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# THE HASTINGS BANNER

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Brandon Mousseau, 29, will head to trial in mid-December for his alleged role in the 2024 death of 79-year-old Battle Creek resident Jimmy Sykes. **Photos by Dennis Mansfield**

## Trials set for pair of murder suspects

**Dennis Mansfield**
Staff Writer

The two suspects in the 2024 murder of a 79-year-old Battle Creek man are potentially headed for separate trails.

Brandon Mousseau, 29, and 30-year-old Brady West, both of Calhoun County, each face open murder charges as fourth-degree habitual offenders in the death of 79-year-old Battle Creek resident Jimmy Sykes, who was found dead in a driveway on Cloverdale Road in Baltimore Township, southwest of the Village of Nashville, on May 29, 2024.

According to reports, the two allegedly bludgeoned Sykes with the blunt side of a hatchet before running him over with a vehicle.

Both Mousseau and West stood before Judge Michael Schipper during separate pretrial hearings in Barry County District Court 56B on June 18 and June 25, respectively.

Schipper said the hearings were "good to have" to check in on how the two cases were progressing.

But, during the June 18 hearing, the judge also denied a request by Mousseau's attorney to lower the defendant's bond originally set at $1 million.

"It's a murder case," Schipper said. "The bond is appropriate."

At the hearing for West a week later, Barry County Prosecutor Julie Nakfoor Pratt said a potential plea agreement had been offered but not accepted.

Pratt said her office had offered the defendant to plead guilty to the top count of murder.

"I will not reduce it," she said at the June 25 hearing. "He can plead to that (murder) charge and I'll dismiss the rest."

Mousseau's case is currently set to go to trial in mid-December, with West's trial then set for mid-January 2026.

According to previous news reports of Sykes' murder, the elderly man was discovered in the

See **MURDER** on 2

## 172nd Annual Barry County Fair kicks off this weekend



In Barry County, July is synonymous with "Fair Season." The Barry County Fair returns this weekend for its 172nd year. Kicking off Saturday and Sunday, July 12-13, with free admission and events, the fair officially begins Monday, July 14, and continues through Saturday, July 19. Organizers say fairgoers can expect the same fair from years past, complete with livestock shows, midway entertainment from Elliott's Amusements, food, drink, entertainment, and, of course, grandstand events. Get the full rundown on what to expect at this year's fair in this weekend's edition of *The Reminder*. **File photo**

## Barry-Eaton District Health Department reorganizing in wake of significant funding cuts

**Molly Macleod**
Editor

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department is feeling the purse strings tighten after funding cuts to health departments on the federal, state and local levels. BEDHD has been hit with over $1 million in cuts since April, with the potential for further cuts looming.

Staff say the cuts will affect how effectively the health department can serve residents.

In response to recent funding challenges, BEDHD is modifying its structure and operations. Barry County Commissioner Catherine Getty gave an update on how BEDHD is facing its current challenges at Tuesday's Barry County Board of Commissioners meeting.

"We have had a lot happening at the health department over the last several months," said Getty.

Getty, a member of the Barry-Eaton District Board of Health, read a statement detailing some of the funding challenges the health department is currently facing and how it is responding to those challenges.

"The health department is experiencing significant changes in response to deep funding cuts at the federal, state and local levels. In April, the health department was forced to eliminate nine staff positions following an $850,000 loss in federal funding. In June, Eaton County announced a 25% cut to the

See **CUTS** on 2

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# LPS board fills yet another vacancy

**Dennis Mansfield**
Staff Writer

Less than a month after voting to fill one vacancy, the Lakewood Public Schools Board of Education voted on yet another appointment to again bring the school board up to its full complement of seven members at its regular meeting Monday, July 7.

LPS board members voted 5-0, with Trustee Ezekiel Cappon absent, to appoint Alisha DeWalt to fill the seat held by the board's former vice president, Darin Weller, who resigned effective June 12.

According to her letter of interest, DeWalt holds a master's degree in clinical psychology and a doctorate in business psychology. She's currently employed as the dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at The Chicago School.

DeWalt said her roots at LPS run deep, with her mother, Cindy Trebian, having served as an "educator and administrator" for more than 25 years.

"My husband and I are now raising our three children here, all of whom will be part of the Lakewood schools, making my commitment to our district both personal and long-term," she stated. "I care deeply about the future of our community and the educational experiences that we provide."

DeWalt was the only person to be interviewed at Monday's meeting for the vacancy, with board members voting unanimously to confirm her as Weller's successor immediately afterward.

But, while DeWalt was the only person to be interviewed, she was not the only individual in attendance with an interest in being appointed to the local school board. Woodland native Siarah VanDriel, who was one of two individuals considered to fill the vacancy created by Kerry Possehn's resignation effective May 12, was also at Monday's meeting hoping to be considered.

The school board interviewed both VanDriel and David Burd, a father of two and senior architect/planner with Corewell Health, at its June 9 meeting. Burd later was selected to serve out the remainder of Possehn's term in office by a unanimous vote.

VanDriel said she had again written a letter of interest after hearing of Weller's resignation but had been informed by board President Jamie Brodbeck-Krenz that she had missed the application deadline of 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 3.

"I was very confused when Jamie said she could not accept it," VanDriel said later.

At first, VanDriel said she wasn't even sure she needed to write a second letter, considering she had sent in the first letter less than 30 days prior.

"They know I'm interested," she said. "They have my resume.

"(But) I sent in (the second letter) just in case."

The fact that VanDriel wasn't given consideration to fill Weller's seat drew the ire of Trustee Adam McArthur, who seemingly took aim at Brodbeck-Krenz for not allowing the board to interview VanDriel a second time.

"Yes, we have rules," McArthur said. "(But) to have one person making that decision unilaterally is completely inappropriate."

Considering the issue relates to a publicly-elected position, he added that the school board should look at revisiting and possibly amending the district's appointment policy at some point in the future.

Also, at Monday's meeting, board members unanimously voted to approve Burd as Weller's successor as the school board's vice president.

"Thanks for having the faith (in me)," Burd said.



Alisha DeWalt takes the oath of office after being selected to serve on the Lakewood Public Schools Board of Education, where she will serve out the remainder of Darin Weller's term, during the board's regular meeting Monday, July 7. Weller had resigned from the school board effective June 12. **Photo by Dennis Mansfield**



Barry-Eaton District Board of Health member Catherine Getty explains some of the recent funding challenges the Barry-Eaton District Health Department is facing at Tuesday's Barry County Board of Commissioners meeting. **Photo by Molly Macleod**

## CUTS

Continued from Page 1

county's contribution to the health department due to their current financial crisis. This resulted in an additional $225,000 loss," Getty said.

The recent cuts have led to BEDHD unexpectedly losing over $1 million in its annual budget. Should Barry County match Eaton County's 25% cut to BEDHD spending, the health department would lose an additional $130,000, according to Getty.

"We're working hard to protect public health and to adapt the structure and services to ensure the sustainability of our operations," Getty said.

In efforts to immediately address current financial pressures, Getty said the health department has made a number of changes to its operations. One modification is the complete closure of the Connections Program that supported residents in navigating local health resources by Aug. 1 of this year. Additionally, Getty said, a number of leadership transitions are taking place.

"Health Officer Colette Scrimger will retire a year earlier than planned, which would be effective Sept. 30, 2025. Environmental Health Director Jay VanStee will retire effective July 31, 2025. These transitions will open up opportunities to restructure leadership roles and reduce administrative costs," Getty said.

BEDHD will be making additional cuts to discretionary spending in areas such as training, travel, materials, supplies and more.

"The health department is exploring other ways to operate, including modified public hours, which would be limiting hours of public access to offices to more efficiently allocate staff; fee increases, raising fees for permits, licenses and inspections to offset operational costs; reduced participation and scaling back involvement in community events, partnerships and coalitions; service redesign, by reorganizing how services are organized and delivered across the district; utilizing technology and exploring digital solutions to improve efficiency while reducing labor costs," Getty said.

The funding challenges BEDHD is facing and subsequent changes made will make it harder for residents to utilize the department's services, Getty said.

"As a result of these changes, residents may experience slower response to infectious disease outbreaks; increased risk of disease spread; longer wait times for vaccines and STI services, possibly requiring outside travel from the district; delays in permitting for wells, septic systems and other environmental services, potentially slowing construction; reduced support for food service establishments and increasing the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks or facility closures; higher fees for permits, inspections and licenses," she said.

With Scrimger retiring at the end of September, the Board of Health is looking to hire a new health officer by Oct. 1. The search for a new health officer will begin in the coming weeks.

Getty warned these may just be the first wave of many changes coming to the health department if funding continues to be cut.

"Additional program and service reductions may be necessary if further cuts are made at the federal level. I think it goes without saying that these changes are going to have a real impact on our community and our residents. I know that the Board of Health is taking this very seriously," she said. "We understand that these are going to have real-life consequences, in some cases for our residents that are least equipped to handle them."

As the health department navigates its new funding challenges, staff say they appreciate the community's understanding.

"We really appreciate the community's support and patience as we navigate these challenging circumstances," said Emily Smale, BEDHD communications specialist. "Public health plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe and healthy, and we're doing our best to continue that work in Barry and Eaton counties."

BEDHD staff say they are committed to serving Barry and Eaton County residents as best they can.

"We're incredibly grateful for the community's support and patience as we navigate this difficult time," said Scrimger, BEDHD's health officer. "Public health often operates behind the scenes, but when funding is cut, the effects ripple outward quickly, from delayed services to increased risks for disease outbreaks. Our priority is to continue doing all we can, with the resources we have, to protect the health and safety of our residents."






Brady West, 30, is set to go to trial in January 2026 for his alleged role in the death of Jimmy Sykes.

## MURDER

Continued from Page 1

driveway of a vacant home about 20 miles from his home in Battle Creek. Court records indicate that Mousseau was located driving Sykes's truck with West as a passenger later that day.

At an earlier arraignment hearing for West, Pratt provided details on what her office believes happened that day, stating Mousseau and West allegedly had been taking advantage of the elderly man and lured him out to the rural area by claiming they were all going out for breakfast. Pratt added that Sykes struggled with dementia.

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# Bi-annual Caledonia High School reunion a month away

## ■Classes from 1938-1974 being celebrated

**Karen Turko-Ebright**
Staff Writer

A Caledonia graduate from the Class of 1966 is leading a team of classmates and friends to share memories on August 16 for Caledonia's bi-annual class reunion that includes classmates spanning decades from 1938 to 1974. Penny Weller, 76, remembers the day she stepped into the role of organizing her class reunion.

"I was looking for something to entertain my dad because my mother had passed away.

This was almost 18 years ago" Weller explained. So, she took her dad to her class reunion. "We had so much fun," she said. During the reunion, Weller was asked to represent the Class of 1966. She volunteered her older sister, JoAnn Carney, from the Class of 1965 to help. Later, Weller's younger sister from the Class of 1977 joined the committee.

"The strangest thing is that we were both a couple of really shy girls back in the day, but all of a sudden we were the committee," Weller said. "Now we have organized for about 15 years."

The rest is history. It's been a family affair ever since and the committee has grown over the years with added friends stepping up to help and more classmates helping with flowers.

Some of those classmates include Linda Crumback and Jean Snyder-Soest, who are both from the Class of 1965. Roy Hawkins volunteers to help from the Class of 1978.

"We used to mail out a few hundred letters, but you can imagine what that would cost nowadays," Weller said. "We are always looking for volunteers."

Now classmates are drawn in through emails, social media and word of mouth.

Family, friends and classmates are invited to gather together for the bi-annual Caledonia High School class reunion on Saturday, Aug. 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., with lunch at noon. Everyone is invited to join the celebration inside the Caledonia High School cafeteria located at 9050 Kraft Avenue.

There will be a $20 charge for the event that will be paid at the time of registration. Organizers are asking that checks be mailed by Aug. 8. For those who want to register for the reunion and find out where to mail checks, email CaledoniaAlumni@gmail.com or call 616-868-6950.

Throughout the luncheon, there will be several door prizes, including one for the person who was the first to register for the event, another for who traveled the longest distance and another for the one that traveled the least distance. The youngest and oldest at the reunion will get an award, plus parent and child and sibling students. There will be drawings throughout the event along with entertainment and a program. Graduating class pictures will be on display.



Pictured here are alumni from the 2023 Caledonia bi-annual class reunion. **Courtesy photo**

# Lakewood board moves forward with change to public comment policy

**Dennis Mansfield**
Staff Writer

The Lakewood Public Schools Board of Education took another step in revising its public comment policy, potentially providing those seeking to address the board with more time to do so, at its regular meeting Monday, July 7.

The school board held the first reading of a potential policy change at the meeting Monday night at the Lakewood High School Media Center, setting up a vote on the issue, according to LPS Superintendent Jodi Duits.

"The board will take action at our Aug. 11 meeting, when we meet again," Duits said.

The amendment to the board's public participation policy would extend the time allowed for individuals to address the board from three to five minutes, with an additional "grace period" being offered if needed.

"I like it," said Wendy Behrenwald, the board's secretary.

The possible policy revision is the result of recent verbal clashes with several district residents who were unable to finish their comments due to the three-minute time limit. The clashes also included one with state Rep. Gina Johnsen, who attempted to address the board at its June 9 meeting and had her comments cut short. She let board members know she didn't appreciate how she was treated.

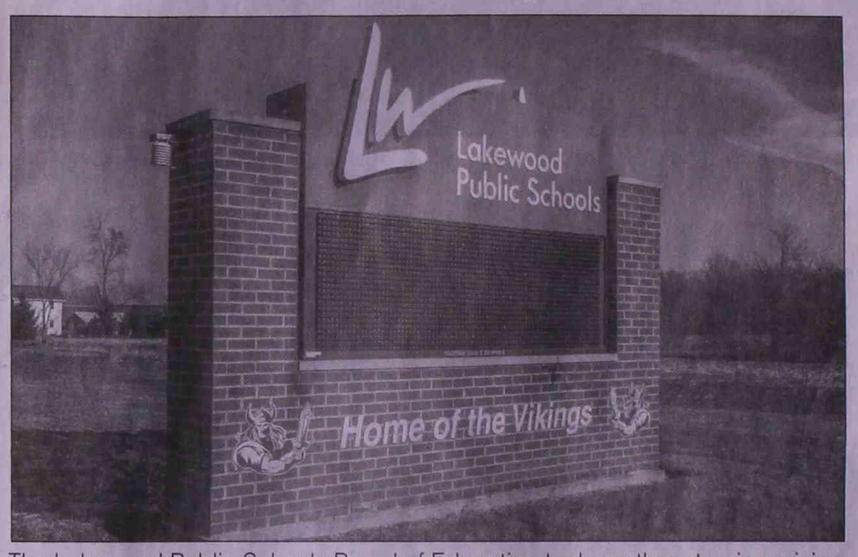
Johnsen, who represents the state House's 78th District, was seeking to address various issues, including transgender participation in high school sports and potential increases in state funding, that had been discussed by the board and other district officials earlier in the meeting.

But, Johnsen was seemingly annoyed when Jamie Brodbeck-Krenz, the board's president, interrupted her to inform the Republican she had just 30 seconds left to speak.

"Very rude," Johnsen said after leaving the podium. "I'll let you know I've never been treated like that at a board meeting.

"I'm here to help you," she added.

After the incident, Brodbeck-Krenz said she reached out to Johnsen's office but had not received any response.




The Lakewood Public Schools Board of Education took another step in revising its public comment policy this week. **File photo**

## Resurfacing project to start near Nashville

Motorists planning to travel on M-79 near the Village of Nashville might want to plan on giving themselves additional time this summer, with a Michigan Department of Transportation project set to begin on Monday, June 14.

According to a statement released by MDOT officials, the state agency will kick off a $1.2 million project to resurface more than 3.5 miles of M-79, from Barryville Road to the western edge of Nashville in Barry County, on Monday.

Shoulder closures will be in effect throughout the project and daily lane closures will be in place between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

"This project will improve the ride and extend the service life of the roadway," MDOT officials stated.

The resurfacing project is set to be completed by mid-August. — *DM*

# Commissioners approve second CHILL grant application

**Molly Macleod**
Editor

Barry County residents in need of critical home repairs may soon have a new, low-risk funding source available to them.

Members of the Barry County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday voted unanimously, 8-0, in favor of submitting a grant application which, if awarded, could bring in up to $354,000 in funding for residents' home repairs.

The grant comes from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Dubbed the CDBG Housing Improving Local Livability (CHILL) Program, the grant helps low- to moderate-income residents complete critical home repairs and stay in their homes. These funds would be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis to qualifying homeowners in the City of Hastings, the Village of Woodland, the Village of Freeport, the Village of Middleville, the Village of Nashville, Delton and Hickory Corners with low to moderate incomes in need of home improvements.

Marilyn Smith from Smith Housing Consulting explained to commissioners last week that the state is reopening a grant that can help local homeowners make critical repairs to their homes that will make them viable for years to come.



Marilyn Smith (pictured) of Smith Housing Consulting spoke at last week's Barry County Board of Commissioners Committee of the Whole meeting in favor of the county submitting a grant application that would help low- to moderate-income homeowners in dire need of home repairs. **File photo**

Some residents in Barry County are already feeling the impact of the grant after the county received $200,000 from MSHDA in the last round of CHILL grant funding in Fall 2024.

"The program has very generous guidelines," Smith said last week. "Up to $10,000 is completely forgiven once the home is finished. $10,001 up to $40,000 is forgiven in five years — no interest, no payment. So it's an amazing program. We always want to make sure that people know that they have to stay there for five years, or they will have to pay the whole thing back. It's not prorated, forgivable."




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## The importance of setting strong financial goals

There's a quote about the importance of setting goals that says, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there." You probably have dreams about retirement, vacations, hobbies and more. But if you don't have a strategy with financial goals in place, you may not make the choices that can best set you on the path to achieve those dreams.

Setting goals helps define and showcase your purpose, passions and priorities. And establishing your own strong financial goals can help you earn and enjoy a wide variety of short- and long-term achievements throughout your life. When you reach your financial goals, you can feel a sense of accomplishment in seeing your efforts literally pay off. But how do you get started?

**Prioritize your needs and wants**. Think about the things that are most important to you and then outline them as financial "must-haves" and "wish-list" targets. Start with the big-ticket items and work through to ideas that may not cost as much, A must-have for many people is having enough to live comfortably through retirement. Being able to afford the college of your child's choice, without incurring mounds of debt, is another. Your wish list, on the other hand, may include things like saving for vacations, hobbies or entertainment expenses.

**Create detailed short- and long-term goals within your financial strategy**. It's important to be specific about the goals you want to achieve and how much you'll need to achieve them. One way to do this is by making your goals measurable. Assign estimated dates and costs to each goal so you can plan how much to save and how much time you have before you need the money. For example, for your retirement goal, be specific about how many years before you want to retire. And once you do, how you plan to spend your time — perhaps traveling the world, turning your hobby into a business or taking your grandkids on outings. These can have vastly different price tags.

**Be willing to compromise**. Reaching one, or more, of your goals may mean compromising. If your must-have is building your dream home but it's not looking quite affordable, you may need to make a trade-off — build it a bit smaller, work a year or two longer or trade in some of your wish-list goals so you can stay focused on your must-haves.

**Hold yourself accountable to stay on track**. Once your strategy is in place, it's not a set-and-forget exercise. Actively tracking your progress and managing your decisions and actions can help you be better positioned to reach your goals. Use time-tested principles for making financial decisions, not predictions. Diversify, own quality investments and keep a realistic perspective, especially for your long-term goals. Maintain your focus and don't let your emotions control your investment decisions. It can be helpful to meet with a financial advisor at least annually to review your full financial strategy, address any changes in your life or your goals, and discuss your progress and new ideas.

As you achieve certain milestones, celebrate them. You may even want to refresh your outlook with new goals. Take pride in your ability to strategize and accomplish a personal financial goal for yourself by following the path you envisioned and created.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

# Concert series to feature variety of folk, jazz and soul music



Ben Traverse brings the history of music to life for children as part of the Hastings Live summer concert series during a performance set for noon on Thursday, July 10. **Courtesy photos**



Hastings's own house band will entertain all ages at this week's Friday at the Fountain performance.



Soul music from award-winning musician Laura Rain and The Caesars is this week's Friday Night Feature, starting at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 11, at Thornapple Plaza in Hastings.

Folk, jazz and soul music will be heard throughout Hastings this week as the Hasting Live summer concert series continues.

Next on the concert series schedule is Ben Traverse, who brings his love of historical music for children to the Thornapple Plaza starting at 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 10. Traverse commands a wide array of instruments to bring traditional folk music into the 21st century, helping children understand the history of music that led to today's music.

The Barry County Courthouse lawn is the site for the Friday at the Fountain performance starting at noon on Friday, July 11, featuring the jazz sounds of the Joe LaJoye Quartet. The band is made up of professional musicians from West Michigan on piano, bass, drums, vocals, trumpet and flugel horn.

The music continues Friday night with the return of Laura Rain and The Caesars, who will bring their hard-driving soulful sound to the Thornapple Plaza at 7:30 p.m.

Rain, who was born and raised in Detroit, and her musical partner, George Friend, lead a multi-award-winning band that has released five albums, eight singles, and traveled the world playing a blend of contemporary soul, blues and R&B.

Hastings Live guests are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn chairs. The concession-stand, operated by volunteers from the local Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, will be open for evening performances serving food, snacks, soft drinks and more.

Smoking, vaping, non-service animals, and outside alcohol are prohibited. There is no rain venue for Hastings Live. Unless there is thunder/lightning, each show will be held.

Hastings Live is made possible through support from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, National Endowment for the Arts, and donations from Barry County Lumber, the Baum Family Foundation, Corewell Health Pennock Hospital, Highpoint Community Bank and other local businesses. — *DM*

# Herb workshop scheduled for Sunday

Area residents can learn about common herbs used for natural remedies at a free workshop this month.

Michigan State University Pollinator Champion and Master Gardener Robbin Glass will lead the workshop this Sunday, July 13, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Attendees of the class will learn the best herbs for common ailments like headaches, athlete's foot, cough and more. Glass will share some of her favorite herb mixtures and recipes. Attendees will learn how to make their own tea bags.

Glass will share herbal tea samples, mixtures, recipes, handouts and prizes — all for free.

The workshop will be held at the Hastings SDA School at 904 Terry Lane in Hastings.

All are welcome to attend the class; there is no need to register. For more information, contact Glass at 517-652-3056. — *MM*

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# FROM THE SUPE'S DESK: How to improve student literacy over the summer

**Rich Franklin**
Barry ISD Superintendent

We all know that students and parents may see the summer break differently. Students see the word "break," and some parents see, "How do I keep my kids busy and help them get ahead or at least not lose ground that they've gained this past year?"



Rich Franklin

I'd like to offer a couple of simple ideas to help students gain ground in their reading proficiency over the summer. Please feel free to add to the list by emailing me at rfranklin@barryisd.org. I'd love to share your ideas with our ISD Early Literacy Coaches and get some dialogue going.

1. Make sure you have books and other reading materials in the home that kids find attractive and interesting. It's not so important what they read as that they read. Graphic novels, how-to manuals, directions for kits or crafts that interest them, tips for doing better on their favorite video games, even, would all still be reading.

2. Get them to the library. If they are eligible for library cards with borrowing privileges, get them! If not, let them browse for a set amount of time and tell them when they get to come back. Many public libraries have summer reading contests, and if you've ever seen how many sausage and cheese packs a kid will sell to earn a prize at school, you know they'll log some reading if prizes are involved.

3. Take advantage of any summer school activities that may be offered, and I don't just mean at school. Many churches offer vacation Bible school or something similar, and the B-Bus and Y on the Fly probably come to a neighborhood near you.

4. Let them see you reading — whether it be a recipe from your phone for dinner, a menu to order dinner, letters that come in the mail, that novel you've been wanting to get to, a newspaper or a favorite magazine.

5. Let kids see that you don't have to spend money to get good reading material. Not only is it free at the library, many electronic resources are available online for free through your local library or the Library of Michigan and will even work on your phone.

6. Listen to audiobooks when you're traveling. It's still a book, which means it's still language development.

7. Get them outside to play — both organized sports and free play.

8. Go places and do things you can't during the school year. Public libraries often lend passes to museums and other family-friendly places to visit together.

9. Both play and experiences are vital to brain development, including reading ability. A hundred years ago, educators were talking about how important experiences are to learning because of a man named John Dewey. It's still true today.

10. If you have a child under the age of 5, sign them up to receive a free book each month through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. It's available free to any child who lives in Barry County. Go to barrycountyreads.org to sign up.

YOU'RE NOT JUST OUR READERS.
You're our friends, our family, our neighbors... and our future.
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Your Community Connection

# Annual 'Dawn Patrol Pancake Breakfast' lands in Hastings this Saturday

The Hastings/Barry County Airport on Murphy Drive in Hastings will be bustling with activity as it hosts its annual Dawn Patrol Pancake Breakfast from 7-11 a.m. this Saturday, July 12.

"Pilots from all over will fly in, filling rows of planes parked outside the FBO with vintage aircraft displayed," said Steve Marzolf, a local pilot and one of the organizers of the event.

According to Marzolf, the pancake breakfast is a community effort and fundraiser with the Middleville Lions Club, Thornapple Flying Academy, Middleville Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, as well as the Hastings Flying Association, serving breakfast and offering airplane rides to attendees.

Throughout the morning, guests may enjoy a breakfast that includes eggs, sausage, juice, coffee and all-you-can-eat pancakes, and a chance to participate in raffles.

Marzolf said that the annual event has been a great success, bringing together aviation enthusiasts and community members for a morning of fun and camaraderie.

"The annual event is a favorite in our area," he added. "We look forward to seeing you there."

Tickets for the breakfast are $12 for adults, $10 for veterans and military personnel, and $8 for kids ages 6 to 11 years old. Children 5 and under may eat for free. — *DM*

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BUILDING BRANDS

# Keep your branding, marketing and advertising sizzlin' this summer



EMILY CASWELL
ecaswell@mihomepaper.com

If the recent heatwave proved anything it's that the dog days of summer have arrived early this year. While the warm, sunny, long and sometimes lazy summer days provide the perfect opportunity to take a well-deserved break from some things (hint: screen time!), one thing no brand should take a break from this summer is advertising.

It may be easy to lull yourself into thinking that dollars spent on branding, marketing and advertising during the summer months are not a smart investment — after all, everyone is at the lake, right? Wrong! Consumers spend money year-round, which means your advertising has to be year-round too because as readers of this column know, the way to successfully grow and strengthen your brand is through consistency and frequency.

While consistency is important when it comes to your core branding pieces — tagline, logo, colors — it's more than OK to switch up your message to meet your customers where they are — including the lake! When it comes to staying top-of-mind there is no off season, and to stay top-of-mind you must get your message out there as frequently as your budget allows. As you build your summer advertising plan here are some things to consider:

First of all, who is your customer? During summer there are a few different types of consumers. It's important to focus in on who you're trying to reach so you use the proper tactic.

• **Customer type: The busy bee —** For many of us, including the team at View Newspaper Group, summer is one of our busiest seasons. We're just as engaged June to August as we are the rest of the year, and we know we're not alone thanks to our friends in the golf, wedding, banquet, catering, travel, landscape, pest control, HVAC, marine, rental and hospitality industries. (Who did I miss? Is summer your busy time too?)

• **Tactic:** Consistency is key for this group because they need to be able to quickly and easily recognize your brand as one they know and trust when they need or want to spend money this summer. These customers have needs like: My AC is out and it's 90 degrees, who do I call? I'm starving with no time to make dinner, where do we eat? I have a free weekend, what event do I attend?

• **Customer type: The savvy shopper** — For others, the downtime during the summer months provides vital time to get organized and plan for a busy fall and winter. Without a doubt much of that planning involves spending dollars both at work and at home. My best friend is a first-grade teacher and just one week into her summer break, she told me she's already scouting and planning the best place to buy school supplies. Plus, with a new 16-year-old she's also car shopping. With extra time on her hands this summer she can research and plan and save before spending her dollars.

• **Tactic:** There are three great ways to advertise to this customer during summer. Option 1 is a brand testimonial. Testimonials are great any time of the year and this consumer will keep that testimonial as part of the research they're doing while they have the time. Option 2 is an advertorial that allows you to tell the story of your brand, product or organization and why you're worth the investment. Option 3 is a special offer. If the offer is appealing enough this customer may even make a purchase earlier than expected because they have the time and energy and you have the best price.

• **Customer type: The summer memory maker** — We all have that friend or family member who declares each summer to be the "best ever!" Seinfeld fans may call this friend "the summer of George" friend. Summer is fun and consumers are soaking it all in. They may not be following their normal routines or spending habits, but they're still spending.

• **Tactic:** Meet the summer memory maker where they are making those memories. Spend your advertising dollars on sponsorships of summer fun so your brand blends right into their summer warm and fuzzy memories.

Second, and with your customer and tactic in hand, consult an advertising expert to help you put your plan together and put it in action. With a combined more than 100 years of advertising expertise, our team can help your brand stay top-of-mind all year long with any tactic. From traditional display ads, to testimonials to sponsorships, as Your Community Connection we can reach your customers through the pages of our 22 locally-owned, locally-connected community newspapers serving 14 counties in Michigan.

How do you advertise and stay top-of-mind during the summer? Email me at *ecaswell@mihomepaper.com.*

*Emily Caswell is the Brand Manager for VIEW Group, the branding division of View Newspaper Group.*

# LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

## County administrator deserves praise for body cam purchase

Editor:

I appreciate the ingenuity of the Barry County administrator (Eric Zuzga) with his plan for providing the county sheriff's department with both the required encrypted radios and the car/body cameras. Once it was discovered that the encrypted radios would be required by the fall, so a purchase would be required anyway, it was smart to incorporate the much discussed and desired car and body cameras. Hats off to the county administrator for his work in this situation!

***Larry Osborne***
***Delton***

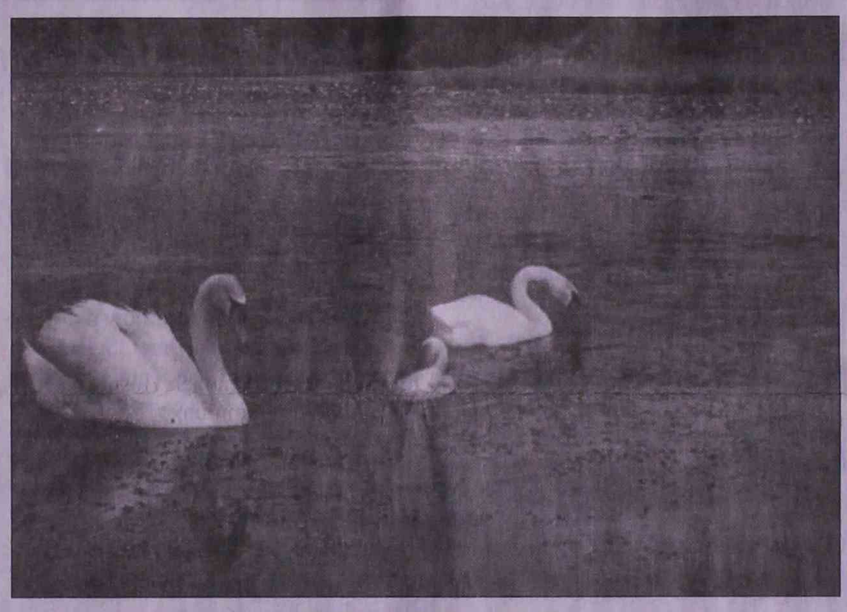
## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

View Newspaper Group publications accept letters to the editor. Letters should refer to an article that has appeared within this publication or ary sister View Newspaper Group publication in the last 14 days or refer to a local event that has taken place in the last 30 days.

All writers must provide their full name, home address and phone number. All letters must be original and are subject to editing for clarity and liability. Letters may not exceed 250 words and writers may not submit more than one letter per 30-day period. View Newspaper Group reserves the right to withhold publication of any letter.

Election-related letters are limited to 150 words and endorsements are limited to no more than three per candidate, per election cycle. View Newspaper Group will not publish letters from candidates for elective office or their campaigns, form letters or letters sent to other publications. Election-related letters will not be published in the final two weeks before Election Day.

# DO YOU REMEMBER?



## SWAN LAKE

— BANNER JUNE 27, 2019 —

Two mute swans and their offspring, a cygnet, swim across Carter Lake Tuesday afternoon. **File photo by Taylor Owens**

# PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE EVENTS

— JULY 10-17 —

Those interested can register for these events and find more information at cedarcreekinstitute.org/events/

**July 1-31** — July Storybook Walk: "Emile and the Field" by Kevin Young; illustrated by Chioma Ebinama. Young Emile loves the field close to his home. He loves the trees, the flowers, the grass. But he doesn't love sharing this field with the other children who come to sled during winter. Can Emile learn to share his beloved field? The Storybook Walk is free and self-guided on the purple and green trails.

**July 1-31** — Summer Wildflower Trail (free and self-guided). Follow the green trail and enjoy the bright blooms of summer.

**Thursday, July 3** — Social Hikes, 10 a.m. Join Institute staff for a social hiking experience. Bring a friend, or make a new one! Trails will have rocks, uneven terrain, mud and great views. All hikes are free. Water is required to hike. This is a safety precaution to prevent dehydration on the trail. The 1.2-mile hike is open to all.

**Thursday, July 10** — Field Station Tour: Conservation on the Ground. Program: 11 a.m.-noon; lunch: noon-1 p.m.; optional afternoon field trips: 1-3 p.m. Learn about the conservation efforts happening "on the ground" at the Institute's field station this summer. Participants will be able to visit researchers and fellows in the field and discuss the research questions they are exploring, the art they are creating and the stewardship work they are doing. This program is presented in-person only. Those interested in the lunch must register by Wednesday, July 2.

**Saturday, July 12** — Social hike, 10 a.m.-noon. Join the Institute for a social hiking experience. All hikes are free. Water is required to hike.

Monday, July 14 — Bird Brains with the Barry County Bird Club, 8:30-10:30 a.m. Join the Institute and the Barry County Bird Club for a social birding morning. Participants should be prepared to hike up to one mile on uneven trails. There are a limited number of binoculars available to borrow. The program will occur rain or shine. In the event of inclement weather, there will be a shorter informational session on birding topics held inside.

Tuesday, July 15 — Trekkin' with Tots: Bird Brigade, 10 a.m. Get your littlest ones excited about hiking! Each hike includes a destination, adventure or other program designed to keep kids happy and hiking. Older siblings are welcome, too.

Thursday, July 17 — Social hike, 6-8 p.m.. Join the Institute for a social hiking experience. All hikes are free. Water is required to hike.

*More information about these events can be found on the Institute's website at CedarCreekInstitute.org.*

# CLASSIFIEDS

**TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL 269-945-9554**

## WANTED

**WANTED TO BUY:** Standing Timber. Conscientious timber harvester. Saw Mill Office- 517-254-4463.

**WANTED-** Someone with Facebook Marketplace experience. I've invested in an estate planning package, now it's time to unload my life, and save the grief learned when my kids became half orphans in December. Split proceeds. Call Mjolinar, 269-666-1348.

## GARAGE SALES

**ESTATE SALE** with many antiques available. Lazy Boy, end tables, shelves, dresser. Tons of glass ware, sewing items, kitchen pots and pans. We will be open Thursday, July 10th from 4-7pm, Friday, July 11th from 4-7pm, Saturday, July 12th 9am-1pm, and Sunday, July 13th 9am-1pm. 6961 Shoreline Dr., Delton.

## EMPLOYMENT

**WANTED: DRIVER. I LIVE** in Cedar Creek. Will pay well for ride to Hastings mostly, or Delton for groceries, etc. Disabed so I can not drive. Many times a week. 269-447-4299.

Think green
VIEW Newspaper Group
READ THEN RECYCLE

NOTHIN' BUT A GOOD TIME



JOHN FOGERTY
THE CELEBRATION TOUR
THURSDAY, JULY 17

EARTH, WIND & FIRE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

SAM HUNT
FRIDAY, AUGUST 8

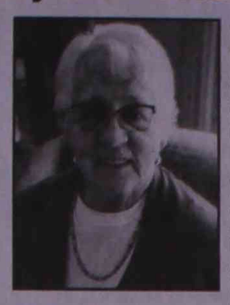
BILL ENGVALL
HERE'S YOUR SIGN: IT WASN'T MY TIME
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Tickets available now at the FireKeepers Box Office or FireKeepersCasino.com.
FIREKEEPERS CASINO • HOTEL BATTLE CREEK GET YOUR VEGAS ON™
I-94 to Exit 104 | 11177 Michigan Avenue | Battle Creek, MI 49014
Must be 21 or older. Tickets based on availability. Schedule subject to change.

# OBITUARIES

VIEW OBITUARIES ONLINE. HASTINGSBANNER.COM

## Mary Ellen Cotant



Mary Ellen Cotant passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family, at the age of 84 years, on Wednesday, July 2, 2025. She was an inspiration to her whole family.

Mary was born February 1, 1941, in Hastings, the daughter of Robert and Irene (Dann) Brownell, where she and her eight siblings were raised in a log cabin on Shultz Road in Hastings, MI. She loved to share this along with attending the old, one-room Shultz Country School, prior to graduating from Hastings high school. Mary was very outgoing, positive spirit and friendly with lots of friends.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Phil; older brothers, Jon, Jim, Jerry, Jeff, along with brothers-in-law, Gordon Barlow, Robert Wellman, William and Elaine Hewitt, Jack and Betty Cotant and Velma Brownell.

And survived by siblings, Jane, Margaret, Tom, Ron, along with sisters-in-law, Brenda, Joan, Murial, Kathy and Dawn (Forest) Kraus. She is survived by her children, Steve (Cheryl) Cotant, Marcia (Eric Aldrich) Tuitel, and Mindy (Mike) Gilbert; five grandchildren, Andy (Jenny), Chelsea (Wes) Johnson, Ashley Tuitel, Morgan (Ian) Stadler, and Caitlyn Cotant; five great grandchildren.

Phil Cotant was the love of her life. They married at Goodwill Church on October 17, 1959. Their priorities were their faith, children and grandchildren over their 43 years together while living at Podunk Lake. They made a great team of hardworking, caring and generous people.

Mom most enjoyed so many family activities, trips, Sunday dinners, caring for her loved ones, pontoon rides, bonfires, freezing her strawberry jam, baking, planting in her flower gardens, dancing, and sewing. She valued her time with the grandkids, singing and teaching them, attending their sporting and cheerleading events, and trips to Mackinac Island and Hawaii.

Mary shared her talent at Pennock Hospital for over 35 years where she put others first, in a variety of positions and departments before retiring. She loved her career and community. Labor and delivery were one of her favorites early on and would continue to be drawn to smile and converse with children or start a conversation with newly expecting moms. Mom was beloved by her patients and respected by her colleagues and doctors she supported.

She spent several years volunteering as a leader for both 4H and Camp Fire girls.

We take comfort in knowing she is with her Lord. Our family would like to express our gratitude to the staff at Legacies Assisted Living with supporting us with the care of our mom.

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 11 a.m. at the Green Street United Methodist church with visitation one hour prior and a luncheon to follow. Pastor Bryce Feighner officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donation may be made to Legacies Assisted Living 9031 North Rodgers, Ct. SE, Caledonia, MI 49316 (Phone 616-275-4999), Green Street United Methodist Food Pantry care of Barry County Cares 231 S Broadway St, Hastings, MI 4905 (Phone (269-948-9555), or Pennock Health Services Fund - Corewell (Payable to Barry Community Foundation, 231 S. Broadway St., Hastings, MI 49058, (Phone 269-945-0526) (Give online: https://www.barrycf.org/funds/pennock-health-services-fund-corewell/).

Arrangements by Girrbach Funeral Home. To leave an online condolence, visit www.girrbachfuneralhome.net.

# Worship Together




***...at the church of your choice ~ Weekly schedules of Hastings area churches available for your convenience...***

**HASTINGS FREE METHODIST CHURCH**
**"We Exist To Be An Expression Of Who Jesus Is To The World Around Us".** 2635 N. M-43 Hwy., P.O. Box 8, Hastings. Telephone 269-945-9121. Email hastfmc@gmail.com. Website: www.hastingsfreemethodist.com. Pastor Brian Teed, Assistant Pastor Emma Miller, Worship Director, Martha Stoetzel. **Sunday Morning Worship:** 9:45 a.m. with Kids Church and Nursery. Aftermath Student Ministries: Sundays 6 p.m.

**SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH OF DELTON**
7025 Milo Rd., P.O. Box 765, (corner of Milo Rd. & S. M-43), Delton, MI 49046. Pastor Roger Claypool, (517) 204-9390. Sunday Worship Service 10:30 to 11:30am, Nursery and Children's Ministry. Wednesday night Bible study and prayer time 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

**COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH**
502 E. Grand St., Hastings. Pastor Tod Shook Wednesdays - Bible Study - 6 to 7 p.m.; Sunday School - 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Service - 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
www.cbchastings.org.

**WOODLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
203 N. Main. Pastor: Kathy Smith. Sunday School 9:15 a.m.; Worship 10:15 a.m.

**CHRIST THE KING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)**
328 N. Jefferson Street. Worship 10 a.m. Nursery provided. Pastor Peter Adams, contact 616-690-8609.

**ST. ROSE OF LIMA CATHOLIC CHURCH**
805 S. Jefferson. 269-945-4246 Pastor Father Jeff Hanley. Mass 4:30 p.m. Saturday. Mass 8 and 11 a.m. Sunday.

**LIFEGATE COMMUNITY CHURCH**
301 E. State Rd., P.O. Box 273, Hastings, MI 49058. Pastor Scott Price. Phone: 269-948-0900. Website: www.lifegatecc.com. Sunday Worship 10 a.m. Wednesday Life Group 6:30 p.m.

**HASTINGS BAPTIST CHURCH**
309 E. Woodlawn, Hastings. Matt Moser, Lead Pastor. Sunday Services: 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages; 10:30 a.m. Worship Service; Senior High Youth Group 6-8 p.m.; Young Adults 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Family Night 6:30-8 p.m., Kids 4 Truth (Children Kindergarten-5th Grade), 6:30-8 p.m. Middle School Youth Group; 6:30 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer. Call Church Office 948-8004 for information.

**PLEASANTVIEW FAMILY CHURCH**
2601 Lacey Road, Dowling, MI 49050. Pastor, Steve Olmstead. (269) 758-3021 church phone. Sunday Service: 10 a.m.

*This information on worship services is provided by The Hastings Banner, the churchesand these local businesses:*

Flexfab®
1699 W. M43 Highway,
Hastings, MI 49058.
945-4700

HASTINGS
Fiberglass Products
A WORLDWIDE SUPPLIER OF Hot Line Tools & Equipment
1301 W. Green St.
Hastings, MI 49058
945-9541

## HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY SCHEDULE

Adventure awaits at the Hastings Public Library. Join the Summer Reading Challenge from June 7 through Aug. 16. Read anything for 15 minutes or more a day, log your days and win prizes.

No library card is required for library programs and activities.

**Thursday, July 10** – Movie Memories and Milestones watches a 1946 movie starring Bette Davis and Glen Ford, 5 p.m.

**Friday, July 11** – Friday Story Time, 10:30 a.m.

**Monday, July 14** – Crafting Passions, 10 a.m.

**Tuesday, July 15** – Baby Cafe, 10 a.m.; Youth Garden Club, 3:30 p.m.; mahjong, 5 p.m.; chess, 5 p.m.

**Wednesday, July 16** – Itsy Bitsy Book Club, 10:30 a.m.; Open Art Studio, 11:30 a.m.

*More information about these and other events is available by calling the library, 269-945-4263.*



## ASK DR. UNIVERSE

### Describing our world

Dear Varish,

If we count all the species that humans have described so far, it's about 2 million. New species get added all the time—about 15,000 of them every year.

But we have no idea how many species we've never met. Scientists think there could be 5 million species out there. Or maybe billions.

We'll only know for sure when we describe all those organisms.

I asked my friend Rich Zack what that means. He's an insect scientist at Washington State University.

He told me how we identify and name a new species.

Imagine we're in my backyard collecting insects together. We see a teeny, tiny parasitic wasp. That's a wasp that lays its eggs inside another organism.

Zack is an expert, so he's pretty sure our wasp is new to science. We collect a series of them—about 20 wasps, including both sexes. That will keep us from finding one freaky mutant and calling it a new species.

But just one wasp will become the official type specimen, or holotype. That's like the model example of our new species. The rest of the wasps in our series are called paratypes.

"We put that type specimen in front of us," Zack said. "Then we start at one end of the insect and write down everything we see until we get to the other end."

Our description includes every possible detail. We measure all the wasp's parts. We use a dissecting microscope to count the segments of its antennae and the itty-bitty hairs on its feet. We report on its wing veins, eyes and mouth parts. All of this is our wasp's morphology, or what its body looks like.

We also note any variation we see in our series and anything we noticed about our wasp's behavior or habitat. We add pictures that show different parts of our wasp. We might examine its DNA.

By now, we're certain we have a new species. So, it's time to name it.

A scientific name includes a genus name and a species name. If our wasp is closely related to an existing group of wasps, we'll give it the same genus name as those guys. Then we'll pick a unique species name and make sure it conforms to the rules of Latin or ancient Greek.

Most names relate to where the organism lives, what it looks like or what it does. Sometimes organisms are named after someone.

"Some people come up with some pretty outlandish names," Zack said. "They may be criticized by their colleagues, but there's not a darn thing they can do about it because you're allowed to pick whatever you want."

Now we send our description to a scientific journal. Other scientists will check our work—called peer review. We might need to make a few changes or answer questions. Once our description is accepted, that's our wasp's name forever.

We carefully preserve our type specimen and entrust it to a museum or somewhere safe. People 100 years from now will be able to look at it and review our work.

The coolest thing about finding and describing new species is that anybody can do it—including scientists, regular people and kids like you.

It's mostly about spe-seeing the world around you with a careful, curious eye.

*— Dr. Universe*

*Do you have a question? Ask Dr. Universe.*
*Send an email to Washington State University's resident scientist and writer at Dr.Universe@wsu.edu or visit her website,askdruniverse.com.*

## MSU Extension to sponsor free 'Tai Chi for Better Sleep' series

The Michigan State University Extension is offering a free "Tai Chi for Better Sleep" program for area residents, with classes running from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Mondays from Aug. 4 to Dec. 1 at the Tyden Center on Church Street in Hastings.

According to MSU Extension officials, the program combines the benefits of Tai Chi for arthritis, fall prevention and sleep education.

Participants will also learn techniques to improve the quality and quantity of their sleep. Each session will include Tai Chi warm-ups, lessons, cool downs, sleep education and goal setting.

Tai Chi may be done seated or standing. Participants are encouraged to attend the classes wearing comfortable clothes with sturdy shoes and a water bottle.

Space is limited to 15 participants and registration is required.

For more information and to register, persons may contact the Barry County MSU Extension office by calling 269-945-1388. — *DM*

# TURNING BACK THE PAGES

## FROM CANOES TO CARS: The evolution of transportation in Barry County

**DAVID W. MILLER**
Special to The Banner

When the earliest white settlers arrived in Barry County in 1826, they entered a land already inhabited and traversed by the Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi peoples. These Native American tribes relied heavily on the Thornapple River—known to them as Sowanquesake, meaning "Forked River"—as a primary transportation corridor. They skillfully navigated its winding course in dugout canoes, carrying furs, game and goods between seasonal encampments. One such canoe, estimated to be over 300 years old and believed to have been used by the Potawatomi, was discovered near Wall Lake, roughly 15 miles south of Hastings. It is now preserved and on display at the Bernard Historical Museum in Delton.

When white settlers began arriving in greater numbers, they followed Native American footpaths, well-worn trails that had existed for centuries. These trails were suitable for foot or horseback travel but proved difficult for wagons and carriages. At the time, the region had no developed roads or bridges, and settlers often relied on rivers and trails for overland navigation.

In 1857, a stagecoach line was established, linking Battle Creek to Grand Rapids by way of Hastings. This route became a vital artery for settlers, traders, and travelers, providing scheduled passenger and mail service. Coaches stopped in Hastings to change horses and allow passengers to rest. Over time, this path evolved into a modern roadway—much of it forming what is now Michigan State Highway M-37, which still serves as a major north-south route through the city.

Hastings itself saw growing infrastructure to support this activity. Native encampments, once numbering as many as 200 wigwams, had been located north of the Thornapple River near what is now First Ward Park. Yet for decades, there was no bridge connecting the two sides of town. That changed in 1887 with the construction of a wrought iron bridge extending Creek Street—later renamed Michigan Avenue—across the river. The next significant crossing, the Broadway Bridge, opened in August 1922 thanks in large part to the philanthropy of local businessman Nathan Barlow.

Railroads ushered in another transportation era. By the 1870s, both the Michigan Central and the Chicago, Kalamazoo & Saginaw (CK&S) railroads operated through Hastings, each with its own depot. Trains transported passengers and freight to and from Grand Rapids, Jackson and Chicago, with smoke-belching engines becoming a fixture of city life.

However, the rails were not without tragedy. On July 15, 1909, a CK&S passenger train collided with a freight train in the village of Schultz. Two CK&S employees, including Seth Chandler, were killed,



Barry County's earliest residents, Native Americans hailing from the Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi tribes, navigated the county's wilderness along the Thornapple River — known to them as Sowanquesake, or "Forked River."
**Courtesy photos**

and 16 others—some from Hastings—were injured. Another major incident occurred in 1930, when a Michigan Central train derailed along Apple Street in downtown Hastings. Fortunately, there were no fatalities in that mishap.

While trains remained central to transportation well into the 20th century, the automobile soon began to reshape daily life. In 1901, Dr. George Lowry brought the first steam-powered car to Hastings. Manufactured in Bridgeport, Conn., it was shipped by rail to town, marking the beginning of a new era. With no dealerships or service stations available, early motorists like Dr. Lowry depended on blacksmiths for repairs and, when necessary, towed their vehicles with horses.

Horses continued to dominate local transportation for many years. Hastings' first fire engine, for example, was horse-drawn. State Street—the town's main thoroughfare—remained unpaved until 1907, when it was bricked to accommodate increasing traffic. The transition to motor vehicles was not without difficulty: the loud engines and unfamiliar appearance of early cars startled horses, often leading to runaways or collisions.

To address these concerns, the city enacted ordinances to regulate motor vehicles. Early speed limits within city limits were typically set at 10 to 12 miles per hour. By the mid-1920s, additional rules required motorists to sound horns when approaching intersections or overtaking horses—and, if needed, to stop altogether if an animal appeared frightened. Drivers were also asked to crank and start their engines away from the main streets. As many as 300 to 500 cars operated in Hastings by 1920, some owned by residents of outlying areas.

Even with the rise of the automobile, railroads remained vital for decades. However, as state highways expanded and trucks became a more efficient freight solution, the importance of the rails gradually diminished. By 1976, the Hastings branch line was abandoned by Conrail due to deteriorated infrastructure. This marked the end of an era that had helped connect the city to major regional centers.

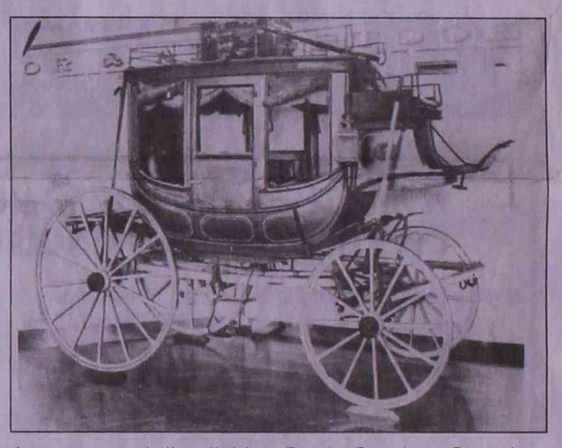
Aviation came to Barry County with the completion of the Hastings Airport in 1947, located four miles northwest of town along State Road. Several of its earliest pilots were returning veterans of World War II. Today, the airport spans 270 acres, is jointly owned by the city and county, and supports a flight school, skydiving center, and numerous community events, including antique aircraft fly-ins and pancake breakfasts. It is home to 88 aircraft.

In more recent decades, the focus has shifted to inclusive, accessible transportation. In 1982, Barry County Transit was established to offer public transportation to residents across the region. Today, it serves more than 120,000 riders annually. Ride-sharing services such as Uber have added further flexibility. And now, as autonomous vehicles emerge on the horizon, Barry County continues to evolve with the times.

From Native American dugouts and stagecoaches to steam locomotives and electric cars, the story of transportation in Barry County is one of ingenuity, adaptation and transformation—ever shaping how residents move, live and connect with the world.

*Sources: Hastings Long Ago, Book C, Robert Palmer (1988), pp. 12, 19; History of Hastings on the Thornapple, Paul J. Moore (2018), p. 397; Barry County History Book (1985), p. 292; Material from Facebook's "Hastings History."*

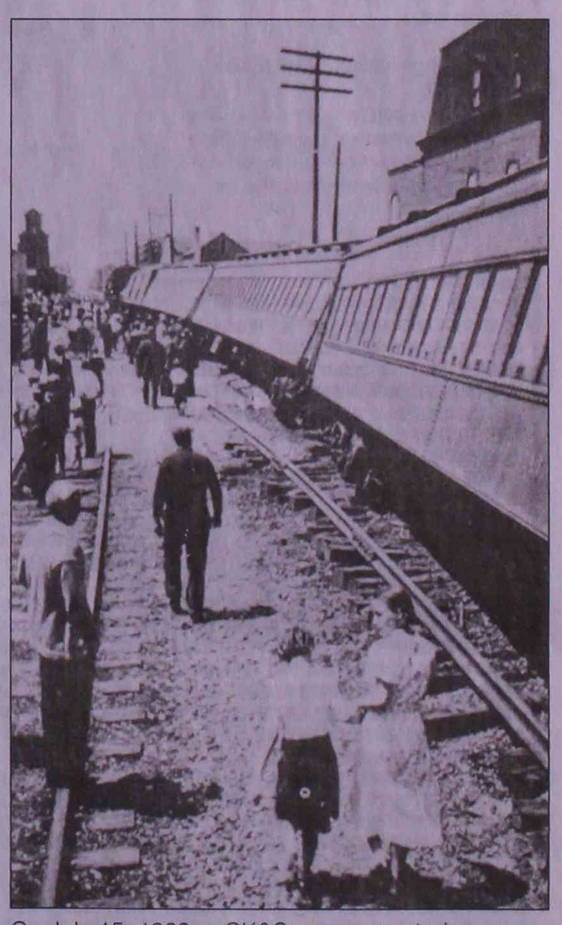
*David Miller is a moderator for the "Hastings History" Facebook group.*



A stagecoach line linking Battle Creek to Grand Rapids by way of Hastings was established in 1857. Today, much of that route is still used as part of M-37.



Aviation came to Barry County with the completion of the Hastings Airport in 1947, located four miles northwest of town along State Road.



On July 15, 1909, a CK&S passenger train collided with a freight train in the village of Schultz. Two CK&S employees were killed, and 16 others—some from Hastings—were injured.



In 1901, Dr. George Lowry brought the first steam-powered car to Hastings.

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# North Country Trail moving off Crane Road in Middleville

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) is going off road in Middleville in the next few months.

Hope is that the new route will be a more scenic one – even it it takes a lot of work.

"I just got back from three hours of working on that trail," Chief Noonday Chapter president Eric Longman said Tuesday afternoon. "Having now taken a shower, I'll say that it will be a beautiful trail when completed, but today it was an overgrown mess and I was hot and sweaty by the time we hacked our way through about a mile of underbrush to reach the end of the cemetery - where we will bring the trail out into the Village."

Longman and a handful of others including John Purlee, Doug Barnes, Jim Bronson and Michelle Fabiano "slashed, hacked and cut" their way through invasive autumn olive, multiflora rose and everything else in their way throughout the day to clear enough of a trail so that soon larger volunteer work crews can expand on the progress.

The Chief Noonday Chapter of the North Country Trail Association will be leading (at least) three workdays between now and October. The plan is to reroute the trail from the trailhead on the east end of Crane Road onto the Paul Henry Trail along the river in downtown Middleville. There are scheduled workday events July 19, Aug. 16 and Sept. 20, but the expectation that there will work done in between those events as well. Ideally the project will be completed by October.

The NCT currently exits the woods at the Crane Road trailhead and then proceeds along Crane Road east across Whitneyville Avenue to the Paul Henry Trail. Much of that stretch of road is currently also a busy pathway for residents and for semi-trailer traffic going in and out of town. The Paul Henry Trail and the NCT currently meet on the east side of the Thornapple River there, and then follow the edge of the river into downtown Middleville.

The reroute will take the trail across Crane Road to the south from the trailhead, through forested area which is a mix of land belonging to a private property owner and the Village of Middleville. The trail will emerge from the woods near Mount Hope Cemetery and then follow Sheridan Road south to E. Main Street. At that point the planned route follows the sidewalks through downtown Middleville to the Paul Henry Trail at Stagecoach Park.

Middleville Village Manager Craig Stolsonburg said, "we were willing to work with them. We want to be a good partner with them. We are considered a trail town and we wanted to continue that relation with them. We basically let them design the route they wanted to do to get off the busy roads as much as possible."

The route will head through village property where the Thornapple Area Parks and Recreation Commission and others have been exploring the idea of a multi-use "Sheridan Park."

Chief Noonday Chapter trail manager Ryan Bowles is in charge of building and maintaining trails for the NCTA chapter which covers Barry, Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties.

"We have two major jobs that we're gonna be doing over the next three months, clearing brush and then making the tread," Bowles said.

"We clear brush to about four feet wide and eight feet tall in order to allow hikers and backpackers to hike through comfortably without hitting the brush. And then you also build the tread. If it's flat ground, that just means uh taking off the the leaves and things that are on top of the ground. But the bigger job, and what we're gonna have to do quite a bit of while on this project, is where the trail needs to go along the side of a hill. So there we do what's called side hill construction, which is or also called benching, and that's where we dig into the hill to level out the the tread, so that it is not like you're walking on the side of a hill."

The Chief Noonday Chapter got a lot of recent experience building new trail this spring along Fish Lake in southern Barry County. That new trail covered about eight tenths of a mile and included some of the benching and brush clearing that will need to be done in Middleville.



North Country Trail Association Chief Noonday Chapter volunteer Jim Bronson with a marker near where a new section of the North Country National Scenic Trail will exit the woods near Mount Hope Cemetery during a work session in Middleville Tuesday. A project is underway to get the trail off of a busy section of Crane Road on the north end of the Village of Middleville. **Photo provided**

The new stretch of trail will cover about a mile and a half. Following roadways isn't always ideal, but it can be at times. The NCTA often works to make sure trail towns, and hikers, get the benefits of the trail passing through "town."

"It goes through downtown on sidewalks, which I think is also an improvement, especially since it gets to go up by some restaurants and bars," Bowles said. "It is a nice little touch if you're a long distance hiker , taking a break and getting some food."

While Bowles is in charge of building the trail, Bronson was the NCTA volunteer tasked with giving him that opportunity by working with land owners to allow for the project. His work started almost two years ago.

"Over time we were able to work it out," Bronson said. "We we had a couple meetings with the village council to make sure that everybody was on board with it and and we developed a memorandum of understanding and got that approved, and I've been working with the Department of Public Works (DPW), they've been my primary contacts with the village."

Stolsonburg said some additional fencing is being put up around DPW facilities in the area near where the new trail will pass just as a precaution.

Longman said Bronson has been a tireless worker, on this project and along the entire 120 miles of the Chief Noonday Chapter's section of the NCT, contacting land owners and working to get the trail off road and into a more natural environment.

"90 percent never respond, or give a fast "no!" Longman said. "And while we may desire a higher percentage of positive responses, we can also appreciate that many people would be hesitant to give permission for hikers to come onto their property. In Middleville, Jim reached out to a large land owner and was grateful to find the owner open to at least a conversation."

There will be time for more conversation as any work day volunteers are welcome to join the Chief Noonday Chapter members at Thornapple Kitchen for breakfast Saturday, July 19 at 8 a.m. That first big workday is set to begin at 9:30 a.m. at the trailhead on Crane Road in Middleville about three quarters of a mile east of Whitneyville Road.

Bowles shared that the chapter will supply some tools, but volunteers are asked to please bring mattocks or pulaskis if they have them, as well as lopping shears, pruning shears or pruning saws.

"Bring sturdy gloves and wear long pants and sleeves even if it's warm," he added. "Plan to wear sunscreen and bug spray, and bring plenty of water and snacks. Plan to get dirty!"

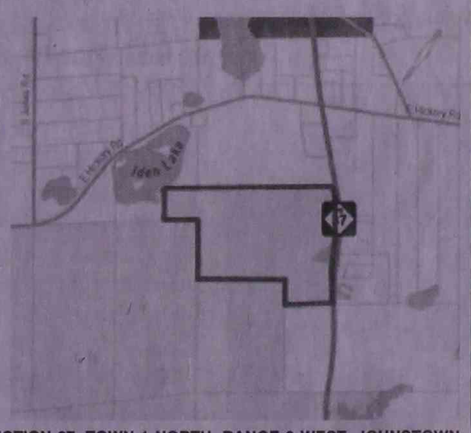
## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Barry County Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on **July 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM** in the Community Room of the Tyden Center, located at 121 South Church Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058.

The subject of the public hearing will be the consideration of the following amendment to the Barry County Zoning Ordinance of 2008, as amended:

**MAP CHANGE A-01-2025**

Request to rezone property at 14510 South M-37 Highway, Battle Creek, in Section 27 of Johnstown Township. (See attached map.)




**FROM A (Agriculture) TO RR (Rural Residential)**
This map is a portion of the Official Zoning Map of Johnstown Township in Barry County, Michigan. All of the above mentioned property is located in Barry County, Michigan.

**Legal Description:**
**BEGINNING AT THE WEST 1/4 POST OF SECTION 27, TOWN 1 NORTH, RANGE 8 WEST, JOHNSTOWN TOWNSHIP, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN; THENCE SOUTH 85 DEGREES 01 MINUTES 08 SECONDS WEST 495.00 FEET ALONG THE EAST - WEST 1/4 LINE OF SECTION 28, TOWN 1 NORTH, RANGE 8 WEST; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 47 MINUTES 48 SECONDS WEST 445.28 FEET PARALLEL WITH THE WEST LINE OF SECTION27; THENCE NORTH 87 DEGREES 34 MINUTES 30 SECONDS EAST 493.26 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION 27; THENCE NORTH 86 DEGREES 42 MINUTES 20 SECONDS EAST 2111.91 FEET TO THE CENTERLINE OF HIGHWAY M-37; THENCE SOUTH 12 DEGREES 27 MINUTES 42 SECONDS EAST ALONG SAID CENTERLINE 75.39 FEET; THENCE 894.17 FEET ALONG SAID CENTERLINE AND THE ARC OF A CURVE TO THE RIGHT WHOSE RADIUS IS 2864.80 FEET, AND WHOSE CORD BEARS SOUTH 03 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 12 SECONDS EAST 890.54 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 05 DEGREES 25 MINUTES 18 SECONDS WEST ALONG SAID CENTERLINE 59.04 FEET; THENCE 794.55 FEET ALONG SAID CENTERLINE AND THE ARC OF A CURVE TO THE LEFT WHOSE RADIUS IS 5729.70 FEET, AND WHOSE CORD BEARS SOUTH 01 DEGREES 40 MINUTES 27 SECONDS WEST 749.01 FEET TO THE NORTH LINE OF THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SAID SECTION 27; THENCE SOUTH 87 DEGREES 23 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST ALONG SAID NORTH LINE 744.49 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/40F SAID SECTION 27; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 52 MINUTES 02 SECONDS WEST 359.08 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 05 MINUTES 27 SECONDS WEST 1359.89 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION 27; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 33 SECONDS WEST 948.66 FEET ALONG THE SAID WEST LINE TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. SUBJECT TO EXISTING HIGHWAY EASEMENT OVER THE EASTERLY 50 FEET FOR HIGHWAY M-37. ALSO TOGETHER WITH AND SUBJECT TO A 66 FOOT WIDE EASEMENT DESCRIBED SEPERATELY.**
**DESCRIPTION OF EASEMENT:**
**A PRIVATE EASEMENT FOR INGRESS, EGRESS AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PURPOSES OVER A STRIP OF LAND 66 FEET WIDE, 33 FEET EACH SIDE OF THE CENTERLINE DESCRIPED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 27 TOWN 1 NORTH, RANGE 8 WEST, JOHNSTOWN TOWNSHIP, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 33 SECONDS WEST 1700.00 FEET ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION 27; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 05 MINUTES 27 SECONDS EAST 1209.89 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF SAID EASEMENT; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 05 MINUTES 27 SECONDS EAST 903.87 FEET ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF SAID EASEMENT TO THE CENTERLINE OF HIGHWAY M-37 AND THE POINT OF ENDING OF SAID EASEMENT.**

Interested persons desiring to present their views upon the proposed amendment, either verbally or in writing, will be given the opportunity to be heard at the above mentioned place and time. Any written response may be mailed to Planning & Zoning, 220 West State Street, Hastings Michigan 49058, faxed to (269) 948-4820, or emailed to Barry County Planning Director James McManus at jkeesler@barrycounty.org.

The proposed amendment of the Barry County Zoning Ordinance is available for public inspection at the Barry County Planning & Zoning Department, 220 West State Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058 during the business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday (excluding holidays.) Please call the Barry County Planning & Zoning Department at (269) 945-1290 for further information.

The County of Barry will provide necessary auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon ten (10) days notice to the County of Barry. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the County of Barry by writing or call the following: Michael Brown, County Administrator, 220 West State Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058, (269) 945-1284, ezuzga@barrycounty.org .

This notice is given pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (Public Act 267 of 1976) as amended.

Sarah M. VanDenburg, Barry County Clerk

**NOTICE TO THE RESIDENTS OF BARRY COUNTY**
Notice is hereby given that the Barry County Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing for the following:

**Case Number: SP-13-2025 - Ben Varney/Skyway Towers, LLC (Applicant); Deidra McClelland Trust (Property Owner)**

**Location:** 9600 Davenport Rd., Woodland MI in Section 35 of Woodland Township

**Purpose:** Request to allow the construction of a wireless communication antenna in the A (Agricultural) zoning district, per section 2386 of the Barry County Zoning ordinance 2008.

**MEETING DATE: July 28, 2025. TIME: 7:00 PM. PLACE: Tyden Center Community Room, 121 South Church Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058**

Site inspections of the above described properties will be completed by the Planning Commission members before the hearing. Interested persons desiring to present their views upon an appeal, either verbally or in writing, will be given the opportunity to be heard at the above mentioned place and time.

Any written response may be mailed to the address listed below, faxed to (269) 948-4820, or emailed to Barry County Planning Director Jeff Keesler at jkeesler@barrycounty.org.

The special use applications are available for public inspection at the Barry County Planning Department, 220 West State Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058, during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. Please call the Barry County Planning Department at (269) 945-1290 for further information.

The County of Barry will provide necessary auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon ten (10) days notice to the County of Barry. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the County of Barry by writing or call the following: Eric Zuzga, County Administrator, 220 West State Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058, (269) 945-1284.

Sarah M. VanDenburg, Barry County Clerk

## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

## BARRY COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Barry County Road Commission, 1725 West M-43 Highway, P.O. Box 158, Hastings, MI 49058, until 11:00 A.M. July 16, 2025 for the Removal and Replacement of Select Existing Concrete Slabs on Grade.

Specifications and additional information may be obtained at the Road Commission Office at the above address or at our web site at www.barrycrc.org.

The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to waive irregularities in the best interest of the Commission.

ROAD COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF BARRY
David Solmes Chairman
Jim James Vice Chairman
Jamie Knight Member

# Off Road Derby, rodeo, super cross return to fair grandstand

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

The 2025 Barry County Fair Grandstand shows follow the usual script this summer. Although, one never knows exactly what will happen once the bulls start running and the engines start revving.

There are a couple days of harness racing, the rodeo, off road derby and demolition derby action, super cross, mud racing and truck and tractor pulls.

Fair activities being Saturday, July 12, and amusements start spinning on Tuesday afternoon, July 15.

The first grandstand events of the week include harness racing on Saturday and Sunday July 12-13. Entry into the fairgrounds and into the grandstand is free for the weekend. Racing starts at noon both days.

Unique Motor Sports will host an Off-Road Derby Tuesday, July 15 and an Off-Road Derby and Demolition Derby Friday, July 18. The grand finale of the week is the Michigan State Fair Super Cross Saturday, July 19. Super Kicker Rodeo returns Wednesday, July 16.

The cost for entry into the grandstand for those events is $15. That price does not include fair admission. All six evenings of grandstand shows begin at 7 p.m.



Matt Rowley puts the finishing touches on an off-road derby car before the start of a heat during the 2023 Barry County Fair. The 2025 grandstand shows at the Barry County Fair include a Unique Motor Sports Off Road Derby Tuesday, July 15, and Off Road Derby and Demolition Derby Friday, July 18. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

The evening shows kick off with the Mud Mitten Race Series Monday, July 14. The Michigan Truck and Tractor Pullers will entertain the crowd Thursday, July 17. Entry into the grandstand Monday and Thursday is $10.

No coolers are allowed in the grandstand. Gates open one hour prior to the event, but lines stretching the length of the midway have been known to form in ideal weather for the most popular events.



Olivia Curtis competes in the barrel racing event during the 2024 Super Kicker Rodeo at the Barry County Fair. The rodeo returns to the grandstand the Wednesday of fair week, July 16.

# TK's Crews wins state Positive Athlete award for cross country

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor

Recent Thornapple Kellogg High School graduate Ava Crews has been named the 2025 girls' cross country MI Positive Athlete Award winner.

Crews and the other Michigan honorees through the Positive Athlete Great Lakes Region were honored on the field before the start of the June 24 Detroit Tigers baseball game at Comerica Park in downtown Detroit.

The goal of the Positive Athlete awards is to recognize student-athletes across the country for their leadership, resilience, and character beyond the game. The national organization received 12,270 nominations, across 50 states and 3,327 schools during this year's nomination period.

The group looks for kids who lead with positivity, determination, and resilience. All Positive Athlete nominees are not only eligible for recognition, they gain access to career development, leadership, mentorship, and job opportunities.

The Great Lakes Region includes Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Crews is set to join the Grand Valley State University Women's Cross Country and Track and Field programs. She was a four-time state qualifier in cross country for the Trojans and earned a medal at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division Cross Country Finals to close out her senior season with a 26th-place finish.

The TK varsity girls' cross country team won the OK Gold Conference Championship this fall with Crews finishing as the conference's individual champion. The TK girls' track and field team won back to back OK Gold Conference titles with Crews leading the distance crew, she won the individual conference championship in the 1600-meter run, the 3200-meter run, was the runner-up in the 800-meter run and helped the 4x800-meter relay team to a conference title.

Throughout her track and field seasons, Crews ran in the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 2 Track and Field Finals in the 1600-meter run and the 3200-meter run as a junior. She earned an all-state medal as a late fill-in for the Trojan 4x400-meter relay team at the 2023 state finals her sophomore track and field season, and competed at the D2 finals in the 3200-meter run in both her freshman and sophomore seasons.

She also competed in indoor track and field competitions throughout high school.




Recent Thornapple Kellogg graduate Ava Crews (second row, second from right) is honored along with other Positive Athlete state award winners before the start of June 24th's Major League Baseball game between the Detroit Tigers and the Athletics at Comerica Park in downtown Detroit. **Photo provided**

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**RUTLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

**NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW**

Pursuant to provisions in MCL 211.7cc (19), MCL 211.7b, MCL 211.7u and MCL 11.53b, the Board of Review will meet on **Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** in the office of the Assessor at Rutland Charter Township Hall, 2461 Heath Road, Hastings, Michigan to consider appeals related to Poverty Exemptions and to Correct Qualified Errors.

**Dennis McKelvey, Assessor**
**RUTLAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP**
**2461 Heath Road**
**Hastings, MI 49058**
**(269) 948-2194**

**SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - BARRY COUNTY**

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Barry County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on July 31, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Sabrina L. Wright, single woman Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), solely as nominee for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: March 29, 2022 Recorded on March 31, 2022, in Document No. 2022-003411, and re-recorded via Affidavit of Correction on May 29, 2025, in Document No. 2025-004462, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): M & T Bank Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Six and 27/100 Dollars ($164,996.27) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Barry County, and described as: Lot 5, Block 6, Chamberlain`s Addition to the City, formerly Village of Hastings, according to the recorded plat in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 7, Barry County Records. Commonly known as 236 W Nelson St, Hastings, MI 49058 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. M & T Bank Mortgagee/ Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400

1565878
(07-03)(07-24)

**FORECLOSURE NOTICE**

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Barry County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, July 17, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Michael David Soya, an unmarried man to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Amerifirst Financial Corporation, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated November 19, 2019, and recorded on December 26, 2019, as Document Number: 2019-012696, Barry County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated May 30, 2025 and recorded June 04, 2025 by Document Number: 2025-004591, , on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Fifty-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Ten and 15/100 ($59,210.15) including interest at the rate of 4.25000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of Assyria, Barry County, Michigan, and are described as: Beginning at a point 10.12 chains South of the Northwest Corner of Section 22, Town 1 North, Range 7 West; Thence South 16 1/2 feet; Thence East 3.162 chains; Thence North 16 1/2 feet; Thence West 3.162 chains to the place of beginning. Also conveying commencing 41 rods, 12.4 links South of the Northwest Corner of Section 22 of said Assyria Township; Thence East 12 rods, 16.2 links; Thence South 12 rods 16.2 links; Thence West 12 rods, 16.2 links; Thence North to beginning, all in Town 1 North, Range 7 West. Commonly known as: 13165 S M-66 HWY, BELLEVUE, MI 49021 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/ or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: June 19, 2025 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00398-1 (06-19)(07-10)

**NOTICE**
**Case No. 24-629-CZ, Barry County Trial Court – Circuit Division NOTICE OF SALE BY COMMISSIONER TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to the Order of the Circuit Court for the County of Barry, entered on May 12, 2025 and in accordance with Michigan Court Rule 3.403(B), the undersigned Commissioner, William Buhl, having the authority to do so, will sell at public auction the real property situated in the Township of Baltimore, County of Barry, State of Michigan, more particularly described as: Parcel I: The East ½ of the Southeast ¼ and the Southeast ¼ of the Northeast 1/4, Section 16, Town 2 North, Range 8 West, EXCEPT: that portion of the Southeast ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 16, Town 2 South, Range 8 West, lying South of the centerline of Maple Grove Road. Also: Any portion of the North ½ of the North ½ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 21, Town 2 North, Range 8 West, lying North of the centerline of Maple Grove Road, Baltimore Township, Barry County, Michigan. Parcel II: Commencing at the Southwest corner of the North one-half of the Southwest one-quarter of Section 15, thence North on the West line of said Section 100 rods, thence East at right angles to said Section line 20 rods, thence Southeasterly to a point 40 rods North of a point on the South line of said North one-half of the Southwest one-quarter of said Section 15, 60 rods East of said Southwest corner, thence South 40 rods to said South line of said North one-half of the Southwest one-quarter, thence West on said South line of the North one-half of said Southwest one-quarter of Section 15, 60 rods to the place of beginning, Baltimore Township, Barry County, Michigan. Commonly Known As: Vacant Land Parcel Nos: 08-02-016-276-00 and 08-02-015-301-00, respectively (the "Property"). The Property is comprised of the two (2) parcels referenced above. For the purposes of the sale, the legal description shall not be separated, and the Property shall be conveyed in its entirety to the successful bidder. If the street address or tax identification number(s) above are inconsistent with the legal description above, the legal description shall govern and control. The sale will be conducted on July 17, 2025 at 1:00 PM at the following location: The Barry County Courthouse, in the City of Hastings, County of Barry, State of Michigan, being the building where the Circuit Court for the County of Barry is held. Terms of Sale 1. The sale will be conducted by public auction to the highest bidder. 2. The successful bidder will be required to pay in cash or certified funds the full purchase immediately at the time of sale. 3. The property is sold "as is" and "where is," without any warranties or representations as to the condition of the property. 4. The sale is subject to all existing encumbrances, easements, and restrictions of record. 5. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property, and potential purchasers are encouraged to contact the Barry County Register of Deeds Office or a title insurance company for additional information, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Additional Information For further information regarding the sale, interested parties may contact the undersigned Commissioner at: William Buhl 35903 64th Ave, PO Box 411 Paw Paw, MI 49073 269-716-0318 Dated: May 27, 2025
(06-05)(07-10)

# Marcukaitis one of the fastest Boilermakers ever

**Brett Bremer**
Sports Editor




Purdue University swimmer Abby Marcukaitis, of Middleville, gets set for a backstroke start during the Big Ten Women's Swimming & Diving Championships at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, in February. Marcukaitis broke her own Purdue 200-yard backstroke record at the meet, scored for the Boilermakers in the 100 backstroke too, and led off for both of the Boilermakers' medley relay teams. **Photo by John Ackerman**

"There's just something when you dive into the water. I just feel good, you know."

That's been the big draw to swimming for all these years for Purdue senior Abby Marcukaitis who started racing in the pool when she was seven.

She tried dance, soccer, basketball and other things over the years. She's not much into running and in the pool you don't notice you're sweating.

"It has always just been something I've enjoyed. I've always loved swimming and the competition that comes with it," Marcukaitis said.

Marcukaitis is a 2022 Thornapple Kellogg High School graduate and former member of the Delton Kellogg/Thornapple Kellogg/Hastings varsity girls' swimming and diving team. She set the Purdue University record in the women's 200-yard backstroke during a Big Ten Triple Dual at the University of Minnesota Feb. 1 and then three weeks later improved her school record time at the 2025 Big Ten Women's Swim & Dive Championships hosted by Ohio State University.

Her current school record sits at 1 minute 54.09 seconds. That time earned her a fifth-place finish in the B Final at McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion in Columbus, Ohio, during the Big Ten Championships.

Jackie Smailis set the previous Purdue record in the race at 1:54.61 in 2019. Marcukaitis became the fastest Boilermaker ever in the 200 backstroke with a time of 1:54.46 in a rare victory for her team in that triple dual with the Gophers and the Northwestern women in Minnesota. She wasn't eyeing a school record that first Saturday in February.

"I just really was trying to win the event for my team. We didn't win many events. I was like, I just really want to beat these girls. I was going through the race just racing," Marcukaitis said, "like genuinely not focusing on the times and trying to beat the people next to me. I talked to them, and I was just so happy that I won … I saw 1:54 something, and that was all I saw. I was so tired that was all I saw. I was just so happy I won.

"Then I got out of the pool and people were like 'Abby, you broke the record.' I was like 'what!' It was so exciting. It was my last race of the weekend, so I ended it on a high note. It was everything I could ask for. It was a super cool moment."

She was obviously happy to improve her time at the Big Ten Championships, but it didn't quite provide the rush of that first record breaking swim.

The Purdue women were eighth at the 14-team 2025 Big Ten Championships. It was a more crowded Big Ten Championships than the first couple Marcukaitis experienced with the Boilermakers. The conference added USC and UCLA, a couple women's teams ranked in the top 25 in the country, to its list of programs during the 2024-25 school year. The host Buckeyes took the title at the Big Ten Championships for the fifth time in six years.

Marcukaitis also led off the 200-yard medley (tenth) relay and the 400-yard medley relay (eighth) for the Boilermakers at the conference championships, and she won the C Final of the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 53.24 seconds placing 17th overall in the event.

At the 2021 MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Swimming and Diving Finals, Marcukaitis won the state championship in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 55.07 seconds. She said since high school she has shaved about four seconds off her top 200 backstroke time, about two seconds off her best 100 backstroke time and about one second from her top 50 backstroke time.

At the NCAA Division 1 level, everyone is so talented already that cutting a second or two in a race or even fractions of a second are a major improvement. Marcukaitis said it is a combination of things that have made her faster and faster over her first three years with the Boilermakers in West Lafayette, Ind.: time, training, technique, nutrition, support from teammates and coaches, etc.

"The competition is just so much better, so you have to get better if you want to compete at this level," Marcukaitis said. "You have to have a 'why' for swimming, and a passion for it. One of my 'whys' is to do it for my community. I look back to my high school years, and I think back to all the kids who couldn't and didn't have this opportunity. And I just think, well you have to go and you have to be successful. So, that has driven me a lot.

"And just doing it for fun."

It's fun to break records, but the big fun is traveling around the country for meets with her teammates, and all the friends she has met along the way at school.

"One of my favorite parts is just having built in best friends that you see all day," Marcukaitis said.

She's enjoyed attending football and basketball games with teammates, and getting to know other athletes. Freshman year she was a part of a class for student-athletes to help them transition to being a college athlete.

"They teach you how much you need to sleep, more nutrition things, how to become a leader for your team and things like that. Through that class you get to meet a lot of athletes. You go around in the Brees Center [the student athlete academic center] and you'll see them there, or at the athlete dining hall, or in your classes or around the campus and it is just super fun to have a cool group of people to hang out with too. Then you go to football games, and you go 'oh, that's my friend playing there.'"

She certainly gets a lot of time with her swim teammates.

"We have doubles on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We have doubles three times a week, which means we have practice in the morning and then afternoon, then we also lift. I've started four times a week, but most of our team does three," Marcukaitis said. "We also do dry land [workouts]. We didn't really do dry land or lift before college, so that was a big adjustment. But I think it has helped me a lot the past few years, after freshman year when I adjusted to everything."

Improved strength and conditioning has certainly helped her drop her times. As far as her technique in the backstroke, Marcukaitis said she has seen big improvement in her underwaters over the years. She said she has upped the amount of dolphin kicks she'll get in underwater during a turn from five to nine or ten.



Purdue University swimmer Abby Marcukaitis, of Middleville, celebrates with her 2025 P2S Award for "unrelenting efforts, display of loyalty and dedication to Purdue swimming and diving." **Photo provided**

She has enjoyed being a part of the Boilermaker swim family so far. She has had good mentors, and is enjoying transitioning into the role of a mentor herself as she nears graduation. The Boilermaker team makes up small families of its own with a freshman or two, a sophomore or two, a junior or two and a senior or two forming workout groups for the year. They'll support each other during dry land activities, go out for occasional dinners, and just generally keep an eye out for each other.

There is always a lot of support, both in and around the pool and in the classroom. Marcukaitis is thankful for the advisors and tutors that have helped her get through school so far. With so much time spent traveling, competing and practicing they are a vital resource. She is working on a double major in supply chain and operations management and in marketing while adding a certificate in collaborative leadership too.

A combination of classroom work and partnerships with real world corporations have Marcukaitis feeling good about her studies so far.

"A lot of the classes are so beneficial," Marcukaitis said. "In one of my classes, we worked with Pepsi Co., and with actual workers from there and we basically were given the opportunity to build their whole supply chain for a new product So, we met with the workers every other week to give them updates and so they could give us guidance for the project. At the end of the whole semester, we presented to executives in groups of five of us. Purdue just gives us a lot of opportunities to actually gain real life experience."

Marcukaitis hopes her experience in the pool will help her add another Purdue record during her senior season. She has a top time of 52.82 in the 100-yard backstroke, third best all time at Purdue and just a tenth of a second off of Smailis' 2019 record of 52.72.

She heads back to school in August and training really ramps up in September. The Boilermakers open the season at the University of Michigan's Be Better; Invitational.



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# Residents can assist in annual summer turkey tally

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources would like the public's help to tally wild turkeys this summer.

From July 1 through Aug. 31, the DNR will run its annual wild turkey brood survey – a community science effort for people statewide to report sightings of wild turkeys and turkey broods (hens with their young). By taking just a few minutes to report any turkeys, people will be contributing valuable data to track the health of the state's turkey population.

Wild turkey numbers in Michigan rebounded from near extinction in the early 20th century to now being found in every county across the state.

"This bird's comeback is something to celebrate, and now we need the public's help to keep tabs on our turkeys going forward," said Adam Bump, the DNR's upland game bird specialist.

The DNR's goal with the turkey brood survey, according to Bump, is to get a clear picture of how turkeys are doing across Michigan.

"Each report from the public, whether it's a single turkey or a big flock, is like a piece of the puzzle that helps us understand turkey reproduction and survival," Bump said. "We have a great hunting and wildlife-watching community here in Michigan, and we're excited to see everyone pitch in and share their turkey sightings."

Now in its third year, Michigan's wild turkey brood survey is part of a multistate initiative to monitor turkey populations. The survey follows a standardized protocol used by many other states, supported by the National Wild Turkey Federation. By participating, Michigan joins a larger conservation effort to identify regional trends in turkey populations and address potential declines seen in other parts of the country.

"In Michigan, our turkey population is currently stable, but we know that in many states, turkeys have been declining," Bump said. "This survey is an important way for us to detect any changes here at home and make sure our turkeys remain a success story. It's also a chance for the public to be directly involved in wildlife science.

"When you report a turkey brood, you're contributing to conservation – it really does make a difference."

Anyone in Michigan can help by reporting wild turkey sightings between July 1 and Aug. 31, using the online turkey brood survey form to submit observations. That form can be found on the Michigan.gov/Turkey webpage.

The survey asks seven short questions about what observers saw. Respondents will be asked to note the number of hens (adult females), poults (juvenile turkeys) and gobblers or jakes (adult or young males) in each sighting, as well as the date and location. It takes only a minute or two to complete a report.

The DNR uses an email address login for the survey to ensure each observer is counted only once, which helps in analyzing the data.

"Linking each sighting to an email simply lets us tally how many individual people are contributing," said Caitlin Ott-Conn, a laboratory scientist with the DNR Wildlife Division. "This way we know if we're hearing from 100 people once each, or one person 100 times – it makes the data stronger."

Ott-Conn oversees the survey data collection and analysis. After the survey period, the DNR Wildlife Division's biologists will compile all public submissions to calculate measures like the average brood size (number of poults per hen) – a key index of turkey reproductive success.

"We're basically looking at how many chicks each hen is raising on average," Ott-Conn said. "If we see, for example, a high poult-per-hen ratio, that tells us it's been a good summer for turkey production. If the numbers are low, it could signal challenges like bad weather or other factors affecting turkey survival."

Year by year, Ott-Conn said such observations show trends that help inform wildlife management decisions.

She specifically praised the value of public input, saying, "Michigan is a big state, and our team can't be everywhere. Reports from residents all over help fill in gaps we'd never capture otherwise. It's a true community science effort, and we're grateful for each and every person who takes the time to send in a turkey sighting."

This midsummer period is when turkey broods are most visible. Turkeys nest in late spring; by July, many hens are out and about with their newly hatched poults following along. Through July and August, people may notice hen turkeys crossing roads or foraging in fields with a line of little ones in tow.



A handful of turkey chicks wanders through the grass in Irving Township Wednesday morning. With turkey broods regularly out roaming throughout July and August the Michigan DRN is asking for help with its annual turkey brood survey, where residents can report sightings online. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

"You might spot turkeys while hiking, driving, or even in your yard – whenever it happens, just remember the details and take a moment to report it online," said Ott-Conn.

The more people who participate, the better coverage there is across Michigan's landscape according to the DNR.

Since the turkey brood survey began in 2023, Michiganders have submitted more than 11,500 reports, tallying over 25,000 hens, 65,000 poults and 11,000 males.

"We were thrilled with the response," said Bump. "It shows how much people care about our wildlife. We're hoping to see that enthusiasm continue and even grow this year. If you missed the survey before, now's your chance. If you reported turkeys last year, we'd love to have you back telling us what you're seeing in 2025."

In other DNR news, the next meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission is slated for today, July 10, in Lansing.

The meeting agenda includes an update on the status of lake whitefish, a legislative report and several land

transactions, and a presentation on generally accepted operation practices for shooting ranges like the new

Barry County Shooting Range on Chief Noonday Road/M-179 west of Hastings in Rutland Township.

The day in Lansing starts at 9:30 a.m. in Rooms M119-121 on the West Campus of Lansing Community

College, 5708 Cornerstone Drive, in Lansing.

For more information or to request time to speak at future meetings, email NRC@Michigan.gov.

A list of future meeting dates can be found at Michigan.gov/NRC.

The Michigan DNR would also like to let people know about the upcoming NotMiSpecies webinar series.

It's a collection that explores how agencies, universities and locally led organizations are working together

to protect our state's natural resources through the Michigan Invasive Species Program. There are more

than three dozen past webinars people can watch on topics ranging from best boating practices to steps to

take to protect a backyard.

— *BB*

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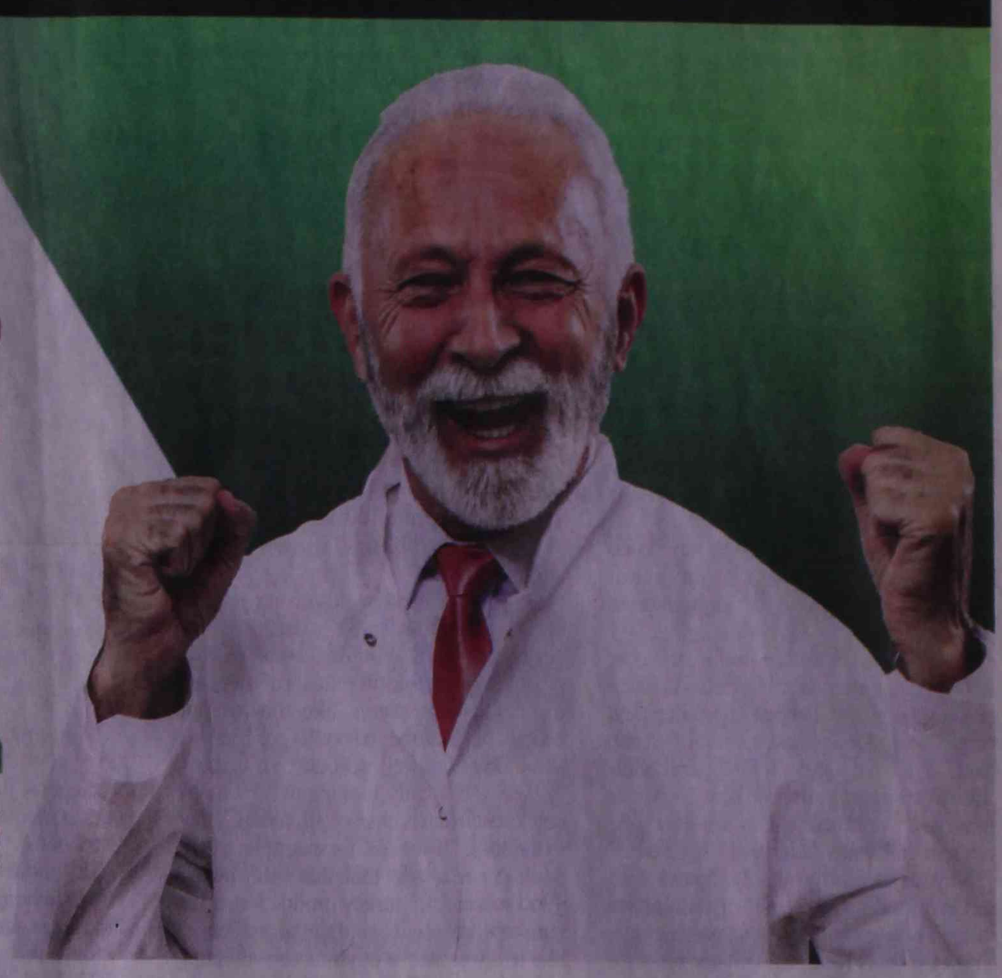
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