous for themselves and others. Throwing balls in occupied areas can cause conflict and damage. There will be plenty of dogs at camp. A barking dog can spoil the peace and quiet sought by most campers. Leave the pet with a friend or kennel, if barking is a problem. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times, and always pick up after your pet.

Keep the campsite clean and leave it that way. Leave only footprints. Nuisance wildlife are attracted by unsecured food items. Feeding wildlife is not a good idea. Don’t throw trash in fire rings.

Camping presents an opportunity to meet new people. We have acquired long-term friends while camping. Be friendly but be respectful of others’ privacy. Some folks like to talk, others don’t. Offer help or wait to be asked, but don’t jump-in uninvited because you may just get in the way because most campers have a practiced routine to get things done.

If everyone follows the rules and respects the concerns of fellow campers, we can all enjoy the great camping opportunities in Michigan and around the country.

We love to hear from you!

The Lowell Ledger welcomes letters to the editor from readers, but there are a few conditions that must be met before they will be published.

The requirements are:

- All letters must be signed by the writer, with address and phone number provided for verification. All that will be printed is the writer’s name and community of residence. We do not publish anonymous letters, and names will be withheld at the editor’s discretion for compelling reasons only.
- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- All letters are subject to editing for style, grammar and sense.
- Letters that serve as testimonials for or criticisms of businesses will not be accepted.
- Letters serving the function of “cards of thanks” will not be accepted unless there is a compelling public interest, which will be determined by the editor.
- Letters that include attacks of a personal nature will not be published or will be edited heavily.
- “Crossfire” letters between the same two people on one issue will be limited to one for each writer.
- In an effort to keep opinions varied, there is a limit of one letter per person per month.
- We prefer letters to be printed legibly or typed, double-spaced. We have a 500-word limit.

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ABCs of Lowell history

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Mondays, June 26, July 10, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Nurture your child’s love of books and build early literacy skills through stories, rhymes, music and movement. For ages 0-5.

Animals Need Animals
Tuesday, July 11, 1:30 - 2:30 pm. Do wild animals have timeshares? Who makes the burrows and the tree cavities for the animals that can’t dig? Who shares their winter homes? Join us as we visit with the Outdoor Discovery Center animals that depend on other animals to survive. Live animals, taxidermy and artifacts will be used during the presentation. For ages 5-10.

Make Your Own Stuffed Octopus
Tuesday, July 11, 4-5 pm. Come and make your own stuffed octopus friend! All materials will be provided. No sewing required. Space is limited; first come, first served. Doors open 15 minutes before the program begins and you may save one seat for a friend. For ages 11-17.

Ruff Readers
Tuesday, July 11 & 18, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. This unique read-aloud program in partnership with West Michigan Therapy Dogs, Inc. pairs kids with a trained therapy dog and their handler. Kids read their favorite book and the pooches curl up, listen and enjoy. Arrive 15 minutes early to sign in and secure a time slot. First come, first served. For ages 5-10.

Exotic Zoo
Tuesday, July 18, 1:30 - 2:30 pm. Meet a variety of mammals, reptiles and birds from around the world for a hands-on learning experience. For all ages.

All Aboard! Book Club
Thursday, July 20, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. For adults 18+

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The ABCs of Lowell History is back for another round. This popular series explores a wide variety of topics in Lowell area history in weekly online articles. Submitted by the Lowell Area Historical Museum.

G is for Glendon Swarthout

Glendon Swarthout wrote more than 20 novels, as well as numerous short stories, plays and film scripts. In addition, two movies were based on his books. He was well-known for his western style in *The Shootist*, the screenplay that featured famous actors John Wayne, James Stewart, and Lauren Bacall. Though he was born near Pinckney, Michigan, in 1918, Lowell was where he grew up, went to school, and considered his hometown. He was voted by his class as “most likely to become famous.”

Growing up in Lowell, Glendon was an entertainer on the Showboat. The Grand Rapids Press stated that during the 1935 performance he “won the audience at once with his expert accordion playing, while hula dancers, composed of Lowell businessmen, caused much laughter.”

After graduating from Lowell High School, University of Michigan, and earning his doctorate from Michigan State University, Glendon and his wife Kathryn, wanted to travel the world. They decided the best way to do that was as a journalist. Glendon wrote for 22 small newspapers, and they traveled to South America, sending home a weekly column of their adventures.



Later, the couple went to work at Willow Run, providing insight to his first novel, titled *Willow Run*. He then enlisted in the army and was sent to Naples. He was part of the second wave at St. Tropez. He injured his back, leading to being returned home, receiving a medical discharge and a long struggle with back pain, until surgery much later in life.

In an interview with Larry King, Swarthout told how he wrote the citations for about 13 or 14 congressional Medal of Honor recipients, in the course of a year and a half, with the 3rd Infantry Division in Italy and France. He had lived with these boys and was similar age. These memories stayed close to his heart for life.

Swarthout was twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in fiction by his publishers and won a number of other awards for his novels, including

a couple of Spurs and a Wrangler, as well as the Western Writers award for Lifetime Achievement. In June of 2008, Glendon Swarthout was inducted into the Western Writers of America’s Hall of Fame.

While he was an accomplished author, his gift to Lowell was the weekly newspaper column, written during the Swarthout’s travels as World War II was beginning. ‘A Letter To... LOWELL’ was published in the *Lowell Ledger*. The Swarthouts were traveling together when Pearl Harbor was bombed. They tried to get home, but the trip from Barbados took five months in order to avoid German U-boats. During this time, there were weeks without communication, which left those at home fearful as they awaited assurance on the safety of Glendon and Kathryn. Readers lived the fear as they saw the sinking of ships in the night by Nazi submarines through the eyes of the Swarthouts, as they themselves were on a blacked-out ship hoping for safe passage.

Swarthout used the village of Lowell and its citizens in multiple books; *Welcome to Thebes*, published in 1962, was based on life in Lowell. The newspaper published the village’s anticipation of the book’s release, “half the town hopes they can find themselves portrayed in the story, and the other half is afraid they will be.” The book was different

than Swarthout’s previous works and was met with mostly negative reviews. The book is fiction, but most of the characters are clearly fashioned after real citizens. Opinions are still mixed today. At the time, it was stated that the story was built on an unpublicized bank scandal from 1928. Beyond that, was Swarthout trying to out the sins of a small town? Was it simply fiction built heavily on familiar characters? Either way, the book led to pain and difficulty, throughout life, for some of the obvious characters, as evidenced by ‘letters to the editor’, denying events in the book. Swarthout himself, in a letter dated August 26, 1978, written to two local women stated, “I am glad to learn THEBES is kept hidden behind the circulation desk at the library - not because it is a salacious book, at least by today’s standards, but because it is grossly and ridiculously over-written. I keep it hidden too, behind my blushes.” Written with his trademark humor, he closes by saying, “Well, thank you again. I shall return to Lowell again one day and expect you to present me with the keys to City Hall. Or, failing that, the Flat River”.

The author from Lowell died on September 23, 1992. His awards, book and movie sales speak to his high school award coming true. Glendon Swarthout had become famous.

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Canadian wildfires — why our air quality is terrible

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

The wilderness in Canada is burning up at an unprecedented rate this year. Canada is madeup of 13 Provinces and Territories. Canada has some 895 million acres of forested land, spread throughout the entire country. As I write this, there are wildfires in various stages of containment in nine, out of those thirteen, geographic districts.

The smoke from these fires has been swirling around the US for the past few weeks, presenting various degrees of hazard when it comes to something we all do: breathing. Most of us in Michigan treat breathing fresh air with the same nonchalance as we do to having a seemingly never-ending supply of fresh water to drink, grow crops, and water our lawns. Our education about how precious clean air and water on demand has been increasingly harsh. In Lowell, the limitations on lawn watering were presented last year and started up very quickly

again this summer. It does not appear that this situation will be changing any time soon.

In my opinion, the worst example, so far, of air-quality came last Tuesday. Just stepping out the back door of our store, and taking a breath or two for the four block walk to our home alerted my nose and throat to the reality of the fall-out from the Canadian fires. Not only was the haze at an all time high, one could actually taste the chemical fall-out from the fires with each inhale. I have friends with medical conditions that are staying inside or wearing masks when outdoors.

In addition to the smoke itself, there is real danger to people and animals in the residue released into the air from fires. Just today, a local resident told me she found a couple of dead birds on their nests in her yard. It is disconcerting to breathe air you can see, but the real danger lies in the unseen particulates that are in the air as a result of the fires. Health officials, all around the Eastern Seaboard and

the Great Lakes, are telling us to stay inside and to keep our children and even pets inside. Once again, we are being urged to wear masks. This message is very slow to be accepted coming on the heels of COVID, but people with breathing problems of any kind are paying attention and the rest of us may have to force ourselves to utilize masks again.

Wildfires happen all of the time in forests. Sometimes naturally, with a lightning strike, or man-made, with tossed cigarettes or unattended campfires. That being said, what is happening in Canada is without precedent. The stage was set in spring with record heat in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Quebec, with some areas registering average temperatures 12 degrees over normal. Global-warming and climate-change are divisive subjects, but there are trends that simply cannot be denied. When you combine that with limited, to no rainfall in many areas (just like our neighborhood), it created ideal conditions for



Photo courtesy of news.cgth.com

a record-setting season of wildfires.

The number of fires in Canadian forests are in the hundreds. A quick internet search took me to the website for the Canadian Wildland Fire Information System (www.cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca). What you can see and learn there is sobering, scary, and unreal. There are interactive maps showing all of the fires they

know about. These maps indicate which fires are out-of-control, somewhat contained or under control. You can also learn how many hectares are burning at any given time. One “hectare” is the equivalent of about 2.47 acres. One map

has various size dots, which indicate fires ranging in size from 0 to 100 hectares, 100 to to 1,000 hectares, and those above 1,000 hectares. Looking at maps with this kind of information is a wake-up call, indeed. Are we listening?



Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold
Edward Jones
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Can you build an estate plan like a house?

If you’ve ever been involved in building a house - or even if you’ve just heard about it -you know that there’s a well-defined process to be followed. But here’s something to think about: Some of the same steps connected to constructing a home are the same as those needed to build an estate plan.

What are those steps? Here are some to consider:
Get the right “builder.” Unless you’re an experienced do-it-yourselfer, you’ll probably have to hire someone to build a house for you. Of course, you’ll make your wishes known about what you want your house to look like, but you’ll be relying on the builder’s expertise. And the same is true with estate planning — you’ll want to share your goals and vision with a legal professional who’s experienced in creating comprehensive estate plans.
Build a strong foundation. “Every house needs a strong foundation” isn’t just a metaphor - it’s

true for every house that’s built. And when you create an estate plan, you also need a foundation that includes whatever basic elements are appropriate for your situation - a will, a living trust, power of attorney and so on.

Make the necessary additions. Even if you’re pleased with your new house, you may eventually decide to make some changes, such as adding on a new bedroom or bathroom. And the structure of your estate plan may need to undergo some modifications, too. For example, if you drew up a will two decades ago, but haven’t looked at it since, it may be out of date - especially if you’ve experienced changes in your life, such as new children or a divorce and remarriage. That’s why it’s a good idea to review your estate plans at least every few years.

Protect your investment. Of course, when you build a new house, you’ll have to insure it properly. And while there’s no actual “insurance

policy” for an estate plan, you do have ways to protect it. For one thing, you need to make sure beneficiary designations on retirement plans, investment accounts, insurance policies and other assets are correct. These designations are powerful and can even supersede the instructions in your estate-planning documents. So, as mentioned, if you’ve had significant life changes involving your family, you need to ensure your beneficiary designations are updated if you want to protect how insurance proceeds, investments and other assets are distributed.

Watch for mistakes. It’s unfortunate, but mistakes do happen in home construction. Water stains can indicate that water is seeping through cracks in the foundation. Or cracks in retaining walls and garage floors could be a sign that the concrete structures were installed improperly. Estate plans can also contain errors or bad choices. Some are inadvertent, such as failing to put intended assets into a trust, but others are done with the best of intentions, such as naming adult children as joint owners of your assets. Even if your children are quite responsible, this move could give their creditors access to your money. If you want your children to be able to step in as needed, you could find other methods, such

as giving them power of attorney.

Following these “construction” techniques can help you create an estate plan that can last a lifetime — and beyond.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.
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Observatory, continued

end. On its right is a cylinder that one might expect to see Sesame Street monster, Super Grover, launch from at any moment. “Look, it’s a cannon!” a small child shouts. “What do they shoot out of that cannon?”

In truth, it is a 17.5 inch Dobsonian telescope, dedicated to the memory of Percy S. Hawkins. This telescope has been here since 1984, but the volunteers do not treat it like a priceless heirloom. They welcome young children with busy hands to look into the eyepiece, and if children use a telescope to pull themselves up, it is definitely a faux pas, but volunteers laugh it off and readjust the angle and focus.

Just before dusk, the Dobsonian is trained on the moon, a waxing crescent so powerful in the night sky that it justified the public observing night, despite an

abundance of clouds. Seen through the telescope, the pock-marked giant looks like the golf ball of the gods, as if Saturn sliced a chip shot aimed at the sun (the broadest side of the solar system’s largest barn). The same moon can be seen from the 16-inch Schmidt Cassegrain telescope, in the West Dome, in higher definition. The Schmidt Cassegrain features both a refracting telescope and a reflecting telescope; depending on the eyepiece, one may see a direct image using precision curved glass or a reflected image bouncing off of mirrors.

Just before dark, the Dobsonian switches to Venus, which like a star, shines just over the treeline. “It looks like the moon,” a young observer comments. This is because Venus, like the moon, has phases, and it too appears as a crescent in the sky. It is hard to believe

that a hunk of stone, floating in the sky with no light of its own and mostly covered with shadow, casts light powerful enough to pierce the cloud cover, but easier when one considers that Venus will soon appear as a “morning star,” visible even as all other heavenly objects are drowned out by the light of the sun. On the way out, those same children tell the GRAAA member at the fold-out table what they observed about Venus.

“Which proves what Copernicus said in 1543,” he responds passionately. The members may take on menial labor jobs, like directing parking, collecting money, or even sweeping the floor of the observatory, but they never take off their educator hats. “The planets revolve around the sun.”

There are four permanent telescopes at the Veen observatory; the



Though the property features a number of amenities, the James C. Veen Observatory, itself, is one central building connected by two domed telescope silos.

larger personal telescopes, either questioning whether this is a public or private device or, more likely, whether or not his father will scold him for putting his eye up to the eyepiece. An older astronomer catches the child’s attention and welcomes him to yet another angle on that closest of heavenly wonders, the moon.

GRAAA members come in all shapes and sizes and with quirks abounding. One member emerges from his car (parked atop the hill in what is presumably a members-only parking lot, a wonderful perk of membership, since the hike can take one’s breath away, especially if pushing a stroller with two children in it) with a canvas case the shape of a bass drum and a spelunker’s headlamp strapped to his noggin. Another member looks like he is dressed for a safari. Perhaps more importantly, each member brings a different breadth and depth of understanding of astronomy. This is not a scientists-only club; membership is available to adults, students, and families at the price of modest annual dues, which are used to support the maintenance and upkeep of the facility. Members bring to the table whatever information they have learned during their own study of the night sky and supplemental readings.

The Veen Observatory is open from April through late October, featuring at least two public events per month during that period. With a clear sky, the observatory pulls in excess of 200 people up the hill to gaze at the night sky during each public event. In the early evening, it is not uncommon for astronomers to focus on bright sky objects, like Venus and the moon, but as darkness dominates the sky, other more subtle objects become visible, including

star clusters located in and around the Milky Way. Tom Good is the Vice President of the GRAAA and an advocate for night sky observation, and like many coping with the wonders and pitfalls of the modern world, he worries that we may lose sight of experiences like these. “People a long time ago used to spend a lot

of their lives finding the dark sky.” Those interested in “finding the dark sky” may attend one of the semi-monthly public observing nights. The next public night is Saturday, July 8, 2023, and it boasts views of various deep sky objects. On Saturday, August 12, 2023, the observatory advertises an all-nighter, in celebration of the Perseid



A 16 inch Schmidt Cassegrain telescope, in the West Dome, provides a high-definition picture of the surface of the moon.



A four-year-old, first-time Veen Observatory guest wonders at the night sky. Is this the beginning of a lifetime love for astronomy?

more time looking at the sky,” Good said. “Before the invention of artificial light, which is a relatively recent phenomenon, the night sky was a basis for our religion, our culture, and our entertainment. It was all right there, any time we stepped outside and looked up. All of that awe is still there for us, but we have to put a little effort into it to make it happen. We have to get away from artificial light; we have to find the dark sky, but we really should be careful that we never lose connection with the nighttime sky and all of

Meteor Shower, which is much like the Christmas of the Michigan stargazers calendar. From 9:00 pm until 4:30 am, observers can lay down and look up, without the assistance of powerful telescope lenses, and simply count the meteors streaking by like stars falling from the night time sky. As the refrain goes, public nights only take place if the skies are clear, and those interested in attending may check for updates at graaa.org, the organization’s social media pages, or call 616-897-7065 for an informative phone message.



He should have placed an ad in the Lowell Ledger to get rid of that stuff!

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Dobsonian “cannon” and the Schmidt Cassegrain in the large dome, but also a 14-inch Schmidt Cassegrain in the smaller dome and a Lunt hydrogen-alpha telescope used for solar observing. On any given night, there are also a number of portable personal telescopes. A child walks anxiously toward one of the

Main Steet Housing is changing lives

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

What do you think of when the words “Flat River Outreach Ministries” (aka “FROM”) come to mind? Most of us will probably think of Food Fight filling up the Food Pantry to help our neighbors or maybe their Thrift Shop. Others may be well aware of more ways that FROM helps people in the area – from the loaning of medical equipment to helping people with their taxes. All of these are really great programs, especially when you consider that the genius of FROM is that it involves the resources of several area churches, which allows it to tackle these critical issues on a much larger scale than if it were the efforts of a single

catching asset. Wendie Priess, Executive Director at FROM, estimates that the generosity of volunteer workers saved MSH close to \$50,000 last year. “Our housing model is self-sustainable,” Priess noted. “Though large renovations still require community investment, we are happy to report that our rental income covers regular operating expenses such as utilities and lawn care.”

The goal of MSH is to “Provide safe, dignified, affordable housing in Lowell.” The recent tours, given by Priess and Jodi Seese last week, is proof that their goal is being achieved. Seese is a loyal FROM volunteer who wears several hats when it comes to MSH. She has been appointed

on the ground floor that is almost ready for a resident. The rest of the apartments are occupied, one of them by a resident who has lived in the building for over 30 years. Unit One provided another “wow” moment as we took in the bright and sparkly clean, fully-appointed living space. Back in the “old days”, seven residents had to share one bathroom. Now there are only two of the ten apartments that share a bathroom. Unit One has a tub/shower combination, just off to the left, as you walk in. It also has a kitchen sink, cupboards, and is awaiting the delivery of a small refrigerator freezer. All in all, it was a great looking space for someone and the rent will be very reasonable at \$475 a month. MSH units rent for



Flowers add to the curb appeal at 504 East Main Street.

walk alongside tenants and do what we can to empower them to reach their goals. It is an individualized approach where we offer a hand-up not a hand-out.”

Another great emphasis of MSH is to serve the people of Lowell. When units are available, they are only advertised locally. It is important to know that in addition to paying rent, there are rules and leases involved in living here. MSH goes the extra mile in creating a community environment that empowers residents. On the flip side, residents are expected to live according to the house rules and are educated on what it means to be a good neighbor. No federal monies are accepted

Main Street Housing has also been the beneficiary of three Eagle Scout projects, grants for things like the laundry room remodel, churches and family foundations adopting apartments so they can be renovated with quality materials to provide a safe, dignified place to call home. We live in a very generous community, and it is a privilege to be a part of that spirit of giving.”

Speaking of “a very generous community”, the garden beds were one of the Eagle Scout projects. The residents are so excited about them that when MSH did a survey asking them if they would like to see some more storage areas made available to them, they responded by

lot of stuff that gets done, as far as the appearance on the outside, is done by the tenants that live here.” Priess also mentioned that people in neighboring houses have expressed appreciation at the transformation at 504 East Main Street over the past few years.

She stressed that it is important that people have an opportunity to be near their support network and familiar surroundings. Staying in Lowell is important to their tenants. MSH knows that when our neighbors have to worry about housing, it is difficult to focus on a job, on their loved ones, or most anything else. By providing a clean, safe place to live, they



Christa Wetzel, ED of the Alpha Care Center, and Pastor Brad Brillhart of Lowell United Methodist Church listen to Wendie Preiss in Unit One.

congregation. For the past seven years, FROM has been tackling one of the most needed issues facing Lowell and most other communities: affordable housing. In 2016, FROM launched Main Street Housing (MSH) when they purchased five city lots in Lowell. The most visible effort to date has been the steady transformation of the big house at 504 East Main Street, across from Ball’s Ice Cream. Thanks to hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and thousands of dollars in donations from the community, the house has gone from being somewhat of an eyesore to an eye

Facility Manager, Project Manager, and Volunteer Remodel Coordinator. The remodeling volunteers most recently turned “the dungeon” of a laundry room into a thing of practical beauty. The laundry room had not been operational in five years. Those of us on the tour, walked by beautiful flowers and multiple raised-bed gardens on our way to the laundry room. There were pictures showing what it used to look like. “WOW” is the appropriate word to use when considering the transformation.

When we were done there, we got to see a recently remodeled living space

between \$350 and \$650 a month.

Rents are kept as low as possible. Rather than turning a profit, MSH is more interested in offering safe, affordable living spaces. Many times, the MSH units are a stepping stone helping people who have gone through a rough patch, for one reason or another, to recover and move forward. “The overall message that we’re hoping for folks to walk away with is that FROM has a proven track record with affordable housing. First, we work with applicants to overcome obstacles to housing,” Priess commented. “And then, just like all of our programs, we



These raised-bed gardens were a project of local Eagle Scouts.

at MSH because such money comes with restrictions and rigid guidelines. Jodi and Wendie explained to the group that MSH wants to be able to tailor their housing to meet the needs of each individual who lives there.

Jodi Seese is understandably proud of the transformation that has taken place at 504 East Main. She also is very proud of what has enabled it to happen. She told us, “The best part for me is looking back at this pilot program, over six plus years, and seeing how it is all anchored in giving. The volunteers giving of their time and talents is the obvious one and a key reason this model is sustainable. But

saying that they would prefer to have more garden plots. Residents pay an additional ten dollars a month for the plots and they have become a source of pride. It also allows MSH residents an opportunity to help others, because the extra produce grown there is shared through the food bank.

We asked Wendie if she could share some success stories; she was happy to comply, “One of our tenants recently shared, ‘I’m actually watching my credit go up, I’m getting everything paid-off, I’m able to help my dad.’” She continued with, “Chris, another tenant, said, ‘Look around we are literally like a community here. A

hope to take that worry away so that residents can focus on their other goals.

We are happy to close by letting you know that bolstered by the success at 504 E Main, MSH is brewing-up some very exciting expansion plans. Remember, we mentioned above that they purchased a total of five lots. They are planning to introduce all of us to their vision of a completely new building on some of that land that will usher in, potentially, seventeen more apartments. The future is looking bright for Main Street Housing as well as the people of Lowell who will be fortunate enough to live there.



FROM Executive Director, Wendie Preiss, in the new laundry room.



The end of Daredevil nears

Brian K. Vaughan amps up the drama as Petrichor brings the fight to The Will in *Saga #65* (Image Comics, 6/21/23), Al Ewing puts Sins of Sinister fan favorite, Jon Ironfire, center-stage in *X-Men: Red #12* (Marvel Comics, 6/14/23), just as the fallout from the crossover continues to drive a wedge between Mystique and Destiny in *Immortal X-Men #12* (6/7/23), and Superman stops in to see Injustice-universe paramour Jay Nakamura in *Adventures of Superman: Jon Kent #4* (DC Comics, 6/7/23).

Here are the top three comics published in June!

Daredevil #12 (Marvel Comics, 6/7/23)

Chip Zdarsky and Marco Checchetto’s Daredevil has been a memorable run on a title whose every story seems to be among the most loved of all time. With contributions from Frank Miller, Brian Michael Bendis, Ann Nocenti, and Mark Waid, among others, Daredevil

has become a prestige book and a career capstone for many. Following the “Devil’s Reign” crossover that promoted Luke Cage to mayor of New York City, Elektra Natchios to Daredevil, and Wilson Fisk to Krakoa citizen, eventually, Zdarsky and Checchetto have descended into the final act of their run together, a time of prophecy fulfillment, and, judging by the tone of *Daredevil #12*, no shortage of tears.

It is a difficult task to properly represent *Daredevil #12* without significant spoilers. Suffice it to say that fate catches up with Matt Murdock and Elektra Natchioz, a pair who, like DC’s Hawkman and Hawkgirl, seem fated to a cycle of passion and tragedy. The lovers spar, and Checchetto depicts it as a beautiful dance, but the conclusion feels final, well, kind of. In the world of comic book heroes, death is never truly an end, and stories like Geoff Johns’ “Darkest Night” or Jonathan Hickman’s Krakoa era of *X-Men* turn this into a feature, not a

bug, but even as issue #12 presents the possibility of a new beginning as well, it feels likely that the old way is closed for the time being.

Zdarsky and Checchetto’s run on *Daredevil* concludes with issue #14 in August.

Batman/Superman: World’s Finest #16 (DC Comics, 6/21/23)

Batman/Superman: World’s Finest is the definition of a Mark Waid fun run, much like his “Fundevil” tenure on Marvel’s *Daredevil*, which provoked smiles, not tears, and still belongs alongside Miller and Bendis’s work as the best of all time. There is just enough at stake at all times to keep the reader intrigued, but the stories feel light, and readers get to explore sides of Batman, Superman, Robin, and Supergirl that are suppressed during constant fight or flight. With *World’s Finest*, readers show up for *Kingdom Come*-renowned Mark Waid, but they stay for illustrator Dan Mora, and colorist Tamra Bonvillain deserves credit too. The art in this series is crisp, precise, and understated, worthy of Jim Lee-levels of hype, but perhaps more akin to Greg Capullo and FCO Plascencia’s work on Scott Snyder’s 2011 Batman run.

In issue #16, villain Newmazo, a much smarter version of Silver Age android villain Amazo, has abducted the world’s wealthiest, but not Bruce Wayne, and the world’s most

brilliant, but not Batman, and the protagonists lament the fact that Superman is depowered and unable to help. All this time, Batman must be seething; friends like Oliver Queen, the Green Arrow, should know better than to underestimate the Dark Knight, and more so enemies like Newmazo. All of this comes to a head when Superman says, “He’s right. I’m sorry,” to which Batman smugly replies, “The world’s greatest escape artist forgives you,” and breaks everybody out. It is small character moments like this that highlight the precision of Waid’s craft and the simplicity of Mora’s depictions, with neither creator heavily relying on the crutches of big events, life-or-death drama, or flashy cinematography. This team could write and illustrate a series on a children’s tea party and keep readers coming back for more; pick up *Batman/Superman: World’s Finest* to see what they can do with history’s most popular superheroes.

Power Rangers Unlimited: The Coinless #1 (Boom! Studios, 6/28/23)

Boom! Studios’ *Power Rangers* franchise gained early acclaim for high quality writing, and fresh, fun, new adventures featuring everybody’s favorite “teenagers with attitude,” and through character innovation and skillful worldbuilding, love for the series has only grown over the past seven years. One such innovation, the introduction of an aged, evil Tommy Oliver (Lord Drakkon), who vacillates between central villain and complicated anti-hero, has captivated the imaginations of audiences who had relegated the Power Rangers franchise to a dusty box of nostalgia in their stuffy attic of pop culture from years past. Power Rangers

has never been better, and Drakkon is front and center in the new one-off *Power Rangers Unlimited: The Coinless #1*.

At the conclusion of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers #109* (Boom! Studios, 6/21/23), Drakkon disappeared with an imprisoned criminal and former Power Ranger through a gate to an unknown region of space, and *The Coinless #1* finds

is fantastic, both because it brings a new dimension to the Dark Spector battle that has been teased since the very beginning, but also because it is still so unclear how Rita Repulsa’s new plot to conquer earth will pan out. As with all things Boom! *Power Rangers*, the solution is to keep reading. Just keep reading.

Other Noteworthy June 2023 Comics
Boom! Studios: *Mighty*



them in Drakkon’s old universe, where empowered zombies lurk, and nothing is as he left it. This is because an aged Kimberly Hart, Drakkon’s former Ranger Slayer, has reunited the resistance and taken the throne, and Drakkon must convince Hart, Scorpina, and any other allies he can find to become Power Rangers again in order to defeat the malevolent Dark Spector. This issue

Morphin Power Rangers #109 (6/21/23); DC Comics: *Action Comics #1056* (6/28/23), *Green Lantern #2* (6/14/23), *Nightwing #105* (6/21/23), *Titans #2* (6/21/23); IDW Publishing: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #140* (6/1/23); Marvel Comics: *Fantastic Four #8* (6/7/23), *Ultimate Invasion #1* (6/21/23), *Wolverine #34* (6/14/23), *X-Men #23* (6/7/23), *X-Men: Before the Fall - Mutant First Strike #1* (6/7/23).

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Live the Life You Want

With Melissa Spino, MA, LPC, CDMS
Life Transitions Therapy, LLC

Dealing with feelings of shame

People often confuse the emotions of guilt and shame. So, what's the difference? Guilt is feeling bad for hurtful words or behavior, real or imagined, and wanting to correct the situation or make amends. Guilt can lead to shame, and shame is a damaging and harmful emotion.

Shame is a feeling that there is something wrong with you. Unlike guilt, it isn't always related to a specific event, situation, or behavior. It's a general feeling that there is something wrong with you as a person, that you are flawed. Shame can lead to feelings of anxiety, sadness, loneliness, depression, low self-worth and worse.

Brene Brown said it well. "Shame means 'I am bad.' Guilt means 'I did something bad.' If you put shame in a petri dish, it needs three ingredients to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence, and judgment. If you put the same amount of shame in the petri dish and douse it with empathy, it can't survive."

Suggestions for dealing with shame:

- Learn to recognize shame in yourself. Is it shame or possibly guilt, or another emotion, like humiliation?
- Learn where it came from. Acknowledge these feelings. I'm not saying accept them, just admit you have them.
- Share your feelings, where you believe they came from, and experiences with those you trust, that support you, and can provide empathy and tactful honesty. If you don't have anyone like this in your life, then you may want to seek a professional to help.
- Work at building self-compassion. A good place to start is through self-care.

- Build your self-worth. Work at recognizing, we are not our behaviors. At some point in life, we all say or do things that may be embarrassing, hurtful, or seem to make no sense. We are imperfect human beings. Acknowledge the behavior and ask yourself if your feelings are normal for the situation? Work to separate the feelings/behavior from who you are, make amends if possible, and work to let it go. We all do things we wish we didn't. Own it, try to learn from it, and work to make it right, when possible.

- Throw out perfectionism. Nothing is perfect, so learn to let good be good enough.

- Take control of your feelings, behaviors, and responses. Letting someone else make you feel bad about yourself, or behaving/responding in a way that makes you feel guilt or shame, gives others power and control over you. I know I don't want anyone, much less a stranger or acquaintance, controlling me.

- Connect with others that have a strong, healthy sense of self. This helps you learn acceptance of self and others. It helps to build empathy.

Shame is toxic and often results in anxiety, sadness, loneliness, depression, and low self-worth. It can also lead to substance-abuse to numb or deal with the pain, and in some cases, suicidal thoughts or actions. If you see yourself exhibiting these types of behaviors and have been unable to change them, it may be time to seek help. I hope you find this info helpful. This article is not intended to provide advice, diagnose, or treat and is for informational purposes only. Be safe and well!



Eligibility for spouse's benefits

By Hillary Hatch,
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Social Security helps you secure today and tomorrow with financial benefits, information, and tools that support you throughout life's journey. If you don't have enough Social Security credits to qualify for benefits on your own record, you may be able to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

To qualify for spouse's benefits, you must be one of the following:

- 62 years of age or older.
- Any age and have in your care a child who is younger than age 16 or who has a disability and is entitled to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

If you wait until you reach full retirement age, your full spouse's benefit could be up to one-half

the amount your spouse is entitled to receive at their full retirement age. If you choose to receive your spouse's benefits before you reach full retirement age, you will get a permanently reduced benefit. You'll also get a full spouse's benefit before full retirement age if you care for a child who is entitled to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

If you're eligible to receive retirement benefits on your own record, we will pay that amount first. If your benefits as a spouse are higher than your own retirement benefits, you will get a combination of benefits that equal the higher spouse benefit. For example, Sandy qualifies for a retirement benefit of \$1,000 and a spouse's benefit of \$1,250. At her



full retirement age, she will receive her own \$1,000 retirement benefit. We will add \$250 from her spouse's benefit, for a total of \$1,250.

Want to apply for either your or your spouse's benefits? Are you at least 61 years and nine months old? If you answered yes to both, visit www.ssa.gov/divorcedspouse.html.

benefits/retirement to get started today.

Are you divorced from a marriage that lasted at least 10 years? You may be able to get benefits on your former spouse's record. For more information, please visit our website at www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/divorcedspouse.html.

college news

A total of 12,487 students, enrolled during Spring Semester 2023 at The University of Alabama, were named to the dean's list with an academic record of 3.5 (or above), or the president's list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A's). These driven students are making waves across UA's more than 70 undergraduate programs and 12 colleges and schools.

Included on the dean's list were: Justin Heaton of Alto, and Jackson MacNaughton of Lowell.

Derek Mohr of Lowell, was named to the Presidents List.

The University of Alabama, part of The University of Alabama System, is the state's flagship university. UA

shapes a better world through its teaching, research and service. With a global reputation for excellence, UA provides an inclusive, forward-thinking environment and nearly 200 degree programs on a beautiful, student-centered campus. A leader in cutting-edge research, UA advances discovery, creative inquiry and knowledge through more than 30 research centers. As the state's largest higher education institution, UA drives economic growth in Alabama and beyond.

Danielle Barnes of Lowell, was among more than 4,555 students from Miami University, who received degrees during the in-person spring commencement, May 13,

2023. Barnes graduated with a B.S. in Business degree, majoring in Human Capital Mgmt. & Leadership.

Nationally recognized as one of the most outstanding undergraduate institutions, Miami University is a public university located in

Oxford, Ohio. With a student body of over 22,000, Miami effectively combines a wide range of strong academic programs with faculty who love to teach and the personal attention ordinarily found only at much smaller institutions.

business matters



Greenridge Realty announced that Phil Hooker received Realtor of the Month.

This award recognizes Hooker for his outstanding success and achievements.



LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING STATE OF MICHIGAN

The Probate Court for the County of Kent

IN THE MATTER OF: Angel Wood, Guardianship File: 23-213,528-DD

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including her mother, Laurie Wood, siblings, and and other heirs or children, whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on July 19, 2023, at 9:00 am at Kent Co. Probate Court, 180 Ottawa NW, Grand Rapids,

MI 49503, via Zoom before Judge Avery D. Rose (P77757) for the following purpose: Appointment of a Guardian for a person with a developmental disability.

Dated: June 28, 2023

Adult Protective Services, DHHS, Petitioner
121 Martin Luther King Jr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507
(616) 258-1182

VAN ESSEN and ASSOCIATES PLLC, Attys for Petitioner by Amanda Van Essen Wirth (P75001)
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More Michigan teens hit the brakes on learning to drive



As the youngest in her grade, Rachel Hammond, a teen in the early 1990s, watched for a year as her peers showed off their new cars and driving skills.

After passing her road test as soon as she turned 16, Hammond was finally able to drive her parents’ Honda Civic Hatchback to school and work. Both she and her parents were excited, as she had been “

That desperation is notably absent in her son Parker, whose 16th birthday came and went without a trip to the Secretary of State. Four months later, he still hasn’t gotten behind the wheel.

“For a while I was really putting it off, because I didn’t really put too much emphasis on it,” he said. “It was kind of an afterthought.”

The time requirements for licensing are hefty for a

U-M. The pattern has only continued in recent years, according to a 2022 report by Sivak.

Reasons for delaying getting behind the wheel can vary.

In a 2013 survey of young adults who had opted against getting a driver’s license, non-drivers listed the time commitment to train and test, the costs of car ownership and ability to use other modes of transportation as reasons for not getting a license.

Among the survey participants, 22 percent said they had no intention of obtaining a driver’s license in the future.

High costs

The state of Michigan stopped mandating that public schools offer driver’s education programs in the late 1990s. State funding for driver’s education was then completely eliminated in 2004, with program oversight shifting from the Department of Education to the Secretary of State.

Hispanic Black teens had their driver’s licenses by the age of 18, compared to 67 percent of non-Hispanic white teens.

The same study also found that only one in four teens in households with total incomes under \$20,000 a year had their driver’s licenses before their 18th birthday. But where household income exceeded \$100,000, 79 percent of teens were licensed by the time they turned 18.

Some schools, such as the Ann Arbor-headquartered All Star Driving Education, which generally charges over \$500 for classroom and in-car instruction, say they offer scholarships and reduced costs for low-income students.

Julie Earle, a student success manager at the Bridge Academy of Southwest Michigan charter school, told Bridge Michigan she’s seen what she estimates to be a 75 percent drop in the number of her students getting licenses over the past decade.

Earle’s school is in

money.

In Michigan, getting a driver’s license before the age of 18 occurs over three segments in a graduated driver licensing program. Teens as young as 14 years and 8 months old can get behind the wheel during segment 1.

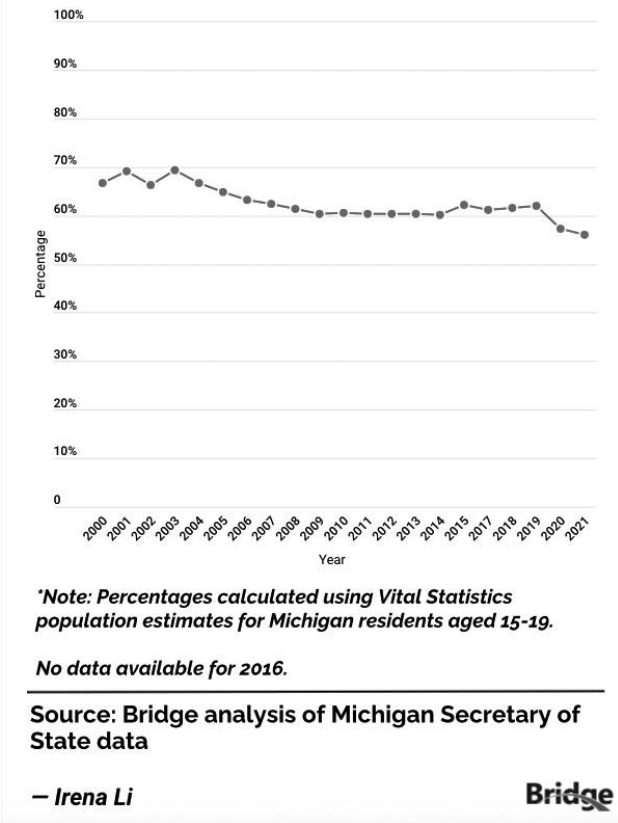
After six hours of on-road driving instruction with a certified provider and 24 hours of in-class instruction, students can apply for a level 1 learner’s license.

Teens can enroll in segment 2 after maintaining a level 1 permit for three months and completing at least 30 driving hours, as well as two hours of night driving, supervised by a licensed adult. Segment 2 involves another six hours of classroom instruction.

After 50 hours of supervised driving, 10 of which must be at night, students who pass an on-road skills test can drive with a level 2 license without adult supervision, but with some restrictions.

Percentage of teens holding driver's licenses

The decline in teenage drivers in Michigan has outpaced the overall decline in the state's teen population. The percentage of age-eligible teenagers with driver's licenses fell approximately 10 percent between 2000 and 2021.



The percentage of Michigan teenagers with driver’s licenses has fallen by 10 percent since 2000. (Shutterstock)

busy family, and Parker is able to depend on his parents to get around. It doesn’t seem to be a huge priority for a lot of his friends either, he says.

Delaying the license

He’s not the only Michigan teen in no rush to hit the road.

An analysis of Michigan Secretary of State data shows that the percentage of age-eligible teenagers holding driver’s licenses in the state fell to about 56 percent in 2021, down from 66 percent in 2000.

This downturn follows a nationwide trend, as the number of teen drivers across the country has steadily declined for the past four decades.

Brandon Schoettle and Michael Sivak, former transportation researchers at the University of Michigan, found that the number of American 18-year-olds with a driver’s license dropped from 80 percent in 1983 to 61 percent in 2012, according to research they conducted at

A spokesperson for the Michigan Secretary of State wrote to Bridge Michigan in an email that there are now 286 certified providers of teenage driver’s education in the state. Only 37 are part of educational institutions.

Most aspiring drivers now turn to private driving schools, which require access to a car, at least 30 hours of classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel training on the student’s own time and money.

Though statewide data by race or income wasn’t available, private driver’s education can rack up to hundreds of dollars per student, which may lead to low-income and minority teens being disproportionately barred from learning to drive.

A 2012 nationwide study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, an auto research non-profit organization, reported that only 29 percent of Hispanic teens and 37 percent of non-

Benton Harbor, an area with a predominantly Black population and a poverty rate of 43.6 percent.

“They do not have cars to practice in when they’re not in a driver’s ed class, or a car to take a road test in because their parents don’t have vehicles and neither do they,” Earle said. “A lot of them cannot afford to take driver’s ed. If they can, they can’t get to driver’s ed because they have no car to actually get to the class.”

The teenagers she works with need jobs to afford buying and maintaining a car and learning to drive, Earle says. But without a reliable way to commute, they aren’t able to get to those jobs in the first place.

“It’s a never-ending cycle that this problem has created for these youth and it’s a barrier to their employment, to college, to success in general.”

No time

For others, the main obstacle is more time than

A student who is at least 17 and has not received any infractions after six months will have their level 2 license automatically upgraded to a level 3 full license.

A driver with a valid level 2 or 3 license will be issued a standard operator’s license once they turn 18.

If the student has not reached level 2 before turning 18, their level 1 license will expire and they will have to start a new application at the Secretary of State office.

Michiganders who are 18 or older can apply for a driver’s license by passing a written knowledge exam, driving for at least 30 days with a temporary instruction permit and passing an on-road skills test with a certified testing business. There is no strict practice hour requirement, but aspiring drivers will still need access to a vehicle that will pass inspection and time to practice their skills prior to the road test.

The three-level program was first implemented in 1997 in response to high crash rates among young drivers. The hope was that making the licensing process more gradual would improve safety, and it has proven to be effective.

For Parker Hammond, hitting that 50-hour benchmark is the main thing keeping him from driving on his own.

“It ultimately came down to me not getting enough hours before I was 16 to take the test,” he said. “Now that I’m 16, I’m like, ‘Oh, I could have had it.’ So I’m really working to get those hours in so I can take my driver’s license test.”

“You have to do at least 10 hours at night, and if you’re trying to get them

done during the summer, it’s really hard to get those hours in because it’s not really dark until pretty late,” his mother Rachel said. “Once you get into the school year ... it’s a little bit harder just to fit those hours.

“I didn’t have that as a requirement,” when she was a teen, she added. “It was pretty minimal: you had to take a class and practice for your test, but you didn’t have to have all those practice hours.”

Less interest

Remote schooling and other restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic might also be contributing to the decline.

For example, a 2021 survey of nearly 700 parents conducted by Aceable, a Texas-based organization that offers online driver’s education courses, found that 71 percent of participants reported a delay in their teen driver’s education due to the ongoing pandemic.

With the advent of social media, teens no longer need to drive somewhere and meet up with their friends if they want to chat after school. One 2018 survey found that 61 percent of American teens prefer using social media, texting or video calling over communicating in-person.

Anxiety over driving

For some teens, fear and anxiety over driving contributes to keeping them off the road.

In 2022, Aceable reported that 73 percent of surveyed California teens experience driving anxiety. 42 percent said they delayed getting their driver’s license as a result.

Concerns over safety

aren’t unfounded: according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teen drivers account for nearly three times as many nighttime fatal crashes per mile driven as adult drivers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that drivers aged 15 to 20 accounted for 8.5 percent of traffic deaths in 2020, but only constituted 5.1 percent of all licensed drivers.

And although motor vehicle deaths have declined significantly over the past seven decades, car accidents remain one of the top causes of death of young people in the United States — second only to firearms.

The Zebra, an insurance comparison site, used data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Census Bureau and FBI to report that Michigan was the most dangerous state for teen drivers in the country, with 14 traffic deaths and 26 underage DUIs per 100,000 Michigan teens.

The road ahead

For now, Parker Hammond can depend on his parents to help him get around, he says. Still, he knows he’ll get his license eventually, even if it takes a little bit longer than he and his mother might have expected.

Rachel Hammond, who was so eager to get behind the wheel when she was a teen, is eager for her teen son to get his license.

“If your parents are driving you around anyway, it’s like, ‘well, it’s fine, there’s no rush,’” she said, imagining a conversation with a non-driving teen.

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misc.

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A	O	U	Y	O	L	I	P	R	A	H	S	C	O	M	S	S	H	A	I
A	D	S	R	A	N	G	D	P	A	I	N	F	U	L	O	R	P	L	L
N	N	B	O	M	B	G	Y	P	V	E	F	E	E	N	O	Y	B	U	L
T	I	I	Y	V	C	E	R	P	V	F	T	N	G	B	H	R	I	N	N
E	C	N	T	R	H	R	C	E	P	N	I	A	B	B	H	A	D	O	E
P	Y	Y	F	U	A	S	S	D	M	P	I	I	E	Y	E	M	C	I	S
D	S	R	T	L	D	D	D	V	S	D	N	E	E	S	A	I	O	T	S
E	A	M	E	I	A	A	N	E	R	G	P	P	T	A	D	R	V	S	L
H	Y	I	A	L	V	M	T	O	I	L	G	I	N	R	A	P	F	E	N
Y	U	G	I	C	Y	I	M	N	C	I	F	P	E	R	C	I	N	G	V
D	S	R	D	T	H	T	T	A	E	E	R	B	D	L	H	V	V	N	H
R	T	A	G	E	S	R	S	I	T	T	S	E	N	P	E	C	V	O	N
A	D	I	P	N	O	I	O	E	S	I	S	I	T	E	C	S	I	C	S
T	O	N	Y	S	B	E	G	N	F	N	O	I	V	S	D	F	S	V	S
I	C	E	T	I	S	Y	D	P	I	I	E	N	S	V	U	D	R	L	E
O	T	G	H	O	C	T	R	H	L	C	L	S	H	R	A	L	U	M	R
N	O	M	U	N	E	C	P	N	A	P	A	O	T	L	E	N	C	S	T
G	R	A	D	U	A	L	G	U	L	G	T	G	A	N	N	P	C	S	S



The Restless Viking
The World Less Traveled
With Chuck & Martha Hayden
www.restless-viking.com

~ By Martha Hayden

The Indian Trail –
Cadillac to Traverse City

Join DaViking (my husband, Chuck) and I, as we search for the 33 markers commemorating an ancient trail from Cadillac to Traverse City, The Old Indian Trail. Evidence found along the 55-mile trek has been dated to 700 BCE. This passage had been used by the Hopewells, and then in the 1200’s, the Anishinaabe tribes of Michigan walked these routes. These tribes are known as “The Three Fires”. Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatomi tribes.

Fresh water clams had been a valuable resource for natives. They used fresh water pearls for trading as well as the clams as a food source.

With many relatives living in the Traverse City area, I have traveled north, oodles of times. I hadn’t realized that this history had been set-out for us by several individuals over the past decades. These historians had worked hard

Marker six had been designated as the old ash marker. Ash trees, had been a vital resource for native tribes. They had used ash trees to make bows and other tools.

Meauwataka means “halfway” in Pottawatomi, marking the mid-point between Clam Lake and an Indian Village. People would camp for the night near marker nine.

Markers twelve and thirteen sit on roads that run parallel to one another. Heavy freight would often cause rutted roadways. Therefore, stagecoaches ran on separate pathways to give their riders a smoother journey.

Years later, logging companies had wanted to float their newly-harvested lumber down this river. It reportedly took 700 pounds of dynamite to break apart this natural dam.

The Boy Scouts



The “Lake Mitchell Marker” began our journey. It sits at the north side of what used to be called Clam Lake.

to research this data, and lay out a path for us, so we could always remember!

Milo Petoskey Crosby and Jim Pontiac

In the late 1800’s, Milo Petoskey Crosby had heard about the Old Indian Trails, when he arrived in Wexford County. Crosby spent time hiking the area and learning about the past. When he retired in the 1940’s, Milo Petoskey Crosby, along with Jim Pontiac, had placed the first fourteen markers.

Marker three holds the history of fields, where crops of beans, corn and squash had been grown for the village of Boon.

Frank Ettawagheshik

Frank Ettawagheshik, the former Chairman of the Little Traverse Bay Band

of Odawa Indians, led a sesquicentennial group, who researched, planned and conducted fundraising for seven years. Finally, in 1987, the final markers were placed, numbered twenty through thirty-three.

Black ash trees had been significant. (Marker 20) When slices of the tree were pounded, the rings would separate, creating strips. These thin pieces could be soaked and woven into baskets. This resource had been vital to the native tribes.

Edward Babcock and James Comp

Edward Babcock, a high school teacher, and James Comp, a Cadillac historian, continued Crosby’s research. Together they set the next five markers.

At the Boardman River marker, travelers would turn west and follow the edge of the flowing water, until

Chuck Bidleman
In 2017, Chuck Bidleman, a 71-year-old retired teacher, was interviewed by the Cadillac News. As a youngster, Chuck had originally learned about The Old Indian Trail from a Camp Torenta counselor, Edward Babcock. (Do you remember him? Edward had placed five of the markers.) Chuck continued to research these treks, which run throughout our state of Michigan. To keep history alive, Bidleman had



Two was named ,“Leaving the Lake Marker.” Three sits near the village of Boon and is labeled, “Boon Marker.” Four is called, “The Sweet Spot Marker.”

contacted school groups, a country club, and then senior citizens, to conduct investigative reporting and show where this path had once been.

“This survey sits in every Register of Deeds office, in every county of the state,” Bidleman said. “This is a free history book.” Chuck Bidleman had been curious about this trail since his childhood and had spent hours locating the exact placement of the trails. In the late 1830’s, as the surveyors had marked each square mile with six section lines, they had noted the native trails on their maps.

Jennifer Brown
Jennifer Brown, Superintendent of Cadillac Public Schools, had been teaching 8th grade in 2004, when Chuck Bidleman had contacted her about researching a connection between The Indian Trails and The Underground Railroad. By May, 2005, the students proposed that these trails had also been pathways for escaped slaves, who hoped to reach Canada.

Andy Ulrich

Chuck Bidleman had approached Andy Ulrich, the clubhouse director for Club Cadillac, with information that The Old Indian Trail had passed right through the property. Measurements were made and sure enough, it had! Ulrich had commented, “Chuck came to us and

said he thought there was an old native trail near our property. Our building was once a one-room school and a lot of the old schools are on these old trails.”

Michigan’s Native Trail Network

In another resource by Thumbwind, it was believed that many of Michigan’s Indian trails had originally been created by migrating bison herds. LaSalle, the French explorer, had noted bison herds’ movements in his journals.

make that history more visible, acknowledged and understood through some new signs,” Modrall had explained. “Our Anishinaabe neighbors and the Grand Traverse Band community; these are their families that have lived here for centuries.”

I stand in awe of the amount of people who have dedicated their interest, time and funds to helping to preserve our indigenous history. This has struck chords in my soul. There is so much in this world

There has been a network of trails throughout Michigan with Saginaw being a “hub” for indigenous people. One hundred nine Chippewa Indian villages have been documented in the Saginaw Bay area.

Emily Modrall – The Future

Emily Modrall, an archaeologist who is originally from Suttons Bay (near Traverse City), is planning on extending the marking of the trail system westerly to Lake Michigan. In January of 2022, she

to appreciate and to learn about. Stay alert and enjoy!

Resources:
Cadillac News Article by Mardi Suhs “Retired Teacher Enlists Others Help On History Project” September 26, 2017
Map of Cadillac to Traverse City on Google 9 & 10 News <https://www.9and10news.com/2022/01/20/traverse-city-will-see-new-signage-around-town/>
Thumbwind <https://thumbwind.com/native-american-indian-trails/>
Record Eagle https://www.record-eagle.com/news/local_news/sally-barber-the-grandfather-of-all-trails/article_bd8dd1ad-a84a-511b-973c-3938d77d9886.html



Chuck Bidleman holding the Archeological Atlas of Michigan, which he’d pieced together from county records, dated 1931. Photo Credit: Cadillac News

had been interviewed by 9 & 10 News. Emily Modrall had said, “I saw an opportunity to try to help

To learn more about the old Indian trail, visit oldindiantrail.weebly.com.

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

	8		9					
	3		8		2		9	4
				3			2	
3					8			
8	7				9	5		
	4				1			
2	1	6				3		
						7		
					4		6	

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

HEADACHE RELIEF WORD SEARCH

Y T E E L E T S F M R P E R Y N I E S L
N A Y T L R R F L V F L R L R T G I T V
A O U Y O L I P R A H S C O M S S H A I
A D S R A N G D P A I N F U L O R P L L
N N B O M B G Y P V E F E E N O Y B U L
T I I Y V C E R P V F T N G B H R I N N
E C N T R H R C E P N I A B B H A D O E
P Y Y F U A S S D M P I I E Y E M C I S
D S R T L D D D V S D N E E S A I O T S
E A M E I A A N E R G P P T A D R V S L
H Y I A L V M T O I L G I N R A P F E N
Y U G I C Y I M N C I F P E R C I N G V
D S R D T H T T A E E R B D L H V V N H
R T A G E S R S I T T S E N P E C V O N
A D I P N O I O E S I S I T E C S I C S
T O N Y S B E G N F N O I V S D F S V S
I C E T I S Y D P I I E N S V U D R L E
O T G H O C T R H L C L S H R A L U M R
N O M U N E C P N A P A O T L E N C S T
G R A D U A L G U L G T G A N N P C S S

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Puzzle solutions
on page 13

HEADACHE RELIEF
WORD SEARCH

DIAGNOSIS

MIGRAINE

SPINE

DOCTOR

PAINFUL

STRESS

GRADUAL

PERSISTENT

SUDDEN

HEADACHE

PRIMARY

TENSION

ILLNESS

SECONDARY

THROBBING

INFLAMMATION

SENSITIVITY

TRIGGERS

CHRONIC

CLUSTER

CONGESTION

DEHYDRATION

LIFESTYLE

SHARP

Guess Who?

I am a comic actor born in Philadelphia on July 6, 1979. I worked as a shoe salesman after attending community college. I later won several amateur comedy contests around New England. I've starred in many hit films and I had an album go five-times platinum in June of 2012.

Answer: Kevin Hart

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to Fourth of July.

I R L S G L

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Grills

CLUES ACROSS

1. Small Eurasian deer
4. Irish county
10. A major division of geological time
11. Broadway actor Lane
12. Canadian province
14. It causes fainting (abbr.)
15. Two
16. A notable one is blue
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Rings
23. Sullies
24. Occurs
26. Publicity
27. Near
28. Tools of a trade
30. Offer in good faith
31. "American Idol" network
34. Garments
36. Soviet Socialist Republic
37. Retired NFL DC Dean
39. Hot meal
40. A type of gin

41. Percussion instrument
42. A \$10 bill
48. About ground
50. Medicine man
51. Seedless raisin
52. National capital of Albania
53. Appendage
54. OJ trial judge
55. By the way
56. Bicycle parts
58. Barbie's friend
59. In a way, stretched
60. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

1. Make up for
2. American songbird
3. Pay
4. International organization
5. Engravers
6. Declared as fact
7. Criminal
8. Jewelry
9. Hospital worker (abbr.)
12. Nonsense (slang)

13. Town in Galilee
17. Value
19. Another name
20. Sheep in second year before shearing
21. Town in Surrey, England
25. Appropriate during a time of year
29. Creative output
31. Recesses
32. District in N. Germany
33. Rider of Rohan
35. The official emblem of the German Third Reich
38. One who puts down roots
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Tycoons
45. Actress Thurman
46. Walking accessory
47. Crest of a hill
49. Member of a North American people
56. Type of computer
57. U.S. State (abbr.)

			1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9		
			10				11							
12	13		14					15						
16		17						18				19	20	21
22								23						
24							25	26			27			
					28		29				30			
31	32	33			34				35			36		
37			38			39								
40					41			42		43	44	45	46	47
48				49					50					
51									52					
			53					54				55		
		56					57	58						
		59						60						

Moravian Sons Distillery delivers distinct brandies

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

Inspired by the need to fill a niche in the market, tested on friends and the love for authenticity with a bit of nostalgia, Moravian Sons Distillery was born in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The father-and-son craft distillery produces fruit spirits with the flagship plum brandy known around the world as Slivovitz. Owners, Ludek and Jake Pala, pour

their passion into the age-old stilling craft. Professionals also call fruit brandies eau-de-vie which means water of life. “We finally had the means and the opportunity to do it,” said Ludek. “I am near retirement age.”

The distillery has been a dream-come-true after years of planning, research, and administrative paperwork in a state regulated by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC). In this family business, the

roles have been divided, based on experience; Ludek is the master stiller, Jake is the administrator.

In the summer of 2020, master stiller, Ludek, traveled to Uhersky Brod, a small town in the Czech Republic. However, it wasn’t a sightseeing tourist trip to Ludek’s homeland, to the Moravian region renowned for making Slivovitz, but a business venture. The final missing piece to the dream was being forged in a local shop located on a cobblestone medieval road.

The beautiful nine-foot-tall copper still, which arrived on the ship, Palena, on January 15, 2021, towers to the ceiling of the small-craft distillery, based north of Lowell. Honoring the medieval Moravian tradition of making brandy from fruit ferments, the distillery produces spirits, aka brandies, 100 percent made with fruit from local farms.

Ludek was inspired by his uncles’ moonshine still in Vizovice but couldn’t borrow it due to a family feud. In the 70s and 80s, every household was making its own plum brandy. “Uncle Joe denied having the still,” he said. “Plum brandy was used as a bartering tool,

medicine, for tooth pain and rubbing.” So he learned to still at a commercial distillery in Lukov, with his father, Joseph. Ludek had been making these educational trips since childhood.

The distilling process is long; it takes approximately four hours to run one batch, which renders 12 gallons of alcohol. “You can’t buy pure fruit alcohol,” Ludek said. “Everything is made from rye, corn or wheat. Any alcohol that comes out of the still is clear like water.”

The cost of the brandy is higher and dependent on the price of fruit, according to Ludek. But the advantages are many: high-quality, purity, no added sugars, no additives. “You can taste the sunshine in the fruit,” Ludek said. “It’s purest as it can be.” The purity comes from the column still, as opposed to old-fashioned double distillation. After six weeks of ripe fruit fermentation, Ludek loads the ferment into the high-technology still which hums like a washing machine.

The most difficult steps in the whole process of starting the distillery, was the licensing, which took 2.5 years. On the other hand, the easiest, for Ludek, was to start distilling, and for Jake, consuming the brandy. Both like the fact that they can drink on the job, which is part of the job. “You never know the yield because everything is natural,” he said. “It’s what nature gives you. If you want smoother brandy, you can’t



Tasting events: next one July 7 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm during Riverwalk at Showboat Spirits.



The distillers, Jake and Ludek Pala.

and peach brandies are 45 percent ABV.

“We’ve always had this embedded in our culture,” owner Jake said. “It has always brought us together during the holidays and family gatherings. We wanted to make our own and to share it. We finally had the resources lined up.” Overcoming the layers of administrative bureaucracy took persistence and determination. “It was a journey,” Jake said. “I had to verify on all levels, state, federal and local that this is possible.”

The farm-to-bottle experience is unique to the distillery which faces the same challenges and obstacles as in real farming. No infusion of flavors

What Jake enjoys the most is the feedback from various tasting events in West and South Michigan. The most recent one was held at the Parnell General Store in Parnell. “I get positive feedback from the customers,” he said. “They appreciate the novelty of our products. Plum brandy is my personal favorite because it has a heavier nose on it, with a distinct flavor, unlike any other fruit. That’s the only way I consume plums.”

The distillery produces four distinct brandies: plum, apple, pear, and peach, with plans to add cherry brandy, herb, and maple-syrup liquors. Individual brandies can be consumed straight, as an aperitif, digestive, or in cocktails. The most popular cocktails are Jack Rose, made with apple brandy, grenadine, pineapple, and lemon juices. Plum brandy mixes well with a blackberry-sage-clove mixer, for a cocktail known as Blackberry Sliv.

The distillery partners with local farms in West and South Michigan. The farmer partners are Mason Orchards and Paulson’s Pumpkin Patch, both in Belding, Hill Bros in Sparta, High Acres Farm, Hartford, and Paul Rood Orchards, Covert. The graphic design partner is Phoenix Design Studio, based in Lowell.

A tasting will be held during the Riverwalk Festival on July 7 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Showboat Spirits. Other sampling events will be held at Smitty’s in East Grand Rapids; Coppervine, Barney’s, Lyons Fruit Market, Greg’s in Middleville; Sawyer Home & Garden, Marathon Cherry Valley in Caledonia; and Depot in South Haven.

For a complete list of retail locations go to <https://moraviansonsdistillery.com/>



The copper custom-made still arrived on a ship from the Czech Republic.

add sugar. You have to let nature do its job.” And each fruit is different and so is the yield per batch of brandy. Plum and apple brandies have the highest yield of alcohol per batch; the plum brandy is 48 percent ABV (alcohol by volume) the apple, pear,

is necessary because the fruit retains its flavor after stilling, according to Jake. “It’s a perfect balance with the right amount of heat up front, complimented with the natural essence of the fruit,” Jake said. “It’s always smooth. It has a nice nose upfront.”

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AT OUR

Block Party!

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Tuesday, July 18

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC OF LOWELL
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Come check out our new space, help us celebrate our grand opening
with a ribbon cutting plus learn more about our programs, senior center,
cancer and grief emotional health support as well as other community
organizations! There will be free activities for the whole family!

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CLUB
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