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TK CHEER FINISHES OFF TRIO OF OK GOLD VICTORIES
PAGE 6





An aerial view shows where the proposed Authentix development would be built at M-6 and Hanna Lake Avenue.
Source: GainesTownship.org

Gaines planning officials to developer: Go back to drawing board for Dutton site plan

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

A real estate development company based in Menominee Falls, Wis., would like to build what it calls an "attainable" apartment complex in Dutton, citing demographics within the township and a growing need for housing as the reason for the proposed development.

But members of the Gaines Township Planning Commissioners told the developers at their meeting Wednesday, Jan. 23, they were looking at the wrong demographic numbers and will need to provide a more upscale apartment type in a revised site plan, if they hope to gain project approval.

Jordan Teichen, Continental Properties' development director, gave a presentation for those gathered at the township hall Wednesday. If a new plan is drawn up and approved, the two-story apartments would be built on a 24-acre section of a 40-acre parcel on Hanna Lake Avenue, near M-6 and south of 60th Street.

The proposal was for 15, 24-unit apartment buildings that would be built in the Authentix-style housing brand in the township's residential (RL-10) and mobile home (R-4) zoning districts.

"Gaines Township really is the perfect location for that demographic that would be living in an Aunthentix community," Teichen said. "When we look at the demographics here in this area, the rents that will be able to be achieved really call for the more attainable product. To build a Springs here, rents would be much higher and we're not confident that the demand for that product would be here."

Planning commissioners gave preliminary consideration for a planned unit development (PUD) and a site plan review. However, they added the number of units should be capped at 16 and include a more upscale apartment style, such as the Spring Hill brand with higher quality finishes.

One commissioner, Ryan Wiersema, also questioned the median $39,133 per-capita income that Teichen cited for township residents.

"Perhaps I need a better (eye glass)

See **PROJECT** on 3

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Village council upgrades new position from part-time to full-time

Jayson Bussa
Contributing Writer

The Middleville Village Council has decided to make a newly-created, part-time government job into a full-time position.

At Tuesday night's regularly scheduled council meeting, council members agreed to make the community development coordinator position a full-time job with the village.

The village plans to list the job opening soon as it attempts to fill the position. The job description lists the hourly wage at anywhere between $21 and $26 per hour depending on the qualifications of the candidate.

Last year, the new position was originally approved, but as a part-time job.

"After kind of looking at it over the Christmas holiday, we thought there was a lot more work there than we originally thought so it warranted it becoming a full-time position," Village Manager Craig Stolsonburg told the Sun and News. "So, hopefully, we can get someone in there that is able to do the job for a long time."

The community development coordinator position will support Doug Powers, whose title has also recently changed to Community and Economic Development Director, a position that interfaces with both the planning and zoning department and the Middleville Downtown Development Authority.

"Our plan is to assign several general fund activities to this person for the upcoming year, including working on the master plan update and working with the community and economic development director as his administrative assistant," Stolsonburg wrote

See **UPGRADES** on 5

Consultant provides update on revisions to Gaines Twp. zoning ordinance

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Gaines Township officials are moving closer to approving the first comprehensive update to the township's zoning ordinance since 2007.

At their Jan. 23 meeting, planning commissioners heard from consultant David Jirousek of Horizon Community Planning, with Jirousek providing a presentation on all the proposed changes the Planning Commission, township board and other stakeholders have recommended since the process began a year and a half ago.

The process for overhauling the township's chief legal document governing land development has already led to a new master plan being crafted for Gaines Township. And, the updated ordinance also would include the findings of a zoning ordinance audit report and the township's future land use map, which includes some new zoning districts.

The importance for a revised and updated zoning ordinance was underscored in 2022 when the township was sued for rejecting a developer's proposed Prairie Wolf Station town center on 84th Street, east of Kalamazoo Avenue. The township ended up allowing American Kendall Properties to go ahead with the project after a judge determined developers had the right under the township ordinance to build.



Consultant David Jirousek with Horizon Community Planning gives the Gaines Township Planning Commission a report on the zoning ordinance that is being updated. **Photo by James Gemmell**



The Gaines Township Planning Commission discusses changes to an amended zoning ordinance at its Jan. 23 meeting. **Photo by James Gemmell**

Construction is scheduled to begin this spring.

Township staff, largely led by Community Development director Dan Wells, rolled up their sleeves in the summer of 2023 and began the process of revising the zoning ordinance, chapter by chapter. A "Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee" provided feedback and a legal review of the formal draft of the ordinance was conducted, which is now posted on the township website, gainestownship.org, by the township's attorney.

"We reviewed a number of different drafts of all of our 30-plus chapters, and eventually prepared a formal draft which was prepared back in the fall," Jirousek said at the meeting Wednesday.

He added the revised zoning regulations are being designed to be user-friendly and easily interpreted. And that the overriding goal of the ordinance is to protect the public's health, safety and welfare.

"We need to make a balance

See **ZONING** on 5

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Village sign to get overhaul this spring

Jayson Bussa
Contributing Writer

The Village of Middleville will soon be welcoming visitors to town with a new look.

The electronic sign positioned at the intersection of Main Street and M-37 has remained operable, but as of September of last year, village administrators have not been able to update the sign's content due to its existing radios no longer working and the internal components being beyond their useful life.

The sign was originally installed in 2012 from funds put forth by the Middleville Downtown Development Authority.

The Middleville Village Council was tasked Tuesday with determining how to proceed in repairing, replacing or removing the sign.

Using three estimates from Grand Rapids-based Postema Signs, the council opted for a full replacement of the LED display.

The quote for such work included $17,985 for the materials and components and $1,465 for installation, which also includes employee training to use the sign's software.

Village Manager Craig Stolsonburg said that the board intends to ask the DDA to shoulder some, or all, of the cost of the sign display.

"It will look a lot different. It will be able to provide a color display with graphics and everything else," Stolsonburg said.

Work on the sign is expected to move forward this spring.

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Hastings, MI 49058
Phone: 269-945-9554
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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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PROJECT

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prescription here," Wiersema said.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the per-capital income in the township was $41,252, plus or minus $2,594. But the median household income was $80,029, plus or minus $4,269.

Planning commissioners were pleased with the proposed amenities included in the apartment development which would include outdoor gathering spaces, plenty of open space, a fitness center, a clubhouse with pool and a disc golf course.

Though, several commissioners added they would prefer an apartment type with better finishes and more variation in the exterior view.

"I think this is a lower end of what we're looking at here, as far as the aesthetics go, which is a concern to me," Wiersema said. "It's very much cookie cutter, as far as placement. So, no variation of buildings that are being set back or in altered states. They're all pretty much the same."

"The other thing is the aesthetics," Planning Commission secretary Lani Thomas added. "Maybe use better materials like stone or brick."

But Teichen said that using higher-end masonry could pose financial challenges for the developer.

"It's a tremendous amount of added cost," he said. "What I will say is, if you look at the varying elevations that will sort of disperse these throughout our community. So, it's not going to be the same building one after the other. Two different building types, then we'll mix in different colors."

Teichen also said Continental does use different types of siding and different orientations of the buildings in the way they are positioned.

"I think as you drive through it really does not feel monotonous because there are step backs, different articulations with the building facades," he said.

Commissioner Brad Waayenberg said, however, that township officials were trying to suggest that developers don't "just make rows and rows" of apartment buildings.

"You've got to, at least, have the facial variations," he added.

Despite some criticisms of the proposed development, Teichen said more housing is needed, both nationally and in Gaines Township, with one report stating Kent County will need to add a projected 7,591 rental units by 2027.

Another issue that was discussed was that the property involved falls within the Anderson Drainage District. According to Teichen, the project would impact about 0.6 acres of wetlands, with a drainage creek crossing required to access the east side of the property.

Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells said some stabilization of the soil likely will be required by the Kent County Drain Commission. Also, some form of re-vegetation would be needed to stem the discharge of sediments into the creek.

"It's basically just a big muddy mess because cattle have been stomping on it for years," Wells said. "And so, in order to stabilize the creek banks, you'd have to plant it and maybe re-contour it with mechanical equipment so that it flows more properly and stops washing a lot of dirt into Plaster Creek."

Municipal water and sanitary sewer are available to the proposed development along Hanna Lake Avenue. The developer would have to pay the cost to connect to those utilities.

Wells said that the planning staff believes the proposed project does meet the township's PUD standards and is consistent with its master plan and zoning ordinance.

"In terms of aesthetics, I think that this is a fairly modern style, it's got good textures," he said. "As I mentioned, there's a lot of back and forth along the building façade. It's got good detailing, and good window covering. I figure, overall, it's a fairly attractive design."

Wells added the density of apartment units per acre is not too high, and there would be a good sidewalk network throughout the development.

"And of course, we know Dutton is changing and we'll probably have more shopping opportunities. It'll be more attractive to pedestrian traffic in the future," he said.

According to Teichen, the development, which falls within the Caledonia School District, would have two access points and children could wait for the school bus in the clubhouse, if the weather is bad.

The apartments would mainly be one- and two-bedroom units, with a small percentage of three-story units and some studio apartments.

Planning Commission Chairwoman Connie Giarmo told Teichen the township needs more upscale living units.

"I am not really interested in seeing another attainable housing development. We have Microsoft making a considerable investment in this township," she said. "We really don't have very much upscale housing for multi-family. And I think we need to hold out for that.

"Just because you think this is the price point that you can sell in the township doesn't mean that we agree with you. So, I'm not supportive of this at all."

But Teichen said "those nicer finishes" would increase the cost of the project.

Also, he said Authentix-branded apartments attract the type of young professionals that Gaines Township officials are seeking to move into the community.

Giarmo again disagreed and insisted on a more upscale project.

"To be frank, I don't think that that's possible for us," Teichen said. "This is a challenging site with the Anderson Drain cutting through it. There's a sizable amount of infrastructure that we need to invest in to make it even feasible to build on, to unlock the entire eastern side of the site.



Continental Properties' Jordan Teichen addressed the Gaines Township Planning Commission on Thursday night, Jan. 23, about a proposed apartment development on Hanna Lake Avenue in Dutton. **Photo by James Gemmell**

"Couple that with water main and sanitary sewer main and a lot of things that you're not seeing. To come in and add that would be a pretty substantial cost."

The Planning Commission voted 6-0, with one commissioner absent, to postpone any further discussion until the applicant comes back with a revised plan.



Gaines PC recommends approval for annual report

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Township Planning and Zoning Department recently provided Planning Commission officials with an annual update on development, code enforcement and other activities within the township during 2024.

Commissioners gave their unanimous approval on a resolution to approve the report and send it on to the township board for review.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requires planning commissions in municipalities to submit a written report to its legislative body each year concerning its operations and the status of planning activities.

Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells touched on some of the highlights of the report during the Planning Commission's meeting Jan. 23.

According to Wells, the total number of residential building permits for new construction in 2024 was 305.



Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells (right) talks about the township's annual planning and zoning report. **Photo by James Gemmell**

That included 244 for apartments and multi-unit condominiums, and 61 for single-family homes, condos and mobile homes. That compares to the 54 total building permits that were submitted a decade before in 2014.

"Our building department is very busy," Wells said. "Obviously, demand for housing is going up, up, up."

The report notes that the township accepted a bid last year from Ohio-based EnviroScience to complete a Natural Features Inventory this year so the township can access environmentally sensitive areas.

The township is looking to preserve and potentially purchase some open space and park land before it is bought by developers for construction. A lot of the forested lands, agricultural property and wetlands have been purchased in recent years for conversion into residential, commercial and industrial developments. So, the township will establish a program for implementing natural buffers and easements.

Gaines Township's 40-year sewer contract with the City of Grand Rapids will expire in 2028 and township officials could enter discussions on renegotiating the contract later this year. That could include an effort to move the sewer district southward from the current boundary at 76th Street to almost 92nd Street.

"So, staff wanted to get ahead of that and look at areas across the township that are appropriate for sewer extensions and which ones are not," Wells said. "And so, we're going to do a resource inventory. We're going to look at soils, forest resources, agriculture resources. What are our high-quality values that we want to preserve over time."

Such an effort would help township staff determine which areas are most suitable for development and which should be protected for open space, parks or trails.

Wells and Township Manager Rod Weersing also discussed a non-motorized trail network on Jan. 23. Wells said it probably will be the focus of the township's next major study, likely in 2026. It would examine how local officials can put together connections to make the trail networks work better for pedestrians, bicyclists and those on scooters.

"I want to start getting some ideas about what are the next big things that we need to do in terms of the long-range planning in the township," Wells said. "I know we'll be looking at housing more and more."

The report has been posted on the township's website, gainestownship.org.

"I want to say this was very well done," Planning Commission Vice Chairwoman Ronnie Rober said. "It was easy to read."

Planning Commissioner Ryan Wiersema described the annual report as "amazing," adding he appreciated the hard work that went into it.

Also, during the recent meeting, Wells reported that Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Tom Werkema resigned for personal reasons. The ZBA will be electing a new chair at its next meeting.

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ZONING

Continued from Page 2

between personal property rights and the public's overall community interests," Jirousek said. "We also want to minimize impacts and ensure compatibility between land uses."

Jirousek and township planners have said that the current zoning ordinance is not user-friendly and it is disjointed in areas. There is also repetition of regulations in other areas, as well as some of the terminology needing to be updated to more accurately define land uses.

And, the new ordinance would reflect significant changes made to federal laws and Michigan's Zoning Enabling Act in 2023. That includes new restrictions on communities when it comes to adopting or enforcing zoning ordinance provisions that prohibit short-term rentals. There also are changes to the permitting process for utility-scale solar projects.

Jirousek said the amended code will include "reasonable flexibility" when it comes to development standards for things like landscaping, lighting and parking.

"So that someone wouldn't have to go to the zoning board of appeals for a few extra parking spaces or lesser parking spaces than the minimum," he said.

In the existing zoning ordinance, there are 11 zoning districts plus four planned unit development (PUD) options. In the proposed amended ordinance, there are 10 zoning districts and one PUD option.

"It's more of a generalized PUD approach," Jirousek said. "We didn't feel like we needed four different processes. You really can run any type of PUD through in one process."

Revisions also include two brand new zoning districts: Village Residential (VR) and Mixed Business (MB). The current agriculture/agribusiness (AB) and agricultural/rural residential (AR) districts would be combined into one rural residential (RR) district in the updated zoning ordinance. That would be reflected on the township's new zoning map.

The existing residential (RL-10) and single-family residential (RL-14) districts would be combined into the new suburban residential (SR) zoning district.

"The difference there is 10,000 square feet versus 14,000 square feet for residential lots," Jirousek said. "The (steering) committee ended up recommending just a combined 12,000-square foot (lot minimum), a happy medium between those two districts."

The new Mixed Business district is a hybrid one that allows both for light industrial uses and some general commercial uses, which are planned for on the future land use map.

The new Village Residential district allows for single-family detached housing units and attached housing of up to eight units. There are only a few targeted areas in the township's future land use map that would qualify for Village Residential rezoning.

After Jirousek completed his 40-minute presentation, a public hearing was opened. Before that, though, Wells gave his summary thoughts to the Planning Commission.

"Some of the major issues that David discussed there is how we're going to manage roads going forward," he said. "That has been a sticking point. So, I would say in your deliberations on this pay close attention to that.

"One of the things that I hear a lot (about) is accessory dwelling units, and where we are going to allow those. Currently, it's only in the RL-10 (residential) zone."

TABLE 2.20 B: ZONING DISTRICTS				
Category		District	Abbreviation	Chapter
Residential Districts		Rural Residential	RR	4
		Suburban Residential	SR	5
		Village Residential	VR	6
		Multiple-Family Residential	MFR	7
Non-Residential Districts	Commercial and Mixed-Use Districts	Neighborhood Commercial	NC	8
		General Commercial	GC	9
		Office and Service	OS	10
	Industrial Districts	Mixed Business	MB	11
		Light Industrial	LI	12
		Heavy Industrial	HI	13
Overlay District		Planned Unit Development	PUD	14

A chart shows the newly proposed zoning districts in Gaines Township and what chapter they are covered in in the proposed ordinance revision. **Source: gainestownship.org**

No citizens spoke during the public hearing.

"I would like one more month to go over some of these (amended ordinance) highlights," Planning Commission Chairwoman Connie Giarmo said.

"I really do like the simplifying of things in a major way," Commissioner Ryan Wiersema added. "That really is huge. And having the (zoning district) chart more simplified with a quick and easy way to look at it. And having the processes listed down in a very simple way. This is a much better ordinance."

Planning commissioners voted unanimously to postpone any final recommendation on the proposed zoning amendment until next month's meeting Feb. 27. The township board will have the final vote on whether to adopt the amended ordinance as written.

In other business, planning commissioners voted 6-0 to keep all of the board's officers in the same positions they served in during 2024.

UPGRADES

Continued from Page 1

in a memo to the Village Council. "Further, I am reassigning the current deputy clerk/administrative assistant to the public works office eight hours a week to be more engaged with the public works director and assistant village manager.

To add to the shuffling of personnel, decades-long crossing guard Joanne VanPutten has retired from her position and the village has consulted with the Barry County Sheriff's Office to determine a crossing guard is no longer needed at the area along Main Street due to additional safety measures that were applied there.

After the reduction in wages from the crossing guard position, upgrading the community development coordinator position to full-time will cost up to $29,500 in total wages for the first year, which will be taken from the village's general fund.

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Sporting News

TK cheer finishes off trio of OK Gold victories

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

There wasn't a fall.

There wasn't a wobble.

There wasn't a doubt.

There was only an explosion of joy when the Trojans raced off the mat at the end of round three in the Thornapple Kellogg High School gymnasium in Middleville Thursday. The Trojans fired off a nearly flawless round three performance to earn a score of 312.9 in the round and an overall final score of 748.86 that bested runner-up Northview by more than 21 points at the second OK Gold Conference jamboree of the season.

The Trojans won both of the conference jamborees this winter and finished off an outright conference championship when they won the OK Gold Conference Championship Meet at West Catholic High School Wednesday, Jan. 29, in Grand Rapids. The two jamborees count for the half of the conference overall standings and the other half came from Wednesday's finale.

"It felt electric," Thornapple Kellogg senior Lilly McKeown said of the round three performance on the home mats last week.

"When I look at coach and she is jumping up and down, and being nine months pregnant that is not easy for her to do, it just feels good."

Trojan head coach Madelynn Lula was just as pleased as her senior back spot McKeown though.

"In that round, yes the performance was fantastic, it was confident, the little things we have been working on like timing of motions and stuff," Lula said. "When it comes down to it, when you're scoring over 300, to get from 300 to 312 is really hard. It's the little tiny things. And it is that much harder when you're competing with 15 instead of 16 because your maximum is so much lower. To go out there with 15 and score that high, that is just that much closer to perfect. The fact that we're getting there already is so exciting. We're able to make the round more, bigger and better and build off of it because we haver the confidence we can do it already.

"I don't think we've gone out there yet and hit that feeling when we came off the mat of like, 'we did it.' Up until now there has always been a stunt fall, or a mistake, or something where they came off and were like that could have been better coach. I know that could have been better. There is nothing like that feeling of running off and being like I gave it 150 percent, and I think they finally felt that feeling today. We hadn't felt it yet."



The Thornapple Kellogg varsity competitive cheer team celebrates its 2025 OK Gold Conference Championship after winning the conference championship meet at West Catholic High School Wednesday. **Photo provided**

The Trojans had 15 girls on the mat in round three, because the Trojan senior duo that was honored at the end of the competition is a bit of a MASH unit at the moment. McKeown had a walking boot on during the senior night ceremony despite competing in all three rounds. Fellow senior back spot Olivia Bouchard has spent time in a sling with an injured shoulder for the second season in a row, and is hoping to be able to be back healthy in time for districts.

"It is really tough," Bouchard said of being sidelined just getting to watch her team cheer to a conference championship. "It is really tough. But I am just trying to keep the positive vibes up for my team, because I know I can do it. I show up to practice every day and I'm the number one hype woman. I make sure that they know that they're needed and what they do is important. If they need ice, I get them ice. If they need

See **CHEER** on 7



Thornapple Kellogg junior flyer Claira Kovich points out to the crowd from high above her stunt group during round three of the OK Gold Conference jamboree hosted by TKHS Jan. 23. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

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A stunt group comprised (from left) Payton Gater, Kella LeClaire, Kaylee Clarke and Emma Syswerda shouts out during round three of the OK Gold Conference jamboree in Middleville Jan. 23. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

CHEER

Continued from Page 6

water I get them water. Just be there for them, that's all I can do."

"What they have contributed makes me kind of emotional to think about," Lula said. "They're my first group that I have coached all four years. I have that much more of an emotional attachment to them, but they're more lead by example kids … The fact that they still go out there and they want it for their team and they're working hard and putting in the effort just shows their leadership more than it is vocalized."

TK also tallied solid scores of 226.6 in round one and 209.18 in round two last Thursday, finishing with the top score in each of the three rounds.

"The parts that we drill in the other rounds are continuing to grow and blossom," Lula said. "I think we just haven't gotten that lightning bolt feeling yet, that sparkle feeling in the other two rounds and they're harder to do because the crowd doesn't get as excited and doesn't get as engaged. I think we're just working on chasing that sparkle at this point. The technique is there. I think the kids, now that they've felt it in a different round I am hoping that then translates into the other two rounds."

Beyond the senior group, Lula said juniors Kaylee Clarke and Mia Hilton both really had a great performance.

"Both of them stood out, both leadership-wise and performance-wise, they both are kids that were the mold, the glue that held today's performances together," Lula said.

Northview was second at the jamboree at TK with a score of 727.22 points ahead of West Catholic 701.12, Wayland 627.4 and Wyoming 540.2.

At the conference championship meet at West Catholic Jan. 29, the TK ladies finished off the three-meet sweep of the conference with a score of 731.18 ahead of West Catholic 729.68, Northview 702.62, Wayland 641 and Wyoming 548.9.

The TK ladies were tops in the first two rounds there with scores of 224.5 and 213.78, then tallied a score of 292.9 in round three which included an eight-point deduction.

West Catholic was in the second-place spot in round three and then capped its conference season on its home mat by flying to a score of 301.9 in round three which was the highest of the competition.

TK shared the 2024 OK Gold Conference championship with Cedar Springs.



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Freshman Lloyd sets TK girls' three-point record

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Thornapple Kellogg varsity girls' basketball coach Brandi James got freshman guard Taylor Lloyd up off the bench when teammate Tealy Cross was whistled for her fifth foul with 90 seconds to play Friday night, Jan. 24.

Lloyd had already knocked down seven three-pointers in a ballgame the Trojans led by more than 20 points, but the Trojan coach told her that if she wanted the school record she should go for it.

Lloyd nailed a step-back three from the left wing with 15 seconds left for her eighth of the night, setting a new TK record and putting the final points on the scoreboard in a 63-41 Trojan win over the Grand Rapids Union Red Hawks in Middleville.

"She deserves that. She put a lot of work in," coach James said.

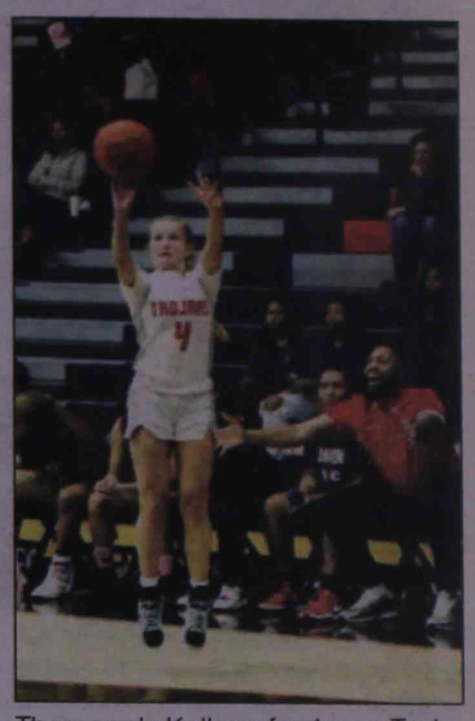
"I had no clue until coach said, 'Tay, get one more,'" Lloyd said of her awareness of the record. "I didn't know what was going on."

The Trojan freshman finished the night with 29 points and sophomore forward Reece Ritsema had 14 points in what was really an all around outstanding team effort offensively. The TK ladies did an excellent job of moving the basketball and the step-back transition three at the end was probably the toughest one Lloyd knocked down all night.

"I feel like we all just played really good and had fun. We played as a team," Lloyd said. "We all tend to play better and happy and stay out of our heads that way.



Thornapple Kellogg senior Emma Dykhouse (left) pressures Grand Rapids Union's Zy'Aira Balckmon in the corner during the second half of their OK Gold Conference contest in Middleville Friday, Jan. 24. **Photo by Brett Bremer**


Thornapple Kellogg freshman Taylor Lloyd is left alone to fire up one of her school record eight three-pointers in an OK Gold Conference win over Grand Rapids Union in Middleville Friday, Jan. 24. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

"Then the ball is moving. We get more passes and we end up with a good shot."

Lloyd said it took her the whole summer and more to really feel confident as a strong three-point shooter. She trained every single day shooting a lot of shots – up to 1,000 on a couple of days.

She said there are times she stays after her team's practice and shoots up some extra shots with the TK varsity boys' team that includes her two brothers the senior Brice and junior Ben Lloyd – also strong outside shooters. While Taylor has the TK varsity girls' record, the Lloyd family varsity record only lasted about four days. Ben set a TK boys' record with nine three-pointers in his team's contest at Hamilton Tuesday, Jan. 28.

Cross chipped in six points in the TK girls' win over Union last week, and McKenna Hoebeke had five points and Emma Dykhouse four.

"Ball movement is what we have been looking for," coach James said. "We want more ball movement, and we want to stop catching and dribbling immediately, but taking care of the basketball and taking our time to slow down on offense. A team win feels good."

Grand Rapids Union was led by 17 points from senior guard Tanayah Porter and 12 from sophomore guard Kamdyn Lee. The Union girls are now 0-6 in the OK Gold and 1-9 overall this season as of Tuesday's action.

It was a win the TK ladies needed while starting a tough stretch that had them going on the road to face West Catholic Monday, a home game against Hamilton Tuesday and a trip to Forest Hills Northern on the slate for Thursday, Jan. 30.

West Catholic is ranked seventh in the MHSAA Division 2 power rankings and the FHN girls are ranked 18th in D1.

TK headed into the match-up with the Huskies with a 6-7 overall record and a 2-6 mark in the OK Gold Conference. West Catholic took a 64-44 win over the TK ladies Monday in the conference to get to 6-0 in OK Gold play and 12-1 overall.

The Trojans bounced back Tuesday at home with a 69-67 win over the Hamilton Hawkeyes.

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Gibson takes title at girls' invite in Hastings

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Hastings Lady Saxon Invitational wasn't a thing when Saxon junior Dezarae Mathis was a freshman.

When Thornapple Kellogg senior Emma Gibson was a freshman there wasn't an MHSAA tournament dedicated for female wrestlers.

Mathis and the Saxons won their home girls' tournament for the second year in a row Saturday outscoring runner-up Grand Haven 132-119.5 and Gibson and the Trojans were fourth overall at the tournament where 30 schools were represented. Those two were the lone individual champions for their teams on the day.

Both girls were state qualifiers a year ago, and Mathis finished fourth in the 120-pound girls' weight class at the MHSAA Individual State Finals at Ford Field in Detroit. Gibson is a two-time state qualifier.

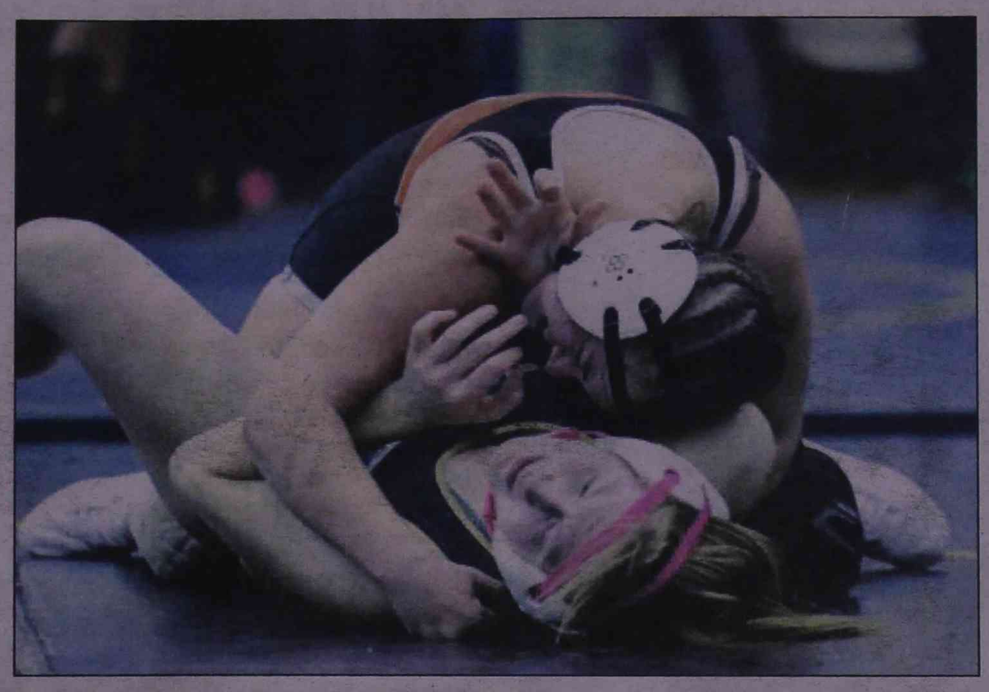
"It is definitely weird, because my freshman year there were not many girls. I was wrestling every other weekend. There were no girls' tournaments. All of us were new and it was a whole mess," Mathis said. "Now, it's weird seeing our whole gym covered with girls and there are girls who are actually really good. My freshman year, not many girls were good."

Mathis said her own biggest improvements since her freshman year have come in her confidence level. She had never wrestled before joining the Saxon girls' varsity program – which is one of the biggest in the state year in and year out so far.

"I used to just go into it and kind of be scared and just try to throw, but now I'm confident with the stuff that works for me, and I make sure I go through all the motions at practice to have the right technique for it," Mathis said.

Mathis was the 120-pound champion Saturday in Hastings with three pins that took about a minute and a half each. She stuck Kent City's Brooklin Armstrong 1 minute 35 seconds into their championship match to improve her record to 17-1 on the season.

"I just knew that I just had to go out there and do my stuff and go with it, go with the flow," Mathis said. "I really am trying to rack up my take down count, because I have the [team] record for it from last year. I want to beat that obviously, so I've trying to work on that and make sure I'm not always just throwing and I'm getting my take down points."



Thornapple Kellogg senior Emma Gibson closes in on a pin of Otsego's Samantha Bonoevetz during the second period of their 135-pound championship match at the Lady Saxon Invitational at Hastings High School Saturday. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Gibson pinned Otsego's Samantha Bonoevetz midway through the second period of their 135-pound championship match to move her record to 22-4 on the season. Gibson thought she could have wrestled a little better than she did. She had to scramble a bit against Bonoevetz and nobody scored in the first period, but Gibson got a reversal in the second period and eventually got Bonoevetz on her back.

"I did good. I think I could have worked a little bit harder my last match and actually took a shot and worked my moves instead, but she is tough. It was kind of hard for me to get that," Gibson said.

The gym was packed with the 30-team varsity competition and a middle school contest too.

The Hastings gym will be full again Sunday, Feb. 9, when Hastings is one of the hosts to one of the first ever girls' district tournaments. Female wrestlers opened the first two years of the MHSAA girls' state tournament with a regional round, but the sport has grown enough in such a short time that a district round was added this winter. Hastings, Thornapple Kellogg, the Caledonia girls and many more will all be a part of that upcoming district tournament in Hastings where the top four at each weight class advance to regionals.

Mathis is looking forward to the district tournament. There were 20 girls in her weight class at regionals last winter. She is not a fan of having face a couple knock out round matches right at the start of the bigger tournament like last year's regional. She is also looking forward to an extra tournament on the schedule. She has 74 wins as a varsity wrestler so far and would like to push for 100 wins before this season is up.

The Saxons had four girls in the top four in their respective weight classes Saturday and a 'B' division champion too. Jordan Milanowski at 140 pounds and Naomi Grummet at 155 had runner-up finishes. Sydney Patterson placed fourth at 145. Autumn Miller won a 110-pound 'B' division championship.

Pine River was third with 114 points ahead of Thornapple Kellogg 106.5, Olivet 86.5, Otsego 82, Traverse City West 73.5, Forest Hills Eastern 63.5, West Ottawa 63 and Northview 55.5, Harper Creek 50 and Wayland 44.5 in the top 12. Delton Kellogg placed 22nd with 21.5 points and Lakewood 23rd with 19.

"I like it a lot. I think a lot of girls have improved so much from when they were freshmen too that kept going. It helps a lot having just the girls, then you get more matches and

See **GIBSON** on 10

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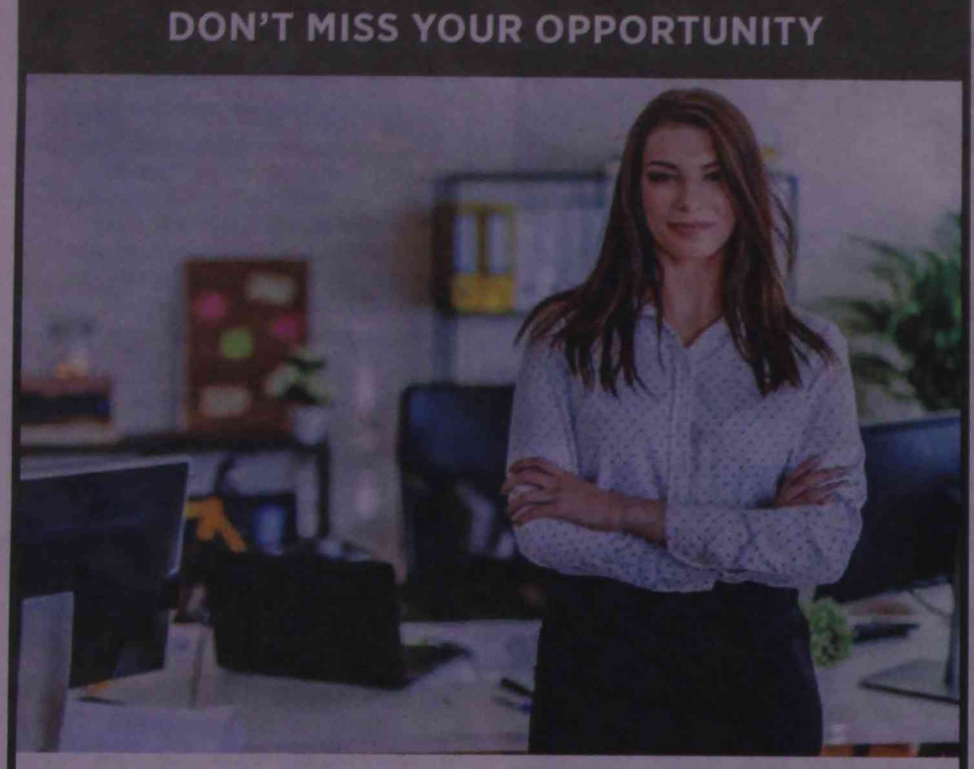
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CHS boys fall in three straight over on the lakeshore

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia varsity boys' basketball team was set to start the second half of the OK Green Conference season Friday at home against Reeths-Puffer.

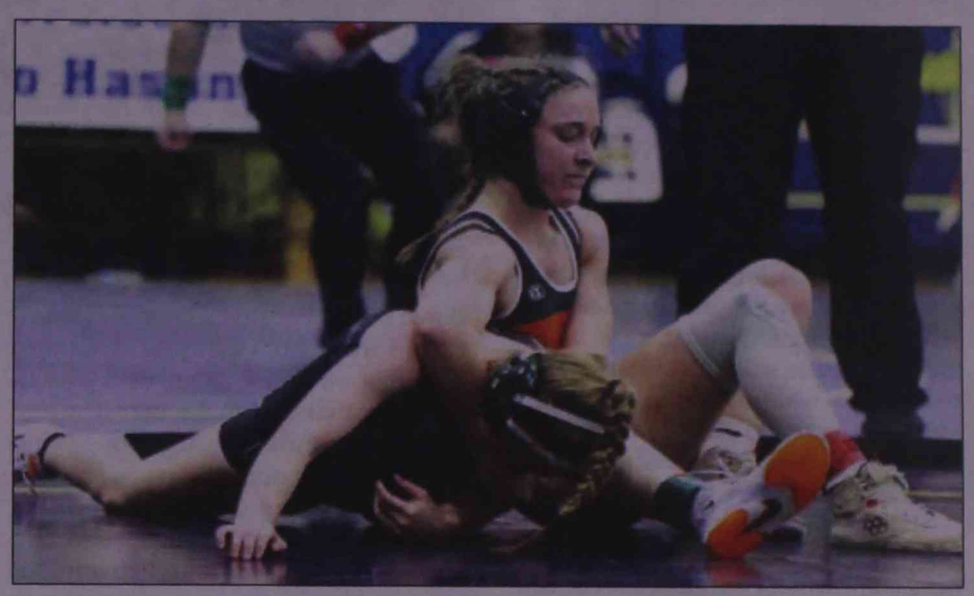
The Scots were 1-4 in the first trip through the conference and fell to 4-11 overall with a couple non-conference defeats this week.

Holland knocked off the Caledonia boys 57-43 in Holland Tuesday after former OK Red Conference foe Grand Haven bested the Scots 62-42 on the lakeshore Monday.

Parker Little had 13 points, seven rebounds and four assists to lead the Scots in the loss to the Buccaneers Monday. Lincoln Senti chipped in nine points and five rebounds. Bryce Backus had six points, ten rebounds and five assists.

Caledonia was downed 53-41 at Mona Shores last Friday, Jan. 24, in

See **CHS** on 11



Thornapple Kellogg's Raini Braska works to score against Pine River's Madelynne Sterly during the second period of their match for third place in the 110-pound weight class Saturday at the Lady Saxon Invitational at Hastings High School. Braska won the bout by technical fall. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

GIBSON

Continued from Page 9

get paired up with different people," Gibson said.

She said her own biggest improvements over the years have come on her feet. She is much better in the neutral position than she was as a freshman, and also getting better at getting off the bottom like she did in her championship match with Bonoevetz.

"I've just kept doing the same things over and over again at practice, and really worked on my movement on my feet and my set-ups. I am trying to get good at that, and not let them have my head. I've got to clear that so I can get in a shot," Gibson said.

Gibson said she felt like she was really strong on her feet in her semifinal win, a pin of the Saxons' Sara Barker, Saturday.

The Trojan team got a runner-up finish from Adelaide Hodlerman and third-place wins from Raini Braska at 110-pounds and a Jaycee Teunessen in a 155-pound 'B' bracket. Briella Dykstra added a fourth-place finish for TK at 115 pounds.

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Gars win two relays, a few other races, at Wayland

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Gars co-op swim team had a handful of wins against a solid Wayland squad in an OK Rainbow Tier II Conference dual at Wayland Union High School Tuesday.

The Wildcat team took a 100-81 victory.

Nolan Send picked up a pair of individual wins for the Thornapple Kellogg, West Michigan Aviation Academy, Unity Christian, Hopkins, West Catholic co-op team. He won the 50-yard freestyle in 25.14 seconds and the 500-yard freestyle in 5 minutes 56.24 seconds.

He was also a part of two relay wins for the Gars. Hunter Tietz, Ty Denney, Send and Gabriel Van also teamed up to win the 200-yard freestyle for the Gars in 1:42.17, outracing the Wildcat team by 17 hundredths of a second. Send, Denney, Tietz and Van took the win in the 400-yard freestyle relay in 3:49.56.

Van also led a 1-2 finish in the 100-yard butterfly for the Gars. He took the race in 58.12 and teammate Ethan Klopfenstein was the runner-up in 1:01.01.

Justin Vandyke and Eddie Oudbier took two individual wins each for the Wildcat team. Vandyke won the 200-yard freestyle in 2:02.36 and the 100-yard freestyle in 54.09. Oudbier won the 200-yard individual medley in 2:09.34 and the 100-yard backstroke in 59.26.

TK grapplers win their final conference dual

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity wrestling team finished off a 4-1 season of OK Gold Conference duals with a 66-12 win over visiting Wyoming Monday in Middleville.

TK got pins from Diego Rodas at 126 pounds and Jayce Curtis at 165 took pins for the Trojans in the dual and Abram Dutcher won by medical forfeit.

The Trojan team also had forfeit wins for Ava Rausch, Christien Miller, Derek Guerrero-Garriga, Emma Gibson, Aiden Foy, Griffin Grummet, Blake Bossenberger and Tanner Buxton.

The Trojans were set to be on their home mats again Friday, Jan. 31, playing host to the OK Gold Conference Championship Tournament.

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity co-ed team will head to Gull Lake Wednesday for its MHSAA Division 2 District Tournament. The Trojans have an opening round bye and will take on either Pennfield or Gull Lake in the district final. Pennfield and Gull Lake are set to open the tournament at about 5:30 p.m.

The TK wrestlers head to Harper Creek Saturday, Feb. 8, for their MHSAA Division 2 Individual District Tournament.

The TK team was fourth last Saturday at the 20-team Leslie Blackhawk Invitational.

TK got championships from Miller at 113 pounds and Curtis at 175. Miller pinned Leslie's Carter Henderson early in the second period of their championship match and Curtis outscored Reading's Lukas Strine 14-8 in their title bout.

Bossenberger was third at 165 pounds, and Rodas, Jackson Smith and Dutcher each placed fifth for the Trojans.

Reeths-Puffer scores in last seconds to beat Scots

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Caledonia came out on the wrong end after a flurry of third period goals Saturday on the road against Reeths-Puffer.

The Rocket varsity hockey team took a 4-3 win over the Fighting Scots. It was a 1-1 game going into the third period. Eli Cutis put in the game-winner with four seconds left thanks to assists from Hayden Taylor and Kaeden Banner.

Ty Lewandowski put the Scots up 1-0 with the lone first period goal, off an assist from teammate Henry Simon. Reeths-Puffer tied the contest with a goal from Trenton Hanks late in the second period.

Ayden Hartzell scored twice for the Rockets int eh third period, including a goal less than two minutes in that gave his team its first lead. Gabe Supuk and Kauffman scored the two Caledonia goals in the third period as the teams went back and forth.

Lewandowski, Himes and Landen Moore had assists in that final period for the Scots.

CHS

Continued from Page 10

OK Green play.

Ben Geerdes has 12 points, four rebounds and two assists in that one. Little added 11 points, five rebounds, four assists and three steals. Backus chipped in eight points and eight rebounds.

The Scots step back outside the OK Green Tuesday to host West Catholic and then will visit Jenison Friday, Feb. 7. The Scots' one win in the first half of the conference slate came against the Wildcats at CHS.

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MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The Jan. 27 meeting opened with roll call. There are two new fish in the fishbowl.

Virginia's program was titled "Just One Thing: Confessions of a Food Addict." from the Jan/ Feb TOPS magazine. In order to break the food addict cycle, you must take a close look at your behavior and why you are doing what you are doing. What are the underlying triggers that compel you to eat? If you can't understand or address these causes, you will continue to yo-yo. Be kind to yourself!

Food-related changes include turning high calorie recipes into low calorie choices. Same for treats. Include more fruits and veggies you like. Swap a veggie or salad in place of French fries. Eat the correct amount of proteins, carbs, and fats at each meal and snack. Change your plate to a smaller nine-inch plate. Learn correct portion size.

Lifestyle changes include choosing an exercise that will challenge you but is doable. Purchase some exercise equipment but keep it affordable for you.

Knowing your favorite food is always available helps to control binge eating. Play the long game. Believe you can lose weight. Do daily positive affirmations. Fund a quiet, dark place every day for five minutes to pay attention to your body. Journal every day. Remember this weight-loss journey is yours. Let friends and family know what you can eat so they don't push other food you know you can't eat. You can do this!

Linda won the Ha-Ha Box.

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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Pair of Scot freshmen win titles at Lakewood Invite

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

A pair of Fighting Scots freshmen took titles and the Caledonia varsity wrestling team placed third Saturday at the eight-team Lakewood Invitational.

Max Schnurstein in the 106-pound weight class and Robert Restau in the 138-pound class took individual championships for the Scots as the team continued its push to be at its peak here at the end of the season.

Schnurstein beat Loy Norrix Dennis Allen-Wormack 10-1 in the semifinals of their weight class and then beat out Wayland's Jody Bitner, a senior with over 30 victories this season, for the flight championship with a 6-0 decision in the finals. Schnurstein was voted the tournament MVP by the coaches.

"Max not only won it there at 106, he beat that kid from Wayland who was a tough well-built senior kid," Caledonia head coach Shawn Veitch said. "That was honestly probably the best match that Max has wrestled all year. He just was smart, was controlled, didn't try to go big-time or anything. He was really solid."

Restau pinned opponents from Armada and Wayland to reach the 138-pound championship match and then stuck Lakewood's Lydon Rogers 3 minutes and 20 seconds into their bout.

"I love that kid," Veitch said. "He doesn't win on technique, he wins on a will to win. He just hates losing. He just gets out there and gets after it and lets it fly. The future is so bright for that kid. He is stating to pick up the technique and pressure a little bit harder."

In all, the Scots brought 12 wrestlers to the tournament and 11 of them finished in the top 12 in their weight class.

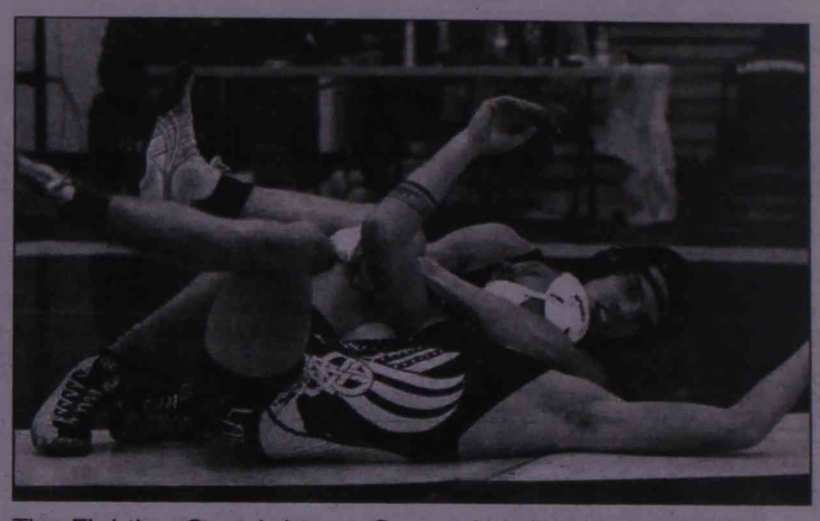
Lakewood took some time to celebrate senior heavyweight Joel Simon's 150th varsity victory at the tournament, and the host Viking team won the championship scoring 271.5 points. Wayland was second with 168.5 points ahead of Caledonia 155.5, Portage Northern 114, Armada 98.5, Loy Norrix 24.5, Laingsburg 23.5 and Ravenna 22.

Lakewood got flight championships from Stephen Aldrich at 113 pounds, Vincent Stamm at 126, Bryson Boucher at 150, Owen Prowdley at 175, Jacob Everett at 215 and Simon at 285 pounds.

Josh Grace at 120 pounds, Will Sheely at 150 and Cayden Nostrant at 165 pounds all placed second for the Scots. Coach Veitch was especially pleased with the youngster Nostrant's performance especially a big 5-3 win over Armada's Trace Lietz in the semifinals.



Caledonia 138-pounder Robert Restau closes in on a pin of Wayland's Wyatt Nesbit during their semifinal bout at the Lakewood Invitational Saturday. Restau had three pins on the day to win the weight class. **Photo by Brett Bremer**



The Fighting Scots' James Carrow V holds Lakewood's Kade Boucher on his back during the first period of their 132-pound semifinal bout at the Lakewood Invitational Saturday. Carrow scored a fourth-place finish at their flight after Boucher broke free and went on to a win. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Nostrant, a sophomore, got a slim win in that semifinal and then learned a lesson in the championship match against Portage Northern's Cayden Nazarians. Nostrant had a two-point lead late, but got into a bit of a bad position as the two grappled on their feet in the closing moments, and Nazarians wiped out the lead with a take down that gave him an 8-7 win.

Still, coach Veitch likes the way that his relationship with Nostrant has grown since last year and how talented and coachable he is becoming.

Caledonia freshman heavyweight Ky Spencer, who has only wrestled a handful of varsity matches so far this winter, was third in a tough 285-pound weight class with a pin of Ravenna's Mason Carringer in the match for third.

Escher Reeder was third at 113

See **SCOT** on 13

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Ben Lloyd beats sister's mark for Trojan threes

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Lloyd family varsity basketball single game three-point record lasted four days.

Thornapple Kellogg junior Ben Lloyd made nine three-pointers in the Trojan varsity boys' basketball team's 72-48 loss at Hamilton Tuesday night setting a boys' school record. His sister, freshman Taylor Lloyd, just set the TK varsity girls' record with eight three-pointers in a Trojan win over Grand Rapids Union in Middleville last Friday, Jan. 24.

Those nine threes by Ben accounted for all 27 of his points against the Hawkeyes, and even extending his range a step or two behind the three-point arc didn't alter his accuracy any. TK head coach Phil Garber said that despite the lopsided loss, the Trojan student section was going crazy with each successful triple, and by the end even the Hamilton students were cheering him on.

Ben hit four threes in the first half, and then was held scoreless in the third quarter before exploding for five threes in the fourth.

After the contest, Garber sent former TK head coach Kurt Holzhueter searching through the archives to find that the previous TK boys' record had lasted for 30 years – set at seven by Andy Brewer during the 1994-95 season.

The game as a whole got away from the Trojans in the second quarter after they held a 14-13 lead through the first eight minutes.

"We just defensively gave up too many open looks," Garber said, "really in the paint. They got in there, and they had some tough defense, they were physical. Inside they were starting guys 6-2, 6-3 and we're not that big and it gave us fits on offense."

Outside of Ben's triples, the Trojan team didn't shoot very well as a whole.

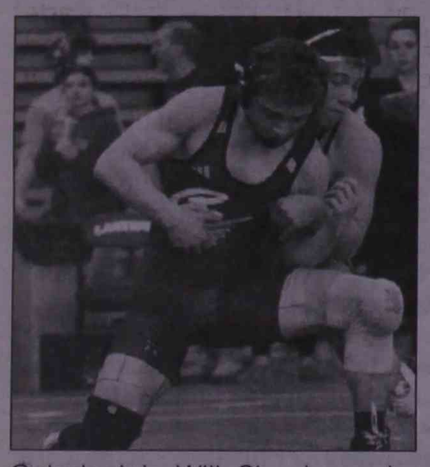
The loss dropped TK's record to 9-6 overall this season. It came on the heels of two good conference wins. The Trojans beat Grand Rapids Union 61-58 last Friday, Jan. 24, and then Monday took a 49-47 win at West Catholic.

TK got off to a good start at Union and then really had to battle as a flurry of ankle sprains ran through the line-up taking Jude Webster, Trey Hilton and Malachai VanEngen off the floor. Webster would eventually be able to return and finished with a team-high 14 points.

Ben and Brice Lloyd stepped up too. Brice finished with ten points and Ben had 12. Hilton played into the second half and finished with 11 points.

At West Catholic Monday, the TK team used its 2-3 zone and 1-3-1 zone to give the Falcons fits. Brice Lloyd had a couple of big threes in the final 80 seconds to help TK seal the two-point win. It wasn't quite that close as the Falcons banked in a three at the buzzer to cut a five-point TK lead down to two. Webster also converted four free throws late in the win.

Those two wins there matched the Trojans' road win total from all of last season, and Garber is happy to have his team sporing a 6-5 road record this season.



Caledonia's Will Sheely works to try and escape the grasp of Armada's Jackson Malburg during their 150-pound semifinal match Saturday at the Lakewood Invitational. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

SCOT

Continued from Page 12

pounds for the Scots and teammates James Carrow V, Ben Moss, Koleson Reeder and Thomas Hodgson all placed fourth.

The Scots returned to action Wednesday taking a big 39-35 win over Jenison on senior night at Caledonia. The win moves the Scots to 2-2 in conference duals this season and the OK Green Conference was set to meet at Reeths-Puffer for the conference tournament Friday night, Jan. 31.

"All the individual kids are buying in. they're doing their job for the team. That was our goal," Veitch said of the victory.

Caledonia will be at Portage Northern Wednesday, Feb. 5, for its MHSAA Division 1 District Tournament and will face the Huskies in one district semifinal while Kalamazoo Central and Mattawan face off in the other beginning at 5 p.m.

The Scots go to Howell for their MHSAA Division 1 Individual District Tournament Saturday, Feb. 8.

Mona Shores gives Scots first Green loss

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Mona Shores pulled even with the Caledonia varsity girls' basketball team with a 42-38 win over the visiting Scots Friday, Jam. 24.

Both teams close the first half of the OK Green Conference season with 4-1 records. The Sailors' line conference loss so far came the previous Friday against Muskegon.

Caledonia is now 10-3 overall this season.

The Scots bounced back with a 39-33 win at Covenant Christian Tuesday.

Caledonia was set to start the second rum through the OK Green schedule at home against Reeths-Puffer Jan. 31 and will be on the road in the conference this Friday at Jenison.

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THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP BOARD
200 E MAIN ST.
MIDDLEVILLE, MI 49333
SYNOPSIS OF MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with seven members present.

Items approved:

1. Printed Agenda approved as amended.

2. Consent Agenda approved as presented.

4. Approved motion for a full-time promotion for Shelby England.

5. Approved motion for entering into an agreement with Acrisure LLD to review our current sick time, vacation time, and personal time policies in order to align them with the new Earned Sick Time Act recently passed by the State of Michigan which goes into effect February 25 for an amount not to exceed $1,500.00.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Prepared by Deputy Clerk Brenda Hess. Approved by Township Supervisor, Eric Schaefer.

Copies of the meeting minutes are available upon request from the Township Clerk or by visiting https://thornapple-twp.org/meeting-minutes/ Office hours 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

IRVING TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING SYNOPSIS
January 21, 2025

Meeting called to order at 6:32pm at 3425 Wing Rd. Hastings, Michigan 49058

Present: Lydy, Stout, Buehler, Brummel, and Nagel

Agenda approved as presented

Barry County Road Commission annual presentation

Approved December 2024 Meeting Minutes

Approved to pay bills in the amount of $12,527.44

Approved to hire West Michigan Shredding for shred services

Set Budget Workshop date for February 25, 2025 at 6:30pm at the Irving Township Hall

Approved to allow Wish-A-Mile bicycle tour to use our grounds as a rest stop

Upcoming Meeting dates: February 18, 2025 6:30pm (Board Meeting); February 25, 2025 6:30pm (Budget Workshop)

Adjourn 6:35pm

Full minutes are available at Irvingtownship.org or at 3425 Wing Rd, Hastings, MI 49058.
Prepared by Deputy Clerk, Shelly Lake.
Attested to by
Supervisor, Dan Lydy.

Peters announces he will not seek reelection in 2026

Molly Macleod
Editor

Michigan Senator Gary Peters announced on Tuesday he will not be seeking reelection in 2026.

The announcement comes as Peters rounds his 10th year serving as one of Michigan's United States senators. The Democrat will end his term at the end of 2026, having served 12 years as senator.

"I have always believed that American democracy can only remain healthy and vibrant when every citizen takes an active role in strengthening their community. There are many ways people can choose to serve their community and all are important. The how and when we serve is different for everyone and what we do becomes part of a unique individual life story having many chapters," Peters said this week.

"At this point in my life, I have been able to write many different chapters, and I look forward to the new ones with both anticipation and excitement."

Peters assumed longtime Michigan Senator Carl Levin's seat after defeating Terri Lynn Land in 2014. Peters successfully defended his seat against challenger John James in the 2020 election.

Before serving as one of Michigan's two senators, Peters began his state political career in 1995, representing Michigan's 14th District in the Michigan Senate. He served in the state senate until 2002. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Michigan's 14th and 9th districts from 2009 to 2015.

Peters also boasts a long career in the United States Navy Reserve, where he served from 1993 to 2008. He also spent 20 years working in the private sector as a financial advisor.

"When I was first elected to Congress in 2008, I always knew there would come a time to pass the torch to the next generation of public servants and allow them the opportunity to bring fresh energy and ideas to our nation's capital. Our founding fathers envisioned members of Congress as citizens serving their country for a few terms and then returning to private life. I agree. After three terms in the House and two terms in the Senate, I believe now is time for me to write a few more paragraphs in my current chapter and turn over the reins. I will therefore not seek reelection in 2026," Peters said.

Though Peters announced his intentions to retire at the end of his term, he says there is still more to do before then.

"I have two more years remaining in my current term and there is more work to do. I intend to continue my work on issues important to all Michiganders by working to lower costs, make sure everyone has the opportunity to succeed, feel safe in their community, and protect core American democratic values.

"My service in the Congress has been the honor of my life. It has been a humbling responsibility given to me by the voters of the state I love. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve, and I believe my work has left our country a better place."

Governor Gretchen Whitmer lauded Peters for his service this week.

"Senator Gary Peters has been a steadfast champion for Michigan," Whitmer said. "As a member of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, he has fought tirelessly to create good-paying jobs, bring manufacturing back to our state, strengthen our auto industry, lower Michiganders' health care costs and protect reproductive freedom.

"As a veteran of the U.S. Navy Reserve, Senator Peters recognizes the importance of a strong national defense and helped secure Michigan as a defense leader through his advocacy for Michigan's Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

"I am deeply grateful to Senator Peters for his service, both as a Michigander and friend," Whitmer said.

As Peters prepares to wrap up his

See **REELECTION** on 15

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 Vine Street Church
Rev. Christine M. Beaudoin
Join us for our traditional yet casual worship service, in person or online, at 9:00 am
250 Vine Street 616-891-8669

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: Rob Wurst
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.
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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 9:00, and 10:30 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

Robert R. Bekkering



Robert R. Bekkering,of Middleville, MI, known affectionately as Bob, passed away on January 21, 2025, at the age of 58 in Wyoming, MI. Bob was born on December 20, 1966, in Grand Rapids, MI to Roger and Karen (Kollar) Bekkering.

Bob was a proud graduate of Thornapple-Kellogg High School, class of 1985. He dedicated over 14 years to Steelcase, working diligently in the shipping department. Bob's passion for the outdoors, woodworking, and golfing were well-known, as these activities brought him immense happiness and peace.

Bob leaves behind a loving family: his parents, Roger and Karen; his siblings, Brian (Suzanne) Bekkering and Bonnie (Dean) McNutt; his cherished nieces, Emily (Josh) Zeigler, Erica Mutschler, Katie (Mark) Orr, Brittany (Nick) Huerter, and his dear grandnieces, Adrienne Ziegler, Maya Huerter, and grandnephews, Paxton and Finn Orr and Cole and Theo Huerter.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Harold and Ruth Kollar, and Charles and Julia Woodruff.

Friends may meet with Bob's family on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at the Beeler-Gores Funeral Home in Middleville from 5-7 p.m.

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

Patricia Lynn Williams



Patricia Lynn Williams passed away on December 25, 2024, in Hastings, MI. She was born on April 30, 1962, in Battle Creek, MI, to the late Earl Russell and Ruth F. (Lowman) Pierce.

Patricia was a woman of unmatched love and vibrant spirit. She brought joy through her delicious cooking, beautiful decorating, and love for nature, music, and old movies. Her humor and warmth brightened every moment, and she had a passion for antiquing and an adventurous love of ghost hunting.

Described as the best mother anyone could ever imagine, Patricia was the most loving, supportive, and beautiful soul, inside and out. Truly one of a kind, she was special beyond words and irreplaceable.

Patricia is survived by her daughters, Brooke (Thomas) Momenee, Julie (Shanna) Gilmore, and Nicole (Gary) Gilmore; grandchildren, Amaya Pena, Aubrey Rasmussen, and Mikayla Gilmore; her fiancé, Joshua Mayhew; his brother, Maurice Mayhew; and her loyal dog, Athena.

A Celebration of Life Gathering will be held on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025 at Convis Township Hall, 19500 15 Mile Rd, Marshall, MI 49068.

Arrangements by Girrbach Funeral Home.

Patricia Louise McCrath



Patricia Louise McCrath, age 81, of Kentwood, MI, formerly a long-time resident of Middleville, went to sing with the Angels on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025. To know her is to love her.

Patricia was an amazing cook and loved to bake.

She was preceded in death by her son, Robert McCrath; her brother, Mike Hodges; her sister, Shawn McCraney.

Lovingly remembering Patricia is her husband of 61 years, Walter; children, Tacy (surviving wife to Robert) (Dylon and Rheagan), Becky (Doug) Callihan (Nick, Kimberly (Anthony), Alyssa, Eathan, Maddy, Nate, Precious, Hailey, Elliana, Treasure, Jace), Dan (Kathy) McCrath (Eden, Noah, Matt (Jill) Nagelkirk, Katie (Bryant) Ruch, Lindsey (Matheus) Soares), Mari (Chad) Slachter (Kyle Wnuk), Jim (Kristine) McCrath (Hanna (Andrew) Rhoades, Lucas), Karen (Tim) Raphael (Karlie, Cole, Katy, Ali, Josie); and eight great-grandchildren along with her sisters and brothers, Ann (Ralph) Miller, Tom Hodges, Kathy (Howard) Zoet, Joe Hodges; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Paul (Jo) McCrath, Cliff McCrath, Sandy Scheib, Nancy McCrath.

The family will greet relatives and friends on Friday, Feb. 7, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Stroo Funeral Home, 1095 68th St. SE, Grand Rapids, 49508, where the memorial service and luncheon will follow at 3 p.m. Pastor Brian Albright will officiate. The family has arranged a private interment at Fort Custer National Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made, in memory of Patricia, to the family to help with funeral expenses.

REELECTION

Continued from Page 14

decades-long career in politics, he is looking forward to riding off into the sunset.

"I am leaving Congress, but I am not retiring. I look forward to writing many more chapters when my term ends. I do not know what those chapters will be, but I expect one of them will be me finding endless twisting back roads where I can experience the joy of total freedom riding my Harley Davidson motorcycle on a warm sunny day," he said.

Moolenaar staff available to discuss constituent assistance

Staff members from the office of Congressman John Moolenaar are hosting meeting times across the district next month where constituents can sit down to discuss personal casework issues they are experiencing with a federal agency.

Moolenaar's office is offering help to constituents who need assistance with a federal agency, including the VA and the IRS.

Staff members will be available locally in the coming weeks in Hastings and Sunfield. On Tuesday, Feb. 25, staff will be available at the Sunfield Township Hall, 145 Main Street, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Later that day, Moolenaar staff will be available at the Hastings Public Library, 227 East State Street, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Constituents who cannot attend one of the meetings can call Moolenaar's office at 616-528-7100, or visit Moolenaar.House.gov to receive assistance with their issue. — *MM*

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Scot ski sees strong competition at Benzie invite

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor



The Caledonia varsity boys' ski team celebrates a third-place finish and a few individual medals won Friday, Jan. 24, at Benzie Central's Bryan Groenvelt Memorial Invitational at Crystal Mountain. **Photo provided**

The Caledonia boys skied to third place in the final team standings and exchange student Chiara Mart won both the girls' slalom and giant slalom (GS) as the Fighting Scot varsity teams took part in the Bryan Groenevelt Memorial Invitational at Crystal Mountain Friday, Jan. 24, hosted by Benzie Central.

Marta set the pace in the girls' slalom in the morning session with runs of 31.02 seconds and 31.22 which was a total almost a second and a half faster than her nearest competitor. She won the girls' GS by 1.19 seconds with runs of 22.31 and 22.53.

As a team, the Caledonia boys were second in the GS and fourth in the slalom. The Potgeter boys led the way for the Scots in the GS with David Potgeter scoring runs of 23.11 and 23.05 that had him second individually. Jake Potgeter was 16th and the Scot team also had Peter Calhoun 17th and Justin Harper 21st in the scoring.

Caledonia head coach Duane Petrosky liked how his "Caledonia clump" pushed back other teams in the scoring. Harper earned a spot in the top four for the team in his first varsity race.

In the slalom, the Caledonia boys were led by David Potgeter with runs of 32.26 and 33.02 that had him eighth overall. Aidan Brown was 13th, Jake Potgeter 20th and James Pritchard 24th. David Potgeter medaled in both events and Brown was among the slalom medalists.

"We are very happy with how our guys skied today," coach Petrosky said. "We were missing one of our top skiers, who was at the state choir festival, and everyone else stepped up to put down great runs for the team. It is always nice when we get to race against some different teams to see how we stack up against some of the competition we will see at Regionals on February 10.

"At the beginning of the season, we knew we had some younger skiers that would help us in the future and they really seem to be making huge contributions earlier than we thought. Jake, James and Justin are really stepping up for our team."

Clare won the boys' championship on the day with 103 points ahead of Mt. Pleasant 105, Caledonia 121, Grayling 143, GR Christian 146, Onekama 178, Harrison 239 and Glen Lake NTS.

Behind Marta in the slalom the Caledonia girls had Zuzanna Poradzka 26th, Madison Reynolds 28th and Ada Decker 29th. Poradzka was 21st in the GS, Reynolds 26th and Kayli Price 28th for the Scots.

"We are extremely happy with how Chiara is skiing. She is a hard worker that is focused on doing her best. Her dedication is really pushing our other skiers and we are seeing them get faster too," Petrosky said. "We have seen a ton of growth from everyone on our team.

"Although we are very a happy with the skiing of our exchange students (Chiara & Zuzanna), our program has been held together by the dedication of our seniors (Liz Hilton, Erin Peckham, Kayli Price, Ada Petersen and Leah Van Hall) who are the backbone of our team. They are great skiers, leaders and students."

Glen Lake had the day's top girls' team finishing with 78 points. Grand Rapids Christian was second with 88.5 points ahead of Grayling 100, Clare 113, Caledonia 160, Mt. Pleasant 161, Onekama 188 andHarrison NTS.



Caledonia exchange student Chiara Marta took championships in both the slalom and GS Friday, Jan. 24. at the invitational hosted by Benzie Central at Crystal Mountain. **Photo provided**



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