Devote more than a day trip to visiting the Thumb area

BY THE THREE OL' BAGS SPECIAL WRITERS

My we suggest Michigan's Thumb area for an interesting read trip this fail?

When the Three O! Bags decided to tour the Thumb, we chose to wing it; fly by the seat of our pants; mesey upward to our destination in Port Austin, stopping at whatever atruck our fancy along the way. Frankly, we weren't expecting too much.

Boy, were we wrong. Our two-day junut was full of aurprises.

Sharon Hegwood, photographer and driver for Three O! Bags, headed northeast on US 29. Follow the shoreline, was the plan. We gave her permission to stop and ge at will. We decided to board the auto forry to Harsen's Island.

"That was the weirdest feeling I've ever had," said Linda Sparkman, editor for Three O! Bags. My stomach leapt to my throat and stayed there until I was convinced it was just a nice, safe little forry ride."

We spent an enjoyable morning exploring the island, meeting interesting people who live there, and experiencing a little of the 'island life."

Beautiful homes with spectneular views along the St. Clair

and experiencing a three or "siand life." Beautiful homes with spectacular views along the St. Clair River drew our attention as word on the island, and "anhhed" our way along the road leading to shops on the island. A former fire station turned antique store, an old hardware store, a gift shop and a volunteer library peaked our interest. We enjoyed a leisurely and delicious lunch while we watched huge barges, and sporty and desicious function white wa watched huge barges, and sporty speedboats head south along the St. Clair River. About mid-afternoon we made it back to the ferry and continued our journey around the Thumb.

Where is it?

The Blue Water Area starts in Algenac and follows the coastline up through Marine City, St. Clair, Marysville and Port Huron. Watching ships, scubn diving, sailing, jet skiing and swimming are some of the water sports visitors and residents of these shoreline communities soloy.

swimming are some of the water sports visitors and residents of these shoreline communities enjoy. According to Vacationland 2001, an official guide for the Blue Water Area, Southeastorn Michigan has the best walloye fishing in the state.

Port Sanilae is home to a working lighthouse, one of the Thumb's many lighthouses that still guide sailors while providing picturesque scenes.

Our next stop was Port Huron, the boyhood home of Thomas Edison.

While in Port Huron, the Three Ol' Bags decided to tour the Huron Lightship Museum, located just south of the Blue Water Bridge, which is the only international crossing jointly owned by Michigan and Ontario, and a spectacular sight itself.

Our lightship guide gave many interesting facts about lightships used by the U.S. Coast Guard in a bygone era. The Huron Lightship sevent fifty years in places where the water was too deep to build a traditional lighthouse. The bright light atop her mast, and loud fog horn, helped guide barges along the Great Lakes.

As determined as we were to be spontaneous on this trip, we did call ahead for overnight accommodations at Breakers-On-The-Bay beach resort, located just west of Port Austin. So, we had to pull ourselves away from beautiful Port Huron and continue north.

We also regret the necessity of

hurrying past the Huron City Museum, where a view of how people in the area lived 100 years age is preserved. The museum looked like a miniature Green-field Village from the road as we drove by.

drave by.

We also passed by Harbor Beach, noted as "the world's largest man-made fresh water harbor" in The Thumb Traveler.

Necessary rest

We arrived at Breakers a little tired from our day of exploring. After settling into our room and resting a short time, we enjoyed an excellent dinner in the Break-

resting a short time, we enjoyed an excellent dinner in the Breakers fine-dining room, with a gorgeous view of the sunset over the bay. It was the perfect ending to a wonderful day.

The next morning after a complimentary continental breakfast, we spoke with Diane Ruth, owner of Breakers, and former Bloomfield Hills resident. About three years age, Ruth bought the former Castaways Motel and renovated the rooms and restaurant. "It was a lot of hard work, but worth all the effort," Ruth said. "Winter time is beautiful up here," she added. Late in the morning of day two we headed back to the road, and around the tip of the Thumb, until we apsited a "Bloreshack Riding Here" sign, just west of Breakera-On-The-Boy, on M25.

Plenty to keep you busy.

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In addition to horseback riding, Port Austin has many family
attractions, including a half-mily
boardwalk where you can enjoy a
loisurely stroll, or fish off the
iner. Nearby state parks are
clean, and beaches are plentiful.
Camping, charter fishing, and
golfing are some of the many
other activities for families to
enjoy.

Only five minutes away from Port Austin is Grindstone City, another point of interest. The general store is just one of eight historic buildings in which you can experience a taste of the past. Grindstone City was a bustling town that produced grindstones from 1836 to 1938. According to Judy Marion, who heads the Historical Society there, Grindstone City was the world's largest producer of grindstones. In addition, grindstones made there were the highest quality ever made, and were sent all over the world. Bob Talbert, formerly with the Detroit Free Press, used to call this area Michigan's best kept secret, "said Marion."

Press, used to cell this area Michigan's best kept secret, add Marion.

Our nort stop was in Caseville, a picture-book little fishing town called, "the perch capitol of Michigan," in The Thumb Traveler. In Caseville, we discovered a gold mine of Cat Who books at Caseville, Books (6500 Main Street). The popular murdermystery books, are written by Lilian Jackson Braun, who used to own a vacation home it. Caseville, where she worked on her early Cat Who books.

On the way down the thumb's west side, the highway goss inland and a quiet seenic landscape helped us wind down. We had not been a subdetures taken while sitting on Ronald McDonald's lap in Sebwaning, bought the biggest blueberries we've over seen at roadside stand outside Decker, and saw the city of Ubly, host to racing fans around the state.

What we thought was going and the thumb turned into a subdued country drive around the thumb turned into a variety of travel experiences and we can't wait to go back.

If you're in Schewning, and you see Ronald McDonald, tell him Three O' Bags said Hi.

What to do, where to go in the Thumb

Upcoming events in the Thumb area and other helpful informa-tion on the Web.

- www.tour-michigan.com
 www.HuronLady.com
 www.BreakersOnTheBay.com

www.bluewater.org Call the Huron City Museums - (877) 428-4123; and Knoblock call the Huran City Museums - (8/7) 428-4123; and Anobicok Riding Stable (call shead for hayrides) days (517) 738-7228 evenings (517) 874-4253. Upcoming Fall Events: Nov. 12, 20 - Christmas decorating con-test, Marine City, and Nov. 30, Dec. 2 - Festival of Trees, Port



Friday, November 9, 7:30 pm Tickets: \$10 adv-\$15.00 door 248-435-8957 Info

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1. Freddie Scotts big hit went to #10 in August of 1963.

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