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Your Hometown Newspaper Serving the Middleville, Caledonia and Gaines Township Areas

GARS SEE PROGRESS IN LOY NORRIX PERFORMANCE
PAGE 12



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Barry County residents involved in pedestrian-vehicle crash in Byron Twp.

Molly Macleod
Editor

A 46-year-old Middleville man is recovering today after being struck by a vehicle while assisting other motorists involved in a crash in Byron Township on Tuesday. The vehicle that struck the Middleville man, who was outside of his car, was driven by a 32-year-old Hastings woman, according to the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

The crash occurred around 9:50 a.m. on Tuesday morning, Jan. 21, on the 500 block of 100th Street SW in Byron Township.

The Middleville bystander had stopped to assist occupants in a grey Chevrolet Traverse who were involved in an unrelated crash. While outside his vehicle assisting the other motorists, the Middleville pedestrian was struck by a white Honda Pilot driven by the Hastings woman. She lost control due to icy conditions and struck the man.

Emergency responders attended to the scene and transported the man to a local hospital. He was alert but with serious injuries.



A 46-year-old Middleville man is recovering today after being struck outside his vehicle by a Hastings woman in Byron Township on Tuesday. **Photo provided**

The Kent County Sheriff's Office Traffic Safety Unit is investigating the accident.

"We remind drivers to reduce their speeds, allow extra time for travel, and remain vigilant, especially during hazardous road conditions," wrote KCSO in a release. "Be mindful of your surroundings and take extra precautions to protect yourself and others. Remember, if one vehicle has slid off the road, it is likely that others could as well."

Freeport man injured in wreck near Zeeland

Sun and News Staff

A 55-year-old Freeport man is recovering from injuries suffered in a 15-vehicle crash on Interstate 196 in Ottawa County earlier this week.

The victim, whose name was not released, was driving a pickup truck in the eastbound lanes of the expressway at mile marker 59 between Zeeland and Hudsonville shortly after 11:30 a.m. Monday when his vehicle slid underneath a semi-truck, Sgt. Matt Wildfong of the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

Other vehicles were then caught up in the wreck, which led to a seven-mile stretch of I-196 being closed for nearly four hours, Wildfong said.

"The crash was caused by blowing snow and whiteout conditions with near-zero visibility," Wildfong said.

The victim was taken to a nearby hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Two other people suffered minor injuries and were treated at the scene.

Former Hastings-based builder faces criminal charges out west

Jayson Bussa
Contributing Writer

As Justina Hunter observes ongoing criminal proceedings hundreds of miles out west, she is hoping that victims in a similar situation locally, like her, also find some form of justice.

"We're rooting for them because we're not seeing justice here," said Hunter, a Hastings resident.

Hunter, and many like her around the Hastings area, can empathize with what a group of residents in the state of Wyoming are going through. A group of local residents say they were duped by a building company that formerly called Hastings home. That same company and its owner have now been accused of doing the same thing more recently out west.

Earlier this month, Wyoming news organization Cowboy State Daily released a report that drudged up a familiar name here locally as it highlighted criminal charges brought against Jerold Saeman, owner of Bay to Bay Building Concepts LLC, which had its home office in downtown Hastings but has since moved and is now listed as permanently closed.

The report states that Saeman is facing felony charges in Niobrara County District Court after authorities accused him of taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from residents without delivering on the promise of service — something that dozens of residents here locally have complained about over the last couple of years Bay to Bay was in business.

Reports stated that Saeman faces 10 counts of felony theft, each punishable by up to 10 years in prison and $10,000 fines.

The report outlined the scope of the investigation, which it says took about a year as the Niobrara County Sheriff's Office eventually handed it over to the Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation back in July.

The report notes that, over the course of the investigation, a deputy received complaints based out of Michigan

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Former Cal UMC reintroduces itself as Caledonia Vine Street Church

One longstanding church in the Caledonia area is starting a new chapter this month.

Caledonia Vine Street Church, formerly Caledonia United Methodist Church, changed its name and went independent beginning Jan. 1. Located in the Village of Caledonia for more than 60 years, the church is beginning a new chapter in its life as parishioners consider remaining independent or joining another denomination based upon the teachings of John Wesley.

Caledonia Vine Street Church holds traditional services that include congregational singing of hymns accompanied by a choir or organ, scripture readings, a sermon from the pastor, prayers and open communion. On special occasions, members also enjoy music from the bell choir. Church members congregate in the fellowship hall for coffee, snacks and stimulating conversation each Sunday following the 9 a.m. service.

Pastor Christine Beaudoin provides the message each Sunday where she shares insights from biblical scholars, demonstrates her knowledge of ancient Hebrew, and mixes in life stories that are said to always amaze the congregation.

The sanctuary includes both cushioned pew and chair seating underneath a high-arching wooden ceiling. The church is currently implementing a capital project to install a lift between the two floors and add a restroom adjacent to the sanctuary on the upper level.

In addition to their church property located at 250 Vine Street in the village, Vine Street Church also has property near the schools on Kraft Avenue. A portion of this property is currently home to the Caledonia Community Garden where Caledonia residents are welcomed to plant and care for a variety of vegetables that are then offered to those in need.



Caledonia Vine Street Church, formerly Caledonia United Methodist Church, changed its name and went independent beginning Jan. 1. **Photo provided**

Caledonia Vine Street Church is encouraging those seeking a church home to pay them a visit on Sunday by attending a service in person or via the live or recorded broadcast on Facebook (CaledoniaVSC).

Anyone with questions about the church is encouraged to reach out at 616-891-8669 or by calling office@vinestreetchurch.org. — *MM*

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Drivers reminded to stay back from snow plows

Dennis Mansfield
Staff Writer

The return of winter weather also comes with a reminder to local motorists to watch for snow drifts and other potential dangers while driving – and to stay 200 feet back from snow plows or face a fine.

Barry County and much of southwest Michigan was hit by severe weather conditions on Monday, with winter advisories calling for snow and cold temperatures this week, including temperatures dipping below zero. That is a stark contrast to last year, when many residents could still see bare ground even in January and February.

The Barry County Sheriff's Office responded to 18 accident scenes over a three-day period to start the week, in part due to weather conditions.

"Fortunately, nothing of a serious nature," said Undersheriff Kevin Erb. "We'll take the good luck when we can get it.

"The Barry County Road Commission does a phenomenal job of keeping our roads clear," he added. "Everyone is doing a pretty good job."

According to road commission officials, areas in the western portion of the county received up to five inches of snow Monday, while areas in the northeast still saw snowfall of 2-3 inches.

"It kind of cut across the county," said BCRC managing director Jake Welch. "The bitter cold always causes some problems."

Welch said the freezing temperatures has caused the road commission to use a "heavy sand mix" to help break up ice and provide traction, rather than salt which is less effective at such conditions, on the county's nearly 1,100 miles of roads.

He added that BCRC snowplow drivers were on the job as early as 4 a.m.

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THE **SUN** AND **NEWS**

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1351 N. M-43 Hwy.
Hastings, MI 49058
Phone: 269-945-9554
www.sunandnews.com

CONTACT US

Editor: Molly Macleod
mmacleod@mihomepaper.com

Sports: Brett Bremer
bbremer@mihomepaper.com

Advertising Manager: Chris Silverman
csilverman@mihomepaper.com

Marketing and Community Engagement Specialist: Jennie Yonker
jyonker@mihomepaper.com

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CHARGES

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about the company after the company's personnel arrived in the county in July of 2023 following a severe hail storm that caused significant damage to homes and commercial buildings.

Several residents local to that area had grievances after working with the company, whose building license was suspended in the state of Michigan as of 2023. These residents were provided with a consumer protection form to document those complaints. The report stated that the company took down payments from 11 homeowners totaling $151,664.57, a single down payment as high as $31,284.67.

The report goes on to say that, when dissatisfied residents asked for a refund, Saeman would tell them they could cancel their project with a 30 percent fee along with additional costs.

The report also stated that a special agent spoke with Sgt. Bryan Fuller of the Michigan State Police back in August to gain information about those who had been victimized in a similar fashion in Michigan.

A Wyoming circuit court initially set Saeman's bond at $10,000 and ordered him to stay in the state, per the report, but near the end of last year, a judge modified the bond to $5,000 cash or surety and allowed him to return to Michigan while he is prosecuted.

While these are merely charges against the company, which is presumed innocent until proven otherwise, it is more progress than Hunter of Hastings has seen. She faced a similar scenario all the way back in 2022 when she turned to the company, which at the time had glowing reviews and seemed like a good choice in a local contractor, for a full exterior makeover.

Hunter said she had a contract in place with the company and put down over $17,000, or 50 percent of the project, in advance.

That's when the problems began, from lack of communication on behalf of Bay to Bay, shoddy initial work and a constantly shifting timeline which led to a point where the company claimed its policies had changed and it needed 100 percent of the project cost upfront before completing the work.

Hunter went back and forth with Bay to Bay into the following year before finally giving up and filing a criminal complaint with the police and with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, where she was grouped in with the initial wave of complaints the organization would receive.

After recouping some money from a settlement between LARA and Bay to Bay, Hunter is still out over $6,000 on a project she and her husband were financing themselves.

"People don't know what to do," Hunter said of being in that situation. "When I started dealing with this, I was lost. I didn't know — am I supposed to call the police? Should I contact an attorney? You're scared, and it's all your money."

Despite complaints like Hunter's piling up, authorities in Michigan have not taken any criminal action against Saeman or Bay to Bay. The Banner reached out to the Attorney General's office multiple times for comment on the matter but did not receive an answer.

Locally, the Barry County Prosecutor's Office has not been handling the complaints. Prosecuting Attorney Julie Nakfoor Pratt said, that due to the multi-jurisdictional nature of the matter, complaints were brought to the Michigan State Police and then to the AG's office, which was better equipped to investigate such matters.

"I mean, let's be honest, if they would have pressed charges, even if it wasn't all the people, maybe we wouldn't see customers who ended up signing up for them in April (of 2023) when we had storm damage and no one knew this was going on behind the scenes," Hunter said.

"I don't know what's happening at the state level," she added. "I know it's frustrating. I'm sitting on a criminal complaint that is coming up on a two-year anniversary."

Another couple from Caledonia, who asked not to be named in the story, turned to Bay to Bay to repair storm damage, putting down nearly $20,000 initially, which they received from the insurance company as a downpayment for the work, which never came. Communication broke down and the couple started to see more and more negative reviews emerge about the company.

They eventually had to get the work done elsewhere, paying that initial down payment out of their own pockets.

"I'm fighting for the elderly," the woman said. "The younger families, I feel terribly for them, but they can work. The elderly don't have the means and usually can't work."

Steven Storrs, an attorney with Hastings-based Tripp, Tagg, Storrs Attorneys at Law has worked with several former Bay to Bay clients and, in many cases, has helped them receive judgments in civil cases.

He told the Banner that, on average, his clients have been able to recoup 20 to 25 percent of what was taken from them but that he is not optimistic that much more will be collected unless the authorities uncover funds over the course of their investigation.

"We remain very frustrated that neither the Michigan Attorney General's Office nor local prosecutors have charged him in Michigan," Storrs said in an email.

Caledonia Twp. refunding Kent County Road Commission

Molly Macleod
Editor

The Caledonia Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved a motion to pay the Kent County Road Commission last week the difference of $94,001 for the completion of a trail along 68th Street between Kraft Avenue and the Panther Woods Apartments.

Township Supervisor Bryan Harrison explained that when Davenport University put in the Panther Woods Apartments on 68th Street, the township required the university to put in trails there and connect it to their field house. While Davenport did as the township asked, the new trails still left a gap between the 68th Street segments of the township's trail system.

"This (project) will at least complete that gap. Kent County Road Commission saw that as an opportunity while they were doing road work in that corridor to do this. They were also able to receive a grant for a portion of that. Construction costs came in over estimates and they're asking us to pick up (the remainder," Harrison said.

The trail connection project was awarded $139,999 from federal grants in 2022, $94,001 less than the project's cost estimate of $234,000. KCRC requested the remainder of the cost from the

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Barry County Transit collecting food items for United Way next month

Molly Macleod
Editor

Riders on the Barry County Transit can exchange food donations for a free ride next month as part of a food drive supporting the Barry County United Way.

The "Fill a Bus" food drive supports the Barry County United Way's food pantry. Riders are asked to bring three cans of non-perishable food items with them for donation. Passengers who donate at least three cans of food will ride for free.

The drive runs throughout February. It's not the only initiative from the Transit that is serving the community.

Barry County Transit Director Mary Bassett informed the public at Tuesday's Barry County Board of Commissioners Committee of the Whole meeting that the Transit is always willing to help those in need, especially with the frigid temperatures bearing down on the county this week.

"It's really cold out there. If you know of anybody who doesn't have a place to stay, have them call and contact Transit. Even if it's finding a shelter the next county over, we'll get them there, we'll give them a ride for free. Nobody should be cold, especially on days like this," Bassett said.

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MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The January 20 meeting opened with roll call. There are no fish in the fishbowl.

Maryellen's program was on habits that helped people lose weight and keep it off. A group of top obesity researchers identified key behaviors that can make a difference. The largest and longest clinical trial called the POUNDS Lost trial found people gained or lost depended on the levels of fat, protein or carbs they ate.

Over 800 people were split into four groups. The first group ate foods that were low in fat and protein. The second group ate high in fat and protein. The third group ate high in fat, low in protein. The last group was low in fat, high in protein. All diets were low in calories and saturated fat.

The trial lasted two years.

Those that ate more protein lost more weight than those who did not. Those that increased their fiber intake lost more. Those that ate less "ultra-processed" foods lost more. Those that ate a wider range of nutritious foods lost more weight and more in the waist and body fat.

Everyone in the study had a pedometer and was encouraged to exercise. The more steps they took, the more weight and body fat was lost. Those that had insomnia tripled their chances of failing to lose weight.

Any diet can work if you work at it. The difference is eating more protein, fiber, and avoiding "ultra-processed" foods.

The meeting closed with marching in place as the group recited the TOPS pledge.

TOPS, a weight loss support group, meets every Monday at Lincoln Meadows in Middleville. Weigh-in is from 3:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., followed immediately by the meeting. Press the white buzzer for entry.

Anyone with questions may call Virginia, 269-908-8036, or Maryellen, 616-318-3545. The first meeting is free.

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Barry County Chamber & EDA celebrates community strength at annual awards dinner

Molly Macleod
Editor

Several businesses and individuals around the county are sporting shiny new hardware this week after receiving awards at the Barry County Chamber & Economic Development Alliance Annual Dinner & Awards Ceremony on Saturday.

This year's dinner, hosted by Bay Pointe Woods on Gun Lake, honored nine businesses and individuals. Awards included:

- Chamber Champion Award – Greg Moore
- Barry Business Booster of the Year – Pat Doezema
- Entrepreneur of the Year – Lynch's Tire & Service
- Member Choice for Customer Service Award – Farmers Insurance-Ayers Agency
- Community Impact Award – Thornapple Credit Union
- Brick Award – Yankee Bills
- ATHENA Honoree – Katelyn Brown
- ROTH Award – David Solmes
- Lifetime Achievement Award (posthumously awarded) – James Wiswell

The awards served as an opportunity for the community to look back at all it did in 2024, looking to the new year. BCCEDA President/CEO Jennifer Heinzman used the opportunity to remind attendees of the chamber's many achievements in 2024.

Some chamber projects highlighted by Heinzman included the demolition of the former Design Wear and Baby Bliss building in Middleville, a $100,000 USDA grant and subsequent Rural Barry County Development Strategy and new housing opportunities.

"We have added over 748 houses or homes to our stock since 2020. We currently have 870 units in the pipeline — that's a total of 1,618. That's good stuff," Heinzman said.

In addition to adding a workforce development coordinator in 2024, the chamber is in the process of purchasing the old Trumble Insurance building on State Street in Hastings.

"We're moving basically across the street, kind of kitty-corner," Heinzman said. Trumble is moving to the former Bunker's building on Jefferson Street.

"Our plan is to move over there April 1. We are turning our current location into the Barry County Innovation and Coworking Station. So we're going to create a business development center in the front, and coworking and business resources in the back."

The chamber is looking to grow even more in 2025, said Heinzman. BCCEDA recently kicked off a sustainability campaign and capital campaign to help support these expansions.

Todd and Christina Porritt, owners of Yankee Bill's Woodfired Saloon, received a standing ovation when accepting the Brick Award. The award honors entrepreneurs who demonstrate commitment to the community through capital improvements. Yankee Bill's completed several improvements and renovations recently. The restaurant is in the early stages of rebuilding after being destroyed in a fire late last year.

"I do want to thank everyone in the community that's been here to support us. It's been very overwhelming. We're honored to be even nominated for this award, and then to get the award is awesome. It's been a very rough month for us," Christina Porritt said. "We will be back. We're working closely with a builder in Caledonia right now, and we're hoping to be open again by the end of 2025. Thank you all."

Highpoint Community Bank President/CEO Mark Kolanowski introduced the Lifetime Achievement Award, posthumously awarded to longtime Barry County Lumber owner Jim Wiswell. Wiswell passed away last year at the age of 87.

Wiswell's children, Tom and Laura, accepted the award on behalf of their father.

"Now most of you are familiar with what Jim may have done, but tonight I want to talk to you about how he did what he did because, to me, that was the differentiator in Jim," Kolanowski said. "Jim touched more lives than most. Make no mistake about what I'm about to say — he was a smart and shrewd businessman. He understood that to lift up his business, he needed to lift up everybody around him. And that is what he did. But for Jim, it was personal. It was innate — it was part of who he was."



This year's ATHENA Award winner, Katelyn Brown, gives her acceptance speech on Saturday.

Kolanowski said the best way to honor Wiswell would be to carry on his life mission — lifting others around him and giving back.

"I believe the best way that we can honor Jim tonight, and a generation of Jims, that we in this county have been so fortunate to be around, individuals that knew what you needed to do as leaders — we need to carry that torch tonight and carry that for him. They showed us commitment and dedication and determination and giving back in a community makes a huge difference. And we owe it to them to carry on," Kolanowski said.

SNOW

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to clear county roads with the onset of Mother Nature's wintery wrath.

"By and large, we hit everything the first day," Welch said. "(But) we're going to have to play the temperature game."

Welch praised not only BCRC drivers for their efforts, but also mechanics who help keep the snowplows up and running at critical times.

"Those guys are our unsung heroes," he added. "If they're not knocking it out of the park, the other guys aren't out plowing."

The return of winter also comes with several reminders for local motorists, such as to watch for drifting snow across roadways and that traffic signs might be covered by sticky snow. Drifting snow can be more of an issue in various parts of the county due to the number of open fields in the area that often allow snow to blow across roadways, sometimes catching drivers by surprise.

"No one is used to winter anymore," Welch said, referring to the mild conditions of the past couple of years.

"Definitely, the northeast part of the county is more open," he added. "We're definitely a huge agricultural county, so there's fields no matter where you are."

But the winter of 2024-25 is bringing more than just snow and cold temperatures. It is also the first winter for the implementation of a new state law.

In July 2024, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation into law that makes it illegal for motorists to drive within 200 feet of a moving snowplow, including within 20 feet of a snowplow stopped at an intersection.

The Michigan measure, which was reportedly inspired by a Wisconsin law, includes a potential $100 fine for violators.

"They finally codified that," Welch said, adding that drivers need to be aware to give snowplows the proper space to operate safely – for both them and the snowplow.

"We have the ability legally to maneuver at intersections more than most people," he said. "If you don't give us room, we can't do our jobs."





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DNR urges safety on, around the ice

With cold temperatures becoming more consistent throughout the state, more people are enjoying ice fishing, skating, hockey and other outdoor adventures. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources urges everyone to have fun but always use caution when venturing onto or near ice.

"Even during consistent cold stretches, pressure cracks in the ice can develop within hours," said Lt. Skip Hagy, DNR law enforcement supervisor in Newberry. "There is no such thing as 'safe' ice. Always check conditions for yourself; don't rely on what you see others doing or what they tell you."

River mouths and other places where river or lake currents may be located are often places of unstable ice. Reservoirs with changing water levels also require great caution.

Frozen bodies of water should be checked very carefully before braving the ice. While there is no perfectly reliable method to determine if ice is safe, you can use a spud, needle bar or auger to test the thickness and quality of ice.

"Keep in mind that warm spells as brief as one day may weaken the ice," Hagy said. "Melting ice during the day only partially refreezes at night, creating a thin layer of unstable ice."

The DNR suggests wearing a buoyant fishing jacket or snowmobile suit. Additionally, wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket as the outermost layer of clothing, and have a pair of ice picks and a whistle clipped to your chest.

"Nobody plans to fall through the ice, but you should be prepared in case it happens," Hagy said. "If you fall through the ice, the most important thing is to remain calm and return in the direction you came from. Return to the ice where you broke through, and pull yourself out of the water, rolling onto the ice. Don't try to stand. Instead, crawl to help distribute your weight until you feel you're safely away from the weak spot. Seek help immediately to prevent hypothermia."

Additional ice safety tips include:

If there's ice on the lake but water around the shoreline, use extra caution.

If you are visiting a new area, ask locals at bait shops, restaurants or stores about ice conditions, but always check conditions for yourself before going onto the ice.

If you're walking on the ice, wear a pair of ice-cleats to help with traction.

Wear bright colors to increase your visibility. White clothing and gear are difficult to see.

Use the buddy system and tell someone who is staying on shore where you will be and when you plan to return.

If you're operating a snowmobile or off-road vehicle, ride in a staggered line. This makes it easier to maneuver in case a rider ahead of you breaks through the ice.

"Ice picks are inexpensive insurance, a great purchase or gift for anyone who ventures onto ice-covered bodies of water," Hagy added.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/IceSafety. For snowmobile safety tips, go to Michigan.gov/RideRight.

— Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Area students named to KCC honor lists

Kellogg Community College officials are proud to present the president's list and dean's list of all students, full- and part-time, who have earned high or highest honors for the fall 2024 semester.

Dean's list

The dean's list recognizes students who have earned a semester grade point average of 3.50 to 3.99. Local students on the dean's list include:

Hickory Corners – Rosalie Elms.

Martin – Caitlyn Altman.

Middleville – McKenna Bazan, William Bustance, Lori Gosselin, Taylor Johnson, Jordan Krohn, Logan Newhouse, Cassondra Piper.

Plainwell – Berlynn Conley, Hannah Maurer, Ryan Robinson, Sophia Saunders.

Shelbyville – Evan Bloch, Angela Gillihan, Nicole Loucks.

Wayland – Sandie Hall, Kristin Kwiatkowski.

President's list

The president's list recognizes degree-seeking students who have earned a 4.0 GPA for the semester. Area students who qualified for the president's list include:

Freeport – Shauna Hoffman.

Hickory Corners – Joshua Baxter, Apple Esman.

See **HONOR** on 9

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Sporting News

Gielincki and Costa lead Trojan boys SWMSC races

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Plainwell/Thornapple Kellogg boys were sixth and girls seventh to place at Timber Ridge Wednesday, Jan. 15, during the second Southwest Michigan Ski Conference race of the seasons.

Mark Gielincki had the top finish for the Trojan Ski co-op racing to an 11th-place finish in the boys' slalom. He had runs of 25.99 seconds and 25.79 seconds. Gielincki also led the Trojan team in the giant slalom with an 18th-place finish.

Lillian Warnez led the Trojan girls in both events too with an 18th-place finish in the slalom and a 22nd-place finish in the GS.

Mattawan/Paw Paw won both the boys' and girls' meets. The Mattawan/Paw Paw boys finished with 55 points followed by Portage 63, Kalamazoo United 87.5, Hackett/Vicksburg 146.5, Hudsonville 174, Trojan Ski 176 and South Haven 203.



The Trojan Ski team's Lillian Warnez leans into a turn in her second run of the first race of the GS Wednesday on the Hawthorne course at Bittersweet Wednesday. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



The Trojan Ski team's Robby Jones shoots down the hill during his first run on the course on the Hawthorne Hill at Bittersweet Wednesday. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Mattawan/Paw Paw had four racers finish in the top ten in the boy's slalom led by Canyon Keller who was third. Sam Oberlee from Kalamazoo United won the boys' slalom with runs of 20.49 and 21.36 and Portage's Olin Rorhstaff was the runner-up with times of 21.43 and 21.89.

With the second-best time in each GS run Bryce Johnson won that event on the boys' side. He had times of 17.03 and 16.65. Keller was the runner-up and Oberlee third. Keller had the fastest time of run two at 16.64. Oberlee had the top time of run one at 16.97.

The Trojan Ski team had Claudio Costa 21st overall in the GS, Robby Jones 29th and Loehn Luckett 32nd. In the slalom, the Trojan Ski boys had Costa 16th, Jones 23rd and Luckett 26th.

Mattawan/Paw Paw won the girls' meet with 54 points followed by, Kalamazoo United 97, Portage 87, Hackett/Vicksburg 87, Hudsonville 158, South Haven 238 and Trojan Ski 241.

The Trojan girls standings included Lilian Lyon 28th in the slalom, Oriente Chiara 34th and Moline Marta 37th. In the GS Lyon was 24th and Chiara and Marta tied for 39th.

Mattawan/Paw Paw's Addison Bell had the four fastest runs of the day and flew to a more than two second win in the slalom. She had runs of 22.08 and 21.95 in the slalom, and she turned in times of 17.46 and 17.41 in the GS.

See **RACES** on 8

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No individual champs, but Scot team wins title

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Caledonia had four runner-up finishes and ten wrestlers among the top five in their weight class while winning the championship at Kalamazoo Central's Ron Russo Classic Saturday.

James Carrow V at 132 pounds, Robert Restau at 138, Will Sheely at 150 and Koleson Reeder at 157 all reached the championship match at their flight and finished the day in second place.

Cayden Nostrant at 165 pounds and Escher Reeder at 106 both placed third for Caledonia, Ben Moss at 144 pounds was fourth and Max Schnurstein at 113, Muhammed Turk at 175 and Xavier Stewart at 215 all placed fifth.

The Fighting Scots won with 190.5 points. Mattawan was second with 181.5 points ahead of East Kentwood 179, Brother Rice 176, Gobles 155, Jackson 131.5, Kalamazoo Central 103, Spring Lake 90, Gull Lake 78 and Harper Cree, 70.5 and Paw Paw 70.5 in the top ten at the 20-team tournament.



The Caledonia varsity wrestling team celebrates an outstanding day at Kalamazoo Central's Ron Russo Classic Saturday. The Scots took the team championship and had ten guys and two girls place among the top five in their weight class. **Photo provided**

Carrow V took a 14-0 win over Daniel White from Hartford in their 132-pound semifinal match for his 20th victory of the season. He was bested by Gull Lake's Rasler Warner in the championship match at their flight.

Restau scored two pins and a technical fall to reach the 138-pound final where he was bested by Mattawan's Zack Miller. Restau stuck Brother Rice's Mateo Pesaros 68 seconds into their semifinal bout.

Sheely pulled out a 5-3 win over Mattawan's Dandinidis in the 150-pound semifinals and then fell to Brother Rice's Deacon Macneill in the championship round.

Koleson Reeder had a pair of pins on the day and then beat out Spring Lake's Chase Seegar 10-4 in the 157-pound semifinals. Brother Rice's Emmanuel Shango took a 17-9 win in their championship round match.

Escher Reeder, Moss and Nostrant all reached the semifinal round before bowing out of the championship round of the bracket.

East Kentwood was powered by its heavyweights with Matthias Granderson taking the 285-pound title and Tyler Meeuwsen winning at 215 pounds.

Brother Rice had a tournament high three individual champs including Caleb Steele at 165, Shango at 157 and Macneill at 150.

The Scots' Maddie Hayden did win her weight class in the day's girls' competition and teammate Halle Stout was third at her weight class.

Caledonia is slated to be a part of the Lakewood Invitational today, Jan. 25, and then will play host to Jenison for an OK Green Conference dual Wednesday, Jan. 29.

RACES

Continued from Page 7

Bell's Teammate Ann Hoogerheide was the runner-up in the GS with runs of 17.68 and 17.51. Amelia Todd from Kalamazoo United took the runner-up spot in the girls' slalom with times of 23.07 and 23.28 with Hoogerheide third.

The conference was back together again at Bittersweet Wednesday, Jan. 22, and has another race set for next Wednesday, Jan. 29, back at Bittersweet.

The Plainwell/TK boys were fifth overall in the day's standings at Bittersweet and the Trojan girls' team placed sixth on the Hawthorne Hill where two GS runs were set up.

Costa led the Plainwell/TK boys throughout the course of the night with a 12th-place finish overall he was 12th on the first GS course the boys' competed on and 15th on the second. Gielincki had 15th and 16th place finishes. The Trojan team also had Robby Jones 23rd overall with 24th-place and 28th-place performances and Gerrit Taber was 33rd overall with 32nd-place and 37th-place results.

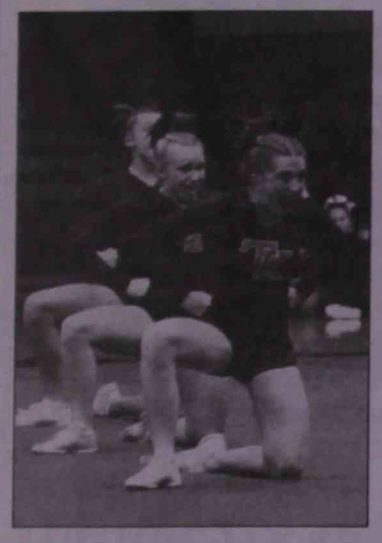
The Trojan girls' team had Warnez lead the way with 22nd-place performances in the two events that put her 21st individually for the day. Lyon had races that put her 31st and 29th for a 29th-place overall finish.

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Trojan cheer near the top at its home invitational



Thornapple Kellogg's Mia Hilton and her teammates shout out to the crowd during the TK Invitational in Middleville Friday, Jan. 17. **Photo Provided**

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity competitive cheer team finished third overall in a field of 13 varsity teams at its own TK Invitational Friday, Jan. 17.

Byron Center was the day's top scoring team with a total of 737.58 points ahead of Plainwell 735.76, Thornapple Kellogg 720.26, Mason 717.08 and Forest Hills Northern 709.36 in the top five.

The TK girls had a score of 224 points in round one, 210.26 in round two and 286 in round three.

Byron Center jumped to the top of the standing with a round three score of 303.5 which was the only round three score over 300 and 12.9 points better than Plainwell's round three score which was the second best of the night.



The Thornapple Kellogg varsity competitive cheer team stunt groups perform during round three at the Trojans' own TK Invitational Friday, Jan. 17. **Photo Provided**

The Bulldogs were in third place behind the Plainwell Trojans and TK Trojans going into that final round.

The Bulldogs opened the invite with a score of 224.1 in round one and 209.98 in round two.

The Plainwell girls had a score of 226 in round one, 219.16 in round two and 290.6 in round two.

Rounding out the team scoring Gull Lake was sixth overall with a score of 689.44 ahead of Sparta 624.5, Harper Creek 613.2, Hopkins 612.6, Portage Northern 599.9, Wayland 596.8, Kelloggsville 497.3 and Delton Kellogg 330.5.

The Trojans were scheduled to host an OK Gold Conference jamboree Thursday, Jan. 23, and the conference will get together again at West Catholic Jan. 29.

The Trojans won the first OK Gold Conference jamboree of the season at Northview Jan. 15.

CHS girls improve to 4-0 in the OK Green

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia girls were looking to finish off the first half of the OK Green Conference season with the league lead Friday at Mona Shores.

The Caledonia varsity girls' basketball team went into its contest with the Sailors with a perfect 4-0 conference mark while the Mona Shores team opened conference play with a 3-1 record.

The Fighting Scots moved to 3-0 in the conference with a 40-37 win over the visiting Byron Center Bulldogs Jan. 17.

That victory moved the Caledonia team to 9-2 overall.

The Scots return to action with a non-conference ballgame at Covenant Christian Tuesday, Jan. 28, and then will start the second half of the OK Green Conference season at home against Reeths-Puffer Friday, Jan. 31.

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KENT

Continued from Page 3

township to complete the project.

"When they bid it out, it was far more expensive," said Township Manager Allison Nugent. "They're doing the work, but they're asking the township to cover the costs that are left over what the overbid was, which is $94,000."

The project fits in with the township's overall trail plan, Nugent said.

"It's going to be a 10-foot-wide trail — they're going to do the work for us. And it would be my recommendation that it is approved. We pay for the remainder, and it's part of our plan. And it links up eventually, hopefully, to Cherry Valley and connects the system," Nugent said.

HONOR

Continued from Page 6

Middleville – Eli Gauthier, Tana Jansma.

Plainwell – Alicyn Gleesing, Paula Jackson, Harleen Waters.

Shelbyville – Kathryn Sipes.

Wayland – Tara Calhoun, Kennedy Kimmel, Tammy Lemay.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF CALEDONIA BOARD OF TRUSTEES Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the December 4, 2024 Township Board of Trustees Meeting that were approved on January 15, 2025, are posted at the Township Offices at 8196 Broadmoor Ave., and on the website at www.caledoniatownship.org.

PUBLIC NOTICE
GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING SYNOPSIS
January 13, 2025

The Gaines Charter Township Board held a regular meeting on Monday, January 13, 2025, and took the following actions.

1. Reviewed the Consent Agenda.
2. Approved the Meeting Agenda.
3. Heard and discussed a presentation by Community Development Director Dan Wells concerning the Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) changes
4. Approved the Consent Agenda
5. Approved the Hoffman Meadows, Water and Sewer Development Contract
6. Approved the Alexander Trails Phase 1 Final Preliminary Plat Review
7. Approved the Alexander Trails Phase 2 Final Preliminary Plat Review
8. Approved the Thornapple Farms Phase 1 Final Plat
9. Approved the Revision of the Cemetery Ordinance
10. Approved the revised Cemetery Rules
11. Approved the International Association Fire Fighters Local 4385 Extension Agreement.
12. Approved the Diemer Run 2025 road closure request.
13. Adjourned the Regular Board Meeting at 7:26 pm

A complete copy of the minutes of these meetings and any resolutions or ordinances adopted at the meeting are on file and available for review at the Gaines Charter Township office, 8555 Kalamazoo Avenue SE, Caledonia, Michigan 49316. Ordinances, meeting schedules, meeting minutes, and other Township information are also available at www.gainestownship.org.

Michael Brew
Gaines Charter Township Clerk

Scots surge in final two periods to beat W.O.

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia varsity hockey team moved its record to 14-3-1 with a split over the weekend in non-conference contests.

The Fighting Scots were bested for just the third time this season as they were beat out 2-1 by Jenison at Griff's Georgetown Ice Arena Friday night. The co-op with Caledonia, Thornapple Kellogg and Lowell bounced back for a 5-1 win over West Ottawa on its home ice at Kentwood Ice Arena Saturday.

The Panthers had a 1-0 lead after one period in the match in Kentwood Saturday, but the Fighting Scots found the back of the net twice in the second period and then ran away with three third-period goals.

Ty Lewandowski had two goals and an assist in the win for Caledonia and Tony Kauffman scored twice as well. Landen Moore had one goal. Logan Himes and Gabe Supuk added assists.

Sam Hoag stopped 27 of 28 West Ottawa shots.

Will Nagelvoort saw 45 shots on his goal at the other end in net for the Panthers and made 41 saves.

Krue Anderson scored the one West Ottawa goal.

Rylan Bultema scored the lone goal in the loss to Jenison last Friday for the Scots. Sova and Kauffman had assists.

Caledonia is slated to visit Reeths-Puffer Saturday afternoon, Jan. 25.

TK ladies take tournament championship at K-Central

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity girls' wrestling team took the championship at Kalamazoo Central's Ron Russo Classic Saturday.

Trojans Emma Gibson at 135 pounds and Laini Braska at 125 pounds won their weight classes for the and they were two of seven TK grapplers who placed among the top six in their weight class overall.

The Trojan team closed the tournament with 122.5 points ahead of Plainwell 106.5, Mattawan 91, Harper Creek 88, Otsego 80, Wayland 65.5, Paw Paw 65, Hartford 54, Watervliet 51.5 and Buchanan 45 in the top ten. Caledonia's girls were 11th with 44 points at the tournament where 41 teams were represented.

Braska pinned her first two opponents and then outscored St. Joseph's Sarah Bennett in the 115-pound championship match. Gibson's final was her quickest match of the day as she stuck Otsego's Samantha Bonoevetz 1:10 into their 135-pound championship.

TK's Adelaide Holderman was the runner-up at 170 pounds as she was pinned by two-time state champion Maddie Hayden from Caledonia in her final match after two pins of her own to start the day.

Thornapple Kellogg's Rylee Alberts was second at 140 pounds, and the TK team had Sines third at 140 pounds, Dykstra fifth at 115, Ava Rausch sixth at 100 pounds.

Alberts pinned three opponents before she was stuck herself by Wayland's Alexis Hozeska midway through the second period of their match in the 140-pound bracket.

Sines was 3-1 on the day too in the 140-pound weight class for TK with a pair of pins and a loss to Hozeska. Sines also scored a 9-5 win over Galesburg-Augusta's Alexis Thomas.

The Fighting Scots' Hayden opened her tournament with pins of Paw Paw's Mikayla Hess and Mattawan's Haylee Schoonbeck that took less than 42 seconds of mat time combined.

The Caledonia team also got points from Halle Stout who was third in the 110-pound weight class. She took down East Kentwood's Maddison Lira in her consolation semifinal bout and then pinned Paw Paw's Sophia Fonseca 1:35 into the match for third.

The TK team also got wins throughout the day from Jaycee Teunessen and Shaylynn Myers.

The Thornapple Kellogg girls are slated to be a part of the Lady Saxons Invite at Hastings High School Saturday, Jan. 25.

It was also announced this month that with the growth of girls' wrestling in the state the MHSAA is adding a district round to the girls' postseason tournament this winter. The Thornapple Kellogg and Caledonia girls will get to participate in the MHSAA Girls' Wrestling Individual District Tournament at Hastings High School Feb. 9. The top four in each weight class from the Hastings district will advance to the regional at Portage Northern Feb. 16 – one of four regionals across the state the third weekend in February.

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Vikings have a few great swims at EGR Invite

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian varsity boys' swimming and diving team placed fourth Saturday at the East Grand Rapids Invitational.

The top race of the day for the Vikings was the 50-yard freestyle where Ethan Snapper placed third in 22.84 seconds and Anders Foerch fourth in 23.03 with teammates Austin Tufts ninth in 24.15 and Noah Miller tenth in 24.89.

The Vikings had a few top finishes in the 100-yard breaststroke too with Andrew Barnum fourth in 1:08.03, Noah Miller seventh in 1:13.73 and Ruben Baker eighth in 1:14.44.

Byron Center took the day's team championship with 648 points ahead of East Grand Rapids 481, West Ottawa 473, Caledonia 309 and Okemos 194.

Snapper, Doug Gaylord, Sam Jones and Foerch teamed up for the top relay finish of the day for the Vikings in the 200-yard freestyle relay. They finished that race in 1:39.42 in fifth place.

Nolan Fitzgerald swam to a fifth-place time of 1:00.25 in the 100-yard butterfly for the CLS team.

Jones was ninth in the 200-yard freestyle in 1:58.55 and eighth in the 100-yard freestyle in 52.45. Foerch added an eighth-place time of 6:05.43 in the 500-yard freestyle.

CLS foursomes were sixth in the 200-yard medley relay and the 400-yard medley relay too.

Byron Center won all three of the relay races on the day.

West Ottawa's Luke Catton and Byron Center's Caleb Meginley both won two individual races. Catton took the 200-yard freestyle in 1:46.22 and the 100-yard freestyle in 48.50. Meginley won the 200-yard individual medley in 2:02.08 and the 100-yard backstroke in 56.22, and was also a part of Bulldog wins in the 200-yard medley relay and the 400-yard medley relay.

The Byron Center team also had Graeden Standorf win the 50-yard freestyle, Jack Oliver the diving competition, Jackson Schmucker the 100-yard butterfly, Carter Nelson the 500-yard freestyle and Ryder Nichols the 100-yard breaststroke.

The CLS team is slated to visit Hastings Tuesday, Jan. 28 and then will send its qualifiers to the MISCA Meet at the Holland Aquatic Center Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.



The Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian varsity boys' swimming and diving team gathers on the deck at East Grand Rapids during a run to a fifth-place finish at the Pioneers' annual invitational. **Photo provided**

Fighting Scots can't keep up with Bulldog boys

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia varsity boys' basketball team was set to close the first half of the OK Green Conference season at Mona Shores Friday.

The Scots fell to 1-3 in the conference with a 79-37 loss at Byron Center last week, Jan. 17.

Caledonia head coach Nate Burns rolled through his roster in the tough defeat. Stuart Parker had a team-high seven points for the Scots. Malachai Hanson added six points. A group of five guys had four points apiece.

The Scots only shot three free throws all evening and combined to go 0-of-13 from behind the three-point line against the 10-4 Bulldogs.

Byron Center moved to 3-1 in the OK Green with the win.

Caledonia had a ballgame with Grand Haven Tuesday postponed. The Scots are slated to visit Holland Tuesday, Jan. 28 and then start the second half of the conference season at home against Reeths-Puffer Friday, Jan. 31.

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Middleville Rotary
Spaghetti Dinner
Date: February 14, 2025
Serving Time: 5:00pm - 7:30pm
Location: Thornapple Kellogg HS School Cafeteria
(Girls & Boys Varsity Basketball Games-starts at 6:00pm)



MENU
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Cost(s)
Adults: $12
Students: $6
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Presale Tickets are available at
Thornapple Township Hall or from any Rotarian

Gars see progress in Loy Norrix performance

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

A year and a half into the new co-op program and the Gars notched their first state cut Saturday, Jan. 18, at the Loy Norrix Invitational.

Gabriel Van swam to a runner-up time of 54.43 seconds in the 100-yard butterfly at the invitational in Kalamazoo meeting the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Swimming and Diving Finals qualifying time.

It was a great day all around for the Gars who were fourth in the day's overall standings. Loy Norrix took the day's championship with 420 points ahead of DeWitt 354, East Kentwood 230, the Gars 201, Mason 160 and Harper Creek 22.

A year ago, the first edition of the Gars co-op finished the Loy Norrix Invitational with just 19 points. The Gars team is a co-op between Thornapple Kellogg, Unity Christian, Hopkins, West Catholic and West Michigan Aviation Academy.

The Gars had a handful of MISCA Meet qualifying performances throughout the day Saturday along with Van's performance in the 100-yard butterfly. Those included Van in the 200-yard freestyle, Ethan Klopfenstein in that 100-yard butterfly race and the 100-yard backstroke and Hunter Tietz in the 100-yard backstroke. The team also met MITCA marks in the 200-yard freestyle relay and the 400-yard freestyle relay.

There were two top six finishes for the Gars in the 200-yard freestyle relay. The team of Nolan Send, Tietz, Ty Denney and Van combined for a time of 1 minute 35.75 seconds. They were just less than a quarter of a second behind the winning team from DeWitt in the race. The Gar 'B' team of Caden Bliek, Dominic Jakubowski, Luke Hemker and Haiden Vruggink placed sixth in 1:50.40.

Gar teams were fifth and sixth in the 400-yard freestyle relay. Send, Tietz, Denney and Van were fifth with a time of 3:34.22 in that race.

East Kentwood's Teague Westra won that 100-yard butterfly race in 54.20, a little less than a quarter of a second ahead of Van. Klopfenstein swam to a sixth-place finish in that race with a time of 57.65.

In the 100-yard backstroke it was a Falcon in front again as James Langosch won in 57.03. Klopfenstein was the runner-up in 58.49 and Tietz third in that race in 59.31.

Tietz also had an outstanding 50-yard freestyle turning in a time of 23.61 that put him in fourth place.

Van added a runner-up time of 1:52.78 in the 200-yard freestyle.

Last Thursday, Jan. 16, the Gars were bested 109.5 to 69.5 in a non-conference dual at Hamilton High School.

Van won the 200-yard freestyle in 1:54.25 and the 100-yard freestyle in 51.75, and Klopfenstein won the 100-yard butterfly in 59.11.

The Gar team also had the foursome of Send, Tietz, Denney and Van earn the first place points in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a time of 3:44.63.



Gars backstrokers Ethan Klopfenstein (front) and Hunter Tietz celebrate placing second and third respectively in the 100-yard backstroke race Saturday at the Kalamazoo Loy Norrix Invitational. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



The Gars' Nolan Send (clockwise from left), Hunter Tietz, Ty Denney and Gabriel Van celebrate their runner-up finish and MISCA qualifying time in the 200-yard freestyle relay during the Loy Norrix Invitational in Kalamazoo Saturday. **Photo provided**

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