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# Welcome



#### FALL IS WHERE IT'S AT.

The first thing that comes to mind regarding fall are the turning of the leaves in a broad sense, and personally, celebrating another year hand-in-hand with my wife. When we set out to decide on a date to be married. it had to be fall. It had to be the time of the year where the crisp air and cool to cold breezes nudge you to hold a loved one a little bit more, to share in your warmth.

Another wonderful part of fall is the hopeful bounti-

ful harvests around us. It's having apples and apple cider. It's driving past the acres of pumpkins, still on the vine and ready to be made into jack o'lanterns or another fall favorite, pumpkin pie. The grains of our land are harvested, the wheat, the corn, the beans and so much more.

It's certainly a time for deer hunting and the salmon runs. Both activities, and the game that's hunted beyond those, allow for anyone to immerse themselves in the abundant nature we have around us.

The trails that we hike, too, give us a chance to kick up the fallen leaves as adults, much like we did as kids going through the leaf pile our parents finished raking.



There's the joys of fall, and there's more sights and sounds to fall. As our nights come quicker, some fields get a glow for miles around, illuminating a game. We hear the crowds cheer and the music of marching bands fill the air, playing out halftime shows and supporting their classmates on the fields of play.

As much as we are on our way to a wintery slumber, fall brings excitement. Our children, who not that long ago looked forward to lazy summer days are brimming with hopes and happiness with the approaching school year to learn who those new classmates are, catching up with friends they've not been in contact with for three months and more. Of course, that's how it was. In today's world, we've got all sorts of gadgets to bind us in the boring days and weeks.

We all learned coming out of the pandemic, though, that nothing beats that in-person interaction, and that's what we tend to get a little bit more of as we start to stay indoors a little more.

With all this talk of fall, how can we forget two major holidays late in the season? Veterans Day is another opportunity to thank and appreciate those who do the things to defend our way of life.

And Thanksgiving affords us the opportunity — just as we get some of the conditions of what's to come in the winter months - to appreciate the gifts we've been given from the company we enjoy and keep to the things we have in our lives.

Fall brings so much reflection on what was and what's to come.

Of course, fall is where it's at.

Not much as changed with this edition of LakeStyle since our last publication. Many of your favorite contributors returned and what were our newcomers with our previous edition are back to tell stories both visually and in the written word. We're all excited to present these stories of our lifestyle in and around the shores of Lake Michigan and into west central Michigan. What was encouraging recently, as I write this in the wind-down of summer, that visitors of our state truly enjoy the magazine. People are reading this from all around the state and country as we distribute here in our region and also around the state. We thank all of our advertisers who help to make this possible each quarter and all of our readers. With our magazine being quarterly and tied to the seasons, don't hesitate to reach out with ideas for stories you think we should highlight as a way that shows what life is like in and around around our area.

#### DAVID BOSSICK

Executive Editor

David is the executive editor of the Ludington Daily News, Oceana's Herald-Journal and White Lake Beacon along with nearly all editorial products of Shoreline Media. He is a 20-plus year veteran of the media business, decorated for a diverse number of categories from several organizations. David and his wife, Jessica, live in Ludington, and the couple have two grown children.

# **Contributors**

#### **David L. Barber**

David is a retired iournalist who has been published in several state and national newspapers and magazines. He lives in Manistee County with his wife Jeanne, and their two cats, Kit and Kaboodle.



#### **Steve Begnoche**

Steve has focused on photography since retiring from the managing editor's position at the Ludington Daily News. He's an avid kayaker, angler and outdoors enthusiast. His community involvement seeks to enhance appreciation of our area's natural qualities.



#### Madison Lajewski

Madison is a writer and photographer. A Central Michigan University alum, she studied journalism, and women and gender studies. She spent time at Grand Central Magazine and the Genesee County View honing her reporting skills. She now works as a staff writer for Shorline Media at the White Lake Beacon in Hart.



**Jeanne Barber** 

Aging.

Jeanne is a freelance photographer from Manistee

newspapers and magazines. She currently serves as executive assistant at the Manistee County Council on

#### **Jeff Kiessel**

Jeff Kiessel has been with the Ludington Daily News for more than 25 years. He is currently the Asst. Managing Editor at the LDN. Jeff spends time photographing high school sports and enjoys being in the school to photograph kids in their environment. He loves the outdoors and is an avid hiker and often finds himself out for hikes prior to starting his work day. Jeff is married to Michelle and has two daughters, Sydney and Norah.





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Photos by Jeanne Barber



## FALL BICYCLING

Steve Begnoche suggests bicycling in fall allows for a great time for exploration





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A photo essay by Jeanne Barber





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FALL A photo essay by Jeff Kiessel

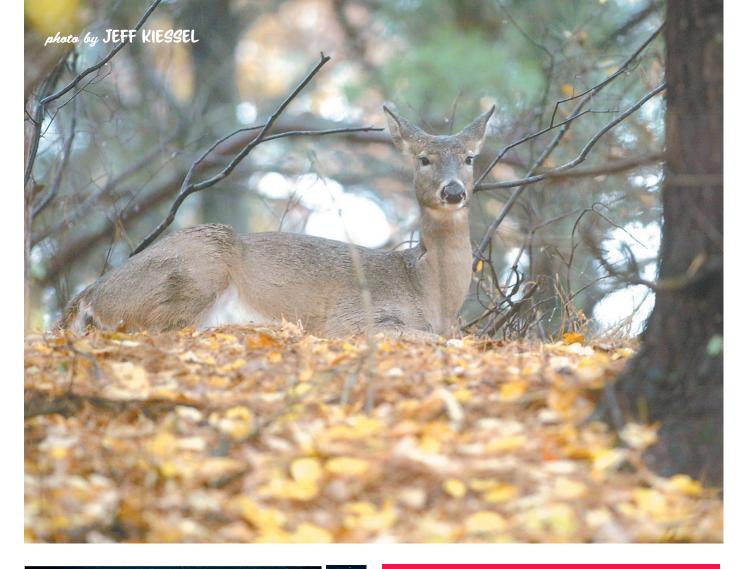




## **FALL PLANTERS**

Staff writer Madison Lajewski visits Weesies Bros. for fall planter ideas and how to winterize your plants

Cover photo by JEFF KIESSEL





# There's no place like home



# FALL CALENDAR

# **MANISTEE COUNTY**

- Oct. 7 Onekama Fall Festival
- Nov. 18 Christmas in Onekama
- **Nov. 19** Celebration of Lights in Onekama
- **Dec. 1-3** Victorian Sleighbell Parade and Old Christmas Weekend, downtown Manistee

# **MASON COUNTY**

- **Sept. 16** Scottville Fall Celebration, 12-10 p.m., rubber ducky races, kids' games, entertainment tent, food, Miss Mason County pageant.
- **Sept. 17** Blessing of the Animals, 1:30-4 p.m., Circle Rocking S Children's Farm, Free Soil
- **Sept. 23** Trial of the Century: Mason County-Style, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Historic White Pine Village
- **Sept. 24** Sesquicentennial Painting Workshop, 12-2 p.m., Ludington Area Center for the Arts
- Sept. 30 Octoberfest in Downtown Ludington, 2-6 p.m.
- Oct. 7 Mason County Historical Society Sesquicentennial Ball, 6-9 p.m., Stearns Hotel, Ludington
- **Oct. 14** Haunted Forest, 7-10 p.m., Cartier Park, Ludington
- **Oct. 20** Pumpkins in the Park Glow Walk, 6:30-8 p.m., Cartier Park, Ludington
- **Nov. 9-12** "Charlotte's Web" at West Shore Community College, Center Stage Theater

Nov. 25 - Aglow the Avenue Parade, 6-7 p.m., Ludington

Dec. 2 - A WSCC Holiday Music Spectacular III, Center Stage Theater

# **MUSKEGON COUNTY**

- Sept. 8-Nov. 5 94th Michigan Contemporary Art Exhibition, Muskegon
- Sept. 29, Aretha: A Tribute, West Michigan Symphony

Sept. 7-Jan. 14 - Tiffany Lamps: The Richard H. Driehaus Collection, Muskegon Museum of Art

- Oct. 26 Harvest Fest, Muskegon
- Dec. 2 Lelm and Langford A Jazzy Christmas, The Block, Muskegon
- **Dec. 15** Home for the Holidays: Timeless Movie Memories, West Michigan Symphony

# **NEWAYGO COUNTY**

- **Oct. 28** Scarecrow Stroll, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., participating businesses in Grant, Newaygo and White Cloud
- Nov. 30 Season of Hope Charity Auction, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at a location TBD

# OCEANA COUNTY

- **Sept. 16** Hispanic Heritage Days Celebration, 4-11 p.m., Hart Commons Park
- Sept. 16 New Era Fall Street Festival, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., New Era

Sept. 16-17 - Jake Pine Lumberjack

- Show, 12-4 p.m., Lewis Farms, New Era
- Sept. 21 Harvest Day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pentwater Village Green
- Sept. 23-24 Fall Fest Arts & Crafts Fair, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Pentwater Village Green
- **Sept. 30** Steinfest, 3 p.m., Golden Sands Golf & Bucket Bar
- October New Era Village Scarecrow Contest, date TBD
- October New Era Halloween Spooktacular, 5:30-8 p.m., date TBD
- **Oct. 6** Golden Fair Parade, downtown Mears
- **Oct. 7** Art Walk, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., downtown Hart
- **December** Santa Claus is Coming to Town, 6:30-8:30 p.m., date TBD
- Oct. 14 Oktoberfest, Pentwater includes Classic Car & Hot Rod Show, Stout Stumble 5K Walk & Run, COVE Home Tour, Live Music, Seasonal Beverages, Yard Games
- **Oct. 31** Downtown Hart trick-ortreating, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- **Nov. 24** Home for the Holidays: Lighted Christmas Parade, 6:30 p.m., downtown Hart
- **Nov. 25** Santa on the Green, 5 p.m., Pentwater Village Green
- **Nov. 25** Silver Lake Community Tree Lighting, 6-8:30 p.m., Golden Township Park, Silver Lake
- **December** Saturdays Christmas in the Village, Pentwater
- Dec. 15-31 Holiday Decorating Contest, Hart Area

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A blue jay prepares to leave a weathered, well-used feeder with a black-oil sunflower seed. Blue jays also enjoy corn.

## photos by STEVE BEGNOCHE

#### **BY STEVE BEGNOCHE**

Done properly, feeding wild birds helps them and could entertain, engage and enlighten you.

More than 50 million Americans feed birds using more than 1 million tons of seed in the process, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

My wife and I are two of them. We maintain several feeders in the yard, varied a bit by season, and enjoy watching "our" birds and visiting ones, such as "our" resident cardinals.

Black-capped chickadees perch inches away as I place black oil sunflower seed in feeders.

Nuthatches, blue jays, mourning doves, captivate us in the cold days of winter. So do a variety of woodpeckers – the Woody Woodpecker-like pileated, the red-bellies, downies and hairy.

Finches flock to the niger seed feeders. Dull-colored in winter, they're morphing into golden yellow and reds (depending on specie) in late winter is a harbinger of spring approaching. Goldfinches, red finches, purple finches, house finches, pine siskin, indigo buntings and many more birds brighten our days as they bustle about dining on feed we put out.

Aisles at Meijer, Wal-Mart, Tractor Supply, hardware stores and country markets offer an array of seeds, suet and feeders for consumers to choose from.

Making good choices can attract birds to your feeder.

Local birders Dave Dister, author of the "Birds of Mason County and Ludington State Park," and Joe Moloney, president of the Sable Dunes Audubon Club, have tips for those wanting to feed birds in ways that help the winged visitors.

#### Placement

"Locate feeders at different levels to appeal to ground, shrub and tree feeders. Provide table-like feeders for ground feeders, hopper or tube feeders for shrub and tree feeders," Moloney advised.

"By all means, locate bird feeders at the ideal distance (o to 6 feet) from winA cardinal waits in a tree near feeders at Ludington State Park's warming shelter where visitors can watch the action from inside the shelter through a window.



dows to avoid bird collisions due to competition with other birds and/or predators," Dister said. "This distance range was determined by research according to a fairly new book, **Solid Air, Invisible KIller: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows,** by Daniel Klem, Jr. (2021). Further out than 6 feet results in birds gaining faster flight speed which becomes most dangerous at 30 ft from windows."

The National Audubon Society says more than 30 feet away from is OK, though.

"Locating within three feet of the window, if practical, may help," Moloney said, which is also what the National Audubon society suggests. Mobiles or opaque decorations in front of windows may help fend of window collisions.

# What seeds help wild birds?

The Audubon guide to feeding birds states feeding birds does benefit them. It provides a supplemental source of feed for wild birds that can be important in winter when food is scarcer. Being supplemental, if you stop feeding for days or weeks because you are away, for instance, that won't harm the birds. They will look for food elsewhere.

Feeders well-stocked with good

seed will likely attract birds.

So, what do you feed birds?

Not all seeds are equal.

Moloney suggests using diverse seed types in separate feeders. "Black oil sunflower appeals to the largest variety," he said

He suggests offering sunflower, niger thistle, and peanuts — but each in their own type feeder.

"The best blend would be sunflower, millet and corn. Avoid milo, wheat and oats," he said.

"When insects decline in the fall due to freezing temperatures, suet becomes valuable to late migrants that rely on insects such as warblers, flycatchers, and vireos," Dister sad. "Bird seed such as niger seed is preferred by finches while black oil sunflower is desired by sparrows, thrushes, woodpeckers, etc., Seeds such as millet and milo are the least desired seeds by most birds and are generally a waste of your money."

Moloney advises avoiding using fat-based suet in the warm summer months because it can turn rancid and dripping fat can damage birds' natural water-repelling feathers. Place it high enough to keep it away from dogs.

One part peanut butter with five parts cornmeal is a good summer fat substitute, he said. Stuff the mixture into tree holes and crevices or large pine cones. Warblers enjoy this mix.

There's another reason to skip summer suet. I have found that suet in warm temperature doesn't stand up to feeding by pileated woodpeckers and crows, which can chunk away a block quickly — very quickly. But it's a hoot to watch them decimate a chunk of suet.

I've made simple winter suet feeders by finding a 2- to 3-inch-thick piece of oak limb. With a 1-1/2-inch hole saw bit, drill insets into the branch encircling the limb to a depth of about an inch. Remove the wood from the circle created. Screw on an eyelet on the top from which to suspend the feeder from hook or suspended wire. Or find a gnarly piece of limb and fill in the crevices, cracks and holes created naturally.

My wife makes a crumbly suet mix that is kept in the refrigerator so it doesn't spoil but doesn't freeze, either. On winter mornings, we bring the feeder in and cram the suet mixture into the holes. Once hung just outside the kitchen window, the birds descend upon it. You see firsthand what "pecking order" means as birds compete for a spot to eat the mix.

It's a bit of work. Most days it requires refilling, sometimes more than once a day, but the show is great.

Moloney suggests providing fruit for berry specialists such as robins, waxwings, bluebirds and mockingbirds. Currants or raisins soaked



A downy woodpecker waits its turn on feeder arms to get to suet.

overnight can be placed on table type feeders. Or find blends with dried fruit. In warm months, Nectar feeders or halved oranges will attract orioles, too, he said.

Adding dried insects found in the poultry section of farm supply stores to table top type seed feeders is another option.

Shade feeders, he advised.

#### HUMMERS

Hummingbirds soon, if not already, have migrated.

Dister and Moloney recommend making your own hummingbird sugar water solution (4 cups water to 1 cup white sugar), but never add food coloring.

When attracting orioles in spring, Moloney said "jelly is not natural for them (think of a teenager surviving on nothing but junk food) whereas cut oranges are fine."

Want something more exotic?

"If you live in a rural area, you can ask the road commission to drop off a roadkill deer occasionally in the backforty within view of the house. This attracts eagles and hawks year-round and vultures in warmer weather."

"Store seeds in small metal garbage can to thwart mice and squirrels," Moloney suggests.

"Keep cats inside. Feeders and windows are buffet tables for prowling cats."

#### What about squirrels?

You either love squirrels or loathe them as they use cunning to get to the feed set out for the birds.

"Discourage squirrels however you can," Moloney advises. "I have had to

place stove pipes at the base of support and trim back overhead branches to prevent squirrels from feasting on feeders. Good luck with this!"

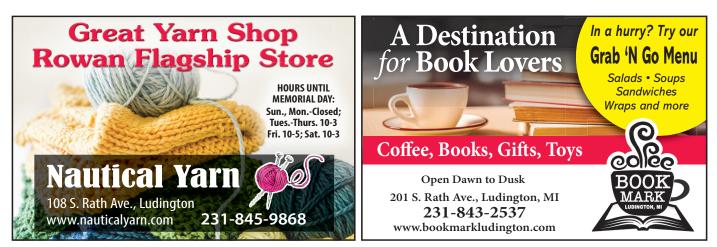
"Bird feeders that use baffles to repel squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, etc. can be constructed or purchased at bird feeder stores or via the internet," Dister said.

Squirrels might not be the only raider of the feeder.

"If you have bears in your area, it's best to suspend feeders between trees beyond reach of bears (10 feet or higher)," Dister said. "Adult black bears are less likely to climb trees than younger/smaller bears."

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources advises bird feeders be brought in starting in early spring through early fall so they don't attract bear.

I taper off feeding in spring as mi-







A pileated woodpecker clings to the side of a homemade feeder holding homemade suet.

gration tapers down, feeding irregularly, if at all in the midst of summer when bugs and other food is readily available. I ratchet feeding back up as summer wanes and migration begins. With the first snows and freezes, all the feeders are back out and being stocked.

Also, because of the arrival of hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive pest that can kill hemlocks, I keep my feeders away from the hemlocks since birds are one way the pest is transported.

#### FEEDER MAINTENANCE

"Empty and clean feeders twice a year," Moloney said. "In warm climates monthly cleaning is appropriate. Use a long-handled bottle brush and scrub with warm water and dish detergent. Rinse with a powerful hose. Suet and sunflowers have a high fat content which results in tougher and messier cleanup if left too long. Also soak in 10% non-bleach solution, rinse and dry in the sun.

"In spring rake up spilled grain and sunflower hulls. I use shell-free seed which reduces the mess significantly."

Depending upon the number of birds at a feeder and the amount of their droppings, Dister said regular cleanings might be required.

#### WATER!

Water attracts birds.

"Several water sources are very helpful," Moloney said, suggesting "a shallow pan on the ground filled with water and one at waist-level. Birds love grooming and hanging out near water features. In winter especially, birds really gravitate to a source of open water. I use a heated bird bath and place it behind a bush so the hawks can't easily pick off the bathers.

"Offer a bird bath during hot/dry weather and into winter (with a bird bath warmer)," Dister also suggests. "An active waterfall is the best at attracting birds, though it can require much work to construct."

#### WHY DO IT?

"For me the surprising behavior of birds is always a treat," Moloney said. "Seeing the courage of the chickadee, the timid nuthatch, the raucous blue jay, the familial cardinal all taking their turn grooming, communicat-



Black-capped chickadees are frequent feeder visitors, sometimes even going after suet.

ing, relaxing even for a moment is energizing. Their behavior connects me to their world just a little bit more than if I was a casual observer."

"The joy of watching colorful birds visiting your bird feeders

and bird baths from the comfort of one's home has a long history with humans," Dister said. "During extreme weather, you may have more birds than you can count!"

But you'll enjoy trying.

#### **FEEDER IDEAS**

I've made several of my feeders. The birds seem to prefer one of them over the commercially made ones. It has two about 3-inche wide cedar sides, a cedar bottom and a cedar top that is held in place by a string strung through two holes in the top and fasten to the cedar sides. About four-inchwide Plexiglass panels with drilled holes about 3/8 of an inch diameter allow access to the seed. I rout out channels in the interior cedar sides for the plexiglass to slip into. TI drill smaller holes below the access hole just large enough for a small piece of dowel wood to go through the two plexiglass panels as perches. It's about a foot tall. The birds seem to love the rough cedar sides. It is always the first feeder emptied and often hosts the most birds.

For feeder sources, or tips on constructing your own, go to the Michigan Audubon website, https:// www.audubon.org/, and navigate to feeder sources and tips.





A pair of cardinals, each with a sunflower seed in their respective beaks, take a look around before flying off with their morsels.



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# Thank goodness,

# about to take Centers stage

photos by JEANNE BARBER



#### **BY DAVID L. BARBER**

LakeStyle Magazine columnist

As autumn stands in the wings behind the curtain, awaiting to take center stage in all her color and glory, I sit in the center seat — front row and await what hopefully will be her rainbow-painted performance.

For now, the sun was playing hide 'n seek behind the clouds that are sometimes cotton-white, sometimes charcoal gray, sometimes soothing, and sometimes angry. Soon, quite hopefully, the road will be shouldered with autumn colors that will teeter between teasing and tantalizing, and the clock will be a non factor.

Autumn is my favorite season. Summer is cool, when it's not too hot. Spring is refreshing, most of the time. And winter? Yuck.

But autumn, with all its could-be, might-be colors and crispness, is a fat cat's purr.

My wife and I are often on assignment traveling here and there and into the shadows of the side roads in between. We rarely arrive on time — the time we set for our trip, not what others expect – for which we rarely care. Because more often than not we tend to shy away from driving the expressways and shortest distance between two points and we opt instead to take the back roads, those two lane, winding and hilly roads of wonder that connect one small town America to an even smaller town America.



Case in point, M-22 that ribbons along Michigan's west coast is proof of that — so we take that scenic road, quite often. So is M-37 that cuts its way through the center of the state. These lesser-traveled roads always seem more peaceful, especially during the autumn.

The road less traveled? Yep, unless you're a critter. Gotta' keep your eyes open when you travel roads like M-22 and M-37. Raccoons, opossums, squirrels, turkeys, deer and a forest of others seemingly love to make a game of Now You See Me, Now You Don't. The only critter that doesn't mind playing a game of Chicken with us are the chickens, themselves. At least not yet.

But I digress in my writing, just as my wife and I digress from taking that road most traveled. And with autumn upon us — or at least soon will be we will digress, even more.

So, we will travel the back roads into the surrounding countryside so that we can pull over and get up close and personal with autumn and all that she will orchestrate.

We will travel the winding, narrow roads that ribbon their way along the lakeshore, so that we can do the same.

We will bend down to pick up and appreciate the painted leaves.

We will toss pine cones into the autumn breeze just we tossed baseballs in the summer and will toss snowballs in the winter.

We will walk along on crispy and crunching trails to hear the ground snap, crackle and pop, beneath our feet.

Autumn, we're waiting for your opening act.

**Editor's note:** David L. Barber is a retired journalist living in Manistee. He will provide occasional feature stories and columns for Daily News. He can be reached at dlbarber1006@gmail.com





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Manistee County Historical Museum's Mark Fedder





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18

The state



# Bicycling in fall allows for great time for exploration

#### **BY STEVE BEGNOCHE**

Bicycling has come a long way and with a bit of pedal power, you can go a long way today on a wide variety of trails and routes, in some cases during all four seasons.

Autumn, with its changing leaf colors, cooling temperatures, clearer air making for keener light, is a great time to explore on two wheels.

Bicycles are diverse. Like sneakers, tools, boats and more they can be specialized for specific uses and fit to what a rider wants or needs.

Fat tire bikes handle snow as well as they handle sand. Fat tire enthusiasts cycle the Lake Michigan shoreline and "single track" trails during the depths of winter when traditionally many stashed away bikes awaiting spring or summer.

Boomers are finding electric-assist bikes an enjoyable way to continue exploring on two wheels.

Pure pedal power has plenty of proponents.

Andy Klevorn, president of Shoreline Cycling Club, said the latest pedal power rage is gravel bikes, The hybrids between road and mountain bikes are used to travel gravel roads such as are so abundant in rural west Michigan. They're built to be comfier with wider arm reach those aids in stability.

"Gravel riding is super interesting," Klevorn said.

One can ride along lightly traveled roads through farm country. "It's a great way to get exercise," he said.

You don't need a specialty bike to ride, though.

"Any bike will do, I started on a \$150 from a bike shop," Klevorn said.

If you do pull your old bike out of the garage, Klevorn recommends getting "a decent tune-up from a bike shop.

"Tires, inner tubes, brake pads dry out. Make sure it is safe," he advises. Old tires can crack. Dried brake pads can fail, which can be dangerous if they fail when you need them.

"Wear a helmet. Look both ways before you cross the street is rule number one," Klevorn said.

"Hydrate. Invest in a nice pair of bike shorts. We don't wear spandex because of the fashion ... they might look ridiculous but they have a fair amount of function."

Chamois padding in the shorts adds comfort – but experts advise, find a pair that fits you well.

"Know your limitations," Klevorn said.

If you've been inactive for years or decades, local trails would be a good place to start.

Options abound – and may astound. Shoreline Cycling Club offers maps for an array of rides – from road rides to trail rides that fit enthusiasts and beginners, depending on the choice.

The club covers a region from Oceana County north to Benzie County and includes Lake, Mason and Manistee counties as well.

Maps, "ride with us" information, ride guides and more, Klevorn said, can be found on the club's website https://shorelinecyclingclub.org/

"Any one of those rides is a great fall adventure" Klevorn said of the routes depicted.

What fits you depends upon your preference for an urban ride such as the Ludington School Forest/Cartier Park route called the Ludington



Urban. He calls it an easy ride with restaurants and other downtown features along the way.

Or one can take a more remote route like the Big M trail in the Manistee National Forest 15 or so minutes east of Manistee, or the Lake Michigan Recreation Area trails between Ludington and Manistee, where you can set off for a ride from your campsite, if you wish.

For those wanting a little more upscale experience, Klevorn suggests trying Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville. It offers "pretty amazing trails" and hosts the Peak-to-Peak bicycle race Saturday, Oct. 21.

#### **RIDE THE SILVER LAKE DUNES**

In 2022, after working with Shoreline Cycling Club and Edge Mountain Biking Association, Michigan Department of Natural resources opened the Silver Lake State Park ORV sand dune scramble area to fat tire biking in late fall and winter. The 2023-24 season will run from Dec. 15 through March 15 from 8 a.m. to dusk daily.

According to the DNR, Open riding is permitted within the boundaries of the designated 450-acre ORV open dune scramble area, excluding the area used by Mac Woods. Elevation changes of 80-100 feet, access to Lake Michigan and sunsets over the lake from the top of the dunes await riders.

Riders must enter the dunes using the down ramp of the ORV area. No reservations or preregistration are required. A valid Recreation Passport is required on all vehicles entering the parking lot.

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#### **RELAXING RIDING**

Sharon Edgar of Ludington is an avid bicyclist who tries

to log 4,500 miles a year on her bike.

"I don't have any specific fall routes," Edgar said.

However, on her normal routes around Ludington and Hamlin Lake "was to find a really beautiful tree each day and take a picture of my bike with it."

She said it made for a lot of fun.

"I've never been a fast rider and these rides were pretty casual, sometimes just rolling through the neighborhoods, street-by-street looking for what I considered the 'tree of the day' and then sometimes trying to find that same tree two weeks later and see how the colors of changed."

Bicycle riding, Edgar said, "just brings me joy. I try to ride almost every day the weather allows. My goal for the year is 4,500 miles and I managed that last year.

"I'm not fast and I'm not a powerful rider but I just get out and ride it. I enjoy it. I have some pre-established routes. Sometimes I just ride around and I often ride to do chores. I have routes to Meijer and Walmart.

Edgar has some advice to share.

"My best advice is make sure your bike is the right size for you. If your bike isn't comfortable, you're not going to enjoy riding."

Ride daily.

"If you do it every day it becomes easier and easier," she said. "I started riding about 10 years ago as part of a weight loss effort. I lost 140 pounds about 11 years ago. The first time I rode around my block twice, which was 3 miles,



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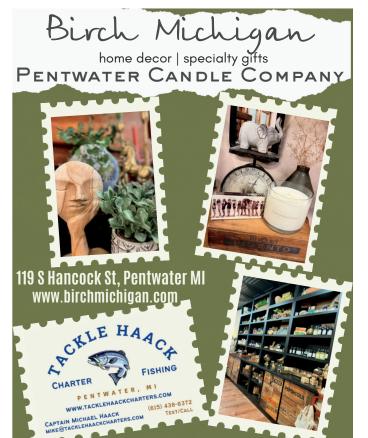
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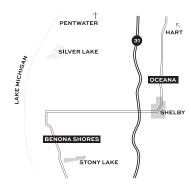
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I was ecstatic. When I tell people l ride 20 – 30 miles a day, they're like, 'oh how can you do that?' It's really is quite easy if you do it every day."

Edgar strongly suggests having a mirror to see what's coming up behind you.

"Always wear a helmet and be a courteous rider. More importantly, make sure you are a courteous driver around bicycles," she adds.

Dale and Cathy Horowski of Hamlin Township are more casual tandem bike riders.

"Fall riding is great because the weather is often still warm and the traffic is a lot lighter," Dale said. "Some years we're still trying to get mileage in to get ready for the Apple Cider ride in Three Oaks (MI) at the end of September. Cathy and I enjoy riding a tandem road bike, especially with our friends the Sleemans, Ann and Dan, and Joneses, Deb and Steve.

"A favorite fall ride would be a Saturday morning trip from Ludington to Pentwater for breakfast and back, maybe routing through the Riverton Township farmland on the way down, and hoping that we have a prevailing southwest wind to push us back up Lakeshore Drive on the way home.

"Another typical ride would be a Sunday afternoon jaunt out M116 to the (Ludington) State Park and then looping back around Lower Hamlin on Lakeshore, ending with dinner somewhere back in town. M116 can be challenging to navigate in the summer with all the cars. It's safer in the fall. We're social riders and most of our rides seem to involve a meal. If the weather's bad we'll ditch the bike ride





but still go out to eat.

"A more casual thing to do is to take mountain bikes up to the Lake Michigan Campground ('Federal Park') and leisurely ride around the campground loops and easy trails up there and then have a picnic. It's a quiet, safe place to ride around with wonderful scenery. Sometimes we combine that with fall camping, which is great, too."

Klevorn said one of the appeals of riding, aside from just getting outside, is the "camaraderie with others you meet on the trails," he said.

"Getting friends together for a ride, sitting around after enjoying an adult beverage has always been a good way to spend a day."

#### **OTHER OPTIONS:**

The William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail

The 22-mile trail – the first linear state park in Michigan and now a "Pure Michigan Trail" – is a former rail trail that winds through farms, orchards, forests and into towns with trailheads in Hart and Montague. Other access points are along the way.

#### PENTWATER PATHWAYS

This 7-mile mountain bike trail system has four loops with beginner to advanced trails through rolling, wooded hills southeast of the Village of Pentwater.

#### **ARCADIA DUNES**

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# The REGAL



With seasonal migration of salmon seeking to spawn, eagles will again be on the 'prowl'

After years of living in low numbers eagles - with their piercing talons and equally piercing eyes - have returned in ever-growing populations not seen for nearly a century. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources tells us that at the start of the 21st century there were just 359 nesting pair of eagles in the entire state and just a dozen or so here in the LakeStyle area; and even worse, it was estimated just 30 pair of nesting eagles called Michigan home in 1980. But now, just 23 years later, those numbers have exploded to be over 900 nesting pairs in the state, with about two dozen pairs in each of Mason and Manistee counties, and with a growing number of those being juvenile birds. Just so you know, it can take four to five years for young eagles to shed their dark brown feathers and faded-white mottling to develop their iconic adult black feathers and white tails and heads. Eagles aggressively search out fish - especially salmon - leaving their deep waters of Lake Michigan to swim upstream to spawn during the late summer and early fall. One place to see these gracious, gliding wonders of nature is at the Little Manistee Weir, located at the Little Manistee River just southeast of Stronach, where a massive eagle's nest - called a communal roost - is located (picture shows adult eagle at the top of the tree, with a juvenile eagle perched lower and near the nest).







photos by STEVE BEGNOCHE

6





#### **BY STEVE BEGNOCHE**

Autumn is my favorite time to hike. Why?

The coolness of the air.

The quality of the light filtering through leaves, whether early in the season when green and lush, or later as they change colors and carpet trails with a mosaic of color.

The fragrance, changes, too. Fall smells like, well, fall.

If summer is for beach time, fall is for time afield in woods, dunes or trekking in towns, too.

Who said hiking has to be purely nature-related?

What gear you need, depends on your choice of hikes.

Walking a well-trodden trail such as Island Trail at Ludington State Park — a great place to hike with some 18 miles of marked trails through varied terrain and with different draws and vistas — requires no special gear other than comfortable shoes.

Comfortable shoes appropriate for

a given trail likely is always the most important choice no matter where you hike.

The more rugged the terrain, the more rugged a shoe you might want. If climbing is involved, or potential ankle-twisting rock-strewn or exposed root routes are planned, I'll don hiking boots for extra ankle support.

Matching tread to trail type can make a trek easier, too, but here in Michigan a comfortable pair of hiking boots, a comfortable pair of hiking shoes, and comfortable walking shoes in your wardrobe will solve most hiking choices.

The proper fit and the proper material (one that breathes but is durable) can prove the difference between enjoying hiking or aching feet, blisters and a loss of desire to hit the trails again. Good shoe and outdoor stores can provide needed guidance.

I also keep a pair of waterproof hikers in my shoe fleet because dry feet are important. It rains in Michigan in fall. It's dewy many mornings, too. There might even by a surprise slushy snow. Whether you choose to spend the extra money for tried-andtrue Gore-Tex lined hikers, or choose to rely on less expensive coating sprays that wear off and will fail if not replenished, know dry feet are better than wet ones when hiking. I usually spring for a pair of the Gore-Tex hikers because they are more reliable than spray coating. That's me though.

Likewise, if rain is possible, packing a rain jacket or a waterproof wind shell can let you enjoy the outdoors despite a shower.

I'm making fall hiking sound fun, eh?

Well, it is.

The region is blessed with hiking trails.

In addition to the Ludington State Park, where I probably hike most often, fall hiking at the Nordhouse Wilderness Area off Nurnberg Road on the north side of Hamlin Lake between Ludington and Manistee, can be gorgeous. Being wilderness, the Ludington State Park trails are varied and include walks interpreting history, the popular Island/Lost Lake trails loops and for those who wander far, the walking trees in the dunes north of Hamlin Lake.



STEVE BEGNOCHE PHOTOS

trails aren't formally marked, but take a phone picture of the trailhead map and they're pretty easy to follow. Being dunes, they have up and downs and a couple overlooks you can climb. But it's a place of both subtle and astounding beauty, especially when the leaves change colors.

There are some nice vistas of dune valleys and Lake Michigan.

Colors later in the season can be muted, but still rich in the browns, bronzes and golds that show in late fall.

Parking permits are required for the Nurnberg and Lake Michigan Recreation Area parking lots.

And, being wilderness, no wheeled contraptions from bikes to coolers or ATVS are allowed.

The Friends of Nordhouse Dunes also recently have been trying to educate wilderness area users of wilderness etiquette — pack in, pack-out, leave no trace — so the popular area can remain wild.

The North Country Trail winds for more than 800 miles through Michigan. Various sections run through the region. Maps and information are available from the North Country Trail Association on line or from the Manistee-Huron National Forest offices in Manistee, Baldwin and White Cloud.

A hike along the Manistee River near Hodenpyl Dam can be spectacular in fall. If you want to day-trip, a section of the North Country Trail by the Manistee River Rollways near Buckley has a stunning view of a horseshoe bend in the river. It's due east of Buckley and south of Kingsley. Google the directions as it requires some dirt road driving. It's worth a drive and the short hike from the parking lot to the overlooks. Or you can make a day of hiking there, too.

Gary Hearing, vice president of Friends of Ludington State Park, put together Third Sunday hikes at Ludington State Park for anyone interested in exploring trails there. Participants meet at 2 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month, September through May, for a couple hour trek along a trail chosen by the hike leaders who also talk about the history of what is being seen along the way.

Hearing also takes part in the Spirit of the Woods NCT Trail hikes on the

first Saturday of each month which are announced on the chapter's web and Facebook pages as well as through local media.

"Every season offers a chance to enjoy the beauty of the trail," Hearing said. "I like hiking in the Fall with the cooler temperatures, fall colors in the trees and the changing foliage. If you're lucky you may see some groves of Tamarack trees lighting up the hillside with some bright yellow color.

"So, join a group of fellow hikers and you'll soon become familiar with the many opportunities to explore wonderful trails we have available to us in Western Michigan and make some great friends"

Joan Young might define hiking in West Michigan. She's twice completed hiking the entire 5,000-plus miles of the North Country Trail, once in section hikes, and most recently in a mostly through hike interrupted near the conclusion by severe winter weather. She's a legend in NCT circles and has written books and articles about her adventures.

She shared thoughts about hiking for those thinking about trying it this



Manistee Highbanks Rollway fence



Nordhouse Dunes trail sign

fall.

"Group hikes are especially good for newbies and people who enjoy the social aspect of hiking. Some people are afraid they won't be able to follow the correct trail, or they don't understand the blazing/marking system, or are concerned about missing signs at junctions. Other people just like to be with others and share the experience."

Hiking alone has other benefits.

"You see more wildlife," Young said. "You can walk fast or saunter. No one cares if you stop to take 100 pictures of plants or mushrooms. If you are alone, I think you have a greater opportunity to be in touch with something deeper- whether you want to call it life force, forest bathing, prayer or something else"

She said she's never thought about a favorite fall hike, quipping "are any of them bad." Still, she offered a few suggestions to consider.

"The NCT from 5 Mile Road to 3 Mile Road includes the Big Sable River and the Vince Smith Bridge. There are some nice colors and golden ferns along there. (Lake County. 3.2 trail miles).

"The NCT along the Manistee River in Wexford County, anywhere from the east end of 12 Road (east of M37) to Baxter Bridge (on 29 1/2 Road). This is a total of 15 1/2 trail miles, with several intermediate access points.

"All NCT hikes can be studied on the interactive map and free maps downloaded at northcountrytrail.org.

"I'd also suggest Pine Valley Pathway, parking and access to several wooded loops at 37 and 7 Mile Road with a small lake in the middle. (Lake County)"

Part of the fun of hiking new trails is visiting the towns



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along the way. Maybe, add a stop at a farm market for cider afterwards. Or check out a new-to-you eatery.

Sometimes, when hiking, hunger pangs hit. I pack a bit of trail mix heavy on nuts for such times. Granola bars also come in handy – make sure the wrappers make it home with you.

Bring water along. By now we've all heard it a hundred times but keep hydrated. That's as true in fall as in summer.

One can "hike" in town, too. Leave your vehicle parked to explore from one side of a town to another or do the Pentwater Channel Walk, the Ludington Coast Guard Walk or the Manistee River Walk. The steps add up. The scenery, though different than in the woods, is often alluring in its own way.

Finally, whether you use a trek pole, high-tech hiking gear or walk in your favorite athletic shoes, fall is a great time to hit the trails.

Be aware when heading into the woods, hunting seasons begin opening in September. Hunters will be afield, too.

Places like Ludington State Park, have signs on trails marking the start of areas open to hunting. Wearing a bit of hunter's orange is warranted, especially in areas deer are hunted. Sharing the woods and trails with others is part of the outdoors in Michigan.

Respect each other. Respect property, whether public or private. But enjoy time on the trail in fall.

Steve Begnoche, sbegnoche@yahoo.com, over the years has hiked trails during all four seasons in Michigan, believing time spent outdoors is time well spent.





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## FALL

A photo essay by JEFF KIESSEL



























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#### BY MADISON LAJEWSKI Staff Writer

Autumn in Michigan with the vibrant fall foliage and gorgeous scenery offers gardeners the opportunity to add different elements to their plants and gardens. Whether readers have had a green thumb for years or they are just sparking interest in developing a garden, Weesies Brothers offers advice on creating festive fall planters and how to properly winterize plants before the harsh Michigan weather comes.

"The most popular are the mums and we offer them in an assortment of sizes to meet the needs of our customers," Weesies Assistant Grower Anna Olson said. "Some of them want big statement sized mums and others want them for a container, so we do have some in smaller sizes and hanging baskets. We're growing some new plants this year that we haven't had for fall before including ornamental peppers and millet. Similar to mums, we always have flowering cabbage, kale and pansies."

Weesies offers different workshops throughout the year specific to each season. This fall they are offering a variety of classes, the most popular being their fall planters that feature different flowers, gourds and pumpkins. All fall planters come with care instructions after they are made.

"In the fall we have done these centerpieces that feature a pumpkin, and we decorate the pumpkins with either dried florals or succulents and arrange them together," said Olson. "Other workshops we're hoping to



do are dried floral wreaths, a fall herbs workshop and other fall planters."

Preparing plants and gardens for winter is essential in Michigan due to the harsh weather, but some plants require different preparation needs than others.

"A good place to start would be doing a general cleanup, like raking leaves, decluttering leaves and sticks on your lawn for spring," Olson said. "Cutting back any plants with sickly leaves and any plants that need trimming. If people are unsure about whether to prune, it's always best to wait until spring when you can see new growth. If any plants are susceptible to wind damage or freezing temperatures, you can create barricades or cover them in burlap to help protect them from freezing."

Autumn also offers a prime opportunity to introduce gardening to children with simple plants.

"I would start simple and small with veggies so that kids can see the process of putting this in the ground, in a week you'll see its first leaves, watch it grow and this is where food comes from. Which I think is really important because in current modern day society, food comes from the grocery store in their minds, so it's cool to see it come to life. Vegetables like squash, cucumbers and tomatoes. You could do some flowers as well, such as snapdragons."

Weesies recommends subscribing to their e-mail list, and following them on Facebook and Instagram to get updates on when sign-up for fall workshops will be available on their website.



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