

# Neighbors

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**APRIL 2025**

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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

**[HTTP://WWW.CASSNEIGHBORS.COM](http://www.cassneighbors.com)**

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## Field Trip:

**Meijer Garden  
Butterfly House,  
Grand Rapids**

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# Regional News

**CVCC annual meeting, elections**

The Cassopolis Vandalia Chamber of Commerce (CVCC) will hold its annual meeting on Wednesday, April 16, at noon at the Cass County Council on Aging in Cassopolis. Please feel free to bring friends or business associates along! The CVCC will be providing a potluck lunch and light refreshments.

The board will be electing directors for a two-year term – 2025-2027. In addition, this year’s officers will be nominated, and a vote conducted at the meeting.

**Spring rummage & bake sale**

The Dowagiac First United Methodist Church, 326 N Lowe St. in Dowagiac, will host its annual spring rummage and bake sale on Friday, April 4 and Saturday, April 5, from 9 am to 4 pm Friday and from 9 am - 3 pm Saturday. On Saturday there will be a special BAG SALE - buy 2, get third bag FREE - Bags are \$4 each. Come see the furniture, clothing, books, kitchenware, bedding, linens, all seasons decor, shoes, boots, records/CDs, VHS/DVDS, tapes, complete set of "I Love Lucy" movies, dishes, toys, & much, much more. For more information call Darlene at (269) 782-8551

**Cass County Historical Society Lecture & Event Series**

The Cass County Historical Society has announced its 2025 lecture and event series. Events include:

**Rose Wood - APRIL 15** - 6:30 pm: In addition to board elections the Historical Society will host Rose Wood discussing her recently published book, *The Chronicles of Cass County*.

**Tea Time at Newton House - Decatur - MAY**

**10, 10 am – 3 pm.** This is a ticketed event featuring traditional tea time food and refreshments, live music, lectures on tea etiquette and a "Best Hat Contest."

**Caruso's Candy & Soda Shop – Downtown Dowagiac - MAY 20,** 6:30 pm. Caruso’s Candy & Soda Shop has been a beloved staple since Antonio and Emilia Caruso opened it in 1922. Now operated by their granddaughter, the shop continues to serve handcraft chocolates and serve classic fountain treats.

**Edwardsburg History Museum – Show & Tell - JULY 15,** 6:30pm, Location: 26818 Main Street, Join Edwardsburg and Cass County Historical Societies for a Show 'N Tell of artifacts, heirlooms, and tools. Neil Hassinger will give a short lecture on "What's Underfoot in Edwardsburg" discussing items discovered at Village sites.

**Bob Lehigh Property – Decatur AUG 19,** 6:30pm, 53333 Gards Prairie Road, Decatur. Visit the Lehigh family farmstead established in 1837. Step back in time and explore the rich history of our community at this unique lecture event surrounded by artifacts from a local iconic DX Gas Station.

**Newberg One Room School House - SEPT. 16,** 6:30 pm, 13020 Born St, Jones. Visit the 1856 one-room schoolhouse for a unique opportunity to hear firsthand memories from former students who attended this historic school.

**Annual Fall Festival – Newton House - OCT. 11,** 11 – 3 pm, 20689 Marcellus Hwy., Decatur, MI 49045 (Adjacent to Fred Russ Forest Park). Come to the annual Fall Festival at Newton House, a free, family-friendly event featuring kid’s activities, pie-eating contests, puppeteers, free snacks, house tours, wagon rides

through Fred Russ Forest Park with Civil War reenactments.

**Christmas at Newton House – DEC 6,** 1 – 4 pm. Experience the magic of the season at historic Newton House, beautifully decorated for the holidays. This exclusive, ticketed event offers a festive escape in a historic setting. Watch our FB page and website for more details!

Unless otherwise stated, there will be a short Society Business Meeting at 6:30 pm with lectures or tours beginning at 7 pm. For more information write to the Cass County Historical Society, PO Box 21, Cassopolis, MI 4903, email - ccmihistoricalsociety@gmail.com or visit www.ccmihistoricalsociety.org.

**Edwardsburg Museum displays**

The 2025 season at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum will get underway April 15, when the first exhibit, "Everyone Loves a Parade," opens. The display features a variety of pictures from past Edwardsburg parades, along with parade memorabilia such as commemorative plates and mugs. The Edwardsburg High School band department has loaned several instruments which will be housed in the museum’s glass cases. The exhibit closes July 19.

The second exhibit, "Sauk Trail: Echoes of the Past," will be front and center from July 22 to Nov. 1. That display will be highlighted by two glass cases of artifacts that the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians will loan to the museum and set up. Other museum areas will showcase items that would have been used when the Village of Edwardsburg was first settled in the 1820s, such as grinding wheels and stones, woodworking tools, and old axes.

"Tis the Season," will end the year. It will highlight all items that revolve around the holidays, with trees, garlands, and many ornaments. That display will run from Nov. 4 through Dec. 13.

The museum opens a month early this year. Hours are 1 to 4 pm Tuesdays through Fridays, and 11 am to 2 pm on Saturdays. It also will be open on the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm. It will close on Dec. 13 and re-open in mid-spring, 2026.

**Dussel gardening workshop.**

The theme is vegetable and floral gardening, and the presenter is Mark Dussel of Cassopolis, who will lead a workshop Tues., April 22, at the Ontwa Township Hall, 26225 U.S. 12, Edwardsburg from 6:30 to 8 pm. Admission is free. The appearance is held in conjunction with the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum.

Dussel is a veteran farmer who has owned Dussel’s Farm Market and Greenhouses for nearly 28 years. He will cover four topics: general gardening; weed control ; growing cut flowers, and container gardening

**Lerner Theater Tuesday Tours**

The Lerner Theater, 410 S. Main St., Elkhart will also offer Theatre Tour Tuesdays on April 15, May 13, June 17, July 15, August 12, September 16, October 14, November 18 and December 16. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased in advance or at the Lerner Box Office on the day of the tour, proceeds to benefit the Lerner Theatre Volunteer Group..

Tours begin every hour on the hour from 10 am-3 pm. No reservations are required. .

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# Regional Calendar

## MISC. AREA EVENTS

**SPRING EGG-STRAVAGANZA**, Lawless Park, noon-2 pm, entry \$2 or 1 canned food item/person,  
**CVCC ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTIONS**, April 16, Cassopolis COA, noon  
**CASS COUNTY 4-H FAIR** - July 27 - August 2, 445-8265  
**DIAMOND LAKE FIREWORKS** - July 5 (rain date July 6), dusk  
**CASS CO. HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSE WOOD** - APRIL 15-6:30 pm:  
**TEA TIME AT NEWTON HOUSE** - Decatur - MAY 10, 10 am-3 pm  
**CARUSO'S CANDY & SODA SHOP** - Downtown Dowagiac - MAY 20, 6:30 pm.  
**EDWARDSBURG HISTORY MUSEUM SHOW & TELL** - JULY 15, 6:30pm, 26818 Main Street, Edwardsburg  
**BOB LEHIGH PROPERTY** - AUG 19, 6:30 pm, 53333 Gards Prairie Road, Decatur.  
**NEWBERG ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE** - SEPT. 16, 6:30 pm, 13020 Born St, Jones.  
**ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL** - OCT. 11, 11 - 3 pm, Newton House, 20689 Marcellus Hwy., Decatur,  
**CHRISTMAS AT NEWTON HOUSE** - DEC 6, 1 - 4 pm.

## DOWAGIAC EVENTS

[www.dowagiacchamber.com/events/upcoming-events](http://www.dowagiacchamber.com/events/upcoming-events)  
**EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA**, April 12, 10:30 - 12:30 am  
**MEMORIAL DAY PARADE**, May 26, 10:30am - 1 pm  
**FARM & ARTISAN MARKET**, May 31, - October 04, 9 am - 2pm  
**MUSIC IN THE PARK**, June 05, - August 21, 7:30 - 9 pm  
**SUMMER FESTIVAL & BBQ COMPETITION**, July 18, 2025 - July 19  
**STEVE'S RUN**, July 18, 6 - 9 pm  
**ED'S OPEN HEADER CRUISE**, July 24, 5:30 - 8:30pm  
**ROD & ROLL CLASSIC AUTO SHOW**, August 16, 8: am - 3 pm  
**SISTER LAKES FIREWORKS**, August 30, 9 - 11 pm

## UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

**FESTIVAL**, October 11, 10 am - 4 pm  
**CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND & THETA MU CRAFT SHOW**, November 14, 15, 10 am - 5 pm  
**SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY**, November 29, 10 am  
**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS PARADE**, December 05, 7 - 8 pm  
**ICE TIME FESTIVAL**, February 07, 2026, 10 am - 4 pm

## EDWARDSBURG MUSEUM

**APRIL 15**-museum opens for season  
**APRIL 15 - JULY 19 - DISPLAY:** 'EVERYONE LOVES A PARADE'  
**APRIL 22 -GARDENING WORKSHOP** WITH MARK DUSSEL  
**MAY 13 - 4TH GRADE FIELD TRIP**  
**MAY 16-MAY 31 - PERENNIAL PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER**  
**MAY 22 - SPEAKER: JIM MEUNINCK**, 7 pm.  
**MAY 26 -MEMORIAL DAY KIDS' CARNIVAL** following the parade.  
**JUNE 25-HACIENDA FUNDRAISER**  
**JULY 15 - CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING**, 6:30 pm, at the museum.  
**JULY 17 - SPEAKER: NEIL HASSINGER**, 7 PM.  
**JULY 22-NOVEMBER 1 -DISPLAY:** 'SAUK TRAIL: ECHOES OF OUR PAST'  
**JULY 26-MUSIC AT THE MUSEUM**, 7 pm.. No admission charge.  
**AUGUST 7-10 - US 12 GARAGE SALE FUNDRAISER.**  
**AUGUST 17 - OPEN HOUSE** AFTER THE ALL-SCHOOL REUNION  
**AUGUST 21-SPEAKER: EDWARDSBURG AUTHOR JIM PAULEY**, 7 PM  
**SEPTEMBER 27- SAUK TRAIL FESTIVAL: ECHOES OF THE PAST**  
**OCTOBER 16-SPEAKER: OWEN WRIGHT**, 7 pm. **OCTOBER 31-WITCHES ON THE PORCH**

**NOVEMBER 4-DECEMBER 13: DISPLAY: 'TIS THE SEASON.'**  
**DECEMBER 4-CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING**, 5:30 pm, followed by open house.  
**DECEMBER 13: MUSEUM CLOSSES UNTIL SPRING 2026**

## CASS DISTRICT LIBRARY

**T'AI CHI** with Alyse Knepple, Mason/Union, Mondays: 11 am. Free introductory class, four weekly classes which will cost \$40.  
**STORYTIME**, Edwardsburg Tuesdays @ 11am; Howard: Tuesdays @ 11 am + 6 pm; Mason/Union: Wednesdays @ 10 am; Main: Thursdays @ 11 am  
**CARDIO DRUMMING\***, Howard, Mondays: 5 pm; free, but a gratuity of \$5 is encouraged. Register at 487-9214  
**TAKE AND MAKE:** Terracotta Mini Flower Planters, Howard Branch, March 31-April 5: Daily  
**DROP-IN CRAFT: FUN** Handprint Art Mason/Union, March 31 - April 5: Daily  
**THE XERCES SOCIETY PRESENTS:** Meet the Pollinators\*, Main, Tuesday, April 1: 1 pm. register at 749-1384  
**DROP-IN EVENT:** Minecraft Mania, Edwardsburg, April 2: 1- 3 pm. Info at 269-487-9215.  
**ADAM OSTER PRESENTS:** Michigan Poor Farms\*, Local History Branch, April 3: 1 pm, register at 357-7823.  
**YOUNG INVENTORS**, Howard, April 5: 10:30 am  
**ADULT CRAFT CLUB:** Farmhouse Style Easter Egg Wreath\*, Main, April 9: 1 pm. Register at 749-1384.  
**PICTURES WITH THE EASTER BUNNY**, Main, April 9: 4- 6 pm. One photo per family., on a first-come, first-served basis.  
**BUILD AND PAINT WOODEN RACE CARS\***, Howard, April 10: 3-6:30 pm. Register at 269-487-9214.  
**TEEN MAKER MONDAY**, Edwardsburg, April 14: 2:30 pm  
**SAVAGE READERS BOOK CLUB**, Savage Bean Coffee Co., April 15: 10:00am. Info at 269-749-1384.  
**VILLAGE BOOK CLUB**, Edwardsburg, April 17: 5:30 pm. Info at 574-314-6454  
**HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT**, Edwardsburg,

April 21: 1 pm  
**ROAD SCHOLAR VIRTUAL LECTURE:** Into the Icy Deep, Howard, April 22: 1 pm. Info h at 487-9214.  
**CROSS STITCH FOR BEGINNERS SERIES\***, Howard April 24: 5:30 pm. Register at 487-9214.  
**TEEN FANDOM**, Edwardsburg, April 28: 2:30 pm.  
**HERB GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS**, Edwardsburg, April 29: 5:30 pm. Info at 487-9215.  
**DOWAGIAC DISTRICT LIBRARY PRESCHOOL STORYTIME.** Tuesdays, 10:30 AM.  
**MAKE & SHARE COOKBOOK CLUB**, April 3; 5:30 pm.  
**FANDOM FEST**, April 5, 10 am-6 pm. FREE, at Lake Michigan College Grand Upton Hall at The Mendel Center 1100 Yore Ave Benton Harbor.  
**SIP & SHARE BOOK CLUB** at Sister Lakes Brewing., Dowagiac, April 9: 6-8 pm,  
**LITTLE BEAKERS.** April 12; 11am. Register at 782-3826 dowagiaclibrarystaff@gmail.com.  
**S.T.E.A.M FOR TWEENS.** April 16; 4 pm. Register at 782-3826 dowagiaclibrarystaff@gmail.com.  
**CRAFT NIGHT AT THE LIBRARY: BOOK PAGE FLOWERS.** April 17; 5:30-6:45 pm. For adult patrons, RSVP to join at 269-782-3826 or email erin@dowagiacdl.org  
**THE INKWELL EXPLORERS BOOK CLUB FOR TWEENS.** April 24; 4-5 pm.  
**SW MICHIGAN WRITERS' CONFERENCE 2025.** April 26; 9 am-3 pm. FREE at Lincoln Township Library 2099 W John Beers Rd, Stevensville. Register at <https://www.dowagiacdl.org/events>  
**THE CLASSICS BOOK CLUB.** April 29; 5-6 pm.  
**TBR BOOK CLUB FOR TEENS.** April 30; 3-4 pm.  
**ADVENTURES IN BOOKLAND BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS.** April 30; 4-5 pm.  
<https://www.dowagiacdl.org/events>.  
**MARCELLUS TOWNSHIP WOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY**  
 To see the upcoming events for April visit <https://www.marcellus.michlibrary.org/>

# EXPERIENCE

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# Lake Life with Jane

## Welcome to spring!



by **Jane Boudreau**

**H**ey Neighbors, and welcome spring! You know what I love about spring? It's the one season people don't complain about, as in, "Geez, I wish spring would get over already". Or, "Man, this has been one heck of a spring!" I can be a rebel when this happens with summer and winter. I've always been a sort of easy going person about things you can't change, like the seasons for instance. I mean, what can you do? No one likes a complainer (except another complainer), and what really gets me are the people who can't wait for, example, summer to get over with, "Oh Lord, the heat!", and then half way through winter, "I just can't take this cold." I can take it with a grain of salt though.

One of life's little pleasures for me is having breakfast at a local diner and seeing all the folks gathered near the door, coming in or going out, stopping to talk about the weather; when was the snow supposed to start and how many inches were we supposed to get? Did you all get gas for your snow blowers? Plenty of wood for your fireplace? Stay warm now! Ah, the seasons. A true constant in our lives!

### April's Signature Cocktail



*The French Blonde*

Since we're breezing into summer slowly, I thought we'd go with a drink that was light, sophisticated, a little romantic, but highly recommended for a lovely spring day outdoors. The classic French Blonde is a delicate balance of sweet and tart flavors, fruity and floral. A martini that I can have in a coupe glass? Well, hello! It's rumored The French Blonde is Taylor Swift's fave cocktail, who knows? Who cares? If you're blonde, and French (as in Boudreau), mix this pretty but potent martini up as your signature drink at your next party to greet them at the door with. If they don't understand the cardinal rule of the signature drink as we do, steer them you-know-where. Even if it's Taylor.

### Ingredients:

2 oz. Grapefruit Juice  
2 oz. Lillet Blanc  
1 oz. Hendrick's Gin, (or any dry gin)  
1/2 oz. St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur  
1 t Fresh Lemon or 3 dashes of lemon bitters  
Twist of lemon peel

### Directions:

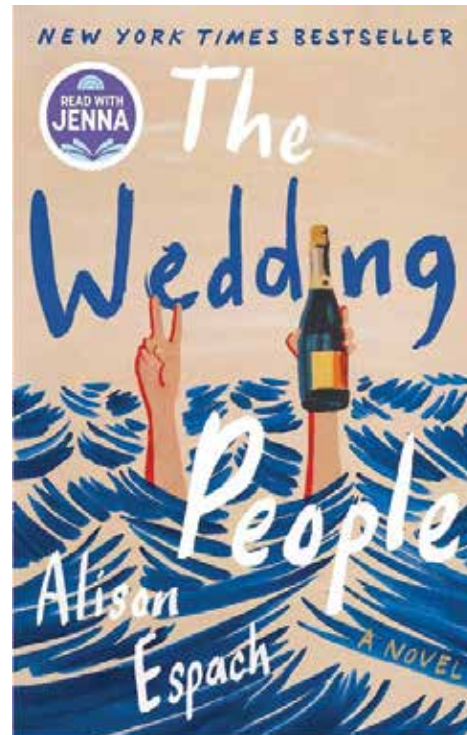
1. Add Grapefruit Juice, Lillet Blanc, Gin, St-Germain, and lemon juice (or bitters) to a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
2. Shake well and strain into a martini glass.
3. Garnish with a twist of lemon peel or lemon wedge. I prefer the twist as the oils add a nice, tart flavor.



### Jane's Imaginary Book club

This month we have *The Wedding People* by Alison Espach. Drinks will be French Blonde Martinis, I'll have a beautiful charcuterie board on the buffet, and I'll be serving Grandmother's Hummingbird Cake (recipe follows).

A friend on Instagram recommended this to me and since she often does, I had to look the other way. Too many books, so little time. But I kept hearing about it, seeing reviews, believing the hype, and there I was, devouring it late into the night. It was more than a story, it was a



journey. Phoebe Stone (I pictured her and her voice as Dakota Johnson) arrives at the Cornwall Inn in Rhode Island, a place she has always dreamed of coming to to with her husband on a romantic trip, but the marriage has ended and Phoebe is despondent. She arrives at the inn, in a long emerald gown and gold heels with no bags, to find there is a wedding booked and she is the only non-guest. What transpires is an unlikely but oddly tender relationship between the bride and Phoebe, complete opposites, over the next several days, and the many ways her heart is healed by the many "Wedding People" she meets.

Grab this, don't wait like I did. Kudos to this talented writer! I hope to see more from her.

### April Recipes Charcuterie Board



Just when you think charcuterie boards have begun to be a thing of the past, I'm bringing them back in. Or maybe they've never gone out of style. I stopped making them for gatherings for a number of reasons, seeing them every-

where was one. They either all looked the same or they were too over the top. The cost. They were also extremely difficult to transport if you wanted to bring a board to a party. Well, I've learned a few things that have made a believer out of me and I'm here to pass them on to you.

1. The olives, nuts, and grapes are a given. Go to the salad bar at your grocery store and have a look at some of the peppers, peppadew are my favorite, cherry drops another. Try Biquinho or kiss peppers, I like the tanginess. In the food aisles with the jars of olives, look for cornichons, small sweet pickles, and bread and butter pickles, small rounds that have that tart flavor to go with your meat. If you use olives, try the stuffed variety such as garlic, bleu cheese, or almond. When it comes to fruit, grapes are a wonderful compliment to the main attraction so you don't want to veer to far off that path, Dates, apricots, sliced apples with a drizzle of lemon juice to keep them from browning. In place of nuts, try some trail mix. You can go healthy, or be a little fun with the kind that has the chocolate candy.

2. Rules of thumb for laying out the board. Start with your larger items first, including ramekins or containers you're serving dips, smaller fruit, etc., in. This also includes your wedges of cheese. Remember to use cheese cubes and slices as well for contrast. These are your anchors. Start from the middle and work your way out. Start to add the other parts of your board, being sure to consistently spread the types of items across it for color and texture. For garnishes, I like to use herbs if it's summer and I have them in the garden. Sprigs of rosemary and thyme work well. You can also buy fresh herbs at the store but it's highway robbery. I suggest buying a head of radicchio or red cabbage. Place the small leaves under various foods such as lighter colored cheese, or a stack of crackers or slices of bread. Food is colorful and fragrant, no one will miss anything.

3) Finally, as far as transporting your boards to parties, you can now buy wood cutting boards with heavy plastic lids that snap on. Some are really cute. The sizes and shapes vary as well as the prices. I'm seeing them everywhere.

That's all for this month! Wishing you all a great start to spring and a Blessed Easter!

~Jane

*Jane Boudreau is a writer, blogger, and newspaper columnist who lives on Diamond Lake, as well as in Chicago, and a little place in the mountains of Asheville, NC. You can reach her at [blndy9@yahoo.com](mailto:blndy9@yahoo.com)*

# NEIGHBORS:

Now in our 22<sup>nd</sup> year serving Cass County.

Neighbors is delivered to homes on 22 lakes in Cass County and available at over 100 businesses around the area. Neighbors is published for nine months per year, from March thru November. Distribution is usually the first Wednesday of the month, and closing for ads and content is the third Friday preceding month of publication

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# Our Children

## Little learning tidbits for April

by **SANDY FLEMING**

**S**ometimes everyone needs a pick-me-up, and our kids are no different. Try something out of the ordinary this month: a little learning nugget that you can use nearly any time. I've labeled them with calendar days, but there is no reason for you to limit yourself. Go wild with flexibility and see if you can squeeze in something each day to help your kids grow and learn!

■ **April 1:** Of course it is April Fool's Day! Teach the kids a new joke or if they are old enough, have them find and learn a new joke or riddle to pull on the family at dinner time. The internet has a bunch, or there are lots of books for various ages at your local library.

■ **April 2:** This is Children's Book Day. It's a perfect time to set aside some family reading time. Be sure to give readers chances to share aloud (it's a great way for you to see reading progress), and parents, read aloud to the kids, too. Try poetry, stories, magazine articles, and whatever else you can find to share.

■ **April 3:** Today is Find a Rainbow Day, and it's also World Party Day! What better way to celebrate than to have a Rainbow Party! Kids can draw or color rainbows, do experiments with prisms and shining sunlight through water, research rainbows, read books about rainbows, and play games like "Name That Color!" where they give clues and have the guesser figure out what color they are thinking of.

■ **April 4:** Since this is Tell a Lie Day, try making up a few tall tales. First, read some famous tall tales, like those with Pecos Bill or Paul Bunyan. Next, challenge everyone in the family to make up the wildest story they can in the same style. Younger family members can dictate their creation to a writer, or record it on a phone or device. Older kids and adults can write or type. Gather the stories up into a family book and illustrate it.

■ **April 5:** It's Read a Road Map Day! This is truly a dying skill, and your child will have a leg up, so to speak, on many peers if you can help him or her learn to read a real map. Find or print out a map of your area, neighborhood, town, or other locality. Mark the map up to show where your house is, where other places you visit are, and even marking out the routes to go between places. For older students, try using a map of your county, state, or even country. Dream a little bit about where you'd like to go, then map out a route to get from your house to your destination. If you really want to add to the learning, you can work together to plan out a whole vacation and budget, researching fun stops along the way.

■ **April 6:** Presenting...World Physical Activity Day! Set up your own Mini-Olympics with events that you dream up. These can be serious and competitive (like racing, jumping, or doing push-ups), or they can be funny or silly. Try seeing who can walk with the most loose sheets of paper on their head, or wiggle a cracker from their forehead to their mouth while looking up at the ceiling (no hands!). Try holding a tall bottle between your knees and passing it to the next person's knees. You can even try a Spaghetti Obstacle Course: set up a course that demands you go over, under, around, and through. Be sure there's lots of room! Now try the course with a partner, holding either end of a piece of raw spaghetti. Can the two of you make it through without letting go or breaking



the noodle? Who will have the record time?

■ **April 7:** It's Metric System Day! What a fine day for a measurement scavenger hunt. Make a list of sizes and arm the players with measuring tools (metric units of course!) to find as many items as they can that match the sizes on their lists. You can adjust the difficulty by using all the same units or different, by requiring conversion between units, by using a range of sizes instead of a single point to match, and so forth.

■ **April 8:** National Library Day is a great day to check your local library for fun programming (usually free, too!). It's also a perfect day to visit your library, get a library card if you haven't already done so, and check out some books or other materials.

■ **April 9:** It's National Unicorn Day in Scotland. What a holiday! Find Scotland on a map and see where your family lives in relation. Make or draw unicorns, color unicorns, try unicorn recipes (check the internet for unicorn party), and pretend to be unicorns.

■ **April 10:** Today is National Farm Animals Day. If you can, go visit a farm or take a virtual tour online. And even if you can't visit, you can play some farm games. Try Twenty Questions where the answer is a farm animal. Try "I'm going to the farm and I will see ... (insert your animal here and make a list to remember).

■ **April 11:** National Pet Day is the perfect excuse to get everyone in the family (parents too!) writing! Write a paragraph or more about the best pet in the whole wide world. This creature can be real or make-believe; it can be an old pet or a current pet. Write about whatever kind of pet you want! Describe the pet, tell how it acts and what it does. Tell how you care for it and why you like it.

■ **April 12:** World Circus Day is a great excuse to let loose with some creative fun. Put on a family circus for friends or neighbors. Get some great acts together, make some props and costumes, and practice, then you'll be ready for action!

■ **April 13:** Today is International Plant Appreciation Day! If weather permits, take a walk outside around the yard, the neighborhood, the park, or the garden. Find a plant to appreciate. Draw its picture, and find out what type of plant it is. Do some research to find out what's special about it and why it is important. How can it be used? What other animals need it? Everything is interconnected, so there are no "useless" plants!

■ **April 14:** It's Look Up At the Sky Day today. If you look up during the day, try to classify the clouds you see. If you look up at night, see if you can find familiar stars, planets, or constellations. If you are interested, there are a number of free

stargazing apps for most cell phones that will help you identify the things you see in the night sky.

■ **April 15:** For Take a Wild Guess Day, try putting some Guessing Boxes. You can put lots of small items in one box (like building blocks, candies, or coins) and see who can guess the closest to the correct number. You can also put highly scented, safe to smell items in covered jars and see who can identify the smells. Try putting an item with a distinctive shape or texture in a closed box and see who can identify it by touch.

■ **April 16:** Today is Save the Elephant Day. Read some books about elephants together, research elephants online or at the library, move like an elephant, and draw pictures of elephants.

■ **April 17:** National High Five Day is a wonderful excuse to choose a "secret word" and give someone a high five when you hear it. If you wish, have someone try to guess the secret word based on when people give high fives. This game builds attention and listening skills, so it's useful, too!

■ **April 18:** Today is World Marbles Day. Scare up a set at your local discount store and bone up on how to play. Basically, you flick marbles at your opponents' pieces to try to roll them out of the circle while keeping your marbles inside the circle. Of course, your opponent is wanting to do the same thing to you. Good luck!

■ **April 19:** Time for National Hanging Out Day. Have a family Hang Out time doing something that you all enjoy together. You might have a movie, play some games, go for a hike or whatever suits your group to spend time together.

■ **April 20:** On Look Alike Day, discover all the things you have in common with family members: your looks, your personality traits, your style, your hobbies, and more. Try to find at least five ways you are like each other person in your family.

■ **April 21:** Happy World Creativity and Innovation Day! What can you do to get the kids showing off their creative, innovative selves? Try making up a new game! They can model after a favorite or create something completely new. Write down the rules, make the pieces, game boards, and props as needed, then try it out. Remind them that sometimes new games need tweaking before they work just right so they are prepared to make some improvements along the way.

■ **April 22:** It's Earth Day, and there's nothing wild or weird about it. Focus the family energy on making the world a better place, saving the environment, or planting trees. Go to a park or get outdoors to appreciate the natural world. Be a part of Earth on Earth Day!

■ **April 23:** Today is National Picnic Day, and I'm sure you can figure out a great

family activity. You just need an excuse. And if you define "picnic" loosely as a meal in an unusual place, you are covered even if the weather is not cooperating. Spread your blanket out in the living room or other fun new place to eat and have at!

■ **April 24:** This is a pretty famous holiday, but not everyone has the opportunity to take their Daughters or Sons to Work. If your kids can't go into a real workplace, try getting info about a career they are interested in. Find out what those workers do, learn about their pay, training, and other aspects of the career. Share the info with the rest of the family.

■ **April 25:** On World Penguin Day, it's easy to be silly or serious. There are scads of great penguin books, so stock up at your local library. Color penguin pictures, watch penguin movies, do penguin puzzles, and learn penguin jokes. On the serious side, find out how penguins are endangered and what people can do to help them survive. Learn about their lifestyle and unique habitat.

■ **April 26:** It's Alien Day! What a great day to let the creative juices flow. Make up stories about space creatures and far away planets. Draw pictures of fantastic scenes. Put on a play about a space creature. The possibilities are endless!

■ **April 27:** Today is Tell a Story Day. Try a round robin family story. You can do this out loud as a group, or you can pass a page around. Either way take turns adding the next few sentences to the story. Keep it going for a few rounds or until you have a thread of a story, then play one last round to see if you can make a conclusion.

■ **April 28:** It's National Super Heroes Day! Instead of choosing your favorite from the common, run-of-the-mill super heroes, make up something totally unique. Choose the colors, design the costume, delegate the powers, and decide what your hero will fight for. Draw your super hero, and if you want, make a whole comic strip or graphic novel!

■ **April 29:** This is World Wish Day. Take some time to write down dreams, hopes and wishes. These could be for yourself, your family, your friends, or even your community or your world. You could even make a few categories and add a wish to each one. Now, pick one that is the most realistic and think about what steps you can take to make it happen. Start planning and setting goals to make the dream a reality.

■ **April 30:** Finally, on this last day of National Frog Month, celebrate with a fancy frog party. Of course, you'll need green food, like lime jello, sour apple candy, and green grapes. Grab some frog erasers or other small frog toys from your local discount or party store to hide around the house and let the kids go on a frog hunt. Try seeing who can frog jump the farthest or longest, and have a croaking contest.

There you go! Something fun to do for every single day this month! But don't be shy, many of these ideas and activities are easily recyclable – just change the names or the themes and repeat the favorites whenever you want! Happy April!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sandy Fleming is an educator and author living in Edwardsburg. Visit her websites at <http://learningnook.com> and <http://sandyflemingonline.com> for more ideas and hints about learning and kids!**

# Field Trip

## Butterflies are in Bloom at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, MI

If you've never been to a butterfly park but always wanted to go, now is the time to make the trip to Grand Rapids and visit the Meijer Garden Butterfly exhibit. As the season changes, the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory comes alive with the return of Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming!

This highly anticipated event, the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the United States, showcases the stunning diversity and intricate beauty of butterflies and moths. Butterflies Are Blooming invites visitors to celebrate the unique spectacle of lepidopteran flight and the exquisite patterns of their wings in the lush environment of the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

Please note, tripods are not allowed in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory during this exhibition.

For complete details on the butterfly exhibition, visit the website: <https://www.meijergardens.org/mec-category/butterflies-are-blooming/> For information on the park, including directions, costs, etc., visit: <https://www.meijergardens.org/>



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# 'bout boats and boating

## The importance of fuel quality and care

By **RUSTY COLLINS**

**F**uel quality and care is a much debated topic on the lake. In my experience 75 percent of issues with boat engines in our market are related to improperly cared for fuel. Understanding the nuances of fuel quality involves examining factors including fuel type, source, cleanliness, storage conditions, and the presence of additives.

Gasoline, for instance, is the most common fuel in our market. Usually it works fine, however it is susceptible to phase separation when exposed to moisture, which is a particular concern in marine environments. This separation can lead to a decrease in octane levels, potentially causing engine knocking or misfires, and if left untreated during a storage season, it can corrode our fuel system components.

One of the most significant factors affecting fuel quality is cleanliness. Contaminants like water, dirt, and microorganisms, can degrade fuel and cause engine issues. Water contamination is particularly common in marine settings due to the open and often humid environment. From considerations like where we buy our gas to how we care for it, cleanliness matters.

Rec-90 fuel is definitely less susceptible to attracting moisture due to containing no ethanol. Ethanol is blended with regular gas at the pumps. It's an alcohol-related chemical that attracts moisture more than non ethanol blended fuels. There are many points of conversation regarding running Rec-90 or pump gas. Treating, stabilizing, and caring for the fuel is still the same, and that's what

we will cover in this article.

Fuel tanks should be regularly inspected and cleaned to prevent the accumulation of water and sediment, which can lead to corrosion and fuel system clogs. Fuel vents are just as important as supply lines! Checking not only the fuel filters on your engine but installing a fuel/water separator is another great line of defense.

Remember, fuel safety must be followed when working on the system. Good ventilation and disconnected power sources are a must when doing any inspections or repairs.

Proper storage conditions also play a vital role in maintaining fuel quality. Fuel should be stored in a cool, dry place, and tanks should be filled to capacity to

minimize the risk of condensation forming inside the tank. Regularly using marine fuel stabilizers can help prevent oxidation and chemical breakdown, ensuring the fuel remains usable for longer periods.

Additives are the most effective way to ensure our fuel is ready to go when we are. These additives can serve various purposes, such as cleaning injectors, preventing corrosion, moisture and improving combustion efficiency. NOTE! Not all stabilizers have additives in them. Selecting a marine grade stabilizer with cleaning and lubrication additives is very important. Stabil Marine 360 is a great product, along with a list of many others that contain stabilizer and the necessary additives for our marine engines.

BoatingMag has done a great study on fuel additive/stabilizer brands and their effectiveness. It can be found at [boatingmag.com/geared/boating-lab-tests-fuel-stabilizers/](http://boatingmag.com/geared/boating-lab-tests-fuel-stabilizers/)

When should we use additives? They are not just meant for storage! Running a quality marine fuel additive/stabilizer

combo all year is a very cost-effective way to never miss a beat on the water. Constantly exposed to moisture, we never know the last time we will use our boats, so why not add the cheap insurance?

In conclusion, fuel quality in boats is an essential consideration that affects both the performance and longevity of marine engines. Through careful selection of fuel type, ensuring cleanliness, maintaining proper storage conditions, and using appropriate additives, boat owners can significantly enhance their engine's performance and reliability. Regular maintenance and understanding the specific needs of your engine and fuel system are crucial steps toward keeping your boat running smoothly and safely.

See you on the lake!

**-Rusty Collins**  
General manager,  
Boat Butler Marine  
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# Historic Postcards

## Historic postcards depict rich scenes of the 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](http://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

## Late winter nature sightings recorded



by *Jonathan Wuepper*  
**Manager**  
*Local History Branch*  
*Cass District Library*  
*145 North Broadway St.*  
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*jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us*

**B**rad Anderson of Bridgman recently submitted photos of mallards taken on February 15 off Silver Beach County Park in St. Joseph. Mallards are the most recognized species of duck in the world. The species ranges across most of North America, a large portion of Eurasia and North Africa. Mallards have also been successfully introduced in Australia and New Zealand.

Mallards are a common permanent resident and abundant migrant over the entire Lower Peninsula of Michigan and a common summer resident and migrant in the Upper Peninsula. Most mallards that spend the breeding season in Canada south to the Upper Peninsula migrate to the southeastern US, north to the southern Great Lakes for the winter. Prior to the 1940s mallards vacated Michigan for the winter.

Prior to European-American settlement in our region, the mallard likely nested at or near the oak openings and small, tallgrass prairies in Southwest Michigan. In Berrien County they likely nested in Bertrand and Niles Townships and across Cass County where oak openings and prairies were found.

Like so many other animal species, by the early 20th century, numbers of mallards were reduced due to unregulated hunting and more importantly, habitat loss. Since the 1950s, and the banning of DDT in the 1960s, mallards and other animal species have rebounded.

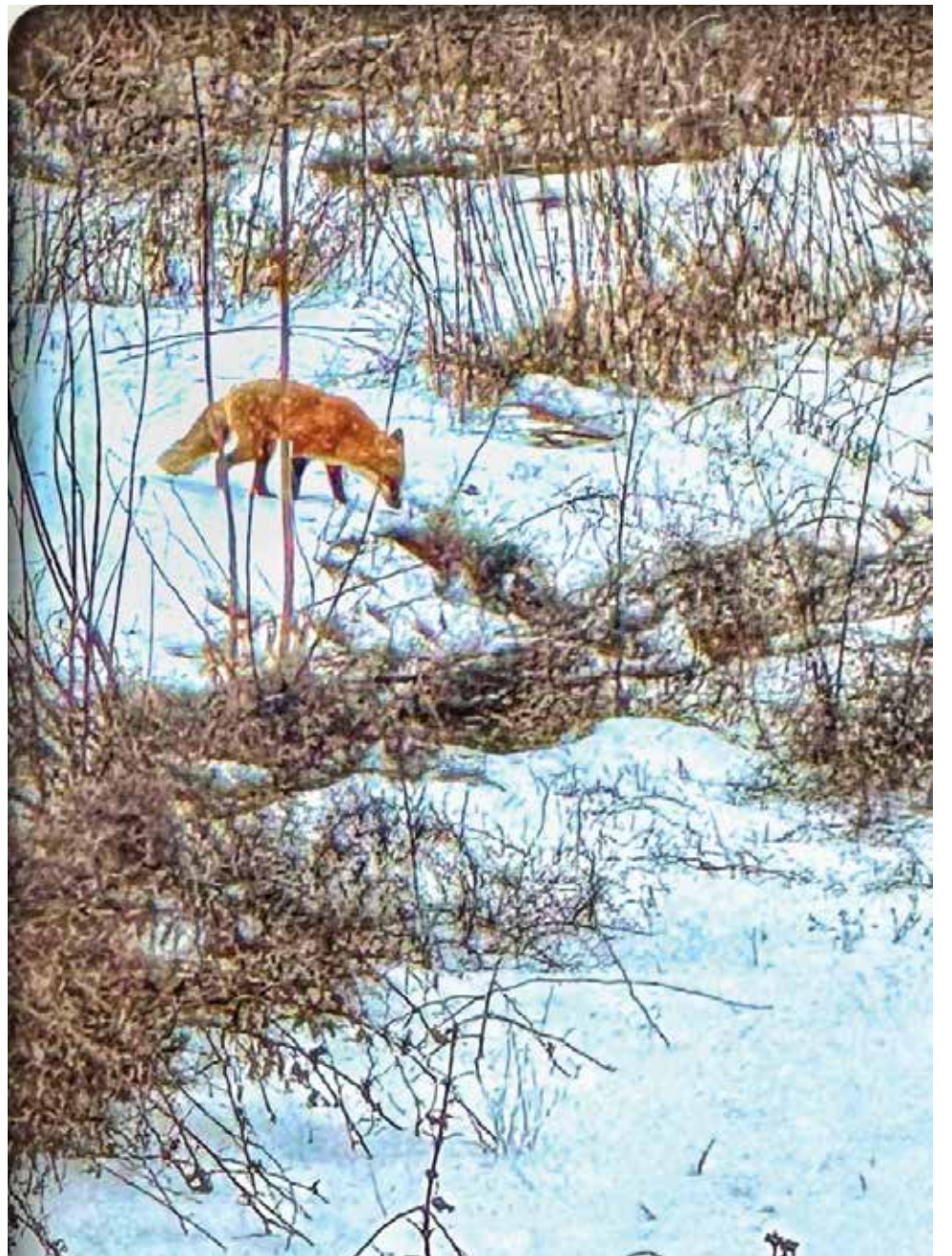
Part of the success of the mallard is its ability to use different landscapes when choosing a nest site. Historically, mallard nest sites included hayfields, upland meadow, dry patches in marshes. In recent decades, mallards have adapted to include forested areas, landscape plantings, yard mulch, etc as nesting



*Top photo: drake (left) and hen mallards on February 15 at Silver Beach County Park, St. Joseph. Brad Anderson.*

*Center photo: a herd totaling fifteen white-tailed deer near Royalton Township Nature Preserve off Bacon School Road, March 2. Photo by Eileen Chapman of Royalton Township.*

*Right: A red fox, February 2025, off Old Lakeshore Drive, St. Joseph. Photo by Janie Gibbs of Lincoln Township.*



sites. Eileen Chapman sent in a photo of fifteen white-tailed deer taken on March 2 off Bacon School Road in Royalton Township. She asked me why there are so many deer. The short answer is white-tailed deer have an abundant food source, being corn and soybeans. Additional factors include the fact that deer habitat preference of woodlots interspersed with open areas, which is abundant in Southwest Michigan. White-tailed deer have relatively few predators in our area. Coyotes will take down deer, but they generally eat smaller mammals and birds. It takes more energy for the coyote to kill a white-tailed deer.

Janie Gibbs of Lincoln Township captured an image of a red fox in February as it traversed the railroad tracks below Old Lakeshore Drive in St. Joseph. This is close to where a red fox was photographed in January 2022 by Mark Zielke. Perhaps it is the same individual photographed by Zielke, or one of its offspring?

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# Local History

## Waterpowered mills in Cass County

by Jonathan Wuepper  
Manager  
Local History Branch  
Cass District Library  
145 North Broadway St.  
Cassopolis, MI 49031  
jwuepper@cass.lib.mi.us

In his great reference book, "Waterpowered Mills in Cass County" (1993), the late Stan Hamper presented documentation of all known mills in Cass County from the earliest, built at Lake LaGrange in 1829, up to the 1920s.

Perhaps the most recognized water powered mill in the county was the Colby Mill, originally called Herndon Mill, located off modern day M-62 where it crosses Dowagiac Creek in section 6 of LaGrange Township, which is presently within the Dowagiac city limits.

A photograph of the Colby Mill graces the cover of Hamper's book, but a different shot of the same mill is featured in this month's Neighbors. The featured photo was likely taken during the 1940s based on the age of the automobile parked in front of the mill, seen in the photo. If you look closely, there is a man sitting on the bank of Dowagiac Creek with a fishing pole, seen in the lower left hand portion of the photo.

On the back of the photo frame, the following is written: "Colby Mill, Dowagiac. Donated to the Cass County Library by Charles Springsteen, July, 1978."

From looking at the photo, one can see the addition to the mill appears in a state of disrepair. According to Harper, the Herndon Mill was built in 1856 by Gilbert A. Colby and the name "Herndon" applied to the mill has never been explained, but it is possible Herndon may have been a friend or relative of the financier.

In 1863 Gilbert's brother, Horace Colby purchased the mill and kept full or at times co-ownership until his death in 1915. It was not until after the Civil War (1861-1865) that the mill was referred to as Colby Mill.

The Map of the Counties of Cass, Van Buren and Berrien, Michigan (Geil, Harley and Siverd, 1860) shows the mill on Dowagiac Creek. At that date, Erastus Holmes Spaulding owned the land surrounding the mill.

Hamper wrote that business contin-



Above: Colby Mill, photographer unknown, taken circa 1940s, LaGrange Township. Donated to the Cass County (now Cass District) Library by Charles Springsteen, July 1978.

Left: Section 6, LaGrange Township. "G.M." = Grist Mill in the northeast portion of that section. From Map of the Counties, Cass, Van Buren and Berrien by Geil, Harley and Siverd (1860). Courtesy Library of Congress.

Below Sketch of an ambrotype of the Herndon (Colby) Mill. This sketch was one of several which graced the border of the 1860 wall map which included property owners of Cass, Van Buren and Berrien Counties, Michigan by Geil, Harley and Siverd. Courtesy Library of Congress.



Herndon Mills, Dowagiac, Cass Co.  
G.A. Colby, Proprietor

ued at the mill until the dam collapsed on July 13, 1968. The mill was torn down sometime after 1968.

More information on the Colby (aka Herndon) Mill in Stan Hamper's book, various issues of local newspapers (now digitized and available on Newspapers.com) and Cass County history books.





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## Trying to learn a new language ... WTH?



about a thousand years ago it seems, when I was just a lad in third grade at James Monroe Elementary School & Home for Adolescent Troublemakers (nobody knew what ADHD was back then), I was offered (or was I ordered) the opportunity to begin studying conversation-

al French. Several times a week my French-studying classmates and I would file out of Mrs. Flack's third grade cellblock ... a ... er ... classroom, walk down the hall quietly and orderly so as not to bother the other inmates ... a ... er ... students, who were chiseling away at their stone tablets in an attempt to develop and/or hone their abilities in algebra, history, cursive writing or some other discipline that the wardens ... a ... er ... benevolent and friendly teachers assured us were life-

skills we had to know and that we'd have to use forever. Of course we all knew that was nonsense, but unless we were in the mood for a stern lecture or worse punishment (not the least of which included corporal punishment), we avoided any response other than "yes teacher," and muddled through whatever exercise they required for us to learn to calculate pi, cipher X times Y, memorize the date of the Great Emu War in Australia (1932) or master the art of writing our own names in a script as decipherable as the Dr. Foley's scribbled prescription for my mother's "little helper" pills.

My first French teacher was Miss Nipper, a comely young American woman who'd had the good fortune to have spent time studying in France when she was in college. Every day she'd lead us as we'd recite our bon-jours and a bunch of seemingly mindless phrases all of les livres et les professeurs assured us were things that would be necessary and we'd have to use forever.

"Ou est la gare? La plume de ma tante. C'est un crayon rouge. Tu es très moche."

Deep, meaningful things that every eight year old kid in the class could instantly recognize to be necessary and that we would use for the rest of our lives.

Ok, maybe not so much, we all agreed amongst ourselves, but at least it was better than finding pi, fighting emus and X times-ing Y, for sure.

Growing up in a family where half of my relatives

had immigrated from Italy and spoke mostly Italian at the dinner table, French sounded oddly familiar, and even though I wasn't very good at conjugating verbs or understanding the whole "masculine and feminine word" thing and whether I needed to use le or la (for anything other than Ooh, la la), I stuck with it, and got pretty good grades when I paid attention and did my homework (both of which were rare).

Now, most of a lifetime later, I look back at my passive resistance and have to admit I may have been hasty. Having visited France and several island nations where French is used exclusively (especially if the locals realize you are an American), I find that I am frequently the only non-local who can communicate well enough to hail a cab, order a beer and find a bathroom (the three most important things to know how to say when visiting any foreign country). So, not for the first time I proffer an apology and a belated thank you to Miss Nipper for what seemed like torture at the time.

Which brings me to this new foreign language that is being quietly shoved into the throats of me and everyone else I encounter in daily life, the language that has been sowed and mass-propogated by the cell phone.

Having been a long-standing, dedicated and stubborn Luddite (see, there's one of those French words I learned) for as long as the world allowed me to be phone-less, I find that I am tragically late to this language, this game, this world.

If cell phones had been invented when I was in third grade, perhaps Miss Nipper could have helped me out, but alas, when I was in third grade learning to speak "phone" meant shouting into a clunky, black, rotary-dial phone that was connected via party line with the Watsons down the street (and the Watsons didn't take it well when I would break into their conversations speaking French or Italian).

Fast forward to 2025, and here I am trying to learn how to use a phone all over again, just so I can go to the movies, get a ticket for an airplane, watch Netflix or, most recently, text someone (when the hell did "text" become a verb?), and I admit that I'm struggling with trying to decipher this gobbledygooked-up new language.

Part of the problem is that the messages presented on the phone's tiny glowing window is all capital letters and woefully short on both vowels and explanation.

And they're full of words like LOL, and WTH (what the heck ... hey, this is a family paper, right?)

I'm getting used to some of the stuff that is assaulting me, simply because a lot of it has been adopted into everyday use. It's being dropped into speech and TV dialog, and used in texted (really, "texted?" WTH?) messages, apparently so the sender wouldn't have to know how to spell or have to poke at the little phone buttons enough times to spell out "Laughing Out Loud," or whatever else they are abbreviating or acronym-izing.

(Hey, if they can make up words, so can I).

If that's not enough to make Miss Nipper nip at her fingernails, the users of this new language seem to have agreed that vowels, punctuation, spelling, grammar and proofreading have become superfluous, but when I respond that I don't understand (je ne comprend pas), their response can simply refer to something thing called "damn autocorrect." On top of that, there's an even more insidious, difficult and, at least so far, incomprehensible addition to this story, the use of icons and emojis (another newly made-up word) in their messages.

Smiley faces I can understand. Also a thumbs up symbol I get. And thanks to daughter Erica (who teaches kids that are hearing impaired), even some of the American Sign Language hand signs are familiar to me.

But why am I getting messages that contain what look like tiny pictures of farm animals, camp fires and piles of dog droppings with little wavy lines wafting from the top? What's up with all of that ... stuff?

Oh well, like I said, I'm late to language, this game, this world.

I wonder what they'd have made of all this back at James Monroe Elementary School and Home for Adolescent Troublemakers. (ADHD notwithstanding, they'd probably text it as JMESHATM, and include a little picture of an emu holding a steaming pie).

And I can't help but wonder what Miss Nipper would have said. Probably she'd utter, "Je ne sais pas. C'est de la folie": (I don't know, that's madness).

Je suis d'accord mademoiselle, folie.

(I agree, madness).

And no matter what it's supposed to mean, when it's texted to me like that, the chances are pretty good that it's going to be all Greek to me.

I mean, WTH, right?



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