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OLYMPIC AND STATE MEDALS WON BY AREA ATHLETES IN 2024
PAGE 9



2025 promises to be a history-making year in Gaines Township

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Groundbreaking changes are in store for Gaines Charter Township in the new year – literally.

Construction work is scheduled to begin this spring on the future Prairie Wolf Station town center on 84th Street, east of Kalamazoo Avenue. The next phase of some major housing projects in Dutton will get underway, as well, in the new year. An amended township zoning ordinance will be finalized, marking some significant changes in the way property can be developed in Gaines.

Microsoft potentially will also begin work on a new data center, which – along with the existing Switch Inc. data center – would amplify the township's status as the nation's largest data-storage hub east of the Mississippi River.

And, a revamped township board will preside over all of that.

On Dec. 9, former trustee Bob Terpstra was sworn in as Gaines' new

See **GAINES** on 4



American Kendall partner Mike Speedy, left, and Nederveld Inc. project manager Eric DeYoung flash smiles at the Gaines Township Planning Commission meeting in August. **Photo by James Gemmell**

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Demolition crews from Pitsch Companies tore down the former DesignWear building at 118 W. Main St. in Middleville in September. **File photos**

New faces and new digs highlight Middleville's 2024

Sun and News Staff

This coming year looks to be a significant one for the Village of Middleville, with several projects in development and new leaders settling in.

A familiar face is settling into a familiar role at Thornapple Kellogg Schools. Tom Enslen was named interim superintendent for TK Schools last year after outgoing superintendent Craig McCarthy announced his retirement. McCarthy's last day was Dec. 31, making Enslen the district's official leader.

Enslen, who was TK superintendent from 2012 to 2018, was appointed to the interim role on a 5-0 vote of the school board at a November meeting.

Enslen spent 17 years in the TK district, starting as a coach before moving into a series of administrative roles, first as assistant middle school principal, then moving to Lee Elementary School as principal and later assistant superintendent before becoming superintendent in 2012. He lived in the district for more than 30 years and saw all three of his children graduate from Thornapple Kellogg High School.

Enslen later served as superintendent of Elk Rapids Schools in northern Lower Michigan from February 2019 to July 2020.

Enslen has signed a contract that will run through June 30, 2025, that will pay him $110,000 during the six-month period, according to contract information provided by the district.

Middleville is also welcoming a new village president this year, Kevin Smith, who beat incumbent President Mike Cramer 943-768 in November's general election.

Smith, a technology executive who was first elected to the council in 2020, had been president pro tempore of the Village Council for the past year. He becomes the fourth different person to hold the position of Middleville village president since the death of longtime Village President Charlie Pullen in November 2020.

See **MIDDLEVILLE** on 3

Public Library
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New housing, Dutton School construction underway as new year arrives

Sun and News Staff

As Caledonia looks forward to 2025, the Sun and News staff took time this week to look back at some of the area's top stories in 2024.

Caledonia saw three individuals helm the village in 2024 after Jeff Thornton resigned from the village manager position in April.

It took three votes, but the Caledonia Village Council picked a former Caledonia fire chief to be the village's newest permanent manager.

Brian Bennett, who served for 27 years on the Caledonia Fire Department, including 13-and-a-half years as its chief, was picked to succeed interim manager Lisa Segard in July last year.

Council Trustee Jeff Niles called Bennett "one of my hometown heroes" in stating his support for the new manager.

Bennett was selected from among four finalists who also interviewed for the job.

Caledonia Community Schools Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer successfully underwent his first evaluation last month as head of the district.

After returning from closed session during a December Caledonia Board of Education meeting, the board voted to give Weeldreyer an "effective" rating — the highest rating a superintendent can receive in such evaluations.



Jeff Thornton, who served as Caledonia's village manager until last spring, interviewed for several village manager jobs across the state following his separation from Caledonia. Here, he is seen interviewing in nearby Lake Odessa. Though he made it to the final round of interviews for that job, he was ultimately not selected.

Weeldreyer took over as Caledonia Schools' superintendent at the beginning of last year after serving a stint as the district's interim superintendent in late 2023. He filled in for former Caledonia Schools Superintendent Dr. Dedrick Martin after he took the superintendent job at Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency (KRESA).

Weeldreyer was no stranger to the Caledonia job when he took the interim role in 2023 – he had already served as Caledonia Schools' interim superintendent in 2018.

Before returning to Caledonia in late 2023, Weeldreyer had been serving as executive director of the School Equity Caucus, a lobbying group that has advocated for more equitable funding opportunities for public education. Weeldreyer had also served in interim superintendent roles at Muskegon Public Schools and Godfrey-Lee Public Schools in Wyoming.

Additionally, the Cal Schools BOE unanimously voted in August to replace the dean of students position with an assistant principal position. The school board also approved the addition of seven new positions to address academic and security needs as part of its vote to update the district's 2024-25 budget in response to additional state funding that was approved after the board adopted its original budget in June.

The CHS dean of students position, which has been in existence since 2021, was originally slated to be eliminated when the budget was first proposed earlier last spring. However, when the board adopted the budget in June, it voted to hold off on making the cut pending further review.

See **DUTTON** on 3

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Gun Lake Winterfest set for Feb. 15 at new location

Karen Turko-Ebright
Contributing Writer

As soon as the Gun Lake Winterfest ended last year, Brad and Stacey Landman started thinking about this year's Winterfest set for Feb. 15. They decided to move the event from Yankee Springs State Park back to Gun Lake County Park.

Theresa Paiz served on the Winterfest committee when the event was held at the county park from 2008 to 2014. She is currently on the festival's planning committee.

"There was no event held in 2015 due to lack of volunteers," Paiz said. "The GLBA took over and 2016 was the first year at the state park."

The Landmans are heading into their second year as the new chairpersons of the event. Planning started in August. After seven years, former Winterfest chairman, Monte Baker, passed the torch to the couple.

Deb Timmerman is in her first year as Gun Lake Business Association president. She is also the treasurer and attends the planning committee meetings.

"We received a lot of feedback asking us to move the event back to Gun Lake County Park, which seemed like a great fit for this year," Brad Landman said. "This venue has a lower cost, electricity, which eliminates the need for generators, and we can have a smaller tent."

That's why, this year, the event is moving from Yankee Springs State Park to Gun Lake County Park.

"We learned a ton last year. While the event is fun and brings a lot of people out to the area, many drove past the local businesses," Landman added. "Our goal this year is to get people to shop and dine at our awesome businesses."

Gun Lake Winterfest committee members each have their own responsibilities.

Kim Lynch of Lynch's Tire and Service is responsible for the kids' area. Elizabeth Maxwell handles Gun Lake Idol and the advertising, while Susie Marsh and Eric Redstone take charge of setting up and tearing down. Paiz manages apparel and vendor marketing. Katie Niemchick

See **WINTERFEST** on 14

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MIDDLEVILLE

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Cramer was the longest-serving current member of the Village Council. He served eight years as a trustee before being elected president in 2022, defeating Fran French 798-597.

Near the end of Cramer's tenure as president, he proposed disbanding the village's Downtown Development Authority in favor of the Planning Commission functioning as the DDA board. This proposal led to several heated debate sessions.

While no final decision has been made as to whether Middleville's Downtown Development Authority board will continue to remain in its current form, DDA members and the Village Council seem to agree on this: there's a communication problem affecting both entities.

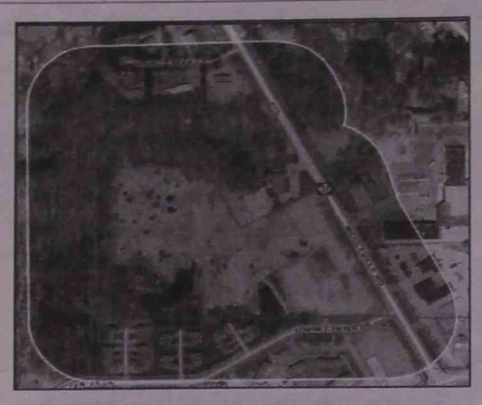
Voters also elected Tracy Gillhespy to a four-year term on the Village Council in November. Gillhespy, who finished fifth among five candidates in the 2022 council election, was the top vote-getter this November, capturing 904 votes. Also elected to a four-year seat on the council was incumbent Trustee Robert Bishop, who received 859 votes. Bishop had been appointed to the council in April 2023.

Incumbent Trustee Steve Baldry, who was appointed to fill a council vacancy in November 2023, finished fourth among the four candidates running for trustee with 780 votes, while John Osterbaan finished third with 797 votes.

A tax-increment financing agreement to fuel a major housing development in the Village of Middleville cleared its final hurdle in August at the Barry County Board of Commissioners' meeting.

The approved plan was designed to support the Flats at Mid-Villa project, a housing development that will see the construction of 144 "workforce housing" apartment units on a 13.3-acre portion of land. The site at 4611 N. M-37 Highway has been vacant since 2015 when the Middle Villa Inn was demolished.

The project also includes a commercial property component and funding generated through the TIF will not go toward that portion.



An overhead view of the vacant site along M-37 where the Middle Villa Inn once stood and where a 144-unit apartment complex will be built.

The TIF agreement will allow the county's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to collect $4.48 million in new tax revenues that are expected to be generated by the development of the apartments at Mid-Villa over the next 15 years. About $1.9 million of that would come from the Downtown Development Authority, which operates with its own tax-increment financing mechanism where it captures a portion of taxes paid by downtown property owners to support public improvements in the downtown.

The project has been years in the making and the debate over the TIF agreement had been smoldering for the better part of last year.

The Flats as Mid-Villa project TIF was not the only development that took place in Middleville last year.

Demolition crews from Pitsch Companies tore down the former DesignWear building at 118 W. Main St. in Middleville in September. The DesignWear building was once attached to the former Baby Bliss building, which was torn down earlier last year. The Barry County Land Bank Authority received funds from the Michigan State Land Bank Blight Elimination fund to pay for the demolition work. The village of Middleville is seeking to have the site redeveloped as a possible mixed-use of residential and commercial.

DUTTON

Continued from Page 2

A month later, Weeldreyer proposed replacing the dean with a third assistant principal in response to new state requirements for evaluating teachers.

Cal Schools' new Dutton Elementary building is well underway, with classes expected to take place there as soon as the 2025-26 school year. Construction will also begin soon on a new housing development just south of the new Dutton Elementary School.

The Township Board on Dec. 4 gave final approval to two separate rezoning requests and a site condominium plan for the Dutton Preserve project, planned for a 30-acre site along Patterson Avenue just south of 76th Street. JTB Homes LLC will build 44 single-family homes on the property it recently acquired from Caledonia Community Schools.

In back-to-back 6-0 votes, the board approved changing the zoning of the property from agricultural to medium-density single-family residential, then passed a subsequent zoning change to make the site a planned unit development.

The homes will be clustered in such a way to allow 12.5 acres of the site to be maintained as open space in perpetuity. Each of the lots will have a minimum size of 10,000 square feet and a minimum width of 75 feet, according to township documents.

In addition, a 30-foot-wide access easement will be provided on the west side of the property, between two lots, that will connect to the neighboring Dutton School site so it can be used as a walking path for children going to and from the school. An 8-foot-wide shared-use pathway will be also built along the length of the development along Patterson and connecting to the school property. The pathway along Patterson was required by the township as a condition of extending sanitary sewer to serve the development, according to township documents.

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GAINES

Continued from Page 1

township supervisor, following the Nov. 5 general election. He replaced longtime supervisor Rob DeWard, who not only endorsed Terpstra for the position, but also won a seat as a trustee on the township board.

Five other township board seats were retained by incumbents.

Republican Robin Halsted captured the Kent County Commission District 10 seat. The district includes all of the township, plus Precinct 6 in the City of Kentwood.

The Gaines Charter Township Fire Department was set to begin 2025 operations as a single entity, the product of a merger between the Cutlerville and Dutton fire departments. Gaines officials decided that combining the two departments would be the best course of action after Byron Township decided to break off its 74-year partnership in jointly operating the Cutlerville Fire Department.

Byron will build its own Cutlerville fire station east of US-131 and north of 68th Street in the near future.

Gaines officials decided to purchase the Cutlerville fire barn on 68th Street west of Division Avenue, even though it is in Byron Township. Gaines is paying $940,000 over five years to buy out Byron's equity share in the fire station, making 20-percent payments each year.

The building at 11 68th St. in Cutlerville is now called Station 1 and the fire barn in Dutton is Station 2.

In August, the Gaines Township Board of Trustees voted 4-0 to direct staff to hire the township's first deputy fire chief of prevention/fire marshal, Patrick Quick, at $45 per hour. He had been the fire marshal in Kentwood since August 2021 and brings 23 years of experience in that city to Gaines.

Earlier in 2024, the township board had authorized changing the fire inspector position to a full-time job.

The Dutton Fire Department had gone to a 24/7 staffing model in January 2024 after trustees approved funding for the addition of five full-time firefighters. The need for a beefed-up fire department reflected a 35-percent increase in calls for service since 2015.

Gaines is the fastest-growing township in Kent County. The 2020 U.S. Census survey showed the township's population had grown by 14.6 percent since 2010 to 28,812 residents. With the call volume skyrocketing for public safety, trustees approved a 15-year special-assessment levy in October 2021 dedicated to supplementally funding police, fire and rescue services. The township board can authorize up to 1.5 mills annually with the township-wide special levy. The first year it was implemented, the levy was set at 0.6 mills.

But the township board has cited the rising costs of public safety for raising the levy slightly each year since. In 2024, the board voted to increase the rate from 1.0 mills to 1.25 mills, beginning with the winter tax roll. That will cost the average residential property owner about $160 in 2025.

The largest change in the Gaines Township landscape will come in the form of large housing and mixed-use developments, most of them in the Caledonia and Dutton areas. After a three-year battle to build a massive retail, residential and commercial town center – which involved a $4 million lawsuit against the township – American Kendall Properties finally received approval to build Prairie Wolf Station.

The first-phase in the construction of the $120 million development is set to begin in the spring on what used to be farmland.

The original site plan called for 499 residential units. The revised site plan envisions 646 total units of housing. Tentatively, it calls for 556 of those spaces for multiple-family residential units and 90 to be reserved for commercial, office and retail space. The numbers may change, but American Kendall said at the time it was planning to build about 127 single-family homes and 258 apartments, with 34 sitting above retail buildings. There would be 36 condominiums, 44 single-family townhome units and 110 senior housing units.

Some preliminary infrastructure work began in 2024, with the extension of municipal water lines from 92nd Street and Kalamazoo Avenue to the site, and the installation of utility lines.

"Yes, I am pleased. This has been in the works for many years here," American Kendall partner Mike Speedy said after final government approval was received in August. Speedy, an Indiana state representative who hails from West Michigan, had spearheaded the years-long effort to get the Prairie Wolf Station development off the ground.

"It's going to be exciting," Speedy said. "We're very proud to start on this. It'll be complementary to the (adjacent Prairie Wolf Park) and complementary to all the different residents."

The first phase of the multi-year project will be built on 23 acres and include multi-family housing units, commercial and mixed-use buildings, and a public square at streetfront. Phase 1 may feature 308 dwelling units, six acres of open space and 18,118 square feet of commercial, office and retail space.

"This is probably one of the most walkable developments that Gaines Township has seen recently," Community Development director Dan Wells said after an August Planning Commission meeting.

A crosswalk on Kalamazoo Avenue will be installed to help pedestrians safely get from the Prairie Wolf Station subdivision over to Prairie Wolf Park and back. The Kent County Road Commission was reviewing a traffic-impact study to determine whether a turn lane will be added on southbound Kalamazoo near the roundabout at 84th Street.

Meanwhile, a 404-unit mixed-use development, called Alexander Trails, will be built on 149 acres east of Hanna Lake Avenue.

This past fall, Signature Land Development Corp. won township board approval for the first two phases of the multi-year, multi-phase project to be built at the 2700 block of 76th Street. Signature Land will sell lots to its partner, Eastbrook Homes, to build the development beginning with Phase 1, covering 29 acres and 25 single-family lots. That will include a cluster of townhouses and an activity area, among other amenities.

Phase 2 will feature 20 additional lots.

The long-term project envisages 190 single-family detached homes being built, plus 40 condominium homes with detached garages. There would be some single-story ranch-style homes and condominium two-story attached townhomes.

Also, Allen Edwin Homes secured final approval from the township board

See **GAINES** on 6

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What's your New Year's Business Resolution?



EMILY CASWELL
ecaswell@mihomepaper.com

Sunday, Jan. 19 is a date to keep in mind if you plan to make a New Year's Resolution this year. That's because research has shown that only 18 days after they've set their intention for a new year, the majority of people ditch their New Year's Resolution by Jan. 19. One fitness app has even named Jan. 19 "Quitter's Day" according an *inc.com* article on the topic.

That article also points out that of the 41% of Americans who make New Year's resolutions, only 9% are successful in keeping them.

I know, however, that most of the readers of this column make up the elite 9% who keep their New Year's Resolutions because they set specific goals and pursue them with relentless passion, expanding far beyond Jan. 19.

With this optimistic view in mind, each year I ask business professionals throughout the communities we cover to share their New Year's Business Resolution, knowing that it will inspire anyone who hasn't set their goal for the new year to do so. Here is what this year's group of inspiring contributors are vowing to do far beyond Jan. 19 in the new year:

Tim Vargas, President & CEO McLaren Lapeer Region

Looking at 2025, our organization is determined to continue to be the provider of high-quality health care to the community, and, in doing so, a source of calm and compassion to the people of Lapeer. Throughout this past year, McLaren Lapeer Region undertook initiatives that increased our patients' and the greater community's access to care. This included hosting free health fairs and achieving re-verification as the county's only trauma center, though our goal now is to build on that. We aim to venture further into the community, help our providers make a connection with those they care for, and to ensure that patients who require care are able to receive it promptly and efficiently.

Bonnie Gettys, President/CEO Barry Community Foundation

Our resolution here is the cherish the past, celebrate the present and strategize our future! With this being our 30th year in existence, we have much to be thankful for!

Theresa Doan, Director of Social Responsibility Genisys Credit Union

As the Social Responsibility Director of Genisys Credit Union, I resolve to continue our commitment to sustainable growth, community empowerment, and ethical practices that benefit our members, employees, and the communities we serve.

We will expand our financial literacy programs to reach more individuals in 2025, with a focus on underserved communities, youth, and seniors.

We will grow and collaborate with local organizations to ensure that our CSR initiatives address the unique challenges faced by all populations within our service areas.

By driving these initiatives forward, we will create meaningful change, align with our credit union's core values, and strengthen our position as a socially responsible leader in the financial services industry.

Leigh LaForest, Executive Director Grand Blanc Chamber of Commerce

I vow to be more present. Less tech, more in the moment. As for the Chamber, we are going to continue to work very hard to make sure that our members are feeling valued and supported.

Wes Smith, Publisher View Newspaper Group

Be a better listener: We all face the challenge of both listening to the person or group with whom we interact and delivering our own message, pitch or proposal. Stephen R. Covey teaches in his *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People:* "Seek first to understand and then to be understood." I know when I do this, better outcomes result.

Practice gratitude: The Mayo Clinic says, "Gratitude can decrease depression, anxiety, difficulties with chronic pain and risk of disease." Those are all good reasons to tell those with whom we work that we appreciate them. I also want my clients and colleagues to know their work has value and my relationships with them are important to me, both professionally and personally.

Pete Clinton, Advertising Director View Newspaper Group

My business resolution for 2025 is to stay ahead of everything. It is so easy in life and business to handle all the things we do on a daily basis to get by and forget about what it takes to keep everything out in front of you and not get stuck working from behind. To stay ahead, you need to take care of all the daily things that need to be addressed, but you also need to take the time to make all the extras to happen, which include planning, organization, research, thought, communication, brainstorming and developing more ideas. Focusing on this more will help our team and clients be better prepared to see success.

My New Year's Business Resolution is to be innovative. While there's always value in looking back at the way we did something in the past as to not "reinvent the wheel," in the year ahead I plan to challenge myself and our team to see if there is a better, faster, more efficient, easier or simply more fun way to do the task at hand.

I'd love to hear your New Year's Business Resolution. Email me at *ecaswell@mihomepaper.com.*

Emily Caswell is the brand manager for VIEW Group, the branding division of View Newspaper Group. She is a 2004 graduate of Michigan State University's journalism school. She first worked as an editorial intern for The (Lapeer) County Press in 2001 and 2002 and later as a reporter for Lapeer Area View and The County Press from 2008-09. Caswell was a staff reporter for The Lansing State Journal's NOISE publication and wrote a popular column for the daily newspaper. She later served as the publications director at a boutique brand and publishing agency in Lansing, before returning to View Newspaper Group in her current role in 2014.



GAINES

Continued from Page 4

in October for the first phase of the Dutton Center mixed-use commercial and residential development on 68th Street, at Hanna Lake Avenue. The board approved Allen Edwin's request to rezone a 29-acre parcel of agricultural land to a planned unit development. It is for the remaining northern section of the former J & A Post Family Farm, north of Shadyside Park.

"This is really a major revisioning of Dutton," Wells said, speaking about the proposed five-phase, multi-year development.

"So, these are homes that are close to the road, porch-prominent, with access to detached garages in the back," Mike West of Allen Edwin told the township board during an Oct. 14 public hearing.

There will be some attached two-, three- and four-unit townhomes with rear-loaded garages in the project's first phase, which will feature 14 single-family veranda-style homes, as well as 47 two-unit and four-unit attached townhomes.

A future, second phase would include 47 single-family detached homes, with Phase 3 slated to consist of 96 multiple family apartment buildings. Phase 4 could possibly include two, 2-story commercial/residential/office buildings facing Hanna Lake Avenue.

The project will connect to the Thornapple Farms development that is being built south of the site. Project developer Michiana Land Development LLC intends to design the Dutton Center as a pedestrian-friendly community hub. It will feature four housing types, public spaces and non-motorized pathways.

Green Development Ventures and Allen Edwin Homes are involved in the first two phases of the Thornapple Farms development at the 7300 block of Hammond Avenue. If the final four phases of the six-phase subdivision are approved, it could eventually have 170 single-family detached homes built over the next decade.

The second phase of construction of another residential development in Dutton, Hoffman Meadows, began in 2024 on the 2400 block of 68th Street, west of Hanna Lake Avenue. Up to 130 single-family lots may be built in four phases. Chris VanderHoff is the property owner.

Another big announcement came in October, when Microsoft Corp. confirmed that it had purchased 316 acres of industrial land from Steelcase Inc. at the northwest corner of Patterson Avenue and 76th Street.

"This 316-acre site was identified in collaboration with The Right Place (economic development organization) as part of our ongoing search for development opportunities in the Michigan market," Microsoft officials stated in a written statement.

Microsoft has not divulged its plans for the site, but The Right Place president and CEO, Randy Thelen, said in a statement that it "fits into our 10-year tech strategy to develop the Greater Grand Rapids region into a leading tech hub in the Midwest."

"For the past year, year-and-a-half there's been talk of maybe a data center-type facility going in on that property," Township Manager Rod Weersing said.

Weersing added that 76th Street could eventually be widened in that area to accommodate a projected increase in traffic in coming years.

"With additional growth and development along that corridor, it will – I believe – lead to rebuilding it," Weersing said.

Township trustees mentioned at their Dec. 9 meeting that Microsoft has recently purchased more property near the site on Patterson Avenue at 76th Street.

The Patterson Avenue corridor already is handling heavy traffic most times of the day. The Microsoft site is just south of the 850,000-square-foot Amazon Fulfillment Center at 68th Street and Patterson Avenue. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is about five miles to the north

Meanwhile, Byron and Gaines townships have approved plans for a new water-storage tank to be installed on Patterson Avenue, about one-half mile south of 68th Street. The ground-mounted tank will be designed with a 2-million-gallon storage capacity. The Byron-Gaines Utility Authority is pursuing a state permit for the tank.

The two townships would split the cost. A start date has not been determined yet, although Weersing said the project could begin in the spring.

With all the developments in Gaines Township, planners have been working for the past year-and-a-half on an amended zoning ordinance to regulate future land use. It will be based on a new township master plan that was finalized last year.

The master plan was the product of a year's worth of input that included open houses and a township-wide survey of residents and other stakeholders about how they want to see Gaines develop over the next 15 years or so.

Some properties that are in the general commercial district will be rezoned into a new neighborhood commercial category to entice more walkable, neighborhood-type services that people can more easily access close to home. Preserving open space and developing parks are also part of the long-range plans.

As for outdoor activities in the township in 2024, one of the highlights was the annual Gaines Fall Heritage Festival organized by Gaines Historical Society president Shirley Bruursema. Steady crowds showed up at the township hall to listen to live music, and enjoy arts and crafts, a petting zoo, a hayride, food and fire trucks, among other things.

The 34th annual Diemer Family of Races featured several hundred participants competing in various races and walks on June 8. More than $9,000 in prize money was awarded.

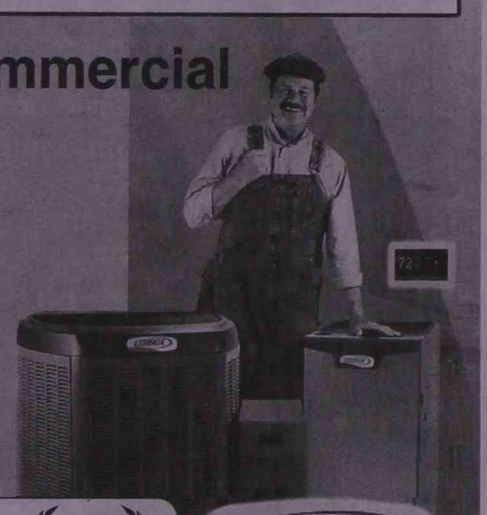
The KCSO hosted the annual South Kent National Night Out event Aug. 6 outside South Christian High School. The sheriff's drone unit, K9 unit, mounted patrol, a tactical team vehicle, marine patrol and various equipment were on display. Some area fire departments and other agencies participated, as well.

The annual Movie in the Park on the lawn outside the township hall on Aug. 23 drew a slew of spectators to watch the animated adventure comedy film, "Migration." The Gaines branch of the Kent District Library and the Gaines Chamber of Commerce helped the township organize the fun night out. It featured food trucks, Kent County Sheriff's Office and township fire trucks and kids' games.

The Gaines Chamber held an inaugural luminary walk around Prairie Wolf Park on Dec. 7. Organized by chamber executive director Barb Nauta, it featured a festive 1.5-mile stroll through the woods on a path illuminated by 450 bags holding LED candles.

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Sporting News

TK renames duals in honor of coach Lehman

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The annual December TK duals are now the Tom Lehman Memorial Invitational.

Lehman, who led the TK wrestling program from 1972 to 2009 and is 12th on the MHSAA all-time list of coaching dual meet wins with an overall record of 710-234-7, passed away in September.

"Coach had a way of treating everyone with respect and dignity," TK announcer Craig Stolsonburg said in a statement following the day's first round of duals. "We know that if coach was here he would he would be sitting in that chair or in the first row of the bleachers catching up with former wrestlers and students. Coach Lehman's kindness, caring nature and ability to love everyone made him a true once-in-a-lifetime icon of the TK community. We are honored to name this invitational after coach Tom Lehman."



Thornapple Kellogg's Griffin Grummet scores nearfall points against Rockford's Ares Porter during their 150-pound match Saturday at the Tom Lehman Memorial Invitational in Middleville. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



Thornapple Kellogg's Blake Bossenberger works on top of Rockford's Brady Anderson during their 165-pound bout Saturday at the Tom Lehman Memorial Invitational at TKHS Saturday, Dec. 28. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Lehman's teams won 19 conference titles, 13 district titles, nine regional championships and the 1996 MHSAA Division 3 State Championship, and he was honored with many coach of the year and hall of fame accolades over the years while also earning the chance to coach national and international squads.

The Trojans displayed a "Home of Tom Lehman" sign for the wrestling room and competed throughout the day of duals Saturday, Dec. 28, in Middleville. It was a tough day of duals.

The TK team was downed in its first three duals of the day 56-18 by Grand Ledge, 52-28 against Rockford and Greenville took a 55-21 win over the Trojans. TK closed out its tournament with duals against Springport and Grant.

Rockford's program is ranked seventh in the state in Division 1 and Greenville entered the holiday break ranked sixth in the state in Division 2.

In that dual with the Greenville Yellow Jackets, the Trojan team got pins from Christien Miller at 113 pounds, Blake Bossenberger at 165 and Jayce Curtis at 190 pounds. Jackson Smith added a 9-8 win against Greenville's Jaxson Croy in the 175-pound bout.

A pin by Smith was the lone win for TK in the dual with Grand Ledge to start the day other than forfeit wins by Tanner Buxton and Miller.

Aiden Foy got TK off to a solid start in the dual with Rockford scoring a 15-0 technical fall in his 138-pound bout. Griffin Grummet added a 16-0 technical fall in his 150-pound match. Bossenberger had a quick pin in the dual with the Rams. Miller at 113 pounds and Diego Rodas at 126 had first period pins too.

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Olympic and state medals won by area athletes in 2024

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The athletic successes of local athletes extended beyond the state and beyond the nation in 2024.

Caledonia alumnus Alena Olsen (2014) took on the world along with the Team USA Women's Rugby Sevens Eagles at the 2024 Paris Olympics and knocked off Australia in the end to win the bronze medal.

"I just never thought I would get a bronze medal," Olsen said fighting back tears as she talked to reporters following the Eagles' finale in Paris. "The doubt that creeps into your head in a competition is so strong. You don't want to put yourself out there, but we put ourselves out there for heartbreak. But that is the only way you can get joy like this, get the success like this is if you also put your heart out there to be broken."

Olsen was an all-conference soccer player at Caledonia High School, and also a volleyball player, who was encouraged by cousins to give rugby at try while attending the University of Michigan. She fell in love with the sport. She made her first cap to Team USA in 2018 and learned in June that she's earned a spot on the 2024 Olympic squad.

Closer to home, Caledonia sophomore Maddie Hayden won her second MHSAA wrestling championship. The Caledonia High School equestrian team won a reserve state championship. The Caledonia varsity girls' golf team captured a state runner-up finish.

There were big victories

The Caledonia varsity volleyball team won its first ever conference title; the Thornapple Kellogg teams filled the state medal stand at the track and field finals; TK senior golfer Ailana Leos and cross country runner Ava Crews finally got their state medals; the Trojan varsity competitive cheer team returned to the state finals, and the Scots and Trojans both began to take on new conference competitions last year.

Some of the victories were more personal, like Thornapple Kellogg senior volleyball setter Kylee Hoebeke's combination of joy and relief at finally getting a win over Wayland three-sport star Harmony Laker "because Harmony Laker has never lost to TK in her whole life. And we wanted to beat her, in anything."

Nobody in the state beat Hayden in wrestling during the 2023-24 season. The Caledonia sophomore made it 2-for-2 in winning state championships and in fact no one scored a point against her during that sophomore campaign.

Hayden pinned Holt senior Brynn Campbell less than a minute into their 155-pound championship match at the MHSAA Individual State Finals at Ford Field in downtown Detroit the first weekend in March. She was 11-0 this winter while recovering from injury. She pinned all seven of her postseason foes in the first period.

Hayden said this second championship was a little less nerve-wracking than her first, mostly due to her own state of mind.

"I feel like I was a little more confident this year," she said, "and since I was out injured for a little while I was more excited to wrestle than I was nervous to wrestle. I was just really excited to go out and see how good I would be again, because I have been off for a couple months."

Hayden was one of two Caledonia girls at the individual state finals last March, Thornapple Kellogg had handful of girls there as well, and beginning with this new 2024-25 season the competitors at the state finals will also be working to win an MHSAA Girls' Team Wrestling Championship for the first time.

Caledonia's Halle Stout and Thornapple Kellogg's Emma Gibson, Rylee Alberts and Raini Braska all earned spots in the state wrestling finals too, while the TK boys' team was represented by Jayce Curtis.

While the wrestlers were doing their thing at the individual state finals, the Thornapple Kellogg varsity competitive cheer team was taking on the top teams in the state at the MHSAA Division 2 Competitive Cheer Finals at Central Michigan University's McGuirk Arena in Mount Pleasant.

Thornapple Kellogg was in a battle with Cedar Springs all season long, and couldn't quite beat out the Red Hawks in the postseason. TK was one spot behind Plainwell at districts and then one spot behind the Cedar Springs girls are regionals to finish as the runner-up both times.

The TK coach was okay with her girls saving their best for last though.

"We always peak at districts or at regionals and then we come and get swallowed up in this big arena and swallowed up by these big huge teams and whatever. They didn't do that," TK head coach Madelynn Lula said after the D2 Finals. "They went out there and they peaked at the state finals. They went out there and did exactly what I asked them to do. They did exactly what I asked them to do. They went out there and got the highest scores of the season."

TK won't have Cedar Springs to contend with during the 2024-25 competitive cheer season. With a number of teams saying farewell to the OK Conference in 2024 the conference's realignment plans saw major changes. For the first time, separate conferences were created for football.

Thornapple Kellogg joined West Catholic, Northview, Wyoming, Wayland, Grand Rapids Union and South Christian in an new rendition of the OK Gold Conference for most sports. The TK team competed in the OK Black Conference for football along with Grand Rapids Catholic Central, Ottawa Hills, East Grand Rapids, Holland Christian and Northview.

The Caledonia varsity football team remained a member of the OK Red Conference, but for most other sports the Fighting Scots moved into the OK Green Conference along with Reeths-Puffer, Mona Shores, Jenison, Muskegon and Byron Center.

Caledonia took its first two OK Green Conference Championships in the fall of 2024 as the girls' golf and girls' volleyball teams won titles. For the Caledonia varsity volleyball team, it was the program's first ever conference championship. It came in a year in which the Scots were led by the senior

See **YEAR IN SPORTS** on 10



The Caledonia varsity girls' soccer team celebrates an MHSAA Division 1 District Championship after beating OK Red Conference rival Hudsonville, the top ranked team in the state entering the postseason, in the district final at West Ottawa High School. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



YEAR IN SPORTS

Continued from Page 9

trio of all-state outside hitter Cambria Gaier, all-state middle Josie Noble and setter Jessica Maier who all have made their college volleyball plans and who all experienced having four different coaches over their four varsity seasons.

"Our journey to this point has been one of dedication and growth, and (Wednesday) was the ultimate reward," CHS volleyball coach Ashley Brown said of clinching the Green title. "The excitement and pride they felt after the final point was priceless - it's why we play, and it's an experience they'll carry with them forever."

A conference title was only the start of things for the Caledonia varsity girls' golf team this fall. The Fighting Scots returned to the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals for the second year in a row and shot their way to a runner-up finish on the course at Ferris State University's Katke Golf Course.

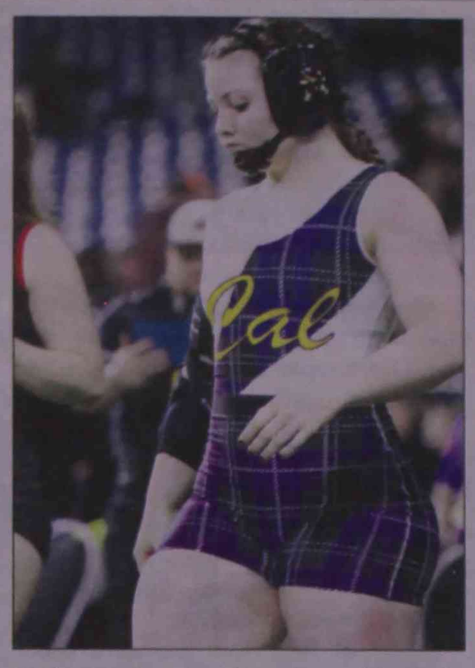
Fighting Scots senior Copelin O'Krangley won an individual state medal with a 78-74-152 over the course of the two-day finals to place third in the state individually.

Northville started the girls' golf season at the top of the state rankings and ended the year with a state championship, but the Fighting Scots who placed second at the finals were never mentioned in the state rankings despite the experienced group the program brought back.

"It was unreal," Caledonia head coach Veronica Von Wagoner said of her team's celebration at the end of the tournament. "Lots of tears, and I think lots of disbelief. The sense of pride that I have in this team is unmatched to anything that I have felt for a team before."

HS junior Codie O'Krangley shot 85 each day to place 19th individually with an overall score of 85-85-170 at the 36-hole event. Senior Ellie Hudson was 37th with an 87-93-180.

Senior Mya Burgess and junior Katie Honhart shaved multiple strokes off their day one scores on day two for the Fighting Scots to place 58th and 64th respectively in the field of over 100 golfers. Burgess shot a 101-90-191. Honhart finished her two-day tally at 100-93-193. The top four scores each day contributed to the overall scores.



Caledonia sophomore Maddie Hayden heads out onto the mats at Ford Field during her run to a second straight 155-pound championships at the MHSAA Individual State Finals the first weekend in March. Hayden was undefeated and unscored upon during her sophomore campaign.
Photo by Brett Bremer

Copelin was a state medalist for the second year in a row after a tenth-place finish at the finals as a junior.

While the Scots were on campus in Big Rapids, Thornapple Kellogg senior Ailana Leos was taking on the competition at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 2 Girls' Golf Finals at The Meadows on the campus of Grand Valley State University in Allendale.

It was also a return trip to the finals for Leos, who was the OK Gold Conference champion this fall and set TK scoring records. At the 2024 Finals she shot a 78-82-160 to earn her sixth-place spot on the finals leaderboard.

Leos just missed out on a state finals appearance as a sophomore falling in a three-person playoff at regionals and then qualified for the state finals for the first time as a junior in 2023.

"It was great. It's what I worked for for four years now for high school," Leos said. "The biggest thing was last year to get to states, and this year get to states and medal. It has always been what we have been working for since I was a freshman. It was amazing, and it was just sort of like a dream come true. This is what you worked for, and you deserve it because you worked for it and it paid off."

All the years of work paid off for Thornapple Kellogg senior Ava Crews. A four-time cross country state qualifier she earned her first state medal for a top 30 finish this fall.

Crews and senior teammate Jacob Draaisma from the TK boys' team both won individual conference cross country championships in the reworked OK Gold Conference in the fall of 2024, and both went on to qualify for the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Cross Country Finals at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. Crews placed 26th at the finals.

For Draaisma, it was the follow up to a successful first track and field season in the spring and an exciting first and last varsity cross country season as he decided last spring to give distance running another try after beginning high school focusing mostly on basketball and tennis.

In the Division 1 boys' race at the cross country finals, Caledonia senior Kort Thompson won his first all-state medal thanks to a 29th-place time of 15 minutes 47.0 seconds. Thompson was a two-time state qualifier in cross country, and ends his high school career as the second fastest guy in the history of Caledonia cross country.

The Caledonia program also sent Eli Velting and senior Hannah Dupuis to the D1 Cross Country Finals.

Crews and Draaisma were also

See **YEAR IN SPORTS** on 11

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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF CALEDONIA
COUNTY OF KENT, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on January 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m., the Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Caledonia will hold a public hearing at the Caledonia Charter Township Hall, 8196 Broadmoor Avenue, within the Township, on the application of Craig Hoppen, on behalf of J&H Family Stores, to amend the approved Valley Point South Industrial Park PUD (the "PUD") and to amend the Final Development Plan for the PUD as to Parcel 6 of the PUD. The proposed amendment would add gasoline service stations as a permitted use within the PUD, and would amend the site plan for the PUD to allow for the construction of two proposed new buildings within Parcel 6 of the PUD: a gasoline service station, with drive-through facilities, and a retail building with drive-through facilities. The lands that are the subject of this request are owned by Broadmoor-84 LLC, and located generally at 8300 Broadmoor Avenue SE, Caledonia, Michigan 49316, and are legally described as follows:

Parcel No. 41-23-17-400-063

PART OF SE 1/4 COM 451.75 FT S 88D 24M 20S W ALONG S SEC LINE FROM SE COR OF SEC TH S 88D 24M 20S W ALONG S SEC LINE 42.09 FT TH N 52D 31M 37S W 284.71 FT TO ELY LINE OF BROADMOOR AVE /STL M37 - 120 FT WIDE/ TH N 27D 40M 56S W ALONG SD ELY LINE 453.11 FT TH ELY 104.15 FT ALONG A 150.0 FT RAD CURVE TO RT /LONG CHORD BEARS N 82D 12M 35S E 102.07 FT/ TH S 77D 53M 55S E 355.93 FT TH S 4D 34M 50S E 290.0 FT TH S 1D 35M 40S E 223.52 FT TO BEG * SEC 17 T5N R10W 3.72 A.

All interested persons may attend the public hearing and comment on the proposed ordinance to amend the approved PUD and site plan for the described lands. Written comments may be submitted to the Township at the above-stated address up to the time of and during the public hearing. Interested persons may contact the Township Offices or consult the Township website at https://www.caledoniatownship.org/ up to the time of the meeting for any updates concerning the manner of holding the hearing.

Dated: December 26, 2024

PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF CALEDONIA

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YEAR IN SPORTS

Continued from Page 10

state qualifiers in track and field at the end of the 2024 spring season. While Draaisma wasn't chasing many people throughout the fall, he did spend much of the spring chasing senior teammate Lucas Van Meter.

Van Meter found his stride on the track as a senior. He set a school record for TK in the 800-meter run in winning the OK Gold Conference championship in the race and then improved his time further to 1 minute 55.98 seconds to finish as the state runner-up in the race at the MHSAA Division 2 Lower Peninsula Track and Field Finals in Hamilton in June.

The TK girls' team continued to be a powerhouse in the hurdles with junior Brooklyn Harmon setting her PRs in third-place finishes in both the 100-meter hurdles and the 300-meter low hurdles. Sophomore teammate Mia Hilton was eighth in the 300 hurdles. Those two also teamed with sophomore Payton Gater and freshman Ellie Harmon to place sixth in the 4x400-meter relay at the end of the meet.

Both TK 4x400-meter relay teams finished the day on the state medal stand as the boys' foursome of seniors Jaxan Sias, Ethan Bonnema, Kyle VanHaitsma and Van Meter placed fourth in their finals race.

The Caledonia boys' track and field team had a handful of state qualifiers in Division 1 last spring. Seniors Ian Fedewa popped off his best throw ever in the discus of 160 feet 10 inches to earn an all-state medal for an eighth-place finish. Senior Jordan Gutierrez qualified for the state finals in the long jump the high jump and .with teammates Shaden Thomas, Maddox Greenfield and Dharius Walker in the 4x100-meter relay.

While the track and field state finals were dodging rain drops, the Caledonia varsity baseball team was winning its second straight Division 1 District Championship in June. The Fighting Scots followed up their 3-1 district championship win over Lowell at Davenport University by beating Wyoming in the regional semifinals.

That win over Wyoming sent the Scots to Central Michigan University for the second season in a row for a regional final, but the Scots were downed 3-2 by OK Red Conference foe Hudsonville in the regional finals.

The Fighting Scots had an outstanding girls' soccer postseason too last spring as the Caledonia varsity girls' soccer team shut out East Kentwood and then Byron Center to get into the MHSAA Division 1 District Final against Hudsonville at West Ottawa High School in May, and knocked off the top-ranked Eagles 2-1 in a shoot out to claim their first district title.

Freshman Averi Rosted scored for Caledonia midway through the second half to tie the district final at 1-1 on the Scots' first and only shot of the game. The two teams played through a scoreless overtime to head to a shootout, one the Scots entered confidently with senior goalkeeper Davanee Balczak one of the team's stars. She had 23 saves through the game's 100 minutes of soccer.

The Scots' Baylee Devries, Kendall Maynard, Langley Peterson and Rosted buried kicks in the shoot out, with Rosted's shot clinching the district championship. Peterson was named first team all-state in Division 1,

"I have never felt a victory this rewarding," Peterson said. "[Beating Byron Center in the district semifinals] was very rewarding, because they have knocked us out the past two years. We have never beaten [Hudsonville] in my four years. My freshman year they knocked us out in the first or second round of districts, and then the past two years it was Byron Center. So, this was personal. I really, really wanted to hold them off and they took 23 shots.

"Davanee is incredible. Couldn't do it without her, for sure. She is the best ever."

It is the Caledonia girls' first district championship in soccer since 2013.

The spring season saw Thornapple Kellogg senior Emma Schut earn all-state honors in Division 2 on the girls' soccer field, and Hoebeke the TK softball team's senior shortstop earn honorable mention all-state in Division 2.

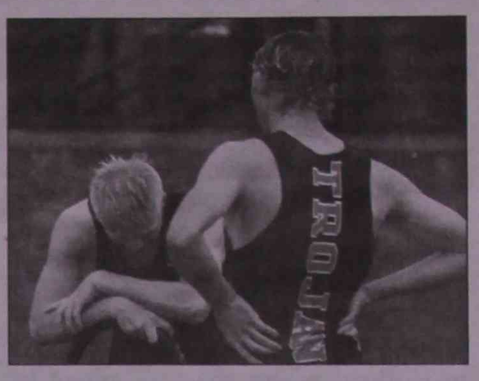
Throughout the course of the year many others competed and were honored on a state level. On the soccer field for the boys this fall Caledonia senior Drew Diebolt, a future Michigan Wolverine, was selected to the MIHSSCA All-State Dream Team as one of the top 11 players in the state of Michigan.

Caledonia had David Potgeter qualify for the MHSAA Division 2 Boys' Ski Finals where he had a top finish of 49th in the giant slalom.

The Caledonia girls' bowling team sent a pair of competitors to the MHSAA Division 1 Bowling Singles Finals at the end of last year's winter season, senior Kala Bisterfeldt and Emma Whitmore who were a pair of standouts throughout the season.

The Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian (CLS) girls' swimming and diving team moved from the OK Red Conference into the OK Rainbow Tier II Conference this fall and captured a conference championship before going on to the program's best state finals finish ever.

The Vikings were eighth as a team at the MHSAA Division 1 Lower Peninsula Girls' Swimming and Diving Finals in November. Senior Bella Trieb placed fourth in the 100-yard backstroke and fifth in the 100-yard freestyle. Sophomore Sophie Gaylord was sixth in the 50-yard freestyle. The CHS team also had medal winning performances from the 200-yard freestyle relay team that included Treib,



Thornapple Kellogg senior Lucas Van Meter catches his breath as junior teammate Jacob Draaisma looks on following their 800-meter race at the MHSAA L.P. Division 2 Track and Field Finals at Hamilton High School in June. Van Meter set a TK record while finishing as the state runner-up in the event. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Amelia McCann, Mya VanderZwaag and Gaylord and the 200-yard medley relay team that included Treib, VanderZwaag, Gaylord and Aliya Van Hofwegen. Teammate Elise Miller just

See **YEAR IN SPORTS** on 12

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider the following request:

Summary of Request:	Request to rezone a 40.5-acre parcel from Steelcase PUD-LSP to Light Industrial (I-1).
Property Address:	7147 Patterson Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316
Parcel Numbers:	41-22-12-100-031
Applicant:	Chris Sander, Microsoft Corporation
Date and Time of Hearing:	January 23rd, 2025, at 7:00 pm
Location of Hearing:	Gaines Charter Township Offices, Board Room 8555 Kalamazoo Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

Any interested party may appear and be heard on said proposal. Information related to this request may be inspected, by appt., during regular business hours at the Planning Department window located in the Gaines Charter Township Offices. For information related to this request, contact Dan Wells at (616) 980-6188 or dan.wells@gainestownship.org. To be entered into the public record, signed written comments must be received by 5:00 PM on January 23rd, 2025.

Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations should contact Kim Triplett at (616) 698-6640 one week prior to the meeting to request mobility, visual or any other assistance.

YEAR IN SPORTS

Continued from Page 11

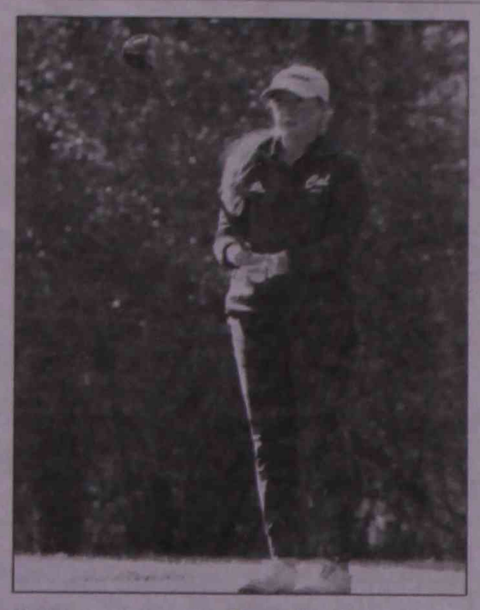
missed all-state honors with a ninth-place finish in the diving competition.

Thornapple Kellogg sent two divers to those D1 Finals as a part of the Grand Rapids Gators co-op. Sophomore Lydia Slagel earned her first state medal too with a fourth place finish in the diving competition at the D2 Finals in Holland where she was joined by senior teammate Abigail Dumond – a three-time state qualifier herself.

It all started for Slagel, Dumond in the Community Education and Recreation Center pool in Hastings with the Hastings Community Diving Club where Miller and the D3 diving state champion, Aubrey Yarger, all train.

"They're both really amazing," HCDC assistant coach Francesca Pileci said of Slagel and Yarger after a practice in between regionals and the state finals. "They're two super kids who work really hard. They were doing big dives way before other kids were. They were so tiny that they could hardly bounce the board."

See **YEAR IN SPORTS** on 16



Caledonia senior Copelin O'Krangley sets up for a tee shot during day one of the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals at Katke Golf Course on the campus of Ferris State University in Big Rapids. O'Krangley was a top ten state medalist for the second year in a row while leading the CHS team to a runner-up finish. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian senior Izzy Leason celebrates her team's win in the 400-meter freestyle relay at the OK Rainbow Tier II Conference Championship in Hastings. The victory clinched the Vikings' 2024 conference championship. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Yankee Springs Township
284 N. BRIGGS ROAD- MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN 49333
269-795-9091 / FAX 269-795-2388

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF YANKEE SPRINGS, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing will be held on January 16, 2025, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall, 284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville MI, within the Township, as required under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Zoning Ordinance for the Township.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE In addition to participation during a public hearing, members of the public may also provide comments for the Planning Commission's consideration by emailing or mailing those comments to the Planning Commission for receipt prior to the meeting, in care of the Township Zoning Administrator, Joe Shea (joeshea@yankeespringstwp.org). Letters and emails are due one week before the hearing date; or by leaving a phone message prior to the meeting with the Township Zoning Administrator, Joe Shea at 269-795-9091.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the item(s) to be considered at said public hearing include, in brief, the following:

1. **SEU 24-12-11; Parcel ID: 16-012-008-00; 7794 Bowens Mill Road, Middleville, MI 49333**. The property owner, Amy Kooyers, requests a Special Exception Use permit to operate a chiropractic business from an outbuilding on her property pursuant to the Yankee Springs Township Zoning Ordinance, Section 4.5.K: Home Occupations.
2. **Such other business as may properly come before the Planning Commission.**

Anyone interested in reviewing the application material may do so at the township hall. All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place, or, if an electronic meeting is held, to participate via the electronic meeting.

Yankee Springs Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon seven (7) days' prior notice to the Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
By: Shana Bush, Chairperson
Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd.
Middleville, Michigan 49333
(269) 795-9091

Yankee Springs Township
284 N. BRIGGS ROAD- MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN 49333
269-795-9091 / FAX 269-795-2388

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF YANKEE SPRINGS, BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a special public hearing will be held on January 14, 2025, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall, 284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville MI, within the Township, as required under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Zoning Ordinance for the Township.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE In addition to participation during a public hearing, members of the public may also provide comments for the ZBA's consideration by emailing or mailing those comments to the ZBA for receipt prior to the meeting, in care of the Township Zoning Administrator, Joe Shea (joeshea@yankeespringstwp.org). Letters and emails are due 3 days before the meeting date, or by leaving a phone message prior to the meeting with the Township Zoning Administrator, Joe Shea at 269-795-9091.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the item(s) to be considered at said public hearing include, in brief, the following:

1. **ZBA 24-11-09, Parcel ID: 16-370-005-00 and 370-006-00, 2739 Sandon Circle #6, and 2739 Sandon Circle #5, Wayland.** The property owners, Richard and Starr Adams, appeal the decision of the Zoning Administrator requiring them to obtain a short term rental permit before operating a short term rental unit, pursuant to the Township Zoning Ordinance, Article X, Short Term Rentals.
2. **Such other business as may properly come before the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

Anyone interested in reviewing the application material may do so at the township hall. All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place, or, if an electronic meeting is held, to participate via the electronic meeting.

Yankee Springs Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' prior notice to the Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.

YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Jake Welch, Chairman
Yankee Springs Township Hall
284 N. Briggs Rd.
Middleville, Michigan 49333
(269) 795-9091

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TK ladies place top ten at Mat Cat Invitational

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg girls' wrestling team placed ninth at the 2024 Montague Lady Mat Cat Invitational Friday, Dec. 27.

Raini Braska had the top finish for the Thornapple Kellogg team placing third in the 115-pound weight class. She took a pair of pins before being bested by Whitehall's Kassie Sapp in the semifinals.

Braska bounced back for a 4-1 win over Whittemore-Prescott's Gracie Murphy in a sudden victory period in the match for third.

The Trojan team had Emma Gibson fourth at 135 pounds, Rylee Alberts fourth at 145 pounds, Peyton Wilkerson sixth at 100 pounds, and Addisyn Barringer sixth in the 130/135 B division.

Gibson moved her record to 11-3 overall this season with a pair of pins to start the day. She was bested by Mattawan's Elyse morales in the semifinals at 135 pounds and then lost out in a major decision against Avery Lynch from Plainwell in the match for third.

Alberts now also had 11 wins on the year after a fourth-place finish at 145. She had a path similar to Gibson's pinning her first two foes of the day before falling in semifinal and third-place matches against Romeo's Belicia Manuel and Pine River's Ali Wheaton.

TK also had wins on the day from Ava Rausch, Adelaide Holderman and Jaycee Teunessen.

The Hastings team took the day's team championship.

The Saxons outscored the second-place Grand Haven team 159.5 to 126.5 at the top of the standings. Whittemore-Prescott was third with 119 points ahead of Pine River 103, Standish-Sterling 89.5, West Ottawa 89, Romeo 87.5, Plainwell 82, Thornapple Kellogg 78 and Olivet 69. There were wrestlers from 58 different schools competing at the meet.

Hastings junior Dezarae Mathis ran her record to 10-1 with a runner-up finish in the 120-pound weight class. She was one of eight Hastings girls to place in the top six in their weight class Friday.

Mathis pinned Hart's Calyn Eisenlohr and East Kentwood's Anari Roberts before scoring an 11-1 major decision over Pine River's Krystin Nelson in the semifinals. Her first loss of the season came in the championship match against Grand Haven's Gracey Barry who pinned her late in the first period. Barry was the state runner-up at 115-pounds a year ago.

Jordan Milanowski had a fourth-place finish for Hastings in the 140-pound weight class and teammate Sydney Patterson was sixth at 145 pounds.

Hastings had Morgan Casselman and Autumn Miller place second and third respectively in the 110/115 B weight class and Chloe Aicken was the runner-up in the 170-pound B class. Petra Foster was fourth in the 140/145 B weight class and Liliana Fox was fifth in the 120/125 B division.

Aicken pinned her first two opponents before falling to West Ottawa's Braelyn Sharda in her championship match in the 170 B division. Casselman had three quick pins before falling to Fruitport's Bailey Garner in their 110/115 B final.

The Thornapple Kellogg girls were scheduled to return to action at a tournament hosted by Three Rivers Friday, Jan. 3.

The TK ladies are home Wednesday, Jan. 8, and will head to Northview for a tournament next Saturday, Jan. 11.

The buck stays here!
Spend it here. Keep it here.
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GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Gaines Charter Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on a proposed restatement of the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance, including an amended official Zoning Map, which is referenced in Chapter 2, Section 2.20 A. The restatement is a complete update and replacement of the existing Zoning Ordinance.

Date and Time of Hearing: January 23, 2025, at 7:00 pm

Location of Hearing: Gaines Charter Township Offices, Board Room, 8555 Kalamazoo Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

The proposed restatement of the Zoning Ordinance includes the following parts and chapters:

- **PART I. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PROVISIONS**
  - o CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION
  - o CHAPTER 2 ZONING DISTRICTS AND INTERPRETATIONS
  - o CHAPTER 3 MEASUREMENTS AND DESIGNATIONS
- **PART II. ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS**
  - o CHAPTER 4 RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (RR)
  - o CHAPTER 5 SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (SR)
  - o CHAPTER 6 VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (VR)
  - o CHAPTER 7 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (MFR)
  - o CHAPTER 8 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (NC)
  - o CHAPTER 9 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (GC)
  - o CHAPTER 10 OFFICE SERVICE DISTRICT (O-S)
  - o CHAPTER 11 MIXED BUSINESS (MB)
  - o CHAPTER 12 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (LI)
  - o CHAPTER 13 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (HI)
  - o CHAPTER 14 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) OVERLAY DISTRICT
  - o CHAPTER 15 LAND USE
- **PART III. BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS**
  - o CHAPTER 16 BUILDING REQUIREMENTS
  - o CHAPTER 17 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
  - o CHAPTER 18 USES WITH SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS
  - o CHAPTER 19 LIGHTING
  - o CHAPTER 20 PARKING AND LOADING
  - o CHAPTER 21 MOBILITY, TRAFFIC, AND ACCESS
  - o CHAPTER 22 PRIVATE STREETS & DRIVEWAYS
  - o CHAPTER 23 LANDSCAPING
  - o CHAPTER 24 SIGNS
- **PART IV. REVIEW PROCESSES AND STANDARDS**
  - o CHAPTER 25 GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES
  - o CHAPTER 26 SITE PLAN REVIEW
  - o CHAPTER 27 SPECIAL LAND USE REVIEW
  - o CHAPTER 28 CONDOMINIUM REVIEW
  - o CHAPTER 29 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
  - o CHAPTER 30 VARIANCE REVIEW
  - o CHAPTER 31 ZONING AMENDMENT REVIEW
- **PART V. ADMINISTRATION**
  - o CHAPTER 32 AUTHORITIES
  - o CHAPTER 33 LAWFUL NONCONFORMITIES
  - o CHAPTER 34 ENFORCEMENT
  - o CHAPTER 35 DEFINITIONS
  - o CHAPTER 36 CHECKLISTS

Any interested party may appear and be heard on said proposal. Information related to this request may be inspected, by appt., during regular business hours at the Planning Department window located in the Gaines Charter Township Offices. For information related to this request, contact Dan Wells at (616) 980-6188 or dan.wells@gainestownship.org. To be entered into the public record, signed written comments must be received by 5:00 PM on January 23, 2025.

Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations should contact Kim Triplett at (616) 698-6640 one week prior to the meeting to request mobility, visual or any other assistance.

WINTERFEST

Continued from Page 2

heads up the Polar Dip. Kenna Graham from the Sand Bar and Grill helps to drive restaurant engagement. As president of the Gun Lake Business Association, Timmerman helps guide the committee. Lisa Heflin is lending a hand with raffle baskets and sponsorship.

"With the state park camping being closed last summer, many of the businesses here had a down year, which took away the normal cushion to operate in the slower season," Landman said. "We are laser-focused on cutting costs and promoting Gun Lake as a premier destination worth supporting."

Timmerman added the Landmans' plan considers the community's best interest.

"The Landmans have done a wonderful job of growing the Winterfest committee and encouraging people to be involved in both programming and decision-making," she said. "They've thoroughly analyzed the cost of putting on a huge event like Winterfest and looking for ways to reduce those costs while keeping the essence of the spirit of Winterfest."

This year, participants in the Polar Dip will pay $10, unlike last year, where the charge was $25.

"While Winterfest might look a little different, we hope there will be more proceeds to share with our partner charity and more benefits to the Gun Lake area," Timmerman said.

Every year, the Winterfest committee picks a local charity to receive a check. This year, the chosen charity to receive proceeds from the event is the Federation of Women's Clubs-Gun Lake Chapter.

"These ladies are often in the background taking care of the area," Landman said. "They help residents who need a little boost. They raise funds and awareness for many projects out there but seldom get recognized for their work.

"We wanted to make sure they are recognized and hopefully give them a nice donation so they can keep up their great work."

Landman said he and Stacey are excited about the move for a few reasons, encompassing three key factors including uniting the community through a fun, low-cost event for families, supporting area businesses and raising funds for a local charity.

"The new location offers some fantastic advantages. Being in a busier area means more people can see and attend the event," Landman said. "To further support local businesses, we've added a trolley service connecting the park to many businesses, and being on Patterson makes this much easier."

Organizers agree that switching locations makes sense.

"The tent rental cost was the biggest factor in changing locations," Timmerman said. "The event was held at the new location in previous years, so it seemed like a great way to reduce costs and get people to engage in and support businesses around the lake."

Other changes to Winterfest 2025 will help support area businesses.

"It's been very enjoyable to attend the committee meetings and witness the growth of involvement and ideas flowing from participants," Timmerman said.

Organizers decided not to have a beer tent this year, as it took business away from area restaurants. Instead, participating restaurants and locations will be selling commemorative beer glasses.

"The cornhole event has been canceled this year. It was never a big draw. We guess that is a summertime sport," Landman added. "The kids' area will be bigger than ever. The shopping will likely be different, as there will be a smaller tent, and all the vendors will need their own tents."

Timmerman hopes the event will grow this year to involve more businesses around the lake, family-friendly activities and events to unite the community.

"The committee is looking to expand programming for children to allow families to participate. Lynch's Tire and Service has stepped up to sponsor the kids' activities, so that is positive," she said. "Winterfest is also partnering with SS Cyril and Methodius for a mystery theatre dining experience. The biggest change is more Winterfest activities over a longer period."

LOCAL CHURCH DIRECTORY

ALASKA BAPTIST CHURCH
Service Times
Sunday at 9:30 AM & 6:00 PM
www.alaskabaptist.org
7240 68th Street SE, Caledonia

Caledonia United Methodist Church
Rev. Christine Beaudoin
Join us for our traditional yet casual worship service, in person or online, at 9:00 am.
250 Vine Street 616-891-8669 CaledoniaUMC.org
Livestream: Facebook.com/CaledoniaUnitedMethodist
Serving ~ Strengthening ~ Connecting

cornerstonechurch
Join us in person or online
Sundays 9:30 & 11am
1675 84th St. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
cornerstonemi.org/weekend

FIRST BAPTIST Middleville
Sunday Service 10:30 AM
Livestream: facebook.com/firstbaptistmiddleville
FBCMIDDLEVILLE.NET - 5215 M37 - 269-795-9726

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
908 W. Main Street, Middleville
(Missouri Synod)
Sunday Worship..... 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: Rev. Peter Berg
http://goodshepherdlcms.googlepages.com
Church: (269) 795-2391

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH
9669 Kraft Ave., Caledonia
Phone: 616-891-9259
www.holyfamilycaledonia.org
Saturday Evening Mass ..... 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Masses..... 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Considering becoming Catholic?
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JOURNEY CHURCH
Caledonia Location -
9185 Cherry Valley Ave SE
9:15 am and 11:00 am
Middleville Location -
1664 M-37
9:30 am and 11:00 am

PEACE CHURCH
PEACECHURCH.CC
Sundays at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM
Lead Pastor: Pastor Ryan Kimmel
616.891.8119
6950 Cherry Valley Rd., Middleville, MI 49333
peacechurch.cc

Sunday Worship:
8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Fellowship
9:45 to 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School
10 to 10:45 a.m.
@ St. Paul Lutheran Church & Preschool
8436 Kraft Ave., Caledonia, MI 49316
Office 616-891-8688 • Preschool (616) 891-8688
www.stpaulcaledonia.org

THORNAPPLE VALLEY CHURCH MIDDLEVILLE
SERVICE TIMES:
Sunday at 9:30am & 11:00am
20 State Street, Middleville, MI / www.tvcweb.com

Whitneyville Bible Church
8655 Whitneyville Avenue, Alto
616.891.8661
www.whitneyvillebible.org
Pastor Jonathan DeCou
Sunday School ..... 9:30 AM
Sunday Worship ..... 10:30 AM
Watch our services from our website (see above)

Yankee Springs Bible Church
8900 Duffy Road
Middleville, MI 49333
"Shining Forth God's Light"
Sunday Morning Worship ..... 10:00 a.m.
Community Group ..... 11:00 a.m.
James L. Collison, Pastor
www.yankeespringsbiblechurch.org

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Obituaries

Gladys L. (Hooyer) Ploeg



Gladys L. (Hooyer) Ploeg, age 81, of Middleville, MI went to be with her Lord on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2024. On December 7, Gladys and her husband, Ivan, observed and celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary and were blessed to be surrounded by their family. She had great pride and joy in her children and grandchildren.

She enjoyed spending winters in Florida with Ivan and their friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Herman and Margaret Hooyer.

Gladys will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by her husband, Ivan; daughters, Debra (Mark) Drenten, Carla (Chad) VanHaitsma; grandchildren, Levi VanHaitsma, Kyle VanHaitsma, and Jessie Drenten.

The family welcomes visitors on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025 from 4 - 7 p.m. at Stroo Funeral Home, 1095 68th St. SE, Grand Rapids, 49508. The funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 3, at Middleville United Methodist Church, 111 Church St., Middleville, 49333. Pastor Ron Worley and Pastor Tony Schumaker will officiate. Interment will be in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Memorial contributions in memory of Gladys may be made to Middleville UMC.

Local group offers discussions on world affairs

Anyone looking for interesting reading and discussion is invited to join the Great Decisions world affairs discussion program.

Great Decisions is the nation's largest discussion program on world affairs. The grassroots face-to-face model adopted by Great Decisions more than 50 years ago continues today, with tens of thousands of participants taking part in discussions nationwide annually. The program model involves reading the Great Decisions Briefing Book, watching the informative talks and meeting in a group to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today. The local group is just one of multiple groups in Michigan with hundreds more throughout the United States.

This year, the Barry County group will meet on Tuesday afternoons beginning Jan. 21 in the Hastings Public Library's upstairs community room. The club will meet through March. The first two meetings on Jan. 21 and Jan. 28 will be from 1:45 to 3 p.m. All other meetings will be from 1 to 3 p.m.

Regular attendance is encouraged but not required. The group generally has between 15 and 20 participants. Consensus is not an aim of the program; rather, the class is designed to help individuals better understand complex issues.

A soft-cover book that provides background, relevant facts, present and future policy options and impartial analysis written by independent experts, is available for purchase. Attendees read the assigned article prior to each meeting to gain background information and prepare for discussion. Along with taking part in discussions, participants watch a video that provides more information on the week's topic. Attendees choose how much they want to participate in terms of preparation and in-class dialogue.

This year's topics include: American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads, U. S. Changing Leadership of the World Economy, U.S-China Relations, International Cooperation on Climate Change, The Future of NATO and European Security, AI and American National Security, India: Between China, the West, and the Global South and After Gaza: American Policy in the Middle East.

The meetings are free; the only cost is for the soft-bound book. For further information about the local group or to order the book, contact Carole at 616-450-3164 or Marge at 269-352-3602 by Thursday, Jan. 9. — *MM*

Herb group meeting on Sunday

Locals can discuss health tonics and other herbalist topics at a free herb workshop slated for this Sunday, Jan. 5. Robbin Glass will lead the workshop, discussing the basics of herbalism. The free workshop will run from 3 to 5 p.m.

Several natural first aid topics will be discussed this weekend, including herbalist terminology, tonics for health and improved immunity, winter sowing of herbs and native plants, how to organize herbal information and much more. Those who may have missed earlier meetings can find past handouts at this upcoming meeting.

As per usual, prizes and handouts will be provided.

The Herbal First Aid Workshop will be held at the Hastings SDA Church Community Hall & Grounds at 888 Terry Lane in Hastings.

Free-will offerings are welcome. For more information, contact Glass at 517-652-3056. — *MM*

Blood drive set for Jan. 14 in Caledonia

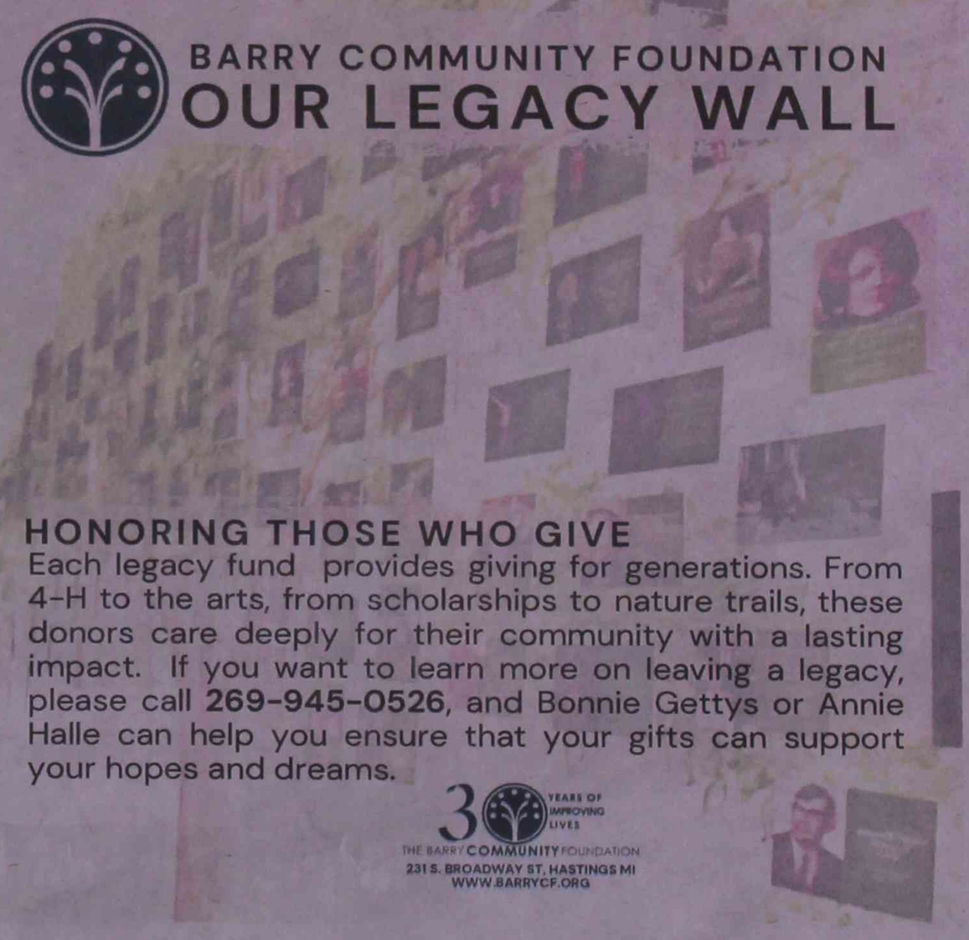
After celebrating Christmas, Caledonia residents will have yet another chance to give to others at an upcoming blood drive.

Versiti-Blood Center of Michigan will be partnering with Caledonia Community Churches for the blood drive at the Holy Family Catholic Church, located at 9669 Kraft Avenue in Caledonia, on Tuesday, Jan. 14, from 1 to 6:30 p.m.

According to organizers of the blood drive, the goal is to collect at least 61 pints. The drive is open to the public and any individual 17 or older is eligible to donate. Persons who are 16 are eligible to donate with parental permission.

If interested in donating blood, individuals are encouraged to sign up online at bit.ly/Jan14CCC or call the blood drive chairperson, Char Mello, at 616-901-2803.

Donating by appointment is preferred but walk-ins are welcome, as the schedule allows. — *DM*



YEAR IN SPORTS

Continued from Page 12

"Yeah, we had to change our approaches just so we could," Slagel said.

"Exactly, we changed their approaches, but we are so proud of them. They deserve everything," Pileci said.

Pileci coached Slagel and Dumond in Holland at the finals while HCDC head coach Todd Bates was with Yarger at the finals at Oakland.

Almost as exciting as who the Trojans and Scots performed at the pool was where they're getting to perform.

The renovations at the Thornapple Kellogg High School were finally completed, and that gave the members of the Thornapple Kellogg, West Michigan Aviation Academy, West Catholic, Hopkins girls' swimming and diving co-op the chance to practice in the pool in Middleville occasionally and the boys' are getting the chance to do the same this winter.

The CLS boys are hoping to host their first duals in the new pool at the Caledonia YMCA across the street from Duncan Lake Middle School this season.



Thornapple Kellogg senior Ailana Leos celebrates a birdie putt at The Meadows in October during the MHSAA L.P. Division 2 Girls' Golf Finals. Leos shot her way to an all-state medal over the course of the two-day tournament. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



Caledonia senior Kort Thompson runs to a 29th-place finish and an all-state medal at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Cross Country Finals at MIS in November. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



Caledonia's Corbin Raffler (1) head off the diamond at Central Michigan University between innings of the team's MHSAA Division 1 Regional Final against OK Red Conference rival Hudsonville in June. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



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