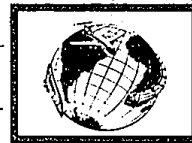


# Travel Scene



Thursday, May 24, 1990 (L&E)

★ ★ 93



crossroads

Iris Sanderson Jones

## Toledo Taj Mahal draws big crowds

We were all there, waiting for the moon to rise above the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. Micky Jones of Farmington, Ted Ryan of Dayton, Ohio. A whole busload of people from all over the United States and Canada, people who have spent part of their lives as armchair travelers dreaming about the Taj Mahal.

The Taj has been described as the most beautiful building in the world. That was certainly what the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan had in mind when he built it as a monument to his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal after her death in 1631.

The emperor called it "an edifice like those in the garden of Paradise," and so it has seemed to centuries worth of travelers, especially when they visit Agra during the full moon.

IT HAS such a strong image, worldwide, that people all over the Midwest are flocking to the Toledo Museum of Art for an exhibit called the Romance of the Taj, open through June 24.

The exhibit includes more than 200 objects created those long centuries ago: paintings, jewelry, glass, carpets and textiles, and a 9-foot-high architectural model of the Taj Mahal, made for the 1939 World's Fair.

The Taj is shown as I remember it, although they never show the poor Indians living in the streets outside the gates. The real world has a bad habit of intruding itself into travel dreams. I call that "traffic jams in Paradise," but the travel promoters seldom illustrate those aspects in their brochures.

OUR INDIAN convention dates had been chosen so that there would be a full moon over the Taj Mahal. That was to accommodate travel photographers and to give the rest of us the Taj Mahal at its best, with a full moon riding high.

Nature had other ideas. The area was in full flood. The famous reflecting pools were empty because of the floods. But the rain had stopped by the day we arrived and the moon was still scheduled to be high in the sky by 8 p.m.

We visited the Taj during the day, went off to dinner, and were scheduled to return just as the full moon took its place above the dome. None of us will forget that moment of return.

Please turn to Page 10

## Saugatuck lures tourists, sailors

By Roberta Schwartz  
special writer

Tiny Saugatuck on the western end of the state on the shores of Lake Michigan boasts that it's the place where there is something for everyone.

Those who love the outdoors know it's a spot that makes good its brag.

The Saugatuck harbor lies among towering dunes and sugar sand beaches. It lures countless sport fishermen who go after big salmon, trout, walleye and perch.

A variety of beautiful marinas provide slips to sailors and a home to internationally famous Broward Marine yacht builders.

Saugatuck is ranked the 10th best harbor in the United States, but those of us who love the gem-like beauty of its waters put it at the top for its sapphire sparkle.

The trails in Saugatuck Dune State Park rival those of the great western states. In winter, brave sledders love whizzing down steep, snow-covered dunes near Mount Baldhead. Others prefer ice skating and horse-drawn sleigh rides.

Saugatuck is a place of blazing log fires and cheery country inns. And with a bit of history, it offers a chance to step back into another century.

THE VICTORIAN handcranked ferry Queen of Saugatuck gives first-time visitors a chance to relax and tour the harbor from the top deck of a 60-foot paddlewheeler. Many prefer the thrill of a dune buggy ride as a way of introduction.

Often called the "Cape Cod of the Midwest," Saugatuck is a year-round vacation wonderland. It's the home of Oxbow Art Workshop, the oldest summer school of painting in the Midwest. Famed as an artists' retreat, the town boasts 14 art galleries, the Red Barn Playhouse and a mid-summer music festival.

Downtown Saugatuck hosts an exciting, colorful, turn-of-the-century collection of trendy stores and specialty shops. It features one

Please turn to Page 10

Saugatuck's many attractions include its long boardwalk, and beautiful marina.



photo by MICKY JONES



photos by ERIC MALLOY

Delhi Rapids, at Delhi Metropark, is one of the most formidable stretches of runnable whitewater in southeastern Michigan.

## Exploring the Huron by kayak

By Eric Malloy  
special writer

I was on the shore of Proud Lake, near Wixom, in the dim light of the coming dawn on a September morning.

Proud Lake was covered by an extremely dense fog. We had encountered no fog on the drive from home. Apparently the warm lake water and chill air had combined to produce a very localized fog bank.

I was here to paddle my kayak down the Huron River. Having been to this place several years ago, I knew that if I had paddled along the lakeshore to my left, the river would continue at the end of the lake.

"I don't see how you're going to know where you're going," said Elaine, my wife.

"Yeah, Dad, you're going to get lost," added my 7-year-old daughter, Alie, in her most critical tone. Assuring my family that I knew where I was going, I waved goodbye and paddled off shore.

A few seconds later, the fog swallowed me up and I was lost. I traveled by my compass, heading toward the northwest. There was no wind and no sound on the lake, other than the slight hiss of my own small boat moving across the water. I could see the tops of trees above the fog, and by them I tried to judge my distance from the shore.

Moments later, a waterfall came into view through the swirling fog, where the lake empties out and the river begins.

MUCH OF THE river flows through Metroparks or state recreation areas. In these areas, the natural beauty of the stream and the surrounding woods and marshes has been preserved. Using a little imagination as you float through Proud Lake Recreation Area, you can picture yourself on a wilderness adventure in northern Michigan, Canada or even Alaska. This illusion is strengthened if you travel on the river when few other people are around.

On this particular day, I saw three deer along the river, one a buck with a beautiful set of antlers in the stretch between Millford and Kent Lake. I also saw many ducks and geese and great blue herons wading in the shallows. Turtles were sunning themselves on logs, their heads stretched out to catch the warmth of the sun. All this on a river that never leaves the metropolitan area.

Having sampled a section of the river, I wanted to see the rest. I resolved to come back the next year and paddle the Huron until it ended, at its mouth in Lake Erie.

In the springtime, I found myself once again on the shores of the river with my friend, Rudy Pavelka.

We were definitely pushing the boating season, as the ice had left the lake only days before. It was cold, in the 30s, and a raw wind blew from the northwest, directly from the direction we wished to travel. Unlike the foggy September morning on this lake, the far shore appeared sharp and clear over the cold windswept waters.

We had barely left shore when it started to snow and sleet, the force of the pellets stinging our faces as we dug hard at our paddles to make progress against the wind.

IN THE RIVER beyond Hubbel Pond, we came upon two swans swimming on the water. Seeing us, they took flight downstream, incredibly graceful with long sweeps of their white wings, and were gone from sight around the next bend of the river. A little farther downstream, however, we caught up to where they had landed.

For a while the swans stayed ahead of our boat, using their webbed feet to paddle through the water. Eventually, though, we moved closer to them. Suddenly, one of the birds turned toward us, rearing back its neck and extending its huge wings threateningly. It took flight and headed straight for our boat. I thought we were going to be attacked. It continued on, its

wings almost grazing our heads as it went by, and flew out of sight upstream, the other swan close behind. I called this the attack of the killer swans.

By the time we got to Kent Lake the wind was blowing in earnest once again. It was a March day better for kite flying than boating, with good-sized waves and whitecaps coming at us from the far end of the lake. We spent the next two hours struggling against the wind and whitecaps to reach the far shore, where the I-56 expressway passes overhead.

Beyond the dam that forms Kent Lake, we were rewarded with relative quiet from the wind as the river winds through Island Lake Recreation Area. This is, I think, the most scenic section of the entire river. In some spots, the river flows through marshlands with grasses along the bank; then around a bend and we would be in dense forest, with precise maneuvering required to navigate around fallen tree limbs.

THE RIVER HERE was in spring flood, making it difficult sometimes to tell the main channel. In one spot, the river was flowing through a stand of trees as it cut across what normally would be a river bend.

At Hudson Mills Metropark we ran an interesting rapids that starts just after the North Territorial Road bridge.

Farther downstream, at Delhi Metropark, is Delhi Rapids. This rapids is probably the most formidable stretch of whitewater in southern Michigan. Of course, whitewater of any kind is pretty rare in the lower part of the state.

Please turn to Page 10



Three metroparks follow a portage at Peninsula Paper on the Huron.



The mouth of the Huron opens at the northwest end of Proud Lake.