

Neighbors

Inside this month

Regional News..... Page 2
 Regional Events..... Page 3
 Lake Life with Jane..... Page 5, 6
 Field Trip..... Pages 7, 8
 Floyd's Postcards..... Pages 9-11
 The Last Word..... Page 15

NOVEMBER, 2024 NOW IN OUR 21ST YEAR FREE – Take one

A regional newspaper serving Cass County, Michigan and the surrounding area, and distributed at homes and businesses in Dowagiac, Cassopolis, Edwardsburg, Vandalia, Jones, Marcellus, Decatur, Union, Sister Lakes, and Three Rivers, with mail delivery at homes on Diamond, Eagle, Birch, Corey, Donnell, Indian, Magician, Shavehead, Baldwin, Long, Dewey, Cable, Juno, Christiana, Painter, Paradise, Stone, Buck, Lewis, Big & Little Twin and Bair lakes

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Field Trip:

A sailing adventure in
CROATIA

Pages 7, 8

Regional News

Thanksgiving dinner at CUMC

Cassopolis United Methodist Church will host a free Thanksgiving Dinner on November 28 at 1 pm. All are invited. PLEASE call your reservation into CUMC at 445-3107 by November 26.

Potpourri bazaar at St. Paul's

St. Paul Lutheran Ladies Circle of Cassopolis will host their Annual Holiday Potpourri Bazaar on Saturday, November 9, from 9 am - 2 pm. The bazaar will feature area crafters, a bake sale, used book sale, 'white reindeer table' and the 'best lunch' in town, carry outs will be available. No admission fee.

St. Paul Lutheran Church is located at 305 West State Street in Cassopolis.

Miracle on South Division Street

The Beckwith Theatre Company will

present the play Miracle on South Division Street on November 8 and 9 at 7:30 pm and November 10 at 2 pm

Beckwith Theatre Company is located at 100 New York Ave in Dowagiac. Tickets are \$15 (reserve online at www.beckwiththeatre.com/box-office)

The show is sponsored by Hales Hardware and Deck the Halls. Miracle on South Division Street is produced by a special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service. For more information email BeckwithTheatreMI@gmail.com, phone 782-7653 or visit www.beckwiththeatre.com.

Toys, ornaments at museum

Christmas in Toyland is the 2024 holiday display at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum from Nov. 5 to Dec. 14, when the museum closes for the sea-

son until May 2025. Also, this year, a remembrance tree will grace the museum's main porch. For those who savor vintage toys, there will be train sets, large nutcrackers, and games.

Personalized ornaments to remember loved ones can be purchased for \$5 each until Nov. 18 during museum hours, from 1 to 4 pm Tuesdays through Fridays, and 11 am to 2 pm on Saturdays.

Dowagiac Christmas Open House Weekend & Theta Mu Craft Show

The Dowagiac Christmas Open House Weekend will be November 14 - 16 from 10 am - 5 pm. Shopkeepers offer special activities and cheer as they present their finest in holiday merchandise during Christmas Open House Weekend, Ascension Borgess-Lee Hospital and the

Chamber will host the Dowagiac Christmas Celebration. Enjoy the relaxed pace of holiday shopping, the way it used to be.

Additionally, Theta Mu hosts their annual craft show at Dowagiac Middle School Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm.

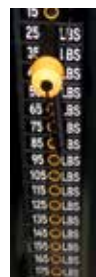
Christmas program planned

A Christmas by Candlelight program is planned on Monday, December 2 at 6 pm at the Cassopolis United Methodist Church featuring Tom and Forrest Miesse Their music includes piano, violin, guitar and voice, and together with their three children, they are frequently invited to perform at local church services of worship and other special programs.



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Regional Calendar

AREA EVENTS

NOV. 9 - Annual Holiday Potpourri Bazaar, St. Paul Lutheran Church, 305 W. State St., Cassopolis, 9 am - 2 pm. 782-7484

NOV. 8-10 - Miracle on South Division Street, Beckwith Theatre, 100 New York Ave., Dowagiac. Shows at 7:30 pm Friday and Saturday, 10 am and 2 pm Sunday. \$15. www.beckwiththeatre.com/box-office.

NOV. 14-16 - Dowagiac Christmas Open House Weekend & Theta Mu Craft Show; open house 10 am - 5 pm, craft show Saturday, 9 am - 3 pm

NOV. 28 - Thanksgiving Dinner, Cassopolis United Methodist Church, 1 pm, reserve at 445-3107

NOV. 30 - Small Business Saturday, Dowagiac

DEC. 2 - Christmas by Candlelight, Cass United

Methodist Church, Cassopolis, 6 pm

DEC. 7 - Christmas in Cassopolis

CASS DISTRICT LIBRARY *REGISTRATION REQUIRED

T'AI CHI WITH ALYSE KNEPPLE, MASON/ UNION BRANCH, MONDAYS: 11 am. Alyse will offer a free introductory class, followed by four weekly classes which will cost \$40.

CARDIO DRUMMING*, HOWARD BRANCH, MONDAYS: 6pm. This program is free, but a gratuity of \$5 is encouraged for but not required. Call Howard Branch Manager Rhonda at 269-487-9214 to register.

MEDICARE SEMINAR, MAIN BRANCH, NOVEMBER 6: 3-4:30 pm.

DINO-VERM PAJAMA

STORYTIME*, Children are welcome to wear their favorite dinosaur shirt, costume, or pajamas to this special evening story time. Call 269-487-9215 to register.

DIY COFFEE SUGAR SCRUB

CUBES*, HOWARD BRANCH, NOVEMBER 7: 5- 6:30 pm. Reserve by calling 269-487-9214.

STORYWALK WEEK, ALL BRANCHES NOVEMBER 11 - 16. Be sure to check in at the circulation desk for a special treat coupon for Culver's for participating!

TEEN MAKER MONDAY, EDWARDSBURG BRANCH, NOVEMBER 11: 2:30 pm, for ages 12-18.

GIVE THANKS WREATH, MASON/ UNION BRANCH, NOVEMBER 11 - 14 & 16: DAILY

BRANCH HOURS. The whole family can take part in this holiday decoration. Create at the library or take home and make, the option is yours! Give Thanks Wreath is available while supplies last.

THE HISTORY OF MICHIGAN CARNEGIE LIBRARIES*, LOCAL HISTORY BRANCH, NOVEMBER 12: 1 pm. Registration for this event is required, call the Local History Branch at 269-357-7823 to register.

ADULT CRAFT CLUB: LEAF CANDLE HOLDER*, MAIN BRANCH, NOVEMBER 13: 1 pm. This month make a luminary out of jars and other simple craft materials. All supplies will be provided. Registration required, call Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 to register.

HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT, EDWARDSBURG BRANCH, NOVEMBER 18: 1 pm.
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Business & Finance

Evolving insurance: Learning from the past to shape the future

By **KERRY DAVIS**
Kemner Iott Benz, Acrisure Partner

The commercial insurance landscape is ever evolving, influenced by historical events, technological advancements, and emerging risks. By examining past lessons, businesses can better navigate the complexities of today's insurance market and prepare for future challenges.

No one is perfect. Not only is no one person perfect, but insurance is also not perfect. What we can all do to become better and grow is to learn from the past. Our history has shaped us into who we are. In the insurance industry, the past holds a key in shaping how insurance looks today.

Insurance started in London in the 1600's, where the first fire insurance company was established. The Great Fire of London taught the importance of comprehensive fire insurance and having building codes. Hurricane Katrina highlighted the need for adequate natural disaster coverage. From that, we learned the significance of flood insurance. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, insurance added the option of terrorism coverage. And most recently, COVID exposed the limitations of business interruption insurance and we realized the need for policy innovations to cover emerging risks.

Because of these events, along with many others, the insurance industry

has had to evolve with the changing times. Business interruption is now a more common coverage, but at one time there was nothing that would cover loss of income for businesses due to disasters. Cyber insurance is obviously a newer insurance need, with so much information on the internet that needs protection. Hybrid work environments have also created some insurance challenges recently.

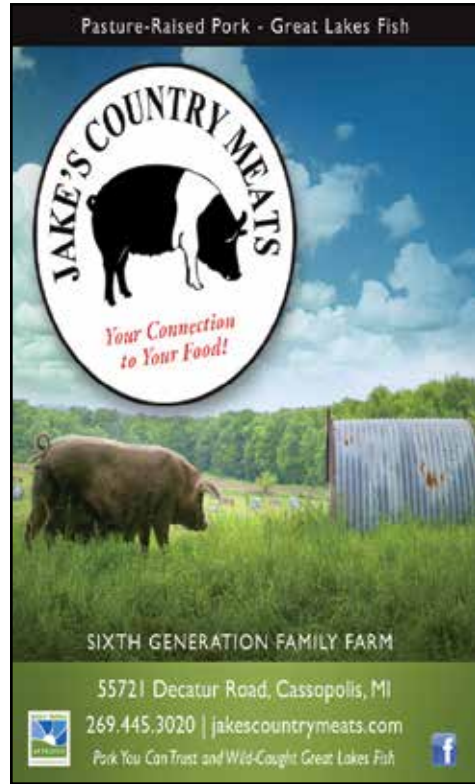
Not only have the insurance policies

evolved, but risk management at the business level has adapted as well. Safety training, disaster preparedness and cybersecurity measures are being implemented across all types of businesses. Technology has helped in many companies to keep records and data more up to date and easily accessible.

Regularly reviewing and updating insurance policies as necessary to cover current and emerging risks is becoming a normal procedure for many compa-

nies. Meeting with your agent or insurance representative is an important part of protecting your assets.

Understanding and applying historical lessons in commercial insurance allows businesses to make informed decisions, enhance their risk management strategies, and be better prepared for future challenges. By learning from the past, we can shape a more resilient and secure future in the ever-changing world of commercial insurance.



REGIONAL CALENDAR

Continued from previous page

Open to ages 5-12. All materials will be provided.

10:30-11:30 am., geared toward children 3-5 years.

SAVAGE READERS BOOK CLUB, SAVAGE BEAN COFFEE CO., NOVEMBER 19: 10 am. Contact Stephanie Knepple at 269-749-1384 for more details and the current month title.

TEEN TUESDAY. Nov 5, 12, 19, & 26), 3-4 pm, for teens 13 through 18 .

S.T.E.A.M FOR TWEENS. Nov 6 & 20, 4 pm for ages 8-12, register by calling 269-782-3826 or email (att: Pam) at dowagiactlibrystaff@gmail.com.

TEEN FANDOM, EDWARDSBURG BRANCH, NOVEMBER 20: 2:30 pm. Intended for ages 12 to 18.

YOGA AT THE LIBRARY, Nov 2, 9:30-10:30 am.

VILLAGE BOOK CLUB, EDWARDSBURG BRANCH, NOVEMBER 21: 5:30 pm. Contact Molly Harwood at 574-314-6454 for more details.

MAKE & SHARE COOKBOOK CLUB, Nov 7, 5:30-6:30 pm.

EVENING PAJAMA STORYTIME, HOWARD BRANCH, NOVEMBER 21: 6:30 pm. Pajamas are highly encouraged!

LITTLE BEAKERS, Nov 9, 11-12 pm, for ages 4-7

CHIPS AND A CHAPTER, HOWARD BRANCH, NOVEMBER 26: 4-4:30 pm. Intended for ages 8-12.

JIGSAW PUZZLE SWAP, Nov 14, 5-7 pm. Drop your gently used jigsaw puzzles from Nov. 4-8 at the library and you will receive a ticket to redeem on Nov. 14 from 5-7pm . Puzzles must have all pieces.

STORYTIMES: Howard Branch: Tuesdays @ 11 am - Year-Round; Edwardsburg Branch: Tuesdays @ 11 am - Sept 3. - Nov 19; Mason/Union Branch: Wednesdays @ 10 am - Sept 4 - Nov 20; Main Branch: Thursdays @ 11 am - Year-Round

HEATED TROPES ROMANCE READERS BOOK CLUB, Nov 21, 5-6 pm.

THE CLASSICS BOOK CLUB, Nov 26, 5-6 pm.

MARCELLUS Township Wood Memorial Library

To see the upcoming events for November please visit the library's website at: <https://www.marcellus.michlibrary.org/>

TBR BOOK CLUB FOR TEENS, Nov 27, 3-4 pm. For 13-18

ADVENTURES IN BOOKLAND BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS, Nov 27, 4-5 pm. For kids 6-8 years

DOWAGIAC District Library

TEEN MATINEE MONDAY, MONDAYS 3-5 pm, for teens 13 through 18 years old.

THE INKWELL EXPLORERS BOOK CLUB FOR TWEENS, Nov 29, 4-5pm, for tweens 9-12 years

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME. TUESDAYS:

For a complete list and description of events visit the library's website at <https://www.dowagiacdlib.org/events>



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Neighbors

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Lake Life with Jane

A two-holiday mashup

Hello Neighbors! Even though it's only November 1st and we're still raking up those leaves and storing the garden tools away, some of us are already getting our luck in a row for Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Yes, Christmas!! I've learned through trial and error that even with having a basic list that rarely changes from year to year, something usually goes awry at the last minute. And all those brilliant ideas or crafts you plan with the grandkids, sadly you're chomping at the bit and have to let it go, or you plod your way through it and you sense your little angels know how flustered you are. And it always saddens me to hear people say that they no longer send out holiday cards. It's like not watching Miracle on 34th Street five or six times in December. Or not eating the candy canes off the Christmas tree. In my case I have only missed sending out cards because I've run out of time, literally, they would have arrived days after the holiday. Sometimes I'm writing and stamping and only get through my address book so far. Nonetheless, whatever I have, they go to the post office. Early November is a great time to start on that Christmas prep and without getting all Martha Stewartish, get going and start several lists, including one for those magical little ideas like fairy lights in the bathroom, or a surprise treasure hunt in the snow on Christmas Day for the adults! I'm of the belief that we can get a lot done by chipping away at the most important things first, and not having the "all or nothing" mindset. Hiding inside every perfectionist is a procrastinator.



A good thing to remember with Thanksgiving and Christmas being so close together is that you can kill two birds with one stone when you shop. Other than your fresh items, make a list and get everything you need before Thanksgiving. The baking aisles will be a mess, throughout December because everyone starts baking. Grab your canned goods, too. I'm always looking for canned corn, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling, and condensed milk. I guess everyone else is, too. I know you don't give a hoot about this so I'll move on. But please, get this stuff now and stash it away. And don't wait for sales or mark downs. It IS on sale. The stores have been pushing it on us since Halloween.

Lest you think I'm going to give you advice for the Twelve Days of Christmas, the Thirty Days of November, and the Remaining Twelve Days of Christmas, I have to move things along. Leaning towards Christmas, take inventory of your dishes, napkins and linens, whatever- and put together a theme. I love this part and I just happen to have a lot of this stuff from all the time I've spent as a lifestyle blogger. I like to mix a little bit of elegance with touches of nature. My boys (who are actually now big 'ol cloddy men), refused to use the old estate sale silver I had when they were younger, saying it was "used by people we didn't know, who were probably dead." I reminded them they ate in restaurants, didn't they? I've also eliminated a lot of fuss in wrapping gifts by using craft paper and nature inspired embellishments. I had accumulated so much wrapping paper over the years

and would still bring home more every time I first went out Christmas shopping, it was all just so irresistible! Now I have a little more fun with velvet ribbon, a few twigs, or dried lavender from my garden. I keep all of my gift boxes, wrapping paper, tissue paper, ribbon, bows, and odds and ends in a soft fabric clothes hamper. I have a gift box that I store smaller items in as well as scissors, tape, pens, markers, tags, labels, stickers, etc.,. Never fear, you will still lose something. Most of all, have fun. Involve the family. Turn on some Christmas music and enjoy the time you have created by being a little more careful in how you do it!



Cranberry Pecan Goat Cheese Truffles

This is a wonderfully festive recipe to have on hand for the holiday season. It goes together fairly quick and it's also something you can make ahead. Now, if you aren't a fan of goat cheese, fear not! You can sub bleu cheese or feta.

10 oz. goat cheese
6 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
2 t cinnamon
3 T honey, plus extra for drizzling
2 c pecan chips, divided
1 1/2 diced dried cranberries
1 c. fresh parsley

In a large bowl, beat together the goat cheese, cream cheese, cinnamon and honey until light and fluffy. Fold in 3/4 c of the pecan chips until combined. Form it into a ball, wrap it up in plastic wrap and chill for 15-20 minutes in the fridge.

Meanwhile, line your countertop with parchment paper. Toss together the remaining pecan chips, dried cranberries, and fresh parsley in the center, and then spread out evenly. Once the cheese is chilled enough to handle without being too sticky from the warmth of your hands, work it apart from the shape of the ball you formed it into, and using a large cookie scoop, form small balls, roll them in the pecan, cranberry mix. I find this more of a "pressing" sort of situation, after the roll, either by pressing the cheese ball down on the mix, or pinching pieces of nuts or cranberries and adding them to bare spots. Continue until all the truffles have been rolled. Refrigerate in a covered container until ready to serve. Just before serving, drizzle with honey. I've also served them with a stick pretzel poked in like a toothpick with the honey drizzling down. Yield: 18

Here are some variations to try on for size and I have tried a few myself:

Use any type of soft cheese to blend with the cream cheese, but keep in mind that the pungency of the goat cheese and the substitutions I suggested earlier adapt to the spices, almonds and cranberries. Once you have the knack for making cheese balls, you can come up with some great combos.

I like to make different shapes other than these small truffles. These are bite size and elegant on a small tray on a buffet. I also like to make a cheese log with this recipe and serve it with crackers or toasted crostini.

Just as you might switch up your cheeses, come up with your own spices, nuts, berries, etc.,. In this recipe I have used Craisins. You can use all sorts of dried herbs in the cheese as well as the outer mix. Remember that you want to give it some texture and crunch. Think

about your menu or the cocktails you're serving. Maybe you want something with a little kick. Add some chili pepper to the cheese and fresh cilantro in place of the parsley. Serve with tortilla chips.

You can make these ahead of time. Do not drizzle on the honey until ready to serve.

Puff Pastry Tart with Tomatoes & Burrata



This is another beautiful appetizer for your buffet or to serve to your guests in larger portions at more intimate holiday gatherings. You'll find many variations on this theme; puff pastry, tomatoes and the ever more popular use of burrata cheese*. I tweaked this version with the use of heirloom tomatoes (if you can find them this time of year), and some tips on keeping your puff pastry behaving and looking like it came out of the kitchen of a French restaurant. Read on!

1 sheet puff pastry, thawed**
1 c pesto, store bought
1/2 c shredded mozzarella
2-3 heirloom tomatoes or 16-20 cherry tomatoes
8 oz burrata cheese, whole
Salt & pepper

1 egg whisked for egg wash
1/2 c fresh basil, roughly torn
Slice tomatoes and place on a plate lined with paper towels. Sprinkle them with a bit of salt to allow some of their juices to release and prevent your tart from getting soggy. After 10 minutes, pat dry.

Preheat the oven to 400. Gently unfold the sheet of puff pastry onto a sheet of parchment paper. Roll out lightly to smooth the creases if necessary, retaining the rectangular shape. Use a fork to poke holes in the dough and fold up the edges slightly to create a bit of a frame for the ingredients.

Spread the pesto over the pastry, followed by the mozzarella. Slice the burrata and arrange over the mozzarella, then the sliced tomatoes between the burrata.

Slide the parchment paper onto a baking sheet, chill the tart for 10-15 minutes. Whisk the egg and brush the creased edge of the pastry using a pastry brush, then bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown with puffy edges. Top the tart with the shredded basil and serve at room temperature.

*Burrata cheese differs from mozzarella in that it has a solid outer layer made from fresh mozzarella that is formed into a thin hollow pouch which is then filled with a mixture of cream and cheese curds. It has a milky, buttery flavor that's rich without being too indulgent.

**Puff pastry can make or break a pie, tart, or gallette. I've hit on some fool-proof ways to make the store bought pastry come as worthy as all the time you put into the recipe itself. One thing I highly encourage you to do is to return your puff pastry tart rolled out and on the sheet pan, place it into the fridge or freezer for 15 minutes or so before baking. The cold temperatures firm up the pastry, meaning that the butter in the dough will melt

more slowly. Slower melting butter means that the pastry will hold its shape, rather than weeping and becoming misshapen. All of this coming from me, the one who despises baking. However, if I'm going to bake, it has to be challenging and I have to have a nervous breakdown doing it.

Whipped Ricotta with Hot Honey, Lemon & Herbs



Ricotta is seeing its day in the sun, but for the many of us who dared to dip our fingers into the luscious layer for our homemade lasagna, risking salmonella from the raw egg, this is what dreams are made of. Hot Honey is something new to me but I'm a little late to that party, but I'm wasting no time finding ways to use the hot and sweet combination, especially in salad dressings. Grab some!

1 c whole milk ricotta
2 t fresh mint, roughly chopped
1 t fresh parsley, finely chopped
1/2 t lemon zest
1 T olive, plus more for serving
3 T hot honey
Sea Salt
Fresh ground pepper
1 baguette, sliced

Place the ricotta in a small mixing bowl. Using a hand mixer with a whisk attachment or beaters, whisk ricotta for 2 minutes until smooth and creamy; you may see some small lumps but that's fine. Place the ricotta in a small serving bowl or spread on a shallow plate.

In a separate bowl, stir together the mint, parsley, lemon zest, olive oil, hot honey, and salt. Pour the herb and honey mixture on top of the whipped ricotta and top with the freshly ground pepper. Serve with grilled crostini brushed with olive oil, crackers, pita bread or chips, or veggies.

Jane's Signature Cocktail Dark and Stormy Cocktail

I love when a drink has a history and is still popular today. That and how the dark and stormy is made was quite fascinating to me. It's said that the Goslings family made a special rum dating back to that late 1800's in Bermuda, and the British sailors made

ginger beer. Eventually it was combined into one glass and was a huge hit that stuck around. Rumor has it that the cocktail got its name from a WWI soldier who said it was the "color of a cloud only a fool or a dead man would sail under." Hence, the Dark and Stormy.

The Goslings are very protective of their recipe so their rum and ginger beer are included here. This recipe does, however, have a simple syrup that is spicy with a touch of lime to brighten it up.

For the Spiced Syrup

1/2 c sugar
1 1/2 c water

Please see **JANE** next page



Our Children / The value of traditional games

by **SANDY FLEMING**
Traditional games are struggling! You know the ones – board games, card games, domino and dice games, and so forth. They are losing out rapidly to their digital cousins, and they also suffer from a serious lack of family priorities. It's hard to find kids who know how to play checkers or Rummy, not to mention kids who play Hearts, solitaire, Stratego®, and others. And it shows! Games have such potential to teach valuable skills to kids that it's a shame to overlook them in our rush through the busy world.

One of the most important skills games offer is teaching how to slow down and interact with other people. Video games simply do not do this in the same way. When a family or even a few siblings or friends gather around a table to play cards or other commercial games, magic happens. Social skills, like taking turns, being kind, and learning about conversation are all nurtured. Memories are made that can last a lifetime. Generations can connect more easily across gameboards. Kids build attention skills and perseverance. They learn to handle both winning and losing gracefully. There's really no substitute.

Aside from valuable social learning, there are a host of other skills that games can build. Many of them support academic learning, but mostly they are important skills for simply being a human being. Let's take a look at some of the other benefits right now.

Reading Skills

Nearly all games have written directions. Players need to read and comprehend them. Try putting your children in charge of researching a new game and then teaching their family or friends. Many games also have penalty and bonus cards or spaces. Kids can be motivated to read better so they can manage these aspects on their own. It's also possible to find strategy suggestions and other information about the game in books or on the internet. Challenge kids to learn about the roots and history of their favorite games.

Many early childhood games build

those critical prereading skills that children need for school success. Look for games focused on matching colors (like Candyland®), counting items (like Hi-Ho Cheri-o®) and matching pictures like Memory and Old Maid.

Math Skills

Math skills abound in nearly every game. Those that use dice encourage not only addition of numbers 1-6, but also pattern recognition and the concept that one does not always need to count to know the number. This is a critical piece of learning for the very young, and we rely on it as adults in many situations. We sort of internalize the common configurations of numbers 2 through 10 from dice, dominoes, and cards so we can tell at a glance how many items are in that small group. Kids who cannot do this end up struggling with their basic math facts and also tend to have greater challenges with other early math skills.

Games that require scores be kept (like Rummy or Dominoes) help children practice and build addition and subtraction of whole numbers. Remember, in many games, players can be "set" or have a negative score. Before you know it, even your elementary student is gaining a hands-on understanding of positive and negative numbers that will prepare him or her for middle school math dealing with signed integers.

Dominoes requires valid scores be divisible by 5. It's just a short jump to change that divisibility number to 3 or 9 after kids have all mastered recognition of numbers that are divisible by 5. Monopoly® encourages modular math (each side of the board is 10 spaces, and allows children to quickly calculate where a roll of 11 or 12 will land around the corner). And underneath the fun of the game, kids are gaining understanding of place value as well.

Many games use some form of paper money. Sometimes you have to decide if you have enough money to complete a desired task. Guess what? That's budgeting in its infancy. The entire concept of "You must have money before spending it" escapes some adults, and part of the rea-

son could be a lack of experience with these play money games.

Many card games require pattern formation and recognition. Some forms of Solitaire have players laying red cards on black ones in ascending or descending order of the card's value. Early learning games like Candyland® and Chutes and Ladders® lay the groundwork for these skills as well. Sorry®, Parchesi® and their kin also support seeing patterns in numbers.

Memory

Nearly all games encourage memory skills. They all have rules that have to be kept in mind throughout the play period to make things fair for everyone. Some games are easier to play if you can keep in mind which cards or tiles have already been played and which are still available from the draw pile. Some games encourage players to keep hidden cards or other items belonging to other players in mind.

Other games lend themselves to learning details like prices for properties, rental fees for hotels, and other details. Studies show that memory can be improved through use and practice, so why not give your kids a leg up on academic success in this way? It has also been shown that even adults can improve their memories through practice and use, and games provide a perfect avenue for this.

Organization, Attention, and Other Executive Function Skills

You've likely heard some of these terms before but may not realize the importance of these skills in school and in our daily adult lives. These are all the skills that allow us to set goals, plan our actions, implement the plans, solve problems, and evaluate our success. Adults who struggle in these areas often have difficulties holding jobs and maintaining healthy relationships. They have trouble managing money and doing the tasks of daily living. Fortunately, playing games can help ... a lot!

By their very nature, games are engaging. Fast-moving games, like Hungry Hungry Hippos® or Grabbin' Grasshoppers® are great ways to start

younger kids on the idea that games in general are fun. As they grow, they will be better able to maintain focus on longer and more complex games like Rack-O® and Monopoly®. Some games for younger children are fun because of anticipation, like Don't Break the Ice® where players tap cubes out of a frame and hope the entire structure does not fall. A more mature version of the game is Jenga® - who can add the next piece to the tower without collapsing it. These games take focused attention for a "big" payoff, and are great for helping children with attention challenges.

Some games require organization. Go Fish and Backgammon force players to keep their cards or pieces organized, or they will miss out on important plays. Most players learn to organize their play money by type when playing games that use it. And what is strategy in the whole, if not organizing one's thoughts, thinking the situation through, and making predictions about the outcomes of given moves?

Low-Cost Fun

Games offer entertainment on a budget for people of all ages. Decks of cards and similar game equipment are extremely inexpensive, and can provide hours of varied types of fun. Best of all, they stay with a person long after they are taught. Once most games are learned, they stay with us for life and only take a quick nudge to rise back up to the top of our skill sets. So teach all the games you recall to your kids. Enjoy the new ones and drag out the old favorites regularly. Play paper-pencil games like tic-tac-toe and boxes with the kids as they are growing up. Teach chess and checkers and card games. Your kids will make memories, and they will see how much games help people with learning. Hopefully they will teach their own kids how to play, and everyone will gain a lifetime of enjoyment!

Sandy Fleming is a writer and private tutor living in Edwardsburg. For more information and ideas about using games for learning and other ways to support students, visit her websites at <https://learningnook.com> and <https://sandyflemingonline.com>.

JANE

Continued from previous page

6 sticks cinnamon, grate 1/4 of one stick into the mix
 10 whole cloves
 10 allspice berries
 1/4 t ground allspice
 1 vanilla bean, cut in half, seeds scraped out
 1/2 t fresh grated nutmeg
 1/4 c fresh grated ginger
 3 oz lime juice

For the Cocktail

2 oz Gosling's Black Seal Rum
 4r oz ginger beer
 1 oz spiced simple syrup
 lime for garnish

To make the syrup, add the sugar, water, and spices to a pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. When it starts to simmer, turn the heat down to low and keep simmering for 10-15 minutes or until the mixture starts to thicken and coats the back of a spoon.. Take it off the heat and let it cool.

When it has cooled a little, strain the syrup and discard the spices. Store the syrup in a jar or container until you are ready to use it. Store it in the fridge if it will be longer than a day.

To Make The Cocktail

Add ice to a tall cocktail glass. First add the ginger beer, then pour in the spiced syrup. It should sink to the bottom.

Hold a spoon upside down at the top of the glass just topping the ginger beer. Pour the rum over the spoon slowly and the rum will stay at the top and create a rum layer. Serve in layers but stir before drinking.

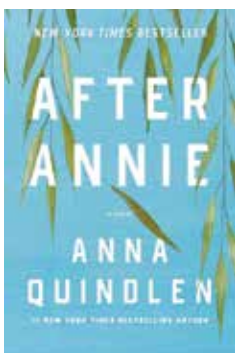
Jane's Imaginary Book Club After Annie

Anna Quindlen is without a doubt, one of my favorite writers of all time, going back to when I picked up her book A Short Guide to a Happy Life in an airport gift shop and read it before the plane took

off. Okay, it was a small book filled with inspiring thoughts and beautiful photos. She is, however, a very gifted writer and well worth checking out if you haven't by now. This is her latest novel and I personally could not put it down. Not to be an Amazonish

reviewer in any way, Annie, a beloved wife and mother dies suddenly, thrusting her family and close friends into grief and confusion, then navigating their way forward without her steady, capable hands. This may sound rather depressing but Quindlen manages to weave a heartfelt and moving story about how some of our greatest losses become a catalyst for hope. What I especially loved about this book is that although we never meet Annie, she becomes crystal clear in the thoughts and memories of those who loved her. Ultimately, it is her voice that moves her loved ones forward, the gift she had given them, that they had all along. This is such a moving book, and it's also funny and warm and I think you need to pick it up and get right on that signature cocktail thing. You know the drill.

Last month I teased about the book club I belonged to. Now, you have to know it isn't your conventional book club where you get together once a month to discuss a book that everyone either loves or hates, and then usually turn to more important matters like what's in the spinach dip, and yes, you do have time for maybe just one more glass of chardonnay. But I do have a bookclub of sorts. We casually meet once a month at a locally owned coffee shop about five minutes from my home and it's called The Silent Bookclub. You bring your own book-whatever you are reading at the time, grab a coffee or beverage and mingle for a half hour. You then



seat yourself, alone or at a table with others, and read your book for one hour in total silence. After the hour of reading you have another half hour to mingle and chat with the group which by then is pretty comfortable because you have books to discuss, your love of reading, the concept of the book club, and so on. The premise of this bookclub- and the many like this that are popping up all over -is that we don't read enough in this world of business and the allure of social media. The founders urge that we carry a book with us at all times, they are rarely any larger than an iPad, and learn to reach for that instead. I've learned to relax much more lately by not having my phone attached to me all day and I find the time to relax and let fictional characters and their lives touch and fill my mind instead of chaos, or begin a nonfiction book and learn something new in science or history- knowledge is in never-ending quantity.

The Silent Bookclub has over 500 local chapters across the country and has received press on Good Morning America, The New York Times, CNN, and many more outlets. People are now forming groups in coffee shops, bars, and libraries. Some call it their therapy. Some think of it as their most ideal combination of social life and like minded people with a love of the written word. For those of you on Diamond Lake or any lake or any town, check to see if there is a chapter in the area by going to <http://silentbook.club/pages/chapter-map>

So that's a wrap for November and 2024. We will be gathering around our tables on Thanksgiving, hands covering those around us in prayer that this world will find peace, love for one another, strength to overcome all hardship, and relief from all that Mother Earth has wrought these past few months from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. At the end of each column I pen, there is always a little bio of me, and mention is made of my home in the mountains of North Carolina. That little slice of heaven that I so love is

in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, NC, and it took a direct hit from Hurricane Helene on September 26, 2024, in what scientists, geologists and meteorologists say was the perfect storm. Search and rescue is ongoing at the time I'm writing this. The death toll in Asheville and surrounding communities is over 120, and that doesn't come near the number of people unaccounted for. Bottled water is rationed and there is no running water available for toilets or bathing. People are trapped where they were when the hurricane swept in with little if any warning. The first and last newscast we saw from a local news affiliate showed a reporter standing in waist high water in Biltmore Village, about three blocks from where we live, saying that most buildings, shops and restaurants were submerged, trees down, roads washed away. Later, those same things had washed away as well. Power and cell service is still out. We have no idea what's left of our home. But we wait like everyone else and we pray for the missing and those who are hurt or fighting for their lives. It's very hard to search out news for NC in light of the double slam Florida took, and all of this occurring so close to a presidential election and a major conflict in the Middle East. But if you can, take a moment and say a prayer for these folks.



Asheville 2020

Jane Boudreau is a writer, blogger and newspaper columnist who divides her time between Diamond Lake, Chicago and a little place in the mountains of North Carolina. You can reach her at blndy9@yahoo.com

Field Trip



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can abide a long plane ride (ours SAS flight stopped for a delightful afternoon lunch in Copenhagen), a six-hour time difference and signs in an absolutely incomprehensible language, the inhabitants (thank God they all speak English) will make you feel at home in the first 10 minutes! The sailing is great, the scenery amazing, the people friendly and the food is very different but very, very good.



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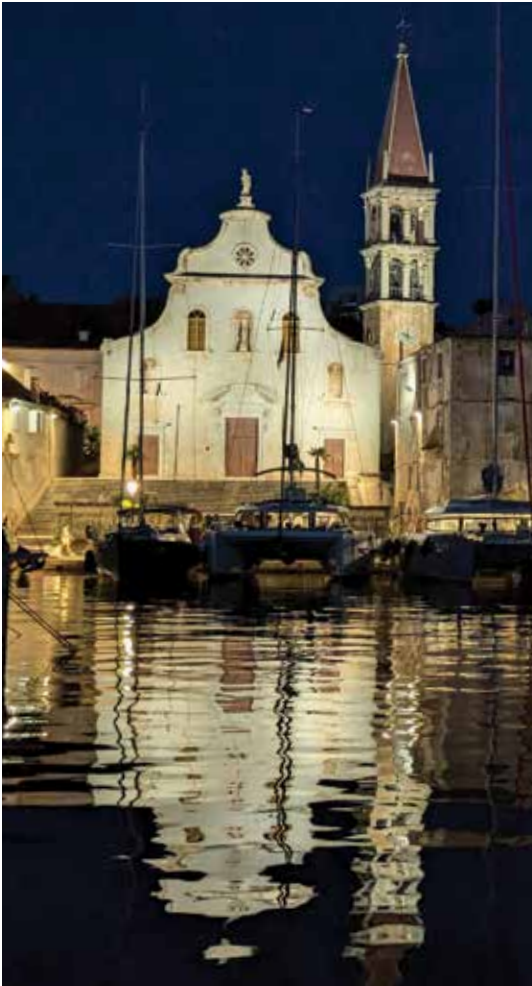
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Historic Postcards

Historic postcards depict rich scenes of area's past

In this issue of Neighbors, Jerdon Real Estate of Dowagiac, owned by Floyd Jerdon and his son Tom, have provided antique postcards of a few of the many lakes in our area.

Floyd and his wife Donna started collecting post cards more than 20 years ago, and since Jerdon Real Estate specializes in marketing lake property, it was a natural fit that Floyd's interest be directed to the lake cards. The collection now numbers many thousands.

Jerdon has recently used many of his postcards featuring the Sister Lakes area in a book written by RL Rasmussen. The book, which retails for \$19.99, is in its second printing by the publisher, Arcadia Publishing.

Among other places, the book may be purchased at the Jerdon Real Estate office on M-62 West, and at Whistlestop Gifts, which is operated by the Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce.

For more information or to get a copy of Jerdon's book, visit the website: www.arcadiapublishing.com

In this edition of Neighbors we have selected postcards showing images of various places around Cass County. In future issues, we will couple additional cards from one or more of the area's lakes with views of nearby communities, lakes and countryside.



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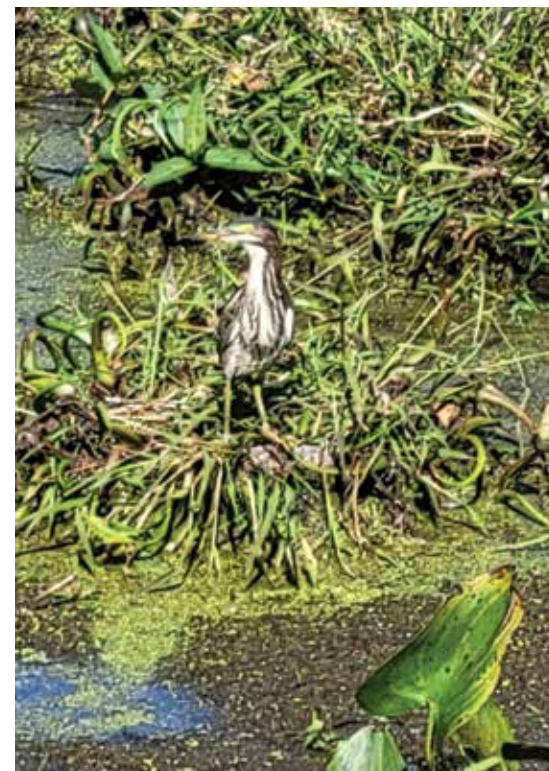


Nature Notes

Ruby-throated hummingbirds, Green heron

Provided by

Jonathan Wuepper, Manager
Local History Branch, Cass District Library
jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us



Left: Ruby-throated hummingbird, likely an individual hatched in 2024, October 3 at the feeder of Leslie Steinberger of Lincoln Township.

Right: Green heron on October 2 at Harbor Shores Golf Course. Photo by Nancy Hourigan of St. Joseph.

October is the month during which you should report hummingbird sightings from Southwest Michigan. These reports help ornithologists understand the migrations of our smallest birds, and the possibility of finding a species of hummingbird other than our ruby-throated hummingbird increases.

Each year during the last days of September, ruby-throated hummingbirds suddenly become much more difficult to find in our area, but they still can be found in smaller numbers.

This October there seem to be fewer ruby-throated hummingbirds reported locally than average. Perhaps this is due to the drought we experienced late this summer, into September? It may be that lack of water affected flowers which hummingbirds rely on for nectar, causing the species to depart earlier than average.

Adult male ruby-throated hummingbirds depart our region beginning in late July. Most have vacated Michigan by September although there are always a few stragglers. Adult males have the iridescent gorget feathers on their throats. Adult females and hatch-year birds of both sexes lack the gorget feathers.

Adult females depart next followed by the young of the year. Hummingbirds do not migrate in flocks. This is a generalization in the departure of males, females and young of the year. Exceptions occur commonly but are less proportionate to the overall ruby-throated hummingbird population.

As of this writing, the most recent ruby-throated hummingbird sighting from Berrien County was one on October 13 seen visiting a salvia plant in the yard of Johanna Humbert of Galien Township. Another on October 4 reported at the home of Leslie Steinberger of Lincoln Township, which was photographed.

On average the last ruby-throated hummingbird

reported in the autumn from Berrien County occurs around October 20. Any hummingbirds observed locally after that date should be reported immediately, accompanied with photographs if possible, to myself or Allen T. Chartier, who studies hummingbird migration. Chartier's email is amazilia3@gmail.com.

Nancy Hourigan of St. Joseph sent in a photograph of a green heron taken on October 2 at the Harbor Shores Golf Course. Green herons are about one and one-half feet in height and look similar to crows when in

flight, they fly with bowed wingbeats.

Green herons are common in the eastern US during the summer months and migrate to the Gulf Coast, south to Mexico, Central and northern South America for the winter months.

On average the last autumn green heron report for Berrien County is made around October 5. A few individuals may linger into late October. Berrien County has one winter record of the species, a single individual seen in December 1974 in Baroda Township.

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Local History

Cassopolis Methodist Church history

by Jonathan Wuepper
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269-357-7823

In September, I co-led for the Cass District Library, along with Kyscha Johnson of the Cass County Council on Aging, a historical walking tour of Cassopolis. One new stop on this tour was the Cassopolis Methodist Church at 213 South Rowland Street, Cassopolis.

While I was at the church I noticed an early photograph of the church building. What struck me was the lack of trees and buildings in the foreground. There were less trees and shrubs in said photo than there are pictured in a later photo of the same building, believed taken around 1900-1910, depicting the congregation on the front steps.

In the older photo in the lower left hand portion, a building with a sign on it with "Wagon & Paint Shop" can be seen. I searched the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Cassopolis (published 1884-1930s) hoping to find a Wagon and Paint Shop at that location, which would in turn help determine the date the photo was taken. While I failed to find a wagon AND paint shop on the Sanborn maps, I did find a wagon and blacksmith shop at that location on the May 1899 map. Putting all these clues together, I estimate that the first photo, without the congregation on the steps, was taken during the late 1880s-early 1890s.

One important fact worth mentioning is that the church building depicted in the photos was dedicated on November 22, 1874, 150 years ago this month!

Here is a brief history of the



Top Left: Enlarged portion of the circa 1880s-1890s photo, showing the sign for a "Wagon & Paint Shop" to the northeast of the church



Right: Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church of Cassopolis, built April-November 1874 and dedicated November 22, 1874. This photo likely dates from the 1880s or 1890s. Courtesy of the Cassopolis Methodist Church.



Bottom Left: ME Church of Cassopolis with the congregation on front steps. Taken circa 1900-1910. Courtesy of the Cassopolis Methodist Church.

Cassopolis Methodist Church, culled from various published sources. The Cassopolis Methodists were organized in 1838, initially meeting in the Cass County Courthouse and then schoolhouses. In 1846 an earlier church building was built on same site as the current Methodist Church building by Jacob Silver and Joshua Loftland. This building was reportedly the first church building in the village. In 1846 the old building was used by both Swedenborgians and the Methodists. In 1854 the original building was sold to the United Brethren, but they

were unable to pay for the building and in January 1855 Messrs. Lofland and Shanafelt presented it to the Methodists.

Newspaper records show the Cassopolis Methodists worshiped in the old building until March 29, 1874 when they sold it to a Cassopolis (in early April) merchant and it was moved off site.

The current Methodist Church of Cassopolis was constructed between April and November 1874 at a cost of approximately \$8000 (adjusting for inflation, \$220,000+ in 2024). Multiple sources say

that during the construction of the building, no Methodist services were conducted in Cassopolis. The current Cassopolis Methodist Church building was dedicated on Sunday, November 22, 1874. Unfortunately, the issues of the Cassopolis newspapers (Cassopolis Vigilant and National Democrat) covering the months of construction and church dedication are lost. There have been at least two additions to the building since 1874.

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The woolly things I wonder whilst I wander



Sometimes the most unusual things pop into my head when I'm walking. Yesterday as I trudged along Walnut Street near my home, I was in a mental la-la land, deep in thought (when you walk for two or three hours a day without a cell phone you actually get a

chance to think instead of responding to texts and Facebook postings). Anyway, that day I was thinking about a variety of serious topics, like "could analysis be worthwhile and is the theater really dead" (thanks Simon and Garfunkel), and contrasting those worries against a mind-numbing comparison of the mediocrity of college football rankings to the doubtful but ubiquitous polls claiming to know which candidate is going to win at the polls in November, and even entertaining and some slightly more dark notions like the health-related benefits of walking daily and whether my seven-mile-a-day hike will kill me or make me stronger (thanks Friedrich Nietzsche), when I was startled out of my reverie by a flamboyantly colored root-beer-brown and ebony-black woolly worm creeping its way across the asphalt of Walnut Street right in front of me.

Normally a creepy, snake-like beastie slithering across my path would produce ikky shivers down my spine, but this time that woolly worm bouncing its soft, undulating cadence its 11 million tiny legs produced as it silently slid over the pavement was actually kind of soothing to my psyche, and I stepped aside to let it pass ... but it put me into a state of deep contemplation.

I remember wondering at the time about that woolly worm, about why it was crossing the road at that particular moment, whether it had knowledge of the book *Bridge of San Luis Rey* (pretty wild Thornton), and how it got to be there. Was Mr. Worm moving just to be moving or was it contemplating its steps as was I? Is a woolly worm even capable of counting, or contemplating in the first place? If so, what might be the abiding concerns of woolly-worm-world that prompted it to act like a chicken and cross that road, especially knowing (assuming a woolly worm can know things) that woolly worms might be seen as a tempting delicacy, a teasing and tasty morsel to passing crows, raccoons or a dozen

other potential hungry predators that might be hunting overhead (to a woolly worm, I'm guessing most everything is over its head both in a literal and a figurative sense)? Was it possible, I wondered as I left the wee beastie in my wake, that a woolly worm might be even deeper in thought than I? Could it be considering its own life choices and its past mistakes, or musing on its ultimate mortality? Might it be worrying about storms and climate change, and considering that since "winter is coming" (oh God, not a Game of Thrones reference, please) could it be worried how its entire species was going to survive the coming freeze?

I wondered if woolly worms will worry (say that aloud three times fast) or was it just woolly worming its merry way across Walnut Street, unaware of the philosophical meanderings of my mid-exercise, endorphin-stimulated deep ruminations as I walked?

I wondered where woolly worms live, what kind of habitat they inhabit, what they eat, how they reproduce, and if they love and care for their baby woolly worms.

I wondered if woolly worms are sentient and capable of thinking deep thoughts, or if they are even self aware. I wondered if woolly worms could be capable of learning or if they are mere creatures of instinct and habit (I know a lot of people, particularly politicians, who fall into that category).

I wondered if woolly worms can create works of art and literature, ponder complex mathematical computations, or resolve paradoxes and puzzles.

I wondered if woolly worms can see the sun and the moon and the stars, or if they even have eyes, and if they do, can they point them up toward the sky or do they just look down at Walnut Street as they cross; can they discern the trails of other, earlier woolly worms that preceded them and found safe passage across Walnut Street to the lush fields of woolly worm sanctuary on the other side of the road.

I wondered if woolly worms are aware of their place in the cosmos, if they know they exist in space and time, and if they are satisfied with their cosmic lot.

I wondered if woolly worms are aware of the passage of human beings like me that might be stepping over (as opposed to on) them as both species make their separate ways along or across Walnut Street.

I wondered if woolly worms have a culture or a gov-

ernment, and if they are all equal, with some being more equal than others (thanks George Orwell).

I wondered if woolly worms can learn, and if they can pass their worm-lore on from generation to generation for the ultimate benefit of wormdom as a whole.

I wondered if woolly worms might have any say in determining the size, shape and color of the woolly bands of worm-fur that give them their distinctive looks, or whether they know humans waste hours and countless gallons of ink in *Old Farmer's Almanacs* and silly newspaper editorials theorizing and postulating that the size and color of their distinctive bands of wool are forecasters of the type and severity of a coming winter.

Suddenly, a clap of thunder in the distance broke my wondering as I wandered, and I hastened my pace, hoping to beat the rain to my home.

But the woolly worm wasn't done with me just yet.

Considering the incoming weather, I wondered why I hadn't even considered how rain might affect a woolly worm. Does their fantastically patterned fur shed the raindrops and keep them warm dry and sheltered from the storm (thanks Bob Dylan)? Can their tiny legs and feet paddle them across the inevitable mud puddles in a woolly-worm-rendition of a mud-puddle dog paddle?

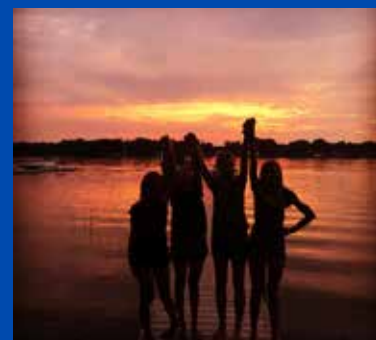
And I wondered if that woolly worm was just going to get wet on Walnut Street, drown in a puddle, or, more likely, whether the last thing to go through its mind before it died that day was going to be a random, worn steel-belted Michelin radial on a rusty old Chevy pickup as a worm-oblivious, bored-to-tears deer hunter quit his deer blind early and blindly sped toward happy hour.

Then a raindrop wetted on my forehead, and I wondered why the hell I was wondering and worrying so much about those stupid woolly worms anyway.

I was three miles from home, about to get a thorough soaking, and instead of walking faster or at least deciding what to write about in the next "Last Word" column for *Neighbors*, I was instead wasting my time worrying about a stupid, creepy caterpillar in the road.

Sometimes the most unusual things pop into my head when I'm walking. Yesterday I worried about woolly worms. Today I'm thinking about being happy.

Happy it's not raining, happy to be home for happy hour, and considering all that they have to worry about, I'm especially happy that I'm not a woolly worm.



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