

REFLECTION

Editor's note: Op-Ed pieces and Letters to the Editor are welcome. Discussion of ideas and issues is one of our fundamental rights and duties, as well as being essential to the advancement of all people. The main requirement for acceptance is that they maintain civil discourse. Articles or letters that engage in ranting or ad hominem attacks will not be published. An extra long article or letter may be edited for the sake of space. Email your article or letter to tina.fieldsmedia@gmail.com, or send it via the USPS to Editor, Northwest Michigan Voice, PO Box 28, Rapid City, MI 49676

Thankfulness

March 20, 2026

So, as I write tonight (March 17, 2026), we have hot water again. It's been a tough few days for us since the water heater sprung a leak and gave up the ghost last Friday. At first, it really seemed as though only the pipe bringing water into the heater was leaking, but no, it was much more. Bummer!

Now, to be fair, it is appropriate to note that this tank water heater has been serving our family in this house for a very long time - 73 years, to be exact. No kidding. My grandparents had this heater installed in 1953, and I am writing about its demise in 2026. So, the heater owes us no apology.

Still, being unable to use the dishwasher - heating water in the teapot to wash the dishes by hand - or to enjoy a nice hot shower, - doing quick cold-water wash-ups - made the last four days very distressing.

That's why we are very thankful for Torch Plumbing and the McKinnon family of professional plumbers. We do well to remember that this was in the midst of the big snowstorm that shut down much of northern Michigan. Yes, we have a couple feet of snow drifts around our home. Yesterday, many people could not get out of their driveways. Yet, Stuart McKinnon came to evaluate the water

heater situation in our basement, then got the new heater ordered for delivery today, and the crew came out this afternoon to take out the old heater, update the water pipe connections, and install the new heater. We have hot water again. Hurray!

The crew very kindly removed the identification label from the "historic" water heater and gave it to me as a souvenir. I think I may frame it and give it a place of honor on the mantelpiece or wall.

It got me to thinking about all the everyday services we get to enjoy with really very little disruption. Saturday morning, the blizzard wind took out our power. The outage was very localized and it was fixed in less than three hours - by workers who went out in the freezing cold, wind, and blowing snow, to make the necessary repairs. I don't know their names, but 'd like them to know just how thankful I am that they did the job. Without them, would I yet be able to use my computer to write this story? Could we have had any hot meals, or would we have had to content ourselves with cold cereal and the like? I wonder whether the water heater replacement would have yet been possible. Yes, thank you, members of the crew from Consumers Energy, for rescuing us from the cold of a long power outage.

Another crew I want to thank is the snowplow gang. We know the driver from our little town. We watched him grow up here, playing baseball on the same teams as our own kids. Andrew Hulburt drives the plow truck that clears the roads in our town. We hear the truck go by, plowing the snow from our road, and although he doesn't know it, we always say "Hi, Andrew" and "Thank you."

These are not the only people in our world who deserve our thanks. In fact, it is a good practice to thank everyone whose acts of service help to make life good. The owners and employees of the Village Market, for instance; or the Alden State Bank; or the libraries in our several nearby towns; or the schools; or the churches; or our local elected public servants. There is no end to the list of people for whom we are - or should be - thankful.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Well, that's what I've been thinking about.

Shalom

Tina Norris Fields
Editor

Citizenship Corner

These questions may require some research on your part. Thank you for making that effort. The answers will appear in the next edition of the Voice.

- 1) Where is the law making, or legislative, power lodged in the United States government?
- 2) What is listed as the first power of the Congress?
- 3) What is the second listed power of the Congress?
- 4) What is the third listed power of the Congress?

Citizenship Corner

Answers to last issue's questions

- 1) The Preamble to the Constitution states as a purpose, "to form a more perfect union." How many other purposes does it list?
A. It lists the "more perfect union" plus five other purposes.
- 2) What is the second stated purpose?
A. The second one listed is to "establish justice."
- 3) What are the remaining purposes?
A. They are: "insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."
- 4) What does the Preamble to the Michigan State Constitution say?
A. We, the people of the State of Michigan, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of freedom, and earnestly desiring to secure these blessings undiminished to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution.



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is important to somebody**