

Volunteering at the Best Place to be 50+

If you've ever considered volunteering, rest assured that there is a place for everyone at the OPC Social & Activity Center. Whether it's a regular commitment or a one-time event, your contribution can help maintain the rich network of support that has woven itself into the very identity of our center. Take a moment to think about how you can be part of something bigger.

The stories of volunteerism at OPC are more than just accounts of service. Everyone has something to give, and everyone can make a difference.



A Volunteer Crew setting up for Terrific Tuesday.

Volunteer Coordinator Daria Burcar works hard to fit individuals to volunteer opportunities they enjoy. "OPC volunteers wear many hats" says Daria. One such example is George, who is always joyful in his volunteer duties. He makes the best popcorn for movie days, and provides the muscle for larger events, which are hard positions to fill.

Terrific Tuesday is a monthly program at the OPC with interesting topics, and a great meal. Each month, a volunteer crew sets up the venue, coordinates the check-in process, serves the food prepared by the OPC culinary team, and helps clean up afterwards. All that with smiles on their faces, while having fun and making new friends.

The OPC Welcome Center Desk Volunteers are the first friendly face that newcomers see when they enter the OPC. These dedicated volunteers are responsible for giving tours, answering questions, and assisting with the Medical Loan Closet.



Welcome Desk Volunteers

“

I love all of the people. When I smile, I receive a smile in return and it makes my day! Instead of counting the hours while volunteering, I count the smiles.

Mary Jo

I feel a sense of purpose when volunteering at the OPC. It is a great way for me to give back. I have met so many wonderful people.

Diane

”

It is imperative that we have Welcome Center Desk volunteers to enthusiastically showcase everything that the OPC has to offer!

Welcome desk volunteer Kathy says; "When I first joined, I thought I would volunteer on days that I worked out. Now, I have committed to volunteering every Tuesday Morning at the Welcome Center Desk. I consider it a success to give a tour, and immediately see that guest sign up to be an OPC member."



George - The Popcorn King!

Volunteering at the Best Place to be 50+ *continued from page 1*

What is your favorite part of volunteering at the OPC Fitness desk Raj?

Where else can you meet so many nice people? For the past 5 years I have met hundreds of OPC members, and I love it! I have made many friends!



Fitness Desk Volunteer Raj



Volunteer Bill

Become more involved by volunteering - it's the BEST way to learn more about the OPC. There are daily, weekly, monthly, and special event volunteer opportunities available. Do you like staying active? You may enjoy volunteering for set up and service volunteer crews, offering tours at the welcome desk to guests and new members, or delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound seniors. Prefer a sitting position - we have you covered. Subs are always needed at the Pool and Sports Desks, you can even choose which dates and times work best for your schedule. Have a creative side? Share your talent by teaching an art class, working in the gift shop, or speaking at a program.



Volunteer Jackie

Call Daria at 248-608-0270 for more information or go to our website to complete the Volunteer Application. Everyone can make a difference at the OPC!

All About FRIENDSHIP!

It's a Wrap! The volunteer OPC 650 Players Theater Group just completed their 2024 spring show with six sold out performances.

We make new friends,
and keep the old...
We're having the time of our lives!



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a part of a live show? Whether you aspire to perform on stage, or help behind the scenes, the OPC 650 Players have a place for you.

This group of OPC members 50+ perform a spring variety show, a fall scripted play and/or musical, and several mini-shows each year. Singing, dancing, acting, creating sets, coordinating props, controlling audio and visual components - the list of opportunities is endless.

The 2024 fall show auditions are August 12 and 13 from 2:30 - 5:00pm in the OPC auditorium. Call 248-608-0263 for more information. ▼

Summer Vacations often Bring the Unexpected

By Jim Avery

Summer vacations offer the opportunity to explore, relax, and sometimes experience the unexpected. Case in point was a vacation in northern Michigan.

There I was, standing in Glen Arbor's memorial garden admiring the personalized bricks placed along the pathway. As expected, some bricks reflected the names of those who supported the project, while others paid tribute to deceased family members that had lived in or visited the area for years.

The garden was tranquil and the perfect place to pause on a warm summer day. While caught in that moment, my attention was drawn to the muffled sound of weeping nearby. To my left I noticed an elderly woman dabbing tears from her cheeks. Fumbling for words, I asked..."are you okay?" Slightly embarrassed she replied, "Oh, it's Lou." Lou?...I wondered out loud.

She explained by saying, "Yes, my husband Lou, and this is the brick I placed here after he died last year." With that she proceeded to share some of her story. Her name is Barbara, a silver-haired woman who married late in life after a long career with American Airlines.

It seems that Lou, a dashing sailor on the Great Lakes, had swept Barbara off her feet like a wave crashing the bow of a ship. Soon after, they married and settled in suburban Chicago. After retirement, the couple spent their summers in a modest cabin overlooking Sleeping Bear Bay, near Glen Arbor.

This day was particularly difficult for Barbara, as it was her final trip north....and the time to say goodbye to old friends and turn the cottage keys over to the new owners. She could no longer afford two homes.



It was there, at the kitchen table in that cottage, that Lou suffered a massive heart attack and died on the spot. The same table where the two had talked, dreamed, and shared coffee every morning while soaking in the magnificent view.

Now Lou was gone, their beloved cottage with the view of Sleeping Bear Bay was gone, as were most of the people she and Lou considered close friends. It was a day that was okay to remember, cry, and let tears flow down her cheeks, as she was sad and feeling alone in the finality of the moment.

As hard as it was to experience her grief, I knew it was one of those moments when you feel the nudging to reach out with compassion and a listening ear. It was a call to be a friend. Soon, my wife Pat joined us as Barbara continued sharing. Like women often do, they quickly engaged in conversation about the feelings women have over the passing chapters of life.

Barbara would smile and then cry as memories flooded her eyes with tears. Pat nodded and smiled back with an understanding that men don't always possess. Life seemed to have put the needy in front of the needed.

After nearly an hour of conversation, a lonely woman named Barbara began closing another chapter in her life. Barbara glanced at her watch and said, "it's time to go home." Before leaving, she thanked us, offered a hug, and this parting advice, "Share your love for each other every day." ▼



A Tale of The Sleeping Bear Dunes

The Anishinaabe (Odawa/Ottawa, Ojibway/Chippewa and Potawatomi) have two versions of the oral tradition of a sacred place within their homelands in the Great Lakes. here is one of the versions told:

Long ago, along the Wisconsin shoreline, a mother bear and her two cubs were driven into Lake Michigan by a raging forest fire. The bears swam for many hours, but soon the cubs tired. Mother bear reached the shore first and climbed to the top of a high bluff to watch and wait for her cubs. The cubs drowned within sight of the shore. The Great Spirit created two islands to mark the spot where the cubs disappeared and then created a solitary dune to represent the eternal vigil of mother bear. ▼

Dreaming of the Drive-In

By Alyson Denyer

Dear Readers: a show of hands, please. When you went to the drive-in movie with your sweetie, how many of you watched the movie? (Or most of it?) Aha, I thought so. Well, we can blame a businessman, Richard M. Hollingshead, Jr., for that, but we need to go back to the beginning of the story.

The invention of the automobile, followed 12 years later by the first motion picture in 1905, shaped our country in new ways: we had access to entertainment. Although the first outdoor movies were shown on the side of a building in Hawaii long before its statehood, silent films shown on an outdoor screen were not popular until the 1920s. They were displayed in an enclosed structure with no roof and were called “airdromes.” Everyone sat on folding chairs.

Enter Mr. Hollingshead, who, one night in 1933, parked his car in front of a screen he had positioned in a tree. Attached to the hood of his car was a 16mm Kodak projector containing home movie reels, and behind the screen was his radio, which he could hear whether car windows were up or down. While he sat watching his movies, an idea emerged: a drive-in movie! He knew the idea was something that could appeal to families and even older viewers who might have difficulty going to indoor theaters. Ten months after Hollingshead applied for a patent, he opened the Camden Drive-In Theater in Camden, New Jersey. It was June 6, 1933. He had a full house; had even calculated the angle and elevation of each row so everyone had an unobstructed view of the screen.



Movies were often hard to acquire, with few options for advertising and no delivery to rural areas where farmers had relinquished some of their acreage in exchange for profit from a new venture. Nevertheless, a burst of outdoor theaters followed: by 1942 there were 100 across the country, each bigger and better, some offering new amenities. Further growth stopped, however, with the onset of World War II. To maintain operation, existing theaters added a defense tax to support the war effort and those near defense plants offered “late late” shows for workers with odd hours.

Not to worry. After the war, new jobs and help from the G. I. Bill gave veterans the impetus to buy homes in suburban areas, and buy cars to commute to those jobs. Families went on Sunday drives and even vacations. Construction of new outdoor theaters picked up again, with even more elaborate screens that could not be missed along highways across the country. Between 1946 and 1953, there were 2,976 new drive-ins built, prompting nicknames invented by newspapers, some of which included: fresh air exhibitors, outdoorers, underskyers, mudholes, and the one that stuck, “ozoners.”

Quality sound was a major problem. Loud overhead speaker systems annoyed the homeowners living near the property; an in-ground speaker under each car proved impractical. Thankfully, in 1946,

RCA introduced the first small speaker boxes with individual volume control that could be suspended on a car window.

Competition ramped up as owners went to great lengths to attract patrons, providing laundry service, bottle warmers for babies, supervised nurseries, telephone service, baby parades, pony rides and even pie-throwing contests! To alleviate lines during intermission, theaters could hire car hops while most eventually installed a cafeteria-style concession stand. Flying insect issues? Window nets were offered and fields were sprayed. Sadly, the chemical used was DDT. It was finally outlawed in 1972, leaving everyone at the mercy of mosquitoes after all.

Entrepreneurs realized greater income could be derived from entertainment prior to the movie. Playgrounds expanded from swings and slides to small amusement park rides, perhaps a small train around the complex, a lake with little motorboats, miniature golf, even a swimming pool to lure customers during daytime hours.

The drive-in craze caught on in Canada, which eventually built and managed 300 theaters, in spite of cold weather. Across the Atlantic, Rome built its first outdoor theater in the 50s, followed by Germany, Spain and France. Mexico, Puerto Rico and Japan soon joined in. Japan innovatively used mall parking lots and portable screens and projectors--land was a premium.

Regrettably, change was on the horizon in the mid-50s and 60s via television. Now outdoor theater-goers could be captivated by favorite shows in the comfort of home, with a pantry's choice of snacks. Kids were now teens who borrowed the family car; films at drive-ins were often geared toward young people. Advertising was created to appeal as well: food, clothing, activities, and even beauty products. Car windows fogged up when no one watched the movie. Ozone's nickname morphed into “passion pit.” All good things must come to an end. The industry could not sustain itself; lifestyle changes in the late 60s were eroding business. Attempting to show sub-standard movies caused legal and financial problems. No new drive-ins were built; older ones deteriorated and developers purchased the unused land to construct housing, malls and mega churches. Only a few stayed solvent by promoting swap meets, car shows or park and ride systems. Bucket seats in newer cars had little appeal and folks could now watch movies at home on VCRs or cable TV. Those fortunate enough might even enjoy in-home theaters.

The Starlight Drive-In theater in Wexford, Pennsylvania, tucks away in my memory. It closed in the 80s. What once sported kiddie-sized amusement rides and once spelled romance, now houses a mega-church. A tiny lump in my throat remains.

What Drive-in memories do you treasure? ▼

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm

Michigan Historical Marker Program

The idea of historical markers did not originate in Michigan, a program that tried to get off the ground in 1917. The idea was to have markers dotting the state, reminding citizens about our past, people, and historical progress. While the idea was well received, the program went through many starts and stops over the decades. In the mid-50's Michigan saw under Governor G. Mennen Williams, the historical markers program got some political and financial backing. For the latest list of historical markers, visit the www.michigan.gov/MichiganHistoryCenter/HistoricalMarkers.org website.

The city of Rochester has eight markers Rochester Hills has seven markers, with six markers in Stoney Creek Village. Oakland Township has four markers.

he newest marker is Paint Creek Cider Mill which was registered in 2019, the same year it was erected.

The front of the marker reads "Needham Hemingway built the first mill at this site in 1835, harnessing waterpower from the Paint Creek millrace. William Goodison purchased the gristmill in 1866. The surrounding community took his name and became a railroad stop in 1872. The mill operated under various owners until 1941. Dale O. Miller purchased the property in 1945, hoping to restore the old gristmill and produce water-powered electricity. The building was no longer structurally sound, so he had the mill dismantled in 1953 and salvaged the original hand-hewn timbers to use in constructing a new tourist destination: a cider mill. Miller hired architects Giffels & Vallet Inc. and L. Rossetti to design the building. Its style was inspired by both Mid-century Modern and Swill chalet architecture." The back of the marker describes the stages in which the mill was rebuilt.



Museum programs are perfect for you!

Register at www.rochesterhills.org/musprograms or call the museum at 248.656.4663.

From bike rides visiting historic sites through Rochester, to Wet and Wild Wednesdays every Wednesday afternoon in July, Stream Science on Thursdays, summer camps and more – visit the Museum program page to find programs for you, your family, to entertain grandchildren and more!

Museum at the Market - Downtown Walking Tour

August 10 | 9:30am–10:30am | Free

Meet at the Rochester Farmer's Market Info. Shed, 202 E. Third

Join Museum staff at the Rochester Farmer's Market! Buy some fresh food and then hit the streets to learn some fascinating facts to share at dinner with family and friends. Where is the oldest building on Main Street? Where were the first hotels? Where was the first house built? When did the telephone come to town? Where were all the churches? On this tour we'll explore our downtown exhibit signs and sift through historical photos and stories while walking about a half mile.

VintageBase Ball Matches

Rochester Grangers - 2024 Season

Saturday, July 20 | 1pm | vs. Bay City Independents

Saturday, August 10 | 1pm | vs. Union BBC of Dexter

Visit the Rochester Grangers Facebook page for their complete schedule of matches. You can follow the Club to Mackinac Island, Ohio, Royal Oak, Northville, and beyond! Always verify date and time as match day approaches, as this schedule is subject to change.

Free, no registration required. Just show up with your chairs, sunscreen and snacks!

Do you Love History?

Visit the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm!

Drop-In Hours & Tours

Fridays and Saturdays - 12pm – 3pm, Guided tour at 1pm

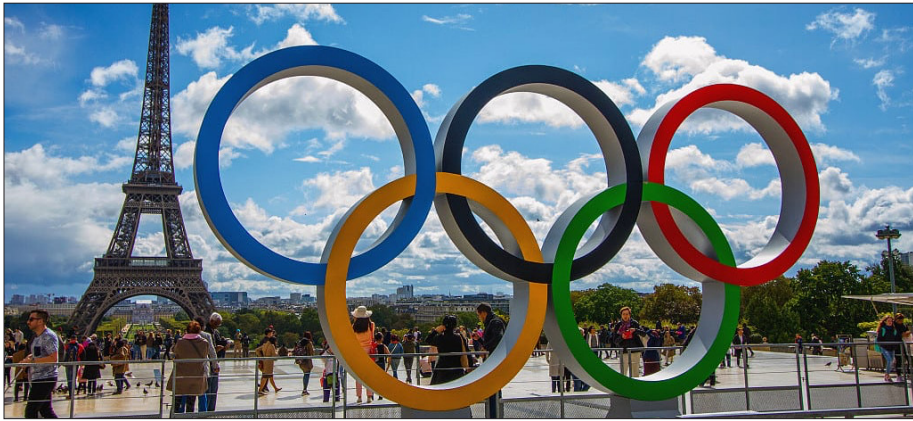
Free for Museum Members – Not a member?

Sign up at rochesterhills.org/musdonate

\$5/Adult \$3/Seniors 62+/students (3rd grade+) No registration required

The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm is open for drop-in hours on Fridays and Saturdays from 12 - 3pm, with a Guided Tour of the Van Hoosen Farmhouse at 1:00pm. Included with your admission is a self-paced, interactive look at our community's local history. Meet the Taylor-Van Hoosen families, check out Mastodon bones, local history exhibits and local videos. The guided tour of the Van Hoosen Farmhouse departs from the Diary Barn at 1:00pm, and you may take a self-guided tour of the Bull Barn, Milk House, Equipment Barn, and Children's Garden, as well as the nearby Stoney Creek Cemetery and our 16 acres or grounds. Come and share your afternoon with us at our site – listed on the National Register of Historic Places!

2024 Summer Olympics



By Michael Flannery

For sports enthusiasts worldwide, the summer of 2024 will be another special time marking when so many outstanding athletes compete for medals for themselves, their teams, and their countries. The 2024 Summer Olympics will be held in Paris from July 26 – August 11 and the Paralympics from August 28 – September 8. This will be the third time the Summer Olympics will be held in Paris.

They were held for the first time in 1900, then again in 1924, and now in 2024—100 years later. Most events will be held in the city of Paris and its six metropolitan regions. There will be 10,500 athletes who will compete with 329 events and in 33 sports. Also the 2024 Paralympic games will include 4,400 of the world's most outstanding Olympic Paralympic athletes competing in 23 sports and 549 events. It is interesting that to combat the intense heat in France during the summer, a geothermal energy system was installed to cool the athletes apartments in the Seine-Saint-Denis suburb to a temperature below 79 degrees Fahrenheit during the night.

Sports that were held at the last Summer Olympics in 2020 Tokyo but not included for this Summer Olympics are baseball, softball, and karate. Four new sports added are skateboarding, surfing, breaking, and sport climbing.

“Breaking” is another name for break-dancing. The participants perform sets along with a DJ in front of a panel of judges and are judged for creativity, personality, technique, variety, performativity, and musicality.

A good friend of mine's granddaughter is moving out to Oregon this summer to be a climbing instructor at a new sport climbing gymnasium. Americans have high hopes to capture medals with skateboard legend Nyjah Huston.

The 2024 U.S. Olympic Surfing team of Caroline Marks, Carissa Moore, Caity Simmers, Griffin Colapinto, and John Florence have big medal hopes.

The 2024 Summer Olympic Sports Programs include: Artistic Swimming (Synchronized Swimming) – I have a special interest in this event because at Michigan State University, many years ago, my daughter was part of the MSU Synchronized Swimming team.



Diving, Marathon Swimming, Swimming (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Individual Medley, Relays, Marathon), Rowing, Surfing, Water Polo (requires the greatest endurance of any Summer Olympic events).

Archery, Athletics (Track and Field and Walking), Badminton, Basketball - 5x5 and 3x3, Boxing, Breaking, Canoeing Slalom and Sprint), Cycling, Equestrian, Fencing, Golf, Gymnastics, Handball, Judo, Modern Pentathlon, Rugby Sevens, Sailing, Shooting, Skateboarding, Sport Climbing, Triathlon.

Field Hockey, Football, Indoor and Beach Volleyball.

Table Tennis – Personally interesting because my late sister was part of the U.S. representation at the time that George Bush was the U.S. Ambassador to China. Table tennis tournaments were held at Oakland University, a very important diplomatic event between US and China, when she was a student there majoring in Chinese and English.

Taekwondo, Weightlifting, Freestyle, and Greco Wrestling.

Because there are so many Olympic events, it's a challenge to determine which ones to watch and follow, plus which cable or streaming channel access you have to see the events.

We will be watching the gymnastics events especially since our granddaughter is a gymnast, dedicated to practices and training three days a week. She is very excited to see the gymnastics events. Simone Biles, Gabby Douglas, and Sunisa Lee are all-around gold medalists planning to compete for the U.S. My granddaughter's favorite is Simone Biles.

Swimming is an exciting sport. If you like swimming as we do, watch Katie Ledecky from the U.S. who is one of swimming's all-time greats with seven Olympic gold medals and 21 World Championship titles and will be competing in the Olympics. Another American swimmer is Caeleb Dressel who is a seven-time Olympic champion and a thirteen-time World Champion in competitive swimming.

The USA Women's National Soccer team is expected to make a run at the Olympic gold medals. Keep an eye on co-captains Alex Morgan and Lindsay Horan along with the team's a new coach Emma Hayes.

The USA Men's and Women's basketball games should be exciting to watch with hopes of Olympic Gold. Oh yes, then there are other sporting events favorites of mine to watch—all the track and field events, golf, and indoor and outdoor volleyball. You will have your own favorite events too.

There are so many to choose from. This summer should be a wonderful time to cheer on our USA individuals and teams competing this year in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.

We may not be Olympians, but we can participate this summer in similar sporting events. In my family, we compete in our own competitive way swimming, golfing, playing soccer, and volleyball. ▼

Wildlife in the Backyard

By Michael Flannery

The spring and summer months bring the birds and animals to our backyards. It is a splendid display of the variety of wildlife found in southeastern Michigan. In the back of our property, about 100 ft beyond the yard, is a small lake and other land that is part of a conservation preserve. Birds and animals thrive in this environment. It is a real treat looking out our kitchen window to observe this wildlife display. A nearby pair of binoculars is helpful to observe all the activity.

We have seen these in our backyard, and I am sure you have additional birds and animals on your property: Swans are our largest waterfowl stretching 6 ft in length and weighing more than 25 pounds. They glide gracefully through the water and stop to eat aquatic vegetation, small fish, frogs, and worms. If you see them open their wings and dive underwater, it's bathtime.

Canadian Geese are large birds that weigh between 5 and 14 pounds and are 25 – 45 inches in length with a wingspan of up to 75 inches. Some Canadian geese migrate, and others are residents. They feed on a wide variety of plants and sometimes insects, and small fish. In your neighborhood, the Canada Goose can be nuisance with their loud honking and droppings in the grass—watch where you step. We deploy plastic Swan decoys to try and slow their intrusion in our subdivision waters.

Bufflehead is a small diving duck that has a large, rounded head and is 15 inches in length with a wingspan of 2 ft, weighing about 1 pound. It is a strikingly beautiful duck. When the Bufflehead dives it stays underwater for 10 to 20 seconds feeding mainly on aquatic insects. It is one of the fastest waterfowl and can achieve speeds up to 48 mph. Watching the Bufflehead swim and dive for their food is fun!

Mallard is a duck familiar to ponds and lakes. The Mallards will return to their place of birth. They feed on seeds, plants, and aquatic insects. The Mallards are 27 – 28 inches in length and weigh between 1.6 - 3.5 pounds. They are surface feeding ducks and eat by tipping underwater for food with head down and feet and tail in the air but do not dive. The Mallard is a beautiful duck, and it is enjoyable to observe them gracefully swimming.

Sandhill Crane is large, elegant, grey bird weighing 7-8 pounds, standing 3.2 - 3.9 ft in height with a 6-7 ft wingspan. The Sandhill crane has a distinctive loud crackling call. They used to be prevalent on golf courses in the area. However, with all the homebuilding, their environment has been impacted, and the Sandhill Crane population has decreased.

The Great Egret is a tall thin heron of 3 ft in height, 31 – 41 inches in length, and a wingspan of more than 52 to 67 inches. The Great Egret is an elegant bird with a long-pointed bill and black stilt-like legs. It stalks shallow wetlands looking for fish to spear with its sharp bill. The Great Egret also eats aquatic insects, frogs, and crayfish. It is a protected bird and enjoyable to watch.



Sand Hill Crane landing

Photo by James Van Couver

The Great Blue Heron is tall grey heron and one of the most common wading birds with black eyebrows and a long yellow bill. The Great Blue weighs 4.7 - 7.9 pounds, with a height of 36 – 54 inches and a wingspan of 66 – 79 inches. It is engaging to see The Great Blue Heron fly holding its neck in an "S" shape with long legs trailing straight behind and wings held in cupped fashion.

Other birds in addition to the waterfowl observed in the backyard are those who visit on a recurring basis including Mourning Doves, Red Wing Blackbirds, Orioles, Robins, Hummingbirds, Crows, Blackbirds, Hawks, Blue Jays, Cardinals, Goldfinch, Sparrows, and Woodpeckers.

Animals who frequent our backyard often are: the Woodchuck (Ground Hog); Grey, Brown, Black, and Red Squirrels; Rabbits; Whitetail Deer; Chipmunks; and the occasional Raccoon.

Additionally, there are the bothersome nest-builders like Carpenter Bees drilling holes in the wood deck, Paper Wasps, and the fascinating Robins and Doves below our covered porch.

I hope you enjoy observing your backyard wildlife - except for the Bees, Mosquitos, Paper Wasps, Chipmunks and Raccoons.

Have a wonderful summer! ▼

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The Wonderful World of Australia Amazed Us

By Jean Waid

What would you do with a free plane ticket anywhere in the world? My husband and I chose to travel to Australia because we had never been there. We had heard interesting facts about the country, and were impressed with pictures we had seen. Our lucky trip included a special deal permitting us to stay at specific five-star hotels for \$30 a night. While en route, we had a two-hour layover in Osaka Japan, where even the apples were expensive. At \$5 each, we decided to decline.

During our adventure, we enjoyed a view of a marathon from our high-floor room at a Sydney hotel, and attended a comedy show that we had already enjoyed in several U.S. cities. The trip's first snafu was when the cab driver asked us for directions. Specifically, he asked what major street crossed our comedy show address. Unfortunately, we were late to the show, and missed about two-thirds of the jokes. Because we were unfamiliar with locations in Sydney, the politics, and the charming accent, we missed quite a few jokes. Others in the crowd were laughing hysterically - still, it was a fun experience for us.



On a visit to a crocodile farm, an unfamiliar multi-colored small spider appeared on my hand. "GET IT OFF OF ME" I shouted, but because no one played hero, I had to remove the spider on my own. The red rash that appeared on my hand disappeared after applying white salve given to me at the farm office.

Wild kangaroos are as prevalent in Australia as the white tail deer are in Michigan. They can also interfere with traffic like deer. How we loved seeing them though.

The burning of cane fields after a crop is harvested was scary and awesome with the sky ablaze in red flames.

This beautiful country is so large, they have five time zones. We only saw a fraction of Australia during our two week trip, and would love to go back to see other areas if only we could be beamed over.

Four full length movies were shown on one leg of our flight! My husband Roger enjoyed scuba diving off the Great Barrier Reef on a day cruise near Cairns. I snorkeled briefly to a small sand island that had been taken over by sea birds. They say it's easier to walk backwards when wearing flippers. I could not see much of a difference. It's not easy either way.

We encountered friendly and interesting people. One guy at a motel handed us his brother's business card when he learned we were heading to Cairns. "Just in case we got into trouble" he said and needed a friend or help. We could not tell if he and his brother were on good terms. We appreciated his offer, "just in case" but told him we doubted we would need it. Perhaps his generosity was offered because it was a happy hour. We enjoyed listening to native accents and enticed him to keep talking.

We viewed koala bears in a small zoo as they were hanging on a eucalyptus tree. They were adorable, but acted in a trance-like mode - under the influence of those eucalyptus leaves.

While visiting the beach, we saw "Beach Closed" signs due to jellyfish sighted in the water. Their stings can be painful, dangerous and even fatal. If a severe reaction occurs, it is necessary to seek medical attention immediately. That day no one was swimming or walking on the beach.

Fortunately, we did not see any snakes. We learned it is considerably easier to eat kiwi when they are cut in half and using a serrated spoon.

The Sydney Harbor Bridge is an iconic bridge that took eight years to build and opened in 1932. It's made of 53,000 tonnes of steel and six million hand-driven rivets. It is also the tallest steel arch bridge in the world. Surprisingly, people pay for a chance to climb the bridge. Bridge climbing officially began in 1998. There are many packages offered ranging in difficulty and time. To climb the ultimate upper arch takes 3 1/2 hours, while the shortest sampler takes about 90 minutes. Dawn to dusk tours vary in price, and are dependent on weather conditions. Specific outdoor gear is required to wear during a climb. Our athletic niece loved the bridge climb. While living in Sydney as a college exchange student, a friend of her mother's gifted her \$300 so she could climb the bridge. Beautiful pictures are on the internet of the views from the climb and more detail. ▼



A World War II Excursion

We took an Amphibious Duck vehicle tour both on land and sea. It was an experience we will not soon forget.

Created in 1942 during WWII, the Duck vehicle was used in the D-Day Invasion of Normandy. They are still in use today, with tours running on land and on the water in harbors and rivers. The tours are very popular, and a welcome addition to parades. Once, a Duck was even used in a wedding. This impressive machine has been called "One of the engineering marvels of the modern world."

Cold War Secrets Nestled into Quiet Places!

By Nicole F. Cannon

Tucked into the rural lands of Oakland County, NIKE Missile Sites were deployed to protect Detroit's manufacturing locations. After the threat levels subsided, Oakland County voters established funding and repurposed the land. Oakland Community College opened in September 1965 on the former D-97 site in Auburn Hills.

The Cold War

The Cold War was an ongoing political rivalry between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their respective allies that developed after World War II. This hostility between the two superpowers was first given the name by George Orwell in an article published in 1945. Orwell understood it as a nuclear stalemate between "super-states"—each possessed weapons of mass destruction and could annihilate the other.

After Nazi Germany surrendered in 1945, there was an "uneasy alliance between the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union" and these alliances began to fall apart. Hence, this was the beginning of the Cold War.

"The Soviet Union began to establish left-wing governments in the countries of eastern Europe, determined to safeguard against a possible renewed threat from Germany. The Americans and the British worried that Soviet domination in eastern Europe might be permanent. The Cold War was solidified by 1947–48, when U.S. aid had brought certain Western countries under American influence and the Soviets had established openly communist regimes. Nevertheless, there was very little use of weapons on battlefields during the Cold War. It was waged mainly on political, economic, and propaganda fronts and lasted until 1991."

The Nike System

Air Defense of the United States in 1950 consisted of radar-directed 90mm and 120mm anti-aircraft guns placed in cities during World War II under the control of the National Guard. These guns were deployed around and in major cities and ports of the United States: New York and Washington had four battalions; Chicago had three battalions; Philadelphia, Detroit, and San Francisco had two; Boston, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles had one.

While little was done to actively provide strategic defense for the United States from 1945 to 1950, the invasion in 1950 of South Korea by North Korea with the aid of Soviet tanks and artillery spurred new concern for anti-aircraft research.

In addition to the Korean War, a few situations spurred the United States Army to establish a nationwide defense system to protect against Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles. This was the Soviet Union's ability to attack the Continental United States over the North Pole or over the seas against either coast, coupled with its demonstrated testing of the hydrogen bomb in 1949. The adversarial relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States became known as the Cold War and prompted the development and deployment of the NIKE system.

Beginning in 1953, NIKE was deployed first on the east and west Coasts and then in the interior of the United States. More than 4000 missiles were installed. Many went into old anti-aircraft gun sites. However, the 25-mile range of the NIKE missiles allowed the batteries to be placed further from the potential targets. This allowed more time to shoot at the incoming bombers. America's suburbs became sites of the NIKE Ajax—the first technological advance in the conversion of the United States air defense from artillery to guided missiles.



NIKE Hercules Missiles

Detroit Nike Sites (Detroit Defense January 1, 1961)

The Department of Defense wanted to protect the manufacturing sites in Detroit and built 16 sites. D-97 was the Nike Site located in Auburn Hills, Michigan, which is the present site of Oakland Community College Auburn Hills Campus.

The IFC (containing area) is gone. All that remains is a road, a small foundation under some trees, and a lot of ground rubble.

The Present

"These pieces of history are nestled into quiet places that are now parks, preserves, and even the airport. They are remnants of fears mostly forgotten but now rekindled with the war in Ukraine. There is a radio tower on Belle Isle that would receive a signal of an incoming bomber and send word and the missiles would launch over Detroit to intercept the incoming missile.

The idea was pretty simple. The missiles had a specific range they could cover, and those ranges overlapped, making a shield of nuclear weapons to protect some of the country's most important factories and industrial places responsible for creating military equipment during the Cold War.

The missiles in Detroit were some of the most important in the country. Not just because they protected factories and plants but also because they were some of the closest to the Soviet Union.

By the early 1970s, the missile program was deemed obsolete after the Soviet Union stopped using bombers and started using more advanced missiles. The sites were demolished, leaving little trace, and sometimes none at all, of the fearful armament they once housed.

The missiles could either have conventional or nuclear warheads on them, and some of the 265 missile sites around the country did have nukes in people's backyards. Mrozek said the ones in Michigan weren't Nuclear." ▼

Source: Steve Mrozek. He is a historian at Selfridge Air National Guard Base Air Museum and is one of the state's top experts on what was called Nike Ajax or Nike Hercules missiles.

Exploring Brazil

By Sam Seabright

For my work during the 1990s, when I went to Brazil I always flew into São Paulo's Guralhos airport. My colleague would meet me and we would drive about an hour west through the scenic hills, to Itu. The first thing you notice about Itu is the size of the traffic lights: Enormous! I suppose the townspeople thought it made the town unique.

Brazilians speak mainly Portuguese. São (pronounced San) Paulo is the main city. The man's name João, my colleague there, is pronounced John. All my foreign colleagues spoke English.

The factory at the outskirts of town made automotive sensors. It was an old Bendix plant. It had its own fire suppression system, with a water tower that could be seen from far away. My job was to inspect the whole facility for safety and environmental issues or potential problems. (Example: I spotted a chemical storage shelf in the lab, with acids stored on the high, open shelf with no retaining lip. Glass bottles of acid could easily fall off the shelf and break on the concrete floor.) I also gave suggestions for production improvements, such as providing laminar flow air movement in a painting facility, or replacing manual presses with common hydraulic presses, which was also an ergonomic improvement. I suggested some room layout changes in the small part assembly room to improve product flow in the department. The changes were all made by my next visit!

It rains a lot in Brazil. During one rainstorm, I was in the plant and it was so humid that it rained inside the plant! No, the roof did not leak: There was so much moisture in the air that it dripped. The downpours can be very heavy, loved by the lush foliage.

There was a small field by the plant, but not really usable. It was infested with termites, with their very large hill structures. A path went around the field to the restaurant and picnic buildings. All employees and management ate there—at no charge, typical of the company worldwide.

I visited the Itu plant many times through the years.

Brazil at that time (1990s) was experiencing severe monetary inflation. I stayed at the San Rafael Country Inn south of town, and they changed the price each day on a sign in the lobby. One day a colleague drove me into town to exchange the government-issued Cruzados into a gray market scrip that everyone used instead. Inflation was so bad that the government changed the name of the money—Cruzados, Cruzeiros, often. The colleague asked me if I like "coke". I was very reluctant to answer, fearing that he was talking about cocaine. However, he produced a plastic bag with white flakes in it: it was coconut!

I visited other plants in Brazil. The plant at Guarulhos (near the São Paulo airport) made a variety of auto parts. It was an old plant. Once they had a fire when I was there and the plant shut down for the day, all employees standing outside while fire trucks attended the fire. It was a pile of wood crates outside the plant.

As was typical for foreign plants, there was free transportation provided by the company for all employees to work and back, but management usually drove their own cars.

My colleagues took me on a short road trip outside Itu. Alongside the road and in the distance, were giant boulders—probably 20 feet diameter—scattered in the countryside. Atop a few of the boulders, a workman would be cleaving the stone into slabs, to be made into street paving stones. He would skillfully split each stone with a hammer and chisel. He must have been very patient.

I stayed a day in Curitiba, south of São Paulo, on the way to the plant in Irati. It is near the tremendous Igassu Falls, on the Paraguay border. I remember it being next to a factory that made matches: talk about a fire hazard!

Also I went to Porto Alegre, south of Curitiba. General Motors had built a massive assembly plant there, reminiscent of the Ford Dearborn works. It was dubbed the Blue Macaw Project, and in the office, the "mascot" was indeed a squawking blue macaw. The project included several supplier plants on the same property, making subassemblies for the main plant. Our plant made entire dashboard and steering assemblies.

I have been very fortunate to travel and get to know the people, culture, and food of Brazil. One of my favorite lunches was Churrasco; roasted chunks of meat served on a rotisserie skewer, and a pitcher of Antarctica beer. Wonderful!▼



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Farmland to Parke-Davis to OPC ~ The Rich History of 650 Letica Drive

By Karen M. Lemon

The land where OPC currently resides was once farmland that was purchased by Parke-Davis, a drug company, in 1907 and named the Parkedale Farm. Parke-Davis & Co., famous for the manufacturing of the Polio Vaccine, evolved from a small drug store on the corner of Woodward and Gratiot in Detroit in 1867.



The Parke-Davis Company of Detroit, Michigan, had been authorized to produce a diphtheria antitoxin in 1903. It soon became apparent they needed a larger facility because of the number of horses and small animals needed in the research. In 1907, after an extensive search around Michigan, Parke-Davis found 340 acres of land in NE Avon Township, just east of Rochester and the interurban railway line which would transport employees and animals to this new location.

In the History of Parkdale publication dated October 8, 1988, Parkedale Farm became well-known during its 80 years as Parke-Davis' production center of vaccines (poliomyelitis, influenza, adenovirus, rabies, and smallpox), antitoxins (used against tetanus, gangrene, and diphtheria) and, more recently, drugs such as Benadryl, Adrenalin...."

Parkedale Farm was a sterile research facility and a working farm with many specific requirements. The horses, for example, were selected for their size: heavy horses from St. Louis and Kansas City and lightweight horses from Kentucky. They lived in well-ventilated barns with concrete floors and metal stalls

for a disinfected environment. At the peak of serum production, 600 horses lived in the Parkedale barns, and the farm produced enough foodstuffs and dairy to supply the nutritional needs of the Detroit offices.

Rochester can claim several large scientific farming operations. These include Parkedale Farm, the largest biological farm; the Sarah Van Hoosen Jones' dairy and poultry farm; the Ferry-Morris Seed Company; Meadow Brook farms; and the Great Oaks Stock farm.

Today the animals are gone and the area has been reduced to approximately 82 acres along with a name change, Endo International. In 2016 the organization so generously donated 2.87 acres of land to the OPC that included a 1907 historical barn. Take a moment and gaze beyond the fence on the east side of the upper parking lot. There, look past the ravages of time and neglect, and you'll see an old Victorian-era barn full of charm and character.

As you admire its weathered facade, take a moment to transport yourself back to its prime, evoking a sense of nostalgia for the rich history it holds—right under our feet at the OPC Social & Activity Center. ▼

References: Callihan, D. (2015, October 19). The Polio Vaccine Story



A Day in the Life at OPC



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OPC Is Where I Like To Be

By Jean Waid

OPC is where I like to be
My knees like the pool and therapy.
Aerobic exercises aid in sleep;
Swimming laps helps with my heart beat.
Roger's legs enjoy the walking track
And stationary bike before a snack.

Upon one thing we are agreeing.
The pool and track keep growing.
They both keep getting longer.
Or are we no longer younger?

Dr. Maibaurer alternates weeks
All dressed up and ready he greets
With orthopedic advice for pain
By appointment with nurse Cindy.

Amazing cashiers with all they do,
Well trained to help both me and you!
Welcome center volunteers give answers.
Cheerful words greet us by sign-in deskers.

There are great concerts that we really adore
Good talks on health, safety, finance, and more.
If I cannot fall right to sleep naturally,
I recite my poems from V V quarterly.

Becky and her kitchen elves are stars.
With nourishing soup and salad bars!
That is on Fridays for lunch
Makes us so happy to munch!.

We need many more hours in every day
To enjoy OPC events where we play!

OPC is where I like to be!
It's a special Center you'll agree!

Sounds of Seasons

By Maryann Blodgett Wilshire

Easy rain plinks
...like echoes of tiny clappers in a bell.
Summer thunder crashes
...like kaboom of bowling pins.
Powerful winds howl
...like roar of race cars.
Fresh snow prints scrunch
...like crispness of an apple.

Have I Told You Lately That I Love You

By Michael Flannery

As music oftentimes inspires me to write a story or poem, I was listening to the Irish lyricist, singer, and musician Van Morrison's song by this same title and was prompted to write this poem:

The simple words "I love You"
Are filled with so much meaningful value

The expression "I love you" is very special
Reserved for those we hold at the highest level

When we say these words, they should not be taken lightly
As they are spoken to those we hold so highly

The words are usually for our closest friends and family
So very genuine and not used that readily

Also said to those who've done something very special for us
Even though may have not been at our request

I don't say "I love you" often enough to my wife
As she is truly the love of my life

Even my grandson recently said "I Love you" so happily
..."I love you too Mikey"

Can never enough tell someone that you love them
In their own way each person held dear is a special someone

Such a heartfelt statement of utmost affection
A bond, devotion, wondrous connection

Our Little Jamie Boy

By Robert A Lytle

Jamie was five years old when I wrote this.

First t' get out fishin' First t' bring one in.
First in line for ice cream. Last to wipe his chin.

First one out to recess an' to bloody up his nose.
First t' skin up both his knees an' scrape his barefoot toes.

Always into somethin', you can be real sure a' that,
Up a tree or down a hole er ticklin' someone's cat.

Always got a glint a' mischief in those eyes a' hi'n,
Ear-split, squealin' sort a' laugh, an' Cheshire, all-boy grin.

An' if there's flowers bloomin' at the cottage or the farm,
He'll run to me with both hands full,
"Let's take these home to Mom!"

Front Yard Maple Tree

By Robert Lytle

Through Ian's eyes, the neighborhood children's favorite climbing tree.

I'm not too sure who started it, wasn't Geoff, I know,
Prob'ly it was Jame or me. Sure it wasn't Bo.
Could'a been some neighbor kid, first to scale that tree,
Cliffel girl er Moilanen—mighta been all three.



But sure as all its leaves are green that maple tree's become
The second story stompin' ground that's far from Dad an' Mum.
A meetin' place for all us kids who's big enough to climb,
Low enough for little tykes to come and keep on tryin'.

Place where all us boys an' girls have met since we was four,
Climbin' up and branchin' out—how could we ask fer more?
Musta been so long ago that Daddy put it there,
An' kept the bugs an' dogs an' kids from bothering with it where

They mighta harmed a twig er leaf, an' doomed that little tree,
An' never give it chance t' grow t' shade a bumblebee.
But now it's tall and strong and has a place in every heart
Of every kid on Aspen Court—our summer mem'ries start

With climbin' up that maple tree at every school year's end,
An' goes until the fall chill snaps the last leaf from her chin.
It always will remain a place for happy thoughts for me.
Our stage for great adventures—that's our Front Yard Maple Tree.

Wading in Cold Waters

By Michael Flannery

Thinking about my folks cottage on Lake Huron
and the early morning when I would walk down
to the beach and enjoy a beautiful sunrise.

Wading in cold waters to be warmed by the sun
A precious time of enlightenment for some

The waters splashed hurriedly along the shore
With some surprising agitation not seen before

The sunrise was spectacular across the skyline
Beckoning a day that was meant to be all mine

The seagulls had their territory lining the sand
Looking for the fish not found on the land

A new day has been born for all to see
Nature's way of telling us we will be eventually set free

Wading in cold waters warmed by the sun
A precious time of enlightenment for some

The sky is brightly lit as the daytime proceeds
Allowing us to fulfill our worldly deeds

It is evening now, and the waters are colder
Bringing us back to the day that has gotten much older

Wading in cold waters warmed by the sun
Asking questions to be answered one by one

The Cottage of My Boyhood Days

By Robert A Lytle

Fond memories of childhood places can be almost
as pleasant as being there. This is from my family's Les
Cheneaux cabin in the 1940s and '50s. I hadn't been there in
thirty years, but my thoughts had never roamed far.

I bet the cottage smells just like it did when I was five,
And sometimes just before I sleep
I make the crows come 'live,

An' listen to 'em "Caw, caw, caw," t' break the summer's still.
I'm fishin' off the Davis dock, my stringer's almos' fill,

I watch my dad draw water from the neighborhood pump well
An' sip a draught from that tin cup—
been there 'fore time could tell

An' then I'm walkin' down the trail with Mom, t' Gov'ment Bay,
She's got me 'long t' scare off bears an' snakes along the way.

I'm sittin' in the kitchen, watchin' Mommy fry the fish,
Stewin' dumplin' cabbage, a-waitin' fer my dish.

Then Amy Lou's a-poppin' corn, an' Karen's meltin' butter.
Pat, she's crackin' ice chips fer the water fer her brother.

The oil lamps are flick'rin'—I know it's time t' sleep.
I slip m' flannel jammies on an' dive beneath the sheets.

Right now that cottage is about a million miles away,
An' thirty years ago, but in my dreams, I'm there today.



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A Tribute to Marye -with an “e” Advocate, Leader, and Friend



OPC Executive Director Renee Cortright & Marye Miller

Marye Miller, the former Executive Director of the OPC who retired in 2014, sadly passed away in June. Marye's journey began in the 1970s as a bus driver, where she first started serving seniors. Her natural leadership and unwavering commitment quickly propelled her to the role of Acting Director of R.A.R.A Senior Citizens Programs in 1974. By 1983, she had become the Executive Director of the Older Persons' Commission (OPC), a role in which she would truly make her mark.

Under her remarkable leadership, the senior center operations moved from the Woodward location to 650 Letica Drive in 2003. Her persistence and perseverance have made possible the expansive 90,000 sq. ft. facility we celebrate today, dedicated to the health and wellness of individuals aged 50 and above. This strategic relocation allowed for the significant expansion of two vital services that support seniors in aging in place—Meals on Wheels and transportation. These programs have since become cornerstones of our mission, providing essential support to countless individuals.

Andy Warhol said, 'The idea is not to live forever but to create something that will.' We are eternally grateful for Marye's contributions and her unwavering dedication. She has set a high standard for all of us to aspire to, and her memory will continue to inspire and motivate us to serve our community with the same passion and commitment. Please be sure to check out the rich history of the OPC by viewing the history wall located on the way to the auditorium and familiarize yourself with the establishment of the OPC with Marye leading the charge. ▼




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Milestones

By Nancy Knitter

According to the dictionary, a milestone is "an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development". As a senior in her 80th decade, I have experienced many milestones along life's journey. I started compiling a lifeline of milestones from the day I married in 1959 to the present. Most of the milestones deal with the usual family marriages, births, deaths, and memorable travel and moving to another state (Michigan) from Wisconsin with my husband and two young boys.

In January of this year, I reached another milestone that impacted my daily life. I HUNG UP THE CAR KEYS FOR GOOD! After dealing with Macular Degeneration for some time, it was apparent that I did not feel at ease behind the wheel and started every venture out in the car with a prayer. No sense in causing an accident and harming someone else especially but also including myself. Several years ago, my husband had to give up driving because of physical issues, and he hated it to the point of trying to find where I hid the car keys so he could sneak out.

Commonly in my generation, when a boy reached the age of 16, he took his driving test and soon to follow he falls in love with cars and driving. I did not learn to drive until age 26, after marriage and a first child. We lived in cities with great public transportation.

A move to a rural community necessitated learning to drive to get around town, visit parents, and get to places too far to walk. I realized the freedom driving gave me to explore scenic back roads and connect with community events. Having learned to drive, I was prepared for our move to the community of Rochester in 1968.

I would pack the kids in the car and tell them we were going on an adventure. I would pick a new road to explore and find where it would lead us. The boys never complained because we always ended the adventure with a stop at the Dairy Queen.

Now, friends and relatives kindly volunteer to drive me to church, lunches, meetings, and medical appointments. The OPC and other senior centers have bus services available to take you door to door. I am grateful for the support services.

Yes...I still miss that feeling of getting in my car and turning on the radio station that played golden oldies with which I could sing along. My favorite route was through Stoney Creek Metro Park to enjoy the Nature Center, the lake, and beaches as well as the scenic drive up to the golf course.

I am looking forward. A few more milestones are to be added to my list. Among them, perhaps an Amigo mobility scooter will take me around to explore life a little closer to home. If you see me passing by, wave and give a thumbs up. I may still say a prayer before I venture out on the scooter but I promise to drive safely. Beep-Beep.▼

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Her Love Would Take You to the Moon and Back

By Ruth Ciocan

Stop to picture the relative from your past who influenced you the most. Got that person? Ask yourself why you chose that person. Personality? Strong work ethic? Family-oriented? Ability to adjust to the circumstances? Fun? Generous to the hilt? Loving?

Without thinking, my thoughts go to Mama's second sister Florence Luguzan King Petrascu. She was a statuesque Romanian woman taking after my Mosu's (grandfather) height, but she had the caring heart of my Baba (grandmother). I couldn't say "Florence" as a child and ended up calling her "Auntie Lo." She was married to Uncle Charlie for years; he was an "American." He was "probably" a bootlegger delivery man because they would make trips to Kentucky, and he'd bring a trunk load of "liquid" back up to Michigan.

She had a kind and loving heart. I got sick and had to stay home from school. She got on the bus, stopping at Sydney Bogg's to get me chocolate covered pineapple. The weather was awful and ice on the driveway was slick; Mama said she crawled on her hands and knees up the driveway. She loved her two nieces in a special way—she never had children herself. While I was sick at home, my sister Janie was in Children's Hospital with pneumonia. Janie's get-well gift was a Madame Alexander baby doll. To find just the right christening blanket for the doll, Aunt Lo shopped in the actual baby department.

Every Good Friday we would go to Baba's house to color Easter eggs. Since Auntie Lo lived in their four-family apartment building, she would prepare the dining room table for decorating by laying out the white sheet used by them to make noodles for soup. The eggs would be in a white enamel pan, and we would find Baba's large coffee mugs with food coloring in them ready for our Easter tradition. We had a wonderful morning dipping, laughing, and mixing the colors "accidentally." We did three dozen eggs to share among the homes of the three families. Some were perfect and others had cracked, but each had color. She'd shine up the finished eggs with bacon grease. Auntie Lo's fried chicken and "sos rosu" (tomato gravy) was eaten in her apartment because our grandparents fasted on that day. Proudly we'd show Mama our colored eggs—never got a cracked egg in our take home carton. Then Easter morning before church we of course came back to let them see our outfits since Baba and Mosu usually paid for them.

Another memory is one morning when Auntie Lo heard Baba yelling that someone had stolen her milk money from her window ledge. Well, it didn't take her long to get on her shoes and take off to get Baba's money back. She "caught" the man at Six Mile and Woodward. Needless to say, I'm sure she gave the people on the bus quite a show of her anger for stealing from her mother.

Some Saturdays when Mama wanted to clean the house, we would go to Auntie Lo's house. The highlight would be going to the movies. First, we stopped at the newspaper store because they had comic books; I always got Archie comics. Then we went to the popcorn shop next door and got to even pick out a large candy bar. The Six Mile theatre had movies for 25 cents on Saturday, so the line was long. We were near the front of the line, and no one tried to cut in front of us because Auntie Lo was a very imposing figure; you didn't want to mess with her. We always had to sit four rows from the back, on the left-hand side near the exit door in case we had to make a fast exit for whatever reason; I never figured that out. You were not allowed to go to the lavatory unless it was an emergency, and then she was your security guard. Those Saturdays were exceptional to us. Movies, popcorn, candy bar, comic books—what more could a child want?

Auntie Lo's world collapsed when her marriage broke up prophylactics in Uncle Charlie's car trunk. She punctured each one with a vengeance. Going downtown one Good Friday afternoon after our morning of fun, she came home to a vacant bedroom closet and bankbook. Sometime later, her friend fixed her up on a blind date with a Romanian, Wes. A few years later, they got married in our living room, and her reception was in our basement. Mama did all the cooking for about 50+ guests. They were married for over 30 years. In the 1980s when they moved to Dearborn, Uncle Wes bought his first car and learned how to drive. She always said her heart was in her throat when he was on the road, yet she went with him to restaurants and grocery stores for her weekly excursions.

Auntie Lo was a "Foley artist," a person who does sound effects, for us. Dad was not keen on us watching "Batman" but when he'd take our grandparents to Wednesday night prayer meeting, Auntie Lo would let us watch it, complete with "BAM" "ZOOM," and "KAPOW"!!! On one of her first trips to Romania she proved her ingenuity. She made little pockets in her long line bra and put in either watches or pairs of glasses. I can only guess what that plane ride was like for her. You would take the glasses to the church you were visiting, and people would try on each pair. If you could see better, you'd take a pair. So, what did it matter if only one lens worked?! You still took the glasses. She had special dresses made for this trip, so she would stylish, but left a few there for her aunts.

One summer, Janie and I took the Woodward bus from Seven Mile down to Six Mile. If we did not see her at the bus stop, we had to get off the bus; we never got off the bus. She'd take us to Hudson's mezzanine cafeteria because you could put as much Maurice dressing on your salad or so she said. Then it was to the toy department on the 12th floor. Janie picked out the Barbie dream house.



To the Moon and Back... *continued from page 18*

I was more mature and decided I wanted an album case. She not only got me the checkered psychedelic case but also let me pick out the "Sound of Music" album. Mama had a fit when she saw all our treasures.

After Uncle Wes passed away, Aunt Lou was on her own again. She would give me her grocery list each week which always included her six sour cream donuts and "whatever else you think I might like." So, I had free reign for getting her to try new products. When the weather was warmer (and even if it was not!) and the Dairy Dream was open, she'd take a chocolate coffee malted milk shake. She was one of the smartest women I knew. With only an 8th grade education, amazingly, she could answer any Jeopardy question.

She had my grandparents' meat grinder and sausage maker. Janie wanted to learn how to make sausage. I was the photographer, and Janie was the secretary. Because Aunt Lou used her hand for measuring the ingredients, Janie had to measure each item before putting it in the meat. The grandkids were mesmerized seeing the sausage come out of the machine and into the casing. Luckily, she showed Janie how to make nut roll and "sos rosu."

Since we had family still in the "old country," she'd send boxes through an "underground service." A man would pick up the boxes, send them via a ship to Germany, and then drive them down to Romania. Delivery time was non-existent; whenever the boxes got

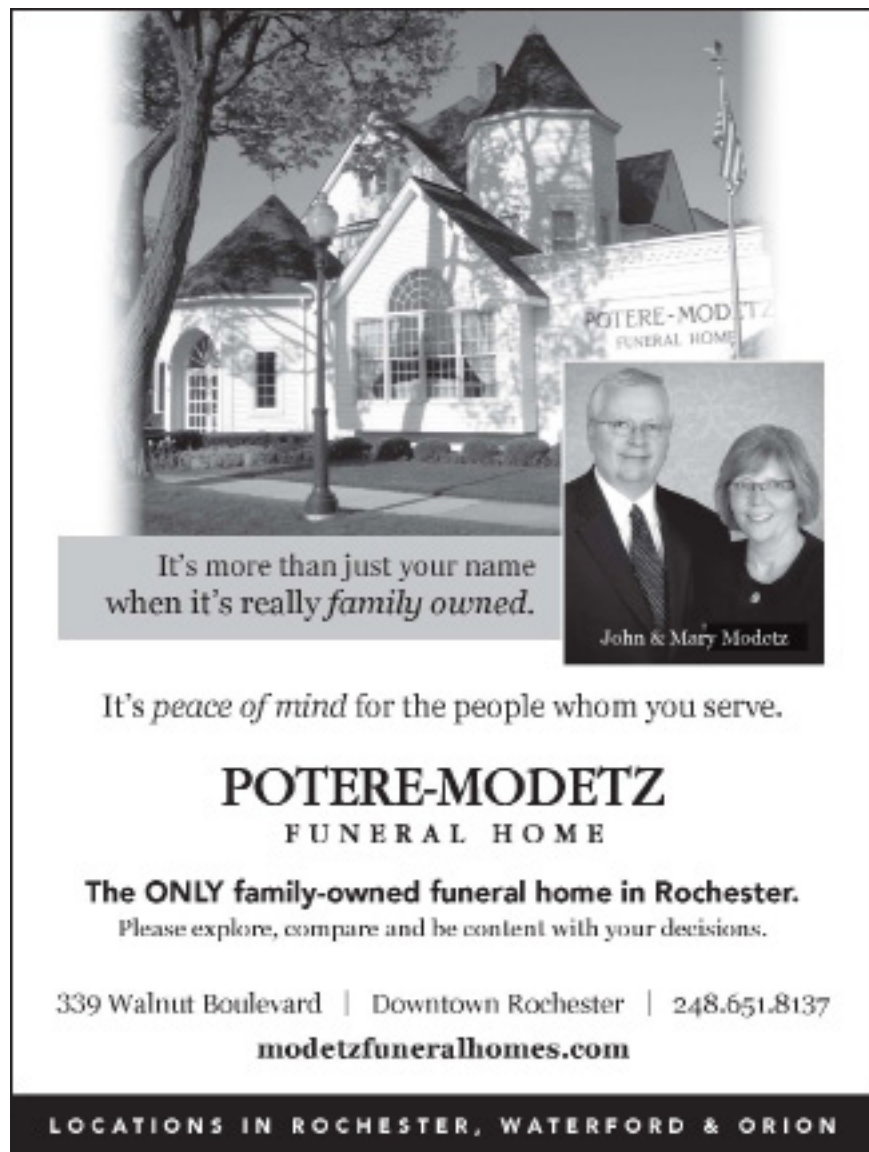
to the house, a Polaroid picture was taken of the recipient, so the benefactor would know it had arrived. We would go to Vanity Fair in Birch Run to get clothing. Auntie Lo would want to carry-on big-time conversation with us. She didn't realize you paid per minute, except this time I paid per minute. We'd bring back bags of ladies' bras and panties with no idea of size of the recipients.

One year we got the owner of a Hungarian restaurant to sell us six pounds of special paprika. Two tablespoons in a miniature envelope was a hot commodity at their weekly open market.

Over the years, she suffered with cancer and strokes, but the last time of numerous visits from EMS was at 5:30 a.m., and she was taken to the hospital. It was the morning of a three-inch snowfall. After a few days of being in the hospital, she fell into a coma...that last night I was there I told Auntie Lo "...if I could be half as good of an aunt as she was, then I would have done okay." I knew her final wishes; her funeral, on that gloomy and cold May day, was simple, just like she wanted.

Cleaning out her house was a lot of work and yet a gift of love from her to the family in Romania of 15 large boxes sent to them filled with clothes she had never worn with price tags still on and enough blue serge material to literally make suits for each man in the village.

Auntie Lo was kindness overflowing who would defend, protect, and love you to the moon and back. ▼



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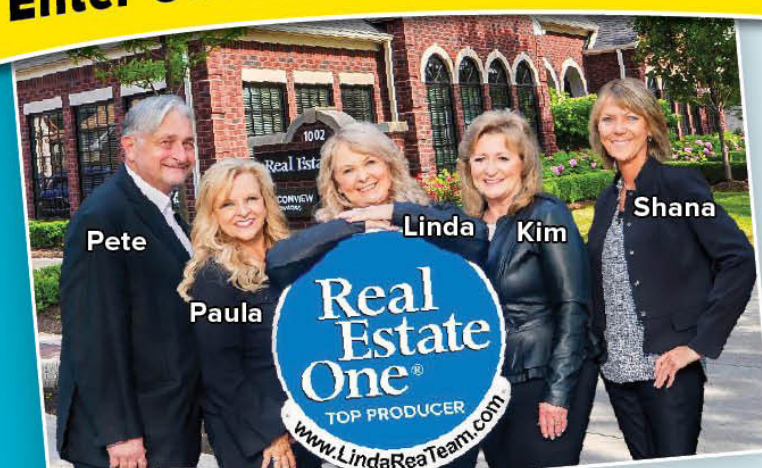
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JULY FUN WORD CHALLENGE

Find the listed words. They may run in any direction but they always run in a straight line.

T	I	E	V	A	R	B	V	E	B	T	V	R	L
U	J	U	L	Y	F	O	U	R	T	H	R	T	L
D	E	R	M	S	B	L	E	U	I	S	L	C	I
N	S	H	E	K	B	S	N	P	W	P	A	E	N
F	L	U	L	R	S	C	I	A	H	A	M	C	D
N	L	A	M	O	W	E	H	T	I	R	E	I	A
Y	T	A	R	W	I	L	S	R	T	K	R	T	R
T	E	S	G	E	M	E	N	I	E	L	I	S	E
R	A	U	I	R	M	B	U	O	U	E	C	U	A
E	E	M	E	I	I	R	S	T	L	R	A	J	T
B	I	M	W	F	N	A	A	I	P	S	P	R	E
I	O	E	R	O	G	T	T	C	F	B	B	Q	A
L	R	R	T	E	N	E	C	I	N	C	I	P	M
U	N	I	T	E	D	S	T	A	T	E	S	R	E

Mail completed puzzle to The Linda Rea Team • Real Estate One
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All winners will be announced on our website at www.LindaReaTeam.com/giveaways

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