

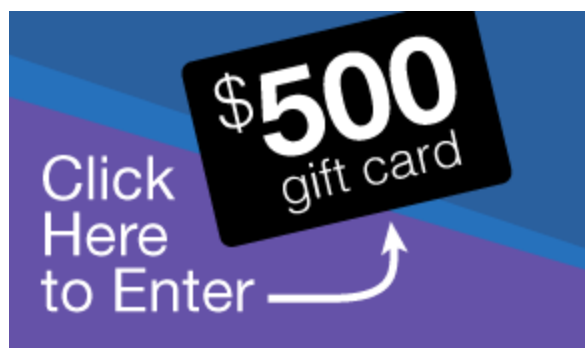


MICHIGAN'S PREMIER MOTORCOACH CONNECTION
BETWEEN EAST LANSING, ANN ARBOR,
BRIGHTON & DETROIT METRO AIRPORT



e-news

FEBRUARY 2024



Tell Us a Great Story, Win a Big Prize!

Announcing a brand new “Great Connections” essay contest—and your chance to win a \$500 gift card Top Prize, or one of five \$100 gift card Runner-up Prizes!

To enter, just tell a great—but true—story about how Michigan Flyer helped to connect you with a special person, place or adventure dear to your heart. In addition to the gift card, all winners will have their stories and photos published in our E-news for the enjoyment of fellow passengers.

It doesn't get much easier: Submit your story of up to 300 words [here at SurveyMonkey](#) between now and May 22, 2024. We'll notify the winners sometime after that by phone or email. Entries will be judged by Michigan Flyer staff and creative consultants, based on their judgment of which stories best fit the contest theme. Good luck!

Meet Michigan Flyer Driver Gary Woods

After years of living out of state, and traveling to different parts of the world, Gary Woods headed home to Michigan in hopes of finding a job that suited him.



One day, driving in downtown Owosso, he passed by the Indian Trails headquarters. That brought back fond memories of motorcoach trips he'd taken as a youth to places like Florida and Cedar Point. Suddenly, Gary was struck by the idea that he might want to become a driver.

"I started with Indian Trails in March 2019 and it's been a perfect fit," he says. "In fact, I enjoy it so much that I suggested to my brother that he might like it, too."

Shortly afterward his brother, Brent Bentler, also became an Indian Trails driver. And then Gary talked their cousin Bo Slomkowski into joining our driver training program. Bo has just passed the course for his

commercial driver's license and will be hitting the road soon. "Professional bus driving is a perfect fit for both of them, too," says Gary.

Born in Flint and raised in Byron, Mich., Gary has lived in Canada, New Jersey, Nebraska, Colorado, and Ohio, mostly working as a pastoral minister. Part of his job at the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Ky., was to transport folks from the parking lot to the museum in a shuttle bus.

"I found I really liked the passengers and the variety of people I met every day," he says, adding that, when he later applied for a driver's position at Indian Trails, he thought, "Why not get paid to do something I enjoy most—traveling and sightseeing?"

Once he passed our rigorous driver training program, Gary started piloting group charter trips. That fulfilled two of his passions: Seeing new places, and adding to the enjoyment of his passengers.

"I've been to so many places, including Washington D.C., Toronto, Niagara Falls, Chicago, and throughout northern Michigan," he says. "It's great."

Switching to the Flyer

Gary began driving for Michigan Flyer, a subsidiary of Indian Trails, in 2021. Besides the travelers he meets, he enjoys his coworkers and the variety: "It feels new every day—not like a 9 to 5 job."

In his current assignment since November, he's up before dawn to start the Flyer's daily runs at 2 a.m., always striving to give his passengers a smooth ride. And it's often so smooth that he has to wake up some when they reach Detroit Metro Airport: "Most say, 'I can't believe we're here already.'"

When he's not driving, Gary enjoys woodworking. He's also eagerly anticipating his June wedding in the Philippines, where he met his fiancée, Jolina.

Gary is a recipient of the Cora V. Taylor Safe Driving Award, which is presented annually by Indian Trails to drivers who complete an entire year without a preventable accident.



Gary Woods holding a rambutan fruit from his future father-in-law's farm in the Philippines



Travel Alerts

✈ Announcing New Low-Cost Flights at Detroit Metro Airport

Frontier Airlines has announced the “massive” addition of flights at 38 airports nationwide and internationally—including DTW—with fares as low as \$19 one way from April into June. Specifically, Frontier will offer new nonstop flights between Detroit and Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) four times a week beginning April 10. Then on April 22, it plans to launch new nonstop service between DTW and Dallas-

Fort Worth (DFW), also four times a week.

Note that the \$19 fares are available only to Frontier’s “Discount Den” members who pay \$59.99 annually plus a \$40 enrollment fee. But even without signing up, the airline’s standard fares are quite low. For example, when we recently checked, a roundtrip between DTW and BWI departing on Saturday, May 25, and returning on Saturday, June 1, cost just \$87. For more details, [see this announcement by Frontier](#).

✈ Book NOW for Travel in Late February & Early March!

If you’re planning a spring trip, please remember that it’s a peak demand period for Michigan Flyer because students at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan are traveling, too. Spring break for both MSU and U-M students runs from Feb. 26 to March 1 this year. So, we’re expecting sold-out buses between Feb. 22 and March 4. To guarantee that we have a seat for you, make reservations without delay at MichiganFlyer.com.

✈ Reminder: We Now Have New Office Hours

The Michigan Flyer office at the East Lansing Marriott is now staffed from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through

Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, there is no in-person service at the office. Still, not to worry. You can buy tickets 24/7 through our website at www.MichiganFlyer.com. And while tickets are non-refundable once purchased, two changes per reservation are allowed before a scheduled departure. [You can easily change reservations online here.](#)



✍ Most Michigan Flyer Fares Will Rise Slightly in May

Just as our riders have experienced significant inflation in the cost of gas, groceries, and housing prices over the past few years, we've been coping with increased operating expenses, too. And we haven't raised prices for years—since well before the COVID-19 pandemic. So, as of May 13, most of our fares are going up a notch—but only by \$1 or \$2 per person one-way. For example, tickets for travel from East Lansing to Brighton or Ann Arbor will go from \$15 to \$16, and tickets to DTW will go from \$32 to \$34. You can [view all of our new fares online here.](#)

Frequent riders from East Lansing to Ann Arbor or to DTW may want to check out the Discounts section of the Fares sheet, where you'll find that prices are staying the same for our money-saving Commuter Travel Passes.

✍ Buyer Beware: Does Your Travel Insurance Offer Real Protection?

The coverage offered by trip cancellation, delay and interruption policies varies widely depending on the "perils" or "hazards" listed in the fine print, as well as by how the insurer will reimburse for any loss. For example, some cruise package policies will not reimburse you at all if a delay by a "common carrier" such as an airline causes you to miss the boat. Others won't pay cash, but instead only give partial credit for use on a future trip. [This New York Times column](#) describes one woman's lengthy struggle to collect even the 75 percent credit for a costly cruise she missed, despite the fact that her policy had a "cancel for any reason" clause.

Rest assured, however, that you can avoid such hassles and secure real peace of mind by investing in coverage from a leading provider. Both TravellInsurance.com and SquareMouth.com enable you to compare top-rated companies, as well as find policies by state.

Top Coming Events—We Can Get You There!

East Lansing

[Golden Girls: The Laughs Continue](#)

Following sold out performances and rave reviews across the country in 2023, The Golden Girls are back and better than ever with a brand-new stage show. Touring more than 40 cities in 2024—including a one-night stop here—the show brings Miami's sassiest seniors together for one more hurrah. We find Sophia out on bail after being busted by the DEA for running a drug ring for retirees. Blanche and Rose have founded CreakN, a thriving sex app for seniors. And Dorothy is trying to hold it all together with help from a younger sex-crazed lover. Catch it at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Ln., on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing. [Tickets \\$44.50 - \\$69.50 plus fee.](#)

Check out more local coming events with the Choose Lansing™ events calendar:

<http://www.lansing.org/events>.



Ann Arbor

Comedian Phil Hanley *Special Engagement*

Phil Hanley has appeared on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, Late Night with Seth Meyers, The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson, The Pete Holmes Show, and John Oliver's New York Stand-Up Show. He was featured in the hit film "I Feel Pretty" and the Comedy Central sketch series "Inside Amy Schumer." While performing at open mics, often between bands at music venues, he honed his unique blend of comedy material and crowd interaction that might best be described as unpredictably reflective, sharply accurate, and rooted in the grand tradition of joke-telling. On Friday, March 1, and Saturday, March 2, you can see Phil Hanley live in one of three performances at the Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 212 S. 4th Ave., Suite A, Ann Arbor. [Tickets \\$25.](#)

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



Brighton

Downtown Brighton Restaurant Week

Here's an opportunity to try new restaurants and delicious food at discount prices. Downtown Brighton's Restaurant Week takes place each day from Feb. 26 through March 3. Cost and hours vary by location. Participating restaurants include [Bourbons](#), [Brighton Bar and Grill](#), [Ciao Amici's](#), [El Arbol](#), [Grand Traverse Pie Company](#), [Great Harvest Bread Co.](#), [Label Kitchen & Bar](#), [Lu and Carl's Grille](#), [Sidecar Slider Bar](#), [Stillwater Grill](#), [Single Barrel Social](#), [Arta's Italian](#), and [Sushi Zen](#). Check out their offerings and start planning

a week of scrumptious eats.

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

Detroit

Disney Princess – The Concert

For generations, the music of Disney's princesses has been the soundtrack to our lives. Now, these beloved songs come alive on stage with a host of Broadway and television stars including Broadway favorite Alyssa Fox ('Elsa' in Frozen, Wicked), Syndee Winters ('Nala' in The Lion King, Hamilton), and Hiba Elchikhe ('Jasmine' in



[Tickets \\$25-\\$79+.](#)



Aladdin). They're joined in this concert of a lifetime by Music Director Benjamin Rauhala (Fiddler on the Roof, The Secret Life of Bees) and enchanting Prince Adam J. Levy (Moulin Rouge, Waitress). Note that this production features Broadway performers appearing as themselves; no costumed characters appear. Even so, your every dream may come true as larger than life animation and theatrical effects immerse the audience in Disney magic. It's at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

[Dionne Warwick](#)

A six-time Grammy Award-winning music legend who has recorded more than 75 hit songs and sold over 100 million records, Dionne Warwick was discovered by Burt Bacharach and Hal David in 1961, and went on to record 18 consecutive Top 100 singles ("Don't Make Me Over," Walk on By," "Say a Little Prayer," "A House is Not a Home," "Alfie," "Heartbreaker," and "Déjà Vu," among others). She received her first Grammy in 1968 for "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?" At 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 17, she performs live at the Music Hall Center for Performing Arts, 350 Madison Ave., in Detroit. [Tickets \\$59-\\$79 plus fee.](#)

NOTE: The [D2A2 Express Bus](#) from Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center (BTC) to Detroit's Grand Circus Park can get Ann Arbor-area riders to and from these events. Both the Fox Theatre and Music Hall Center are a short walk from D2A2's stop at 1508 Park Ave., Detroit.

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/>.



Airfares for Summer Getaways

The sooner you start planning your summer escape, the less expensive your airline tickets are apt to be. We scouted nonstop roundtrips to popular destinations using [Skyscanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com), spot-checking fares for flights originating at DTW on the sample date of Friday, June 21, and returning on Saturday, June 29. Among the search criteria we used: Flights had to be nonstop and direct to the destination both ways, and the return flight had to arrive at DTW in time for you to catch our last run at 9:45 or 10 p.m. to Ann Arbor, Brighton and East Lansing.

Even so, please be advised that you can easily find lower prices than shown here—as well as a greater selection of destinations—if you're willing to change planes

enroute. Being flexible about the dates on which you travel can also mean big savings on airfares. Note that these economy roundtrip fares include taxes, but not necessarily baggage or other “extras”:

Washington, DC (BWI) Frontier \$171
Atlanta, GA (ATL) Frontier \$241
Dallas, TX (DFW) Frontier \$271
Philadelphia, PA (PHL) Frontier \$291
Denver, CO (DEN) Frontier \$317
Tampa, FL (TPA) Frontier \$331
Boston, MA (BOS) JetBlue \$367
Charlotte, NC (CLT) American \$380
Minneapolis, MN (MSP) Delta \$389
Las Vegas, NV (LAS) Frontier \$391
Phoenix, AZ (PHX) Frontier \$391
Lexington, KY (LEX) Delta \$419
St. Louis, MO (STL) Delta \$429
New York, NY (LGA) American \$447
Houston, TX (IAH) Delta \$457
Fort Lauderdale, FL (FLL) Delta \$468
Nashville, TN (BNA) Delta \$477

Austin, TX (AUS) Delta \$479
Miami, FL (MIA) Delta \$507
Durham, NC (RDU) Delta \$509
Seattle, WA (SEA) Delta \$542
Kansas City, MO (MCI) Delta \$549
San Antonio, TX (SAT) Delta \$559
Orlando, FL (MCO) Delta \$567
Myrtle Beach, NC (MYR) Delta \$577
Cancun, MX (CUN) Delta \$586
Fort Myers, FL (RSW) Delta \$587
New Orleans, LA (MSY) Delta \$612
Los Angeles, CA (LAX) Delta \$649
San Juan, PR (SJU) Delta \$651
San Diego, CA (SAN) Delta \$679
San Francisco, CA (SFO) Delta \$719
Salt Lake City, UT (SLT) Delta \$759
Honolulu, HI (HNL) Delta \$1,580



Tips for Smarter Travel

- ✈ [Easily Change Your Own MI Flyer Reservations at this Link](#)
- ✈ [Where's Your Bus? Find Out with Our Real-Time Tracker](#)

Update on Our Humanitarian Mission to Ukraine

The enormous volunteer effort originally sparked by Michigan Flyer VP Ody Norkin in 2022 recently succeeded in delivering a brand new Digital X-Ray machine to Dnipro Municipal Hospital in Ukraine. It is now in full operation by the medical staff, making a huge difference in the treatment of military and civilian war victims.

As you may recall from our prior E-News reports of [May](#), [June](#), and [December](#) 2022, this humanitarian mission began with Ody's personal determination to buy a desperately needed ambulance to transport elderly and infirm refugees out of harm's way.

Yet, as word spread, hundreds of generous people, businesses, health systems and other nonprofit organizations—locally, as well as overseas—began contributing. This includes the 15 Rotary Clubs of Michigan's District 6360; the Rotary Clubs in Suceava, Romania, and Dnipro, Ukraine; the East Lansing Rotary Foundation; the Block Imaging Corporation and Block family of Holt, Mich.; the Greater Lansing Jewish Federation; The Peoples Church of East Lansing; Kiwanis Club of East Lansing; International Association of Torch Clubs of East Lansing, and many more.



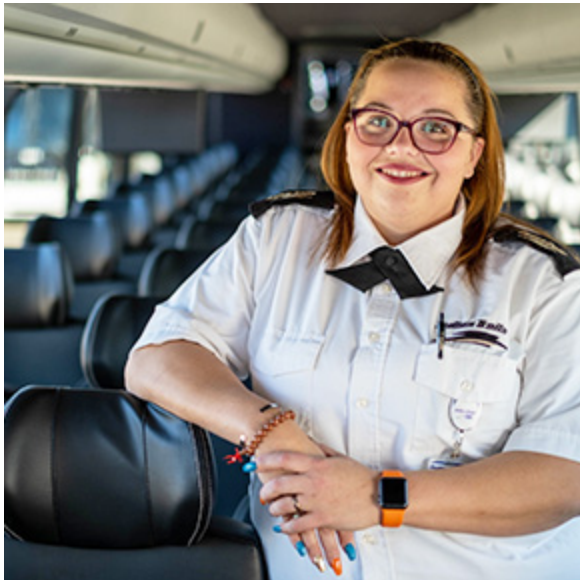
Ody (at left) in the Dnipro hospital

As a result, four trauma-ready ambulances have been delivered to war-torn Ukraine, along with a transit van and whole shipping container full of medical supplies.

Now, fundraising is focused on delivering a \$60,000 Computerized Tomography (CT) scanner to the Dnipro Hospital, where it is urgently needed to support the trauma surgery unit.

“On behalf of the entire volunteer team, I'd like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to every donor,” says Ody. “We deeply appreciate any financial contribution toward this critical mission.” Even small donations add up to make a big difference in easing the pain and suffering. If you'd like to pitch in, you can do so here:

<https://bit.ly/3YzIPsQ> or here: <https://bit.ly/4b2fEDB>.



Professional Drivers Wanted

No experience necessary! 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 \$22.28, provide a 6-week PAID training program leading to a Commercial Driver's License, and operate Michigan's newest and largest fleet of motorcoaches. Among other benefits, full-time drivers 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 114-year-old, family-

run company with old-fashioned values like fairness, honesty, teamwork, and service excellence.

If you're a safe driver, we encourage you to apply. It takes a special person to become a professional bus driver. To us and to our passengers, they're truly heroes of the road. [Learn more and apply here](#).

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!



All of us at Michigan
Flyer wish you the
very best of this
season of rebirth,
rejuvenation, and
renewal!

Happy St. Patrick's Day, Springtime, Easter & Passover!

Daylight Savings Time. In every state except Arizona and Hawaii (which opted out of the time change), DST will start on Sunday, March 10, in 2024. That's when clocks "spring forward"—or skip one hour—so there's more daylight to enjoy in the evening, though less in the morning.

St. Patrick's Day, on Sunday, March 17, is the celebration of Ireland's patron saint, who died in the year 461 A.D. Parades, shamrocks, green clothing and beer are featured in many countries worldwide. Fun

fact: Although he converted the pagan Irish to Christianity, he wasn't Irish himself, but rather [Romano-British](#).

Spring. Shortly after DST begins, spring officially arrives in the Northern Hemisphere on Tuesday, March 19—the "vernal equinox"—when the Sun is directly above the Earth's equator, and day and night are both 12 hours long. The weather warms and flowers bloom. In the Southern Hemisphere, though, this marks the start of autumn.

Easter is on Sunday, March 31, this year. The Christian feast day and holiday—famous for brightly-colored eggs, bonnets, bunnies, candy baskets, lilies, and church services—commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That occurred three days after his crucifixion by the Romans at Calvary in 30 A.D., according to the Bible's New Testament.

Passover, which lasts from sundown on Monday, April 22, to sundown on Tuesday, April 30, in 2024, is the major Jewish celebration marking the Exodus of the Children of Israel from slavery in ancient Egypt. The first night often involves great ceremony around a special family meal called the seder, where foods such as [matzo](#)—symbolic of liberation—are eaten, and traditional recitations are performed.

Why Drive?

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



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