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# MICHIGAN

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# COUNTRY LINES

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association



Beware Of Third Party  
Payment Sites

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A Valentine  
To My Parents

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Artists In The Forest

**Silver Muzzle  
Cottage**

*A Rescue & Hospice For  
Homeless Senior Dogs*

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**Publisher:**  
Michigan Electric  
Cooperative Association

**Michigan Country Lines**, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Lansing, Mich., and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

**Subscriptions** are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors.

**POSTMASTER:** SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Association officers are **Robert Kran**, Great Lakes Energy, chairman; **Mark Kappler**, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

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February 2018 // Vol. 38, No. 2

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Photos By Dre Photography



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## *I Remember...*

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

### Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) or email to [cdorr@meca.coop](mailto:cdorr@meca.coop)

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will pay  
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## The Keen Edge

Tom Harrell, Chief Executive Officer

The college basketball season is in full swing and fans everywhere are looking forward to March Madness. That's the time of year when 68 college basketball teams begin a single-elimination tournament that eventually yields the NCAA national champion team.

One reason March Madness captures our collective interest is because the field of competition has such disparate teams—national powerhouses such as Duke, Michigan State, Kentucky or Kansas sometimes find themselves in a desperate contest against a comparatively small-school team such as Wichita State, Valparaiso, or Loyola Marymount.

David knocking off Goliath is always a compelling story, and March Madness shines a spotlight on the David-sized college programs that are sometimes overlooked. For those teams, competing against Goliath on the national stage helps them recruit better players—which helps them get better in the following seasons and go farther in the next tournament.

Just like the college teams competing to recruit the best players, Alger Delta and co-ops across the country are competing for talent. We strive to hire the best and the brightest, thereby ensuring our competitiveness and success as our business environment evolves. You might be wondering, "How does that affect me?"

Michigan co-ops are competing to keep the talent they've developed and to recruit the best and the brightest for the future. Especially in those parts of the state where the David-sized co-ops comele with the Goliath-sized Investor Owned Utilities (IOU's). In the U.S. there are approximately 10,000 people retiring every day. Many IOU's are suffering from a mass exodus of employees due to retirement, and they are hiring replacements at a furious pace.

Co-ops—including Alger Delta—are not immune. What sets us apart is how successful we are at attracting and retaining great employees. There are studies showing that employees consider flexibility, variety, opportunity for career growth, and even their work environment as important as the pay and benefits they get. To stay competitive and to attract and retain top-quality talent, co-ops offer competitive wages and benefits and invest in their employees' career growth and development. We do this through training and networking that gives our employees an understanding of their value in the wider world of electric co-ops and the utility industry as a whole. For example, when employees see their co-op investing in safety, training and technology—and giving them opportunities for professional and personal growth—it underscores the value we place in the employee as a whole person, not just what they can do to get the immediate job done.

And, it works. At the co-ops, it's pretty common to meet employees who've been on the job for 30 or more years. Said another way...Alger Delta cares for its employees and we show it in many ways. That is part of what makes us an employer of choice in the U.P. and better able to serve you—our members.

Here's hoping your favorite team goes far during March Madness.

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M–F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. (ET)

*Alger Delta Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

[algerdelta.com](http://algerdelta.com)

# Beware Of Third Party Payment Sites

Paying your electric bill is fast, easy and free when you use Alger Delta's website or any of our other approved payment methods. But, BEWARE! Using a third party payment website could result in extra charges, delays, late fees, and possible disconnection. To avoid these extra fees, use Alger Delta's website to make your payment.



Even if a website has Alger Delta's name and company logo, you must check the website's address. **Check the address bar at the top of the screen and make sure it says: [www.algerdelta.com](http://www.algerdelta.com) or <https://algerdelta.smarthub.coop>.** Using any other website to pay your bill may result in extra charges from the third party for each transaction on their website; significant delay between the time you make your payment and the time it is submitted to Alger Delta and/or posted to your account; disconnection if payment is not received in time to avoid shut-off.

Our goal is to make paying your electric bill convenient, safe and without additional cost or risk. If you'd like more information about any of these payment options, or to set up auto pay from one of your accounts, please call one of our friendly member service representatives at 906-428-4141.

**Alger Delta offers many free and convenient payment methods. Choose whatever option works best for you:**

**AutoPay:** Your payment is automatically deducted each month from either your checking or savings account, credit card or debit card.

**SmartHub:** Pay with the app or online at [algerdelta.com](http://algerdelta.com). Make a payment from your checking or savings account, or credit card or debit card.

**U.S. Mail:** Send your payment in the return envelope included with your bill, or send to Alger Delta Cooperative, 426 N. 9th St., Gladstone, MI 49837.

**In Person:** Drop your payment off at the Gladstone office or in the after-hours drop box.

## Meet Director Karen Alholm

**Alger Delta is governed by a nine-member board of directors who exercise the governance function of the cooperative. Local representation and control allows all members to have a strong voice in how the cooperative is run and how to best meet the needs of the areas where we serve. Karen Alholm represents District 2—Harvey/Deerton and we recently sat down with her to learn more about her.**



**Q: Please tell us about your background.**

**A:** I am a lifelong resident of Marquette County. I graduated from Northern Michigan University and later attended and graduated from Cooley Law School, Lansing, Mich. I retired after practicing law in the Marquette County area for 23 years. In addition to serving on the Alger-Delta board, I am on the Marquette County board of commissioners, and a board director for Adult Learning Systems-U.P., a nonprofit business providing housing, care and independence to disabled adults.

**Q: What made you want to be on the board of directors?**

**A:** The electrical industry is an intensely complex and multi-faceted business. I enjoy the challenges and the opportunity to serve.

**Q: You have served on the board for over two years.**

**Is there a memorable goal or accomplishment during your tenure that you are particularly proud of?**

**A:** In early 2017 I completed 40 hours of intensive training, covering six topics pertinent to a co-op director, thereby becoming a credentialed cooperative director. Additionally, I am on the Alger Delta's policy committee, which has most recently been reviewing, updating and streamlining the co-op's bylaws.

**Q: What about hobbies? What do you like to do when you're not working?**

**A:** I am an active member of my local YMCA, and enjoy reading, going to camp and getting together with friends.

# NO BARRIERS

ADVENTURES FOR RURAL VETERANS—APPLY BY FEB. 28

Michigan electric cooperatives believe there should be “No Barriers” for veterans with disabilities. That’s the name and idea behind CoBank’s No Barriers initiative. Michigan cooperatives are looking for qualified veterans\* from our local community to participate.

No Barriers is a five-day, all-expenses-paid, expedition in Colorado, designed to help veterans with disabilities transform their lives through curriculum-based experience in challenging environments (climbing, rafting and hiking).

If you are a disabled veteran, or you know of a disabled veteran in our community who would like to participate in the No Barriers program, please complete the form on our website:  
**[countrylines.com/nobarriers](http://countrylines.com/nobarriers)**

*\*Must have VA disability rating to be eligible.*



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
**YOUTH TOUR**

Michigan Co-ops Inspire  
Tomorrow’s Leaders This Summer  
**June 9–14, 2018**

Youth Tour applications accepted  
between now and Feb. 28.

Encourage your favorite high school  
sophomore or junior to apply!



# YOUTH TOUR 2018

Learn more at [CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://CooperativeYouthTour.com).

# Portable Generator

# SAFETY TIPS

Always read the Owner's Manual and instructions for your generator. Do NOT cut corners when it comes to safety.

These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended as a substitute for reading the Owner's Manual.



## Carbon Monoxide And Ventilation

- Using a generator indoors **can kill you in minutes**. Exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly, poisonous gas you cannot see or smell.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly-enclosed areas, such as garages.
- ONLY use outdoors and far from windows, doors, vents, and crawl spaces and in an area where adequate ventilation is available and deadly exhaust gas cannot accumulate.
- Using a fan or opening doors and windows will not provide sufficient ventilation.
- It is recommended that you install battery operated carbon monoxide alarms/detectors indoors according to manufacturer's instructions/recommendations.

## Gasoline, Fueling And Burn Safety

- Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- If the tank is over-filled, fuel can overflow onto a hot engine and cause fire or explosion.
- Never add fuel while the unit is running or hot. Allow the generator and engine to cool entirely before adding fuel.
- Never store a generator with fuel in the tank where gasoline vapors might reach an open flame, spark or pilot light.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you during operation and while the generator is cooling after turning off. Avoid coming into contact with a hot generator.

## Electrocution Hazard And Electrical Shock Hazards

- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.
- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Only start or stop the generator when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator. Prioritize your needs; do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator. A portable electric generator

should be used only when necessary and only to power essential equipment.

- Use the proper power cords. Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions such as rain or snow.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. Check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations related to grounding.

## Generator Placement And Operation

- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Generators can be used during a wide variety of weather temperatures, but should be protected from the elements when not in use to prevent shorting and rusting.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly.
- Always disconnect the spark plug wire and place the wire where it cannot contact the spark plug to prevent accidental starting when setting up, transporting, adjusting or making repairs to the generator.

Source: American Red Cross with technical advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code®) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

# Look For The ENERGY STAR Label

Making the switch to LED bulbs is a smart way to save energy. But, just like all other products, some LEDs meet a higher standard of quality and performance than others. To ensure you are selecting the best LEDs, always look for the ENERGY STAR®!

## What is ENERGY STAR?

ENERGY STAR is a trusted brand for quality products that use significantly less energy than required by minimum federal standards. The ENERGY STAR label can be found on hundreds of items, including lightbulbs, electronics, major appliances, and even certified homes and buildings.

For an LED to bear the ENERGY STAR label, it must pass rigorous testing to ensure maximum energy savings, while also proving it will display the following characteristics:

- Brightness equal to or greater than that of other existing technologies
- Well-distributed light
- Excellent color quality
- Light output that remains constant over time
- Light that comes on instantly when turned on
- No flicker when dimmed
- Does not use power when turned off

## Other tips for choosing the right LED bulb.

Choose the right brightness. Instead of watts, look for lumens when purchasing LEDs to gauge the brightness of the bulb.

Choose the appropriate color. LEDs come in a broad range of colors, which are measured by temperature on the Kelvin scale (K). Lower K emits warmer, yellowish light, while higher K produces cooler, bluer light.

***By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with ENERGY STAR LEDs, you can save up to \$75 each year.***

## REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy saving information and incentives.



Look for the  
**ENERGY STAR®**



## All LED bulbs are not created equal.

Choose ENERGY STAR LEDs for a world of benefits:

- Highest quality and performance
- Exceptional color quality and light output
- Tested and verified to back up claims
- Three-year minimum warranty

**ENERGY TIP:** In-store cash incentives available NOW for LED bulbs and fixtures!

Phone: **877.296.4319** Online: **[michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org)**



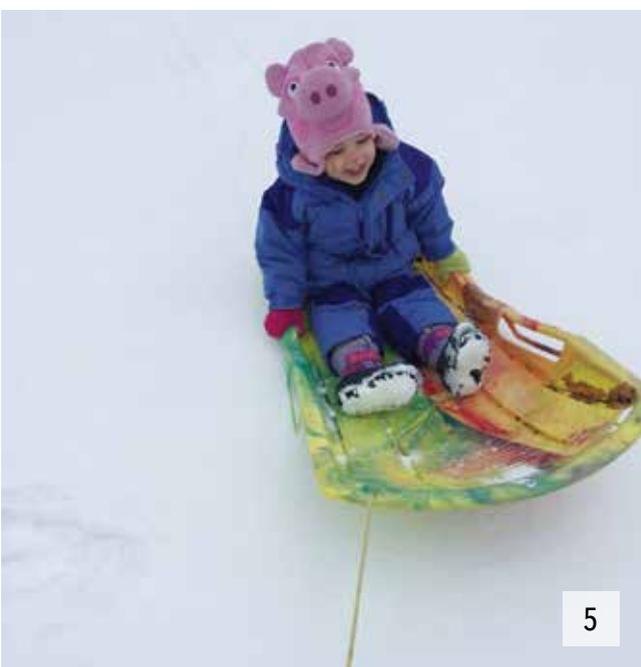
Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).



# Photo Contest

## Winter Sports

1. "The tipping point..." by Lynne Severt
2. "Ryder riding his snowmobile in northern Michigan" by Erika Girven
3. "Winter hike in search of Lake Michigan ice caves" by Theresa Lelito
4. "Snowmobiles and snow angels" by Ronda Howard
5. "Wheeee!" by Stefanie Tschirhart-Baldwin



### Share Your Captured Moments!

Alger Delta invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Our upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Heroes due Feb. 20** for the March issue and **Show Us Your Garden due March 20** for the April issue.

To submit photos go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

# Pizza! Pizza!

**Take out? No way! Make perfect pizza at home with these simple recipes.**



## Farmhouse Pizza (pictured in top photo)

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- one pre-made pizza crust (or make your own from scratch)
- Creamy Caesar dressing (amount depends on size of crust)
- smoked gouda cheese, ham and sun dried tomatoes (or any toppings you like)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Spread Creamy Caesar dressing on the crust. Add toppings. Bake for 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving. Enjoy!



Watch a video of this recipe at  
<https://goo.gl/5bWmPE>

## Homemade Pizza

Elizabeth Coates, Cherryland

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 cup warm water at 105–115 degrees    | 1 teaspoon sugar              |
| 1 standard packet yeast (2¼ teaspoons) | 1 teaspoon salt               |
| 2½ cups flour                          | • mozzarella cheese           |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil                | • tomato sauce                |
|  | • favorite toppings of choice |

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Dissolve yeast in warm water in a medium-sized bowl; let stand for 5 minutes. Add flour, olive oil, sugar and salt. Stir vigorously for 2 minutes, then let rest for 5 minutes. Grease two cookie sheets or two 12-inch pizza pans. Place the oven rack in lowest position. Divide dough in half. Pat each half into an 11-inch circle on a cookie sheet with floured hands. Sprinkle crust with mozzarella cheese, then spoon tomato sauce mixture over the cheese then add your favorite toppings. Bake one pizza at a time for 15–20 minutes or until crust is golden brown.



## Pizza/Flatbread With No Knead Dough

Annie Barnes, Great Lakes Energy

- 3 cups lukewarm water**
- 6-7 cups all purpose flour (I use King Arthur)**
- 1½ tablespoons instant or active dry yeast**
- 1 tablespoon salt**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine all dough ingredients in an ungreased large mixing bowl, at least 6-quart capacity; stir to make a very sticky, rough dough. If you have a stand mixer, beat at medium speed for 30 to 60 seconds, or just stir with a big spoon until everything is combined.

Cover bowl and let rise at room temperature for 2 hours. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or for up to about seven days. If you're pressed for time, skip the room-temperature rise and stick it right into the fridge. The longer you keep it in the fridge, the tangier it will get. When ready, take out as much dough as you need (1/3 of the dough makes a large half sheet pan of pizza), oil your hands and lightly oil baking sheet and spread the dough out. If it springs back, let it rest for 5 minutes, then spread it more. If you're using a pizza stone or a grill, flour your surface and then spread the dough out.

Add your favorite toppings. Don't pile on the toppings too thick or the pizza will be soggy in the middle. Use a pizza peel to transfer your pizza to the oven/grill. Bake for 20-30 minutes, depending on pizza size, until the crust is nicely browned on the bottom. Let sit 5 minutes and then cut into serving pieces.



**Entertaining & Potluck ... due March 1**

**Spice It Up ... due April 1**

Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

Go to [microopkitchen.com](http://microopkitchen.com) for more information and to register.

Enter to win a  
**\$50**  
energy bill  
credit!

## Featured Guest Chef

If you love a good hotdog and you're as busy as the folks at Silver Muzzle Cottage, this classic and easy Coney Dog Sauce is perfect for parties, picnics or a plain old Wednesday night.

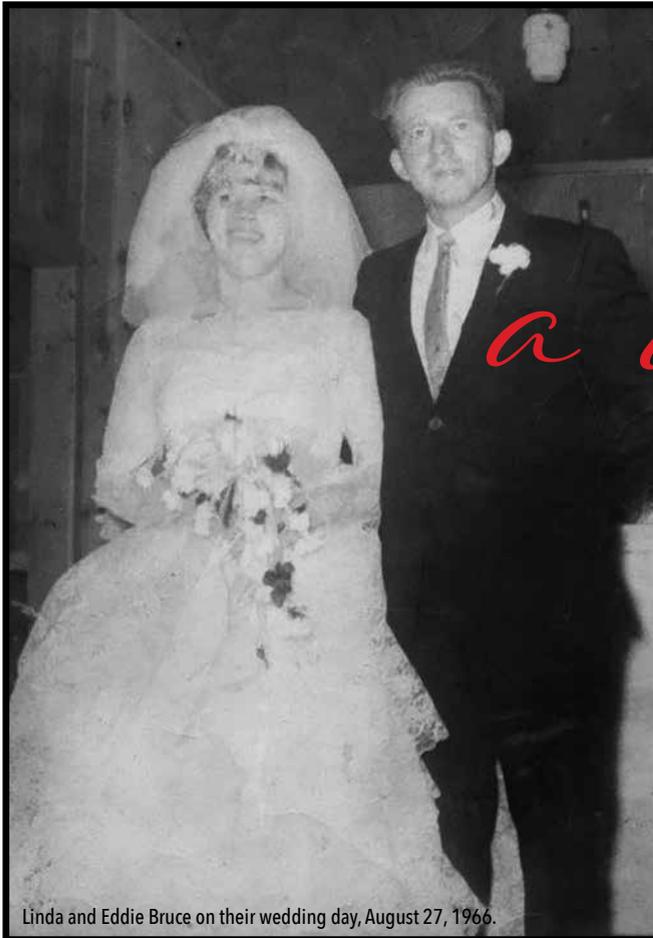


## Coney Dog Sauce

- 2 pounds ground beef**
- ½ cup chopped onion**
- 1½ cups ketchup**
- ¼ cup granulated sugar**
- ¼ cup white vinegar**
- ¼ cup yellow mustard**
- ½ teaspoon celery seed**
- ¾ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**

Cook ground beef and onion in a skillet on medium-high heat until beef is browned. Drain. Transfer the beef and onion to a slow cooker and stir in remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer on low setting for 2-3 hours. To serve up a classic Coney dog, top a hotdog and bun with the simmered sauce, raw onion and yellow mustard.

Read the full story about Silver Muzzle Cottage on page 14, and find this recipe and others at [microopkitchen.com](http://microopkitchen.com).



Linda and Eddie Bruce on their wedding day, August 27, 1966.

## *a valentine* To My Parents

*Valentine's Day often prompts people to think about the meaning of true love. Unlike the storybook romances often portrayed on the big screen or in novels, replete with grand gestures and dramatic overtures, lasting true love is instead made up of simple, yet genuine, day-to-day actions and words. This is my parents' true love story.*

By Pam Bruce

My mom and dad, Linda and Eddie Bruce, have been in love and married for 51 years. They are quite the pair. They help each other in everything—true companions for life! They have taught their five children so much about life, love, relationships, religion, respect for ourselves and people around us. The life lessons we have taken away from them are too many to count.

My dad does fun things that have meaning, and he always keeps life interesting. He sings to my mom every day. Sometimes they are weird, quirky songs that he makes up. Sometimes his songs are TV commercial themes, country songs, or songs his dad sang to him. He even sings when we are in the emergency room at the hospital. You know he is really sick if he is not singing. One of his favorites to sing is "If We Make It Through December" by Merle Haggard.

He just chooses to find joy and laughter in life, and he makes my mom laugh. My sister remembers them taking drives on the old country roads and if a good song came on the radio, they would stop the car, crank up the radio and dance right in the road! They are both good dancers and could really cut a rug back in the day!

They attend church every Sunday and they have a very fun relationship with their parish priest. My dad's job is to ring the bell every Sunday before mass begins. He has often found fun things to determine how many times he rings the bell. Most Sundays it's 10 times to signify the 10 commandments. If Sunday falls on November 10, he rings it 29 times for each of the crew members that lost their lives on the Edmund Fitzgerald. My dad prays for the lottery every Sunday in church, and he makes sure he tells their priest of

*Love is our true destiny.*

We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone—we find it with another.  
—Thomas Merton



have a wing named after him. Instead, they make every day count.

Our family looks forward to going home because our parents make it the most welcoming and joyous place. My dad calls Arnold "God's Country," and I would never argue that point with him. I love it there! It's a small town, but there is so much love in the hearts of our neighbors and relatives. Everyone helps everyone else without expecting anything in return. Of course, the Arnold woods are beautiful and bring so much peace to the most stressed-out soul. It grounds you when all else in the world is going crazy. My loving parents have modeled a great life in a beautiful place, and all of our lives are richer because of it.

his quest to win. We have often joked that we are going to have a casket made in the form of a lottery ticket.

My parents never complain about their health. They consider each day a blessing and determine to make the most of whatever God gives them. They have had some health scares, but they always take care of each other, setting yet another good example for us. Sometimes my dad's arthritis would flare up so badly causing my mom to have to help dress him for work at the Empire Mine. My dad fought to work, and he never missed a day. My mom is the same. She is never sick and never missed work. Talk about a life lesson in work ethic! I never call in sick because that is embedded in my DNA. Lately, however, my dad has had to spend quite a bit of time at UP Health Systems. He jokes that he has been there so much he should



The Bruce family. Back row (L to R): Tricia Brisson, Peggy Jilian, Pam Bruce, Russell Bruce, Mary Jo Mahaffy. Front row: Linda and Eddie Bruce with their beloved dog, Duke.

# Silver Muzzle Cottage

*A Rescue & Hospice For Homeless Senior Dogs*

By Emily Haines Lloyd // Photos By Dre Photography



**Captain**  
13 years old;  
sweet, gentle,  
slow mover



**Parker**  
12 years old;  
recently adopted

"The truth is, I'm selfish."

Those words don't quite ring true when you're speaking to Kim Skarritt-Nelson, owner of Bowers By The Bay, and founder and program director for Silver Muzzle Cottage Rescue & Hospice in Rapid City. Skarritt-Nelson is the heart and soul of this organization that looks to place or care for senior dogs that have been surrendered or abandoned by their previous owners.

"You see," Skarritt-Nelson explains, "I get as much out of the time spent with these amazing animals as they do."

Skarritt-Nelson's "selfishness" began when she left corporate America in 2004 and opened Bowers By The Bay in Elk Rapids in 2011. This cage-free boarding home, grooming center and behavior therapy clinic for dogs offers everyday encounters with a variety of beloved breeds.

However, as Skarritt-Nelson became more involved in the community, she saw a disturbing trend.

"Over and over again, I would see senior or terminal dogs in shelters," said Skarritt-Nelson. "They were either dropped off by their owners who could no longer care for them or, even more heartbreaking, these animals were abandoned and left to fend for themselves."

Silver Muzzle Cottage, to date, has rescued more than 110 senior dogs.

**Gracie**  
10 year old Lab mix;  
sweet and gentle



**Kim**  
Founder, Silver Muzzle Cottage

**“Our rescue takes dogs of all breeds and sizes.”**

—Kim Skarritt-Nelson



**Reese**  
12 years old;  
a gentle giant



**Emily**  
13 years old and blind;  
a permanent resident of  
the Cottage, truly an angel

In a typical shelter older dogs are often overlooked for more energetic puppies, while the terminally ill dogs are often euthanized. Over 2,000 senior dogs are without homes within 500 miles of Traverse City, she learned. Skarritt-Nelson’s heart couldn’t take it.

That’s when she created Silver Muzzle Cottage—a unique rescue mission for senior dogs and hospice care for terminally ill dogs. Unlike overcrowded shelters, Silver Muzzle provides a home-like environment where dogs roam freely during the day and sleep on large pillow beds or sofas at night, often curled up with their new pack family.

“These dogs once were loved by an individual or a family,” said Skarritt-Nelson. “We believe that they should feel that same love at the end of their life as well.”

As big as Skarritt-Nelson’s heart is, even she can’t attend to all the needs of each dog in her care, which is why a dedicated team of volunteers are critical to Silver Muzzle’s success. Volunteers take the shelter’s beloved pack on trips to the beach, walks in the woods, drives into town for ice cream, or even just long, lazy naps on Skarritt-Nelson’s newly-acquired 15 acres in Rapid City. The new location is undergoing constant renovations to provide an amazing quality of life for its canine residents and accommodate even more needy dogs in the future.

Volunteers even gather together when it’s finally time for some of their hospice pets to say goodbye. Surrounded by loving words, lots of animals and heartfelt farewells, Silver Muzzle’s team sends beloved friends off with all the love and companionship each dog deserves.

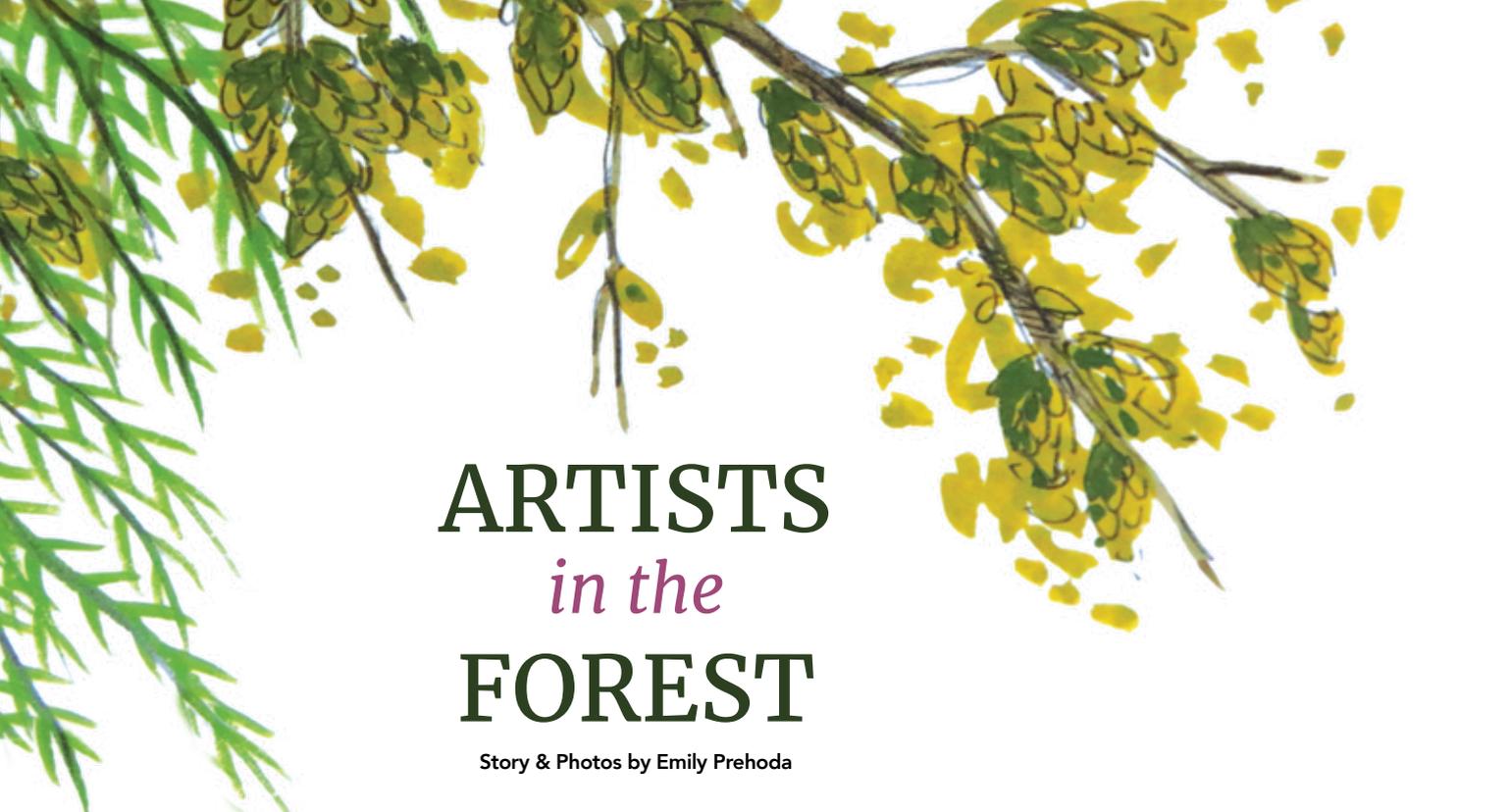
With heartwarming touches and thoughtful experiences like that, it’s easy to say that the world could do with a little more selfishness like Skarritt-Nelson and the team at Silver Muzzle Cottage. 🐾



**Mongo**  
8 year old  
Dane/Mastiff mix;  
has no idea he  
weighs 130 lbs

**With 12–20 dogs onsite on a daily basis, there’s always plenty to do! If you are interested in helping Silver Muzzle Cottage, volunteers can take dogs out on adventures, lend a hand with custodial work that allows the residents a clean home, or assist with administrative work like writing thank you notes or stuffing envelopes.**

**Visit [silvermuzzlecottage.com](http://silvermuzzlecottage.com) to see how you can help.**



# ARTISTS *in the* FOREST

Story & Photos by Emily Prehoda

**I** magine a small, cozy, timber-framed cabin in the woods. One big, lofted room. A wood stove. A small kitchen area and table. An easy chair and two twin beds. A propane gas stove and lights. A babbling river cascades over a rocky embankment behind the cabin. A weathered wooden swing faces the waterfalls, providing a perfect resting place for contemplation. It all sounds so serene and relaxing, and it mostly is... except all water and food must be hauled in miles by foot or cart, over a hilly and rocky terrain. Cell phone signals here are nonexistent, or sketchy at best. There is no electricity. No running water. And yet the opportunity to create art in this setting is so sought after that hundreds of artists from around the world apply for the Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program, established in 2006 by Friends of The Porkies, at the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park (the Porkies).

Entering its 12th year, the mission of the AIR program is, "To offer residencies to new and established artists of recognized excellence from around the world to pursue their creative process in a wilderness environment." The AIR program is open to artists and artisans whose work can be influenced by this unique northern wilderness setting, including, writers, composers and all visual and performing artists.

Program Director Sherrie McCabe states, "They are required to absorb the park and their goal is to try to interpret the park according to their

medium." Each artist contributes a piece of work representative of their residency to the permanent collection of the Friends of the Porkies. During their residency, the artist also shares their experience in a public program, demonstration, or workshop, in conjunction with the park's interpretive programs.

Watercolor artist Leigh Cox had to compete with over 300 other applicants to live in this solitary cabin for two-to-three weeks in the Porkies, in the fall of 2016. Cox found out about the program through a Michigan DNR Newsletter. A nature lover all her life, Cox's father is the editor of Fur-Fish-Game Magazine, thus hunting and animals were a constant presence in her life while growing up. Cox drove over 15 hours from her hometown of Marietta, Ohio, to get to the Porkies in Ontonagon, Michigan. She openly admitted, "I was really spooked the first week. I didn't think it would bother me because I live in the woods, but southern Ohio is different from this. You can't see your hand in front of your face out here at night. "

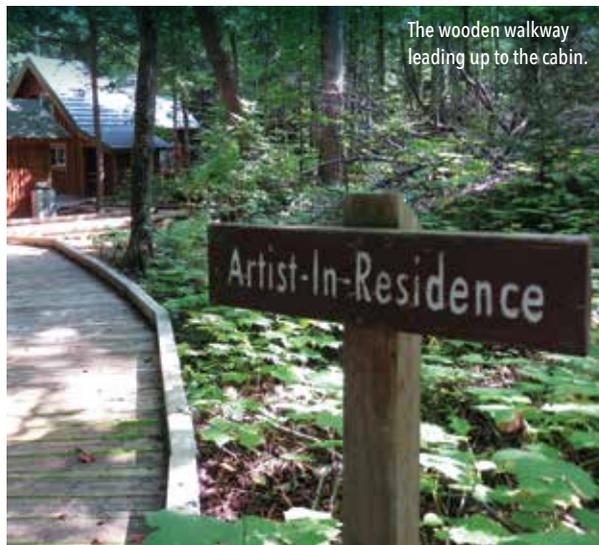
A graduate of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Cox received a bachelor of fine arts in illustration in 2006, and she has been a professional artist and illustrator for over 10 years. She uses watercolor, pencil and ink to create portraits and images of animals, or "rappers to raptors," as she likes to say. Cox thought the residency would be an opportunity to create more



Watercolor artist Leigh Cox at the artist in residence cabin.



Watercolor artist Leigh Cox at work during her stay in the artist in residence program.

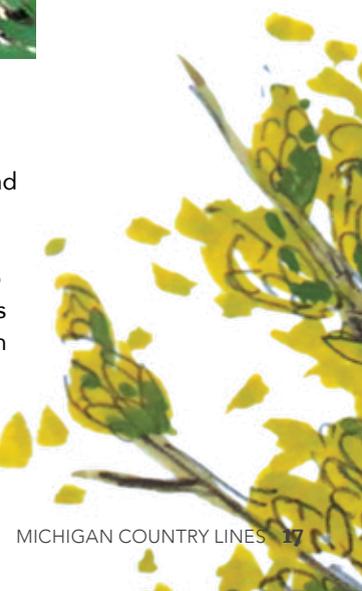


The wooden walkway leading up to the cabin.

For more information on the Artist-in-Residence program at the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, go to: [porkies.org/projects-programs/artist-in-residence/](http://porkies.org/projects-programs/artist-in-residence/).

wildlife art, which often falls by the wayside to focus on more profitable commissioned portraits. Cox was particularly inspired by the minugia of the Porkie's forest. She remarked, "It rained for a few days last week, then all of a sudden this whole separate kind of mini-forest of new mushrooms, fungus, and lichen were everywhere. I was obsessed with looking at the ground. It's so complex here and amazing, how the forest grows and how many layers it has, like plants that look

like tiny trees; it's like Jurassic Park!" Cox said she would absolutely repeat the experience, and plans to apply for another residency in coming years. Surprisingly, Cox added she felt the best part of the experience was that "the cabin is so thoughtfully done, and then on top of it, there's no power, and the phone doesn't work; you can work uninterrupted." The beauty and sweet silence of the Porkies are an inspiration for anyone who visits.



# I Remember...



## Michigan Memories

It was 1942, and I was four years old when my parents moved about six miles to a different farm home. There had been a storm that blew down our barn and killed some cows, and my mother had found a rattlesnake in the kitchen of our farmhouse. My dad, Amos, purchased a different farm west of Edmore near Six Lakes. He tied all of our cattle together and led them right down M-46 to our new farm. My mother, Nellie, drove a team of horses pulling a steel-wheel wagon that was carrying my sister, two brothers and me. Three more sisters would be added to the family at the new farm. I do not believe that move would be possible today with all of the hundreds of different vehicles that now travel that same highway.

It was so exciting to explore our new home, but the thing that I most remember is that it had electric lights. That was a new experience for us. There was a single lightbulb in the middle of the ceiling with a pull string, and we pulled the string turning the light on and off until the bulb broke.

The yard had a tall pine tree that stood in front of the house, and we would climb it. Since that time the barn and the house have both burned, but the huge, 100-year-old pine tree is still proudly standing and can be seen for a mile. I served in the U.S. Navy and then returned to Six Lakes and now live in view of my old farm home and that beautiful, old pine tree.

*Nile Pool, HomeWorks Tri-County*

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## Catch And Release

Catch and Release has had a strong meaning throughout my life.

As a young girl, we lived down the street from the owners of camp—a beautiful place on Walloon Lake where I got to spend a good part of my childhood summers riding horses and making lifelong friends. Those gentle horses would let us catch, saddle, and ride them in the corral and were happy upon release to return to their stable for food and rest.

A few years later my parents created a lovely retreat on the banks of the South Branch of the Au Sable River. It was an easy rustic landing where we learned to fly fish and relax as the elusive trout were caught and released.

Many loved ones have shared our river house and have caught our love of the north woods of Michigan. Over the years we have released some mighty important friends and family, but they are still in our hearts and thoughts as we head back up to our beloved spot along the river in the evergreen Michigan forest.

*Sally Binard, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative*



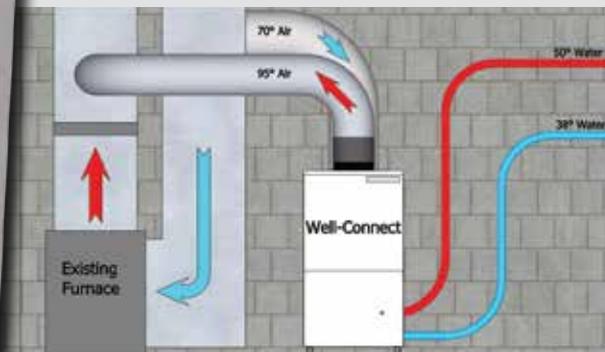
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