



Revealing “Great Connections” Contest Winner #3



Our 2024 essay contest asked folks to tell us how Michigan Flyer connected them with a special person, place, or adventure. It features 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 first and second runner-up winners [here](#) and [here](#). (Note that each winner is notified in the month their entry is to be published.)

This month, we’re happy to announce that our third runner-up winner is **Charlie Richardson** of East Lansing, Mich. Decades ago, Charlie met Diana Farmer when they were in their 20s and serving on a summer mission trip for the Appalachia Service Project. During eight weeks there, they helped to repair homes for low-income folks. Afterward, they parted ways.

“We went on to live completely different lives,” Charlie says. That is, until the fateful day when they reconnected on Facebook. “There was definitely a spark there,” he says.

However, distance was a challenge. He lived in Colorado, and she lived in East Lansing. After his first trip here, she suggested using the Michigan Flyer as a reliable and

affordable part of their long-distance trips. This was perfect for Charlie, who's a big believer in mass transportation: "Less cars on the roads mean lower carbon emissions."

He also appreciated how the Flyer's schedule enabled him to spend time with Diana and then return to Colorado in time for work. There were other perks, too, including the comfort of our motorcoaches and "drivers so professional and efficient that I always feel safe with them."

Charlie adds that he was pleasantly surprised to get our call about his winning entry. "I saw the contest in the e-newsletter," Charlie recalls. "I like to write songs, so I approached the essay like that, just telling a story."

In fact, his and Diana's band Jackalope have been performing Charlie's original songs—as well as covers of songs by groups like the Beatles—at Lansing-area venues for many years. [Check out their YouTube channel here](#). And [both serve as lead singers](#).

Finding Love in an Unexpected Place

By Charlie Richardson

In 2011, after 30 years apart, an old college friend and I fell in love! The typical "Facebook-reunion-turns-into-something unexpected," my romance with Diana began by flying between our respective Colorado and Michigan homes to see each other. After a VIP car ride from DTW on my first trip to Michigan, I was quickly introduced to the Flyer, sensing the value it would add in subsequent months when we would make cross-country "courting visits."



*Charlie Richardson
with Diana Farmer*

Needless to say, I got pretty good at maximizing vacation days allowed by my Colorado job. Two decades into my energy conservation career, I was pretty motivated to use mass transit to my advantage on both ends of a Denver-Detroit flight. And Michigan Flyer afforded an easy, relaxing ride to East Lansing without requiring three hours of my love's precious time fighting traffic.

More than once when traveling home, I managed an itinerary I'm proud of. First, a 3 a.m. East Lansing cab (they had "cabs" back then) got me onto the Flyer for a wicked early and cheap 6:30 Detroit departure, arriving at 7:30 Denver time. Then came a regional bus ride, with transfer to my Longmont office, where I squeezed in a full workday, and finally collapsed with exhaustion and satisfaction at home after an 18-hour day! And what wasn't to like about having WiFi on a BUS back then ... PLUS a free bottle of water? Ah, the memories of a perfect weekend with my fiancé, rolling down U.S. 127 in style without the stress of driving! Did I say, "fiancé"? Well, yes, in 2012 I became a Michigander, we married and settled in East Lansing. Occasionally, although much less often, we still take the Flyer to DTW—but together now—to catch a plane back to Colorado ... to see our grandkids!



D2A2 Express Bus Earns High Marks from Passengers

The popular [D2A2 Express Bus](#)—which makes frequent daily runs between downtown Ann Arbor and downtown Detroit—is getting some mighty impressive reviews from passengers. (Michigan Flyer operates D2A2 for the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan.) According to a recent RTA survey, 98.5% of riders were satisfied with the service overall, 98.53% were happy with our on-time performance, and 99.33% were satisfied with the cleanliness of our buses.

D2A2 riders responding to the survey represent a range of age groups from young adults to seniors; a balance of genders between male and female plus non-binary people; and a mix of ethnicities with about 61% white, 15% black, 11% Asian, and others. Approximately 42% were from Ann Arbor, 23% from Detroit, and 34% from outside of Southeast Michigan.

Their main reasons for riding D2A2 were to access entertainment (53%), or get to work (36%), school (12%), or medical appointments (6%).

Finally, 48% said they would have taken their personal car if D2A2 wasn't available. That fact highlights [the eco-friendliness of motorcoach travel](#), which markedly reduces air pollution, traffic congestion, and fuel consumption in comparison with personal cars.



Travel Alerts

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

If you're 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 days **some** of our runs will bypass the BTC on the way to and from the airport. This will affect certain runs before, during, and after the following home games:

Sept. 28, Minnesota, Noon

Oct. 26, Michigan State, TBA

Nov. 2, Oregon, TBA

Nov. 23, Northwestern, TBA

Please note that **other** 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](#).

Ann Arbor Also Bypassed Due to Marathon on Oct. 13

On Sunday, Oct. 13, several downtown streets will close between 3 a.m. and 1 p.m. for the [Probility Ann Arbor Marathon](#), which includes a full marathon, half marathon, and 10K and 5K runs.

As a result, some of our own eastbound runs will bypass the Blake Transit Center (BTC) and go directly to Detroit Metro Airport, while some of our westbound runs from DTW will go straight to Brighton and on to East Lansing. Again, to see when Michigan Flyer stops at the BTC on race day, just check "Book a Trip" on our [website](#).

While the street closures will cause some inconvenience for travelers, it's all for very good causes. The marathon's mission is to "E-Race the Stigma" around mental health by helping to fund local charities such as Families Against Narcotics, the Miles Jeffrey Roberts Foundation, Girls on the Run, Lost Voices, and Concert Music Outreach Collective.

Delta Air Lines to Offer Flights between DTW and Tulum, Mexico



Starting Jan. 11, Delta will introduce flights from Detroit to Tulum (TQO) for the first time. Tulum is celebrated for stunning beaches, ancient Mayan ruins, and rich cultural heritage, making it ideal for both relaxation and exploration.

With this new route, Delta will operate up to 50 weekly flights from DTW to five destinations in Mexico this winter, including Cancun, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico City and Puerto Vallarta.

The new Tulum route is available on Saturdays, and can be booked now on [Delta's website](#). We spot-checked a roundtrip that leaves DTW on Feb. 8 at 8:30 a.m. and arrives at TQO at 12:30 p.m. It then returns after Valentine's Day on Feb. 15, departing at 1:35 p.m. and arriving in Detroit at 5:50 p.m. The fare for main cabin seating was \$566.

United Airlines Adds Flights for College Football Fans

Like other airlines, United recently added special flights to enable fans to attend some of the biggest college football games of the 2024 season. Of those remaining, the Nov. 23 Big House matchup of Northwestern vs. Michigan may be of most interest to Chicago-area Wolverine and Wildcat fans who'd like to cheer on their team in person. [At United's website](#), for example, you could book a \$293 economy-class roundtrip from Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) to DTW on Nov. 22. You could also make reservations for a two-night stay at an [Ann Arbor hotel near Michigan Stadium](#).

How to get from the Detroit airport to Ann Arbor? Hop on one of [Michigan Flyer's luxury motorcoaches](#), of course. After catching the game on Nov. 23—and perhaps taking in some of the city's culinary delights—the nonstop United Airlines return flight could put you back in Chicago on the morning or evening of Nov. 24, your choice. What about game tickets? [Find them at Ticketmaster](#) for \$35-\$250.



Top Coming Events–We Can Get You There!



East Lansing Les Misérables

Set against the backdrop of 19th century France, *Les Misérables* tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice, and redemption—a timeless testament to the survival of the human spirit. The magnificent score of *Les Misérables* includes the songs “I Dreamed a Dream,” “On My Own,” “Bring Him Home,” “One Day More” and many others. This brilliant staging of the Tony Award-winning musical phenomenon has been hailed as “a reborn dream of a production” (Daily Telegraph). See it on any night from Oct. 8 through Oct. 13, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Ln., on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing. [Tickets \\$45-\\$150 plus fees.](#)

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

Brighton Cultura!

This annual celebration of music, art and food is co-hosted by the Livingston Diversity Council and the Livingston Arts Council in downtown Howell, Mich., at the Howell Opera House. On Saturday, Sept. 28., from noon to 9 p.m., this event—FREE and open to the public—brings culturally significant experiences to the community in the form of visual art, spoken word, music, dance, and food.



Two stages will feature [many diverse performers](#), while visual art will be displayed in the historic opera house, and culinary delights highlighting various spice and flavor palettes will be served by food truck vendors. (Note that the Howell Opera House, located at 123 W. Grand River Ave., is about a 15-minute drive west on I-96 from our Michigan Flyer stop at the Meijer store in Brighton.)

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 Artoberfest**

This intimate and rich celebration of the arts in downtown Ann Arbor will feature 100 jury-selected artists, live entertainment, food vendors, art activities, and several adult beverage offerings.



A FREE event presented by the Guild of Artists & Artisans, A2 Artoberfest takes place Saturday, Oct. 12 (10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with afterhours from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.), and Sunday, Oct. 13 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) Displays by artists will stretch across Ann St. and N. Fourth Ave. from Huron into the charming Kerrytown area, [as shown on this map](#). For the latest info about the event, check [the Guild's Facebook page](#).

(Note that Saturday may be the best day to attend for anyone planning to get there on Michigan Flyer. That's because our stops at the Blake Transit Center on Sunday will be limited due to road closures for the Ann Arbor Marathon.)

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



photo credit Marc J. Franklin

Detroit

Some Like it Hot

Set in Chicago during Prohibition, “Some Like It Hot” is the “glorious, big, high-kicking” (Associated Press) story of two musicians forced to flee the Windy City after witnessing a mob hit. With gangsters hot on their heels, they catch a cross-country train for the trip of a lifetime. And what a trip it is!

With its irresistible combination of heart and laughs, song and dance, “Some Like It Hot” won more theatre awards than any show in its season, including 4 Tony Awards®, the Grammy Award® for Best Musical Theater Album, and was named Best Musical by the Drama Desk, the Drama League, and the Outer Critics Circle. Deadline calls it “a tap-dancing, razzle-dazzling embrace of everything you love about musical theater.” The New York Times calls it “A super-sized, all-out song-and-dance spectacular!”

Catch [one of 16 matinee or evening performances](#) between Oct. 1 and Oct. 13 at the Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., in Detroit. [Tickets \\$15-\\$225 plus fee.](#)

NOTE: [The D2A2 Express Bus](#) from Ann Arbor’s Blake Transit Center (BTC) to Detroit’s Grand Circus Park (1508 Park Ave.) can get you to within about 3½ miles of the Fisher Theatre. [A 13-minute, \\$2 ride on a local transit bus](#) can put you within easy walking distance of the theater.

BUT ALSO NOTE: Because “Some Like It Hot” runs 2½ hours plus intermission, **D2A2 riders are strongly advised to choose an afternoon performance of the musical** in order to ensure that a D2A2 bus can get them back to Ann Arbor after the curtain comes down. [See D2A2’s schedule here.](#)

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

Sample Airfares for a Thanksgiving Trip



If you're planning to visit family or friends in another state this Thanksgiving (Nov. 28), now is the time to start planning. In order to get below-average fares, it's important to buy your tickets at least three weeks in advance of your trip.

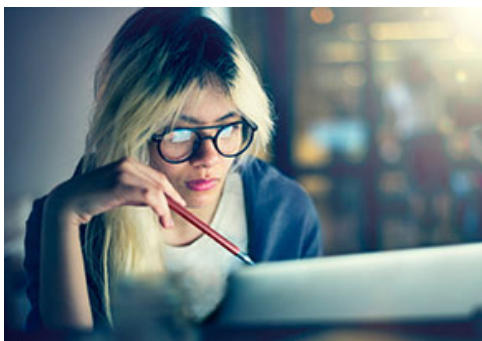
Every day, we help passengers connect with hundreds of nonstop flights between Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) and top domestic and international destinations. Michigan Flyer's schedule of 12 daily roundtrips, seven days a week, gives you many opportunities to take advantage of the best airfares available.

To help you anticipate costs, we used [SkyScanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com) to search for the least expensive domestic economy-class fares (which include taxes but not necessarily baggage or other "extras"). Having chosen a sample trip originating at DTW on Saturday, Nov. 23, and returning on Saturday, Nov. 30—and focusing only on nonstop flights—we found these and other roundtrips available:

Washington, DC (BWI) Frontier **\$163**
Philadelphia, PA (PHL) Frontier **\$174**
Alpena, MI (APN) Delta SkyWest **\$188**
Chicago, IL (ORD) United **\$195**
Durham, NC (RDU) Frontier **\$198**
Boston, MA (BOS) Spirit **\$206**
Denver, CO (DEN) Frontier **\$240**
Minneapolis, MN (MSP) Spirit **\$242**
Nashville, TN (BNA) Delta **\$309**
Atlanta, GA (ATL) Frontier + Spirit **\$335**
Traverse City, MI (TVC) Delta **\$349**
Phoenix, AZ (PHX) Frontier **\$354**
Houston, TX (IAH) Spirit **\$359**
Indianapolis, IN (IND) Delta **\$369**
Lexington, KY (LEX) Delta **\$389**
Louisville, KY (SDF) Delta **\$389**
Hartford, CT (BDL) Delta **\$379**
Kansas City, MO (MCI) Delta **\$379**
Charlotte, NC (CLT) American **\$385**
Seattle, WA (SEA) Alaska **\$391**

New York, NY (LGA) American **\$394**
Providence, RI (PVD) Delta **\$394**
Myrtle Beach, SC (MYR) Delta **\$414**
New Orleans, LA (MSY) Spirit **\$417**
Omaha, NE (DSM) Delta **\$419**
Portland, ME (PWM) Delta **\$419**
Orlando, FL (MCO) Frontier **\$438**
Las Vegas, NV (LAS) Delta **\$473**
Austin, TX (AUS) Delta **\$499**
Miami, FL (MIA) Delta **\$507**
Richmond, VA (ORF) Delta **\$509**
Los Angeles, CA (LAX) Spirit **\$525**
Tampa, FL (TPA) Spirit **\$527**
Fort Lauderdale, FL (FLL) Spirit **\$598**
San Antonio, TX (SAT) Delta **\$609**
San Francisco, CA (SFO) United **\$609**
San Diego, CA (SAN) Delta **\$629**
Portland, OR (PDX) Delta **\$659**
Salt Lake City, UT (SLC) Delta **\$659**
Honolulu, HI (HNL) Delta **\$1,830**





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

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!

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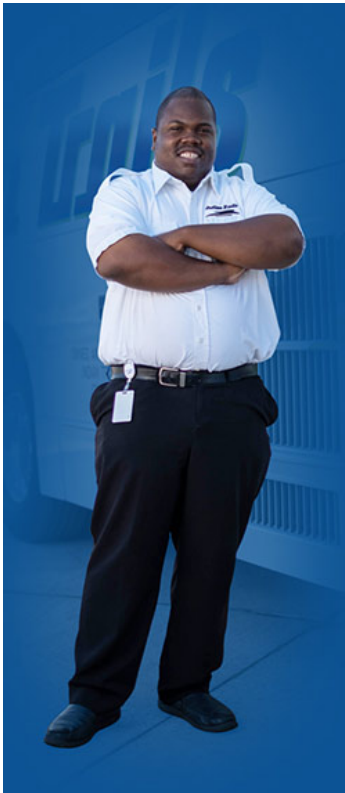
[tripadvisor®](#)

[yelp](#)

Customer Comment

"On August 19th, I took the Michigan Flyer from DTW to East Lansing. I left my wallet on the bus and there was a significant amount of money in it. I called the Michigan Flyer phone number and left an emergency notice. Janine from the Michigan Flyer office phoned me that evening and said the wallet was found during the normal cleaning process in Owosso. She noted that the bus driver, Doug Hamlin, was instrumental in getting my wallet to the East Lansing office. I picked the wallet up from the East Lansing office the next day and was relieved that all my money was still in it. Not only were the office manager and driver honest, but both were very conscientious and excellent representatives of Michigan Flyer. THANK YOU!"
—Jo-Ann V.





Bus 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 5-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

Worth noting, too, drivers with the highest seniority currently earn \$32.76 an hour. Indian Trails truly appreciates the hard work of its staff members—it's a 114-year-old, family-run company that values fairness, honesty, teamwork, and service excellence. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Happy Columbus Day & Indigenous Peoples Day!



Columbus Day—Oct. 14

The second Monday of October marks Columbus Day in the United States. It honors the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, who launched the ships Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria from the coast of Spain in 1492, intending to sail to China, India and the Spice Islands of Asia.

Instead, after 10 weeks, he landed in the Bahamas on Oct. 12, 1492, becoming the first European to arrive in what is now the U.S. In 1934, Congress declared Columbus Day a federal holiday. It is also a celebration of heritage for Italian-Americans.

Indigenous People's Day—Oct. 14

Tribal nations occupied the territory now known as the mainland United States for centuries before the first European explorers and settlers arrived. In fact, these Native Americans had populated the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf of Mexico to northern Canada. After 1968—when Gov. Ronald Reagan signed a California resolution calling for an “American Indian Day” to honor and celebrate their traditions, cultures, and contributions—several states followed suit, though with varying dates. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed proclamations declaring that both [Columbus Day](#) and [Indigenous People's Day](#) be celebrated on the second Monday in October.

Why Drive?

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



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www.michiganflyer.com

