

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Michigan's Bookmaker

Chad Pastotnik Creates Literary
Beauty The Handcrafted Way

Plus!

October is National
Cooperative Month

Local Citizens Receive
'Good Member' Award

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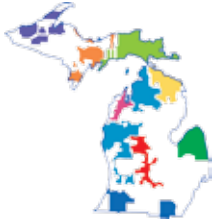
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Casey Clark

Editors
Christine Dorr
Gail Knudtson

Publisher
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CONTACT US:
Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
517-913-3531
cdorr@meca.coop

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Please notify your electric cooperative.
See page 4 for contact information.

IN THIS ISSUE

ON THE COVER*

Chad Pastotnik, proprietor of Deep Wood Press in Mancelona, MI, has garnered prestigious international acclaim for his handcrafted publications. Pastotnik prints for New York's Museum of Modern Art, numerous state archives and university special collections from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Auckland, New Zealand.

*Some co-op editions have a different cover.

IN YOUR WORDS

This is our new "question of the month" section of *Michigan Country Lines*. Let us know your answer and it may appear in the next month's issue or on your electric co-op's social media site. Please answer the question at countrylines.com. Submissions are due November 12.

Now the question:

If you could win a 'life-time supply' of anything what would you want it to be?

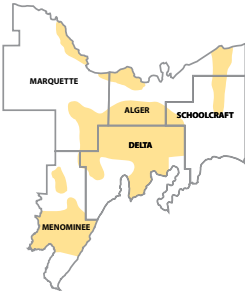
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Board Of Directors

District 1—Big Bay

Mike Nason
906-360-1477 • mnason9993@charter.net

District 2—Harvey/Deerton

Karen Alholm
906-249-1095 • karenalholm@gmail.com

District 3—Grand Marais

Nancy Gardner-Platt
906-494-2772 • rlnkgard@jamadots.com

District 4—Cedar River/Palestine

Dave Prestin
906-424-0055 • cedarriverplaza@gmail.com

District 5—Gourley/LaBranche/Cornell

David Anthony
(906) 466-2932 • anthony@hannahville.org

District 6—Nathan/White Rapids

Paul Sederquist
906-753-4484 • sedergrove@gmail.com

District 7—Stonington/Rapid River

Sue Alexander
906-399-3666 • smalexander55@yahoo.com

District 8—Nahma/Isabella

Ray Young
(906) 644-2488 • kyoung@uplogon.com

District 9—Hiawatha/Maple Ridge

Ron Oberg
906-573-2551
director9-algerdelta@jamadots.com

CEO

Tom Harrell
tharrell@algerdelta.com

Headquarters:

426 N. 9th St, Gladstone, MI 49837
906-428-4141 • 800-562-0950
Fax: 906-428-3840 • admin@algerdelta.com
www.algerdelta.com

Office Hours

M–F, 7:30–4:00 (ET)

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algerdelta.com

Alger Delta Celebrates National Cooperative Month



Tom Harrell
General Manager

October is National Cooperative Month, and Alger Delta—along with other co-ops across the U.S.—is celebrating the benefits and values that cooperatives bring to their members and communities.

Alger Delta is an electric cooperative, but in reality, there are many other kinds of co-ops operating in many industries and sectors of the economy. One thing we all have in common, though, is that we follow the seven cooperative principles

which set us apart from other businesses. Those principles are:

- 1) voluntary and open membership; 2) democratic member control;
- 3) members' economic participation; 4) autonomy and independence; 5) education, training and information; 6) cooperation among cooperatives; and 7) concern for community.

A lot of people like having options and alternatives in their decision making and in how they participate in the economy. The co-op business model offers one such option. Cooperatives are unique and rooted in local communities. Co-ops help build a more participatory, sustainable, and resilient economy—something that is very much needed in the Upper Peninsula. With the support of our members, Alger Delta is doing its part and we're proud to be part of America's cooperative network, which includes more than 47,000 cooperative businesses.

Alger Delta is one of 10 electric generation and distribution cooperatives in Michigan that is celebrating National Cooperative Month. Together, we provide power to about 300,000 members in the Great Lakes state. Nationally, there are more than 900 electric cooperatives serving about 42 million people in 47 states. Learn more at algerdelta.com. ■

Other than Alger Delta, have you ever done business with a cooperative? Many people buy from cooperatives and don't even realize it. If you've ever had business dealings with these organizations or purchased their goods or services, you've patronized some of America's largest cooperatives!

Name	Product(s) or Services
CHS, Inc	Sugar, other agricultural products
Land O' Lakes	Milk, butter, dairy, agricultural products
Ace Hardware	Hardware and other consumer products
Navy Federal Credit Union	Financial Services
Thrivent Financial	Insurance and financial services
Mutual of Omaha	Insurance
True Value	Hardware and consumer products
Ocean Spray	Fruit juice and agricultural products
Sunkist Growers	Citrus products
Blue Diamond Growers	Almonds and other nut products

Alger Delta Honors Local Citizens with 'Good Member' Award

At Alger Delta Cooperative's annual meeting in June, the co-op recognized three members who demonstrated the cooperative principle, "Concern for Community." These members showed what it takes to be a good neighbor, devotion to a good cause, and hard work.



Jack Vest is a "Good Member" due to his caring attitude towards others. He takes the time to check on camps and the homes of those neighbors that are not year-round residents. He also plows driveways in the winter for the elderly, and will help anyone that gets stuck in the snow or mud. All of this is done

with a smile, and a good sense of humor.

Jack lived in Chicago most of his life, but has had a camp in the Upper Peninsula since the '60s. He fell in love with the area, its people, and built his retirement home here. Jack has the true heart of a Yooper.



Cathy Egerer started the first website to help promote the town of Grand Marais, which later became the Chamber of Commerce website. She still manages the website today.

In 2003, Cathy was part of the fundraising team to restore the Pickle Barrel House. She wrote over 15 grant applications,

which resulted in \$75,000 in grant donations. She has also been the Historical Society treasurer for the past 10 years, and she helps manage and care for the Memorial Rose Garden and Historic Iris Garden. Cathy is a proud member of the Grand Marais Garden Club and helps organize the bi-annual Grand Marais Garden Tour. Cathy is a volunteer of the Burt Township Ambulance Corps, and has been an EMT since 2009, and she also manages the Grand Marais Checkpoint of the UP200 Sled Dog Championship and serves on the board of the U.P. Sled Dog Association, which works to promote dog sledding in the U.P.



Mary Palmer started out her 32 years of community commitment as an Ambulance Corps member applying for advanced first aid, and then becoming an emergency medical technician (EMT). The ambulance service assists the people of Menominee County and helps them in their time of need.

Mary attended school to become an instructor for the American Heart Association, and later progressed to the position of coordinator with 16 instructors under her direction. Mary submitted a grant application for the Mid-County Rescue Squad and was awarded a \$300,000 grant through Michigan Rural EMS Network. She is also the Menominee County DNR hunter safety coordinator, which serves to certify students and gives them the privilege to hunt.

Alger Delta is proud and honored to recognize these members. These "Good Members" excel at demonstrating a commitment to the communities in which they live and serve. Alger Delta will continue the "Good Member" Award next year, and winners will be announced at the Annual Meeting in June 2016. Look for information and nominating a "Good Member" in the 2016 issues of *Country Lines* magazine. Keep up-to-date by visiting our website at algerdelta.com and liking us on Facebook. ■



Balancing Temps in a Two-Story Home

By James Dulley

Even with the newest heat pump systems there can still be problems keeping all the rooms in your home comfortable. Someone is always too hot or too cold, particularly in a two-story home. Unless you install an expensive zone-control system with multiple thermostats, your heat pump can only respond to the temperature of the room where the wall thermostat is located.

Numerous factors determine how much heating or cooling is used. These can include the number and orientation of the windows, what floor the room is located on, activity level and the length of the duct leading to it.

There may also be differences in the energy efficiency of various rooms, which cause the temperature difference. Leaky windows are a common problem. When using an air-conditioning system, place an air deflector over the register to help distribute cool air.

Check your home's attic insulation, especially if it is the blown-in type. The insulation can shift, and some rooms can have 2 feet of insulation while others only have 2 inches. This will affect room temperature.

Standard sheet metal ductwork often has many leaky spots, so some of the heated or cooled air leaving the heat pump never makes it to the rooms in your home. The joints between the duct segments are the most common areas that leak. Use a high-quality duct tape to wrap all of the joints, and this may take care of most of the problem.

Each room should have a return air register, particularly bedrooms where the doors may be closed at night.



Check the ducts near the heat pump. If you see short handles on each one, they are for controlling dampers inside the ducts. Partially close the dampers in the ducts leading to the rooms which are getting too much heating or cooling to force more to the problem rooms.

Don't try closing the damper in the room's floor or wall registers. They typically are leaky, so the air flow will not be reduced by much. Also, the ducts inside the walls are probably leaky and you may have no access to seal them, so conditioned air is lost inside the exterior walls.

If these methods do not provide adequate temperature balancing, consider installing duct booster fans. These small fans mount in the ducts to the problem rooms and force more air to them.

The fans sense when the main blower turns on, and automatically run at the same time. Others have built-in thermostats to determine when they run. The fan can be wired into your blower switch to turn on with the heat pump.

A simple do-it-yourself option is to install a small register booster fan. This fan mounts over the register cover and plugs into a standard wall outlet. The fan uses about 30 watts of electricity, and some are adjustable to turn on only when more cooling or heating is needed in that particular room.

Setting the thermostat to "continuous fan" may also help, but note that it will increase your electric bill. The fan setting is most helpful if your new heat pump has a variable-speed blower that can continuously run on a low speed. These motors are also more efficient than a standard blower motor. ■



Use Your Space Heater Safely

Many people use space heaters for winter warmth, but they can be dangerous if used improperly.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 25,000 home fires every year are associated with space heaters, causing over 300 deaths. An additional 6,000 people annually go to the hospital for related burns.

These fires are caused by contact with or nearness to the heating elements, flammable fuels used in the heaters, defective wiring, and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper venting or incomplete fuel combustion. ■

Here are tips for using an electric space heater safely:

- Keep it at least 3 feet from flammables, such as curtains, clothing, furniture or bedspreads.
- Select a model with an automatic shut-off, in case it tips.
- Buy one that is certified by an independent testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Buy the right size to handle the area to be heated.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep kids and pets at a safe distance.
- Never leave it unattended, or sleep with it on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near it.
- Do not use it in a bathroom—a high-moisture area can cause damage.
- Keep it away from water to prevent electrocution.
- Check the cord for fraying and cracks, and do not use an extension cord to run it.
- Be sure the plug fits snugly in the outlet. (The cord and plug may feel warm when operating, but it shouldn't feel hot. If it does, unplug it and have a repair person check for problems.)
- Do not try to repair a broken heater yourself—go to a qualified appliance service center.

Visit [cpsc.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov) for more safety tips on space heaters and ones that use wood or kerosene.



Pretzel Rods

Fred Black, Sandusky

- 1 lb. dark chocolate
- 50 large pretzel rods
- different colored sugars

Pour colored sugar on wax or parchment paper. Melt chocolate and pour into a tall glass. Hold onto end of pretzel and dip $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pretzel into the melted chocolate. Roll the pretzels in the sugar and put on plate to cool.

Photos—831 Creative

CANDY

Irresistible recipes perfect for entertaining crowds or giving as gifts.

Luau Bark (pictured)

Deborah Black, Sandusky

- 1 lb. white chocolate
- ¾ c. chopped pecans
- ¾ c. toasted coconut
- ½ c. miniature marshmallows
- ½ c. chopped dried cherries
- ½ c. chopped dried pineapple

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Add all ingredients and stir in. Spread on parchment paper in 11x14-inch rectangle pan. Cut into squares when set. When cool, break apart.



Saltine Cracker Candy with Toasted Pecans

Mary Ann Schultz, Scottville

- 35 saltine crackers
- 1 c. butter, cubed
- 1 c. packed brown sugar
- 2 c. (12-oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 c. toasted pecans (see below)*

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 15x10x1-inch baking pan with foil; grease foil. Arrange saltines in a single layer on foil. In a large heavy saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 3–4 minutes, or until sugar has dissolved. Spread mixture evenly over saltine crackers. Bake 8–10 minutes, or until bubbly. Immediately sprinkle with chocolate chips. Allow chips to soften for a few minutes, then spread over top. Sprinkle with pecans. Cool slightly. Refrigerate, uncovered 1 hour or until set. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator.

*To toast nuts: Spread pecans in a 15x10x1-inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for 5–10 minutes, or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally.

Easy Pralines

Faye Adkins, Tecumseh

- 1 pkg. butterscotch pudding powder (not instant)
- 1 c. granulated sugar
- ½ c. brown sugar
- ½ c. evaporated milk
- 1 T. butter
- 1½ c. broken pecans

To a heavy 2 quart saucepan over low heat, add pudding mix, granulated sugar, brown sugar, evaporated milk and butter. Stir and cook until sugar dissolves. Add pecans. Cook and stir to a full boil. Boil slowly 3–5 minutes, stirring often, until candy reaches soft ball stage. To test readiness, drop a small piece of the mixture in a bowl of cold water. If it forms into a soft, flexible ball, it is ready. Take off heat. Beat until candy thickens but still looks shiny. Drop quickly with a tablespoon onto waxed paper to form 2-inch patties. Allow 1 spoonful for each. Let stand until firm. Makes 24.

Rocky Road Candy

Mákara Garcia, Baldwin

- 1 pkg. (6-oz.) semi-sweet chocolate pieces
- 1 square (1-oz.) unsweetened chocolate
- 1 T. butter
- 2¼ c. powdered sugar
- ½ t. salt
- 1 t. vanilla
- 2 c. salted peanuts
- 2 c. miniature marshmallows

Melt chocolate pieces, unsweetened chocolate and butter in a large saucepan over low heat, stirring until smooth. Remove from heat. Mix in sugar, salt and vanilla. Blend in chocolate mixture and stir in peanuts and marshmallows. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper. Chill for 2 hours or until firm. Store in refrigerator and remove just before serving. Makes about 4 dozen candies.

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Chili" recipes by **Nov. 1** and "Gluten Free" recipes by **Dec. 1**.

Enter your recipe online at countrylines.com or send to (handprinted or typed on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2015 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2016 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Save Energy and Protect Against Vampires!

Turn off the lights in your computer or TV room, and you'll probably see "eyes" peering through the darkness. All of those glowing LEDs, clocks and power switches are sneaky electronic vampires, feeding on your home's energy as your utility bills rise. While you can't completely slay those thirsty vampires you can manage them with a smart power strip.

What is a smart power strip?

Smart power strips are similar to conventional power strips. However, smart strips sense when a main or master electronic device (TV, computer) is turned off, and will automatically shut down other devices associated with it (DVD player, gaming devices, cable/satellite boxes, printer.) By completely shutting down those devices, the phantom load (vampire) is gone and you will not use extra energy.



About your smart power strip.

- **Energy savings:** Your smart power strip can reduce your home's energy use by 5 to 10 percent. It only uses 1 watt of electricity when turned on, and 0 watts when the green control outlets are off.
- **Money savings:** \$10 rebate available when you buy ENERGY STAR® smart power strips. Visit michigan-energy.org for information on how to receive your mail-in rebate.
- **Handy:** A lighted power switch and built-in filters prevent you from accidentally turning things off.

Please visit michigan-energy.org for more information, or call 877.296.4319 with any questions. ■

Slay
**ENERGY
VAMPIRES!**



Beware of energy vampires lurking in your home!

Did you know many electrical gadgets and appliances use energy even when turned off? Stop energy vampires with a smart power strip.

ENERGY TIP: A smart power strip can reduce your home's energy use by 5-10%. It uses 1 watt of electricity when turned on and 0 watts when the green control outlets are off.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org
PHONE: 877.296.4319

Talented Members Share 'Sunrise and Sunset' Photos



1. A beautiful sunset, taken just north of Trenary.
By Linda McLain, Trenary
2. Sunrise over Little Bay De Noc. By Tom Harrell, Gladstone
3. Sunset on Lake Michigan from the Garden Bay Motel, an establishment that has been part of this community for over 65 years. By Eva Marie Maher, Cooks
4. Another day in paradise, sunrise at the cabin on the Bay of Green Bay, Lake Michigan. By Beth Freydank, Menominee

There's A Story In Every Photo

Alger Delta invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Upcoming topics and deadlines are: "**Best of Selfies,**" due **Nov. 15** for the January issue; and "**Cute Pets,**" due **Dec. 15** for the February issue. Details and instructions for photo submission—including rules, topic list, publication date, and submission deadlines—can be found at <http://bit.ly/1JX5Afh>.

We look forward to seeing your best photos!

Board Votes to Continue Low Income Energy Assistance

On June 13, 2015, the Alger Delta Cooperative Board of Directors voted 8–1 to continue the co-op’s participation in Michigan’s Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF) program. The LIEAF program was created by the Michigan Legislature with the passage of Public Act 95 and signed into law by Gov. Snyder in July 2013. The legislation creates a permanent funding mechanism to assist Michigan’s low income families with paying their winter heating bills.

The LIEAF program tax is limited to no more than \$1 per electric meter, per month, and the total amount in the fund balance cannot exceed \$50 million. Unlike most taxes, the LIEAF program is a voluntary tax. “Electric utilities can opt-in or opt-out,” says Tom Harrell, Alger Delta’s CEO. “There are different rules that must be followed depending on which option a utility chooses.” Alger Delta has opted-in since the beginning of the program.

The co-op collects the tax, which goes to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and is then transferred to the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS distributes the funds in the form of grants to various groups and agencies that apply for and use the money to help low income consumers pay their winter heating bills. Groups that have received grants and distribute funds in the Upper Peninsula include the Department of Human Services, Michigan Community Action Agency Association, St. Vincent De Paul, Superior Watershed Partnership, and The Salvation Army. “The MPSC and DHS are directed to make sure the money goes back to the same areas from which it came and it looks like they’re doing a good job in that regard, at least for the Alger Delta consumers,” Harrell says. In the last heating season, over 165 Alger Delta members received more than \$50,000 in assistance.

The law requires participating utilities to collect the tax on each electric meter; notwithstanding, the law provides that consumers with more than one meter on the same residential site shall only pay tax on one meter. For example, if an Alger Delta member has a meter on their house and a meter on their garage and both buildings are on the same residential site, the tax only applies to one of the two meters. The legislation also says the tax cannot exceed \$1 per meter, per month, and the total fund cannot exceed \$50 million annually. The MPSC reviews and adjusts the tax annually.

The co-op figures it would cost between \$1.52 and \$2.65 per member/per month to opt-out of the LIEAF program. This is based on the carrying costs of unpaid energy during the winter heating season, and operational costs that otherwise would not be incurred.

Alger Delta maintains that paying the LIEAF tax is the best way to keep costs down, and ensure members get the help they need. Through the heating season—which is Nov. 1 through April 15—the co-op may include a disconnect notice to members who get behind on their bills. “With a disconnect notice in hand, members who go to the assistance agencies already have the documentation they need to speed up any assistance they might qualify for,” explains Amanda Seger, Alger Delta’s CFO and office manager. “The alternative is to opt-out of the LIEAF program and hold all the notices and disconnects until the end of the heating season. That’s a problem because, by then, many of the agencies have used up all their funds and members can’t get the help they need. That just puts the members further behind and makes the problem bigger and bigger,” Seger added.

Opting-in to the program avoids other problems, too. For example, the end of the heating season coincides with other important “seasons,” such as road restrictions and the beginning of construction season. “We already work hard to balance and schedule our limited personnel and equipment between regular maintenance, work orders, and construction projects,” says Troy Tiernan, Alger Delta’s operations’ manager. Seger adds “A pile of overdue bills, payment arrangements, disconnects, and reconnects on top of an already busy schedule can cause big delays in all the regular office work, too, leading to unhappy members.” Seger estimates it would take up to six weeks for office staff to address the backlog that would result from holding all that activity until the end of the heating season.

Alger Delta’s participation in the LIEAF program is in addition to the Winter Protection Program. There are separate eligibility requirements and operating rules for the two programs and Alger Delta members may qualify for either or both programs, depending on their specific circumstances. Members can call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141 and talk to a member service representative about either program, including information on how to apply. ■

Net Metering Stays Local

In July 2015, Senate Bill (SB) 438 hit the floor of the Michigan Legislature. This bill is the Clean and Efficient Energy Act and reforms its predecessor, the Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy Act. Among many other things, SB 438 seeks to replace net metering programs with distributed generation programs that allow individual electric customers to generate up to 110 percent of their average annual electricity consumption and make other changes to the way net metering programs are administered.

"The net metering provisions of SB 438 would not affect Alger Delta since we are a member-regulated co-op" says Tom Harrell, Alger Delta's CEO. "Nothing in SB 438 changes our status as member-regulated. Member-regulated cooperatives can be as aggressive or passive about net metering as their boards' determine," Harrell added.

What happens when a member installs a solar panel or wind turbine on their property? What do they get in support of renewable generation? Those are, perhaps, the two most common questions about interconnecting renewable energy resources.

Alger Delta says they have 28 net-metered members on their system. Net metering allows consumers who generate their own electricity from renewable resources, such as solar or wind power, to send the electricity they don't use back into the power grid, or distribution system.

In practical terms, net metering is a billing mechanism. The owner of a renewable generation resource receives an economic credit for the electricity they add to the grid. For example, suppose a member has a solar (also called a photo-voltaic, or PV) system and it generates more electricity than the member consumes. If the home is net-metered, the electric meter will track how much energy the home consumes and how much energy the PV system produces. If the member produces more than they consume, they will get a credit against their next month's electric bill. If they consume more than they produce, they will pay the difference to the utility company. In other words, the member is only billed for their "net" energy use. ■

Alger Delta Exceeds 200 Kilowatts of Interconnected Renewables

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association connected 21.5 kilowatts (kW) of solar generation in August, making the total member-owned renewable generation connected to its system just over 200 kilowatts. "We're proud to partner with our members in this way, and bring more renewable generation onto the system," says Tom Harrell, Alger Delta's CEO.

Alger Delta has 28 members with renewable generation resources connected to the distribution system. The total interconnected renewable generation adds up to 200.95 kilowatts. Using an industry "rule of thumb," that's enough to supply about 20 average homes. The renewable resources range in size from 1.9 to 90 kilowatts. Of the installations, six are wind generators, one is a "water wheel," and the remaining 21 are solar (also called photo-voltaic (PV) panels).

"We've seen quite an increase in solar in the last few years," Harrell says. "Since 2010, we've interconnected 20 solar installations but only two

windmills," he added. Harrell attributes this to the decreasing cost of solar panels, easier maintenance, and more predictable energy output from solar compared to wind. Solar is predictable because the number of daylight hours for every day of the year is a known quantity. That leaves shade from nearby trees, overcast days and snow cover as the biggest variables. However, PV owners can easily address most of these issues. Even on overcast days, solar panels still produce energy, but at a lower output than on clear days.

All of Alger Delta's interconnected members are net metered. This means the co-op members get a credit on their bills for the energy they produce in excess of what they consume. The net excess energy flows back on to the Alger Delta system and helps reduce the amount of energy that comes from base-load generating plants.

Members who are interested in renewable energy and net metering can visit Alger Delta's website at algerdelta.com or call 906-428-4141. ■



Chad Pastotnik Creates
Literary Beauty
The Handcrafted Way



Michigan's Bookmaker

By John Schneider

Had Pastotnik's alchemy is half art, half toil. The fine-bookmaker must baby ancient machines, negotiate literary translations, conduct workshops, and fulfill international speaking engagements.

In a recent blog, Pastotnik, who runs Deep Wood Press out of his home in the woods near Mancelona, wrote: "Sometimes running a business and being an artist have nothing to do with actually making art."

Nonetheless, the alchemy works. Four-hundred-year-old printing and binding techniques weave their magic. Pastotnik's lead becomes pure gold.

"I make books the old-fashioned way," Pastotnik says. But not quite. His limited edition fine-press creations are world-renowned and sell for up to \$3,000 each. That was the price tag on a one-of-a-kind deluxe edition of Pastotnik's treatment of Joseph Conrad's famous novel, *"Heart of Darkness."* Typically, Pastotnik's books cost between \$100 and \$1,000.

Pastotnik's type is hand-set, or cast on a linotype machine, from molten lead. His pages are printed on obsolete cylinder presses. He uses wood engravings and linoleum cuts. His handmade cotton paper is tucked into luxurious bindings of fine leather and exotic cloth. The finished product: "A piece of art that functions as a book." By Pastotnik's estimate, only 50 to 70 other people in the U.S. do what he does.

Pastotnik is grateful that his ancient equipment (one of his presses was built in 1911) is surprisingly reliable: "Fortunately, it's built much better than most things are nowadays."

Born in Cadillac, Pastotnik made his escape from northern Michigan as a young man.

"I couldn't wait to leave," he says. "Then, I couldn't wait to get back."

On a fly-fishing trip to Antrim County around 1990, Pastotnik came upon a small fishing cabin on the Cedar River that was for sale. The bucolic setting struck a chord. He moved in. In 1992, the cabin became the home of Deep Wood Press. Pastotnik studied printmaking at Grand Valley State University. His first venture into hand-made books came in Chicago. Pastotnik says, "I get to share my wonderful life with my wife, Kathryn, and our two children. Being able to raise a family in such an amazing environment is something we're thankful for every day."

Pastotnik confesses that he loves fly-fishing as much as making books. Some recent titles (*"The Trout in Winter,"* by Jerry Dennis, for example) reflect a blending of the two passions. "It's a good excuse for business meetings on the stream," he says.

Among Pastotnik's other recent books: *"The Intruder,"* by Robert Traver (the pen name of John Voelker, the Upper Peninsula author of *"Anatomy of a Murder"*) and *"There Be Monsters,"* written by Pastotnik, who calls it "a little fable about how to walk in the woods."

In 2010, Pastotnik won the prestigious Carl Hertzog Award for *"Heart of Darkness,"* and he's featured in the PBS television series, *"A Craftsman's Legacy,"* as *"The Bookmaker,"* Episode 11. It aired last fall, but you can find it at craftsmanslegacy.com/Home.

Pastotnik hopes his works of art aren't handled with white gloves and parked in display cases, however, "I would certainly hope," he says, "my books get read."

Visit deepwoodpress.com to browse all of Pastotnik's titles. ■

WHEN A FARM CREATES A FAMILY

By Yvonne Whitman



Members of the Weaver family and Sandy Strahl (standing, far right) taking a wagon ride out into one of their farm fields.

Arriving in 1932 at the farm his dad had just purchased, two-year-old, Don Strahl, had no way of knowing that for the next 83 years (and counting) this would be the place he would call home. And a very fine home it turned out to be, according to the octogenarian. "I enjoy my life very much," says Strahl. And, his life remains a true testament to the saying "Do what you love, love what you do."

Strahl has been in the business of conducting horse-drawn sleigh and wagon rides for over 45 years. Both at his dad's original farm in the Upper Peninsula, and in Wisconsin's Door County. His wife, Sandy, joined the fun following their marriage in 2000. Their story is a sweet example of "meet cute". In the late '90s, Sandy was in Door County while Don was also there giving stagecoach rides. When Sandy and her girlfriends boarded Don's coach, he asked, "Well, who is going to sit up top with me?" Sandy jumped right into the seat next

to him where, she recalls, "We talked and talked!" A veteran of 28 years of inner-city teaching, the Indiana native had long wished to return to country life. "I never felt complete in the city. I always felt like a square peg in a round hole. In my heart, I'm country," she says.

Upon the newlyweds' arrival at the U.P. farm, Don told Sandy that she needed to experience an actual wagon train. So, for the next four years they made a regular wagon train trip to the Bay Cliff Health Camp for Children in Big Bay, MI—a respectable 110-mile round trip. "We would set off from Escanaba, traveling 20 miles per day, collecting donations for Bay Cliff all along the way," explains Sandy. Bay Cliff Executive Director Tim Bennett said, "What the Strahl's did during those years raised awareness for the camp. They did it out of the goodness of their hearts. And along the way they raised over \$10,000 for the camp. We were really blessed by them."



The sign in the front yard of the farm.



Don and Sandy Strahl on the porch of their farm.



Katie Grace holding a newborn chick.

Blessings are sometimes returned in kind. And so it was in 2014, when Don began experiencing health issues and Sandy, getting close to 70, began to wonder how they would be able to continue with the horses, rides and the farm. Along came Amos and Nila Weaver. The young farming family of eight had, according to Amos, "Prayed for an older couple who might need our help." When Amos shared this story, Sandy laughed, telling him, "And YOU didn't know that WE were praying for a young couple to find us!"

A plan was soon devised and the Weaver family moved into a cabin on the farm, bringing along milking goats, sheep and chickens, who joined the resident 'gentle giants' (horses) already on the farm. "The Weavers have breathed new life into the farm. It was dying and now it is alive again," Sandy says. Lush fields of ripening produce now surround the farm. This year's abundance of pumpkins, popcorn, sunflowers, green beans, rutabagas, onions and broccoli will enable them all to be self-sufficient.

"IF YOU THINK THIS SOUNDS LIKE A LITTLE BIT OF **HEAVEN ON EARTH**, YOU'D BE EXACTLY RIGHT."

"We work to produce enough food for all of us," according to Amos, an experienced herdsman, farrier and farmer.

"This is like the "good old days" when extended families lived near each other and worked together. We're not related by blood but we have this kinship with each other and I think it really is how people are meant to live. Now the 10 of us are living the good life, working and supporting each other. If you think this sounds like a little bit of heaven on earth, you'd be exactly right," says Sandy. ■

For information about Don Strahl's wagon and sleigh rides, or farrier work, please call 906.466.5368.

Wish Upon a Star at Headlands International Dark Sky Park

By Emily Haines



Most of us have had the magical moment as a child of wishing on the first star in the night sky. But what if those moments weren't reserved for children in their backyards?

Those inspiring moments happen 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at the Headlands International Dark Sky Park in Mackinaw City, MI.

The only designated dark sky park in Michigan and one of the first 10 in the United States, Headlands is over 550 acres of wooded area and more than 2 miles of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline on the Mackinaw Straits. This protected area ensures not only the quality and safety of the land, water and air in the area, but of a resource that is often overlooked just above us—the night sky.

A “dark park” designation ensures light levels over the area never interrupt the natural darkness of the sky or impede the view of the stars and their celestial companions.

Headlands’ program director, as well as star lore historian and storyteller, Mary Stewart Adams encourages visitors to get in touch with their inner compass and explorer.

“Finding your way both on the earth and the sky is profoundly philosophical, as well as practical,” Adams explains. “We’ve lost our ability to navigate without the press of a button, and visiting the park allows you to learn to find your way again.” ■

Planning a visit to Headlands?

Follow these simple tips to make it a memorable trip.

- **Do research:** Check what you can expect seasonally in the sky to get your bearings.
- **Come early:** Get familiar and take in the sunset.
- **Lights out:** No artificial lights. If you need a flashlight, wrap a red bandana around it with tape.
- **Bug off:** Bring bug spray to keep away unwanted pests.
- **No camping:** While you’re welcome and encouraged to stay out all night, no tents or camping equipment are allowed. Bring along a chair or sleeping bag to keep comfy and warm.
- **New moon:** Best time to see the wonders of the night sky are at the new moon (in October, that’s the 12th).

Visit midarkskypark.org for more information.



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