

INSIDE
TODAY'S EDITION
REGISTRATION OPENS FOR CYCLING RACE
PAGE 2



TK LADIES DOWN PREVIOUSLY UNBEATEN CALEDONIA SQUAD
PAGE 8

Season's GREETINGS
FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!
VIEW Newspaper Group

Hastings Public Library
227 E State Street
Hastings MI 49058

VOL. 171, NO. 52

THE HASTINGS BANNER

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BARRY COUNTY SINCE 1856
VIEW Newspaper Group

www.HastingsBanner.com Thursday, December 25, 2025 $1.50



Bruce "The Moose" Nelson stands with the cow elk he shot on Dec. 13 in Atlanta, Mich. He waited 61 years for an elk permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. **Courtesy photo**

Local hunter bags elk after 61-year wait

Molly Macleod
Editor

Bruce "The Moose" Nelson may have to change his nickname to "The Elk" after his most recent hunting excursion.

The Hastings-based hunter, 87, waited 61 years to take his shot at an elk. After receiving his long-awaited cow elk permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in June of this year, Nelson needed only a day of action in Atlanta, Mich., before he experienced the moment he's been waiting for.

Armed with his .450 Bushmaster, Nelson took his shot at 4:25 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13.

"I shot her at 100 yards, and she dropped right in her tracks — never moved," Nelson said.

Nelson's only complaint? It only took one day. Nelson's permit allowed him the whole week, from Dec. 13 to Dec. 21, to shoot one cow elk.

Thanks to his efficiency in the field, Nelson and his buddy, Rick Reynolds, were able to return to West Michigan by Sunday, Dec. 14, with a cow elk in tow. The elk is currently being processed at Fox Farm Processing in Freeport.

"It takes quite a while to cut up a 306-pound elk," Nelson laughed.

Nelson gave praise to his guide, Don Priest, and the staff at Canada Creek Ranch, his home base during the hunt.

"We just had a fantastic time up and a fantastic time back," Nelson said.

Nelson, an avid hunter, can't get around as well as he used to in his younger days. But that posed no problem to his trip thanks to his guide, Priest. Nelson and his entourage drove around in a truck, looking for elk. Once a herd was spotted, Nelson got out of the truck to take his shot.

"So they drove around, and then we jumped out and got in position to shoot the cow (elk)," Nelson said. "Actually, I saw this big cow and three other cows, and a four-by-four bull, all one right behind the other. And I took the biggest cow — that was just exciting," Nelson said.

After taking down the elk, Nelson practiced a longtime tradition among elk-hunters: smearing blood from the elk on his forehead.

"And that makes you an official, successful elk hunter," Nelson said.

Heavy snow and a recent ice

See **ELK** on 3

Sunday blaze in Middleville ends in total loss, no fatalities

Karen Turko-Ebright
Staff Writer

Fire crews arrived on the scene of a house fire at 128 Ellis St. in the Village of Middleville on Sunday morning, Dec. 21, for a fight that would last several hours.

Fire Chief Bill Richardson from Thornapple Township Emergency Services said the call from central dispatch came in for his crew at 8:36 a.m.

"We had 10 firefighters on scene within 10 minutes. I think initial units were on scene in three minutes," Richardson said. "No fatalities, the house was a total loss. We were able to save the attached garage with two cars in it and the cat."

Richardson added that two ambulances from his department transferred the only two occupants in the house to a nearby hospital, where they are now recovering.

He said that the cause of the fire will remain undetermined.

"The house was not safe for our firefighters to go in and do

See **LOSS** on 3



Fire crews battled a blaze for seven hours on Ellis Street in Middleville on Sunday, Dec. 21. The two occupants of the home were transported to a nearby hospital, where they are now recovering. The house was a total loss. **Courtesy photos**

Second murder trial delayed back to March '26

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

Yet another potential trial related to the alleged May 2024 murder of a 79-year-old Battle Creek man has been pushed back to the first half of 2026.

The trial of Brady West, a 30-year-old resident of Calhoun County, was slated for earlier this month but was recently adjourned. The trial was delayed after a motion hearing before Judge Michael Schipper in Barry County District Court 56B in Hastings on Dec. 10.

"We just got an adjournment, but we don't have a new (trial) date yet," said Julie Nakfoor Pratt, Barry County prosecutor. "It will be in April or early May."

According to Pratt, the trial date was pushed back after West's defense counsel requested additional information from the county prosecutor's office.

West isn't alone in having his trial date rescheduled.

See **DELAYED** on 3

View Newspaper Group Hastings office relocating

View Newspaper Group, publishers of *The Hastings Banner*, *The Reminder* and *The Sun and News*, will start the new year with a new office location in Hastings. View Newspaper Group is moving to 1510 N. Broadway in Hastings, a building shared with Broadway Dental. The new office location, approximately a half mile south of the current location at 1351 N. M-43 Hwy., will be open for business starting at 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 2, 2026. The phone number will remain the same: 269-945-9554.

View Newspaper Group publishes 22 community newspapers in Michigan, reaching more than 350,000 households by U.S. Mail each week. In addition to *The Banner*, *Reminder*, and *Sun and News* in West Michigan, View also publishes *The Lowell Ledger*, *Buyer's Guide and News*, *Battle Creek Shopper News*, *Ad-Visor and Chronicle* in Marshall and *Daily News* based in Greenville. For more information, visit mihomepaper.com or contact View Newspaper Group Brand Manager Emily Caswell at ecawell@mihomepaper.com or 810-513-8501.

— *MM*



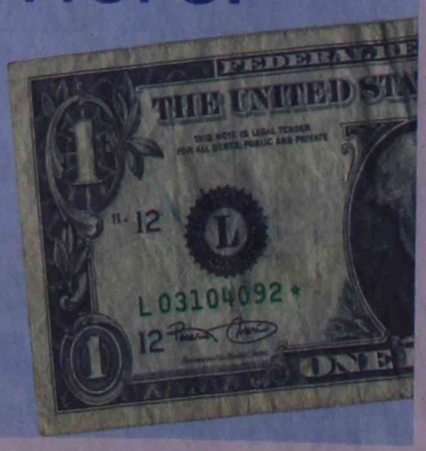
ALBERTS LEADS TK LADIES AT PLAINWELL TOURNEY WITH RUNNER-UP FINISH
PAGE 8

Hastings Public Library
227 E State Street
Hastings MI 49058

SUBSCRIBE
TO SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM
YOUR CONTRIBUTION MAKES TRUSTWORTHY REPORTING POSSIBLE
SUBSCRIBE TODAY: 269-945-9554

CAR-RT LOT**C003
T1 P2 203 203
HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY
227 E STATE ST
HASTINGS MI 49058-1954

Spend it here.
Keep it here.
SHOP LOCAL
INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY.
VIEW Newspaper Group
THE HASTINGS BANNER



Registration opens for Yankee Springs cycling race

Jayson Bussa
Contributing Writer

Mark VanTongeren knows that his event isn't necessarily one that will attract thousands of people.

That's part of the fun of it.

"It's such a difficult race that it's never going to grow a lot," said VanTongeren, who is race director of the Lords of the Springs bike race, which is slated for Sept. 12, 2026 in Yankee Springs. "It's asking a rider to bike on pretty treacherous single-track trails over at the Deep Lake Trail System and then having to bike a lot of those hilly, dirt roads."

"I never designed it to be a big race," he added. I always knew it would be too difficult to grow a whole lot, but that's just part of what people like about the race. They know, when they've completed it, they've done something a lot of people can't do."

Now in its eighth year, the Lord of the Springs event has opened up for registration. Participants can sign up for 19- or 37-mile races that take riders on both single-track trails and gravel roads throughout the state recreation area in Yankee Springs.

The race kicks off and finishes up at Camp Manitou-Lin. The event routinely attracts around 350 participants each year. Registrations can be made at lordofthesprings.com.

"It doesn't really have a capacity limit.," VanTongeren said. "The main benefit to signing up now is to get a race on the calendar so you are motivated to train through the rough winter months."

The race unfolds in clearly defined phases, each testing a different skill set. Riders are sent off in waves, rolling through a five-mile lead-out that quickly strings the field out on mostly gravel terrain. From there, the tone shifts sharply as competitors dive into five demanding miles of the Yankee Springs Deep Lake mountain bike trail, where technical single-track and punchy climbs begin to separate contenders.



Registration for the annual Lord of the Springs cycling race is now open. The race starts and finishes at Camp Manitou-Lin.

After emerging from the woods, 37-mile racers settle into a long grind across 18 miles of Barry County gravel roads, winding past Audubon Sanctuary scenery before hitting the notorious Sager and Shaw two-tracks.

Regardless of distance, the closing act favors speed: a fast, five-mile run to the finish on mostly gravel roads, where any remaining energy could be unleashed in a final push to the line.

VanTongeren, who is from Grand Rapids, said that when it came time to design an event of this nature, Barry County and its rich network of trails and gravel roads was a no-brainer. The county is also home to the Barry Roubaix, the largest gravel road cycling race in the country.

"The combination of Barry County and the single-track trails at Yankee Springs and then Camp Manitou-Lin, the great home base to start and finish the race, that's pretty rare," VanTongeren said. "There are very few places in Michigan that can offer those three things in one place.

The event also features a kids loop that can be used for free. Riders see how many laps they can do in 10 minutes and winners even receive metals. VanTongeren said that organizers are seeking volunteers, as well.

DID YOU SEE?

MEMORIAL TREE INCLUDES LOST LOVED ONES THIS CHRISTMAS

Locals are including their lost loved ones in the holiday season this year. Gail Lowe, who spearheaded the "Memorial Christmas Tree," said her daughter's memory inspired her to petition the Hastings City Council to designate the tree. Barry County residents have been adorning the tree this month, located near Thornapple Plaza across from the Hastings Public Library, with custom ornaments that remember lost loved ones. Ornaments must be taken down from the tree by the first week in January, Lowe said. **Photo by Molly Macleod**



Supper club offers class on 'comfort foods'

The Hastings Healthy Living Supper Club is offering local residents a way to kick off the New Year in a healthy way, hosting a winter plant-based cooking class on "comfort foods" on Sunday, Jan. 4, from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Those attending the class will learn about recipes using whole foods, such as raw cashews or tofu, to make a tasty cream sauce. Participants will also enjoy food demonstrations and samples while learning the health benefits.

Featured recipes are set to include mac and cheese, a potato dish, spinach artichoke dip, and chicken-like nuggets.

The presentation will take place in the Community Hall of the Hastings Adventist Elementary School on Terry Lane in Hastings, off of Starr School Road.

There is no cost to attend the class, though good-will offerings are welcome.

The Hastings Healthy Living Supper Club is a health ministry supported by the Hastings Seventh-day Adventist Church to educate its members and the community.

For more information or to RSVP for the event, persons may text with their name to 269-804-9959 or email Hhealthylivingsupperclub@gmail. — *DM*

Michigan still shields governor, lawmakers from FOIA as high fees hinder access

Lee Marentette
Special to The Banner

A decade ago, Michigan was dead last in national government transparency rankings.

While it has made some improvements, Michigan, alongside Massachusetts, remains one of two states where both the governor and the legislature are exempt from public records laws.

The Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows access to most records of public bodies. The most recent legislation aimed at changing FOIA was rejected last month by House Speaker Matt Hall, in favor of reforms to publicly disclose legislative earmarks before the state budget was passed.

Moves like Hall's raise the question of where we stand nationally when it comes to providing access to government records.

Collaborative journalism nonprofit MuckRock assists in filing and tracking public information requests across the country. Their website provides up to date statistics on each state, which can help gauge where Michigan ranks today.

Statewide, 21% of requests come with a fee attached, which is the fourth highest rate in the country; Oregon is the highest at 27.6%.

The average cost of a public records request in Michigan is nearly $5,200, which is the 13th highest in the nation; California is the highest at $31,565, but only requests fees 2.7% of the time.

University of Florida's Freedom of Information Project Director David Cuillier has spent two decades researching government information. A report he authored in 2019 using MuckRock data found a correlation between better transparency and stricter provisions, particularly short response deadlines and mandatory fee-shifting.

Michigan's law contains both of these, as well as very high fees for violations. Possibly due to these factors, Michigan does rank among the middle of the states in requestor success rate at 34%; Alabama has the worst success rate at 15.8%.

However, expensive fees still present a significant challenge to citizens seeking public records.

While the overall success rate may be high in Michigan, the cost may dissuade many requestors from seeking information in the first place.

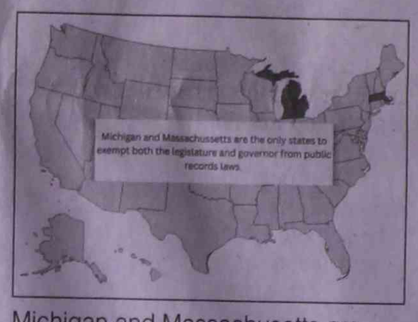
Cuillier suggested every state should have an independent office, or ombudsman, to aid the public and ensure the law is followed correctly. One state that does this is Connecticut. To him, transparency success comes down to one important part of the law: Enforcement.

In Michigan, every public body designates its own FOIA coordinator, and the way different offices approach requests can vary. He stressed that FOIA is less effective when run from within an agency, where it is susceptible to abuse through exorbitant fees.

"You could pass the best law in the world, but if it has no teeth, the government is just going to ignore it, and it won't make a difference," Cuillier said.

In Lansing, state lawmakers have gotten used to operating with no concern about FOIA at all.

Attorney General Dana Nessel believes that in the State Capitol a culture has developed that sees transparency laws as a nuisance rather than a necessity for open government. She says legislators have become accustomed to candid, sometimes hostile email correspondence and may be more reluctant to discuss bills if made publicly available.



Michigan and Massachusetts are the only states to exempt both the legislature and governor from public records laws. **Courtesy photo**

"If all you've ever known is that these conversations are not made public – these conversations are not exposed – you get used to it," Nessel said. "Then when you feel like you have to do more than that, all you can see is the negatives."

Nessel says FOIA requests have also been increasingly used for what she categorizes as harassment, both from the public and lawmakers, particularly the House Oversight Committee. A large increase in requests also has put a strain on her office.

Because of long response times, exorbitant fees and exemptions, many journalists increasingly work around, or without, FOIA requests.

Ron Fonger of the Flint Journal covered the Flint water crisis largely without FOIA, primarily through public meetings. Records that Fonger did report on were self-released by then Gov. Rick Snyder's administration following public pressure, or were revealed through criminal prosecutions.

"I don't know that we ultimately received everything that otherwise would have been subject to FOIA," Fonger said.

Government officials have become increasingly resistant to records requests, according to MLive President John Hiner. He believes that a system with high fees and long waits to receive those records is working against the public, not for it.

"We spend tens of thousands of dollars a year just to get information that, in a more transparent state, we wouldn't have to pay anything (for)," Hiner said.

With no success in creating a legislative solution to expand FOIA to include the governor and legislature, many have suggested alternative measures as an option.

Nessel said many candidates have run on pro-transparency platforms only to abandon promises to expand FOIA once in office.

Any proposed change to Michigan's FOIA law may need to be put on a statewide ballot to decide, Nessel said.

Lobbyists and news outlets have been trying to no avail to get legislation passed for the last decade. They, too, have begun to look elsewhere. A statewide poll from the Michigan Press Association in 2025 indicated 89% of Michigan voters would support a ballot initiative to change the law.

"Once these people are in positions of authority, and they've been benefiting from something like a lack of FOIA, they're just not going to (change the law)," Nessel said. "It's got to be through a ballot proposal."

All MuckRock data used was from Nov. 29. As this data is continually updated, results may have fluctuated slightly in the time since.

Lee Marentette is a junior at Grand Valley State University. He serves as the news editor of the Grand Valley Lanthorn. Marentette is a graduate of Thornapple Kellogg High School.

• Closed-Cell Foam Insulation
• Blown-In Attic Insulation
Nelson's SPRAY FOAM, LLC
Nelson Schmucker
1700 N. Ainger Rd. • Charlotte, MI 48813
517-983-0954
Start Saving Today ~ Use Spray Foam

GD WOOD PRODUCTS
Family Owned & Operated
SAW MILL OFFICE
517-254-4463
Conscientious Timber Harvester Wanting to Buy Standing Timber

YOU'RE NOT JUST OUR READERS.
You're our friends, our family, our neighbors... and our future.
VIEW Newspaper Group

THE HASTINGS BANNER

(USPS #71830)
1351 N M-43 Hwy.
Hastings, MI 49058
269-945-9554
www.hastingsbanner.com

VIEWnewspaper Group
Rick Burrough, President
Wes Smith, Group Publisher
Molly Macleod, Editor

CONTACT US
EDITORIAL
mmacleod@mihomepaper.com
DELIVERY QUESTIONS
circulation@hastingsbanner.com
CLASSIFIED ADS
classifiedads@hastingsbanner.com

ADVERTISING
All advertising in The Hastings Banner is subject to the conditions in the applicable rate card or advertising contract, copies of which are available from the Ad Dept., 1351 N M-43 Hwy., Hastings, MI 49058 (269-945-9554). This newspaper reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Our ad takers have no authority to bind this newspaper and only publication of an ad constitutes acceptance of the advertiser's order.
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Chris Silverman
csilverman@mihomepaper.com

DELIVERY
Circulation Hours: Mon.-Th. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Home delivery: 269-945-9554
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
The Hastings Banner
1351 N M-43 Hwy., Hastings, MI 49058
NEWSPAPER RATES
Mailed periodicals postage paid at Hastings, MI 49058 and additional offices. Published Thursday.
Barry County ..... $78/yr. or $14/mo
Adjoining Counties ..... $85/yr.
Elsewhere in Michigan ..... $90/yr.
Elsewhere in U.S. ..... $90/yr.
Single Copy $1.50

PRIVILEGE OF RESPONSE
Persons who believe they have been unfairly treated in this newspaper are always invited to telephone, or to make a written response. See the Opinion Page for contact information and our letters policy.

Copyright 2025
©2025 Jams Media, LLC
All Rights Reserved
Printed in the U.S.

Santa delivers AEDs to area high schools



Santa made early stops to Hastings High School and Thornapple Kellogg High School last week as he prepares for the big day this Thursday, Dec. 25. Jordan Mulder, owner of J Mulder Agency in Middleville, donned his Santa suit to deliver automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and "Stop the Bleed" kits to the two high schools. Mulder said he was inspired to donate the AEDs and kits through his agency after losing a high school teammate on the court. **Courtesy photo**



Several area firefighters assisted Thornapple Township Emergency Services in fighting the blaze at 128 Ellis St. in the Village of Middleville on Sunday, Dec. 21.

Recent wintery weather adds to already busy December

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

Wet and then snowy weather last Thursday and Friday provided more evidence that this winter could be a busier one – at least in comparison with the past couple of years – for the crew at the Barry County Road Commission, as well as other county agencies.

Jake Welch, BCRC manager, said crews were out treating county roadways as early as 3 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 19, after it rained in the area during the night of Thursday, Dec. 18.

"We had some rain overnight," Welch said. "It wasn't like it was a freezing rain."

With snowfall occurring on Friday, crews were back out to make sure road conditions were made as safe as possible. A limited number of plow trucks were also in operation the following day.

"Everything had been cleared off, but we put some more material out on the roads," Welch added.

Overall, according to BCRC statistics, the "weather event" led to crews to work 201 hours and use 410 yards of material on local roads at a cost of about $50,000.

Welch said most of the cost, or at least added cost, was due to the use of the various materials – gravel, sand and salt – used to melt or break up any ice on the roadways. Snow or not, crews would still have been out working, whether plowing, clearing trees or completing other related duties.

"There are some savings (when it doesn't snow)," Welch said. "But it's not as stark of a difference as people might think.

"The bigger story may be the early winter in general," he added.

From Nov. 10 to Dec. 20, the BCRC expended about $728,000 to address road conditions. That's up from $524,000 for the same period last year and a dramatic spike from $136,000 spent at the start of the winter of 2023.

"That was an incredibly mild winter," he said of 2023. "Last year, everybody felt it was a more normal winter again."

The wintery weather late last week also had local law enforcement agencies out responding to calls.

"According to our stats, we had three accidents that morning, with one unrelated to the weather," said Undersheriff Kevin Erb with the Barry County Sheriff's Office. "The weather wasn't near as bad as they had led us to believe, fortunately for us."

While also happy the weather didn't result in more difficult road conditions, Welch said he'd prefer the weather to be more like last year when temperatures dipped below freezing and then generally stayed that way until spring. That compared to the early winter conditions this year, with temperatures climbing back into the mid-40s just before the Christmas holiday.

According to Welch, the cycle of temperatures dipping below freezing only to return to warmer conditions can "wreak havoc on our roads."

"It's just not good for your road system," he added.

ELK

Continued from Page 1

storm in Northern Michigan made dragging the elk back to the truck somewhat difficult.

"It was a tough job dragging it out, even at 100 yards," Nelson said. "… It took four guys to drag it that 100 yards back to the road."

Nelson applied for his first elk permit through the DNR in 1964, at the age of 26. Unsuccessful in securing a permit that year, he tried again, unsuccessfully, in 1965. Nelson said the state closed elk hunting after the 1965 season for about 20 years, before opening it back up in the mid-1980s. Nelson has applied for a permit every year since, and has been denied each year — up until this year.

This month's trip may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Nelson. Now that he's bagged his elk, he said he must wait 10 more years before he can apply for another permit. That would put him near 100 years old.

"They'd have to take me in a wheelchair," he laughed.

A lifelong hunter of all kinds of game, he said this experience ranks near the top for him.

"I would have to say it would almost be number one," Nelson said. "I've waited so long for it, and I always wanted to go elk hunting. And it's fabulous country up there, too. You just couldn't ask for anything nicer."

DELAYED

Continued from Page 1

Brandon Mousseau, 29, also of Calhoun County, was originally set to go to trial in Barry County on an open murder charge in mid-December. But Schipper agreed to a motion by Mousseau's defense attorney, Lyonel Woolley, to move the trial back to the first week in March 2026 during a status conference in late October.

At the time, Woolley said Pratt also approved the change in dates, though Pratt disputed that in saying she was "not in complete agreement" with any delay.

"It's painful to my office," she said. "It's painful to the victim's family."

Schipper defended his ruling, saying the process of going to trial was still moving forward at an appropriate pace.

"We move quicker than anybody," he said, while making his ruling at the October hearing. "But we're not going to rush any case, especially a murder case. So, I think this makes sense."

Mousseau and West each face open murder charges as fourth-degree habitual offenders in the death of 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 the 79-year-old Sykes with the blunt side of a hatchet before running him over with a vehicle.

West's trial is set for mid-January 2026.

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

LOSS

Continued from Page 1

inside firefighting," Richardson said. "We had to pull it apart with an excavator. We were there for seven hours."

Anyone who wants to donate to the family that lost their home can contact Barry County United Way, according to Richardson.

Several area fire crews assisted Thornapple Township Emergency Services in fighting the blaze. They included both Wayland and Hastings city fire departments, plus Leighton, Yankee Springs and Caledonia township fire departments.



Crews battled a fire in Middleville for hours Sunday morning, Dec. 21. The home was a total loss.



Financial FOCUS®

Provided by the Barry County offices of Edward Jones



Andrew Cove, CFP®, AAMS® AFFP®
Financial Advisor
421 W. Woodlawn Ave.
Hastings, MI 49058
(269) 945-3553

Member SIPC

Jeff Domenico, AAMS® CRPC®
Financial Advisor
450 Meadow Run Dr., Suite 100
Hastings, MI 49058
(269) 948-8265

Take control: Why budgeting doesn't have to feel restrictive

Let's be honest: The word "budget" doesn't exactly spark joy for most people. It can feel restrictive or even generate feelings of guilt about past spending choices. But what if budgeting could feel empowering? When done right, it's simply about understanding your money and making sure it aligns with what truly matters to you.

Who needs a budget? While nearly everyone can benefit from budgeting, it's especially helpful if you're just starting out on your own, if your expenses exceed your income or if you're working toward a big goal like buying a home or retiring. Major life changes — marriage, a new baby, a job change or even retirement itself — are also perfect times to take a fresh look at your finances.

If your spending causes you stress or you simply want clarity about where your money goes each month, budgeting can help. Here are a few tips to help get you started:

Dispense with the dread. Often, the hardest part of budgeting is just getting started. Try breaking it down into small, manageable steps, and dedicate 30 minutes a week to tracking your income and expenses. Pair budgeting with something enjoyable — a favorite coffee or a relaxing activity — to make it less of a chore.

If you have no idea how much you spend, start by simply observing your buying habits for a few months. Review your checking and credit card accounts to see money coming in and going out. You can't change the past but you can adjust for your future.

Find your level of detail. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to budgeting. You might start by tracking just total income and expenses or by using the popular 50/30/20 rule: 50% for necessities, 30% for wants and 20% for savings and debt reduction. Some people prefer to build detailed categories for everything from groceries to entertainment, while others keep broader categories that work better for their lifestyles.

Technology can be your friend here. Budget apps and Ai-enabled spreadsheets can pull information directly from your bank and credit card statements, making the process much easier.

Make it work for you. Once you've tracked your spending, look for areas to adjust. Can you swap brand-name items for generics? Are there subscriptions you're not using? Sometimes the biggest impact comes from examining your largest expenses — housing, utilities, transportation, insurance — to find opportunities to save.

If you can't make room in your budget, you may need to revisit and reprioritize your financial goals. A financial advisor can help you understand your options and any trade-offs.

Stay on track. Check in with your budget monthly, quarterly or annually — whatever works for you. When life changes, your budget should too. Salary increases, bonuses, new expenses or significant life events are all good reasons to review and adjust.

Above all, the goal of a budget isn't perfection. It's progress toward financial confidence and peace of mind. A good budget shouldn't limit you — it should free you to spend guilt-free on what matters while saving intentionally for your future.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Kiwanis honors young citizens

Hastings elementary school and middle school teachers have selected students to be honored as citizens of the month by the Kiwanis Club of Hastings.

Students are selected by their teachers for reasons such as excellent citizenship, attitude, conduct, academics, character, service, leadership and sportsmanship.

The citizens of the month for November (with parents' names in parentheses) include:

Central – Opal Day (student of Darnell Day and Catie Case).

Northeastern – Skylar Lucas (student of Blake and Joyelle Lucas) and Lilly Schnerre (student of Michael and Katie Schnerre).

Southeastern – Liam VerWys (student of James VerWys and Rebecca Hindenach) and Gordyn Parsons (student of Gary and Nicole Parsons).

Star – Dorian Patterson (student of Cory Patterson and Jenessa Miller) and Clara Lilley (student of Matthew and Jennifer Lilley).

Hastings Middle School — Sixth graders Jordan Ziny (student of Charles and Courtney Ziny) and Weston Walsh (student of Andrew Walsh and Geneva Knapp); seventh graders Carter Graham (student of Dennis and Nina Graham) and Willow Merrick (student of Jon and Maiya Merrick) and eighth graders Charlotte Bagley (student of Jonathan and Kristin Bagley) and Jasmin Ramirez-Tapia (student of Arlene Ortiz-Cruz). — *Hastings Area School System*



Several Hastings middle schoolers were recently named citizens of the month. They include sixth graders Jordan Ziny and Weston Walsh; seventh graders Carter Graham and Willow Merrick and eighth graders Charlotte Bagley and Jasmin Ramirez-Tapia.



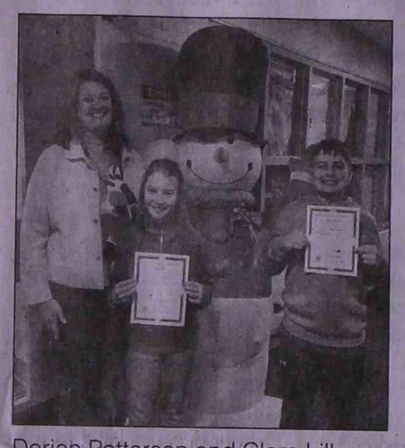
Skylar Lucas and Lilly Schnerre are Northeastern Elementary's Citizens of the Month.



Opal Day was honored as Central Elementary's Citizen of the Month. **Courtesy photos**



Southeastern's Citizens of the Month for November are Liam VerWys and Gordyn Parsons.



Dorian Patterson and Clara Lilley are Star Elementary's November Kiwanis Citizens of the Month.

YOU'RE NOT JUST OUR READERS.

You're our friends, our family, our neighbors... and our future.

VIEW Group

Your Community Connection

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 January 22, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of 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:

Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Christopher Vanstee and Tami Vanstee, husband and wife

Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns

Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation

Date of Mortgage: November 21, 2016

Date of Mortgage Recording: December 8, 2016

Amount claimed due on date of notice: $274,156.83

Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Thornapple, Barry County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 52, Boulder Creek Estates, according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 6 of Plats, Page 23.

Common street address (if any): 5570 Ravine Dr, Middleville, MI 49333-8371

The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).

If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to 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.

This notice is from a debt collector.

Date of notice: December 18, 2025

Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515

1580154
(12-18)(01-08)



The Barry Conservation District is hosting a workshop session, "Boom or Bust: Invasion of the Spongy Moth" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Hastings on Friday, Jan. 9, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Courtesy photo**

Barry Conservation District to host workshop on spongy moth invasion

The Barry Conservation District is getting ready for a fight, hosting a workshop session, "Boom or Bust: Invasion of the Spongy Moth" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Hastings on Friday, Jan. 9, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The workshop will feature University of Chicago professor Dr. Greg Dwyer and the Barry Conservation District staff for an update on this invasive species. The workshop is to help those interested to learn about the moth, the virus and what they can do about it.

According to the BCD, the spongy moth, like other moths and butterflies, has a 4-stage life cycle – egg, larvae, pupa and adult. It begins with the egg stage, where each egg mass can contain 600-1,000 eggs.

The eggs hatch into larvae, or caterpillars, and it is this stage where spongy moths reportedly feed continuously, causing severe to complete defoliation of trees if the population is large enough.

The workshop will include an outdoor ID session in the afternoon, weather permitting, so those planning to attend are asked to come dressed for the outdoors.

Cost of the program, which includes a lunch, is $15 for BCD members and $21 for non-members. Though, members can attend the program only for free, while non-members may participate for $8.

Persons are requested to register for the workshop by Friday, Jan. 2, to reserve a lunch and may do so online at https://wl.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E351193&id=438.

The BCD has also compiled more information, links, and a list of contractors who can help, at barrycd.org/learn/spongymoth. Or persons may contact the BCD via email at barryconservation@macd.org, or by calling 269-908-4139. — *DM*

SEN. ALBERT: Michigan should embrace new scholarship opportunity

Senator Thomas Albert

Michigan kids deserve a chance to succeed no matter where they live. Unfortunately, far too many schools in our state are failing students and their families.



State Senator Thomas Albert

As Gov. Gretchen Whitmer noted in her State of the State address earlier this year, just one of every four students in the fourth grade can read proficiently. She also noted that Michigan invests more per-pupil than most states and achieves bottom 10 results. It's unacceptable, and as a state, we must embrace opportunities to improve.

There's no one magic solution to this problem. I previously have suggested more focus on instruction time, a strengthened "Read by Grade 3" law, and several other changes designed to improve outcomes for our students. But another part of Michigan's approach should be providing more educational choices and support for students no matter what school they attend. That's why I am excited about a new opportunity that has presented itself through recently approved federal legislation related to tax policy.

States may opt in to a program that would allow privately funded scholarships to help K-12 students in both public and nonpublic settings. The money could help pay for tuition, tutoring, books and supplies, transportation and support services.

It's likely that kids from most Michigan families would be eligible for scholarships. Students must come from a household earning no more than 300% of their area's median gross income.

Organizations could form to raise money and establish scholarships for students. These scholarship-granting organizations must be a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit — a private foundation, for example, would not be allowed.

Nonprofits potentially could be set up to benefit students at all types of schools. Organizations could raise money to help kids attend nonpublic schools, for example, or a nonprofit could help kids in public schools or homeschool pay for computers, tutoring or other support services. Each organization must provide scholarships to at least 10 students, and they can't all attend the same school.

Scholarships would be funded by private donations. This plan does not take away any public money now going to education. There is a benefit for donors, who could claim a nonrefundable federal tax credit of up to $1,700 for contributions to scholarship-granting organizations.

The program begins in 2027. States must opt in through their governors, or other entities that would first have to be designated in state law. I recently introduced a resolution in the Michigan Senate calling on Gov. Whitmer to opt Michigan into this program.

Michigan residents will contribute to these nonprofits and be eligible for the federal tax credit regardless of whether the state allows scholarships to be used here. Why incentivize Michiganders to donate to nonprofits in Indiana or Ohio? We might as well put that money to work right here for families in our own communities.

More importantly, it's the right thing to do. Kids who are not getting what they need through their local public schools deserve the opportunity to seek alternatives that will help them succeed. Kids who want to stay in their neighborhood public schools also deserve more support and a better chance to thrive.

It's a win for students either way. This is an opportunity Michigan can't afford to pass up.

State Sen. Thomas Albert represents the 18th District, which includes Barry County and portions of Allegan, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Kent and Ionia counties.

Lakewood Hall of Fame seeking nominations

The Lakewood Public Schools Hall of Fame is seeking nominations for its 2026 class of inductees.

Nominations for the next class of Hall of Famers are being accepted through Jan. 30, 2026. An induction ceremony will be held at Lakewood High School on April 22, 2026.

Beginning in 2017, the Lakewood Hall of Fame was established to honor former students and staff of Lakewood who have "made an exceptional contribution to society, achieved exceptional success, brought honor and prestige to Lakewood Public Schools, and have exhibited such qualities of character and action as to be outstanding role models for our students," according to Lakewood's website.

Inductees selected for 2026 will join the growing ranks of Lakewood Hall of Famers. With the 2025 induction of Bill Bradley, Dennis Richardson and Larry and Lynne Hilton, the Hall of Fame currently boasts 23 members — and counting.

Application materials and more information can be found at http://bit.ly/4pFFx35. — *MM*

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

New Year's in Hastings: Quiet traditions, and a changing sense of celebration

DAVID W. MILLER
Special to The Banner

Across nearly a century and a half, New Year's observances in Hastings have tended toward the understated, shaped more by staying home and neighborly goodwill than by any grand spectacle.

The earliest references in the *Hastings Banner* speak of families serving the season's staples—pork roast, potatoes, winter apples, sauerkraut and pies—dishes deeply rooted not only in local custom but also in the diverse cultural heritage of Michigan. Many households added Southern-style traditions that had made their way northward in the early and mid-20th century: black-eyed peas for luck, and cornbread to symbolize the year's hoped-for abundance. Each plate carried with it a quiet wish for the months ahead.

In those years, clubs and fraternal lodges often observed the turning of the calendar by reflecting on charitable work completed, setting goals for the new year, and gathering members for simple suppers or winter entertainments. Young people could always count on the local roller rink—one of the town's most reliable cold-weather amusements—or, somewhat later, the holiday programs presented at the Strand and Barry theaters. Even during harder times, crowds filled the seats of Central Auditorium to enjoy travelogues and operettas. Yet for all the lively diversions Hastings offered, many residents recalled a quieter custom: the gentle ringing of the courthouse bell at midnight, long before sirens, horns or fireworks became New Year's staples elsewhere. In those moments, the town seemed to honor the holiday with a soft-spoken dignity all its own.

Another tradition emerged in the pages of the *Banner* itself. Each year, in January, the newspaper publishes a photograph of the community's first baby born in the new year. The portraits typically showed mother and child symbolizing the promise of new beginnings. Some years brought stories of particular note. On New Year's Eve 1948, the Hall triplets—Christopher, Carole, and Christine—were born two minutes apart at Pennock Hospital (now Corewell Health Pennock Hospital). Staff members remarked that, to their knowledge, these were the first triplets ever delivered there, a milestone that made headlines across Barry County.

Two years later, the first baby of 1950 arrived at 2:14 a.m. on January 1. The mid-century infant, Dexter Tobias, became a small symbol of hope for the town as it stepped into the modern age. As is customary, the baby—and often the family—received congratulatory gifts from Hastings merchants. The practice of showering these newborns with blankets, diapers, gift baskets and certificates has remained a steadfast gesture of goodwill across generations, reflecting the strong community spirit that defines the town.

Hastings MOOSE Lodge #628
New Year's Eve Party
Tickets Now On Sale
8:30 PM - ?
Music provided by "Savannah"
Party Favors, Midnight Buffet
~ Members Only ~

Throughout the mid-20th century, clubs and fraternal lodges often observed the turning of the calendar by reflecting on charitable work completed, setting goals for the new year, and gathering members for simple suppers or winter entertainments. Courtesy photos



The Hastings Hotel, seen here, hosted 80 guests for a swanky New Year's Eve celebration, ringing in 1960.

While most Hastings celebrations remained modest, the *Banner* occasionally chronicled more elaborate affairs. In its edition of Jan. 7, 1960, the paper reported several festive New Year's gatherings held the week before. At the Hastings Hotel, Mr. and Mrs. Tony Hein hosted a dinner party for 80 guests from 7 to 9 p.m., a lively occasion that filled the hotel with conversation and mid-winter cheer. Across town, the Hastings Country Club offered an even more dramatic setting. Its rooms were elegantly decorated with lights and featured towering six-foot-tall sparkling pink champagne glasses that became the talk of the evening. The club welcomed numerous large parties: Marshall Cook's group of 16, George Chenoweth's 20, Bob Stanley's 18, Bob Showalter's 20, George Hamate's 26, Chuck Leonard's 20 and Ralph Shirley's 14. These expansive celebrations, though far from the norm, highlighted a brief era when New Year's Eve in Hastings occasionally shimmered with exceptional flourish.

Four decades later, as the year 2000 approached, New Year's carried a very different kind of anticipation—one rooted not in festivity but in technological uncertainty. The Y2K scare, short for the "Year 2000 problem," arose from a programming practice common in the 1960s and 1970s, when computer systems stored years using only two digits to conserve memory. As 2000 neared, many systems risked interpreting "00" as 1900, potentially disrupting banking, electrical grids, hospital equipment and air-traffic control. By the late 1990s, governments and industries worldwide were investing staggering sums to locate, test and correct vulnerable software. The United States alone spent more than $100 billion in remediation, while international partners launched parallel efforts.

Public anxiety was considerable. Newspapers and television networks speculated about power outages, flight cancellations, food shortages and disruptions to healthcare. Some families stocked up on canned goods, generators, bottled water and cash, reflecting fears that everyday life could falter at the moment midnight arrived. As midnight passed first in New Zealand and gradually across Asia and Europe—with minimal disruption—confidence grew. When the clock finally struck 12 in the United States, only minor technical glitches appeared, none of them catastrophic. The seamless transition validated the exhaustive preparations and sparked debate afterward over whether the threat had been overstated or the investments had prevented a genuine crisis.

In more recent years, Hastings has adopted a distinctly modern way of welcoming the new year. Since 2009, the city has hosted an annual New Year's Eve community celebration designed to provide residents with a festive local option rather than requiring long drives to Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo or Detroit. Centered at the intersection of State and Jefferson streets, the event begins at 9 p.m. on Dec. 31 and builds steadily toward midnight. The evening concludes with a ball drop and a synchronized light show, from the roof parapet of the Walldorff Brewpub and Bistro.

The event, which originated with Carl and Loretta Schoessel, has grown into festivities that include live bands while dancers, jugglers and other performers entertain the crowds. Face-painting stations and children's activities enliven the sidewalks, and prizes are awarded throughout the night. Vendors provide hot chocolate and food, while fire pits and warming tents ensure that even the chilliest Michigan weather does not dampen spirits. As the illuminated ball descends and the crowd joins together in a rousing chorus of "Auld Lang Syne," Hastings celebrates in a manner both contemporary and unmistakably its own—a blending of small-town warmth with a touch of big-city flair.

Turning Back the Pages reveals a consistent spirit of community events and celebrations—moments large and small that have strengthened the bonds of this hometown for generations. As we look ahead, an easily manageable resolution for 2026 might be simply to take part in what the community has to offer, to show up where neighbors meet, to cement old friendships, and perhaps discover new ones along the way. In doing so, we honor not only the customs of the past but the enduring spirit that continues to define Hastings today.

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



On New Year's Eve 1948, the Hall triplets—Christopher, Carole, and Christine—were born two minutes apart at Pennock Hospital (now Corewell Health Pennock Hospital).

REMEMBER
Turn your computer off before midnight on
12/31/99.
BEST BUY

As the year 2000 approached, New Year's carried a very different kind of anticipation—one rooted not in festivity but in technological uncertainty. The Y2K scare loomed large.



Since 2009, the city has hosted an annual New Year's Eve community celebration. This year's event is scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 31, in downtown Hastings.

OBITUARIES

VIEW OBITUARIES ONLINE. HASTINGSBANNER.COM

Kathleen M. Frie



Kathleen M. Frie, age 92, of Delton passed away peacefully December 21, 2025, at Thornapple Manor in Hastings, MI. Kathleen was born May 11, 1933, in Kalamazoo, MI, the daughter of Walter and Marvel (O'Neill) Johnson. Kathleen grew up living on Holly Court in Kalamazoo and was a graduate of Kalamazoo Central High School.

Kathleen enjoyed many hobbies including knitting, quilting, relief carving, and drawing. On January 2, 1953, Kathleen married the love of her life, John J. Frie. Together, Kathleen and John enjoyed a full life on their farm near Delton. They enjoyed watching the birds, insects, and butterflies, participating in the Michigan frog and toad survey, traveling to Canada and out west on many occasions, and just being amateur naturalists.

Kathleen spent several years employed as a bus driver for the Delton Kellogg Schools.

Kathleen is survived by her children, Eric (Kathy) Frie, Nathan (Kollene) Frie, Jean (Daniel) Quick, and T.J. (Celeste) Frie; daughter-in-law, Cindy Frie; sister, Ester Miller; 14 grandchildren; 21 great grandchildren; one great great grandchild, and several nieces and nephews.

Kathleen was preceded in death by her husband of 65 year; her parents; a son, Dale Frie and siblings, Evelyn Bosker, Arvid Johnson, Marilyn Adams, and William Johnson.

Kathleen's family will receive friends, Friday, Jan. 2, 2026 from 10-11 a.m., at Williams-Gores Funeral Home where her memorial service will be conducted at 11 a.m. Interment will take place in Brush Ridge Cemetery.

Memorial contributions to a charity of one's choice will be appreciated.

Please visit www.williamsgoresfuneral.com to share a memory or leave a condolence message for Kathleen's family.

Joan L. Kenyon



Joan L. Kenyon, age 88, of Delton, MI passed away Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025 in Hastings, MI. Joan was born June 13, 1937 in Detroit. She was the daughter of Paul and Lorraine (Hunter) Ballard.

Joan moved to Wayne, MI from 1942 to 1946 before settling in Prairieville, MI. She was a 1955 graduate of Delton-Kellogg High School.

Following graduation, Joan worked for Upjohn Company for several years. On September 28, 1957, Joan married the love of her life Arnol Kenyon and moved to Kalamazoo until 1963 before moving back to the Delton area. Joan then worked for Dr. John Hipple and Dr. James Hogan when he took over the practice for several years.

Joan took some time off before working at Felpaush Grocery Store in Delton for over 18 years where she retired as a General Merchandising manager in 1993.

Joan enjoyed camping with family and friends, bowling, golfing, traveling, and living in Venice, FL. Most of all Joan loved her family.

She was preceded in death by her husband Arnol in 2018, mother in 2001, stepfather in 1998, and brother in 1941.

Surviving are her daughter and son-in-law, Michelle and Brent Haines of Delton, grandchildren Kal Haines and Billy Peek of Texas, Jordan and Tom Watchorn, great grandsons Waylon and Colter of Sault St. Marie, and several nieces and nephews.

Joan's family will receive friends on Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Williams-Gores Funeral Home, Delton.

Memorial contributions to the Delton Fire Club will be appreciated.

Please visit www.williamsgoresfuneral.com to share a memory or leave a condolence message for Joan's family.

PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE EVENTS

— DEC. 25-JAN. 1 —

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

Oct. 1-Apr. 1 — Chelsea Bivens' art exhibit. Bivens is a local artist whose work is heavily influenced by her experiences living in this community. A quarter of the proceeds from sales will be donated to the Institute to further its mission: To inspire appreciation and stewardship of our environment.

Nov. 1-Dec.31 — Dec. Storybook Walk: "Forest Bright, Forest Night" by Jennifer Ward, illustrated by Jamichael Henterly. Many animals call the forest their home, but how do they learn to coexist? Some animals are awake during the day, and some are nocturnal. Compare these two groups of animals that live amongst the trees. The Storybook Walk is free and self-guided on the purple and green trails.

Nov. 3-Jan. 1 — Whose Track is That? Check out the tracks of the Institute's most frequent visitors. Pierce Cedar Creek Institute is home to many species of mammals. Can you follow their tracks? Whose Track is That? is free and self-guided on the green trail.

Mondays, Dec. 1-Jan. 26 — Seed-cleaning drop-in, 11-4 p.m. Stay warm indoors and work with your hands this winter. A seed-cleaning station is set up with everything you need to get started. Tea, coffee and snacks are free. Drop in on Mondays through Jan. 26 anytime between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Education Building to get started.

Dec. 19-28 — Winter Break Kits (ages birth to 18). Stop by the Institute near the south side bathrooms, Hastings Public Library, Delton District Library, or Dowling Public Library to pick up a free kit filled with winter fun and hands-on activities to keep learning and exploring during the break. Kits are grouped by age or grade level: birth to 2 years old, preschool, early elementary, upper elementary and teens.

Jan. 1-Feb. 28 — Jan. and Feb. Storybook Walk: "The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure" by Barb Rosenstock, illustrated by Jamey Christoph. Take a journey through the Great Lakes, tracing a drop of water down rivers, over falls, and through unique Great Lakes environments on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. The Storybook Walk is free and self-guided on the purple and green trails.

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

HASTINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY SCHEDULE

No library card is required for library programs and activities.

Thursday, Dec. 25 – Library closed.

Monday, Dec. 29 – Crafting Passions, 10 a.m.; Visual Storytelling & Tiny Art, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 30 – Baby Café, 10 a.m.; mahjong, 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 31 – Library closed at 3 p.m.

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

YOU'RE NOT JUST OUR READERS.
You're our friends, our family, our neighbors... and our future.
VIEW Newspaper Group



ASK DR. UNIVERSE

Navel intelligence

What determines the size and shape of someone's belly button?

—Isana, 16, Wash.

Dear Isana,

My belly button is a subtle scar on my tummy. It's covered by my fluffy cat fur—and it's not easy to see. But humans have obvious belly buttons. They come in different sizes and shapes.

I asked my friend Cindy Brigham-Althoff about that. She's a nurse midwife and professor at Washington State University. She teaches student nurses about birth.

She told me the scientific name for a belly button is umbilicus. It's what's left of your umbilical cord.

Before you were born, a temporary organ called the placenta grew next to you. A cord connected the placenta to a spot in the center of your developing tummy. Oxygen and nutrients traveled in blood from the placenta and down the umbilical cord to your body. Waste left your body and flowed the other direction.

After you—and your placenta—were born, a midwife or doctor placed two clamps on your umbilical cord. They used special scissors to snip the cord between the clamps. That separated you from your placenta.

"The umbilical cord has no sensation," Brigham-Althoff said. "So, babies don't feel when the cord is clamped and cut."

What's left is a small, meaty stump.

Some newborn babies need medicine or fluids delivered by an IV. Sometimes they can receive that through their stump, so they don't feel a needle poke at all.

Within a few weeks, your stump dried up and fell off. It left behind a scar—your belly button!

Brigham-Althoff told me that process has nothing to do with the size or shape of your navel. How it looks at the start is a total wild card.

But your belly button probably won't look the same for your whole life.

As people grow and get older, they may add fat tissue to their abdomens. That makes the belly button appear bigger or deeper. It can even change its shape. That's why an outie belly button—where some of the umbilical scar tissue pokes out instead of dipping in—is super uncommon among adults.

All mammals with placentas wind up with an umbilicus. It's a remnant of life inside the womb. It's a reminder that we have a lot in common with our mammal relatives.

Who are all as cute as a (belly) button.

— 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.

Worship Together

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

This information on worship services is provided by The Hastings Banner, the church and 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

Admirable effort for Vikes at Arrows' annual Assembly Dual

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Vikings could not have put themselves in a tougher position in December in an effort to be in the positions they want to be in during the postseason in February and March.

The Lakewood varsity wrestling team made the short trip across I-96 to be the chum at the annual Holiday Assembly Dual at Lowell High School Friday afternoon.

Not only were the Vikings facing off against the top ranked team in the state in Division 2, a.k.a. the 12-time defending state champions, but they were doing it under the spotlight, with most of the Lowell student body packed into the gymnasium, the Lowell dance team pausing things for a quick performance, a DJ blasting music from start to finish, and with the Red Arrows in their Christmas pajama-themed singlets.

Lowell took a 61-15 victory, with Lakewood wrestlers winning just three of the 14 weight classes, but all in all things could not have gone much better for the Vikings. They performed so well that the lights came on and most of the gym cleared out before the heavyweight bout to conclude the duel, because it was time for the Red Arrows' classmates to get on the buses.

Viking junior Bryson Boucher and senior Vincent Risk especially had big smirks on their faces as the Vikings entered the unfriendly confines of the Lowell High School gymnasium, with a smattering of Lakewood parents seated in the center of one side of the gymnasium, with Lowell freshmen and sophomores flanking them on either side. The opposite bleachers housed the rowdy Lowell juniors and seniors.

"It is already hostile," Boucher said coach Tony Harmer told the team before it entered the gym. "The lights are off already. There are spotlights shining. It is going to be a little different. Just stay in it.

"It helps that I am in the middle there where I get to see a couple guys go out before me and get to see Dakota Harmer coming off the win right away. Once I saw him coming off the win, I was like let's go. We're here."

Coach Harmer had thought about putting 106-pounder Dakota Harmer against a tougher Red Arrow, John Carter McKay, in the 113-pound match, but he also wanted to calm some anxieties by getting some points in a less challenging match-up at the start of the dual.

Dakota improved his record to 13-0 on the season by pinning Lowell's Hunter Smith in the second period of their match. Dakota was happy to be the lead-off guy for Lakewood, and he had fun watching his teammates getting after it after that

"I like that everybody was being supportive," Dakota said. "Nobody really got mad at the student section, and everybody was able to keep control of themselves. It was loud. I kind of liked it though, being on the other team, going out there and knowing you can beat the kid and then the student section just going crazy about it."

Boucher had fun playing to the crowd.

He pulled out a 2-1 victory in overtime of the 157-pound match against Lowell's Trevor Boone. Lowell had built a 38-6 lead with seven straight wins leading into that bout, which was one of the best of the afternoon.

Boucher got an escape point in the second period. Boone got an escape point in the third period. The two guys battled through a one-minute sudden victory period scoreless. Boucher managed an escape with seven seconds left in a 30-second overtime period in which he started on the bottom, and then managed to ride Boone for the full 30 seconds of the ensuing period to get the win.

The referee raised Boucher's right hand in victory, and as they slid out of the spotlight Boucher raised his left index finger to his lips and gave a little shush to the Lowell juniors and seniors shouting from the edge of the mat.

"That's fun. First time. In a hostile environment. It feels good coming out with a win, not as a team, but for myself. It was cool," Boucher said.

The Vikings' other points came thanks to a second period pin from Owen Prowdley in the 215 pound match. He had been on his back momentarily in the first period against the Red Arrows' Max Bigard, after an unsuccessful attempt at a throw, but then caught Bigard and put him to his back early in the second period to earn six points.

Lakewood head coach Tony Harmer said he saw some good things from everyone of his kids that stepped out onto the mat, and he was pretty pleased that a number of guys were able to save team points by staying off, or getting off their backs.

Lowell got pins from Jarrett Smith at 120 pounds, Mason Saylor 126, Logan Dawson 144, Zayne Zeeuw 175, Dylan Boone 190 and Braylen Meeuwsen at 285.

The Red Arrows got technical falls from McKay at 113 pounds, Carson Blum at 132, Cole Cichocki at 138, Cody Foss 150 and Colton Barney at 165.

Coach Harmer said he was especially pleased with Landon LaFavor's efforts against Saylor and Olivet Johnson's efforts against Blum in losses. LaFavor is in his third year wrestling, and just competed with the varsity for about half of last season.

"And then this year we threw him up against Mason Saylor who has sat behind a lot of kids, but I know he is good. He is really good. And I 'm thinking maybe we'll make it through the first period. And [LaFavor's] going out there, he's tying up, he's shooting, he's sprawling. He almost had a take down even. That alone is good stuff.

"That is why I brought the kids in. I talked to them at the end. I go, you don't realize it because we always remember the end results. We don't remember what happened in the match. If you go back and look at your stance, and where you're putting your hands - going in, that kid is far beyond your level, you're just not there yet, but you're going to get there if you continue doing the things that you're doing."

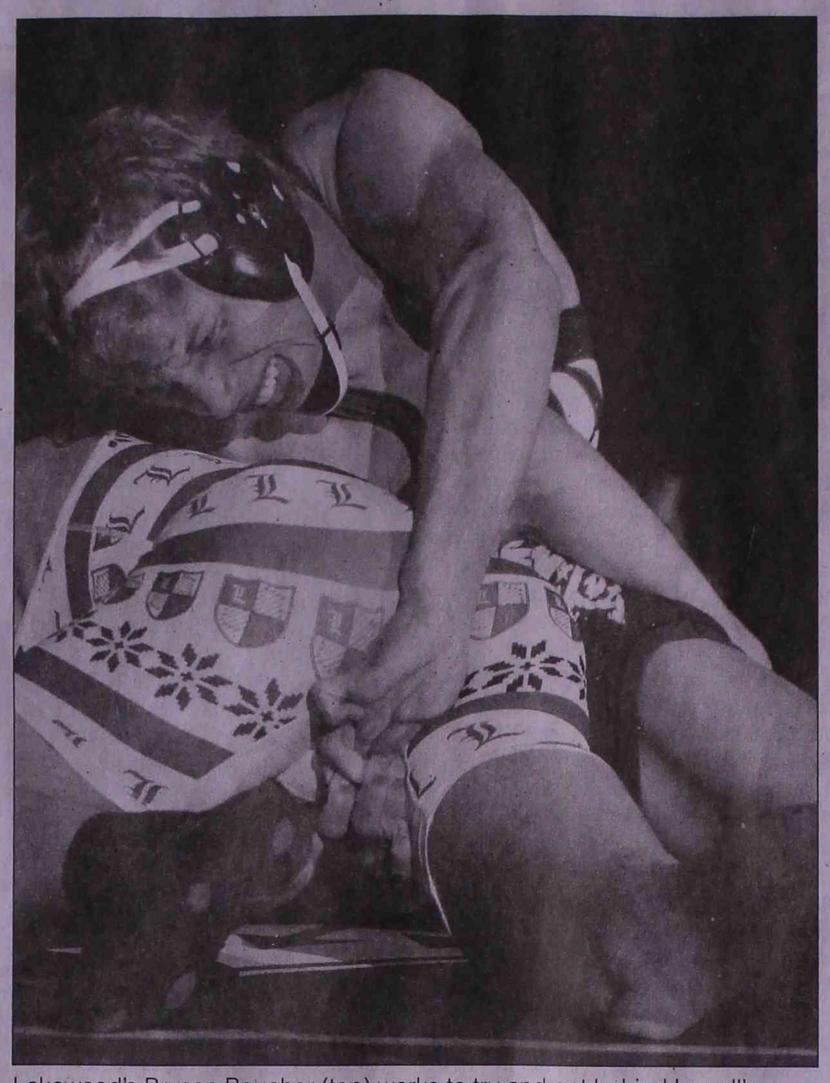
The Lakewood head coach said he accepted the invitation to participate in the event last summer, and his confidence in that decision wavered throughout the offseason. At the time he was riding high after his team made it to the state semifinals in Division 3 at the end of the 2024-25 season.

He said his assistant coaches thought he was crazy when they first heard the news. In the days leading up to the dual, coach Harmer said he started to have second thoughts. It was right about the time his assistant coaches were really starting to get excited about being a part of the event. Lakewood beat every ranked team it faced in duals leading up to the assembly dual this month. The Vikings were 9-0 in duals heading into the match.

"I made a tough schedule. I wanted to be kind of 4-5, in my mind, coming into this Lowell dual, but these kids, they stepped it up and they are wrestling out of their mind," coach Harmer said. "They're wrestling beyond expectations."

He said a calm came to him the night before the match.

"We have got to teach our kids what a good wrestling environment is and how to create it, how to get that excitement and student support."



Lakewood's Bryson Boucher (top) works to try and get behind Lowell's Trevor Boone during their 157-pound bout at the Red Arrows' annual Holiday Assembly Dual Friday afternoon. Boucher, a state runner-up a year ago, pulled out a 2-1 win in overtime. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Lakewood's Vincent Risk is held down by Lowell's Zayne Zeeuw during their 175-pound match at the Holiday Assembly Dual hosted by Lowell High School Friday afternoon under the spotlight in front of the Lowell student body.

Hastings wins handily in all five contests at Saxon Super Duals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Hastings varsity wrestling team went a perfect 5-0 at its own Saxon Super Duals Saturday at Hastings High School.

The closest dual of the day for the Saxon team was a 53-24 win over Central Montcalm. Hastings also defeated Ottawa Hills 74-6, Muskegon Oakridge 83-0, West Catholic 76-5 and Spring Lake 64-10.

Hunter Sutfin, Isaac Lilley, Liam Renner, Aden Armstrong, and Jace Acker were all 5-0 on the day for Hastings. Josh Roberts, Karson Gray, Reyd Zoerman, Austin Friddle and Angel Mejia-Hernandez all picked up four wins each.

In that dual with Central Montcalm, the Saxon team got pins from Sutfin at 113 pounds, Zoerman at 132, Lilley at 138, Armstrong at 150, Acker at 165, Donny Smith at 175 and Friddle at 190.

Liam Renner won by injury default at 144 and the Saxon team got a technical fall from Logan Smith at 157 pounds.

Hastings is off now until its annual LH Lamb Tournament planned for Jan. 3.

KCC to offer welding training in Hastings

Area students will have the opportunity this winter and spring to work toward completing nearly all of the training modules required to earn an "Industrial Welding Certificate" from Kellogg Community College.

And, they'll be able to complete those modules while studying in Hastings.

KCC's winter and spring industrial welding training in Hastings is currently set to take place in the Welding Lab at Hastings High School on West South Street.

According to an announcement by KCC officials, the training will run through KCC's spring semester – which starts Jan. 20 and ends May 11 – on a flexible basis. That reportedly means students may drop in to complete training at their own pace at any time during open lab hours for their selected section.

Students may begin training at almost any time during the semester as space allows, adding modules on as time allows for completion by the end of the semester.

Sections available include:

Welding Section 8230, with training open 3:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays; and

Welding Section 8232, with training open 3:30 to 7 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays.

Each section consists of 53 short training modules focused on specific welding competencies, ranging from safety tutorials and blueprint reading to specific joining, cutting and other welding practices.

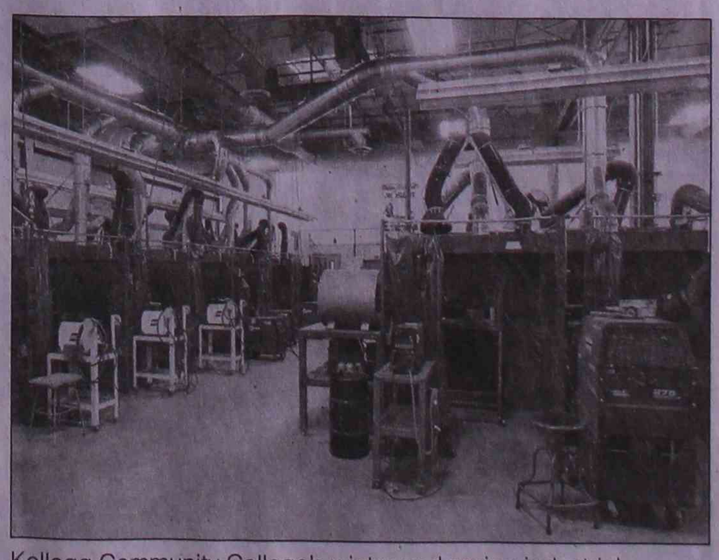
Students who complete all the modules in each section can earn up to 23.53 credits toward KCC's 25-credit Industrial Welding Certificate and 60-credit Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Welding degree.

Limited space is available in each section, so interested individuals are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible.

For more information or to sign up for a section, contact the Fehsenfeld Center at 269-948-9500 or centerf@kellogg.edu.

KCC also offers welding modules at the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center campus in Battle Creek and Eastern Academic Center campus in Albion.

For more information about KCC's Industrial Welding Program, interested persons may visit online at kellogg.edu/welding. — *DM*



Kellogg Community College's winter and spring industrial welding training in Hastings is currently set to take place in the welding lab at Hastings High School on West South Street. **Courtesy photo**

TK ladies down previously unbeaten Caledonia squad

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

A 13-2 run in the fourth quarter powered the Thornapple Kellogg varsity girls' basketball team to a 54-51 win over a previously undefeated Caledonia team Thursday in Middleville.

The Fighting Scots started the fourth quarter with a seven-point lead thanks to some full-court pressure that gave the Trojans fits throughout much of the second half.

The Trojan surge in the fourth quarter included three 3-pointers. Sophomore guard Taylor Lloyd hit two and assisted on the other. She fired a pass into the left corner, in front of the Christmas-themed TK student section, for an assist on a three by junior point guard Addy Henry that got their team within one with just over five minutes to play.

The next three was the one that was a bugaboo to Caledonia head coach Todd Bloemers. His team was really good with its transition defense for much of the game and did a good job of keeping a close eye on Lloyd. This time the Caledonia defense lost Lloyd in transition and left her alone at the top of the key for an open three that put TK into the lead at 49-47.

A minute later, the Scots lost the Trojans' All-OK Gold junior forward Reece Ritsema in the paint and sophomore guard Amya Gater found her for a bucket prompting a Caledonia timeout. A putback by Ritsema moments later had TK's lead to six points.

Caledonia freshman guard Reese Abbott scored four points down the stretch to get her team within two, but the Scots' last best chance down the stretch was a three-point try from the right wing by sophomore guard Brooklyn McLeod that was heavily contested by Henry and missed its mark.

"In film, we watched the back side of their press be wide open, so our plan was to pass forward," James said, "but we ended up having to go to a back pass to get the reversal. In the second half, they took that back pass away a lot better and they tightened up that trap a lot better. Then, when we're throwing those passes into high hands it didn't really work. Luckily, we had Addy and Amya [Gater] who were willing to, as the trap was forming, dribble into it to cut through it. That made a huge difference. That was what we needed to break it.

"They get caught up when I say, 'don't dribble through a press break,' to mean don't dribble at all. It is shortened passes with two dribbles, instead of doing it yourself."

Thornapple Kellogg led the ballgame by as many as seven points in the first quarter, but the Scots nudged in front 25-24 at the half and then it was their turn to hold a slim lead for a while. Caledonia extended its advantage to 45-38 by the end of the third quarter.

"Both teams kind of played that emotional rollercoaster where each went on runs, and then they responded, and then unfortunately TK was the team to make the last run," Caledonia head coach Todd Bloemers said. "They caught us in transition three different times, I think that was an 8-0 run with a couple of threes from Lloyd. We had done such an excellent job of executing our game plan defensively, she is a really nice player and our girls are familiar with her, so to kind of have that breakdown late in the game where we just fell away from our game plan for a two minute stretch that one hurt."

Abbott finished with a team-high 19 points, mostly by attacking the basket. McLeod buried a couple threes and finished with ten points for the Scots. Sophomore guard Myla Gortmaker had seven points.

Ritsema had a game-high 20 points. Lloyd finished with 14 and freshman Kathleen Kaboos had five points.

"We weren't able to use our speed. They're long and fast," James said of the Scots. "So, we weren't able to beat them in transition. When we were actually getting our offense running, we were getting lay-ups and getting good looks at it. I think Reece could have had a way better game if we were able to feed her the ball in the post, but our spacing wasn't always allowing that to happen."

She did like the way freshman Kaboos performed in the post and noted that Ritsema once again "rebounded like an animal." The TK coach also said she was pleased with the composure of sophomore guard Taylor Lloyd who was rightfully a focus of the Caledonia defense.

"To be down seven with six and a half down in the fourth, we don't typically battle back from that very easily. That's a mental barrier," James said. "Once you get over five with five or so minutes left, it takes a lot of mental resilience to be able to fight back. Taylor hit those two huge shots and gave us momentum."

TK is now 2-2 overall this season.

"We have a young team," Bloemers said. "These girls have just been an absolute joy to coach. They are very connected and it makes our job so much fun. One of the things we're also, with a really young team, learning about, is groupings that really gel and play together and what offensive styles suit them the best. We have had a lot of time together, but we're still a little inconsistent in what we're doing."

He was thankful his girls were going to get the opportunity to put the game behind them in a hurry.

The Fighting Scots are now 5-1. They bounced back with a 39-27 win over Lansing Waverly at the West Michigan Hoop Summit hosted by Aquinas College Saturday and then knocked off East Grand Rapids 50-28 Monday on the road. The Scots are back at it Saturday, Dec. 27, taking on Grandville at 1 p.m. at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids.

TK is off until the Cornerstone University Holiday Classic starts Dec. 26. TK faces Lowell at 11:30 a.m. the day after Christmas.



Thornapple Kellogg senior Marlee Shuford (left) is greeted by senior teammate Tealy Cross as she is introduced before her team's nonconference win over Caledonia in Middleville Thursday, Dec. 18. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Thornapple Kellogg junior point guard Addy Henry works against pressure in the back-court from Caledonia's Brooklyn McLeod (left) and Reese Abbott (right) during the fourth quarter Thursday, Dec. 18, in Middleville.

Points pretty tough to come by for Saxons at Parma Western

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Hastings varsity boys' basketball team heads into the holiday break with a 2-4 record after falling in an Interstate-8 Athletic Conference ballgame at Parma Western Thursday.

The Parma Western boys outscored the Saxons 48-27 for their first win of the season.

It was the second time this season the Saxons have been held under 30 points in a ballgame.

"Parma played very physical and took us out of our rhythm," Saxon head coach Jess Webb said. "It made it tough to get downhill and get to our spots. Too often the ball got stuck in players hands instead of moving it, which shrank the floor and took away driving lanes."

Daniel Jensen had a team-high ten points for the Saxons. Jett Nofz added six points and Auincy Brown had four. Bryce Etheridge had two points and a team-high three assists.

The Saxons turned the ball over 17 times leading to 23 Parma Western points. The Panthers had 13 steals as a team led by four from Andrew Parrott who closed the game with ten points and eight rebounds too.

Jayden Willis finished with 11 points, five rebounds, four assists and three steals for Parma Western and Chance Pangborn had a game-high 15 points.

Parma Western went on a 13-0 run between the middle of the first quarter and the start of the second to take control of the ballgame. It was a 25-13 Parma Western lead at the half.

"Defensively, our rotations broke down at times and we didn't help each other the way we need to," coach Webb said. "Bottom line, we didn't stay locked in on the fundamentals, and it showed."

The Saxons are now 1-1 in the I-8 this winter. Parma Western moves to 1-2 in conference play.

Hastings will travel to Ionia Jan. 3 and then return to I-8 play at Jackson Northwest Jan. 6.

Press creates scoring chances for DK boys in SAC Central victory

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Delton Kellogg varsity boys' basketball team played its first road game Friday and didn't miss a beat.

The Panthers improved to 4-1 overall this season and 2-1 in the Southwestern Athletic Conference Central Division with a 77-47 win at Saugatuck.

Delton Kellogg scored at least 20 points in each of the first three quarters, and a lot of that offense came thanks to the defense. Panther head coach Jason Howland said his team's full-court pressure created turnovers that his guys were able to convert into easy baskets.

"Really happy with our effort and going into break with a win," coach Howland said. "It will be important for us to practice hard over break. We have three games the week we return."

The Delton Kellogg team goes to Maple Valley Jan. 5, Parchment Jan. 6, and then will return to SAC Central play Jan. 9 at home against Martin.

Grady Matteson hit five three-pointers and finished with a game-high 29 points to lead Panthers at Saugatuck. He had those 29 points in the first three quarters. Tyler Howland had 16 points, Jarno Wiebenga 12 and Keegan Hill ten points.

Sam Bos led the Trailblazers with 11 points.

GO ONLINE TO HASTINGSBANNER.COM

NOTICE TO THE RESIDENTS OF BARRY COUNTY

Notice is hereby given that the Barry County Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing for the following:

Case Number V-01-2026 - Gordon R. Skinner, Christopher Zagors (Applicant/Property Owners); Tim Schollaart (Applicant)

Location: 11168 Anchor Cove Dr. Road, Shelbyville, in Section 8 of Orangeville Township.

Purpose: Request for a variance to allow a 4 foot side yard setback, (10ft is required) and a variance to allow 23' of lakefront setback (25ft is required) in the Recreational Lakes (RL) zoning district.

Meeting Date: January 12, 2026. Time: 7:00 PM.

Place: Tyden Center Community Room, 121 South Church Street, Hastings, Michigan 49058

Site inspections of the above described property will be completed by the Zoning Board of Appeals 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 time and place. 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 variance application is 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 audio tapes 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 calling 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. January 15, 2026, for the following project.

Specifications and additional information can be obtained at the Road Commission Office located at the above address or on our website at www.barrycrc.org.

Overhead Hoist Replacement at the Barry CRC Garage

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

BOARD OF COUNTY
ROAD COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF BARRY

David Solmes — Chairman
Jim James — Vice Chairman
Jamie Knight — Member

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. January 15, 2026, for the following project.

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

Well Replacement at the Barry County Road Commission

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

BOARD OF COUNTY
ROAD COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF BARRY

David Solmes — Chairman
Jim James — Vice Chairman
Jamie Knight — Member

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Trust Estate

TO ALL CREDITORS:

The Settlor, Helen Mae Gorton (date of birth) 5-5-31, who lived at 454 Tanglewood, Middleville, MI 49333, died Nov. 13, 2025. There is no personal representative of the Settlor's estate to whom Letters of Administration have been issued.

Creditors of decedent are notified that all claims against the Keith Hubert Gorton and Helen Mae Gorton Revocable Living Trust dated 7-13-2011 as amended, will be forever banned unless presented to Jill S. Zoet, Paula VanDuine or Kristi R. Temple, Co-Successor Trustees, within four months after the date of publication of this notice.

Notice is further given that the Trust will thereafter be assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it.

Jill S. Zoet
5519 W. State Rd.
Middleville, MI 49333
616-450-1306

Kristi R. Temple
7435 Snow Ave.
Alto, MI 49302
616-485-9891



Delton Kellogg's Jazlynn Hall (right) and Otsego's Harmony Barck work for control during the first period of a 125-pound consolation match at the Plainwell Meert Memorial Tournament Sunday at Plainwell High School. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Thornapple Kellogg 135-pounder Rylee Alberts works to pin Mason County Central's Raelyn Wilson during their quarterfinal match Sunday at the Plainwell Meert Memorial Tournament. Alberts finished as the runner-up at her flight.

Alberts leads TK ladies at Plainwell tourney with runner-up finish

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Plainwell freshman Evangeline Coutu has been Thornapple Kellogg junior Rylee Alberts kryptonite so far.

Alberts ran her record for the season to 11-2 with a runner-up finish in the 135-pound weight class Sunday at Plainwell's Meer Memorial Girls Tourney. The two losses have come against Coutu, and this time went a little better than the last.

Coutu took a 9-2 win in their 135-pound championship match, after having pinned Alberts in the third period of their first meeting this month.

Alberts pinned her first two foes on the day, Mason County Central's Raelyn Wilson in the quarterfinals and Ana Sofia Vega from Plainwell in the championship round. It was the first loss of the season for Vega in one of the tournament's toughest weight classes. Coutu moved to 10-1 with her championship.

The Thornapple Kellogg girls were sixth as a team on the day and a trio of Delton Kellogg girls had their team 30th in the day's final team standings. Constantine won the day's championship with 155 points ahead of Otsego 143, Plainwell 140, Harper Creek 100, Hamilton 98, Thornapple Kellogg 86, Three Rivers 77, Gull Lake 69.5, Mattawan 52 and Paw Paw 52 in the top ten. Delton Kellogg closed the day with 19.5 points at the 35-team tournament.

Thornapple Kellogg had four girls finish among the top six at their weight class and a total of nine girls scored at least one victory on the day. Briella Dykstra was fourth at 115 pounds improving her record to 10-3 on the season. Maggie McKeown was fifth at 105 pounds for TK and Kayla Price sixth at 130 pounds.

Delton Kellogg varsity girls' coach Clint Post said he is happy to have his roster up to five girls for the season at the moment. A trio competed Sunday with the top finish coming from junior Olivia Post who was fifth in the 130-pound weight class.

Olivia Post was 4-2 overall for the day. She pinned Thornapple Kellogg's Kayla Price 1:18 into their match for fifth place. Post was bested by Hamilton's Ana Ruggles in the quarterfinal round, then took two wins in consolation before falling to Plainwell's Sophia Vega in the consolation semifinals.

TK's Price and McKeown both wrestled their way into the championship semifinals at their flight before then battling back through consolation matches for their top six finishes.

Delton Kellogg's Olivia Vincent at 155 pounds had one victory for her squad, a pin of Gigi Fazio from South Haven in the first round of consolation.

Panther cheer wins championship at Plainwell Cheerfest

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

One meet and one championship.

The Delton Kellogg varsity competitive cheer team opened its 2025-26 season by winning the Division 4 championship Saturday at the Plainwell Deck the Mats Cheerfest.

The Panther team had the top score in each of the three rounds among the three D4 teams competing. Delton Kellogg tallied a score of 189.5 in round one, 176.92 in round two and 216.5 in round three.

That gave the Panthers an overall score of 582.92 points. Bangor was second with an overall score of 473.74 and Comstock third with 304.40.

The host Plainwell Trojans, a state finals team last season, won the four-team Division 2 contest with an overall score of 738.24 ahead of Cedar Springs 702.56, Otsego 602.90 and Wayland 591.30.

Plainwell had scores of 228.6 in round one, 218.14 in round two and 291.5 in round three.

The Delton Kellogg girls will head to Schoolcraft Jan. 8 for the first Southwestern Athletic Conference jamboree.

Saugatuck, a SAC Central favorite, takes it to Panthers in first meeting

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Delton Kellogg varsity girls' basketball team fell 51-22 to an undefeated Saugatuck team on the road in the Southwestern Athletic Conference Central Division Friday.

The loss drops the Panthers to 1-2 on the season and 0-2 in the conference.'

"We ran into a tough team with a lot of shooters," Delton Kellogg head coach Kevin Lillibridge said. "They came out and shot the ball well against our zone."

The Trailblazers' Tali Laskowski scored 15 of her team-high 18 points in the first half. Saugatuck led 30-6 at the half.

Addie Stampfler had eight points and coach Lillibridge said she handled the Trailblazers' pressure all night. Jalin Lyons had a good shooting night and finished with seven points for DK. Kelsey Watson didn't score, but led the Panthers on the boards with ten rebounds.

The Delton Kellogg girls are off now until a trip to Fennville Jan. 5.

Saugatuck moved to 2-0 in the SAC Central and 4-0 overall with the win.

LOOKING TO JOIN A WINNING TEAM?

WE ARE HIRING

VIEW Newspaper Group is seeking qualified applicants for an ADVERTISING SALESPERSON covering Marshall, Battle Creek, Hastings, Middleville, Caledonia and Lowell

RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Become a part of our locally-owned newspaper group doing good things for the communities we serve!
- Help local business owners and managers grow their businesses!
- Build relationships by attending local networking events!



THE REMINDER
THE LOWELL LEDGER
THE HASTINGS BANNER
BUYER'S GUIDE AND NEWS
BATTLE CREEK SHOPPER NEWS
THE SUN AND NEWS
AD-VISOR & CHRONICLE

Send resume to: Chris Silverman
csilverman@mihomepaper.com

Mike Adamson championship goes to DK team with five individual titles

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Delton Kellogg varsity wrestling team took the championship at Ionia's annual Mike Adamson Invitational Saturday with five guys winning flight championships.

The Panther team beat out St. John's at the top of the day's ten-team standings.

Evan Stampfler at 138 pounds, Griffyn Harmon 150, Tucker Tack 157, Mendon Phillips 165 and Mitchell Swift won flight titles for Delton Kellogg. Stampfler, Harmon and Swift were all 5-0 for the day. Phillips was 4-0 and Tack 3-0 for the day.

Brandon Nieuwenhuis at 106 pounds and Mason Ferris at 19 finished as flight runners-up for DK. David Cheftchuk was third at 215 pounds and Joseph McCoy placed fourth at 144 pounds.

Stampfler pinned Keith Miller from Blanchard Montabella after a quick reversal in the second period of their 138-pound championship match. It was the fourth pin of the day for Stampfler.

In the 150-pound championship match, Harmon pinned St. Johns' Hayden Billings in the closing seconds of the second period.

Phillips ended his run to the 165-pound championship by scoring a 5-1 win over St Johns' Brady Heibeck. He got a quick reversal in the third period for the final points of the bout and then rode out Billings for the victory.

Swift got the 285-pound championship with five pins.

The Delton Kellogg varsity wrestling team spit a pair of tough Southwestern Athletic Conference duals at home Wednesday scoring a 49-30 win over Schoolcraft while falling 49-29 to an Allegan team ranked third in the state in Division 3.

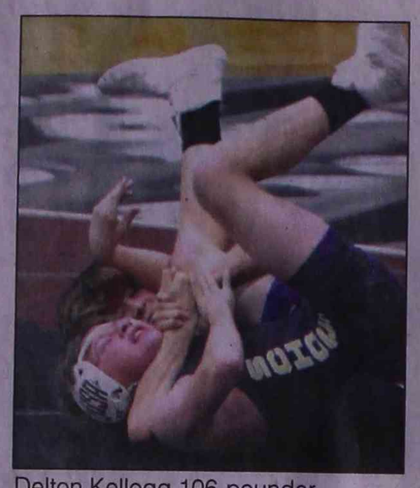
Ferris for all intents and purposes sealed the win over Schoolcraft for the Panthers on their home mat with a pin in the 190-pound bout. That victory boosted his team to a 37-30 lead, and Cheftchuk and Swift followed up with forfeit victories that moved DK to its final margin.

Nieuwenhuis at 106 pounds, Kayle McLellan at 120, Stampfler at 144 and Phillips at 165 also had pins for Delton Kellogg in the victory.

Joseph McCoy scored a 15-7 major decision with two third-period take downs of Schoolcraft's Nyko Winebaugh in their 138-pound match. Tack scored a 7-3 win over Schoolcraft's Lucas Noora in their 157-pound bout.



Delton Kellogg's 157lb Tucker Tack works to control Schoolcraft's Lucas Noora on the mat during their match Wednesday, Dec. 17, at DKHS.



Delton Kellogg 106-pounder Brandon Nieuwenhuis (back) works to pin Schoolcraft's Bryce Bozell during the second period of their match Wednesday, Dec. 17, at Delton Kellogg High School. **Photos by Perry Hardin**

The Panthers are now 1-3 in Southwestern Athletic Conference duals this winter.

The Delton Kellogg team is off now until the Homer Invitational Jan. 3.

Lakewood boys get their first 'W' of the winter, at Eaton Rapids

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Lakewood varsity boys' basketball team notched its first victory of the season to head into the holiday break.

The Vikings took a 73-26 win at Eaton Rapids in Capital Area Activities Conference White Division play Thursday, Dec. 18.

Max Thrun had 11 points, Skyler Oberlin ten and Ethan Matthews nine points for the Vikings. James Tichvon chipped in six points and a game-high 17 rebounds.

The Viking team also got eight points apiece from Bryer Poll, Hollis Poll and Jaxon Jablonski.

Ryan Steel led Eaton Rapids with ten points.

The Vikings built their lead to 35-15 in the first half.

Both teams were chasing their first victory of the season. Lakewood is now 1-5 overall and 1-2 in the CAAC White. Eaton Rapids falls to 0-7 and 0-3 in conference play.

Lakewood has a string of tough ones in the return from the holiday break going on the road to face CAAC White foes Portland Jan. 6 and Lansing Sexton Jan. 8.

Mix and Barton win two games each as Saxons topple Coldwater

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Hastings boys rolled their way to a 3-0 start in the Interstate-8 Athletic Conference with a 26-4 win in Coldwater Thursday.

The Saxons took a 26-4 win over Coldwater at Midway Lanes in Coldwater Thursday.

Brody Mix and Andrew Barton won two individual points each during the regular games. Mix had scores of 200 pins and 180. Barton rolled a 234 and a 212.

Aiden Hook won a point for the Saxons with a 212. Dakota Cole won a point with a 165 game and also scored a 175.

The Saxons rolled a 175 and 165 in the two Baker games with help from Owen Boge and Jonas Stiling.

The Coldwater girls dropped the Hastings girl's team to 0-3 in the conference with a 28-2 win over their guests. Megan Ramey won two points for Hastings with games of 167 and 140.

Other top scores from the Hastings girls included a 101 from Chloe Pirtle, an 80 from Misha Haskin, a 97 from Khloe Baker and a 116 from Tempy Jiles.

Hastings will host a match for the first time this season at Hastings Bowl, Jan. 6, taking on conference foe Pennfield.

NEWSPAPER ADS ARE EFFECTIVE!

"Advertising in the Battle Creek Shopper News and the Advisor & Chronicle has been highly effective for our family-owned business. The strong reach and credibility of these publications have enabled us to connect with our local community in a meaningful and consistent way. This targeted exposure has not only driven increased sales but has also enhanced our overall brand awareness. Throughout the extended Michigan Avenue road construction, our advertising presence proved especially valuable in helping customers find and access our store. Additionally, the team at View Newspaper Group has been knowledgeable, creative, and responsive, offering helpful advertising ideas and making the entire process a pleasure. We truly value this partnership."

Kevin Murphy, Owner
Longstreet Living - Marshall



BATTLE CREEK SHOPPER NEWS
AD-VISOR & CHRONICLE
VIEW Newspaper Group
www.mihomepaper.com