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VOTE
November 8

INSIDE:

What's in a vote?
page 10

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OCT | NOV 2016

**3 ■ TIM'S
CARTOONIVERSE**

Tim Wheeler

**4 ■ MEDIA WATCH:
WHAT I SEE**

Jay A. Newmarch

4 ■ GOOD READS

Laura J. Kraly

**5 ■ YOUR MONEY
MATTERS**

Tom Kendra

**6 ■ THE VOICE FOR
REAL ESTATE IS ON A
ROLL...**

Dale P. Zahn

**6 ■ LEGALESE:
SO THAT'S WHAT
THOSE LEGAL TERMS
ACTUALLY MEAN**

Jonathan J. David

**7 ■ STRANGE GOINGS
ON AT BIG SABLE**

Peter Manting

**8 ■ AN EYE ON
EDUCATION: WHAT'S
IN A GRADE?**

Steve Edwards

**8 ■ PLUS MOVIE
MINUTES**

Jordan Peterson

**9 ■ GOOD FOOD:
CRAB CAKES WITH
ROASTED RED
PEPPER COULIS**

Chef Bruce Konowalow

**9 ■ SUGAR
ADDICTIONS**

Laurie Semlow

**10 ■ MAKING THE
PATRIOTIC CHOICE.
YOUR VOTE MAKES A
DIFFERENCE.**

Dave LeMieux

**13 ■ SURVIVING
THE ELECTIONS**

Michelle Martin, M.A.

14 ■ GOOD SPORTS

Tom Kendra

**15 ■ TAKE A
BEERCATION IN
THE MITTEN**

Laura Holmes

**16 ■ LET'S MAKE
THE IMPROBABLE,
PROBABLE**

Riley Williamson

**17 ■ FALL INTO THE
ARTS**

Marla R. Miller

16 ■ TECHNOLOGY

Brenda Durga

**18 ■ MERCY
HEALTH SERIES: PART
1, PATIENT PORTAL**

F. Remington Sprague,
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to the October – November issue of PLUS. In this edition you will find more interesting articles and stories from the trusted writers you been reading for nearly a year and a half.

It seems that every 4 years we are all challenged with a topic that excites, puzzles, infuriates, frustrates, and brings hope of a positive future...who will be our next President? Who will lead the country to a successful future is what is on the minds of most of us. Which

Democrat, Republican, or third party candidate should we put our faith and futures in?



In most Presidential election years the questions don't change much, just the candidates. There is always an equal amount pros and cons for each candidate and we as United States citizens are asked to choose. Maybe I should say we are given the right as a free people in one of the greatest countries in the world to have a hand in our own futures, we get to Vote!

The comment I hear most often is "Why vote, it really doesn't count". YES, every vote counts! Let's bring

this a little closer to home and look at it from a different perspective. Instead of thinking of ourselves as Voters let's think of ourselves as Employers. Every 4 years we get to hire the individuals that we entrust our quality of life to. We hire the people that make the decisions in our own communities. Every 4 years we hire a Supervisor, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Board of Trustees, Educational Directors, and Commissioners to manage our Parks, Roads, and Drains. These people manage our communities, our neighborhoods, our tax dollars. These important votes really count. Many of these positions are decided by just a handful of votes.

I encourage you to gather information on your local candidates. Ask them some questions, talk to your neighbors, family, and friends. Help your community hire the best possible individual for the job. Please do this by casting your Vote!

Mark Williamson
Publisher

inside

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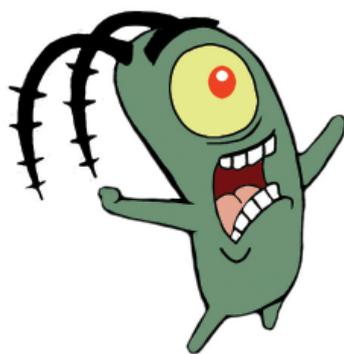
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Tim's CarfooniVerse

A Hard Day's Pokémon

By Tim Wheeler

I've never really seen a convincing contemporary update for the old cocktail party game: Name Your Favorite Beatle. Depending on your answer, you were creative, combative, or collaborative. If your answer was Pete Best, you were either confused or under the delusion that you were terribly clever. You weren't. Time to skulk back to the Brie wheel and wait for the topic to turn to Welcome Back Kotter.

At long last, our quest for the favorite Beatle has evolved for the 21st century: Who is your favorite Pokémon? Is Ringochu an answer? See what I did there? Combined a Beatle with a Pokémon? See that? I'll be over at the Brie wheel if you need me.

If you haven't been indoctrinated into the world of Pokémon Go, here is the elevator overview: Download the free app and wander around aimlessly with your head buried in your phone – completely oblivious to deadlines, responsibilities, and, in some cases, personal hygiene. How is that different from what you already do all day? That's a question I have been asking myself lately. Still looking for an answer that makes me feel good about who I am.

Pokémon cartoons, and anime in general, have never really been my cup of animation tea, but chasing these cartoon critters through city parks, college campuses and convenience stores turns out to be a wonderful way to avoid productivity. And Pokémon hunting at the convenience store affords the opportunity to amble about with a phone in one hand and a Little Debbie Zebra Cake in the other – multitasking and accomplishing nothing at the same time. So Zen.

Back to the Fab Four. If we spin the time machine into reverse, you can see the similarities. Unless you spin it too far and suddenly find yourself under attack from pterodactyls. Don't spin so hard. Nobody likes an overachiever.

A generation ago, our city parks, college campuses, and convenience stores were awash with people immersed in their transistor radios, stopping to capture Eleanor Rigby whenever and wherever she broke through the weather system in all her AM signal glory. They were also eating the same Zebra Cakes that are on the shelves right now, but let's try and stay on topic for a change, shall we?

Back then, siding with George Harrison made you spiritual and introspective – unless you were wearing koolats and yodeling show tunes. If you were in Camp



McCartney, you were optimistic and organized. You were also less likely to koolat yodel, if that can be called a thing.

So let's morph this superficial, unscientific, and possibly detrimental look at your personality by switching out our Beatle filter for a Venonat filter or a Pidgeotto filter. Or let's knock it off and get some actual work done for crying out loud. Nope.

I'm sticking with the Pokémon.

There are 151 Pokémon according to my Pokedex (always fun to pad my vocabulary with pretend words to continue the ruse of my pretend intelligence), so let's just select a few at random and draw unfounded conclusions about one another. That's always a healthy idea.



Poliwhirl – One foot in technology and one in the psychedelic, you are a water type with a love of laughter and a weakness for sweets. Your oversized mitts also suggest you may be channeling the Hamburger Helper guy.

JigglyPuff – You're pink! You're playful! You have no suggested spellings in spellcheck! Keep being you, baby!

Pete Best – Just checking to make sure you're paying attention.

Zubat – Yes, you are flighty, but is that really such a bad thing? And since you come with your own Zubat Candy, you are always good for a little mischief and a little tooth decay. Embrace your originality, and quit plinking off the porch light. Everyone will think you're a moth.

So there you Pokémon Go! All the info needed to add another distraction to your cluttered day. Feel free to check today's box DONE! While you're at it, go ahead and reward yourself with a Zebra Cake and a little Welcome Back Kotter. You're going to need to recharge those batteries after all this work.



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Tim Wheeler is the creator of Rocketoons (Rocketoons.com), an original animated series for teachers, counselors, parents, and anyone interested in helping kids by having a Cartoonversation. Tim's e-book (not a novel!) is available through Barnes & Noble and Amazon. He holds degrees from Western Michigan University, Villanova University and Northwestern University.



Note to our legislators: Let voters vote

By Jay A. Newmarch

Why do you think that some state legislators seem intent on building barriers to voting? Across the country we are witnessing court rulings on state laws meant to curtail voting or, at the very least, laws meant to make voting more cumbersome.

A federal appeals court ruled that Texas' strict ID law illegally discriminates against blacks and Hispanics. An ID law that would prevent more than 600,000 Texans from voting because they don't have the necessary ID required by the law. A law, by the way, that allowed concealed handgun licenses to count as ID, while student IDs did not.

Similarly, the Supreme Court, thanks to a 4-4 split decision, upheld a Circuit Court decision that blocked a North Carolina voter ID law. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that provisions of the ID law targeted, "African-Americans with almost surgical precision." The law contained a tightening of voter ID requirements and cutbacks on early voting.

A U.S. District federal judge left the Wisconsin voter ID law on the books while ruling multiple aspects of that law as unconstitutional. The judge ordered the state to quickly issue credentials valid for voting to anyone attempting to acquire a free voters photo ID while overturning restrictions on absentee voting, residency requirements and a prohibition on some voter IDs.

Additional voter registration requirements in Alabama, Georgia, and Kansas were blocked by a D.C. circuit court, while another court overruled voter restrictions in North Dakota.

An Iowa Supreme Court upheld a ban on felons voting, while Virginia's Governor, Terry McAuliffe is in a battle with Virginia's Supreme Court over whether Virginia felons will regain the right to vote.

September also brought a Supreme Court decision that allowed Ohio to cut one week of voting, called the "Golden Week," in Ohio. The week was one where voters could register and cast ballots at the same time. This concluded a see-saw of lower courts that had seen the law overturned by a federal judge, but then overruled by a three-judge appellate panel decision. Ohio pastors also claim that additional restrictions on early voting were an attempt to curtail their "souls to the polls" initiative. Majority African-American churches would head to the polls after Sunday services.

And, yes, we in Michigan are not immune. Our Michigan Attorney General, Bill Schuette, doggedly pursued to overturn a federal judge's hold decision on a straight-ticket voting ban that was passed by our Republican majority legislature and signed into law by our Republican Governor. No matter that state voters had twice voted down the straight ticket ban. Our "father knows best" legislature and Governor had once again decided that their views superseded the rights of the voter and tried to push through the ban. Thankfully, Schuette's attempt to drag this dead horse across the finish line was undone by a Supreme Court that refused to take up the case.

At least for the time being, voters in Michigan have won the right to vote straight ticket. Forcing voters to painstakingly vote for each candidate might seem, on the whole, to be nothing more than a minor inconvenience, a few minutes more per voter.

But, let me ask you to think about where the impact of a straight ticket ban would be most acutely felt. The answer is, of course, busy urban voting polling places. The longer the line, the bigger the burden on the voter. Slow down the line in urban areas and you most likely tamp down the vote. If you successfully tamp down the vote in urban areas, you most likely reduce the democratic vote in relation to the stronger republican vote in smaller, more rural voting precincts.

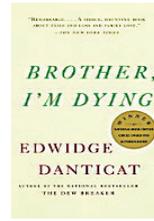
These court battles are all part of a broader movement of state legislatures toward restrictive voter requirements. And, I believe, a broader movement to increase the burdens on voting for certain constituencies. These majority Republican lead states have basically said that if we can't convince you, we'll try to keep you from voting. Or, even more heinous in Michigan's case, even if we vote something down, our legislature will overrule us by passing a law that the voters can't overturn. I find such repression of voter intent simply abhorrent.

If you can't convince the voters of your ideas, you shouldn't be elected. It's just as clear as that. That's democracy. This playing around the edges, subverting the voter, is nothing short of pathetic and far from what our forefathers envisioned. Come on legislators, instead working to protect your seat, let everyone vote and let the chips fall where they may.

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



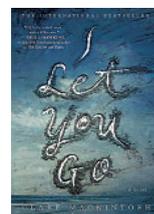
Brother I'm Dying

by Edwidge Danticat

Author Edwidge Danticat uses her powerful writing skills to relate a very personal narrative in *Brother I'm Dying*. She tells the story of her father and her uncle, two men who make opposite choices. Her father immigrates to the United States along with her mother, leaving Edwidge and her brother behind in Haiti, in order to seek a better life for his family. Her uncle, who cares for her and her brother, chooses to remain in their home country, even as violence, loss, and danger escalate and begin to press down upon the family.

Published in 2004, the power of this story is undiminished despite the twelve-year remove from the events it narrates. It touches on the most elemental feelings we experience as humans and as families while providing a first-hand account of the complex bureaucracy surrounding immigration to the United States. Joy, danger, love, and loss are beautifully presented as the complex story of her family, who are so relatable, unfolds.

I read this book as preparation for the Holland Area Big Read. This November, the Herrick District Library and Hope College will be hosting events centered on discussion of *Brother I'm Dying*. You can find out more about the Holland Area Big Read at <https://blogs.hope.edu/thebigread/>



I Let You Go

by Clare Mackintosh

The steady stream of thrillers with twisty plots and unreliable narrators continues unabated, but *I Let You Go* is a standout in a sea of *Gone Girl* read-alikes. The book centers on the death of a child in a hit-and-run accident, so sensitive readers might want to approach it with caution, but those who follow the narrator Jenna on her physical and emotional journey through the story will be rewarded with a shocking twist, a complex love story, multiple alarming reveals, and a resolution that satisfies.

Much of the book is set on the remote Welsh coastline, and the stark beauty and wild remoteness of the region reinforces the tone of isolation and abandonment. I found the sections told from the point of view of the investigators less compelling, but the expert construction and propulsive narrative of this book makes it easy to recommend. Be prepared to read it in one marathon session, because once you begin, you won't be able to let this story go.

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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YOUR MONEY MATTERS

How you can protect your retirement assets

By Tom Kendra

Saving for retirement cannot take place in a vacuum. Whether you are just starting out, nearing retirement, or already enjoying those golden years, it's important to be aware of the risks we all face.

That's where a retirement plan comes in. It helps you identify risks to your retirement assets and formulate strategies for addressing them.

Risk is usually defined as the potential for loss. When most people think of financial risk, they focus on investment risk and the potential for loss due to downturns in the economy, changing interest rates, inflation, or poor management of the companies in which they invest. These risks are typically addressed through diversification of one's assets—selecting different types of investments across several industry sectors. Please note that there is no guarantee that diversification will ensure a profit, or protect your investment against losses in declining markets.

But risk of loss also arises from life events such as illness, disability, or death.

Health Risks: While most people look to health insurance to pay for health care, finding adequate insurance is increasingly difficult.

Rising premiums have forced many employers to shift a greater share of the burden to employees and to discontinue health coverage for retirees. The answer is to be prepared for

the unexpected. Many experts recommend health insurance with high deductibles and co-payments as a way to keep premiums down, yet protect against catastrophic loss. This suggests keeping a portion of your retirement assets in cash to pay for doctor and emergency room visits, routine physicals, tests, and prescription drugs.

Long-term Care Risks: Another risk is chronic illness or a disability that requires not only medical treatment but also ongoing custodial care.

Whether the care is delivered in your home or at a nursing facility, it can be expensive. Keep in mind, that while Medicare covers most medical procedures and treatment for individuals, it is not intended to pay for extended or long-term custodial care. And although Medicaid, a program sponsored jointly by state and federal governments, covers long-term care services, eligibility depends on meeting strict guidelines and you may be forced to "spend down" to qualify.

A possible solution is long-term care insurance. As more and more people live longer lives, the risk of requiring long-term care increases.

Death and Disability Risks: The financial loss due to the death of a wage-earner can be devastating. Sometimes overlooked is the impact on a surviving spouse's retirement. Assets that had been earmarked for retirement including IRAs, mutual funds, and 401ks may need to be tapped for

immediate needs.

Life insurance can be an affordable way to provide generally income tax-free death benefits (See IRC Section 101) to survivors at the time they need it most. Death benefits can be used to settle outstanding doctor bills, funeral expenses, and other death-related costs. The balance can be used to help pay off mortgage and other debts, fund college education tuitions, and provide income for survivors, leaving retirement assets intact for the purpose for which they were intended.

Many individuals find that life insurance needs diminish during retirement as mortgages are paid off and children become financially independent. On the other hand, increasing estate values and the potential for increased death taxes can increase life insurance needs during retirement.

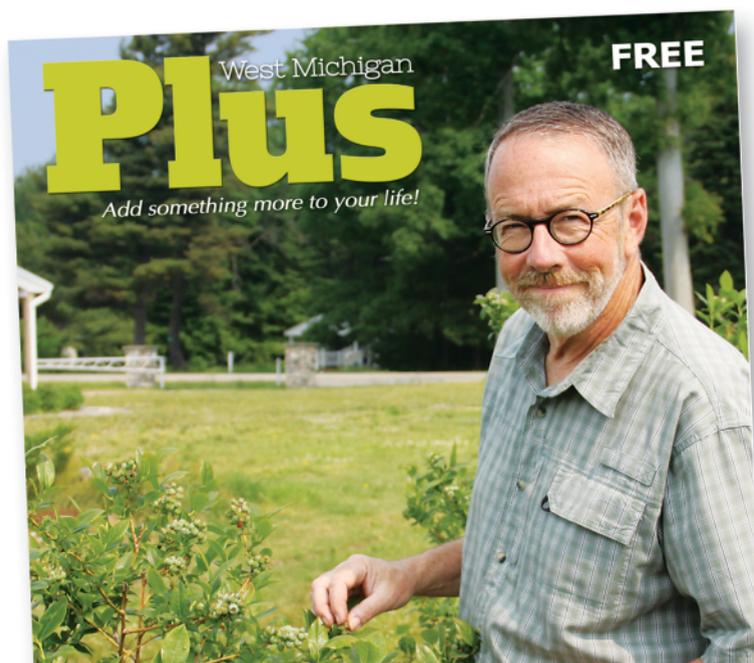
Life insurance can also be a good solution for retirees who wish to provide a bequest to a favorite charity or create a legacy for their heirs.

.....
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HOME SWEET HOME

The voice for real estate is on a roll...

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

To say it's been an active summer is a bit of an understatement. To echo a phrase being heard rather frequently among REALTOR members of the West Michigan Lakeshore Association, "WMLAR is Everywhere!" While a presence has been felt on no less than five radio stations, in print and on television too, the Association thru its staff and volunteers have been actively involved in the communities they serve and the political process as well.... the Official Vehicle of the Association carrying the message for all to see that "West Michigan Is A Great Place To Call Home" has been seen in numerous parades, most recently the Coast Guard Festival parade, North Muskegon Fun Fest and the Roosevelt Park parade on a rainy Saturday morning!

While all this was going on, the Association didn't lose sight of its focus on members helping the public list and sell homes. With the Internet being chock full of sites all offering a different spin on things, the Association of REALTOR recognized the need to simplify things and take on the daunting task of funneling attention to Open Houses in one direction. Referred to by some as "a sleeping giant" the Association already had in place the foundation for a well-designed, easy to navigate and map website where John Q Public could go to find all they information they required when seeking Open Houses. But, thought it was available, there wasn't much of a push to get people to know about it. So, in an effort to assist REALTORS and the Public alike, a full court press promoting www.wmlaropenhouses.com began in earnest. Within weeks, the site has consistently ranked among the top sites listed on search engines when people would look for Open Houses in West Michigan.....activity has been torrid and receptiveness has been great. Knowing that www.wmlaropenhouses.com may be a bit hard to remember, the Association has made access to the site easier by simply going to www.wmlar.com and clicking on the link on the Home Page.....but that's not all!

Knowing the power and the draw of Facebook, the Association of REALTORS created a Facebook page, titled West Michigan Lakeshore Open Houses and member REALTORS are adding additional information on their Open Houses along with photos and comments and of course a link to the actual Open House site itself appears towards the top of the page. Why do this when so many other sites are available? Simple - there are so many sites that it has gotten confusing and its a crap shoot that a viewer would find the right site with all they need. The WMLAR site is looking to be THE one-stop place to go to search all of the Open Houses in the area served which includes the Counties of Muskegon, Ottawa and Allegan. In addition to the 'thumbnails' with price and times to visit, one simple click will pull up all of the detailed information on a property so that the home seeker is In The Know Before They Go.....

Can the new and good looking site really take on the mega sites with Billions of Dollars to spend? Our response is, did David slay Goliath? The West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS believes its hit on something Big and that everyone gets served well and for those who may wonder, the service is offered free of charge to members, all they do is enter their Open Houses into the MLS and it automatically feeds the Open House site. For the public it's a textbook example of 'one-stop' shopping for all they need. Win-Win for all. Summertime was a busy time for REALTOR members of the Association. Now that Labor Day has passed and the kids are back in school, activity seems to be on the upswing again with folks either having to move or simply wanting to make a move.

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



LEGALEASE

So That's What Those Legal Terms Actually Mean

By Jonathan J. David

A living will, also known as an advance directive, is not a will at all but a statement or declaration of what type of medical treatment a person wants to receive in the event he or she has a terminal illness or is in an irreversible coma.

Dear Jonathan: What is the difference between an executor and a personal representative?

Jonathan Says: There is no difference, they mean the same thing. Some states use the term executor and other states use the term personal representative. An executor or personal representative is the person who is in charge of administering a deceased individual's estate if a probate administration is required.

Dear Jonathan: What does it mean when someone dies intestate?

Jonathan Says: If a person has died intestate that means he or she died without making a last will and testament. If a person has made a last will and testament, he or she will be deemed to have died testate.

Dear Jonathan: What is the difference between a living trust and a living will?

Jonathan Says: A living trust is a revocable trust created by a person (known as the "grantor" or "settlor") during his or her lifetime, which holds and manages assets on behalf of, and distributes assets to, the beneficiaries named in the trust. If the grantor/settlor transfers assets to the trust during his or her lifetime, those assets will avoid probate upon the grantor's/settlor's death. A living will, also known as an advance directive, is not a will at all but a statement or declaration of what type of medical treatment a person wants to receive in the event he or she has a terminal illness or is in an irreversible coma.

Dear Jonathan: What is the difference between a power of attorney and a durable power of attorney?

Jonathan Says: A power of attorney is a written document created by an individual (the "principal") designating another person (the "agent") to act on behalf of the principal. It terminates automatically upon the principal's disability. A durable power of attorney is a written power of attorney which does not automatically terminate upon the principal's disability. Instead, it is designed to be used during the principal's disability and will not automatically terminate until the principal's death.

In order to make a power of attorney a durable power of attorney, special language needs to be inserted in the power of attorney which in essence states that the durable power of attorney shall not be affected by the principal's disability. A durable power of attorney can be written so that it is effective immediately upon being signed, or it could be written as a springing durable power of attorney which means that it becomes effective only upon the principal becoming disabled.

Dear Jonathan: What is the difference between a revocable living trust and an irrevocable trust?

Jonathan Says: A revocable living trust is created by a person (known as the "grantor" or "settlor") during his or her lifetime, which can be amended or revoked at any time while the grantor/settlor is alive and has legal capacity to do so. An irrevocable trust is a trust (i) that a person creates during lifetime which becomes irrevocable at its inception, or (ii) becomes irrevocable upon the individual's death or legal incapacity. For instance, a revocable living trust becomes irrevocable upon the grantor's/settlor's death or legal incapacity.

Jonathan J. David is a shareholder in the law firm of Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, PC, 1700 East Beltline, N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525. He is a runner, sports enthusiast, and University of Michigan alum, with a passion for reading and writing. He has been practicing estate planning, business, and real estate law for over 30 years and has been writing his column "Legal Ease," for over 20 years. His favorite quote is his own: "It doesn't take a village to write — just a reliable dictaphone and transcriber."



Strange goings on at Big Sable

By Peter Manting

Lighthouses decorate our seashores and quietly have existed for centuries. Many haunted lighthouses have seen multiple lifetimes of seafaring history. Much of that history is good, such as saving the lives of sailor's through aid of the lighthouses' beacons. Other lighthouse history is tragic, such as when ships were not able to find the life-saving lamps only to be found broken up on the rocks, unaware of their impending doom.

Some lighthouses are haunted due to the tragedies of ships, horrible pirate attacks from both land and sea, and other hardships keepers and families endured. Many people believe that lighthouses are haunted by former a keeper which is the case at the Big Sable light. I thought in this article I will share a few tales from the keepers.

Henry Vavrina was one of the last head keepers at Big Sable. His tour was from 1955 to 1965 at the Big Sable light. We display Henry's uniform, which is on a mannequin, in the display case located in the gift shop at Big Sable. The keepers claim Henry is still around. He likes to play tricks on the resident keepers so they know he is there. At times in the night he will turn his showcase light on after everyone has turned in. A keeper reported to waking up in the night with all the lights in her room on. She then saw a man in a red and white striped shirt walk across her room. Others have reported hearing footsteps or other sounds coming from upstairs when staying in the downstairs apartment.

Going upstairs to investigate they found all the doors unlocked so they locked all the doors only to go back downstairs and hearing the noises again. Upon going back upstairs they found all the doors unlocked and doors to rooms they had closed opened. Keepers have reported smelling cigar smoke during the evening several times. Smoking is not allowed in the lighthouse any more, but Henry always liked a good cigar.

It was getting close to football season, during the day the keeper's conversation had turned towards college football. A new couple from Ohio and

naturally big Ohio State fans began bragging their team up to the veteran keepers with whom they were serving. In the middle the night the rookie women keeper awoke to find the downstairs lights on. She went down, turned them off and went back to join her husband in bed. Shortly after getting in bed they both were startled as the downstairs smoke alarm went off.

As soon as they went downstairs they smelled lingering cigar smoke and as suddenly as the alarm went on, it went off. In the morning as they were recalling these events to the other keepers, who had not heard the smoke detector, the veteran keepers laughed and said that Henry was just checking out these new keepers from Ohio. They believed Henry was a Michigan man and had probably set the alarm off with his cigar. Occasionally, the smell of bread baking in the oven, or coffee brewing when nothing is being prepared in the kitchen are other signs that Henry is around.

In the south bedroom a keeper claimed to be awakened by a small young boy who was upset and crying because his father had just spanked him. Other unusual sightings have occurred in that bedroom as well. On a stormy November evening with the thunder was crashing and the lightning flashing a frightened young teenage girl appeared and asked to climb in bed with the resident keeper couple because she was scared of the storm.

Other strange happenings reported at Big Sable have been a book levitating in the gift shop in front of two keepers and a customer, attic covers in the East bedroom and in the small living room pulsating, moving and spinning, scratching noises coming from the closet in the East living room, lights in the basement being turned on after hours, keys to the Coast Guard door appearing in the morning and the door being locked after the keeper had misplaced the keys and were unable to lock the

door at closing.

A Keeper insisted that she felt pressure on her feet and legs several times during her two week stay. It felt like someone was sitting at the foot of the bed during the night. She also claimed to see "spirits" of a man and a woman walking around upstairs during the night. She said this type of thing happened to her all her life and she was sensitive to the spirit world! She said our spirits are not upset or angry...just making sure the lighthouse is being taken care of. They were pleased with how things were.

As our season comes to a close this year I want to remind you that we have two week volunteer keeper opportunities available at the Big Sable lighthouse. The volunteers live and work in the old keeper's quarters at the light. Are you brave enough to volunteer?

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



managers 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.



AN EYE ON EDUCATION

What's in a grade?

By Steve Edwards

As we round out the first marking period of school, a question likely asked in every classroom, hallway, and at every dinner table is, "What grade did you get?"

When I think about the traditional practice of grading students, I'm drawn to a statement educational researcher Roger Taylor made about grades. Roger said that a traditional grade is "an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material."

That is a very fancy way of saying it's almost impossible to define what a single grade really means.

When is a single grade ever used in real life? What if I asked my wife to give me some feedback to help me be a better husband? Would I know what I could do better if she gave me a letter grade like a B? What makes me a B? Is it my personality? My work ethic? My parenting? My manner of dress? If I truly wanted to be the best husband I could be, wouldn't I ask for feedback in all the areas that we, as a couple, deemed important? It's really no different in math, reading, writing, etc. How can we improve when everything is thrown into a stew and boiled down to one grade?

Perhaps better questions in schools should be, "What did you learn?" or "What were you expected to learn?"

Through formative (ongoing), benchmark (periodic) and summative (final) assessments, we know more about what kids know and are able to do in specific content areas and standards within content areas than ever before. What we know is almost impossible to boil down to a single grade. If a grade is necessary (HS transcripts for college admittance, as an example), grades given should reflect what a student actually knows and can do in that content area. When things like participation, tardiness, respect, and other factors like extra credit for bringing in school supplies are added to the mix, we begin to get a watered down understanding of what a student actually knows and can do.

In many schools along the lakeshore, districts have been working very hard to report student progress in a way that is meaningful, objective, accurate, and specific. We call this approach standards based reporting. If your district has worked through this process, students are likely given a number (1-4) in addition to a letter grade. These numbers are based on standards and groups of standards in the various content areas. It is basically breaking the content down into parts. It might not be familiar, but when one takes the time to look at and analyze the assessment of each of the standards, we have a much clearer picture of where our focus should be for each student.

When report cards are delivered, think of this question instead: Do you want a grade, or do you want to be better?

Yours in education,
Steve Edwards

Steve is the Superintendent of Reeths Puffer Schools, located in Rocket City, Michigan. He graduated from both Eastern Michigan University and Grand Valley State University and holds his Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. He has two school-aged children, Sydney and Kaden and is the lucky husband of Karyn. Steve enjoys teaching, coaching, leading, and reading.



PLUS MOVIE MINUTES



Kubo and the Two Strings

(Rated PG, 2016)

Legend speaks of a brave warrior who sought to free animation from the popular realm of CGI. His name is Travis Knight (son of Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike). In addition to his presidential duties at Laika Entertainment (the studio behind the stop-motion hits *Coraline*, *Paranorman*, and *The Boxtrolls*), Travis also directs the studio's latest effort *Kubo and the Two Strings*. Fresh-faced Kubo (Art Parkinson) leads a peaceful life in forgone Japan as a storyteller who conjures magic origami to recall tales of mysticism and bravery to nearby villagers. After accidentally summoning an ancient evil, Kubo embarks on his own journey to collect three mythic artifacts supposedly capable of combating these sinister forces. Along the way Kubo befriends a strict talking monkey (Charlize Theron) and a forgetful Samurai bug (Matthew McConaughey). These three bring out the best and worst in each other which, in addition to the terrific performances, makes for some compelling melodrama and great comedic moments. They truly begin to mesh as the story hits on familiar story beats and common themes of family, faith, and legacy. 'Kubo' is also Laika's most visually dazzling film to date. Each frame is rich with detailed costumes, set pieces, and eye-popping colors. With a distinctive visual flare and fleshed out characters, Laika is a delightful alternative to the popular computer

generated animation from the likes of Pixar or Dreamworks.



Blood Father

(Rated R, 2016)

With *Blood Father*, Mel Gibson seems to be buying into the role that he's been dealt in recent years as the bad guy trying to do some good. He plays John Link, a grizzled ex-con who's trying to lead a clean life inking tattoos out of a dusty trailer park. Of course, just when John thought he was out, he gets pulled back in. Almost as if on cue, John's estranged daughter, Lydia (Erin Moriarty), finds herself back in his life but something's different about her. Is it her hair? No. Nose job? Not likely. This time she's got a price on her head (figuratively speaking) put on her by the Mexican cartel. John, being the loving father he is, hits the road with his daughter for one last highly illegal hurrah. What results is a gritty, throwback revenge flick with a script as bumpy and empty as the dirt roads John and Lydia are repeatedly chased down. Despite the many sets of wheels throughout the film, *Blood Father* truly cruises on Mel Gibson's charisma. Even while mumbling tragically obvious one-liners through his thick, gray chin bush, Gibson seems to be having enough fun for it to be mildly contagious and at 88 minutes, there isn't a lot of time to dwell on any regrets you may find yourself having about not watching *Taken* again instead.

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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Crab cakes with roasted red pepper coulis

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

This week I had to opportunity to eat at the Courses Restaurant which is in the Culinary Institute of Michigan building in downtown Muskegon. Our special that day was a New England boiled dinner with a traditional Maryland style crab cake serve as an appetizer. It was wonderfully prepared and so it reminded me about a trip to Baltimore and the best fresh crab and crab cakes that I had experienced. It is the simplicity of good quality fresh ingredients that make this dish a national favorite.

The Atlantic blue crab that is often called the Maryland blue crab can be found all along the east coast of the United States. Their Latin name of "callinectes sapidus" which roughly translates into beautiful savory swimmer suggests their ultimate destination will be on a plate served to piscatorial devotees. Fresh blue crabs are in season from May through September. Molting blue crabs or "soft shell" can be found fresh or frozen but taste better when fresh and alive just prior to cooking. Crabs are priced by size with the larger crabs



demanding a higher price. A Maryland crab boil consists of fresh blue crabs cooked in water with the famous "Old Bay Seasoning" or crab boil spices and served with corn, potatoes and other fresh vegetables. Eating crab this way requires hard work, manual dexterity, and wooden hammers and metal pickers to obtain the precious knobs of crab meat.

If you are not near a source of fresh crab the next best thing is to purchase fresh or frozen jumbo lump blue crab and make some delicious crab cakes without the arduous labor of shelling crabs. Here is my recipe for crab cakes served with a red pepper coulis. They are also great with tartar sauce or just a squeeze of fresh lemon. You can pretend it is summer all year long when you purchase the pre-cooked fresh lump crab. Beware this is not a budget dish. The cooked high quality crab meat could cost up to thirty dollars a pound. Enjoy!

Crab Cakes

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.5 lbs. jumbo lump or other real crab meat (Jumbo Lump from Atlantic Blue crabs is the best) | 1 tbsp. finely chopped onion |
| 1 cup fresh white bread crumbs | 1 tbsp. mayonnaise |
| 1 tsp. dry mustard | 2 whole eggs beaten |
| 1 tsp fresh lemon juice | 2 cup of Panko bread crumbs for dredging. |
| 1/2 tsp Worchester sauce | 2/3 cup grapeseed oil or a neutral flavored vegetable oil. (grapeseed oil has a high smoking point and great flavor) |
| 1 tsp old bay seasoning | |
| 1 tbsp. finely chopped green pepper | |
| 1 tbsp. finely chopped celery | |

Place all ingredients(except oil and panko crumbs) in a stainless steel bowl and gently mix together, trying not to break up the crab too much. Roll crab mixture into 24(2oz.) balls and gently flatten them down to about a half inch thick. Dredge each crab cake on both sides with the panko crumbs. Place on a tray and refrigerate for 10 minutes. Place half the oil in a 12 inch saute pan and heat to a medium high temperature. You will see ripples form in the

oil when it is high enough. Place 12 crab cakes in oil and cook for 3-4 minutes on each side. Reserve first batch in a warm oven. They should be golden brown. Discard the oil. Clean out the pan and repeat with the other half of the oil. Serve on top of a pool of red pepper coulis.

Roasted red pepper coulis

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 large red bell peppers | 6 oz. dry white wine |
| 1 oz. minced shallots | 6 oz. vegetable stock |
| 1 oz. olive oil | 1 tsp. kosher salt |

Roast the red peppers over an open flame until charred on all sides. Place the peppers in a paper bag and seal for 10 minutes. Remove peppers from the bag and scrape off the skin and discard the seeds. Place the balance of the ingredients with the peppers in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Place mixture in a sauce pot and simmer for 10 minutes. If you are lucky enough to have a vita mixer, you can heat the sauce by blending it for about 5 minutes at high speed. You can adjust the sauce consistency with more or less stock

Sugar Addictions

By Laurie Semlow

Do you grab a candy bar to cope with your afternoon slump then later reach for a soda to get out of your post-slump slump?

If you've found sugary snacks make you crave more sugar you're not alone. Eating lots of simple carbohydrates without protein and fats can quickly satisfy hunger and give your body a short term energy boost, but they quickly leave you famished and craving more.

According to Christine Gerbstadt, MD, RD, a dietitian and American Dietetic Association Spokesperson, carbohydrates stimulate the release of the feel-good brain chemical serotonin. Sugar is a carbohydrate, but carbohydrates come in other forms, too, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The taste of sugar also releases endorphins that calm and relax us, and offer a natural "high". The problem comes not when we indulge, but when we over-indulge, something that's far too easy to do when sugar is added to many processed foods. According to the American Heart Association, American's consume an average of 22 teaspoons of added sugars per day. The AHA recommends about 6 teaspoons per day for women and 9 for men.

How do we stop sugar cravings? Following are several suggestions:

Eat regularly. Wait too long between meals may set you up to choose sugary, fatty

foods. Eating every 3-4 hours can help keep your blood sugar levels stable and help you avoid irrational eating behavior. Choose protein, fiber rich foods and produce.

Combine foods. If the idea of stopping at one little treat is too much, combine your sweet with a healthy food. For example, have a banana with chocolate or almonds with chocolate chips.

Go cold turkey. Cutting out all simple sugars for 48-72 hours can help to eliminate or greatly diminish cravings. This will give your body a chance to "reset" itself. It's healthier to allow yourself one "cheat" treat per week than every day or several a day.

Good for you sweets. You don't have to give up sweetness, just get it from other sources. Keep fruit handy for when sugar cravings hit. You'll get fiber and nutrients along with some sweetness. A great combination is fresh berries on oatmeal instead of sugar.

Exercise. Exercise can help change the way you eat. When you start feeling better you want healthier foods. Start out slow and work towards 30 minutes 5 times a week.

Accept no substitutes. There are many sugar substitutes available now but just switching out sugar for sugar-substitute won't address the problem and may lead to more serious problems.

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.





Making the patriotic choice.

By Dave La Mieux

Mary Anne Noland gave eloquent voice to a sizeable portion of the American electorate back in May when her trenchant commentary on the upcoming Presidential election was published in the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch:

“Faced with the prospect of voting for either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, Mary Anne Noland of Richmond chose, instead, to pass into the eternal love of God on Sunday, May 15, 2016.”

For many this election season, Noland’s pithy obituary published on May 16 is the last word on the 2016 election.

However, while the grumbling masses may appreciate Nolan’s sentiment, most are looking for other ways to express their discontent than going to meet their Maker.

The bluster in local coffee shops and craft breweries is all about third-party candidates, write-in ballots or, given the choices, not voting at all on Nov. 8.

The first two are certainly options, says Muskegon Community College Political Science instructor Kurt Troutman. “The only wasted vote is not to vote at all,” he said.

That said, there are a few things to consider before voting for one of the four third-party presidential tickets on the Michigan ballot or writing in your Aunt Millie for president, Troutman cautions.

First, no matter which option you choose, Clinton or Trump will be the next president. “That’s the thing,” Troutman said. “You’re not going to have a president from other than the two major parties.”

Next, a write-in vote for president doesn’t count unless

the candidate has filed all the proper paperwork with the state by Oct. 28. “I can’t tell you the number of votes for Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck we had to throw out when I was on the Muskegon County election board,” Troutman said.

So, writing in your dog’s (or cat’s) name (depending on your party affiliation) isn’t even recorded as a protest vote and is, in fact, the same as not voting at all.

On the state and national level, a write-in candidate is the very longest of long shots (even less likely than the Lions winning a Super Bowl in your lifetime). It’s a different story in local elections, Troutman said. “Remember, in 2005 a high school student was elected mayor in Hillsdale.” That would be Michael Sessions who ran a successful write-in campaign and beat the incumbent by two votes. “On a local level, say the city commission, a write-in campaign is viable because there is likely to be a large number of constituents who know you,” Troutman says.

A successful write-in candidate for president would need an enormous political apparatus sophisticated enough to file the appropriate paperwork in all 50 states and generate the massive media attention required to become a household name.

“It can’t be done,” says Troutman.

So it seems voting for a third-party candidate is the surest way to show The Donald and Lying Hillary you don’t like either of them.

Or maybe not.

“It really depends on how rational you want to be,” said Don Zinman, associate professor of political science at Grand Valley State University. “If you’re looking to make a statement and feel good about yourself, you’re not throwing your vote away. If you’re looking to have a

material effect on the election, you’ll try to get as much information as you can.”

Voting for a third-party candidate can sometimes have the unintended consequence of getting your least-liked candidate elected, Zinman cautions. “It depends on the circumstances of the election and the state you’re living in. If it’s a close race, you might have to suck it up and vote for the better of the two choices.”

Third-party candidates are a real concern for those supporting the major parties in this election, said John Clark, chair of political science at Western Michigan University. “It could potentially take a really small number of people voting Green or Libertarian to tip the scales. You could end up with the candidate you least prefer rather than the one you most prefer. Sometimes you vote to keep a candidate from getting elected and a minor party is not the best way to go.”

The odds of a third-party president, no matter how many votes he or she gets, are vanishingly small. Remember Ross Perot in 1992? Perot got nearly 20 percent of the vote, but didn’t get any closer to winning than those other notable third party wunderkinds Teddy Roosevelt (27 percent) and George Wallace (13.5 percent).

The reason? The Electoral College. “The electoral system is winner take all, which favors a two-party system,” Troutman says. Whichever candidate gets the most votes in a state gets all that state’s electoral votes – in essence all the votes cast in that state. So while ol’ Ross got nearly 20 percent of the votes cast in 1992, he really got none. And while Wallace only got 10 percent of the vote in 1968 he won five states and really got 46 of the 538 electoral votes (8.5 percent).

If the system sounds rigged, well, it kinda of is.

“The only thing two major parties agree on is that there shouldn’t be a third party,” Troutman says.

But...

While a third party candidate can’t win, they can have a profound effect on an election. Troutman’s pretty sure that Perot got Bill Clinton elected president. “Clearly,





Your vote makes a difference.

10-, 11-, 12-million of the votes for Perot were cast by Republicans," Troutman said. "And, ultimately, Clinton was a minority President with 43 percent of the vote." Had even 10 million of those Perot voters stayed in the Republican fold, George H.W. Bush could have been re-elected.

Or maybe not.

Clark and Zinman say Clinton would likely have been elected regardless, but offer other examples of the

effects third-party candidates can have on elections.

"Ross Perot's success in 1992 led, in part, to Congressional Republicans adopting the issues he raised in the 1994 election and winning a majority in the House and Senate for the first time 40 years," Clark says.

And while votes cast for Ralph Nader had a negligible effect in Texas in 2000, those cast in Florida may have taken the presidency from Al Gore and given it to George W. Bush.

Despite the long-ranging effect a good showing by a third party can have, in the end it's human nature that leads most people to vote for the major party candidate they dislike the least.

"Support for third parties tends to peak in the summer and early fall and then fade," says Zinman. "The summer dream of a third party fades when faced with the hard facts of fall."

"Folks living in states where the outcome is pretty much a forgone conclusion are more likely to cast their vote for a minor party than folks in states where the election is close," Clark says. "If it's close, people may not like Trump and they may not like Clinton, but they'll hold their nose and vote for the one they dislike less than the other to avoid a worst case result."

"At the end of the day, we like to value our vote," Troutman says. "So many people say they're going to vote third party, but on Election Day they don't do it. We like to vote for winners."

GET READY, GET SET... VOTE!

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For information on voting in Muskegon County, visit:

<http://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/clerk/elections/index.html>

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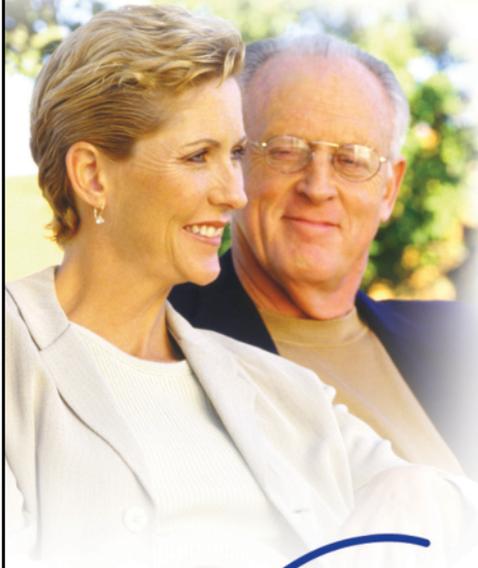
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Dave LeMieux is west Michigan-based freelance writer, sometime triathlete, world traveler and inveterate reader of books great and small.



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The season of our discontent: Surviving the elections

By Michelle Martin, M.A.

It seems as if the presidential election campaigns have been ongoing for years now. While the election is important, the advertisements and comments on social media are tiring and in some cases distressing. More than one friendship has suffered over disagreements regarding politics. How does one stay informed and not lose their sense of humor, friends and perspective during this election season?

The first piece of advice I have is to limit exposure. I would never suggest someone make uninformed decisions, but getting lost in the mire of constant information is rarely helpful. Decide which news sources are of the most value and check them on a regular basis. For those of us who grew up before the internet, we can remember what it was like to miss a news story. Now, newsfeeds are constant and mostly repetitious. It is no longer necessary to constantly check them in order to stay informed. A person can take a day away from their computer, smart phone or television occasionally and still have a good idea of what is happening. There are a number of my clients I suggest decrease their exposure to broadcast media due to their high level of reactivity. Breaks from screen time of all kinds have been shown to be beneficial to mental health and relationships.

Consult a variety of news sources. Television, radio and print are no longer the arbiters of news. Social media and internet reports are often more up to date. Be cautious

though. While many internet sources are excellent, some of them are Super PACS in objective guise. There are also internet pages, where virtually anyone can post an article, fact or fiction. It is often impossible to trace the sources of these as well as their references. If an article makes outrageous claims and has no footnotes or sources credited, it is likely to be less than factual.

Think critically. Try to look past the emotional verbiage and sensational exaggerations to discern what is actually being said. Be on the lookout for words like, "may, reportedly, and possibly". What those stories are telling the reader is that they have no real facts, only suppositions, opinions and inferences. News is a business and sources compete for our attention in order to sell advertising. Unfortunately, in my opinion, politics has also become big business. When the two are combined, the consumer often gets a less than factual accounting. Dramatic music and creative film techniques juxtaposing candidates with events are other spurious techniques creating an illusion of fact, when they are often creative fiction.

Remember the old adage that it is never wise to discuss religion and politics in polite society. While many relationships can withstand these conversations, many cannot. These are topics about which people feel passionately. When someone offers to enlighten their friend, colleague or loved one, it can sound like a lecture

presupposing the other person is ignorant. Media of all kinds has done a great job of polarizing our population.

If someone chooses a different candidate than you have chosen, it does not make the person stupid or an enemy. I know a lot of wonderful people with whom I disagree politically. When I am distressed by postings in social media, I remind myself there are things about that person I value, even if I do not agree with them on a particular issue or issues. Certainty is usually a symptom of limited wisdom. One of the central tenets of our democracy is that each voter gets to decide how to cast their ballot. Disagreement is a privilege of democracy, not lack of patriotism. Let us keep that in mind as we converse with the important people 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. She can be reached at michelle@harborpsychological.com.



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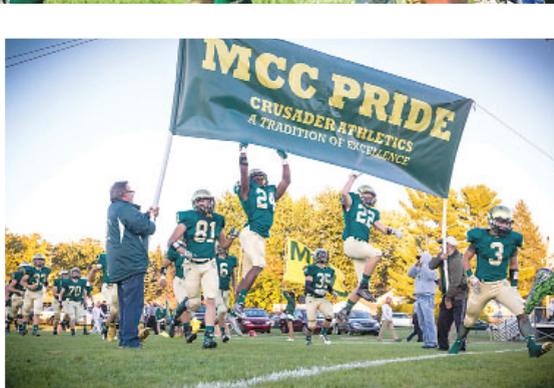
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Tradition never graduates at Muskegon High, MCC

By Tom Kendra



To paraphrase the great Neil Armstrong, the distance between Muskegon High School and Muskegon Catholic Central is one short drive for a fan, but one giant leap into high school football tradition.

I was missing football something fierce this summer, so I decided to visit my old friend Hackley Stadium on a calm, peaceful Saturday morning, on the way home from the downtown Farmer's Market.

The old lady backs herself right up and practically hangs over Sanford Street, in order to maximize the amount of seating (estimated at 7,000 seats) on the home side. Luckily, the gate on the south end of the stadium was open that morning, so I was able to walk in and onto the hallowed field – and suddenly the memories came rushing back.

I swear I could hear Leo Redmond and Harry Potter hollering at Big Reds from generations ago as I walked along the home sideline. Turning onto the field proper, it's easy to visualize the likes of Bennie Oosterbaan, Earl Morrall and Ronald Johnson taking their turns as the stars.

A quick glance up at the press box, perched precariously atop the giant concrete structure, proves that Big Red football is more than just anecdotal memories over the past 121 years, but tangible state championships – 17, to be exact, with the first in 1920 and the most recent in 2008.

It occurred to me, as I walked through the tunnel under the bleachers where the Muskegon band has marched for years after games (win or lose), that one of the only football

programs in the state which can hold a candle to Muskegon High is located just 1.5 miles away. After a quick trip down Sanford and a right turn onto Laketon, I found myself at another "bucket list" site for a Michigan high school

football junkie – Kehren Stadium, on the campus of Muskegon Catholic Central.

Kehren Stadium is a more conventional set-up, with bleachers on both sides of the field and room to roam behind, but the play on that field over the past 63 years has been anything but common.

My memories at MCC are more personal, starting with my dad and his good buddy, Bill Duplissis, working the chains at each home game while I played rough-and-tumble with my friends behind the bleachers, occasionally sitting down to watch boyhood heroes such as Marcus Toney and Tim Susterich lead the "Crusaders onto victory."

This turf has also hosted its share of football legends, from coaches like Roger Chiaverini and Mike Holmes and star players from Bill Wolski, to Bobby Morse and Ruvell Martin.

My conclusion after that whimsical Saturday is most of us in Muskegon have become so used to the Big Reds and Crusaders always being so good that we take it for granted and don't truly appreciate these two community treasures.

Think about it.

Muskegon has won 807 football games, by far the most of any high school in Michigan and the ninth most in the nation.

Muskegon Catholic, like a 400-meter runner starting back in the first lane, started later but is starting to make up the stagger with 13 state championships, including the past three years in a row.

Each of these programs has spawned 1,000 memories of band performances, halftime shows, cheerleaders, battles played in blistering sun or pouring rain and snow, games attended with parents and grandparents, and various pre-game and post-game festivities.

Do yourself a favor and go check out some of the outstanding football, and the surrounding pageantry, at these schools. Muskegon has remaining regular-season games against Mona Shores (Oct. 14) and Jenison (Oct. 21), followed by the playoffs. MCC hosts Muskegon Heights (Sept. 30) and Hesperia (Oct. 14) before postseason play begins on Oct. 28.

Muskegon County football fans are lucky that they don't have to empty their wallets and their gas tanks in cities across the state like Ann Arbor, East Lansing or Detroit.

Why bother? The two best high school football traditions in the entire state of Michigan are located in the City of Muskegon, 1.5 miles apart.

Tom Kendra is a high school sports radio broadcaster who does the area "Game of the Week" on WMUS-FM 107.9. He also writes articles for the MHSAA Second Half program and is a longtime board member of the Muskegon Area Sports Hall of Fame. Tom can be reached by phone at (231) 563-6638, fax at (231) 375-5229 or e-mail at tom.kendra@prudential.com





Take a Beercation in the Mitten

By Laura Holmos

Craft suds and breweries pop up in Michigan like the signature springtime morel mushrooms in the forest. Beer tourism is a real thing and locals and visitors alike grab the ale trail map and plot a vacation around tasting this hopped-up beverage. Finding your favorite brew can serve as a foundation or the stylish accessory for a weekend getaway.

Currently, there are 205 breweries in Michigan. Josh and I have been to 31 of the 205, which is only 15% of the total. We have a lot of "work" to do and many beerations to plan. Beer tourism is big business in the Mitten where you can find tour operators in beer-centric communities like Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Traverse City. Not up for a road trip, statistics show there is likely a brewery within 10 minutes of your door. If we go on a radius tour from home, we can hit Old Boys Brewing in Spring Lake, Grand Armory in Grand Haven then just 20 minutes up the road in Muskegon is a favorite, Pigeon Hill Brewing. Be sure to try a Walter BlondeAle or the LMFAO Stout.

We're not experts but here's some local insight around the Mitten. Happy tasting and travels.

Blackrocks Brewery, Marquette

As a warm-up to Ore 2 Shore Mountain Bike Race, a Marquette and U.P. trip is all about beer and biking. And, Blackrocks 51K IPA sponsor the South Trails, so we felt obligated to patronize their taproom. Favorite beer: The Coconut Brown.

Fetch Brewing Co., Whitehall

Me and eight friends enjoyed a complete tasting flight and tour from owners, Jen and Dan Hain who restored a historic bank building. In summer, don't miss the Apricot Wheat.

Founders Brewing Co., Grand Rapids

There are too many outstanding choices at GR's prize brewing jewel and its newly expanded facility is a must visit. People will wait in outlandishly long lines to get a couple of pints of the KBS Stout.

Grand Armory Brewing, Grand Haven

New on the scene in 2015, we are impressed with their taproom live entertainment, the Dewey Hill Amber, Black Ale and the BBQ at Righteous Cuisine on-site.

Harmony Brewing Co., Grand Rapids

Pizza and beer, what a combination at this quaint East Town bar. Order a wood-fired pie along with the smooth and mellow Tupelo Honey.

Jamesport Brewing Co., Ludington

Before taking the USS Badger ferry ride across Lake Michigan, fuel up on pub grub and Lud-suds before the four-hour cruise.

New Holland Brewing, Holland

This is downtown Holland's social epicenter with a large bar, patio and restaurant serving up staples like The Poet and Full Circle.

Newaygo Brewing, Newaygo

Perfectly positioned near the NCT trailheads (North Country Trail), we rode a section then hit the taproom for sandwiches and a delightful coconut brown ale.

Ore Dock Brewing Co., Marquette

Marquette is full of it... beer that is. Ore Dock is a compliment to its downtown neighbor (Blackrocks), with a two-level bar and plenty of food and music.

Perrin Brewing Co., Grand Rapids

We don't like IPA's but the Grapefruit IPA at Perrin is one of our summer faves. Perrin rounds out GR's amazing list of top breweries.

Pigeon Hill Brewing, Muskegon

They brew tasty beer just minutes from Lake Michigan in downtown Muskegon. Their attention to detail has garnered several awards and their signature OCP (Oatmeal Crème Pie) is now available in cans on local grocery store shelves.

Rare Bird Brewpub, Traverse City

It's always nice to go back home and learn that my hometown is now a hotspot for good beer. There are more than five breweries downtown alone.

Right Brain Brewery, Traverse City

Another TC staple, there is plenty of CEO Stout on the shelves at your favorite retailer but my favorite is a seasonal, The Chubby Squirrel a pint of spiced-brown goodness.

Saugatuck Brewing, Saugatuck

Saugatuck Brewing has won Josh's heart. He fell in love at first sip with the Blueberry Maple Stout.

Trail Point Brewing, Allendale

Now there is more in Allendale than the GVSU campus. New on the scene, seasoned goodness is already pouring from their taps. Try a sampler with my top three: Toasted Brunette, Dr. Peelgood and the Wyley Black Ale.

Laura is the marketing strategist at FineLine Creative and travel author who always has a trip up her sleeve. Ambassador for finding balance in life~work~play! Follow her monthly blog at www.contentqueens.net



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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 sleight! Nearly 75 entries lineup for this festive event.

Let's make the improbable, probable

By Riley Williamson

Being a student of business, I've always pondered ideas about what could bring in new business and profitability to our city. Business in Muskegon is phenomenal at it's current state. Unemployment is at an all time low and business is thriving. But understanding the underlining fact that the local economy can always get better is the first step to establishing long lasting profitability for the city, the business owners, and the employees. With that, conversations should be continually had to discuss what's possible for Muskegon's economy.

In my previous article I discussed the possibility of the rejuvenation of Downtown Muskegon. The progression of the past two months alone have already begun to make that a reality. New plans were created to update downtown and a new 'off the leash' dog park has been granted funded by the city, state, and various organizations. It will be established in downtown Muskegon on vacant lots and will provide more opportunities for community members to head downtown. Because downtown has made such strides in the past two months, I find it appropriate to move the thoughts of potential opportunity elsewhere, Pere Marquette Beach.

With over 27 acres of beach, it almost compares to Grand Haven State park's area. But what does Grand Haven have that Pere Marquette doesn't? Nightlife, shopping, and food are the most basic types of businesses to bring in tourism. Sadly, Pere Marquette is lacking in all of those areas. Tourism is the number one industry in Michigan. So it would seem viable to establish Pere Marquette as



a tourism centered economy. In the early 1900's Pere Marquette was exactly that. Businesses thrived on the water's edge, and tourists enjoyed what the businesses, and beach had to offer.. Business was so good that a roller coaster was built! Maybe building another roller coaster on the beach is an

improbable idea. But there can be plenty to learn from the history of Pere Marquette. Pere Marquette was originally owned by a trolley company, railroad company, and then sold to the city of Muskegon. Once sold to the city, the leases of the businesses that resided there expired and the buildings were torn down. To this day, the land is still owned by the city of Muskegon.

I believe that there should be talks within the local community, by business leaders and the city, to establish an economic zone on Pere Marquette beach. The tourism that could be brought in from establishing ice cream shops, surf shops, restaurants, and bars would provide a fiscal advantage to West Michigan as a whole. West Michigan has the potential to be the number one tourist region in Michigan. With the establishment of businesses at Pere Marquette, I believe that we can achieve that goal.

Riley Williamson is a Supply Chain Management student at Arizona State University and is currently interning with Senator John McCain in Phoenix, Arizona.



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Fall into the arts

By Marla Miller

Ushered in by cooler days and colorful leaves, fall means a return to routines. School is back in full swing and football fans flock to high school stadiums on Fridays.

But there are plenty of other seats to fill and fun to be had in the way of concerts, exhibits and cultural exploration. The fall arts season also signals a shift in the weather, but don't despair about the darker days ahead. Local arts organizations have you covered.

Muskegon Area Arts & Humanities Festival: A community-wide celebration of the arts and humanities, Ah Fest celebrates its 17th year and offers a variety of arts and cultural events throughout October. Each year, local arts and community groups collaborate to develop a diverse schedule of lectures, art exhibits, concerts, movie screenings and conversations around a thought-provoking theme. This year's is Us and Them. Capping off the festivities, well-known mystery and crime fiction writer Dennis Lehane will speak at 6 p.m. Oct. 27 at Frauenthal Theater. ahfest.org

Buster Keaton Convention: Unbeknownst to many locals, the Buster Keaton Convention brings Damfinos from across the globe to Muskegon. This is the 22nd year for the annual gathering Oct. 7-8 and Keaton followers participate in a variety of activities including at baseball game at Buster's Ball Field, a tour of the Bluffton Actors' Colony, film screenings and lectures. Most events require registering for the convention, but a few are open to the public. Keaton's silent comedy "Sherlock Jr." and "Detective Story" will be shown at 8 p.m. Oct. 8 at Frauenthal Theater accompanied by silent film organist, Dennis Scott, on the Mighty Frauenthal Barton Theater Organ. busterkeaton.com; frauenthal.org

Muskegon Museum of Art: This downtown gem with a world-class collection is always doing something cool, and the fall exhibit and programming schedule offers something for all. The MMA helped develop and premiere Circular Abstractions: Bull's Eye Quilts with Guest Curator Nancy Crow and it will tour nationally once it closes Nov. 6. This juried, invitational exhibit features 51 quilts made specifically for the show, on display for the first time, and improvise around the bull's eye pattern. Even more impressive, 32 of the selected quilters traveled to Muskegon at their expense for the opening and various supporters raised enough money for a printed catalogue. Even men have been in awe of the colorful, contemporary, abstract designs, says newly appointed Senior Curator Art Martin. For the men, Studio Brew: The Colors of Beer runs through Oct. 30 or those who admire sculpture will want to check out internationally recognized sculptor David Deming's works in bronze, steel and stainless steel through Dec. 11. Plus, the MMA is hosting a five-part lecture series The Art of Five Great Religions at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in October as a prelude to

Expressions of Faith opening Dec. 8. muskegonartmuseum.org

West Michigan Symphony: Muskegon is lucky to have a professional orchestra that performs in a world-class venue. WMS continues the tradition with a new season of Pops and Masterworks concerts on Fridays at Frauenthal Theater and more intimate concerts at The Block on Western Avenue. The season kicks off Sept. 30 with Heroes and Villians, showcasing music from popular movie soundtracks, followed by EP!C on Nov. 11 and the world premiere of "Epic" by composer-in-residence Austin Wintory. Mark your calendar for Dec. 16 when the symphony returns for its heartwarming holiday concert Classical Christmas. westmichigansymphony.org

Muskegon Civic Theatre: MCT prides itself on presenting quality community theater thanks to hundreds of volunteers who also love live theater. "Hands on a Hardbody," a musical comedy inspired by true events and infused with a "fresh roots-rock vibe," runs Nov. 18-Dec. 4 on weekends at Beardsley Theater. The seasons resumes in January with "The Drawer Boy," "I Hate Hamlet" and "Mary Poppins." muskegoncivictheatre.org

Lakeshore Museum Center: The annual Lumber Barons' Ball doubles as a fundraiser and costume party with a Victorian Carnivale theme Oct. 1 at Watermark 920. If you've never visited the Hackley & Hume Historic Site, now is your chance. Muskegon County residents can enjoy a free tour of the homes of Muskegon's most well-known lumber barons on weekends in October. For a spookier tour, buy your tickets in advance for a special Obituary Tour Oct. 25-26, which includes details about people who have died in the homes, Victorian era death and funeral practices, and the staging of two funerals. Or take a color tour drive and head for the Haunted Trail at LMC's Michigan's Heritage Park in Whitehall. There will be two night of haunted history 7-10 p.m. Oct. 28-29 at the living history park. Visit lakeshoremuseum.org for more information, including holiday home tours Nov. 26-27.

Marla R. Miller is a professional writer and Total Control instructor who lives in Norton Shores and enjoys writing about the people, places and events that make West Michigan a great place to live. Learn more about her at marlarmiller.com.



1-800-IDENTITY THEFT

By Brenda Durga

We all know how troublesome and demanding Microsoft and its programs can be and how sometimes we would prefer to pull out our own hair than actually deal with it or anyone, for that matter, on their tech support team. The need for updates can cause some serious lag in how your computer or device runs. Scammers and cyber-criminals also know this and have developed rather insidious, yet simple, ways to take information from right out of your hands in the worst way: **by having you give it to them willingly.**

Some of this year's newest scams are disguising themselves as dear old Microsoft. Here are just a few of the masks they wear for your convenient inconvenience:

- Windows Service Center
- Windows Helpdesk
- Microsoft Support
- Windows Technical Department Support Group
- Microsoft Tech Support
- And Microsoft Research and Development Team (Microsoft R & D Team)

Quite the list right? It's not even the half of it. Most of the information they find on you are within a public phone directory, giving them your name as well as other personal information. There have been numerous cases where they have even guessed correctly on what operating system that you're running! The scammer that will contact you may even sound generally friendly and approachable and listen to any woes you may have about your

computer and any current programs you have running. They may even be rude and try to trick you into paying for services that you didn't ask for.

Don't worry. Take a deep breath! They prey on your panic. Do **NOT** let them take control over your computer; simply hang up the phone and call your local computer store. More than likely you and your computer are fine but it never hurts to reset your passwords.

The holiday season is quickly approaching and these scammers are out more than ever. Be prepared. Educate your parents and grandparents about these calls so they don't fall victim. Put the phone number of your trusted computer store/person on the back of their computer to give them a sense of security. They love people who don't understand computers and how to protect them.

Rule of thumb: If you don't know them, don't let them on your computer!

Brenda Durga is one of the owners of Technology Bytes in North Muskegon near the 750 Grill. She is a passionate about working with the community. She is what we like to call a translator. She takes "tech talk" and translates it so our customer understand and educates them on how to maintain their computer moving forward. www.technology-bytes.com • brenda@technology-bytes.com 231.709.9729



Part 1 in a series by Mercy Health:
Innovations in Health

What is a patient portal and why should you use it?

By F. Remington Sprague, MD, Chief Medical Officer of Mercy Health Muskegon

With the prevalence of computers, smart phones and tablets, the world has come to increasingly rely on digital communication. This is also true when it comes to health care.

The use of patient portals is an important way that health care has been transformed in the past decade or so. It requires patients to know basic computer skills, such as email and how to use the Internet, which are easy to learn.

Q: What is a patient portal?

A: According to the website healthit.gov, a national resource on health information technology, a patient portal is “a secure online website that gives patients convenient 24-hour access to personal health information from anywhere with an Internet connection.”

Q: What advantages does a patient portal provide?

A: A patient portal gives you convenient access to (1) the staff at the medical practice you use and (2) some components of your electronic health records, such as diagnostic test results.

With an online patient portal, you no longer need to make a phone call, listen to the prompt or be placed on hold when contacting your provider's office. You won't have to wait until the right person is free to come to the phone. You may reach out to the practice when and where you choose to do so.

An example: If you recently had a cholesterol test, you can access the results using your patient portal instead of waiting for a notification the old-fashioned way. If you want a paper copy of your results, you can print them from the portal right at home.

There are other practical, time-saving benefits too. With so much of today's communication being digital, you can easily request a refill of your prescriptions via the portal. The office staff will place the order for you and notify you via email with a confirmation of your refill order. If you need to make an appointment or change the time or date of an appointment, you can do that online too.

Having access to a specific provider via the portal is a wonderful advantage for patients. You can leave a message and the provider can respond to you through the portal's email, often streamlining your care and offering you peace of mind.

Q: What about the future? If I learn to use the portal now, will I need to learn how to use some other tool later?

A: I cannot imagine a future without some form of the patient portal, so learning to use it will serve all patients well. Patient portals will continue to evolve, introducing more useful tools customized for your health care experience.

In the future, you may receive medical articles via the portal about the latest developments concerning a medical condition you have. This form of ongoing education for patients is part of today's value-based, patient-centric care.

Telemedicine is another possible use for the patient portal. Telemedicine

is the ability of providers to make decisions about care without an actual office visit. It gives patients more flexible access to care, respecting their time and convenience.

There are different versions of telemedicine in use now, including some that rely on social media applications (apps), such as FaceTime or Skype. The possibilities are endless as technology continues to innovate.

An example: You contact your provider via the portal with a list of symptoms you are experiencing. Your provider may then access your electronic medical record and notice that your symptoms are similar to those you had last year. Your provider may suggest that you get a specific diagnostic test based on your health history and current symptoms. Or the provider may indicate that the condition could be serious, and you need to come in for an examination later that day. This kind of timely response can save time, money and promote better health.

Q: Are there any disadvantages of using a patient portal?

A: I can think of only one disadvantage: There are a lot of different portals for different providers, including dentists. Keeping track of all of the passwords and user names can be a challenge.

I rely on an app on my smartphone to store my log in information. Eventually, it would be nice to have a unified portal, like a “Mercy Health portal” for patients who use Mercy Health Physician Partners and Mercy Health hospitals. That day has not yet arrived, but stay tuned. Mercy Health is constantly innovating.

Mercy Health encourages patients to become familiar with the benefits of using a patient portal because it saves money, streamlines care and offers you convenient, timely access to your health record and providers.

Patient portals are one more way we can deliver quality, patient-centric care that meets you where you are, respects your time, and gives you the access you need and deserve. It's about putting your health care needs first.

Next time: THE NEW MERCY HEALTH MUSKEGON MEDICAL CENTER: Five Frequently Asked Questions

F. Remington Sprague, M.D., F.A.C.P. is the vice president of and Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at Mercy Health Partners, Muskegon, Michigan. He graduated from the University of Michigan, Masters of Science in Medical Genetics at Indiana University Medical Center, and completed his Doctor of Medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine. He is currently serving on several nonprofit boards including: Access Health, Health West and the Muskegon Community Health Project.



Dr. Sprague is married to Ginny and together they have four children and four grandchildren. He enjoys reading contemporary fiction, history and classical literature. He performs regularly with Muskegon Civic Theatre.



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