

What's up in the hills?



KING OF THE HILL: Former Adrian resident Nathan Wakefield purchased Mystery Hill, and will host a free carnival this Saturday. See our entertainment page inside for details.

Howdy folks!



BARBEQUE IS KING: A new generation is drumming up business in a big way and championing the Irish hills in the process - see inside.

Hidden Lake Gardens



Hidden Lake Gardens is celebrating a century of growth. Above, Harry Fee, the founder of Hidden Lake Gardens, is shown in a 1945 photograph. See story inside.



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EXPONENT

A MEADOWBROOK MEDIA NEWSPAPER
\$2⁰⁰
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026

Clark Lake Golf Course & Restaurant sold



New Clark Lake Golf Course & Restaurant co-owner Tony Spink and his fiancé, Angie Sharp, stand on the deck overlooking the course.

"I'm bringing my expertise in the turf field to get the golf course in the condition that it needs to be in."

Tony Spink
Co-owner, Clark Lake Golf Course

Story and photo
By John Hummer
Editor

Clark Lake Golf Course & Restaurant is under new ownership. A group of six men took over as owners effective June 30, 2026. Tony Spink, who is one of the owners of Calderone Golf Club in Grass Lake, is one of the six co-owners who will serve as the onsite manager of operations.

The other five co-owners are Stan Grouse, one of Spink's ownership partners at Calderone; Ken Datte, his other partner at Calderone; Joe Eisele, Ron Beurmann, and Alex Perlos. Beurmann is recently retired as PGA pro at Jackson Country Club for 35 years. Spink said that Beurmann will likely bring in a lot of golfers from the country club.

The 214-acre, 27-hole property includes a new cement patio, modern irrigation, and a revitalized kitchen among other major improvements from the previous owners. The publicized asking price of the property was \$2.85 million.

The group purchased the facility from Charlene and Mike McHugh who took over ownership from Domenick Forgione in early 2022. "We put in a substantial amount," Charlene said. "We bought equipment for the golf course, all new furniture for both the club room (where the new bar is), we put in the patio – 100 cubic yards of cement – it's huge. We got the equipment for the outdoor kitchen, and made [indoor] kitchen improvements. It's a bittersweet thing to sell it, but it was time to let somebody else take over. I'm

excited to watch the transformation happen now that somebody else with new ideas and different ways to do things is taking over – I think it's going to be better. I'm excited to watch the new improvements that will come about because of their ownership. I think it's just going to continue to improve over time. It's going to be outstanding."

Charlene noted that when she and her husband purchased it, it was never meant to be a long-term investment. "We knew it was in dire need of improvements," she stated. "We didn't want to see it sold for real estate reasons. We wanted to keep the golf course and restaurant alive and improve it. That was our goal." Unfortunately, Charlene's

See *Golf course* page 3

Napoleon Township Man drowns in Big Wolf Lake

By John Hummer
Editor

Wayne Odell Payton, 31, of Jackson, died late last Friday afternoon, July 10, in what police say is a drowning on Big Wolf Lake in Napoleon Township, according to preliminary investigation.

On July 10, 2026, at 4:51 p.m., Jackson County Central Dispatch received a 911 call reporting a swimmer in distress on Big Wolf Lake who had gone underwater and failed to resurface.

In their preliminary investigation report, police say Payton was visiting friends on the north side of the lake. He and a co-worker had gone out on the lake in a boat and entered the water to cool off from the extreme heat. While they were in the water, the boat began drifting away from them.

Police say the co-worker was able to swim back to the boat, regain control of it, and return toward Payton's location. Despite those efforts, Payton was unable to reach the boat. A flotation device was thrown to him, but he was unable to reach it before it drifted away. Witnesses reported that Payton went underwater several times before ultimately failing to resurface. The co-worker immediately called 911.

Emergency responders from numerous agencies were dispatched to the scene, and an extensive multi-jurisdictional

See *Drowning* page 2

Crunching the numbers

Napoleon Township receives perfect audit score

By John Hummer
Editor

Napoleon Township received a perfect score on its assessment roll and practices audit, as required by Public Act 660 of 2018. The audit was conducted by Reason Consulting on behalf of the State Tax Commission. It is not easy to "bat a thousand" with something as detailed as township assessing rolls.

The audit consists of 12 technical compliance review items and three substantial compliance review items. Based on the findings of the audit, the township was given the designation of "substantially compliant".

Napoleon Township was the only township on the eastern side of Jackson County in the Exponent readership area to receive a perfect score on its assessing audit. Other townships in Jackson County that received a perfect score were Henrietta, Liberty, Parma, Pulaski, Spring Arbor, and Springport townships. The

City of Jackson also received a perfect score on its assessing audit.

Michigan townships have assessing audits conducted on a cycle of every five years. This year was the year for Jackson County audits. The audit covers the 2026 assessing roll, from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

"We are very pleased the PA660 state audit of our assessing found no deficiencies at all," said Napoleon Township Supervisor Dan Wymer. "We recently switched from having our own in-house assessor to outsourcing the work and were a little nervous, since we had never done that before. All Level Assessing, LLC has done an excellent job for us at an affordable price. Their wide breadth of experience from working with other townships is an important asset they brought with them."

"This audit makes sure that assessors are doing what the state would con-

sider to be the minimum amount of work required to have good assessments and being adequately transparent with the public to the standard that they was set forth in Public Act 660," said Jackson County Equalization Director Joe Van Hassel. "They're making sure the Board of Review stuff is all accurate, including any of the changes that would have occurred during that time, making sure that the proper guidelines are in place for poverty exemptions, and making sure that the information is available online, that people have a way to contact their assessor – stuff along those lines."

The same company – All Level Assessing, LLC – that does Napoleon Township's assessing work is the same company that does the assessing for several of the other townships that received perfect scores.

"A lot of these companies are very good at this," Van Hassel explained. "When you have an assessing com-

pany, getting a perfect score can almost become routine – they do everything the same way every time – make sure all the boxes are checked."

Van Hassel said that something as simple as a township not having its assessing department hours posted on its website can put a small black mark on their assessing audit, but, he said, "Those small things can be quickly fixed."

If a township or other local unit of government has enough incorrect items on its audit, it must do a corrective action plan, Van Hassel noted. Township audits are pass-fail. "They get recognition if there is a perfect review."

Van Hassel said local units shouldn't hesitate to reach out to the county or the state if they need help with their assessing audit. "We're just trying to make everyone better – to make sure they're all being treated fairly and equitably."

Columbia School District

District’s budget in better shape

Deficit catalyzes discussion on moving Options program to Columbia Central High School facility



Columbia School Board President Tim Creech

Story and photos
By John Hummer
Editor

The Columbia School District board held a special meeting last Wednesday to discuss its budget deficit and ended up spending the second half of a two-hour, 15-minute marathon meeting talking about the possibility of moving Columbia Options High School to the main Columbia Central campus.

The board was overall pleasantly surprised with the budget presentation by Rhonda Potts, the district’s business manager.

“I think we can feel good about what we heard,” said Board President Tim Creech. What was originally projected to be a nearly \$1.3 million budget deficit is now, worst-case scenario \$400,000, and best-case scenario \$185,000 heading into the district’s new fiscal year that began July 1. That is due to budget amendments that occurred over the last couple weeks of the fiscal year, both on the revenue and expense sides.

“Budget years hinge on the prior year,” explained Potts. “I can’t stress enough – these numbers will change.”

“Most years we would have an amended budget after we received the final audited statements from our accounting firm,” said Bob Wahr, board vice president who has been on the school board for many years. Wahr noted that it’s easy to question expenditures, but categorical federal and state revenue that trickles in might be harder to see and explain until it hits the district’s books.

“I’m very excited that it looks like our loss may be \$400 [thousand] or less,” Creech stated. “I’m not excited that we’re losing anything, but the amount of it in relation to our fund balance budget, the programs that we’re providing, the strength of what we did for our staff with budget increases for their raises, benefits, and everything else – all in all, we

actually look like we’re going to turn in a pretty solid year.

“However, I’m still very cognizant of the fact that we have expenses that are more so than what our revenue is,” Creech continued. “I recognize that we’re a school, but I also recognize that it’s within this group’s purview to take a look at what are we spending money on, and ask, “Are we really getting the best results

higher amount of staff costs for the actual number of students in that building than what we do for the rest of our programming,” stated Creech.

Another example of potential cost savings Creech brought up is eliminating having to haul food for lunches over to that building every school day.

“When it comes to giving medical assistance, we now have one nurse,” he said. “By having Options be relocated – and that would be up to [Superintendent Baker’s] purview on this – I think the suggestion is going to end up being that it probably be located here. But by doing so, those children would have better access to healthcare needs if they need to see a nurse for anything. They would have better access to support staff like counselors. They would also be able to have a better concentration of support from our SRO (school resource officer – police).

“In essence, what I’m trying to suggest is that we relocate the Options program,” Creech continued. “We would continue to have it be supported by – in her current role – Melissa [Szymke] who oversees that program. That would allow us to consolidate some of our employment expense, pull a lot more efficiency for our staff on how we

semester, 53 in the second semester. “They are probably going to remain virtual, is what I think we would be looking at,” he noted.

Baker stated there have been, on average, 35 in-person students per semester over the past three school years. Teacher-wise, he noted there is Melissa Szymke, the school’s lead teacher, another full-time teacher, and a half-time retired/rehired teacher. “Melissa has share that that current model is not doable,” he said. “It’s not giving the kids enough of an educational experience and the staff can’t keep up with those numbers.”

All told, Baker said the school has up to 10 employees and listed the various positions. “If we’re thinking that that model would be able to be brought forward – there is no way,” he stated. “I would not be able to justify that much FTE (full-time equivalent) for what we currently know as 35 kids that are in-person. That’s not what we’re doing for the rest of the district.”

Then Baker raised the question of how many of those students might be ready to come back to traditional schooling. “I don’t know that number, but I think it’s fair to say there is a pretty good chunk of those kids who might be able to go in that direction,” adding that some of the recent in-person returning students may now be interested in virtual schooling.

Another idea Baker raised is a hybrid program where students might be enrolled in Columbia Central High School and receive extra assistance from some of the specialty staff available at CCHS. “It would have to be developed on a one-to-one on what works best for those kids and those parents and what makes most sense – because they do have different needs,” he said. “We have a much more robust opportunity than what’s been offered in the past because, quite frankly, virtual is increasing what they can do along with putting a certified teacher of record on the other end of that delivery system.”

Creech added his final thoughts. “If you take a look at where we’re at financially, and what we can get into a better setting to deliver a better amount of education for those prospective kids, relocating that makes a ton of sense and saves the district money,” he stated. “I think it’s going to allow them to get a better quality education and we can recognize some better expense management.

“It’s not terminating that program in any way – it’s just re-housing it and redefining how it’s going to be done.”

Board Vice President Bob Wahr commented on timing of the decision. “Don’t rush your analysis based on this discussion,” suggested Wahr. “We want to make sure it’s

“In essence, what I’m trying to suggest is that we relocate the Options program.”

Tim Creech
President
Columbia School District Board of Education

– to do the best we can for kids?”

What’s next for Columbia Options High School?

The board discussion then segued into a discussion on what could ultimately save the district a lot of money – the possibility of moving Columbia Options High School (COHS) to the main campus at Columbia Central Jr.-Sr. High School. Of note, there were no COHS teachers or staff at this special board meeting.

“I have never said, nor are you going to hear me say today, that I want to not do the Options program,” Creech stated.

He noted that the COHS building needs a lot of significant updates (including asbestos abatement) that could cost several hundred-thousand dollars and that the staffing levels at the school are in “in excess” of what is at other schools on a per-student basis.

“We have a significantly

handle the services rendered there, and get the program much more in line with what would be input cost in relation to the other 1,380 kids that we have...By doing that, we could potentially save ourselves somewhere in the \$300,000 range.”

Creech then suggested the board take a look at divesting the district from the current COHS property. “If we talk specifically about sales or who might buy it or something like that, we would want to do that within a closed session,” he stated. “I do believe we would divest ourselves, because then we are not paying insurance, we’re not mowing grass, we’re not shoveling snow, and a host of other expenses that we would harvest some additional savings from. So, we would get synergistic savings coming from putting students into two campuses instead of three.”

Superintendent Jim Baker then brought up how many virtual (online) students were enrolled at COHS this past school year – 35 in the first

well thought out. If it takes a little extra time – I personally would rather have that happen than rush something.”

The board finished with

consensus that a decision may come on the COHS future direction at a second regular school board meeting in July – on Monday, July 27.

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Volume 144 Number 50 ACCOUNT NO. USPS 793-460
160 S. Main Street, Brooklyn, MI 49230
Telephone (517) 592-2122 • Fax (517) 592-3241
Founded September 1, 1881

Matthew B. Schepeler
Publisher

John Hummer
Editor

Postage Paid at Brooklyn, MI 49230
SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$70 per year
E-mail address: news@theexponent.com
Web site: www.theexponent.com

Postmaster: Send address and change to:
The Exponent 160 S. Main Street, Brooklyn, MI 49230

Publication Day: Tuesday; Periodicals
Materials cannot be used without written permission of the publisher.

Drowning from page 1

search operation was launched. Personnel from the Southeast Michigan Dive Group, along with additional dive teams and resources from Indiana and Ohio, remained on scene throughout the evening assisting with search efforts.

Payton was located underwater at approximately 11:55 p.m. on July 10. Recovery operations were completed at approximately 12:47 a.m. on July 11, at which time he was recovered from the water and pronounced deceased.

The incident remains under

investigation by the Napoleon Township Police Department and the Jackson County Medical Examiner’s Office. At this time, preliminary information indicates the cause of death was drowning.

Department officials extend their appreciation to the many public safety agencies, dive teams, and emergency personnel who responded and assisted throughout the incident.

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Howdy folks!

A new generation of Bahlau is doing business in the hills...and things couldn't be going better



Seth Bahlau takes a rack of ribs out of the smoker as he prepares for a busy day at Randy's

By Matt Schepeler
Howdy folks!
This is how the Irish Hills' biggest proponent begins his videos on Facebook.
So who is the latest, greatest pitchman on Facebook?
Is it Terry Hanks from Sundance Chevrolet wanting to make a deal on an automobile?
Nope.
Could it be the high-energy Billy Mays, back to sell Oxi-Clean to the masses to help clean their dirty laundry?
Sorry – you're not even close.
This pitchman might not be nationally known, but he is dedicating his life to serving visitors to the Irish Hills "delicious hickory smoked goodness" that he, his mother, Amy, his dad Randy, and their team "put love, time and effort" into making into the best barbeque in the Irish Hills at their business, Randy's Roadside Bar-B-Que.
If the name doesn't ring a bell, Seth Bahlau is the grandson of Fred and Dorothy Bahlau, who owned Stagecoach Stop and the Golden Nugget, and the young Bahlau is every bit as sharp a pitchman as his granddad and father before him.
In fact, he's a natural. He enunciates. He projects. He has fun. And his videos are getting attention not only from

people in the Irish Hills, which Seth passionately promotes, but across the region. Randy's Roadside Bar-B-Que, which Randy Bahlau started around 20 years ago, recently reached more than 10,000 followers on its Facebook page, thanks in large part to Seth's showmanship, humor, and, of course, his love for good cookin'.
Seth is helping his mom and dad run the small business which has become a destination for bikers, families in sedans from downriver who come to the lakes, and others who loves their cornbread, slaw, smoked ribs and pulled pork sandwiches.
While Randy has recently been experiencing some health issues, Seth notes he still has plenty of input and the two speak regularly. Seth also noted that he isn't the first to pitch the business' barbeque online. Randy was selling his barbeque on video before it caught on with the rest of the business world. "My dad was on videos 20 years ago," he noted.
So why has Seth dived into it?
"I took it as an opportunity to gain business and draw traction and attention," he said, "and it has all been positive, and seems to be drawing in more business and more attention to the Irish hills."
When asked if he enjoys

making the videos, he didn't bat an eye. "I love it. I think it is neat to do videos and content," he said. "I'm just trying to continue the entrepreneurial Bahlau spirit my great grandparents, grandparents Fred, Randy, uncles, they are all entrepreneurs."
To be sure, Seth has the Bahlau flair for the dramatic and zest for life, and it comes across easily on video.
For instance, on one recent video he approached line workers during the recent power outages with an offer of free barbeque for the tired crews. On others he asks customers how they are enjoying their meals.
During our conversation, he mentioned the Irish Hills several times, and clearly feels proud of how the small business pulls people to the area and bolsters the local economy.
"Ultimately, I just want our customers to know how much we appreciate them," said Seth.
While the videos are fun, it

is the product that does the real work. People love the place. Joel Gresham, who owns the Irish Hills Wedding Barn, happened to stop by for lunch during our interview, and without solicitation Gresham noted "They have the best ribs around, and don't forget to try the peach cobbler."
When asked if there was anything else he wanted to get in the story, Seth noted that the family feels fortunate to live in the Irish Hills and, ultimately, the United States. "God bless America," Seth said. "Happy 250 years to America!"
We've got a feeling Randy's Roadside Bar-B-Que will be around as long as there is pork to be smoked and peach cobbler to be eaten. In fact, one video recently posted Seth made the point himself:
"Believe me when I say this," Seth said, looking into the camera, "we're just getting started."

Lookin' up



Patrick Morris, left, of the Grass Lake Department of Public Works, watches intently as Sandy Lammers takes her shot with an air gun, firing off a T-shirt to the crowd at the Brayden Lape concert last Friday night during Grass Lake's Traffic Jam'n event. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER

Clark Lake Golf Course from page 1

husband passed away in May. "My husband and I were very excited for more time for retirement, so it's a little bittersweet."
So, the golf course and restaurant now transitions from one community-centered couple to a handful-plus of gentlemen with solid golf backgrounds.
"We thought there was a lot of potential here – we're getting the greens back in excellent shape and giving the course the maintenance that is needs consistently. We want to make it a first class golf course in pristine shape." He says they have 10 guys working on the course where a lot of courses just have three or four doing course maintenance.
"I'm bringing my expertise in the turf field to get the golf course in the condition that it needs to be in," Spink explained. From working at Little Green Acres sod farm in Horton where he grew up as a youngster, he went on to major in turf grass management at Michigan State University. He then spent many years working at golf courses in

the Ann Arbor and Chelsea areas and consulting for a number of courses in turf management.
In 2004, Spink and his partners bought Calderone in Grass Lake and he focused his efforts there for the last 20-plus years.
Spink noted that a lot of people started golfing during COVID because there was a lot of time on their hands and wants to work on capturing those newer golfers.
Spink said they also want to start doing more events on the patio that was improved tremendously by the previous owners. "I think we're going to have one-man bands. On Wednesdays we want to grill – chicken, burgers, maybe even smoked ribs. We also want to start a happy hour – we're thinking from 2 to 5 – with half off on cocktails. We want to try to get this patio filled up." He noted they may also add a Sunday event.
Spink says they also want to use the current big bar room area more as a sports bar featuring many of the state's professional and college sports on the big

screen TVs, as well as all of the big golf events.
"Trying to keep it busy through the winter is going to be the hardest," he said. "We want to provide something where we can get people out here in the winter."
Plans also call for the back room to continue to be rented out for parties and the like. "That seems to be working out pretty well," Spink noted.
As far as the food goes, Daryl Hoskins, Jr. will continue to be the head chef; son of the well-known chef who once owned Daryl's Downtown in Jackson and served as chef at a few other area restaurants. Spink says Hoskins, Jr. will be "unleashed" and customers will gradually see new menu items popping up. "He's a great chef," Spink said.
Overall, business has been good for the team's first couple weeks of ownership. "The previous owners were nice enough to let me be out here trying to get some stuff going so that when we took over it was ready to go," Spink noted. "It's been getting

busier and busier all spring and summer," adding that they still have plenty of room for a lot more golfers. "It takes a lot of golfers to fill 27 holes."
They have added twilight golf special to get more golfers for evening play or keeping the day golfers later to play 18 instead of going home or out to the lake. "We're getting more and more 18-holers and not necessarily less 9-holers. We're seeing a lot of new faces." Spink attributes that partly to the great reputation of Calderone Golf Club in Grass Lake.
Spink says there will be more big golf outings on the horizon as well. There are couples' outings planned for this Friday, July 17 and Friday, Aug. 14. Both will be scrambles. There will also be a 27-hole, par 3 outing, date TBD.
For more information, visit clarklakegolfcourse.com or call 517-592-6259. Clark Lake Golf Course & Restaurant is located at 5535 Wesch Road, Brooklyn.

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Park renovation on the way



Brooklyn officials were pleased to learn they were receiving \$500,000 towards the redevelopment of Weatherwax Park. The village also is awaiting an additional \$300,000 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund to be matched with \$200,000 from the village's parks budget.

Village receives \$500,000 in state funding for Weatherwax Park redevelopment

By John Hummer
Editor

A community gathering place in Brooklyn is one step closer to being redeveloped thanks to funding from the State of Michigan secured by State Senator Sue Shink. \$500,000 from the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget has been allocated to the Weatherwax Park redevelopment project.

Located on the east side of downtown Brooklyn at 115 Water Street, Weatherwax Park currently holds green space, parking, and public restrooms. This summer and last it has been the site of community events, including the Art in the Park series.

The \$500,000 in state funding will be used for a redevelopment project that will bring an amphitheater, concession stand, parking lot for downtown businesses, walkways, landscaping, decorative lighting, and im-



Swartzlander

proved public restrooms. Village leaders plan on using the enhanced space for more community events like outdoor movies, concerts, and festivals.

Sen. Shink represents Senate District 14, which includes the Village of Brooklyn. Shink says she sought funding for an improved Weatherwax Park after hearing from local families wanting to spend more time at the park. "I'll be excited to see this park develop into an inviting, accessible park where residents and visitors can gather for fun events while also supporting Brooklyn's amazing downtown business district," she said.

Village Manager Matt Swartzlander is looking forward to seeing the park's redesign move forward. "Creating a more welcoming space at Weatherwax Park will boost quality of life for our residents and bring more people to Brooklyn," he said.

"We thank Senator Shink for this critical funding to make our dream a reality."

The Village of Brooklyn is currently awaiting an additional funding allocation from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund in the amount of \$300,000 to be matched by \$200,000 from the village's parks budget to round out the park redevelopment funding.

Swartzlander said he is "fairly confident" the Trust Fund monies will come through, essentially giving the village a million-dollar pot of funding to work with for Weatherwax Park improvements.

In addition to the redevelopment and new amenities, some of the funding will be applied to engineering and design work utilizing the concept the village's Parks Board produced for the park, Swartzlander noted. Construction on the Park is expected to start in 2027.

Another voice

Welcome to the Irish Hills!

Community pride shines bright through Irish Hills businesses

Submitted by Ann Arwin
Oh These Irish Hills!

The Irish Hills community has a fresh reason to celebrate as local business owner Andy Gammo continues to make an impact through his renovation of Top of the Hill Party Store on U.S. 12.

Since taking ownership, Gammo has transformed the store into a bright, airy, and welcoming space that better serves the community. Through thoughtful renovations and improvements, he has created a more spacious environment that reflects both pride in ownership and a commitment to the community.

We are proud to welcome Andy Gammo to the Irish Hills business community and thank him for investing in our area. His efforts have enhanced not only his business but also the appearance and spirit of the neighborhood.

The community also welcomes Patty's Restaurant, adjacent to Andy's store, and its owners, Brian and Shantell. Their addition to the local business landscape brings new opportunities for residents and visitors to gather, dine, and enjoy the hospitality that makes Irish Hills such a special place. We wish them great success and look forward to supporting their new ven-

ture.

A special note of appreciation goes to Green Acres Greenhouse on M-50 for their generous contribution to beautifying our community. Their team is donating their time, expertise, and resources to plant new flowers and provide ongoing maintenance for both the east and west "Welcome to the Irish Hills" signs that bookend the Irish Hills, located at Top of the Hill Party Store (east end of Irish Hills) and the USA 2 Go Brooklyn Market and Campground (west end of Irish Hills).

This collaboration between local businesses is a shining example of community spirit at its best. When business owners come together to support one another and invest in shared spaces, everyone benefits. Their partnership demonstrates the pride, generosity, and commitment that make the Irish Hills a wonderful place to live, work, and visit.

May this effort inspire all of us to continue working together to strengthen our community, celebrate local success, and create a welcoming environment for generations to come.

OTIH! meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 1 p.m. at Jerry's Pub. Please join us!

‘Attempted abduction’ a false alarm

By John Hummer

Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney Kelsey Guernsey announced that no charges will be authorized in connection with the reported attempted abduction at the Clark Lake Beach and Boat Club in Columbia Charter Township.

Following an investigation conducted by the Columbia Charter Township Police Department, it was determined that the incident was the result of a misunderstanding and that no attempted abduction occurred.

The investigation revealed

that a family visiting from out of town was attending the beach as guests of club members. As the parents were gathering their three children to leave, another nearby child became upset and began crying. Concerned for the child's well-being and not immediately seeing a parent nearby, the father briefly attempted to check on the child.

The misunderstanding arose because the mother was speaking to her own three children while they were in close proximity. Shortly thereafter, the family's children entered

their van, and the parents departed. At no time did the investigation uncover evidence of an attempt to lure, entice, or abduct the child.

"I appreciate that the Clark Lake Beach and Boat Club took these allegations seriously, and I am grateful for the Columbia Township Police Department's thorough investigation," said Prosecuting Attorney Guernsey. "I am pleased to report that this was a misunderstanding and not an attempted abduction."

Woodstock/Rollin townships

Fire millage on ballot

Woodstock Township asking voters to renew at current level, Rollin with slight increase

By John Hummer
Editor

Voters in Rollin Township have the opportunity to vote in a new fire protection millage on the Aug. 4, 2026 state primary election ballot. Voters who prefer to vote absentee should have received or should receive their ballot in the U.S. mail very soon.

Fire protection services for Rollin Township are provided through the Addison Fire Department, which operates under an Interlocal Agreement between Rollin Township, Woodstock Township, Wheatland Township, and the Village of Addison. This cooperative arrangement allows the participating municipalities to share the costs associated with providing fire protection, emergency response, fire prevention, and related services to their residents.

Under the terms of the agreement, each participating municipality is responsible for a portion of the department's operating costs based upon the number of fire and emergency service runs made within its jurisdiction. Historically, Rollin Township and Woodstock Township each account for approximately 40 percent of the total department costs. The Village of Addison and Wheatland Township combined account for the other 20 percent of the fire budget.

"Both Rollin and Woodstock townships' fire millages have expired," stated Rollin Township Supervisor Mike Clark. "You can do the math pretty easily and see how important that is to our fire department." The Village of Addison and Wheatland Township do not have millages up for renewal, Clark said.

To fund its share of these services, Rollin Township has relied upon voter-approved fire millages. The current fire millage expired at the end of 2025, making it necessary for the township to seek renewed voter authorization to continue providing a stable source of funding for fire protection services.

To address this need, the Rollin Township Board has authorized placing a replacement fire millage of 1.0 mill on the August primary ballot. If approved by voters, the replacement millage would be levied from 2026 through 2029.

The proposed millage is expected to generate approximately \$283,000 during its first year. These funds would be dedicated exclusively to supporting essential fire protection and prevention services, including but not limited to emergency response operations, equipment acquisition and maintenance, firefighter training, and staffing needs.



Mike Clark

"They are very brave people who risk their lives every day to save our lives and our property, and the things they have to see and do, for very little money, frankly," said Clark. "I think they deserve our support."

Woodstock Township is going for a renewal of .75 mills for their contribution to maintaining the current fire services, Clark noted.

"Our millage was also .75 and we (Rollin Township) chose to go for a replacement of 1 mil – which is only \$25 more per thousand dollars of assessed value," he stated. "We're already spending almost all we have and four years from now we won't have enough."

The Rollin Township board said in a letter to residents that continued funding is critical to ensure that the Addison Fire Department has the resources necessary to provide timely and effective emergency services to the residents and property owners of Rollin Township. They

believe that maintaining a well-equipped and properly funded fire department is essential to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our community.

Any questions or requests for additional information, should be directed to the Rollin Township office at 517-547-7786 or email clerk@rollintownship.gov.

Text of the Rollin Township fire millage proposal

"Shall Rollin Township impose an increase of up to 1.0000 mill (\$1.00 per \$1,000 of taxable value) in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution and levy it for four (4) years, 2026 through 2029 inclusive, for fire protection and prevention services, which 1.0000-mill increase will raise an estimated \$283,000 in the first year the millage is levied? This new millage replaces a 0.7500 millage for fire protection and prevention services which expires at the end of calendar year 2025."

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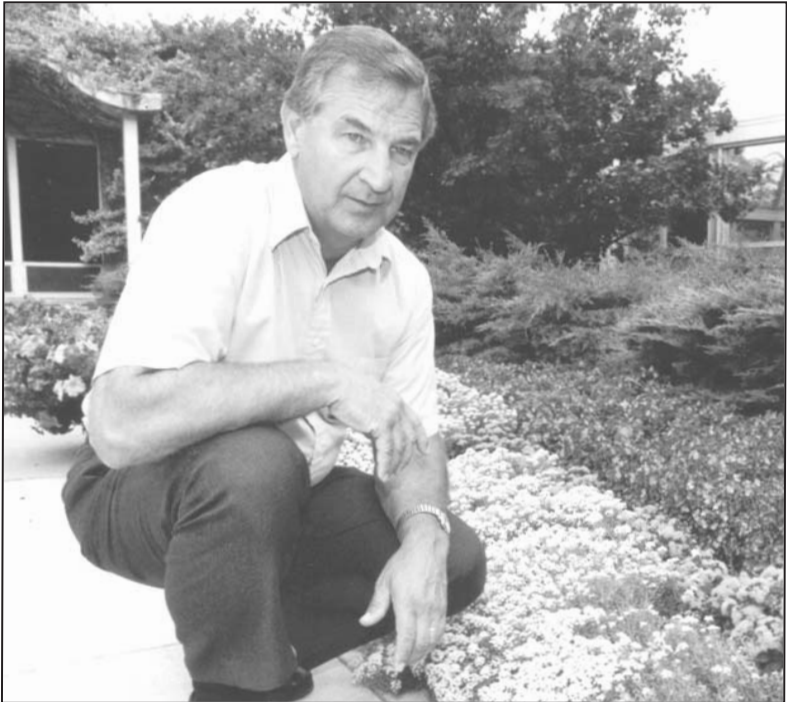
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Hidden Lake Gardens

This Irish Hills treasure remains a hidden gem and a quiet sanctuary for people and wildlife



The Hidden Lake Gardens conservatory, under construction in 1968. Photo courtesy HLG. Below, a group of visitors feeds the swans.



Jack Wolf, a worker and later the Manager Director, worked at the facility from 1956-1999. Photo courtesy HLG.



By Michelle McLemore
Staff writer

Hidden Lake Gardens celebrates its centennial birthday this summer.

One hundred years ago, Harry Anson Fee, Adrian Electric and Power Work tycoon, began botanical experimentation on the rolling hills in Tipton.

He sold his family business, “retired” in 1923, and purchased adjacent farms including that of Charles Card, Arthur Joseph, and Louis Robert. These created, at the time, a 224-acre parcel with a six-acre private lake.

In his first years, Fee renovated the farmhouse, built a

greenhouse, attempted farming, and began nursery stock. Local lore says that during the Great Depression, Fee discovered his nursery sales were hurting other area farmers who depended on the income to survive. It was at that time that he transitioned his intentions to creating a community show-

case with horticulture. He described his goal as “creating a series of pictures” in a “dream as you go development.” Fee eventually added a man-made pond, a road around the lake, and a rock garden. -

In 1945 Fee and wife, Harriet, donated the Hidden Lake Gardens nature complex to Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (now Michigan State University). The Fees established an endowment fund to help with the garden’s ongoing care and maintenance. Jessie Fee, Harry’s sister, also created a trust fund to ensure maintenance of the family’s legacy.

Milton Baron, MSU landscape architect, noted in 1946, “Mr. Fee established the gardens to enable people to see and learn about beautiful landscape compositions and new plants...to stimulate the demand for beautiful surroundings.” The college recognized the horticultural collection as valuable for viewing, but also the site as perfect for educational outreach as well as research.

As part of acknowledging the Fees’ benevolence as well as building the site’s dedication

to natural history preservation, the college purchased a 65-ton rock originating from the north shore of Georgian Bay in Canada. A glacier had deposited it in a swamp on what eventually became Russell Leffingwell’s farm in 1949. Despite transportation challenges, the boulder was placed at the entrance of the garden with a plaque immortalizing Fee’s donation and the intent for the gardens to be “maintained and developed for the benefit of the public.” Fee remained active in the garden’s development until

his death in 1955.

From 1955-1986, Fred Freeman served as the curator and lead horticulturist. Using part of the Fee trust fund, the college purchased the Crane Farm and would later build the arboretum on it.

Schools began sending students for field trips to Hidden Lake Gardens in the 1960s. The community interest made it clear a visitor’s reception center and 100-seat lecture hall was needed. This was constructed during 1965 with a gift of \$250,000 from Mr. and



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Above, left: The Pulque Agave that bloomed in 2018 in the Arid Dome was a celebrated visitor draw as the agave only blooms once every 50 years. Photo by Michelle McLemore Right: Jack Wikle began the Bonsai collection at HLG. This photo shows his care in 1971. Photo courtesy HLG. Below: Educational exhibits, such as the glacial lake basin display in the HLG Visitor’s Center, promotes nature learning at every turn. Photo by Michelle McLemore



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celebrates a century



Mrs. Ray Herrick. In this year, acquisitions brought the land total to 407 acres.

Recognition of the breadth and specialties of the collections on site spread widely. In 1966, the Michigan Garden Club of America visited and gave a donation to develop an area to explore adaptability of plants for low-maintenance landscapes.

By 1968, the original Fee greenhouse had deteriorated and needed replacement. Plans were drawn and executed to create two large plexiglass dome structures, two conventional connected greenhouses, and a public lobby of 8,000 square feet. Underground irrigation from lake water helped regulate temperatures across the structures. Three large palm trees were obtained from Belle Isle and moved to the Tropical Biodome under the 50-foot high, 60-foot wide dome.

In 1968, Jack Wolf was assistant curator. Glen Lumis, Ph.D. candidate, researched plant propagation onsite. Wolf invited Bonsai hobbyist Jack Wikle to display his trees in a corner of the Temperate House and appointed him the first naturalist educator.

Each decade thereafter, additions and new programming were added. In 1970, the Woodland Drive was established and all roads were paved. In 1972, bonsai were relocated to the Lath House. In 1974, the Albert H. Schmidt Foundation funded an educational exhibit in the Visitor's Center. Fixed to the wall still today, it shows the evolution of a glacial lake basin.

In 1981, collector Justin C. "Chub" Harper shipped his dwarf and rare conifer collection from Moline, Ill. in three semi-trucks. Around 1988, James Wilkins, president of the Michigan Hosta Society, proposed a display. MSU landscape architects re-designed Fee's rock garden and society members planted the multiple MSU plant donations.

In 1990, the Bloom Pavilion was constructed with the goal to create inclusive educational horticulture activities for all youth. The raised planting beds were funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, MSU Extension of Lenawee County, Hidden Lake Gardens, the Lenawee Intermediate School District, and MSU. This was followed by the Demonstration Garden in 1991 acknowledging Charlene Harris for her work in design and planting with Master Gardeners.

The Bonsai Courtyard was opened in 2002 with funds raised by Jack Wikle, Bill and Lois Hazelwood, and others.

By the 2000s the park spanned 755 acres and maintenance wasn't always easy. Most memorable was the 2019 winter boiler failure devastating the tropical and temperate plants. The na-

tional horticulture community responded offering replacement plants as well as cuttings. It was 2021 before all damage was repaired.

The next frontier to explore and cultivate was the Skywalk, opened in 2024, along with John and Sue Gruel Nature Trail. Most recently, in 2026, the gazebo (originally added in the early 2000s) was renovated. The original construction was through a donation by



J. Edward Fuller in memory of his parents, Mary and Chester. Through the years it offered a beautiful venue for music, educational sharing, special displays, and work zones. Along the walk there and inside the Temperate House, commemorative personalized bricks now allow others to remember loved ones and provide ongoing support for the gardens.

From hiking, cross-country skiing, walking, yoga on the

beach, Friday after Five educational tours, the Run for the Hills 5k, the annual plant sales, and numerous expos and classes, Hidden Lake Gardens remains a vibrant venue for learning and nature immersion.

To learn more, visit ipf.msu.edu/hidden-lake-gardens, or facebook.com/HiddenLakeGardens. Phone inquiries for programming, volunteering, or donating can be made at 517-431-2060.

Far left: Fred Freeman and the Michigan Garden Club posed for a check presentation in 1966.

Left: the entrance rock on the way to Hidden Lake Gardens in 1949.

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Obituary

Stuart Michael Zeiger

Stuart Michael Zeiger, 35, passed away on June 8, 2026, in Richmond, Virginia. Stuart's family and friends will gather to celebrate his life on Saturday, July 25th, from 10 am to 1 pm at Eineder Funeral Home, Brooklyn Chapel. Stuart was born on September 19, 1990, in Portland, Oregon, to Mark and Emily



Stuart Zeiger

(Faulds) Zeiger. He was a 2009 graduate from Columbia Central High School and graduated from Western Michigan University, going on to work as a software developer. This profession took him to several states, including Arizona, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Stuart enjoyed playing golf, baseball, and tennis in his youth, along with gaming with

friends he met through work, and of course, his brothers. He will be remembered as a hard worker and well-respected in his field, who loved his family and was a loyal friend. Best of all, he had an incredibly quick wit that endeared him to everyone he knew. He truly enriched our lives. Stuart will be missed by his mother, Emily; brothers, Scott and Pete; and grandfather, Allan Faulds. Various aunts,

uncles, and cousins. He is preceded in death by his father, Mark; grandmothers Emily Faulds and Margaret Zeiger; and grandfather Harry Zeiger. Memorial contributions are suggested to causes dear to your heart. Please leave a message of comfort for Stuart's family or sign his guest-book at www.EinederFuneralHomes.com.

Summer sightings



Dave and Nancy Brown of Vineyard Lake have enjoyed this pair of sandhill cranes, which have been frequenting their lake-front home. Photo submitted.

It's YOUR Business

By Cindy Hubbell, President/CEO
Irish Hills Regional
Chamber of Commerce
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Mystery Hill on US-12 in the Irish Hills is holding a Summer Carnival on Saturday, July 18, from 10 to 5. Stop by and celebrate with the new owner! The gravitational house, oddity museum, gemstone mining, and gift shop will be open and operating as normal. In addition, there will be a bounce house, live sideshow performers, a food truck, vendors, and more! The event itself is family-friendly and free to attend. The attractions (tour, gemstone mining, etc..) will be available at their normal pricing. Go to visitmysteryhill.com for more information and to sign up as a vendor.

Gypsy Blue Vineyard's U-Pick opens at The Fields Flower Farm on Friday, July 17, through Sunday, July 19. Stroll through rows of vibrant, seasonal blooms, handpick your favorites, and create a one-of-a-kind bouquet to take home while enjoying all that Gypsy Blue has to offer. Go to gypsybluevineyards.com for details. WINOS (Women in Need of Shopping) will be taking place at **Cherry Creek Cellars** on Sunday, July 26, from noon to 6 pm. Enjoy local vendors, drink specials, live music, food trucks, giveaways, and more. Go to cherrycreekwine.com for more information.

Join the **Village of Brooklyn** on Thursday, July 23, for an evening of music, art, local vendors, and more. Art in the Park will take place every fourth Thursday until September from 5 to 9 pm. The Irish Hills Regional Chamber will be holding Chamber Connections during the July event. Stop by any time and network with your business community while enjoying music, booths, food, and more. **Camp Killarney** is holding a Family Summer Retreat Friday, July 24, through Sunday, July 26. This family-oriented Bible Retreat is \$30 per person and includes snacks, all meals, and all materials. Go to [\[camp.org\]\(http://camp.org\) for more information and to register. **Savanna Rose Dance Studio** is holding a 2-Day Try It Class on July 28 and 30. Go to \[savannarosedancestudio.com\]\(http://savannarosedancestudio.com\) for more information and to register.](http://killarney-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Check out our community calendar at IrishHills.com for a list of happenings going on in and around the Irish Hills. Check out the Irish Hills community calendar at IrishHills.com to find tons of events going on in and around the Irish Hills, including bike nights, live music, classes, family fun events, craft shows, and more!

Death notices

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County clerk, reports the following recent recorded deaths:

Paul William Brindle, 76, Waterloo Township; Clarence James Green, 80, Blackman Township; George Henry Cujar, 78, Spring Arbor Township; Caryl Ann Briseno, 74, Jackson; Rose Marie Breining, 85, Napoleon Township; John Douglas Wimmer, 60, Jackson; Damien Allen Wortley, 47, Blackman Township; Jermei James Thormason, 53, Jackson; Willie Davis Weston, 59, Jackson; Richard Harold Worthy, 98, Michigan Center; Gary Guy Baldwin, 80, Napoleon Township; Kathleen Ann Ruth Bibler, 99, Jackson; Sy'Rian Samaj-Lee Journey, Jackson; Harry Abner Frank Canning Jr., 69, Jackson; Jonie Gale Kirchis, 70, Jackson; Kyle James Mcgauley, 37, Jackson; Ian Thomas Nichols, 44, Jackson; Jesus Rodriguez Rocha Sr., 82, Jackson; Robin Ralph Brier, 76, Summit Township; Susan Lee Jackson, 75, Jackson; Bruce Alan Andrews, 78, Columbia Township; Steve Allen Mullins, 72, Leoni Township; Mary Jean Schaeffer, 67, Adrian; Robert David Sherwin, 91, Blackman Township; Allan Leroy Adair, 90, Jackson; William Clarence Weible, 66, Jackson; Syble Nita Hackworth, 87, Albion; David Leigh Self, 73, Ruskin, FL; Lori Jean Ritchie, 55, Columbia Township; Linda Jean Mckay, 76, Spring Arbor Township; John William Mcgauley, 71, Hanover Township; Paris Roman Alonzo Lindsay, 47, Jackson; Alice Ann Adams, 95, Hanover; Hope Elizabeth Hughes, 60, Hillsdale; Sherry Ann Iverson, 84, Leoni Township;

Marriage licenses

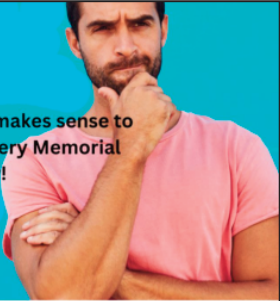
Cierra Sowle, Jackson County clerk, reports the following recent recorded marriage license applications:

Breanna Nicole Choate and Lukas Ryan Olson, Jackson; Lucas Alan Mackenzie and Trystyn Kay Freeman, Jackson; Kevin James Umerlik and Brianna Tate Haywood, Grass Lake; Cassidy Taylor Modlin, Jackson, and Donald Lynn Brown, Fort Bragg, NC; Erica Elaine Davis and Mitchell Adam Hemgesberg, Jackson; Brett Michael Vroman, Jackson, and Mareesa Lyn Westfall, Montgomery; James Robert Ray, Jackson, and Tara Marie Thelen, Jackson; Brett William Herwat, Jackson, and Anne Elizabeth Gidley, Grass Lake; Christopher Lee Jacobs, Brooklyn, and Kristee Kay Hartman, Brooklyn; James Levi Tharp, Jackson, and Stephanie Eileen Yaldoo, South Lyon; Nicole Jean Delisle and Thomas Michael Kush, Jackson; Kathleen Helen Foster and Anthony John Pryor, Jackson; Karly Alexandra Kiely, Springport, and Joshua Alan-William Rose, Jackson; Alexis Mariah Vanepps and Braynson Steven Pearsall, Jackson; Amanda Lynn Horning, Clarklake, and Jesse Lee Hurst, Clarklake; Dawson Ray Gorsuch and Emily Elizabeth Sobell, Jackson; Julie Lynn Casto, Jackson, and Paul Davis Kime, Jackson; Valencia Marie Bedore, Jackson, and Cody Jackson Riley, Clarklake; Cydnie Anne Tedrow, Michigan Center, and Dawson Jerald Swetland, Tampa, FL; Cortney Lynn Lowe and Aeron Scott Hartle, Jackson.

And they're off!



Kids and adults of all ages take off at the start of the Grass Lake Traffic Jam'n one-mile fun run. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER



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Obituaries

Bruce Andrews

 Known for his kind spirit, strong moral compass, and gritty perseverance, Bruce Andrews peacefully crossed his final finish line on July 3, 2026, surrounded by his family. The son of Betty and Bill Andrews, Bruce was born on June 17, 1948. His All-American childhood taught him the simple joys of gardening, how to ride a pony like Roy Rogers, and the dangers of a frog spear. He graduated from Holgate High School and headed to Bowling Green State University, where he worked in the cafeteria and first met Beth, who became the



Bruce Andrews

love of his life and wife of 55 years. He picked her up in his gold Oldsmobile 442, and they were married on March 27, 1971. Bruce enlisted in the Air Force during the Vietnam War, and he proudly served in Thailand and in the National Guard. He was a top salesman throughout his career at Bostwick Braun, and his sales territory brought Bruce and Beth to Brooklyn, where they raised their family. He was a member of St. Rita Catholic Church and served his community on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Bruce was often seen on

training runs, preparing for his next event. He ran 391 races, including 63 half marathons, one full marathon, and a 50K, always looking to better his time and collect some hardware. He hiked the Narrows, Angel's Landing, and MacCreadys and enjoyed golfing with his friends. From camping in Yellowstone to fishing in the gulf, from running behind a wobbly two-wheeler to extra batting practice, Bruce provided a great life for his family. Bruce is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Andrews of Brooklyn, and their children: Heather (Chad) Patrick, Robb (Theresa) Andrews, and Randy Andrews. His legacy

will carry on through his grandchildren: Jacob, Joey, Kaitlyn, Shirley, Ruth, Ruby, Claire, Robbie, Meredith, and Matthew Andrews. He is also survived by his sister, Bonnie (Dwight) Kalita of Defiance, OH, and nephews, Brian (Mia) Kalita and Kevin (Patti) Kalita. He was preceded in death by his parents. Fr. Bosco Padamattumm celebrated the funeral mass at 11 am, at St. Rita Catholic Church, with an additional visitation for the hour prior to the mass. Innnichement of ashes followed at the St. Rita Columbarium. Memorials are suggested to Henry Ford Hospice or St. Rita Catholic Church.

Faye Anne Moore

Faye Anne Moore, 85, Jackson, Mich. (formerly Napoleon Twp) passed away peacefully on June 20, 2026, at 2 am following a courageous battle with dementia. Faye was born on March 6, 1941, in Hillsdale, Mich., to Herman and Laura Margaret (Reynolds) Dietz. A dedicated and accomplished professional, she enjoyed a long, successful career and ultimately retired as the branch Vice President of Standard Federal Bank. She was on the Board of Fair Housing, The Board of Realtors, and Jackson Business. The caregivers at Brightside Memory Care treated her with dignity and compassion. They appreciated her sense of humor, and she looked at them as an extension of her own family. She was an avid reader, an enthusiastic gardener, enjoyed genealogy, and spent many happy hours on the golf course several times a week. She is celebrated and lovingly remembered by her children: Deena Banner, of St. Petersburg, Fla., Devin Baker,



Faye Moore

of Ann Arbor, Mich. Sister, Terry (Jerry) Mergler of Pleasant Lake, Mich.; grandchildren, Autumn Grossman, Joshua Banner, Emily Baker; great-grandchild, Alex Harm, nieces: Debbie (Dan) Burch, Cindy (Don) Gambrell, Sarah (Keith) Pund, Todd (Laura) Miller, Kevin (Laura) Miller. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, C.J. Moore; sister, Donna Miller, of Hillsdale, Mich.; and many extended family members and close friends.

There will be a Celebration of Life held for Faye at 1:30 pm on Friday, July 10, 2026, at Eineder Funeral Homes – Michigan Center Chapel (820 5th St, Michigan Center). Family and friends are invited to gather between 11:30 am and 1:30 pm at the funeral home with a light lunch. Pastor Glenn Russell will officiate the celebration of life service.

Please leave a message of comfort for Faye's family or sign her guestbook at www.EinederFuneralHomes.com.

Rosemarie 'Rose' (Dragonettie) Breining

Rosemarie "Rose" (Dragonetti) Breining, age 85, of Jackson, Mich., passed away peacefully on June 28, 2026, at the Jackson County Medical Care Facility.

Born on November 3, 1940, in Jackson, Mich., Rose was the daughter of Louis and Frances (Wasielewski) Dragonetti. A lifelong Jackson resident, she attended St. John's Catholic School and built a life centered on faith, family, and love.

On July 28, 1972, she married the love of her life, Duane Breining Sr., together they shared 54 wonderful years of marriage, creating countless cherished memories with their family.



Rose Breining

Rose worked as a clerical assistant in the automotive dealership industry for many years. Throughout her career, she was employed at Bob Hardy Toyota and Extreme Dodge, where she was known for her dedication and friendly personality.

Above all else, Rose treasured her family. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were the joy of her life, and she rarely missed an opportunity to attend their sporting events, school activities, and other special occasions. She found her greatest happiness simply being present for the people she loved. When she wasn't cheering on her family, Rose enjoyed quiet evenings relax-

ing in the gazebo with Duane while watching the lake.

Rose is survived by her devoted husband, Duane Breining Sr.; her children, Jason (Heather) Breining, Laurie Davis, Karin (Terry) Reinhart, Teresa (Bill) Jarrett, and Duane (Paula) Breining Jr.; her grandchildren, Caleb Breining, Madison Breining, Gage Breining, Jessica Bammer, Jordan Davis, Trevor Hadden, Tannor Hadden, Tylor Reinhart, Britnie Myers, Heather Vanden Heuvel, Adam Jarrett, Ethan Jarrett, Annah Jarrett, Natalia Breining, Evalina Breining, and Russell Breining; 12 great-grandchildren; and her brother, John (Susan) Dragonetti.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Louis and Frances (Wasielewski) Dragonetti; her sisters, Theresa

luni, Blanche Coulombe, Angelina Scott, and Louise Dragonetti; and her beloved black Labrador, Buddy.

At Rose's request, cremation has taken place. A private celebration of her life will be held with family and friends at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Jackson County Medical Care Facility, 524 Lansing Avenue, Jackson, MI 49201.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the many doctors, nurses, and support staff at the Jackson County Medical Care Facility for the compassionate care and kindness they provided to Rose throughout her time there.

Marilyn Ann Lown

Marilyn Ann Lown, age 90 years of Adrian, formerly of Somerset, passed away on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at Brookdale Assisted Living, Adrian. She was born on February 18, 1936, in North Adams, the daughter of Harold W. and Doris M. (Cunningham) Ferguson.

Marilyn graduated from Addison High School in 1954. She married Norman R. Lown on May 19, 1956, in Somerset. He preceded her in death on January 18, 2014. Marilyn worked for Key Bank in Addi-



Marilyn Lown

son for numerous years, retiring in 1998. She was a member of Somerset Congregational Church from the time she was 14 years old and was always a choir member. Marilyn was president of the Addison Schools Alumni Association for many years.

Marilyn is survived by three children, Kathy (Royal) Fischer, Jerry (Laurie) Lown and Alan (Jana) Lown; a son-in-law, John Mitchell; nine grandchildren, Jeremy, Seth, Alexis, Ian, Jayne, Kimberly, Eric, Tyler and Connor; ten great-grandchildren and numerous

nieces, nephews and cousins. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Sandy Mitchell; her parents; two sisters, Janet and Susan; and a brother, Robert Ferguson.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at 4 pm on Friday, July 17, 2026, at the Somerset Congregational Church, Somerset, with Reverend Lucas Miller officiating. Visitation will be held at the church before the service from 2 to 4 pm. Private burial will take place at the Somerset Cemetery, Somerset.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Somerset Congregational Church. Friends

can express sympathies to the family online by visiting the tribute wall at www.brownvanhemert.com. Arrangements have been made with the guidance of the Brown-Van Hemert Funeral Home, Addison.

Summer sightings



Local photographer Lynn Okenka snapped this young (nymph) katydid is on a spiderwort wildflower. Photo courtesy Lynn Okenka

Hazel May Morgan

Hazel May Morgan, 100, of Brooklyn, Mich, peacefully passed away on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at Brooklyn Living Center, Brooklyn, Mich. She was born May 1, 1925, in Green Oak Township, Livingston County, Mich. Her father, Frank Isaiah Giberson, was a free Methodist minister, and her mother, Mary Elizabeth (Spicer) Giberson, was a farmer's daughter. The Spicer family migrated from England and homesteaded in Green Oak Township during the 1860's. Frank's branch of the Giberson family migrated from Western Europe and established lives in New Brunswick, Canada, before the Revolutionary War. Frank migrated to the United States from British Columbia, Canada, in the early 1920's after losing his first wife to the 1918 flu epidemic. Frank's daughter, Frances, remained in Canada with her mother's family.

Hazel attended a country school through the 8th grade and finished her high school education at Brighton High School, Brighton, Mich., where she graduated Valedictorian in



Hazel Morgan

1943. She attended and graduated from the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy in 1947.

In 1946, she married James R Birkelbaw, from South Lyon, Mich. They had three daughters, Judith Ann, Jane Kay, and Bonnie Jo. They later divorced, and Hazel married Clarence Albert Morgan in 1958. No children were born to this union. In the 100 years of her life, her descendants grew to 37 individuals over 4 additional generations. Her extended family was much larger, including her descendants' spouses and multiple step-generations.

Hazel was an avid 'rock hound', traveling around many states to build a significant collection of gems and minerals. She collected, cut, polished, tumbled, faceted, and otherwise enjoyed turning the collection into jewelry and specimens to admire. She was a member of 3 State of Michigan Gem and Mineral clubs and served as president in two of them over the course of 60 years. Hazel and Clarence enjoyed teaching and worked for many years in Hartland School's lapidary lab. The lab

was later named in their honor.

She enjoyed cooking, gardening, preserving food, shopping, fishing, sewing, collecting recipes, and actively serving in local churches as a teacher and secretary. She also enjoyed working many summers in the Handcraft Center at the Lake Ann Christian Camp and Retreat Center in Michigan. When asked what her secret of long life was, she answered, "Love Jesus".

According to her wishes, she was laid to rest next to her husband and parents in Oakland Hills Memorial Gardens. Her family and friends will celebrate her life on Saturday, July 18, 2026, from 3 pm to 6 pm at Loomis Park Baptist Church pavilion, 2301 N Elm Ave, Jackson, Mich., 49201. Friends are invited to attend, as we would love to hear memories of her. In lieu of flowers, if you want to make a donation in Hazel's honor, please send it to Loomis Park Baptist Church. Please leave a message of comfort for Hazel's family or sign her guestbook at www.EinederFuneralHomes.com

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EXPONENT Classifieds

AUCTION

AUCTION, July 25 – 10 am
Onsted 10091 Bryan Hwy, AUCTION
Construction tools, Air tools, Electric tools, Chop saws, table saw, Miter saws, Welder torches, tile saw, Floor nailers, Dry wall tools, Flooring tools, portable compressors, 2 chainsaws, snowblower, generators, 3 pedal cars, the list goes on. Tool Heaven. Something for Men and Women both. YOU NAME IT, I GOT IT! 10091 Bryan Hwy, Onsted, 49265.

49x3

STORAGE UNIT AUCTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2026 @ 4:00 PM AT E&B STORAGE LLC, 445 MANITOU RD. MANITOU BEACH, MI 49253. THE UNDERSIGNED, E&B STORAGE LLC OF MANITOU BEACH, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION BY COMPETITIVE BID, THE PERSONAL PROPERTY THERETOFORE STORED WITH THE UNDERSIGNED BY:

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VALID PHOTO IDENTIFICATION WILL BE REQUIRED TO BID. CASH ONLY WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR PAYMENT. THERE WILL BE A MINIMUM STARTING BID. ALL ITEMS MUST BE REMOVED AND UNIT CLEANED OUT THE DAY OF SALE.

50X2

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335 Tiffany Street, Brooklyn, Mich. July 16, 17, 18, from 9 to 5. Furniture, home decor, kids' books, holiday, clothes, lots of new stuff.

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49x2

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tf

HELP WANTED

Administrative assistant needed at local funeral home serving three locations. Looking for professional part-time administrator who has a minimum of four years of administrative experience, computer literacy is necessary, willingness to learn, be a team player, people oriented, must be able to multitask and prioritize tasks. No calls, please submit resumes to: Jeff@EinederFuneralHomes.com

tf

HELP WANTED

Senior Female looking for someone to drive to the doctor when necessary. About two times a month. Will pay, if interested, or for additional information, contact Karen at 517-522-8341.

CARPENTRY WORK

Semi-retired carpenter – doors, windows, kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing repairs, light electrical and fall cleanups, tree and brush removal. Call 517-937-3571 to schedule your spring project.

20TF

FOR SALE

CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF SALE

50X2

Cambridge Township is offering for sale a 2020 John Deere Z950R zero-turn mower with a 60" deck with approximately 1,100 hours of use. The township is requiring sealed bids for this sale with a minimum bid of \$4,999.00. Bids shall be mailed to: Cambridge Township, Box 417, Onsted, Michigan 49265 to the attention of the Township Clerk; or may be delivered to the township hall at 9990 W. M-50, Onsted, Michigan. Envelopes are to be marked "bid for mower" and must be returned to the township by Wednesday, August 12, 2026 by 4:00 P.M.

The mower may be viewed at the Maple Shade Cemetery on Slee Road in Onsted (across from the school). You may contact the cemetery sexton with questions at 517-605-0359.

Bids will be opened at the township board meeting on August 12, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.

Rick W. Richardson
Cambridge Township Clerk

NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP

Notice

50

The Napoleon Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing August 12th, 2026 at 6 p.m. at the Township Hall 6755 Brooklyn Rd, Napoleon, MI 49261.

At this time all interested parties will be heard on the request of Brett Miles (Lakeside Real Estate) 11429 Oakwood Dr. Jackson, MI 49201 to allow 1) 13' Reduction in the 50' setback to waterfront and a 6.4 reduction in the 10' side setback for Steps leading down to Ackerson Lake on property 056-14-19-473-001-00 Ackerson Lake Dr Vac. Request: 37 ft from Waterfront and 3.6 ft from side lot. All other setbacks comply.

Napoleon Township Office is open Monday thru Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during which time the Zoning Ordinance / Zoning Map may be examined. Written comments regarding the above matter may be directed to the Township or by calling (517) 536-8694 Extension 208. Napoleon

Township will provide any necessary or reasonable auxiliary aids at the meeting for persons with disabilities, upon ten (10) days' written notice to the Township.

Jane Gallant,
Zoning Administrator

NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP

NOTICE NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP VOTERS

50

Notice is hereby given that a Public Accuracy Test for the Tuesday, August 4, 4026 election will be held on Wednesday, July 22 at 4:00 p.m. at the Napoleon Township Hall, 6755 Brooklyn Road. We will test the programs used in processing ballots for the State Primary Election to be held on August 4, 2026, conducted pursuant to Act No. 306 of the Public Acts of 1969, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

Traci Spring,
Napoleon Township Clerk

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PUBLIC NOTICE
CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP

50

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the public accuracy test for the August 4, 2026 Primary Election has been scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. at the Cambridge Township Hall located at 9990 W. M-50, Onsted, MI

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the computer programs used to record and tabulate the votes cast at the election meet the requirements of law.

RICK W. RICHARDSON
Cambridge Township Clerk

COLUMBIA CHARTER TOWNSHIP

50

Public Notice
Columbia Charter Township

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Public Accuracy Test for the August 3rd Primary Election has been scheduled for Wednesday July, 22nd at 9:30 a.m. in the Columbia Charter Township Meeting Room, 8500 Jefferson Rd. Brooklyn Michigan.

The public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the programing and ballot computers that will be used to tabulate the results of the election, counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Cathy Jo Hulburt
Columbia Charter Township Clerk

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

50

DECEDENT'S ESTATE
STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF JACKSON
312 S. JACKSON ST., JACKSON MI 49201
(517) 788-4290
FILE NO. 26-431-DE HON. JENNIFER M. KELLY

Estate of **Dennis Andrew LaRock**, deceased, date of birth 12/14/1969
Notice to creditors: The decedent, **Dennis Andrew LaRock**, died 1/28/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate, will be forever barred unless presented to Brett LaRock, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 312 S. Jackson Street, 1st Floor, Jackson Michigan 49201, (517) 788-4290, and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. 7/03/26

Ryan L. Phillips P73731 Brett LaRock
180 W Michigan Ave., Suite 906 1016 Greenwood Ave.
Jackson, MI 49201 Jackson, MI 49203
(517) 796-3907 517-748-3103

LEONI TOWNSHIP

50

NOTICE

The Leoni Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing, Monday, August 10, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. in the Leoni Township Meeting Hall, 913 Fifth St., Michigan Center, Michigan, 49254. This meeting will be held in person.

000-09-12-476-001-06
8955 Glenn Rd.
Travis Witkins Variance

Purpose of hearing: Variance

Legal Description: BEG AT SE COR SEC 12 TH N88°39'54"W ALG S LN OF SD SEC 992.87 FT TO W LN OF S 30A OF E 60A OF SD SE 1/4 (AS MONUMENTED) TH N00°00'00"W ALG SD W LN 671.42 FT TO POB TH CONT N00°00'00"W ALG SD W LN 358.55 FT TH S88°39'54"E 380.10 FT TH N00°00'00"W 286.58 FT TO N LN OF S 30A OF E 60A OF SD SE 1/4 (AS MONUMENTED) TH S88°39'54"E ALG SD N LN 212.67 FT TH S00°00'00"W 407 FT TH N88°39'54"W 200 FT TH S00°00'00"W 238.13 FT TH N88°39'54"W 392.77 FT TO BEG. SEC 12 T2S R1E 5.18A; SPLIT ON 01/21/2005 FROM 000-09-12-476-001-04;

Cindy Norris,
Clerk

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg July 12, 2026

ACROSS

1 Actress
Renee in the
"Mean Girls"
musical

5 "I cry a lot,
but I am so
productive,
it's an ____"
(Taylor Swift
lyric)

8 Telecommut-
ing abbr.

11 Widely
watched
short film?

14 United ____
Emirates

16 Boatloads

17 A ____ a dozen

18 Order by
preference

19 Consume

21 Tater ____

22 "Unfor-
tunately ..."

23 She may
fawn over her
fawn

24 City south
of Seattle

26 Helper, for
short

28 "Hella sick"

29 Have a
stench

32 "The Lion
King" baddie

34 One of 500 in
a Proclaimers
song title

36 Common
question to a
recent couple

39 Character in
Universal's
Monsters Un-
chained: The
Frankenstein
Experiment
ride

40 Person from
Newcastle,
e.g.

41 Exams

42 Garment that
might be
decorated
at a baby
shower

44 "Baseball
Tonight"
network

46 Didn't make
the final team
roster

47 Clean water
org.

48 Emphatic "I
agree" on
social media

52 Sphere

53 Treat with
treatments?

55 ____-Cola

56 Norse god
of war

58 "Can't argue
with the
scoreboard"

60 Animal
welfare org.

61 Begin

62 Gym unit

63 Suffix for "lion"

64 Stench

DOWN

1 Competitor

2 The Eras
Tour venue

3 "Never
half-ass
two things.
Whole-ass
one thing."
show, for
short

4 Counterpart
of "thx"

5 Old saying

6 Philosopher
Descartes

7 Film that
inspired the
Slinky Dog
Dash ride

8 Chunk of
cash

9 Tex-Mex
dishes often
served in
chips bags

10 Nonkosher
egg dish

11 Aloe ____

12 Black cats,
casually

13 "Maybe"

15 Playtested
version

20 Tiny bit

25 Spot for a
guest to
leave
feedback

27 Where to see
a rainbow

28 Skillets'
relatives

29 "Turning
Red" director

30 It's picked up
at a restaurant

31 "No need to
be scared of
me"

33 Tech for most
movie dinos

35 UFO crew

37 Place for
parting
words?

38 Motor oil
brand

43 Shady,
informally

45 "Stop beating
around the
bush!"

46 Gunk

47 Revises

49 Helpful
manual

50 More
treacherous,
as a road in
winter

51 Souvenir
from the
beach?

54 Wows

57 Contact ____
(snuggly
snooze for
a baby)

59 University of
____ Paulo

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NORVELL TOWNSHIP

50

Norvell Township
300 Mill Road
Brooklyn, MI 49230
(517) 536-4370
FAX (517) 536-0110

Synopsis of Special Meeting - July 6, 2026
Present: Andrew Haystead, Supervisor; Sharon Pero, Clerk; Deserre Sauers, Treasurer; Terri Curtis, Trustee; Norvell Township, Jackson County

The Special Meeting of the Norvell Township Board was called to order by Supervisor Haystead at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Items Approved:
Agenda
June 15, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
Appointment of Trustee
Resignation from Planning Commission
Appointment of Board Representative of Planning Commission
Appointment of Board Representative of Zoning Board of Appeals
Resolution 2026-11 Establish Township Inspection Fees for Building
Approval for Hire of New Deputy Clerk

Sharon Pero,
Norvell Township Clerk

Minutes approved at the July 20, 2026 Regular Meeting

JACKSON COUNTY

50

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTENTION TAXPAYERS

The 2026 Summer Property Tax Statements have been mailed. If you have not received your statement, please contact your local unit (City, Village, Township).

Compare the legal description on your tax statement with your deed or contract before paying the tax.

Verify that you have received a tax statement for any or all properties you own. Failure to receive a tax statement does not exempt a taxpayer from delinquent penalties and interest. All taxpayers now receive both a summer and winter statement and a village statement, if applicable, to your property.

If you feel you may qualify for a 2026 summer deferment, please contact your local unit. You may file your intent to defer before September 14th, or before the date your summer taxes are due, whichever is later.

Karen A. Coffman Cyndi Snyder
Jackson County Treasurer Chief Deputy Treasurer

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VILLAGE OF GRASS LAKE

50

Village of Grass Lake
119 N. Lake St., Grass Lake, MI 49240
(517) 522-4550

SYNOPSIS OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Grass Lake Village Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 7:16 PM at the Village Hall.

Present: President Pro Tempore Jane Fitzgerald, Council Member Gina Lammers, Council Member Cindy Popovitch, Council Member Jennifer Stanton, and Council Member Wes Shermwell. Absent: President David Keener and Council Member Monica Stevenson. Staff Present: Village Manager Sabrina Edgar, Village DPW Supervisor Paul Lammers, Village Treasurer Julie Muszynski, and Village Utility Billing Specialist Cheryl Vi-cory. Public: None.

Items Approved:
1. Agenda for June 16, 2026
2. Minutes from June 2, 2026 Regular Meeting
3. Disbursements
4. Motion to approve the budget amendments as presented.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Prepared by Clerk Jennifer Keener.
Approved by Village President David Keener
Complete Copies of the meeting minutes are available at www.villageof-grasslake.com or upon request from the Village Clerk. Office Hours are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Thursday, closed between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
Jennifer Keener
Village of Grass Lake, Clerk

CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP

50

SYNOPSIS
CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
JULY 8, 2026

The meeting was called to order by the supervisor at 7:00 P.M. with the pledge to the flag. Roll call showed all board members present. Approved the following regular items: the agenda, the minutes of the June 10, 2026 meeting, the treasurer's report, the payment of bills in the amount of \$169,597.15, the monthly police, fire, zoning, planning commission and ZBA reports. Approved selling the fire department hose roller for \$5,000. Approved re-advertising for the sale of the 2020 John Deere zero-turn mower at \$4,999.00. Approved special assessment districts and assessment rolls for Cambridge Drive and Lakeshore Drive. Approved following the personnel committee recommendations for the hiring of the office secretary position and the zoning officer position. Adopted Ordinances #26-002 and #26-003 regarding membrane structures. Approved the 2026 renewal of the property/casualty insurance package at a 6.6% increase from 2025. Approved allowing an additional seven days for the owner of 461 Egan Hwy. to close on the sale of that property, and allowing the new owner to have 30 days from the date of closing to submit plans and permit applications for the renovation of the property. Adopted resolutions of intent to renew the special assessment districts for Marsh/Lyster Road and Meadow Lane. Discussion on the sale of the 2019 Dodge Charger. Approved keeping the car until December 1, 2026. Public comment was received. A complete copy of the minutes of this meeting is available for inspection at the township office during regular business hours.

Rick W. Richardson
Cambridge Township Clerk

UNIVERSAL
Sudoku Puzzle

7/5

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

Today's puzzle solution

6 1 9 8 2 3 5 4 7
8 7 2 5 3 1 6 9 4
5 2 3 7 6 9 2 8 1
2 3 8 9 5 6 7 1 3
7 9 6 2 1 3 5 2 8
1 3 9 2 8 7 9 2 6
3 9 7 1 9 2 8 6 2
2 8 1 6 7 9 2 3 9
9 6 2 3 2 8 1 7 9

7/12

Themeless Sunday 191 by Amie Walker and Rafael Musa

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64

ENTERTAINMENT

Sun & Sand brings the beach to Tecumseh



Ice Creations of Napoleon, Ohio will create five oversized sand sculptures for Tecumseh's Sun & Sand Festival to be held July 17-18.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

By JACKIE KOCH
Meadowbrook Media

Tecumseh's Sun & Sand Festival will return Friday and Saturday, July 17 and 18, bringing the beach to the downtown area along with a variety of activities.

Tecumseh's event and marketing coordinator, Rhonda Nowak, said that Ice Creations of Napoleon, Ohio, will create five oversized sand sculptures for the festival. The company will bring in the sand on Wednesday and pack it to prepare for the sculpting. On Thursday they will do some carving and when the festival starts on Friday, attendees will be able to watch them sculpt and finish the sand designs.

"Watching the sand sculptures is the best part," said Nowak. "The sculptures will be up all weekend and they usually last a week, sometimes two weeks out on the sidewalks, so people can come see them after the event if they want to."

A scavenger hunt will

challenge folks to find hidden treasures throughout participating businesses. Clue sheets for the hunt are available on the Downtown Tecumseh Facebook page, at downtowntecumseh.com, and at each participating merchant. Once clue sheets have been completed, participants may hand them in for a chance to win a gift card packet from local merchants with a value of more than \$250.

The festival will begin at 10 a.m. Friday, with a street party Friday night until 10 p.m. on South Evans Street between Chicago Boulevard and Potawatamie Street. The street party will kick off with a DJ playing tunes from 6-7 p.m., and the Wasabi Pearls band will play from 7-10 p.m.

"We'll close down the street there and that's also where the inflatable obstacle course will be. That'll be something new this year," said Nowak. The 51-foot obstacle course will be set up Friday night during the street party as well as for the duration of the Saturday festival hours from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Nowak said anyone can enjoy the obstacle course at no cost. "It's got two different channels that people can run through, so

you can challenge your friends and run through the obstacle course and have some fun," she said.

For those hungry after walking around downtown, the Hannah's Hawaiian Shaved Ice, Bussin' Bowls, Pita Delight and S'Mac and Cheese food trucks will be serving up tasty treats during the street party.

Tecumseh's Farmers Market will be open at the Market on Evans from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, offering fresh, local produce, baked goods, handmade items and more.

Also on Saturday starting at 1 p.m. is a celebration of America's 250th birthday at the American Legion Underwood Orr Post 34, 101 W. Pottawatomie St., featuring a chicken broil dinner for \$12 per plate, while they last. The public is

welcome to attend the dinner and the festivities, which will include a bake sale by the Auxiliary Unit 34, games and face painting. Live music with the band Mojo and the Outlaws will begin around 6 p.m.

Throughout the festival there will be family-friendly yard games on the grassy lot at the corner of South Pearl Street and West Chicago Boulevard, across from Martin's Home Center. Visitors will be able to enjoy a sandbox, mini golf, and other games.

The annual Sun & Sand Festival will offer a way to celebrate the summer and enjoy fun activities with other community members. "It should be a good, fun time," said Nowak.

For more information and updates, visit Downtown Tecumseh on Facebook.

Out and about: more things to do

Sounds & Sights Festival

On July 24 and 25, Chelsea's Sounds & Sights Festival presented by Rick Taylor and Reinhart Realtors, will continue its four-decade tradition by featuring live music, kids entertainment and activities, a classic car show, an art market, the Chelsea Art Alley, a chalk art competition, farmers market, food court, a teen zone and more.

Gig – The Art of Michigan Music, will be part of the festival, with a curated exhibition of concert photography, gig posters, album artwork and wearable art. Attendees will be able to purchase one-of-a-kind prints and art at the Music Market that can't be found in any store or a typical art gallery. Workshops at Gig will include artist-led sessions on craft, career and more, according to the website chelseamich.com.

Musicians performing in the festival's social commons tent will include Magic Bus and The Square Pegz on Friday evening, with Lilly MacPhee, Bob Pogue and Scotty Karate performing in the afternoon on Saturday. The Ben Daniels Band will take the stage at 7 p.m. Saturday, and The Crasherz will perform at 9 p.m. Visit the website for details.

Sunset Serenade

Outdoor Sylvania Community Parks hosts Sunset Serenade concerts every two weeks on Wednesday nights throughout the summer. On tap for July 29 is the band Bliss. Concerts are held in Nederhouser Community Hall – Olander Park, 6930 Sylvania Ave., Sylvania, Ohio, and begin at 7 p.m. Sylvania residents are admitted for free; non-residents pay a \$5 car fee. More details are at outdoorsylvania.com.

National Museum of the Great Lakes

The museum, at 1701 Front St., Toledo, has two ongoing exhibits. The temporary micro-exhibit, "From Buoys to Boaters & Beachgoers," will be on display through Aug. 31. Visitors can explore the observation and information network that keeps the region informed about what's happening on the water and discover how real-time data supports researchers, commercial mariners, recreational boaters and beachgoers.

The exhibit "Currents of Change: The Living History of the Great Lakes" is available through Oct. 18. From beavers that shaped early Great Lakes economies to invasive species and harmful algae blooms of today, this immersive exhibit traces the forces that have transformed the region. Visitors will discover how science, conservation and community action continue to influence the lakes' future.

Both exhibits are included with regular museum admission. The National Museum of the Great Lakes also includes the Col. James M. Schoonmaker Museum Ship and Museum Tug Ohio. For hours, admission fees and more about the museum, visit nmgl.org.

– Meadowbrook Media

Mystery Hill to host carnival

By JACKIE KOCH
Meadowbrook Media

Roadside attractions have had a place in the hearts of many who yearned to visit the themed features that dotted U.S. highways during their youth. In the Irish Hills, places like Mystery Hill beckoned to their sense of adventure and fun.

Around 1916 the country began construction of 150,000 miles of asphalt roads, which resulted in attractions that enhanced family road trips for decades. While some of them fell by the wayside when super-highways began to cross the country in the 1950s, many remained. Local attractions kept operating, but eventually Frontier City closed, the dinosaurs of Prehistoric Forest were sold off, and Stagecoach Stop went on hiatus from its former bustling pace.

Mystery Hill, that puzzling, mind-bending spot at 7611 U.S. 12, Onsted, across from the entrance to Hayes State Park, is still welcoming visitors. Nathan Wakefield, the new owner since May, is enthusiastically planning his first season. The roadside attraction will host a free, family-friendly carnival from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, July 18.

Along with the carnival, visitors will be able to take tours to witness mind-boggling illusions such as water running uphill, a ball that refuses to roll downhill, and a pendulum that only swings to the south. Other activities include visiting Ward Hall's Strange Oddities Museum, gemstone mining, a bounce house, live sideshow performers, a food truck, vendors and more. Tours and some activities are available for a fee, and a gift shop on site offers fun shopping.

Wakefield grew up in West Michigan and moved to Adrian when he was 10. His fond memories of Mystery Hill visits as a child never left him.

Now a resident of Ypsilanti, he is an entertainer who performs juggling and other sideshow and circus-type acts.

"I've always been into kind of that quirky style of entertainment and roadside attractions," he said. He toured the grounds last fall and found that the owner had made some renovations. "And then as I was leaving, I was like, man, how cool is that? It'd be awesome to own something like that," Wakefield said. This spring when he heard it was for sale, he got in touch.

"He was looking to sell it to somebody that kind of had that same passion about roadside attractions, because he turned down a few offers for people that wanted to basically just use the property and get rid of the attraction," he said.

Wakefield is committed to maintaining the historic roadside attraction as it is and plans to add more to the site. He will expand the gift shop with books, especially "weird history"; a juggling section;



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Former Adrian resident Nathan Wakefield purchased Mystery Hill in the Irish Hills in May and will host a free carnival July 18.

branded merchandise; and souvenirs.

Future plans include more pop-up events, and he hopes to add a new attraction in the next three years, creating a mini-amusement park.

Mystery Hill is open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Wakefield hopes to expand into the fall to hold a Halloween haunted attraction in October.

For updates and more information on the carnival and Mystery Hill, including fees for various activities, go to visitmysteryhill.com or Mystery Hill Michigan on Facebook.

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JULY 18

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10am-5pm

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