

WHITE PINE PRESS

We hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may.

Get Out the Vote

Kathryn DePauw
Editor in Chief

In a year full of firsts, many people in Grand Traverse County are adding one more thing to their list – voting.

“I felt like it was long overdue, honestly. And a level of relief,” explained Traverse City resident Bridget Bernhard, a 26-year-old Renewable Energy Technology student who is registered to vote for the first time. She never felt that voting was a priority. “I left the country when I turned 18 and didn’t feel it was important to register.”

Many others in Grand Traverse County are feeling the need to register as well. There has been a steady increase in registered voters since March, with current numbers closing in on 80,000 (up from about 74,000 in October 2016). While many of these may be 18-year-olds newly inaugurated into the responsibilities of adulthood, there are also older voters like Bernhard who are finding new meaning in the process.

While Bernhard didn’t disclose her political leanings, her reason for registering at this moment is one that applies across party lines. “My biggest motivation was the realization that I have importance in this world. To recognize my worth is important and with that comes responsibility to myself and the world around me.”

The process of registering and voting is simple enough for those nervous newcomers to navigate without too much trouble. To voting in person, you can register at any time up to 8pm on election day at your city or township clerk’s office. If registering by mail, applications must be received or postmarked by Oct. 19. With a state ID or driver’s license, registration can be completed anytime online before Oct. 30 at mivic.sos.state.mi.us/registervoter.

Voting itself is also quite flexible. In-person voting occurs at the assigned polling location anytime between 7am and 8pm on Nov. 3. For those with COVID-19 concerns, completed absentee ballots can be dropped off at your city clerk’s office by 8pm Nov. 3 or, due to a recent ruling, postmarked by Nov. 2. Absentee ballots can be requested online, from your township or city clerk, no later than 5pm the Friday before the

election or, if you’ve already registered, at your clerk’s office any time before 4pm on the day prior to the election.

A 2018 state constitutional amendment that allows absentee voting without a reason is critically important in this year’s election. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many are turning to mail-in ballots as a safer alternative

to in-person voting. The August state primary saw nearly 1.6 million ballots cast absentee, almost 60% of the total across Michigan. In Grand Traverse County, 68% of the vote was counted before Aug. 4, with even more mail-in ballots counted on election day. With the long history of military mail-in voting, the success of the August primary ballot count,

and the low number of voter fraud on record, voters should have confidence in casting an absentee ballot.

Numbers show that Democrats are more likely to vote via mail than Republicans and much of the “get-out-the-vote” effort is also a “mail-in-your-vote” effort. Dr. Jill Biden campaigning for her husband, former Vice President Joe Biden, was in Traverse City on Sept. 29. She wore boots that read “V-O-T-E” and flanked by Chasten Buttigieg, TC native and husband to former Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, to encourage people to register.

“There are so many people who want to tell us that our nation is hopelessly divided,” Dr. Biden said, “that our differences are irreconcilable, that our communities are fractured beyond repair, and beneath that is another message: ‘Your voice can’t fix it, your vote won’t change it.’”

Biden’s speech, which never mentioned President Trump’s name, was light on politics but did touch on school safety, education, and the effects of climate change on local farms. The majority of her time was spent focused on a unifying message. “Democrat and Republican, rural and urban, from north to south to east to west, our communities are showing us that the heart of this nation still beats with kindness and courage,” Biden told the Traverse City crowd. “We can still love and respect one another.”

This type of positive message may feel strategic during an election cycle where many, if not most, voters are fueled by political divisiveness with a winner-take-all mentality. But seeing beyond Nov. 3 and looking at political awareness and community engagement as the “win” is the message that Bernhard wants to share with non-voters watching from the sidelines.

“There is more to the world than ourselves,” Bernhard said. “We have a responsibility to get together to make things happen, and it wouldn’t be the same without you.”



Dr. Jill Biden visited Right Brain Brewery in Traverse City on Sept. 29 to promote voter registration and campaign for her husband, Joe Biden.



Image courtesy of Ann Swaney / NMC Archives

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages an informed and active participation in government. In 2019, the local chapter of LWV, joined by Grand Traverse County clerk Bonnie Scheele, helped NMC students register to vote in the Osterlin building. More information on registering to vote for the 2020 election (including election-day registration) is available at michigan.gov/vote.

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Deja Zoom: Parallel 45's Alphabraid Livestream

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

Thursday nights aren't always the most party-filled nights.

Pre-COVID, they'd be the nights where you would say, "I'm gonna catch up on all the homework I have to do just minutes before the deadline." Lately it's even been, "I'm gonna sit around and do nothing because why would I do anything during a pandemic?"

However, Thursday night became interesting on Sept. 24, when Traverse City based theatre-troupe Parallel 45 put on an online staging of their new original work, "Deja Zoom." Performed live last under the title of "The Alphabet Experience," "Deja Zoom" is a livestreamed, social-distanced version of the original play.

As written for young audiences, "Deja Zoom" is a play of plays; one for each letter of the alphabet, all performed in under an hour.

Before the streaming started we were met with testimonials from members of the Traverse City community. The owners of MAWBY Winery, author and founder of the National Writers Series Doug Stanton, the co-president of the Parallel 45 board Paula Jo Kemler, and Traverse City Mayor Jim Carruthers all had words to support the project and work that P45 have been up to.

It's hard to pull off a livestream show. There's bound to be technical issues and lag time. But even with the faces disappearing within the greenscreens and dead space between lines (which is forgivable and in some cases actually made for some pretty funny moments), it made for a more entertaining Thursday night than normal.

Some of the original show's physicality was missing from the evening's performance. For the most part we could only see the top half of each actor, so bits like the river dance were lacking since its original joke was that it was all foot play. Another instance was when the whole cast had a costume change into a flock of flamingos.

To make up for those moments there were short plays that went along with a new energy more fit for the screen, and more fit for the times, compared to the original.

One such mini-play was performed by troupe member Nick Viox. In this section of the original play the letter Q stood for "Questions," and Viox would run around in the audience

hosting a one-minute game show with participants being chosen from the seats.

This time, the letter Q was a little different.

Q stood for the ever popular: Quarantine. But don't worry. Viox still found a way to have it be a gameshow. Instead of quizzing the audience, he just drank from a bottle of Jack Daniels and talked to Reese WitherSpoon. And yeah, you guessed it. It was just a spoon. A soup spoon that he just dressed up to look like Reese Witherspoon. It's difficult to name a favorite letter of the alphabet. That's a pretty strange thing to spend your free time on, letter-picking. But Q is a decent choice.

The show was a powerful hour of online content. Live shows are hard enough—performing through a digital environment is even harder. A strong setup, designed by Brittany Powell Merenda, really pulled the whole thing together. Making it so that every actor could be working in the same house, socially distanced and safe, while also editing the live show on the fly is not an easy task.

So keep your eye out. If we're lucky, the team at Parallel 45 will continue to release some digital theatre to keep our eyes from rotting out of their head while we're in the middle of this coming winter.



Photo by HarpeStar

What the Tech!?

Why do I have to go in?

Jason Slade
Contributing Writer

The pandemic has brought many changes to the workforce and how we work. One of the most profound has been the rapid shift to remote and offsite work.

There was a time, not too long ago, when working remotely was reserved for those in IT (software developer) or regional sales positions. The pandemic expedited the push to remote across all sectors, and jobs that had never been remote are now fully online.

There are many articles on the "J" curve that saw performance dip temporarily in March 2020, yet rebound as employees (and companies) became more efficient. The "J" curve occurred when performance plummeted at the beginning of the pandemic, due to the chaos of going remote and shelter-in-place orders, forming the bottom of the "J". At this point, productivity was at its lowest. However, after bottoming out, performance quickly rebounded and actually exceeded output prior to March (straight part of the "J").

This increase in efficiency made many companies rethink the potential of remote work and alleviated previous fears. In addition, there are rumblings of large corporations downsizing their physical footprints by regionalizing offices or shifting departments to be permanently remote.

Twitter was one of the first companies to make the move to permanent remote work for various departments, citing the fact that

work was occurring effectively at home. These announcements seemed to turn the tide of negative connotation surrounding remote work that saw Yahoo and other large corporations cease the practice in the interest of driving innovation a few years ago.

But this article isn't about that—it is about you. Has this shift in the work environment changed your career goals? Do you like the idea of remote work and its perceived freedoms? Does a job that was once in a "stuffy" office setting (think cubicle farm) appeal more now because you can work from anywhere?

I am seeing this with former colleagues, both students and friends. Case in point: a young tech professional currently in industry has always been tied to the office. She had some freedom to work one or two days outside of the office, but now her whole world has opened up. She enjoys the freedom of working for a few hours, decompressing at lunch, returning to tasks, and then wrapping up when she has accomplished her goals for the day. Combine that with the benefits of not commuting (time, money, gas, etc.) and it has been a very positive remote experience. She is taking this one step farther by renting a place in another state and working truly remote for a few months as her company won't return to the office until sometime next summer.

But will she come back? She said she may never go back to a job that requires her to physically be present in an office everyday. That

is the question many employees and companies are pondering. Once these remote jobs return to the office, especially five days a week, will the rank-and-file return too?

Many employers and employees are grappling with this. Remote work opens up the talent pipeline to the entire world. Why wouldn't you want the best for a potential job opening? But by the same token, the best worker may not want to relocate or come into the office. This will be a driver for the next few years.

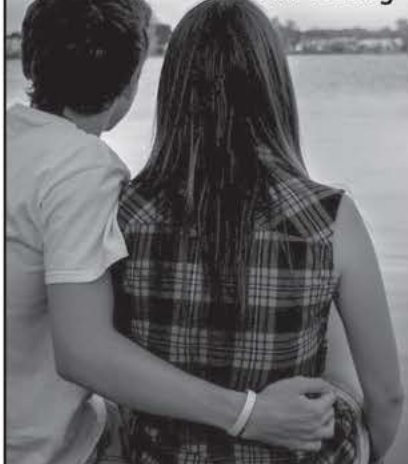
Boston Consulting Group conducted a study this summer, surveying more than 12,000 workers regarding remote work. More than 60% of the respondents stated that they want a job with flexibility. These numbers are expected to go up as more and more companies stay remote. Some of the largest employers in Michigan will continue working remotely—including General Motors with more than 25,000 salaried employees—potentially staying remote until June 2021. Will this be the push for permanent remote or hybrid work environments?

So as you finish up your class, degree or certificate, what are your job expectations? Will you even consider a job in an office? Or is it 100% remote for you? This will be a question for many moving forward and will be a driver for the regional and statewide economy. It will be interesting to see how this all works out!

Jason Slade is the director of the Technical Division at Northwestern Michigan College.

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NMC Board of Trustees Election

On Nov. 3, voters will decide the next Board of Trustees for NMC. Three positions are open, with seven candidates running for six-year terms. Two seats are being vacated by Ross Childs and Janie McNabb, with Rachel Johnson up for reelection. Six of the seven candidates took the time to address three of the most pressing issues to NMC students.

Candidate Dan Lathrop did not respond in time for publication.



James Perra



Vincent Cornellier



Laura Oblinger



Larry Johnson



Rachel Johnson



Kenneth Warner

Compiled by Kathryn DePauw

In regards to safety and financial support, do you believe the institution's response to COVID has been adequate for both students and faculty? What role does the college play in community recovery?

Vincent Cornellier: I have been initially impressed with NMC's response to the pandemic by offering four different tracks of instruction and the Faculty's willingness to adapt.

Lawrence Johnson: Yes, due to the severity of the pandemic, I believe that NMC's response to COVID has been appropriate and necessary. The college should encourage interactions with the community to convey current medical advice and safety measures.

Rachel Johnson: I am very proud of the College's response to the pandemic. We've provided resources for our faculty to adapt their curriculum to online learning. Our careful stewardship of College finances put us in a position to hold tuition flat for our students at a time when most other colleges passed significant tuition rate increases. In addition, we distributed over \$2 million of CARES Act funding to students to help them meet their immediate needs and maintain their momentum at NMC despite economic uncertainty.

Our diligence in enacting public health and safety best practices has proven successful. Despite several students and staff testing positive for COVID-19, public health officials have indicated a very low chance that any infection spread through the College. At this point in the pandemic, I think that is the best we could strive for and that we should be very proud of our students, staff, and administration for their response to this crisis.

NMC will be vital to our community's recovery. First, we can leverage the Futures for Frontliners program to provide a tuition-free pathway for our essential workers who don't have a college degree. Equipping our frontline employees with technical certificates and degrees will put them on a path to new career opportunities. Second, we can provide a safe learning pathway to help our students continue their momentum toward their degrees, those who intend to transfer or who have transferred back home temporarily in response to COVID. Third, we should continue to work closely with our community partners to help fill any talent gaps that might prevent our local businesses from surviving the COVID crisis.

Laura Oblinger: With the information I have available to me to offer an opinion on this, I do believe the college's leadership has made appropriate decisions in response to COVID-19 for the safety of its learners and those delivering it. The reaction was swift and appropriate for the level of severity the pandemic has had. It is one thing to make the decisions needed and another to execute in a seamless and non-panicked manner and it is just this that I witnessed during these unprecedented times. As it relates to the financial support needed in response to Covid-19, as the college leaders were putting into place safety measures, I witnessed the Foundation leadership quickly pivot its communications and efforts to plea for its struggling students – with success of additional donations to help support those that lost jobs and were having to make decisions between food and tuition. The care for NMC's students during this time, financially and emotionally, was genuine. I am proud of how the pandemic was quickly, seamlessly and effectively addressed by President Nissley and all the leaders involved.

The college plays a critical role in the recovery for our community because the moves it makes could have a positive or negative impact on [the] region's population. It can utilize this

time to show its strength as a lead organization in our community – it is a visible organization and should use this visibility to set examples.

James Perra: In terms of safety and financial support, NMC's COVID response seems to have been robust so far. Resources such as the food pantry augmented by CARES money seem to meet needs adequately. Furthermore, the cases of COVID related to NMC are stories of assertive containment. Of course, it is the unfortunate case that we will be responding to COVID for more than enough time to evaluate the plan as implemented and make tweaks around the edges. NMC can help foster recovery both by modeling strong and compassionate guidelines that make good choices (quarantine, reporting, etc.) as painless as possible, and by assisting students whose programs may [have] been affected by the COVID pandemic.

Kenneth Warner: By way of background, I spent 45 years as a professor in the University of Michigan School of Public Health, including six years as Dean. As such, I am very familiar with the issues created by COVID-19. My familiarity with the college's response to COVID derives from two sources: a briefing on the subject by President Nissley this summer during a Zoom meeting for members of the President's Club and reading the information on the NMC website, especially the Exposure Control Plan (ECP).

I am impressed with the college's process for dealing with the pandemic and with the resulting decisions and policies. The ECP is a model that should be followed by all organizations. The safety measures are all necessary and appropriate. If followed by all students, faculty and staff, and visitors to campus, they should ensure the highest possible level of safety. They incorporate all of the evidence-based measures needed to minimize transition [sic] of the virus. That does not mean that infections will not occur. Some may. But with the procedures in place and with effective contact tracing (working with the county health department), the likelihood of a significant outbreak on campus should be small. (Again, this assumes compliance by all parties on campus.)

In particular, I commend the college for deciding to focus on distance learning to the extent possible. (Some educational activities necessitate in-person classes or labs.) All educational institutions have struggled with how to proceed. Some universities decided to go with regular on-campus teaching and have had to move online after significant outbreaks of COVID. NMC is following precisely the plan I would have recommended: rely on distance learning to the extent possible, implement strict safety measures in classrooms and labs where the subject matter requires in-person education, and employ a mixed or hybrid model where some, but not all, education requires in-person classwork.

The safety measures should protect all students, faculty, and staff. I cannot comment knowledgeably on financial support for students as it relates to COVID.

Regarding the college's role in community recovery, as one of the community's most important organizations, I believe the college should be, first and foremost, a role model for appropriate safety measures. As I noted above, NMC is doing a first-rate job in this capacity. Second, as the community's center of higher education, I would like to see NMC's scientists and health professionals advising community groups as to how best to proceed while the threat of significant outbreaks remains. Those of us with some expertise who have tangential connections to the college should be doing the same. For example, I am on the board of the International Affairs Forum (IAF, housed in NMC) and have been advising the Forum's leadership about keeping our programs online for the foreseeable future.

NMC Board of Trustees Election (cont.)

While the health crisis has necessitated a shift to online learning, how do you think the college should move forward after the crisis is over? Do you believe that much of the newly virtual courses should stay or will you support a refocusing on in-person instruction?

Vincent Cornellier: I do believe in the power of “Face to face” instruction and the importance of direct social contact among students so I eagerly support a resumption of the old normal when it is safe. A careful evaluation of the four models used will yield valuable information regarding not only educational outcomes but potential financial impacts for the future.

Lawrence Johnson: I believe that once we are past the current crisis, the college should return its focus to in-person instruction. Some online instruction could remain where it is advantageous to students requiring flexible schedules.

Rachel Johnson: I don’t think this is an either/or proposition. Our pivot to online learning has prompted the development of new pedagogical tools. I anticipate that our faculty will want to continue to use some of those tools moving forward. In the long run, I think we need to learn from this experience and get better because of it. We have a tremendous opportunity to reimagine the systems and models we use to deliver education. The good news is, we have a long history of innovation and excellent faculty and staff. I have no doubt that the classroom formats we offer after COVID will be cutting edge, experiential, and highly effective.

Laura Oblinger: Moving forward, I believe college leaders need to analyze what changes were made related to virtual learning and determine what changes were something we should sustain. Possibly, there were adjustments that may have turned out for the better and warrant permanency. I will support a return to in-person learning, continued virtual, or a mixture – whatever is determined [to be] the safest for all involved and based on the scientific data available.

James Perra: The rapid adoption of online tools for education has and will continue to provide a wealth of innovations improving digitally augmented learning. However, it can be easy to overlook the intangible benefits of in-person learning and I am concerned that, for reasons of convenience and cost savings, there may continue to be an over-reliance on online options once they are no longer a health safety tool. A college education includes experiencing working relationships with a diverse array of people, creating skills in cultural competency and the ability to see circumstances from different points of view. Many of those experiences happen in the “in-between spaces” that are very hard to replicate over a video conference.

Kenneth Warner: In early September, speaking with the Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, I expected to hear a litany of problems about adjusting to COVID. Instead, she focused on some positives. She said that she and her colleagues were learning about opportunities to enhance the efficiency of the school’s operations and, in some instances, improve the quality of its education in the future. In a similar vein, while all of us involved with IAF were deeply disappointed at first that we had to go completely online, we have realized some significant advantages – not as a replacement for the in-person experience but as a complement. For example, we had a program on the refugee crisis (including the issue of COVID in refugee camps) that involved staff in two different camps in Lesbos, Greece, as well as an individual here in Traverse City. That fascinating program came to us from multiple sites, including the two camps in Greece. We could never do that without an online component. More recently, our first program of the 2020-21 season, an interview about pandemics with one of the world’s leading global health experts, Dr. Julio Frenk, would not have been possible in our normal in-person venue (Milliken Auditorium in Dennon). We had tried to get him to come here previously but he could never find the 2-3 days he would have had to leave his post as President of the University of Miami. I hope that in the “new normal” post-COVID era, IAF will utilize both modalities – some programs in-person, some online, and, perhaps many, utilizing both.

We can’t tell today how NMC’s education will evolve in the future, but I would be surprised and disappointed if the college did not take advantage of the opportunities created by today’s communications technologies. (Of course the college has been utilizing online education for

years through the University Center, a marvelous opportunity for many students.) That is not to suggest that in-person education will be a thing of the past. Having taught for years at Michigan, mostly in-person classes but with some distance learning experience, I think there is no substitute for the face-to-face experience. But online resources and connections can enhance the conventional classroom too. Consider, for example, “flipped” classes: Students watch a recorded lecture online and then come to class ready to engage directly with the instructor in small-group activities and conversations. The future of educational programming, at NMC and everywhere, should not be an “either-or” situation – either in-person instruction or distance learning – but rather both.

The current faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement expires in 2022. What do you believe the priorities should be and how can the bargaining process be made smoother?

Vincent Cornellier: As a Trustee, I would probably not be directly involved in labor negotiations but as a former educator myself, I would support all efforts to promote fairness and show appreciation for our dedicated faculty.

Lawrence Johnson: However the process goes forward in 2022, the central emphasis should be focused on present and future needs of the students. I have engaged in collective bargaining over the years from the point of view of management. The issues are usually volatile with strong feelings on both sides, and with ample rationale from each perspective. While I stick by my reluctance to be more specific in light of the recent collective bargaining negotiations, my overall philosophy is that issues that impact the students should be of prime importance, with their success and well-being of the highest consideration. After all, without the students, what is the point?

Rachel Johnson: The priorities will likely be driven by the trends we see in education and enrollment over the next few years as our model evolves post-pandemic. When the time comes, my hope is that we can negotiate a contract that keeps learning at the center and protects the interests of the students, the faculty, and the taxpayers. If we rely on our shared value system and shared goals, I am confident the bargaining process will be successful.

Laura Oblinger: It is difficult to judge past experiences and processes for the bargaining process when I don’t have all the relevant information at hand and was not tangibly involved. Regardless, it will be my concern that all parties are treated with respect, treated fairly, and with empathy. To create a positive experience, I believe all parties need equal and relevant data, a give and take from both sides will be critical to genuinely believe the process is fair, attitudes must remain positive and dialogue should be consistent. I will work hard to be certain these traits are carried out during the critical phase of bargaining agreements.

James Perra: While I admit to being unfamiliar with the collective bargaining process at NMC, as a proud former union IAFF paramedic I would suggest that smoothness of process is not an end in and of itself. The process of creating the best collective agreement for all involved requires getting everything on the table, and then often breaking pieces down even further to find creative ways to offer compensation and benefits packages that attract excellent instructional and support talent, while being good stewards of tuition, tax, and donated funds.

Kenneth Warner: Ensuring a positive work environment for faculty (and staff) is crucial to maximizing students’ experience at NMC, the latter being the essential purpose of the college. Yet, as in all of life, NMC must live within a budget. The friction that often arises during collective bargaining negotiations reflects that fundamental truth. I cannot comment knowledgeably about what the priorities should be in the 2022 negotiations, nor how the bargaining process can be made smoother. I have no experience with the NMC faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement. Further, I believe that the negotiations should transpire between the faculty and the administration, with the Board of Trustees providing guidance only to the extent that it is requested by the parties, if requested at all. This – as with so much else – is something about which I will learn if I have the good fortune to be elected to the Board.

The Legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Randi Upton
Staff Writer

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died at the age of 87 on Sept. 18 from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

Justice Ginsburg was a powerhouse who shattered glass ceilings from a young age. Ginsburg graduated from James Madison High School with honors, going on to study government at Cornell University and later becoming one of nine women at the time to be admitted into



Harvard Law. Ginsburg later transferred to Columbia Law, receiving her degree in 1959 and graduated first in her class.

Ginsburg fought through discrimination over the years, with two perceived strikes against her: she was both Jewish and a woman. Never giving up, in 1970 she founded "Women's Rights Law Reporter," the first law journal that focused on discrimination and rights of women.

Throughout the 1970s, Ginsburg fought for many rights that women still are able to enjoy today. In 1971 she wrote the brief for *Reed v. Reed*, which protected women under the 14th amendment's Equal Protection Clause. This led to the landmark case *Roe v. Wade*, in which abortion was constitutionally protected due to the 14th amendment's Equal Protection and Due Process Clause, guaranteeing women the right to doctor-patient privacy and the right to medical procedures as they saw fit.

In 1973, she argued in *Frontiero v. Richardson*, challenging a statute in which female service members could not get the increased housing allowance for their husbands that their gendered counterparts would get for their spouses. In 1975, Ginsburg argued for, and won, in *Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld*, in which a widower could not receive social security benefits for his dead spouse to care for his children, despite a widow being allowed to receive those benefits. During the 70s, she fought for, and won, against forced sterilization of the mentally ill and "defective" as well as discrimination against women completing jury duty.

On June 22, 1993, Ginsburg was nominated as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton. Justice Ginsburg used her 27 years on the Supreme Court to not only fight for the rights of women to privacy and equality, but also for the rights of men. Women have the right to work, join the military, and have access to the same colleges as men; men have the right to stay home and be caretakers of the family, and should be allowed the same benefits as their counterparts to do so.

Justice Ginsburg was married for 56 years to Martin Ginsburg, who passed away in 2010. Ginsburg's health declined for several years, with her condition worsening over the past year.

In her last few days with her family, Ginsburg reportedly told them, "My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a new president is installed."

Community Connects During PorchFest 2020

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

It's hard to know how to fill our time in the celestial void that is COVID-19. Do we sit and stare at the television, watching *Back To The Future* for the first time since your freshman year of high school? Or maybe watch *Schitt's Creek*, after its record-breaking Emmys sweep?

But, fortunately, it isn't all reruns and Netflix. Somewhere out there you can find a live event, or two. Or, if you're wandering the Central Neighborhood District of Traverse City on a specific day in September (this year it was the 20th) you can catch a whole flock of them.

It was a beautiful day. Really, it felt like the first day of autumn. Families and groups of friends walked around, masked up, enjoying the community that only a place like Traverse City, specifically one of the neighborhoods downtown, can muster up.

Musicians and bands lined up on porches donated for the day to the project. From Union and Ninth Street to the very ends of Sixth Street, you could see groups socially distanced on lawns and in alleyways to hear friends and strangers play on porches that they hadn't seen until that day.

Some of the setups were incredibly technically impressive. One group managed to fit a five-piece band, including a drum set and a keyboard, on a porch that was certainly too small for them, but the sound stayed just as powerful.

It's easy to toss something like PorchFest aside. It's just some music on porches, right? Wrong.

The sense of community that PorchFest 2020 brought, with the help of every volunteer musician, and everyone who helped put it together behind the scenes, was immaculate.

"PorchFest was a lovely, safe reminder of community and normality in a time where such concepts are at odds with our current timeline," said one musician, Jack M. Senff, who was stationed out front of the Heritage Center on Sixth Street, which is now a part of Crooked Tree.

As someone who's becoming a sort of beacon of young music in Traverse City, Senff's presence, and promotion of his new album, made the event more fun. It was interesting to hear a local talk about local things, at a local thing. Localception. Does that work here? Probably not, but the intent remains.

All in all, PorchFest 2020 was exactly what we needed in this year where everything is wild. It's hard to know when the next time we'll get to see live music is, so getting to be alive on this specific September afternoon, where it felt like the weather was perfect. Everyone held their heads high -- a treat more pure than sugar..



Photo by HarpeStar

Jack M. Senff performs on the steps of the Heritage Center for PorchFest 2020.

Fall Flavors: Pumpkin Crunch Cake

Stephanie Jones
Staff Writer

This delicious dessert brims with fall flavors and has a sweet and salty taste. It's a fast and easy dish that will be a hit at any dinner party or in the comfort of your own home. The recipe is at its prime during the months of October and November.

Serve this dish hot or cold. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream and caramel drizzle for extra pizzazz. As you read this recipe, you will see it calls for cinnamon, nutmeg, ground ginger, and cloves. You may swap all of these out for 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice if desired. Enjoy this super easy and yummy dessert!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz) pumpkin puree
- 1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- Pinch of cloves
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 box yellow cake mix. For a cake-like consistency, use the full box.
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup butter, melted

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick spray.
2. In a large bowl beat the pumpkin, milk, eggs, sugar, and spices until well combined. Pour into the 9x13 baking dish.
3. Sprinkle the top with the desired amount of yellow cake mix.
4. Sprinkle with the chopped pecans.
5. Pour the melted butter evenly over the top of the cake.
6. Bake for 60-70 minutes or until the top is lightly browned and the custard is set.
7. Serve warm or cold. Store in the refrigerator for up to five days.

Shady Lady Book Review "Flame"

Ann Hosler Copy Editor "Flame" is book #17 in Donna Grant's Dark Kings series. I'll start with a disclaimer: when I requested an advanced reading copy of this book on Netgalley, I had no idea it was so deep in a series as the cover and title did not indicate as such. This is the first book I've read in Dark Kings and my opinions are likely skewed by that fact.

Living among the Dragon Kings, Cain has spent lifetimes learning to distrust both mortals and Fae. He is a warrior born—and every instinct demands that he fight to keep his own kind safe.

Noreen is horrified by what her kind and the malevolent Others are planning for the Dragon Kings. Dark Fae or not, there are lines she will not cross—even if it means risking her life.

"Flame" is backstory heavy, which was helpful to someone who didn't read the prior books. The fantasy setting, alternate Earth setting, and various types of magical people were described and thought-out quite well. The epilogue did a good job of setting the stage for the next book in the series.

However, after a few chapters of backstory it began to feel like bloat that an editor should have suggested large cuts to, and combined with lack of action and development by the main characters, it made this book difficult to get invested in. Overall, I felt no attachment to the two main characters, Noreen and Cain. Their backgrounds are detailed well but due to being stationary most of the book, it didn't feel like I got to know who they currently are. They seemed to lack motivation to do anything other than talk and have a few rounds of sex. This pair falls in insta-love in less than a day, which is great if you are purposefully reading an insta-love novella and not-so-great if you're reading a 407-page story that should've given time for an organic romance.

Adding to the book's bloat were many chapters from secondary character points-of-view that were likely relevant to the series' overarching plot, but primarily irrelevant to this story's plot. It was interesting to see the antagonists' view in a few of the chapters, but otherwise the secondary protagonists did practically nothing to further the story. I didn't do a count but it felt like at least half of the chapters were not from the main characters' point-of-view.

At 70% through the book, there is finally action. Though there's another spurt of inaction/backstory before the end, this is when it finally felt like the story picked back up for the first time since chapter four or five. The climax is interesting — until suddenly it's left unresolved. That's not to say that the book ends there, just that the main plot of this book is left hanging to be finished in the next. After so much reading to get to this point, it left me unsatisfied.

There were days between my reading sessions of "Flame" because I simply lacked the interest to go back to it. It's not that I was feeling lost in the story due to jumping in so deep in a series, but simply because the majority of the book was boring. I imagine that someone who has read and enjoyed the series up to this point would have a much better impression of the book than me. Unfortunately, "Flame" left me with no desire to check out the earlier books in the series.



Craig Hadley Dennos Museum Center While 2020 has been a whirlwind, I hope you'll consider a visit to the Dennos Museum Center to relax, unwind, and enjoy a few quiet moments in between classes, work, and everything else. Your NMC student ID earns you FREE admission to the museum—simply show it at the front desk.

Never been to the Dennos? There's lots to see and do, and most of our visitors spend 1–2 hours when they visit. The museum offers a glimpse into Inuit life and culture with its stunning collection of stone-carved works on paper and carved sculptures, while the newly renovated permanent collection galleries offer up local, regional, and international artists as well. See famous artists such as Salvador Dali without even leaving Traverse City!

Two new Michigan themed exhibitions will open later this month: Michigan Modern will feature mid-century modernist architecture, while Mathias Alten highlights the life and work of one of Michigan's most important American Impressionist painters of the early 20th century.

Finally, I hope you'll take a few moments to shop at the museum store. We have the best fun socks in town! Check it out at shop.dennosmuseum.org and find the perfect gift today!

Craig Hadley is the Executive Director of the Dennos Museum Center.

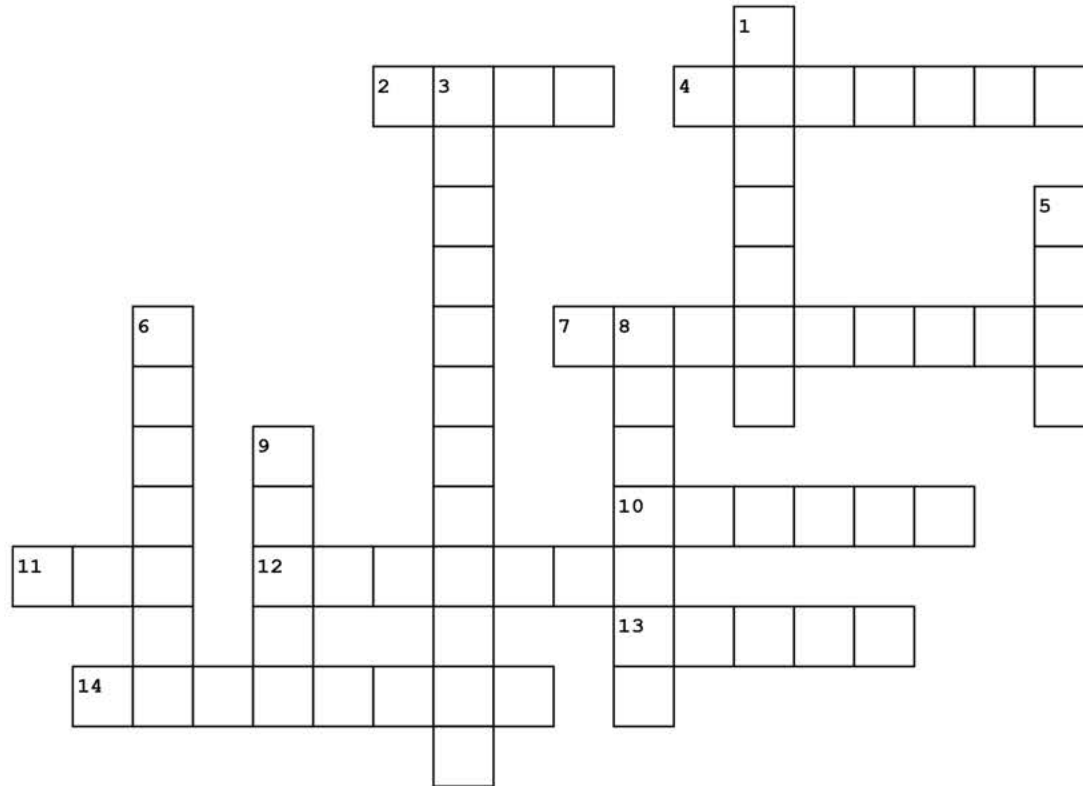


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Animal Kingdom



Across

2. An octopus's _____ determines how small of a hole it can fit into.
4. The brown _____ is a poisonous spider found in Michigan.
7. The massasauga is the only _____ snake in Michigan.
10. The short-tailed shrew has _____ that can paralyze its prey.
11. The _____ hummingbird is the smallest bird in the world.
12. Michigan has ten different species of _____.
13. A bearcat's _____ smells like buttered popcorn.
14. The lake _____ can live for more than 150 years.

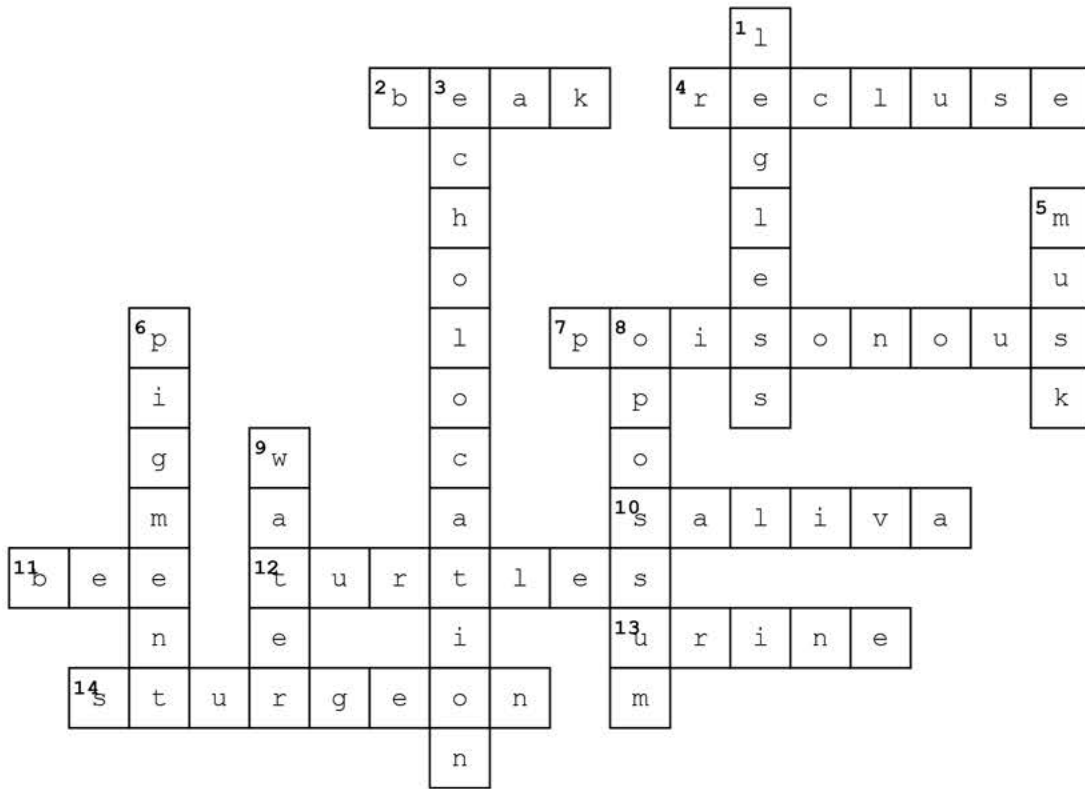
Down

1. There are almost 200 species of Caecilians, a _____ amphibian.
3. Oilbirds successfully fly in total darkness by using _____.
5. Garter snakes release a foul-smelling _____ in defense.
6. Black squirrels have a faulty _____ gene.
8. The only marsupial found in northern Michigan is the _____.
9. Tardigrades, or _____ bears, can endure extreme temperatures.

Compiled by Hannah Krohn

Find the answers online at www.whitepinepresstc.com

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