

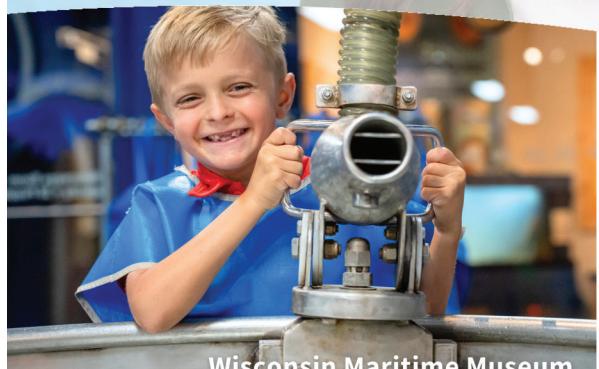
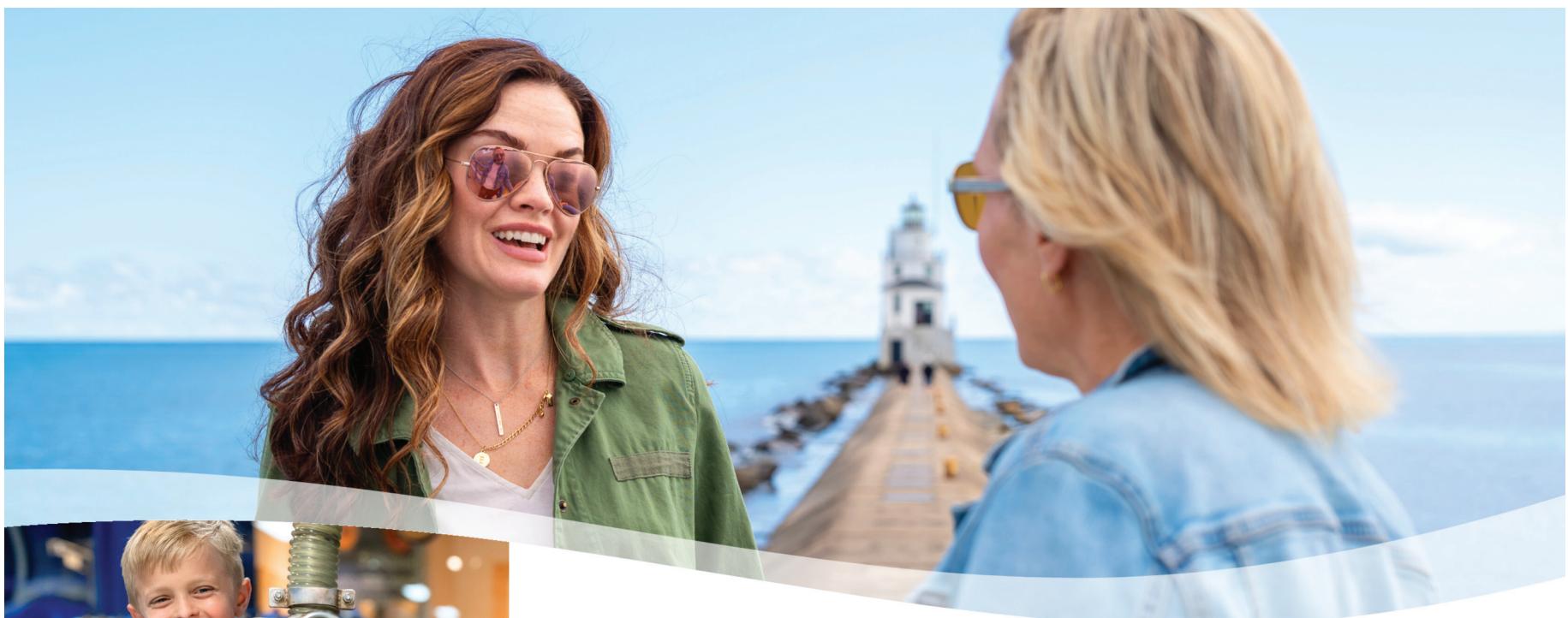
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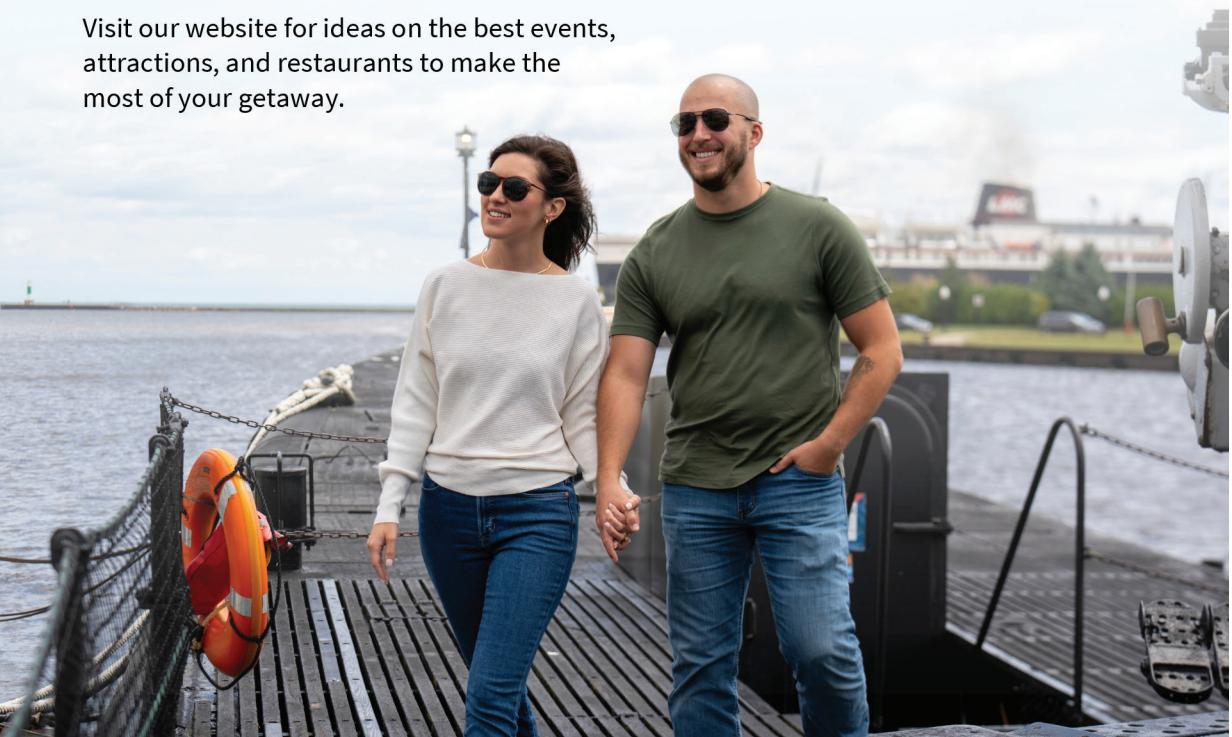
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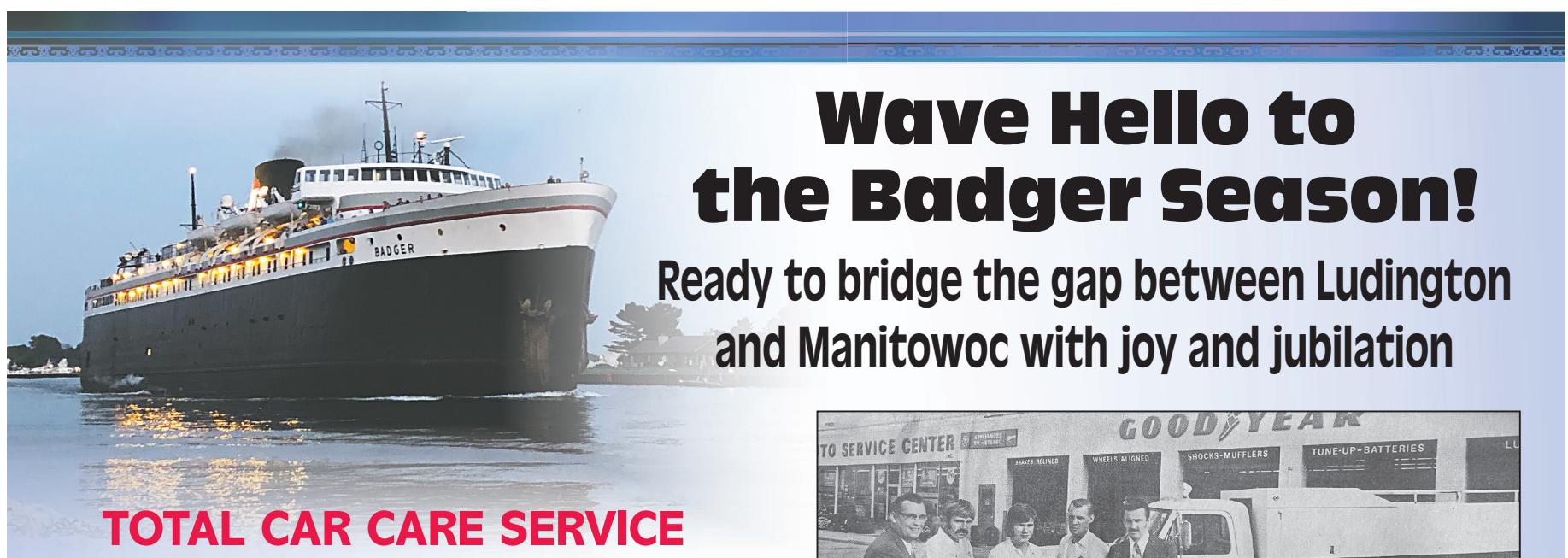
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## 2025 marks 150 years of cross-lake service from Ludington

The year 2025 marks 150 years of cross-lake service from Ludington, Michigan to Wisconsin. In 1875, the first steamships to transport goods across Lake Michigan were known as break-bulk freighters. Railcars at that time did not travel across the lake, so the contents of the cars were removed, loaded onto the break-bulk steamer, shipped across Lake Michigan, then re-loaded onto railcars waiting on the other shore.

In December 1874, the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway completed construction between Flint, Michigan and Ludington in Mason County, with the first

train arriving on Dec. 6. Within the next year, cross-lake service, the predecessor of the railcar ferries, began.

Construction of the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway began in 1859. Railroad executives had been considering a cross-lake route to Manitowoc, Wis. since 1859 because the trip around Lake Michigan was costly, mostly due to heavy rail traffic through Chicago.

In 1875, the F&PM chartered the 175-foot-long side wheeler steamer John Sherman to shuttle grain, packaged freight and passengers between Ludington and Sheboygan, Wis. to connect with the Sheboygan & Fond du

Lac Railway. The steamer also handled passengers and general cargo.

The John Sherman was too small for the needs of the F&PM and served only for a single season. Beginning in 1876, the railroad chartered a variety of steamers from the Goodrich Transit Company, the largest Lake Michigan passenger and package-freight carrier. The Goodrich ships operated at various Wisconsin ports, but the principal route in connection with the Flint & Pere Marquette came to be the run from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to the Michigan ports of Ludington, Manistee, and Frankfort.

The F&PM ended its relations with

Goodrich transit in 1883 and purchased two steamers for its own operation out of Ludington, F&PM Nos. 1 and 2. Both were typical Great Lakes propellers at the time, with their engines aft and a single tier of cabins for 25 passengers on the spar deck. A spar deck is the upper deck of a ship that extends from stem to stern

With an increase in traffic in the late 1880s the railroad expanded its fleet by three ships: F&PM Nos. 3, 4, and 5, built in 1887, 1888, and 1890, respectively.

The F&PM began negotiations with the Wisconsin Central Railway with the goal of establishing a through all-rail route



Badger March 1970



Badger February 1969

via Ludington and Manitowoc. The arrangement required the Wisconsin Central to build a branch from its main line at Neenah-Menasha, near Lake Winnebago to Manitowoc.

In December 1895, the F&PM ordered a steel carferry, designed by Robert Logan (1861-1918), a prominent naval architect of Cleveland who had immigrated to the U.S. from Scotland.

The Pere Marquette was launched on Dec. 30, 1896 and arrived in Ludington on Feb. 13, 1897. It was then sent to Milwaukee for inspection. The Pere Marquette made its maiden voyage from Ludington to Manitowoc the evening of Feb. 16-17, 1897. It carried 22 freight cars and the private car of S.T. Crapo, general manager of the Flint & Pere Marquette Railway.

The Pere Marquette Railway was formed on Nov. 1, 1899 to consolidate

the Flint & Pere Marquette, the Chicago & West Michigan and the Detroit Grand Rapids & Western. When the new company was formed, it also obtained the former F&PM fleet consisting of the carferry Pere Marquette and the passenger and break-bulk freight-carriers F&PM Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5. Additionally, it acquired a carferry that had been owned by the Detroit Grand Rapids & Western.

In 1901, the Pere Marquette Railway changed the names of its entire carferry fleet, including its Detroit River ferries. Break-bulk freighters were to be numbered 1 and up. The river ferries were to be numbered from 14 downward and the Lake Michigan ferries were to be numbered 15 and above.

The break-bulk freighters were renamed Pere Marquette 2, 3, 4, and 5. The Pere Marquette was renamed Pere Mar-

quette 15 and the Muskegon, a ship that the railroad acquired as part of its merger, was renamed Pere Marquette 16.

The fleet of Ludington-based carferries continued to grow and evolve. In 1947, the Pere Marquette Railway was absorbed into the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. In 1951, the C&O asked for

bids on a pair of ferries, similar to its City of Midland 41, built in 1941. The result were the Spartan (1952) and the Badger (1953), the last two steam-operated carferries built to operate on the Great Lakes.

Today, the Badger is the last of the ferries that began in 1875.

John Hausmann photos

*The Badger's Voyage:  
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provided photo

# Apron repairs

BY ROB ALWAY

One of the most noticeable improvements SS Badger passengers will see during the 2025 season is a new apron leading up to the ship's Ludington slip. In July 2023, the SS Badger's sailing

season was cut short due to a collapse of one of its apron counterweights. Both counterweights were replaced over the following nine months and the Badger set sail again in May 2024. As a second phase to the project, the apron itself has also been replaced.

Vehicles onboard the Badger are loaded and unloaded from the after section of the ship. The ship backs into its dock and the apron, attached to shore, is lifted and lowered to connect to the ship, thus the massive counterweights. Both the counterweights and

apron were built by the Pere Marquette Railway in 1930, 23 years prior to the Badger's maiden voyage.

Crews from Al Bufka Construction of Manistee, Michigan spent nine months rebuilding the apron, which included removing rails still attached.



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## Remembering Val

We remember Valerie Stapleton a cherished colleague and friend who left an indelible mark on the Lake Michigan Carferry team and our personal lives. Val served as the gift shop manager for 27 years - a job which required stamina, creativity and devotion. Her infectious optimism, unwavering dedication, generosity, and friendly spirit were a constant source of inspiration

to all who worked with her. Her sharp business intellect was invaluable to our success. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Val was known for her kindness, humor, and willingness to always lend a helping hand. She was a friend to many, and we will deeply miss her presence, but her legacy of collaboration, excellence, and positivity will continue to guide us in our work.



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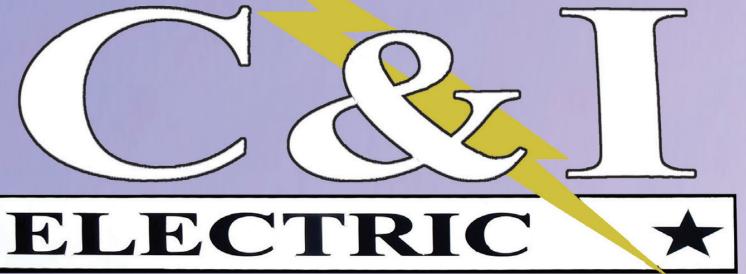
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## 2025 season offers new food and beverage choices

The S.S. Badger cross lake ferry features some of the best food and drinks on Lake Michigan. The 2025 sailing season features enhanced culinary and beverage choices.

"We have listened to our passengers and are providing some new options to make their cruise an even more enjoyable experience," said Wesley Paggeot, Lake Michigan Carferry director of hospitality.

The Badger Galley is a dream stop for "bingoholics" with stadium-style concessions and a few healthier options such as salads, fruit and vegetable cups, and fresh sandwiches. To satisfy the sweet tooth, passengers can cool off

with an assortment of ice cream treats.

New this season to the Upper Deck Cafe are full meals featuring baked chicken breast, beef tips and gravy and good old-fashioned meatloaf. All entrees come with a choice of two sides or one soup plus a soft drink. The Upper Deck Cafe also features some of its traditional meals including a full breakfast, hamburgers, and other hot sandwiches.

The Cabana Room is a place to relax with a drink from the bar or to get a caffeine boost for the next leg of the journey. A full bar offers a variety of adult beverages while the coffee bar serves whole bean coffee ground for

each cup. All ships' bars feature new signature drinks as well.

The 2025 sailing season begins Friday, May 16. To reserve tickets visit [ssbadger.com](http://ssbadger.com) or call 800-841-4243.

Lake Michigan Carferry operates the S.S. Badger, the largest cross-lake passenger and car ferry service on the Great Lakes. Designated a National Historic Landmark, the Badger is a key part of US-10 highway connecting the cities of Ludington, Mich., and Manitowoc, Wis. A vital link across Lake Michigan, the Badger can accommodate 600 passengers and 180 vehicles, including RVs, motorcycles, motorcoaches, and commercial trucks and oversized loads

in one single trip. [www.ssbadger.com](http://www.ssbadger.com)

Interlake Maritime Services is a family of companies with nearly 300 years of collective service on the Great Lakes. A family-owned and -led company in its second generation, Interlake Maritime and its more than 50 shore-side employees manage The Interlake Steamship Company, Interlake Logistics Solutions, Lake Michigan Carferry, Soo Maritime Services and Interlake Port Services from its corporate headquarters in Middleburg Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, and additional regional offices in Ludington, Mich., and Sault Sainte Marie, Mich. [www.interlakemaritimesservices.com](http://www.interlakemaritimesservices.com)

# Traveling with pets and service animals on board the Badger

Even though pets are not allowed in the passenger areas aboard the SS Badger, they are well taken care of on the ship's car deck. "We understand that pets are a very important part of the family," said Sara Spore, Lake Michigan Carferry general manager. "For this reason, we accommodate our furry friends so passengers can relax knowing they are safe and comfortable." For no additional charge, animals may be kept in a well-ventilated portable



kennel on the car deck or they may be transported in the owner's vehicle. About two hours into the four-hour trip, pet owners are invited to the car deck to check on their animals. Though they aren't allowed out of the vehicles or kennel, passengers can visit and make sure their pets' water is refreshed.

Fully-trained service animals may travel with passengers if they meet the requirements. A service animal is de-

fined as an animal that is trained to do work or perform tasks for a qualified individual with a disability. This includes a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, including but not limited to: visual impairments, deafness, seizures, mobility impairments, and/or post-traumatic stress disorders. Service animals in training, emotional support animals, and comfort animals may travel as pets and may be kept on the boat deck.

"Our policies are in place to assure the highest level of passenger safety and security."

Paggeot said. "Traversing the ship requires close proximity to other passengers through passageways and seating areas. Passengers who have questions about the ship's animal policy are encouraged to contact customer service in advance of their travels at 800-841-4243 or info@ssbadger.com

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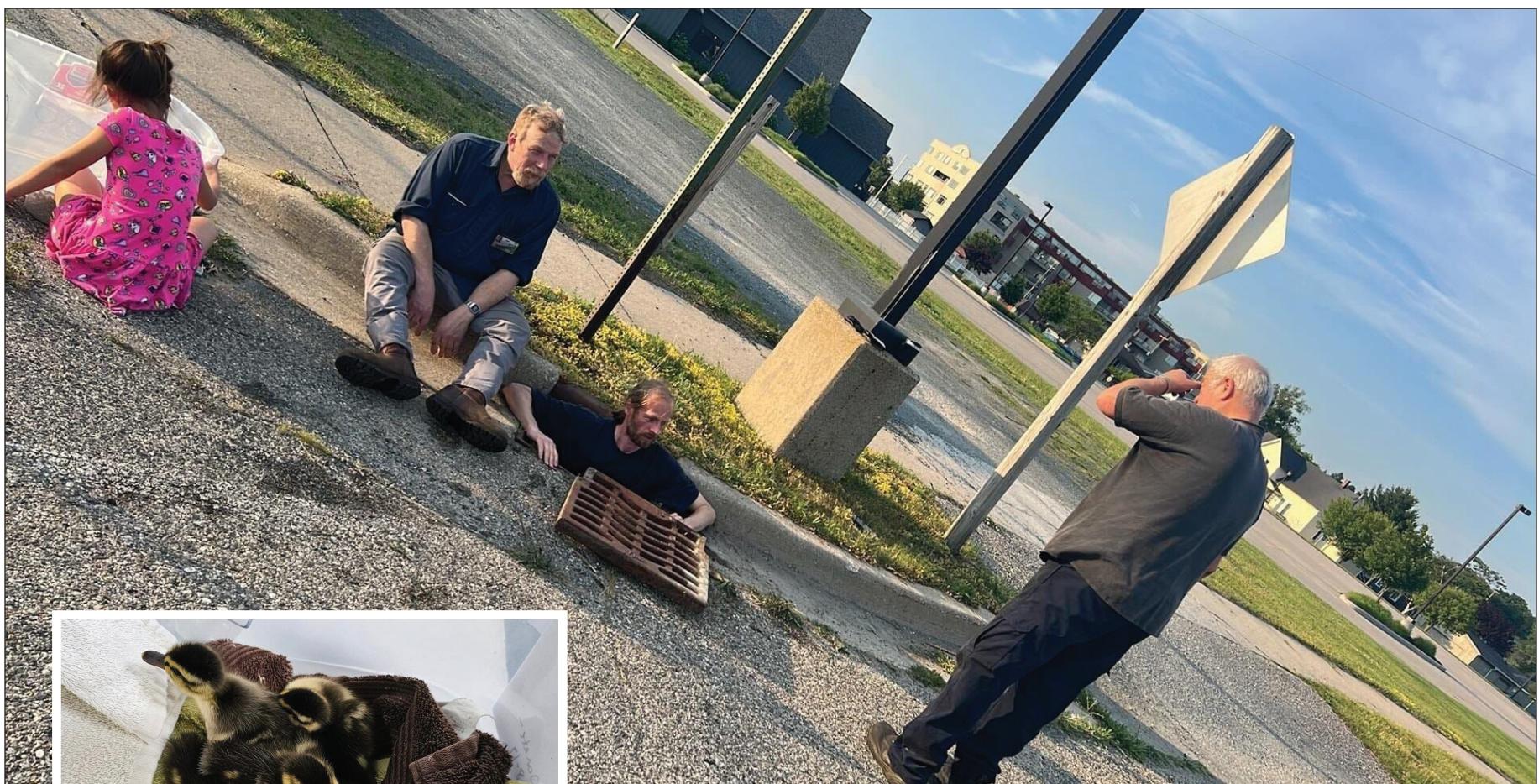
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# Badger crew to the rescue

BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Not only is the Badger crew trained to handle any situation on water, a handful of Badger employees demonstrated their life-saving skills to rescue a flock of nine ducklings from a storm drain in Ludington last year.

The rescue effort started at about 6:30 p.m. and took about three hours to complete.

Kevin Diedrich was one of the nine Badger members involved in the rescue. Others included Craig Stahelin, Bill Kulka, Joe DeBusk, First mate Chris Roelant, Bryce Schuler, Riley Claveau,

Luke Poort and Joel Bates.

"I was approached by two of the shoreline people informing me of trapped ducklings," Diedrich said in an interview with the Daily News. "I immediately went to investigate and could not see them but could hear them clearly.

"One had been extracted and the mother ran off with the lone duckling. I started to get a rescue operation started, as I could not just leave them to die," he said.

The rescue crew was faced with a situation in which there were two storm drains on both sides of the road connected by a single pipe. The ducklings were hanging out in the center of the

pipe, out of reach.

"I tried several different techniques to get them to one side so we could get to them, but they were very frightened and would not move."

One did come within reach and was taken safely out of the drain.

"We put him in a bin and I kept the bin close to the storm drain we wanted to extract them from so the rest would hear his cries and hopefully draw the rest to us. It worked for a few of them, but the rest continued to stay put."

The innovation quickly devised on the spot was an empty one-gallon jug which was tied to a garden hose. When this was snaked through the pipe, the remaining

ducklings were driven towards the waiting rescuers and extracted.

The warehouse manager took the rescued ducklings home. He used a heat lamp for warmth, cleaned them up and fed them. On Tuesday, he brought them back to the site to see if they could be reunited with their mother.

The mother did not come back for the ducklings, which were successfully released back into the environment.

Diedrich said the rescue was a group effort. He offered special recognition to Craig Stahelin "who spent over two hours in water up to his waist to pick up the ducklings and hand them up to me," he said.



# The Nelson family

There is a common theme among the crew of the SS Badger: Family. Whether that is a closeness that is created through the shared purpose of working on a unique and historic vessel that has served the Great Lakes for 72 years, or whether it is actual family. Often multiple members of the same family are hired in, strengthening what makes the Badger so special. For Nicole and Patrick Nelson, the Badger brought them together and now they have begun their own family.

Patrick started working for Lake Michigan Carferry the summer of his high school senior year in 2004. He is a graduate of Mason County Central High School in Scottville, Michigan, located 10 miles east of Ludington. Nicole also started working for the Badger the summer of her high school senior year. She is a 2012 graduate of Manitowoc Lincoln High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Both started as auto attendants, the crew members who expediently load and unload vehicles onto the ship — on opposite shores and a few years apart.

Today, Patrick is a licensed able bodied seaman (AB) who serves as a wheelsman. The wheelsman, as the name indicates, steers the ship. Nicole and her twin sister, Marissa Senglaub,

are the co-supervisors of the Badger's Manitowoc ticket office. As supervisors they oversee several elements of the Manitowoc office, including passenger relations and shore operations.

"I started working at the Badger because I was on the high school track team," Patrick said. "LMC often recruits track and cross country runners from the local high schools to work as auto attendants. I thought to myself, 'I can do that: Get paid to run. No problem.' It was fun."

He worked as an auto attendant for three years and then served as an ordinary seaman (OS), also known as an entry level deckhand, for three years, where his duties included line handling, deck maintenance and fire/life-boat/emergency duties.

Patrick then attended classes at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City where he earned his AB license. He has since also attended Grand Valley State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in special education.

With the AB license, he had the position as watchman for eight years. For the last eight years, he has served as a wheelsman. Typically Patrick works during the overnight sailings

(this year's overnight sailings are from June 20 to Sept. 1), or on weekends. For nine months out of the year, he is a special education teacher and track coach at Mason County Central High School, a job he has had for eight years with a total of 11 years teaching.

Nicole and Marissa started working at the Badger because their older sister, Mikayla, had been working there for a summer job. In 2021, they took on the co-supervisor positions. For the past four years, their dad, Jeff Senglaub, has worked at the ship as an auto attendant and security in Manitowoc. Additionally, Marissa's boyfriend, Robert Ball, works at the Badger as an auto attendant.

"I have met so many people and have developed so many friendships over the past 22 years," Patrick said. "Of course, the passengers are the best part of the job. I really enjoy having conversations with them. Every summer we get to see many of the same people and meet new people. The Badger becomes a part of their lives."

Nicole agreed with Patrick, saying one of the best parts of the job is interacting with the passengers.

In 2020, Nicole and Patrick were married. Nicole is quick to point out that she asked him out first.

Having a marriage that crosses a 60-mile wide lake can be a challenge. When the Badger isn't operating, Nicole and Patrick live in their home in Custer, Michigan, about 13 miles east of Ludington. In the "off season," Nicole works at Home Depot in Ludington and has also taken culinary arts classes at Grand Rapids Community College.

During the sailing season, Patrick spends a lot of his time living on the ship while Nicole lives with her parents in Manitowoc. Last year, the arrangement became a little more challenging — but in a good way. The Nelsons were blessed with a baby girl, Roxanne.

"Last year, I was able to bring her into the office frequently, and it worked out pretty good," Nicole said. "Now, she's nearly a year old, that may be a bit more of a challenge. Luckily, she has wonderful grandparents on both sides of the lake who are willing to help out."

Just a few short years from now, Roxanne will probably tell her own story about being the third generation of her family to be part of the Badger tradition.

To learn more about careers on the Badger, visit [wwbadger.com/join-the-crew](http://wwbadger.com/join-the-crew).



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO



FILE PHOTO

# So many options for fun

The adage that time flies when you're having fun rings true during a Badger sailing. For those who like to stay busy, there are a plethora of things to keep passengers of all ages busy on their four-hour cruise.

Badger Bingo is one of the go-to activities that has gained a lot of fans throughout the years. With bingo games, miscellaneous trivia and a dash of jokes and observations from the engaged bingo caller, Todd Hansen, this activity is a recipe for fun. Add in a scavenger hunt and a children's activity book, and let the fun on board keep going.

From experienced travelers, here are some other suggestions on how to make the Badger's slogan - Big Ship,

Big Fun your own.

## ENJOY THE VIEWS

Walk around the ship, soaking in the fresh air and sunshine while observing all the elements of the sailing experience. Look for the details - everything from the bolts to the life boats and everything in between. Take in the sight of the Badger's bow slicing through the water. Count the freighters that pass by. At night, check out the stars and the constellations. Be sure to watch the car ferry's arrival in Ludington or Manitowoc for that shoreline view. If you are a lighthouse fan, the Badger's arrival in port or departure offers opportunities to take a photo or two or three or more from the waterside.

## INDULGE IN RELAXATION

Catch up on your reading while sitting on deck or in the ship's lounge or a stateroom. Let the sound of the ship's engines and the sway as The Badger cruises through the water be your on-board lullaby. Absorb the sunshine and the refreshing breeze. Relish the experience and remember someone else is in charge of getting to the destination. Or unwind by watching a free movie.

## NOURISH

Find your craving at the many food and beverage options aboard the ship. The choices range from the kind of snacks you would find at a stadium to a full meal, as well as healthier options

like salads, fruit and veggie cups. Don't forget ice cream treats for those warm summer days. Enjoy a coffee, soft drink or adult beverage while onboard. What can be better than good food, refreshing drinks and a one-of-a-kind view?

## PLAY

The Badger has board games available for use during the crossing. Pick up a Badger card deck from the gift shop and play your favorite card game with family and friends or focus on a game of solitaire. Perhaps a visit to the game room will satisfy your competitive spirit. Let the little ones enjoy the Kid's Port Play Area.

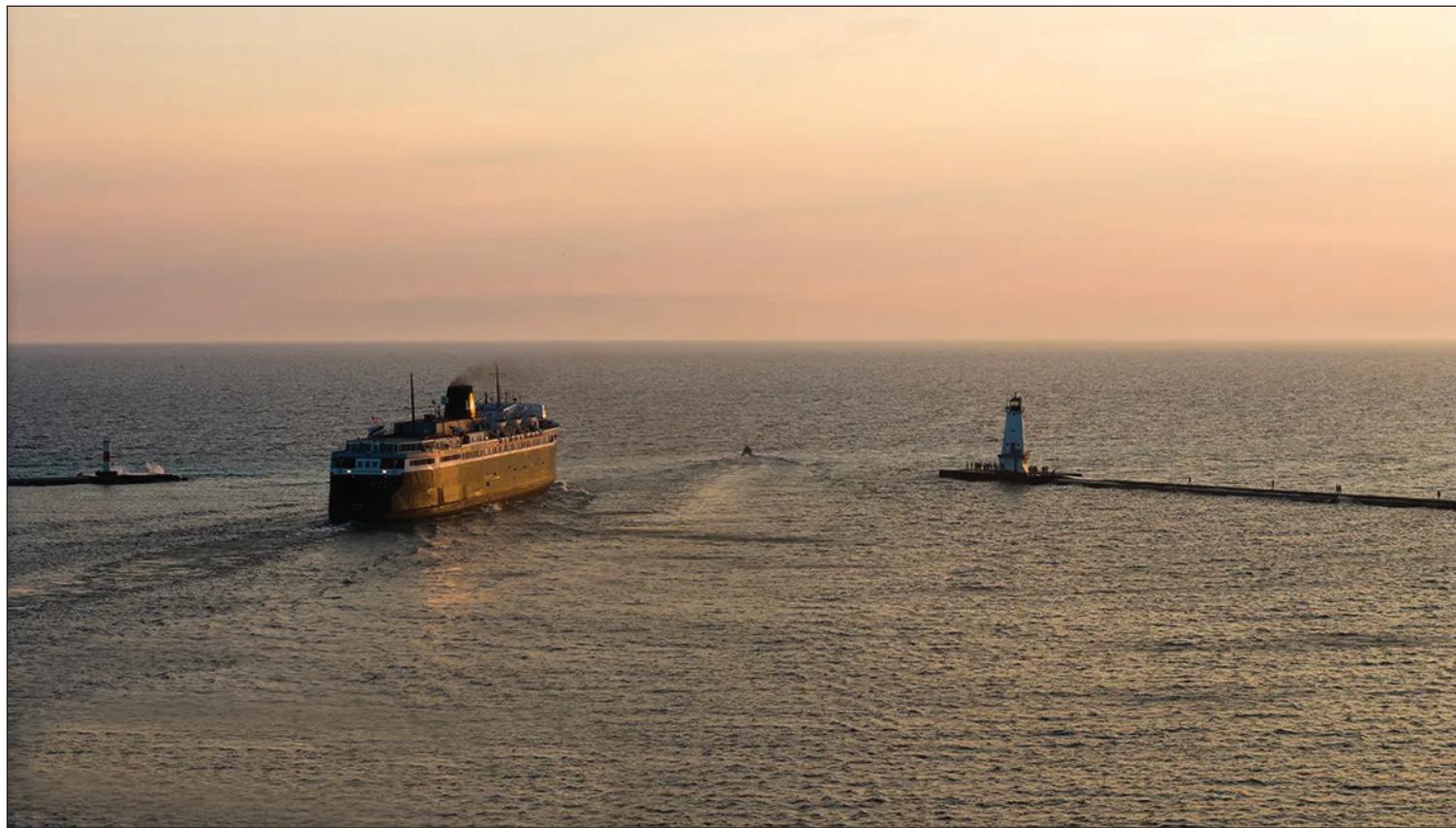


PHOTO PROVIDED BY SS BADGER

## Other ways to have a Badger Experience

While daytime crossing to and from Ludington and Manitowoc are one of the more common ways people traverse the expanse of Lake Michigan during sailing season, there are other ways to have a Badger experience.

One of these is the overnight crossings. These are scheduled from June 20 - September 1. This is a shorter span of time than the regular season, which begins on May 16 and ends on October 12.

Overnight crossings operate Thursday through Tuesday departing from

Ludington. The Badger leaves Ludington at 8:45 p.m. Eastern Time and arrives in Manitowoc at 11:45 p.m. Central Time. Departures from Manitowoc for the overnight sailing is at 1:30 a.m. Central Time, arriving in Ludington at 6:30 a.m. Eastern Time. The Manitowoc departures operate Friday through Wednesday.

Another way to enjoy the ambiance of this legendary and historic vessel are the shoreline cruises offered in the summer on both coasts. These are not

crossing, but a scenic off-shore look at these amazing Badger destination cities.

In Ludington, passengers will board the ship at 8:30 p.m. for a two-hour cruise (9-11 p.m.) along the Ludington shoreline. The 2025 dates for the Ludington cruises are Wednesday, June 18; Friday, July 4; Wednesday, July 23; and Wednesday, August 20.

In Manitowoc, passengers board the ship at 1:30 p.m. Central time. This shoreline cruise, also two-hours in length, is from 2-4 p.m. and takes in the

Manitowoc shoreline. Dates for these shoreline cruises in Manitowoc are Saturday, June 14; Saturday, July 19; Saturday, August 2; and Saturday, August 16.

Food and entertainment are part of the Shoreline Cruise option. And guests have access to all of the ship's other amenities.

Check [www.ssbadger.com](http://www.ssbadger.com) for additional information, including sailings impacted by Shoreline Cruises. Tickets may be reserved at the website or calling 800-841-4243.

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STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

# *Discover Manitowoc, Wisconsin:* A Blend of History, Culture, and Lakeside Charm

Nestled along the western shore of Lake Michigan, Manitowoc is a city steeped in maritime heritage and cultural richness. Its name, derived from Native American languages, is believed to mean "dwelling of the great spirit" or "place of

the spirits." The area saw its first European settlers in the 1830s, with shipbuilding becoming a cornerstone of its economy. During World War II, Manitowoc's shipyards notably contributed to the war effort by constructing submarines for the

U.S. Navy. Today, the city honors its storied past while offering a vibrant array of attractions and events for visitors. While you are here, take some time to find out what this Badger destination city has to offer.

## DISCOVER MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

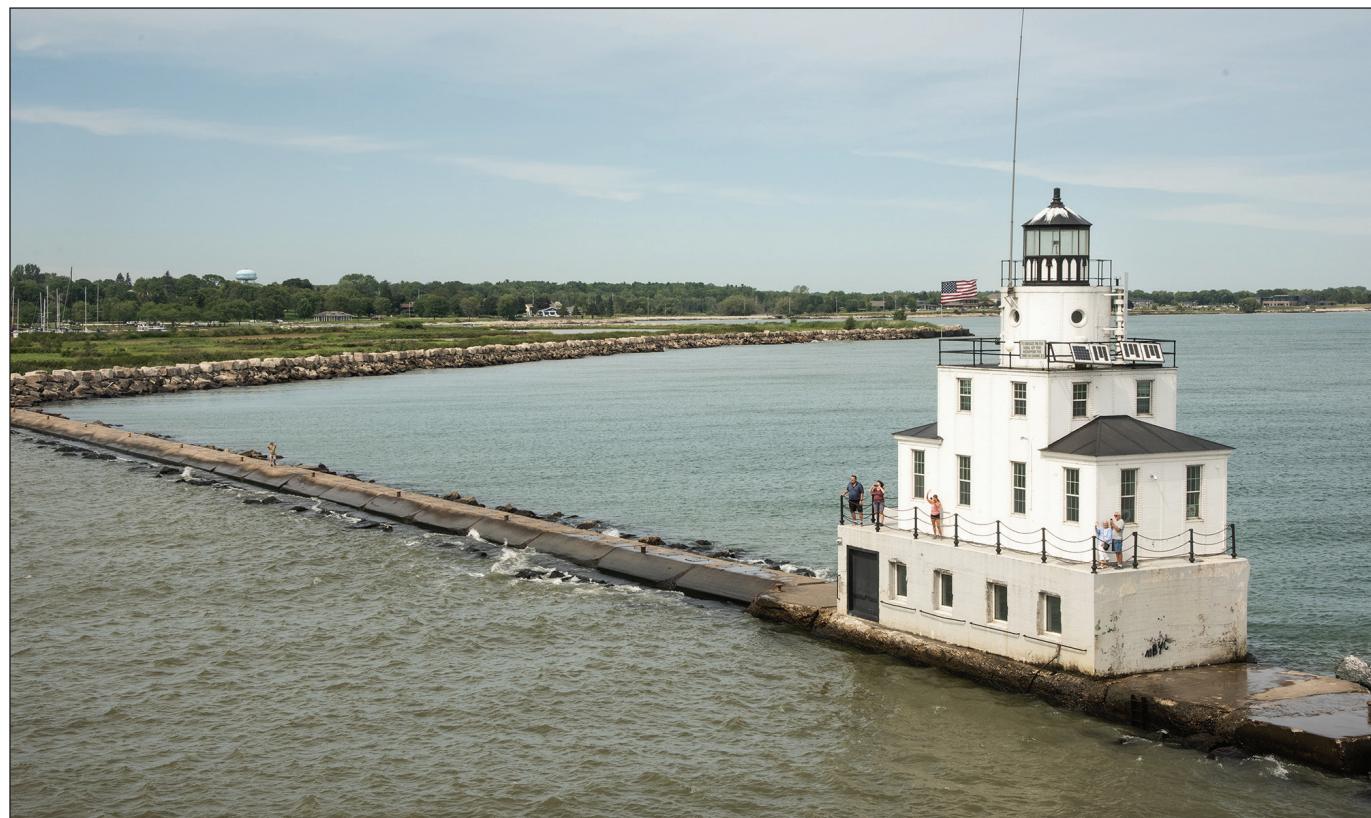
### Attractions Within Walking Distance of the S.S. Badger Dock

#### WISCONSIN MARITIME MUSEUM

Located just a short walk from the S.S. Badger dock, the Wisconsin Maritime Museum offers an immersive dive into the region's nautical history. A highlight is the USS Cobia, a World War II submarine that visitors can tour to experience life aboard a naval vessel. The museum also features interactive exhibits, including the Children's Waterways Room, making it a family-friendly destination. Website: [www.wisconsinmaritime.org](http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org)

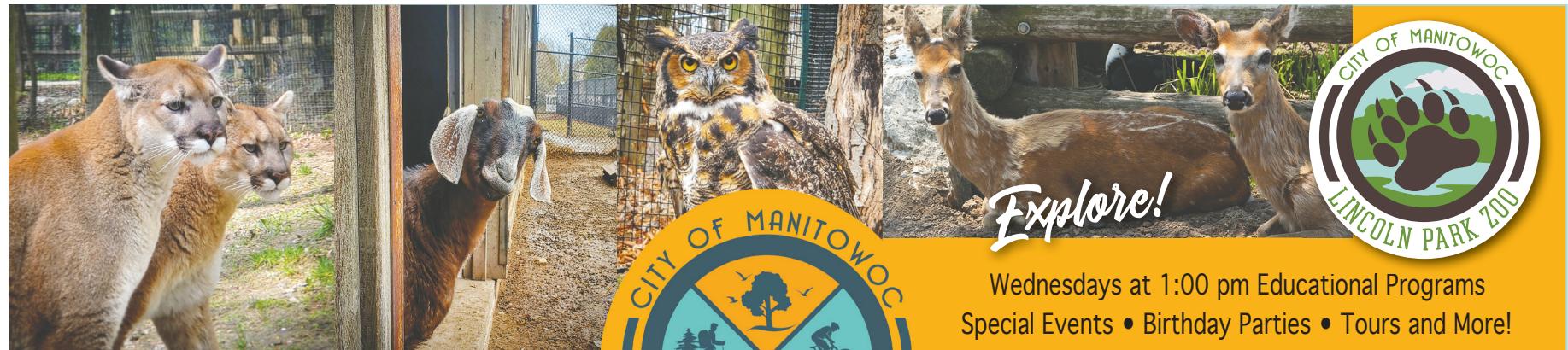
#### RAHR-WEST ART MUSEUM

Situated within walking distance, the Rahr-West Art Museum is housed in a historic mansion and showcases a diverse collection of fine art. Notably, it displays a piece of Sputnik IV, com-



Manitowoc Breakwater Lighthouse from Badger

STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO



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## DISCOVER MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

memorizing the 1962 incident when a fragment of the Soviet satellite crashed onto North 8th Street in Manitowoc. Website: [www.manitowoc.org/2557/](http://www.manitowoc.org/2557/)

Rahr-West-Art-Museum

### DOWNTOWN MANITOWOC

A leisurely stroll from the dock brings you to downtown Manitowoc, where you'll find unique shops like The Nook, a bookstore and mocktail lounge, and Basil's Sustainable Goods, offering eco-friendly products. Website: [www.visitmanitowoc.com](http://www.visitmanitowoc.com)

### Attractions a Short Drive from the S.S. Badger Dock

### PINECREST HISTORICAL VILLAGE

Approximately a 10-minute drive inland, Pinecrest Historical Village offers a glimpse into 19th-century life with its collection of historic buildings and artifacts. Operated by the Manitowoc County Historical Society, the village provides educational programs and events throughout the year. Website: [www.manitowoccountyhistory.org/pinecrest-historical-village](http://www.manitowoccountyhistory.org/pinecrest-historical-village)



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO



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## DISCOVER MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN



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## DISCOVER MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

### WEST OF THE LAKE GARDENS

A brief drive north along the lake-shore leads to West of the Lake Gardens, a beautifully maintained botanical garden featuring a variety of plant collections and serene walking paths. Website: [www.westfoundation.us/](http://www.westfoundation.us/) hours-and-directions

### CHERNY MARIBEL CAVES COUNTY PARK

Located about 20 minutes west of Manitowoc, this county park is renowned for its network of caves and scenic hiking trails. Guided tours are available for several caves, including the Maribel New Hope Cave, offering an adventurous outing for nature enthusiasts. Website: [www.mariblcaves.com](http://www.mariblcaves.com)

### Annual Festivals

#### and Events

##### METRO JAM

Held in Washington Park, just a short walk from the ferry dock, Metro Jam is a free two-day music festival scheduled for June 20-21, 2025. This year's headliner is The Jayhawks, bringing their alt-country/rock sound to the lakeside stage.

##### SPUTNIKFEST

Commemorating the 1962 Sputnik IV incident, Sputnikfest is a quirky, family-friendly festival taking place on September 6, 2025. Activities include costume contests, art projects, and the popular Alien Drop raffle, all within walking distance of the downtown area.

##### MALT CITY BREWFEST

Beer enthusiasts can enjoy the Malt City Brewfest on August 2, 2025, from 2:00-5:30 PM. Located in downtown Manitowoc, the event features over 30 breweries, live music, and food vendors, offering a lively atmosphere near the riverfront.

##### MANITOWOC COUNTY FAIR

Running from August 20-24, 2025, the Manitowoc County Fair is a traditional fair experience with agricultural exhibits, live entertainment, and carnival rides. The fairgrounds are a short drive from the city center, making it an accessible outing for visitors.

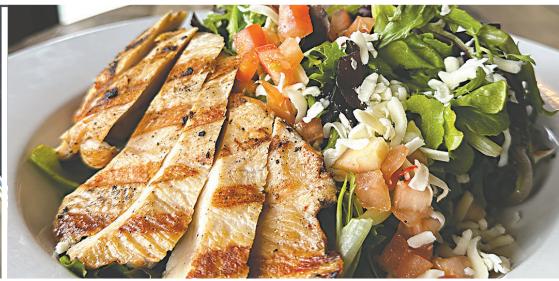
##### WINDIGO FEST

As Wisconsin's largest Halloween festival, Windigo Fest brings spooky fun to Manitowoc with live music, costume contests, and themed attractions. The 2025 dates are yet to be announced, but the event typically occurs in early October, drawing crowds to the downtown area.



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## DISCOVER MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

### Family-Friendly & Kid-Centric Activities

#### WISCONSIN MARITIME MUSEUM

This museum offers more than history, with the Children's Waterways Room and USS Cobia tour making it engaging for young visitors. Website: [www.wisconsinmaritime.org](http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org)

#### LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Approximately a 10-minute drive from the dock, this free, year-round zoo features nearly 200 animals, a petting area in the Big Red Barn, and a scenic environment perfect for families. Website: [www.manitowoc.org/2559/Zoo](http://www.manitowoc.org/2559/Zoo)

#### MANITOWOC FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER

Just 5 minutes from the dock, this water park includes slides, splash zones, and pools designed for all ages, open during the summer months. Website:

[www.manitowoc.org/2558/Aquatic-Center](http://www.manitowoc.org/2558/Aquatic-Center)

#### FARM WISCONSIN DISCOVERY CENTER

Located about 15 minutes away, this interactive center includes exhibits on agriculture, a birthing barn, and seasonal events like "Cheese Week" from April 22-26, 2025. Website: [www.farmwisconsin.org](http://www.farmwisconsin.org)

#### MANITOWOC PUBLIC LIBRARY

Only a 5-minute walk from the dock, this library hosts family-friendly activities, including the Bookmark Art Contest through May 1, 2025, and "Tech Toy Tinker Time" on April 24, 2025. Website: [www.manitowoclibrary.org](http://www.manitowoclibrary.org)

#### STRAND ADVENTURES

Just a 5-minute drive from the dock, Strand Adventures features climbing walls, obstacle courses, and arcade games, perfect for an indoor energy outlet. Website: [www.strandadventures.com](http://www.strandadventures.com)

#### SILVER CREEK PARK

A 10-minute drive leads to this outdoor space with hiking trails, beach access, and a disc golf course—ideal for a family outing. Website: [www.manitowoc.org/Facilities/Facility/Details/18](http://www.manitowoc.org/Facilities/Facility/Details/18)

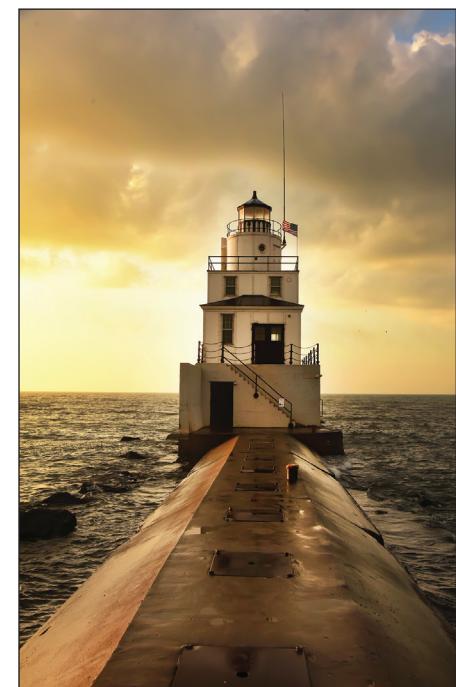
#### CEDAR CREST ICE CREAM PARLOR

A 10-minute drive from the dock, this iconic ice cream parlor offers over 30 hand-dipped flavors and a charming, nostalgic vibe. Website: [www.cedarcresticecream.com](http://www.cedarcresticecream.com)

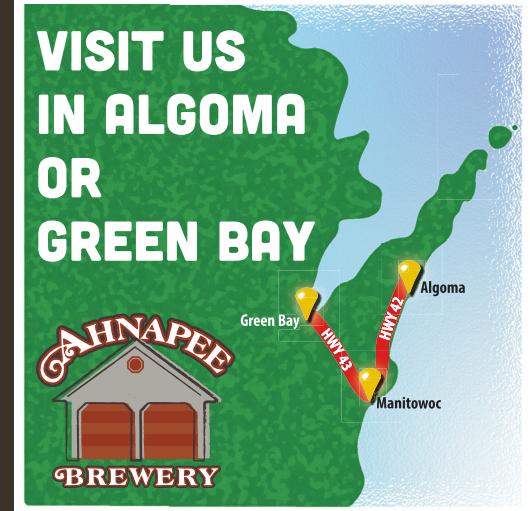
As you step off the S.S. Badger and onto Manitowoc's welcoming shoreline, a world of history, culture, family fun, and scenic beauty awaits. Whether you're exploring maritime marvels, strolling downtown, or attending one of the city's signature festivals, Manitowoc offers a refreshing mix of charm and adventure for every visitor. Don't miss the opportunity to uncover the many treasures this lakeside gem has to offer.

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# Wheelsman Joe DeBusk takes pride in the Badger

Wheelsman Joe DeBusk has a goal of someday being one of the Badger's captains. DeBusk, who lives in Reed City, Mich. has worked for Lake Michigan Carferry for 10 years, but became a Badger fan in 2004 when his grandparents began a tradition of taking him on an annual trip aboard the 410-foot ship.

"I have ridden on the Badger every year since," DeBusk said.

"Joe has worked his way up through the company and always has a smile on his face," said Sara Spore, Lake Michigan Carferry general manager. "He is the first to greet a passenger and is there to comfort those who may not be feeling well during a crossing. He does an amazing job as wheelsman and never hesitates to go above and beyond."

Last December DeBusk took on the task of decorating the exterior of the Badger with holiday lights -- including a Christmas tree at the bow -- attracting many people to the shoreline to admire the lit-up boat.

"We received a lot of compliments about the decorations," Spore said.

DeBusk began his career at the Badger in 2015 working as a deck hand assistant, a position now known as deck security. His job was to make sure the deck was clean and secured.

Joe took classes from the Great Lakes Maritime Academy, located at 1 North-

west Michigan College in Traverse City, Mich., where he earned a certification as an able body (AB) seaman, qualifying him to be a wheelsman. An AB also assists in loading and unloading the ship as well as performing deck maintenance.

Last year, he earned another certification as a radar observer, which is a step closer to his goal of becoming a deck officer, which will also allow him to be licensed as a third mate. With a Third Mate Great Lakes license and as he gains experience and time working aboard the Badger, he will qualify to serve any of the mate positions on the Badger, third mate, second mate, and first mate..

"I'm hoping to have that done by the end of the year," DeBusk said. "It will be kind of bitter-sweet because I really enjoy stirring the ship. But, my ultimate goal is to earn my captain's license."

Earlier this year, DeBusk received the Interlake Maritime Services Customer First Award, presented during the company's annual winter meeting. Interlake Maritime Services, which operates one of the largest shipping fleet on the Great Lakes, acquired Lake Michigan Carferry (LMC) in 2020.

He was nominated for the award by Spore.

"Each year Interlake honors an employee for each of our core values,"

Spore said. "Those values include innovation, customer first, passion to perform, and one-hand (a crew member who embraces the idea of always willing to lend a hand to a shipmate).

The recipient is selected by the Interlake executive committee as well as some of the company's captains. Interlake Maritime Services' corporate headquarters are based in Middleburg Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, and additional offices are located in Ludington and Sault Sainte Marie, Mich.

DeBusk's love of carferry and maritime history extends beyond his job. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Society for the Preservation of the SS City of Milwaukee and USCGC Acacia in Manistee, Mich. The Society oversees the museum ship SS City of Milwaukee, a carferry that was built in 1930 and served in the Grand Trunk Railroad fleet out of Grand Haven, Mich. and Muskegon, Mich. until 1978 when it briefly served the Ann Arbor Railroad fleet out of Frankfort, Mich. The US Coast Guard Cutter Acacia began service on the Great Lakes during World War II and was decommissioned in 2006. Many present and past members of the Badger's crew have volunteered on the City of Milwaukee.

The Badger offers a variety of year-round and season jobs. Visit [ssbadger.com/join-the-crew](http://ssbadger.com/join-the-crew) for more information.



## VISIT MANISTEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

# Manistee home to many historic sites

BY DAVID L. BARBER

Permanently anchored in Manistee is a floating museum that pays tribute to the S.S. Badger, and historic Great Lakes ships like it.

Moored on the western shores of Manistee Lake is the S.S. City of Milwaukee, the last of six sister ships designed in the 1920s and built by the Manitowoc

Shipbuilding company out of Wisconsin. It is available for tours, facility rental, and contains a bed and breakfast (May through early September).

Tied up next to that time-honored ship is a second floating museum, the USCGC Acacia (WLB 406), one of 39 180-foot seagoing buoy tenders built for the US Coast Guard between 1942 and

1944. It is also available for tours and facility rental.

Located in the center of the city is its 19th-century fire department that has earned a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the oldest continually manned and operating fire departments in the world.

Just a few blocks west of the fire de-

partment is the main branch of the Manistee County Library, where one book that measures a whopping 29 ½ inches by 39 ½ inches is on display. That book, "The Birds of America," has page-after-page of colorful paintings made from the original drawings of John James Audubon and a note at the side of the book reads: "Reissued by J.W. Audubon

## VISIT MANISTEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Roe Lockwood and Sons, publishers, 1860; New York. This is a double elephant folio that ... given to the library by the Honorable T.J. Ramsdell."

That Manistee County Historical Museum, which is located in downtown Manistee, was originally the A.H. Lyman Company Building. Built in 1883, it's one of many historical structures - both businesses and homes - the community has been meticulously maintained into the 21st century. Because it began as a drug store, the museum's display of items related to that field of science is of particular note.

The museum also offers an extensive genealogy station.

Just to the west of the downtown area on the north side of the Manistee River/Channel, the 38-foot tall Manistee North Pierhead Lighthouse just might be one of the most visited and photographed lighthouses anywhere in the state, in part because it has just one of the four remaining catwalks on Lake Michigan, one that stretches nearly a quarter-mile from shoreline to beacon. The fact the Manistee Lighthouse stands front and center between the city's two golden beaches - Fifth Avenue and First Street - is an appealing calling card, too.

Starting at the mouth of the Manistee River Channel where 600-foot long Great Lakes freighters crawl at a snail's pace to get to their foundry docking destinations just over two miles inland on Man-



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

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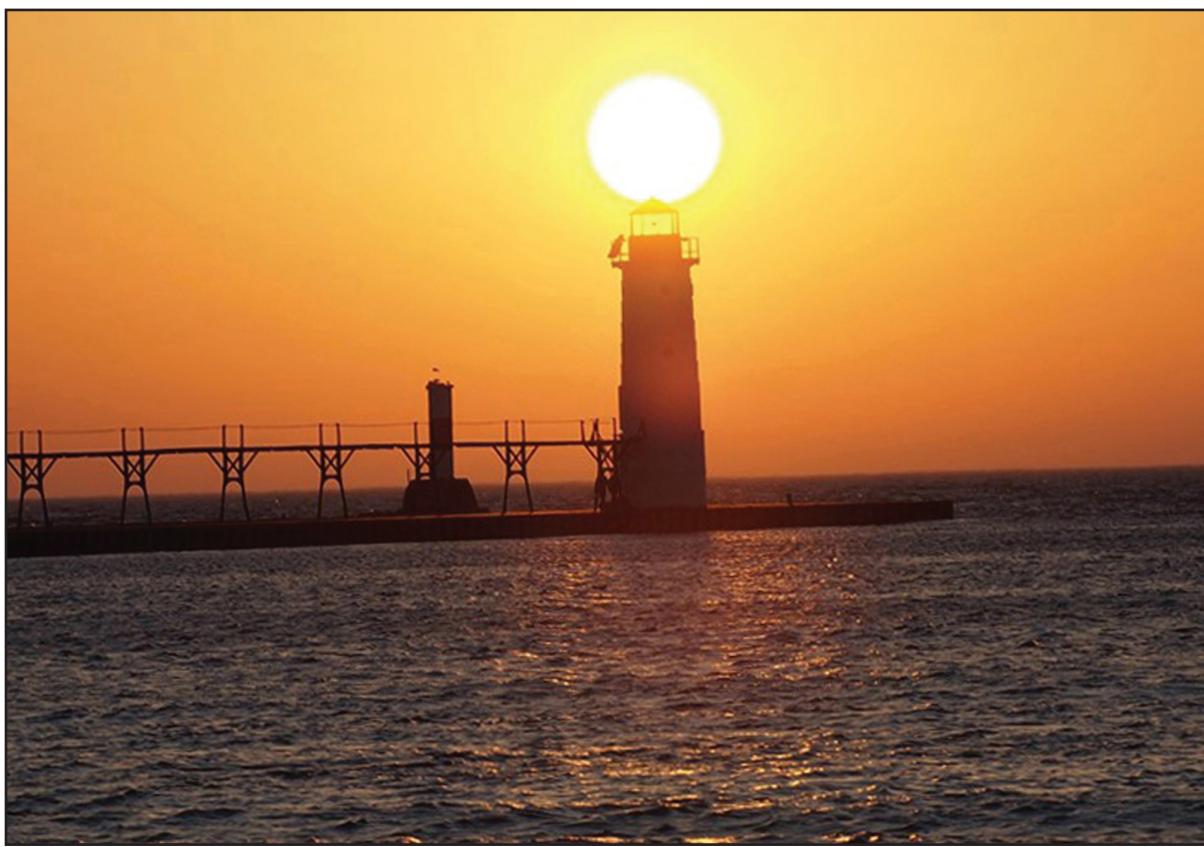
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## VISIT MANISTEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

istee Lake, locals and visitors can walk step-for-step alongside with those giant boats on the city's riverwalk that runs parallel to the river, during which they can call out to the crew to exchange pleasantries. The riverwalk follows the Manistee River and has 13 signs along its path, with mileage markers every

tenth mile to track your distance.

The Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts in Manistee is another of the city's true jeweled landmarks. Opening its doors in 1903, it was named after the aforementioned local lawyer and entrepreneur, T.J. Ramsdell. Acclaimed actor James Earl Jones, known as Todd Jones

in the 1950s when he went to high school in Brethren and worked at the theatre, started at the Ramsdell as a stage carpenter and later broke into acting when he portrayed Othello in 1955. The theater was also where Toni Trucks, who starred in the hit TV series SEAL Team, got her start.

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# Safety is Job One for Badger Captains

BY ERIC WELCH  
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS

For Captains Ed Wiltse and Mike Martin the safety and security of visitors to the S.S. BADGER is the highest priority. Through the Badger's safety and security program, the pair of skippers ensure that each and every staff member understands this commitment and the importance of keeping passengers and crew safe while onboard the ship.

Before the season begins the crew of the Badger participates in safety and security response drills. The safety training consists of general safety topics- fire and emergency, person overboard, and abandon ship. "We also conduct training and drills on security awareness and response," said Wiltse.

Drills for fire and emergency, person overboard, abandon ship and security response are also part of the annual safety inspection conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard each spring. Wiltse said, "The drills are part of the overall vessel safety regulations which the Badger and her crew must satisfy every year in order to receive the annual certifications required to operate in commercial service."

The crew of the Badger continues

to conduct safety and security drills during the operating season. Some are scheduled weekly while other surprise drills are at the Captain's discretion. The Badger Captains always make sure to notify their leadership team of surprise drills so they can inform passengers of the training exercises beforehand.

The Badger typically gets underway with a crew ranging between forty and fifty personnel depending on passenger load. Captain Martin explains, "the crew is broken up into three divisions- the deck crew, engine crew, and hospitality crew." Each crew member has a responsibility to act in the event of an emergency, including customer service staff, or hospitality crew, who are trained to direct passengers to safety.

An important aspect of keeping passengers safe are life jackets. Crews onboard the Badger practice donning lifejackets first on themselves and then on another crewmember acting as a passenger unable to help themselves. There is no time limit for the donning drill, Captain Martin prefers "staff get it done properly and without panic."

One of the most serious emergencies a vessel at sea can experience is a fire while underway. Members of the

Badger's deck crew and engine crew are trained firefighters, many of whom trained at the fire academy in Traverse City. These firefighters don their turnout gear weekly for emergency training.

In addition to fire and emergency training the Badger crew performs life-boat drills at least once a week. Loading as many crew members as possible into lifeboats while docked in either Ludington or Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The boats are lowered into the water and rolled about to simulate the waves of Lake Michigan that the crew might encounter in the event of an abandon ship order.

The Badger is also equipped with a motorized rescue boat that Captain Martin said, "must be launched in ninety seconds or less per Coast Guard regulations."

The crews train regularly with the rescue boat in man overboard drills and Martin adds, "the crews are consistently under that ninety second launch regulation." The rescue capabilities of the Badger include life rafts and the motorized rescue boat can marshal the rafts through the water, "like a shepherd herding the flock," said Martin.

Captain Martin has worked for the company that owns the Badger for the past 26 years after graduating from the

Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City. He has been a Captain on the Badger for 10 years.

Captain Wiltse is an experienced mariner as well. In 1984 he entered the Great Lakes Maritime Academy, where he served as a cadet on several vessels as part of the required training. Wiltse graduated in 1987 and received his license from the U.S. Coast Guard. He began his nautical career as a Third Mate before working his way up to the rank of Captain.

With more than 66 years of combined experience at sea, Wiltse and Martin split their command duties with a three days on three days off schedule during the Badger's operating season, which begins with the Badger's first voyage on May 16 and runs through October 12, 2025.

Wiltse explained that "safety and training are how we keep our passengers and crew safe. We strive to meet or exceed the Coast Guard's guidelines every day. If you are not working to be the safest and best you can be every time, you do not belong in this business." Martin added, "If you've never been on the Badger, please join us- one of the most fun things you can do is to take an old steam ship across the lake."

## DISCOVER PENTWATER, MICHIGAN

# Pentwater: Small in size, big in adventure

BY DAVID L. BARBER

PHOTOS BY JEANNE BARBER

in the tall pines, along the sugar-sand shoreline of Lake Michigan, is the quaint, quiet community of Pentwater.

Quaint? Yes. It is peaceful and pleasant as any community – big or small – that calls the Mitten State its home.

Quiet? Not in the summertime. Or even the spring or fall, for that matter, though it does nap during the winter season, but just a bit.



Resting in the western wilds of Oceana County, Pentwater attracts visitors by the thousands every summer, visitors who arrive by car, bike and yes, even by boat – boats that are as big as the S.S. Badger that drops anchor in Ludington just a few miles to the north.

Pentwater's downtown shopping area – again, the word quaint comes to mind when describing it – has dozens of specialty and curiosity shops, art stores, one-of-a-kind restaurants and bars that specialize in deli meats, home-cooked meals, bakery items, cheeses, fish and spices, champagnes, wines and beers and more.

And it's not just what these businesses sell and serve that makes them so unique and inviting year after year, it's the kindness of the owners and workers who operate them that makes them, individually and collectively, family-friendly destinations where name tags aren't needed because names are never forgotten.

The patchwork of farms that surround Pentwater offer a seasonal smorgasbord of fresh, high-energy fruits and veggies, including asparagus, strawberries, cherries, corn, toma-

toes, plums, pears, nectarines, peaches, apples, squash and more, which local stores and restaurants are only too happy to take advantage of – a good thing for those who patronize those stores and restaurants. Not to mention the bountiful farmer's market held on the Green.

And the rivers and lakes that surround the community? There are those who say you won't find any better fishing anywhere else in the state, making Pentwater and its waters the ideal place to catch your salmon, lake and brown trout, perch, steelhead and more.

Pentwater Lake – all 500 acres of it – is located in the center of town and is connected by river channel to Lake Michigan. The Charles Mears State Park, one of the most popular and busiest in the state, abuts both the channel and Lake Michigan and it remains the hub around which the wheel of fishing, boating, hunting, walking, power boating, sailing, swimming, kayaking, canoeing and birding revolve.

But getting back to the summertime – the wondrous, peaceful summertime – when old-time, good-time band concerts deliver their own appeal, when

parades and picnics command enthusiastic audiences, and when park benches become the meeting grounds for strangers who quickly become friends.

With a population of about 900 permanent residents, give or take a small family or two, Pentwater can swell to several thousand when visitors and vacation-seekers converge on the quaint – there's that word again – community during the warm and welcome months of summer.



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# Winter work

BY ANDREW VERVEDLE  
SS BADGER CHIEF ENGINEER

Visit Ludington in February and you might think the SS Badger is empty and sleeping for the winter. For the ship's engineers, winter doesn't mean sitting idle. Every year, a dozen crewmen conduct routine maintenance, inspections, and upgrades to keep the 72-year-old steamship as reliable as when she was new.

One job is overhauling the historic steam engines. Each piston is pulled from the cylinders and piston rings are cleaned and checked. If necessary, adjustments or even new bearings are fitted to ensure reliability.

During the sailing season, the Badger is "home" to her professional crew who live, work, eat, and sleep onboard the ship. Winter projects also included renovating crew quarters including the "flickers," a car deck away from the hustle and bustle of our guests. On the early car ferries, when railroad cars rolled on or off the boats, the lights would flicker in these rooms, giving them their name. The lights don't flicker today, but the name remains.

Originally built in 1930, the decking on the Ludington dock, or apron, has been replaced and is ready for decades more service. This apron was adapted from handling railcars to automobiles

and commercial trucks.

Prior to each sailing season, extensive inspections are conducted to ensure the Badger remains safe and compliant with maritime law. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) and American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) inspect the vessel from bow to stern.

Shortly before the sailing season begins all these efforts culminate in an intense two to three-day inspection referred to as Certificate of Inspection. During COI, the USCG and ABS witness the operation of safety and engineering equipment across the entire boat, boiler systems and safety valves are tested, and electric generators are put through their paces.

It's not just the boat, the crew is tested also. Fire and lifeboat drills are conducted to assure each crew member knows just what to do if ever the need arises. Only when everything is proven ready will the Badger receive her COI and be ready for our guests.

For Manitowoc and Ludington, the Badger's first voyage heralds the arrival of summer; visitors line the channel to see her pass by and offer a warm wave to passengers and crew. Thanks to a dedicated crew, months of hard work gets the Badger to this point, and we hope you enjoy sailing her as much as we do!



*The Badger Sets Sail, and So Do Our Hearts.*

*Here's to another season of bridging connections and creating memories between Ludington and Manitowoc*

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# Jr. Capt. Gabriel's SS Badger ferry adventure

GRIMMS, Wis. -- Mary Svacina has had a tradition of taking each of her grandsons on a Round Trip Mini Cruise on the SS Badger ever since they each turned 5 years old. Last summer, she took her youngest grandson, Gabriel.

Svacina, 71, lives in Grimms, Wis., located in Manitowoc County, about 15 miles from the Badger's Manitowoc dock. She said the Lake Michigan car ferries have been part of her life since she was a little girl.

"My mom used to love dressing me in sailor dresses," she said. "I did the same thing with my daughter. Then, she had three boys. So, I started a tradition of dressing them in a captain's uniform when they were each 5."

Each of the boys, Portland, 10, Rowan, 9, and Gabriel, 5, have sailed on the cross-lake ferry with their grandmother.

"We left Manitowoc in the afternoon and arrived in Ludington that evening," Mary said. "On the cruise, Gabriel drew a lot of attention, even from the captain (Capt. Ed Wiltse). He made a special effort to speak to Gabriel. It was certainly a highlight."

After arriving in Ludington at 7 p.m. (EDT), Mary and Ga-

briel, and Mary's friend, Barbara Gelhausen, of Manitowoc, needed to be back at the dock to catch the boat leaving before the 8:45 p.m. (ET) ferry departure back to Wisconsin -- just enough time to get ice cream at House of Flavors Restaurant -- a Ludington tradition. Thanks to a friendly cab driver, and the great service of House of Flavors, they were back in plenty of time.

"Visiting Ludington is always a great experience," Mary said. "Everyone is very friendly. The cab drivers were so kind. He went into the restaurant and let the staff at House of Flavors know that we were in between sailings of the Badger. They made sure we were served right away. Then, we didn't even have to call for the cab. He was there waiting for us and got us back to the dock in plenty of time for the evening departure."

The only disappointment of the trip for Jr. Capt. Gabriel was that he fell asleep on the return voyage to Manitowoc. "He really wanted to see the stars over Lake Michigan, but just couldn't stay awake," Mary said.

The S.S. Badger and its former sister vessels have special meaning for Mary.

"I grew up in Manitowoc so the ferries were a big part of our town," Mary said. "Back then, the ferries would come up the river, requiring the two bridges to be raised. It was always a thrill when the bridges went up."

"My first trip on a car ferry was on the City of Midland the summer after my dad died," Mary said. "I was 8 when my dad passed away and my mom wanted to do something special for my siblings

and me. In those days, there were sit-down dinners on the boats and it was very fancy. I remember we were in the dock in Ludington and my mom hadn't remembered which ship we had taken over from Manitowoc. But, we figured it out and made it back to the right dock."

During that time, eight cross lake car ferries operated out of Ludington, transporting rail freight, automobiles, and passengers to the Wisconsin ports of Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Kewaunee.

Mary said she will wait a few years to take the boys on the Badger again.

"I am waiting until they are older and more independent will give them an entirely different experience on the Badger."

Round Trip Mini Cruises on the SS Badger ferry are available throughout the sailing season, May 16 to Oct. 12. To take the Cruise, and to return the same day, such as what Mary did, passage must take place during double sailings, which are June 20 to Sept. 1.

This cruise offers passengers the opportunity to travel at a discounted rate of \$108 per adult without a vehicle, returning within 48 hours. Passage is free for two children up to age 15; each additional child between the ages of 5-15 is \$62; children under 5 are free for any cross-lake ferry passage.

Passengers wishing to take the Mini Cruise must call the Badger's Reservation Office at 800-841-4243. All other passage can be booked by calling or online at ssbadger.com.



Jr Capt. Gabriel with Capt Ed Wiltse.

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## SS Badger, home of the Poort family

LUDINGTON, Mich. -- Over its 70-plus years of service, the SS Badger has been a vessel of making special memories for thousands of people that span multiple generations. For one Hart, Michigan family the Badger not only provided an important service during a time of hardship, it has become an integral part of their lives.

"My 21-year-old daughter, Sarah Ur-

siny, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2021," Tonia Poort explained. "She was living in Hart, and we had to transport her multiple times to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for treatments. Eventually, the tumor caused a spinal cord injury and paralyzed her, making the eight-hour drive challenging."

Taking the SS Badger, which travels

between Ludington, Michigan and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, would cut the drive time in half.

"I called the Badger's reservation office to find out if the ship could accommodate Sarah, who, at that point, was using a large motorized wheelchair," Tonia said. "I knew that boarding the ship required going up to another deck and that the Badger had a stair chair to

assist with passengers with disabilities. The reservation specialist explained that the motorized wheelchair couldn't be brought to the passenger decks, but we could use a regular wheelchair."

Tonia said she knew she would not be able to transfer Sarah herself between the wheelchairs and the stair chair.

"The woman on the phone was very

calm and said, 'No worries, we have people who can help with all your needs,' Tonia said. 'There was just so much compassion in her voice and all my worries just went away. At that moment I just knew we were embarking on something special.'

Over the 2021 sailing season, Sarah got to know many of the crew members and passengers.

"The people we met were just incredible," Tonia said. "Passengers would come up and ask to pray with us. The crew members would share their stories with us. Every single crossing was just an amazing experience. It was so convenient for us to travel on the ship and became something that Sarah really looked forward to. It was very therapeutic for her."

Because of the frequent trips on the boat, Sarah got to know the crew members.

"During one of our crossings she was talking with one of the deck crew members," Tonia said. "She wanted to know all about his job and what it took to keep the ship going. She came home and told her younger brother, Luke, who was a student at Hart High School that he needed to apply for a job on the Badger."

"She told Luke that working on the Badger would be the perfect job for him."

Then, one day, Sarah began talking to Dean Schultz, who, at that time, worked as the ship's explosives K-9 handler. As part of the ship's security protocols, the Badger utilizes K-9 services to detect possible threats to the ship, inspecting vehicles waiting to be loaded. Schultz began working for the Badger following his retirement as a sergeant with Ludington Police Department.

Steve Poort, Tonia's husband and father of Sarah, was about to retire from a career in law enforcement.

"Sarah started asking Dean about his job," Tonia said. "She told him all about her dad and how he was getting ready to retire and she knew he needed something else to do as he moved into a new season in his life. Sarah wrote down her dad's number on a piece of paper and handed it to Dean. As we drove off I thought to myself, 'He's just going to throw that piece of paper away.'

Sarah passed away on Dec. 5, 2021 at the age of 22, just two months after the Badger's sailing season ended, leaving her young son, Douglas and husband Scott Ursiny Jr., along with the rest of her family.

Then, something happened.

In January 2022 Dean Schultz called Steve to talk about the K-9 position at the Badger. The two met for dinner and spent several hours talking about their careers and what it's like to work at the Badger.

"I couldn't believe that Dean kept that note and then called Steve. They very quickly became friends," Tonia said.

As Sarah knew it would happen, Steve began working at the Badger prior to the 2022 sailing season. As explosives K-9 handler, he works with the ship's dog, Greta. Luke also put in his application to work on the deck crew and was hired in the pre-season as well.

Then, Tonia was hired to work on the deck crew in June 2022.

"The first day they hired me the sun began to shine again in my life," Tonia said.

Tonia and Steve's other son, Nathan Poort, was then hired to work as a coal passer on the engine crew. Their

daughter, Katie Poort, and Tonia's mother, Sue McDonald of Shelby, Michigan, were also hired.

"My mom started out working in the galley and this coming season will work in the cruise director's office," Tonia said. "Katie won't be returning this season so she can concentrate on taking care of her newborn baby."

"My entire family working at the Badger has been such a blessing," Tonia said. "When we are on board together we always eat together. For me, it's been an incredible experience. I spent two seasons working in deck security, which allowed me to meet so many people and share our stories."

Sue said she enjoys working on the Badger for many reasons, but most importantly she gets to spend time with her family.

"I love working on the Badger," Sue said. "The best part is spending time with my family. I am so proud of my grandchildren and the careers they have developed on the boat."

This year, Tonia has taken on a new role with the company. In January she was named gift shop manager, following the unexpected passing of Valarie Stapleton, who was in the position for over two decades.

"I am honored to follow in Val's footsteps," Tonia said. "Val was such a beloved member of the crew and set such a strong foundation of offering quality products for Badger fans. This is such a great opportunity."

Both Luke and Nathan have furthered their maritime education, moving into new positions. Luke is now an able-bodied seaman, a certification that is the first step of moving into higher deck crew ranks. They both said they plan on having long careers at Lake

Michigan Carferry and Interlake Maritime Services.

Lake Michigan Carferry, which operates the Badger, is owned by Interlake Maritime Services, whose Interlake Steamship Company operates one of the largest freighter fleets on the Great Lakes.

After the Badger was laid-up for the season in October 2024, Luke was transferred to the M/V Mesabi Miner, a 1,004-foot freighter that has a holding capacity of 63,300 gross tons. There, he served as a wheelsman until the ship was laid up for the winter.

"Luke will be returning to the Mesabi Miner when it returns to service," Tonia said. "He'll work there as a wheelsman until the Badger returns to full crew at the end of April. I'm very proud that the captain of Mesabi Miner wanted him to return."

Nathan was sent to school by LMC to earn his qualified member of the engine department (QMED) license, a merchant mariner credential (MMC) that allows a mariner to work in the engine room of a ship. It's the highest rating for unlicensed crew members in the engine room. The engine crew on board the Badger has a job unique to any other maritime job in the United States, as the Badger is the last coal-powered steamship in the country.

"This is such an incredible company," Tonia said. "It understands the importance of investing in its employees and sends them to further their education. My family has been so blessed to join this even bigger family of amazing, compassionate and caring people. We just love the Badger and Interlake and it's all because of the tragedy of my daughter's passing, which became a miracle for all of us. I just know she is still with us."

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# History of the Chadburn EOT

Technology on board the S.S. Badger spans nearly 200 years. One of the oldest forms of technology is the engine order telegraph (EOT), which is used to communicate between the pilot houses and the engine room.

The EOT was created by an engineer and medical doctor named Charles Grafton Page (1812-1868) in the 1850s.

The EOT is a device that allows the captain or officers on a ship's bridge (pilot house) to transmit specific speed and direction orders to the engineers in the engine room, improving navigation safety and efficiency.

The EOT operates with a small black arrow located near the center of the dial, connected by wire to the other

telegraph. It shows what the other station's telegraph handle is set at. When the pilot house crew calls for an order, the black arrow in the engine room moves to that position; a bell rings to notify an order has been given. The engine room crew then answers by moving their handle to match the arrow, which causes the arrow on the pilot

house's telegraph to move to match the handle's position, acknowledging the command.

Charles Page earned a degree in medicine from Harvard College in 1836 and gave lectures on chemistry. While still a medical student, he conducted a groundbreaking experiment which demonstrated the presence of electric-

ity in an arrangement of a spiral conductor that no one had tried before. The device emitted shocks and Page advocated for it to be used for medical treatment, an early form of electrotherapy. But, his own interest lay in its heightening of electrical tension, or voltage, above that of the low voltage battery input. After improvements, he named it the Dynamic Multiplier.

His experiments led to the invention of the induction coil. His work was cited by Alexander Graham Bell, 30 years later, as an important precedent for Bell's development of the telephone.

He later invented many other electromagnetic devices and even consulted with Samuel F.B. Morse and Alfred Lewis Vail on the development of telegraph apparatus and techniques. He contributed to the adoption of suspended wires using a ground return, designed a signal receiver magnet and tested a magneto as a source of substitute for the battery.

Another one of Page's inventions included the Axial Engine, an electromagnetic locomotive.

EOTs on the Badger are located in the engine room and both the forward and aft pilot houses. Passengers can witness the EOT in use when the captain moves to the aft pilot house during docking. During this procedure, a series of maritime music occurs as a variety of bells chime from the EOT indicating various communication back and forth between the captain and the engineers. Down in the engine room, two engineers monitor the EOTs -- one controlling the starboard side engines, one controlling the port side engines while an oiler keeps watch on the instruments.

The EOTs on board the Badger were manufactured by Chadburn's Limited of Liverpool, England, which is why they are often referred to as "Chadburns." Chadburn and its predecessor companies were responsible for 75 percent of the world's marine telegraph production. The Badger's Chadburns were installed during her construction in 1952 and continue to be used as a primary source of communications.



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## VISIT LUDINGTON, MICHIGAN



# Ludington: A Feast for the Senses

Ludington is not only a place to embark or disembark after a trip on the S.S. Badger. It is also a city filled with historic, culinary, creative, and simply fun things to do. Here are some of the top ways to spend time strolling through the vibrant downtown or heading towards the beach for a truly enjoyable day in the sunshine.

### LAKE MICHIGAN BEACH SCENE

Ludington boasts some of the Midwest's best beaches, with 28 miles of shoreline. Within walking distance to downtown, Stearns Park Beach offers volleyball courts, food concessions, picnic areas with grills, shuffleboard, mini-golf, and a skate park. It's also a great location to watch the S.S. Badger ferry arrive. Dock distance: 1.3 miles. Website: [www.pureludington.com/Beaches-Parks](http://www.pureludington.com/Beaches-Parks)

### CLIMB A LIGHTHOUSE

Ludington is home to the Ludington North Breakwater Light and Big Sable Point Light in Ludington State Park. The Breakwater Light is accessible from a half-mile pier and is open for tours and tower climbs in summer. Big Sable Point Lighthouse, located 1.5 miles into the park, offers panoramic views and a scenic hike. Dock distance: 1.8 miles. Website: [www.splka.org](http://www.splka.org)

### HUNT FOR SCULPTURES

Waterfront Sculpture Park includes green space for picnicking, two large playscapes, and a sculpture trail with nine bronze sculptures depicting Ludington's history. Dock distance: 0.5 mile. Website: [www.pureludington.com/Waterfront-Sculpture-Park](http://www.pureludington.com/Waterfront-Sculpture-Park)

## VISIT LUDINGTON, MICHIGAN

### CULTURE GALORE

Ludington's cultural attractions include the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum in the former U.S. Coast Guard Station, Sandcastles Children's Museum with three floors of interactive exhibits, and Ludington Area Center for the Arts hosting exhibitions and performances. Several galleries are located downtown. Dock distance: 0.6 to 1 mile. Website: [www.pureludington.com/Arts-Culture](http://www.pureludington.com/Arts-Culture)

### TAKE A HIKE

Ludington features over 40 miles of

trails, including the Maritime Heritage Trail, the paved Cartier Pathway (1.3 miles), and the 10-mile Urban Single-track Trail System. Ludington State Park also offers 25 miles of trails. Bike rentals are available from Spindrift Cyclesports and Trailhead Bike Shop. Website: [www.shorelinecyclingclub.org](http://www.shorelinecyclingclub.org)

### ATTEND AN EVENT

Ludington hosts weekly artisan and farmers markets, live concerts, seasonal beach bonfires, movies in the park, and signature events like the Fourth of



July Freedom Festival and Suds on the Shore. Website: [www.pureludington.com/Events](http://www.pureludington.com/Events)

### TASTE CRAFT BEER

Enjoy local craft brews at Ludington Bay Brewing Co. and Jamesport Brewing Co., or sample Michigan-only craft beer at the Mitten Bar. All offer excellent food and vibrant atmospheres. Dock distance: less than 0.5 mile. Website: [www.pureludington.com/BEER](http://www.pureludington.com/BEER)

### GO FISHING ON LAKE MICHIGAN

Ludington is a top fishing port, known for its abundance of trout and salmon. More fish are caught here annually than at any other Michigan port. Choose from 25 licensed charter captains. Dock distance: less than 0.5 mile. Website: [www.ludingtonsalmon.com](http://www.ludingtonsalmon.com)

### ENJOY A CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Ludington's downtown is filled with dining options and drink spots. Legacy Plaza features tables, a fireplace, a music stage, and a pavilion for events. Sample adult beverages in the Ludington Outdoor Social District. Dock distance: 0.5 mile. Website: [www.downtownludington.org](http://www.downtownludington.org)

### WATCH THE SUNSET

Enjoy sunsets over Lake Michigan from Waterfront Park or Stearns Park Beach. Free Sunset Beach Bonfires with live music take place the fourth Thursdays in June, July, and August from 8-10 p.m. Dock distance: 0.5 to 1.3 miles. Website: [www.pureludington.com/Sunset-Bonfire](http://www.pureludington.com/Sunset-Bonfire)

### OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

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Big Sable River, and 360 campsites. Website: [www.michigan.gov/dnr/parks](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/parks)

**Big Sable Point Lighthouse** - Located in Ludington State Park, it's a 1.5-mile hike to the tower. Children over 40 inches tall can climb for a panoramic view. Website: [www.splka.org](http://www.splka.org)

**Hamlin Lake Beach** - Warmer waters make this spot inside Ludington State Park ideal for young swimmers. Families can boat, fish, and picnic here. Website: [www.pureludington.com](http://www.pureludington.com)

### INDOOR FUN & EDUCATIONAL SPOTS

**Sandcastles Children's Museum**  
- Located at 129 East Ludington Avenue, this 12,000-square-foot museum includes over 30 interactive exhibits on transportation, construction, and healthcare. Website: [www.sandcastleschildrensmuseum.com](http://www.sandcastleschildrensmuseum.com)



### PET-FRIENDLY THINGS TO DO

Ludington is a pet-friendly haven for travelers accompanied by their four-legged companions. The city offers several outdoor spots where pets are welcome. Central Bark at Cartier Park

is Ludington's only off-leash dog park, complete with separate areas for large and small dogs in a wooded, fenced setting. Dogs can also splash freely at Loomis Street Dog Beach and Buttersville Beach,



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## VISIT LUDINGTON, MICHIGAN

both of which allow off-leash play and access to Lake Michigan. Ludington State Park is another favorite, with leashed dogs welcome on its trails and at shoreline areas like Sargent Sand Lake and Lost Lake.

For scenic walks, pet owners can enjoy the paved one-mile Cartier Park Walk Path, which features waste stations and views of Lincoln Lake. The Ludington School Forest Trails offer over five miles of wooded paths ideal for leashed pets, while Ludington State Park provides more than 20 miles of diverse terrain that's perfect for outdoor exploration with a dog.

Dining with your dog is also easy in Ludington. Restaurants like Ludington Bay Brewing Co., The Blu Moon Bistro, Cafe 106, and House of Flavors offer outdoor seating areas where dogs are welcome, so you can enjoy a meal or a treat together.

For additional resources, visit Visit Ludington's Pet-Friendly Guide and Pure Ludington's Dog-Friendly Page.

Plan Your Visit Website: [www.pureludington.com](http://www.pureludington.com)

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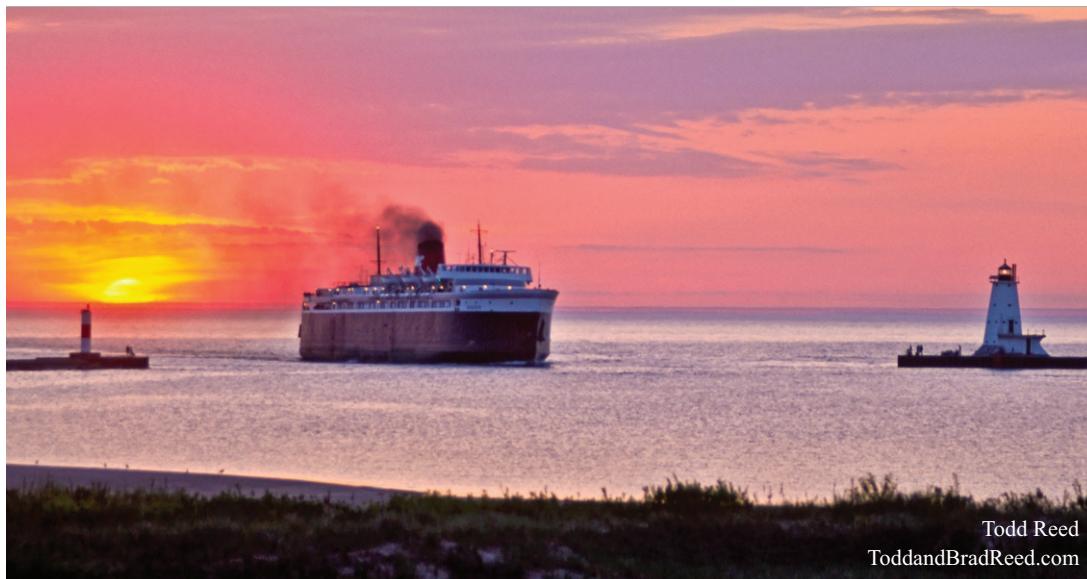
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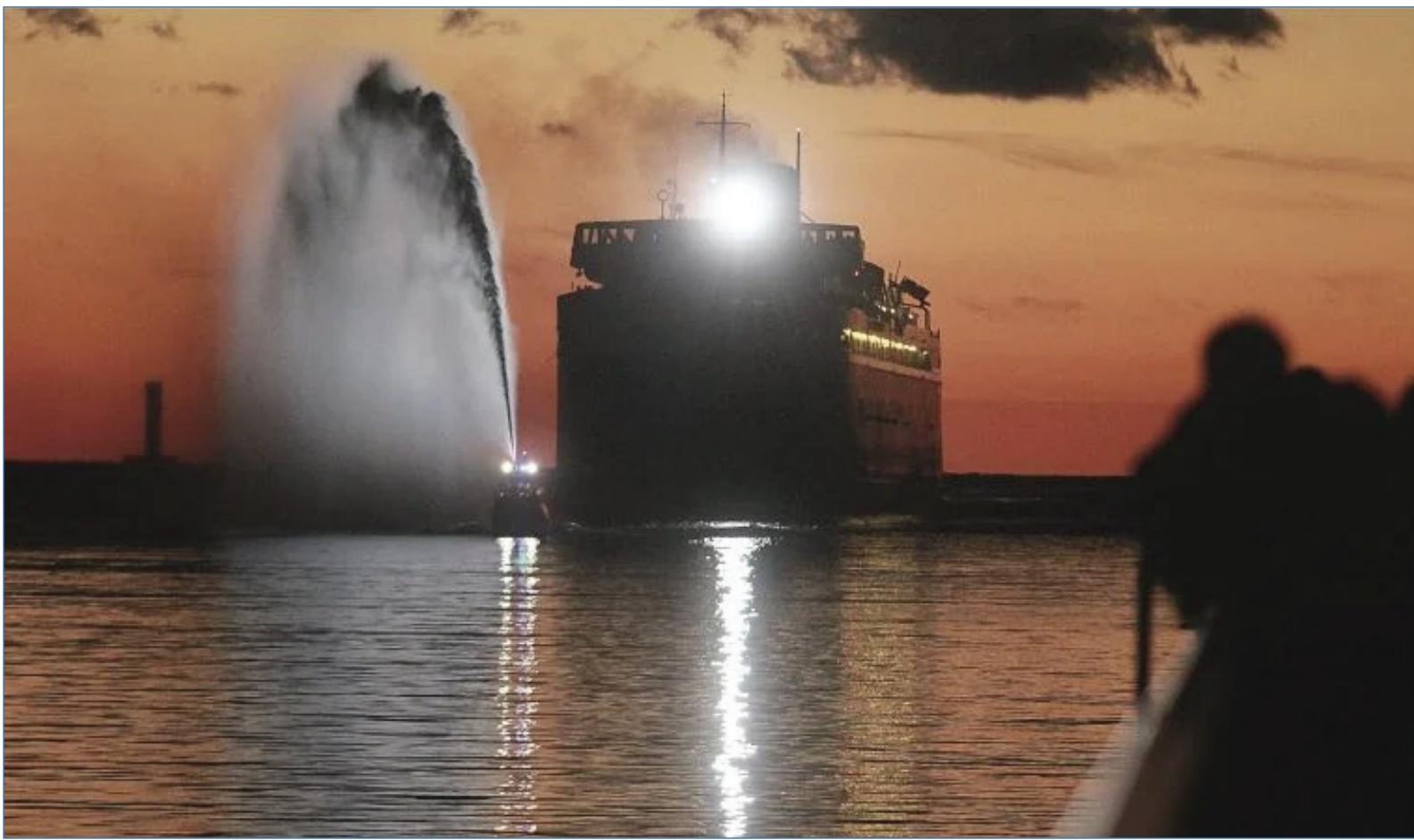
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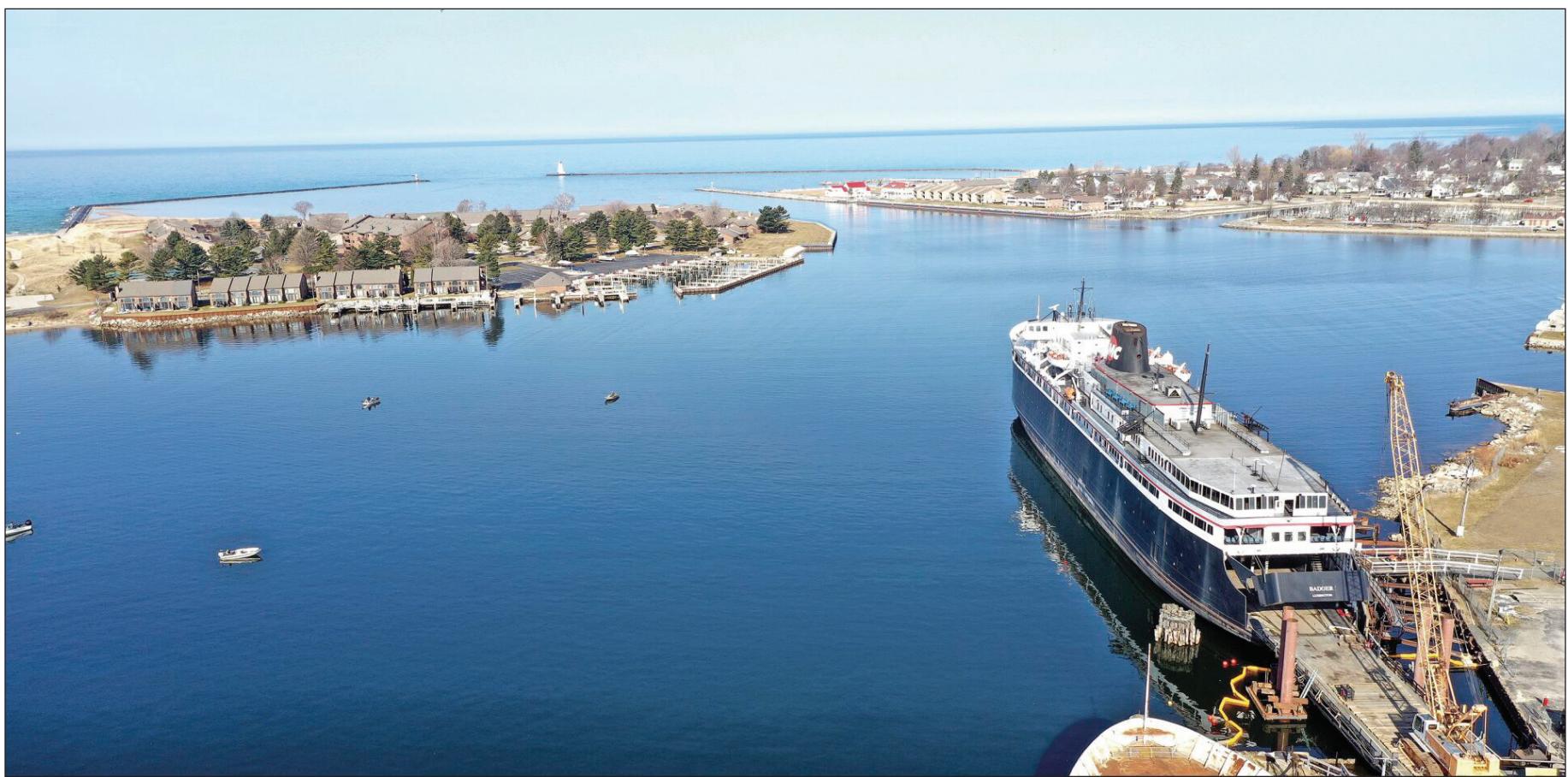


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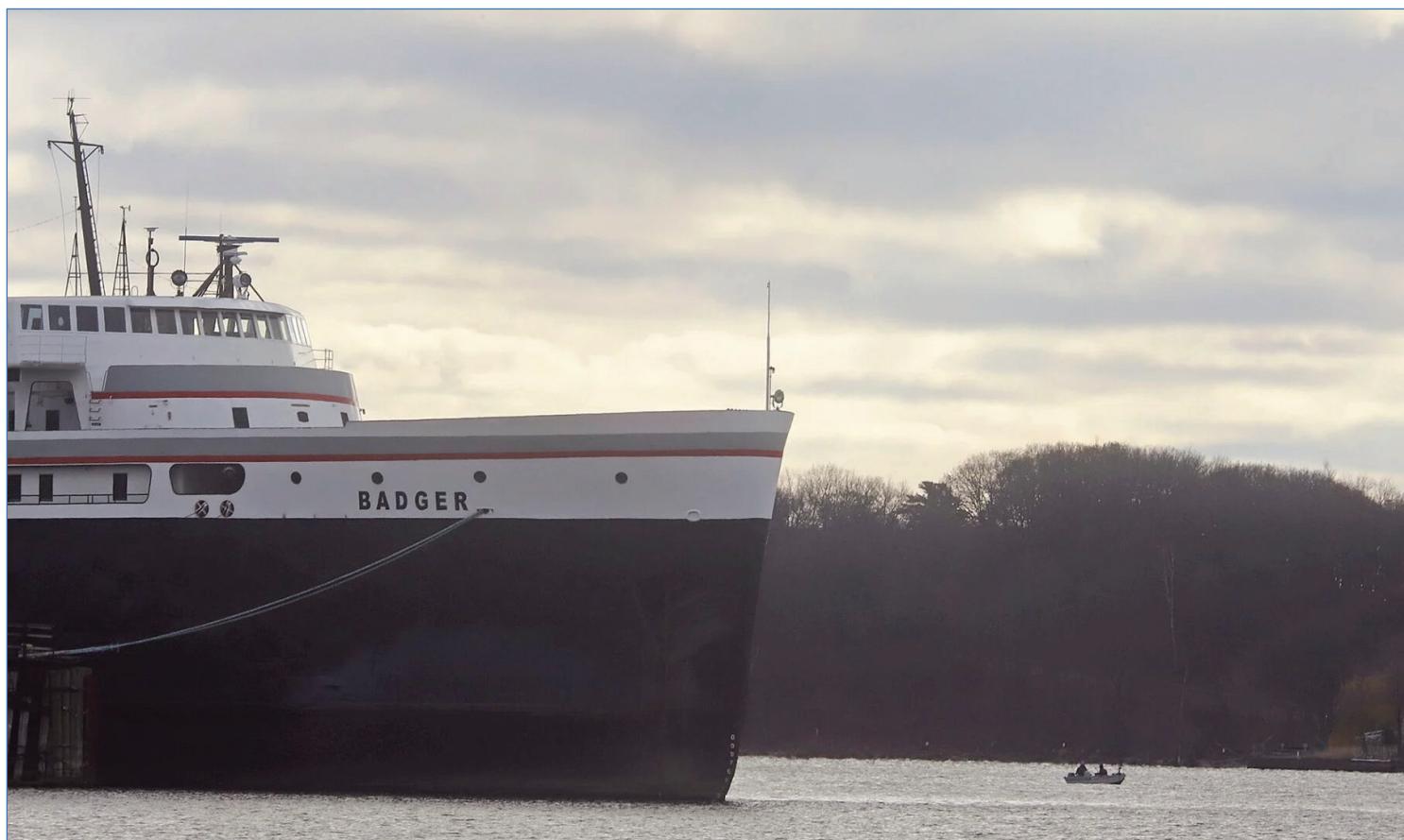
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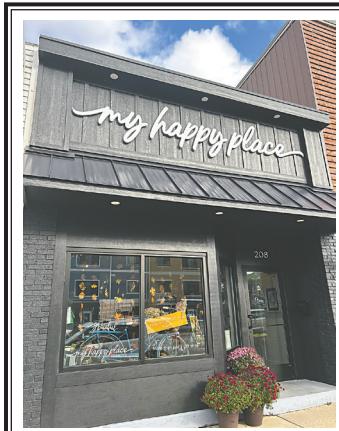
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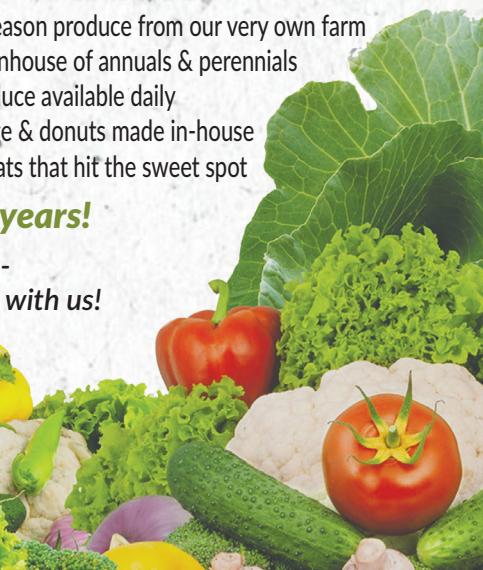


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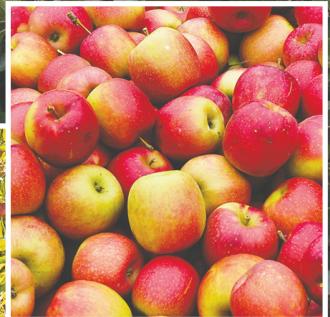
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