



MICHIGAN'S PREMIER MOTORCOACH CONNECTION
BETWEEN EAST LANSING, ANN ARBOR,
BRIGHTON & DETROIT METRO AIRPORT



e-news

AUGUST 2023



Debra Hamel and daughters Rebecca and Melissa

Announcing “Love Connections” Contest Winner #2

Our 2023 essay contest—“Love Connections”—asked contestants to tell us how Michigan Flyer connected them with a special person, place, or adventure dear to their hearts. It features a \$500 gift card Top Prize, and five \$100 gift card runner-up prizes.

Based on which essays best fit the contest theme, Michigan Flyer staff and creative consultants select the winners from among the many fine entries we receive. (Please note: Each winner is notified in the month their

entry is to be published.)

We revealed our first winner in the [July E-News](#). Now, we're pleased to announce that winner #2 is Debra Hamel of North Haven, Conn. Her entry seems especially poignant this month, when so many folks out there will be either sending their children to college for the first time, or remembering both the heartache and happiness of delivering a child to campus as they started a new chapter of their lives.

Debra's first reaction when she got our call: “I was momentarily caught off guard since I'd forgotten I'd entered the contest. I was so pleased that it was happy news.” She's the mother of two daughters: Rebecca and Melissa. Melissa is a senior at Clark University in relatively nearby Worcester, Mass., and Rebecca is studying for her master's degree in social work at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Debra herself earned a doctorate at Yale in the classics, where she concentrated on Athenian history, its society, court system and military. She is the author of several books, including ["Trying Neaira: The True Story of a Courtesan's Scandalous Life in Ancient Greece."](#)

When daughter Rebecca decided to move from the East Coast to attend U-M, Debra did an Internet search for the easiest way to get from Detroit Metro to Ann Arbor. That's how she found Michigan Flyer. "I was pleasantly surprised by how nice the buses were. They're so comfortable, clean, and convenient." She's still happily mulling over what she'll buy with her Amazon gift card. "I'm a frequent Amazon shopper and I may decide to just treat myself." Here's her story:

Watching Them Go and Welcoming Them Home

By Debra Hamel

"She was my first. We met in 1996, and I fell in love right away. But relationships oscillate. People grow, change, and fly apart sometimes. She's flown away a lot: Atlanta, Canterbury, Jerusalem, and Budapest. So far, she's always come back. Nowadays, she's 700 miles away from me. I can't say hello across the kitchen table anymore or hop in the car for a quick visit, like I'd been able to for the last few years. So, I drive from New Haven to the airport outside of Hartford, and then it's Delta to Detroit and the Flyer west down I-94 to the artsy college town where she seems to fit so well. And I'm glad she fits so well, really, even though she's so far from home. When the bus pulls into the transit center at U-M, I grab my bag and see her waiting—my beautiful, brilliant daughter. Tomorrow I'll be able to say hello to her across the kitchen table, and we'll walk around the town she's calling home. To be honest, I think Ann Arbor has won her over. I don't think she'll be moving back to Connecticut when she finishes her degree. So, we'll have a nice visit, and in a few days, I'll retrace my steps: Michigan Flyer to DTW to Bradley Airport to home. And I'll miss her. But I'm glad she's found her spot in the world, and when I need to, I know how to get back to her."



Meet Danny Nethaway: Jack of All Trades

Danny Nethaway was working for his family's tree service back in 2000. As they were taking trees down on a strip of land owned by Indian Trails near the Owosso, Mich., airport, his brother suggested that Danny consider becoming a bus driver in order to get health care benefits that he didn't have.

That's exactly what Danny did. In the years since signing on with us, he's become a kind of "jack of all trades" at Indian Trails. In his career here, Danny has

served as a driver for both Indian Trails, on regular line runs and charters trips, and for our airport shuttle service, Michigan Flyer, on its route between East Lansing and Detroit Metro Airport.

When he later gave up driving, Danny was offered positions as a dispatcher and head bus washer at our Owosso headquarters.

Unique Experiences

Danny was one of the first drivers for Michigan Flyer when the shuttle service was launched in 2006. "A lot of us thought it was going to be temporary," he recalls. "We had no clue that it would take off the way it did and become so immensely popular."

One of his most memorable trips as a Flyer driver was at the helm of the lead bus to transport members of the University of Michigan's band to former President Gerald Ford's funeral in Grand Rapids. "Ford was a U-M graduate, and we picked up half of the band, which was coming in from out of state, to [play at the funeral](#). My bus actually parked under the wing of Air Force One, so the band got a look inside the plane."

As an Indian Trails driver, Danny had also ferried a variety of groups to destinations like New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. "It was always nice when those groups requested me again as their driver. I was lucky to meet some really interesting people, too."

Switching Gears

When Danny wanted to change jobs after eight years of driving, Indian Trails offered him a position as a dispatcher, which he did for a year and a half, and also as head bus washer, where he both does the work and trains new crew members. He also pitches in on maintenance. "All of our buses are completely washed every night, the interiors are cleaned and, since Covid, are also thoroughly disinfected," he says. "All three of our garages (in Owosso, Romulus, and Kalamazoo) have stations that look like car washes, except that they're for buses. And if a driver reports a problem with a bus, we do our best to fix it."

The cleaning and maintenance crews take great pride in their work. "These are top-notch motorcoaches, and we want to keep them looking sleek and beautiful," says Danny.

The cleaning crews also turn in anything they find that passengers have unwittingly left behind—like jewelry, cash, and other items—so the company can do its best to return them to their rightful owners. "We know we'd want to get back anything of value that we might misplace."

In his downtime, Danny uses his vocal and guitar talents to entertain veterans at VFW and American Legion halls, as well as nursing homes.

He's grateful that he took his brother's advice more than two decades ago. "There's a real camaraderie here that I enjoy," he says. "I feel like the executives here are doing their best to look after me and my family, so it's up to me to do my best to make sure our buses look terrific and are maintained, so everything runs smoothly, and our customers are happy."



Travel Alerts

Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center Bypassed on U-M Football Saturdays

If you are planning a Saturday trip with Michigan Flyer between Ann Arbor and East Lansing or Detroit Metro Airport this fall, please know that on U-M home football game Saturdays some of our runs will bypass the BTC on the way to and from the airport. In September, this will affect some of our runs before, during, and after the following home games:

Sept. 2, East Carolina, Noon

Sept. 9, UNLV, 3:30 p.m.

Sept. 16, Bowling Green, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 23, Rutgers, Noon

Note that some Michigan Flyer runs will continue to stop at the BTC on these days. It's easy to find out which ones: Just check the "Book a Trip" feature on our website.



and fees).

Delta to Expand Flights to China

Beginning on October 29, Delta will expand its flight schedule to China's Shanghai-Pudong International Airport (PVG), operating three-times-weekly service from DTW with an Airbus A350-900 aircraft. Delta passengers flying this route will be able to connect with many other cities in China via the airline's partnership with China Eastern Airlines.

Through the Delta.com website, we found one-way, nonstop, economy fares of \$1,457 for a sample Oct. 20 DTW departure and \$1,579 for a Nov. 10 return from PVG, for a trip total of \$3,036 in airfares (before taxes

Top Coming Events—We Can Get You There!



East Lansing

2023 Michigan Chicken Wing Festival

This two-day family-friendly event features live music, a kids' zone, a VIP tent, a hot wing eating contest, a sauce boss contest, food trucks, food vendors, merchant vendors, arts and craft vendors, and more. Even better, it's a fundraiser to support the Against All Odds Foundation's free boutique—Lillian's, inside the Lansing Mall—that serves the homeless, cancer survivors, people with disabilities, Veterans, and those in need of a little help with their daily essentials. Catch it on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 2 and 3, from 2 p.m.

to 9 p.m. at Adado Riverfront Park, 300 N. Grand Ave., in Downtown Lansing.

Kindly bring your own blanket or lawn chair since no general seating is provided. Chicken wings are available to everyone for purchase; free samples provided to VIP ticket holders only. [General admission is free. VIP tickets \\$45-\\$55 plus fee.](#)

A Capital Area Transportation Authority bus can get you from our location at the East Lansing Marriott to the Chicken Wing Festival in about 30 minutes for \$1.25. Find [CATA's Trip Planner here](#). Folks from the Brighton and Ann Arbor areas who are going to the festival should know that our last eastbound run of the day leaves East Lansing at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Check out more local coming events with the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar: <http://www.lansing.org/events>.

Ann Arbor

Rhiannon Giddens

A two-time GRAMMY Award-winning singer and instrumentalist, MacArthur "Genius" grant recipient, and composer of opera, ballet, and film, Rhiannon Giddens has made a career out of stretching her brand of folk music, with its deep historical roots and contemporary sensibilities, into just about every field imaginable. NPR



coming events: <https://www.annarbor.org/events/>



Convention & Visitors Bureau events calendar: <https://visitlivingstoncounty.com/events/>.



Aerosmith Peace Out Farewell Tour with The Black Crowes

Four-time Grammy® award-winning and diamond-certified rock legends Aerosmith have announced their “Peace Out” with special guest The Black Crowes, including a performance at Little Caesars Arena on Monday, Sept. 18, at 7 p.m. Fans will see one of the most significant American rock bands in history one last time during this not-to-be-missed final tour. Tickets [\\$95-\\$500+](#).

NOTE: [The D2A2 Express Bus](#) from Ann Arbor’s Blake Transit Center (BTC) to Detroit’s Grand Circus Park can get Ann Arbor-area residents to and from these events. Little Caesar’s Arena is about a half-mile walk from D2A2’s stop at 1508 Park Ave. (in Grand Circus Park) in Detroit.

 calls her one of its 25 Most Influential Women Musicians of the 21st Century, while American Songwriter says she’s “one of the most important musical minds currently walking the planet.”

Catch her performance at the Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor, at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 18, 2023. [Tickets \\$41-\\$66](#), with a VIP package available.

For more entertainment in and around A2, see the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of

Brighton

[**Smokin'Jazz & BBQ Blues Festival**](#)

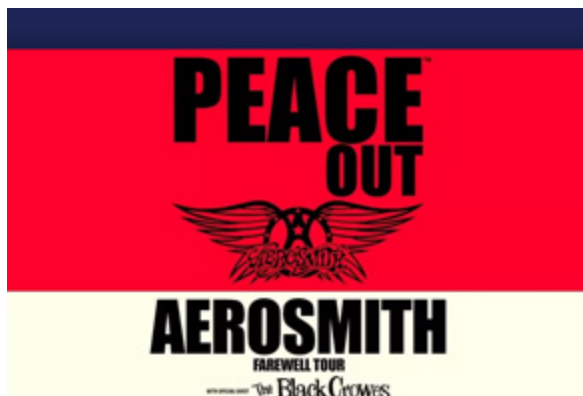
Live jazz and blues musicians fill the streets with glorious song while vendors offer delicious food—smoked ribs, pulled pork, beef brisket, pork tenderloin, mac and cheese, and more. Thirsty? Walk over to the beer tent and grab a local brew to enjoy with your meal. It’s happening on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 8 and 9, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., at Mt. Brighton, 4141 Bauer Rd., Brighton. [Tickets: \\$15 general admission, \\$40 Center Stage VIP](#), plus fee.

Brighton, like other communities in Livingston County, offers a multitude of events to delight visitors of all ages. Explore them with the Livingston County

Detroit

[**Duran Duran - Future Past North American Tour**](#)

Arguably the biggest band of the 1980s, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame group Duran Duran is staging a 26-date North American arena tour in 2023, with both Nile Rodgers & CHIC and Bastille joining them as special guests. Here are Smooth Radio’s [picks for their top ten songs](#). Duran Duran will perform in Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward Ave., Detroit, on Saturday, Sept. 16 at 7 p.m. [Tickets \\$29-\\$189+](#).



✍ To learn more about what's happening in Detroit, check out the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events:

<https://visitdetroit.com/events/>.



—N.D., Lake Forest, Calif.

Customer Comment

"I traveled on the Michigan Flyer to and from the Detroit Airport and wanted to congratulate your company on the very convenient, practical and altogether comfortable journeys. I'm so happy and very grateful that I can fly into Detroit and get to East Lansing (where my daughter lives) without any inconvenience to her. The drivers are helpful and load the luggage too. What more can I ask? Thank you, thank you from a happy mamma and an equally happy daughter."



Airfares for International Autumn Escapes

Our focus this month is on international destinations accessible by nonstop flights—and there aren't many of them. Using [Kayak.com](https://www.kayak.com) we sampled trips originating at Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) on Saturday, Oct. 14, and returning on Wednesday, Oct. 25. Among the criteria used for our spot check: Flights had to be nonstop in both directions, and the return had to arrive at DTW in time for you to catch our last run at 8:15 p.m./8:30 p.m. to Ann Arbor, Brighton, and East Lansing.

You can definitely find lower prices than we did if you're flexible about the dates of travel. If you're also willing to change planes at least once enroute to your destination, then not only will you find lower fares, but the whole world of potential places to visit opens up to you. The following economy **roundtrip** fares include taxes but not necessarily baggage or other "extras":

- ✍ **Cancun (CUN) Spirit \$281**
- ✍ **Montreal (YUL) Delta & WestJet \$472**
- ✍ **Toronto (YYZ) Delta & WestJet \$480**
- ✍ **Munich (MUC) Delta \$821**
- ✍ **London (LHR) Delta, as Virgin Atlantic \$902**
- ✍ **Frankfurt (FRA) United \$935**

- ✈ **Paris (CDG) Delta \$1,035**
- ✈ **Amsterdam (AMS) Delta \$1,038**
- ✈ **Seoul (ICN) Delta, as Korean Air \$2,027**



Update on Ody's Humanitarian Mission to Ukraine

Ody Norkin, vice president of Michigan Flyer, continues to make headlines with his humanitarian mission to Ukraine. This time he's on the cover of the August edition of *517 Magazine*, a Lansing business and lifestyle journal. We are so proud of his efforts to transport ambulances and critical supplies that make a real difference to the people of this war-torn country.

As we reported in prior issues of our E-News, Ody's personal mission to help ease the suffering of people in Ukraine have inspired hundreds of people, businesses and organizations to get involved. Now having made five trips to the region in a little over a year, he has helped to deliver four fully equipped, trauma-level ambulances, plus a passenger van, to Dnipro, Odesa, and Kiev.

In fact, he's there right now helping to deliver a semi-tractor trailer full of medical supplies and emergency

equipment to Dnipro.

It has all been made possible by more than \$150,000 in donations so far from a multitude of sources—hospitals, Rotary Clubs, fire departments, and legions of ordinary people who just want to help. Amid the massive, ongoing humanitarian crisis, even small donations can make a world of difference. If you'd like to pitch in, you can do so online here: <https://bit.ly/3YzIPsQ>.

Please, Help Others by Reviewing Us Online

Kindly take a moment to help others understand how our service might improve their travels. Simply visit one of the websites below to write a brief review about your experience with Michigan Flyer. Thank you!



Professional Drivers Wanted

Indian Trails, Inc.—which staffs Michigan Flyer with professional drivers—is accepting applications for full-time motorcoach drivers. These positions pay a **starting** hourly rate of \$21.42, provide a 6-week PAID training



[Learn more and apply here.](#)

program leading to a Commercial Driver's License, and operate Michigan's newest and largest fleet of motorcoaches. Full-time drivers also receive:

- ✓ Two weeks of paid time off in the first year
- ✓ Medical, dental, vision and life insurance
- ✓ 401(k) retirement program with employer match
- ✓ Annual safety bonus

Also important, Indian Trails truly appreciates the hard work of its staff members—it's a 113-year-old, family-run company with old-fashioned values like fairness, honesty, teamwork, and service excellence.

We encourage anyone, including those with no commercial driving experience, to apply. It takes a special person to be a professional bus driver. To us and to our passengers, they're truly heroes of the road.



beach, enjoy the rest of summer! Astronomically speaking, the first day of fall arrives on Saturday, Sept. 23—the Autumn Equinox. This is when the Sun crosses the Equator, and those of us in the Northern Hemisphere begin to see more darkness than daylight.

Happy Labor Day & Welcome Fall!

On Monday, Sept. 4, we celebrate the 129th Labor Day, which honors the enormous contributions of workers to the strength and prosperity of America.

The first labor parade was organized by New York City unions in 1882. More than 10,000 workers marched, though it cost most of them a day's pay. Back then, the average worker toiled for 12 hours a day—seven days a week—just to earn a meager living. In many states, children as young as five worked in mills, factories and mines for even lower wages.

In 1894, Congress established Labor Day as a federal holiday to be celebrated on the first Monday of September. President Grover Cleveland signed it into law. The eight-hour workday was established with passage of the Adamson Act in 1916.

Whether you celebrate Labor Day with a parade, cookout, picnic, fireworks, or long weekend at the

Why Drive?

Booking is easy, [click here](#) to view schedules on



Michigan Flyer
333 Albert Street - Suite 214 | East Lansing, MI 48823

www.michiganflyer.com



follow us on Facebook and Twitter