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HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE WALK

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SEE AD ON PAGE 23
FOR DATES AND DETAILS

Inside This Issue

Page 8



By Mike Lerchenfeldt

Page 14

THUMBPRINT NEWS CONTEST

FIND OUT WHO OUR 2020 WINNER WAS!

Page 21



By Rita MacDonald

MICHIGAN'S FLOATING ZIP CODE

By David Odziana, *ThumbPrint News* Contributor

Michigan's proximity to the Great Lakes resulted in the constant utilization of the waters for transportation hundreds of years before the state was accepted into the union – the use of these waterways have led to a great deal of long-lasting and unique enterprises. One corporation, known as J.W. Westcott Company, which was started all the way back in the 19th century by Captain John Ward Westcott, is still operating today and is the only business of its kind in the country.

The Great Lakes and its connecting rivers have been used for shipping people and material throughout the United States and were essential during the formative years to move logs and other natural resources. As time passed, the waterways around Michigan experienced a huge influx of ships traversing the area. Eventually, the lakes became filled with shipping companies spending more time on the water in order to meet the increased demand for needed material – a way for companies to stay in contact with their captains to ensure everything was running smoothly became more essential as traffic increased.

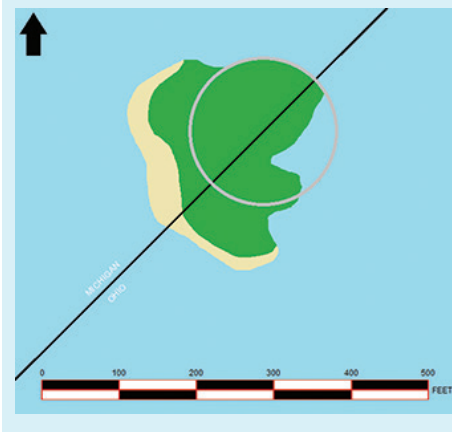
John Westcott was born in 1848, to David H. Westcott and Mary Ward – both of his parents'

See ZIP CODE Page 6



ISLAND SPLIT after Battle Over Territory Lines

By David Odziana, *ThumbPrint News* Contributor



The history behind the state lines separating Michigan and Ohio dates back hundreds of years – the dispute grew so heated that it actually sparked the Toledo War.

While the territorial lines are clear and precise today, in the early 1800s, it was common for two states to claim the same section of land, which is what happened with the Toledo Strip. While the issue was finally resolved more than 150 years later, one small piece of land was split down the middle as a result of the official state lines that jot northeast through Lake Erie. Sitting out in the middle of the water is Turtle Island, half of which belongs to Michigan, while the other half is owned by Ohio. The property was named after Miami Chief Meshikinwah, also known as Little Turtle, who became well known after his involvement in the American Revolution and his push for peace between the Native Americans and Europeans. He became

See ISLAND Page 17

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LETTER from the EDITOR

What an amazingly long year 2020 was! We missed many things last year at one point or another – parties, graduations, holiday get-togethers, eating in restaurants, travel, seeing our relatives and friends in person, social gatherings – the list goes on and on. Some of us lost friends or loved ones.

All of us needed to find ways to cope. For some, taking up old hobbies or beginning new ones helped to take our minds off what was going on in our personal lives and in the world, even if only for a short time.

My hobbies include genealogy research, edible landscaping and cooking. I think the latter one is what helped me get through 2020 the most.

I love watching cooking shows, but one of my favorites is *Bizarre Foods: Delicious Destinations* with Andrew Zimmern. What I like about it is learning about new foods and ingredients that we seldom see here in America and the awesome recipes that are indigenous to the countries he visits. Not only does he concentrate on the foods of a country, but also on the culture, history and sights. During COVID-19 when travel was somewhat limited, I felt like I could vicariously visit some of these far-away places.

And I started experimenting. I purchased spices and herbs online that were not available in our local supermarkets. I Googled and tried out recipes that were representative of the countries Andrew shared with his viewers. Plus, I came up with a crazy idea. I added to my bucket list trying to make at least one recipe from every country in the world before I leave this earth.

That may be an unreasonable goal as I realize how many countries are currently on our earth! It depends on who you ask and what the definition of a country is to them as to exactly how many there are. The United Nations recognizes 193 countries plus two observer states: the Vatican and the Palestinian Authority. Additionally, there are six countries that have obtained partial recognition from UN member states. These are Taiwan, Western Sahara, Kosovo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Northern Cyprus. These territories are claimed by other countries, but are not controlled by them.

On a complete list of country codes, you will find 249 nations listed, because dependent territories and self-declared nations are included.

There are also 206 nations that compete in the Olympics, 211 nations that are able to play in the FIFA World Cup, and a total of 204-207 self-declared nations. So, in the end, the answer to the question of how many countries there are in the world remains a question with many different possible answers.

No matter how many countries there are actually in the world, making one recipe from each is a daunting task. It will be fun, though, and tasty to at least try.

Today, I am sharing two recipes from two different countries that I have attempted to make, mostly successfully. If you have recipes you have personally made that are representative of a country that I didn't share, I would love to have you submit it to *ThumbPrint News* at thumbprintnews@comcast.net in Word Document form. If you have a photo you took of the dish you made, please submit it as well in high-quality jpeg format. I will be sure to share some of these recipes in future editions so that we may all take a culinary trip around the world. 🌍

-Diane Kodet

Pelau with Chicken and Pidgeon Peas from Trinidad Servings: 6

- 2 ½ lbs. chicken thighs, bone-in, skin on (could also use chicken legs)
- 3 springs thyme, use less if using dried thyme
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped, grated or pressed
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 cups long grain rice, washed and drained
- ½ onion, chopped
- ½ cup carrot, chopped
- 19 oz. (1 can) dry pigeon peas, rinsed and drained (can substitute black-eyed peas)
- ¼ tsp. scotch bonnet pepper or more if desired
- 1 tbsp. cilantro, finely chopped
- ¼ cup green onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 7 oz. coconut milk
- 3 cups hot water or chicken stock
- 1 tsp. margarine, optional

1. Place chicken in a large bowl, along with 1 sprig of thyme (reserve the other 3 for cooking), garlic salt and black pepper. Stir to coat the chicken with the seasonings, cover and place in the fridge for 30 minutes (or overnight).
2. Add oil to a large heavy bottom pot, and place over medium-high heat. Once oil is hot (but not smoking) pour the sugar into the pot in an even layer and allow to caramelize. The sugar will melt and bubble as it caramelizes. Do not stir the sugar, but do watch it carefully to look for the change

in color. Wait until the sugar just starts to turn dark brown in color (not black), then carefully add chicken to the pot and stir to coat with the "burnt" sugar. Use caution – hot sugar can burn you quite badly! Add onion, carrots and pigeon peas to the pot and stir to combine. Cook for 5 minutes.

3. Add rice, stir and cook for another 5 minutes. Then add add cilantro, green onion, reserved sprigs of thyme, scotch bonnet pepper and stir to combine.
4. Add coconut milk and hot water to the pot. Season with salt and pepper.

5. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover pot and gently simmer for about 20-25 minutes, or until all liquid has been absorbed and rice is cooked through.
5. Stir in margarine, if using. Serve hot or at room temperature.



Spongy Cheesecake from Japan Servings: 8

- 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, cubed
- ½ cup milk
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 10 tbsp. cake flour
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- 6 egg yolks
- 6 egg whites
- ¼ tsp. cream of tartar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 10 tbsp. superfine sugar
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (165°C). Lightly grease an 8-inch round cake pan and line with parchment paper.
2. Place cream cheese in a bowl with milk; soak for 20 minutes.
3. Heat cream cheese with milk and butter in the top of a double boiler over simmering water, stirring frequently, until melted and smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool completely, at least 15 minutes.
4. Sift cake flour and cornstarch together into a bowl. Sift again into the cream cheese mixture; mix well. Add egg yolks and lemon juice and mix well.
5. Beat egg whites, cream of tartar, and salt together in a separate bowl using an electric mixer until foamy. Add sugar, 2 tablespoons at a time, beating well after each addition. Continue beating on high speed until soft peaks form.



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Moving On with Gratitude

By David Gillis
 ThumbPrint News Columnist



What a year 2020 was! I am confident of not being the only person offering that thought as we enter 2021. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a strong element of fear and concern for many of us. The government and self-imposed restrictions we are experiencing have changed our lives substantially and maybe forever. And the violent protestor-caused national chaos coupled with election year confusion has brought us to the point we are now at. Possibly the only way to begin to address where we are is to state, "Whew!"

Realistically, there is so much more that can be added after the word "whew." However, at this special time of year, maybe we should just pause to reflect on the importance of moving on from a month of thanksgiving and gift-giving. There is much to be considered and reflect on as we enter this new month and a new year.

To begin our new year journey, let us start by asking ourselves, "Am I a grateful person? Have I remembered to thank God for the good things, large and small, I have experienced?"

In the confusion and anxiety of our daily life last year, it has been too easy to block out the details of the day, forgetting that each and every day really does hold precious gifts. Simple things, like the air we breathe to our ability to provide for our families and on to the friendships we hold close and that have become so important during these trying times.

We need to understand and accept that gratitude is a special gift from God. It is fundamental to not taking things for granted. It is being thankful for what we have, what we receive and what we are able to give others. Thankfulness is a powerful means for drawing near to God. And, as citizens of this still great nation, we really do have an obligation to our God and to our country. Gratitude only strengthens that obligation.

Gratitude is life changing. According to many psychologists, maintaining gratitude can change our lives. It can produce a lasting, positive affect if we will only work towards making it a part of our day's efforts. Research shows that gratitude reduces stress, increases self-esteem and improves relationships.

Understanding the benefits of having gratitude and practicing it becomes a powerful way for us to live, especially when things are not what we want them to be. Our hearts and our minds become glad when we are grateful to God for having the ability to experience these benefits. We affirm the good in our lives and recognize that He is the source of this goodness. Our attitude of thanksgiving has the ability to change the direction of each day. Taking the time to recognize what God has done and expressing our gratitude is important to developing and maintaining our relationship with Him.

Gratitude also makes us less self-centered. It allows us to cease focusing on ourselves so much and to place our attention on others. Our expression of gratitude to God plays an important role in our relationship with Him and with others. Gratitude is a "glue" that binds.

As we grow in our gratitude, we can learn to be thankful not only for the good gifts, but for everything in our lives, including the trials and sufferings.

As we move from the month of Christmas blessings to the month of new beginnings, let us accept that possibly the two most important words in the English language are "thank" and "you," especially when they are joined. Have a happy and significantly meaningful new year. 🌱

Editor's note: When last we heard from David Gillis, back in December of 2017, he was shifting his focus to building his ministry as a newly ordained chaplain. We are pleased to welcome him back into the ThumbPrint News fold of regular writers. We are looking forward to enjoying David's wit and wisdom.

CLARITY IN HEALTH

Here we are once again starting a brand new year! Seeing as how crazy 2020 was, I thought it would be a good idea to once again deem this new year as one of clarity! If one were to get an eye exam and be told that they have 20/20 vision, they are considered to have perfect vision and see with great clarity. These exams are important and conducted routinely on an annual basis by most people, because let's be frank, life would be much different without the ability to see the world around us. But what about hearing with great clarity? Isn't the ability to hear the world around us clearly just as important as seeing it?

Hearing exams aren't prioritized as much as eye exams or overall annual physicals, but they should be, considering that hearing loss is being linked to more and more health conditions that affect the overall well-being of an individual. Most people are unaware that when we hear, sound waves travel from the outer ear, through the middle ear into the inner ear, where the vibrations stimulate thousands of tiny hair cells. These tiny hair cells in our inner ear send electrical signals to the auditory nerve, which is connected to the center of the brain, where the electrical impulses are perceived by the brain as sound. The brain translates the impulses into sounds that we know and understand. What this means is that there is a direct link between the ability or inability to hear and the brain.

By getting a regular hearing exam, you can stay abreast of not only your hearing health, but your overall health. Untreated hearing loss has been directly linked to cognitive decline, dementia, Alzheimer's and an increased risk of falling. One main goal when treating hearing loss is to keep the brain active and engaged and by treating hearing loss in its early stages, you can lessen your chances of developing further health problems down the line. This and every year, let's be clear where we stand in all matters of our health, because if we don't have our health, nothing else we have matters! 🍀

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- 7 You find yourself reading people's lips in order to understand the conversation.
- 8 You find yourself saying "huh" or "what" a lot in conversations.
- 9 You find that communicating over the phone is difficult.
- 10 You complain that people mumble or talk too fast.

Editor's note: Beltone Skoric Hearing Aid Center has been serving the hearing-impaired community in Michigan for over 30 years. They have made it their mission to educate about the negative effects of untreated hearing loss. For more information, please visit their website www.beltoneskorichearing.com or call to schedule a free hearing exam at one of their 38 locations: (810) 356-0559.



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ZIP CODE

Continued from Page 1

families were heavily involved in the shipping industry in the Midwest. Westcott spent a majority of his childhood around ships, and by the time he was 20 years old, he was already the youngest captain on the Great Lakes at the time. The J.W. Westcott Company was started from a small operation in 1874, when Captain Westcott began using a rowboat to deliver messages and items to passing ships on the Detroit River. While a majority of his business eventually changed to delivering mail, his venture mainly catered to shipping companies. During this time in freight history, companies were very protective of their routes, often times not even revealing their final destination to their captains, which made Westcott's ability to deliver messages very crucial. With the invention of the telegraph, Westcott began utilizing the new technology to let the companies know when their ships had reached the Detroit River, who would in return send him updated orders for their ship's captains – it was around this time that postal delivery was added to the services provided by Westcott.

By 1895, the J.W. Westcott Company was experiencing a great deal of success making deliveries on the Detroit River, which caught the attention of other entrepreneurs in the area. Not only did the U.S. Postal Service launch a boat to compete with Westcott, but other businesses, such as the Independent Marine Reporting Company, began making deliveries in 1902. In order to stay competitive and ensure he could deliver the most packages as possible, Westcott



S.S. J.W. Westcott I in 1908

purchased his first engine-powered boat in 1910, called the *J.W. Westcott* – Westcott also expanded his operations to Port Huron on the St. Clair River in the hopes of serving other commercial vessels crossing that waterway. This rivalry continued for nearly four decades, when the J.W. Westcott Company finally won the drawn out battle over the Detroit River. Westcott's company received the postal charter from the United States Post Office in 1948, which also gave the business one of its most unique

characteristics – the J.W. Westcott Company was assigned its own zip code of 48222, making it the only ship in the country with that distinction. The following year the floating post office commissioned a new 45-foot ship dubbed the *J.W. Westcott II*, which is still in use to this day.

In the 1970s, the company experienced its highest volume of business, delivering as much as one million pieces of mail each year – by the 1990s, that amount decreased by nearly half, but they filled that void by delivering workers back to their vessels, as well as bringing crews anything from toiletries to groceries to pizza. With the advent of technology, the company has adapted to the changing times, but still remains faithful to their roots for certain aspects of their business. In the past, the J.W. Westcott Company only had a notice of about an hour before ships made it into the Detroit River, but thanks to the ability to track ships today, the workers know first thing in the morning what customers are going to pass through the waterway. The day prior to their arrival, captains email the business with their list of needed items – the company makes approximately 20 of these transactions per day. While the new tools at the business' disposal make parts of their job easier, the Westcott Company continues to use old school means to keep things running smoothly, as well by keeping a handwritten account of all transactions. Even today, the mail is still loaded into a bucket attached to a rope just like it was way back in 1874, when it was just Captain Westcott in a rowboat.

Although the delivery method today is much safer because the workers are in a larger boat powered by an engine instead of an oar, the process still poses certain dangers. Although a towline is no longer necessary because the gas-powered boats can match the speed of the freighters, the reality of how fast things can turn bad became evident in 2001. On October 23, the Westcott crew was returning a captain to the *Sidsel Knutsen*, a 533-foot oil tanker, when tragedy struck. It is typical for the *J.W. Westcott II* to take on a considerable amount of water while next to the massive ships, but this time was different. The ship continued to take on more and more water, which quickly filled the pilothouse, causing the boat to tip to one side.

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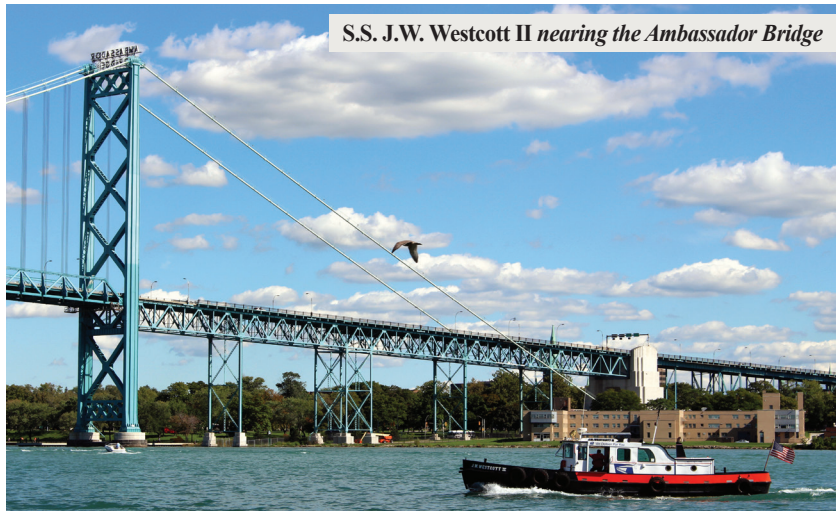
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S.S. J.W. Westcott II nearing the Ambassador Bridge

Two of the pilots aboard the *J.W. Westcott II* that were being taken back to their vessels were able to escape out of the door and swim to safety, but not everyone was as lucky. David Lewis and Catherine Nasiatka, who were the employees running the ship, perished in the freak accident, which sunk the ship in just 20 seconds according to eyewitnesses. Although the *J.W. Westcott* Company employees have been involved in countless life saving efforts, this was the only time in its 143 years of service that the company had experienced a fatality of one of its own workers.

The *J.W. Westcott* Company continues to operate from April until halfway through December, patiently waiting to help those on the Detroit River 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In 2005, the business was honored with a Michigan Heritage Award for a century of unique service on the Great Lakes. In 2010, the company was able to do something that few others have ever been able to accomplish – the presidency was handed down to Captain John Westcott’s great-grandson, James M. Hogan, making the *J.W. Westcott* Company a five-generation family owned and operated business ever since its inception in 1874. 🇺🇸



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Why Do I Teach?

By Mike Lerchenfeldt, *ThumbPrint News* Reader from Rochester Hills, Michigan

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Modern States Education Alliance and the College Board have partnered with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) to offer Michigan residents free online preparation courses for any of College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams – giving Michiganders a chance to earn college credits at Michigan universities and community colleges without taking coursework. To learn more go to www.bit.ly/SOM-lerchenfeldt

Why do I teach, you ask? I teach because it is a highly rewarding and fulfilling profession. Teachers have one of the most important, meaningful and purpose-driven jobs of anyone working today. We share valuable information and important skills to encourage a love of learning that will serve students the rest of their lives. I do this work because I am committed to having a positive impact on the future of each student that I serve.

I wake up each morning and serve students at Iroquois Middle School, a Chippewa Valley School. Being a role model, and teaching students the skills and knowledge they need beyond the classroom, is extremely inspiring and rewarding. No two days in the classroom are ever the same.



Mike and his family

For me, motivation has always come from students in my classroom. I know that it is essential to make lesson plans interesting to get all students motivated to learn. I emphasize the collaborative and cooperative nature of scientific work. I do my best to creatively facilitate and encourage the engaging interaction between students, and provide feedback based on their observations.

To accomplish our goals, teachers need perseverance, passion, validation and hope; and today, given all that is happening in the world, it is an excellent time to be a teacher, mentor and role model.

My former teachers helped me get to where I am today by providing me with an exceptional education. The math, reading and writing skills

I developed as a student supported me in my journey to becoming a successful teacher today. Playing sports and being involved in student government taught me valuable life lessons about teamwork, time management and responsibility. As a student, I learned the benefits of getting along with people from different cultures, an approach which continues to assist me in my career. This lesson came full circle during recent travels to New Zealand, where I participated in a teacher exchange program. Through the program, I learned from and shared my experiences with foreign educators.

So many educators had a positive influence on my life. They encouraged me to explore my curiosities, supported me to overcome my struggles, and celebrated my successes. They cared about me, my learning, my life, and they wanted me to find happiness within myself, so that I could be capable of helping others. They inspired me and pushed me to be my best in the classroom and on the athletic fields. I am now trying to pay this positive influence forward to my students.

During my time in the classroom, I have learned so much about myself, my practice and my students. I pass along these thoughts to others in the education field, but the ideas are transferrable to any profession.

Be persistent. Never give up on students, parents and colleagues. Everyone is in this together, and it truly takes a village to educate a child properly.

Be open-minded. Listen to other people and their opinions. The more information you have, the better decisions you can make. Communication and organization are essential for highly effective teachers.

Think positive. There is a lot of negativity out in the world, especially within the field of education. You need to have a positive outlook in order to combat all the negativity.

Try different roles until you find your niche. Spend time with different people and in various extracurricular activities. Use your hobbies and passions as a guide.

Always want to learn. Whether it is a new technology or a new teaching strategy, teachers are life-long learners. We need to be learning alongside our students and show how passionate we are in seeking knowledge.

As I reflect on my role as a Proud Michigan Educator and advocate for the teaching profession, I continue to realize that teaching is a multifaceted endeavor, and not just a trade. The daily rewards and challenges make every day unique, and most importantly, worth it all. 🇺🇸



Editor's note: Mike Lerchenfeldt earned his Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Oakland University (OU) and Master of Education degree in educational leadership from Saginaw Valley State University. He also graduated from the OU Leadership Institute, a program designed to further increase their contributions to their community. Mike taught in New Zealand through a teacher exchange program. Since 2008, he has been a teacher in the Chippewa Valley Schools in Clinton and Macomb Townships, Michigan. His academic career and experiences have inspired him to mentor others. He mentored students at OU and received university honors: summa cum laude and Keeper of the Dream Award.



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BENEFITS OF OWNING A PET

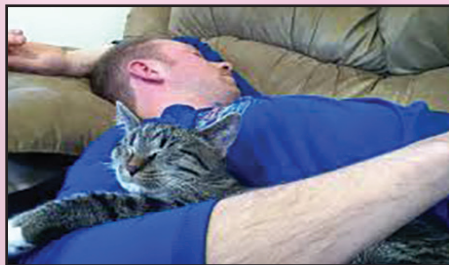
By Dr. DiBenedetto, *ThumbPrint News* Columnist



Photo courtesy of isosphere
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According to *CNN Health*, snuggling with your furry friends after a hard day is a proven antidote to decreasing the day's stress. For millions of people, having a pet brings a circle of love into our lives. They give affection, we give it back and all of us are the better for it. And here is the best news, science agrees to a certain point. Throughout history, dogs have been good at keeping us safe, guarding our houses, our cattle and various material goods. We have also trained them to assist us with hunting and have bred numerous breeds specifically for their cuteness and elegance.

Just last year, *Medical News Today* reported on a study that showed that owning a pet reduces a person's risk of premature death by up to a third. Also, researchers at the University of Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, suggest that pet owners have higher survival rates, fewer heart attacks, less loneliness, better blood pressure, better psychological well-being, lower rates of depression and stress, fewer doctor visits, increased self-esteem, better sleep and more physical activity. But why is that? It is difficult to establish a causal relationship between owning a pet and enjoying better health. However, the benefits may appear thanks



to a series of factors related to lifestyle adjustments that people tend to make after they decide to adopt a canine or feline friend.

Children who have pets have better immune systems and are less likely to take days off from school. While pets cannot be considered as human replacements, there is no doubt of their ability to alleviate feelings of isolation that humans of all ages are prey to. Research has also shown that older, homebound adults who owned pets had better cognitive function.

The health benefits of pets are not limited to just cats and dogs. If you're thinking of getting a household pet, here are some less common options: **snakes and lizards**. You may think that reptiles seem cold, but studies show that lizards and snakes can grow attached to their owners, recognizing those who care, handle and feed them. Some may even ask to be petted by raising their necks up. A reptilian companion might also appeal to those who have an allergy to furry pets or find their exotic, unusual beauty attractive. **Rabbits**. Another alternative for those who are allergic to dogs or cats is a bunny rabbit. A rabbit can be an exceptional family pet, not as high maintenance as dogs or cats, but with lots of energy and personality. **Birds**. Feathery friends encourage social interaction, which can be beneficial if you live alone. **Fish**. You might have noticed fish tanks in many doctors' or dentists' offices, care homes or other medical facilities. There's a good reason for this. Keeping and watching fish have been scientifically proven to reduce stress and calm your heart rate.



Leopard gecko

Having pets, whether it is a cat or a dog or another species that fits better in your household, to comfort us has never been more important than this year with all the isolation, stress and uncertainty people have had to endure. Here's to hoping that we all can find peace and happiness in 2021. 🌱

Editor's note: Dr. DiBenedetto is a veterinarian at Maple Veterinary Hospital, located at 2981 Iowa in Troy, Michigan. The hospital website is www.mvhvet.com. For other pet-related questions, you can reach Dr. DiBenedetto at (248) 585-2622.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR JOURNEY WITH US!

If you're planning a trip for business or pleasure, please consider taking a copy of *ThumbPrint News* with you and photographing yourself holding it at a point of interest for that location. Submit good quality .jpeg photo(s) to ThumbPrintNews@comcast.net and include a paragraph about your trip. When your photo or photos appear in the paper, we will be sure to send you a complimentary copy, so please include your full name and address with your submission.

CALLING ALL ANIMAL LOVERS!

Join in our **THUMBPRINT NEWS PET PHOTO CHALLENGE**

A little over a year ago we started our Pet Challenge: asking readers and pet lovers alike to send a photo or two of their favorite animal posing with *ThumbPrint News*.

So far, we have featured many adorable dogs, a turtle, a fish, a bearded dragon and a hedge hog!

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Submit good quality .jpeg photo(s) of your pet or favorite animal somehow posing with our paper to ThumbPrintNews@comcast.net and include a few sentences about your photo. When your photo(s) appear in the paper, we will be sure to send you a complimentary copy, so please include your full name and address with your submission. we do not share your personal data with anyone

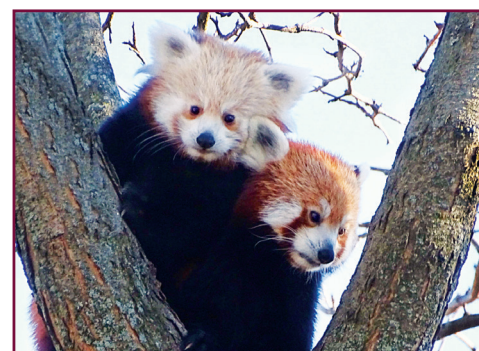
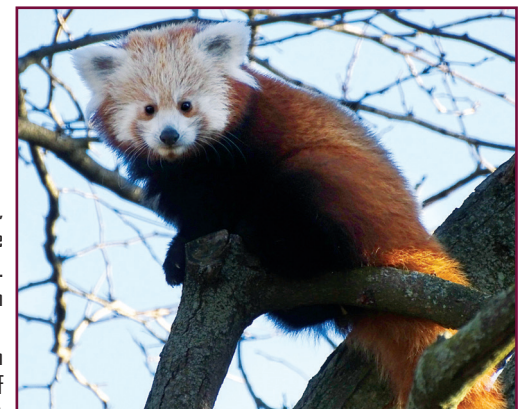
BABY RED PANDA Makes Debut at Detroit Zoo

Baby red panda, Scarlet (pictured on left), has made her first public appearance at the Detroit Zoo following her birth this past July. She lives in the Holtzman Wildlife Foundation Red Panda Forest with mother, Ash.

"It's really exciting to see Scarlet learn from Ash how to be a red panda. This involves a lot of dramatic tree climbing maneuvers," said Scott Carter, chief life sciences officer for the Detroit Zoological Society. Scarlet is the 25th red panda born at the Detroit Zoo since 1999. "Ash is doing so well with Scarlet; she is very attentive and always waits for her to follow," said Carter.

Red pandas are listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It is estimated that fewer than 10,000 red pandas remain in the wild and their numbers are decreasing due to habitat loss, poaching and illegal pet trade. The Holtzman Wildlife Foundation Red Panda Forest features more than 14,000 square feet of naturalistic space with a flowing stream and waterfall, an arboreal pathway through the habitat, misting areas to cool the red pandas in the summer, land for exploration and a variety of nesting places.

For hours, prices, directions and other information, call (248) 541-5717 or visit www.detroitzoo.org.



Scarlet and Ash



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2021

MARKET MATTERS

Is there anyone who isn't happy to welcome in the new year? Wishing you and yours good health, prosperity and all the best in this new year.

Although final 2020 statistics won't be available for a couple of months, 2020 finished brisk and strong, due primarily to the continuing low mortgage rates and tight inventory. Sales prices were up, and the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the typical market seasonality out past spring/summer into fall and the winter months.

The market was also buoyed by more and more people working remotely, giving them greater flexibility on the geographic area for their home searches, including more distant suburban and rural areas. National Association of Realtors® (NAR) reported that one in three people transitioned to full or partial remote work during the pandemic and that almost 9 million people relocated in 2020.

Dr. Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, is forecasting that, "A persistent housing shortage will likely keep home prices elevated, while new-home and existing-home sales will continue to rise as record low mortgage rates and a work-from-home trend give housing markets a boost."

Mortgage rates should continue to be relatively stable at historically low levels. Conforming loan limits in most parts of the country will increase from \$510,400 to \$548,250 in 2021. Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Single Family loan limits for 2021 will increase in most areas from \$331,760 to \$356,362.

We are optimistic and expect a continued strong residential real estate market in 2021.

HOME REMODELING COSTS VERSUS VALUE

Thinking of selling and wondering what home remodeling projects give you the best return on investment? Here are a few ideas based on the "Remodeling 2020 Cost vs. Value Report" (www.costvsvalue.com). A range is shown as the cost recouped varies geographically.

- Replacing a band of your home's vinyl siding with **Manufactured Stone Veneer** tops this year's list, with an 88-96% return.



- Garage Door Replacement** is always a top choice, returning 79-95% of the investment.
- Minor to Midrange Kitchen Remodels** are popular and can return 70-78% value on resale. They also can be the difference to Buyers in deciding on your house versus another!
- Siding Replacement with Fiber-Cement or Vinyl** are estimated to return 71-78% or 69-75% of their investment, respectively, along with cost-saving energy improvements, and enhanced curb appeal. 🌱

Editor's note: Don and Barbara Alcorn are Realtors® serving St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland Counties and the Grosse Pointes, and are part of an international network of Realtors. They are affiliated with Coldwell Banker Weir Manuel, the #1 Coldwell Banker in Michigan. You can reach Don and Barbara at (810) 278-6654 or -6655 or dalcorn@cbwm.com or balcorn@cbwm.com.

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STAY-AT-HOME STORIES

Dear Editor,

My favorite stay-at-home story was not about staying at home.

My daughter, DJ, organized a surprise birthday drive-by for my granddaughter, Kimberly, in early May. Eight cars full of us gathered in a nearby parking lot to decorate our cars.

DJ had Kimberly outside for a picnic. It was so precious and fun to see the expressions on her face - first shock, surprise, then joy - as we slowly drove past honking our horns, waving and yelling, "Happy Birthday!" A total success.

- Dottie Baillargeon, Warren, Michigan

ALL READERS are invited to share their Stay-at-Home Stories with us! Stories should be of positive outcomes from this period of social distancing and/or lessons that have been learned as a result. You can email your story to ThumbPrintNews@comcast.net or mail to the address on page 2. Pictures are welcome too! We will continue printing them as long as we receive them. Thank you for sharing your stories with us and all our readers.

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PROBLEMS



THERE'S A MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

Informational Tips and Advice on Common Household Pests from Nicole Szymczak, President, ABC Home & Commercial Services

Happy New Year, *ThumbPrint* readers! Now that the holidays have passed, the beauty and wonder of the winter fades to something a little more frigid. Staying cozy indoors becomes a top priority for most people. But people aren't the only ones looking to keep warm this season! Critters of all types are in need of food, comfort and shelter, and unfortunately for us, our homes are the most appealing option. Out of the many critters we'd most like to see stay out in the cold, mice usually top the list. They are sneaky little guys and have the ability to get inside through the smallest of openings – I'm talking ¼ of an inch in diameter. Making sure your house is completely sealed up of all voids and cracks that small is nearly impossible. This means the mice will be getting in, but there are other ways to deal with them.

Now, you may be thinking, "So what? What's the big deal if I spot one little mouse?" Well, chances are it isn't just one. Mice breed year-round and reproduce very quickly! These creatures can be very destructive. They will target and chew on books, clothes, items stored in boxes, pictures that are irreplaceable and more. Electrical fires have also been known to start due to mice chewing on electrical wires.

While being worried of a potential infestation, it is also important to be concerned about your health. Mice can carry and spread diseases to people and pets. Some of the diseases they are capable of transmitting are salmonella food poisoning, rickettsial pox, meningitis and leptospirosis. Diseases can be transmitted through bites, contaminated food and mouse droppings. Irreplaceable possessions are not the only thing they're after; mice will eat and contaminate any food they can find – whether it's out or stored away. It is vital to throw away any food that you suspect has been contaminated.

Mice will go after food left on counters, on dirty dishes in the sink and even food in our beloved pets' bowls! Once you are aware that you have a mouse infestation, there are several precautions you can take to help eliminate the problem. Make sure dirty dishes are washed and not left out overnight, take out your garbage every night and put it in a sealed garbage can and pick up and put away or empty pet food bowls before dark. Mice have poor vision and are color blind. They rely heavily on their other senses, including the sense of smell to find food; leaving food out overnight is an open invitation! Keep all the food in your cupboards in tightly sealed containers and vacuum regularly. Mice are nocturnal, meaning night time is when they are most likely actively foraging for food, and seeing mice during the day can be an indication of a severe infestation. Nesting locations vary, with a few of their favorites being in attics and crawl spaces.

Mice eat up to 20 times a day and produce about 70 droppings a day per mouse. With a severe mouse infestation, you will have hundreds of new droppings in your home on a daily basis. Sanitation is very critical! Keeping your home free of food sources and clutter will increase the effectiveness of baiting and trapping. Cleaning up droppings on a daily basis also allows you to see if your infestation is getting better or worse with your treatment program. Proper sanitation and daily cleaning decreases the chances of disease transmittal.

Call ABC Home & Commercial Services now to evict these unwanted visitors! Our wildlife technicians will inspect your home and design a specialized treatment plan for you. From the attic to the crawl space and outside too, our technicians will do the dirty work for you. The sooner you begin the treatment process the better. Remember, there's never just one. Call now to schedule your appointment at (810)794-5678. 🐭

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THUMBPRINT NEWS CONTEST

Each month, *ThumbPrint News* prints a photo of an object, person or a place for our readers to identify. If you think you know the answer, go to our website www.thumbprintnews.com and enter your answer. Of all persons submitting the correct answer by the 12th of the month, one person will be randomly selected to be entered into a drawing for a wonderful surprise gift at the end of the year!

Congratulations to our 2020 winners, Gloria and Steve Wolken!

On December 16, 2020, Gloria and Steve, of Rochester Hills, Michigan, were randomly selected out of the 2020 monthly winners! The Wolken's have won a \$50 gift certificate to Foxfire Fixin's restaurant in Marine City, Michigan!

For the new year, we will draw one lucky winner on December 15, 2021, out of all our monthly winners.

For our 2020 December contest, we asked our readers to identify what the items to the right are and for what they are used. Of all of those submitting, no one was able to figure out the correct answer! This plant that baffled everyone is the pawpaw.

From Wikipedia: *Asimina triloba*, the American pawpaw, pawpaw, paw paw, or paw-paw, among many regional names, is a small deciduous tree native to the eastern United States and Canada, producing a large, yellowish-green to brown fruit. It belongs to the genus *Asimina* in the same plant family (the Annonaceae) as the custard-apple, cherimoya, sweetsop, ylang-ylang and soursop.

The pawpaw is a patch-forming (clonal) understory tree found in well-drained, deep, fertile bottomland and hilly upland habitat, with large, simple leaves. Pawpaw fruits are the largest edible fruit indigenous to the United States (not counting gourds, which are typically considered vegetables rather than fruit for culinary purposes, although in botany they are classified as fruit).

Pawpaw fruits have a sweet, custardish flavor somewhat similar to a combination of banana, mango and pineapple, and are commonly eaten raw, but are also used to make ice cream and baked desserts.

For our January contest, we are asking our readers to identify the object pictured on the left. Visit our website www.thumbprintnews.com if you know the answer. 🍀 **GOOD LUCK!**



By Pamela Lynn Hayes, *ThumbPrint News* Columnist

Usually at this time of the year when I have already halfway closed up the cottage, I normally feel a little dejected that another summer has passed already.

It's almost a feeling of dread and a bit of sadness all rolled into one feeling as the water tank is drained and the fridge is emptied out and the deep cleaning is completed. (Deep sigh here.)

BUT THIS YEAR, IT WAS DIFFERENT.

I took care of the necessary steps to winterize the place and make sure it is ready to bear the brunt of the harsh Michigan winter once again. But I wasn't even that diligent or concerned about keeping the mice out this winter.

Why was I not as sad this year? My love for this little place hasn't waned at all and I will surely visit the place several times or so during the winter months, but I was and still am okay with taking a break from the place for a bit.

This is unusual for me, but as I think about it, I believe it's because we have so many distractions in the world right now – so many unanswered questions about what last year has forced on us. Through no fault of our own, we were robbed of a 2020 spring and summer and, for the most part, the fall as well.

Maybe I want to get the new year rolling and to get a few months of 2021 under our belt. Anything has to be better than what we all have endured since March of 2020.

Maybe I, like so many others, have felt cheated and betrayed when it came to our normal lives being disrupted and turned upside down and maybe that is why I was okay with moving forward and getting the winter season rolling.

Not being a huge fan of the cold weather months, I wouldn't call it an acceptance or a new found love for winter, but this year I really was ready to close out the most horrible year I have ever remembered enduring. If that means closing up my cottage and moving on towards another year and riding out the winter months to get it moving faster, then so be it.

I have been awakened to a lot of things going on in the world the past 10 months with everything that has happened to our country and vow to stay alert and remain awake.

My little cottage isn't going anywhere and I will still make a few weekend retreats to check on the place and enjoy a cozy weekend indoors as the winter lumbers on.

So, thinking about it all in that sense, the winter close up of the cottage hasn't been so bad for me this year, void of any sad feelings or dread as in the past cottage close-ups.

Now I look ahead to the spring opening as always, and that comes with an exciting feeling! 🍀

Happy 2021, ThumbPrint News Readers!

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By **Patricia Cosner Kubic**, *ThumbPrint News* Columnist

Even in the depth of this ornery pandemic, the perennial January question of how to face a new year is staring at us. And, since our lives have been made much, much quieter by an abundance of home life, maybe that question looms even louder.

There is a viable argument that the question is more important this year compared to other years. We lost so much last year. Some people lost everything, leaving those around them feeling lost. And with the talk of vaccinations giving rise to distant hope, doesn't that make you feel like this year is extra important? Hope isn't just inspiring; it's a reminder that we cannot waste our re-start.

But, there are miles to go before we can leave our masks behind; but even so, the decision of how to face this new year waits for our answer.

When I think about last year, and the restrictiveness that will surely claim the rest of our winter and the better part of our spring, I try to think about a few things that didn't change; things that gave us some degree of surefootedness. And for me the constant current of friendship has saved many of my days since we started wearing masks and having game night over screens.

My friendships are an everyday lifeline to me. The kinship my "sister-friends" have with each other is invaluable. And, I'm certain I'm not the only person who feels that way, particularly among women. It's like women were born with an extra DNA molecule (or ten) for socializing. Before masks, I'd get a little wonky if I didn't see a friend every ten days. Happily married as I am, what I get during gal pal time is something I can't get from my husband, and most ladies I know agree. But, friendships, like most everything else, need proper food and watering. Hmmm...how to do to that when so many things are off limits?

I unexpectedly got a possible answer early last month. To be safe, I haven't seen this particular gal group for a good while. We stopped having cocktail hour on a backyard patio, sitting six feet apart, when the temperatures took a nose dive. But, these daring temperatures did not deter my dear friend, Claire. She got an idea and she just wasn't going to let go of it.

She invited four of her favorite ladies to have lunch outside on December 6th. What!!! Claire was determined to make it a cozy time for us. She put out patio chairs draped in thick blankets in a circle with a bonfire in the center. Our winter picnic spot was nestled between her house and a tall pine tree which effectively, and appreciatively, blocked the wind. Claire put out an outdoor buffet with hot tea, chicken shawarma sandwiches and we filled in the menu with some tasty side dishes. Initially, I was taken aback more than just a little when I got her text describing her invite. But like many women, I was (and am) desperate for some serious girl-time chatter. So, I cautiously accepted Claire's invitation, but my RSVP included a disclaimer that I wasn't sure how long I'd last in our chilly Michigan temps.

The four of us arrived at Claire's house bundled up almost as much as the kid in *A Christmas Story* who can't move his arms because his snowsuit is so big. Two and half hours later and countless topics mulled over, my cold feet told me it was time to go home. And it wasn't just me who had an impressive case of frosty tootsies.

By mid-evening, I had been home for several hours when I started getting texts from the girls reporting they were still cold. Yeah, me too. Despite having a fresh pair of wool socks on and under a thick afghan crocheted by my mom, I hadn't warmed up. My husband - one of those rare birds who uses the sentence: "I went winter camping last week" - said that it can take hours for a body temperature to rise back up to the normal point and that is probably the reason all of us were still cold hours after being inside our toasty homes.

We let our body temperatures drop because that is what you do for friendship during a pandemic. Yes, not the only thing. We stayed outside on a 33° day in December for hours because being face to face is so precious it defies description. Screen time gatherings just don't cut it every time.

So, I'm not suggesting several hours in almost freezing weather is what you need to take care of your friendships, but it does beg the question of how far will you go to take care of friendships during this pandemic and during the glorious days of restriction-free life that, hopefully, awaits us sometime this summer.

One way to think about your friendships is to spend a few quiet minutes genuinely imagining how you would feel without them. And then magnify those feelings ten times over - the "pandemic effect" so-to-speak. That void is also beyond description.

While New Year's resolutions are the popular question and yes, can be helpful, maybe reframing that question of how to take care of a precious thing, the constant current that helped to keep you lifted last year, is worth thinking about. And for me, my friendships are my utmost and deserve loving care, even if that means an afternoon sitting outside in the 33° temperature. 🌱

You can reach Patricia at pcubic@gmail.com

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Benito Juarez, 1806-1872. Zapoteca

"There is no winter without snow, no spring without sunshine, and no happiness without companions."

~ Korean Proverb



Melanie Duquesnel

NEW YEAR FINANCIAL STABILITY

Looking back at 2020, it was a year like we have never experienced before. Many people were not only impacted physically and mentally, but financially as well. The new year is here and with that comes new resolutions. While some wish for health and prosperity, others are just hoping to recover from the exhaustion on both their bodies and their bank accounts.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have lost their jobs. Even with unemployment checks, job loss can be a financial burden for anyone. The stay-at-home order toward the beginning of the pandemic closed many businesses for several months and they are still trying to recover from that closure – not to mention the added expense the holidays bring; it has been a financially difficult year for many.

Whether you're overwhelmed from financial difficulties due to the pandemic or from overspending during the holidays, working to recover financially can be daunting. Instead of dwelling on it, move forward with a plan that can help you save money and prepare for the future.

This year has been one filled with much uncertainty and unfortunately, going into 2021, that uncertainty is still there. That is why it is important to control what you can and that starts with a plan. Better Business Bureau® Serving Eastern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula offers these tips to help you get started with recovering financially.

Develop a Plan — Before you begin paying off any bill, it is important to develop a plan for paying down debt as quickly as possible without dipping into emergency savings or borrowing money. There are plenty of great online resources that help monitor money and get your budget inline.

Put Your Credit Cards Away — In an effort to avoid creating more debt, put credit cards away and out of your wallet to avoid the temptation of using them. Some credit card companies allow their customers to freeze their card temporarily, which helps dissuade them from using the cards.

Pay Extra Whenever You Can — When repaying debt and trying to regain financial stability, it is always best if you can pay more than what the monthly minimum of what you owe is. This will help get the debt down and help you pay it off quicker.

Stay Out of the Stores (Online and In-Person) — When facing a post-holiday debt situation, avoid going to the mall or shopping online. One of the easiest ways to help curb online shopping is to unsubscribe from email lists, which often advertise tempting sales and deals after the holiday season.

Return Unwanted Gifts — If you received a gift that you can return without hurting anyone's feelings, then go ahead and return the item. When you return an item you bought with your credit card, it'll push down your balance some. When you return an unwanted gift, you're gaining some much-needed cash you didn't have on hand before, which you may need for paying your bills. Keep in mind that some retailers aren't allowing returns during the pandemic. Check their websites to see if they are extending returns or exchanges at a later date.

Eliminate Unused Services — Take an inventory of services you either no longer use or services you can live without. Also shop around; you may be able to find cable or internet for cheaper elsewhere. You might also consider turning to streaming services, as their monthly payments tend to be cheaper than typical cable bills.

Creating a plan for saving where you can will help you feel more prepared when uncertainty arrives. If you choose to hire a professional to help with your finances, check them out at bbb.org or call (866) 788-5706. 🌱

Editor's note: Melanie Duquesnel is the president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Eastern Michigan & the Upper Peninsula, which is a non-profit organization that fights fraud and promotes ethical business practices in the local marketplace through its business accreditation, consumer education and dispute resolution programs. Contact your local BBB by calling (248) 223-9400 or by visiting www.bbb.org.

We hope to see you soon!



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ISLAND, Continued from Page 1

so influential that he actually went to the east side of the country to meet with both Thomas

Jefferson and George Washington.

Prior to Europeans coming to the Midwest, the Miami tribe were the first people known to use the island, although they didn't live on the six-acre enclave – research shows that the Native Americans came to the land to hunt and collect seagull eggs. When the British began to gain control of land around the Great Lakes, they constructed a small wooden fort on Turtle Island in 1794, as a way to control the navigational waterways in the area. After the British influence was removed from the area in the early 1800s, the government decided they had no use for the island, so it was sold in a public auction held in Monroe, Michigan, in 1827. Edward Bissell from Lockport, New York, purchased Turtle Island with hopes of preserving the land and its history.

Sadly, nothing ever materialized from Bissell's dream for the island, but it wasn't long before the government realized they actually had a use for the island. Since commercial shipping had become common by this time, it was decided that the small island needed a lighthouse to warn ship captains of the potential dangers in the area. Turtle Island was bought back from Bissell just four years later for \$300, and soon \$5,000 was set aside to construct the lighthouse, along with \$2,000 to fight erosion. Shortly after the first lighthouse was erected on the island, government officials quickly realized they had a problem because the land that once exceeded six acres was now depleted to only one and a half acres because of erosion – throughout the next decade, the U.S. government spent tens of thousands of dollars trying to keep the island from disappearing. The first

lighthouse keeper was Samuel Choate, who served in the War of 1812, but sadly passed away in 1834, from cholera and was buried on the island.

In an attempt to save the fading island and the newly constructed lighthouse by the late 1830s, the government turned to the superintendent of public works in New York, who drove two rows of pilings around the shore and used the dirt outside the pilings to fill near the shore. While the plan did a great deal to slow down erosion, the project



Turtle Island 1880

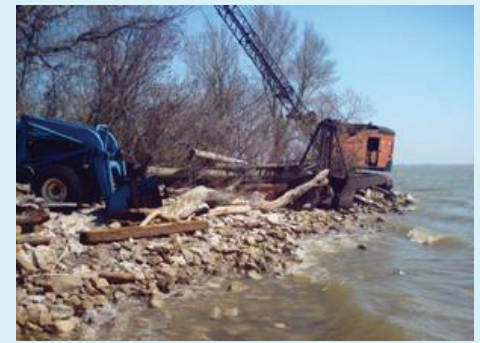
cost the government \$16,700, equivalent to nearly \$500,000 today. By 1857, the lighthouse received a new Fresnel lens that could be seen 14 miles away, compared to the original light that could only be recognized from six miles away. Following the Civil War, Congress set aside \$12,000 for a new lighthouse to be constructed on the island to replace the dilapidated building. Completed in 1866, the lighthouse was 44 feet tall with a home attached to the back for the lighthouse keeper and their family.

It wasn't long before the issue of erosion once again became a problem, and in 1884, a concrete wall was installed around the exposed section of the island at a cost of \$15,000 – the reason erosion was a constant issue on Turtle Island was because unlike most islets in the area, the land was comprised of clay and gravel. As commercial ships continued to increase in size to carry larger loads, the path around Turtle Island became too shallow to accommodate the larger vessels. By 1904, a new lighthouse was constructed to the east four miles, known as the Toledo Harbor Lighthouse. Once this was completed, there was no longer a need for the Turtle Island Lighthouse, which was decommissioned – that year the island was purchased by A.H. Merrill for \$1,650. The land changed hands countless times over the years before being leased in 1933, by the Associated Yacht Club of Toledo, who planned on restoring the lighthouse and using the property as a club. This plan was quickly abandoned the following year and while the land sat empty, vandals continually stripped the buildings of anything remotely valuable.

Over the next few decades the island remained seemingly unchanged, aside from metals being taken for scrap and the lighthouse slowly deteriorating. On Palm Sunday in 1965, a tornado ripped through the area which destroyed the upper part of the lighthouse and the residence attached to the tower. In the early 1990s, there was an attempt to turn the island into a non-profit and restore all of the buildings on the property, but unfortunately like all the other plans for Turtle Island, it never materialized. In 2002, a great deal of money was invested into the



Ice sheets built up



Crane on shore
(contributed by Mushinzenat)

island in order to develop the property into a vacation spot with multiple homes to rent, but this was soon shut down by the government because they never pulled a permit in Monroe County, Michigan, which is where the jurisdiction lies for half of the island. Today, the island looks as though construction could continue any day, with a crane sitting on the site near a few partially finished homes – the winter of 2008-2009, destroyed a great deal of these rentals when sheets of ice invaded the island, actually pushing one home completely off its foundation.

Over the years, rumors have continually swirled around Turtle Island, with some people believing that ownership of the island changed each year depending on who won the college football rivalry between the University of Michigan and Ohio State University. Amazingly, it is estimated that the United States government spent more than \$1 million to maintain the lighthouse and island between 1831 and 1903 – an island that one day soon may slip under the surface of Lake Erie never to be seen again. 🇺🇸



Turtle Island Lighthouse (contributed by cmh2315fl)

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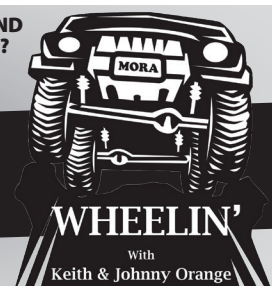
*"Winter is a season of recovery and preparation."
- Paul Theroux*

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January

WHAT HAPPENED ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 On this day in 1902, the first American college football bowl game, the Rose Bowl between Michigan and Stanford, is held in Pasadena, California. | 2 On this day in 1942, in the Philippines, the city of Manila and the U.S. Naval base at Cavite fall to Japanese forces. |
| 3 On this day in 1996, the first clamshell flip mobile phone, the Motorola StarTAC, goes on sale.
 | 4 On this day in 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt claims in his State of the Union message that the federal government will provide jobs for 3.5 million Americans on welfare. |
| 5 On this day in 1887, the first U.S. school of librarianship opens at Columbia University. | 6 On this day in 1975, <i>Wheel of Fortune</i> debuts on NBC.
 |
| 7 On this day in 1957, Katie Couric, American journalist and author, is born in Arlington, Virginia. | 8 On this day in 1835, the U.S. national debt is \$0 for the first and only time in history.
 |
| 9 On this day in 1793, the first hot-air balloon flight in the U.S. lifts off in Philadelphia, piloted by Jean Pierre Blanchard. | 10 On this day in 1776, <i>Common Sense</i> , the pamphlet advocating American independence by Thomas Paine, is published. |
| 11 On this day in 1843, Francis Scott Key, author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," dies in Baltimore.
 | 12 On this day in 1967, Dr. James Bedford becomes the first person to be cryonically preserved with intent of future resuscitation. |
| 13 On this day in 1937, the United States bars Americans from serving in the Civil War in Spain. | 14 On this day in 2005, the <i>Huygens</i> probe lands on Saturn's moon Titan.
 |
| 15 On this day in 1624, riots flare in Mexico when it is announced that all churches are to be closed. | 16 On this day in 1547, Ivan IV of Russia, a.k.a. Ivan the Terrible, becomes Czar of Russia.
 |
| 17 On this day in 1984, the Supreme Court rules (5-4) that private use of home VCRs to tape TV programs for later viewing does not violate federal copyright laws. | 18 On this day in 1962, the United States begins spraying foliage with herbicides in South Vietnam, in order to reveal the whereabouts of Vietcong guerrillas. |
| 19 On this day in 1977, snow falls in Miami, Florida. This is still the only time in the history of the city that snow has fallen. | 20 On this day in 1841, China cedes Hong Kong to the British during the First Opium War. |
| 21 On this day in 1978, the Bee Gees' album <i>Saturday Night Fever</i> goes to #1 for 24 weeks.
 | 22 On this day in 1982, President Ronald Reagan formally links progress in arms control to Soviet repression in Poland. |
| 23 On this day in 1901, a great fire ravages Montreal, resulting in \$2.5 million (equivalent to \$76.5 million today) in property lost. | 24 On this day in 1679, King Charles II disbands the English parliament.
On this day in 1930, 3M begins marketing Scotch Tape. 31 |
| 25 On this day in 1840, an American naval expedition under Charles Wilkes is first to identify Antarctica as a new continent. | 26 On this day in 1788, a fleet of ships carrying convicts from England lands at Sydney Cove in Australia. The day is since known as Australia Day. |
| 27 On this day in 1996, Germany first observes International Holocaust Remembrance Day. | 28 On this day in 1921, Albert Einstein startles Berlin by suggesting the possibility of measuring the universe. |
| 29 On this day in 1926, Violette Neatley Anderson becomes the first African American woman admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court. | 30 On this day in 1969, The Beatles perform their last live gig, a 42-minute concert on the roof of Apple Corps HQ in London. |

Editor's note: This calendar's purpose is to provide entertainment for our readers and to mention lesser-known historical events. We are aware that there also may be well-known events that have happened on these days, and not listing them does not indicate that we are unaware of their importance.

Vocabulary Voyage

A good vocabulary is a powerful tool and makes communication simpler, so we will continue our quest for unusual words and their meanings. We hope our readers will join in our learning journey by submitting some underused, misused or uncommon words they've discovered.

Compiled By **Laura Irwin**, *ThumbPrint News Staff Writer*

"The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism." – Norman Vincent Peale

importune im-por-tune | \im-pər-tün

A verb meaning 1a: to press or urge with troublesome persistence b: *archaic*: to request or beg for urgently, 2: ANNOY, TROUBLE. First known use: 1530; Middle English, from Anglo-French. *Ex. The accused is charged with importuning and disseminating matter harmful to juveniles.*

inveigle in-vei-gle | \in-'vā-gəl

A verb meaning to persuade someone to do something in a clever and dishonest way. First known use: 1485-95; variant of envegle <Anglo-French. *Ex. She inveigles her patients into trying treatments for their ailments that have not been previously tested.*

invidious in-vid-i-ous | \in-'vi-dē-əs

An adjective meaning 1a: of an unpleasant or objectionable nature: OBNOXIOUS b: of a kind to cause harm or resentment, 2: tending to cause discontent, animosity or envy, 3: ENVIUS. First known use: 1606; Latin from *invidia* envy. *Ex. Political advertisements, regardless of the campaigners, are nothing short of invidious.*

In one way or another, each of these words remind me of the year 2020.

If you have suggestions, please email the word(s) and meaning(s) to thumbprintnews@comcast.net, along with your first and last name and the city of your residence, or mail them to us at the address located on page 2 of the paper. When we use your submitted words, we will credit you in the column.



THE TREE WON

By **Gerald Nyquist**, *ThumbPrint News Contributor*

Located southeast of Traverse City in beautiful Grand Traverse County is the delightful Brown Bridge Quiet Area, public land with rolling terrain and pine trees, and the Boardman River meandering through.

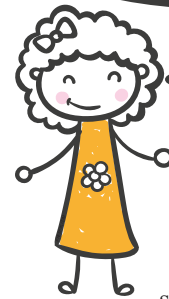
I've walked trails there for many years, always somewhat unconsciously observing the trailside gnarled and twisted pines. Considering the numerous times that I had passed a particular tree, recently I was surprised to see a lumberman-type, rusty old saw blade jutting out from its trunk down at ground level.

Of course, the history behind this interesting sight likely will never be known; many years have passed since some woodcutter, probably with a sharpened, shiny-bladed saw, decided that this tree was to come down. The mind congers-up a battle scene: saw versus tree. Sharp teeth attacked the seemingly helpless pine; it fought back with what little defenses it could muster. Perhaps its gummy sap slowed the blade's progress. Perhaps eventually its leaning trunk pinched the blade, ending further progress, and the woodcutter gave-up. Maybe a dislodged dead branch fell from the quivering boughs, knocking the woodcutter senseless. Somehow the tree won the battle.

Hurray! I like trees. 🌲

Editor's note: The author resides in Macomb Township and spends time at his Rennie Lake cottage near the Brown Bridge Quiet Area.

when I grow up...



By **Rita MacDonald**, *ThumbPrint News Columnist*

I have this friend. I cannot tell you her name, but she is who I hope to be when I grow up – wise, and kind, and generous, and thoughtful. Let me tell you why...

For several years now, I have watched this friend serve her friends and others in the community when they are sick, or struggling, or sad, or financially hurting, or just in need of a ride somewhere, or a few bags of groceries. She drops off meals, listens intently, cooks homemade soups, writes checks, buys thoughtful gifts, calls, sends cards, checks in on people, encourages, prays – and when I say she prays – I mean this woman storms heaven with her prayers!

What sets my friend apart from most people is that she doesn't advertise all that she does for others. She doesn't call people and tell them of her hours of service, or announce how exhausted she is on social media from driving people to doctor's appointments or to grocery shop. She doesn't look for others to recognize her in any way, shape or form for her servant's heart, or even to point out to her just how wonderful a friend she truly is. She just does it, and she's quiet about it, and quite frankly I find her humility my favorite part about her because most of us, including myself, want everyone to know when we do something kind for someone else. But not my friend. She serves others for all of the right reasons.

I want to be like her when I grow up.

Now and then, I get a text or an email with a real need to pray for – never, ever for her...no, no – always for someone else. When we are together, and she tells me of prayer needs, she gets choked up and cries for the heartaches and the needs of those she encounters.

I want a heart like that.

My friend has lived a long time and has lost a few friends and family in the past couple of years, including a close friend recently. This person was dear to her and she often told me of the time they would spend together and share a slice of her homemade peach pie – a recipe my friend wishes she had gotten from her friend before she passed away.

She's lived a life that in many ways is just like mine; she is just a couple of decades ahead of me in age. I often tease her and tell her to be sure and do everything right because I'm watching and following closely behind her! And then I ask, "How's that for pressure?"

We have so much fun together, my friend and I – and have shared more laughs in our seven- or eight-year friendship now, than I am able to count. She corrects me, teaches me, prays with me, guides me, shares with me, cries with me, laughs with me, and prays for me. She doesn't know it, but she disciplines me in so many ways. I'm not sure she knows how much of an influence she's had on me and how much I love and admire her.

So tonight, I'm in search of the best peach pie recipe I can find. Feel free, if you have one, to kindly send me yours! When I find a good one, I'm going to bake it and show up on her doorstep, and tell her how much I love her, how much I cherish our friendship, and just how much I glean from her wisdom. I'll bring my own coffee cup, the one that matches hers, and we'll laugh, and probably cry, and remember our friend Jerry, our actor friend Paul, the fun plays we've seen, and good TIMES we've shared.

Friend, here's to the TIME you intercepted and invited me to your class, and the good TIME we're going to have eating this pie! And here's to all of the TIME in between those two TIMES. You are one of my life's greatest treasures, and walking through these years with a friend like you – well, I'm not sure it gets any better than this ;)

I wanna be like you – when I grow up. 🌲

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

– Matthew 6:1-4 ESV

JANUARY

Calendar of Activities and Events

If you have an event in February that you would like listed in the February issue of *ThumbPrint News*, email it to ThumbPrintNews@comcast.net by January 12, 2021. There is no charge for the listing. Limited space is available for publishing events in this section. If it becomes necessary to eliminate some of the events that were submitted to us, we apologize. Events that were submitted earliest and non-profit events will be given the first priority.

Editor's note: Before traveling beyond your hometown to attend any of these events, please call ahead for any changes in dates or times or for any cancellations.

GENESEE

No events were submitted for Genesee County this month.

LAPEER

**Attica – January
4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 25 & 28**
Open Archery Shooting,
Lapeer County Sportmen's Club,
1213 North Lake George Rd.
Monday nights (4, 11, 18 and 25)
at 7:00 p.m.: open to compounds
and traditional archery gear.
Thursday mornings (7, 14, 21 and 28)
at 9:00 a.m.: open to compounds and
traditional gear. Thursday nights
(7, 14, 21 and 28) at 7:00 p.m.:
open to traditional gear only.
For more information call
(810) 724-6579.

MACOMB

No events were submitted for Macomb County this month.

OAKLAND

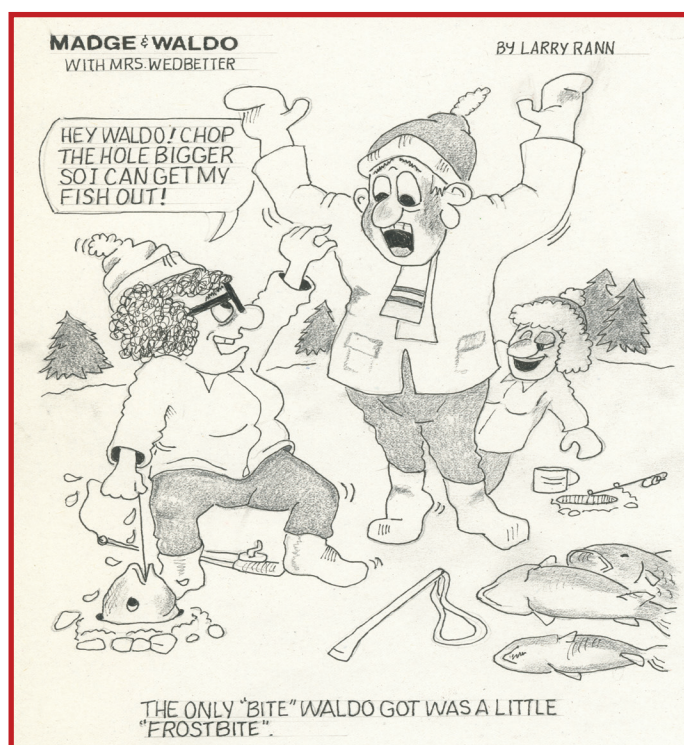
No events were submitted for Oakland County this month.

ST. CLAIR

**Algonac – January
2, 3, 7, 8 & 9**
**17th Annual History of the
Christmas Tree Walk – Deluxe
Tours Only.** Buy your ticket
online now for this event! Over 200
Christmas trees, decorated with
authentic ornaments from the 1850s
to the present, are displayed inside
of a 9,500 sq. ft. log home. Due to
COVID-19, we will only be offering
the **Deluxe Tour** this year. Masks
are highly encouraged. All details are
available at TheChristmasWalk.com,
by calling (810) 794-2300 or see page
___ of this issue.

SANILAC

No events were submitted for Sanilac County this month.



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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

My husband and I were cruising last fall, and went by this building that someone was restoring. We can't remember the location, other than that it was somewhere in the Thumb, probably between Yale and Port Huron?

Does anyone from your staff recognize it, or maybe one of your readers can identify this location?

We remember driving also by a big, old house on a main intersection that needed restoration and was fenced off. We may have been as far north as Peck, but can't be sure. Also we remember a car repair place on the main road that had a lot of old cars in front. Not sure that any of that helps, but we've been racking our brains and weren't able to find these places when we cruised this fall.

Thanks, Polly Ozga

Editor's note: No one on our staff was able to figure out where this was taken, so it's up to our readers! If you think you recognize this building, email us at ThumbPrintNews@comcast.net.



**NOT
CANCELLED**

**JANUARY DATES ARE
STILL AVAILABLE FOR THIS SEASON'S
HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE WALK**

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE WALK



DELUXE TOUR ONLY

16 DATES IN DECEMBER & 5 DATES IN JANUARY

**CLICK THROUGH THE SITE PAGES AT
WWW.THECHRISTMASWALK.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR CALL (810) 794-2300**

**PARKING INFORMATION & DIRECTIONS ARE DIFFERENT
DEPENDING ON WHICH TOUR IS CHOSEN. YOU CAN FIND
SPECIFIC DETAILS BY CLICKING THE TOUR TICKETS IN SITE PAGES**



NEW! DELUXE TOUR DEC 2020 & JAN 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

9,500 SQ. FT. LOG HOME WITH OVER 200 TREES INSIDE!

DELUXE TOUR TICKETS

Limited Time Slots Available

\$65 per person

EACH DATE
OF DELUXE

Lunch Tour: 3:00PM - 5:00PM
Dinner Tour: 5:15PM - 7:15PM

Guided Tour with Owner, Souvenir Booklet
and a Takeout Meal provided by Foxfire Fixin's

Total Ticket
Quantity Available:
ONLY 1,050
25 openings per date & meal time

**MASKS HIGHLY
ENCOURAGED**

HOUSE IS NOT HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE | NO STROLLERS ALLOWED INSIDE

**Due to COVID-19 and for the health and safety of all involved,
we have decided to cancel the Standard Tour dates for 2020.**

ALL DETAILS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO EVOLVING GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**DUE TO EVOLVING GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS AND MANDATES,
WE ASK ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE
DELUXE TOUR TO PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION!**



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Compare at \$1,699



SAVE
up to
70%



Flexsteel Sofa

SALE
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Compare at \$3,199

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5. CUSHION . . . LIFETIME WARRANTY

The Plush Cushion features 2.5 lb. high resiliency, polyurethane foam topped with 1.2 lb. density polyurethane foam and a 1 oz. fiber wrap – all in a white fabric wrap.



Flexsteel Reclining Sofa

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Flexsteel Sectional



SALE
\$2,698
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