

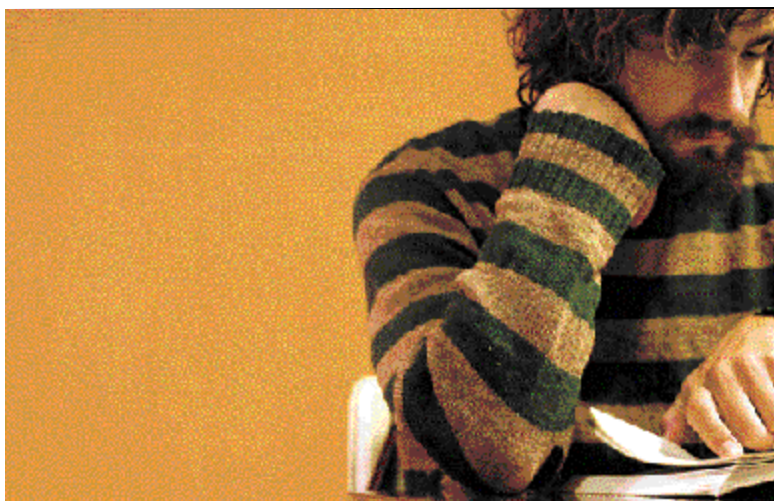


HAIR: Almost midnight illuminates the mane of Pop on the scene in his act at the Stephen M. Gold College at the end of the year.

FIELD: Mixed with photos along the Granddunk trail in West Michigan's Granddunk State Park take on the color of autumn in early fall.



The first week of October brought brilliant hues of red, yellow and orange to the leaves of a maple in the front of the Walnut Street home of Kim Stevens.



Working a sweater to ward off the chilly morning air, Jeremy Fromm reads over breakfast Oct. 7 at Upper Elementary Building.

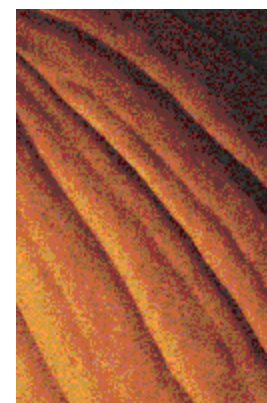
shades of autumn

Photos and words by SHAWN BITTLE
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It happens every year on the first of October, usually as I cross the street & breeze overwhelms my senses with a particular combination of crisp scent and temperature.

Then things begin to change. Green leaves give way to gold and red — gradually at first, then all together in a sudden burst. People, too, change colors as they pull on their favorite sweaters. The browns and oranges of nature are reflected in the sweaters and jackets making their first appearance in months.

Fall is the season of long conversations, crunching leaves and pumpkins. It's the season in which a warm drink begins to feel perfect in my hands and extra layers of clothing feel cozy, not burdensome. Soon, the leaves will fall and a blanket of snow will cover Columbia. Until then, we are surrounded by autumn's palette.



Pumpkins outside Walnut Ace Hardware are well lit tonight and transform into Jack-o'-Lanterns.