

said. Birds and animals are not neglected at Leapin' Lizard. A selection of bird feeders is available, as are paw print kits that can be used to make a plaque imprinted with the paw mark of a favorite family dog or cat.

Garden plaques are popular gift items. Customers may select from one foot square plaques by well-known artists such as Ohio's Carruth, to new, smaller designs by Nana, an earth-conscious artist from Washington, whose subjects are frequently leaves, shells and sprites in brown and green tones. Plaques are most often displayed on fences, trees, "or in a sun room of those lucky enough to have them," Wildman explained.

Stones measuring 4 x 5 inches and featuring amusing messages are good gifts for Mothers Day, birthdays or no occasion, said Wildman, who added that customers have enjoyed reading such sayings as "Never go faster than your guardian angel can fly," and "If it weren't for stress, I'd have no energy at all."

An ideal place to get ideas for designing a garden is Crystal Gardens in Frankfort, where lawn and garden accessories, fountains and statuary are displayed on 10 acres in a picturesque location near Crystal Lake.

"People are always surprised at how much there is to see," commented owner Edith Putney.

Outdoor decorative objects may be seen in a natural setting of trees, shrubs and grasses, complemented by the large selection of perennials and annuals. Some stone and wood



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

A clay, hand-made Spirit Leaf features faces and can be used on patios, walls or fences.

outdoor furniture is on display, including swings, gliders and tables. A garden center store features an extensive selection of statuary, and there is an entire room of bird baths and feeders. Crystal Gardens is in the process of expanding the grounds display, and a newly equipped gift shop that has been set

up in the barn will open on Flag Day, June 15.

Crystal Gardens is located about one and one-half miles north of the blinker light in Frankfort. It is open Monday through Saturday, with Sunday hours starting April 18.

Sheila Garrett is a local freelance writer.



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

Above is a laser-cut steel wind vane called Fanciful Flights is handpainted and can be found at Traverse City's Leaping Lizard. Left, a fire pit from So-Joe can be used as a grill for hotdogs, Smores or other foods.

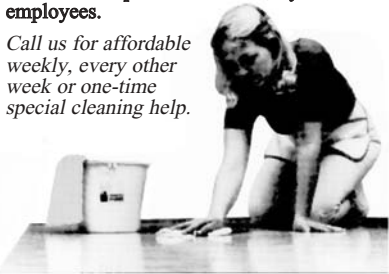


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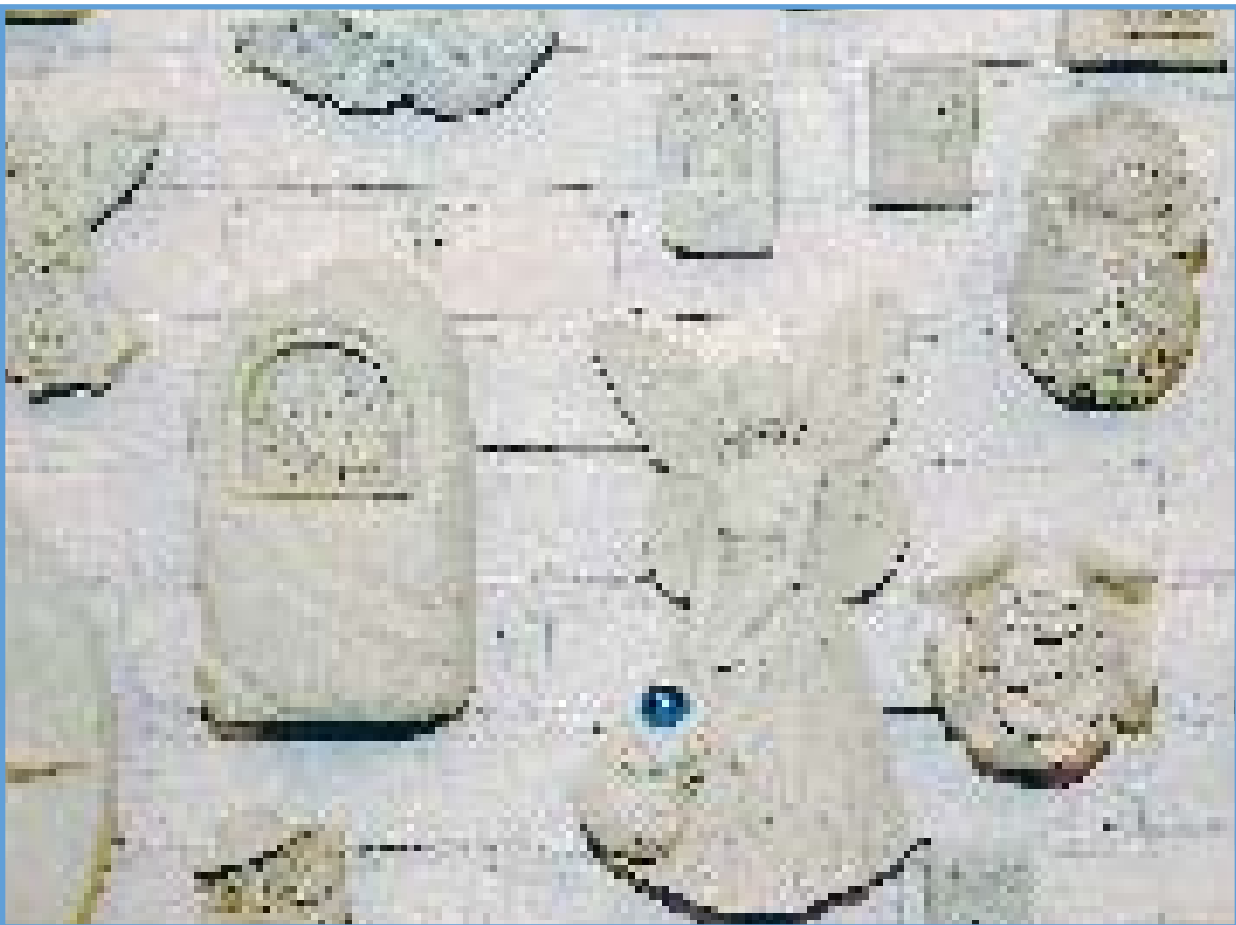
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