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Lifestyle

ISSUE 2021

Summer 2021 | A Supplement to the
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The 2021 Lifestyle Issue is here!

Summer in Minnesota is a special time, this year it's going to be something special after a year of social distancing. Enjoy this supplemental "Lifestyle" issue of the Maple Lake Messenger and Annandale Advocate. You will find some fresh new ideas for you and the family to get out and enjoy new hobbies and stay physically fit this summer. Subscribe by using the sub form below or to the Advocate on Page 7. Keep up with all our favorite events like Lakers games, swap meets, and the Gear Head Get-Together. COVID-19 disrupted all our lives, but it won't keep Minnesotans from enjoying our community

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Lifestyle

ISSUE 2021

Fat burning smoothie revealed



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Active Lifestyle



4

Attracting Bluebirds



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Lifestyle
ISSUE 2021

Summer 2021
 A Special Supplement to
 Annandale Advocate / Maple Lake Messenger



“Meditation in motion” is a strategy that involves using exercise to relieve stress and can include anything from long walks to swimming laps.

By Brenda Erdahl

There are many reasons to get in shape. Weight loss is a prime motivator, as is reversing a negative health effect, such as high cholesterol or increased diabetes risk. Routine exercise also can improve life expectancy. WebMD says exercise keeps the body and brain healthy. That’s why exercise should be an important component of daily life no matter one’s age. Research published in the journal *Immune Aging* found that how people age is 75 percent lifestyle and only 25 percent genetics, which underscores the importance of the lifestyle choices people make.

“Exercise improves your health, reduces cardiovascular disease and some cancers,” said Phoun Phoulavan a M.S., ACSM, TPI Certified trainer who manages Maple Lake Fitness. But regular exercise isn’t just important as you get older, it’s important at all stages of life. It

can help you sleep better and improve mental health. In kids and teens, it helps to build stronger bone muscle and as you age, remaining active can combat natural muscle loss, Phoulavan said.

Cardiorespiratory fitness

Many health experts say that cardiorespiratory fitness may be just as valuable a metric to determine overall health as blood pressure and lipid levels. People with a high aerobic capacity can deliver oxygen to tissues and cells efficiently to fuel exercise, according to data published in 2014 in the journal *Aging & Disease*. In a study involving 11,335 women, researchers compared V02 max, also known as aerobic capacity, in women with mortality data. Women who were fit from a cardiovascular perspective had a lower death rate from all causes, irrespective of the women’s weight.

♥ Good health starts with an **Active**

“Exercise improves your health, reduces cardiovascular disease and some cancers...”

– Phoun Phoulavan
M.S., ACSM, TPI Certified trainer,
Maple Lake Fitness

Lif



Gail Schwartz is a member of Maple Lake Fitness’s Silver Sneakers, a free club for folks 65 and older. Staying active is especially important as you age to improve bone health and combat muscle loss.

Photo by Brenda Erdahl

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◀ If your job has you sitting behind a desk all day even doing simple stretches like this throughout the day can help.



Travis Nordling works on some strength training exercises at Maple Lake Fitness. Strength training and physical activity can stave off the effects of frailty and osteoporosis, which affects bone strength.

Photo by Brenda Erdahl

estyle

Manage stress and mood

Exercise has direct stress-busting benefits that can promote longevity. According to Phoulavan, physical activity can increase the production of endorphins, which are the body's feel-good neurotransmitters. It's a feeling often referred to as "runners high" but you can experience

it doing other aerobic activities as well, from playing tennis to hiking.

"Meditation in motion" is a stress relieving concept. The idea is to find an activity – a long walk, a game of racquetball, hiking or swimming laps in a pool – that gives you that feeling of "my day is going to get better, that gets rid of the days'

frustrations," Phoulavan said.

Improve bone health

Strength training and physical activity can stave off the effects of frailty and osteoporosis, which affects bone strength. A study published in the Journal of Internal Medicine in 2017 found that hip fractures are associated with diminished quality of

life and survival among the elderly. Building muscle strength, balance and bone density through exercise can reduce falls and frailty, helping to prevent fracture-related health risks. Even light exercise done right at home or the office with items you have laying around can be a big benefit, especially if you find yourself sitting behind a desk for much of the day. To maintain bone strength, it is important to put some stress on the body, Phoulavan said. That can be as easy as lifting cans of soup or milk jugs. By putting stress on the muscle your tendons will then stimulate bone growth, he said. Another simple idea is to buy an inexpensive resistance band and use it on your legs while sitting at your desk or pulling it apart with your arms.

Addresses muscle loss

According to Phoulavan, after the age of 30 people start to lose as much as 3 to 5 percent of muscle mass per decade and research suggests exercise is the main treatment. Strength training is ideal, but any sort of physical activity from walking to swimming helps. Even getting up and doing some stretches throughout the day is beneficial.

"You just don't want to be sedentary, you want to move," Phoulavan said.

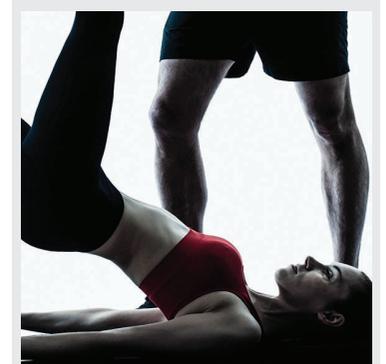


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Choose Beauty over Pest Control

By Brenda Erdahl

It's that time of year when warmer weather after a long winter sends us rushing to the local garden center in search of something pretty and preferably sweet smelling to



grow in our containers, flowerbeds and gardens. With an eye to the looming summer, it might be tempting to look for plants with alleged mosquito repellent qualities. Don't. No matter what you have read or heard, experts agree potted plants are little to no help when it comes to chasing off those pesky bugs.

Experts say the best way to get rid of mosquitos is to reduce standing water and use bug spray with Deet.

Lemon balm, mint, catnip, basil, marigold, and lavender have been touted as plants that will keep mosqui-



tos from infesting your garden.

Adam Austing, University of Minnesota Extension Educator for Wright County, said the source of these claims lie in the small amount of citronellal these plants contain. Citronellal, of course, is one of the main ingredients in citronella oil that is used in mosquito repellent. The catch is, the amount of citronellal in these plants are somewhat small and won't do much mosquito repelling by just growing in your yard.

While there is a potential for some of these plants to ward off mosquitos by crushing it or burning it, the results are inconsistent and almost always less effective than mosquito repellents with Deet, he said.

"By burning some of these plants, you are introducing the citronellal to the air and the mosquito's environment. Theoretically this could have minor mosquito-repelling effects, but most likely not at a noticeable level," he said.

If you really have a desire to use these

plants to ward off mosquitos, the most effective way is to crush the plant (usually the leaves) and use the oil on your skin. Of course, this brings with it the potential for skin allergies you don't know about yet. Austing said if you are going to try this, always make sure to spot test the application first by applying it to a small area of skin to make sure you don't react



Mint may smell nice in your garden and taste good in a drink, but it won't take care of your backyard mosquito problem.

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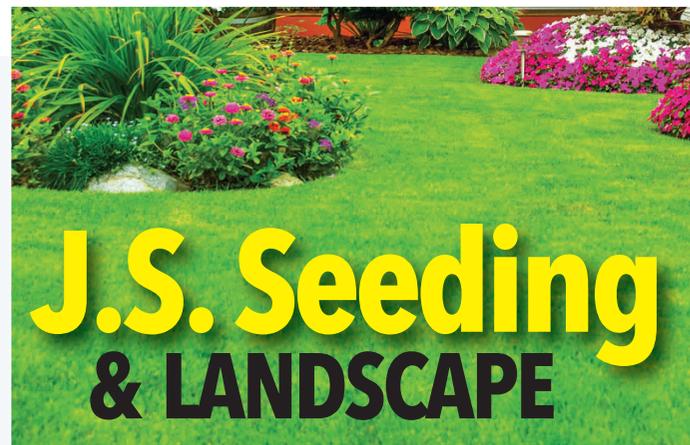
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◀ Lavender can be a pretty addition to your garden, but don't expect it to ward off mosquitos as some people have claimed.



Marigolds are another plant purported to have pest control qualities.

badly to it.

The most direct way to keep mosquitos out of your yard is to get rid of standing water. Mosquitos need standing water to reproduce, and they can find it just about anywhere from clogged rain gutters, leaky hoses and toys to fountains, bird baths and water bowls for pets. The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD) reports having found mosquito larva in sources as small as a bottle cap. They recommend checking your yard frequently for standing water and that includes cleaning out your rain gutters now and again. If you have a bird bath or pond, consider these strategies:

- For bird baths, make sure to refresh the water at least once a week. Stagnant water is a perfect breeding site for mos-

"If you really have a desire to use these plants to ward of mosquitos, the most effective way is to crush the plant"..

– Adam Austing

University of Minnesota
Extension Educator for Wright County

quito larva.

- For ponds, MMCD recommends stocking it with small fish that eat mosquito larva, try emptying the pond and refilling it with fresh water once a week or purchase a pellet designed for larval control and pond use.

While the consensus is there is no plant that will effectively chase mosquitos from your yard, that is no reason not to plant them anyway. Just be sure you choose them for their beauty and pleasing aroma rather than their pest control abilities.

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Outdoor Adventures

from Wright County Parks

Many Wright County parks have opportunities for family fun this summer, and many are free of charge.

Here is the complete listing of events for May through August:

Fungus Among Us

Saturday, May 15 9-11:30 a.m.

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park, 9910 Briarwood Ave NE, Monticello.

Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Martin Dibben gives an on-trail/off-trail tour detailing fungus/mushrooms located in the park, including which are and are not edible.

Raptor Center

Saturday, May 29 – Two shows:
11 a.m. to noon and 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$10.

Description: The U of M Raptor Center will bring three birds (typically hawks and owls) to teach about the lives of these predators.

Fishing with MN Trout

Saturday, June 5 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$5.

Description: Focused on children, the program is a beginner's teaching course on fishing. Poles and bait are provided.

Orienteering

Saturday, June 12 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Collinwood Regional Park and Campground, 17251 70th St SW, Cokato.

Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Teaching how to use a compass and how to determine what direction you are heading when in the woods/forests – with or without a compass.

Fishing with MN Trout

Saturday, June 19 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$5.

Description: Focused on children, the program is a beginner's teaching course on fishing. Poles and bait are provided.

Hiking Wright

Saturday, June 19 (9-10:30 a.m.)

Location: Harry Larson Park, 12750 Clementa Ave NW, Monticello.

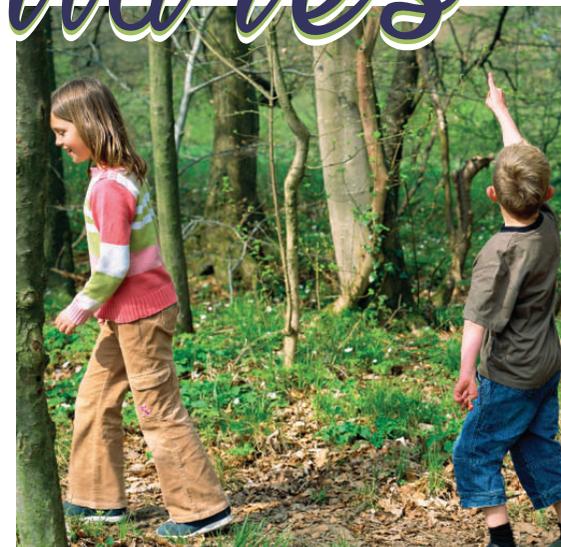
Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Trail hike for all ages.

Marsh, Prairie & Forest

Friday, June 25 (9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)

Location: Robert Ney Nature Center, 5212



73rd St. NW, Maple Lake.

Participation Fee: \$30.

Description: A program designed for elementary school-aged children (ages 5-12), the program is a one-day camp that teaches how marshes, prairies and forests work together in the wildlife ecosystem.

Paddle On! Kayaking.

Saturday, July 10 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$10.

Description: Kayaking for all ages and experience levels. Instruction is provided to help make novices comfortable on the water in a kayak. Kayaks & paddles are provided.

Backyard Birds

Saturday, July 17 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Schroeder Park/Campground

9201 Ireland Ave NW, Annandale.

Participation Fee: Free.

Thursday Nights 4-8 PM Dinner on the Deck!

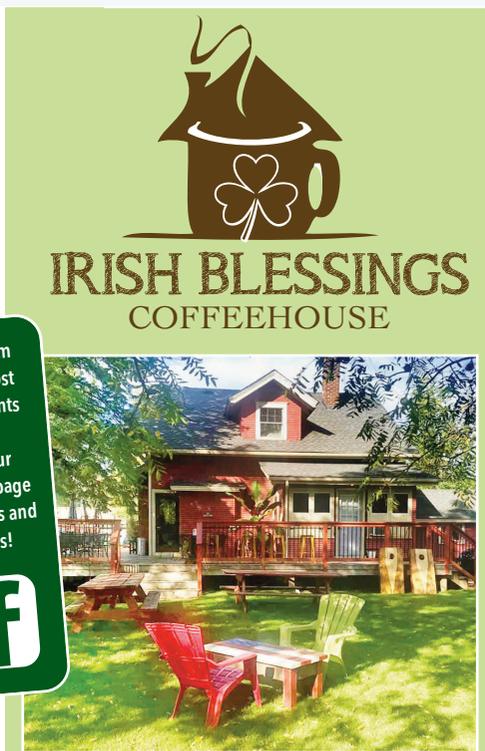
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- 7/8 Gess What's Cookin'
- 7/15 Gouda Q
- 7/22 Rebel Lobster
- 7/29 Brick Oven Pizza Bus
- 8/5 El Jefe Latin Fusion
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- 8/19 Just North of Memphis
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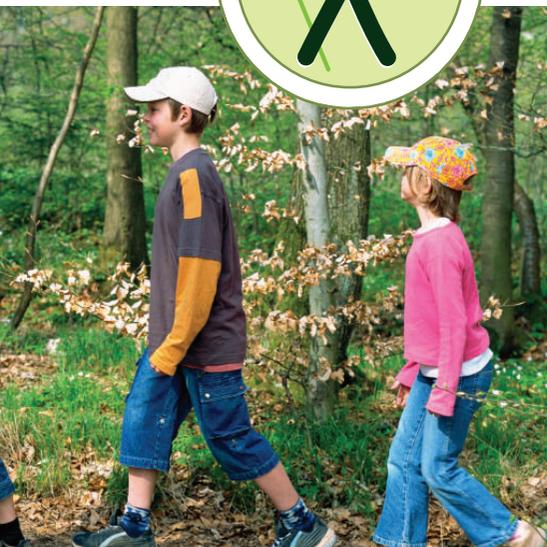
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Description: Participants will be taught how to locate and identify birds, starting with the large blue martin population that annually inhabits the park.

Hiking Wright

Saturday, July 17 (9-10:30 a.m.).

Location: Clearwater-Pleasant Regional

Park, 10909 90th St NW.

Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Trail hike for all ages.

Moonlit Kayaking

Saturday, July 24 (8-10 p.m.)

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$10.

Description: An evening kayaking event for individuals, couples and families. Kayaks and paddles provided.

Paddle On! Kayaking

Saturday, Aug. 14 (1-3 p.m.)

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Park.

Participation Fee: \$10.

Description: Kayaking for all ages and experience levels. Instruction provided for those new to kayaking. Kayaks and paddles are provided.

Outdoor Survival

Saturday, Aug. 21 (1-3 p.m.).

Location: Bertram Chain of Lakes Camp-

ground.

Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Instructional class that teaches skills such as rope tying, building a shelter, techniques to use if you get lost in the woods and what foods in the wild are edible and which should be avoided.

Hiking Wright

Saturday, Aug. 21 (9-10:30 a.m.).

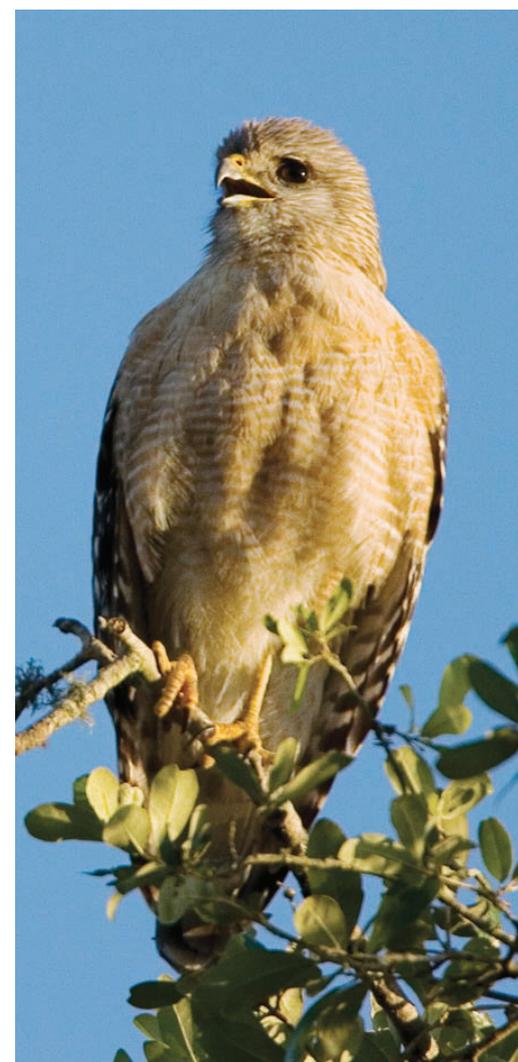
Location: Carl Johnson Park, 1200 Oliver Ave. NW, Cokato.

Participation Fee: Free.

Description: Trail hike for all ages.

• To register for any of these events, call (763) 684-2387 or email Parks & Recreation at www.parksandrecreation@co.wright.mn.us.

For more information about these programs, visit the Wright County Parks & Rec webpage (www.co.wright.mn.us/parks) or visit the Parks & Rec Facebook page (www.facebook.com/wrightparksmn).



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Local Events

BACK on TRACK FOR 2021



The Wright County Fair could be on track for record attendance. Be sure to check event websites for dates and times of all events before you go. Times may change due to executive orders.



Annandale's Fourth of July celebration includes a parade, carnival, fireworks and more.

Annandale

June-October, 8: Annandale Farmers Market, Saturdays, a.m. to noon in City Hall Square.

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July 18: Heart of the Lakes Triathlon, Sunday, Starts at Pleasant Lake City Park. Visit holtri.org for more information.

April-October: Wright County Swappers meet: Minnesota's Largest Outdoor Market is open every Saturday at 13594 100th St. NW South Haven. Visit www.wrightcountyswappersmeet.com for more information.

Buffalo

June 13-20: Buffalo Triathlon, June 6. Visit TriBuff.com

June 13-20: Buffalo Days, Enjoy parades, fireworks, rides, Fishing Clinic for Kids and more.

June 24-August 26: Concerts in the Park, Thursday evenings in Sturges Park.

June 24-26: Buffalo Championship Rodeo, Enjoy a full weekend of showmanship at Minnesota's oldest rodeo. Visit www.BuffaloRodeo.com for more information.

July 16-17: Crazy Days,

August 21: Art and Craft Festival, downtown Buffalo.



Buffalo's Art and Craft festival comes to downtown Buffalo August 21st.

September 11: Classics by the Lake Car Show, on the shores of Buffalo Lake.

Clearwater

August 20-22: Clearwater Rodeo, put on by the Silver bullet Saddle Club. Visit www.silverbulletsaddleclub.com for more information.

Howard Lake

July 21-25: Wright County Fair celebrates 150 years. Visit wrightcounty-fair.org for more information.

Monticello

June 12: 26th Annual Walk N Roll Community Pathway Celebration, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at CentraCare Health parking lot and down River Street East to West Bridge park. Enjoy face painting, mountain bike challenge course, and prize giveaways.

July 7: Monticello Party in the Park – West Bridge park,

July 18 – 11: Riverfest – Car Show & Family Fun day, July 18 – 11. Enjoy a car show, 5K and kids fun run, parade, pie eating contest, street dance, talent show and fireworks. Visit monticelloriverfest.com for more information.

July 10: Art in the Park, 8 a.m. – 3p.m. at Ellison Park on the banks of the Mississippi River.

Maple Lake

May 31: Memorial Day program,

June 5: All City Garage Sale,

August 21: Gear-Head Get Together, A car show, and much, much more, the get together is a favorite among gear-heads and non-gear-heads alike in downtown Maple Lake.

– By Brenda Erdahl



Maple Lake's All City Garage Sale is June 5 and Gear-Head Get Together is Aug. 21

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Summer is better at the Ball Park



The Maple Lake Lakers return a core of talented players for the start of the 2021 season.

By Brenda Erdahl

It isn't summer in Maple Lake if there isn't baseball. From May until August hardly a week goes by without the sounds of cracking bats and cheering fans emanating from Irish Stadium. Last year, for the first time in what is likely the history of Maple Lake baseball, the Lakers didn't play a full season because of the COVID 19 pandemic. Players and fans alike were saddened to see their favorite sport delayed then reduced to just 10 regular season games.

Since the early 20th century town ball has held a spot in the history and heart of Maple Lake. With one of the best amateur baseball parks in the state, no shortage of community support, and a winning program with 19-state tournament appearances since 1975, the Lakers are a source of pride and entertainment. Fortunately, the tradition is expected to resume this season in all its former glory.

2021 outlook

The 2021 squad returns a core of talented players plus some major additions coming off injuries, according to Messenger Correspondent Matt Brown. Manager Casey Pack figures he will have young guns Hunter Malachek and Ben Reilly back from UCL (Tommy John) surgery as well as long-time ace Mitch Wurm, who underwent shoulder surgery in August and is planning a return this season. Adding those three to a rotation that already features Nick Preisinger and Grant Mergen and the Lakers have one of the best pitching staffs in the league, Brown said. That staff should see plenty of run support from a team that almost hit .300 collectively, led by Ben Reilly, Donnie Mavencamp, Matt Bergstrom, Ben Clapp, and Ben



Goelz.

Pack has said he is excited to get back on the field for a full-length season. The North Star League is as deep and competitive as ever with the same lineup of eleven teams from last year. Delano, Buffalo, and Hutchinson all had very strong seasons last year, but sustained success in the North Star League is difficult and if the Lakers continue with the momentum they had last season their name should be right in the mix at the top of the league.

A distinguished past

Townball has been around in Maple Lake since the early 1900s and even back then saw no shortage of success.

In 1916, the Lakers won their first league championship. In 1925, they attended their first state tournament, losing 4-0 to White Bear Lake. In 1931 the Lakers won their first state championship, then won another in 1939. That same year the team advanced to the national tournament in Battle Creek, MI as the smallest community represented, and the last Minnesota team to play there.

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In 1947 the Maple Lake players again won their way to the state tournament but lost to Chaska 1-0. The first home game played in a stadium at its current site was on July 24, 1950. Since that first state appearance in 1925, the Lakers went to state

seven more times in 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1936, 1939 and 1947. In 1958 the Lakers made league history by becoming the first team to win the regular season championship and the league championship.

In 1965 a lack of players, money problems and rising interest in the Minnesota Twins caused the Lakers to withdraw from the Northstar League. It wasn't until 1971, under coach Gary Porter, that the Lakers reorganized into the success story they are today. Since then, they have qualified for the state tournament 19 times, winning a title in 2012, the first since 1939. That was also the year of a total remodel at Irish Stadium for the 2013 Class C Championship, an event that further tightened the bond between baseball and the community.

Off to a fine start

The Lakers kicked off the 2021 season Saturday, May 1 at a preseason warmup tournament in Roscoe where they fell 8-7 to Atwater before defeating Roscoe 13-2. The regular season started on Sunday, May 9, at home against the Cokato Kernels. For a complete schedule, visit the Lakers website at www.maplelakerlakers.com.

MAPLE LAKE Lakers

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* League Game

05/07	7:00pm	Intersquad Scrimmage	Laker Stadium
05/09	1:00pm	vs. Cokato	* Laker Stadium
05/14	7:30pm	vs. Mora	Laker Stadium
05/16	2:00pm	@ Hutchinson	* Hutchinson
05/19	7:00pm	vs. Hamel	Laker Stadium
05/21	7:00pm	@ Dassel-Cokato	* Dassel
05/23	1:00pm	@ Cokato	* Cokato
05/26	7:00pm	vs. Monticello	Laker Stadium
06/02	7:30pm	vs. Becker	Laker Stadium
06/05	TBA	@ TBD	Pipstone
06/05	1:00pm	@ Bloomington	Pipstone
06/06	TBA	@ TBD	Pipstone
06/09	7:00pm	vs. Montrose-Waverly	* Laker Stadium
06/11	7:30pm	vs. Litchfield	* Laker Stadium
06/13	2:00pm	vs. Buffalo	* Laker Stadium
06/16	7:00pm	vs. Dassel-Cokato	* Laker Stadium
06/18	7:30pm	vs. Maple Plain	* Laker Stadium
06/23	7:30pm	@ Litchfield	* Litchfield
06/27	2:00pm	@ Loretto	* Loretto
06/30	7:00pm	@ Howard Lake	* Howard Lake
07/01	7:00pm	vs. Tempe Banditos	Laker Stadium
07/07	7:00pm	@ Delano	* Delano
07/09	7:00pm	vs. Kimball	Laker Stadium
07/10	2:00pm	@ Montrose/Waverly	* Waverly
07/11	2:00pm	@ Maple Plain	* Maple Plain
07/14	7:00pm	vs. Howard Lake	* Laker Stadium
07/16	7:00pm	@ Buffalo	* Buffalo
07/17	8:00am	Lakers Golf Tournament	* Whispering Pines
07/18	2:00pm	vs. Delano	* Laker Stadium
07/21	7:30pm	vs. Hutchinson	* Laker Stadium
07/23	7:30pm	vs. Loretto	* Laker Stadium
07/30	7:00pm	vs. St. Michael	Laker Stadium

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Exterior

Add ambiance to your backyard

By Brenda Erdahl

The value of the right lighting in a home is undeniable. Lighting can instantly transform a room and create the ambiance homeowners are looking for. Though it might be mostly seen as a way to create mood inside a home, lighting also can do much for lawns and gardens. "Outdoor lighting is a great way to extend the day if you like to be outside," said Russ Orson, owner of Light Bulbs and More in downtown Maple Lake.

Backyards have come a long way over the last several decades. Orson started seeing the uptick in outdoor lighting 10 to 15 years ago and it's only been growing. Once reserved as play areas for children and stomping grounds for the family dog, backyards have become oases for homeowners and their families. Outdoor living areas are wildly popular, and no such area is complete without exterior lighting. In fact, a recent report from the National Association of Home Builders found that 85 percent of home buy-

No matter what type of outdoor lighting you're looking for consider these options in your backyard

1. Uplights with focus on trees
2. Warm light
3. Utilize a timer
4. String lights for patio area

ers want exterior lighting, making it the second most desired outdoor feature (patios topped that list). According to Orson, the most recent fad is café lighting which is easy to install on your own and inexpensive. They come in different varieties and lengths to

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Lighting

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Focus exterior lights on trees and landscape to create an inviting mood into your backyard after the sun has set.

meet your needs and all you have to do is plug them in, he said. He stocks strings from 14 feet up to 100 feet and can get them longer depending on what you are looking for.

Another popular and inexpensive option

is LED tape lighting, which attaches easily to a deck, patio or under the eaves of your home, Orson said.

No matter what type of outdoor lighting you are looking for, keep these tips in mind to create a relaxing, awe-inspiring mood at night.

• **CONSIDER UPLIGHTS.** Uplights are installed in the ground and direct light up at a tree, focusing on its trunk or canopy. This creates a dramatic effect that makes it possible to enjoy majestic trees at night just like you might when spending time in the yard during the day.

• **FOCUS ON TREES.** Many homeowners already have exterior lighting lining their walkways and patios but focusing on trees can create an entirely different look.

• **OPT FOR WARM LIGHT.** Warm white light creates an inviting feel around the property. Warm light tends to be easier on the eyes and directs attention to the features of the landscape, which is many homeowners' goal when installing exterior lighting in their yards. • Utilize a timer.



Once reserved as play areas for children and stomping grounds for the family dog, backyards have become oases for homeowners and their families, but no space is complete without exterior lighting.

Modern exterior lighting timers make it easier than ever to control the lights outside a home. Many such timers even adjust for the changing seasons and the shifting hours of daylight. That means homeowners shouldn't have to tinker with the timer once it's set. Safety is another good reason to install outdoor lighting. Motion sensing and flood lights are a great

way to bring a little security to your yards, Orson said.

Once homeowners get their lighting to their liking, Light Bulbs and More is the perfect place to find replacement bulbs, timers, motion sensing lights and flood lights. If Orson doesn't have what you are looking for, he's happy to order it for you.



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Smooth roads ahead

start with your vehicle maintenance



By Brenda Erdahl

Keeping life on track and enjoying the lifestyle we imagine to have this summer depends on many factors, but none more important than our method of transportation. Car care needs to be a top priority for our mental health and stress free lifestyle, so remember to give your vehicle the extra attention it deserves to keep you and your family on schedule all summer.

Minnesota winters are hard on vehicles, said Kris Porter, service manager at M&M Express Lube and Car Care Center in Maple Lake. Suspension, tires, and batteries all take a beating during cold weather and should be inspected before summer and vacations are in full swing.

Getting a vehicle in top shape can be as simple as scheduling a routine main-

tenance appointment such as an oil change. Mechanics at Andy's Pro Tire & Auto in Annandale call oil the "lifeblood of your engine." It reduces friction, lessens wear, provides lubrication, forms a seal between the pistons, rings and cylinder walls while helping to cool engine parts. Without the cleaning action of new oil, carbon and varnish buildup would be toxic to the engine. And engine oil even dampens the shock and noise of moving parts.

Checking air pressure, fluid levels and washing vehicles to get rid of salt residue from winter can also help keep it running smoothing.

According to Porter, these five components on your vehicles are particularly vulnerable to Minnesota winters:

Suspension and tires

It's no secret the state of some Minnesota roads in the winter leave something to be desired. Potholes are a very real hazard, and they can wreak havoc on your vehicle's tires, suspension, and wheel alignment.

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Battery

Cold weather can have a heavy toll on your vehicle's battery, but even worse is summer heat. Porter said spring is a good time to check your battery and maybe invest in a new one before heading into another extreme season.

Brakes

A good brake inspection is always a good idea in the spring, Porter said. Typically, it's when the weather warms and people begin rolling down their windows that they start to hear noises that maybe

weren't audible before. Strange noises can be an indicator of a brake problem.

Wiper blades

Wiper blades are another vulnerable component of your vehicle that can take some damage over the course of a long, wet winter and should be checked out.

Headlights

If your car does any kind of sitting around in the winter, your headlights can begin to turn yellow, Porter said. At M&M they now have a program to restore your headlights so they shine clearer, and you can see better.

At M&M most of these potential problem areas are caught during their multi-point inspection which is included with every oil change.

In Annandale, Andy's offers what they call a Touch® Courtesy Check, which includes a visual check of the following items:

- Engine air filter
- Brake fluid
- Power steering fluid
- Automatic transmission fluid
- Coolant/antifreeze

Andy's staff will also walk you through your vehicle manufacturer's recommendations for replacing these vital fluids and filters.

While not necessarily affected by the cold weather or rough roads of winter, Porter noted spring is also a good time to check if your air conditioner works. "The worst time to find out it doesn't work is when its 90 degrees out," he said.

So, this spring, while you are making a list of items to clean and repair around the house, don't forget to include routine car maintenance.



An M&M technician services a tire at the shop in Maple Lake. Winter can be hard on tires, suspension and wheel alignment, now is a good time to have your vehicle inspected.

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Tom Blizil, owner of Blizil's Repair restored the 1966 Dodge Coronet on the left and is working on getting the car on the right running for a customer.



The Dodge, pictured at left, wasn't much more than a shell when Blizil first started working on it. Most of its parts were in boxes in the back seat.

By Brenda Erdahl

Tom Blizil has never met a car he couldn't get running. His most recent patient, a 1966 Dodge Coronet, came to him as a mere shell with most of its parts in boxes in the backseat instead of under the hood. It was a challenge, he said, but that's what he likes about the classics and he's not afraid to get his hands dirty.

Blizil is the owner of Blizil's Repair in Maple Lake. He has been tinkering with cars since he was a kid. It's a passion that turned into

a career, leading to 13 years as an auto mechanic at the local Cenex and four years at MP repairing equipment. In 1992 he opened his own shop just west of the stoplights on Highway 55 where he spent 29 years repairing virtually anything on four wheels. Now Blizil is going back to his roots and his first love – classic cars.

Blizil will work on most any make or model of antique or custom classic car, truck, or street rod whether it needs an oil change, a repair or complete engine restoration. He calls his new focus semi-retirement, after all, can it really be

called work when he enjoys it so much?

He said he likes getting back to the basics when under the hood of an older vehicle, but he also enjoys the unique challenges it presents. He knows too that a classic car isn't just a machine, it almost always has a story to go with it. Take for instance the 1946 Ford pick up he restored. He has a picture of it hanging in his office and if someone asks, he'll explain how it was his grandfather's farm truck and his own very first set of wheels. He might relate how he drove it to high school back in

1973, and how it had fallen into disrepair before he got his skilled hands on it again. Also displayed on his wall is a picture of a 1962 Chrysler New Yorker. The Chrysler was a father-son project some years back. At first his son Mike didn't think much of the four-door sedan, he said, but it grew on him so much as they worked that he had a picture of it tattooed on his chest.

Blizil also owns a 1957 Minneapolis Moline Tractor that he restored to its former glory, and a refurbished 1969 Plymouth GTX. The Moline has been in his family since it was new. It runs on propane which makes it very unique and hard to find. The GTX is another family heirloom. He has owned that car since he was 19 years old.

But after all those restorations, Blizil's most challenging project was his most recent, the 1966 Dodge Coronet. He acquired it in 2015 from a local collector who bought it at a swap meet. It wasn't much more than a shell with most of its parts gathered in boxes in the back seat. It didn't run at all, Blizil said, but it was from New Mexico, so the body was completely rust free.

"I put everything back together, it was all in boxes and all these little screws in a little bag," he said.

It did have a motor, but Blizil took that out and replaced it with a bigger one. Despite the many boxes he also had to buy a lot of parts and those are not always easy to find. After he rebuilt all the mechanical, it spent two years in a body shop and another local business refurbished the seats. He finished it just last spring.

Part of the fun of owning a classic car like the Coronet is putting it back together, but Blizil knows not every car lover has the time or the equipment for major restorations. That's where he comes in.

"I have a car in here right now that hasn't run for years. I'm going to get it going and then he (the customer) is going to decide if he wants to do more with it," Blizil said.

Since he's been in the industry so long and has refurbished his share of vehicles, he also has the advantage of knowing who to buy parts from, because finding parts for these older vehicles isn't always easy.

He likes to say: "If your project gets too big, give me a call."

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- 1 cup baby spinach
- 2 Tbsp fresh mint leaves
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup brewed green tea, cooled
- 1/2 large grapefruit, peeled and seeded
- 1 cup pineapple chunks, frozen
- 1/4 large avocado
- Dash ground cayenne pepper, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

- Blend spinach, mint, celery, and green tea.
- Puree until smooth.
- Add remaining ingredients.
- Blend again. Best if served chilled.



Find your mix! Feel free to add or substitute using these natural ingredients

Adjust the sweet-tart ratio by adjusting the grapefruit and pineapple. The pith and peel of the grapefruit are extremely bitter, but are beneficial in small amounts. To lessen the bitterness of the grapefruit, remove the fruit from the inner membranes as well as peeling before using.

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