



Presenting Our Grand Prize Winner!



Our 2024 essay contest asked folks to tell us how Michigan Flyer connected them with a special person, place, or adventure. It featured a \$500 gift card Top Prize and five \$100 gift card runner-up prizes. Michigan Flyer staff and creative consultants select the winners based on which essays best fit the contest theme. You can read about our previous five runner-up winners [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). (Stay tuned for details of our next contest, coming soon!)

Finally, we're happy to announce that our \$500 Top Prize winner is **Isabella Crow** of Ann Arbor, Mich.

The lyrical tone of Isabella's award-winning entry charmed our reviewers. It didn't surprise us to learn that she's previously won awards for her writing skills at the University of Michigan. What we didn't expect, though, was to discover that Isabella, now a senior at U-M, is finishing up a degree in Economics with a Mathematics minor. She hopes to become either a professor or an economist for the federal government.

Growing up, Isabella's father was an active-duty member of the U.S. Army. "I think we moved 13 different times when I was a kid," she says. Yet, both sets of grandparents are Michiganders, and the state felt a bit like home to her, especially when her family

lived in Ann Arbor. So it was during that time, as a middle school student, when she first remembers taking—and loving—the Michigan Flyer.

Over the years, she's relied on the Flyer many times for her travels. Most recently, it was the first step on her journey to Mexico to celebrate her grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary.

Isabella was elated when we notified her that she was this year's top contest award winner. She'll be joining her family, including three siblings, at her parents' home in upstate New York this holiday season and plans to spend her \$500 gift card on gifts for them, and maybe a little splurge for herself. Read her award-winning entry here:

"The Air Is Humming, Something Great is Coming"

By Isabella Crow

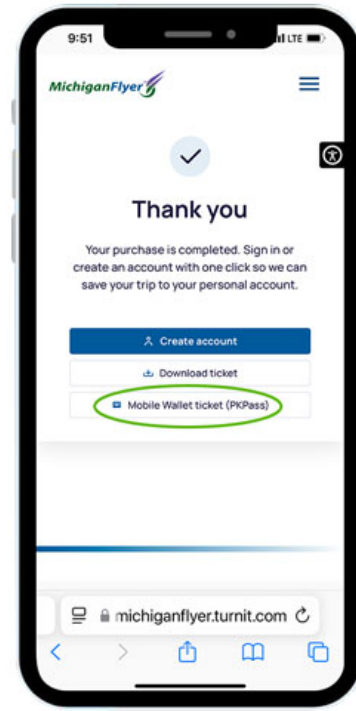
"I'm a student at the University of Michigan. Every trip home, every vacation, every adventure has begun with the Michigan Flyer. I couldn't count the number of times I've taken it. I've watched for it in the Ann Arbor District Library, waiting for the towering bus to round the corner as I played giant chess; I've waited for it in the rain, huddled under the bus shelter, and in the snow, with my face craned towards the clouds. I've walked my suitcase for miles to its doorstep, rattling over cracked concrete and pitted asphalt. I've finagled it onto rental scooters, strapped it to my back on my bike, or arrived with nothing more than the duffel in my hand. I've been so late that I've sprinted to catch it; I've been so early that I picked up coffee and came back with time to spare. I've waited for it before the sun breaks over the parking garage—before the city itself is even awake. Every time I climb onto the Michigan Flyer, I can feel an adventure at its very beginning. Waiting for the bus to pull away from the curb, you can sense that something has started—that the journey is underway. The Michigan Flyer has been the first leg on the way to the beaches of Mexico, to the Northwoods of Michigan, and to the red stone gorges of Kentucky. It's been the texts to my family—"I'm officially on my way home"—and to my grandparents, meeting me for lunch in East Lansing. It's been trips to football games and to the airport, to family and friends. It's never late. It never let me down. It is the gateway and the first step. I board the bus and look out the window, imagining what comes next."

Now You Can Add Your Ticket to Apple or Google Wallet!

When you buy a Michigan Flyer ticket online, you can now add an e-ticket to the digital wallet on your Apple or Google smartphone, making it easier for you to board our buses. It's simple: At checkout, when buying your ticket, just tap "Add to Wallet."

After that, there's no need for you to print out a paper boarding pass, or rummage through emails to find your confirmed reservation. When you're ready to board your bus, the driver will simply scan the e-ticket on your phone and welcome you aboard. For simple instructions on how to use your digital wallet, [click here](#).

Most smartphones come with the Digital Wallet app pre-installed. But if yours didn't, you can download it at the App Store or Google Play.



Travel Alerts

Fewer Michigan Flyer Runs on Christmas Eve

While our office will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, we will operate some—but not all—of our runs on Tuesday, Dec. 24. Moreover, on Wednesday, Dec. 25, as well as on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, we plan to operate our full daily schedule of 12 roundtrips. Just use the "Book a Trip" feature on our website to see which buses will operate on any particular day.

Delta to Resume Flights to Bahamas on Dec. 21



If you're eager to get away for an island vacation, you may be happy to know that Delta Air Lines is now offering nonstop flights between Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) and Lynden Pindling International Airport (NAS) in Nassau, Bahamas. The seasonal route, which is resuming after a four-year pause, runs once weekly on Saturdays through April 12, 2025. You can book roundtrips through [Delta's website](#) starting at \$757 for basic economy class seats.

Avelo Airlines to Add Low-Cost Detroit-New Haven Flights in April

U.S.-based budget airline [Avelo](#) is set to launch nonstop flights between Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) and Connecticut's Tweed-New Haven Airport (HVN) twice weekly beginning April 4. We spot-checked prices for a roundtrip departing DTW on Friday, April 4, and returning on Friday, April 11, and found ample economy-class seating available for \$64.

Holiday Downtimes for D2A2 Express Bus

The D2A2 Express Bus between Detroit and Ann Arbor will not operate during the Christmas and New Year holidays (Dec. 24, 25, 31, and Jan. 1). On normal weekdays, the luxury motorcoaches of D2A2 offer 16 eco-friendly roundtrips between Detroit's Grand Circus Park (1508 Park Ave.) and Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center (328 S. Fifth St.), plus eight roundtrips on weekends. [See the schedule here](#). The D2A2 is a service of the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan and is operated by [Michigan Flyer](#).

Book Michigan Flyer NOW for Travel in Early January

If you're planning a trip with us this time of year, remember that it's a peak travel period. People by the millions visit family and friends around the Christmas and New Year holidays. Also, with Michigan State University and University of Michigan students returning from winter break, we will be in high demand for the first couple weeks of January. U-M students resume classes on Wednesday, Jan. 8, and MSU students on Monday, Jan. 13, 2025. To guarantee that we have a seat for you, make reservations without delay at [MichiganFlyer.com](#).

Top Coming Events–We Can Get You There!

East Lansing



Wonderland of Lights at Potter Park Zoo

Prepare to be dazzled at Potter Park Zoo's 32nd annual Wonderland of Lights, located at 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave. in Lansing. The Wonderland is open from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday between now and Monday, Dec. 23. Step into a real-life winter wonderland as thousands of sparkling lights transform the zoo into a magical holiday paradise. Wander through festively illuminated pathways while listening to holiday music as you take in dazzling displays. Visit Santa for photos that capture cherished family memories (Friday and Saturday only). [Tickets \\$5-\\$9 per person.](#)

NOTE: A Capital Area Transportation Authority bus can get you from East Lansing to the Potter Park in about 45 minutes for \$1.25. Near the corner of westbound Grand River Ave. and M.A.C. (a short walk from our location at the East Lansing Marriott), catch CATA's #1 bus to downtown Lansing. At Grand Ave., use a free transfer card to switch to the #8 bus heading south toward Holt. Get off at S. Pennsylvania Ave. and Fletcher St., then walk about 10 minutes to the zoo. See [CATA's Trip Planner here.](#)

Shucked

It's the new Tony Award®-winning musical comedy that The Wall Street Journal calls "flat out hilarious!" Sure to satisfy your appetite for corny but great

musical theater, it's at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Ln., on the MSU campus in East Lansing for eight matinee and evening performances between Tuesday, Jan. 21, and Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025.



Credit: Matthew Murphy
and Evan Zimmerman

[Tickets \\$39-\\$120.](#) Call the Ticket Office at (517) 432-2000 or email wharton@msu.edu.

Check out more local coming events with the Choose Lansing calendar:
lansing.org/events.

Brighton



Island Lake Lantern Hike

Enjoy the winter wonderland of the Hickory Ridge hiking trail during the Island Lake Lantern Hike. This self-guided loop hike spans 1.5 miles, and is completely lit by lanterns. Hikers can start any time between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m., after which the lights are taken down.

This fun outdoor event takes place at Island Lake Recreation Area, 6301 Kensington Rd., in Brighton. While admission is FREE, a Michigan [Recreation Passport](#) is required for entry. Note, too, that Island Lake is about a 10-minute [drive](#) or 2½ hour [hike](#) from Michigan Flyer's location at the Brighton Meijer store.

Brighton, like other communities in Livingston County, offers a multitude of events to delight visitors of all ages. Explore them with the Livingston County Convention & Visitors Bureau events calendar: visitlivingstoncounty.com/events/.

Ann Arbor

A2 SmartTours

Created to celebrate the [Bicentennial](#) of Ann Arbor's founding in 1824 and its development over two centuries, the 15 self-guided "SmartTours" are FREE and

open to the public. Together, they encompass a rich array of 177 significant sites throughout the city.



There's a photograph for each site and a narrative describing its importance. You can take each tour virtually (online with a smartphone or computer) or in person. Tours most appropriate for walking, biking, and/or driving are noted. Here are the SmartTours you can explore:

[Downtown Tour](#)

[Central Campus Tour](#)

[Campus/State Street Tour](#)

[Old Fourth Ward Tour](#)

[North Division Street Tour](#)

[Old West Side Tour](#)

[Washtenaw/Hill Tour](#)

[Lower Town Tour](#)

[A2 Modern Tour](#)

[Historically Black Neighborhood Tour](#)

[Underground Railroad Tour](#)

[Street Exhibits Tour](#)

[Riverwalks Tour](#)

[Scavenger Tour](#)



48th Ann Arbor Folk Fest

The 2025 Ann Arbor Folk Festival is the largest annual fundraising event for The Ark, Ann Arbor's non-profit home for folk, roots, and acoustic music.

Featuring a blend of renowned and up-and-coming performers, the program gives audiences an opportunity to hear artists they know and love while discovering great new talent. See the lineup [here](#). Catch it at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 24 and 25, at U-M Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave, Ann Arbor. [Tickets \\$47.50-\\$70, special seating \\$120-\\$1,250.](#)

For more entertainment in and around A2, see the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: annarbor.org/events/.

Detroit

""Twas the Night Before ..."" by Cirque

du Soleil

Everyone from age 5 to 95 is sure to be wowed by Cirque du Soleil's Christmas show, based on the classic poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas."



This heart-warming story about a jaded young girl who rediscovers the magic of Christmas features thrilling acrobatics performed by a cast of 26 artists from around the world, lovable characters, and a soundtrack of Christmas favorites. Catch one of 19 afternoon or evening performances between Friday, Dec., 20 and Tuesday, Dec. 31, at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. [Tickets \\$46.50-\\$126+.](#)



The Detroit Auto Show

Experience the world famous Detroit Auto Show with your friends and family. It features over 20 attractions, events, and displays about motor vehicles and the ever-growing technology behind them. Fun for families and car enthusiasts alike, the event showcases innovative vehicle technology, experiential track activations, "modded" car exhibits and more, including a special day of programming on Saturday, Jan. 18, honoring the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. See it all at Huntington Place, 1 Washington Blvd., in Detroit between Saturday, Jan. 11, and Monday, Jan. 20. Open each day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. except Jan. 15 and 16, when doors open at 1 p.m. [Tickets \\$20 adults, \\$12 seniors, \\$10 kids.](#)

PLEASE NOTE: To get within a short walk of both of these Downtown Detroit events on luxury coaches we operate, use Michigan Flyer to connect with either [D2A2](#) in Ann Arbor or [DAX](#) at Detroit Metro Airport.

To learn more about what's happening in Detroit, check out the Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: <https://visitdetroit.com/events/>.

Airfares to Warm, Romantic Places for Valentine's Day



Using [SkyScanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com), we set out to scout prices for a sample trip that includes Valentine's Day. We chose Wednesday, Feb. 12, for the departure from DTW, and Wednesday, Feb. 19, for the return. As usual, our search criteria required that the flights be non-stop in both directions, and had to arrive back at DTW in time for you to catch Michigan Flyer's last run at 9:45/10 p.m. to Ann Arbor, Brighton, and East Lansing.

We discovered dozens of warm and potentially romantic destinations. The following economy roundtrip fares include taxes but not necessarily baggage or other "extras":

Atlanta, GA (ATL) Spirit \$53
Dallas, TX (DFW) Frontier \$108
Miami, FL (MIA) Spirit \$117
Las Vegas, NV (LAS) Spirit \$136
Houston, TX (IAH) Spirit \$144
Fort Myers, FL (RSW) Spirit \$157
Nashville, TN (BNA) Delta \$157
Tampa, FL (TPA) Spirit \$181
New Orleans, LA (MSY) Spirit \$183
Phoenix, AZ (PHX) Delta \$190
Los Angeles, CA (LAX) Spirit \$197
Orlando, FL (MCO) Spirit + Frontier \$224
Seattle, WA (SEA) Delta \$257
Myrtle Beach, SC (MYR) Delta \$299
Charlotte, NC (CLT) Delta \$303

Charleston, SC (CHS) Delta \$317
Austin, TX (AUS) Delta \$399
San Antonio, TX (SAT) Delta \$399
San Diego, CA (SAN) Delta \$499
Cancun, MX (CUN) Spirit \$565
San Francisco, CA (SFO) Delta \$639
Frankfurt, DE (FRA) Delta \$704
London, GB (LHR) Virgin Atlantic \$761
Montego Bay, JM (MBJ) Delta \$819
San Juan, PR (SJU) Delta \$824
Paris, FR (CDG) Air France \$908
Amsterdam, NL (AMS) KLM/Delta \$917
Tokyo, JP (HND) Delta \$1,101
Honolulu, HI (HNL) Delta \$1,241

NOTE: You can find even lower prices and more choices if you're flexible about dates of travel and/or willing to change planes at least once enroute to your destination. Also, in order to get below-average fares, it's important to buy your tickets at least three weeks in advance of your trip.



Tips for Smarter Travel

Know How to Find Us at DTW ([click the link for each terminal](#))

Easily Change Your Own MI Flyer Reservations at [this Link](#)

Where's Your Bus? Find Out with Our [Real-Time Tracker](#)

Please, Help Others by Reviewing Us Online

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

facebook

 **tripadvisor**

yelp 

Customer Comment

"Awesome service. Thank you for a luxury feel at a bargain price! How do you do it? I've taken Michigan Flyer several times—Detroit Metro to Brighton and back—I'm in on time every time. Would not send my family to get me ever again. Thank you!"

— Lori H., Portland, OR



Welcome, Winter—and More Sunshine!



Astronomical winter officially begins at the Winter Solstice, which occurs on Saturday, Dec. 21, here in our Northern Hemisphere in 2024. This is both the shortest day and longest night of the year. On the bright side, this means we'll enjoy more sunlight as the days gradually grow longer until the March 20 Equinox, when Spring begins.



From all of us at Michigan Flyer, we wish you and yours the happiest of holidays, and a healthy, prosperous New Year!

Why Drive?

Booking is easy, click here to view schedules.



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www.michiganflyer.com

