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5 A Tale of Two Co-op Families

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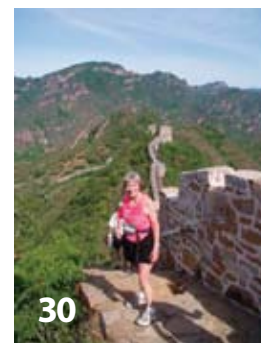
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A scene looking north to the Soo Locks, shot from the deck of the retired ice breaker *Mackinaw* during a summer festival. Building on the left is Cloverland Electric Cooperative's hydroelectric power plant. *Photo* – © *Shawn Malone/LakeSuperiorPhoto.com*

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Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association

Answers To Your Co-op Questions

Perhaps you remember getting the March/April 2010 edition of *Country Lines* magazine and seeing the list of district meetings? The first meeting was March 4 at the Deerton Town Hall. It was cold that day and there was still plenty of snow on the ground when I arrived. I wasn't late, but there were already about a dozen people waiting in their cars. We carted the stuff in the door, got the coffee going, and had the meeting. I told the crowd that since this was the first district meeting of the year, they would have to suffer through while I took my PowerPoint program for a test flight. Much to their credit, they stayed through the entire one-and-a-half hour presentation. At the end, I took questions from the attendees, and was expecting the first question to be, "How come your presentation is so long?" Fortunately, co-op folks are a friendly bunch. Even though they didn't ask that question, I got a clue and shortened things up for the remaining eight meetings, which went well (some would say because they went faster).

District meetings serve two important purposes—they offer you, as members and owners of the co-op, an opportunity to participate in the democratic process of electing directors to the board (see related story, p. 5), and to interact with the co-op's leadership.

Alger Delta's nine districts cover a broad expanse of the central Upper Peninsula, stretching from Grand Marais to Big Bay to Shakey Lakes and Garden Corners. This area is so big that the weather is not usually the same throughout our service territory. Even so, members from the four corners and

all points in-between have many of the same questions.

For example, everyone wants to know, "Why can't you just put all the wires underground?" The main reason is cost—converting overhead lines to underground lines is expensive. It is generally more cost-effective to properly maintain the existing overhead lines. With new construction, however, underground may be the more cost-effective choice. In most cases, underground lines have a higher initial cost but require less main-



Manager's Column
Tom Harrell

tenance over the long-run. But underground lines aren't problem-free, either. Underground lines have a limited life span before the insulation starts breaking down from voltage stress. When this happens, the lines may require expensive maintenance or replacement. So, we carefully consider all the known factors when deciding between overhead and underground lines.

There is also always a member question about electric rates at these district meetings. There are hundreds of factors that influence rates, including the cost of wholesale power (which itself is influenced by hundreds of factors), labor, maintenance, insurance, taxes, fuel, interest on debt, purchasing and maintaining vehicles and equipment, construction costs, planned and unplanned overtime, outages, and the weather—just to name some of the big ones. These and many other factors influence what the co-op must charge in order to meet its revenue requirements and pay the bills. However, since Alger Delta is a nonprofit business, we are always concerned about helping to keep electricity affordable.

A Tale of Two Co-op Families

M eet the Smith and Jones families, who are neighbors on a small lake near Marquette.

The Smiths have a nice three-bedroom, two-bath, ranch-style house with a large kitchen and deck. Eight years ago, they downsized from their place in town, after the kids were gone. They wanted enough room to be comfy, but also have some weekend guests and space for the kids and grandkids for a week or so in the summer.

Smith still works, but is nearing retirement and watching his pension and savings closely to decide when the time is right. He and his wife are really looking forward to retirement and travel, but otherwise they'll do some gardening and just enjoy living by a lake.

Until Mr. Smith retires, most days will be a lot like today – he gets up at 7 a.m. and starts the coffee pot before showering. The couple has breakfast together, catching the weather on TV. A tap on the opener sends the garage door up as he leaves, and she won't be far behind to close it.

As he drives away, Smith takes a good look at the Jones place for signs of movement or anything out of place. It's a habit he's had since moving here because it's neighborly, and the Joneses live in Chicago most of the year.

The Jones and Smith homes are similar (three bedroom/two bath), but a big difference is that the Jones place sleeps 10 people. There are bunk beds and pullout sofas, cots for the kids, and room for a tent outside. The other difference is a huge deck, added a few years ago so the family can enjoy cookouts and viewing the lake when they're all here in July. A few relatives stay on some long weekends, and the Joneses bring their parents every year for a fall visit.

Near deer season, six men also use the Jones place as a hunting base. Some years the buck pole in the yard holds at least six deer; sometimes less. Regardless of their success, they always offer some venison to the Smiths. Every July, the Joneses also invite the Smiths over for a cookout to show their gratitude for "keeping an eye on the place."

Both families are Alger Delta Co-op members that, as their lifestyles reveal, recognize the value of having electricity available at the flip of a switch. However, they have different

ideas about its necessity here. The Smiths need electricity every day to pump water, heat their home, use a computer, cook, open the garage door, and so much more. To them, a power outage is a huge inconvenience.

The Smiths even attended Alger Delta's last three district meetings to ask questions about tree trimming and other vegetation management. At one meeting, they even reported a large tree they thought might be a hazard to the co-op's power lines. They are anxious to help make sure the power stays on, even while they understand that outages will sometimes occur, especially during storms.

The Joneses don't want to see an outage either, but if it happens, it happens. After all, they're on vacation from the hassles of city living. Sometimes they see an outage as part of the rustic charm of having a U.P. camp, and the kids think it's fun and adventurous.

The Jones family enjoys the thick barrier of trees around their place because it muffles noise and it's peaceful to hear the wind in the leaves. So, a few years ago, they weren't happy to find that the co-op had trimmed and removed some of their trees, and they let the co-op know it. They would rather the co-op leave the vegetation alone, even if it means

having an occasional power outage.

Lost in this "tale of two co-op members" is the co-op's responsibility. Regardless of who is connected to the system and how they use energy, Alger Delta is charged with keeping the lights on and maintaining its electric system to meet or exceed certain standards for service reliability and quality. Each year, the co-op's performance is measured—relative to the frequency and duration of outages—and reported to state and federal agencies. The less frequent and shorter duration, the better the performance rating. These measurements even account for things that are out of the co-op's control, like severe weather or outages caused by animal contacts or vehicle accidents. That leaves maintenance, meaning tree-trimming and other vegetation management, pole and other inspections, and testing of cables and equipment.

The Smith and Jones families are in different life-styles and stages, which means that even though their homes are similar, their electric bills will differ. They even have differing opinions about what should be done to help keep the lights on. But they agree on one thing—no matter when they walk through the door, they want the lights to come on when they flip a switch. Alger Delta wants this, too, and that's why we do everything we can to keep providing you with reliable service at the lowest possible cost.

Three Directors Re-elected at District Meetings

Representatives to Alger Delta's board of directors are elected at the co-op's district meetings, and each year three of the nine directors are up for election.

This year, **Darryl Small** was re-elected to District 1 (Big Bay), for a total of nine years' service; **Paul Sederquist** to District 6 (Nathan/Bagley), with 21 years and currently serving as president; and **Dennis Gramm** to District 9 (Hiawatha/Maple Ridge), with six years of service. Each term is for three years.

At these district meetings, Tom Harrell, the co-op's general manager, also gives an update on activities. This year, he reported that work continues on rate restructuring. The current rate is inappropriate for today's economic climate and needs to change in order to ensure adequate revenue for operations and address issues energy conservation and efficiency issues. This restructuring is a multi-step process that needs to occur over an extended period of time.

Harrell also reported on member regulation, Alger's transition to WPPI Energy for its wholesale power supply, power supply costs, decreasing energy sales, labor and benefit costs, vegetation management, pole inspections, and other operational issues.

Alger Delta's operating costs continue to rise while energy sales have declined or held steady in recent years. For example, energy sales to seasonal members (as a group) was \$650,000 below budget in 2009. The decline is attributed to economic uncertainty and related factors that force people to cut back on their recreational pursuits.

On a positive note, Harrell said the co-op has reduced power outages and overtime labor costs (over 40 percent), and system reliability has improved. The savings is due to aggressive vegetation management, maintenance, and fewer outages caused by severe weather.

Internet Service Mapped in State

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has completed broadband availability maps aimed at promoting development of high-speed internet access.

The maps, accessible online at connectmi.org, are a product of the Connect Michigan broadband initiative, a public-private partnership between the MPSC and Connected Nation, a national nonprofit focused on technology expansion in underserved areas.

"This is an important first step as the state seeks to target resources to those areas of the state without high-speed

internet service," said Orjiakor Isiogu, chairman of the MPSC.

The map details where broadband does and does not exist across Michigan by type of broadband service.

The initial maps include data from more than 86 state providers. The key findings show that 95.41 percent of Michigan households have access to broadband service of at least 768 kbps downstream (excluding mobile and satellite service); 4.59 percent of Michigan households are unserved, representing approximately 174,000 unserved households of which 165,128 are rural.

Consumers can search for high-speed internet service providers using their home address, service providers can make informed expansion decisions, and state and federal policymakers can target resources to unserved and underserved communities.

Those who do not currently have broadband access can add their name and address to a secure database of households that would like to subscribe, if given the opportunity.



Map of available DSL service on connectmi.com.

MYSTERY PHOTO

Everyone who identifies the correct location of the photo below by **Aug. 10** will be entered in a drawing for a **\$50 coupon redeemable for electricity from your electric cooperative.**

Call in your entry to *Country Lines* at 517-351-6322, ext. 306, email jhansen@countrylines.com, or mail it to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the September 2010 issue.

The **May** contest winner is **Karen Altman** of Gaylord, who correctly identified the row of "cottages" near the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.



May photo

Do you know where this is?



National Electric Co-op Youth Tour Means Education, Fun

A group of 13 teens from across the state traveled to Washington, D.C., recently to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. Sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, this annual event gives high school sophomores and juniors the opportunity to learn about electric co-ops, politics and current issues.

"I gained so much from this trip..." says Brittany Bonar of Charlevoix, "...new friends, more knowledge about our country, and I found the monuments, memorials and museums to be very intriguing. These are memories that will last forever."

Along with a tour guide and three chaperones, the group toured Arlington Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, war memorials, Supreme Court and Capitol, and enjoyed a play at the Kennedy Center, a visit to the National Zoo, and a Potomac River boat cruise.

The students also met with Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Reps. Bart Stupak, Dave Camp, Vern Ehlers, Fred Upton and legislative staff to ask questions and discuss economic and energy-related issues.

And, joining 1,500 electric co-op-sponsored students from across the country, the group also convened for National Youth Day to learn from inspirational

speakers, including Mike Schlappi, a four-time paralympic medalist and two-time world champion in wheelchair basketball. Schlappi shared his inspiring message: "Just because you can't stand up, doesn't mean you can't stand out."

McKenna Wolf, a junior at Constantine High School, was chosen to represent Michigan on NRECA's Youth Leadership Council. She will return to D.C. in July to attend a youth conference designed to strengthen leadership and public speaking skills.

Participating co-ops included Cloverland Electric, Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, Midwest Energy, and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. The students were chosen by their sponsoring co-op after attending Michigan Electric Cooperative Teen Days in April—a three-day camp to learn about electrical safety and energy efficiency, and how co-ops operate.

Learn more about these co-op-sponsored youth programs at countrylines.com; click on "Youth."



Mike Schlappi and McKenna Wolf

Top photo: (back row from left) Marcus Ruff, Jake Smith, Tyler Ashbaugh, Robert Myers, Kevin Bolz, Will Puerner and Luke Smith; (front row) Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Esther Hardies, Karol Chubb, Tabitha Lyon, McKenna Wolf, and Brittany Bonar.



Honda. Why is it so hard to understand that even though the Honda was “assembled” in the USA the purchase supports Japan and not the Michigan workers who pay state taxes and spend their money in Michigan? While traveling through the state I see so many foreign cars, especially around Traverse City.

I could go on, but I’ll make my point. With our income down around 40 percent and job prospects as bad as they are, if my wife loses her unemployment before finding a job, we could lose our vacation home. That will be one more family not spending their money in northern Michigan. When are the people of this state going to learn and stop sending our potential tax revenue to Japan, Korea and China?

Tony Burkel, Macomb Township

“Greener” Lawn

In his article, Brian Sloboda (“A Greener Way to a Greener Lawn,” June 2010) failed to mention another alternative to mowing or trimming a lawn, reducing emissions, and using less oil.

There are new products at golehr.com that you might be interested in: a propane-powered lawn mower and gas trimmer. I have the trimmer myself. It is powered by a 4-cycle motor. Emissions are far less than with conventional fuels. The trimmer and lawn mower use a 16-ounce camping-style canister that lasts two hours. The canister is recyclable and in the future it may be possible to re-fill these containers.

The amazing thing is there is no mixing of oil and the canister can be removed and used anytime with no worry of it becoming “old.” Octane ratings stay the same. The trimmer and lawn mower are a clear alternative to old methods while helping the environment. Cub Cadet makes

a propane-powered zero-turn lawn mower.

Propane is a clean-running fuel and it doesn’t require burning fossil fuels to create the fuel to run it and it is in plentiful supply. I hope others will begin to use this equipment as I have to help reduce emissions that impact our planet.

I plant natural grasses and plants in my yard so that I have reduced my mowing to zero. I trim my yard, but I burn weeds with a propane “Weed Destroyer” so that I eliminate my use of chemical pesticides.

Jim Ege, Pentwater

Propane is a fossil fuel. Propane is cleaner burning than gasoline, but not as clean as natural gas or electricity when used to power equipment. In terms of emissions, from higher to lower, the order is gasoline, propane, natural gas, electricity. —ed.

About Coal & Nuclear

I’d like to respond to a letter in the May 2010 issue of *Country Lines*.

It appears [the writer] is suffering from severe selfishness, preferring to avoid any responsibility for encouraging profligate use of carbon-yielding fuels rather than working, in any way he could, to reduce the negative impact that today’s use of those fuels probably have on his grandchildren—and mine. If he were to adopt an increased sense of altruism he might find that he can look at all children and know that he has done something for all, not just for his personal concepts of what is best for our world.

Look outside your window and you’ll discover there is a world worth working to save.

Jon Wennerberg, Skandia

Physicians for Social Responsibility has information about energy sources people making decisions about those sources should be familiar with.

Gerald Drake, MD, Petoskey

Students Win Scholarships



Ben Schell



Brandon Kieft

Brandon Kieft, a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, and Ben Schell, Cheryland Electric Co-op, have each won a \$1,000 scholarship from the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA).

Brandon is the son of Paul and Gina Kieft of Rothbury, and a graduate of Montague High School, where he was active in varsity basketball and soccer, and community service and leadership organizations. He plans a career in bio-medical engineering.

Ben is the son of Timothy and Linda Schell of Traverse City and a graduate of St. Francis High School, where he was active in community service and played varsity football, basketball and track. He will attend the University of Michigan and plans to pursue a career in medicine.

A total of 156 scholarship applications were received by MECA, which publishes *Michigan Country Lines* for the state’s nine electric co-ops.

Recycled Paper

Michigan Country Lines is now printed on recycled paper from FutureMark Paper, which taps the “urban forest” of waste paper thrown out in Chicago every day. Using recycled paper reduces the carbon emitted in paper production, the paper deposited in landfills, and water and air pollution. The energy to produce recycled paper is about one-half the amount required to make paper from pulp.

Support Michigan

I am from the Detroit area, lived here for all of my almost 52 years. Most of my family and myself have worked for the auto industry and I have worked directly for Ford Motor Co. R&D for the last 17 years. I am also not embarrassed to say I am a Lions season ticket holder, but go to very few games in October or November. I spend most of those months in northern Michigan. There is nowhere else on earth that I’d rather be in the fall.

We own 20 acres in Manistee county where we just built a vacation home in late 2008. We’ve spent countless vacations in Da U.P., eh! My wife and I have seen over 100 waterfalls there and a large portion of the lighthouses. We purchased a plaque for my mother and stepdad in the Marquette Lighthouse tower that was to be used for restoration. We have gone out of our way to vacation and spend money in Michigan’s north country.

With all the jobs lost in Michigan in the auto industry, it is no wonder tax revenues are down. My wife has been out of work for a year-and-a-half and my income is down over 30 percent, yet we still find a way to visit the north. When are the people of Michigan going to learn to buy products from Michigan/USA, which pay Michigan income taxes, property taxes and corporate taxes and quit buying from companies that send money back to Japan, China and Korea?

A teacher friend was complaining to me about the state’s financial crisis and how his taxes are going up and [he’s] losing benefits, yet he drives a

A Greener Way to a Green Lawn

Most summer weekends are filled with the sounds of splashing in swimming pools, kids riding bikes, and the steady din of lawn mowers. Mowers and other gas-powered equipment also roar to life to keep yards looking trimmed and pristine.

However, these small engines emit a surprisingly large amount of pollution. By some U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, engines used to maintain lawns and gardens account for 5 percent of total U.S. air pollution. Although regulation of small engines has not been a government priority, new rules will go into effect in the next year or two that govern these emissions.

The gas engines powering lawn mowers and other yard equipment emit carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas that is toxic to humans. They also emit hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide that contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone. Operating a gas-powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles, according to the EPA.

What's more, gas lawn mowers are noisy – just ask anyone who wanted to sleep in on a Saturday morning when a neighbor decided to get an early start on yard work.

Luckily for your lawn and neighbors, options exist to help keep the grass groomed while reducing air and noise pollution.



Photo - Neuton

Neuton® battery-powered mowers run on a rechargeable DURACELL® battery.

A manual reel mower is a great option. These mowers have no engine, no fuel, and use human power to operate. They have zero emissions and operate with very little noise. The cost of a reel mower starts at \$70. To maximize their effectiveness, the blades should be sharpened regularly and the wheels lubricated. These mowers can last years with proper care. Though it's still hard to push this mower through tall grass, today's models are lighter and easier to maneuver than those of several decades ago. They are best-suited for smaller yards, although they can be used on any size lawn. Just keep in mind: the bigger the lawn, the more energy is needed from

whoever is doing the mowing!

Electric- and battery-powered mowers offer another alternative. Like gas mowers, these have a motor that spins a blade, which cuts the blades of grass. They are quiet, emit no direct pollutants, and are available in corded or cordless.

Costs for a corded mower are similar to a gas-powered machine, ranging from \$150 to over \$400. However, they do have one very limiting feature: they must be connected to the house via an extension cord. As you can imagine, users must be aware of where the cord is at all times in order to avoid running over it with the mower.

Cordless rechargeable mowers are more convenient than their corded counterparts. Some cordless mowers have a removable battery that can be charged inside the home and placed in the mower when it is time to mow. Costs range from \$200 to over \$500.

Rechargeable mowers are limited by the life of the battery pack, so they may not be best for large lawns. When shopping for a cordless mower, look for information on the size of lawn the mower can handle or the minutes the mower will be able to run on a single charge. Many cordless mowers claim to handle one-third to one-half acre of yard or have a cutting time of 45–60 minutes. Actual times will vary depending on the battery's age, grass height, and how quickly the user can get the job done.

In recent years, the choice in cordless mowers has expanded, with models introduced by well-established companies like Toro® and Black and Decker®, as well as newcomers like Neuton®. But cordless mowers receive mixed reviews. Given their higher price tag, careful attention should be paid to the brand and model being purchased, and online reviews are a helpful resource in picking the right one. Many retailers offer customer reviews of products and these should be looked at prior to purchasing.

Gas-powered lawn mowers can be found on almost every street in America. However, because of rising fuel costs and environmental concerns, more people are switching to human-powered reel mowers or electric mowers. These alternatives are a reliable and attractive alternative to gas-powered models. They pollute less, and perhaps most importantly, they won't disturb your neighbor's summer nap.

– Brian Sloboda

Public Act 295:

The Clean, Renewable and Energy Efficient Act

Annual Energy Optimization Report

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association – MPSC Case Number U15813

Alger Delta contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer an Energy Optimization (EO) plan in order to comply with P.A. 295. MECA filed a 2½-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on Feb. 18, 2009, as required by P.A. 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on May 12, 2009, and we began launching Energy Optimization programs in June 2009.

In August 2009, CLEARresult Consulting, Great Lakes LLC, was selected to implement the “Residential and Small Business Energy Star Program,” the “Commercial and Industrial Prescriptive Program,” and the Energy Optimization website at michigan-energy.org. CLEARresult has subcontracted with Franklin Energy and JACO to assist with EO program delivery.

In 2009, Alger Delta collected \$56,733 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$21,014, resulting in an overcollection of \$23,929 that will be applied towards 2010 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Alger Delta achieved 21.7 megawatt hours of energy savings in 2009.

The full report can be obtained in the Alger Delta section of michigan-energy.org.



Cooperative Principles Still Working After 75 Years

A few years ago I joined my son and his Boy Scout troop on a 10-day backpack trip at the Philmont Scout Ranch, the Boy Scouts' 214-square-mile-high adventure base located in the mountains of northern New Mexico. Since we were a "boy-led troop," our purpose as adult leaders was simply to follow the Scouts and only step in if it became a matter of safety. Each day the boys picked a different trail leader and that scout was responsible for setting the pace and navigating the trails. For the most part, the trails were fairly well marked and getting lost took some effort. However, in some of the more rocky regions there really is no trail and you had to use the compass and map to make sure you were heading in the right direction.

I recall one occasion where the scouts headed off down a path the adult leaders knew was incorrect. We were tired and really didn't want to wait too long to see how far they would go before figuring out we were "lost." In our minds, we were recalling a hike we took five years earlier where we walked 10 miles on a five-mile trail as we dutifully kept following behind a scout who was obviously lost. We didn't want to needlessly add to our trek, but we also didn't want to squash the enthusiasm of the leader. So instead of shouting out that he was wrong or lost, or taking over, we slowed the pace and gave him a chance to figure out we were not heading down the right trail. Fortu-

nately, it only took him about 10 minutes to figure it out. This led to a conversation about the need to stop every so often, look around, and reconfirm that you are on the right trail.

As cooperatives, we follow a more general road map: the seven cooperative principles. These principles have been around for hundreds of years and have guided all types of cooperatives. As we hit our 75th year, it makes sense for us to pause, take a look around, and reconfirm that we are still on the right trail.

Following are the principles that guide cooperatives:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their ser-

vices and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.

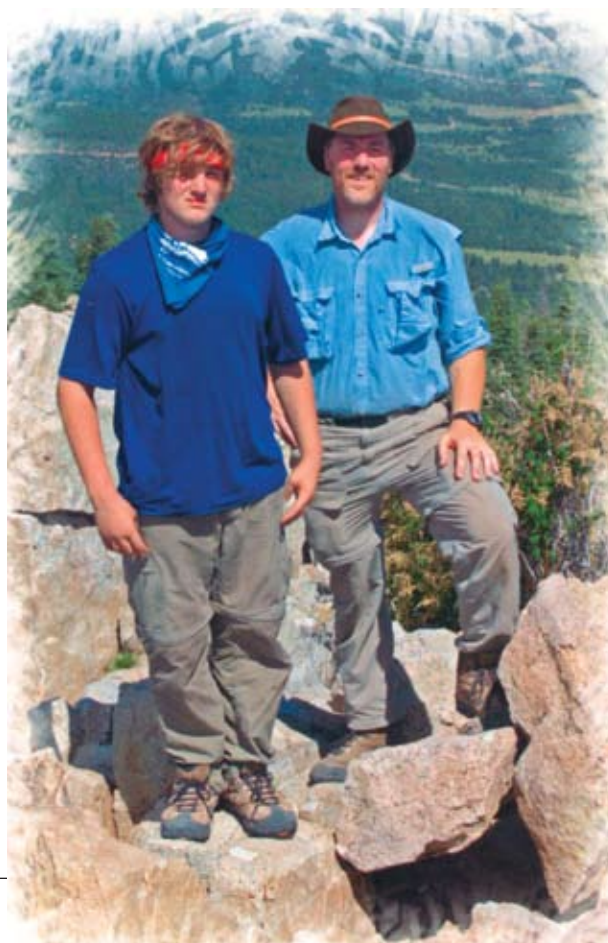
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

I can think of numerous examples of cooperatives that have stayed true to these principles and are walking the right path.



Michael Peters and his son, Barrett. Peters is president and CEO of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. His email address is mpeters@countrylines.com.



Photos – Sault Convention & Visitors Bureau

See the Soo

The busy waters of the St. Mary's River ensure that Sault Ste. Marie never loses its undercurrent of excitement and possibility. **Linda Sirois**

An old French word, “sault” describes the turbulent rapids and waterfalls that have caused river traffic to pause and linger for hundreds of years in Sault Ste. Marie. Since its European settlement in 1668 by Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette, this area where lakes Superior and Huron are joined by the river has been a lively crossroads of trade, travel and activity. Even earlier, generations of Ojibwa people gathered at “the cascading rapids” to harvest the abundant resources of whitefish, maple sugar and fur.

“The river defines the town geographically and historically,” says area resident Will Fowler, who wears many hats as an employee of the local bookstore, member of the Chippewa County Theatre Guild, and employee of Sault Historic Sites. “So many groups have had influence on the area—each group has left its mark.”

A Crossroads and a Destination

Sault Ste. Marie, or “the Soo,” has a tradition of being a place to re-stock provisions and relax. This second largest U.P. city is also the oldest European settlement in the Midwest and combines small town friendliness with enough authentic attractions to please the whole family.

“It’s a very friendly city,” says Linda Hoath, lifelong Cloverland Electric Co-op member and director of the Sault Ste. Marie Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Sault area is an ideal home base for the numerous day trip destinations located just a short distance away. Traveling time is a few minutes by bicycle, foot or car within the compact downtown waterfront area, and a few minutes to a few hours to the natural beauty, history and fun

the eastern U.P. offers.

The International Bridge spans the St. Mary’s to join the U.S. and Canada, and offers easy access to the sister city of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (call U.S. Customs at 906-632-2631 for border-crossing rules).

History FUN!

Fun is never separate from history in Sault Ste. Marie. The Tower of History features an amazing panoramic view of 1,200 square miles, including the Canadian side of the river, for those who take the high speed elevator 210 feet up to the observation decks.

From the top of the Tower, the Museum Ship *Valley Camp* can be seen a short distance away. This retired Great Lakes freighter has 20,000 square feet of exhibits and re-creations of the ship’s heyday as an iron ore and taconite carrier. Visitors can wander the crew’s quarters and pilothouse, view recovered artifacts from the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, and sense the sheer volume of a Great Lakes ship, which is only about one-half the size of freighters cruising today.

The newly-opened River of History Museum beautifully displays information about the diverse cultures and development of the St. Mary’s River system and Sault area. In the same building is the Interpretive Center for the Sault Tribe of Chippewa, a free learning experience featuring native artwork, craft displays and a tribal library.

Money-saving combination tickets are available for the three venues above (visit sault-historicsites.com or call 888-744-7867).

A national historic site, the American Soo Locks (Visitor’s Center: 906-253-9101) should not be missed. This engineering marvel allows ships that are 1,000 feet long



to narrowly negotiate the 21 feet of difference in water levels between lakes Huron and Superior. The Soo Locks Boat Tour (906-632-6301) uses double-decker boats to take visitors along the St. Mary’s and through the Locks.

Rarely open to the public, the block-long former Edison-Sault Hydroelectric Power Plant—now owned by Cloverland Electric Cooperative—is a dazzling work of circa 1898 cut-stone architecture, with “hidden” lighthouse columns.

Other attractions include the Great Lakes



Photo - Soo Locks Boat Tours



Photos - Linda Sirols



Opposite: The International Bridge to Canada (top), with one of three train bridges behind it, and a freighter preparing to pass through the Soo Locks. The historical homes (bottom) of John Johnson, Bishop Baraga and Henry Schoolcraft flank Sault Ste. Marie's city marina, with the Tower of History museum and its observation decks spiraling in the background.

Above (clockwise, from top left): This eagle fountain on the corner of Portage and Ashmun represents the Soo area's history, according to Lee Brown, director of the Downtown Development Association, and marks the location of the Farmer's Market that sets up for business each Wednesday evening and Saturday morning during the warmer months. • A freighter follows a tour boat through the Soo Locks. • Genny Kaunisto, a Cloverland Electric Co-op member, serves up a smile and delicious drinks and Mexican fare at the colorful, historic Palace Restaurant and Saloon. • This humorous clock face is one of many quirky creations at Riverstone Gallery. The owners recycle outmoded electronics and camera parts into unique clocks and jewelry. • Eric and Kathy Demaray represent 55 local artists in their Sault Realism gallery on Portage Ave., as well as offering printing, mounting, and framing of artwork.

Shipwreck Historical Society, and St. Mary's, Michigan's first Catholic church. The current building is the fifth on this site and dates from 1881.

Local storyteller Jim Couling, also known as "Woodsmoke Jim," delights in leading his Twilight Walking Tours (twilightwalkingtours.com or 906-440-5910), which offer tales that combine history and mystery.

"Each story is a gem," Couling says, adding that he loves sharing his enthusiasm for "cool and creepy untold stories." Some of the untold stories focus on his "Strong Women

of the North" tales. "Their [the women's] stories are compelling," he says. With his wife Mary, who adds her vocal talents, they offer family-friendly evening strolls that depart appropriately across from the Haunted Depot on Portage Avenue.

Historic Sugar Island is just a hop away by ferry. Be sure to try the funky 1949 Clyde's Drive-In restaurant near the ferry landing.

Speaking of Food...

Even eating is more fun in the Soo. Try ship-watching at the riverfront while feasting on

fresh whitefish, fine dining at the Ramada Inn Ojibway (National Historic Landmark), or tasty Mexican specialties at the renovated 1903 Palace Restaurant and Saloon. Zorba's serves up Greek, and Cup of the Day boasts great coffee, specialty sandwiches and homemade soups. Owner Anthony Stackpoole keeps a bowl of fresh water just outside the door for passing four-legged friends.

Unforgettable family dining awaits at the award-winning Antler's Restaurant on Portage Avenue, where about 500 antler racks and animals—real and frankly fake—enliven the atmosphere from their perches on the walls and ceiling. Legend has it that among the names under which it has operated, the "Bucket of Blood Saloon and Ice Cream Parlor" is the most colorful. The Antlers offers homemade hamburger buns, twice-weekly fish fries, and delicious steaks. Their beer-of-the-month feature and traditional Paul Bunyan burgers are in demand by local Lake Superior State University students. (*Hint: the steak bites on garlic bread and s'more cheesecake are amazing.*)

A Lively Arts Scene

Shopping, theaters and art galleries are scattered throughout the Soo. Sault Realism, an art gallery run by Eric and Kathy Demaray, offers a mix of locally-created paintings, jewelry and photography. Some of the retro prints shown were taken by Eric's grandmother, nationally known photographer Marion Stahl Boyer.

Nearby is Riverstone Gallery, specializing in Michigan and Sault art. Owners Gregory and Donna Steele, and daughter Allyson Schwartz, shape one-of-a-kind jewelry and clocks from re-purposed materials.

The Alberta House Art Gallery has traveling exhibits and a gift shop. Mahdziwin, on Ashmun St., is owned by the Sault tribe and offers original Native American artworks. Kewadin Casino also has a large gallery and gift shop with Native creations.

A recent "Cool Cities" grant has allowed the local drama community to renovate and use the historic Stars Theatre (906-632-1930), on Ashmun St.

The river's special energy, collaboration among diverse cultures, and a strategic location make the Soo area an unforgettable destination with a charm found nowhere else.

"Sault Ste. Marie has found its own," explains Hoath. "We are not Mackinaw City, we are not Mackinac Island, we are not St. Ignace. We are Sault Ste. Marie."

To plan your trip to "The Place Where Michigan Was Born," see saultstemarie.com or call 800-647-2858.

Unique in the U.P.

Take a Michigan vacation this summer by visiting Keweenaw Bay in the western Upper Peninsula. *Kath Usitalo*



Bill and Nancy Leonard are the owners of the Einerlei Shop in Chassell. Much of the area is served by Ontonagon County REA.



Teresa Palosaari's Country Craft Cabin offers soaps, rag rugs and honey, among other things.

To know Bill and Nancy Leonard is to wander through their airy, two-story Einerlei Shop at the heart of Chassell in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Every artfully arranged item, from handcrafted jewelry to kitchen gadgets and gourmet foods, garden plants, pet

accessories and books, is a reflection of their interests. *Einerlei*, German for “one and the same,” expresses their goal of combining work and play. It’s a philosophy that has guided them to the 35th anniversary of their one-of-a-kind store, involvement in their adopted hometown, and 45 years of marriage.

The couple had vague plans to “do something on our own” when they left Indiana and their careers—his as an engineer, and hers as a special education teacher—in their VW camper in 1973. “We were kind of Hippie-ish,” says Nancy, when they happened upon Houghton and stayed “to see what it was like to live with a lot of snow.” An avid sailor, Bill says, “Big water attracted us.” They also liked being close to Michigan Technological University.

“Let’s sell something!”

Two years after arriving in the U.P., the couple launched Einerlei on a lark, “because we had store windows,” says Nancy of the building that had housed a restaurant and barbershop. “Let’s sell something!” they said, and opened shop with handcrafted items and furniture they refurbished.

Gradually, they added inventory to reflect their home and garden interests, renovating the building in phases to make room for the works of local artists and musicians, greeting cards, housewares and apparel. The variety appeals to their clientele, a mix of tourists, locals, and the Michigan Tech and Finlandia University communities. “When I buy for the new year, I try to redefine (the shop). We have to constantly change, and that’s great because it keeps us interested,” Nancy says. “I try to find companies that are doing good on their own,” she adds, preferring those that donate to causes, deal in fair trade, and are conscientious about packaging.

Community Center

The couple is also active with local historical, business improvement and tourism committees, and Humane Society fundraising. Bill was township supervisor for 12 years, and Nancy’s passion for vintage clothing inspired “Friends of Fashion,” a volunteer group that preserves historic apparel and presents pageants depicting those who wore it.

The Leonards also serve as the unofficial Chamber of Commerce, readily sharing



The Einerlei Shop has an ever-changing collection of unique clothing.

tips on what to do in the area. In summer, mountain bikers and hikers hit the Chassell Classic cross-country ski trail, and paddlers enjoy Chassell Bay and the Keweenaw Water Trail. The Chassell General Store carries everything from instant toothache pain relief to extension cords, refurbished computers, Vollwerth's sausage, fishing lures and fresh fruit. Across the street, Treats and Eats offers ice cream and makes sandwiches for easy picnics at Centennial Park, with its playground, fishing pier and sandy beach on Chassell Bay.

A Berry Good Time

The waterfront was the site of a sawmill built in 1887, and lumbering reigned until the mill closed in 1928. Farmers realized the area was ideal for growing strawberries and Chassell became a major supplier. The story is told in the "Lumber Kings to Strawberry Kings" exhibit at Chassell's Heritage Center Museum. Housed in a handsome former school, the Center is a Heritage Site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. It's open summer Tuesdays and Thursdays, with a variety of Thursday evening programs.

A handful of berry growers, some with U-Pick farms, remain in the area and Chassell celebrates with the annual Copper Country Strawberry Festival (July 9-10). It features parades, entertainment, an arts and crafts sale, whitefish "boil" and famous strawberry shortcake. Folks gather at the park pavilion to clean and



In L'Anse, Lynn Ketola built the Ivory Mansion Bed & Breakfast to offer unique lodging and keep her family's homestead.

prepare 1,200 quarts of strawberries for the signature treat.

Along U.S.-41

Roadside attractions near Chassell include the Bishop Baraga Shrine, a towering monument overlooking Keweenaw Bay, and birders flock to the Sturgeon River Sloughs, a designated wildlife viewing area. Teresa Palosaari's Country Craft Cabin is filled with soaps, rag rugs and honey, and a bright red sign signals North Entry Road. A giant bear trap at the Bear Trap Iron Works is a can't-miss photo stop.

Houghton offers a variety of lodging, but for a unique alternative, check into the Ivory Mansion Bed & Breakfast in L'Anse.



Stop at the Baraga Drive-In for a quick meal, ice cream and a friendly welcome.



The Chassell General Store has "a little bit of everything," from garden tools to canned tuna and firewood.

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The Next Water Heater

New heat pump water heaters may signal the rebirth of an energy-saving technology. **Alice Clamp**

Cold showers aren't a pleasant way to start the day, and hot water plays a hefty role in cooking and cleaning, too. As a result, water heating has become the second largest energy user in an average home, accounting for approximately 20 percent of residential energy use.

To save energy, consumers have wrapped water heaters in blankets or wrapped hot water pipes in insulation. While those practices should continue, a new type of water heating product is entering the market, promising to lower energy consumption and save consumers money.

Heat pump water heaters, while not a new technology, are experiencing a rebirth. A handful of small companies produced units in the 1980s and 1990s. But random failures and other issues (such as the need for utilities to install special electric service to power the devices) soured consumers on the technology.

In addition, many electric co-ops offered (and still offer) load management programs that depended on briefly shutting off standard electric resistance water heaters (which can store hot water for many hours) as a way to cut electric use during times of peak demand when power prices skyrocket. These programs, in turn, helped co-ops keep electric bills affordable. Heat pump water heaters, unfortunately, could not be used in these efforts.

Now, some major water heater manufacturers and other appliance companies have entered the market with a new and improved generation of heat pump water heaters. Many electric cooperatives are currently testing these products for possible deployment in their service territories—a critical step in determining whether they will really help consumers save energy and trim electric bills.

How They Work

Heat pump water heaters come in two types. The more expensive “integrated” model replaces an electric resistance water heater with one that combines a heat pump with a storage tank. The second version adds a heat pump unit to an existing electric tank.

In both versions, a heat pump circulates a refrigerant, which absorbs heat from surrounding air before it passes through a compressor to maximize heat output. Essentially, heat drawn from the air transfers to water in the tank.

While a heat pump water heater can produce most of the hot water a family requires, a backup electric resistance element in the tank takes over when outside air becomes too cold or consumers need extra hot water. In summer, cool exhaust air can be released into the vicinity where the heat pump water heater is located, assisting home cooling, or it can be returned outside through ducts.

Because a heat pump water heater uses electricity to move, rather than generate, heat, it consumes roughly half the electricity of a conventional electric resistance model. This



efficiency qualifies integrated heat pump water heaters for an Energy Star® rating, a first for electric water heaters.

But this added efficiency comes with a high price tag. Integrated units sell for \$1,400 to \$2,000—more than twice the cost of standard electric resistance water heaters. However, depending on your co-op's electric rate and the installed cost of a heat pump water heater, including any financial incentives, payback for the purchase can take as little as three years. In areas with low electric rates and limited financial incentives, though, the payback period can be much longer.

Heat pump water heaters are most efficient in warm and damp climates. Homes in those regions also benefit from the appliance's cooling and dehumidifying features.

A heat pump water heater needs space of at least 10 feet square to ensure adequate air exchange. An open basement, a utility room, or—in some areas—a garage, will work.

Noise becomes another consideration when deciding where to place a unit. While conventional electric resistance water heaters operate quietly, most heat pump water heaters boast noise levels similar to window air conditioners.

Heat pump water heaters are not a universal option. Residents in colder climates will see decreased performance during winter. In the Pacific Northwest, for instance, if the heat pump is designed to work at ambient air temperatures of 45° F or higher, the water heater's electric element will operate whenever air temperatures drop below that level, reducing energy savings.

To learn more, visit energystar.gov, and search for heat pump water heaters.

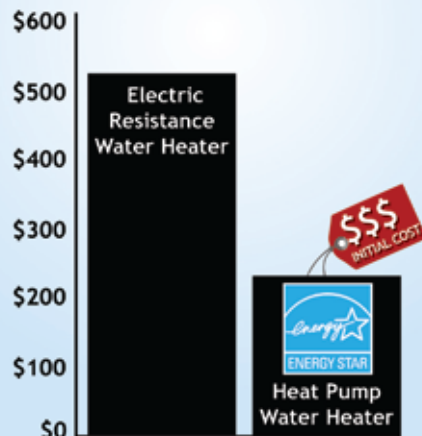
Alice Clamp is a technology writer for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Heat Pump Water Heaters Cost More Initially, But May Trim Electric Bills

Energy Star-qualified heat pump water heaters cost almost **twice as much** as standard electric resistance models, but may cut energy costs in half.

Annual Energy Costs (\$/Year)

Based on average household of 2.6 occupants, U.S. Census Bureau, 2006



Source: Energy Star



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Do the Math! Kids Need It; You Can Help!

In the collective rhythm of our lives, summertime has become the mellow jazz of the year, especially for our kids. A growing number of students, however, are picking up the tempo by tackling some summer-time learning.

Adding motivation for high school students are the Michigan Merit Graduation Requirements. Starting with the class of 2011, these standards require *every* student to master rigorous subjects like Chemistry, Physics, and Algebra 2.

Since no subject seems to cause more anxiety than math—Algebra 2, to be exact—I asked math experts for some tips.

STARTING THIS SUMMER

Target your help – Discover where your teen’s strengths and weaknesses were in last year’s math classes. This will uncover areas where you could catch up or get a jump-start on next year.

“Ask for worksheets or assignments for students to work on over the summer,” says Jamie Wernet, a math tutor and high school teacher. “Or explore websites that offer free math games, tutorials, worksheets, and more.

Plan and practice – All too often the summer can slip away, regardless of the best intentions. Schedule study sessions and follow it. Take advantage of summer schools if one is offered.

“Summer schools often offer smaller classes or a different approach to the material,” says Wernet.

Study the standards – Review local and state standards, which explain what your child will be expected to learn each year (see sidebar).

“What does it mean to ‘pass Algebra’? List the topics found in the standards and make sure your child is learning them.” urges W. Michael Kelley, author of a series of math guides for people who don’t “speak math.”

AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

Be visible and accessible – Introduce yourself to teachers early on. Let them know

you’re interested in your child’s progress. Ask if there is a class website or other way to track when assignments are due.

“Send an email early so that the teacher has easy access to your email address,” says Wernet.

Learn what to expect – Ask about the textbook or curriculum used. Does the teacher use a traditional approach, or one that emphasizes group work, problem solving, and investigations? What will a typical lesson look like? How much homework should you expect?

“Math instruction doesn’t always look the same as when parents were in school, and that’s okay!” Wernet says.

Keep students on track – Have a set time to work or study a little every day. Often, success hinges on just keeping up with daily assignments.

MOTIVATING RELUCTANT LEARNERS

Uncover the root – Is it boredom? Discouragement? Confusion? Then match the remedy to the cause.

Create a can-do attitude – Kelley says some parents believe their children will fail math because they, themselves, failed the subject. *Never* give any child the idea that it’s okay to give up on math.

“Avoid comments like ‘I was never good at this stuff’ or ‘I never use this math,’” Wernet says. “If you need to, study the material yourself!”

Use positive peer pressure – Find a compatible study buddy who challenges your teen, and arrange regular homework sessions together. It gets students talking about math, and each might take different things from the lesson. “It’s easier to do anything if you’re not alone,” says Kelley. Plus, a little healthy competition can motivate them to complete work well and on time.

TIME FOR A TUTOR?

Don’t wait – Once a student falls behind—for any reason—or feels discouraged, both Kelley and Wernet urge families to seek help



©iStockphoto.com/Andres

right away—especially if you know your own math skills are rusty.

Look for quality and passion – Ideally, families should look for a certified math teacher, but there are other options: college students, retired or unemployed teachers, tutoring centers, or online tutoring. Look for one that fits your budget and your child’s personality—and who is passionate about math.

Don’t sell yourself short – According to Kelley, parents are willing to help out with just about everything *except* math and science, especially in higher grades. His series of “Humungous” guides (see sidebar) provide very detailed answers to math problems, showing you how to work out every problem, and they don’t skip steps.

“A surprisingly large share of my readers are adults determined to master what they never understood in school,” Kelley says. “Parents are using my books to learn the material so they can help their own children.”

So enjoy the lazy, hazy days of summer, and allow kids time to dance to their own music. But do what it takes to start September on a strong note.

“There is no shame in asking for help,” Kelley says. “Asking for help when you’re already hopelessly lost is too late.”

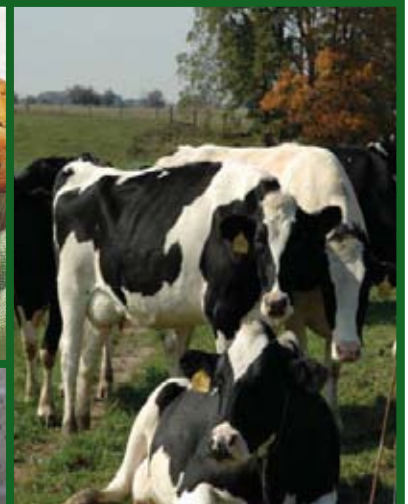
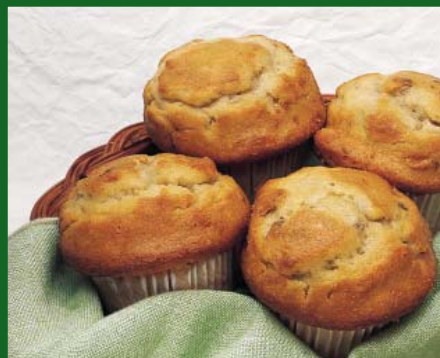
RESOURCES

The Humungous Book series of math study guides by W. Michael Kelley makes the intricacies of math perfectly clear. Look for *The Humungous Guide to Algebra*, and similar titles for Geometry, Statistics and Calculus.

Online math sites like aaamath.com and hotmath.com offer worksheets, games and more.

Michigan’s High School Content Expectations (HSCE) describe what students need to master before they graduate. Review them for math and other subjects at Michigan.gov/mde (select “parents and family” at left).

SOY



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Soybeans play an important role in Michigan's economy. According to the latest census, the soybean crop is 2nd only to corn in value of field crop production with a total impact of over \$1 billion. Over 2 million acres are planted to soybeans annually in Michigan. Instate soybean processing represents a total economic impact of \$44 million and soybean farming results in nearly 7,000 jobs. Soybeans are little beans with big economic benefits!

For more soybean information visit
www.michigansoybean.org.





Chicken

Did you know? Hong Kong is the only place in the world where people consume more chicken per person than the United States. Find many more recipes from readers at countrylines.com.

Sour Cream-and-Dill Chicken

8-10 skinned chicken pieces
 1 10¾-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
 1 envelope dry onion soup mix
 8 oz. sour cream
 1 T. lemon juice
 1 T. freshly chopped dill or 1 t. dry dill weed
 1 4-oz. can sliced mushrooms, drained
 pepper to taste
 paprika
 wide egg noodles, cooked

Place raw chicken in a single layer in a 9x13-inch baking pan. Sprinkle with pepper. Combine mushroom soup, dry soup mix, sour cream, lemon juice, dill and mushrooms; pour over chicken. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake, uncovered at 350° for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Meanwhile, prepare egg noodles according to package directions. Serve chicken over noodles.

Barbara Palzewicz, Daggett

Tuscan Chicken

1 lb. boneless chicken breasts, cut into cubes
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 2 T. olive oil
 4 c. cubed potatoes
 1 med. bell pepper, diced
 1 jar pasta sauce
 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen green beans
 salt and pepper to taste

Sauté chicken and garlic in olive oil until lightly browned. Add potatoes and peppers and cook 5 minutes; stirring occasionally. Add sauce, beans, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 35 minutes until chicken is cooked and potatoes are tender.

Mary Waterbury, Fenton

Baked Taco Chicken

1 c. all-purpose flour
 2 envelopes taco seasoning
 1 t. salt
 2 eggs
 2 T. milk
 2 3-4 lb. broiler/fryer chickens, cut up

In a large re-sealable plastic bag, combine flour, taco seasoning and salt. In a bowl, beat eggs and milk. Dip chicken pieces in egg mixture, then place in bag and shake to coat. Place chicken pieces on a foil-lined 10x15-inch baking pan. Bake uncovered at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until juices run clear.

Naomi Yoder, Scottville

Cheese Nip Chicken

4-6 boneless chicken breasts
 4-6 crushed Cheez-It® Crackers
 1 c. crushed Cheez-It® Crackers
 8 oz. sour cream
 1 stick butter, melted

Place chicken in a baking dish, spread evenly with sour cream, then sprinkle with crushed crackers. Pour melted butter over crackers. Bake uncovered at 375° for 1 hour.

Helen Benner, Lansing

Wild Rice Casserole

1 c. wild rice
 1 lg. onion, diced
 2 c. diced celery
 1¼ c. diced green pepper, optional

1/2 c. sliced mushrooms
 1 can cream of mushroom soup
 1 can cream of chicken soup
 1 soup can cold water
 2-3 T. soy sauce
 2-3 lbs. cooked, skinless chicken breasts

Wash rice and cover with warm water; let set for 3 hours. Sauté onion, celery and green pepper; combine with soy sauce, soups and cold water. Add rice and mushrooms. Gently fold-in chicken. Place all in a buttered casserole dish. Bake at 325° for 1½ hours.

Mandy Rebone, Interlochen

Tarragon Chicken with White Wine

4 lbs. chicken cut into pieces
 2 T. butter or margarine
 2 T. oil
 1 lg. onion, chopped
 2 T. flour
 1 c. white wine, Inglenook® Chablis is best
 1 T. tarragon
 grated rind of 1 lemon
 chopped parsley for garnish

Brown chicken in combined oil and butter; set aside. Sauté onion in the same butter. Add flour and gradually add wine, stirring in browned pieces from bottom of pan. Add tarragon; cook until sauce has thickened. Return chicken to pan; cover and cook for 50 minutes or until done. Garnish with grated lemon and chopped parsley.

Duane Alvard, Port Sanilac

Chicken Salad

2 c. whole seedless green grapes
 3+ c. cooked and cubed chicken breasts
 1 c. cashew halves
 1/8-1/4 c. sesame seeds
 1 T. butter at room temperature, or melted
 1 c. sour cream
 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 1 T. tarragon vinegar
 1 t. salt
 pepper to taste

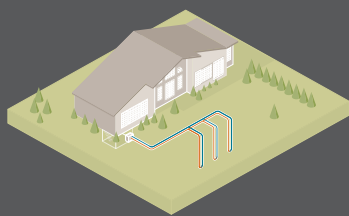
In a large bowl, combine chicken and butter. Add remaining ingredients; mix well. Chill before serving. Serve in a pita pocket, alongside a croissant, or on top of a tomato cut into eighths served on a bed of lettuce.

Jeanne Stewart, Lansing

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Co-op Member *Gardeners*

From the Ohio border to the U.P., gardening is a common interest throughout electric co-op territories in Michigan.

There is no shortage of gardeners among electric co-op members. From vegetable gardening to growing fruits, berries and flowers, co-op members do it all. This spring, while not tending my own garden, I talked to a few co-op folks who garden for fun and profit. They shared their stories and a few green thumb tips.

I'm always looking for an excuse to stop at Burdock Farm Greenhouse, in Dafer, to shop for plants and talk to Karen Bartunek, whom I've known for years. Now retired from the Sault Area Schools, this Cloverland Electric Co-op member runs a small business in a country setting. She sells plants

and gifts to area gardeners. Her business could be described as 'a passion for gardening that got out of hand.'

"It's something that evolved," explains Bartunek. "I grew plants for myself and pretty soon had too many and started selling them to neighbors. So I decided to try it on a bigger scale—this is big enough," she says with a chuckle.

Bartunek mostly enjoys starting plants from seed, though it isn't practical, even on a small scale, to start enough plants from seed to supply to area customers. Still, she manages to plant a number of things inside her house long before the snow melts. She germinates most of her seeds over heat tape and sometimes by placing germination trays on a cookie sheet over the pilots of a gas stove.

Assisting her in this endeavor is her 92 year-old mother, Belma. Karen's mother doesn't let a little arthritis keep her from her passion, which she obviously passed down to her daughter.

With the help of her daughters, who live on either side of her, Belma is able to continue doing something she loves. Each year she starts plants from seed in a spare bedroom, eventually hardening them off in a small greenhouse not far from her front door. With the help of a ramp and walker, Belma can mosey down to the greenhouse each day

At 92, Mrs. Hugo has been involved in growing things for 78 years. Her current garden includes broccoli, onions and garlic.



Karen Bartunek is the owner of Burdock Farm Greenhouse, in the eastern U.P., where she's turned her fondness for growing things into a small business by selling plants and gardening gifts.

to tend to her gardening chores. She uses a chair on wheels and a long-handled water wand to maneuver within reach of the plants in the greenhouse.

Eventually, some of the hundreds of plants Belma raises will be on the retail display racks at Burdock Farms, or they may just get potted up and placed where she can see them from her living room window.

"Oh, I just love it," said Belma, smiling as bright as the sun. "It keeps me going."

Bartunek's rustic garden center is large enough to offer a nice variety of plants, yet small enough for the personal service Karen offers her customers. She says helping her customers is what makes this endeavor worthwhile. "Most people come here in a good mood and leave in a good mood. You're making people happy."

My long-time friend and gardener, Brian Howard, of Blanchard, usually calls about the time asparagus is coming on in my garden. We compares notes on the weather and discuss what each of us is going to plant in the coming year. This year was no exception.

This summer, Brian and his wife, Priscilla, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op members, are busy adding to the 17 varieties of apple trees in their small orchard. "I grow a lot of apples for cider," Brian explains. "I also grow the Ida Reds for eating." They are also adding another 1,000 strawberry plants to the ones they were already growing for market, and they're planting another large



vegetable garden this year.

Brian understands strawberries—his family has grown them for years in the Remus area. He grows several different varieties, including Jewels, Early Glow, Sparkles (one of his favorites) and a variety that sets flowers a little later in the spring—Ovation—which increases the chances of escaping a late spring frost.

The Howards give away, sell or can what they can't eat fresh. They're always on the lookout for the least toxic controls for insects and disease, which he admits is difficult—but perhaps not impossible, even with apples.

Brian has always been involved in gardening and some type of agriculture. The former beekeeper grew up on a farm near Remus. His father sold farm equipment for Ford in the Mt. Pleasant area, and Brian spent summers helping his grandfather garden and eventually gardened with area 4-H kids. "A lot of my interest in gardening came from my grandfather," Brian says.

Mrs. Hugo (the only name I've known her by), is a new Cloverland Electric Co-op customer due to the Co-op's recent acquisition of Edison Sault Electric. She says she cultivated most of her love for gardening in Germany,

where she lived into her late teens.

Her first exposure to gardening was when she was about 14, and wanted to become a hair stylist. To enter this vocation, she was first required to work for a year, either in a home, doing domestic work, or on a farm. She chose a farm, and today is glad she did. On the farm she learned a lot about gardening.

"It was very fascinating to see a garden grow," she says of her first experience. She shuns the use of chemicals in her backyard garden, and has instead adapted some of the nonchemical insect control techniques of Jerry Baker (gardening author who coins himself 'America's Master Gardener') to grow her tomatoes, carrots and other veggies.

"There is a personal satisfaction when you see the vegetables grow," she says in her German accent. "There is so much pleasure."

Her words of advice? "Start out with a small garden and encourage your children to garden."

Neil Moran is the author of "North Country Gardening: Simple Secrets to Successful Northern Gardening," and "From Store to Garden: 101 Ways to Make the Most of Garden Store Purchases."



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Metal Roofs Are Cool

Metal roofs save energy by keeping homes cooler during summer. And they look good, too.

Many—but not all—metal roofs qualify for the federal energy conservation tax credit for 2010. Metal roofs save energy by keeping your house cooler in the summer, which can dramatically improve comfort and reduce electric bills if your home is air-conditioned. In winter, a metal roof has little impact on the energy efficiency of your house.

Generally, to qualify for the energy tax credit the roof must meet Energy Star® qualification standards. For roofing, this means the TSR (total solar reflectivity) must be greater than 25 percent when new and 15 percent after three years of aging. To be sure the roofing qualifies, ask for the specifications and a manufacturer's certification statement (MCS). It pays to be diligent these days: I recently got quotes on a roof installation, and several roofers told me their asphalt shingles qualified for the tax credit. In actuality, they did not qualify.

The amount of the tax credit is 30 percent of the roofing materials cost (not installation expenses), up to a maximum of \$1,500. Use IRS form 5695 to apply for the tax credit and save the payment receipt and MCS in case of a tax audit.

For my own home, I eventually selected an aluminum roof by Classic Metal Roofing Systems. It is made from 98 percent recycled aluminum, and the one-by-two-foot panels are formed to simulate cedar shakes. It's attractive and certainly unique: many neighbors were stumped trying to figure out exactly what it is.

To install the aluminum panel roof, a special film underlayment was nailed down with plastic clips and stainless steel fasteners over the existing shingles (which saved the expense of tearing off the old shingles). Each aluminum panel interlocks with the adjacent ones on all four sides. The top of each panel is held down by a stainless steel nail through a hole in the upper corner and an aluminum clip attached midway across the top. It is designed to withstand up to a 120-mph wind.

Although it is more expensive to install than an asphalt shingle roof, my new metal roof will never have to be replaced. From a lifetime cost comparison, it is cheaper than



The metal roofing panels are installed over the underlayment. Hidden stainless steel nails and aluminum clips are used to secure each panel.

installing an asphalt roof every 20 to 30 years. I also get a 3 percent reduction on my homeowner's insurance because of the reduced fire hazard.

Most metal roofs reflect more of the sun's heat than asphalt shingles, particularly black shingles. My Classic metal roof has a TRS of 0.43, whereas a black asphalt shingle roof has a TRS of only 0.05. This keeps the roofing materials cooler so less heat is radiated down through the ceilings to the living area. Also, the underside of the aluminum metal surface has lower "emissivity" (the ability to emit heat) than shingles, so even less heat radiates downward.

It was warm, sunny weather when my metal roof and ridge vent were installed, and the second floor was noticeably cooler than before.

The final energy advantage is that Classic's aluminum panels are relatively thin, with the contour of shakes formed into them. This contour creates an air gap between most of the roofing and the sheathing or shingles below it. This gap allows some outdoor air to naturally circulate up under the metal roof panels to keep them cooler. I sealed off my gable vents so outdoor air is now drawn in the soffit vents and exhausted out the ridge vent.

One minor drawback to the aluminum

shake panels is they can dent if you indiscriminately walk on the high points of the contour. This can be avoided by stepping on the lower nailed area of the panels. Contoured insulating foam pieces were placed under areas of the panels to provide walkways on the roof to clean my skylight and service the ridge vents.

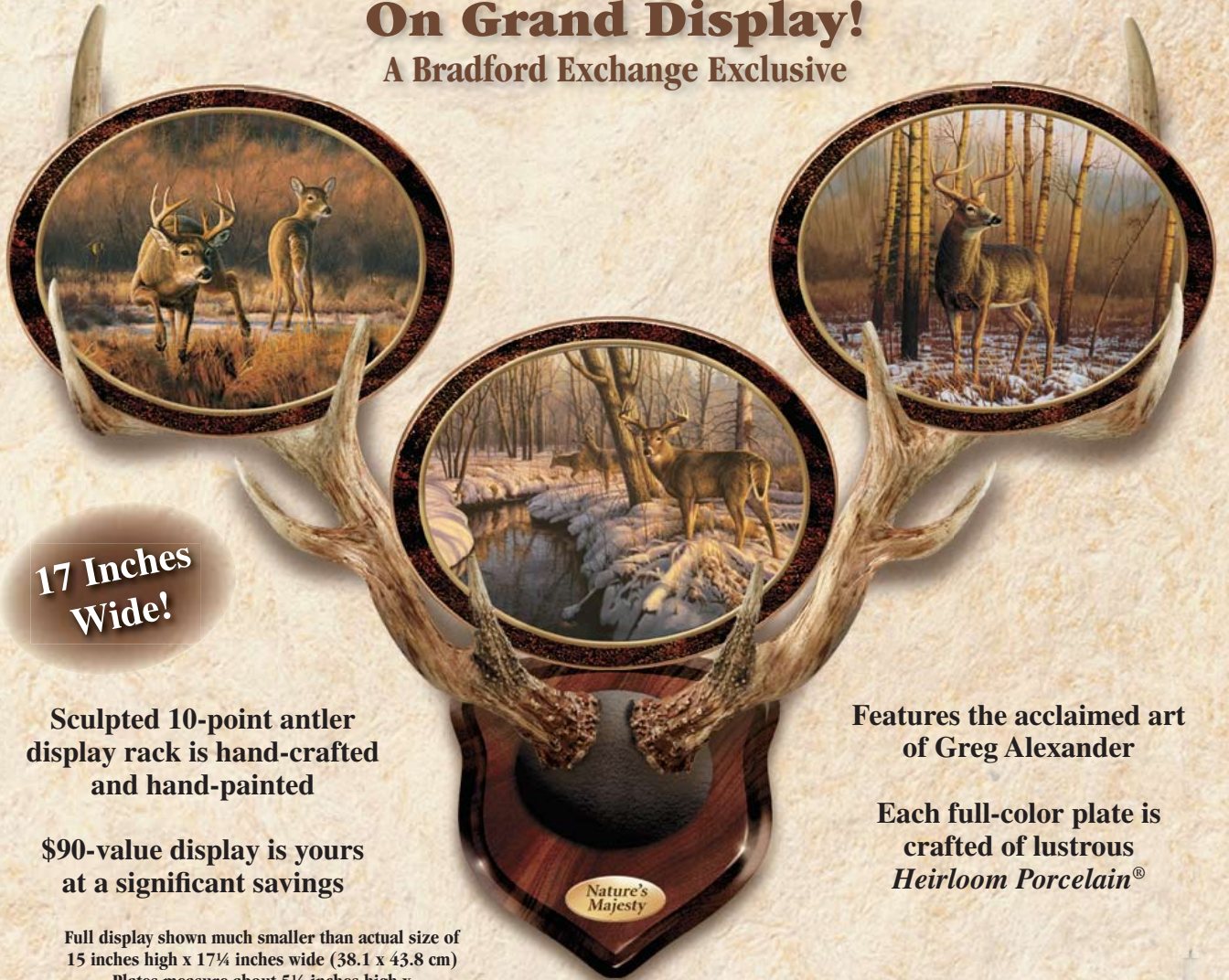
Steel roofing is another option becoming more popular on homes. Painted standing seam or tile steel roofing is very durable. Instead of trying to simulate some type of standard roofing material, their bright colors and unique appearance are signatures of upscale homes. The finish coating on aluminum and steel often uses a Kynar®-based paint with heat reflecting additives in a multistep process.

These companies offer metal roofs: American Metal Roofs, 888-221-1869, americanmetalroofs.com; Classic Metal Roofing, 800-543-8938, classicmetalroofingsystems.com; Conklin Metal, 800-282-7386, met-alshingle.com; Follansbee Steel, 800-624-6906, follansbeeroofing.com; and Met-Tile, 909-947-0311, met-tile.com.

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Summer and Sunfish Go Together

T rue—the state fish is a trout. But as good as the fishing is for that species, the availability of waters to fish for them is scant compared to the amount of lakes and streams holding members of the sunfish family: sunfish, bluegill, crappie, rock bass and those big cousins that most call “black bass” (really just larger members of the same family).

From late April into early July, spawning time arrives for the sunfish clan. You’ll see round, dish-shaped redds (or nests) beginning to appear around the shoreline shallows; it signals a warm season of sunfish angling in the state’s lakes and warmer streams.

By mid-July, with spawning over, the fishing shifts to deeper water by day and back to the shallows in the early morning and evenings.

Most tackle handles sunfish, but the most fun can come by using ultra-light spinning tackle or a fly rod. Either are top choices.

Most who enjoy fly-fishing for panfish are real familiar with the “rubber-leg spider” or the “small popper”—tempting surface lures used with fly rods, and they are effective once fish are on the redds. Dark, fuzzy, wet flies, cast out and allowed to sink and then twitched back in a slow retrieve underwater, can get sunfish to hear dinner bells during or after the spawn.

On a fly rod’s limber action, a good-sized bluegill or sunfish is as frisky and feisty as a brown trout – given a sunfish’s instinct to turn its body right-angle to the line. This action adds the water’s resistance to its struggles, so a 7- to 8-inch bluegill can feel like a 10- or 12-inch rainbow or brown trout at the other end.

Ultra-light rods, with reels loaded with 2- to 4-pound test line, offer great light-line fishing fun. Like the fly rod, they are a suitable match with these smaller, sprightly gamefish. Cast small spinners, spinner baits, 1/32 or 1/16-ounce jigs with small grub tail worms or live bait, and you’ll be heading



© iStockphoto.com/Cliff Buhs

for a fish fry.

Into July, after spawning is complete, sunfish go deeper as surface waters warm and they are hungry from their efforts, turning to larger food such as summer insects that fall to the water.

Not just insects, either. Small bait-fish, minnows and small fish of other species also respond to the warming summer waters. Even crayfish begin to get more active; all of these are natural foods that attract larger sunfish like rock bass and black bass. Lures that imitate these, or live bait such as minnows, become very good choices.

A favorite way of exploring for sunfish when they are off the beds is to fish with soft-hackle nymph flies on a fly rod and work them from shore or boat over the depths of 2 to 8 feet. I use dark, fur-bodied nymphs tied with soft hackle, which, when twitched, give the fly a lot of action. I let them sink after the cast, then retrieve slowly with rod-tip action to make the nymph’s

hackles flutter and the fly twitch enticingly. It usually gets a notice if the sunfish are in the shoreline shallows.

Some days sunfish just want meat, so grab a spinning rod and cast half a night crawler or red worms on a bait hook with a bobber. Just strike when the bobber goes under and keep the line tight as you retrieve it.

A feisty bulldog of a sunfish digging for freedom on the end of a fly line or bowing over an ultra-light rod tip is a fishing hoot.

I spend quite a few fishing days every summer seeking the black crappie, my favorite of the two crappie species that we have in our state.

The white crappie is common in Lake Erie and connected waters, and in larger, down-state impoundments. But in the cooler northern waters where I cast my lines, the black crappie is more commonly found. It is a handsome fish and where it has good habitat, food and clean waters it can grow to slab sizes.

Crappies love minnows, so live minnows fished under a slip bobber, or a small minnow-imitating lure are sure to get you into action.

Then there is the “goggle-eye” – the “every man’s fish.” Rock bass are delightfully predictable fish—give them a worm and they will take it, often with a bullish pull for their size.

Rock bass are well-distributed around the Great Lakes and these fish are aptly named because they love rocky areas, and so does that sunfish cousin, the smallmouth bass. It is quite common to find a rock bass on your line when fishing for smallmouth and a smallmouth there when fishing for rockies.

Don’t forget that all sunfish make for great eating. Carry a cooler and put your catch on ice as soon as you can to bring home the makings of a fish fry.

With summer at hand, it’s time to head for a sunfishing payoff in fun and food. Now *that’s* a pairing made in fishing heaven.

10 Hot Tips for “Green” Cooking

Keep your cool when making summer meals. You can save money and reduce your carbon footprint with these easy tips.

1 Cook outdoors when possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner. Try a solar cooker or oven. Solar cookers and ovens are by far the most energy-efficient cooking appliances. They require no fuel, reduce unwanted summer heat in your home by taking cooking outside, and can accommodate any food a slow cooker can. Some solar ovens can reach 500 degrees. To learn more, visit solarcooking.org.

2 Toaster ovens, convection ovens, and slow cookers get the job done with less energy than conventional stove tops or ovens, especially when preparing smaller meals.

3 Use as small a pan, as little water, and as little pre-heating time as possible.

4 Bake in glass or ceramic oven ware instead of metal. You can turn the temperature down

by 25 degrees, and foods will cook in the same amount of time.

5 Avoid thawing food in the microwave. Thawing food in the fridge is far more energy efficient, contributes to the fridge’s cooling, and is safer than thawing food on the counter top or in the sink.

6 Don’t open the door to peek in the oven. Use the oven window instead!

7 Clean burner pans (trays under burners that catch grease) regularly – they’ll reflect heat more effectively to the cookware. Dirty burner pans absorb heat and reduce efficiency.

8 Use flat-bottom cookware that rests evenly on the surface of electric coil burners, solid-disk elements, or radiant elements under smooth-top ceramic glass.

9 Use residual heat. Turn the stove or oven off two minutes before cooking is done to allow it to continue while reducing energy use. An



Photo – Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

electric burner element can be turned off two minutes before removal since cookware remains hot. Ovens can be turned off 2 minutes before cooking’s done.

10 Consider substituting one or more stove top burners with an induction cooker. The typical efficiency of an induction cooker is 84 percent, and gas stove tops are 40 percent efficient, says the Department of Energy. Induction cookers (require magnetic cookware such as cast iron or enameled steel) also produce as much heat as gas and are less costly to run than a conventional electric burner (visit theinductionsites.com for information).

– John Bruce

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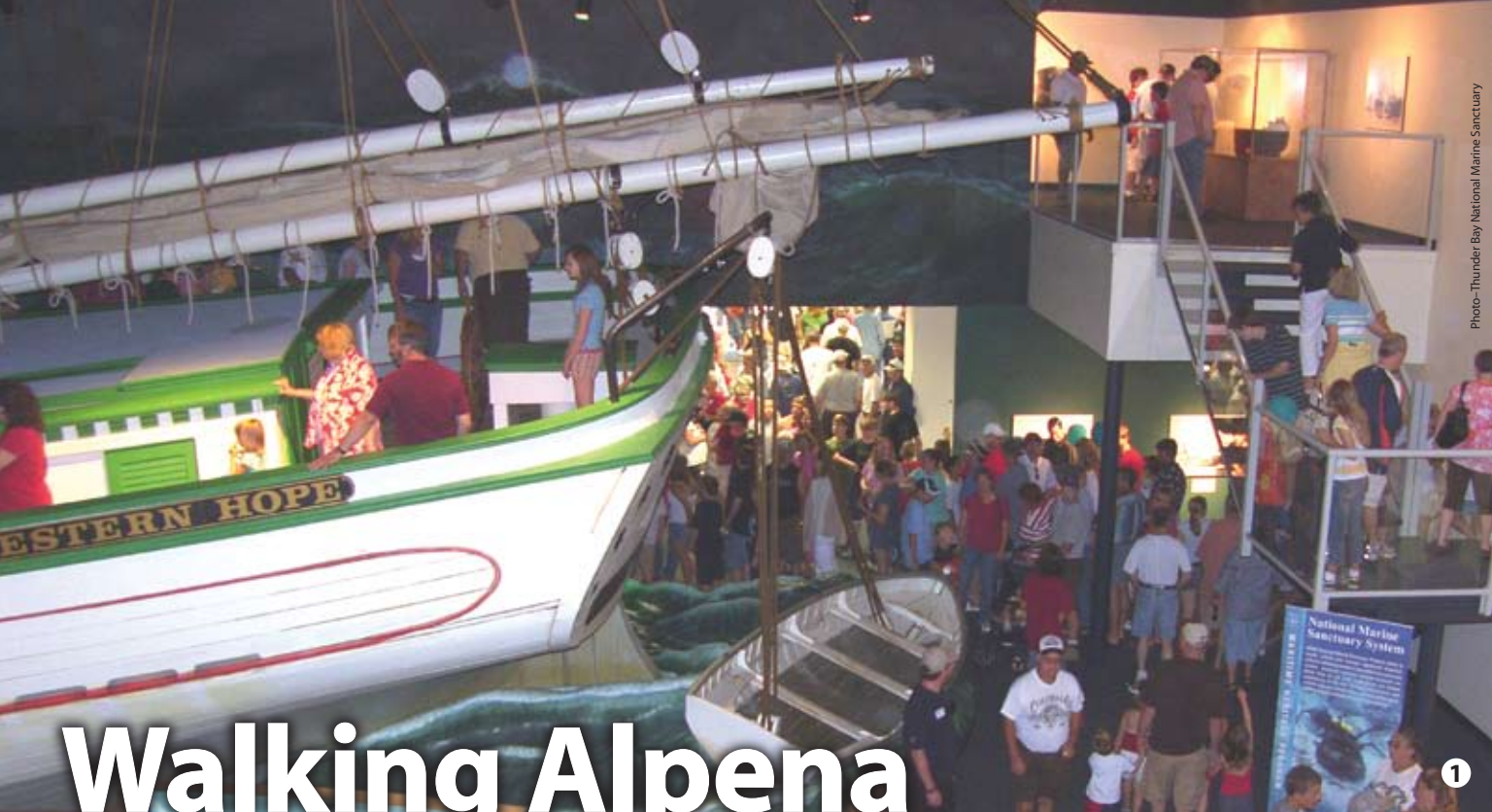


Photo: Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Walking Alpena

1

Resurgent Alpena proudly displays its unique physical and cultural charms. **Rhonda Dedyne**

You can add the word “walkable” to the water, woods and wildlife that are part of Alpena’s attraction.

The town’s assorted walkways and bike trails are an excellent way to see all that Mother Nature provides for more than 11,000 residents of this northeastern Michigan community and the thousands of guests who visit each year.

“The Alpena Bi-Path and other walkways that connect downtown and other parts of the city definitely help attract visitors here, and it’s also a plus for our residents,” says Jackie Krawczak, Chamber of Commerce director. The city’s walkability also helped it earn a recent designation as a “Community for a Lifetime” by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. “There’s really nowhere you can’t get to by bike or on foot,” she adds.

Water, Water Everywhere

Beautiful blue water edges the 16-mile Bi-Path as it passes through the city’s parks and beach areas on Lake Huron and the Thunder Bay River. Visitors have a great view of Lake Huron at Bay View Park, where part of the walking path runs along the breakwall. The park, with its performing arts stage, play and picnic areas and basketball and tennis courts, is a favorite spot for both residents and tourists. Fun in the water is the focus at other city parks such as Mich-E-Ke-Wis, Starlite Beach, Blair Street, and Thomson.

A walk on the Maritime Heritage Trail is

a “must do” for any visitor. Also part of the Bi-Path, the Trail winds along the Thunder Bay River, starting in the downtown area and ending at South Riverfront Park. It includes interpretive signs with information on the importance of Lake Huron and the river in the community’s maritime heritage. A pedestrian bridge located behind the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is a recent Trail addition that was funded in part by “Cool Cities” grants that Alpena received several years ago.

Other popular walkable areas are Duck Park and Island Park, which are part of the city’s 600-acre wildlife sanctuary located on the corner of U.S.-23 and Long Rapids Road. Island Park features nature trails and fishing platforms, while Duck Park has both fishing and a picnic area, and is a nationally-known viewing area for many varieties of birds.

“It’s pretty unusual to have a wildlife sanctuary right in the middle of a city, and have it so readily accessible for visitors,” Krawczak explains. “Bird-watchers come from all over to see all the different species.”

Over 200 Shipwrecks

Alpena and Thunder Bay are also well-known for something less peaceful than bird watching. Over 200 shipwrecks have been identified in the water that’s part of the 448 square-mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The first of its kind in the Great Lakes, the sanctuary was established to pro-

tect the collection of shipwrecks.

“Lots of divers are attracted to Alpena because of the shipwrecks,” Krawczak says, noting that some are even visible from the surface of the water. “I’ve taken my kayak out and seen some—that’s pretty amazing.”

If diving or kayaking isn’t your thing, at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center you can view shipwrecks without being on the water. The 20,000-square-foot building includes live video feeds from divers at shipwreck sites and many interactive exhibits and displays. You can even feel what it’s like to be on the roiling waters of Lake Huron when you board a replica of a ship that sank in Thunder Bay.

There’s no admission fee to the Center, which is open year-round, and has special events and activities during the Thunder Bay Maritime Festival that is part of Alpena’s annual Fourth of July celebration (<http://thunderbay.noaa.gov>).

Lighthouse Lovers

Whether they sank or travelled safely on Lake Huron’s waters, every ship’s captain focused on the rays of hope that came from light signals. Lighthouses in and around Alpena include the Alpena Light that can be viewed from the transient docks at Alpena City Harbor; Middle Island, where you can even stay overnight; Thunder Bay Island, one of the oldest light stations on Lake Huron; and two of the most famous stations on Michi-

gan's "Sunrise Side"—the "old" and "new" Presque Isle lighthouses. Located about 20 miles north of Alpena, the Old Presque Isle Lighthouse was built in 1840. The "new" station dates to 1870, and at 113 feet, it's the tallest lighthouse on Lake Huron.

If you love lighthouses, but your time in Alpena is limited, visit the Huron Lights Gift Shop and Museum, located at U.S.-23 and Long Lake Road. Owners Jerry and Barbara Roach have photographed and written about hundreds of lighthouses, with photos and books for sale beside a wide variety of Michigan-made products.

"We enjoy working with local artisans and displaying their items," Jerry says about the hand-crafted wares, including stained glass, metal art, woodworking, and log furniture. "People are always surprised when they stop here and see everything—it's not just about lighthouses, although we certainly enjoy our connection with the Middle Island Lighthouse Association and its museum here, too." Check out Huron Lights on Facebook or call the shop at 989-595-3600.

Alpena also hosts the Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival (Oct. 7-10; 586-566-1603 or lighthousefestival.org), but from Saginaw to Mackinaw, lighthouses will be open for tours and visits.

Downtown: Art and A Ghost

Beautiful sights and fun things to do aren't limited to the outdoors. Alpena offers many shopping and eating choices if you are in town for a day trip, weekend events, or a longer vacation outing.

One of the most well-known restaurants in the historic downtown district is the John A. Lau Saloon. The food is great and the brew tasty—just ask Agnes, a ghost of the saloon's original owner who makes occasional appearances.

"It's a fun place to go, and the legend about Agnes makes eating there even more



interesting," Krawczak says about the restaurant, where John A. Lau first served hungry lumberjacks back when the timber industry reigned in Alpena.

The current owners, John and Connie Van Schoick, have kept that history alive through renovations following their purchase of the business in 1987. See old and new photos—and learn about Agnes—at johnalausaloon.com

A short walk away is the Center Building, another of Alpena's many vintage structures that have been lovingly renovated for 21st-century lifestyles. Retail shops such as The Fresh Palate, featuring gourmet breakfast and lunch; and The Forget Me Not Shoppe, with scrapbooking offerings, fill the first floor.

Alpena's cultural heritage is on full display on the third floor, home to the Art in the Loft Gallery of the Northeast Michigan Center for Fine Arts. Nearly 200 artists keep the spacious gallery filled with works from all genres.

"In addition to all

the various art pieces that are available for sale, our artists conduct workshops and demonstrations throughout the year," says Karen Bennett, a board member for the nonprofit association. "We like to call this part of the downtown area our 'creative district'—close to our theatres, shops and cafes that are all nearby."

For details on Art in the Loft and the Passport to the Arts Program that includes special events at many venues around Alpena, visit artintheloft.org or artownmichigan.org.

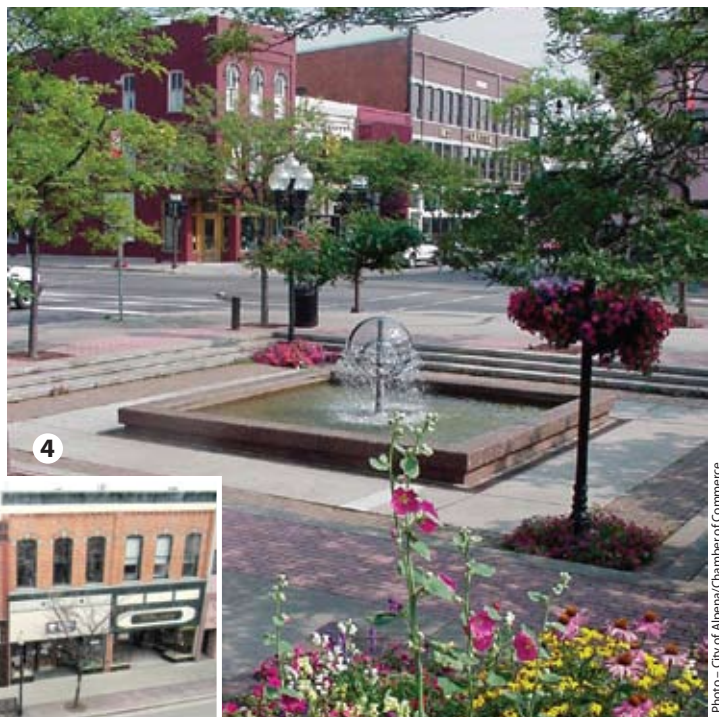
Other summer happenings include the Michigan Brown Trout Festival (July 17-25); Art on the Bay (July 17-18); Wings Over Alpena Air Show (Aug. 21). More details and lodging options are available through the Alpena Convention and Visitors Bureau at alpenacvb.com or 800-425-7362.

1) Shipwreck history comes alive at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center.

2) Views of Lake Huron to the east—and the pretty city of Alpena on the west—greet walkers on a section of the Alpena Bi-Path that runs along the breakwall near Bay View Park.

3) Lighthouse lovers will want to see the Middle Island Lighthouse Association's museum, and nearby Huron Lights Gift Shop.

4) Culligan Square, and shops in downtown Alpena. The town has many vintage buildings that have been renovated.



Photos - Rhonda Deelyne

Photo - Rhonda Deelyne

Photo - City of Alpena/Chamber of Commerce

When Brian Burns, CEO of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, recently suggested we might want to do a feature on a woman who lives in his hometown of Indian River and who is running a marathon to raise money for a day care center in Mexico, I balked. I mean, if we run a story on one run-for-a-cause, it could look like an endorsement and open the floodgates to hundreds of requests to publicize other runs for money. Of course, it turns out Dorothy Johnson is not just another runner. She has a compelling life story, and she's written it all down. I read it and it made me tired. Seriously, she needs to put it all in a book.

You've probably noticed there are a lot of people running in Michigan these days. And I don't mean politicians running for everything from sheriff to governor. (There's even a sheriff running for governor.) I'm talking about the fit-and-trim grandmothers, school track teams and just-out-of-rehab heart bypassers who are lacing up running shoes and hitting pavement and trail to run—or walk—in hundreds of 5K, 10K, half-marathon and full-marathon races this summer and fall.

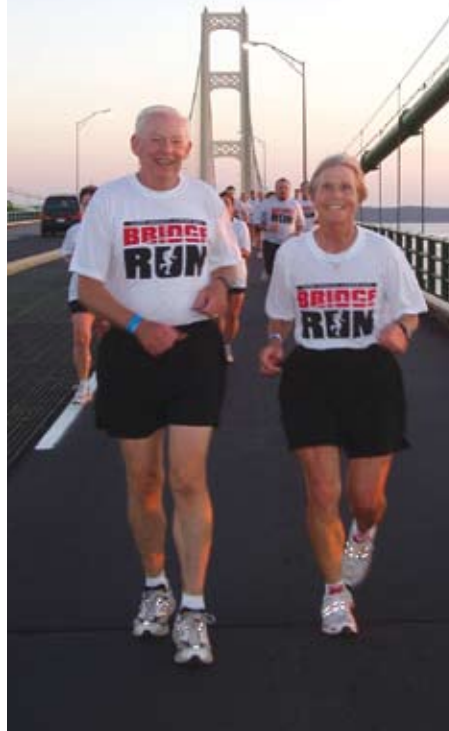
Let's be honest, most of us who participate in these races aren't in them to win. We're in them to get a little exercise, certainly, but mostly we run on weekends to join friends, get a t-shirt and a snack, and help out a cause we believe in.

Sometimes, it's personal. Cherryland Electric Co-op CEO Tony Anderson has pledged to run a marathon in every state to raise money for Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Northwest Michigan because he wants to give back for all the help he got as a kid after his father died. (marathon4kids.com)

Charity runs have become a big deal. The top 30 "thon" fundraising programs generated more than \$1.62 billion in gross revenue for charity in the U.S. last year, according to the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council, which keeps track of such things. The big winners are Relay for Life (American Cancer Society), \$405 million; Race for the Cure (Susan G. Komen for the Cure), \$120.3 million; March for Babies (March of Dimes), \$100 million; Start! Heart Walk (American Heart Association), \$100 million; and Team in Training (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society), \$98.9 million.

If you're interested in participating and contributing, you'll find 430 big and small run/walk events through the rest of this

Love to Run



John and Dorothy Johnson ran across the Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day.

year on runmichigan.com.

I've run and walked through a few 5K races, and I probably should push myself to actually 'run' longer and more often, but, like many of us, I haven't yet experienced the runner's high that devoted runners say feeds their desire to keep running.

No doubt Dorothy Johnson has experienced that high. She's had fast feet since 1986, when, at 41, she ran the 10-mile Crim race in Flint, where she continues to run every year, and where she and her first husband, Jim, were teachers. (Jim French died in 1997; they'd been married 31 years.)

She must be in constant motion. Even before she started running, she was a "serious" biker in the '70s and '80s, riding in extended events in Michigan and elsewhere. She recorded her longest bike day trip in 1987: 176 miles for the "One Day

Ride Across Michigan." In 1995, she biked 100 miles each day for three consecutive days with her sister, Barbara.

But her love now is running, for both the health and fun of it. "I do race to win, but I don't," she says. "It's really a social thing for me."

She retired in 2004, married John and moved to their vacation home on Burt Lake. She runs with her friends in the Indian River Striders club, which she started in 1999 so she would have someone to walk and run with in her future retirement community. She runs an average of 30 miles a week and walks 12.

She's completed 25 marathons since her first, the Flying Pig in Cincinnati, in 1999. She ran the Boston Marathon for the first time this year and counts the Great Wall of China Marathon as her most interesting. (She's traveled all over the world.) Over the last few years, she's run 1,400 miles annually and 'briskly' walked 600 miles more.

She will be running in this fall's Chicago Marathon—in her first charity run—to raise money for a daycare center in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where she and her husband have volunteered for four years through the Cross in the Woods Shrine, their parish in Indian River. (marathon.casadelosangeles.org)

The center provides a healthy, safe place for children of low-income, single, working parents. It operates solely on volunteers and donations, Dorothy says. "Not a penny is wasted, and it helps a lot of people."

Given Michigan's problems, maybe the politicians should team up with Dorothy. They could put together a charity run for the state. We could make a dent in the deficit and all lose a few pounds to boot. I think she could pull it off. She may not win all her races, but she finishes what she starts. She was a teacher, after all.

"If they can do it, so can I," she said in the beginning, always the motivator.

"If I can do it, so can they," she says now.



Mike Buda is the founding editor of Country Lines and continues to work on the magazine, as well as other activities of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. He's going to run more.

Email Mike at mbuda@countrylines.com.



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