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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

A MEADOWBROOK MEDIA NEWSPAPER

Village sprucing up

Five grants awarded to help businesses improve storefronts

‘Music heals’

Irish Hills Music Fest Saturday



Benny Kilpatrick of Jaded Soul announced raffle ticket winners during the 2025 Irish Hills Music Festival and Benefit.

Story & Photos
By Michelle McLemore

The days are counting down and the details are getting ironed out for the second annual Irish Hills Music Festival and Benefit to be held Saturday, September 12.

Based on the belief that music heals, 14 veteran bands are volunteering to play continuous music between two stages from noon until Midnight. Proceeds from the event will benefit Parkinson's and Irish Hills Hospice organizations.

This year's entertainment lineup includes Fortunate Greg, Stray Shot, ElektriK Mayhem, Jaded Soul, Bille Lewis and the Soulbacks, The Swamp Trolls, The Outsiders, Wasabi Pearls Band, Good Question, Massasauga, Coaltrain, Spellbound, Under the Influence, and Gruv'n. Production is powered by The Sound Doctor, Inc.

For the browsers and shoppers, 18 vendors have applied so far with arts, crafts, wellness, and music-related products or services. Businesses who have not yet finalized their booth with payment are encouraged to

wrap it up so they may be able to be involved. A few spots are still available so interested vendors should email info@irishhillsmusicfestival.com.

A health and wellness row has been added this year. It will be located across from the Onsted American Legion building. Michigan Parkinson's Foundation and Hospice representatives will be available with information. Next to them, a Wellness Center tent and demonstration area will be available. Festival goers may sign up to enjoy a 15-minute free massage or energy therapy session as well as learn how these holistic practices can support a healthy lifestyle—even for those dealing with chronic illness. The certified practitioners include Jen Abraham of Fire Within, Kristin Seegert of Anointed Alchemist Healing, and Michelle McLemore of Heart of the Journey.

Also new this year, the Wellness Center is hosting health demonstrations for the public to try. At 2 p.m., Kimberly Rieli, of Singing For

See *Irish Hills Music* page 4



The Star Theatre, on the east side of the Village Square, is one of five Brooklyn businesses receiving a façade improvement grant. PHOTO COURTESY VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN

By John Hummer
Editor

Five local businesses will be getting facelifts thanks to funding from the Village of Brooklyn. At their August monthly meeting, Brooklyn's Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) board voted to award five Brooklyn businesses façade improvement grants totaling \$4,402. These businesses received grants:

Angel's Floral Creations, 131 N. Main Street, \$1,000 grant for façade brick repair and exterior coating.

ERA Reardon Realty, 105 N. Main Street, \$1,000 for a new illuminated sign.

Lakeside Printing, 102 S. Main Street, \$1,000 for new

wall siding.

Star Theatre, 119 N. Main Street, \$1,000 for façade steel panel restoration.

Spellbound Owl Boutique, 106 S. Main Street, \$402 for exterior sign upgrade.

The five businesses receiving grants must carry out the storefront work proposed in their applications. They will get reimbursed after the improvements are completed and inspected by the village.

With exterior upgrades planned at the Star Theatre, Cody Morehead, the theatre's memories curator, says the funding is a major step in getting the historic theatre redeveloped for the community to enjoy once again. "We're

thankful to be a part of the community and to receive this grant," said Morehead. "It's wonderful to see the Village of Brooklyn caring for businesses in our community, and we're honored to be part of that." Now in its second year, the village's Façade Improvement Program is a way for local businesses to get assistance with improving the exteriors of their properties. All businesses located within the Corridor Improvement Authority boundaries were eligible to apply for the program, which had an open application period of June 1 to July 31, 2026. The Façade Improvement Program is funded through the CIA's an-

nual budget, which uses a portion of tax dollars captured from properties along Main Street and Wamplers Lake Road within the CIA district boundaries. Those funds are directly reinvested back into the commercial corridor through programs, events, and streetscape improvements. "Our local businesses are a big part of Brooklyn's small-town charm, so it's exciting to offer funding to help them improve the look of their storefronts," said Village Manager Matt Swartzlander. "This program supports businesses and helps improve the overall look of the community."

Skelton murder case bound over to Lenawee Circuit Court



"I am convinced by a preponderance of the evidence that the children are gone. They are buried somewhere or hidden somewhere."

Judge Laura J. Schaedler
Lenawee County District Judge
pictured above

Story and photos
By David Panian
Tecumseh Herald

ADRIAN — Two moments were most telling during defendant John Russell Skelton's preliminary examination on murder and evidence-tampering charges for Lenawee County District Judge Laura J. Schaedler.

One, Schaedler said Thursday in issuing her ruling on whether the case against Skelton would proceed to circuit court, was an FBI agent's testimony about Skelton's use of the past tense when talking about his sons, Andrew, Alexander and Tanner, from his hospital bed in the days after they were reported missing on the Friday after Thanksgiving 2010.

The other was Skelton telling his church's pastor, the Rev. Donna Galoway, that the boys had gone home, using terminology she had been using in her holiday sermons where she described heaven as home.

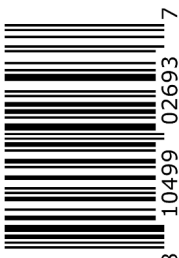
"I am convinced by a preponderance of the evidence that the children are gone," Schaedler said. "They are dead. They are buried somewhere or hidden somewhere. We just don't know where. And that perpetrator by a preponderance of the evidence is in fact John Skelton."

Schaedler bound the case over to Lenawee County Circuit Court and scheduled Skelton's arraignment there on the three open murder counts and three evidence-tampering charges against him for Sept. 16.

Whether Skelton is guilty or not guilty will be determined in circuit court. The examination is a proceeding where the prosecution has to demonstrate that it has enough evidence to show that a crime was committed and the defendant is likely to have committed the crime.

Schaedler's ruling came on the sev-

See *Skelton case* page 3



Love for skiing brings Clark Lake Pine Riders back



Roger Lyons, a founding member of the Clark Lake Pine Riders, creates a wall of water, or a “big spray” as skiers call it, while waterskiing on Clark Lake recently. PHOTO COURTESY ROGER LYONS

Waterskiing taking off again at Clark Lake

By John Hummer
Editor

Roger Lyons, Dan Morea, and Chas Timberlake were all members of the original Clark Lake Pine Riders Water Ski Club in their younger days back in the 1960s. Their love for waterskiing has now spanned 50-plus years, and they have resurrected the group – as waterskiing is taking off again.

“It was a thriving club at the time,” Timberlake recalled. “There were several regional and national champions at 18 and under in the club.”

“This lake has produced six people in the Michigan Water Ski Hall of Fame,” noted Lyons. (The Hall of Fame happens to be in Jackson at Krupa’s Boart Mart, 3909 Francis Street.)

The name “Pine Riders” came from the fact that, in those days, water skis were made of pine wood.

Waterskiing, as a sport, took a downward slide from about the mid-1970s through the early 2000s. The Clark Lake Pine Riders club also lost active members and enthusiasm during that time. “The enthusiasm [for the sport] seemed to die, and it kind of went into hiatus,” said Timberlake.

Lyons said the sport left public lakes and moved primarily onto private lakes for better wind conditions.

Then last year the four-some decided it was time to resurrect the waterski club on Clark Lake.

“We did this because we have such an enthusiastic love for waterskiing,” Lyons said about the rebirth of the club in the summer of 2025. They credit Barry Rudloff, a Waterski Hall of Famer on Wolf Lake in Napoleon Township, for inspiring them to ignite the club. Rudloff has exponentially grown the waterski group on Wolf Lake in recent years.

The Clark Lake group started by creating new T-shirts with their Pine Riders logo on the back and the words “Rip It” on the front. A bevy of club sponsors are also on the back of the shirt. The club is selling the shirts to raise money for the group’s efforts. “We’d love you to support our advertisers,” Lyons said.

However, any person who is seen skiing on the lake, or sends one of the club lead-

ers a video of themselves skiing, is awarded a free Pine Riders T-shirt and is welcomed into the club. To date, they have given away over 70 T-shirts.

Next up was what they did on the water of Clark Lake with the slalom course (on the southwest part of the lake). Lyons described the previous slalom course as a disarray of buoys. It had been there since the mid-1950s, he said.

The club paid a surveyor to come in and survey the course. They also paid a diver to go down and put anchors in at the strategic locations of the new buoys. “It’s now dead accurate,” Lyons said. “It will now give every skier an opportunity to judge themselves. We rejuvenated that slalom course. We thought that would be a nice vehicle to get people enthusiastic [about joining the club].” It appears to have worked.

“Any given Saturday morning there’s competition – who’s going to get out on the water the earliest and get the flat water,” said Morea. “Before, there was maybe one set of skiers out there. Now, we’re jockeying four or five boats...It’s wonderful to see how many more people are [waterskiing].”

“The more people we get skiing, the happier we are,” Lyons shared. He spoke particularly about the increase in children skiing. “The joy I get is watching these kids come out of their house with their own skis, with their vest on, and are at the end of their dock waiting their turn. I haven’t seen that in 50 years.”

Added Morea, “And choosing that over tubing.” Or playing on their phones, Timberlake said.

Morea noted that waterskiing is highly generational. “The grandparents are with their kids and grandkids, and they’re all competing or out there skiing,” she shared. “Traditions are passed down.”

The club’s big catalyst was a meeting held at the Eagle’s Nest right after Thanksgiving in November of 2025. “We had snow covering the ground (there were four inches of snow) and we had 45 water skiers [at the Eagle’s Nest] to talk about waterskiing,” Lyons recalled. “We were told many times,



Roger Lyons, right, a founding member of the Clark Lake Pine Riders, says he enjoys the camaraderie of skiing with his grandson, Parker Babineau. Lyons says this photo was from about three years ago when Parker was 10. Lyons is now 73. PHOTO COURTESY ROGER LYONS

‘Good luck getting people to show up.’ Fifteen of them were kids under 15 years old.

“We gave them information about the Pine Riders and were resurrecting the love of waterskiing,” stated Morea.

To top it off, Lyons said a ski rope manufacturer from Michigan came to the meeting with skis, ropes, and vests to show and gave away some ski swag.

The momentum of the club kept going through the summer months of 2026 with members getting together for casual skiing fun and using the new slalom course.

This past weekend, the club hosted another meet-up at the Eagle’s Nest. It featured special guests and waterskiing pro legends Cale Burdick and Pete Shoemaker. Members talked slalom, learned pro tips, advanced techniques, training secrets, and conversed on the latest waterskiing gear with the two world-class champions. Members were also able to connect with fellow waterski enthusiasts, share stories, and help grow the Clark Lake waterski community.

Of the two events, Timberlake explained, “They’re geared toward education, particularly for the kids. We want to teach these kids not

only etiquette, but how to ski properly, how to get up on skis if they’ve never been up before, and to cultivate in them the love of skiing that we have.”

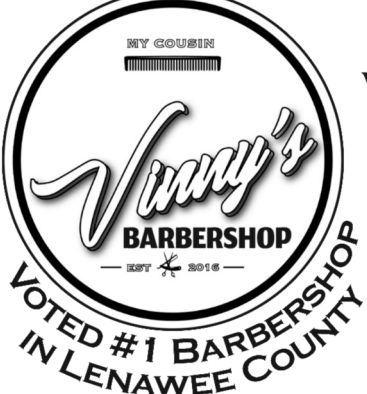
Lyons would like to continue the education process for kids through the club. “What we’d like to do is get a place here on the lake where we can get a boat, and get a coach, and teach kids,” he says.

And it’s not just about kids. Clark Lake resident Wilma Nichols, 88, still waterskies and is a Pine Riders member. Timberlake recently turned 80. Lyons is 73 and shared that he has had two strokes. “I was rejuvenated in this sport, after being off for 15 years, by Barry Rudloff (Wolf Lake Hall of Fame skier) who taught my grandson to ski – and I got a chance to ski with him,” he said thankfully.

On the distant horizon, the group is talking of hosting a tournament, but that could be a couple of years off. “It’s a goal,” said Timberlake.

The Clark Lake Pine Riders will accept donations so they can continue to purchase and award club T-shirts to members. For more information, contact Roger Lyons at 517-414-1777, rogelyons@gmail.com.

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From left: Lynne Morea, Roger Lyons, and Chas Timberlake – three of the four leaders of the newly re-born Clark Lake Pine Riders Water Ski Club. Missing from the photo is Dan Morea, Lynne’s husband and world champion water skier.

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Arraignment set for Sept. 16

Skelton murder trial bound over to circuit court from page 1

enth day of testimony in the examination, which began Aug. 24. Her ruling was interrupted for about 33 minutes by a tornado warning that set off cell phone alerts and the building's alarm system, sending court staff, attorneys and the public in attendance to the Rex B. Martin Judicial Building's basement until the court's security team determined the storm that generated the warning had passed.

In stating her reasons for binding the case over, Schaedler said the "A-ha!" moment for her may have been the same as it was for Galloway, who testified on the exam's first day. Galloway described a phone conversation she had with Skelton while he was in the hospital with an injured ankle hours after he was supposed to have returned the 9-, 7- and 5-year-old boys to their

Galloway told the court she was standing against a wall at the Morenci municipal building where she could look into the police station and the city hall offices, which share the building.

"Why won't Tanya talk to me?" Galloway said Skelton asked.

"And I said, 'She will talk to you if you're going to tell her where the boys are,'" Galloway said. "...She wants to know where her boys are, and she wants them home, and they're not home."

"And he said to me, 'Pastor Donna, you of all people should understand what I mean when I say that they're home.'"

"I just kind of slid down the wall and sat on the floor."

"I knew at that point when he said, 'You of all people should know what I mean when I say I sent them home.' I knew that they were dead."

Galloway had earlier explained that her theme for her lessons at church that holiday season was "Come Home for Christmas," where heaven was home.

"He didn't say, 'I sent them home to their mother,'" Schaedler said Thursday. "He didn't say, 'They're at my house.' He didn't say, 'They're at Joanne's house.' He didn't say they're with an underground organization that's going to take care of them until they're 18. He said they went home...."

"And for me that was a moment where it all made sense that for John, he wanted his family back," she continued.

Messages Skelton had sent Zuvers were "all designed around his pain at losing his wife and what I see as manipulation of his children in order to try and maintain his marriage," she said. "And the idea being that if he couldn't



Lenawee County District Judge Laura J. Schaedler gives her ruling Thursday to bind over to circuit court the murder and evidence-tampering case against John Russell Skelton, foreground, at the conclusion of the case's preliminary examination.

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have his marriage, his wife, that she wasn't going to have what gave her the joy and the pleasure in their relationship, which was her children."

The only other possible perpetrators, Schaedler said, were Joanne Taylor and Virgil, two supposed members of an underground organization that protects children from abusive situations. Schaedler noted that Skelton didn't tell investigators about the organization until January.

He had told them about Taylor and giving the boys to her, but those stories were inconsistent, Schaedler said. One version of the story, which was shared Thursday by an FBI agent who interviewed Skelton on the Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving Day, included how he put the boys in his minivan early on the morning of the Friday after Thanksgiving. He described to the agent the pajamas the boys were wearing and how he gave each a stuffed animal and wrapped them in blankets before carrying them to the van.

The parts about giving the boys stuffed animals, wrapping them in blankets and carrying them to the van were "interesting" details, Schaedler said, given that the boys were capable of walking.

"Why would you transport your children with a blanket and stuffed animal to the van in the nighttime in November in Michigan?" Schaedler said. "There is no good reason unless you're taking them someplace or if the cold doesn't matter."

The story about Skelton giving the boys to Taylor didn't make sense, either, Schaedler said.

"The court is convinced that Joanne Taylor and John Skelton are one and the same and that John Skelton is in fact responsible for the disappearance of these children and their death," she said.

It was clear to her that the boys are dead, given that they have had time to contact their mother or other relatives, even those on Skelton's side of the family with which they seemed to have good relationships, Schaedler said. There has been no sighting of them, even as they might appear as adults, which seems unlikely in today's technological world.

"Even those people in our current situation who choose to live off the grid end up being someplace on some CCTV or, you know, a security tape or a Ring doorbell," she said. "And these children

have avoided all that without knowing that that puts their father at risk. It makes absolutely no sense."

The boys also knew to call 911 if they needed help, Schaedler said. This was demonstrated by the final witness. Lt. Christopher Hudson, who now is the Lenawee County Central Dispatch director, said he was working as a dispatcher at 7:20 p.m. Nov. 20, 2010, when the Skelton boys called 911 because they couldn't find their father. Lenawee County Prosecutor Jackie VanWoert played the recording of that call, where an upset Alexander and Andrew explain that they can't find their father. Hudson dispatched a Morenci police officer to their home on East Congress Street and stayed on the line with the boys, asking them questions about themselves and to try to narrow down when they last saw Skelton. At one point, he asks how Tanner, the youngest boy, is doing.

"He's doing pretty good," Andrew replied. "He's not the one panicking."

"OK. Well, you guys are all doing good," Hudson said.

When the officer arrives, Hudson told Andrew to answer the door when the officer knocks, to talk to the officer and that he would hang up with him then.

"You did a good job, OK," Hudson said.

"Oh, we just found him," Andrew said.

"Where was he?"

"He was upstairs."

"He was upstairs? OK."

"OK."

In the background, Skelton is heard talking to the officer who explained the boys had called 911.

"Bye," Andrew said.

"Bye, Andrew," Hudson said, ending the call.

FBI involvement

Two FBI agents testified Thursday about their roles in the early days of the investigation. Retired Special Agent

Kelly Liberti was a member of the Cleveland office's Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) Team in 2010, which was dispatched Nov. 27 to Morenci. This was the day after Zuvers reported that Skelton had not brought the boys to their planned custody exchange.

Liberti said she, another agent, and Galloway talked to Skelton in his room at a hospital in Toledo. He had been transferred to the psychiatric unit there from the Fulton County Health Center where he originally went to treat his ankle. Skelton had told police he had tried to kill himself by hanging.

The CARD Team was accompanied by two members of the Cleveland office's Behavioral Analysis Unit, commonly known as "profilers."

Liberti did not take part in the FBI's initial interview of Skelton but listened in. When she joined in, one of the first things she told him was that they knew Taylor wasn't real from evidence on his laptop computer.

"There had been a lot of time spent talking about Joanne, and we wanted to put an end to that because we wanted to find the boys," Liberti said.

She described Skelton telling them about wrapping the boys in blankets, giving them stuffed animals, putting them in his minivan and making sure their seatbelts were buckled.

"And then it stopped at that point," Liberti said. "...And the next memory that he had was the following morning, going to his aunt's house."

Skelton gave them two specific locations to search for the boys. One was a deserted school building in Kunkle, Ohio, and the other a dumpster at a motel in Holiday City, Ohio. He told Liberti the dumpster location came to him in a dream that Saturday night. He drew her a map of where the dumpster was in relation to the motel and a restaurant.

"He said in his dream it was like having tunnel vision, that he saw his van pull up, parked beside the dumpster. He said he saw Joanne Taylor get out of the car, but then it became him," she said.

Agents were sent to search the dumpster and the area around it, but no evidence was found.

Retired Special Agent Christopher Garnett was the senior team leader of the Evidence Response Team at the FBI's Cleveland office in November 2010. The ERT was dispatched to the Toledo area where they searched the Kunkle school and the landfill where the contents of the Holiday City motel dumpster were taken.

No evidence of the boys was found at either location, he said. They were at the landfill from about 2:30 to 9 p.m. Nov. 29. He said landfill operators keep "meticulous notes" about where material is deposited, and the Williams County Landfill workers were able to direct them to a specific cell in the landfill where they estimated the dumpster's content would be within the top 2-3 feet. Using a bulldozer to spread out the material, several agents from the Cleveland and Detroit offices used rakes and shovels to pick through the trash.

"Sometimes you're on your hands and knees picking through that particular pile," Garnett said.

They searched material that had been piled 5-6 feet deep in a 12-foot by 12-foot area – about 720-864 cubic feet – and brought in portable lights so they could keep searching after dark, he said.

In the trash they found bones that the Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Medical Examiner's Office determined to be from animals, Garnett said. They also found several stuffed animals that they photographed to show to Zuvers to see if she recognized any of them.

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Attic & Hearth

~A Look Back~

By Michelle A. McLemore

Bargains, all around

Feminist leader Gloria Steinem had Clark Lake connection



LBJ Library photo by Frank Wolfe

By John Hummer
Editor

Gloria Steinem, the American journalist and political activist who was the face of feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, died Wed., Sept. 2, 2026. She was 92.

Born on March 25, 1934 in Toledo, Ohio, Steinem spent her childhood summers at Clark Lake, where her family ran a popular lakeside resort and dance pavilion.

Her father, Leo Steinem, owned the Ocean Beach Pier and a local dance pavilion at Clark Lake during the 1920s and 1940s. The pavilion hosted prominent musicians

of the time, including Duke Ellington and Guy Lombardo.

In the early 1940s, Steinem's parents divorced, and the resort was closed. She and her mother stayed behind at the Clark Lake home during a difficult period before she moved away at age 15.

Steinem was best known for her leadership and speaking engagements for the feminist movement during the 1970s. She was a founder and editor of Ms. magazine, as well as a co-founder of the Ms. Foundation, Women's Action Alliance, and Women's Political Caucus.

Of note, Steinem became an undercover Playboy bunny (1963); served as staff writer for New York magazine (1968–72); won the Penney-Missouri Journalism Award (1969); and served as editor of Ms. magazine (1972–88).

She was operated on for breast cancer (1986), and left Ms. in 1988 to write several books and became a freelance writer and speaker thereafter.



Above: This early 1900s postcard shows students and staff posing at a Brooklyn public school. The girls' big hair bows and boys' knickerbockers with high socks show the common style between 1910 and the late 1920. Photo courtesy of the Godfrey collection.

Right: Zooming in, the elevated gentleman at the right draws my focus. Was he the principal, superintendent, or a teacher? Regardless, his clothing and expression are a marked contrast to the young gentleman at his left sharing the window ledge.

Often times, it's the gifts that we must zoom in for with old photos that remind us the black-and-white days of ol' had just as much personality as these digital days.

Yes, the architecture of Brooklyn High School, built in 1869, is a marvel alone. But if we zoom in to the top right of the picture, we see the well-dressed adult balancing in a window frame just as several of the boy students are doing.

Did you know *that* teacher or administrator in school? The one who joked around, took risks, or didn't

quite act as "dignified" as the other professionals? Or perhaps it was the staff member who was very serious in their intention to model stoic behavior yet on occasion surprised everyone with whimsy?

Bless them one and all for showing youths it was alright to have fun as an adult—to take the risks to make memories while making a difference. Here's wishing all students and school personnel a safe, joyful, and educational new school year.



If you have photos, scrapbooks, postcards, or other historical items that may be shared, we would love to see them. Contact The Exponent office to arrange a time, or email unique photos with any information you have about the content to exponews@theexponent.com. In the subject line, please note "Attic & Hearth" or "For Michelle," and include your name and contact information in the message.

Irish Hills Music Fest . . . from page 1

Your Soul, will guide a mini workshop called "Empowered Everyday: Simple Sound for Joy, Calm, and Confidence." In this short demo, Rieli will share simple ways to use breath, humming, sound and singing to release tension, lift your mood, build confidence and bring more joy into everyday life. No singing experience is needed, and there's nothing to perform or get 'right.' Just bring your breath, your voice, and a willingness to make a little sound!"

At 3:30 p.m. Ryan Richardson of Lion's Eye Lifestyle, will guide "Basic Balance: An Introduction to Tai Chi." Richardson describes it as "a gentle introduction to Tai Chi through breath-led movement, mindful awareness, and grounding flow." Participants together "will explore

simple movements designed to release tension, improve balance, and reconnect the body, mind, and energy. No previous experience is needed."

At 5 p.m. Jen Abraham, of Fire Within, will lead, "Release and Rest: Practical Massage Techniques" to use with family and friends to relieve everyday muscle and tendon tension. No pre-registration is needed for the wellness activities.

To sustain the body throughout the day, seven food sources will be available for festival goers. Smoky DZ, Jenny's Diner, Brenda's Little Taste of Texas, Katie Kakes, Caffeine and Crumbs, and the Onsted Band Booster's bake sale will be on-site. Two adult drink stations will be run by the American Legion—one outside and one inside. A

charity bake sale booth is also in the planning stages to support the school.

Besides a day for the community to come together, to celebrate family musical heritages in the Irish Hills, Jason Lake, organizer, reminds folks, "it is a benefit to raise funds for the Parkinson's Foundation of Michigan and the Irish Hills area hospices. Please come out and support this cause." In addition to cash raffles and a charity motorcycle poker run (with special parking in the Legion lot for motorcycles), they are working on obtaining the means for digital donations and sponsor giveaways.

Lake shared, "The IHMF was founded in memory of three local musicians that dedicated their lives to bring music to the Irish Hills area. Jim Kilpatrick, Bob Williams

and Doug Lake played in many bands together."

Other principal organizers include Eric Crittenden of Durkee-Seager Onsted American Legion, Dustin Ely of Ely Solutions, and Mike McLemore of The Sound Doctor. "The IHMF mission is to bring awareness and healing to the Irish Hills community through great food, art, information, and live music."

The event will be held at the Onsted American Legion Post 550 both in the parking lot as well as inside. Visitors should plan on parking at the Onsted park and enjoying the short walk to the hall or using the complimentary golf cart service.

To volunteer or get involved, email info@irish-hillsmusicfestival.com and to watch for updates, visit irish-hillsmusicfestival.com.

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Clarification

In last week's Onsted Wildcat Trap feature, Troy A. Heselschwerdt was left out of the listing as an assistant coach. Heselschwerdt was instrumental in getting the club started. Additionally, Jeremiah Courington is the Range Safety Officer who ensures the youths practice in a safe manner.

Save the date!

The Star Theatre will be hosting a movie in the park on Sunday, Sept. 20 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Weatherwax Park (behind the Star Theatre) in Brooklyn.

They will be showing the family friendly Minions and Monsters. The movie is sponsored by @Home Mortgage ERA Realty and

co-sponsored by Heart O' The Lakes, Village Creamery, Callaghan's, BC Pizza, and Wesco.

Wesco will be providing popcorn, while Callaghan's and BC Pizza will have food available for purchase from their food trucks.

The movie will be a free event for the community.



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Kratz comes full circle

New education program coordinator at Hidden Lake Gardens is back where she started



By JACKIE KOCH
jackie@tecumsehherald.com

Carley Kratz, shown above, ended up right where she began when she took the position of education program coordinator at Hidden Lake Gardens (HLG) three months ago. Her lifelong connection to ecology and the earth started when she was a young child visiting the gardens with her grandmother.

“My grandmother would bring me here, and she loved plants, and she loved nature, and she would take us on hikes, but also we would garden with her at her home all the time,” Kratz said. “So that’s where I really fell in love with plants and fell in love with soil.”

She went to the University of Michigan to get a bachelor’s degree in botany, earned a master’s degree in agriculture, food, and natural resources education from Michigan State University, then went to Michigan Technological University to earn a Ph.D. in forest science. When she moved back to the area to help out on the family farm in Clinton after graduate school, she ended up working as the director for the River Raisin Watershed Council starting in 2014, her first job after college. Now a resident of Manitou Beach, she grew up in the Manchester area.

She remains the consulting educator and watershed ecologist for the River Raisin Watershed Council and is also the co-coordinator for the Grand Raisin

Conservation Community for The Stewardship Network, and sits on the Lenawee County Conservation District Board of Directors.

According to her LinkedIn page, she designed and taught the Natural Resources and Biochemical Technology programs for juniors and seniors at the Lenawee Intermediate School District’s Center for a Sustainable Future for over a decade. She has taught biology, chemistry, environmental science, and geology at the college level and was an adjunct professor at Adrian College for over a decade where she led the biology for non-majors program.

Because HLG hasn’t had an education coordinator since before the COVID pandemic, her new role has been “kind of wide open,” she said. She’s working on four different services to provide the community, including educational programming, with weekend and possibly evening programs that are offered for a fee, such as hands-on workshops; and tours of the conservatory, the hiking trails, and the Sky Walk, including educational sessions, and tours of the gardens in general.

“Having a naturalist come with you or somebody who’s experienced, who can point out those little things that you might not notice otherwise,” Kratz said of the guided tours. Docents will also be trained to guide those experiences. They will also offer field trips, not only for school groups, but different educational groups including garden clubs and larger family groups, with aquatic ecology, terrestrial ecology, and plant adaptations tracks to choose from as well as the Sky Walk engineering track. She also wants to have more drop-in sessions that include active learning opportunities for those who come to the gardens. “It’ll increase the richness of opportunities available here, I think, having an educator,” said Kratz. “I’m envisioning, when families are visiting and maybe they’re looking at our bloom garden and what’s out there, maybe telling them about different types of flowers and the different animals that might pollinate the different types of flowers.” She would like to increase stewardship opportunities to help

plant a rain garden and do some prescribed burning in the spring. Her connections with The Stewardship Network and the Lenawee Conservation District will help her provide more varied speakers. Upcoming opportunities at HLG include the Run for the Hills! 5K and 1-mile run and walk on Saturday, Sept. 12 starting at 8 a.m., which benefits the gardens and the Oh These Irish Hills! organization. An autumn equinox celebration for families will take place on Sunday, Sept. 20, with fall arts and crafts that will be geared towards children. The Friday After Five series from 5-7 p.m. on Sept. 25 will be on ornamental grasses, when Managing Director Paul Pfeifer will inform how to use grasses for movement, texture, and fall interest in a landscape. They will have a session on invasive shrub management on September 26 and a tree identification session on Oct. 3. In October the leaves will be changing so visitors will be able to enjoy the colorful landscape, and on Oct. 17 and 18 the Fall Fruit and Foliage Bonsai exhibition, a national-level event, will take place with bonsai trees and vendors. To close out October, on Saturday, Oct. 31 the gardens will have a Halloween activity for families, with pumpkin carving and dissection, and more. HLG will have a table at the Great Outdoors Jamboree at Lake Hudson Recreation Area on Sept. 13 and at Artalicious in Adrian on Sept. 19 and 20 to share information on what the gardens offer. To find out more, visit ipf.msu.edu/hidden-lake-gardens/events or follow Hidden Lake Gardens on Facebook. Kratz is excited to be at the gardens. “It’s really come full circle. I feel honored. It kind of feels like a big responsibility on my shoulders, but it feels like I was born to do this,” she said. “I saw the job posting and I thought, I’m really happy teaching, I love my students, I love having my classroom, but this feels like an organization I can help grow... and the networking with all the different conservation organizations that we have, I’m really excited to pull in speakers from all those different areas and just help us all build our capacity together.”

Jackson Area Career Center celebrates 50 years

Come for the anniversary celebration and back to school open house

For five decades, the Jackson Area Career Center has helped students discover their strengths, develop real-world skills and prepare for their futures. On Wednesday, Sept. 16, the Career Center will welcome alumni, former employees, community partners, students and families to celebrate that legacy.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration and Back to School Open House will take place from 4 to 7 p.m. at the career center at 6800 Browns Lake Road in Jackson. The event is free and open to the community.

Under the theme “Careers Happen Here: Then, Now, Always,” the celebration will feature historical photo-

graphs, memorabilia and displays highlighting milestones from each decade. Guests can reconnect with former classmates and colleagues, visit program spaces, and see how career and technical education has evolved.

“The Career Center’s 50th anniversary reflects its long-standing impact on the Jackson community through quality, life-changing career education,” said Dan Draper, JCISD assistant superintendent and JACC principal. “While our programs have continued to evolve, the goal has remained the same: developing the next generation of workforce talent. Our staff have helped transform the lives of tens of thousands of

students by providing opportunities that could only exist through the Career Center.”

The Career Center opened on September 9, 1976 following years of community planning and support for a countywide vocational education center. Today, it offers more than 20 career and technical education programs, giving students opportunities to earn industry credentials, college credit, and hands-on workplace experience.

Planning for the anniversary has brought current employees and retirees together to preserve photographs, documents, and stories from throughout the school’s history.

“Uncovering the Career Center’s history has been such an exciting and rewarding process,” said Kaci Babineau, JCISD marketing and special projects coordinator. “Every photograph, document, and conversation adds another piece to a story shared by so many people throughout our community. We hope alumni, former staff, and community partners will recognize part of their own experience and see how their contributions helped shape the Career Center we know today.”

For more information, contact Kaci Babineau, JCISD communications at 517-768-5216, kaci.babineau@jcisd.org.

Lakeside Custom Printing

from page 8

how to print it,” Amber says.

Direct-to-film transfers allow the shop to produce designs with more colors and details than traditional screen printing, Amber explained. Most of Lakeside’s business is custom, although the Brooklyn shop also has a small retail section carrying Columbia Central and Napoleon gear, lake-themed merchandise, embroidered sweatshirts, hats, and novelty items.

“Most of our stuff is generally custom, so we don’t keep too much on hand,” Amber noted.

If a customer sees something but needs another size or color, she said, “We put it on order, and then we’ll make it for you.”

Lakeside also creates online fundraising stores for schools, organizations and other groups. Instead of collecting paper order forms, participants can purchase merchandise online, with an agreed-upon portion of the sales going back to

the organization.

“We do a lot of fundraisers,” Amber says.

The company’s relationship with its former Addison customers has also continued, despite the move.

“When we moved from Addison, we were worried about, you know, our customers would be too far away or we wouldn’t see them again, but that was not the case,” Amber stated. Customers followed them to Brooklyn, including some who came into the new store simply to look around and congratulate them.

“We didn’t want to lose them, and they came with us,” she said.

Now the Arnolds are already looking at what comes next.

Embroidery work has increased enough that they are considering investing in additional equipment, while a new manual screen-printing press could allow the shop to produce more colors and more

shirts at once.

“I don’t think that we’re going to get through Christmas without a second machine, or a third, fourth – I don’t know how many,” Amber noted of the embroidery side of the business.

For Amber, however, growth hasn’t taken away the part of the work that first attracted her to it.

“I have a lot of creative freedom, you know, to make whatever I want,” she said. “It’s nice when people see your design and like it and then want to buy stuff with it on them.”

There is still a little uncertainty each time one of those designs goes out into the world. “That’s always your biggest fear,” Amber shared. “It’s like, I like it. Are you going to like it?”

So far, Brooklyn seems to like it.

Lakeside Custom Printing is located at 120 S. Main Street in Brooklyn. They are open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through

Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. They will stay open as late as needed, they say, to accommodate customers’ needs.

Doing business as...

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County Clerk, reports the following recent recorded business listings:

Essa Arts: 5908 Mapledale Road, Jackson (Art Studio and Gallery) Sheryl Amburgey, owner;
G3 Services: 329 N. Francisco Road, Grass Lake (Construction) George Sondergeld, owner;
Roberts Home Improvements: 1206 Hampton Drive, Jackson (Construction) Andrew J. Roberts, owner;
Lakeside Lawncare: 3128 Park Drive, Pleasant Lake (Lawncare) Ronald C. Hagle, owner;
It’s All In The Details/Custom Detailing: 3713 Fairview Avenue, Jackson (Car Detailing) Roy Guy, owner;
Brown Restoration & Construction: 706 Homewild Avenue, Jackson (Construction, Maintenance & Repair) Cory Brown, owner;
Faldeland LLC: 133 West Michigan Avenue, Jackson (Business Consulting, Marketing, software as a Service) Leland D. Falde, owner;

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Animal track identification was only one of several activities on hand at the first Wooden School Family Fall Festival in 2025 which over 80 people attended. The 2026 event will be Saturday, Oct. 3. Photo courtesy of Lisa Cyrus.

Columbia Charter Township police report

August 27
Property Security: South Meridian Road; **Field Contact:** South Main Street; **Assist Other Agency-Medical:** Palo Alto Drive; **Malicious Destruction of Property:** River Street/Tecumseh Street; **Natural Death:** Cement City Road; **Property Security:** Hyde Road; **Operating While Intoxicated:** Eagle Point Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Hewitt Road

August 28
Field Contact: South Main Street; **Property Security:** Meridian Road; **Property Security:** Hyde Road (2); **Personal Welfare PWC:** North Shore Drive; **Personal Welfare PWC:** Ocean Beach Road; **Loud Music:** Hewitt Road; **Inspect Vehicle:** South Meridian Road; **Accident PI:** Hewitt Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Hewitt Road; **Suspicious Situation:** Brooklyn Road; **Accident PDA:** Jefferson Road/Wesch Road; **Domestic:** Jefferson Road; **Parking:** North Main Street; **Suspicious Situation:** Tecumseh Street/ River Street; **General Non-Criminal:** South Meridian Road;

August 29
Property Security: Hyde Road (2); **General Non-Criminal:** Ocean Beach Road; **Assist Other Agency:** North Street Court; **Suspicious Situation:** Wamplers Lake Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Riviera Drive; **Assist Other Agency:** West Brooklyn Road/ Plymouth Road; **Domestic:** Wamplers Lake Road;

August 30
Loud Music: Bedford Drive; **Property Security:** Hyde Road(2); **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Hill Court; **General Non-Criminal:** Ocean Beach Road; **Assist Other Agency:** Fay Lake Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Wamplers Lake Road; **Disorderly:** South Main Street; **Assist Other Agency:** Skiff Lake Road; **General Non-Criminal:** South Grand Pointe Drive; **Inspect Vehicle:** Maple Lane; **Disorderly:** South Main; **Found Property:** Jefferson Road;

August 31
Property Security: Hyde Road(2); **Traffic Hazard:** Daugherty Road; **Conservation:** Brooklyn Road/ Palmer Road; **General Non-Criminal:** School Street; **General Non-Criminal:** Jefferson Road; **Probation Violation:** Monroe Street; **General Non-Criminal:** Hewitt Road; **Traffic Hazard:** Waterman Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** South Main Street; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Constitution Avenue; **General Non-Criminal:** Monroe Street; **General Non-Criminal:** Jefferson Road;

September 1
Property Security: South Meridian Road; **Property Security:** Hyde Road(2); **Traffic Hazard:** North Drive/Wamplers Lake Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Brooklyn Road; **General Non-Criminal:** School Street; **Abandoned Vehicle:** Jackson Street; **Found Property:** Jefferson Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Taylor Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Hewitt Road; **General Non-Criminal:** School

Street; **Suspicious Situation:** Cement City Road; **Hit and Run:** Mill Street/North Main Street; **Motorist Assist:** Jefferson Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Blue Ridge Road/Hyde Road; **Property Security:** Blue Ridge Road/Hyde Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Hyde Road; **General Non-Criminal:** Monroe Pike;

September 2
Field Contact: Jefferson Road/Hyde Road; **Property Security:** Hyde Road; **In-**

spect Vehicle: Hyde Road; **General Non-Criminal:** School Street (2); **Larceny:** South Main Street; **General Non-Criminal:** Hewitt Road; **Personal Welfare-PWC:** Reed Road; **Inspect Vehicle:** North Lake Road; **Accident PDA:** Jefferson Road/Hayes Drive; **Parking:** Hyde Road; **Accident PDA:** Brooklyn Road/Riverside Road;

Marriage licenses

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County Clerk, reports the following recent recorded marriage License applications: Quincy Claudene Stark and Evan Mitchell Hafley, Jackson; Matthew Joseph Snow, Fort White, FL, and Michaela Joy Hiss, Clarklake; Cynthia Kay Kern and Brian James Briggs, Jackson; Megan Marguerite Jarzynka, Jackson, and Malcolm Stephen Trimble, Jackson; Cheyena Daniele Tyler and Duane Maurice Selby, Jackson; Abby Elizabeth Smith and Eliseo Zuniga III, Jackson; Brenna Louise Cox and Evan Brady Tompkins, Jackson; Jayce Cameron White, Clarklake, and Ryan Star Grant; Monique Renee Langston, Jackson, and Desmond Reese Logan, Jackson; Shasta Jean Angell and James Patrick Lichlyter, Jackson; Erin Jane Prater, Michigan Center, and Braden Christopher Kosmet, Grass Lake; Kevin Lee Kirkpatrick and Chelsea Therese, Jackson; Grace Marie Radvan, Grass Lake, and Keaton Donald Cooper, Jackson; Matthew Elias Kasman, Grass Lake, and Teresa Sarah Marie Freeman, Grass Lake; Chastity Ann Brooks and Michael Lavern Conrad, Jackson; Logan John Randall and Rachelle Anne Comeau, Horton; Mellissa Ann Byers, Brooklyn, and Andrew Arthur Hart, Brooklyn; Gerald Jay Balikowski and Katie Sue Taylor, Jackson;

Renewable energy fundamentals workshop comes to Brooklyn

Across Michigan, communities are being asked to consider utility-scale solar, wind, and battery energy storage system projects. Along with these proposals come questions about safety, farmland and marginal land, environmental impacts, decommissioning, sound, and Michigan’s changing energy infrastructure.

An in-person workshop, sponsored by Michigan State University Extension, will explore what is currently known, where uncertainty remains, and how different perspectives and community priorities shape decision-making. It is being held Tuesday, Oct. 6 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at WellWise Services Area Agency on Aging, 107 Chicago Street in Brooklyn.

Register for the workshop at events.anr.msu.edu/fundamentals26/. The cost is \$10. Light refreshments and snacks will be provided. For more information, contact Mary Reilly, AICP, at 231-889-4277 ext.1, or reillym8@msu.edu.

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Obituaries

Gerald Dean Woodruff

 Gerald Dean Woodruff, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend, passed away peacefully at home on August 31, 2026, surrounded by his loving family.

Gerald was born on Oct. 30, 1936, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, to Harold and Nellie (Hersch) Woodruff. Gerald proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps from 1956 to 1962. He carried the pride and values of his service with him throughout his life.

On July 9, 1956, Gerald married the love of his life, Cora May Curtis, at Ypsilanti Baptist Church in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Together, they shared 70 years of marriage, building a life and family filled with love, memories, and devotion to one another.

Gerald worked for Ford Motor Company and was a proud member of UAW Local 849, where he worked from 1955



Gerald D. Woodruff

until his retirement in 1989. His strong work ethic and dedication were an important part of who he was.

In retirement, Gerald enjoyed having the time to do the things he loved most. He cherished the many hours spent with his friends hunting, fishing, and golfing, making memories and enjoying the friendships that meant so much to him. These simple

pleasures brought him great happiness throughout his retirement years.

Gerald will be remembered most for the love he had for his family. He was a devoted husband, a loving father, and a proud grandfather and great-grandfather. His family was his greatest accomplishment and his greatest joy.

Gerald is survived by his beloved wife of 70 years, Cora; his children, Bill (Shawn), Debbie, and Kevin; his grandchildren, April (Blair) Bashore, Danielle Woodruff, Anthony Woodruff, and Do-

minic Woodruff; and his great-grandchildren, Jason Harbach, Sam Harbach, and Kimberly Underwood, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Nellie Woodruff; his brothers, Donald and Harold; and his sister, Esther.

Gerald leaves behind a lifetime of love, memories, and a family who will carry his legacy in their hearts. Though his passing leaves an emptiness that can never be filled, his family finds comfort knowing that he passed peacefully at home, surrounded by the people he loved most. Semper Fi, Gerald. Your watch is over. Rest peacefully. You will be loved and missed for generations to come. Until we meet again...

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Gerald, please visit our floral store. Gerald's final resting place is at Union-Udell Cemetery, 9742 Textile Road, Ypsilanti Charter Township, Mich.

Village of Brooklyn Walk with Ease program kicks off

Walk with Ease, a new program co-sponsored by the Village of Brooklyn, WellWise Services Area Agency on Aging, and the Arthritis Foundation begins this Thursday, Sept. 10 and runs through Thursday, Oct. 15.

The goal of the six-week walking program is to get people active with short and moderate length walking routes through the Village of Brooklyn. It is open to all ages and fitness levels.

Walk with Ease features exercise tips, stretching and strengthening, health advice, prizes, and incentives. The program has been proven to improve balance, reduce pain, build stamina, and help manage arthritis.

Interested participants should meet in the lower level fitness room of WellWise Services, 107 Chicago Street, at noon on Thursdays through Oct. 15.

Shirley Ann Cory

Shirley Ann Cory, 97, of Sun City Center, Florida, formerly of Brooklyn and Woodstock Township, Lenawee County, Mich., passed away on Wednesday, Aug. 26, at Melech Hospice House in Temple Terrace, Florida.

Shirley was born on July 31, 1929, in Adrian, Mich, the daughter of Kenneth Frederick and Gladys M. (Mitchell) Dermeyer.

Shirley graduated from Onsted High School in 1947 as salutatorian. She married Lyman Reid Cory on Sept. 20, 1947, in Onsted. He preceded her in death on June 8, 2023.

Shirley loved music, especially playing the piano and organ for church and school functions. She worked for On-



Shirley Cory

sted Schools as the librarian and teacher's aide for more than 17 years.

Shirley enjoyed quilting, sewing projects, artistic painting of natural scenes, cake decorating, and flower gardening. She attended Cornerstone Community Church.

Shirley is survived by her son, Thomas (Marcia) Cory, two granddaughters,

Cristina (Matthew) Bulmer and Courtney Gillentine, three great-grandchildren, Fiona and Sylvester Bulmer, and Antonio Molinary, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her husband, her daughter, Vicki Lyn Maloney, and two sisters, Yvonne (Al) Johnson and Mar-

gurite (Merlin) Ostrander.

Funeral Services for Shirley will be held Friday, Sept. 4, at 1 p.m. at the Brown-Van Hemert Funeral Home in Addison, with Pastor Silas Kruez officiating. Burial will follow at Maple Shade Cemetery in Onsted. Visitation will be held for one hour prior to the funeral service at the funeral home.

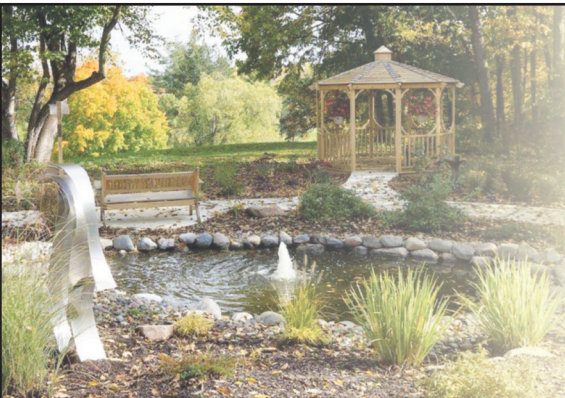
Memorial contributions can be made to Cornerstone Community Church, 201 Constitution Avenue, Brooklyn, MI 49230, or a charity of the donor's choice. Friends can express sympathy to the family online by visiting the tribute wall at www.brownvanhmert.com. Arrangements have been made with the guidance of the Brown-Van Hemert Funeral Home, Addison.

Death notices

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

Heidi Lee Whitt, 55, Leoni Township;
John Franklin Stafford, 88, Jackson;
Robert Leroy Reich Jr., 68, Jackson;
Raymond Walter Niles, 93, Henrietta Township;
Denise Ellen Miller, 73, Jackson;
Jimmie Mccan, 88, Jackson;
Eric Scott Haack, 55, Jackson;
Leon Clarence Morin II, 64, Blackman Township;
Gerald Leroy Squires, 84, Spring Arbor;
Ruth Ann Walker, 84, Napoleon Township;
Nancy Lou Thomas, 71, Jackson;
Paul Ivan Ewing, 95, Jackson;
Winifred Marta Wallace, 75, Jackson;
Gerald Lee Tremaine, 83, Jackson;
Diana Lee Rickman, 71, Jackson;
Phillip Charles Maxon, 67, Blackman Township;
Coralie Cederna Johnson, 86, Jackson;
Christopher Keith Howe, 64, Jackson;
Perry Davis, 80, Blackman Township;
Colleen Sue Archer, 79, Hanover;
Judy Alice Cox, 80, Jackson;
Sharon Ann Kouba, 74, Rives Township;
Harold Edward Vroman, 84, Spring Arbor;

Douglas Bernard Yonnick, 79, Summit Township;
Barbara Dean Coppage, 91, Summit Township;
June Marie Mead, 94, Blackman Township;
Kenneth Dean Hesche, 66, Summit Township;
Mary Jean Minner, 90, Spring Arbor;
Brian Bernard O'Neil, 81, Leoni Township;
Sandiland Gail Langschied, 85, Columbia Township;
Drew Nathaniel Laughlin, 38, Jackson;
Sandra Lee Lee, 80, Sandstone Township;
William Edward Martz, 81, Blackman Township;
Linda Katherine Ousley, 78, Leoni Township;
Izzaryah Isabella Sanders, Blackman Township;
Vivian Elaine Schuette, 87, Hanover;
Kathryn Kay Van Vleet, 72, Blackman Township;
David Lynn Weese, 61, Blackman Township;
Donald Gene Mercer, 93, Summit Township;
Dennis Richard Zaski, 76, Spring Arbor Township;
Mary Ann Ziegler, 91, Summit Township.



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 **TLC Community Credit Union**

Lakeside Custom Printing comes to Brooklyn

By Christine MacIntyre
Contributing writer

What started as something to keep Amber Arnold busy at home has grown into a downtown Brooklyn business where the answer to “Can you print on this?” is rarely no.

At Lakeside Custom Printing, Amber and husband Thomas have printed the expected — T-shirts, hats, jerseys, banners and business cards — and the decidedly unexpected.

Like part of a bounce house. “[A customer] brought in a piece of her bounce house that she wanted stuck back on,” Amber said. “It’s like a velvet piece, and she’s like, ‘Can you

print on this?’ And never have I done that before. But let me figure it out.” She did.

That willingness to experiment has been part of Lakeside Custom Printing since Amber started the business as a hobby in 2018. Today, the business has grown from the couple’s basement to a storefront in Addison and, most recently, to its new home at 120 S. Main Street in Brooklyn.

“It was a hobby,” Amber shared. “I just needed to be busy, make my own stuff kind of thing, and it just kept snowballing, because I always want to do more. I’m not the person to be okay with how it is. I’m going to learn more. I’m going

to grow.” Eventually, the Arnolds had to acknowledge that what was filling their basement had become much more than a hobby.

“It just got to the point where we just sat there and we were like, ‘This is a business. Our entire basement is full,’” Amber shared. “We are actually a business, you know, we’re running things through the hospitals, we’re running things to big companies.”

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated that growth. Lakeside was considered essential because it was doing printing work for Henry Ford Hospital, including departments such as

radiology. With the couple at home, they also decided it was a good time to expand what they could offer.

“We always used vinyl, so we bought a screen-printing press and stuck it in our basement. We were home all the time. It’s a good time to learn,” noted Amber.

Learning as they went has been a recurring theme for the Arnolds, but neither came into the business without skills that would eventually prove useful.

Amber has an accounting background and handles the company’s books and finances.

“I do not do the taxes,” she stated. “I am well not kept up with any of those laws, but, yes, I do keep all of our books and manage our finances here, which definitely helps when you’re an entrepreneur.”

Thomas came from manufacturing, where his work included overseeing scheduling, employees, materials and shipping. When Lakeside grew to the point that Amber could no longer operate it alone, the couple faced a choice: hire employees or have Thomas leave his job and join the business full time.

“We did get to the point where I was like, ‘We got to make a decision. Do I hire people to work here, or do we go all in and [Thomas] comes on board?’” Amber postulated.

Thomas came aboard and took on embroidery, despite not having a background in it. He found his manufacturing experience translated surprisingly well.

“The great thing about embroidery is it’s almost just like a CNC machine,” Thomas said. “You have to find zero to start the stitch, and you have to design and digitize to make the machine do what you want it to do.”

The combination of their different backgrounds has become one of Lakeside’s strengths.

“We didn’t come from this business, but we used what we had to make this business successful,” Amber noted.

After operating from their basement, the Arnolds opened a downtown Addison storefront, where they remained for about four years.

“We did really well,” Amber stated. “We were really big members of the community, so it obviously helped being a business owner.”

But as Lakeside continued growing, the couple began looking toward Brooklyn.

“We just kind of got to the point where we felt like we were outgrowing the [Addison] area,” Amber said. “We kind of had feelers in Brooklyn for quite some time to see if a building that would work for us popped up, because this is a very up-and-coming village. We see a lot of growth here, and I felt it was a next step for our business succession.”

Thomas agreed that the move would give the company a chance to reach more customers.

“In Addison, we kind of hit the roof of where we could get to,” he stated. “And we knew that if we took our brand a little farther, we could push out of that [space in Addison] and keep building for our futures and our retirement, and our kids.”

Finding the right Brooklyn building happened almost by accident.

The couple and their realtor had looked at two other locations, but neither had enough room for Lakeside’s equipment. Feeling discouraged, they stopped at Callaghan’s Coffee Cafe.

“We decided to go to Callaghan’s and have some coffee and sit there and wallow,” Amber shared.

Then they looked out the window.

“We saw this building, which I hadn’t really noticed,” she said. “You know, it’s a smaller building, but it has so much charm to it.”

The building wasn’t actively being marketed. The couple eventually connected with building owner Kraig Hardcastle and were initially given permission to look through the windows.

As they were doing just that, Hardcastle pulled up.

“He’s like, ‘Okay, fine, come



Amber and Thomas Arnold, co-owners of Lakeside Custom Printing in downtown Brooklyn, pose outside of their shop at 120 S. Main Street. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER



Thomas Arnold stands next to his embroider machine. He says this machine has the biggest embroidery hoop which makes for more work space on the item in which he embroiders on. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER



Amber Arnold proudly shows off a freshly screen-printed T-shirt with the words “Terrific Tuesday Boot Camp” on it. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER

in. You can look inside,” Amber recalled.

Once they explained their business and what they hoped to bring to Brooklyn, Amber said Hardcastle warmed to the idea.

“He really, really loved the idea of having this sort of business in this building,” she stated. “He’s been nothing but helpful. He’s been great to work with.”

By mid-July, Lakeside was getting settled into its new location. There were some hiccups — including about a month spent waiting for internet service, something particularly important when much of the shop’s equipment relies on internet-connected programs.

“I think there was a few trials and tribulations,” Amber noted. “But like anything, it’s never going to go exactly how you think it’s going to.”

What the couple wasn’t expecting was how quickly business would take off once the doors opened.

“Almost immediately,” Amber shared. “I mean, the Brooklyn community has been amazing. The business picked up way quicker than we had imagined.”

Thomas said he has noticed

a sense of camaraderie among Brooklyn’s business owners.

“The Brooklyn community, everybody in [the village], there’s a sense of ‘we take care of each other,’” he shared. “There’s a sense of community.”

Amber noted people have stopped in simply to ask how they can help. “It’s just been very welcoming,” she said.

Amber had expected to rely heavily on the social media marketing that helped the company build its following in Addison.

“I was like, ‘All right. Well, we’re going to start from scratch and build up in Brooklyn,’” she stated. “But it just took off.”

“Faster than we ever thought,” Thomas added.

Inside the shop, customers can order screen-printed and transfer apparel, embroidery, banners, yard signs, business cards, sublimated products, jerseys, coffee mugs, hats, jackets and other custom items.

“If you say you want it printed, I’m going to figure out

See *Lakeside* page 5

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