

West Michigan Plus

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The Holidays are behind us. The fond memories of time spent surrounded by family and friends will stay with us till next year. New Year's resolutions set in stone to shed a few pounds and keep up with that exercise program and the winter "To-do-list" nearly complete. We are all faced with what to do until spring. For me that means I can spend a little more time with one of my favorite pass-times, Netflix.

For those of you that currently subscribe to Netflix you will completely understand how additive this incredible entertainment option is. For example, choose a TV series like "Blue Bloods" and pretty soon you're binge watching episode after episode and hours have gone by. You've forgotten to eat, let the dog out, was the phone really ringing? Is tomorrow/today a work day? All I can say is be careful!



For those of you who do not subscribe to Netflix I say give it a try. You'll find more movies than you knew existed, TV shows you've missed, informational documentaries to satisfy most any curiosity. Watch something, rate it and Netflix will recommend programs you might be interested in based on the shows you've watched and rated.

I'm a sucker for informational TV programs. All those programs that show how things were made and who invented them. I recently finished

season 1 of a PBS program called "How We Got to Now" narrated by Steven Johnson. He takes you on a trip through history to explore how people have harnessed the power of light, sound, cold, time, and other phenomena to shape the world we live in.

After finishing the season I discovered a universal theme. Nearly every invention was a simple idea explored by a single individual and improved upon by other individuals that shared the same thoughts. It took a "community" of people to make the idea a workable reality. Cool air started out in a New York City Hospital as a bowl of ice with air blowing across it. Now we have refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, and even an indoor Snow Skiing resort in a desert country.

With that theme in mind I encourage all of you to share your ideas and thoughts with your family, friends, and neighbors. Collectively we can create a new festival or event, improve a park, and even invent the next great kitchen appliance. After all this kind of thinking is what makes Lakeshore communities a PLUS and a great place to live.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Williamson
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inside

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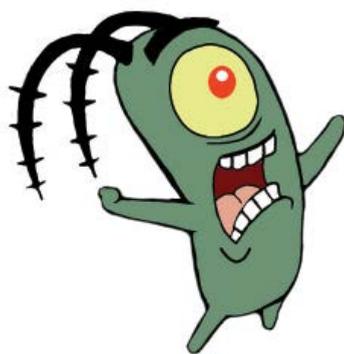
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Tim's CarfooniVerse

Sneaking the Sunrise Past a Rooster

By Tim Wheeler



*"That's a joke, son. Ya got a hole in your glove.
I keep pitchin' 'em and you keep missin' 'em."*

– Foghorn Leghorn

Everything I need to know I learned in kindergarten. I've always liked that line, and I've always used that line. More like an alibi than a mission statement, but I still use it.

When I'm presented with a daunting task beyond my intellectual purview (i.e. anything other than throwing a Frisbee or heating up a plate of Steak-umms), I pull out the kindergarten line and walk off before there is time for any follow-up. So far it's working, because my colleagues have no idea just how dumb I really am: I can't get past level 32 of Candy Crush and my dvr is suddenly recording everything starring Tony Danza. Pretty sure I was just trying to record soccer. Nope. Everything's coming up Danza.

The kindergarten line has served me well over the years, but I think it's time to find a new mantra. And by mantra I mean a new mélange of smoke and mirrors to deflect attention away from the growing theory that I know absolutely nothing. Well, I know that Angels in the Outfield was on last Tuesday at 2 pm, but other than that the precocity cupboard is looking pretty bare.

So I'm going to the bullpen for another line of bull, and it looks like my best source of bull is a chicken. A rooster to be exact. Foghorn Leghorn to be exacter. Wow! exacter is a word?! Thought for sure spellcheck was going to show me a yellow card.

If I've been able to keep this raft afloat with just the kindergarten line, Foghorn is going to propel me to new heights of how low I'll go to hide my stupidity. It's all about the turn of phrase with Foghorn, and used the right way, his words of wobbly wisdom will leave my audience duly impressed – or at least distracted long enough for someone to bring the car around back and help me escape.

I tried a few on for size to see how they fit, and I'm still employed. They must have worked.

I'm supposed to be training the new guy on our proprietary project management software, but the only thing I'm able to consistently access on my computer is a YouTube video of a llama in culottes. Funny, for sure, but not much help with tracking the Sanderson project.

The boss asked me how the training is going so I did the only logical thing: I threw the new guy under the bus, and Foghorn was there to help. "That kid's about as sharp as a pound of wet liver," I said with just a hint of a Kentucky accent. Then I walked off shaking my head. Score!

About a week later I was asked again for an update on the training. I decided to add another spice to the recipe and make the new guy annoying as well as inept: "Nice boy, but he's got more nerve than a bum tooth." As the boss walked away I decided to put a little icing on the cake and reprimand new guy. He was down the hall in accounting, but no one was really paying attention when I bellowed, "Pay attention to me boy. I'm not just talkin' to hear my head roar!"

Honestly, would such a blustrious outburst come from someone up to his armpits in ineptitude? Forget the fact that it actually did, just ride this bike with me for a bit to see where it goes. By the time everyone in the office gets suspicious, new guy will already be sent packing and everyone will be ripe for the next curveball that detracts from the underwhelming reality that is me. And I have just the curveball to, well, to stay ahead of the curve: Who's The Boss? binge party down in IT!

As Foghorn would say, a move like that is lower than a snake full of buckshot, but I would never say anything as mean as that. I learned not to say mean things to other people – when I was in kindergarten.



Tim Wheeler is the founder and owner of Wheeler Creative Studios (WheelerCreativeStudios.com) and is the recipient of nearly 200 national and international awards for writing and advertising. Tim is a nationally published humor columnist, an award-winning radio show host and the creator of the original animated series, Rocketoons. His e-book, Chevy Kokomo: Drive The Passion, was released earlier this summer through Barnes & Noble and Amazon. Readers are reporting few lasting side effects. Tim holds degrees from Western Michigan University, Villanova University and Northwestern University.





Visit the White Lake Area! 2016 EVENTS

4TH ANNUAL BUSINESS EXPO & PANCAKE BREAKFAST

March 12, 8am - 12:30pm
Whitehall High School. Over 50 booths exhibiting services in the White Lake community

FARMERS MARKET
Wednesdays & Saturdays
June - October • 8am – Noon
In Montague

MONTAGUE ARTISAN MARKET
June – September
First Saturday • 8am – 1pm
Located adjacent to the Farmers Market, Montague

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES
June-August at 7 pm
Montague Band Shell offers free concerts every Tuesday. Concert-goers can enjoy the music of jazz, folk, country, swing and international groups. Programs are sponsored by the Arts Council.

TASTE OF WHITE LAKE
June 2, 2016, 5 pm
Howmet Playhouse, Whitehall Community members come together to show off an array of food and spirits

WHITE LAKE AREA NATURE WALKS
1st Saturday of each month
June 4 – October 1
Walks begin at 10:30am and go until 12noon and vary in locations.

38TH ANNUAL WHITE LAKE AREA ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL
Saturday, June 18, 10am - 5pm
Sunday, June 19, 11 am - 4 pm
Goodrich Park Annex, Whitehall Juried Art Festival. Continuous entertainment and food court. More than 75 booths will be presenting at this festival.

WEST MICHIGAN WINE & JAZZ FESTIVAL
July 2-5 In Montague
Wine tasting, appetizers and desserts will be paired with a variety of live jazz performances and artist receptions.

4TH OF JULY PARADE
Monday July 4
Beginning at 10 am
From Whitehall City Hall to Montague City Hall. Over 100 entries are involved in this family fun, annual parade.

4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS
Monday, July 4, 2016
North end of White Lake This annual event begins at dusk.

CELEBRATE WHITE LAKE
July 9
A family event with an antique boat show and historical displays. Held at Goodrich Park in Whitehall beginning at 10 am.

CRUZ'IN CLASSIC CAR SHOW
Friday, July 29
Downtown Montague Cars cruise at 7 p.m. from Whitehall to Montague where they will be on display in the downtown area. DJ, food and fun for all.

WHITE LAKE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
August 5-14
A mix of visiting professional groups & local talent offer wide variety of performances throughout the White Lake Area.

FISH BOIL
Saturday, August 20
4 - 8pm
The annual Bob Gillan Memorial Fish Boil will be held at the Montague Band Shell. The event is sponsored by the White Lake Area Sportfishing Association. All proceeds support fishing improvements in the White Lake area

LABOR DAY COMMUNITY WALK
Monday, Sept. 5, 10 am
Hart-Montague Bike Trail, at the trailhead behind Montague Foods

SUMMER AIN'T OVER YET
Tuesday, Sept. 6, 13 and 20
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
An outdoor concert at the Goodrich Park Gazebo in Whitehall. All Proceeds benefit the White Lake Food Pantry.

PUMPKINFEST
Saturday, October 8
9:30 am registration
The famous Pumpkin Roll down the Dowling Hill begins at 11 a.m. plus many pumpkin events... largest pumpkin, pumpkin painting, seed spitting, pumpkin carving & pumpkin toss.

DEPOT TO DEPOT
Saturday, Oct. 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2016, 10am - 4pm
12th Annual Muskegon County Fall Color Tour Travel between White Lake Area Chamber Depot and Muskegon Convention & Visitors Depot.

WHITE LAKE AREA HOLIDAY WALK
Friday, Nov. 18, 2-8pm
Saturday, Nov. 19, 10am-4pm
Montague and Whitehall downtown shopping. Enjoy Carriage Rides Friday & Saturday, use the Muskegon Trolley to travel from store to store all day Saturday in both towns. Visit with Santa, listen to caroling and enjoy the Luminaries Friday evening. Maps available at participating merchants

64TH ANNUAL WHITE LAKE AREA CHRISTMAS PARADE
Saturday, Dec. 3, 2 pm
Whitehall to Montague and concluding with Santa in his sleigh! Nearly 75 entries lineup for this festive event.



Getting Your Resolutions to Stick!

By Michelle Martin, M.A.

While many of us make New Year's Resolutions, most of us do not keep them. It is possible that you have already discarded 2016's resolutions. It is not too late to make a well-planned attempt to get yourself invested into more healthy and productive habits.

There are a number of reasons most resolutions are cast to the wayside. First and foremost is that we generally choose to resolve to change an engrained habit into a new, healthier more helpful behavior. There's a reason the habit is engrained. It may be something pleasurable such as junk food or surfing the internet. Behaviors that become habits do so because they serve us in some way, even if it's a harmful way. It may be simply too much of a good thing, where we take the behavior too far and it takes away from other areas of our lives. For some people, the behavior may be some type of guilty pleasure they believe should be banished from their lives in order for them to feel productive and happy. Whatever the reasons for wanting to make changes, it serves us well to recognize what we are up against.

All too often we underestimate the power of our habits. Habits often circumvent conscious thought and tend to show up when we are on auto-pilot and not making conscious decisions. This is because of neural pathways. I explain this to clients by using the metaphor of cutting across an overgrown field to take a shortcut on a daily route. While it's difficult at first, when we take that path daily, we wear down a trail, which becomes more easily traversed over time. Even if we cease to take that trail for awhile, once it's established, it will remain there for a long time and we can return to it whenever we choose. Neural pathways work much the same way. Once they are established, they remain, where they can easily be accessed, re-emerging into our behavioral repertoire. This is the reason simply deciding to change is not usually enough to make the change happen on a lasting basis.

Especially when we are under stress, we are likely to fall back into old habits. This makes sense when we consider that whatever is causing us stress is most likely taking up a lot of mental space in our lives, leaving us with fewer resources to devote to making new healthier choices. The easiest thing to do is what we have always done. We do not even need to stop and think, so it saves time as well.

It is important to make a plan to change, not just a decision to change. A good way to do this is to consider the types of situations where we would be tempted to go back to an old habit. The more detail we can provide in imagining these situations, the better prepared we will be in making our plan.

We should make sure that we are as realistic as possible. It's often easier to make a positive change one step at a time, rather than going from one extreme of behavior to another. We are best to consider all the resources we will

need to make this change. Lack of specific planning is one of the main reasons resolutions get thrown aside. For example, if we want to eat a healthier diet, we should plan for time to grocery shop and to cook and prepare food. If, like so many people, a busy schedule is a factor, we will want to have ingredients for healthy snacks and meals on hand. We may want to plan for some quick and easy to prepare meals that will not take us off our chosen course and through the fast-food drive-through.

A critical and often overlooked issue in making permanent change is that relapsing into old habits is to be expected. A relapses can be a powerful tool for learning. Whenever we find ourselves slipping back into old behaviors, we can try to learn from the experience. All too often people give up when they find themselves sliding back into old habits. If we can see it as a brief detour rather than as failure, it tends to be less powerful. Remember that just because we are learning a new habit, the old habit has not disappeared. It is still there waiting to be picked up again.

Having a support system is another effective tool for making changes last. On those days when we do not feel like exercising, it is so much easier to find motivation if a friend is waiting for us at the gym. This is why it is easier for couples to make healthy changes together and it also decreases the temptation to relapse. A good therapist can be a great resource as well. A person to offer support and encouragement can be especially helpful in planning positive change and recovering from a relapse into old behaviors. Because a therapist is not associated with daily routines and relationships he or she can provide more objective feedback and suggestions that are not based on personal motivations.

Making changes is difficult work but worth the effort. Even when it is three steps forward and two steps backwards, taking charge of our lives and well-being is worth the effort. The more we take charge of our changes the more empowered we will be. We can make 2016 a year in which we take control of the changes in our lives.

Michelle Martin, M. A. is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, Limited Licensed Psychologist, (supervised by a Licensed Psychologist,) and Certified Sex Therapist at Harbor Psychological Associates. She has twenty years experience working both in agency and private practice settings. She has also worked as an educator teaching subjects related to mental health. Her areas of expertise include relationship issues including couples and parent-child problems, anxiety and mood disorders, sexual problems in adults and the behavior disorders of children. She can be reached at michelle@harborpsychological.com.



Small Business Financial Tune-Up

By Tom Kendra

Wherever your small business lies in the business lifecycle, it may be time for a financial tune-up. Like the name implies, a financial tune-up is a fresh look at how well your small business is working for you, the owner.

Here's a short list of things to consider.

- **Type of business entity.** Many small businesses start out as unincorporated sole proprietorships. The advantages are ease of formation and simplicity of operation. The disadvantages are exposure of personal assets to business liabilities and reporting net business earnings on your personal income tax return.

If your business has grown since you started out, it may make sense to consider a operating under a different business form.

Some types of business entities popular with small business owners—limited liability companies, S corporations, and regular C corporations—protect the individual business owner's personal assets from claims of business contractual and tort creditor. Furthermore, some of these other business forms offer tax advantages to small business owners that are not available to sole proprietors.

- **Retirement plan.** When is the last time you considered whether your employer-sponsored retirement plan was the best plan for you? Or, if you don't have an employer-sponsored retirement plan, when is the last time you evaluated the benefits of starting a plan?

The landscape for employer-sponsored retirement plans has changed considerably over the past few years and you may be missing out on a great opportunity for both you and your employees.

- **Health Insurance plan.** Rising health insurance costs remain a major concern for many small business owners, but there are options that can lower costs through tax incentives, for example the Health Savings Account.

With an HSA, employees –and their employers, if they choose –contribute pre-tax dollars to an account earmarked for out-of-pocket health expenses. In addition to not paying tax on contributions, participants also pay no tax on earnings that accumulate in the HSA. Moreover, money not withdrawn to pay for medical care is carried over to the next year and continues growing tax-deferred.

Provided money in the account is used for health-related expenses or to pay health insurance premiums, the participant pays no tax when withdrawals are made. There is the only catch— not everyone is eligible for a Health Savings Account. To qualify, you can only be covered by a high-deductible medical insurance policy, either through your employer or one you purchase as a self-employed person.

- **Life and Disability Insurance.** Small businesses often find it challenging to attract and retain employees. Employee benefits offerings such as life and disability income insurance are often necessary to compete with the "big boys." Group plans provide affordable coverage without the need for individual underwriting. This type of coverage can be offered as employee benefits paid for solely by the employer, an employer-sponsored plan paid for by the employee, or a combination of both.
- **Key-Person Insurance.** Small businesses routinely insure their premises, equipment, and inventory. Less common is the business that insures its most valuable assets, its key employees. If you haven't increased the amount of existing key person life and disability coverage to keep pace with increasing profits and business lines of credit or to reflect the addition of new key employees, there's no better time to do so than now. As employees age and/or become health-impaired insurance becomes more expensive or outright unavailable. When it comes to acquiring key person insurance, the sooner you act the better.
- **Business Succession Planning.** When business owners think about wealth transfer, they usually think about the transfer of their business or its value. Typically, businesses have only three outcomes at the death of an owner: 1) Sale of the business to an outsider; 2) Retention of the business for family members or other surviving owners; 3) Liquidation of the business.

Business succession planning usually comes down to a decision to sell or retain the business. The decision is not an easy one. If your business has experienced growth, if you've brought a family member into the business, or if you are approaching retirement, it makes sense to revisit your business succession plan.

A tune-up can be as painless as an oil change for your car, or it can uncover some major work. But the benefit of a tune-up is that it puts you in control and minimizes the chance of getting stranded on a lonely road at night.

A financial tune-up offers the same benefit—it prevents you from getting stranded without adequate retirement benefits, attractive employee benefits, or an up-to-date business succession plan.

Tom Kendra is a Financial Advisor with Prudential, with an office in Muskegon. He can be reached by phone at (231) 563-6638, fax at (231) 375-5229 or e-mail at tom.kendra@prudential.com



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Hard at Work Making Sure Your Vote Doesn't Count

By Jay A. Newmarch

The Michigan state constitution allows voters a way to overrule our lawmakers if they don't agree with the bills that have passed the legislature. Well, a majority contingent of state lawmakers have decided they don't like it when we don't agree with them and have come up with an underhanded ploy to get their own way. How? They are attaching unnecessary appropriations to laws, a provision that makes the law ineligible for repeal by voters through the referendum process.

Don't get me wrong, dirty political tricks have a long history and are an equal opportunity offender. But, in this instant, at this particular moment in time, it's our Republican lawmakers that are riding roughshod on our constitutional right to overrule and repeal laws that we don't think they should have passed.

Our Republican legislators have used it to lock in the income tax on pensions and to set district maps for congressional seats without a way for us to appeal. Boy, if that last one doesn't have a partisan, very personal bent for some of our lawmakers, huh? Maybe they're decided that if they're going to thwart our rights as voters, they'd better make it harder for us to vote them out of office, too!

But the most egregious example to date? Soon after Michigan voters overturned the controversial emergency financial manager law, the state legislature went to work passing an almost identical law, but with one big, very significant difference. They added a \$700,000 appropriation that made it referendum-proof.

Well, that bill, a blatant example of snubbing the clear directives of Michigan voters, resulted in an emergency financial manager being at the helm in Flint when the current water catastrophe was first enacted. That ill-advised act of switching the Flint water supply from Detroit water to the more caustic Flint river water caused a scouring of the old supply pipes bringing the water into homes. Once scoured, the pipes began to leach lead into the water flowing from the faucets of Flint homes.

And even worse, it was only through community activism and the dogged work of non-governmental individuals that this health crisis was forced out into the light. At first denied by state officials, it has just recently been admitted by our Governor, well after Flint children had been exposed to potentially life altering unsafe levels of lead. The sad, horrible truth is that lead poisoning in children cannot be undone and will most likely impact Flint families for a lifetime. Even as I write this, federal investigators are looking into the situation and FEMA is sending officials to assist in this man-made mess.

Would the story have been different if Michigan voters had been heard and the use of emergency financial managers had ceased? At this point, we will never know, because democracy was overruled by those we hired to do our bidding. They ensured that our Governor was free to usurp the authority of freely elected officials by placing a personally chosen surrogate in charge of Flint governance.

Now the latest example of legislative overreach? A law that places a ban on straight ticket voting. In 2002 voters rejected a similar law, but our current Republican lawmakers have decided, once again, that they know best. But, how to ensure that this time we won't get our way? They have added a \$1 million appropriation to the bill that would make it repeal-proof.

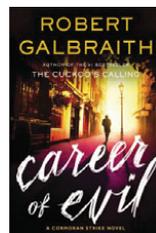
Even if you agree with all the laws that are being enacted with this "do not pass go" provision, you need to care. Why? Well, right now their unilateral governing tactics might well fall in line with your wishes, but what about in the future? It could just as easily be happening on the other side of the aisle or with laws you don't agree with.

We must demand, through persuasion or through the power of our vote, that Michigan lawmakers do OUR bidding. They are there for us, because of us. We are not here to simply rubber stamp their agenda. Michigan should not be allowed to become (if it hasn't already) an oligarchy, with power held in the hands of a few.

Jay A. Newmarch is a lifelong native of west Michigan, currently living in Kalamazoo. A marketing, design and communications professional, Jay is a self-admitted newshound with an avid interest in current events, politics and governmental accountability.



Good Reads



Career of Evil

by Robert Galbraith

By now it's no secret that Robert Galbraith is a pseudonym for J. K. Rowling, but hopefully by now this fine mystery series is able to stand on its own, free of any association with Harry Potter (a set of stories I love but which has no bearing on these books). *Career of Evil* is the third in a series featuring modern noir private detective Cormoran Strike, Afghanistan war veteran and amputee, and Robin Ellacott, temporary secretary turned contemporary Girl Friday. All the setup Galbraith has done over the first two volumes begins to pay off. The mystery in this story (who is sending Robin severed limbs?) underscores the careful development of Cormoran and Robin's relationship, deepening the care we feel for these two people, revealing important backstory while touching on larger societal issues such as the media, rape culture, engagement and marriage, family, friendship, and more. All the trappings of a traditional mystery are present, but as their best selves, with thrilling chases, perplexing twists, gruesome murders, fascinating side characters and exciting action. If you're looking for a series to get you through the doldrums of winter, start with *The Cuckoo's Calling*, continue with *The Silkworm*, and then pick up *Career of Evil*. You'll enjoy your time with Strike and Ellacott.



Lafayette in the Somewhat United States

by Sarah Vowell

If you are looking for a magisterial tome relating a serious history of the Marquis de Lafayette, there are other books out there that will serve your purposes. If you are looking for an entertaining, informational, quirky book that is the equivalent of your nerdiest friend with a dry wit telling you enthusiastically about Revolutionary War hero Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, this is your book. Sarah Vowell has written several other idiosyncratic books about American history (*Assassination Vacation*, *The Wordy Shipmates*, and *Unfamiliar Fishes*) and is also heard on NPR's *This American Life*. Her take on history involves a nonlinear narrative, a dazzling array of obscure factoids, and humorous asides. Chances are there is a Lafayette street, park, or monument in your town, and this book gives a delightful capsule history of their namesake, a fascinating man who sailed across the ocean at nineteen to put himself at General George Washington's command, helped write the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, survived the French Revolution, and made a stunning return trip to the United States in 1824 to eulogize and valorize the Revolutionary generation. Vowell's book serves to remind us of the rich history all around us that, if you look carefully, tells a tale that can be better than fiction.

Laura J. Kraly is the Head of Adult Services at the Loutit District Library in Grand Haven, MI where she answers questions, selects books for the collection, provides tech support for the library's electronic resources and gives reading, watching and listening suggestions. While reading is a lifelong passion, she also enjoys watching hockey, doing Zumba and yoga, cooking Italian food, and traveling.



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Big Sable Lighthouse Ludington State Park

By Peter Manting



Nestled among jack pines, just a short two mile walk along a breathtaking trail in the Ludington State Park, stands Big Sable's noble black and white tower. Big Sable is a beacon to mariners, a link to Michigan's proud maritime heritage and a memorial to the proud keepers who worked so hard to keep the light burning throughout the years.

In 1855 twelve ships wrecked between Big Sable Point and the City of Ludington, and forty-eight lives were lost. Charles Mears, a senator from Ludington, Michigan, began to ask Congress for money to

build a lighthouse at Big Sable Point so ships on Lake Michigan could navigate around the point as they traveled up and down the coastline. Finally, on July 28, 1866, Congress budgeted \$35,000 to build a lighthouse at Big Sable Point. The 112-foot tower was built with Milwaukee cream brick and had walls that were five feet thick at the base of the tower and two feet thick at the top. A Third Order Fresnel lens was installed in the tower.

Milwaukee cream brick was also used in the construction of the story-and-a-half dwelling with full basement. This housed both the Head Keeper and the Assistant Keeper with their families. Designed as a duplex, the Head Keeper's quarters took up the entire first floor and consisted of an oil storage room, kitchen living room and a single bedroom. The Assistant's Keepers quarters on the second floor were made up of two bedrooms, a kitchen and living room.

In 1898, the District Inspector reported that the cream brick used in constructing the tower was found to be flaking as a result of exposure to the elements, and voiced concern that if left as is, the integrity of the tower would likely be compromised. This flaking grew so severe, that in 1899 a contract was awarded to the J.G. Wagner Company of Milwaukee to construct the necessary steel plates to encase the tower. The plates were assembled at the Milwaukee Lighthouse Depot and brought across the lake on lighthouse tenders, or flat boats. When the steel cladding was installed around the brick tower, cement was poured between the bricks and the steel cladding adding to the thickness of the walls. The construction was completed in June 1900 at a total labor and materials cost of \$4,925.00. In order to increase the visibility of the tower during daylight hours, the new cladding was painted white with a contrasting black band around its middle third.

On July 12, 1909, after the installation of a fog signal to the station's inventory, a second Assistant Keeper was authorized at the station. Rather than build a second dwelling to accommodate the additional keeper and his family, the decision was made to undertake a complete remodeling of the existing dwelling. With the completion of this project, the station appears much as it does today.

In 1933 road was built through the dunes for more accessibility to the station and in 1943 a seawall was installed to keep the water away from the tower.

Big Sable holds the distinction of being the last Great Lakes light to become electrified in 1949. This paved the way for automation, eliminating the need for a Keeper. Big Sable saw its last Keeper leave in 1968.

Unmanned and virtually abandoned, and well out of the eyes of the public, the buildings deteriorated rapidly due to vandalism and the lack of maintenance. The seawall built in 1943 to protect the light was breached in 1977, the waves came perilously close to undermining the tower before a local band of Ludington residents came to the rescue. Along with the Foundation for Behavior Research this local group now named the Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association, became keepers of the Lighthouse. In 2002 in the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers formally the BSPLKA signed a new 25 year lease agreement with the State of Michigan DNR to preserve, promote and educate the public and make Big Sable accessible to the public.

While no longer equipped with its Fresnel lens, Big Sable's light is still maintained by the Coast Guard, is on the current shipping navigational charts and still shines brightly approximately 18 miles out across the waters of Lake Michigan.

Peter Manting is the Executive Director of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association. SPLKA's mission is to preserve, promote and educate the public and to make our lighthouses accessible to all. SPLKA manages 4 iconic Lake Michigan lighthouses: the White River Light Station in Whitehall, Little Sable Point Lighthouse in Silver Lake, the Ludington North Breakwater Lighthouse and the Big Sable Point Lighthouse in the Ludington State Park. Peter grew up and lives in the Grand Haven/ Spring Lake area. He has had a love of local Maritime history fostered by his grandfather who would tell him stories of the many ships that frequented the Grand Haven harbor in the early 20th century. Peter has been active in the community as a former board member for the Tri-Cities Historical Museum which houses many of his grandfather's historic ship models.



Real Gold Radio



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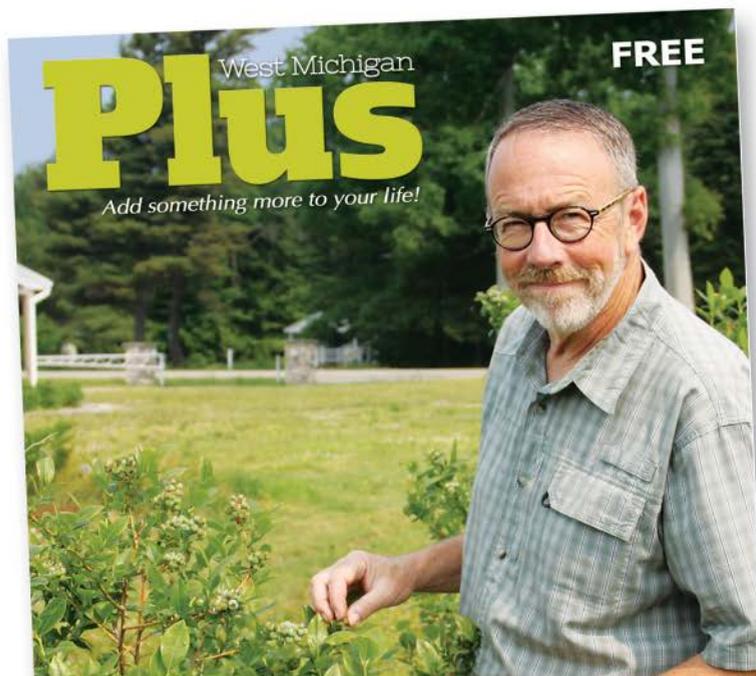
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PLUS MOVIE MINUTES

The Big Short

(2015, Drama-Comedy, Rated R)



Screwball comedy Director Adam McKay (*Anchorman*, *Step Brothers*) invests his talents into screwball dramedy with *The Big Short* and sadly yields little payoff. This crisis flick centers on the 2008 collapse of the housing market the handful of gentlemen who saw it coming, including those portrayed by Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling, and even Brad Pitt. An exciting group of actors to be sure; however, mostly they follow separate storylines which never cross over. The multiple storylines are just a symptom of *The Big Short's* overall problem, which is the audience is expected to keep track of not just the various stories, but also the numerous acronyms thrown around like candy between the Wall Street savvy investors who occupy them. To be fair, *The Big Short* does go out of its way to help you understand what they are talking about, but that in and of itself is an issue because there is such little story here and so little character work that putting any of it on hold simply to explain what everybody is talking about often leaves *The Big Short* feeling more like an economics lecture than a form of entertainment.

Joy

(2015, Drama-Comedy, Rated R)



Continuing the theme of "things that sound boring but have been made into movies anyways" is *Joy*, the third collaboration between Director David O. Russell, Actor Bradley Cooper, and Oscar Winner Jennifer Lawrence (the first two being *Silver Linings Playbook* and *American Hustle*). What could be so boring about a movie called *Joy*, you ask? Well, it's about the invention of the Miracle Mop. That's right, the popular QVC cleaner. Don't worry because this film is a lot of things but boring is not one of them. For starters, the performances are terrifically engaging throughout, with special emphasis once again on Jennifer Lawrence who beautifully portrays the rich development of her character Joy as she transitions from aspiring inventor to tough business woman and eventual multi-millionaire. *Joy* is also consistently funny, thanks in no small part to Jennifer Lawrence's impeccable timing. Though O. Russell's film runs a tad too long, the persistent humor and admirable performance from Lawrence ultimately make *Joy* worth the watch.

Jordan Peterson is a film student at Grand Valley State University and works as a projectionist at Celebration! Cinema Carousel in Muskegon. He is an aspiring writer-director as well as an amateur screenwriter and reviewer. Some of his favorite movies include (500) Days of Summer, The Muppets, and Evil Dead 2.



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Growing Home

My relaxing weekend up north meant rolling up my sleeves instead of putting my feet up

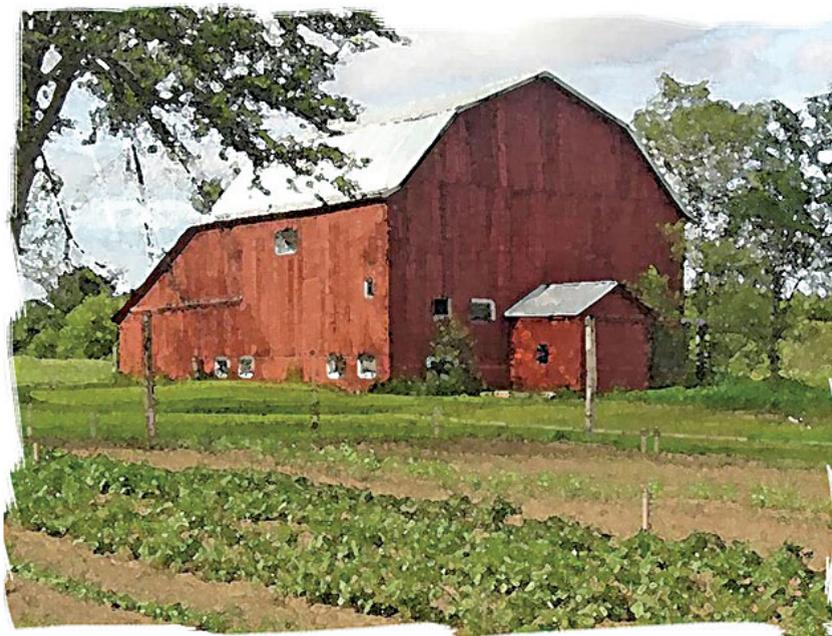
By Laura Holmes

I laughed when my parents announced they were buying a retirement farm! In their mid 60's, instead of putting their feet up they decided to roll their sleeves up. The farmhouse needed extensive renovations, so did the 10 acres. But, in pursuit of a dream, they never wavered. Propelled by faith, undeterred by obstacles like money, equipment or time, The Holmestead Farm opened its barn doors in 2008.

The Holmestead Farm has become an extension of their hearts. With the gift of hospitality and a talent for growing things, the project has grown into a thriving CSA Farm (community supported agriculture). Over 30 families show up weekly to collect a basket of farm fresh goodness that includes organic eggs, greens, veggies, fruit, fresh-cut flowers and more. The first line in the farm's CSA membership brochure reads: Every sunrise is a welcome challenge. I've never seen my parents work this hard, but they are clearly gratified by the conversations and heartfelt thank you's from each family.

I joke about going home to Traverse City for a relaxing weekend. On the farm, I will undoubtedly be put to work. It's a welcome change though trading tapping keys for dirt under my fingernails. It's simple, sweaty, pure and I get to see my folks. A weekend at the farm means planting 200 tomatoes, dirtying my jeans and nursing a sore back. And, it also means grilling burgers then relaxing over a meal (with fresh veggies of course) with family, who I don't get to see often enough. My dinner views are tomatoes growing over mom and dad's shoulder, in perfect-staked rows. I stare out at the rows, reflecting. An appreciation grows inside of me, for the values I've learned and a homegrown work ethic with roots in farming.

At my last visit, I helped work CSA pick-up day, the Thursday before the fourth of July. My dad keeps a handwritten list of the names with special marks for half or full-shares. I observed as the first people showed up with baskets in hand, with clear excitement for what's newly harvested. Each item has been carefully bagged or bunched. My dad fills the baskets calling out names like, kale, Salanova, radishes, green-onions, basil, turnip greens, arugula and carrots. He finishes with a dozen eggs, explaining that the new hens have been slow on the uptake. Most people lingered, they did not rush in/out like it was a stop at the store. They petted the barn cats (Licorice and Sunny), walked to the chicken coop



with grass for the hens or let the kids play in the sandbox near the greenhouse.

I figured I could follow his lead as he headed in to town to run an errand. Scanning the list, I counted 12 more pick-ups. My supplies of greens and eggs were looking low, so I checked my watch often hoping dad would return to help me care for his flock. People came in waves. They looked surprised but happy to see me. "Are you Marshall today?" they inquired, approaching with an empty basket. I explained, "I'm Marshall's oldest daughter up for a visit, helping out on the farm." Everyone shared how pleasant it is to stop at the farm, not just for vegetables, but to chat about what's growing next.

Honestly, I have never seen people so excited about arugula or turnip greens! I kept filling baskets, smiling back as each person affirmed how wonderful my parents are and how much they love their homegrown goodies and recipes. My parents are local celebrities, affectionately talked about at dinner tables throughout Grand Traverse County.

No one was even remotely upset, when I explained the farm was out of eggs and my dad had yet to return from his errand. They even offered to come back the next day. Three people remained on the list. When I realized we were out of kale and Salanova, I asked if they would mind waiting and literally ran off to the south garden to trim a few more bunches. Thankfully, dad arrived with extra eggs purchased from a nearby Amish farmer. The crisis was averted and the last baskets were filled.

Later, we laughed over dinner at my trial by fire in the farming business. My dad patted my shoulder, grinning, "I knew you could handle it." I returned his grin and confirmed my thoughts. It was the right move to come home to work on the farm. My vacation day did not mean putting my feet up, rather rolling up my sleeves too.

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Laura Holmes is a FineLine Creative career girl and writer who always has a trip up her sleeve. Gotta pack, write, travel, play! Reach her at www.4fineline.com or www.contentqueens.net



With music downloads, podcasts, and global broadcasting programs available at your fingertips, people may think tuning in to a local radio station is outdated, old school and obsolete.

But make no mistake: local radio continues to have a strong following in West Michigan.

For Parker Sovinski of Fremont, the music major at Muskegon Community College prefers 95.3 FM WGUV. "The jazz music is perfect because of the complexity and expression of the music," he said.

Christine Pfromm May of Muskegon sees radio as a vessel that provides her favorite Christian music through 91.3 FM. "I love my Christian music, and they had wonderful Christmas music," she said.

Others, such as Rose Sanocki and Cindy Snider Brown, see radio as a reliable part of their daily routine. Both Muskegon women enjoy listening to the Bobby Bones Show on WMUS 107.9 FM during the morning as they prepare for work or while driving in the car.

There's something to be said for the unique offerings of radio along the West Michigan lakeshore. With a variety of live, local programs, news coverage, as well as music, several stations fill a niche.



WGHN 92.1 FM "Grand Haven's Favorite"

WGHN hit the airwaves in 1955, and among its various locations was inside a funeral home.

The staff can chuckle as today the station rests in the basement of a not-so-creepy place. Nestled inside the



Grand Haven Chamber of Commerce building, the large windows face the gorgeous riverfront boardwalk.

WGHN is one of three local, privately owned stations, including Sports Radio 1370 AM, and a country music station, WMPA 93.1 FM.

The daily format for WGHN is adult contemporary from the 1980s and 90s, with retro music from the 80s featured on the weekends. But its focus on the small waterfront community of Grand Haven, Spring Lake and Ferrysburg has secured its listenership for more than five decades. Local news coverage includes city councils, school boards, and local crime.

A big hit is the "Missing Pet Report," where listeners call in and describe their beloved animals that went missing. You likely won't find such a service in larger, urban markets. A good portion of the station's listenership are snowbirds who listen online to keep up with what's happening in West Michigan.

It is this imprint on the Grand Haven area and beyond that has longtime on-air host Jesse Bruce convinced that the station will remain relevant for years to come.

"The reason Mom & Pop stations like us will survive is

The Sweet Sound of Local Radio

By Teresa Taylor Williams

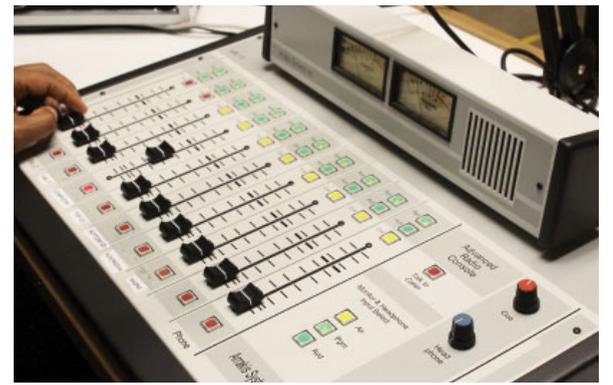
really because there's no one doing what we do. We're always in the community," said Bruce. "If we live in the Tri-Cities area, why listen to a station based in Grand Rapids? Why do we care what's going on there? It all comes down to local news. We cover what pertains to (listeners) and their community."

With 17 years on the job, the best part of the job for Bruce is working with young people. WGHN has hosted interns from Grand Valley State University for years.

"Local broadcasting can be a great start for some students," said Bruce, who is also WGHN's program director. "It's neat to see kids with little to no experience and teach them how to write commercials and prepare them for being on the air. That's what I've been able to give back to the business. It's the best thing that I get out of it."

WUVS 103.7 FM "The Community Station"

If people think 103.7 FM the Beat is a hip hop radio station for teenagers, they would be mistaken.



That would be too limiting for the urban format radio station located in the center of Muskegon County and on the border of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights.

Celebrating 14 years on the air in February, WUVS 103.7 FM evolved from owner and general manager Paul Billings' vision. He desired to combine his passion for music with promoting unity and providing resources and services to the community.

The station is under the umbrella of the West Michigan Community Help Network, a not for profit organization which serves Muskegon County residents with employment seminars, health fairs, and food distribution to the needy. Cultural enrichment is of primary importance, with activities such as the Juneteenth Fest and Men of Color READ.

Billings and his staff do more than just report the news about the community: they want to make a positive impact on the community.

One of those methods includes giving young people guidance through the IMARA Mentorship Program. Throughout the year, students receive tutoring, cultural education, learn about the broadcasting field, participate in community service and attend field trips.

"The station is just part of the West Michigan Help Network's mission. If the radio station folded, we would still run these programs for the community," said Billings. "We want to do more outreach, and we want to do more to reach the minds of kids."

But don't be confused—the station is nowhere near close to folding, thanks to local financial support.

"We're blessed with how the business community has supported us," said Billings, adding, "Of course, we're not where we could be, but we're a lot better than other places in bigger markets."

The radio station prides itself in being socially responsible with various educational programming that includes community leaders such as the Muskegon County Prosecutor, municipal leaders and various health educators. Music Director Robert "Big Rob" Roundtree has been with the station since its inception and has seen many ups and downs in trying to establish a presence on the airwaves.

"It has not been easy, and there have been a lot of battles with businesses for sponsorship," said Roundtree. "I've seen us grow from day one to where we are now, and we will do nothing but improve. Everyday is a different learning experience."

Billings is pleased overall with the progress of the station. For 2016, plans are well underway for a second station featuring a Motown and oldies format during the week, and "EDM," or electronic dance music on the weekends.

Tory Shine McAllister, who hosts a Gospel Hip Hop show on Sunday evenings, is thrilled that his genre of music is getting more recognition by the mainstream, thanks in part to the Internet.

"The Internet is just another open door for radio," said McAllister. "Radio stations that used to be limited to certain areas can extend their reach by way of Internet, and become more visible...We're getting there."

WBLV 90.3/WBLU 88.9 FM
“The Voice of the Arts”

When the daily grind threatens your peace, try tuning in to the soothing classical, jazz or folk sounds found on Blue Lake Public Radio.

Touted as “The Voice of the Arts” in West Michigan, the station has partnerships with every major arts and cultural organization in West Michigan. These include two symphony orchestras, an opera company, art museums,



public museums, theatrical companies, arts councils, and also with academic arts and cultural programs that promote and encourage community involvement in the arts throughout the year, according to bluelake.org.

The format includes locally-produced and syndicated network programming. The station provides performance/event information, and broadcasts local concert series performances by the Grand Rapids Symphony and West Michigan Symphony.

Foley Schuler is an on-air daily host who has been on staff for 21 of the station's 33 years.

He particularly likes the wide ranging listenership, as the two stations span 18 West Michigan counties. Much of the overall support for the station comes directly from listeners, which, Schuler says, strengthens the connection between the station and the audience.

And Blue Lake staff considers listeners more than an audience. They are family.

“The feeling of ownership that listeners feel – that this is their station – is a vital part of the station's identity,” he said. “There are as many types of listeners--and reasons for listening--as there are listeners themselves, united by a love of great music and of the fine arts. Our programming appeals to both seasoned aficionados of classical music and jazz, and those just discovering these traditions--and really anyone with a hunger for learning, for something different than one normally finds on the radio dial and, in a larger sense, for peace and beauty in an often turbulent world,” said Schuler. “One of the great delights is to play a role in people's discovery (and continuing discovery) of this music, and to simply be able to share my passion for it, which is why I got into all of this in the first place.”

Schuler has a special affinity with Blue Lake, as he was the first high school student to intern at the radio station. “My own history and that of the station have been intertwined; you might say that the camp and I have grown up, and into our own, together.”

Blue Lake Public Radio was established under the umbrella of Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, which is located in Twin Lake. Celebrating 50 years in existence this year, the prestigious camp has served more than 300,000 gifted students, hosting a creative environment to discover and experience fine arts.



GRAND HAVEN: WGHN 92.1 FM – Features adult contemporary music Monday-Friday, with retro 80s and 90s on the weekends; daily local news and sports coverage. Website: Wghn.com; Phone: (616) 842-8110

MUSKEGON: WUVS 103.7 FM
The Beat – “The Community Station of Michigan,” the mission is to promote public safety. Music includes a mix of urban, old school, blues and inspirational along with 15 local programs. Website: 1037thebeat.com; Phone: (231) 722-8338

TWIN LAKE: Blue Lake Public Radio 90.3 FM -- What sets them apart from other NPR affiliates in this area is there is less emphasis on talk-programs and greater emphasis on fine arts, particularly classical music programming. Website: Bluelake.org; Phone: (800) 221-3796

WHITE LAKE: WAXT-LP 98.9 FM – **Real Gold Radio**, also known as “White Lake Area's New Community Radio Station,” boasts a non-commercial format of entertaining and educational programming, and extends to Muskegon, Shelby and Hesperia. Website: Realgoldradio.com; Phone: (231) 981-5389



WAXT-LP 98.9 FM
Real Gold Radio

WAXT may be a young station, but they are looking to make a significant mark in the White Lake area.

Created in spring 2014 by John “Big John Allen” Gilbertson, Real Gold Radio was only up and running nearly a year when Gilbertson passed away on April 24, 2015.

But his legacy and love for the industry continues on with the leadership of Tim Harris, a 28-year radio veteran who serves as operations manager.

Although there are three radio stations based in the White Lake area, Real Gold Radio is the only locally owned station, according to Harris.

“We are a nonprofit, and we are live and local, which means that every penny that comes into the station through donations or on-air underwriting goes back into the White Lake Area, not to some out of state CEO,” said Harris. “We are a full service radio station. Real Gold Radio doesn't just churn out tunes, but has woven itself into the fabric of the community.”



The nonprofit station offers a live morning show where the topics run the gamut of local issues, news, weather, events—even school plays.

“Whatever is on the minds of the citizens of White Lake—that is our challenge, to meet those expectations. For many generations, radio was your news and entertainment source. Sadly, due to deregulation, stations can basically be a computer in a closet. Nobody has to be around; automation has thrown many talented broadcasters to the curb,” said Harris. “Our goal is to recharge the faith people once had with radio to get the information they need in a timely manner.”

According to Harris, the station has invested money to serve the community to a level that the Lakeshore has never seen before, such as a project for a backup power supply to keep the station on air when it is needed most, and a system to warn communities of possible weather or natural disasters. For those interested in volunteering or for students looking for an internship, the station is always looking for help. Please email Harris at nitethang85@yahoo.com.

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Teresa Taylor Williams is a veteran journalist, freelance content provider and adjunct English instructor at Muskegon Community College. A mother blessed with two sons, she resides in Muskegon.



Cooking with Guinness Stout

By Chef Bruce Konowalow, CCE, Dean of Culinary Arts, The Culinary Institute of Michigan

Several years ago I had the opportunity to visit the Guinness Plant in the heart of Dublin. We had a specially prepared lunch which used the stout in every recipe. The meal was delicious and the surroundings were fantastic. After lunch I went to the top of the building where there is a wonderful bar with panoramic views of Dublin. The barman poured me the perfect pint of Guinness, waiting the requisite time for the stout to settle and leaving the small creamy head that makes this a special treat. The great thing about Guinness is

that is a great beverage in the winter and a great cooking ingredient. When I got home from that European trip I decided to try my own spin on creating an entrée and dessert using Guinness as an ingredient. The stew is great when you need that stick to your ribs, hearty dinner and the ice cream has caramel notes and salt and crunch which makes gives it a savory and sweet counterbalance. It will take a couple of hours to get everything done but well worth it.

Praline, pretzel and Guinness Ice cream

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 T dark brown sugar
- 1 cup of peeled blanched hazelnuts
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup Guinness
- 10 egg yolks
- ¾ cup of salted chopped pretzels

Place the sugars in a heavy bottomed sauce pot and stir until the sugar caramelizes. Stir in the nuts and cook until nuts brown. Pour the mixture on a greased sheet pan and cool. When hardened place the nut brittle into a food processor and pulverize into a praline powder.

Mix the praline powder with the egg yolks until fully incorporated. Heat the milk, cream and beer together until it just reaches the boiling point. Slowly mix the hot mixture into the egg yolks whisking throughout the process. Adding the hot liquid too fast will curdle the eggs. Return the milk and egg mixture to a heavy bottomed sauce pan and over medium heat mix with a wooden or heat-proof spoon. Do not use a meat spoon as it can discolor the mixture. Keep mixing until the mixture lightly coats the back of a spoon. This is called 'nape'. Immediately strain the mixture in a stainless steel bowl that is sitting in an ice bath. Continue stirring until the mixture is cold. Refrigerate the mixture for 30 minutes to an hour. After refrigeration pour the mixture (custard) into an ice cream machine and churn. Remove the ice cream from the machine and fold in the pretzel pieces. It is ready to serve or hold in the freezer.

Beer Goulash Soup

- 4oz. Lard
- 1 # small dice onion
- 1 cup small diced carrots
- 1 medium sized green pepper small dice
- 3 # beef chuck or shank cut into a small dice
- 2 T flour
- 4 T Hungarian Paprika
- 2 tsp caraway seed
- 2 tsp fresh marjoram or 1 tsp of dried
- 1 clove of garlic
- 2 qt. of beef stock (pre-heat to simmer)
- 1 qt. Guinness stout mix with stock
- 2 # of potato cut in a small dice
- 2 tsp tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves

Place lard in a 6 qt. heavy bottomed sauce pan and heat on a medium flame. Add the onions, carrots and peppers and brown them. Combine the meat with the paprika and spices and add to the onions and cook an additional 5 minutes. Add the flour and stir. Add the tomato paste and stir. Pour in the stock /beer and stir and bring to a boil. Add the bay leaves. Reduce heat to a simmer until the meat is tender. This will take about 45 minutes. When meat is done, add the potatoes and simmer until the potatoes are cooked. This will take another 10-15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve soup with Spaetzle or buttered noodles.

Note: The word goulash which roughly translates from Hungarian to "herdsman" always contains meat and onions. The onions are always half the weight of the meat. Hungarian paprika must be used.



May the Code be with You ALWAYS!

By, Dale P. Zahn, CEO
West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS

In recent months, we've been inundated with Star Wars hype and "The Force Awakens." This got me to thinking about the REALTORS Code of Ethics and a phrase we in organized real estate have used many times over the years - "May The Code Be With You." 108 years ago the National Association of REALTORS was formed largely for the purpose of creating standards of ethical conduct to which true professionals would be obligated to. It took five years for what began as a voluntary set of standards to become mandatory, enforceable, and subject to sanctions if violated. Today, there are 17 Articles of the Code supported by numerous Standards of Practice and 14 of those Articles are designed to protect the public. Whether buying or selling, the public deserves the highest level of professional conduct and service. Anything less is unacceptable behavior.

The Preamble of the Code begins with the words, "Under All Is The Land" as such is recognized as valuable, scarce and important to the future of a free society and our civilization itself....The term REALTOR (and YES, its a TWO-Syllable word!) has come to connote competency, fairness and high integrity resulting from adherence to a lofty ideal of moral conduct in business relations and no inducement of profit and no instruction from clients ever can justify a departure from this ideal. Simply put, the Code is embodied in the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them." REALTOR members of the West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS have pledged themselves to observe the spirit in all of their activities whether conducted personally, through associates or others, or via technological means, and to conduct their business in accordance with the tenets set forth in the Articles of the Code.

So, does the "Voice For Real Estate" along the lakeshore take this seriously? It certainly does. Not to say the world is perfect and everything is trouble free and wonderful, but REALTORS do indeed strive to make the buying and selling experience a smooth and hassle



free experience and to create lasting relationships. The REALTOR often is your neighbor, becomes your go-to person and is most of all a friend. From the time a real estate licensee joins the Association to become a REALTOR, they are instructed in and reminded of the Code. New REALTORS are presented with several hours of training and existing REALTORS must take an Ethics course every two years to maintain membership as a REALTOR. West Michigan Lakeshore prides itself with being the recognized go-to source for Code of Ethics training in the State of Michigan and has trained REALTORS all across the State. Violate the Code and its going to cost the REALTOR via sanctions that will fit the offense. Its not something to be taken lightly.

WMLAR even offers a course titled "Professional Courtesies - How Do You Want To Be Remembered" to its members. The course is above and beyond the normal Code of Ethics training. So, got a question or need more information on the Code and the way to submit a complaint if necessary? Information can be found on our website, www.wmlar.com right on the Home Page and included is a Ethics Complaint Form and a downloadable copy of the latest version of the Code.

While in movie theaters, "The Force Awakens," in the world of real estate we say "May The Force Be With You - Always."

Dale P. Zahn
Chief Executive Officer
West Michigan Lakeshore
Association of REALTORS



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Creating Nontraditional Christmas Memories

By Melanie Sportell

This Christmas will prove to be different than all others. Months ago, we presented the question to our six children: Should we celebrate Christmas as usual or spend time together as a family on a vacation over the holidays? The unanimous decision from all six was to embark on a ten day, all inclusive vacation to Cancun over the holidays, which, at the time that I am writing this, is only a few days away.

The excitement is brewing as it will be a first for all us to travel together on an airplane and spend ten days together being spoiled by nonstop food and drinks. However, as the stockings were hung and the Christmas tree was set up in our home, the reality of not being home on Christmas morning also started to become a reality. Our twelve year old boy mentioned yesterday that he can't wait to be on airplane, but he was really starting to think about how much he was going to miss running downstairs to see the presents under the tree on Christmas morning. I agreed, wondering if we made the right decision to celebrate in a nontraditional way.

As we celebrate Christmas over 2,000 miles from home, we will not miss the endless hours of shopping for just the right gift, buying items no one really needs and the hustle and bustle of trying to find time to see everyone with all their different schedules. We will definitely not miss the secular view of what Christmas has become. So, this year, we started listening to Christmas music well before Thanksgiving in hopes that we would feel as if we still

were experiencing Christmas at home before Christmas day, but without snow, it's not working.

There are so many things I will miss by not spending Christmas at home: cuddling by the fire to watch the kids open their presents, leaving out cookies and milk for Santa, the anticipation of the arrival of gifts under the tree, and time spent with our extended families. However, the true meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and I can't think of any better way to do that than to be surrounded by our children away from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Thus, bring on Christmas in Cancun with the gift that cannot be purchased—the gift of time, together.

Melanie Sportell is the mother of the modern day blended Brady Bunch—four boys and two girls ages twelve to twenty. She holds her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction and teaches science for adjudicated youth. In her "free time", she teaches group fitness, does personal training, and coaches a girls' basketball and boys' soccer team.



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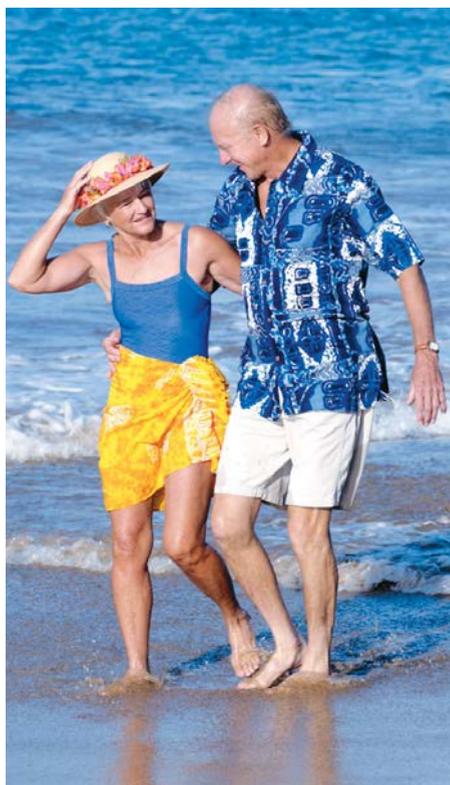
Health and Safety Tips for Winter Vacationers

Courtesy of Mercy Health

Are you and your family planning a winter getaway? Whether you are headed to snow-covered slopes or a warmer climate, Mercy Health reminds you to create a health care checklist as part of your preparation for upcoming trips. To ensure that you and your family have an enjoyable and healthy vacation, we recommend that you consider the following before you go.

What to Pack

- When traveling, be sure to pack your health plan card along with its toll-free customer service phone number.
- Bring along all medications that your family members are taking, especially prescriptions, which may be difficult to obtain away from home. Important note: Leave medications in the original bottle if you are traveling by air.
- If you have allergies, reactions to certain medications, foods, or insect bites—or other special medical problems—consider wearing a medical alert bracelet.
- Bring non-prescription medications that you might need.
- Take along the name and phone numbers of your pharmacist and health care provider.
- If you travel without your children, leave a signed consent-to-treat form with your children's caretaker.
- Take immunization records, along with any other important medical records, especially when traveling to another country.
- When traveling to less economically developed countries, avoid tap water and ice; opt for bottled products such as water, carbonated sodas, etc.
- Take a medical first aid kit that contains the following:
 - Thermometer
 - Disposable, instant ice bags
 - Tweezers, to remove ticks and small splinters
 - Sterile cotton balls
 - Antiseptic solution (hydrogen peroxide)
 - Antibiotic ointment (bacitracin, polysporin, or mupirocin)
 - Calamine lotion for stings or poison ivy
 - Hydrocortisone cream, ointment, or lotion for itching



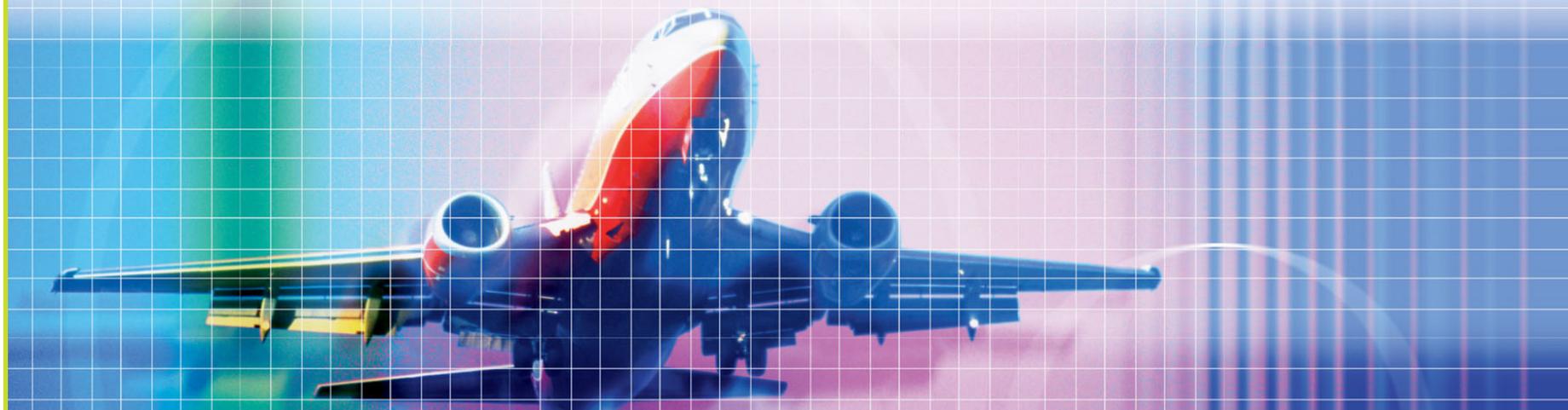
Preventing Cold Temperature Exposure

Many injuries can be prevented by protecting yourself when you are outdoors in cold weather. Here are some tips to help you prepare:

- Pack an emergency kit* and keep it in your car in case of a breakdown, or bring it along if you are planning to spend time outdoors, so you are prepared for cold, wet, or windy weather conditions that might arise.
- Head for shelter that will protect you from wind and rain if you get wet or cold.
- Avoid doing too much activity and sweating. Sweating increases heat loss through evaporation, so you will feel cold.
- Eat plenty of food to help maintain your body heat. Carry high-calorie foods, such as candy bars and trail mix, when going out in cold weather.
- Drink plenty of water. *Carry extra water with you and drink it hourly.*
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages. Alcohol interferes with the body's ability to regulate body temperature. It can cause blood vessels in the skin to dilate, which increases heat loss.
- Keep your hands and feet dry. Wear mittens instead of gloves. Wear socks that retain warmth and keep moisture away from your skin.
- Wear loose fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer clothing made of tightly woven, water-repellent material is best for wind protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold more body heat than cotton does.

*During cold-weather months, keep emergency supplies in your car in case you get stranded: several blankets, matches, flashlight, candles, water, and some foodstuffs, such as granola bars or crackers. A cell phone also can come in handy. If your car is stuck in a snow bank, be careful about leaving the engine running, because infiltration of carbon monoxide inside the car may pose a silent danger.

For more information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, go to mercyhealth.com/healthyliving_mercyhealth.



It's Spring!

Well... Spring Training, Anyway!

By Mike Mattson

Let it be known that I am no fan of Michigan winters.

My days of skiing, skating, ice fishing, and sledding are pretty much behind me. And while the snow shovel is appreciated, it's no friend of mine.

These days, winter driving conditions and cold temperatures create frowns.

I am at a stage in life where palm trees make me smile. So I look forward to spring and, specifically, Major League Baseball's Spring Training (practices and exhibition games).

To me, baseball always will be America's pastime.

There's nothing better to shake a Michigander's winter doldrums than a Spring Training getaway to Florida or Arizona. Or just following the start of another Detroit Tigers' season (or your favorite team) from the newspaper, television, radio, or computer.

All teams have hope in spring training. All teams can forget their shortcomings of last season. And fans can forgive the Tigers for occupying the cellar and being knocked off their four-year perch at the top of the Central Division.

Many offseason trades and transactions have been made and hopefully the team weaknesses have been shored up. For sure, optimism and new life come from Spring Training.

Of course, a new season means many questions abound:

- Will the Tigers move forward under new General Manager Al Avilia?
- Did they shore up the bullpen? It seems no lead was safe last season, so it will be refreshing to see how new setup



men Justin Wilson and Mark Lowe and new closer Frankie Rodriguez pan out.

- Did they work toward assembling a consistent starting rotation? They added Jordan Zimmermann and Mike Pelfrey, who both can blossom in new uniforms.
- Can Justin Verlander again be the dominant ace and 20-game winner? Hopefully, JV will be healthy and return to his dominant ways.
- And will there be enough consistent hitting throughout the lineup? We shall see.

If possible, Tiger fans should consider at least one trip to Lakeland, Florida for Spring Training. Joker Marchant Stadium is part of a nice, clean complex to watch the Tigers in the sun and warm breeze. Coaches and players also are accessible for photos, autographs and small talk.



Spring training isn't the only thing I like about saying goodbye to winter. I admit the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament also grabs my attention.

And much of the country joins in the mania of "bracketology" and office pools.

How can you not get caught up in March Madness? The road to the Final Four in Houston will include some upsets and Cinderella teams knocking off the favorites. Average guys will become heroes along the way.

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Mike Mattson is an award-winning sports journalist, with 23 years of experience at The Muskegon Chronicle. He enjoys sports, reading and leadership development. Mattson is a graduate of Central Michigan University.



MORE
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Treasure Hunting in West Michigan

By John Morgan

So if you've caught any of the earlier articles in this series, you know we've touched on a number of things which might commonly be thought of as treasure: pearls, opals, gold, etc., but always in the context of west Michigan and always, in the end, with nods to other things, not so material, that enrich our lives. Whatever our ultimate goal in these stories, whether it's appreciation of nature, learning from the past, or valuing our relationships, we've shamelessly baited the unwary reader with tales of loot, often spiced with more than a little Hollywood like mystery, in a crass, and commercial appeal to their baser senses in order to gently nudge them into a dawning appreciation of the real moral, aesthetic, and philosophic riches that surround us.

Well, no more Mr. Nice Guy.

According to the New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language Handy School and Office Edition, copyright 1975, treasure is listed as "treasure, trezh'er, n. Any form of accumulated wealth; something or someone much valued—v.t.,-ured, ur-ing. To hoard; to collect or store for future use; to cherish; to prize." Ha! Not one specific mention of pearls, opals, dubloons, or any other favored article of Mammon, and certainly nothing about titillating, low brow enticements should one wish to write about the noble subject of treasure. That's right, we're getting serious, so drop the People Magazine George Clooney Special Edition and grab your copy of the Collected Works of Aristotle. Webster's says any form of accumulated wealth and we're starting with your vegetables instead of dessert this time around.

So, got out that copy of Aristotle yet? No, well how about another book then? How much trouble would it be to find any book in your house that you read last year? That wasn't Romance or didn't involve vampires and alcoholic private detectives? Hey, any reading is better than nothing—someone once asked what difference there really was between somebody who couldn't read and somebody who didn't—and the fact you're reading this article means you're more likely to engage in a book than most. But really, when was the last time you read to learn and not just to entertain. I don't mean like going on-line to find the pizza carry-out phone number or home remedies for halitosis, since that's just kinda treading water and not really getting ahead (C'mon, you already know you eat too much onion fish dip!) So how about it? Aren't books one of the greatest treasures of all civilization? As store-keepers of knowledge and culture, is there really anything as enduring, useful, and satisfying as a good book? Sure the internet has lots to offer at the touch of a few keys, but so often it's short, shallow and formatted for cursory on-screen reading, with little accreditation. And even if it is something you can sink your teeth into, what happens when you're someplace you can't access the internet...or when the power goes down? In my opinion, books are just as likely to outlast the internet as to be replaced by it. There are just times and places where a book is more convenient and more immersive, and even more important, there are lots of books you won't find on-line. And they are full of treasure...

Let me give you a few examples right here in west Michigan:

There's a great little book you can buy at our local bookstore, the Bookman, called Grand Haven Area, Our People, Their Stories by Wallace K. Ewing and Marjorie Bethke Viveen. I had a hard time finding it by typing the title into my search engine, so it's a good thing I hang around in book stores because I otherwise would never know

it existed (there are local variants throughout the state), much less be able to read it. I did, however, find a nice advertisement for People of the Bank of Holland, who are excellent at SEO. Anyway, this book is full of fascinating stories like that concerning Thomas Ferry of Grand Haven who became a U.S. senator, then acting vice president of the United States when Vice President Henry Wilson died, and finally "President" for a day on Sunday March 4th, 1877, the day between the expiration of President Ulysses Grant's term and that of Rutherford Hayes! There's some mystery about how "official" it all was, but all the more intriguing. Local boy does good, huh? And you wouldn't have read it on the back of a box of Capt'n Crunch, would you?

The next book is one I bought from the bargain bin at Meijers. I took it with me to my son's house on Thanksgiving and, sitting on the couch with a little grandson on either side (and an even younger little granddaughter trotting by from some other important business to check in on our progress periodically), we read the clever story of The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins by Dr. Seuss. This delightful experience has much to recommend itself for in the investment value department—more so than any Bank of Such & Such—and it would not have occurred had it not been for our already knowing about the intrepid Bartholomew from another book, Bartholomew and the Obleck. I wonder how the four of us would have enjoyed the big picture pages together on the screen of my smart phone?

The final book I have for you is—yes, yes—the dessert I promised earlier. But it still comes with a goodly dose of implied morality and character building from your stern author. In a local estate sale, I picked up a copy of the Historical and Business Compendium of Ottawa County Michigan 1892-3. (Find that on any e-book lists?) On pages 69 and 70 of this volume is found the following:

"Shirley [man's name] Hammond was one of the early settlers of Spring lake and Ottawa county. He located a farm (now occupied by xxxxxxxxx) in 1840. He was struck and killed by a locomotive, near the depot, about 1874. It is supposed that he buried between three and four thousand dollars in a tin box upon his lot, now occupied by xxxxxxxxx, just a short time before he was killed. Although a thorough search was made, neither box or money was ever known to have been found."

Hmmn, now if the dollars were silver, then they were likely Seated Liberty or Trade dollars. If they were in gold, then they were probably the Coronet style eagles, double eagles, or their fractions. Either in silver or gold, in common condition and mintage, these coins would today trade at about 150 to 300 times face value. And if there were some rare dates in the group...now you're talking real treasure at possibly 1000s of times face value. So say somebody had a modern metal detector, but didn't have any use fer cypherin', as Jethro Clampett would say, why they'd probably just have to be satisfied digging up wheat back pennies, costume jewelry, and nails, wouldn't they? On the other hand, a little effort and a book long out of print, you might take another run over that property and...hey, don't ask to see my copy. I'm done with you. Now go treasure up for yourself.

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Sgt. Preston-Yukon King 5K/6-mile

Starting the New Year on the Run

By Dave LeMieux

Former Olympic miler Paul McMullen might have uncovered the secret to the paradoxical success of the Sgt. Preston-Yukon King 5K/6-mile run – the state's oldest New Year's race.

Run every New Year's Day since 1974, the Sgt. Preston Run endures despite a reasonable certainty runners will face freezing temperatures and treacherous footing. The Muskegon Winter Sports Complex has hosted the event for the past two decades.

McMullen, now 43, grew up in Cadillac and lived in Ypsilanti during his professional running career. He spent four years in Grand Haven with the Coast Guard after his career as a professional athlete ended in 2002 and has lived there ever since. "It's a beautiful place to live," he says. McMullen now works as a Life Safety Consultant for EPS Security. Once the top middle distance runner in the country, McMullen didn't come to the Sgt. Preston Run for the competition (although he found all that he could handle from Muskegon's Dr. Kristen Brown), but for the camaraderie.

"I was hoping to bump into Lindsay Neal," McMullen said. "I helped her get out for runs and keep focused in the off-season the year she won the state cross country championship. I haven't seen her in a while and was hoping she'd be here."

Neal had planned to run, but had to leave early to catch a flight back to Seattle.

The race gives runners from all around West Michigan a similar chance to reconnect and share their plans for the upcoming race season. Most haven't had a chance to catch up since the season ended in late summer and early fall.

In the crowded Muskegon Winter Sports Complex lodge before the race, North Muskegon's Clayton Lowe introduces his daughter Avery, the defending 5K women's champ, to an acquaintance.

As they stand shivering on the Scenic Drive start line, Robert Blower from Shelby tells Fruitland Township resident Laurie Walsworth about his recent trip back home to England and the perfect day he spent climbing the country's tallest mountain.

"I think it's great," McMullen said. "There are a remarkable number of people willing to get out in miserable weather – 27 degrees with a little



snow – and overcome the conditions. There's no better way to start the New Year."

There are very few, like McMullen, who have chosen to run in shorts. "I still try to get out and run once in a while, but I'm a cyclist now so I don't have all my running clothes anymore," he says. "I put a little toilet paper down my shorts for insulation and I'm wearing a down vest to keep my core warm." (McMullen, the 2015 Michigan Challenge Cup 35 and older cycling state points champion, is more than just a casual cyclist.)

Things heat up out on the course when former women's winner Brown, 44, takes the lead away from McMullen just past the 1-mile mark. "I thought, 'Oh geez, I don't know if I've got enough to go get her,'" McMullen said.

Brown, Vice President, Physician Network Organization, Mercy Health Muskegon, is training for the Paris Marathon in April and was eager to test her legs. "Given the training I've been doing, the weather and some slippery spots on the course, I couldn't be more pleased."

A collegiate All-American at Michigan Tech, Brown kept the pressure on and had built up about a 25-meter lead at the two-mile mark. "I was kind of hopeful there for a few minutes I might take the whole thing. I was suffering that last mile and he caught me."

"Towards the end I remembered how to breathe correctly," McMullen said with a laugh. "It's been awhile since I've pushed myself on a run. I put my head down and focused."

In the end, McMullen dug out the kind of finish that made him a world-class miler and crossed the line in 18:50. It was only just enough, though, as Brown finished second overall, just 6 seconds behind him.



"If her gap had been a little bigger I might not have been able to catch her," McMullen said.

Zac Wright-Fisher, of Twin Lake, won the grueling 6-mile run, that includes and trip up and over Blockhouse Hill, in 33:18. Courtney Hansen, of Muskegon, was the top woman in the 6-mile, finishing 12th overall in 41:29.



Dave LeMieux is west Michigan-based freelance writer,

sometime triathlete, world traveler and inveterate reader of books great and small.

New Year's Resolutions How Are We Doing?

By Laurie Semlow

Resolutions? Most of us made them, but did we keep them? We are already a month into the new year and it's time for an assessment. Think about your resolutions and ask yourself:

1. Is it realistic?
2. Is it measurable?
3. Is it stressing me out?

The start of the new year brings excitement, anticipation and hope that this year will be different. The number one resolution is "lose weight". But some of us have had a "get healthy" type of resolution on our list for so many years in a row that it's become a joke. What does that even mean? Get Healthy. The truth is, each year we analyze things about ourselves and our lives we want to change and we think, "What better time to begin than January 1?" So why do we keep falling short? Why are we even making resolutions?

It's time to redefine the word resolution. A resolution requires no preparation and there is no one holding you accountable. It's time to change our mindset and set goals. A goal requires specific action steps. It requires you to work backwards and set small, measurable steps to reach that big GOAL. As you reflect on your 2016 health goals, consider taking the following steps to attain success and cross that goal off your list.

Don't Subtract ... Add. Instead of telling yourself you cannot have a bag of chips or soda, start by adding a serving of fruits and vegetables each day and replacing one soda with water. Bring a few healthy snacks with you so you're not tempted by the drive-thru or vending machine. Keep track on your calendar when you have a great day and when you "fall off the wagon" make note of what was going

on that day and try again. Almonds, cheese sticks, or a piece of fruit are great mid-morning and afternoon snacks to get you through to the next meal.

Schedule Exercise. At the start of each month plan out where and when you will exercise. Put it on your calendar like any other appointment. Don't get stuck thinking exercise is only at a gym. Find a workout partner for accountability. Park in the farthest parking space so you get a few extra steps in. Return your shopping cart. Take the stairs. Walk the dog.

Cook at Home. By cooking your own meals you have control over what ingredients you use and the health benefits of each meal. Decide to add one or two more home cooked meals a week. Make enough so you have lunch another day during the week. Freeze extras for those busy nights you would've ordered takeout.

Stop Multitasking While Eating. It's tempting to check Facebook or Pinterest while eating, especially if eating alone. Instead stop and enjoy your food. Taste each bite. By slowing down you'll feel full faster.

Celebrate 2016 with a healthier you!

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Laurie Semlow is a Certified Creating Wellness Coach and Office Manager at Semlow Chiropractic, 5353 Grand Haven Road, Norton Shores. She can be reached at 231.798.9355.



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