MICHIGAN MAGIC

THE GIVING SPIRIT, PAGE 2.
OUR MARVELOUS MARKET, PAGE 3.
A WONDER DOG, PAGE 4.

Supported by readers of the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News
Michigan is magical this time of year. Detroit’s Campus Martius is open for skating beneath the Christmas tree, all aglow. And be sure to check out the lights around town. Wayne County’s Lightfest is under way on Hines Drive, one of the longest drive-through displays in the area. (See www.waynecounty.com for more details.)

Michiganders have the holiday giving spirit, too. We visit a classroom that is sharing their love of books through the Gift of Reading, on Page 2.

On Page 3, the Yak finds market magic at a shop in Detroit’s Eastern Market.

On Page 4, meet a Michigan dog that is casting a spell wherever he goes after setting a record.

And there’s plenty of magic writing in this week’s Winter Tales on Pages 6 and 7.

Readers Are Leaders In Giving

Even on a gray, wintry day, the halls and classrooms at Addams Elementary School in Royal Oak are bright with artwork and cheerful signs. And there’s a bright box covered in yellow paper that’s filling up fast. It’s a box made for the Gift of Reading, a Detroit Free Press program that collects books to give to needy young readers.

Kindergarten teacher Nancy Hollyer has been collecting books for the program for about 25 years. “I think I started when the program began,” Nancy told the Yak, who visited Addams to hear about the school’s giving this year.

Students in every grade as well as the preschoolers in the Early Childhood Center are part of the effort. The Yak had a chance to talk with some of the leaders in the collection, who have already brought in books, about the spirit of giving.

“Everyone deserves to read,” said Isabelle Hedge, 9, a third-grader. “Reading can take you to a new world,” she added, when explaining why she likes to donate. Isabelle donated one of her favorite books, “Bad Kitty for President.”

Sam Silveri, 7, a second-grader, said, “It’s good to give to other people who don’t always have books.”

Amy Liu, 9, a third grader, loves to read and thinks others will want books “for a rainy (or snowy!) day, a book lets you have something for your imagination.”

Deb Scola, Community Affairs Director for the Detroit Media Partnership, said, “It means so much to us when schools and classrooms work together to help others. It’s heartwarming to see kids put forth an extra effort to bring that same enjoyment to children less fortunate, children whose families can’t afford to make books a priority in their homes.”

Nancy told us that when the collection for this year is finished this week, she thinks she’ll have reached 5,000 books – for her 25 years of collecting from classrooms. The Yak knows the Addams kids will make that happen!

By Cathy Collison

Want to Help?

Books and donations for the Free Press Gift of Reading are collected all year long. For information on starting a collection, ask your family or teacher to check out www.freep.com/reading.
Detroit Spirit in Store For Market Shoppers

One of the nicest things about Detroit is its historic buildings, each a reminder of the past.

Several of our favorites are in the Eastern Market Historic District. One is the Ciaramitaro Brothers Wholesale Produce Commission House, at 2506 Market Square. Built in the 1880s as a saloon, there were sleeping rooms on the second floor, just like in cowboy movies!

Now, another old market district building has been restored. The “new” Detroit Mercantile Co., at 3434 Russell Street, recreates the look and feel of an early 20th Century general store, the predecessor of today’s retail stores.

The façade, or front, was built in 1917 by the city’s fire department. But the rest of the building and surrounding grounds “were used for decades before that to board horses, train horses and store and repair (fire) wagons,” said Robert Stanzler, a co-owner of the Mercantile.

The store’s displays bring smiles and should instill pride. The weird, wacky and wonderful merchandise was all made in Michigan. Some items are new; others are antiques.

The collection includes the plush, chocolate-brown mounted head of a Michigan farm-raised bison; hand-sewn 19th Century-style leather sports balls; a shiny new Detroit Bicycle Co. bike with copper handlebars and trim; an original Popeye pop-up book; rock posters, T-shirts, books and more. Things like the bison head ($3,000), bike ($3,700), and Popeye book ($300) were beyond the Yak’s pocketbook, but were well worth a look (smile, smile).

But there were neat inexpensive items, too, including buttons and antique Detroit postcards for $1. We bought two postcards of the Detroit Zoo – one with polar bears, the other with giraffes. They were so cool we framed them! There were also vintage steel TootsieToy cars for $2. A leather lemon ball, a form of 19th Century baseball, was $35. The hand-sewn antique basketball was $200, but again, well worth a look – we’d never seen one.

The Mercantile will host a special holiday shopping event December 15-16. About 25 retailers, designers and urban craft people have been invited to sell their goods in the annex, the now-empty warehouse that takes up most of the building. Check out the walls and ceiling to see the different floor heights and different kinds of bricks – evidence that the building was cobbled together in stages. Imagine horses drawing a wagon inside for repairs. “Then because horses tend to be one-way drivers, they could go right out the front!” said Robert.

The Detroit Mercantile Company is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday.

By Patricia Chargot

Photos by Patricia Chargot

At the Detroit Mercantile, be sure to look up and around – so you won’t miss the bison head and the special bike.

New Detroit T-shirts are mixed in with antiques. Everything is made in Michigan.
In Greek mythology, Zeus is the king of the gods, ruling over Mount Olympus with his thunderbolt. But in Otsego, Michigan, about 160 miles west of Detroit, Zeus is the king of dogs, ruling over his new world record status. Zeus, a Great Dane, is featured in the recently released "Guinness Book of World Records 2013" as the tallest dog ever, measuring 44 inches tall when standing on all four paws and a mighty 7 feet and 4 inches when he rises up on his hind legs!

How did Zeus get discovered and become a history–making canine? It all started when his owners, the Doorlag family, saw another record-holder, Giant George, on TV about two years ago. The video showed Giant George, also a Great Dane, walking around the kitchen, and Denise Doorlag and her family noticed that George and Zeus seemed to be about the same size. She was judging by how tall the dog was compared to the height of the cupboards in the background.

Denise decided to contact the folks at Guinness Book of World Records and that got the ball rolling, she said. Zeus didn't like being measured by the official measuring tool, so it took about a year of coaxing and practicing. Soon after he was finally measured, his size was verified, or confirmed. It was determined that he was, in fact, an inch taller than the previous record-holder!

But Zeus doesn't just sit at home eating kibble, basking in his new fame. He's been an active pet therapy dog for much of his life, visiting patients in the hospital. He also visits schools, especially in and around his hometown, and since winning the record; he's been a celebrity guest at libraries and events, including a recent visit to the Petco store in Troy.

Zeus eats about 10 to 12 cups of dry food, or kibble, a day and a couple cans of wet food mixed in with that, says Denise. He also has eggs, chicken or ground beef – whatever the family is eating – to give him extra protein and calories, adds Denise. Zeus, who weighs a trim 155 pounds, usually eats twice a day and often has a bedtime snack, too.

Like most dogs, Zeus loves to go for walks and spends lots of time playing in his yard with Segan, the family's German shepherd. Does Zeus do any special tricks, we wondered? “My husband says his only trick is being tall,” says Denise with a laugh.

Denise says Zeus, who turned four on Thanksgiving, is a beloved member of their family. He loves to give his family members kisses, and sits on everyone’s laps. “He’s just a big, goofy, loveable dog. He makes us happy.”

By Janis Campbell

Zeus, the world’s tallest canine according to the Guinness Book of World Records 2013, drinks from the kitchen faucet at home in Otsego, Michigan. Zeus lives with his family – Denise and Kevin Doorlag and their two children, Nicholas, 17, and Miranda, 20.
**Historic Trip**

The White House is welcoming in the holidays with the decorating of the Christmas tree in the Blue Room and President Barack Obama even went holiday shopping with Sasha and Malia on “Small Business Saturday” after Thanksgiving. The busy schedule in Washington, D.C., comes after a historic trip by President Obama to Asia. The president visited Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar, or Burma. It was the first time an American president has visited Cambodia or Myanmar. He was greeted by thousands of people in Myanmar, who lined the roads to see him. He met with Myanmar President Thein Sein and also visited the Shwedagon Pagoda, the holiest cultural site in that country. President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Nobel Peace Prize winner and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, at her home. They are supporting the change in Myanmar's government transitioning toward a democracy.

**Twinkie Tale**

It’s still not known if the Hostess Company, maker of the popular snack food, Twinkie, will have another buyer. Right now, the snacks like Hostess Cupcakes and Twinkies have been snapped up off the grocery market shelves. However, while the Hostess Company may not survive, business experts predict it’s likely another company may step in and take over the Twinkie production!

**Mideast Cease Fire**

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton left the Asia trip to head to Egypt, where she assisted in negotiations for a cease-fire or truce in the Mideast. The truce ended more than a week of attacks on Israel from Palestinian rockets and Israeli air attacks on the Gaza Strip, land controlled by the Palestinian militant group called Hamas. In Israel and in Gaza, schools that were closed due to the attacks were reopened. At the Yak’s Corner press time, the truce was still in effect, but there will be lots more to negotiate. To keep up to date with this fragile peace, you can read the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News.

**Trees in Trouble**

The online journal Nature has some serious news on the world’s trees. A physiologist, a scientist who studies plants, reports that his research shows forests are all vulnerable, whether they are in tropical areas, or dry ones. The Australian scientist found that trees’ delicate “plumbing” leaves them very fragile if there is any drought. In a time of global warming, the scientists say further attention to our fragile forests is critical.

**Michigan’s MVP**

Since the Yak’s last news column, the Detroit Tigers had reason to celebrate with Miguel Cabrera named Most Valuable Player (MVP). “(I want to) share with all the fans in Detroit, all the fans in Venezuela,” Cabrera told the Detroit Free Press. “It’s going to be exciting for my country Venezuela and my family and I’m very happy for getting this MVP.”

Compiled by Cathy Collison
ENJOY THIS WEEK’S WINTER TALES!

THE GINGERBREAD OLYMPICS
By Jenna Doyle, 11, Larson Middle School, Troy

The doorbell rang, so I scooted over to the door and opened it. There stood my mysterious neighbor holding a picnic basket.

“Can I help you?” I asked.

“I am your neighbor, the Baker’s Wife. I live down the street,” she announced.

“I have brought you three very special gingerbread cookies.”

“Thanks, “ I replied, shutting the door on her. I walked over to the table and set down the basket and opened the latch. There I saw three perfectly baked gingerbread men. I could smell the peppermint buttons that went down their chest. I could feel their crisp edges. I heard muffling sounds coming from their licorice mouths. They were talking!

The first one said, “Hi, I’m Cindy.”

The second one said, “Hello, I am Patrick.”

The third one said, “Evan, present.”

Astonished, I grabbed the letter out of the basket. It said: Hello, you have just received your three applicants for the Gingerbread Olympics. Your applicants have been specially made for a certain skill for the Olympics. All you have to do is love and train the little gingies. Have fun!

- The Baker’s Wife

P.S. Cindy, Patrick, and Evan = sledding

How am I going to train three gingerbread men? Snow is slippery, so I had the idea to make them a mountain out of soap. Another problem was finding the right sized sled. I decided to glue a couple of Popsicle sticks together and then colored them with markers. We practiced, practiced on the soap mountain.

The next day I magically woke up in the North Pole at the Gingerbread Olympics. I heard the starting pistol for the girl’s sledding competition. I couldn’t tell which one was Cindy because five other girls had the same helmet as her. Next came the boy’s sledding competition. I knew which one was Evan because he had a purple helmet. I couldn’t believe my eyes! Was I really seeing my gingerbread compete?

The next morning, I smelled gingerbread as I opened my eyes. I threw on my robe and walked hunched over down the stairs. My mom was talking with our new neighbor who lives down the street, the baker’s wife. Was all that fun just a dream? I guess so, but now the baker’s wife really does live down the street. Maybe it could happen.

THE BEAR AND THE FOX
By Cameron Cole, 6, Lake Orion

Once there was a bear that was hibernating and he lived in a cave. There was a hare peeking into the cave. He snuck in the cave and he brought in a little bit of snow. It woke the bear up and the bear growled at the hare. The bear said, “Why did you wake me up?” The hare said, “I was trying to make a fire to keep us warm.” The bear said, “Let’s do that now that you said that!” They sat around the fire.
MY WINTER TRADITION
By Caroline Kalmar, 10, Grosse Pointe Park

Winter is coming soon; I can see the carolers now. I remember hanging the stockings while listening to the song, “Deck the Halls.” Well, let’s start from Christmas Eve. . .

“Mom, I got the lights. I didn’t know if you wanted green, red or white, so I got them all, but they are a little tangled,” I said as I tried to pry the lights apart.

“OK, we finished early; now we can make the cookies for Santa,” my mom tried to say as she went outside. The outdoors is our nightmare in the winter. I grabbed my coat, hat, scarf and my mittens. I got out into the outside nightmare. The white snow got all over me. I felt like I was frozen.

We got to the store for some late cookie making supplies. The store was busy more than usual, but it is Christmas, so whatever. “Cookie-making time,” Mom yawned, for it was late. She made the cookies, now we’re ready for the cookie games.

“Now you know the rules, whoever decorates (fully) all of the cookies on your plate first will win. Ok, on your mark, get set, go,” my dad yelled.

I grabbed the frosting and the sprinkles more ready than ready. All that was going through my head was “decorate the cookies,” over and over again. The cookies dashed off the plate. Gone, gone also went through my head as each cookie got decorated.

NOOOOOOOOOOO! I dropped the sprinkles. I picked it up, the frosting already on the cookie, and I sprinkled all of the tiny Christmas trees on the cookie. “I’m done!” I screamed just before Alex did.

“And the winner is Caroline!” my dad screamed for he was happy for me. Everyone was, even Joe and Alex. Sure they wanted to win, but they were still happy for me. My prize; I get to pick the first cookie to eat in the morning. We all went to bed that night feeling happy, me more than anyone. I was ready for Santa to come and looking forward to my cookie in the morning!

OUT IN THE SNOW
By Reginald Taylor, 9, Detroit

One day my cousin and I were at home by ourselves because my mom went to the store. There was a lot of snow outside so my cousin and I were going outside to play catch, but we could not get out because snow blocked the front door. So we went to get our coats, boots, gloves and hats. I went out the back door because it was not blocked by snow.

When I went out, I went to the front door and I said to him, “On my 3, you push and I pull. Got that?” He said, “Yes I got it. And don’t fall off the porch because the porch is frozen.” I said, “1-2-3,” and the door opened. We screamed, “Yes!” My mom was pulling up and she said, “What happened?” We told her, “The door was stuck.” She said, “Oh! Thank you for opening my door because I bought a lot of stuff so come and help me out.” We said, “OK.” Then we finally got to play catch and play in the snow.
All of these Santas look very similar this Xmas, but only one has all the following features:

- A round nose
- Green mittens
- A big smile
- A square belt buckle
- Three buttons
- A cotton ball on his cap

My name:

Learning Buddies: Spell your child’s first name, using the lines to write large letters. Use an uppercase letter for the first letter in the name and lowercase letters to spell the rest. Have your child trace the letters with a finger, crayon or pencil.

My Letters

X is for eXtra
x is for extra

My Numbers

How many X?

My Rhyme Time

’Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse.

My Sentence

Learning Buddies: Read the first part of the sentence aloud. Ask your child to think of a way to finish the sentence. Write your child’s words in the lines. Read the entire sentence to your child while pointing out that reading is done from left to right. Older children may want to trace all or some of the letters in the sentence.

I need extra

Letter Identification

With your child, look through the newspaper to find pictures of things with the same sound as the letter X in extra.

Math Play

Point to the number 6 in the newspaper. Have your child say the number and, if it’s large enough, have your child trace the number.

Extras

Many words that contain the letter x begin with the letter e like the word extra. Look through the newspaper with your child and put an X through all the words that start with ex. Circle any other words that contain the letter x.

Xmas Images

With your child, locate Christmas images in the newspaper. Examples you may find are: Christmas trees, presents, jingle bells, Santa, reindeer, ornaments, gingerbread. Cut out images and make a Christmas collage.

Holiday Shopping

The pages of the newspaper can take you and your child on a pretend shopping trip for gifts. Look through the newspaper and pick out pretend gifts for your child’s loved ones.

X Marks the Spot-Shapes!

Pick a shape you want to study—square, circle, or any other. Have your child look through the newspaper and draw an x on all examples of that shape.

Mystery Wrap

Find some objects in your house and wrap them in newspaper. Ask your child to figure out what is inside by feeling the packages. Ask what clues your child used. Unwrapping solves the mystery!

This page for young Yakkers is brought to you this week by readers of The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press who donated their vacation newspapers.