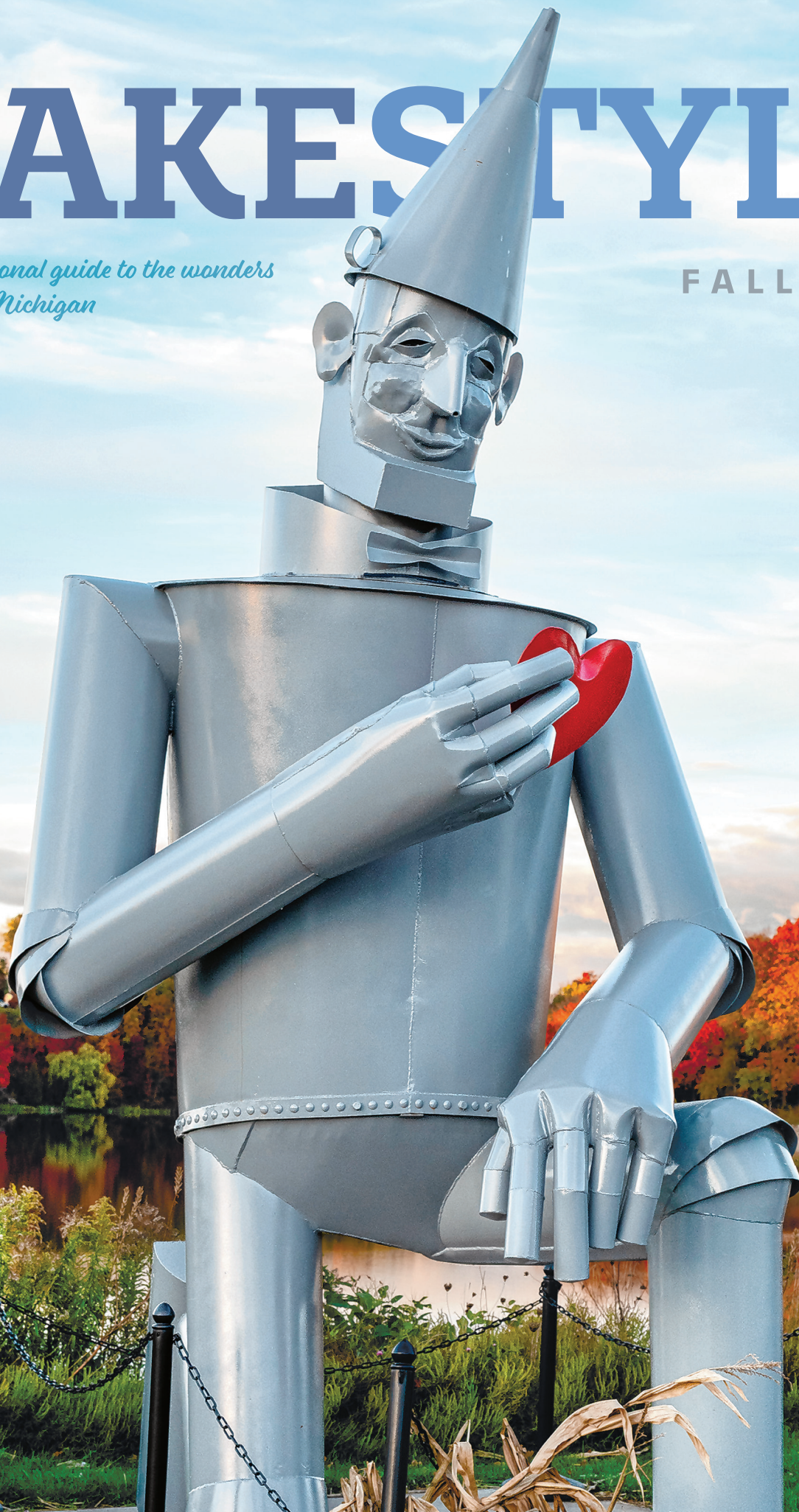


LAKESTYLE

*Your seasonal guide to the wonders
of West Michigan*

FALL 2026



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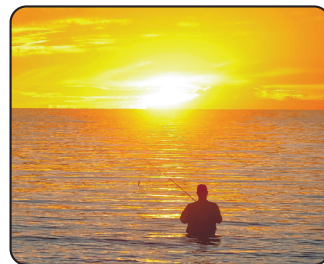
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Cover photo by **STEVE BEGNOCHE**

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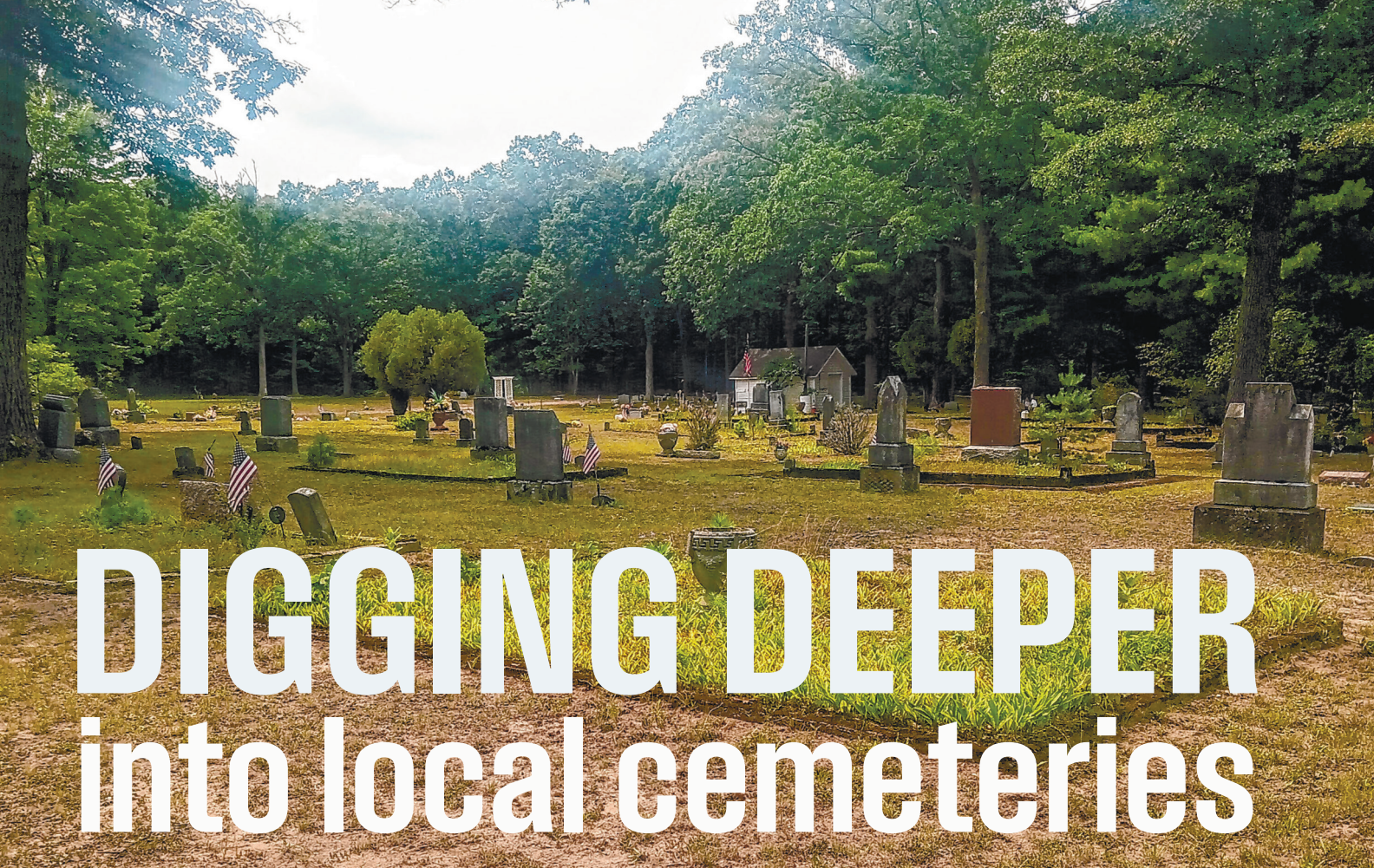
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DIGGING DEEPER into local cemeteries

BY SHANNA AVERY
Shoreline Media Staff Writer

Cemeteries have a story to tell. A place where people are laid for their final sleep, these resting grounds are often considered sacred, and are beautified with seasonal flowers mingled with the soft scent of fir, cedar and spruce trees, giving the impression of a park or garden setting. Some cemeteries that are overgrown and neglected can give off a more eerie and unsettling feeling, and some cemeteries are completely forgotten, with no markers to give remembrance to those who lay beneath the sod.

Cemeteries are more than just a burial ground - they serve as a benchmark for a history of a community - whether a large city, a small town or a long-gone settlement.

They tell the story of the people who lived in a location and the era they made their home there.

Bruce Micinski, who lives in Branch Township and is president of the Lake County Historical Society said there's an important correlation between local history and the cemeteries in the area.

"A lot of them they do tell a story about the individuals and when they came and where they came from," he said. "In my program in October I'm doing the ghost towns and grave yards, so I'm going to talk about some of the different graveyards."

In Mason County there are the larger cemeteries such as the Lakeview Cemetery right on Lakeshore Drive on the north side of Ludington across from Lake Michigan, with more than 13,500 burials.

In contrast to the full grounds at Lakeview Cemetery, is a rather small and more obscure cemetery right in Ludington State Park between Beechwood Campground and Hamlin Lake Beach known as the Hamlin Village Cemetery - a historic site.

On the southeast part of town the Pere Marquette Cemetery is also known as the old Catholic Cemetery - with many cross-shaped gravestones and religious statues, with more than 4,000 burials.

Phillips Cemetery in Pere Marquette Charter Township on S. Lakeshore Drive dates back to 1866.

According to Find A Grave, Summit Township Cemetery is a short distance

east of Pere Marquette Highway and the former French School where there are a few family plots associated mostly with the main settlement and farming families.

Brookside Cemetery in Scottville has over 3,000 graves and covers an area both north and south of U.S. 10 on the western outskirts of the city.

The Mason County Poor Farm Cemetery is situated on 80 acres in section 20 in Amber Township on S. Dennis Road, where some of the residents of the poor farm who died on the premises are interred.

There's the Towns Cemetery (also known as N. Amber Cemetery) on Johnson Road, and S. Victory Cemetery on Fisher Road, and the Sugar Grove Cemetery.

As one heads east, they will find the Custer Cemetery, with over 2,000 graves, and the Eden Township Indian Cemetery, which was deeded in 1880. There also is the McCumber Cemetery in Logan Township.

For a more complete list of cemeteries in Mason County, visit FindAGrave.com.

Although his bones were re-buried in St. Ignace, the Pere Marquette Memo-



rial on Buttersville Peninsula marks the place where Jesuit Priest Fr. Pere Marquette, was said to have died while traveling along the shore of Lake Michigan, and was originally buried.

Mason County Historical Society offers cemetery tours, such as the Brookside Cemetery Tour, where folks learn about some of the Civil War veterans who settled in the area, as well as other interesting pioneers.

In Lake County, Micinski said the McPherson Cemetery which is back in the woods over in Branch is interesting, located at W. 56th and E. Kinney Road and S. Tyndall Road. Although the St. Gregory Church has been demolished, the cemetery marks where the church yard used to be in Carr Settlement.

The Peacock Cemetery north of Baldwin is where African Americans who settled in that vicinity are buried.

There's the Pleasant Plains and Webber Township Cemetery just west of Baldwin. Before the cemetery was established, according to old issues of the Lake County Star, some of the pioneer residents who died were buried in their back yards.

At Chase Township Cemetery, there is a section where people who died at

the Lake County Poor Farm, which was north of the cemetery on Hawkins Road, were buried in unmarked graves. In 1910, members of the Chase Township Library History Group submitted research, naming at least 70 people who were buried in this section, and held a ceremony honoring the burials. One of the members crafted a large wooden cross in their honor.

In 2016, the Gould Cemetery was re-founded. Established in 1872 in the settlement of Summitville, Priscilla Gould, a young daughter of the Gould family, was buried on the family's land, which was a couple or so miles northwest of Chase on State Road, along the power lines. State Road was the original stagecoach road through the area. A cemetery was established there. The family eventually moved and the land was sold, and with no permanent markers, the cemetery was eventually forgotten and hidden until Lake County Historian Sid Woods found mention of it in an old article in the Lake County Star.

The cemetery is located in Pinora Township, where township officials worked with the DNR and other entities to re-establish the cemetery and fence it off to vehicle and ORV traffic. 16 graves

were located by using underground radar, and members of the Chase Township Library History Group identified confirmed and likely possible burials, including some Native American graves that were buried off to the side of the woods. On Aug. 19, 2016, a ceremony was held that brought together township and county officials, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the DNR and descendants of the Goulds, historical society members and the community to pay honor to these early settlers. A memorial stone was erected with each of 16 names.

In Oceana County, Friends of the Pentwater Township offer guided historical walks of the cemetery, led by local historians. This year's fall event on Sept. 26 and 27 highlight's America's 250th anniversary.

The Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society in Hart also has an extensive collection of sexton records, pioneer files and cemetery microfilms.

Most towns and settlements have cemeteries, where tears of loved ones watered the sod of those who left this world before them, where the final, mournful goodbyes bear testament of the love that supersedes the confinements of the grave.



a taste of **FALL**

Area bakeries bring the flavors of West Michigan's harvest to cookies, cakes, breads and other seasonal favorites

BY KATE BABEL

Shoreline Media Staff Writer

Can you smell it?

Cinnamon warming in the oven. Apples bubbling beneath a crumbly topping. Butter, brown sugar and caramel melting into something sweet. Fresh bread and dinner rolls sending that unmistakable yeasty aroma through the room. Maybe there's pumpkin, nutmeg and cloves in the mix, too.

Walk into a bakery in the fall and you can often smell the season before you see it.

Across West Michigan, those aromas begin with many of the same fruits, spices and flavors that arrive with the

fall harvest. Apples take center stage as varieties ripen from late summer well into autumn, joined by pears, grapes, pumpkins and winter squash. Farm stands fill with bins of colorful produce, while cider mills and orchards begin pressing apples into one of the region's signature tastes of the season. For bakers, the harvest provides plenty of inspiration for pies, cakes, breads and other cool-weather favorites.

Then there are the spices. Cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger and allspice pair naturally with apples and pumpkin, while caramel, maple, brown sugar and toasted nuts add richer, sweeter flavors. They turn up in everything from traditional pumpkin pie and

apple crisp to cinnamon rolls, cookies, cheesecakes and layer cakes.

But the tastes of fall aren't limited to pumpkin spice and apple pie. The season also brings baked goods rooted in a variety of cultural traditions. German baking includes apple strudel and fruit-filled cakes, while Polish tables may include placek and other fruit-filled treats. Scandinavian baking brings cardamom, cinnamon and other warming spices to breads, buns and cookies. Hispanic traditions include pan de muerto, the sweet bread associated with Día de los Muertos celebrations around Nov. 1 and 2.

Fall also marks a shift from summer treats to the baked goods that find their way to family gatherings,



tailgates, holiday tables and weekend get-togethers. For local bakers, that means bringing back seasonal favorites while experimenting with a few new creations.

At Trail's End Baking Company in Ludington, owner Cody Wedding said Thanksgiving brings increased demand for some traditional favorites, particularly rolls and pumpkin pie.

"Around Thanksgiving we'll get special orders for rolls and pumpkin pie," Wedding said. "Not a lot of apple pie,

which I figured with fall people would want apples in that, but surprisingly no."

Fall baking isn't limited to what customers find in the display case. As family gatherings and the holidays approach, special orders become another part of the season. Dinner rolls, pies, cakes, cookies and other desserts can take some of the work out of hosting — or give guests something locally made to bring to the table. For larger gatherings and holiday meals, ordering ahead can become particularly impor-

tant as bakery schedules fill.

Fall also means the return of one of the bakery's colorful seasonal offerings: shortbread cookies shaped like autumn leaves and decorated to match the season.

"We'll have more fall shortbread cookies, so we'll do a bunch of fall leaf shortbread and then we'll ice them in fall colors," Wedding said. "We did that last year. A lot of people liked it."

Traditional fall flavors don't always result in traditional desserts.



At Britter's Twisted Whisk in Ludington, owner Brittany Septreion puts her own spin on one of fall's familiar combinations with an apple cider caramel cake.

"Our favorite fall baked good to make is our apple cider caramel cake," Septreion said. The dessert combines spiced cinnamon apple cake with cream cheese frosting and a caramel filling.

The bakery is also experimenting with seasonal variations on its cinnamon rolls, along with a few creations Septreion isn't ready to reveal.

"We have a great line of cinnamon rolls that have just come out, and we're creating new flavors for those — fall flavors," she said. "We do have a couple of things in the works we're gonna keep under wraps. It's always good to keep those things best secret until we perfect them."

Britter's also offers its own take on another fall and holiday staple with pie bars.



MORE BAKERIES TO EXPLORE

West Michigan has plenty of places to satisfy a craving for breads, pastries, cakes, cookies and other baked goods. Among the bakeries readers can explore are:

- Trail's End Baking Company — Ludington
- Britter's Twisted Whisk — Ludington
- Country View Bakery — Ludington
- Patty Cakes & Etc — Ludington
- Violet's Bakery — Ludington
- Rizzo's Bread — Ludington area
- Homebaked by Roxann — Pentwater
- Laughing Tree Brick Oven Bakery — Hart
- The Daily BakeHouse — Manistee
- Morat's Bakery — Muskegon
- Hodgepodge Bake Shop — Muskegon
- Ryke's Bakery — Muskegon
- The 490 Bakery — Muskegon
- Sinfully Sweet Bakery & Coffee Shop — Fremont
- Ramirez Bakery — Holland
- Bliss Bakery — Holland
- Colin's Bakery — Holland
- Cakabakery West — Holland
- Holland Cakery — Holland

Planning a fall gathering? Many bakeries accept advance or special orders. Check directly with individual businesses for seasonal menus, ordering deadlines and availability.



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by
DAVID BARBER *photos by*
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- PORTAGE POINT STOUT

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FIG

Northern Natural Cider House and Winery offers some of the best cider and wine to be found anywhere



Chad Wardie stands at the center of Northern Natural Cider House nerve center.

JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

BY DAVID L. BARBER

When Mother Nature is your hostess, you know you're in five-star surroundings – it just doesn't get any better.

And if you happen to be at the Northern Natural Cider House and Winery on a cloudless night, then you're beneath what will seem like a bazillion stars.

That's the way it is at Northern Natural, where as they say on their Facebook page, "organic fruit is not a passing fad, it's a way of life."

Located on Chief Road in western Manistee County, the business is sur-

rounded by lush forest and farmlands and has a "dance floor" that is mowed for grooming rather than needing to be vacuumed and mopped. Northern Natural is one of only a handful of USDA Certified Organic hard cider producers in North America.

"Organic apples are sweeter, by nature," said Chad Wardie. "We distribute in the fall to a number of Meijer stores ... that do well with organic products ... All our food is scratch made.

"We have many customers – many families – from all over who come back year after year and who seem to love our rural setting and who especially

enjoy it when we celebrate Chief Day, which we do on the second Saturday in October."

Founded by Dennis Mackey, the business has long been recognized as a pioneer in the area of organic farming techniques and best-practices.

"The requirements to become USDA Certified Organic are quite rigid so this is a pretty big deal to us," Mackey said in his Facebook post. He has been involved in organic farming for nearly 40 years and opened Northern Natural in 1997.

Mackey's wife, Diane, manages Northern Nature's Tasting House. Son



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO



Chad Wardie shows off Natural Northern's entrance sign.

Kyle, who is a trained chef, serves as head brewer and the latter's culinary background has played a significant role in the wine and hard cider flavors he creates: the Northern Star Hard Cider and Lavender Apple Hard Cider have been awarded Gold Medals at the World Cider Championships, while the Traditional Hard Cider earned a Bronze Medal.

"The USDA Certified Organic fruit we use in our process, absolutely, impacts the taste of our hard ciders," Dennis said on Facebook. "When you start with premium ingredients and

never use fruit concentrates, the taste of the products is noticeably different."

Another aspect that sets Northern Natural's hard ciders apart from other brands is that they are sulfite-free.

The flavors produced by Northern Natural Cider House and Winery are many, including Northern Natural Blueberry Apple and Northern Natural Elderberry Apple are also available in 12-ounce bottles. And at the Tasting House, an impressive array of avant-garde hard ciders are featured on-tap on a rotating basis, including Chocolate Cherry, Cherry

Ginger, Blueberry Waffle, Season's End, Hibiscus Rose, Barrel Aged and Sweet Orange Blossom.

The Tasting House offers hard cider in sample flights, by-the-glass, Growler or Howler.

Its selection of Northern Natural wines include Chardonnay, Dry Riesling, Riesling (2021), Pinot Noir, Pinot Noir Rosé, Pinot Gris, Rockin' Robin Naturally Red, Rockin' Robin Peach Wine, Rockin' Robin Cherry Wine, as well as Iced Apple Cider, Grape Desert Wine and Cherry Desert Wine.

Guests can sample all of the wines at the Tasting House and purchase bottles to go.



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

Empty now, these cider bottles will soon be filled with ciders.



JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

In recent years the Tasting House has added an outdoor live music venue and dance “lawn,” and a permanent Roaming Harvest Food Truck features tacos, burritos, burgers and more, while its Pizza Wagon features specialty pizzas made with organic ingredients, many procured from local farmers.

“We have created a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere supported by local and regionally-known folk and bluegrass entertainers,” said Dennis.

The business is located at 7220 Chief Road, Kaleva, east of US 31 between Manistee and Bear Lake.

Its hours of operation are Monday, closed; Tuesday and Wednesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Thursday, noon to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, noon to 10 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

For more information go to northernnaturalwinery.com, or call 231-889-0064.

Editor's note: In agriculture, organic specifically means food produced without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

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 SCAN ME





A Season for the Senses



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

BY STEVE BEGNOCHE

Autumn will be welcomed by many who found Summer 2026 to be hot – one of the five hottest in Michigan's recorded weather history.

In addition to cooler temperatures, autumn brings a host of qualities that make it the favorite season of many.

To me, it's my favorite season in Michigan during Fall. I like each season in its own time, autumn being no exception.

What makes Autumn in west Michigan unique and worth savoring?

It's the season of exuberant color. Gorgeous, fiery red maples. Golden birch, beech, maples and aspen. Bronze and yellow, too.

Offset by our evergreen pines and skies clear and blue or cloudy and moody.

Autumn is Friday night prep football with a marching band. Saturday morning soccer. Saturday afternoon college football and Sunday pro football. Go Lions. Sorry Packer and Bears fans.

Autumn is apple cider – all the better at a friendly cider-making party.

Autumn is cinnamon-dusted doughnuts and, for many, pumpkin spice this or that.

Autumn is a time of harvest. In our rural countryside one can see fields of pumpkins orange and ready for the cannery or for selecting those Halloween porch decorations.

Autumn is the crisp bite of a newly picked apple. The varieties available locally are astounding and seemingly ever-expanding. Apple aficionados can debate their favorite or which apple is best for which purpose. Visit a local farm market for the best and freshest selections.

Personally, a tried-and-true traditional McIntosh freshly picked and in their prime remains the most apple-ly taste of autumn for me. Call me traditional.

While beaches draw us to the lakeshore in summer, autumn is a great time to drive the backroads of rural west Michigan. Corn fields may or may not be harvested. Watching a combine move through a corn field methodically picking



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

corn and chopping the stalks still grabs my attention. When farmers work into the evening under a full harvest moon rising on the eastern horizon, it's a scene out of a Hollywood movie or a nostalgic painting from times gone by. Mind you, the farmer might mostly be experiencing a long, tiring day, but we can enjoy the scene.

In Oceana and Mason counties, backroad travels may put you in places where specialty crops such as the aforementioned pumpkins are raised. Last year we came across fields of cabbage in Oceana County – rows of purplish cabbage on one field and green on another. It made for a distinctive sight.

Asparagus fields burn a bright yellow that rivals the brilliance of yellow maples. Find an asparagus

with an old barn, homestead or even graying fence posts and what was once a feast for the spring table, is now a feast for our eyes in autumn.

Autumn is great for fishing. How you angle – flyfishing in a river, boat fishing on Lake Michigan or in its harbors, inland lake pan fishing or seeking bass, pike or muskellunge, is a personal choice. Many species go on a feeding tear to bulk up for the coming winter. On inland lakes, other boat traffic is greatly reduced from summer peaks making for a quieter, less congested time on the water.

Waterfowl are on the move. Inland lakes serve as water inns for migrating ducks, geese, and other birds. They especially like

quiet inlets with wild rice or other vegetation. Kayaking through such areas in autumn is a favorite fall pastime for me. Just be aware, waterfowl hunters might also be in the area, especially early in the morning. When I notice them, I steer clear for both our benefits.

Sometimes, and especially in autumn, I wish I had taken up hunting. Not so much because I want to harvest a deer or waterfowl. Rather, I want the excuse that I can't fulfill a potential responsibility, because I have to go hunting. A week in the woods, a morning on the water, or an evening in a hunting blind often sounds better than attending a meeting or fulfilling some other adult activity.

Autumn, after all, is a great

time to enjoy nature. Bucks' antlers are at their finest. Woods are cathedrals of color with a lot fewer biting bugs than in summer. Lakes often are reflecting ponds doubling the beauty of a shoreline woods blazing in color in ways that blow my mind every time I experience it.

Autumn, for me, is also a time of collecting, splitting and stacking firewood. I'm usually working not for the impending winter, but for the winter still a year away. Working in the woods in autumn makes for a great work environment, one that's hard to beat.

For youth, autumn means a return to school routine. All of us need to watch and respect school buses stopping to pick up or drop off students before or after school. Please, when a bus driver extends the "STOP" sign and turns on the red flashers, stop. Don't pass the bus. Take the time to look around you or think about when you were a student, perhaps back in the day. School days are long behind me. Thinking about them, even briefly, momentarily time-transport me to youth. Do you remember helping make your high school class float for homecoming? It was quite the social activity – one that a shy young guy might more easily talk to that girl he liked, but was intimidated by during class. Or watch the spring in the step of a young elementary students who love school as they bound off in the



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTO

morning. It can be a special time.

Yes, darkness lengthens as daylight hours shorten in autumn. By late autumn colors are muted. All those millions of shards of heavenly beauty are on the ground awaiting raking. Cold, rain and sometimes snow foretells of winter soon at hand. A fall storm on Lake Michigan is a

display of nature's power worth a look -- and respect.

Don't worry. As the Bible (and the Byrds) states, "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

Now is the time for autumn, its color, smells, sights, sounds and activities.

Go forth and enjoy.

Autumn is the best season there is right now.

Steve Begnoche, sbegnoche@yahoo.com, is an outdoors enthusiast, writer and photographer who, like a squirrel, stores up the mental scenes of color and beauty of autumn to help nourish him through the winter to come.



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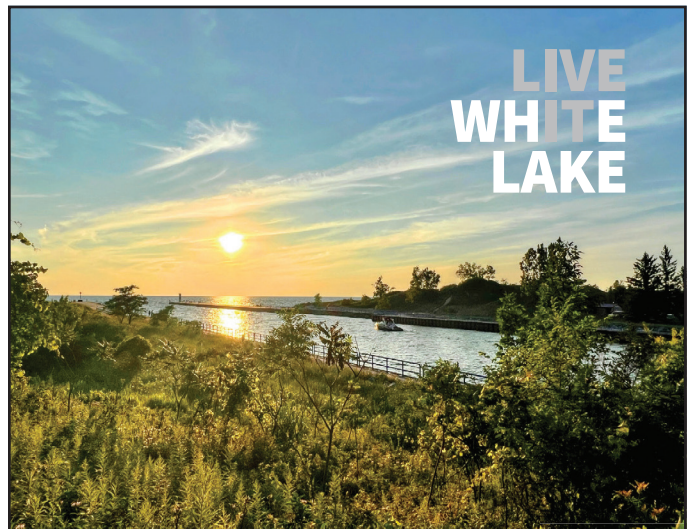
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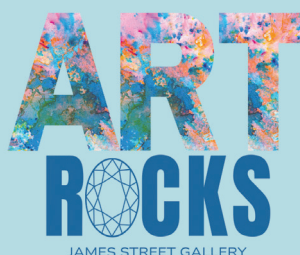
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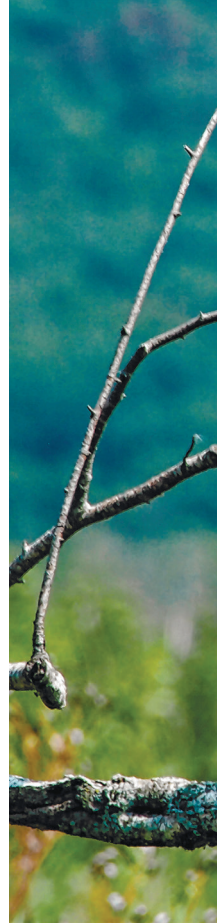
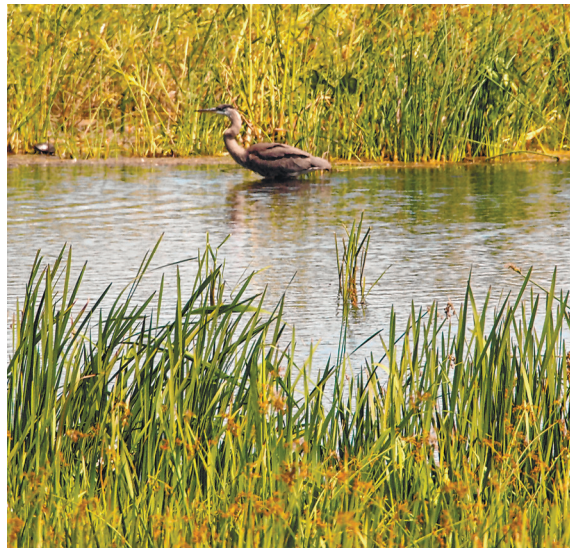
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TRAIL OF TRANQUILITY

Arcadia Marsh boardwalk
delivers close encounters with
Mother Nature

Photo Essay by Jeanne Barber

Nestled in northwestern Manistee County on the winding M-22 highway, the 470-acre Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Arcadia Marsh invites visitors to get out and stretch their legs, while becoming one with 250 or so species of birds, a mesmerizing coastal community of fish, frogs and turtles, a breathtaking carpet of flowers and fauna, and a music-making choir of crickets - lots and lots of crickets. Visitors can walk - free of charge - a barrier-free 1.9-mile boardwalk that winds through the marsh and if you get tired, there are a number of benches that have been strategically located to sit and appreciate all that surrounds you. And if you're into fishing, there are a number of platformed areas where you can throw your bobbers and bait to the water. The Arcadia Marsh truly is one of the LakeStyle area's more shining gems.





FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS



Across western Michigan, high school football fields become gathering places filled with school colors, marching bands, traditions and generations of community pride.

BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI

Executive Editor

It starts before the sun goes down.

The stadium lights come on while there is still daylight in the sky. Players cross the field in helmets and shoulder pads. Cheerleaders squeeze in one more practice. From somewhere nearby come a few scattered notes from the marching band, followed by drums and then the full force of the brass.

At the concession stand, burgers hit the grill. There are hot dogs, popcorn and walking tacos, and when October arrives, plenty of hot chocolate.

Shoreline Media sports reporter Larry Launstein Jr. has eaten his share of concession-stand food while covering high school sports. He gives particularly high marks to the Angus burgers at Reeths-Puffer, cooked on a large smoker at Rockets games.

Cars begin filling the parking lot. Grandparents settle into the bleachers while alumni who haven't had children in the school for years still show up to watch. Some fans never make it to a seat, preferring a familiar spot along the fence. Younger children toss footballs beyond the end zone, occasionally stopping

to watch the older kids under the lights.

Students arrive in groups. Parents take pictures. Friends spot one another across the stands. The concession line gets longer.

School colors are everywhere — on jerseys and cheerleading uniforms, sweatshirts and hats, blankets and stadium seats. For a few hours, communities become Orioles and Spartans, Pirates and Tigers, Panthers and Vikings, Wildcats, Mariners and Rockets.

Versions of this scene play out every fall in communities across the country. Friday night football is a sporting event, but it is also a reason to gather.

Here in western Michigan, those gatherings take place in towns surrounded by orchards and farm fields, forests and Lake Michigan. Some stadiums are tucked into neighborhoods. Others sit beside school campuses or draw fans from miles of countryside.

Early in the season, shorts and T-shirts are enough for an August evening. By October, sweatshirts, jackets and blankets have appeared. The metal bleachers are cold and a stiff wind off Lake

Michigan can make hot chocolate sound pretty good.

Launstein considers that autumn chill football weather. Rain and snow are another matter, but a cup of hot chocolate doesn't hurt.

In Montague, there's no mistaking where you are. The Wildcat water tower rises above Townsend Athletic Complex. "Anchors Aweigh," the Wildcats' fight song, provides another familiar marker on game night.

Montague has also used football nights to recognize first responders, something Launstein remembers from covering games there.

In Scottville, today's Spartan Community Field sits within sight of an earlier chapter of local football history. McPhail Field was home to Scottville High School and later Mason County Central football before the Spartans moved to their current field in 1998. The old field carries the name of Curtis and Catherine McPhail, who donated the property in 1925.

Hart's football home carries community names as well. The Pirates play at the Richard A. Hodges Athletic Complex, named for a longtime educator, school board





president and supporter of Hart athletics. This year, the football field is being named Platt Field in honor of retiring Superintendent Mark Platt.

Much of the Hart football complex familiar to today's fans dates to improvements made in 1986. Another round of athletic facility improvements is planned as part of the district's voter-approved bond project.

The Pirates made some much newer history there in 2023, when Hart hosted a football playoff game for the first time and defeated Kent City, 44-22, for the program's first playoff victory.

Oriole Field in Ludington is tucked into a residential neighborhood, close enough to surrounding homes and streets that a busy football night can affect what happens beyond the stadium.

That was especially evident on Halloween in 2025. An undefeated Lud-

ington team was scheduled to host a playoff game at 7 p.m., during the city's traditional trick-or-treating hours. With football traffic and children expected on the same neighborhood streets, City Council members discussed changing the trick-or-treating hours or even moving the observance to another day.

Halloween stayed on Oct. 31.

It was an unusual meeting of two fall traditions and a pretty good example of how much activity can surround a high school football field on a Friday night.

As daylight fades, the bands become harder to miss.

Marching band members have spent part of their summer learning music and formations and practicing the steps that will carry them across the field. At Whitehall, marching band includes August band camp, home football performances and competitions during the fall.

Reeths-Puffer's program also competes. Its 2025 production, "Midnight Caravan," ended the season with the Rockets winning the Michigan Competing Band Association Flight III state championship.

The bands don't spend all their time at football games, either. Shelby's Marching Tigers participate in the community's Memorial Day observance, and area bands appear in parades, concerts and other community events throughout the year.

On Friday nights, they are back in the stands and along the sidelines.

Drums and brass mix with whistles, cheers and the public-address announcer. From his place along the sideline, Launstein hears another part of the soundtrack — helmets and shoulder pads colliding, followed by the reaction from the stands after a touchdown,



turnover or other big play.

At halftime, the players leave and the band takes the field.

Brass catches the stadium lights. Drummers set the pace. The show that band members spent hot August days practicing is finally in front of a hometown crowd. Parents and grandparents who came to watch a musician or color guard member get their turn.

Area games have included recognition of military members, veterans and first responders. Cancer awareness and fundraising events have become part of the

fall schedule as well, sometimes adding another color to the usual school colors in the stands and along the sidelines.

Launstein has covered cancer-related events at Shelby and Montague. Last season, he watched longtime rivals Montague and Whitehall come together for one such effort.

Community support isn't limited to winning seasons, either. Launstein points to Hesperia, where he has been impressed by the support surrounding the Panthers even through difficult seasons.

Come playoff time, the atmosphere changes again. Crowds can grow, school colors seem to show up everywhere and each game carries the possibility that there won't be another Friday night that season.

Still, most of what happens around the field never appears in the final score.

There is the grandparent watching a grandchild perform, the alumnus who keeps coming back and the child along the fence watching players he or she may someday join. Volunteers work the concession stand. Bands play fight songs





generations of students have learned before them. Fans cheer for teams that may win championships and teams that may struggle to win at all.

Eventually, the crowd thins.

The concession stand closes. Instruments return to their cases. Players disappear into the locker room. Families head for their cars and the stadium lights go dark.

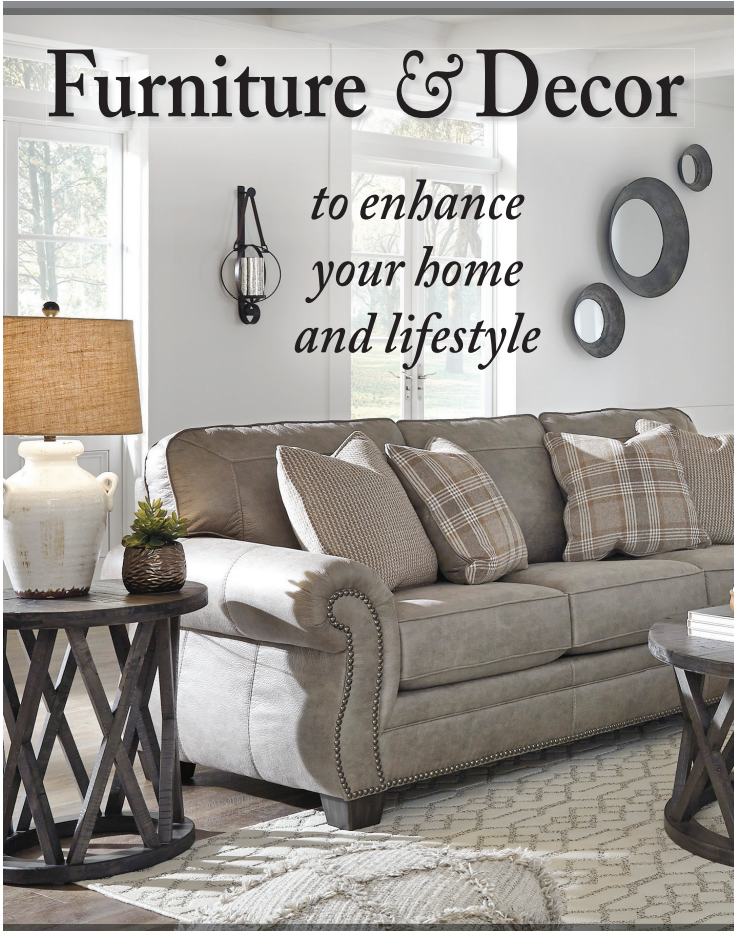
Another Friday night is over.

Next week, they'll do it all again.



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Living in a coastal community is pretty special

BY DAVID BARBER

The prettiest port in paradise is in Manistee.

Of course I am prejudiced because Manistee is where I live. That said, I tip my hat to those who live in other ports, and who make the same argument.

I've lived in Hawaii and was stationed at Pearl Harbor, another pretty port in paradise. I've lived in San Diego and along the Gulf Coast of Florida, too – all breathtaking ports, to be sure.

And for the past 26 years – while Jeanne and I have lived here in Manistee, a.k.a. the Victorian Port City – we've visited ports all up and down the golden West Michigan shoreline over and over again.

They're all pretty, all inviting and all possess their signature calling cards.

The historic port city of Ludington is spectacular.

The quaint port of Pentwater is a Mediterranean Mayberry.

Frankfort and Onkama to the north, and Muskegon and Holland to the south, are all pretty in their own right – pretty inviting, pretty friendly and pretty to the camera lens.

Living in a port community brings a

peace that is painted in the heart, and that challenges the senses with every rolling wave, and every song of the seagull.

Living in a port community can deliver zen walks along the beach, or so I am told by my wife who does just that while I sit in our car and enjoy the aforementioned rolling surf and songs of the seagulls, as screeching of a song the latter might be.

It's funny how our beaches – how all beaches become, I am quite sure – during the summer when others who live elsewhere come seeking what those who live here probably take for granted, all too often. Oh my, how the beaches can become crowded.

And then there are the freighters – massive ships that disappear into the Lake Michigan horizon – fantastic ships that when they come into port can stop traffic. Literally, they stop traffic whenever the drawbridges are raised into their upright positions.

But trust me, if you live in a port community such as Manistee and you want to get from one side of the shipping lane to the other whenever a bridge goes up, sometimes – and I've been guilty here, too – tempers can go up, too.

Sunbathers nap on the golden sands of port communities. Fishing boats zig zag back and forth along the shoreline. Kite surfers climb into the clouds, or so it seems.

Yes, life in a port community can be pretty, alright – pretty interesting, pretty relaxing and well, just plain pretty.

And for me, there is no prettier time to visit the beach than at sunset, when all the colors of the rainbow are melted into a pool of hues and hazes that will completely mesmerize you – they do, me.

Whenever I see the sun disappear into the water's edge, I take solace in knowing it'll reappear in a few hours behind me, and that gives me pause to know all is right in the world, and beyond.

Pretty remarkable, don't you think?

Pretty divine, to be prayerfully precise.

Editor's note: David L. Barber is a retired journalist living in Manistee. He will provide occasional feature stories and columns for various Shoreline Media publications, including the Ludington Daily News, Oceana Herald-Journal, LakeStyle Magazine and PTW Magazine. He can be reached at dibarber1006@gmail.com



Floral arrangement

CRISTINA JUSKA PHOTO

Cozy home makeovers for fall: **tips and trends from the experts**

BY CRISTINA JUSKA

As the summer fades away and cooler temperatures creep in, many people naturally begin to gravitate towards cozier living. The sun sets earlier, the leaves change colors and

we begin reaching for our fall sweaters and boots instead of our summer shorts and sandals.

Fall is also a great time to give your home a design refresh for the changing seasons. Whether it's time to invest

in some new home furnishings, or you just want to add seasonal flair with accessories or botanical elements, we asked experts in interior design to weigh in on this year's top trends.



Easy updates

“The best and easiest way to update your home for the different seasons, like fall, is to switch up your pillows and throw blankets,” said Stephanie Graham of Spaces by Stephanie Design. Graham offers virtual design services to clients around the country.

“For fall, add warmer colors and heavier fabrics, like a burgundy-colored velvet pillow, and a thick, knitted cream-colored blanket,” Graham said.

Stacie Hegg of Hegg’s Furniture in Ludington agrees.

“Changing out accessories and lighting for a more moody vibe is one of the easiest ways to update for fall,” Hegg said. She suggests switching out your bedding, throws and pillows, rugs and lamps, art or table-top decor if you wish to make seasonal updates to your living spaces.

Graham also mentioned table-top decor as an opportunity to incorporate seasonal flair into your home, mentioning flower arrangements, plants and candles as items that can be switched out seasonally. Table linens, glassware and place settings can also reflect the season.



Bella palm

CRISTINA JUSKA PHOTO



STACIE HEGG PHOTO





STEPHANIE GRAHAM PHOTO

Trending designs

Both Graham and Hegg said that darker wood finishes and contrasting wood tones are trending home design elements right now.

“Matching absolutely everything can be boring and lacks personality,” Graham said. In keeping with the mix-and-match theme, she said that mixing older and antique pieces with new and more modern pieces can add character to your space.

“I’m also noticing that, slowly but surely, making a home in all light white oak is going in a

different direction,” Graham said. “I’m starting to see darker wood flooring, walnut furniture, and even darker wood-toned kitchen cabinets.”

Hegg said that homeowners are seeking out “simple, sculptural designs” in home furnishings. She is also seeing customers select pieces that hold up over time and aren’t off limits to kids and pets.

“Fabrics where performance meets comfort — durable, family-friendly fabrics that are cozy and cleanable,” are popular, Hegg said. “Cozy, comfortable fabrics such as velvets and boucles are great for fall,” she added.



STACIE HEGG PHOTO







STACIE HEGG PHOTOS

Color palettes

If you are looking to add some color to your home this fall, there are a few standout trends.

Noble Graham-Lattin of Birch & Blossom in Hart said that home design and wedding decor often follow the same trends, both seasonally and from year-to-year. Birch & Blossom is a flower and plant shop, as well as a wedding and event venue.

In 2026, Graham-Lattin said that brides are choosing palettes revolving around sage, juniper, terra cotta and linen. When it comes to flower arrangements and bouquets, he said that botanicals and grasses are taking precedence over bright florals this fall.

In keeping with the green theme, Graham-Lattin mentioned that new plants are a good way to breathe some fresh life into a room, and that pet-friendly plants such as the Bella Palm are in demand right now.

“Light, warm neutrals can make the dark days of fall a little brighter,” Hegg said. “Along the lakeshore, coastal colors of sand and blue are always popular; however, more national trends include deep greens, caramels and chocolate browns.”

Graham also felt that brown tones are in style.

“Another color tone that I believe is making a well-deserved comeback is brown!” she said. “This can be tan, beige, taupe, chocolate — you can never

go wrong with a good brown color.”

She noted that dark, moody reds are also popping up for fall.

“A trending color that I am noticing a lot and really love is a deep burgundy color,” Graham said. “You can bring this color into a room design through cabinetry, tile, and of course through paint colors.”

In conclusion, cozy fall decor trends are leaning into warmth, character and elegance. Homeowners are moving away from “millennial gray” minimalism toward colorful, lived-in spaces that feel inviting and restorative.

For more inspiration and ideas, visit www.spacesbystephaniendesign.com, www.heggsfurniture.com and www.birchandblossomshoppe.com.



STACIE HEGG PHOTO



STEPHANIE GRAHAM PHOTO



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Ode to Autumn

BY JUDY WINTER

It's that time of year when people who adore all-things summer begin to feel a little sad and lost as signs of fall take center stage. You can even hear some of them sobbing gently into their warm summer beer.

Not me. Fall is easily my favorite season. Summer intensifies everything, including heat, humidity and storms. Fall delivers more delightful weather and a welcome invitation to rest a little, too.

How can you not ooh and ahh as trees begin their seasonal nature show — slowly presenting another breathtaking Crayola landscape of orange, red and yellow hues? Leaves dance down sidewalks on cooler breezes, and there's that crisp sound as you stomp through them on purpose while the dust you defiantly

kick up makes you sneeze.

Who doesn't smile watching giggling kids and barking dogs gleefully jump into giant leaf piles? Except for shorter days and the unfortunate fact that fall is closer to winter than summer, I'm all in for autumn.

Here are seven big reasons why I love fall.

Weather — Some of the most enjoyable summer-like weather happens in September and October. Sometimes even November gets in on the joy, if Old Man Winter doesn't rudely intrude too early.

Too many summer people unfairly lump fall with winter. They're not the same season. Fall delivers some of the best weather of the year. The crisper air makes walking and gardening more enjoyable. Staying inside until the sun goes down to increase the odds of hu-

man survival is not my idea of summer fun. Fall swings the doors wide open and invites everyone outside to frolic and breathe again!

Fall is also a wonderful time to travel. It's less hot and humid, with fewer spirited, cranky kids and families to deal with because school is back in session. God bless teachers!

Clothing — I'm a bit of a fashionista and even have a fashion blog on my website. Fall provides great fashion inspiration from all those fashion rags, like VOGUE, which give my arms a workout with hundreds of pages of stuff most people will never buy or wear. Still, it's so pretty and creative.

I love getting dressed in real clothes again. Most summer days I'm just trying to make sure I have enough clothes on to be respectable when I go out to grab



another iced tea. Get my respectable fashion drift?

Food — Who doesn't love heading to a cider mill for cider, sugary donuts and crisp, tart apples with caramel that stubbornly sticks to your teeth and threatens to pull out old fillings?

Fall is made for comfort foods that seem too heavy in summer heat, like mac and cheese, buttered mashed potatoes, homemade lasagna, chicken chili, baked bread, pies, nachos and fried chicken. Fall fills up your dinner plate. That beats summer's obsession with looking OK in swimsuits, drinking more beer and waiting two hours for a table.

Earlier bedtimes — When fall comes around, I'm a bit tired and cranky from staying up so late trying to eke out the last drops of summer. Fall says it's OK to go to bed before 10 p.m. People get back

to watching movies and couch napping again, too.

While I'm not keen on chasing vitamin D with increasingly shorter days, I'm happy my house doesn't always smell like suntan lotion and there's no sand in my sheets.

Cozy blankets — One of my favorite fall rituals is putting out cozy, never-itchy blankets wherever family, friends and pets like to snuggle. I love the rich colors of forest green, chocolate brown and shades of rose.

Blankets prepare my home to be cozy again, as opposed to summer days when I'm more likely to be found sticking my head in the freezer to cool off. Bring on blankies, indoor twinkle lights and holiday-scented candles, too.

Fall football — When I say Fall Football, I mean marching bands. I

love hearing them practice at nearby schools. It's also fun to visit your alma mater to watch the band strut their music stuff. The world seems better watching a marching band preparing to do halftime battle.

Mother Nature — While summer sunsets are worth bragging about, some of the most spectacular shows happen in October. Deep orange, yellow and red sunsets are worth waiting for. They always leave me speechless, an incredibly rare phenomenon. You might even catch the northern lights.

That's My Ode to Autumn. I'm filled with fall love. At least until the first snowflake falls.

Then I'm going south.

Because last year, winter came a month early and was a total weather jerk. If that happens again, I'll be the first one sobbing into my fall cider and begging for sultry summer days — and you can quote me on that.

But I'll deny I ever said it.

Autumn Love, Baby!

Judy Winter is a Ludington Daily News contributing columnist, nationally recognized author and speaker on disability, and executive producer of the Emmy Award-winning documentary "CAMP RICSTAR," now streaming free with the PBS app. More at JudyWinter.com.





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