

Detroit River winners



Rylan Hamlin and Luke Hendrick won the Michigan High School State Championship July 21 at the Detroit River with 21.65 pounds. This also qualifies them to represent Michigan next year for the national and world finals in Oklahoma. Courtesy photo



McCubbins wins

Napoleon High School golfer Anna McCubbins hits a shot during the Jackson County Womens Golf Association Match Play Tournament final last week at Sharp Park Golf Course. See story inside



The stars come out

Thousands of people and dozens of stars came to the Irish Hills to celebrate summer and music last weekend at Faster Horses. Photographer Christine MacIntyre was there with her camera to catch some of the action. Above, Jelly Roll is seen performing.

EXPONENT

TUESDAY, July 23, 2024

\$2⁰⁰

Let's talk about it

Officials are hopeful a series of opioid community conversations will help educate - and combat - small town drug use

By Julie Riddle

BROOKLYN — Small towns have the power to stop overdose deaths, but first they have to see that a problem exists, say community leaders invested in fighting addiction and drug crime.

Several opioid community conversations planned by substance abuse prevention organization Drug Free Jackson will invite conversations about drug use in local small towns, including one event in Brooklyn on Aug 17.

Participants will leave with free boxes of Narcan, a brand name of the opioid overdose-reversing drug naloxone.

Organizers hope information at their fingertips and Narcan in their car will empower people to feel they are a part of the battle against the harm of illegal drug use.

That harm extends beyond people who use drugs overdosing, exposing the entire community to drug-driven theft and violence, said Columbia Township Police Chief Jay Niles.

Small towns do have drug problems, but they also usually have strong community pride and are made up of people who care deeply about their neighbors, said Rebecca Caulkins, coordinator of Drug Free Jackson.

With the right education and open minds, those communities could be powerhouses in fighting addiction when they collectively decide to fight opioid deaths, declaring, "Those are our people, and we want our people to survive," Caulkins said.

'START THE CONVERSATION'

Jackson County reported 44 overdose deaths in 2022 and 28 through the third quarter of 2023, the most recent data available on the state's website. The county reported 447 non-fatal overdose-driven visits to emergency health care in all of 2023, down from 510 the previous year. The state does not differentiate between one-time visits and people who overdose multiple times.

The greatest concentration of overdoses and deaths happen within Jackson city limits. But overdoses happen everywhere there are people, Caulkins said.

Community Conversation organizers studied the data to



Jay Niles, police chief of the Columbia Township Police Department, holds a dose of the opioid overdose-reversing medication Naloxone in a patrol car last week.

choose locations for the community conversations. They scheduled events in Grass Lake, Spring Arbor, Brooklyn, and near the Meijer store in southeast Blackman Township, intended to reach Rives Junction residents. All of those areas have experienced multiple overdose deaths in recent years.

Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of a panel of leaders, including police and people with lived addiction experience. A "listening board" will invite attendees to share thoughts and questions they may not be willing to speak out loud.

Some people won't agree that fighting overdose deaths is everyone's problem, Caulkins knows. She also welcomes them to the events.

"Bring your stigma," Caulkins said. "Bring the thoughts you might have. Start the conversation and see where that goes."

'CRACKING UNDERNEATH YOU'

Small towns and rural areas experience overdoses and drug crime the same as more populated areas, and those issues affect everyone, Niles said.

And, he said, when residents don't — or won't — see and address their community's drug problem, they are wearing a blindfold at the edge of a cliff, and they or their loved ones could tumble into addiction without warning.

"People don't know how close they are to this," he said. "You're literally standing there with your toes hanging off the edge, and it's cracking underneath you."

Brooklyn is "an outstanding, beautiful community," he said. Still, his officers find needles at the park and drug paraphernalia in ditches. They execute search warrants on drug houses. They deal with the fallout when someone in town sits down in a recliner, shoots up, and stops breathing.

Police scramble to get drug distributors off the street, gathering information to allow them to make arrests. Unfortunately, Niles said,

"You nail one person, there's 10 in line behind them."

As a small-town cop who the locals know by name, he grieves the families he's seen torn apart by drugs, the "good, upstanding folks" torn down by addiction and the moms and dads unable to parent because of the chemicals in their bodies.

"And some of them we end up burying," he said.

Some make it, though, and the success stories they share when they bump into him in town give him goosebumps.

Efforts like those by Drug Free Jackson could be the difference between a person who lives long enough to succeed at recovery and a person who overdoses and dies, Niles said.

MONEY AND COMMUNITY VOICE

Local governments have one sizable weapon in their drug-fighting arsenal — millions of dollars from lawsuit settlements involving Johnson and Johnson, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, and other companies blamed for the proliferation of pills that led to the opioid epidemic.

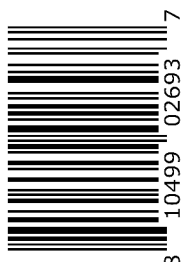
Those settlements have netted Michigan \$1.4 billion in promised money over recent years, half of which will be funneled to counties. The state retains control over the remaining half, with announcements of its intended use slow in coming.

Jackson County will receive \$3.9 million — portioned over 18 years — according to online data shared by the Michigan Association of Counties. The city of Jackson, Leoni Township, and Summit Township will receive a combined \$1.3 million.

Counties are permitted to use the money as they see fit, as long as it in some way fights the effects of the opioid crisis.

Jackson County administrators tapped the Jackson County Health Department to explore initial use of the settlement money. In its first year using settlement funds, the

See *Let's talk about it* page 3





Once again the world’s largest hillbilly sleepover has come and gone. The weather cooperated, the stars came out, and the people had a good time. Thousands of country music fans flooded the Irish Hills towing campers and bought up beer, food, firewood and more in their stay at area campgrounds and at Michigan International Speedway. In the past, crime and accidents have marred the event, but this year’s event appears to have been free from major incidents. Shown (clockwise, from top) are music fans reveling during a show, Bennet Brown playing a fiddle, and Shane Smith of Shane Smith and the Saints.

Did Chief Paterson save a life?

It has been reported by some on Facebook that Cambridge Township Police Chief Jeff Paterson helped save a woman’s life during the later stages of the festival. While we have not been able to confirm this as of press time, we hope to have an update next week.

Columbia police report

July 13 Property security: Hyde Road (2); Personal welfare check: South Stony Lake Road; East Mill Pond Drive; Accident: White Road; Conservation: Lewis Road/Peninsular Street, Woodstock Township; Domestic: School Street; Disorderly: Hyde Road (2); General non-criminal: Ocean Beach Road; Brooklyn Road; Marshall Street; Hyde Road; Peace officer: School Street	July 14 Obstructing police: North Main Street/River Street; Missing person: Kelley Road; Property security: Hyde Road (2); Civil dispute: Cottage Court; General non-criminal: Perrin Street, Woodstock Township; Jefferson Road/Woodland Drive; Jefferson Road; Animal complaint: North Parker Street, Woodstock Township; Assist other agency: Cranberry Lake Road, Napoleon Township; Domestic: Turk Road
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July 15
Alarm: South Main Street (2); **Accident:** South Meridian Road/Wetherby Road; **Property security:** Hyde Road (2); Daugherty Road; **Accident:** South Meridian Road/Wetherby Road; **Personal welfare check:** Wampers Lake Road; Cement City Road; **Civil dispute:** North Main Street; **Domestic:** School Street; **Motorist assist:** Brooklyn Road/Palmer Road

July 16
Personal welfare check: Constitution Avenue; North Main Street; O'Rourke Court; Kelley Road; Hewitt Road; **Property security:** Hyde Road (2); **Hit and run:** North Main Street/Chicago Street; **Accident:** School Street; **Inspect vehicle:** Q Lane; **Disorderly:** South Main Street

July 17
Property security: Hyde Road; **General non-criminal:** Irwin Street; **Civil dispute:** Oakwood Beach Drive; **Animal complaint:** Brooklyn Road; **Personal welfare check:** Irwin Street; North Main Street; Riviera Drive; **Found property:** Reed Road

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Matthew B. Schepeler
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John Hummer
Editor

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Sheriff sergeant accused of abusing prisoner with pepper spray

On July 23, Ronald Leggitt, 43, of Marshall, waived a preliminary examination and was bound over to stand trial in the 1st Judicial Circuit Court in Hillsdale County on seven felonies for alleged assaults of a county jail inmate under his supervision at the Hillsdale County Jail in December of 2021.

At the time of the alleged assaults, Leggitt was employed as a sergeant by the Hillsdale County Sheriff's Department.

Officials are charging that in the early morning hours of December 16, 2021, a woman was brought into custody at the jail, where Leggitt was supervising operations and staff. Staff at the jail were informed the woman had resisted officers during the arrest and booking process. At the jail, the woman allegedly continued to exhibit resistant and disruptive behavior. It is alleged that over the course of 80 minutes, Leggitt assaulted the inmate six times with an agent commonly known as mace or pepper spray, spraying the chemical irritant into her face from a distance of mere inches.

During the five of the six alleged assaults, the victim was secured in an emergency restraint chair; restrained in wrist and ankle cuffs as well as a chest restraint.

Leggitt was charged in March with one count of misconduct in office, a 5-year felony, and six counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, each count a 4-year felony.

"Law enforcement officers have an obligation to protect the physical safety of those within their custody," said Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel when announcing the charges. "When their conduct stoops to criminality, we must take such allegations very seriously. My department prioritizes matters of public integrity and will continue to hold those who violate the rule of law accountable."

A trial date has not yet been set.



Vote
James Minnick Jr.
Columbia Township Trustee
August 6

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Paid for by James Minnick Jr

Celebrating 50 years



Happy Golden Anniversary
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Let's talk about it . . . from page 1

The Columbia Central
Class of 1974



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county "has made significant strides in combating the opioid crisis, particularly in overdose prevention," said Kristin Pluta, health officer with the Jackson County Health Department.

With the help of an opioid health educator funded by the settlement, the health department connected with established local organizations that combat addiction, including Home of New Vision and Drug Free Jackson, to get grassroots insight into the community's needs.

It is working with an epidemiologist to analyze data about drug-related death, added Narcan machines around the county, and distributed lock bags and boxes for safe storage of prescriptions, among other efforts, Pluta said.

This spring, the county requested proposals from local organizations requesting a piece of the settlement pie. Those proposals remain confidential until their Aug. 3 deadline but,

Pluta said, will provide a clearer picture of how the county can best use the settlement money.

"Jackson County has taken a community-centric approach to ensure that our initiatives meet the greatest needs," Pluta said in an emailed statement. "We have prioritized building relationships and connections within the community, allowing us to directly assess needs and tailor our programming accordingly."

Drug-fighting efforts work best when leaders listen to their community, said Francine Zysk, community development coordinator for Lenawee County, which stands to receive \$5.4 million in settlement funds, with another \$200,000 slotted to the City of Adrian.

A community needs assessment she coordinated last year pointed to recovery housing — which helps people in addiction recovery avoid environments likely to trigger relapses, such as Andy's Place

in Jackson — as a key need for the county.

Zysk has been a loud advocate for community-wide book reads of books explaining the roots and impact of addiction. She has interviewed people with lived addiction experience, people in jail, and others with input about the best way to stop drug harm and provided other addiction-related learning opportunities for the county.

The more education and input-gathering the better, said Niles, at the Columbia Township Police Department..

Fighting illegal drugs takes everyone, and every effort is worthwhile if it makes a dent in the problems that vexes police most.

"I don't know, man," Niles said, shaking his head. "This drug thing — it's there, and it's not going anywhere soon."

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Opioid Community Conversation
WHEN: July 30, 6 to 8 p.m.
WHERE: The Lost Railway Museum, 142 W. Michigan Ave., Grass Lake
WHO: Members of the public invited

MORE INFORMATION:
Panelists will answer questions about local drug use and recovery support efforts. Attendees will learn how to administer Narcan and be given free Narcan kits. Refreshments included. Free.

OTHER SCHEDULED EVENTS

• Aug 7: Meijer Branch, Jackson District Library
• Aug 10: Spring Arbor Branch, Jackson District Library
• Aug 17: Brooklyn Branch, Jackson District Library

Early Voting Begins July 27

Tom Kissel

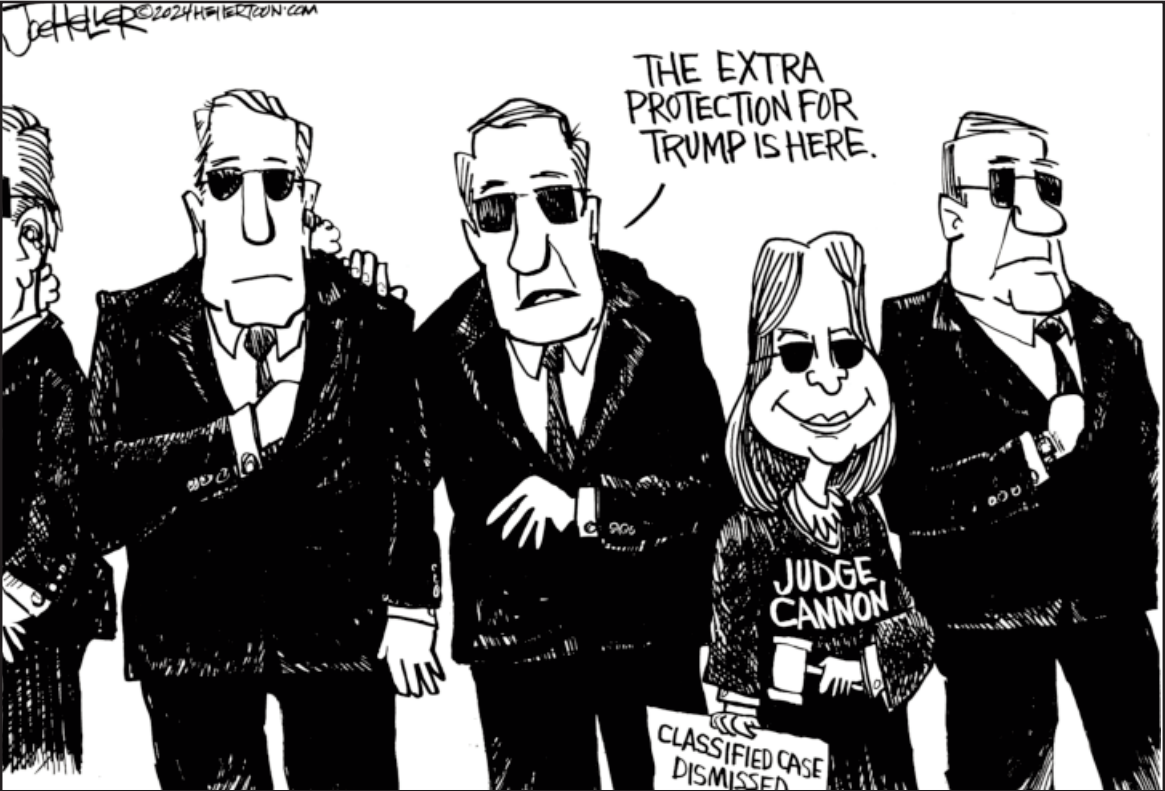
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Candidate replies to Albain letter

Dear editor,

In the July 7,2024 edition of The Exponent, Michael Albain, a former Cambridge Township Trustee, and Zoning Board of Appeals Member, mentioned that Tom Kissel, a candidate running for Cambridge Township Supervisor, is suing the township. I am Tom Kissel. I believe I am doing what is right. I have filed an appeal.

The Cambridge Township Zoning Board of Appeals voted to give a variance, to an ordinance, which I believe is absolutely prohibitive to give. An ordinance that starts with “At no time shall...” is an ordinance you do not defy. Mr. Albain indicates in his comments that a citizen who witnesses an incorrect decision that defies such an ordinance does not have the right and obligation to make the error known so it can be corrected through the appeal process. This is absolutely not correct!

The Boards are here to serve and protect our citizens and uphold the ordinances that they previously approved.

I would appreciate your vote on August 6

**Tom Kissel
Brooklyn**

Former supervisor: Minnick would bring much needed fresh leadership to Columbia Township

Dear editor,

Columbia Township Supervisor Marsh had been saying many times there is a need for fresh leadership in the Township while Trustee Beamish has reiterated many times that if a younger invigorating resident, he would not run again.

With Jimmy Minnick being placed on the ballot, I believe both views would be addressed. Brent has done alot for the community over the years and he deserves riding high into the sunset with all of his accomplishments. I would recommend Columbia Voters that even though the ballot allows them to vote for no more than four Trustees, they refrain and only vote for Minnick. (Voting for another three would in effect nullify Minnicks' chances of being on the Board as the other trustees face little resistance as being incumbents.

**Ray Kuzminski
Brooklyn**

Tips for a low-waste camping trip

Courtesy Julie Maurer, Lenawee Count Solid Waste Program Coordinator

Are you heading into the great outdoors this summer for a camping trip? Don't forget to do your part to make the enjoyment of our beautiful state possible by keeping our environment clean. We've got some sustainable and low waste camping ideas for you.

Plan Food Ahead of Time

Figuring out exactly what you are going to eat on your camping trip and packing accordingly not only helps you save money on your grocery budget and prevents food waste, it can also help you reduce the amount of trash you generate while on your trip.

- Instead of packing individually bagged snacks or utilizing plastic baggies – bring your reusable food storage filled with your camping munchies.
- Pre-make your meals and freeze them to thaw and heat at the campsite. This serves as a double purpose – not only does it reduce the amount of packaging you will need for your ingredients, but the frozen food can be a replacement for ice in your cooler. This will prevent you from having to purchase a lot of those bags of ice wrapped in non-recyclable plastic.
- If you are bringing disposable drinks – make sure they are in recyclable containers. You can freeze some of these as well to replace ice bags.

Smart packing

Getting ready for a camping trip can be exhausting. Sometimes it feels like you are bringing your own house!

One of the best tips I've ever seen is to keep pre-packed camping bins with all your supplies that you just have to pull out and restock a little for each trip. With that in mind – instead of packing plastic cutlery, paper plates, disposable cups...why not keep dishes and silverware in your camping bins? This will significantly reduce the amount of waste you produce at your campsite. This will also save you money in not having to purchase all those disposable items!

Financial report shows shortfall for cost of July 4 fireworks display

Dear editor,

Thanks to the Brooklyn and neighboring community businesses and residents who donated money and services in support of Brooklyn's July 4th celebration.

Here is a financial report prepared by me, sole owner of The 4th Be With You, L.L.C., a company formed to meet insurance requirements for the event. The report is endorsed by Irish Hills Community Legacy and The Exponent has been provided a detailed copy with donators named and expenses listed.

Total Income	15,090.52
Total Expenses	- 1,843.95
Ending Balance	13,246.57

Cost of Fireworks	15,000.00
Ending Balance	- 13,246.57
	(1,753.43) shortfall

I transferred \$1,755 from a personal savings account in order to write a check to Nite Magic for the \$15,000 cost of the fireworks.

Anyone wishing to donate to assist with re-payment of the shortfall should make their tax-deductible check to Irish Hills Community Legacy and mail to: Fireworks for Brooklyn 2024, PO Box 4, Brooklyn, MI 49230 or leave at The Exponent office. Cash donations may also be left there.

**Terry Mahr
Brooklyn**

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Why do people believe the lies?

Dear editor,

After watching the presidential debate, I wondered how long before Matt Schepeler joined his right-wing media colleagues in bashing Biden and the Democratic “reaction.” I’m not making excuses for President Biden, even though he had just completed two 48-hour trips to Europe back-to-back, and also had a bad cold. I would have an off night myself. Yes, he is 81. Whatever happened to honor your elders? Now people and the media make fun of older human beings and laugh at their shortcomings. They try to edit and clip videos to make Biden look lost or confused. Maybe he is too old to run our country, I don’t know. I don’t care who the democrats elect to run for President, they will still be a better choice than Donald Trump.

I believe the American people have lost their way. We don’t know who or what to believe because we have been lied to for so long. Donald Trump started the BIG LIE about a stolen election in 2020. Even though the 2016 election was really stolen by Trump, He continued to lie, had his subordinates lie, and the media lie for him. The CEOs of ABC, NBC, CBS, MSNBC, and Fox are all Trump donors (millions) and supporters. The CEO of the New York Times is a Trump donor and supporter. Billionaires protect billionaires.

Why do people still believe the lies? Are they too proud to admit they have been deceived? Too embarrassed to change their minds? Or are they tribally locked into voting “because my family did.” It’s okay to wake up and realize you have been tricked, as long as you try to change it.

How do I know the stolen election was a lie? There were recounts after recounts. Over 60 court cases were heard and overturned. No evidence has ever been presented showing voter fraud or a stolen election. In fact, it showed the opposite; that the 2020 election was the most secure and fair election ever. End of story! AS a result of his inability to accept defeat, Trump summoned an armed mob to attack the Capitol to stop the lawful transition of power. Many of those responsible have been rightfully convicted and imprisoned. Many people are in prison or have had their lives ruined by believing the lies of Donald Trump. Many thousands of people needlessly died by his mishandling of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Trump was convicted of a 34-count felony by a jury of his peers because he is a criminal, not some perceived “weaponizing of the justice system.” Sometimes the answer is that simple. Criminals get prosecuted because they are criminals. If you believe charging Trump with a crime is a political hit job, you are still buying into the BIG LIE. AS Matt so aptly put it. . . They think we are that stupid? The Republicans are banking on the American public being too stupid to vote intelligently.

I believe 60-75% of Americans just want to return to normalcy and decency. They don’t want a convicted rapist or convicted fraudster. We don’t want Don Corleon running the country. We realize Biden’s age. We don’t talk about his accomplishments. No one tried to eject Queen Elizabeth at the age of 99. There are over 10 world leaders who are over 80. Age is not the issue here. Criminality, undermining the constitution, and an inability to tell the truth are my determining factors.

Patrick Boylan
Brooklyn



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The Onsted American Legion will be hosting bingo every Sunday from 3 to 6 pm. Fifteen games will be played every week with three playing card books of 15 sheets sold for \$15. Food concessions will be open.

Open a Clearly Free Checking account at **Bank Michigan** and receive a brand-new backpack for the 2024/25 school year. Get ready for the new school year in style. Go to BankMichigan.bank for more information.

There will be a 5K Color Run/Walk held at the **Brooklyn Presbyterian Church** on Saturday, July 27 from 9:30 am to noon. This run/walk is being held to support the Brookes Family's 5-year-old daughter, Kensi, on her journey to fight cancer. Find more information at [#KensiStrong](https://www.instagram.com/KensiStrong).

The Southern Michigan Food Bank and **Springville United Methodist Church's** next fresh food distribution date is coming up on July 25 starting promptly at 3 pm in the church parking lot until the food boxes are gone.

The Addison Heritage Festival will be on Saturday, August 3 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Main Street in Addison. They will be celebrating 190 years with the US127 World's Longest Garage Sale, a pancake breakfast, 5K race, softball tournament, craft vendors, cornhole tournament, karaoke contest, food court, car show, live entertainment and fireworks at dusk.

PLAYING IN THE SAND
Ice Creations out of Napoleon, Ohio was contracted to work with local sponsors for sand creations along the sidewalks in downtown Tecumseh last week. At right, artist Matt Larson carefully chiseled out the welcome wording for the Chamber of Commerce. At least three other sand sculptures graced the streets.

Find more information on Facebook.

The Manitou Beach Farmers and Crafters Market put on by the Land & Lakes Ladies Club, will be on Saturdays through Labor Day from 9 am to noon. Enjoy fresh produce, flowers, homemade baked/canned goods and handmade crafts.

Enjoy the **Farmers Market at Cambridge Historic Walker Tavern** on Sundays from 10 to 2 throughout the summer except August 18. For more information go to michigan.gov/cambridge-junction.

The Mill Sports and Events Center in Onsted is holding a Mom to Mom Sale on Saturday, August 3 from 9 to 4 and Sunday, August 4 from 10 to 2. If you are interested in selling items, call 517-467-5529 for an application. This event is for gently used baby and children's items, no crafts or manufactured items. Find the event on Facebook for more details.

For more events going on in the Irish Hills area, please visit our community calendar at IrishHills.com.



PHOTO BY MICHELLE MCLEMORE



RE-ELECT BRENT

BEAMISH

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Paid for by Citizens for Brent Beamish

