Avery Rhodes and Napoleon had a good run - inside

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Hyde Road crash

Man killed in crash 'was a dedicated father'

Police say the October 14 accident on Hyde Road in Columbia Township remains under investigation.

John W. Branigan

By John Hummer

A Woodstock Township man died following a collision involving his bicycle and a garbage truck on the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 14 in Columbia Charter Township.

Police identified the bicyclist as John W. Branigan. He died at Henry Ford Jackson Hospital shortly after the crash on Hyde Road near White Road.

The crash occurred at 10:02 a.m. on Hyde Road near White Road in Columbia Charter Township. Rescue personnel responded following an iPhone crash detection. While enroute, a passerby came upon the crash and called in additional information about the crash involving a bicyclist and commercial truck. The commercial truck was identified as an LRS garbage truck.

Upon arrival, emergency medical personnel began treatment of the bicyclist, identified as John William Branigan, 36, and the operator of the LRS garbage truck. The garbage truck was operated by 59-year-old Randy A. Bunch of Leoni Township.

Branigan was transported to Henry Ford Jackson Hospital by Jackson Community Ambulance for life threatening injuries. Branigan succumbed to his injuries and passed away at the hospital.

Branigan's sister, Tara Truszkowski, shared a few words about her brother on behalf of their other brother, Matt Branigan, and herself. She noted that John was a kind-hearted, loving person who loved his family.

"He was a great brother," Tara said. "He had a son, Cameron, who was his world. He always put him first. He

See *Hyde Road crash* page 2

Workers attempt to flip a garbage truck from LRS back on its wheels after an October 14 crash on Hyde Road. Photo courtesy Columbia Charter Township Police.

On your mark...

Riders at the start of the 100K race give the "thumbs up" just prior to beginning their trek through the Irish Hills. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER

Gravel road race draws 360 participants

Story and photos
By John Hummer
Editor

It was a cold October morning Saturday with temperatures plunging into the low 30s to greet participants of the second annual Irish Hills Gravel bicycle race hosted by Michigan International Speedway, presented by Experience Jackson.

The cold, however, did not deter many riders as more than 360 participants came to experience the event.

The race started and ended at the NASCAR Fan Zone at MIS and led riders along rural gravel roads in the Brooklyn area and through corners of Lenawee and Washtenaw Counties. Riders had their choice of a 100K, 50K, or 30K route.

Participants could choose their bike of choice, from flat bar, drop bar, gravel, mountain bike, or touring bike with knowledge of the terrain. Gravel bike racing is a cycling discipline that combines road and mountain biking elements, taking place on unpaved roads and trails. It is a quickly growing sport.

"Irish Hills Gravel is an untapped faucet of beautiful, tree-covered gravel roads for all levels of cyclists," said Bill Marshall, race director.

Marshall's connection to cycling dates to summer 1984 when he began racing. Gravel racing was not yet popularized, but he spent considerable time on gravel roads with both road and mountain bikes. Gravel racing eventually revived the sport of cycling. In 1990, he hosted his first gravel race and developed his passion as a race promoter. Having worked with some of the biggest races in the world, it is Marshall's desire to grow the sport of cycling in communities around the country.

"The popularity of gravel riding and racing has really exploded over the past 10 years. I'm beyond excited for people to experience the beautiful roads in the Irish Hills," said Steve Trosin, race founder and outdoor recreation manager at Experience Jackson prior to the race. "There are so many opportunities to experience the outdoors in our region."

This year the race was added to the Michigan Gravel Race Series, a series of 16 races around the state of Michigan. The Irish Hills Gravel bicycle race was the second-to-last race in the series.

"We're super excited to be a part of the Michigan Gravel Race Series," stated Trosin. "We're the second-to-last race in the series, so I think that drove some people to come out and get some points."

"We've seen a huge influx in participation," noted Ryan Tarrant, president/CEO of Experience Jackson. "Last year we had 165 riders; this year we more than doubled that. We've got people in from Portland, Oregon; Denver, Dallas, Florida, Savannah, Georgia; New York and into Ontario, Canada," he noted. "Really it's become an international race – people all over the country are recognizing what the Irish Hills has to offer." There were also participants from throughout the Great Lakes region, including Chicago, Ohio, Minnesota, and Indiana, as well as from all over Michigan.

The course meandered through gravel roads south of Brooklyn, around Manchester and through rural parts of Lenawee and Jackson counties. "It's fun to share so many of the highlights of this area with people coming from out of the area," he said. "The courses are in great shape and the roads are amazing; they are super-fast with lots of little punchy climbs so that definitely challenges people." Another major goal of the race was to create economic impact for the Irish Hills Area. That goas was accomplished. Tarrant said the Super 8 hotel in Brooklyn was all booked up Friday night. "That's a really great problem to have when you're in the tourism business," he noted. "We wanted people to come in Friday

See *Irish Hills race* page 2

Jacob Inosencio, who runs the Grow Jackson farmers' market, showed off his U of M colors for the Irish Hills Gravel bicycle race.

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Your driveway, in deed

Court of Appeals rules in six-year battle between property owners

By Julie Riddle

Acting like a property owner doesn't make you one, the Michigan Court of Appeals said in a Jackson County-related opinion released last week.

The opinion addressed a six-year battle over a strip of property between two homes on Clear Lake. Eddie and Kathy Slack, in Lot 31 of the deeply wooded subdivision rimming the south end of the lake, have used the steep, narrow road between the properties as their driveway for 10 years and believe it was included in the deed when they took ownership of the lot.

Neighbors Christopher and Lindsey Tapping, who bought the then-undeveloped adjacent Lot 30 in 2018, argued that they should get to use the driveway, which provides access to the lake.

The Tappings took the Slacks to court in 2020. The local court in 2023 and the Court of Appeals last week both sided with the Tappings, saying a long-standing deed gives any subdivision resident the right to use the strip of land, currently designated as Pebble Drive.

In 1920, a swath of land including Lots 30 and 31 was owned by a Cora A. Holmes. When she broke the property into lots and deeded them to new owners, she specified that all owners in the newly formed subdivision had the right to use all driveways connecting the properties with nearby roads.

Since at least the 1950s, the various owners of Lot 31 — and, in the current case, family members who live adjacent — have treated the driveway in question as their own, with no other neighbors nearby who might have need of it. In the 1970s, the couple who lived there acquired quitclaim deeds saying they had sole right to use the strip. A quitclaim deed does not guarantee that the person issuing it actually owns the property and has the right to bestow it.

When that couple deeded Lot 31 to the Slacks in 2016, the deed granted the new owners "all land between Lots 30 and 31 … as extended to the water of Clear Lake."

Meanwhile, Lot 30 sat undeveloped in the forested, off-the-beaten-path subdivision until the Tappings purchased it in 2018. The language of their deed, reflecting the original Holmes deed, seems to clearly grant them access to the contested land between the lots.

A protracted court battle resulted in a ruling by a local judge that the Tappings on Lot 30 had a right to use Pebble Drive. The Slacks were ordered to remove any trees and fencing on the Tappings' side of the strip and forbidden from blocking the Tappings' access to the drive. The judge also required the Slacks to pay $7,500 in damages to their neighbors.

On appeal, the Court of Appeals reviewed deeds and plat drawings dating back a century. It determined that the original deed language concerning the area is still in effect, giving all subdivision residents access to the driveway.

Michigan law allows someone to take over ownership of property after they have openly claimed and used it — and kept other people from using it — for at least 15 years. The Court of Appeals ruled the 15-year rule doesn't apply in this case because the other subdivision owners weren't being barred from using the driveway — they just didn't want to.

The Court of Appeals took both parties to task for not backing up their arguments with detailed information or evidence they understood and had grappled with the legal questions surrounding their court battle over the driveway.

"An appellant may not merely announce his position and leave it to this Court to discover and rationalize the basis for his claims," the higher court said. "Trial courts are not the research assistants of the litigants."

Irish Hills gravel race … continued from page 1

night and spend the weekend. There is enough to offer in the Irish Hills for them to really enjoy the experience." People also stayed in hotels in Jackson and Adrian, race organizers said.

Ilyse Denike drove over an hour from West Bloomfield to participate in the 50K race. "I heard it's a beautiful area and I wanted to explore some new-to-me gravel roads," she said. "I'm also excited to try to beat some records for myself personally and have a good time." Denike said she thought twice about whether to come because of the excessively cold temperatures Saturday morning but decided to gut it out. "You just got to bundle up and get moving." Denike planned to stick around town for a while after the race and visit downtown Brooklyn.

Trosin provided the initial push to have the race staged at MIS. "It's an opportunity to share and show off all the beautiful assets, roads, lakes, and scenery of the area," he stated. "There are a lot of people from out of state who haven't ridden here before. They are getting to see peak fall colors and all the amazing things that we've all come to know and love.

"What we're really trying to do is use events like this to get people to decide to come back for their leisure time, their vacations, during the summer, and spend some time around here," he continued. "It's an awesome opportunity to share what we, as residents, know what makes this community great with people coming from outside the area."

This is a team that dubbed themselves the "FoWL Flyers" – FoWL standing for "Friends of Watkins Lake State Park". They rode to raise money for Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve and earned around $1,500 from generous contributors. From left: Geoffrey Cripe, Tim Koelewijn, and Spencer Kellum.

Steve Burk from Grass Lake did not have to drive very far to the race. He was a participant in the 50K. "I'm a local and raced it last year and had a good time, so I thought I'd come back," he said. He said he thought three times about not coming due to the cold but braved it anyway. He and his friend, Dan McClure of Jackson, planned to get lunch in Brooklyn after the race.

Jacob Inosencio, who runs the Grow Jackson farmers' market hosted inside of the historic state prison in Jackson, participated in the race for the first time this year, doing the 50K. His dad did it last year. "I like to bike, I like to run and swim a little bit; I just like to be outdoors in the community and use our trails," he shared. "A friend invited me to do this race with him. It's a cool opportunity to come check out the area." Inosencio plans to do the 100K next year. He said the chilly weather did not deter him at all from doing the race.

For more information, race day results, and more race day photos, visit IrishHills-Gravel.com.

Hyde Road crash … continued from page 1

was a family man – our family always came first. He was always the life of a party and always wanted to be around everybody. He made a friend wherever he went and never held hate in his heart.

"He was very much an outdoors guy," Tara added. "We'll miss his laughter and his stories the most – he always had a story for everything."

Bunch was also transported to Henry Ford Jackson Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries by Somerset Township Fire Department Ambulance to receive further treatment.

Police say the LRS garbage truck was traveling north on Hyde Road, north of White Road prior to the crash occurring. The final resting position for the truck was in the ditch on the east side of Hyde Road, laying on its driver side. The final resting position of the bicycle was in the roadway.

The investigation is ongoing to determine the exact chain of events before, during, and after the crash. Police say that LRS has been cooperative with the investigation.

Columbia Charter Township is being assisted in the investigation by the Michigan State Police Traffic Crash Reconstruction Unit Special Operations Division and the Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Division.

The Jackson County Department of Transportation assisted with the road closure and necessary repairs to the road surface. There was a small spill of fluids from the garbage truck that was remediated and overseen by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

Hyde Road was closed for approximately eight hours last Wednesday to allow for the investigation, cleanup from the crash, and repairs to the road surface.

Police say that further details of the investigation will be made available at the appropriate time.

According to his obituary, Branigan was a graduate of the Lumen Christi High School class of 2009. After graduation, he worked for many years at Kutcha's Tire of Jackson and most recently at Subway of Brooklyn.

The family noted that he loved fishing, camping, kayaking, cars, and music.

Branigan is survived by a son, Cameron. Visitation will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2026 from 9:30 a.m. until the time of service at 11:30 a.m. at Watson Funeral Chapel – 2590 Spring Arbor Road, Jackson, Mich., with Father Timothy MacDonald presiding.

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A new look for Kara

Kara Lorenz-Goings, front, caved in to her daughter's and friends' prodding to get her hair sprayed with glitter at Patrone's Spa & Salon. Spraying kids' (or adults'!) hair in different colors or glitter is Patrone's annual Pumpkin Quest activity. Back, from left: Emma Rentfrow and Zoey Shafer (sprayers), Devyn Troyer, Harmony MacBlain, and Leah Lorenz. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER

Parking issues addressed in village of Brooklyn

By John Hummer
Editor

The Brooklyn Village Council heard a presentation from Community and Economic Development Director Aaron Dimick on downtown parking at its Oct. 12 meeting. The presentation was in response to ongoing parking concerns in the village and being directed by the village planning commission to conduct a parking study of the downtown area and develop solutions to ease parking concerns.

Dimick stated that he and Village Manager Matt Swartzlander reviewed all available parking spots in the downtown area on Monday, Sept. 14. A total of 482 parking spaces were surveyed: 143 public parking spaces (public lots/street parking); 170 parking spaces at nonprofit buildings/churches; and 169 spaces on private property at businesses.

"A finding of the study shows that of the 482 spaces, roughly 70 percent of available parking spaces are controlled by private entities, and 30 percent are publicly available," Dimick noted. "Staff continue to track parking numbers on the Town Square to understand peak times and where people are parking."

At the Sept. 21 meeting of the village planning commission, staff presented the parking statistics and some proposed solutions. "During member comments, most members did not believe parking was a serious issue," Dimick said. "The consensus was to first focus on an education campaign promoting the online parking map with identified parking locations before looking into parking permits or heavier enforcement [of the two-hour limit on the square].

Dimick then presented several proposed solutions to the council that were also presented to the planning commission in September and are actively being worked on by village staff.

• Village staff plan to launch an informational campaign in early November to inform residents and visitors of public parking options, including how to seek parking on side streets and in public parking lots. This informational campaign will include an instructional video about finding public parking, maps, and social media messaging.

• An important tool of this informational campaign will be the village's online parking map, Dimick explained. A map of downtown parking is available through the Interactive Downtown Business Guide, which can be accessed through the homepage of the village website.

• Village staff propose altering three public parking spaces to make them 30-minute parking spaces instead of 2-hour. "This is something that we've heard from businesses – that some people come downtown and park there for two hours or more and there is not enough parking for people who want to park and quickly go into a business and leave quickly," Dimick noted. The altered parking spaces will be located in front of Angel's Floral (131 N. Main), the Village Creamery (140 N. Main), and street parking on the north side of Monroe Street near Main Street (outside Corner Cuts at 103 S. Main). The parking changes are on the agenda for review at the Oct. 19 meeting of the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) Board and will come to the village council for official consideration at a future meeting date.

• Work with private businesses to make sure their employees and visitors are using their individual parking lots efficiently prior to using public spaces.

• Inform village board members and visitors of how they can use the lot behind the Village Office for village business during the day and general use outside of normal business hours when visiting instead of using street parking. "That will free up more spots on the Square," stated Dimick.

In addition to the above proposed solutions, Dimick noted that three additional solutions are being considered by village staff for future implementation.

• Explore agreements with downtown churches and nonprofits to provide overflow parking. "I definitely think this will happen once the Star Theatre opens and there will be more parking demands," he said.

• Create a parking permit program where downtown employees and residents pay for designated parking spots. Funds would go to parking enforcement and parking lot maintenance.

• Increase downtown parking enforcement by potentially partnering with the Columbia Charter Township Police Department for an additional police officer focused on the village.

Village Council Trustee Ronda Kay thought the churches and nonprofits should be contacted now, well before the Star Theatre opens to inquire about parking arrangements.

"That's actively being worked on – we've already had conversations with some of the churches and nonprofits," Dimick stated. "We have stopped short of having an actual agreement at the moment. I definitely think we will get to that, certainly before the Star Theatre opens. We will definitely need a solution for people who come to the theatre to park."

Village President Stella Roberts had further input on church parking. "Matt [Swartzlander] and I have met with both the Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church to put that out there, but we do not have any hard-term signed agreement with them. We have approached the subject – it is, in fact, sort of in the works."

Roberts welcomed further thoughts and ideas on the village's parking situation.

In other business, the village council approved votes for George Bosanic (Manager, City of Greenville) and Valerie Kindle (Mayor, City of Harper Woods) for three-year terms beginning Jan. 1, 2027 for the Michigan Municipal League Board of Directors election (both were unopposed); approved the nomination and appointment of Angela Hartley to the CIA Board for a partial term ending Dec. 31, 2027 (to fill the vacant seat due to the resignation of Ben Hicks); approved the nomination and appointment of Rob McKnight to the Village of Brooklyn Planning Commission for a partial term ending Dec. 31, 2027 (to fill the vacant seat due to the resignation of Jessica White); approved the purchase of a John Deere Gator (with the addition of V-Blade Snow Equipment) from Napoleon Lawn & Leisure at a cost of $34,458; and approved a request for proposals (RFP) for a rewrite of village's Zoning Ordinance language following the completion and adoption of the village's Master Plan. The approval included the directing of staff to distribute the RFP to prospective consultants.

Opportunities abound to give needed blood

The American Red Cross is in need of blood to help those whose lives depend on a blood transfusion. There are several blood drives coming up in the Exponent readership area for donors to consider giving at:

• Thursday, Oct. 29 at Napoleon High School, 201 West Avenue, Napoleon, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

• Tuesday, Nov. 3 at Onsted High School, 10109 Slee Road, Onsted, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

• Thursday, Nov. 12 at St. Joseph Shrine Church, 8956 U.S. 12, Brooklyn, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

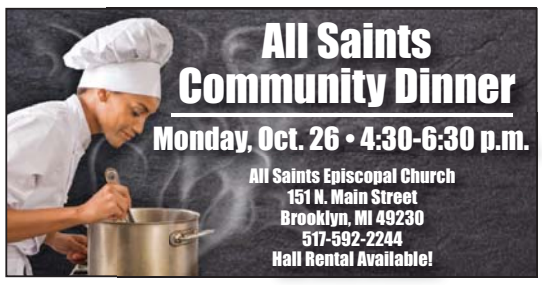
• Friday, Nov. 13 at Grass Lake High School, 11500 Warrior Trail, Grass Lake, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

• Tuesday, Nov. 17 at Grass Lake United Methodist Church, 449 E. Michigan Avenue, Grass Lake, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

• Friday, Nov. 20 at Addison High School, 219 Comstock Street, Addison, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

• Wednesday, Nov. 25 at Brooklyn American Legion, 211 Chicago Street, Brooklyn, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

To register to give blood, visit redcrossblood.org or call 800-733-2767.



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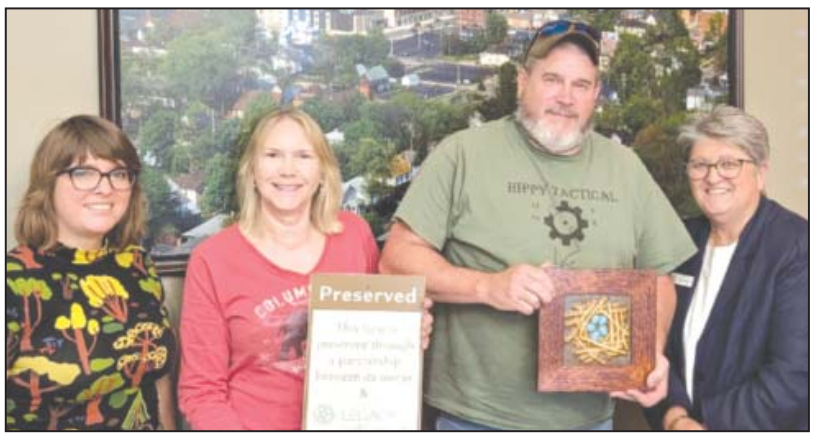
Legacy Land Conservancy

Nearly 30 acres of Norvell Township wetlands protected



From left: Susan LaCroix, Legacy Land Conservancy land protection director; property owners Lisa and Brian Waters, and Diana Kern, Legacy's executive director. PHOTO SUBMITTED

By John Hummer
Editor

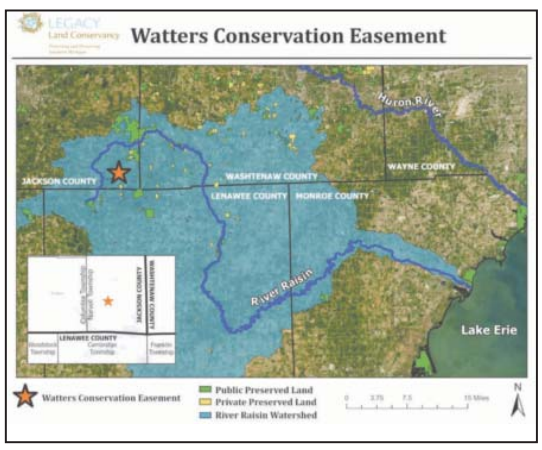
Legacy Land Conservancy has permanently protected 28.5 acres of wetlands and forest in Norvell Township, adding to a growing network of conserved lands near the headwaters of the River Raisin.

The Watters project, located in the southeast corner of Jackson County within the River Raisin Watershed, provides local water quality benefits that extend downriver to Lake Erie, where harmful algal blooms continue to threaten drinking water, recreation, and wildlife.

"What happens on the land directly impacts our water, and water doesn't stop at property lines," Legacy Land Conservancy Executive Director Diana Kern said. "When we protect wetlands near the headwaters of the River Raisin, we're improving the overall health of the watershed and the Great Lakes Basin, helping water quality for communities downriver all the way to Lake Erie."

The landowners – Brian and Lisa Waters – are extremely pleased to protect their properties' valuable wetland areas and ensure the quality and quantity of water resources within the River Raisin Watershed via a conservation easement with Legacy, which offers permanent protection of privately-owned land.

Shortly after Legacy met with the Watters, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited announced a newly launched limited two-year grant opportunity through the Wetland Conservation Program using American Rescue Plan Act funds, creating a rare chance to move the project quickly.



The total cost to purchase and protect the Watters conservation easement was $150,000. In addition to American Rescue Plan Act funds, additional resources to purchase the conservation easement from the landowners were secured in partnership with the Carls Foundation.

"I've been watching the land around us get subdivided and developed over the years and it's heartbreaking," landowner Brian Waters said. "I'm thrilled that with Legacy's help we're able to protect our land and preserve its open space and wildlife habitat, forever."

This wetland project is one within a much larger Lake Erie watershed-wide approach to improving water quality, the Conservancy says. It adds to over a thousand acres of private and public preserve lands – including Watkins Lake State Park and Vineyard Lake County Park in the area already conserved.

"Protecting land and specifically wetlands in the River Raisin Watershed is a critical part of the broader regional water quality strategy," stated Ducks Unlimited Water Quality Biologist Matthew Conrad. "Protection and enhancement of wetlands provide a nature-based solution to benefit downstream communities and reduce algal blooms in Lake Erie."

If you have any questions, contact Legacy Land Conservancy Land Protection Director Susan LaCroix at 734-302-5263 or slacroix@legacylandconservancy.org.

Communication

From the Supervisor's desk

By Andrew Haystead
Norvell Township Supervisor

With the November election approaching and nine days of early voting beginning October 24, Norvell Township residents are being asked to consider a proposal for a 2.0000-mill public safety millage for 10 years. The stated purpose of the proposed millage is to provide a dedicated source of revenue for public safety services while allowing the township board to budget those resources among authorized public safety needs.

Currently, Norvell Township residents pay 1.0100 mills through the Fire Safety Special Assessment District (SAD), which funds the township's fire protection contracts with Cambridge and Napoleon townships.

If the proposed 2.0000-mill public safety millage is approved, the township board intends to suspend collection of the existing fire SAD and begin collecting the new millage with the December tax bills. Estimated first-year revenue from the proposed millage is approximately $391,000. Under the township's stated funding plan, these funds are intended to support the existing fire protection contracts as well as the continued re-establishment and operation of the Norvell Township Police Department.

If the proposal does not pass, the Township's stated funding plan provides that the existing 1.0100-mill fire safety special assessment district would remain in effect to fund fire protection services. The proposed public safety millage would not be enacted.

Residents with questions about the public safety millage proposal may visit the township office at 300 Mill Road during the following hours: Monday and Wednesday: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. – noon. Residents may also call the township office at (517) 536-4370 for additional information.

Andrew Haystead
Norvell Township
Supervisor

Cars damaged in Jefferson Road crash

By John Hummer
Editor

Two vehicles were severely damaged following a crash on Jefferson Road in Columbia Charter Township last Tuesday. On Oct. 13 at 4:38 p.m., Columbia Charter Township police and fire departments were dispatched to the intersection of Jefferson Road and Hyde Road for a vehicle crash.

Police said that 22-year-old Chance P. Romej of Liberty Township was driving his Nissan sports utility vehicle east on Jefferson Road. As he approached the intersection of Hyde Road, he stopped to allow traffic to proceed across Jefferson continuing north on Hyde Road. There is no stop sign for traffic heading in either direction on Jefferson Road.

Police say that while Romej was stopped, a Honda sedan, operated by 47-year-old Brandon W. Weatherwax of Columbia Charter Township, struck Romej's Nissan in the rear of his vehicle. There were no significant injuries to either driver.

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'Could have been worse'

Woman escapes with minor injuries after being rear-ended on M-50

By John Hummer
Editor

A 50-year-old Napoleon woman is lucky to have escaped with just minor injuries following a crash last Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 13, around 3:30 p.m. in Napoleon.

Napoleon Township Police say the woman, driving a blue 2008 Dodge Caliber, was struck from behind by a 20-year-old Napoleon man driving a maroon 2012 Ford F-150 truck on Brooklyn Road (M-50) in front of Dollar General. The woman was heading west waiting to turn left into the store parking lot.

Police report that the man was admittedly tired and likely fell asleep at the wheel after working all day. He was cited and found at fault in the crash.

The woman was transported to Henry Ford Jackson Hospital by Jackson Community Ambulance in good condition with only minor injuries. The male was uninjured.

The Napoleon Township Fire Department, Michigan State Police, and Jackson Community Ambulance assisted the Napoleon Township Police at the scene.

This is the flipped-over blue 2008 Dodge Caliber that was struck from behind last week in front of Dollar General on Brooklyn Road (M-50) in Napoleon. The 50-year-old woman driving the car was lucky to escape with only minor injuries judging by the damage to and flipped position of the vehicle. PHOTO COURTESY NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES CHARITIES

Dear Brothers, Sisters, Sponsors & Donors:

On behalf of the Irish Hills Eagles #3689 Golf & Auxiliary Scholarship Committees, we would like toextend our sincere appreciation for your generous support of our 2026 Annual Golf Outing.

This event was established to raise funds for our Scholarship Fund, allowing us to provide financial assistanceto deserving local high school seniors as they pursue their educational goals. Your generous contribution helpsus continue this important tradition and brings us one step closer to our fundraising goals.

We could not continue this effort without the generosity of our sponsors and donors, along with thetremendous support of our community, golfers, volunteers, members, and everyone who helps make our annualevents possible. Your generosity truly makes a difference. Because of your support, we are able to invest inthe future of our local students and help them pursue their dreams.

Thank you for believing in our Scholarship Fund, supporting our Annual Golf Outing, and helping us giveback to the young people in our community.

With sincere gratitude,
Irish Hills Eagles #3689Golf & Auxiliary Scholarship Committees

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Gauci Golf Course
The Back Nine
Lake LeAnn Golf Course
Clark Lake Golf Course
Tibbits Opera House
Oriental Sizzling
Harolds Restaurant
Weather Tech
Monahan's Meats
Ash & Oak
Shady's Brooklyn
Beach Bar
Ed & Dianne Froelich
Jerry Minnick & Sue Sigg
Art & Chris Francis
Chuck & Suzi Walker
Kerri Gallatin
Bill & Deb Poma for Izzy & Joanie
Tim Murphy
Dawn, Richard & Sophia
Sue, Jeannie, Mary & Pat (Chris' Sisters)
Cindy Hicks
Nancy Kelly
Thea Picklesimer
Stacy Greene
Kyla Dunn
Rod & Joanne Sparks
Keith & Brenda Schultz
Vicki Carpenter
Patty Thomas
Alida Kline
Diane Parker
Dale Roback
Miranda Smith
Dorann Alcove
Anne Takacs
Nancy Bumpus
Julie Brighton
Stacy Palmer
Brian Walker
John Tetault
Steve Alcove

For any we may have missed, please accept our apologies we tried to remembereveryone that helped or donated!!

Obituaries

Kenneth Leo Creger

Kenneth Creger

Kenneth Leo Creger, born in Ann Arbor, Mich. on August 4, 1941, passed on Oct. 7, 2026. A lifelong painter and pastor, Kenneth is now resting with Jesus.

Kenneth is survived by his beloved wife Judy (Landers) Creger of 67 years. Children include Steven (Christine) Creger and MeChelle (Timothy) Earley, as well as 15 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two nephews and one niece. Kenneth was preceded in death by his children Kenny, Dawn, and David; parents Leo and Pauline Creger; siblings Margret King and Marjorie Crawford, one nephew and two nieces.

A service will be held at Cement City Baptist Church, 16788 Cement City Road, Cement City, Mich. 49233 on October 31st, 2026. Visitation will be 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., and the service will be 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. A luncheon will immediately follow the service.

Robert Seibert Pratt

Bob Pratt

Robert Seibert Pratt, 79, of Brooklyn, passed away on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026. Bob's family and friends will gather Thursday, October 22, 2026 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Eineder Funeral Homes, Brooklyn Chapel. Visitation will take place Friday, October 23, 2026 at 10 a.m. His funeral service will be held at 11 a.m., October 23, 2026 at the Brooklyn Presbyterian church. Reverend David Weber will serve as celebrant. Interment will take place at Dibble Cemetery in Wheatland Township at 3 p.m.

Bob was born on August 26, 1947, in Detroit, Mich., to Harry and Elizabeth (Seibert) Pratt. Bob graduated from Grosse Pointe South High School and went on to attend Michigan State University where he graduated with his bachelor's degree in 1969. Bob married the love of his life, Lucinda Vinaske, on June 30, 1972, in Somerset, Mich. Bob will be remembered for his love of music. He loved playing music, listening to music, and teaching music, which led him to be the band director at Addison Community Schools for 30 years. After he retired from Addison, he drove a motor coach for Dean Trailways for 15 years. He enjoyed golfing, camping, traveling, attending concerts and musicals, reading books, and was an absolute fanatic of all things Michigan State athletics, especially MSU football and basketball, where he had season tickets for decades.

Bob was a member of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, Vice President of District 8, life member of the Michigan Education Association and the National Education Association, and lastly, of the Detroit Institute of Arts and Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Bob will be missed by his loving wife of 54 years, Lucinda; his children, Dan (Noelle) Pratt and Beth (Steve) Boughton; brother, Phil (Judy) Pratt; grandson, Luke Grodi; and nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to Addison Community Schools in Bob's name. Please leave a message of comfort for Bob's family or sign his guestbook at www.EinederFuneralHomes.com.

Mary Elizabeth Devine

Mary Devine

Mary Elizabeth Devine of Eaton Rapids, passed away Sept. 22, 2026, at the age of 95.

Mary was born in Manhattan, New York, on July 30, 1931, the daughter of Clayton and Elizabeth (Morgan) Dibble. She was a woman of many talents, a devoted member of her faith community, and someone who found great joy in the simple things she loved. She worked as a seamstress and dressmaker, sharing her creativity and skill through her beautiful work. She was a longtime member of St. Joseph Catholic Shrine and was also a member of the American Legion and the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Brooklyn. She had a special love for animals and cared deeply for them throughout her life. Her beloved black German Shepherd, Dog, held a particularly special place in her heart and was a cherished companion. She will be remembered for her caring nature, her love of animals, her creative talents, and the many friendships she made throughout her life.

Mary is survived by her goddaughter, Carleen (Dennis) White. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Michael Devine.

At this time no services are planned. Arrangements were entrusted to the Mills Funeral Home, Shelly-Odell Chapel in Eaton Rapids. Mary's wishes were to be buried in Ireland, those desiring may contribute to the transportation costs associated. To leave condolences for the family, visit our website www.millsfuneral.com.

Beverly Ann Wahr

Beverly Wahr

Beverly Ann Wahr, 91, of Brooklyn, passed away on Friday, Oct. 16, 2026. Beverly's family and friends will gather Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026 at 10 a.m. for a gathering at the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church. Her funeral service will be held on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026 at 11 a.m. at the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church. Reverend David Weber will serve as celebrant.

She was born in Jackson, Mich., to Donald and Paula (Groat) Reed. Beverly graduated from Brooklyn High School in 1952, then went on to attend Western Michigan University where she graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in 1956. In 1979, she earned her Master's Degree from Eastern Michigan University. She was employed by Columbia School District as a junior primary teacher at Miller Elementary. Beverly wrote that her fondest memory is marrying the love of her life, Robert O. Wahr on July 11, 1959, in Brooklyn, Mich. at the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church. She will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and teacher.

Beverly simply loved everything about Brooklyn, living in the Brooklyn Area her whole life.

Beverly's favorite activities included family vacations, camping in Baldwin at Big Star Lake, swimming, daily trips to the ice cream store, campfires, quilting, crossword puzzles, and working on family genealogy. She was a member of the Irish Hills Women's Club, Pieces & Patches Quilting Guild, Ford Retirees Local #892, MEA/NEA-R and Tri Sigma Sorority. Her community involvement included being on the Columbia Township Planning Commission, serving as a Brooklyn Village Trustee, and devoting her life to teaching at Columbia School District. Beverly faithfully attended the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church and was heavily involved within the church.

Beverly will be missed by her children, Robert (Debbie) Wahr, Douglas (Donna) Wahr, Amy (Wahr) Goetsch; grandchildren: Stephanie, Eric, Alex, Cody, Corey, Amarah, Chloe and Emily; great grandchildren: Carter and Ezra. She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, Bob.

Memorial contributions are suggested to the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church or the Brooklyn Food Pantry. Please leave a message of comfort for Beverly's family or sign her guestbook at www.EinederFuneralHomes.com.

Janis Lamey

Janis Lamey recently passed away surrounded by the love of her family.

Born on Aug. 18, 1947, Janis lived a life marked by faith, loving devotion to family, kindness, and generosity. She is survived by her children, Heather (Matthew) Lomazzo and Dr. Eric (Dr. Kristin Cousineau) LaMey; grandchildren Josh Sexton, Kortney (Chris) Griffith, and Dominick Lomazzo; and great-grandchildren Pierce Murphy and Presley Griffith. She is also survived by her siblings, Gloria (Bob) Mann, Barry (Liz) Dettling, and Robert Dettling, along with many nephews, a niece, extended family members, and dear friends.

Janis retired from Ford Motor Company after more than 25 years of dedicated service as an executive secretary. Throughout her career and retirement, she built many lasting friendships with her caring nature and genuine concern for others.

A devoted Catholic, Janis' faith was the foundation of her life. She attended St. Joseph's Shrine for more than 50 years and loved bible study, and living her faith through service and compassion.

Janis enjoyed staying active through water skiing, snow skiing, exercise classes, and regular trips to the gym. She also enjoyed traveling and spending time at the family cabin.

Known for remembering birthdays and important milestones, Janis made family and friends feel special and loved. She was compassionate toward those who were elderly, ill, or in need of companionship.

Janis was immensely proud of her family and cherished every moment with them. She will be remembered for her unwavering faith, loving heart, and selfless care for others. Though she will be deeply missed, her legacy will live on in all who knew her.

Visitation for friends and relatives will be held at Eineder Funeral Home 137 S. Main St Brooklyn, MI Monday, Oct. 26 from 4-7 p.m.

A celebration of life will be held at St. Joseph's Shrine, 8743 U.S. 12 in Brooklyn, MI on Tuesday, Oct. 27 with visitation from 10-11 a.m. Funeral at 11 am. Luncheon following approximately 12:30 pm at the church hall 8956 U.S.12 Brooklyn, MI.

Pumpkin Quest visitor

It wasn't all ghosts and goblins out and about at Pumpkin Quest. This beauty of a praying mantis looks like he's changed into his fall costume as well – turning his backside brown to blend in more with the fall colors. PHOTO BY JOHN HUMMER

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Grass Lake sweeps, still unbeaten in conferance

Columbia Central falls to Hanover-Horton in battle for second in Cascades Conference

Story and photos By Paul Snyder

Grass Lake vs. Addison

The Grass Lake Lady Warriors celebrated senior night by sweeping the Addison Panthers 25-22, 25-9, and 25-15 last Tuesday night at Grass Lake.

Senior Reese Lape notched 13 kills and 11 digs, while fellow senior Rachael Palmer dished out 19 assists. Senior Grace Steggall-Lewis contributed seven kills and nine digs, while senior Rose Eros added four kills and five digs for the Warriors who remain unbeaten in Cascades Conference play at 8-0.

With the loss, Addison slipped to 1-7 in conference play.

Columbia Central vs. Hanover Horton

In the Cascades Conference showdown for second place, the Columbia Central Lady Eagles fell to the Hanover-Horton Comets in four very competitive sets last Tuesday night at Columbia Central.

The Eagles dropped the first two sets 24-26 and 20-25, before bouncing back to take set three, 28-26, and falling 16-25 in the fourth set.

Columbia's Mara Henry amassed 31 kills and 20 digs. Brooke Petosky dished out 43 assists while making 20 digs, and Harlow Zuver had 29 digs to lead the team. Leelyn Brown chipped in with nine kills and seven blocks and Lydia Sanders contributed six kills and 24 digs for the Eagles.

Columbia Central is now 6-2 in Cascades Conference play and 17-9-2 overall on the season.

Napoleon vs. Jonesville

The Napoleon Pirates swept the Jonesville Comets in three sets 25-16, 25-22, and 25-23, last Tuesday night at Napoleon.

Claire Beer amassed 14 kills and 14 digs, Hallie Duvall tallied 17 digs, Lydia Warner handed out 14 assists, Jenna Yob dished seven assists, and Myla Hasegawa spiked seven kills to lead the Pirates.

Napoleon improved to 5-3 in Cascades Conference play and 19-8-4 overall.

Onsted vs. Dundee

The Onsted Lady Wildcats dropped three tough sets to the Dundee Vikings 22-25, 22-25, and 21-25 last Tuesday night in LCAA conference play at Onsted.

Grace Teske had a team high 16 digs and was 9-10 serving and Ella Ruttofsky had four aces while going 10-13 serving, and made eight digs to lead the Wildcats. Ava Deland led the Wildcats in assists with 11 while making eight digs. Hadley Ross contributed six kills, two blocks, and five digs and Kayla Gerken notched five kills.

Grass Lake Quads (Grass Lake, Jackson, and Stockbridge)

The Grass Lake lady Warriors improved to 20-5-3 on the season after sweeping the Stockbridge Panthers 25-11 and 25-7 and the Jackson Vikings 25-15 and 25-23 in their final home matches of the season last Thursday night at Grass Lake.

Sydney Palmer was a perfect 16-16 serving and had 13 points, Aliria Pastoriza smashed 14 kills, Reese Lape spiked 13 kills, Hayley Laurie dished out 34 assists and scooped 14 digs, and Aubree Williams tallied 10 digs to lead the Warriors.

Lenawee County Invitational (at Tecumseh)

After a slow start Saturday morning, the Onsted Lady Wildcats finished 3-2 at the Lenawee County Invitational at Tecumseh.

The Lady Cats fell to Division 2 state-ranked Tecumseh 10-25 and 7-27 and the Hudson Tigers 18-25 and 22-25 to start the day. Then things got better for Onsted as they rebounded to take down Britton Deerfield 27-25 and 25-16, Addison 25-18 and 25-13, and Morenci 25-21 and 25-21 to finish the day.

Grace Teske was 32-40 serving with five aces and amassed 53 digs and

Hadley Ross tallied 29 kills and 17 digs while going 20-25 serving with two aces to lead the Wildcats. Other key contributors included Paisley Murphy with 19 kills and five blocks, Ava Deland who dished out 53 assists and notched 26 digs, Lauren Terakedis who chipped in with 40 assists and 32 digs, and Ella Ruttofsky who tallied 16 digs while going 15-19 serving with four aces.

High school cross country results, highlights

Girls Cross Country

Napoleon at Madison Invitational: Napoleon was second with 60 points and Onsted finished fourth scoring 104. Brynlee Swihart of Hanover-Horton won the race in 21:27, Ayva Berkeypile of Napoleon was seventh in 22:17, and Stylar Ross of Onsted placed eighth in 22:32.

Gabriel Richard Invitational: Lumen Christi easily won the event with 25 points. Grass Lake finished eighth (202) and Homer was 12th (271). Avery Haynes of Columbia Central ran 19:51 to finish fifth and Molly Johnson of Homer was 10th in 20:30. In the medium school race, Napoleon was 12th (358) and Marshall was 13th (352). Alaina Dillon of Marshall finished 10th individually in 19:56 and Olivia Khon of Northwest was 43rd in 21:16. Napoleon runners Madisyn Lindemann (21:49) and Aubrey Weber (21:57) finished 62nd and 68th respectively.

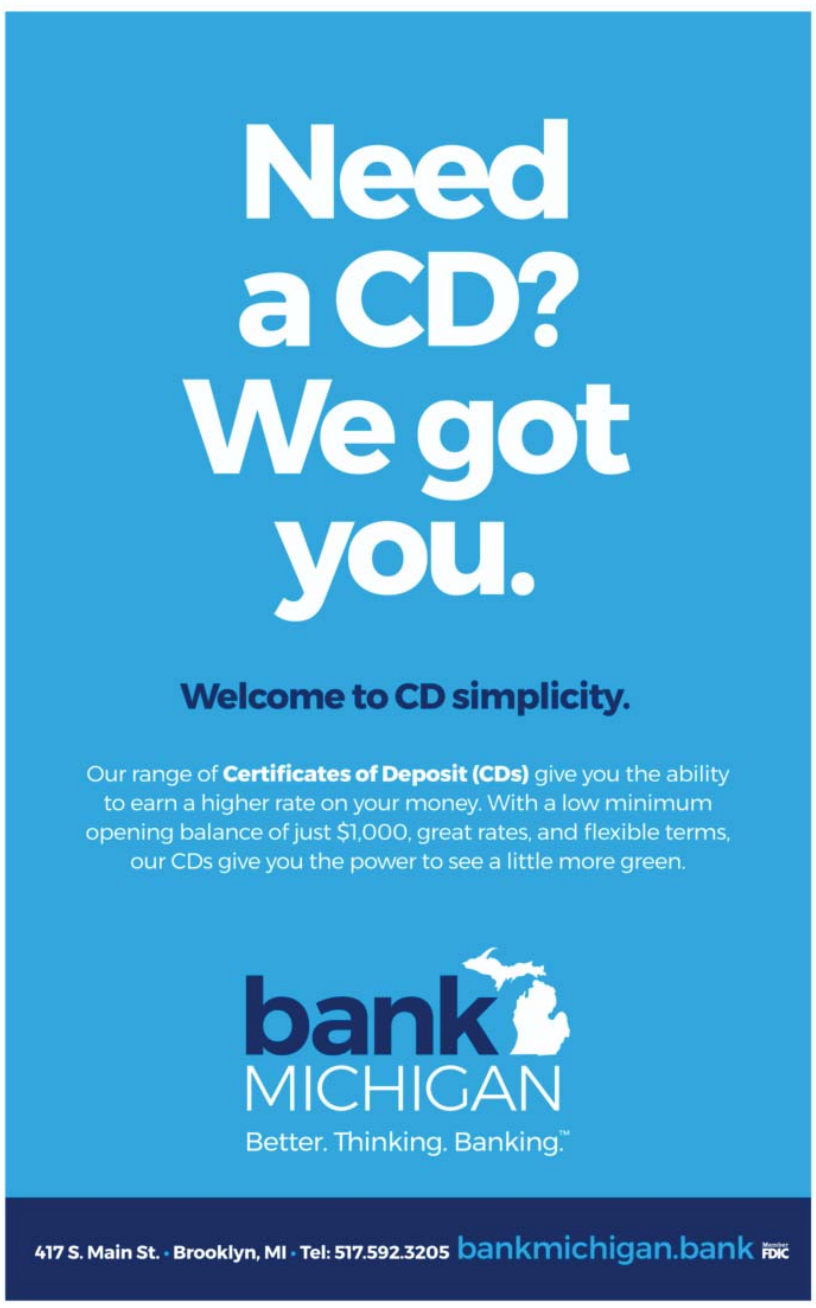
Lenawee County Championship: Onsted High School finished fifth scoring 143 points. Stylar Ross of Onsted earned a top-10 medal finishing eighth in 21 minutes even. Ellie Woodring of Addison placed 29th with a time of 23:22.

Boys Cross Country

Napoleon at Madison Invitational: Napoleon High School finished third (101), Onsted was sixth (147), and Addison placed eighth (184) at Madison. Blake Fish finished sixth overall in 18:10 and Nicklas Holmes of Onsted finished in the top 10 at ninth place with a time of 18:16.

Gabriel Richard Invitational: Marshall High School was 15th (400), Napoleon finished 18th (452), and Northwest was 20th (501) in the medium-sized school race. Abraham McHugh of Marshall was fourth individually running 16:08 and Blake Fish of Napoleon finished 36th in 17:20. In the small school race, Lumen Christi finished second with 64 points, Grass Lake was fourth scoring 156, Columbia Central was seventh with 177 point, and Homer was 11th with 291 points. Clint Couchman of CCHS was eighth with a time of 16:32, Connor Boteler of Grass Lake placed 11th with a time of 16:38, and Eli Fassett of Columbia Central placed 26th in 17:49. .

Lenawee County Championship: Onsted High School finished seventh as a team (186) and Addison ninth (264) at Blissfield. Nicklas Holmes of Onsted was 23rd (18:26), teammate Alex Hunt finished 25th (18:41), and Tony Gudakunst of Addison finished 34th (19:19).



Golf

Rhodes, Napoleon finish 13th in state final

Avery Rhodes of Napoleon High School finished 13th at the Division 4 state golf tournament over the weekend.

Columbia Central High School golfer Maddy Truax finished 38th in the state in Division 4 golf.

Photo, story by Jeff Steers
Exponent special writer

Napoleon High School golfer Avery Rhodes seems to save her best golf for the Saturday round at the Michigan High School Athletic Association state finals.

Rhodes shot an 85 at The Meadows at Grand Valley State University helping the Pirates finish 13th as a team in the Division 4 state finals.

Last year she shot six strokes better on day two and this year 15 strokes better in the state final tournament.

The Napoleon golfer finished 13th overall with a two-day total of 185 – just two strokes away from a top-10 medal.

Teammates Katelyn Ault finished with 193, Ally Hoard scored 231, and Kayla Potbury carded 240 for the Pirates.

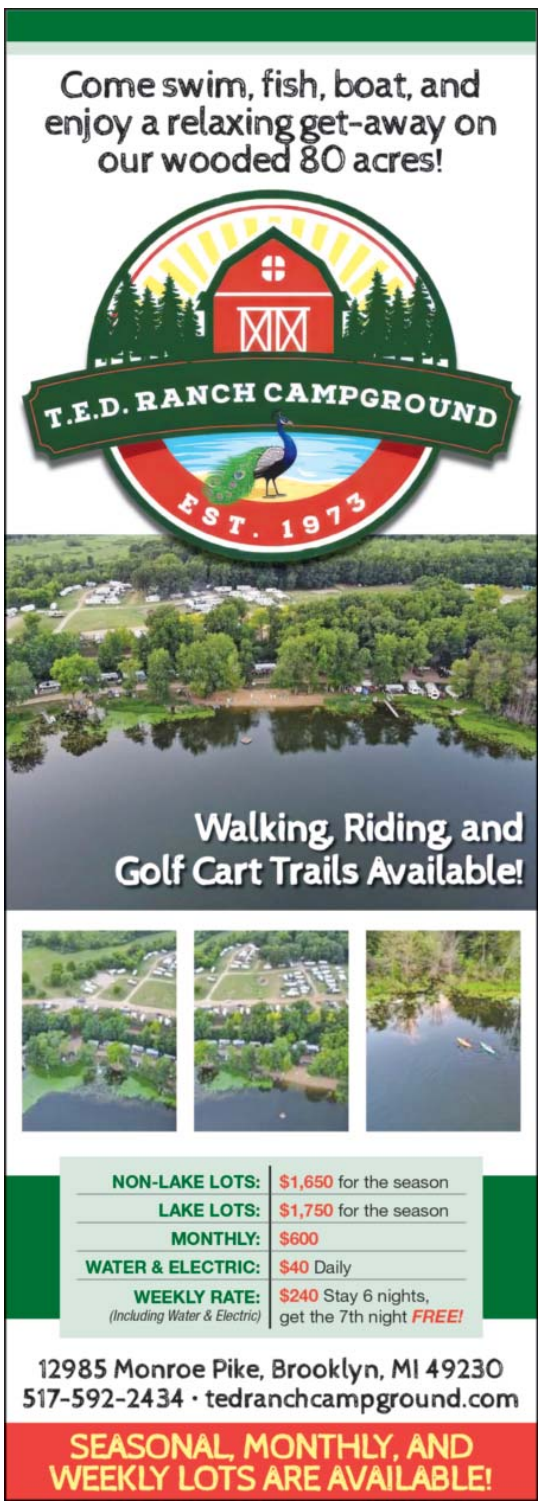
Grass Lake finished 18th as a team as freshman Ellie Roberts scored 219, Emma Troyer shot 233, Ava Rentfrow carded 240, and Lauren Doser finished with 255. The Warriors finished the season as regional champions and runner-up in the Cascades Conference.

Maddy Truax of Columbia Central finished 38th overall shooting 204 and Caylee Campbell was 54th at 213 qualifying in the state finals as individuals.

HOTLWEEN this Sunday

Join Heart O' The Lakes Church in Brooklyn for HOTLWEEN this Sunday, Oct. 25, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. There will be candy, games, prizes, free food (hot dogs, popcorn, etc.) and beverages, and a bounce house available for kids to play in. There is no admission fee.

Heart O' The Lakes Church is located at 7031 Jefferson Road, Brooklyn.



Boys soccer

Columbia, Grass Lake to square off

Greyson Schiel, left, of Columbia Central High School and Connor Tripp of Michigan Center come face to face trying to head the soccer ball during the Division 3 district soccer district matchup last week at Columbia Central High School.

Photos, story
by Jeff Steers
Exponent special writer

It was Columbia Central versus Grass Lake – round three – in the MHSAA Division 3 district final semifinal.

The two teams met Monday night for a third time after winning first-round games in the Division 3 district tournament.

Both teams earned wins against one another earlier in the season.

Look for results of the district semifinal and final in next week's newspaper.

Here are results from district tournament games and a non-conference game last week.

Division 3 district tournament

Columbia Central 3, Michigan Center 1: Carter Hackworth scored two goals within a two-minute period midway through the first half for CCHS. Eli Hawley scored a goal a couple of minutes later. Alessandro Tamponi scored the only goal for MCHS with less than a minute to play in the first half. The contest was scoreless in the second half. CCHS advanced to play Grass Lake in the Division 3 district semifinal Monday.

Grass Lake 2, Onsted 1: Justin Rought scored both goals for Grass Lake on penalty kicks. Arrone Santuari scored the lone goal for Onsted who finishes the season with a 10-9 overall record.

Adrian 2, Columbia Central 1: Eli Hawley scored the only goal for CCHS on a penalty kick in the first half in a non-conference battle.

Below, left: Sawyer Murphy of Onsted High School takes a shot at the net during the Wildcats' district soccer match at Grass Lake last week.

Vandercook beats Addison, Pirates roll

Story and photos By Paul Snyder

Napoleon 56, Leslie 18

For the fourth time this season, the Napoleon Pirates scored 50 points or more as they took down the Leslie Blackhawks 56-18 Friday night at Leslie to improve to 7-1 on the season.

Zavior Skog rushed for 182 yards on 19 carries, scoring three touchdowns on runs of 12, 37, and 46 yards and hauling in a two-point reception from quarterback Isaac Caroffino. Skog now has 19 touchdowns on the season.

Caroffino also connected with Richie Crane and Mason Preece for touchdowns and twice with Davis Tallman on two-point conversions.

Crane also scored on a 15-yard run while rushing for 68 yards on four carries. Jayden Servis rushed for 137 yards on 10 carries and added a successful two-point conversion run.

The Pirates close out their regular season this Friday when the host the Onsted Wildcats (1-7).

Michigan Center 33 Columbia Central 14

The Columbia Central Golden Eagles fell to the Michigan Center Cardinals 33-14 Friday night in their Cascades Conference (North-South) crossover contest at Michigan Center after beating the Cardinals earlier in the season.

Columbia quarterback Sammy Truax connected with Trent Troyer for an 85-yard scoring strike and Dylan Penix for an 18-yards touchdown pass for the Eagles' two touchdowns of the night.

Truax was 8-22 passing for 120 yards while running back Julian Boardman was held to 55 yards on six carries.

Liam McMurtry made 12 tackles, Avery Soto contributed 10 tackles, and Penix picked off a Cardinal pass to lead the Eagles' defense.

With the loss, Columbia Central is now 5-3 on the season and will close out the regular season this Friday when they travel to Ann Arbor Skyline to take on the 1-7 Eagles of the Southeastern Conference Red Division.

Vandercook Lake 50 Addison 15

The Addison Panthers were stopped in their tracks by the Vandercook Lake Jayhawks 50-15 Friday night in their Cascades Conference (North-South) crossover game at Vandercook Lake.

Caden Olsofsky scored two touchdowns for the Panthers in the fourth quarter, breaking free on a 50-yard run and later scoring from five yards out.

Dontae Johnson kicked one extra point and Michael Beard scored a two-point conversion for Panthers.

Addison, now 1-7 on the year, will close out its season this Friday when they travel to Blissfield to take on the 3-5 Royals. Vandercook Lake moves to 3-5 on the season and will finish its regular season this Friday at home versus Perry.

Jonesville 58 Grass Lake 24

The Grass Lake Warriors fell to the Jonesville Comets 58-24 Friday night in their Cascades Conference (North-South) crossover contest at Grass Lake.

Warrior quarterback Wesley Reul was 10-21 passing for 202 yards, throwing three touchdown passes. He connected with Camden Prater on a 42-yard touchdown pass, Will Ford on a 27-yard scoring strike, and with Gage Salts on the final touchdown of the night.

Grass Lake, now 1-7 overall, will close out its regular season this Friday when they travel to Milan to take on the 1-7 Big Red.

Landin Leffew punts for the Panthers. The Panthers had a hard time generating any offense, and lost to Vandercook in a blow out. Photo by Paul Snyder.

Dundee 35 Onsted 34

Onsted running back Connor Kish went over 1,000 yards rushing on the season and scored three touchdowns but it wasn't quite enough as the Wildcats dropped a heartbreaking 35-34 contest to the Dundee Vikings Friday night at Dundee. Parker Pasquin added two touchdowns for Onsted in the loss.

The Wildcats led 28-13 at halftime and were hanging on to the lead at 34-28 with 4:30 left in the fourth quarter when Dundee quarterback Brayden Mason connected with Ben Sanders on a 65-yard touchdown pass. A kicked extra point kick put the Vikings on top 35-34. The Wildcats were unable to score in the waning minutes.

Onsted, now 1-7 on the season, will close out the year Friday night when they travel to Napoleon to take on the Pirates (7-1).

High school sports schedules Oct. 19 - 24

Football

Oct. 23

Addison at Blissfield	7 p.m.
Columbia at Skyline	7 p.m.
Grass Lake at Milan	7 p.m.
Onsted at Napoleon	7 p.m.
Perry at Vandercook	7 p.m.

Volleyball

Oct. 20

C.C. at Addison	6:30 p.m.
G.L. at VCL.	6:30 p.m.
Napoleon at H-H	6:30 p.m.
Onsted at Hudson	6:30 p.m.

Oct. 22

Blissfield at Columbia	6:30 p.m.
Grass Lake at Clinton	5 p.m.

Oct. 24

Cascades Championships at Napoleon	9 a.m.

Cross Country

Oct. 21 Cascades Conference Final at Ella Sharp 4 p.m.

Soccer District Tournament

Oct. 19 Grass Lake at Columbia Central 5 p.m.

Oct. 21 District final at Milan 4:30 p.m.