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*Magazine*

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SUMMER 2017



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# Feature Home

( ON THE COVER )

# 17

Wood flooring and plenty of light from large windows and doors helps make this remodel, by DeHaan Remodeling Specialists, seem like anything but a basement. Graceful brackets help support the cantilevered bar top, its curve matching the soffit overhead.



# 13

Choosing the Right Outdoor Furniture

# CONTENTS



# 7

Taste of Summer - Pavlova



# 26

Pretty Lake Camp



# 9

High-Tech Kitchen



# 28

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors



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# It's all about you, *Kalamazoo*

I love that we can enjoy the change of seasons here in West Michigan.

I love the wide variety of arts & education: from WMU to Kalamazoo College, from Balloon Festivals to Medieval Faires.

I like Kalamazoo for the Kalamazoo Air Zoo with its exhibits of nostalgic aircraft and environment of aircraft history. They have many fun events for the whole family.

What I love about Kalamazoo is the entertainment: bars and restaurants, to the summer festivals, farmer's markets, and exhibits. There is never not something to enjoy.

I love the music scene in Kalamazoo; from local to touring bands, there are so many awesome and talented musicians from so many genres of music. There's always a show to go to and enjoy!

The Kalamazoo Farmer's Market is an extraordinary place to shop local produce, meat, and homemade goods. I love the sights, sounds, and marvelous smells.

Kalamazoo is the home of the finest public golf courses in the state.

I enjoy watching America's favorite pastime at Homer Stryker Field. Life doesn't get much better than watching the Kalamazoo Growlers play while sitting in the Miller Lite Party Zone, unless it's "Dog Days".

I love how the community rallies together. Bad things can happen anywhere; Kalamazoo has a compassionate, kindhearted, supportive, but resilient community. Kalamazoo residents are Kalamazoo Strong.

Kalamazoo has great parks, excellent craft beer and a phenomenal music scene.

I enjoy attending WMU football games at Waldo Stadium. After the game, many options exist to enjoy the Kalamazoo night life. Several venues offer a variety of entertainment, food, and drink.

The people of the Kalamazoo area enjoy diversity in a caring community.

We are blessed with forward-thinking educational institutions, first-class medical care, and pride in community that brings us all together. Kalamazooian's open their hearts, and their purses, to make Kalamazoo a better place.

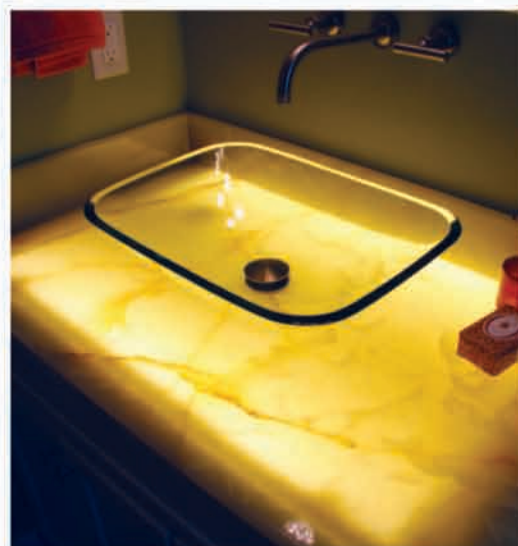
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# Celebrate Sweet Summer

## Pavlova

Photography by Linda Hoard

My wonderfully sweet friend Alison is known for whipping up delectable desserts at a moment's notice, typically without following a recipe. She surprised me on my birthday with this incredible dessert. Pavlova is not only beautiful, but it's light, airy sweetness is almost intoxicating! It looks incredibly complex, but according to Alison it's "no problem at all." Pavlova is made from a crisp meringue shell topped with whipped cream and fruit.

Servings: Serves 12

#### Ingredients

6 egg whites at room temperature—make sure there are no yolks in the egg whites!  
1 pinch salt  
1 cup sugar  
2 tsp. any kind of vinegar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract

#### Whipped Topping

1 pint heavy whipping cream  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Fruit Topping

1/3 cup powdered sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1-2 pints Fresh strawberries, blueberries or other fruit  
(Strawberries, blueberries and mango pictured)

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat the egg whites on medium-high speed for about 3 minutes, or until peaks form. On medium speed, slowly whisk in the sugar and turn the mixer to high speed for about 5 minutes. Add the vinegar and vanilla, mixing on low speed to ensure the ingredients are fully incorporated.

Draw an 8-inch circle as a guide onto a sheet of wax paper and place on a cookie sheet. Using a spatula spread the mixture to cover the circle, slightly higher on the sides than in the middle.

Place in the oven and IMMEDIATELY turn the oven down to 300°. Bake for 90 minutes, turn the oven off, prop the oven door open slightly, and let the pavlova completely cool down in the oven.

Place the heavy whipping cream in the bowl of a mixer, add the powdered sugar and vanilla extract and whip until thick and peaks form.

To make the filling; wash and clean the berries. Cut the tops from the strawberries, half or quarter them (depending on their size), rinse and then mix fruit in a bowl with a little of the powdered sugar. Let them stand in the refrigerator for an hour or so.

To serve the Pavlova, gently peel the paper from the underside of the pavlova. Place it on a large serving platter. Top with the whipped cream. Sprinkle the fruit generously over the whipped cream.

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Welcome Home • Summer 2017 • 7





### Old-Fashioned Service



Owned and operated by the Miyagawa family since 1940, George's Appliance is one of greater Kalamazoo region's only family operated appliance stores. For over seven decades and throughout three generations the Miyagawa family has helped customers from Battle Creek to South Haven choose the perfect appliance for their homes and provided superior after-sale service.

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## Fine Dining at the Push of a Button

By Zinta Aistars

Photos courtesy of George's Appliance & GE

Your work day is running long—and the boss just brought in another rush job. You're going to be home late, and it sure would be nice to come home to a hot home-cooked meal.

Click, click, and done. By bringing up an app on your smart phone, you accomplish it all from your office, and when you get home and open the door to the kitchen, you are greeted by the savory smells of a just done meal.

How is this possible? With a high-tech kitchen, designed specifically to meet your needs and wants.

"We've seen it happen over the past 10 years," says John Michael, kitchen and bath designer at The Kitchen Shop. Michael works at the branch located in Lansing, but the same products and services are available at The Kitchen Shop in Kalamazoo.

"People want to duplicate the meals they enjoy at restaurants at home," Michael says. "The high-tech kitchen is creating new 'foodies.'"

Homeowners who want to build or remodel their kitchens into a high-tech space come to the kitchen design and appliance store first, Michael says. "Design starts with the appliances. You need to know the sizes and types and build around them."

Michael describes built-in coffeemakers that can prepare two different types of coffees, for instance an espresso in one cup, side-by-side with a cappuccino, brewed to perfection at the same time. He points to refrigerators and ranges that have LCD screens built into their stainless steel doors with touch settings that can be programmed and operated by smart phones.

"These AI [artificial intelligence] machines can be turned on and off by phone, and so the owner feels much more comfortable than just leaving an oven on or even a crockpot and leaving the house," Michael says. "You can even send the range your favorite recipe through your phone, or look up a recipe already in the system. Maybe it has varying temperatures, and the range will adjust to that."







The Kitchen Shop also carries microwaves that work more like convection ovens, with more than one shelf, and with the ability to cook food in stainless steel containers without sparks. The microwave-oven combo, Michael says, is one of the most popular high-tech items.

"Whatever the customer wants, we can design around it," says Kyle Kirshman, designer at Kirshman & Associates. His parents, Bill and Corrie Kirshman, are owners of the kitchen and bath design studio, established in 1988.

"We fit the design to the family and their lifestyle, so every kitchen is unique," Kirshman says. "When I meet with a customer, I begin by asking questions: How busy is your life? How do you like to entertain?"

The modern kitchen, Kirshman says, is designed to simplify life. Cabinet doors tend more toward the sleek, doors are flat, and everything in the kitchen is easy to use and maintain. Whatever appliances the customer chooses, Kirshman obtains the specifications from the appliance manufacturer and designs around them.

"You remember the Lazy Susan?" Kirshman recalls the rotating trays of decades ago. "Now we have 'magic corners.' These corners go all the way



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back into the corner of the space, with a door that unfolds for access. There are cabinets with mechanized motors—push a button and it opens, push a button and it closes again. Touch a door and it rises up for you.”

Not everyone wants such an ultra-modern kitchen, Kirshman admits, but when a customer asks for all the bells and whistles, Kirshman delivers.

Dave Miyagawa agrees that not everyone is into the techy trend.

George’s Appliance, one of greater Kalamazoo’s only family-operated appliance stores, has been owned and operated by the Miyagawa family for three generations, since 1940. George Miyagawa was born and raised in Hawaii, then

moved to Chicago to complete his education in electronics, where he had a roommate from Kalamazoo. When his roommate brought him along on a trip to Kalamazoo, Miyagawa found he liked the small town—well enough to stay and open up a business of his own.

Brothers Dave and Tom Miyagawa, the current generation of owners, help customers not only choose the right appliance for their needs in their 7,000-square foot showroom, but also offer service and repairs after the sale.

“When the younger crowd comes in, they often ask about the high-tech appliances,” Miyagawa says. “But that’s often as far as it goes. We find that manufacturers talk more about the high-tech than the customers, because they are always looking for something new and competitive to market. We saw refrigerators with revolving digital photos on the door. That lasted about a year. Then there were refrigerators with TVs on the door. That lasted about a year. We saw refrigerators with computer screens on the door. That lasted about a year, too.”

Among more mature buyers, Miyagawa says traditional still reigns supreme. Stainless steel remains the finish of choice. Among more high-tech features, buyers do look for filtered water dispensers built into their appliances, with the convenience of dispensing exact amounts of water for cooking needs, he says. Filtering systems inside high-end refrigerators that keep the air odorless and vegetables crisper longer are popular, too.

“Some changes people have liked, such as having a larger freezer and putting it on the bottom of the refrigerator instead of on the top or side,” Miyagawa says. “That’s old school. And we carry a line of ranges and convection ovens that can be programmed by smart phone.”

What goes out the door, Miyagawa says, is high quality. That’s something that never goes out of style.



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Photo Courtesy of Picwood USA

## The right Outdoor Furniture will make outdoor living even sweeter

By Chris Killian

If you consider your patio or deck an extension of your home, why not furnish it that way?

From elaborate living and dining sets to rustic-themed chairs encircling fire rings, more and more homeowners are looking to squeeze as much use out of their outdoor spaces during the warmer months as they can, say local patio furniture retailers, and the aluminum framed lounge chairs of old just don't cut it anymore.

"People want to maximize their time outside because the winters are so long," says Ashleigh Kosin, owner and designer at Bell Tower Lake House Living Co. in Richland. "They want a place to entertain their friends, but also a space to just relax." Popular style trends include wicker, teak or wrought iron chairs and sofas with plump, water-resistant cushions, durable recycled plastic furniture and fire rings to give homeowners' spaces a camping-type feel. Chest-high bar tables and stools can accent patios with a bit more entertainment flair, she says.

But as much as patio furniture shoppers are looking to spice-up their outdoor spaces, they also desire durability and longevity out of their investment, which can run from a few hundred dollars for smaller purchases up to several thousands of dollars for full furniture sets.

"Cushioned outdoor furniture with rug and pillow accents have become popular, but you have to take care of it," Kosin says. "There is a lot of fabric out there that claims to be outdoor, but it really isn't." She recommends meeting with a retailer who is familiar with the materials being used in patio furniture to tailor a purchase based on personal needs and desires. And not to be left out – make sure the furniture has a warranty, she says. "Some of the patio furniture, especially sold at the big box stores, doesn't come with a warranty. And because your furniture is outside, exposed to the elements, you want that."

Making sure furniture is covered when not in use and shading it with umbrellas to keep it from fading also go a long way toward maintaining it for years to come. In addition, store these items in a shed or garage during the harsh winter months, Kosin says. "Do your research and talk with specialists who know their stuff and can advise you," she says. "Everywhere you turn there are outdoor furniture items. Be careful what you invest in it."



Photo Courtesy of Bell Tower Lake House Living Co.

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Welcome Home • Summer 2017 • 13





Photo Courtesy of Liberty Square Furniture

Tom Dockham, owner of Picwood USA, an outdoor furniture manufacturer and seller in Kalamazoo, says he is seeing more customers who want to purchase bare furniture and customize it to their desires, be it with a stain they like or a specific color of paint.

Dockham sells the traditional Adirondack chair as well as a local take on the classic design – the “Michigan-Back Chair,” where the back is in the shape of the Lower Peninsula. He also sells a table in the shape of the Upper Peninsula and a bench in the shape of Lake Michigan, among other items. “More people are looking to shop local, and our Michigan-styled items add a bit more ‘at home’ feel to your patio.”

All Dockham’s furniture is made out of either red cedar or white pine, almost all sourced from northern Michigan, and the advice he gives for the maintenance of his furniture can be applied to any outdoor accents comprised of wood, he says. “Get a good polyurethane stain or quality paint and protect your furniture from sudden storms and UV rays,” he says. “You can leave the wood bare if you want, but it’s going to get a silvery fade to it. All you have to do is a little sanding, and it’s back to looking new.” Like Kosin, he recommends storing any wood furniture indoors during the colder months.

Maintaining the outdoor furniture that Steve VanderWoude sells is as simple as opening a spigot. Owner of Liberty Square Furniture in Portage, he sells a wide-range of outdoor furniture made almost exclusively out of recycled milk jugs, which when formed into chairs, tables and other items last for decades, he says. They even come in 16 different colors. “All you have to do is hose them off if they get dirty,” he says. “We are keeping plastic out of the landfills and giving people an environmentally-friendly option that lasts.”

VanderWoude, who has sold furniture from this store since 2004, is in his 11th year selling the recycled plastic items, which come from an Ohio manufacturer and have a 20-year warranty. Sure, they might cost a bit more up front – about \$300 for an Adirondack chair and thousands for table and chair sets – not having to purchase paints, stains or other maintenance items means the extra cost is recouped over time, he says. “They are solid as a rock,” he says. “Summer is a time for relaxing, not worrying about the furniture you purchased to relax on.”





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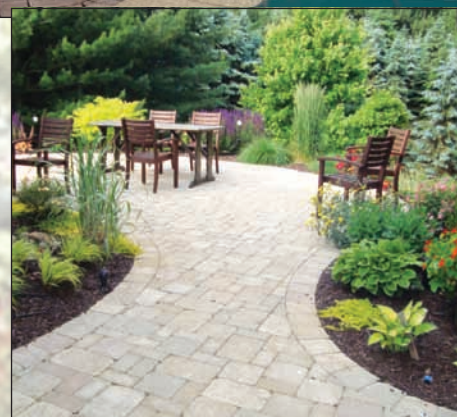
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## Transition: From Unfinished Basement to Meditative Retreat

By Zolton Cohen  
Photography by Zolton Cohen

After 28 years of moving around for the military, the owners of Welcome Home's Summer 2017 Feature Home decided to settle down near Texas Corners. "We liked the quality and design of a model home we had seen in the Allen Edwin Andover Woods development," they say. "And we thought it would be nice for once in our lives to have control over choosing a house we wanted to move into. Being in the military as long as we were, we didn't always have an opportunity to live where we wanted. So it was important to us, in retirement mode, to think about a house that would be reflective of who we have evolved into."

Their home, in another development, had already been started by the time they decided to commit to it. "They had the footprint of the house done," the owners say. "And then we worked with our designer, Carol Kenaga, at the time a Selections Coordinator at the company, and the builders to make several modifications that we wanted." The couple moved into the house in 2003 but never finished the basement.



**TOP:** A bird's eye view of the great room clearly reveals the clear-finished bird's-eye maple highlight band that frames the stained wood floor.

**ABOVE:** Built in 2003, this Feature Home has been in place long enough for the landscaping to mature and fulfill its mission to enhance the look of the property.

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Natural wood on the floors, table and kitchen cabinets warms up this central hub of the home.

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The master bedroom's features include a dramatic tray ceiling and a settee perfectly placed for reading in front of the fireplace.

Why did it take 14 years to get around to doing that? The owners say, "We're actually glad we waited this long because it never would have translated into what it is today had we done it soon after moving in. It took us time to think through what we wanted the space to be."

But after looking for so many years at bare studs and concrete, they realized there was a lot of space being wasted, and understood they could use it far more effectively if they finished it off. It was, they say, "A basement filled with all of our stuff, plus things from our parents and our kids who said, 'oh, you have room down there to store some items for us.'" So they contacted Kenaga, who had done design work for them throughout their home, and started to talk about what they wanted.

Kenaga says, "Very early in the project they asked if it was foolish for them to take on a job of this scale. I told them that, number one, they could use the space. And in the neighborhood they're in, in the size home they have, they needed to finish the space for resale eventually. Even with four bedrooms upstairs, there still wasn't really a place to send the children or entertain

**RIGHT:** There is plenty of elbow room available along the extended master bathroom vanity countertop. A walk-in shower and a large tub offer options to bathers.







Subtle colors on the dining room's walls, curtains, rug and upholstered chairs blend with light pouring through the window to render a tranquil setting.



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Wood flooring, a coffered ceiling, a ribbon fireplace and family heirlooms displayed in shelving units create a cozy place for the couple to unwind in the evening - or to use for entertaining.

a group of people. So finishing the lower level will make a lot of difference at resale time. They may not recover every penny they put into it. But, most importantly, they'll have the pleasure out of using it, and the house will sell faster when that time does inevitably come."

Those ideas were a revelation to the couple. They say, "Yes this is a big house, but there really wasn't a designated area where it could be that retreat concept, or a place for children to play, and there should be a space like that. We needed to look at that idea of size. Just because you have so much square footage doesn't mean that you have a delineation of space that really is appropriate for you - or a potential buyer."

They started with a couple of general ideas. They say, "We wanted it to be like the rest of the house, not just a finished basement with carpet and drywall and big, empty rooms. We wanted it to be a space where our children could come and spend time during holidays, and that it would be a fun place for them to both stay in and for

**RIGHT:** Bun feet on the painted Great Northern vanity add style to the new lower level bathroom. A Kohler Choreograph shower wall assembly has minimal seams to clean.







The built-in oven at the end of the island makes it handy to cook or warm up snacks for entertaining. As originally built, the now- U-shaped staircase used to descend in a straight line from the first floor

us to be together enjoying family time."

Kenaga picked up on that right away. She says, "We have children about the same age. And when they said they envisioned this as a space where they would be with their children, I knew we wanted to move a little away from the more traditional design area and more toward the contemporary, which is not normally their style. I thought we needed to make it just a little bit edgier for those who are going to be down here."

Planning and dreaming are good, positive activities - and then someone has to build what has been conceived. Kenaga had worked well with Bob DeHaan, owner of DeHaan Remodeling Specialists, on several other projects, and she enlisted his help with this job. It was going to take an expert to put into place the various ideas Kenaga and the couple had come up with - and then to roll with the changes that came up as the project moved apace. DeHaan was just that person.

On the one hand, DeHaan says, it's relatively easy to walk into an unfinished basement and make dramatic changes immediately. "It's fun doing it like that,"

he says. "Unlike a lot of our work in kitchens and bathrooms where we're tearing out outdated or deteriorated materials, there's no demolition involved, so the framing can go up right away." But there were challenges to overcome first.

The existing staircase went straight into what would eventually become the bathroom. Kenaga suggested adding a landing and then turning the bottom set of treads in the opposite direction in order to free up space for a hallway by the bathroom and bedroom. Checking clearances under the first-floor stairs, DeHaan realized there was enough headroom to do that, and his crew framed up the new staircase. Everyone worked together to consider other ideas - a proposed archway between the main room and bar area; an exercise room that was part of the plan, and then wasn't, and then was again. DeHaan says the remodeling process can be like that; as areas get delineated, other concepts emerge and things get changed around.

"Things in life are evolutionary," the couple says. "Carol talks about how the design changes and morphs over time, and Bob was responsive to that. You have

to trust that sometimes people know what you don't know, so you're bound to the expertise of the people who are here on site. Carol and Bob would always work together to make certain that the design elements we wanted were amenable and adoptable."

The high ceilings in the lower level that the couple had insisted on when the house was first being built gave Kenaga and DeHaan design options that they were able to exploit to excellent effect. DeHaan says, "That really came into play with everything they wanted in the project. The owners were interested in working a coffered ceiling into the design, so we figured that out in a way that complemented the room and did not dominate. Carol's vision and the owners' enthusiasm for that feature translated into a visually striking outcome."

Kenaga says, "For me as a designer, Bob has been an excellent partner. He never said, 'you don't want that.' When I talked about adding the ceiling curve over the bar area, I was prepared for him to say we can't do that. But he said we'll figure out a way to do it. He's never, ever pooh-poohed me. He always listens to my ideas and tells me, from a mechanical standpoint, if it can be done. If it can't, then OK. But if it can, then let's go ahead with it." The owners add, "Carol and Bob's rapport, coupled with their ability to push the design envelope to create something unusual and unexpected, lends a special symmetry to their work - and to the outcome."

So, is the couple pleased with the results of their lower level remodeling project collaboration? They say, "We've been on this long journey with Carol for the last 13 years and we can't say enough about her. She is truly talented; gifted. There is an artistry here to be able to interpret and know who we are. There's a psychological, emotional element that is involved in everything that has resulted in this house. She knows us, what we are like, what we think, what we should move toward, in the evolution of our own ideas and our own style and taste. If we had the talent, this is what we would do, but we don't. So she is here to do that interpretation and to put forward possibilities that we really could never even imagine."

"Somebody could come in and fill the space. Carol doesn't do that. She looks at us, who we are, how we want to utilize the space, what best expresses us and allows us to move forward. Hers is an



immensely artistic experience; she is in a league of her own. It's a joy to work with her."

Their praise extends to DeHaan's company. "Bob has an amazingly competent crew. His sons are involved in the business, and we like that because it's kind of an old-world style. The people he brings on board are meticulous. The crew was not at all disruptive; they were totally professional and paid attention to every detail as if they were working in their own homes. We had great confidence in and were so trusting of them that we gave them total access to the house even when we were not here. That says a lot. We were so impressed with the quality of the workmanship and the level of consultation with us all the time. It couldn't have gone any better."

Kenaga describes the process this way, "This was truly a group effort, with DeHaan Remodeling as the real stars. Bob, his sons and his contractors are in a class by themselves. Their expertise produced a finished product that will delight the owners and their family and friends for years to come. It was a labor of love for me, as the owners and I have become dear friends over the years."

Kenaga reflects that she likes to design spaces so that people in high pressure jobs can come home and leave that all behind - so that they can enter an 'oasis.' The remodeling job just completed for this couple she labels a 'retreat.' In addition to it being a silent, meditative "coffee space" in the morning, the couple likes to spend evenings snuggling on the couch in front of the TV. They say, "It could only have happened with the combination of individuals right here, and with the chemistry. Would the chemistry have come together without Carol? Without Bob? We would say no. We could have done it with other people, but it wouldn't have been this way. It happened at the right time at the right moment with the right people."



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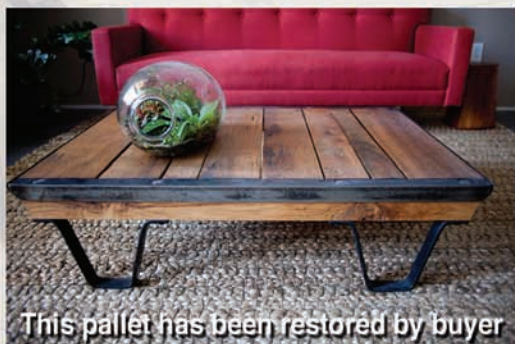
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# Pretty Lake Camp: A Pretty Remarkable Place

By Jeff Palmer

Photos Courtesy of Pretty Lake Camp

There's no place quite like Pretty Lake Camp, located southwest of Kalamazoo.

What began in 1916 with 15 boys during one summer, has blossomed into a year-round operation that's provided summer camp experiences to more than 50,000 at-risk girls and boys from Kalamazoo County and more than 100,000 other people who've sought out its variety of programs.

Also, what began with five acres and one building has since grown to 250 acres of woods, meadows, farmland, and beach that also features a gymnasium, classrooms, ropes courses, climbing walls, hiking trails, cabins and more.

"Pretty Lake really is the community's camp," Executive Director Eric Wimbley says. "It's a resource for kids, adults, families, schools, business and civic groups, other nonprofits, and the community at large. We help everyone build successful lives for themselves, their families, and the community," he adds. "And we like everyone to have fun while they're doing it."

## HAPPY CAMPER

Pretty Lake Camp's mission is to provide adventure education and outdoor experiences that change lives and improve the entire Kalamazoo community. It does this in part by offering six-day / five-night summer camp sessions structured for children, grades three through seven.

Campers are selected based on need – financial, social, and emotional – and spend their days playing team games, hiking,

engaging in creative arts, and learning new activities such as kayaking, fishing, and petting a donkey (Pretty Lake has two, Stevie and Lilly).

"One of the most important things we do is teach kids how to swim," Wimbley says.

A Leaders in Training program at the Camp serves girls and boys who have finished grades eight or nine. Most attended Pretty Lake Camp when they were younger. They take part in traditional camp activities, an off-site community service project, and leadership skills training.

The new Pretty Lake Ambassadors program serves students who have completed grades 10 or 11. Ambassadors advise Camp staff, work with younger campers, create and organize events, and gain valuable work experience.

All Pretty Lake campers spend time with books. A library stocked by members of the Junior League of Kalamazoo provides books for campers to read during an hour of quiet reflection time and before lights out each day. Camp counselors read to younger campers each evening.

Camp staff members, says Wimbley, help kids hold onto a little bit of the school experience they might lose during the summer and help build a college-going mindset for campers.

"We know that not all kids will go to college," he says. "We want them to see learning and education as a lifelong pursuit, not something you only do from September to June when you are young. Learning helps build children's self-esteem, skills, and ability to care for themselves and others."

Wimbley praises Pretty Lake's ten-member year-round staff and its legion of summer camp workers. Many are past Pretty Lake campers like himself (he also worked at the Camp as a lifeguard, counselor and kitchen worker in his younger days, and served on the Camp board of directors during his long career with the Michigan State Police) and Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell (a past camper and summer camp worker who now serves on the Pretty Lake board).

"We strive to hire people who have a heart for children," he says. "Everyone goes through background checks and extensive training."

## PRETTY LAKE FARM

Integral to every Pretty Lake experience is the three-acre Pretty Lake Farm, an outdoor classroom meant to cultivate connection to the outdoors, inspire healthy bodies, and build





strong community links. All summer campers engage in hands-on learning opportunities at the Farm. Local school students participate in a variety of field trips here during the school year. Many other kids and adults take part in teambuilding exercises here throughout the year.

The Farm promotes the Michigan "No Child Left Inside" initiative by being an outdoor extension of the classroom. It also supports the ideals of the "Kalamazoo Promise" by working to give Kalamazoo Public School children the opportunity for a rich and diverse learning experience. By pairing outdoor learning opportunities with state curriculum benchmarks, Pretty Lake Farm supports local youth by fostering a greater understanding of nature and natural resources.

This working farm grows and serves fresh produce ("and an endless supply of chicken eggs," says Wimbley) to the hundreds of summer campers and approximately 4,000 adult clients and retreat guests who dine on site each year. The farm strives towards environmental sustainability and is free from chemical pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizers.

In 2016, Pretty Lake's kitchen served nearly four pounds of produce grown on site to each of its 800 summer campers. Other food is distributed in the Food for Families Program that provides bundles of fresh food for campers to take home cost-free. Extra food goes to local food pantries and is sold at farmers' markets to support summer campers.

## ADVENTURE CENTRE

Since 1978, more than 100,000 youth and adults have had a Pretty Lake Adventure Centre experience, designed to expand their self-confidence, trust, and leadership skills through a variety of individual and group outdoor adventure learning activities. Most of these experiences are built around the Centre's low- and high-ropes courses, climbing towers, and other team building experiences all led by highly skilled staff.

Adventure Centre staff members customize each experience to fit a group's goals, and ensure participants' physical and emotional safety throughout. Through these experiences, Pretty Lake increases and strengthens productivity, effectiveness, and relationships for adults and students from corporations, nonprofit organizations, secondary schools, colleges, universities and other fields.

"Not all Adventure Centre activities require harnesses or ropes," says Wimbley. "They're also done on the ground in fun and friendly team competitions."

He says the four-hour Waterfront Adventure is a popular and highly entertaining team activity that gives participants an experience on (and in) Pretty Lake. The Adventure Centre also partners with the Farm in a lively three-hour competition in which teams compete to harvest and prepare the tastiest, most visually appealing, and creative meal they can serve.

## DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Throughout its history, kids attending summer camp at Pretty Lake Camp have done so free of charge. Everything is provided: bedding, clothing, towels, swimwear, personal hygiene items (toothpaste/brush, shampoo, sun screen, etc.), transportation to and from downtown Kalamazoo, all food, basic health care, arts and crafts materials. Everything. Free.

Campers are even sent home at the end of the week with a coveted Pretty Lake t-shirt and the package of new, clean underwear they were given at the beginning of the week.

"We do this in order to remove any barriers that might keep children from being able to attend camp,"



says Wimbley. "Our commercial size clothes washers and dryers get quite a workout, but it's worth it."

A cost-free camp experience is made possible through fundraising events and through financial and in-kind donations, large and small, from individuals, businesses, service clubs, and foundations. Groups that rent Pretty Lake facilities for retreats, conferences, business meetings, and other events help offset camp costs, as do groups that pay to use the Pretty Lake Adventure Centre.

"We could not provide free camp without our generous donors and paying patrons," says Wimbley.

"We also benefit mightily from an army of volunteers who help us take care of the facilities and grounds," said Wimbley. "Volunteer groups often spend a day painting cabins, clearing trails, cleaning our beach, and working on our three-acre Pretty Lake Farm."

The Kiwanis Club of Kalamazoo and Junior League of Kalamazoo have supported Pretty Lake since its earliest days. Beginning in the 1930s, the two clubs ran the camp for many years. Members continue to actively support Pretty Lake with their time and resources.

Wimbley also commends other Pretty Lake residents for their long support. While the Camp owns about 60 percent of the lakefront property, dozens of summer and year-round residents are neighbors and, according to Wimbley, they couldn't be more neighborly.

"One gentleman comes over after each summer camp session to clean, repair and untangle our fishing gear. Another bought us a power-washer so we can clean boats and other gear. I asked neighbors if they were annoyed by our 7:30 a.m. morning bell and the shrieks of 100 kids running into the water. They all said, 'Not at all. It reminds us of summer.'"

## THE COMMUNITY'S CAMP

Eric Wimbley says, "Pretty Lake staff and board members try to help everyone who visits the Camp see the value of paying it forward to the next generation and giving back to the community."

He hopes to forge partnerships with other for-profit and nonprofit community organizations – even other area camps – in order to give everyone more bang for limited bucks.

"We sometimes turn away campers because we don't have enough beds. Meanwhile, other camps have openings that go unfilled. We want to partner with others to create a net that no child slips through."

Wimbley also wants to spread the word to neighborhood groups, churches, schools, and other community organizations to "come to camp," especially in fall, winter, and spring.

"We encourage community groups to bring their kids and families to Pretty Lake and have a good time for an afternoon, perhaps visit our Farm and run through the woods playing 'Capture the Flag.' We'll even put the flags out for you," he says.

"We have great facilities in a unique natural environment. We'd love to make it available for the community to experience and enjoy."

Learn more about Pretty Lake at [www.prettylakecamp.org](http://www.prettylakecamp.org) and on Facebook. Contact Matt Claus at [matt@prettylakecamp.org](mailto:matt@prettylakecamp.org) to schedule a volunteer opportunity or tour.







# Good Fences Make Good Neighbors

By Zinta Aistars

**D**o it right, and a fence can make good neighbors, smiles on both sides. Do it wrong, and a good relationship with your neighbor could sour.

"It's one of the most common mistakes we see customers make when putting in a fence," says Roy Roden. Roy and wife Heather are the owners of Kalamazoo Fence. "And it's an expensive mistake," he adds.

Ben Yost, owner and general manager at FnG (Fence & Garden) agrees: "Property lines mean two neighbors, not just one. We can advise, but we always recommend that the customer buying a fence first contact a surveyor. You may think you know exactly where your property line is, but too often we have had to go out to take out a fence and move it. Don't rely on a verbal commitment. Ultimately, it is the property owner's responsibility, and that can be costly."

Not only property lines and fence heights can be a matter of contention, but any permits, ordinances, codes, and zoning, both Roden and Yost say, also fall under the property owner's responsibility. Some areas may have designations about which side of the fence should face in or out ("shadow box" style fences can solve this issue, built to look the same on both sides of the fence). Condominiums often have special covenants, while waterfront properties may have their own considerations in terms of obstructing views for pedestrians or vehicles. Historic neighborhoods may have to comply with regulations requiring fencing to maintain historically accurate styles and materials.

"We strongly recommend to our customers that they do the research first," Yost says. "Every township, and often neighborhoods, too, can have their own set of rules to follow. Required permits are rare, but various codes are common. Find out what you can and cannot do on your property."

Surveys completed and legalities confirmed, the fun of picking the perfect fence for your property can begin. Both Kalamazoo Fence and FnG offer free estimates.

"When choosing fencing, we ask about your needs," Roden says. Customers usually list kids, dogs, neighbors, he says, keeping one in while keeping the other out. Privacy is a top

concern, but Roden quizzes his customers about lifestyles, tastes, budgets. How high can the dog jump? How long should the fence last? How maintenance-free should it be?

"What do you need the fence to do for you?" Yost adds. "That's the first question we ask."

At Kalamazoo Fence, Roden has fencing available in heights of 3', 4', 5', 6', and 7'. Taller fences can be arranged as well, although he notes that most areas don't allow more than 6' heights.

"Galvanized chain-link fences tend to be least expensive, but can also last the longest," Roden says. "The black vinyl chain-link is pretty popular. We also have decorative vinyl, aluminum, and custom-treated wood. Wood costs more, but it is the most popular because of its looks, and longevity can be as much as 15 years if properly maintained. Wood may require more maintenance than other kinds of fences, but personally, I like it best. Wood is a living thing. It can warp, shrink, crack, but you can power-wash it and start all over again with fresh paint or stain."







The Rodens bought Kalamazoo Fence in 2016, although the business was established in 1980 by Ed Uminn. Roy Roden worked for Uminn for 16 years, learning the business from bottom to top, and his wife Heather joined the business office shortly before Uminn's retirement, at which point he offered to sell the business to the Rodens.

The Rodens made the business their own, Roden says, "but we still kept the customer first, just like Ed did. We sell the best quality, use our own installers, and nothing is pre-assembled, because those kinds of fences don't come with a warranty—and we're going for longevity. Because I'm a Marine myself, we give all veterans a 10 percent discount on materials, and the same for seniors."

FnG's history goes all the way back to 1946, Ben Yost says. He is third-generation owner, inheriting the business from his father, Rudy Yost, and has worked at the store since he was 14 years old, helping out.

"The business began as a co-op with a large feed elevator," Yost says. "Agribusiness was my father's life, and he was general manager of the business for many years. But in the 60s, large farms built their own feed elevators, so co-ops supplemented their businesses—in this case, my father supplemented with lawn supplies and tools, which became our garden center, and fencing."

FnG now installs and maintains fencing for residential and commercial clients.

"We may have large commercial clients, like Pfizer, but their employees often come in on weekends to buy for their homes," Yost says.

FnG sells fencing in chain-link, vinyl and aluminum, and wood (treated pine).

"Some customers like to mix materials," Yost says. "You may put an ornamental fence up front, but use chain-link in back. We talk to our customers for a long time up front to determine their needs and wants. Personalized service is what we do."

Yost points out that large box stores may offer fencing but can't compete with the knowledge and experience a business like his can offer.

"We take the time to discuss the details with you," he says. "For instance, we'll ask how big your dog is and how high the dog can jump. We've seen fences installed several inches off the ground that allowed small dogs to push underneath. We'll find out where your septic tank is located to allow access. We'll take the time to install your gate correctly, so it doesn't sag."

Gates, after all, are critical, Yost says. Once your new fence is installed, you may still want to go visit that good neighbor to borrow a cup of sugar.



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|                                       |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Abode Building Center                 | 6      |
| BrioLife Photography                  | 20     |
| Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo | 23     |
| Cork Lane Decorating Center           | 18     |
| DeHaan Remodeling Specialists         | 16     |
| Design Evolutions                     | 14     |
| Expressions by Jan                    | 16     |
| Fence & Garden                        | 29     |
| Flair Interiors                       | 10, 23 |
| The Furnace Guy                       | 8      |
| George's Appliance                    | 8      |
| Glas Associates                       | 32     |
| GraniteWorks                          | 3      |
| Home Builders Association             | 8      |
| Infusion by Etna                      | 25     |
| Integrated Smart Technologies         | 30     |
| J&J Glass                             | 20     |
| Metzger's Heating & Cooling           | 30     |
| Migala Carpet One                     | 31     |
| Murray Landscaping                    | 15     |
| Overhead Door                         | 24     |
| Pennings & Sons                       | 11     |
| Powell Custom Homes                   | 2      |
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| Sandstone Creation                    | 10     |
| Visser Construction                   | 29     |
| Vlietstra Bros. Pools & Spas          | 12     |

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