

November 9, 2019

Moody on **The Market**



Pat oodu

When Greg Vaughn joined the team at Cornerstone Alliance in Benton Harbor 25 years ago this month, he came

with a tremendous amount of knowledge about the community at large. Not only was it his hometown, he held multiple key positions in city government for an entire decade all the way up to the role of City Manager. Today, the man who worked his way to the role of **Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President** of Business Development for Berrien County's lead economic development agency is poised to step away from the job and into retirement at the end of the year. Vaughn says that when he leaves on New Year's Eve he will take at least a month off "to do whatever my wife wants to do," and chuckles. After that, he says, "I'll just kind of find my way around, but will still be putting in some hours here at Cornerstone on a consulting basis to not only keep me busy in the transition, but also to allow me to work through some of the projects I've been involved in that are still ongoing." The affable community leader has the respect of a vast majority of the citizenry which is readily evident when you see him walk downtown or at community events and is approached regularly with warm hugs, hearty handshakes and big smiles every time. He'll be the first to admit, "A lot is happening in this community right now, and it will be hard to walk away from it, but sometime you have to cut the strings and move on with your life, and I think it's getting close to that time for me." I sat down with Greg after learning of his decision to retire and asked him about the things that he'll recall with pride. He says the key highlight of his Cornerstone career has been "Watching the community progress." He notes, "Oftentimes working in this type of environment, you sort of don't see the forest for the trees. I'll run into people who say 'Oh man, this looks so much better than when I was here 10 years ago,' or, 'I didn't know that was even happening,' and that's always a reminder to me that we have accomplished a lot in this community." He goes on to suggest, "Local folks tend to take it for granted because they see it every day, but when visitors come into the community they recognize the additions and the improvements that have taken place." Some of the great things Vaughn points to you would certainly understand, like the myriad improvements in Benton Harbor, and naturally he's proud of the hard work to bring to fruition the Harbor Shores development, which he calls nothing short of "fantastic." Beyond that he points to "The many great companies that have come and stayed and grown in our community which have made such a tremendous impact on

SPEND MORE TIME WITH FAMILY ND LESS TIME WORRYING ABOUT **MONEY THIS CHRISTMAS**



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fun and interesting things

half of the month offers

many activities with



Executive Director, Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council

Fun & Interesting Things to Do in Michigan's *Great* Southwest!

I am not sure how opportunities to start your Christmas shopping. November arrived so November would be a good time to complete quickly, but I do know your gift giving list, so you can enjoy December that there are still many celebrating the holiday season.

Yuletide classics trumpet the crisp air, welto do this month! The last coming families to holiday activities held during Dowagiac's Christmas Open House Saturday, November 16. Jolly 'Ole St. Nick greets children

within the elegant indoor setting at a local restaurant. Enjoy the warm surroundings inside the restaurant, where children receive a gift from St. Nick. Outside families enjoy holiday vocal, instrumental and dance performances at Beckwith Park, where a meet & greet with costumed miniature horses is also held. Families can tour the

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city by horse-drawn wagon and meet local artisans, when they visit the Craft Show. Open House Weekend is also the official kick-off to the holiday shopping season, as specialty shops throughout the city feature their finest selections Friday and Saturday.

Next up, celebrating a milestone 25th year is the *Luminary Festival*, November 22, in downtown St. Joseph. Stroll through the beautiful candlelit streets as 1,000 luminaries light your way as you shop in downtown St. Joseph. Shop! Shop! Shops will be open late on Friday and throughout the weekend to provide refreshments, great sales, and amazing product offerings. Let them entice you with wonderful gifts and festive holiday decor. Eat, drink and be merry.

You can also eat, drink, be merry and shop at the two-day *Autumn Artisan Market*, November 23 and 24. For two days, artists and makers of all kinds will fill Journeyman's iconic event spaces for their annual Autumn Artisan Market! Wander the old Featherbone Corset Factory with your favorite craft beverage in hand and meet some of the area's most talented and dedicated creative professionals. From locally sourced gourmet and personal care items, to handcrafted decor and jewelry—you'll find gifts for everyone on your holiday shopping list. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. Don't miss this popular event!

Another popular event is Arclight Brewing Company's *Mac & Cheese Bake Off,* November 27. They invite you, your friends, and your family to join them the night before Thanksgiving for their annual Macaroni & Cheese Bake Off! There are prizes awarded to the top three contestants.

Over 100

Five Star Reviews

Enjoy a delicious bowl (or two) of Macaroni & Cheese at 6pm, it's free and open to the public. The Deep-Fried Pickle Project is returning to the Taproom at 8pm, so stay and enjoy the live show. Be sure to take home some of their craft brews to enjoy with family and friends throughout the holiday weekend.

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You can wrap of the month by finishing your Christmas shopping during *Small Business Saturday*, November 30. St. Joseph Today is excited to celebrate Small Business Saturday in Southwest Michigan! Support the movement by shopping locally. Anytime you spend \$100 locally, \$68 will stay in town supporting the local economy and that is a win-win for all of us! The Welcome Center will feature 97.5 Y-Country, and coffee. There will be specials, discounts and refreshments at many locations throughout the downtown area including, but not limited to Baroda Founders Wine Cellar, Box Factory for the Arts *Holiday Makers Market*, and Forever Clean Soap Works.

You can also celebrate *Small Business Saturday* with the folks at the Buchanan Art Center. The Buchanan Art Center will be hosting an artist's market for a fun day of shopping and will have free kids' activities and crafts. While you are there browse the gift shop filled with thousands of locally made items.

For all the details on these events and more visit <u>www.swmichigan.org</u>. We'll be back at the end of the month with a whole host of Christmas celebrations in December.

We wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving!

Read more at www.MailMaxOnline.com

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Fall Splendor Photo by Barbara Parsons

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We all wish to be independent; and not have to depend on anyone - especially our grown children. Unfortunately, the aging process doesn't always respect our wishes. I have worked over twelve years in the In-home care realm, serving our seniors, which has provided me with a true and real insight to the growing needs of this population. The truth is, we will all age. The reality is, we too will one day be the person in need. It is important that we take a step back and imagine how we are going to face losing some of our own independence when the time comes. By doing this, we can better understand what our parents are facing, put ourselves in their shoes, and hopefully guide them with a greater love and understanding. In my numerous visits with the families of loved ones, the one goal that resonates each time is, mom/dad wish to stay in their own home. Seniors are accustomed to leading productive lives and their days should involve hobbies and engagement in activities which will help them remain in their homes. Feeling useful can be a boost to an elderly person who is feeling isolated or depressed. Everyone needs to feel like they are contributing to something larger than themselves. You may be surprised how much a person perks up knowing that they are making real contributions to their household chores and engaging in fun activities which help counteract a sense of isolation. It truly is about finding ways to help nourish your loved

Preserving Seniors Independence

one with a sense of purpose, which is genuine to each one of us.

Helping elderly people feel connected and useful is one of the most nurturing things we can do. They need to be reassured by our thoughts and actions that their life has purpose now as it always has. Age does not change this. All of us cultivate our purpose which gives true meaning to every journey we experience.

There's no denying that giving up driving can be a tough step for older adults -- often far harder than we anticipate. It is one thing to talk about giving up driving but quite another to suddenly find yourself unable to go where you desire, when you wish to go. You can be a valuable source of emotional support to a driver as he or she gets used to life without wheels, by listening carefully to their concerns and helping to set up alternate solutions to continue their outings they once enjoyed and also maintaining scheduled appointments.

There can be a balance between accepting help and living independently. By accepting help you are giving a gift to your family and also the person helping you.





The number one complaint that we hear from our new patients with hearing loss is, "I can hear but I can't understand." If this is what you're experiencing, you may wonder if you have a hearing loss.

Hearing loss is complicated because it involves not only the ears, but also the brain where sound is translated into meaningful words. Hearing loss comes in all degrees from mild to profound. When you think of hearing loss, severe hearing loss or deafness probably comes to mind. But mild, moderate and high frequency hearing losses are actually much more common. And, with these types of hearing losses, the only symptom may be difficulty with word understanding, especially in situations where there is competing noise.

If you have a high frequency hearing loss, you may notice problems understanding speech even in a relatively quiet environment, but when background noise is present or several people are talking at once, it can become nearly impossible to follow a conversation. People with hearing loss that has gone untreated for a



MailMax for Michigan's Great Southwest I can hear, just not clearly. Do I have hearing loss?

> number of years sometimes begin to avoid lively social situations or public places they once enjoyed because interacting with others is too difficult.

> When you have a high frequency hearing loss, you may have trouble:

- following conversations in quiet and noisy places (hear but can't understand).
- talking on the phone.
- understanding your favorite TV shows or movies even when you turn the volume up.
- understanding female and young children's voices because they tend to be higher in pitch.
- enjoying music because it sounds distorted, especially at higher volumes.

If you can hear, but can't understand, you're not alone. This is what we hear almost every day from our patients, and we will get to the root of the problem, listen to your concerns and find a solution that meets your needs. Don't give up on enjoying conversations at work, home and play. Call Dr. Kasewurm's Professional Hearing Services at (888) 675-9480 before November 30th for your FREE hearing screening!

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Contact Steve for additional information and your private showing. (269) 921-0770

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Beyond Just Feeding Probiotics



Things are different these days ... a lot different when I started into natural medicine in the mid-1990s. The internet has impacted the way people deliver and receive information, as well as how people are influenced in the choices, they make regarding their health.

Often when a new "all the rage" topic hits the headlines, I stop and listen. I read. And I research. I have seen too many fads come and go, and over the last year or so, one of the topics I have been investigating more is prebiotics.

The concept of a prebiotic was put forth in 1995. Early scientific discussions about prebiotics focused on identifying substances that targeted health-promoting groups of bacteria in the gut: namely, bifidobacteria and lactobacilli. And that's a lot of what you hear about today: how prebiotics are food for probiotics, and as we are discovering, they are much more.

One of the tenements to gut bug research is a diverse environment of beneficial bacteria. There are over trillions of bugs in what is referred to as our microbiome, and over a thousand unique species. Much like the diversity of the rainforest, consider the importance of our microflora to the health of our bodies. From immunity to cognitive health, to metabolic support, control of inflammation, mood, and more, a healthy gut environment is critical.

Changes to the diet have shown to alter the microflora with just a few days. Unhealthy and/or

restricted diets typically decrease microbiome diversity, while varied and diverse sources of fiber (prebiotics) and a family of antioxidants, known as polyphenols, increase microbiome diversity. High microbiome diversity has been linked to optimal health and resilience.

In addition to supporting diversity of bacteria, emerging research is showing how prebiotics may play an even more significant role than probiotics, performing unique metabolic, growth, and protective functions within the gut, once again, leading to overall cellular, immune and metabolic support.

This is the evidence I was looking for. I wanted to see that prebiotics can go beyond just feeding probiotics, promoting and performing their own unique, stand-alone benefits to our biome and our health.

In practice, I am finding prebiotics and probiotics to be a "both/and" concept, opposed to an "either/or." I have been using a product from Pure Encapsulations called Poly-Prebiotic Powder. Poly-Prebiotic contains PreticX Xos and BioEcolians α-GOS, two prebiotics which have shown to promote short-chain fatty acid (SCFA) production in the colon and bifidobacteria in the GI tract.

In addition, Pure has added polyphenols from blueberry and pomegranate to further support the growth of lactobacilli and bifidobacterium in the colon, as well as inflammatory balance in the GI tract

Stop by a Martin's Pharmacy today to find out more about Prebiotics for your health. And as always, all Pure products are 15% off every day.

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Each episode explores what researchers have learned about some specific function in the human brain. The subject of the first episode is memory.

nating new documen-

tary series entitled

The Mind, Explained.

Researchers have discovered that the capacity of the human brain to commit things to memory is breathtaking. For instance, one woman featured on the show is able to memorize a random series of 500 numbers in just 10 minutes and then repeat the numbers in their proper sequence without making a mistake.

However, researchers have also found that there are many aspects of human memory that are far from reliable. Another woman recalls what she remembers from September 11, 2001. While the main arc of what she remembers is accurate enough, there are various details in her recall that are not.

All of which brings us to our Lord. Our God's capacity to remember is perfect. It is all-encompassing. It is eternal. All by itself, this is a chilling thought. It tells me that if my plan is to stand before a perfectly good MailMax for Michigan's Great Southwest Memory

"I will never forget . . . " Amos 8:7

There is a fasci- and just God one day and presume that, somehow, my failures will be small enough to have been forgotten by him, then I am the one with a faulty memory. I have forgotten that my God knows all and remembers all that I do.

> But that's why God chose to send his Son. He saw our desperate need for rescue. Jesus remembered his heavenly Father's will and lived a life of perfect faithfulness on our behalf. He also carried our every sinful failure to the cross. There he washed them away in his blood. Now, through faith in what Jesus has done in our place, God declares that he will remember our sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34).

> And here's one more beautiful thing. Even on those days when you don't fully remember how much God loves us in Jesus, he does

> Prayer: Lord, thank you that because of what Jesus has done for me, you remember mv sins no more. Amen.

> > Submitted by:Pastor Glenn T. Rosenbaum Administrative Pastor Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Joseph Originated by: www.What AboutJesus.com

Read more at www.MailMaxOnline.com

protect your future what is your strategy?



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Ramsei **Emotions**, basics, and change Dear Dave

I've gotten out of

debt before following your plan, but I always seem to fall right back in. I find myself spending more than I mean to whenever I go out shopping or running errands. I'm tired of all this, and I want to stop busting my budget and get control of my money once and for all. Do you have any advice?

Patrick

Dear Patrick,

Years ago, when I lost everything financially, there were two or three extremely strong emotions that spurred me toward change. Probably the biggest emotion was fear. I was scared to death I'd be broke for the rest of my life, and not be able to take care of my family. Don't misunderstand me, though. I don't think you should ever live your life in fear. But a reasonable, healthy level of fear where some things are concerned can be a fantastic motivator.

Another emotion was disgust. I realized the way I had been living and handling money was stupid. So, I made a proactive, conscious decision that I was going to change, and things were going to be different. The third emotion was contentment. You know, advertisers try to make us believe our lives will be better, and we'll be hap-

Dave Says

pier, if we just go out and buy their stuff. I can tell you from personal experience when this idea is crammed down your throat every day, it can warp your perception of contentment and happiness. Lots of stuff does not equal lots of happiness.

If you've tried several times, and are still falling back into the same old trap, maybe you should approach your situation in a practical, day-to-day way. Stop going places where you're tempted to spend money on silly things. When you go out running errands and shopping, make a list of only the bare necessities, and take along just enough cash to pay for them.

Spending money on a bunch of stuff you don't need, and probably don't even really want, isn't going to bring you contentment. It's just going to bust your budget, and put you in a financial hole that will, sooner or later, become very difficult-if not impossible-to dig your way out of

-Dave

* Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 16 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @ DaveRamsey.

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It's that time of year! I'm sure you've noticed the dark mornings and evenings. They are here to stay, making it hard for runners and walkers to get their miles in before and after work. Safety

first, of course, but with the right gear and a few extra precautions-it's entirely possible to run and walk smart in the dark:

1) Coordinate with dawn and dusk. Your favorite weather app should predict both sunrise and sunset. Try to time your run or walk so you can experience at least a little bit of dawn or dusk. Hello, beautiful orange skies!

2) Wear gear that lights up. Vests, armbands, headlamps, flashing necklaces from the party store...whatever makes you look like a twinkling Christmas tree, wear it! The more visible you are, the better. Reflective gear is great, too. Think vests and bright clothing with strategically placed reflective strips. If you need to stock up, visit Connected Soles on Niles avenue for some great options.

3) Leave the music at home. When you're out in the dark, it's harder to see what's going on around you. Make sure all senses are firing, including your ability to hear. Leave your headphones at home or consider a pair of AfterShokz. These wireless headphones sit outside your ear, which allows you to hear both your music and the world around you. (Also available at Con-

November 9, 2019 Page 7 **Be Smart in the Dark**

4) Choose a populated route with sidewalks and street lamps. This is key, even if it means you'll be stuck doing a few loops. If these sidewalks and streets don't exist where you live, consider driving yourself into downtown St. Joseph or anywhere else that's lit up fairly well.

5) Run or walk against the flow of traffic. This is especially important if you're on the side of the road versus a sidewalk. Always be aware of what's ahead of you. It's true that cars need to watch out for humans, but humans need to be responsible, too. This is easier when you can see what's coming down the road.

6) Take a buddy. Need I say more? And if you can't take a buddy, let a buddy know where you're going, just in case. The buddy system is legit.

And finally, the most important tip: Stay safe, be smart, and just go inside if you must. Running and walking on the treadmill isn't fun-I get it! I hate it, too. But thankfully, that option exists if we need it, and we should take advantage of it when safety is a concern. If you don't have a treadmill, let me know. There are plenty at South Shore! We also have an indoor track, which is pretty popular with the runners right now.

Reach out to me if you'd like a guest pass: tara@southshorehrc.com.

By: Tara Sabo (Fitness Director, ACE-CPT and Group Fit Instructor at South Shore Health & Racquet Club)

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to go along with 12 digs, five blocks, and three aces against Gobles. Megan is also an All-Conference member of the Comet Basketball and Softball teams, and National Honor Society. In the classroom, she carries a 3.9 grade point average.

Megan is the daughter of Steve and Shannon Neubecker of Coloma

Other finalists for the week were Levi Zelmer of Buchanan Football, Spencer Harris of Michigan Lutheran Football, and Marshall McFarland of Berrien Springs Football.

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the overall community. So, those things are always great to see and be a part of." The other side of the coin can wear on the best of us, as Greg says, "I think I have some disappointments as well, and those generally are around how slow things tend to move. It takes a long time to make progress, and a long time for a lot of the projects that we've worked on to materialize, and of course along the way there have been some that started out looking really great but never managed to materialize. Of course, that's very disappointing." Vaughn landed the Cornerstone Alliance job 25 years ago after a chance meeting with Jeff Noel at a community event. Noel had just come aboard as President of Cornerstone Alliance and that chance conversation was just an opportunity to talk about what Noel wanted to accomplish during his time with the economic development team. It was not at all about Vaughn joining the team, however a short while later an opening came up at Cornerstone and Noel reached out to Greg and, as he says, "Lo and behold I ended up here at Cornerstone and have been here ever since." During that time, he worked for Noel and then Wendy Dant Chesser. followed by Vicki Pratt and now Rob Cleveland. Vaughn's career background is quite diverse. He worked for the City of Benton Harbor for "just shy of 10 years, and did everything from working for the fire department, the inspections department, ran the human resources department, was assistant to the city manager. and even served a stint as City Manager. I certainly wore a lot of hats for the city over the years." After his civic service, Vaughn developed a company of his own, a start-up called Marketing Materials Distribution, and did that for about three years before selling it to a competitor. He says, "After I sold that business I met with Frank Pastrick at Frank Pastrick Chevrolet, and he suggested that I might be a good candidate for the General Motors Institute, which was a dealer development program, with the idea of owning and operating a dealership of my own at some future point. I did that and as part of my requirements for that program I had to work at a dealership, so Frank invited me to work with him, which I did for a few years. Unfortunately for Greg, the dealer development program fizzled when the economy went south, and the auto industry contracted substantially. Greg says, "They were closing up dealerships all over the country, so I figured that was likely not the best time to get into that field. So, I ended up staying with Frank for a few more vears, and then went to a company called Bibco and did their human resources work and special projects for about three or four years. After Bibco, whose operations were anchored just a block and a half away, Jeff Noel came knocking and the rest is history. Greg Vaughn's work at Cornerstone and elsewhere in the community

MONDAY - BURRITOS \$6 TUESDAY - TACOS 3 FOR \$6 WEDNEWDAY - TACOS \$1.25 THURSDAY - WET BURRITOS \$9.99 FRIDAY - FAJITAS \$10.99 has paved the way for many great successes and he's been active on many fronts including with the Executive Committee of the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, and countless groups working to improve the quality of life in Michigan's Great Southwest. He serves on the boards of the Berrien County Economic Development Corporation, Berrien County Loan Administration Board, Berrien Community Foundation, Lakeshore 504 Board, Benton Harbor Promise, Benton Harbor Economic Development Corporation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Benton Harbor and the Benton Harbor Parks Conservancy. He is a past winner of the Small Business Advocate of the Year for the State of Michigan by the U.S. Small Business Administration in May of 1998. He tells me, "It's been a great ride, quite frankly. I came here expecting to be here for a couple of years and 25 years later I'm finally going to be moving on." He will be missed, but you'll still see him all around town, because he wouldn't have it any other way. Now maybe he and I and his son Zach and our buddy Jerry Price can finally find our way onto a

golf course once again. There are only 19 hotels in all of Michigan that have earned AAA's coveted Four Diamond Status We've all heard about the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, but now we have bragging rights deep in the heart of Michigan's Great Southwest. The Inn at Harbor Shores has also earned that elite status. Known for majestic views of the Lake Michigan and St. Joseph River waterfronts, as well as of The Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, The Inn at Harbor Shores hotel has been awarded AAA's prestigious Four Diamond Status. With only 6.3-percent of more than 27,000 properties inspected receiving the honor, the hotel joins an elite list of world-class destinations across the country, including the Grand Hotel and The Townsend here in Michigan. General Manager Brady Cohen says of the Inn at Harbor Shores recognition. "The Four Diamond Award from AAA marks a pinnacle moment in our resort's history," and adds, "As Lake Michigan's first beach, golf, and waterfront destination, we are proud to help keep Michigan tourism on the map. Not only is this a crowning achievement for The Inn, it is also well-deserved recognition of the natural beauty within Michigan and a celebration for the surrounding community." As part of the rating ascertainment process, a property must meet certain requirements based on an unannounced inspection. The stringent standards of a Four Diamond hotel is described by AAA as "refined, stylish with upscale physical attributes, extensive amenities and a high degree of hospitality, service, and attention to detail." Ed Vandenack is President of Highland Hotel Investments. He says. "From the 92 guestrooms and 14 suites to 13,000 square feet of event space, The Inn has something for everyone," and notes, "Our visitors include families, golfers, tourists, business travelers, and even celebrities. Overnight guests, as well as the public, have access to many of our amenities, including The Spa, Rise & Vine coffee and Michigan wine bar, and our waterside restaurant, Plank's Tavern." Much of what is seen today at The Inn was inspired by history. The hotel's waterside restaurant owes its name to a resort built in 1888 by John Oliver Plank known as Plank's Tavern on the Beach, which was located directly west of the



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current location. The Inn's classic coastal architecture. with much of it constructed from Michigan products, reflects the area's roots in materials, colors, and art. The award comes just five years after The Inn started taking reservations in 2014. Since its inception, it has been seen globally as part of the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship television broadcast on three occasions. Harbor Shores will also play host again to the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship in 2020, 2022, and 2024. You can learn more online at these links: www.innatharborshores.com and www.harborshoresresort.com

When they realized how much the vast parking lot they inherited when moving to their Pipestone Road headquarters impacted the nearby Ox Creek Watershed, the professionals at Wightman took matters literally into their own hands to carve out a more environmentally friendly Rain Garden, and now they've won a major award for that project. Wightman has received a Michigan Award for that Rain Garden beautification project from Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc. (KMB) at their annual Awards Banquet held last month on October 18th in Lansing at the Crowne Plaza West. Founded in 1946, Wightman is a Benton Harbor-based architecture, engineering, environmental and surveying services company. Realizing the impact on Ox Creek, the Wightman team selected a section of their asphalt parking lot at 2303 Pipestone Road, removed parking spaces, and replaced them with a rain garden. The rain garden collects and filters pollutants from stormwater run-off before the water enters the Ox Creek watershed. Wightman Landscape Architect Ben Baker says, "By reducing the quantity of stormwater run-off from the site, the garden offers a substantial positive environmental impact. The 3,750 square foot garden features plants and trees native to Michigan, providing a welcome respite amid an asphalt jungle shared between one office and two manufacturing facilities." The Wightman rain garden was originally designed three years ago in 2016 as part of a larger environmental effort to improve the water quality of Ox According to the Southwest Michigan Creek. Planning Commission, Ox Creek is the last tributary to

enter the Paw Paw River and is one of the most polluted, owing to the manufacturing facilities, shopping mall, large box stores, and farm operations that encompass it. Polluted stormwater run-off, often carrying dangerous chemicals, travels into the creek, leaving erosion in its wake. Those factors cause the environment to suffer. Planted in the fall of 2017, 18 parking lot spaces were eliminated, and dirt was excavated from the site. New soil and rocks were added to the garden, and a community planting day was held where more than 750 plants were installed. The garden will soon mark its two-year anniversary. Installing the rain garden was truly a community event that included community volunteers, dignitaries, side by side with Wightman employees performing the planting work. The trees are growing, the native garden plants are thriving and water entering Ox Creek is cleaner as a result. Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc. is a non-profit organization established in 1962 by Governor John Swainson as a litter prevention committee. In 1965, following the White House Conference on Beautification, hosted by Ladybird Johnson, a Governor's conference was held in Lansing. At that conference Governor George Romney declared that Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc. would be the official state organization to combat litter and to promote beautification. Their objective is to identify, recognize and honor programs or projects that involve beautification, litter prevention and control, recycling of waste materials, clean-up, site restoration and historical preservation. Wightman is a full-service consulting firm staffed by a dynamic team of more than

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That's it for this week, folks. See you Saturday right here in MailMax!

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A Couple of Sure Vets I've been thinking about how manv Veterans Days my dad observed as a veteran. Technically, since November 11 became officially named "Veterans Day" in

June, 1954, it would be 56 days. But weren't there thousands of ordinary days that he, not to mention my mom, siblings, and me, celebrated in some little way that he was simply here among us? I guess I don't really know the answer, but I do know that being in the limelight of this annual column always made him feel a little embarrassed. When I think of Veteran's Day, I mentally

snap to 'ten-HUT for my mom and dad. They're vets of "The Big One," World War

II. My dad had enlisted in the summer of 1941, so he was already in uniform when America got involved, and he stayed in it throughout. (Well, he changed into clean uniforms once in while. I hope.)

While my dad was cultivating a taste for army food, my mom helped in all the ways that a teenage schoolgirl could. She assisted my grandpa with his duties as a block warden, finished her compulsory education, conserved and rationed. And prayed.

Dad spent almost two years on the island of New Caledonia in the South Pacific. A couple years ago, I finally memorized the dates that he was overseas. He reached New Caledonia on April 21, 1942, the day after his 20th birthday. I figure the other end of the equation is one of the most important days of my life, even though it was 4,860 days before I was born: he headed home - all in one piece - on April 1, 1944.

Something tells me that on the voyage home, he didn't foresee a future that would bring him a degree from Wabash College (on the GI Bill), marriage to a DePauw University co-ed (58 years and counting), and long careers for both of them in elementary and high-school education including their own "continuing education" at the hands of their five brilliant children.

I come from a family of readers, and at one time my parents owned scores of books about WWII. I was very fond of one of them when I was a kid. It's called "Up Front." It's a book of wartime cartoons by a guy named Bill Mauldin, who honored the fortitude of ordinary GI's through two foot soldiers named "Willie and Joe.'

Mauldin's drawings of Willie and Joe are wonderful - a couple of regular guys always balancing their weariness against their determination. They always need a shave, and a change of uniform. (Willie and Joe won a Pulitzer Prize for Mauldin, but I once read that General George Patton just HATED the way they looked.)

As a kid, I'd draw my own versions of Willie and Joe. They were about what you'd expect from a 10-year old, although I did do a pretty nice job with their stubbly whiskers. Of course, I could observe and touch the occasionally unshaven face of a real-live vet.

Luckv me.

PS - Thanks dad (we miss you), thanks mom, and thanks to every vet of the front lines or the home front

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