THE SUN AND NEWS
Your Hometown Newspaper Serving the Middleville, Caledonia and Gaines Township Areas



TWO TKHS STUDENTS ADVANCE AS NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FINALISTS
PAGE 4

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CHS teacher receives national honor

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer



Heather Tornes

Caledonia High School educator Heather Tornes was recently selected as the recipient of the 2025 Distinguished Citizen Award by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The national recognition honors one individual each year who demonstrates an exceptional commitment to education, youth development and civic engagement while embodying the core values of the Medal of Honor – courage, commitment, citizenship, integrity, sacrifice and patriotism.

Tornes attended the New York Stock Exchange Circle of Honor Dinner this week on March 5, where she was recognized for her contributions to education and civic engagement. She also attended the NYSE Closing Bell Ceremony as a guest, where more than 20 Medal of Honor recipients would be honored.

The Circle of Honor Dinner celebrates individuals and organizations who make profound contributions to the nations, including the NYSE itself for its ongoing support of veterans and veteran-owned businesses.

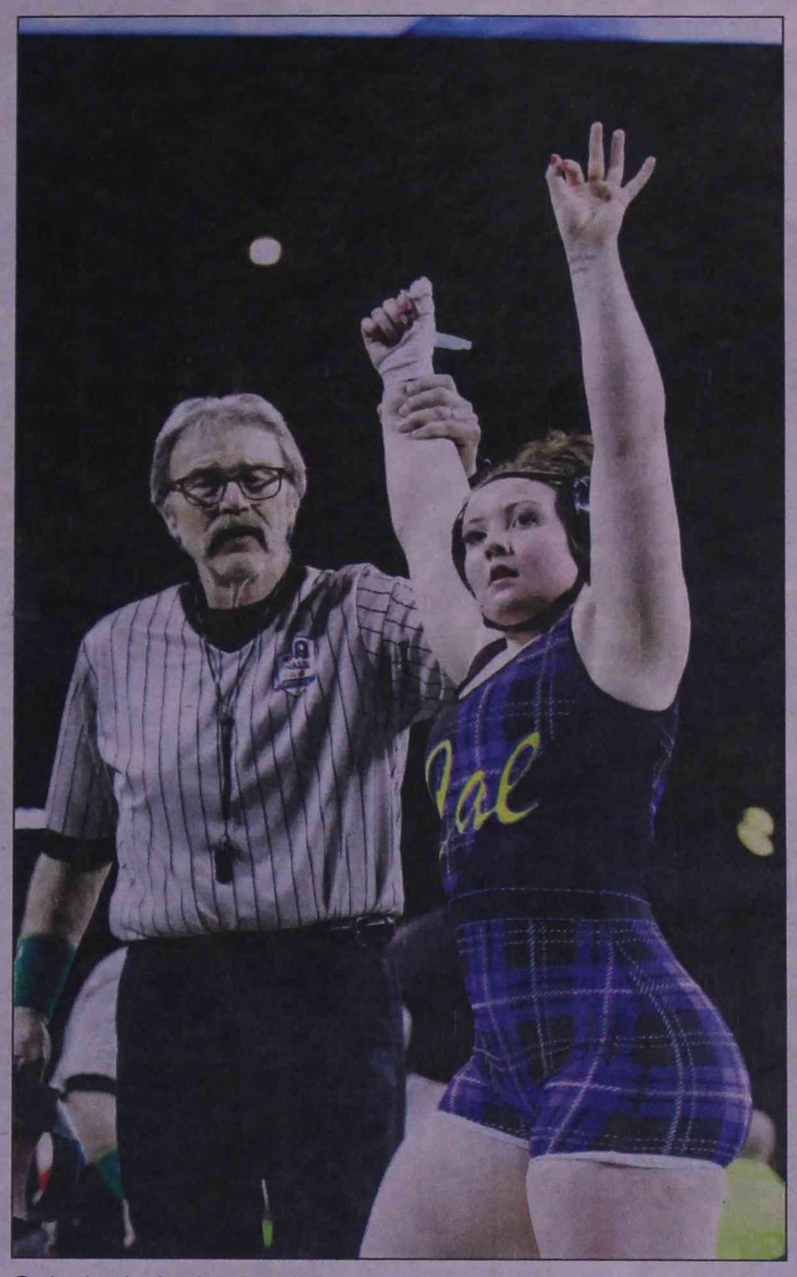
"For years, Heather has been a passionate advocate for fostering leadership and civic responsibility among students," said Dirk Weeldreyer, Caledonia Community Schools superintendent. "Her dedication to education and community service has left a lasting impact on Caledonia students, and we are incredibly proud to see her recognized at the national level."

District staff say Tornes has been instrumental in implementing character development programs at CHS, incorporating the values upheld by the Medal of Honor into her classroom. They say her commitment to shaping the next generation of ladder aligns with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's mission to inspire and educate students on the importance of service and integrity.

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Three down, one to go



Caledonia junior Maddie Hayden has her right arm raised while raising three fingers on her left hand after winning her third state championship in three varsity seasons at the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals inside Ford Field in downtown Detroit Saturday. Hayden defeated Clinton's Raven Aldridge 5-0 in the girls' 170-pound championship match after pinning her first three opponents at the state finals. Read more about Hayden's third state championship on page 17. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Caledonia officials celebrate official opening of community center

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer

Caledonia Community Schools, in partnership with the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, officially opened the Caledonia Community Center during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 27.

The state-of-the-art facility, made possible by the 2020 bond, is designed to be a hub for recreation, wellness, and community engagement for residents of all ages.

"It's so wonderful to see a project that's been so long in the planning and construction to finally come to fruition and great to see so many people out here today," said CCS Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer. "We look forward to seeing it enrich our community for years to come."

Hundreds of community members attended the celebration, which included district and community leaders, as well as CCS education and outreach coordinator Monique Brennan who was given the honor of cutting the ribbon at the recent ceremony.

"The Cal Community Center is more than just a building, it's a place for all ages to connect, learn and create lasting memories," Brennan said. "For over 30 years, the Caledonia Resource Center has enriched our community and this new space allows us to expand that mission, providing a true home away from home for seniors, families, and students."

In addition, guests got to witness a "First Splash" in the competition pool by the Caledonia-Lowell-South Christian swim teams, along with elementary and middle school students and senior citizens, symbolizing the center's multigenerational influence.

"We are so excited. These kids are ready to go," said Todd De Jong, CLSC varsity swim coach. "They're

See **OPENING** on 2

Horses run wild down M-6 Wednesday morning

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Kent County Sheriff's deputies say the approximately 15 horses that got loose from a boarding facility in Byron Center on Wednesday morning were rounded up safely within two hours.

Kent County dispatchers told *The Sun and News* the horses got loose around 7:30 a.m., and some of them took a stroll down eastbound M-6 in Cutlerville, tying up rush-hour traffic with a big backup. They were seen wandering around as far east as Hanna Lake Avenue in the Dutton area of Gaines Township before being retrieved and placed in a trailer.

Police say the horses had gotten loose from a boarding facility near Wilson Avenue and 76th Street in Byron Township. The horses were all back "home" before 9:30 a.m.

See **HORSES** on 6



Kent County Sheriff's deputies say the approximately 15 horses that got loose from a boarding facility in Byron Center on Wednesday morning were rounded up safely within two hours.
Photo provided



Caledonia Education and Outreach Coordinator Monique Brennan (center) at the Caledonia Community Center ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 27.
Photo by Noah Peterson

OPENING

Continued from Page 1

The celebration continued during the Grand Opening Weekend from Feb. 28 to March 2, offering community members a chance to tour the facility, learn about programs, and sign up for YMCA memberships.

Starting March 3, a membership will be required for access to YMCA programming. To make it even easier to get started, the YMCA is waiving the membership join fee from Feb. 20 to March 31.

gonna love having this pool in this community and seeing the full value of it from little kids learning how to swim to elderly people being able to exercise. It's great and it's about time."

The center features a competition pool, leisure pool and splash pad, fitness and wellness area, indoor walking track, basketball court, and facilities for the Caledonia Resource Center, which offers educational and personal enrichment programs.

"Our partnership with Caledonia Community Schools and the Caledonia Resource Center exemplifies the YMCA's commitment to strengthening community through collaboration," said Scott Lewis, president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids. "The Cal Community Center will be a place where people of all ages can focus on their health, build connections and be part of something greater. We are honored to help bring this vision to life."

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Gaines PC postpones Microsoft rezoning request after hearing 'disturbing' comments from residents

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Planning Commission voted unanimously at its February 27 meeting to postpone for one month making a recommendation to the township board regarding a request from Microsoft Corporation to rezone a section of land.

The 40.5-acre parcel is located at 7147 Patterson Ave. SE, about four blocks north of where Microsoft purchased 316 acres of industrial land last fall at the northwest corner of Patterson Avenue and 76th Street to potentially be developed into a major data center. Microsoft reportedly paid $45.3 million to buy that land from Steelcase Inc.

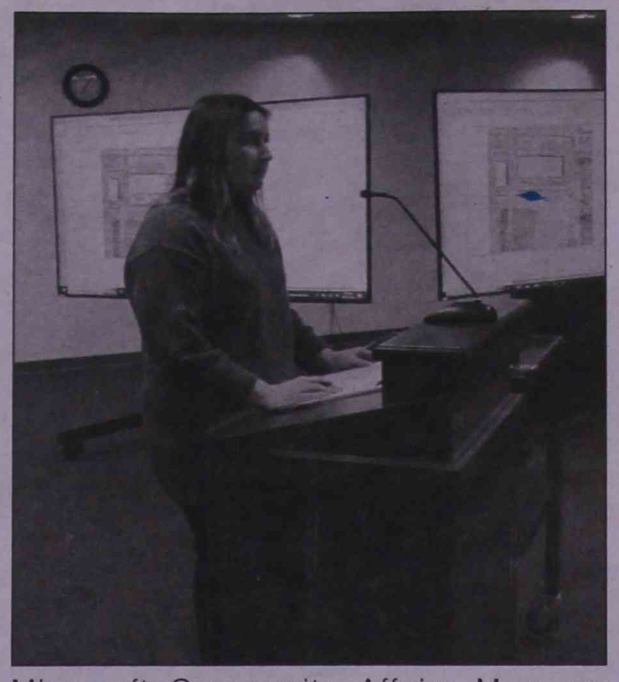
The parcel Microsoft is requesting be rezoned is just south of the Amazon Fulfillment Center, which is located at 4500 68th St. SE. The request is to rezone it from a Planned Unit Development – Large Scale Phased (PUD-LSP) designation to Light Industrial, which is what the township has future-zoned it for in its zoning ordinance. The parcel is undeveloped and, according to Gaines Community Development Director Dan Wells, will "likely become part of the project they (Microsoft) have planned for the larger parcel to the south."

Rezoning the 40.5-acre parcel would eliminate the need for dual zoning of the properties.

But some planning commissioners said they were "disturbed" by comments from a couple of township residents who said in a public hearing that they were mistreated by Microsoft officials concerning a potential purchase of some land they own. It is separate from the parcel Microsoft is seeking to have rezoned, and from the 316-acre parcel purchased last fall.

Township resident Timothy Zandbergen – a former Gaines planning commissioner – said he owns about five acres of property immediately south of the Microsoft property that was previously rezoned. He said Microsoft made offers to him and some other neighbors to purchase their property.

"We jumped through hoops getting the papers signed," Zandbergen said. "Basically, Microsoft threw us and the other neighbors to the south under the bus," he said. "We negotiated a fair price … Microsoft had a free look and due diligence period, and tied up our property for many months."



Microsoft Community Affairs Manager Meredith Lizza addresses the Gaines Planning Commission at its February 27 meeting. **Photo by James Gemmell**

Zandbergen added that he and the other property owner cooperated with all Microsoft requests, including keeping quiet publicly about the potential land purchase. He said his understanding was that the technology firm was going to put $25,000 into an escrow account in case the potential deal fell through, but said the corporation never did.

Microsoft did not confirm that.

"Come to the end of the due diligence period, nothing was said. No reasons (were given) for backing out, they simply went silent and we couldn't get ahold of anybody. We didn't get anything in writing from them saying they didn't want to purchase the property. Just dead silence," he said.

Zandbergen said he had different experiences dealing with Steelcase in the past when he sold part of his farm to the office furniture company.

"We never had any issues with Steelcase, an awesome company," he said.

Zandbergen said neighbors near Patterson Avenue and 76th Street would have no ability to force Microsoft to keep the township's best interests in mind, if the property is rezoned.

"We're just here tonight to ask the planning commission to think pretty hard about changing this to a straight zoning where you don't have any control to protect the neighbors that are in the parcels and the neighbors on the east side (of Patterson)," he said.

The west side of Patterson Avenue is in Gaines Township and the east side is in Caledonia Township.

Another 76th Street resident, Bruce Beebe, said he and his wife had a similar experience in not receiving a letter from Microsoft to indicate it would not be buying their property. Beebe claims the company said it was interested in the because it is close to the intersection.

"We put our life on hold for a year and a half. We accepted the agreement that was given to us to buy our homes out. I was told … we'd have to be out in four months, once they signed. So, I tore everything down to get ready, because winter was coming," he said. "We were supposed to demolish our houses, too, as part of our agreement."

Beebe said he thought the deal to buy his property would close on December 5, 2024.

"So, all last year my wife and I were looking for homes to buy, knowing that we had to move and demolish our house of 35 years. I'm just really frustrated that a big company like that would just treat people like this," he said. "We were thrown in the sewer after they got the property they wanted."

"It's a little disturbing to hear this," Planning Commission Chairwoman Connie Giarmo said after the public hearing closed. But she noted that there are always two sides to a story.

Jonah Mills with Microsoft's land-development team then addressed the commission. He said the company has a rigorous due diligence process that typically takes three to six months to complete and includes working with engineers, public planning profes-

See **REZONING** on 8

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Two TKHS students advance as National Merit Scholarship Finalists

Two Thornapple Kellogg High School seniors have advanced as National Merit Scholarship Finalists. Cole Novak and Lukas Walters both recently received notification of the prestigious national honor and were presented with certificates by TKHS Principal Tony Petersen.

The two students were first named among only 16,000 semifinalists in the nation and now are among the approximately 15,000 finalists. From the finalists, some 6,870 will be awarded scholarships this spring totaling nearly $26 million.

"It's quite an honor, even if I don't end up getting the scholarship. I was not expecting any of this in the slightest," said Walters.

"It's still surprising to me. It's a very happy surprise," Novak said.

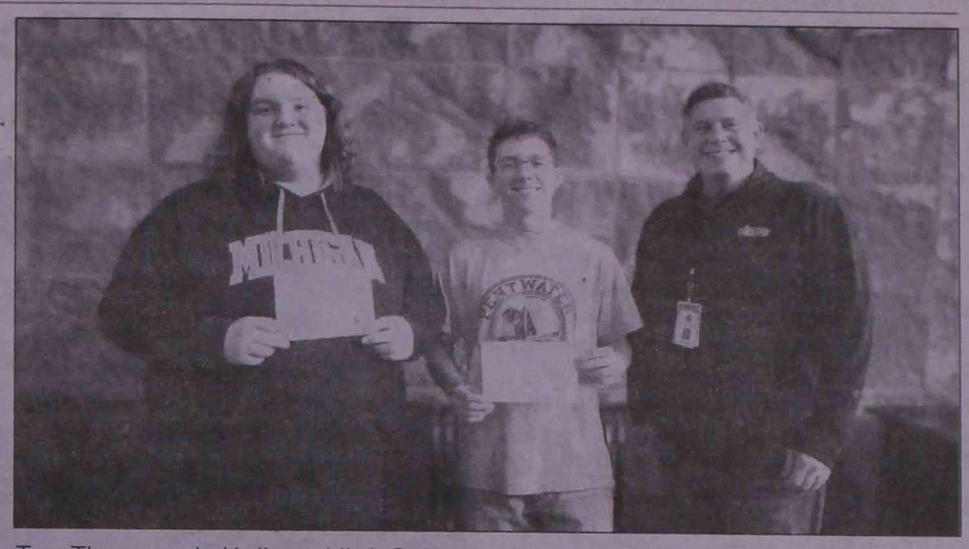
Novak is considering attending either the University of Michigan or Michigan State University to pursue a biology degree and continue into the medical field. "I know I want to do something medical, but I'm not sure yet exactly what is going to appeal to me the most."

Walters has finalized his plans for college and will be attending Aquinas College to pursue a degree in communications and a pathway to pre-law.

Both students credit TK Schools for helping them reach this ultimate achievement. "We have truly incredible teachers here. I think the classes we have offered here have been really helpful like the AP Language classes that really helped me do better and be prepared for the tests we had to take to get to this point," said Walters.

"The teachers make the class and TK has great teachers who ensure students have what they need," added Novak.

Both students said some of the AP classes they've taken over the years have been their favorites, especially AP Language and AP Calculus. Novak said he also especially enjoyed his classes in genetics and biotech, anatomy and physiology.



Two Thornapple Kellogg High School students were recently named National Merit Scholarship Finalists. Pictured from left: National Merit Scholarship Finalists Lukas Walters and Cole Novak with TKHS Principal Tony Petersen.
Photo provided

In addition to his AP classes, Walters said he has mostly enjoyed being in band classes all four years of high school and his theater arts class.

Both Walters and Novak are members of the jazz, marching and symphonic bands. They've both been involved in plays and musicals. Novak works as a member of the stage crew for plays and musicals. Walters has been in all of the plays and musicals for four years and had the leading role in the 2024 fall play. He will also be featured as the Tin Man in the spring musical "The Wizard of Oz."

Additionally, Walters is a member of the Student Council, National Honor Society and theater arts class. He also performs with a worship band for his church and plays with a jazz combo including a performance at the recent Barry Community Foundation Hometown Hero Banquet. He is the son of Jason and Robin Walters.

Novak is a member of the boys' varsity tennis team, National Honor Society and Science Olympiad. He enjoys reading in his free time and helping his younger cousins. He is the son of Jared and Amanda Novak.

The two scholars offered some advice to younger students just starting their high school careers. "Put in the work. Put your nose to the grindstone and do the work. Get things done. Be in class and pay attention in class. But most importantly — "do the work and surround yourself with friends and teachers who will help you," said Novak.

Walters added his advice. "Push yourself and don't be independent about your learning. Use the resources here. The people and teachers are here to help." — *MM*

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Revised apartment proposal in Dutton draws warmer reception from Gaines planners

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Planning Commission reacted more favorably at its Feb. 27 meeting to a revised proposal by Continental Properties to build 15, 24-unit apartment houses in Dutton than it did to the original site plan that was presented a month earlier.

But on a unanimous vote, the seven commissioners decided once again to postpone any action on Continental's request for approval of a preliminary Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning until they can study the updated proposal further. A preliminary PUD must be approved before a final PUD can be considered.

If approved, the two-story apartment buildings would be built on a 24-acre section of a 40.6-acre parcel on the 6300 block of Hanna Lake Avenue. That is immediately south of M-6 in the township's residential (RL-10) and mobile home (R-4) zoning districts.

The 360 apartment units would have a density of about 8.9 units per acre. There would also be a clubhouse along Hanna Lake Avenue with a single residential building.

In the developer's modified site plan, two of the buildings would be moved to the east side of the development.

Also, a 6.7-acre section of dedicated park land along Hanna Lake Avenue was added to the plan since the original presentation in January. In addition, a boulevard would extend off Hanna Lake as the primary entrance to the site. It would extend to the east side of the property.

Jordan Teichen, development director for the Wisconsin-based firm, called Vern and Linda Verduin up to the microphone to explain why they are considering selling the parcels, which represent one of the few areas left in the township that are still zoned for apartments.

Vern Verduin said the sale of farmland is inevitable with growth in the area.

"You're not going to farm in Dutton. We'd like to. We like Dutton, but we're just not going to do it," he said. "We lost the land across the street here. … We're slowly getting pushed out."

Verduin also cited increasing traffic congestion in the area as a reason for selling the property.

"We've had offers," he said. "We like Continental. We like their product."

Verduin added that his family will continue farming and has identified a site to purchase in Allegan County.

"I don't think it's a secret, but we've (tentatively) signed with the Doezema's (Dairy Farm) on the Shelbyville exit," he said.

Continental Properties has been coordinating with Verduin about the timeline for moving his cattle off the farm his family has been working on for nearly a century in Dutton.

"So, one thing we decided to do is dedicate this park, which is a great way to commemorate their legacy here in the township," said Erik Hahn, Continental Properties vice president of acquisitions.

Continental has been using "Authentix Gaines" as a working name for the proposed apartment complex, although some township staff members have said that name does not reflect the Dutton community very well.

As he did in late January, Teichen gave a presentation to the planning commissioners about the Authentix-style housing brand that would be used. But at the most recent meeting, he was joined by Hahn, who took more of a hardline stance when commissioners insisted on a reduction in the size of the apartment houses from 24 units to 16.

The planning commissioners had told Continental at the previous meeting that the number of units must be capped at 16 and that they preferred a more upscale apartment style than the Authentix brand, with higher-quality finishes.

"I'll be just completely honest with all of you," Hahn said. "We cannot go down to 16 units, unless we pursue a housing TIF (tax increment financing). It will create a massive gap in our financial model. … There's not enough depth in the rental market here to do what you're asking, to the extent that I wouldn't proceed with this project.

"We would go elsewhere," he added. "I want to be super clear with you all. The cost is so high these days we can't hit the price point … some of the requests you're making is diminishing the affordability of these units to the point where we wouldn't come back."

However, Teichen said Continental could build three-story apartment houses, instead of the two-story, which would

See **DUTTON** on 7



Continental Properties Vice President of Acquisitions Erik Hahn discusses with Gaines planning commissioners an updated proposal for 360 Authentix-style apartment building units to be constructed along Hanna Lake Avenue south of 60th Street. **Photo by James Gemmell**

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Campus Life approved for annual music event



Middleville's Campus Life got its event permit approved by the Village of Middleville Council on Feb. 25 for its annual live music and talent show. The event will be at the amphitheater and pavilion on Main Street on May 31. **Photo provided**

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer

The show will go on after the Middleville Village Council approved an event permit for Middleville Campus Life, a youth organization serving students at Thornapple Kellogg Middle School, allowing the group to move forward with its annual music and talent show scheduled for late May.

Village council members unanimously approved the event permit at their Feb. 25 meeting, with the music and talent show set for May 31 at the amphitheater and pavilion on Main Street. The event is slated to offer games and music for the whole community.

Andrew Kiste, director of Middleville Campus Life, requested the permit and said the show would be the best way to end the 2024-25 school year.

"It's going to be a Campus Life party for the community, for our students and their families to see what their kids have learned," said Kiste. "Kids will participate in a series of games and listen to some live worship music to send the message of love. It will generally be a nice time for families in our community to come together."

For the past three years, Middleville Campus Life has helped the needs of students at the Thornapple Kellogg Middle School. The organization also started a program for local high school students this year.

For more information on Middleville Campus Life or to get updates on upcoming events, interested persons may follow its Instagram and Facebook pages.

HORSES

Continued from Page 2

For some, it may have harkened memories of when a cow got loose and was seen running loose on northbound US-31 south of the S-Curve in downtown Grand Rapids on December 1, 2023. The cow escaped from a trailer in that instance.

How the horses got loose Wednesday was still being looked into at press time.

Runners brave cold temps at Winter Trail Fest



Runners begin their half marathon or 5-mile race at the Winter Trail Fest in Yankee Springs on Saturday morning. **Photo by Noah Peterson**

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer

Over 300 participants braved the cold and icy conditions Saturday morning, March 1, to compete in Middleville's Winter Trail Fest Half Marathon and 5 Mile Westside run at Yankee Springs.

Runners of both races ran through trails in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area and had to battle ice and 20-degree weather. Runners had the choice of crossing the frigid water about a half-mile from the finish or running a bonus quarter-mile to avoid the water. Custom race beanies were given to the top overall winners and top age group winners in both races.

The event saw 376 runners and featured several course records.

The top overall winners of the half marathon were Addison Smith, 27, (1:26:56), Samuel Darling, 47 (1:29:45), and Tyler Johnson, 26, (1:37:56). Smith also broke the course record for the male 25-29 age group, which was previously held by Alexander Hoffman (1:45:59) in 2017. The female overall winner was Melissa Winchester, 27, (1:42:10), who also broke the female 25-29 age group record that was previously held by Brandi Corkins (1:52:45) in 2018.

The overall winners of the 5-mile run were Skyler Frisbie, 17, (35:47), Scott Evans, 41, (38:44), and Christopher Fay, 40, (42:48). Frisbie broke the course record for the 19 and under age group, which was previously held by Connor Brower (44:40) in 2020. The female overall winner was Sarah Storey, 21, (44:32).

"We are very happy with the turnout of the race," said Rob Hyde, the race's director. "It was icy out there, but the people that toughed it out were definitely pleased with their efforts. We are very thankful to Gun Lake Department of Natural Resources and University of Michigan Health West sports medicine."

Since 2017, Trivium Racing has hosted the Winter Trail Fest. Runners can sign up for its partnering event, the Summer Trail Fest, featuring an ultra marathon, half marathon, and 5-mile run. The event is June 14 at Sleepy Hollow State Recreation Area in Laingsburg.

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DUTTON

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reduce the total number of apartment houses but not the number of individual apartment units.

"If there is concern over the scale of the development, we could also consider dropping (total) unit count," Teichen said.

"We would prefer to drop two buildings rather than go to (16-unit apartment houses)," Hahn added. "We won't be back, if you guys need to see 16-unit buildings."

At that point, Planning Commission Chairwoman Connie Giarmo said she favored postponing any decision until the proposal concerning the 6.7 acres of the property being dedicated as park space can be discussed with the township board.

Wiersema said that if the park portion is deeded, the "township will have to examine how it would maintain it, how we can take care of it, all that kind of stuff."

"That's a question the (township) board needs to maybe weigh in on," added Planning Commission member Tim Haagsma, who is also a member of the township board.

"That concept of a park came to light at the last minute," Teichen said. "So, we have not had conversations about that transaction or how that is taking place."

The revised site plan for the project includes some significant improvements. In terms of traffic circulation, there is the main entrance boulevard, plus a new roundabout to improve traffic circulation, and enhanced pedestrian pathways. The sidewalks would be extended along Hanna Lake Avenue and connect to sidewalks between M-6 and 68th Street.

A revised drain crossing is designed to cause fewer wetland impacts. And some new building locations in the site plan would provide improved views of wetlands.

"The previous plan had a couple of apartment buildings closer to Hanna Lake," Community Development director Dan Wells said. "They moved those to the rear of the property to get an open space facing Hanna Lake. So, they moved them back toward the eastern end of the property so it would have a more open feel."

Teichen said Continental Properties would need some incentives if Gaines Township wants a higher-end product than the "attainable housing" type originally proposed. He suggested the township consider using Tax Increment Financing under Michigan's Brownfield Redevelopment Act to support the development project. An Act 381 housing TIF would allow the township to capture increased property tax revenue from the redeveloped site.

"We would need about $16 million to (cover) the additional cost, based on the gap in the price point here," he said.

Total parking has been reduced to 664 stalls from the 696 that were originally proposed.

Teichen said in the January meeting that the studio apartments would rent for $1,300 per month, one-bedroom units would cost $1,450, two-bedroom units will be $1,775, and three-bedroom units would cost $2,050 per month.

Hahn said during the Feb. 27 meeting that the Hanna Lake Avenue location is appropriate for Continental because it is close to the Broadmoor Avenue corridor.

"Where there are all those new industrial jobs coming in," he said. "Microsoft was here this evening. That will bring a lot of jobs, but those are the types of jobs that we're pursuing."

The revised site plan also calls for stainless steel appliances in the units, instead of the black ones that were originally proposed, and addressed commissioners' prior concerns about the apartments' exterior color scheme being too gray for Michigan winters. There would be two different residential building types with two separate color schemes for both, or a total of four variations.

As for proposed amenities, the updated site plan still includes a pool deck at the clubhouse, a 24-hour fitness center, a leasing office, and valet trash service. A community garden has been added to the site plan's southwest corner.

A disc golf course, a car wash station, a dog wash station, gathering spaces and two leash-free pet parks are included in the dedicated open space.

"I do appreciate the amenities that are offered with the apartment complex itself," Planning Commission member Ryan Wiersema said. "I think this has some really decent amenities that are offered."

TKAA to hold annual 'All-School Dinner'

Get your tickets. That's the message of the Thornapple Kellogg Alumni Association as it prepares to host its annual "All-School Dinner" on Saturday, May 3.

According to organizers, the dinner is for all graduating classes from Thornapple Kellogg High School, as well as former principals, teachers and staff. The deadline to register is April 9.

The annual dinner will be held at the Thornapple Kellogg Middle School cafeteria, with the school located at 10375 Green Lake Road in Middleville. The event, which will include the honoring of a distinguished alumnus, will kick off with a social hour at 5 p.m., with appetizers and dinner at 6:15 p.m.

The menu is slated to include smothered chicken or roast beef dinner with salad, rolls, potatoes, vegetables, dessert, coffee, iced tea and water.

The cost to attend is $20 per person and checks can be made out to "TKAA." Mail your dinner reservations with your name, guest name, year graduated and choice of chicken or beef to Wanita Huizenga, 5285 Stimson Road, Middleville MI 49333.

Seating is limited and those planning to attend are encouraged to mail in reservations as soon as possible. Those wishing to reserve a table – a minimum of eight people – are asked to provide the names of those guests at the time of registration. — *DM*

MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The March 3 meeting opened with roll call and the secretary's report. All chapter members are swimming in the fishbowl. This week was a No Gain Week.

Virginia's program continued from the TOPS "The Choice is Mine Handbook" titled "Motivation and Reality of Healthy Weight Management: Effective Self-Management for results." Organizing your activities make success possible. You need specific goals, good time management and a monitoring system. Specific goals can be personalized guiding you to do what you need to do. Time management requires finding time every day to do what you need to do. Know where the time is going to come from, think before you commit to any requests for your time, say no without guilt, because you can only blame yourself if you over-commit. Monitoring ensures you execute your plan. Make a list of five barriers preventing you from your program. Now, write down how to deal with these barriers.

Talk to yourself by having a weekly meeting to go over how well you tracked your daily eating and exercise goals were accomplished. Then, set your goals for next week, meal plan, and plan grocery lists.

Manage temptations and cravings by remembering they are normal. Blood sugar readings and the time of day are triggers. To fight temptation, you need to imagine yourself resisting any type of temptation, big or little, in order to fight it. Visualize a food you want to eat. Imagine getting it, smelling it, and tasting it. Remember it will taste really good for a little while, but you wouldn't feel good afterwards. Decide you can live without it right now. Throw it out, if necessary. Do not practice an image success when you are hungry or in an eating environment.

Virginia 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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REZONING

Continued from Page 3

sionals and attorneys to assess every property before committing to buying land and joining a community.

"I feel we've been very open and honest with the correct folks, especially with this rezone request," Mills said. "It does not sound like it was a very smooth process, and I apologize if there was a miscommunication."

"It seems to me you've got some bridge-building to do with some of the neighbors," Giarmo told the Microsoft officials. "But like I said, I believe there are two sides to every story. So, I think it would be a very smart move on Microsoft's part to get someone from your company in touch with the neighbors, who are visibly upset about how they've been treated through the process."

"Hearing these two neighbors does not make me happy," planning commissioner Tim Haagsma said. He is also a member of the township board.

"It does not give me more confidence in what's going to happen. That said, this piece of property that we're looking at is not contiguous to the neighbors' (property) that was talked about. That doesn't make it right. It's just really not the parcel we're talking about."

Haagsma noted that the proposed uses for the two Microsoft parcels are very similar, so he understands the corporation's request for the rezoning.

There is an exit point onto Patterson Avenue, but Wells said the corporation is still trying to figure out whether that would become an access road in the future.

Haagsma said he has concerns about access to the parcel via a long dead-end road, from a safety and mobility standpoint.

"Once this is rezoned, all bets are off," he said. "As Mr. Zandbergen said, once it's not a PUD we lose that control."

"We've been burned by a large corporation in this township once already," Haagsma added, not naming the corporation. "And then, as soon as you try to do something about it you don't know who to call. They're all hiding behind everybody else.

"When you deal with large corporations that have more money than anybody else does, you can't fight them. That's what I'm concerned about. I haven't heard anything from Microsoft to make me more confident in what's going to happen," he said.

Typically, no site plan is required with straight rezoning nor details about how the property will be developed.

Mills said his company, Microsoft, will be held accountable to all the township's standards. But he noted it is early in the rezoning process, so that is why no site plans were presented at the meeting.

"To get the site-plan approval, we have to meet all the code requirements. And typically, what we like to do is, we'll have an open house. All the neighbors are invited to come and look at what all our site-development plans are."

Commissioner Talimma Billips expressed concern about Microsoft's neighbors not being able to reach company representatives, saying "we don't want to end up in the same boat on a larger scale."

"These are long-term residents of the community, and to have to go through what they went through for such a long period of time … it's unfortunate for them," Commission Secretary Lani Thomas said.

Microsoft Community Affairs Manager Meredith Lizza then addressed the planning commission.

"I heard your constituents, and I understand. That was a miss," she said. "And we will make a good-faith effort. But I will also be a direct contact for this community … my role in this position is to advocate for your community. When we go through these development phases, I'll be in some of those meetings and able to aggressively go after what your concerns are.

"I may not be able to fix everything, but I will be to advocate for what the community wants. I'll give you my business card after that and we'll try to make it right," Lizza said.

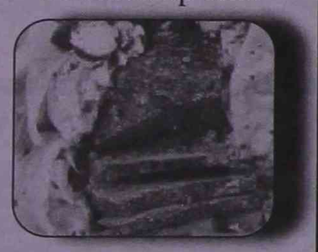
Before considering taking a vote next month on whether to recommend that the township board accept Microsoft's rezoning request, Commissioner Brad Waayenberg said it would be nice to know how important the road-access issue is. And he said it may help to solicit some more information from the township fire department or the Kent County Road Commission.

The township board would make the final decision on the rezoning request after the planning commission gives its recommendation. And that will take at least a month, as the board would take a first read of the proposal at one meeting and then take a second read at a subsequent meeting.

The planning commission voted 7-0 to postpone making a recommendation on the rezoning request until its March 27 meeting and said it would be acceptable for township staff to prepare a resolution on the matter, if they choose to do so.

After the vote, the Microsoft officials met privately in the township hall lobby with the citizens who spoke out in the public hearing.

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DNR hosting open house March 12 on proposed Hall Lake Dam modifications

Molly Macleod
Editor

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is hosting a public information open house on Wednesday, March 12, to share a draft plan for decommissioning Hall Lake Dam, which is located in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area in Barry County.

The meeting will run from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Hastings Public Library, 227 E. State St. in Hastings.

DNR staff and project team members will be on hand to discuss the draft plan or any environmental concerns related to the lake and surrounding area. People will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments throughout the two-hour period.

A copy of the draft plan and public feedback form, which is open through March 19, are available online at Michigan.gov/YankeeSprings.

The dam, which is located six miles south of the village of Middleville and one mile east of Gun Lake, is owned by the DNR.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's Dam Safety Unit classified the Hall Lake Dam as a significant hazard dam the last time it was inspected in July 2021. This means that if the dam fails, loss of human life is unlikely, but economic damage, environmental harm or disruption to essential services downstream are probable, say DNR representatives. Most funding for this project will come from a recently awarded EGLE Dam Risk Reduction Grant.

The $1.6 million grant, awarded in May 2024, can be used to address infrastructure concerns with the dam and potential impact on the surrounding environment. Hall Lake was one of 22 dams across the state last year to receive grants totaling $14.1 million designed to reduce the risk of dam failures. In July 2024, DNR staff said they plan to use the grant dollars to remove "all water control structures, placing a properly sized culvert to restore local hydrology, and restoring the area with native vegetation."

The Hall Lake Dam was built in the mid-1960s.

"The DNR has listened to the public feedback about maintaining recreation on Hall Lake, and has been working with EGLE and our design consultant on a solution that would address the dam deficiencies while still preserving an outdoor recreation lake experience at a new, lower lake elevation," said Joe Jandernoa, park manager, in a DNR news release.

DNR staff say public input is a valuable step in the planning process. Community members, park users, anglers and other stakeholders are encouraged to attend the open house or provide feedback via email.

For more information on the Hall Lake Dam, contact Jandernoa at 269-795-9081 or email JandernoaJ@Michigan.gov.

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Trojans and Vikings open postseason with victories

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The end of the regular season was a little bittersweet, but the postseason started the way both the Thornapple Kellogg and Lakewood varsity girls' basketball teams were hoping – with wins.

The Trojans controlled things from start to finish in the regular season finale in Middleville Thursday evening, Feb. 27. Seniors Emma Geukes and Emma Dykhouse knocked down three-pointers for the Trojans in the opening minutes of the fourth quarter, with Dykhouse's earning an especially explosive reaction from the Trojan bench.

Senior Lydia Schilthroat was able to scoop an underhand shot up between Lakewood's Elizabeth Markwart and Heidi Carter while being fouled for an and-one opportunity that bumped the Trojan lead to its final margin of 57-17.

One at a time, Geukes and Dykhouse came off to applause and hugs while Schilthroat waited at the free throw line, and after her shot attempt it was her turn. The emotions of the moment hit the Trojan senior trio on the sideline before the handshakes began – and before the team's state postseason started this week.

Thornapple Kellogg opened the postseason with a 46-40 win over Byron Center at Byron Center High School Monday in an MHSAA Division 1 District Quarterfinal match.

Lakewood faced Capital Area Activities Conference White Division foe Charlotte in the opening round of the MHSAA Division 2 District Tournament at Olivet High School Monday and took a 53-39 win over the Orioles. The Vikings and Orioles split their two regular season meetings this season.

The host Trojans got out to a 13-2 lead in the opening quarter Thursday, and things never got much better for the Vikings.

But the Lakewood ladies learned they have to bring a little more fire right from the get-go and got to face some tough zone defense. All helpful things as they prepared for their district match-up.

Getting shots was a challenge for the Vikings in Middleville. Jacqueline Possehn had a team-high five points for Lakewood, hitting a three and a pair of free throws. Avery Farrell, Liz Markwart and Ana Grant had four points each.

Thornapple Kellogg had four girls in double figures led by 13 points from Geukes. Schilthroat finished with 11 points and Dykhouse ten. TK also got 11 points from sophomore forward Reece Ritsema, seven from sophomore guard Ellie Harmon and five from freshman guard Taylor Lloyd.



Thornapple Kellogg senior Lydia Schilthroat (2), Emma Geukes and Emma Dykhouse (right) share a moment in front of their bench after checking out of their final home game in Middleville Thursday, Feb. 27, a Trojan victory over visiting Lakewood. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

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Sporting News

CHS bowling season ends in qualifying at D1 Finals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

An outstanding 2024-25 Caledonia varsity bowling season came to an end over the weekend at Thunderbowl Lanes in Allen Park as the Fighting Scot girls' team and a couple of individuals competed in the MHSAA Division 1 Bowling Finals.

The Caledonia girls rolled their way to a 13th-place finish in the qualifying rounds of the team state competition Friday with top Baker scores in the 160s throughout the day. The CHS girls rolled eight Baker games and two regular games in the qualifying portion of the competition. On Saturday, Caledonia juniors Addison Luxford and Brady Humbarger participated in the state singles competitions.

The top eight teams advanced to mach play rounds Friday. Utica United was the top team in qualifying with an overall score of 3,404 pins. South Lyon was second at 3,220. The Caledonia girls had an overall pinfall of 2,811 in the qualifying and were 138 pins behind the last of the match play qualifying teams.

The Grandville girls who were seventh in the qualifying rounds captured the MHSAA Division 1 Girls' Team Bowling Championship with wins over South Lyon, Rockford and then Holt in the match play bracket. The Bulldogs won a best-of-five Baker game contest with Holt in the championship match 3-2, outscoring Holt 158-153 in the final game to clinch the state title.

Holt reached the championship bout with an upset of favorite Utica in the semifinal round. Holt outscored the Grandville girls 153-116 in their first Baker game, but the Bulldogs rallied to pull out a back-and-forth final in the end.

The Caledonia girls won an OK Green Conference championship this winter and qualified for the state finals as a team by winning a regional championship as well.

Utica took a 3-1 win over Belleville in the match play championship match on the boys' side Friday.

Luxford placed 36th in the qualifying contests Saturday in the D1 Girls' Bowling Singles Finals. She had a total pinfall of 1,013 through six games. She had a high single score on the day of 199. She was 93 pins behind the last of the 16 girls who qualified or the match play bracket.

Utica sophomore Ava Mazza was tops in qualifying with an overall pinfall of 1,354, but she was bumped from the match play bracket in the semifinals by Rockford sophomore Sophia DeLuccia. Novi senior Madeline Gazzarari finished the day as the state's D1 girls' singles champion by outscoring DeLuccia 205-165 and 225-220 in two games.

Humbarger rolled to 54th in the qualifying in the boys' D1 singles competition with an overall pinfall of 976. He had a top single game of 210 to start his tournament.

Hartland senior Haden Hebel beat out Davison senior Joe Merz 1,372-1,376 for the top seed in the qualifying, but in the end of the match play bracket it was Wayne Memorial sophomore Lyman Derrick III taking the state championship by outscoring senior Dylan Harnden from Utica 257-212, 233-232 in their two championship round games.





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Pennington retires from CHS football



Caledonia varsity football coach Derek Pennington talks to the media inside Ford Field alongside his son Derek Pennington Jr. and Mason McKenzie following the Fighting Scot varsity football team's 2022 state runner-up finish. Pennington announced Feb. 17 that he is retiring from coaching. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Derek Pennington, the second head coach to ever lead the Caledonia varsity football team to a state championship game, announced he is retiring from coaching Feb. 17.

The Fighting Scot varsity compiled a record of 34-12 in his four seasons leading the program, including a 12-2 2022 season in which the Fighting Scots won their way to the MHSAA Division 1 State Finals at Ford Field in Detroit where they were eventually downed by the defending state champions from Belleville.

Caledonia won a district championship under Pennington in 2021 as well and reached the district finals in 2023. The Scots were contenders for OK Red Conference championships in each of Pennington's first three seasons, but could never quite get over the hump against perennial powerhouse Rockford – at least not until a 14-13 win at Rockford High School in the MHSAA Division 1 District Finals at Rockford High School in 2022 which helped propel the Scots to Ford Field.

Pennington spent 17 seasons leading Zeeland West High School's football program before coming to Caledonia where he was able to coach his son, Derek Pennington Jr., who is now a member of the Western Michigan University Football program.

Over his coaching career in Michigan, Pennington had 134 wins, 15 winnings seasons, 13 playoff appearances, four district championships and two regional championships. He was named the 20022 AP Coach of the Year in Michigan, the 2022 Division 1 MHFCA Coach of the Year, and five times was an MHSFCA regional coach of the year.

He of course credits any awards he received over the years to the players and coaches working along side him. He said he is really proud of the accomplishments the Fighting Scots made over the past four seasons.

The Caledonia varsity was 4-5 overall last fall missing the playoffs for the first time during Pennington's tenure.



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Trojan trio ends weekend with all-state medals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Three of the four Trojans wrestling at Ford Field this weekend in the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals will close their tournament run on the state medal stand Saturday afternoon.

TK sophomore Adelaide Holderman wrestled her way to a fourth-place finish in the girls' 170-pound weight class and senior teammate Emma Gibson placed sixth in the girls' 135-pound weight class. Trojan senior Jayce Curtis placed eighth in Division 2's 165-pound weight class. It is the first all-state wrestling performance for all three. Curtis (38-14) and Gibson (31-7) are both three-time state qualifiers. This was Holderman's first finals appearance.

Holderman and Gibson both wrestled their way into the championship quarterfinals Friday before being bumped into the consolation bracket, and both girls finish their season with more than 30 victories. Curtis opened his tournament and closed his tournament with losses to Holly's Christian Preston, but won a pair of consolation bouts Friday to secure his spot on the state medal stand.

All three Trojans found themselves in the "blood round" Friday where a win earned them another day of wrestling and a spot on the state medal stand, and a loss would mean the end of their state tournament run. Curtis' match there in the second round of consolation was one of the wildest he has ever wrestled. He took a 20-17 decision over Kaleb Gagne of Escanaba.

Gagne had a takedown eight seconds into the bout and led 7-2 after getting another takedown with 15 seconds to go in that opening period. Curtis managed an escape and a take down of his own in the final few seconds of the period to get within 7-6.

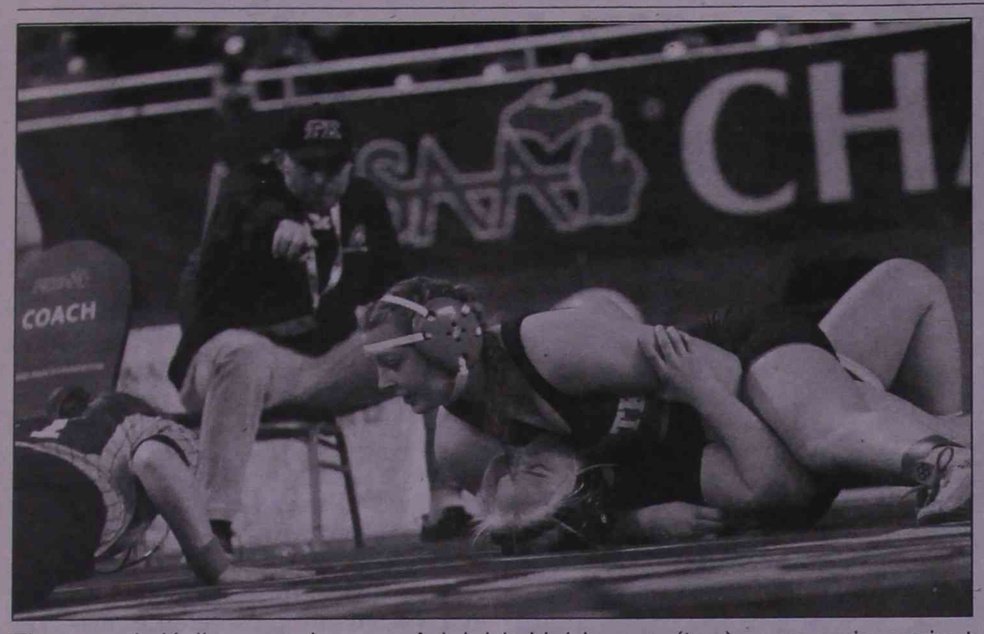
The second period was more of the same. Gagne got of the bottom quick, and then Curtis took his first lead of the match with a take down. They traded points rom there with Curtis notching two takedowns in the period and then

See next page

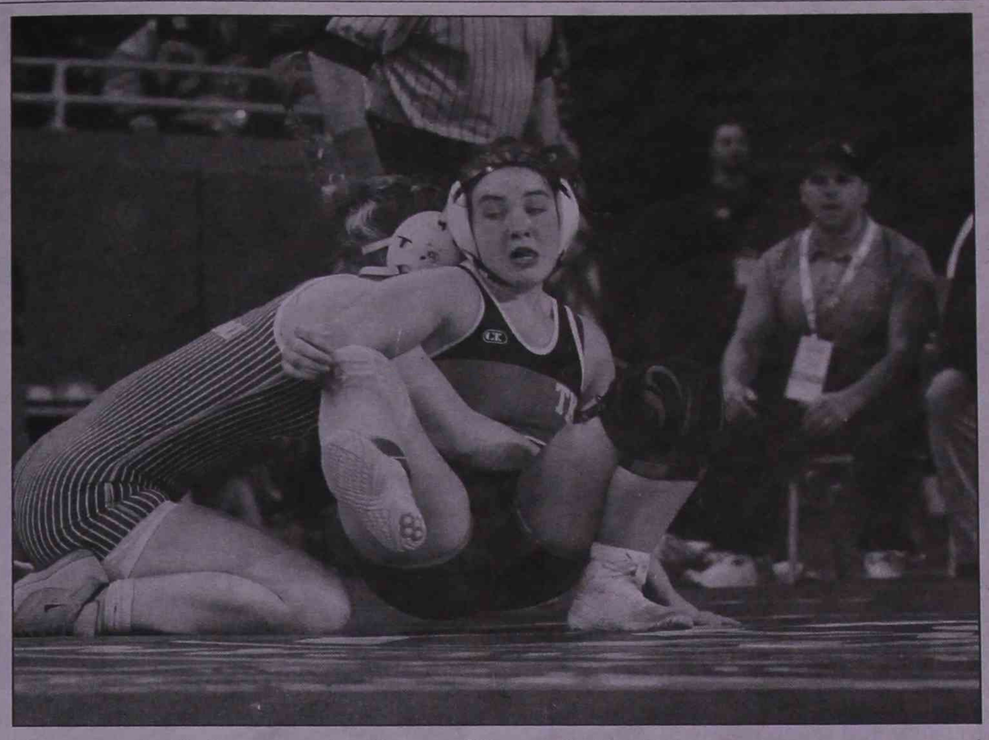


Thornapple Kellogg senior Jayce Curtis looks out from the medal stand Saturday after placing eighth in Division 2's 165-pound weight class during the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals at Ford Field in Detroit.

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Thornapple Kellogg sophomore Adelaide Holderman (top) nears a pin against Marcellus senior Carlee Osborn, as TK coach Dayne Fletke offers assistance from the corner behind, during their first match of the medal rounds Saturday inside Ford Field in Detroit at the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals. Holderman was 4-2 over the weekend to place fourth in the girls' 170-pound weight class.



Thornapple Kellogg senior Emma Gibson fights to try and score a reversal against Allen Park's Adeline Tuccini during their opening match of Saturday's medal rounds in the girls' 135-pound weight class at the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals inside Ford Field in downtown Detroit. Gibson placed sixth at her weight class to earn her first all-state wrestling medal. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

Continued from Page 12

Gagne one in the end that sent him into the third period in front 13-12.

Curtis started the third period in the bottom position. He reversed his way to the top, then Gagne did the same, and then Curtis managed another reversal all within the first 75 seconds of that third period. The second reversal nudged Curtis in front 16-15. This time he got Gagne to his back for four nearfall points that proved to be the difference in the match at the end even with Gagne scoring another reversal with 38 seconds to go. Curtis prevented Gagne from scoring again to advance with the three-point win.

Curtis and Gibson both said they went into the state finals with fewer nerves this time around. Curtis said he really put a focus on trying to be the aggressor in his bouts at the finals this year.

Curtis was bested in his two medal round matches Saturday.

Gibson started her tournament with a pin of Bark River-Harris' Vaida Uskilith-Karaja, but then fell 12-7 to Center Line's Carmella Clark in the quarterfinals of their 135-pound girls' bracket. She went on to a 3-3 weekend that ended in another match-up with Clark in the bout for fifth-place that was decided by an 8-7 score.

In between those contests with Clark, Gibson scored an 8-3 win over Otsego's Samanatha Bonovetz in the blood round Friday and then won her first match of the medal rounds Saturday by pinning Allen Park's Adeline Tuccini. West Bloomfield's Tamari Khizanishvili bested Gibson 14-5 in the consolation semifinals to put her in the match for fifth.

Holderman (32-13) won three straight matches by fall in consolation after a quarterfinal loss Friday in the girls' 170-pound weight class. She started her tournament run by pinning Waverly's Se'nyah Suddeth-Doss early in the second period of their match. In the quarterfinals, Holderman was bested 7-2 by Clinton's Raven Aldridge who went on to finish as the 170-pound state runner-up behind Caledonia's Maddie Hayden.

From there, Holderman started her run up the medal stand by pinning Westland John Glenn's Brooklyn Fisher in the blood round Friday. Holderman started her Saturday by pinning Marcellus' Carlee Osborn and then Waverly's Victoria Carter. In the match for third, Holderman was bested 7-0 by Pine River's Adalyn Holmes.

The TK team also had senior Raini Braska competing in the girls' 110-pound weight class. She was bested in her two bouts Friday in Detroit.

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New pool proves beneficial to Vikings already

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The OK Rainbow East Division had to borrow the Byron Center High School pool for its championship meet last weekend, but the Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian varsity swimming and diving teams don't need to go looking lanes to share any more.

The CLS Viking varsity boys' swimming and diving team got to get in a week of taper workouts in the new pool at the Cal Community Center while welcoming the team's divers to finally get to practice with the rest of the team too before the conference meet.

"You could see, feel and hear their excitement as they huddled together, taking it all in," CLS varsity boys' head coach Todd De Jong said. He expects it to be an ideal environment for his guys to grow and reach their full potential.

"The Caledonia Community Pool serves many purposes for the community, but the team was the first to experience it and demonstrate its value. We are deeply grateful to the Caledonia community and its leadership for making this possible. We're also proud to say that our first week of practice in the new facility paid off in time for the Rainbow East Conference Swim and Dive Meet."



Grand Rapids Gars senior Nolan Send races through the water during his preliminary heat of the 500-yard freestyle Friday, Feb. 28, at OK Rainbow East Division Championships hosted by Byron Center High School. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

The CLS Vikings placed third at the conference meet, behind the undefeated conference champions from Wayland and the runner-up Bengals from Ottawa Hills.

The Grand Rapids Gars, a co-op between Thornapple Kellogg, West Michigan Aviation Academy, Unity Christian, Hopkins and West Catholic, placed fourth in the final standings Saturday. Wayland clinched the conference championship with a score of 451 points ahead of Ottawa Hills 471, Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian 335, Grand Rapids Gars 314, Catholic Central 264 and Grand Rapids Union 106.

Junior Anders Foerch, sophomore Nolan Fitzgerald and senior Sam Jones earned all-conference honors with their performance at the Feb. 28-March 1 conference championships. Gran Rapids Gars freshman Gabriel Van, senior Ethan Klopfenstein, senior Hunter Tietz and junior Ty Denney all earned all-conference honors for their point totals at the championships.

The Vikings swam to third even without Ethan Snapper in the line-up for the weekend meet. An illness prevented him from competing with his teammates, but he got to practice for a couple days in the Cal Community Pool Monday and Tuesday and was back strong enough Wednesday for the Second Shave Meet at East Kentwood where he raced to an MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 state qualifying time of 22.44 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle. Snapper also teamed with junior Austin Tufts, Jones and Foerch to beat the state qualifying time in the 200-yard freestyle relay with a finish in 1 minute 30.54 seconds in that race in Kentwood.

The MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals will be held March 14-15 at the Holland Aquatic Center.

A few Gars put on a push at the Holland Second Shave Meet Tuesday to try and join teammate Van, a D1 state qualifier in the 100-yard butterfly, at the finals, but came up just short. The Gars' 200-yard freestyle relay and 400-yard freestyle relay teams were both less than half a second from the state qualifying mark.

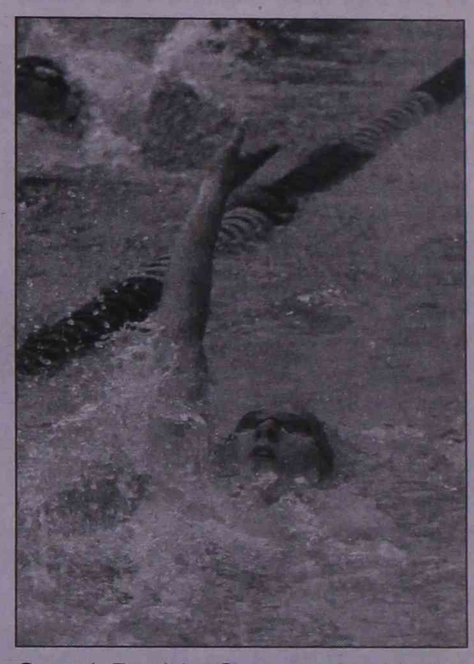
The Grand Rapids Gars did score a pair of championships in Byron Center. Klopfenstein swam to a winning time of 56.34 seconds in the 100-yard backstroke and he chased after Van in the 100-yard butterfly. Van won that race in 56.43 with Klopfenstein third in 55.67.

Foerch had the lone victory for the CLS team at the conference meet. He took the 50-yard freestyle in a personal best time of 22.59 seconds. CLS also had Tufts fourth in that race.

Jones had a pair of runner-up finishes for the Vikings. He was second to Ottawa Hills' Juan Huner in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:53.57 and second to Wayland's Eddie Oudbier in the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 50.72.

Oudbier was the only guy to win two individual events at the championship.

See next page



Grand Rapids Gars senior Hunter Tietz races along in the backstroke leg of his preliminary heat of the 200-yard individual medley at the OK Rainbow East Division Championships hosted by Byron Center High School Friday, Feb. 28.

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CLS junior Anders Foerch races through the water during his preliminary heat of the 500-yard freestyle at Byron Center High School Friday, Feb. 28, during the OK Rainbow East Division Championships. Foerch placed fifth in that race at Saturday's finals after winning the conference championship in the 50-yard freestyle.



Grand Rapids Gars freshman Gabe Van races to a win in his preliminary heat of the 100-yard butterfly Friday, Feb. 28, during the OK Rainbow East Division Championships at Byron Center High School. Van went on to win the conference championship in the race Saturday.

Continued from Page 14

He also won the 200-yard individual medley in 2:03.31. The Gars' Van was second in that race with a time of 2:06.44 and Tietz was third in 2:10.42. CLS's Fitzgerald wasn't too far back in fifth in that race.

Fitzgerald swam to a runner-up time of 5:16.90 in the 500-yard freestyle behind only Ottawa Hills sophomore Wyatt Jacques (5:05.96). The Gars' Haiden Vruggink placed eighth in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 5:46.32 and Send was ninth in that event despite a time of 5:41.39 in the 'B' Final that bested his teammate Vruggink's time.

That 100-yard backstroke final was an outstanding one for the Gars too with Tietz second in 58.32 and freshman Sreyas Murmu seventh in 1:06.62.

CLS junior Andrew Barnum was the runner-up to Wayland's Mason Fein in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:06.29.

Denney's top individual performance for the Gars came in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 23.68 seconds. He was also fifth in the 100-yard freestyle in 52.86.

Ethan Magnuson, the Gars' lone diver competing, was sixth with a score of 214.85 points over the course of his 11 dives. The performance earned him a spot in the regional diving competition this season. CLS had freshman Caleb Sheldon eighth in the diving and Tufts ninth.

Nearly every individual medalist all day long Saturday set a personal best time.

The Gars were fourth in the 200-yard medley relay to start the meet and the top relay performance from the team came from the foursome of Send, Tietz, Denney and Van that was third in the 200-yard freestyle relay with a time of 1:33.39.

Jones, Barnum, Fitzgerald and Foerch had the top relay finish of the day for the CLS squad as they opened the finals Saturday with a time of 1:45.52 in the 200-yard medley relay. They were second only to Wayland in that race. The CLS teams were fourth in the two freestyle relay races without the speedster Snapper.



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian senior Sam Jones pumps a fist after winning his preliminary heat of the 100-yard freestyle Friday, Feb. 28, at the OK Rainbow East Division Championships hosted by Byron Center High School. Jones was the conference runner-up in both the 100-yard and 200-yard freestyle Saturday.

Village of Middleville
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the February 11, 2025 Regular Council Meeting, that were approved on February 25, 2025, are posted at the Village Hall at 100 E Main Street and on the website at www.villageofmiddleville.org.

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Fighting Scots win their way into district finals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Trojans were pleased to only give up 18 points in the first half.

Caledonia was happier to allow just eight.

The Caledonia varsity girls' basketball team (18-5), the 2025 OK Green Conference Champions, opened the state postseason with a 47-25 win over Thornapple Kellogg in the MHSAA Division 1 District Semifinals at Byron Center High School Wednesday.

Thornapple Kellogg (10-13) took down the district hosts in the opening round of the state tournament Monday, but this was the postseason opener for the Scots. It took some time for the Caledonia girls to get into an offensive rhythm, but as head coach Todd Bloemers had hoped his defense didn't collect any rust waiting for the postseason to begin.

Freshman guard Emily Stauffer had a game-high 22 points and shouldered much of the offensive load early on. She scored or assisted on each of the Scots' first five baskets spanning most of the first quarter and a half.

Stauffer found an open Olivia Foster for a three-pointer four and a half minutes into the ballgame that put the Scots up 5-2 and they led the rest of the night. They had a 9-6 lead at the end of one quarter and pushed the lead to 18-8 at the half.

"That is the best thing about Emily," Bloemers said. "She is such a joy to coach because she is not a scorer. It's not just assists. She is just a playmaker. Whatever the right play is, she is going to make it, and she gets more joy out of setting up her teammates. When you watch her watch her teammates make a shot, she is the first one to run to them and touch them and tell them good job. That becomes contagious too, and that is how a freshman can lead."

Thornapple Kellogg freshman guard Taylor Lloyd drilled a three-pointer and sophomore forward Reece Ritsema knocked down a couple free throws to open the second half, but five points was as close as the Trojans would get the rest of the night.

"Honestly, we had opportunities, we just needed to take care of the ball a little bit better," TK head coach Brandi James said. "I think the emotions and the weight of this game got the best of us tonight. Our defense was fantastic. We did a lot of things to shut them down. We only allowed 18 points in the first half, so that was pretty good, but only scoring eight obviously there were defensive woes. We can hit big shots, we just didn't tonight. They were kind of up in our faces and we let it make us miss opportunities. We didn't use the whole floor."

Trojan senior guard Lydia Schilthroat led her team with eight points. Lloyd had seven points, and seniors Emma Dykhouse and Emma Geukes had four points apiece.



Caledonia senior Lily Gortmaker and the rest of the bench celebrate a fourth quarter three-pointer by teammate Emily Stauffer during the Scots' win over Thornapple Kellogg in the MHSAA Division 1 District Semifinals Wednesday at Byron Center High School. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

Foster, a freshman guard, and senior center Lakely Bottum had six points each for the Fighting Scots. The Scots had eight girls score.

James said defensively her team knew the Fighting Scots liked to get to the basket and that Bottum would look to be a distributor out of the high post. She liked how her team fought on the boards, got hands on passes, and fought to try and keep the Scots out of the paint.

"We have a lot of kids that score," Bloemers said. "There tend to be a lot of kids in that four to six point range and those add up when you have a lot of kids contributing. I thought we were hard to play against tonight. Brandi does a really good job coaching her teams and her kids always battle. We knew what we were getting into, and I am just glad the ball started falling through the basket a little bit so we were able to take a deep breath and start relaxing and playing our game."

Bottum was certainly someone the

See next page

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Caledonia senior center Lakely Bottum goes over Thornapple Kellogg junior McKenna Hoebeke in the paint for two points during the MHSAA Division 1 District Semifinals at Byron Center High School Wednesday.

Continued from Page 16

Trojan defense had to pay attention to in the paint, but her defensive presence in the post was certainly felt at the other end of the floor. Midway through the second quarter on back-to-back attempts she rejected shots by Trojan senior guard Tealy Cross and Ritsema near the rim, and Trojans looking to drive appeared always aware of the threat of her coming after their shots.

The win earned the Scots a spot in the district finals back in Byron Center Friday, March 7, against the East Kentwood girls who beat Wyoming in their district semifinal ballgame Wednesday.

"The future is bright," James said of her TK program overall, "but these seniors were great so I wanted it now. I thought that we had a good chance … We will miss those seniors greatly, but yes our future is bright."

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Hayden earns her three-peat; one to go

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The big throw she envisioned in her mental preparation for the match never materialized and she had to stay out on the mat for six minutes for the first time in a couple months, but Caledonia junior Maddie Hayden is now a three-time MHSAA Individual Wrestling State Champion.

Hayden (22-1) defeated Clinton's Raven Aldridge (33-5) 5-0 in the girls' 170-pound championship match Saturday at Ford Field in Detroit. It didn't come right away at the final horn as her first thoughts were about how she could have wrestled better, but before head coach Shawn Veitch was putting another championship medal around her neck the joy that comes with winning a state championship started to materialize for Hayden too.

"I think I was kind of romanticizing the idea of a certain move that I wanted to do. So, I was kind of just thinking about it for my match. I was like okay, this is going to be my set-up, this is going to be the move I hit and that is all I was thinking about, instead of thinking about how if this doesn't work I'll go to this, or just going in with a clear mind.

"During the match, I just kept trying to go for the same move, trying to go for it, forcing it, and she obviously wasn't going to let it happen and I kept forcing it. That is where I messed up, being very one dimensional before going out on the mat."

But she really, really wanted that reverse headlock.

"It has just kind of been working," Hayden said. "It has been a really fast pin for me lately. I know they had done some scouting, just because I'm ripping underhooks every single match. Everybody knows I'm going to be doing that. At some point it is going to catch up with me and I'm going to have to figure out how to get around that and do different things and chain wrestle better."

More than once Hayden has been called a "wrestling machine" and Veitch referred to her as "champ" as he shouted instructions and encouragement throughout the final. But the duo has worked and discussed how important it is to have fun wrestling too, especially during this junior campaign which started a little slow due to an offseason concussion and included a bump up from 155 pounds where she won her first two state titles. Veitch said he was proud that Hayden only spent a moment reflecting on her perceived struggles in the championship bout before finding him and announcing her spirits were improving and acknowledging that it was a moment to enjoy.



Fighting Scot junior Maddie Hayden (left) fights to try and get Clinton's Raven Aldridge to the mat during their championship match in the girls' 170-pound weight class Saturday at the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals inside Ford Field in Detroit. Hayden took a 5-0 win over Aldridge to earn her third state championship in three years.

Overall, Hayden said she was able to find happiness in the things she was doing right more often throughout the course of the two-day tournament this year than in seasons past.

Three down, one to go.

"I am happy. I am very grateful for the opportunity that I had, and I am grateful to still be able to showcase that even if I am not wrestling my best, or there are obstacles … I can still go out and beat the best," Hayden said. "I am grateful. I am happy that I went out and got it done, because sometimes you just have to find a way to win. You just have to want it more. I am grateful that I did have that in me to go get it when I wasn't wrestling my best."

Hayden pinned each of her first three

See **HAYDEN** on 20

THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF BUDGET
PUBLIC HEARING

The Thornapple Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed Township Budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 at the Thornapple Emergency Services, 128 High St., Middleville
On Monday
March 10, 2025
At 7:00 p.m.

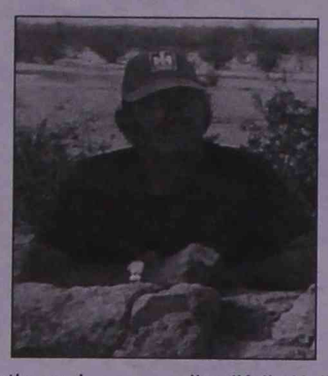
The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be the subject of this hearing. A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at the Township office.

Americans with Disabilities Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at this public meeting upon 6 days notice to the Township Clerk.

Cindy Ordway
Thornapple Township Clerk

Obituaries

Terry D. Rosenberg



Terry D. Rosenberg passed away peacefully in Eloy, AZ, on February 10, 2025, at the age of 84. Born on June 15, 1940, in Middleville, MI, Terry was the son of Claude and Mary (Boley) Rosenberg.

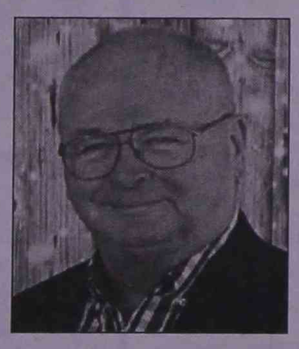
Terry had enlisted in the Navy and later embarked on a diverse career path. He worked for Arnold's Amusements, WG Wade Shows, and Diversco Gravel. His entrepreneurial spirit shone when he owned his own tire and wrecker service in Kalkaska. Throughout his life, Terry drove trucks for many companies and held a variety of jobs that showcased his versatility and work ethic.

Terry's zest for life was evident in his numerous interests and involvements. A devout member of the Parmelee United Methodist Church, he also enjoyed fellowship at the Golden Harvest Cowboy Church in Arizona City, Arizona. Terry's love for the outdoors was unmistakable, with over 50 joyous years spent in Eloy, Arizona. He was a valued member of the Barry County Gas and Steam Engine Club and relished the simple pleasures of exploring the desert, and even finding abandoned vehicles for cash rewards. He was a jack of all trades that could fix almost anything, and an extremely talented welder. He enjoyed riding motorcycles, even going to Sturgis Motorcycle Rally one year with his brothers Dodie and Mike. Terry's love for birds, and his musical talents on the dulcimer and accordion were known to all who loved him.

Terry was a loving patriarch, leaving behind a large and adoring family. He is survived by his children, Tammy (Ed) Jackson, Tim Rosenberg, Tom (Dana Newsome) Rosenberg, Jim (Kelly Hull) Rosenberg; stepchildren, Dawn (Jim) Losinger, Alan (Lydia) Brog, Jody (Sheryl) Brog; 40 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren; and 5 great-great-grandchildren. He also leaves his siblings, Jackie Gerard, Mike (Lynda) Rosenberg, and Susan (Bob) Parsley, as well as many nieces and nephews. Terry was preceded in death by his loving wife, Janet (Thaler) Rosenberg, his grandson Matthew Allen James, his sister Nancy (Bob) Anders, his brother, Dodie (Rosie) Rosenberg, and his brothers-in-law, Gary Gerard and Paul Parsley.

Services will be held at a later date. Memorial contributions to the Barry County Gas and Steam Engine Club will be appreciated. Please visit www.beelergoresfuneral.com to share a memory or leave a condolence message for Terry's family.

Chester Thomas Benedict



Chester Thomas Benedict walked with confidence to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on Sunday, March 2, 2025, at the age of 77.

Born on July 4,1947, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Tom spent his early years on a farm in Alto, where he developed a lifelong love for the land and a strong work ethic. He spoke fondly of his childhood, recalling early mornings milking cows, long days driving tractors, and the joys of farm life. Tom attended Caledonia High School where he was a standout athlete, excelling in football, basketball, baseball, and track & field — setting several school and regional records in football, some of which still stand today.

His athletic accomplishments took him to Western Michigan University where he attended on a Football Scholarship. While an injury would shorten his college football career, Tom would quickly realize that injury was the best thing that ever happened to him. Tom transferred to Grand Rapids Baptist College, where he fell in love with a brunette who sat behind him in class. She loved his "big muscles" and he never forgot her "big brown eyes".

Tom shared 54 wonderful years of marriage with his wife, Brenda. Together they would have four children. Jennifer (Sudeep), Thomas (Sherry), Kristen (Chris) , and Eric (Sara) — and were blessed with eight grandchildren: Madelynn, Jay (Alex), Jack (Faith), Anna, Savida, Wally, Nolan, and Stella. Family was the center of Tom's world, and nothing brought him greater joy than being a devoted husband, father, and proud grandfather.

Life took him from the fields of Alto to chapters in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, and Toronto, ON, before settling back in Caledonia, MI — a community he loved deeply. In later years, he enjoyed winters in Avon Park, FL, and treasured time spent at the family cabin along the St. Mary's River in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

With positions in Manufacturing Management and Human Resources, Tom built an accomplished career at Steelcase, Inc. While his career was marked with many successes, it was countless life-long friendships that he developed that he cherished most. After retiring, he found fulfillment in coaching baseball and softball for Caledonia High School, giving back to the community that had always meant so much to him.

Sports were a defining passion throughout Tom's life. Summertime was filled with Softball and Gus Macker Tournaments, and winters meant Saturday Morning Basketball with his friends from church. In 2003, he was inducted in the Inaugural Class of the Caledonia High School Sports Hall of Fame. There was always a game on his TV, and he kept up with sports news on his favorite sports talk radio programs. His love for sports carried through to his later years as he eagerly traveled to cheer on his grandchildren in their games, concerts, and activities.

Tom's Christian faith was the foundation of his life. A lifelong believer, he found a wonderful community at Faith Bible Church in Alto, where his gentle spirit and servant's heart touched many lives. Tom drew comfort and guidance from Psalm 121, "I lift my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

With deep kindness and quiet strength, he had an extraordinary gift for making everyone he met feel valued and heard, always taking a genuine interest in their lives. He was the first to offer a helping hand, whether it was plowing a neighbor's driveway or showing up when someone needed support, never asking for anything in return. His warm spirit, selflessness, and unwavering faith left a lasting imprint on everyone who was fortunate enough to know him.

Tom is survived by sisters Rosemary (Ron) DeJonge and Joyce (Bob) Graham, sisters-in-law Kathy Hoath, Susie (Roger) Schlehuber, brother-in-law Tim (Linda) Hoath and many nieces and nephews.He was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Marge Benedict, his brother Jack Benedict, his in-laws Jack and Lois Hoath, brothers-in-law Roger Stanley and Jackie Hoath, and niece Sarah Stanley.

The family will greet visitors on Sunday, March 9, from 4 - 7 pm at Stroo Funeral Home, 1095 68th St. SE, and on Monday, March 10, from 10 - 11 am prior to the service which will begin at 11 am at Ada Bible Church, 8899 Cascade Rd. SE, with Rev. Kyle Pierpont and Rev. Aaron Buer officiating. Interment will be in Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites donations to Faith Bible Church, Alto, or Corewell Health Hospice in Tom's honor, continuing his legacy of compassion and service to others.

John Owen Muir



John Owen Muir, a cherished husband, stepfather, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully on February 27, 2025, at the age of 92. Born on May 14, 1932, John's journey through life was marked by dedication, service, and an unwavering commitment to his family and community.

A proud Army veteran, John carried the values of loyalty and discipline throughout his life. He was a respected alumnus of Allegheny College in Pennsylvania and went on to earn his Law Degree from the University of Michigan, building a foundation of knowledge and integrity that would guide his professional and personal endeavors.

For over 25 years, John was a familiar face at Muir Drug Stores, a family business where he worked alongside his father. His dedication to his work was matched only by his commitment to his beloved wife of 40 years, Jan (Bigelow) Muir; his stepchildren: Diane (Tim) Hill, Colleen King, Michael (Beth) Harcek, Thom Harcek, Todd Harcek, Katie Harcek-Westcott, and Mark (Angela) Harcek; grandchildren: Jennifer, Jaime, Kayla, Logan, Jack, and Carter; great-grandchildren: Mark, Zane, Novali, Liam, Haylee, Aspen, and Kendra; and great-great granddaughter Amelia; who brought him immeasurable joy. He is also survived by his brother, Robert Muir and several nieces and nephews. John was preceded in death by his parents, Boyce and Ellen (Owen) Muir, grandson Jeremy, and brothers Kenneth and Bruce Muir.

John's passion for helping others was evident through his involvement with the First United Methodist Church in Grand Rapids, where he was actively involved with the mission committee and helping refugee families in the area. He was also involved with Mobility Worldwide and the Mary Freebed Wheelchair Sports Camp. As a longtime adaptive swimming coach and teacher, he empowered countless individuals to reach their potential in the water. His love for swimming continued into his later years, as he participated in the Senior Olympics in Arizona, showcasing the enduring spirit that inspired all who knew him.

Remembered as a genuinely loving, kind, and generous man, John's legacy is one of compassion and selflessness. The entire Muir family will hold dear the memory of John's unwavering love and the countless lives he touched.

A memorial service for John will be held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at First United Methodist Church, 227 Fulton Street E, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in John's name to Mobility Worldwide 414 E 40th Street Suite 3, Holland, MI 49423.

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

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Obituaries

Rachel Bean

Rachel Bean, age 41, of Caledonia, went to her heavenly home on Monday, February 17, 2025. Rachel came to the U.S. as a baby from Korea at the age of 2.5 months old. She was raised in Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska, where she called home for many years and attended college. She spent years in Chicago working at several restaurants, including Tavern at the Park, where she met the love of her life, Allen. She had a heart to help others and was learning and striving to help others in need. She enjoyed cooking, the arts, including ballet and attending the Nutcracker every Christmas. She also enjoyed shopping at the Dollar Tree for a bargain. Most of all, she loved being with her family and raising her son, Hudson.

She will be lovingly remembered by her husband of 11 years, Allen; son, Hudson; parents: Allen and Jeannette Bean; sister, Sarah (Brad) Coughlin; mother-in-law, Sharron Chu; father-in-law, Zooey Chu; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Christopher (Heidi) Chu, Sydney Chu, Stephanie (June) Roberts; many nieces and nephews, including Meghan and Connor Coughlin.



Relatives and friends may meet the family Sunday, February 23 from 2-5 pm at Matthysse Kuiper DeGraaf Funeral Home, 616 E. Main St. SE, Caledonia.

A celebration of Rachel's life will be held 11 am Thursday, March 13 at Ada Bible Church, 2045 68th St., Caledonia, with Pastor Jake Oswald. A celebration of Rachel's life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Pine Rest Foundation https://www.pinerest.org/, Mel Trotter Ministries https://www.meltrotter.org/, or Kent County Animal Shelter https://www.kentcountymi.gov/1415/Animal-Shelter. Condolences may be sent online at www.mkdfuneralhome.com.

Patricia (Pat) JoAnne Tripp

Patricia (Pat) JoAnne Tripp passed away February 26th in the comfort of her home. She was preceded in death by her parents, Earl Ferguson and Linnie Martin, and her brother, Gary Ferguson. Pat was born July 7th, 1941 in Battle Creek, Michigan to Earl Ferguson and Linnie Martin. She married Lawrence (Larry) Tripp on November 11th 1960 in Hastings, Michigan.



They spent a majority of their 64 years of marriage in Middleville, Michigan, raising 3 children. Pat truly loved her kids, grandkids and great-grandkids. When she wasn't spending time with family, she and Larry enjoyed traveling with their camp group friends and mushrooming around Northern Michigan.

They spent countless hours exploring flea markets and garage sales. Pat loved searching through her cookbooks and hosting many meals with enough food to feed an army. Pat cherished the time she spent with her granddaughters getting her nails done.

Pat is survived by her husband Larry, daughter Jody (Tom) Gunn, sons Scott (Denise) Tripp, Steve (Shannon) Tripp, her grandchildren Hillary (Adam) Billmeier, Jacob (Emily) Noordeloos, Justin (Camila) Noordeloos, Taylor (Kevin) Lukas, Holley (Colin) Wurst, Steven (Meghan) Tripp, Sydney (Rylan) Tripp, and her great-grandchildren Landon, Ainsley, Leo, Lucca, Thea, Colson and Jordan.

Pat will be dearly missed.

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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.
Considering becoming Catholic?
Call or see our website for information.

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

St. Paul Lutheran Church & Preschool
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

Caledonia High School

75th Anniversary Celebration

In the fall of 2025, Caledonia High School will celebrate 75 years since the construction of its football field and honor the historic 1950 football team, which completed an undefeated season without allowing a single point (Caledonia 234 – Opponents 0).

As part of this celebration, the district is seeking memorabilia to help tell the story of this incredible season and the field's construction. Items of particular interest include:

- A rumored film of a 1950 game, possibly recorded by a parent, potentially from Middleville.
- Scrapbooks from team members or families, as archived newspapers from that time are unavailable.
- Photos of the team, games played at Lakeside Park before the field was built, or images of the field's construction.
- Other memorabilia, such as jerseys, game programs, or keepsakes.

If you have any leads on these items or know someone who might, please contact:

Kelly Clark
communications@calschools.org
616-891-8185
Caledonia Community Schools Administration

Help us preserve and share this important piece of Caledonia's history.



Caledonia junior Maddie Hayden (right) looks out from the medal stand after winning her third consecutive state championship at the MHSAA Individual Wrestling Finals inside Ford Field in downtown Detroit Saturday. Hayden took the championship in the girls' 170-pound weight class over the weekend, and was joined on the medal stand by Thornapple Kellogg sophomore Adelaide Holderman (second from left) who placed fourth in the weight class. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

HAYDEN

Continued from Page 17

opponents at the finals over the weekend. Carleton Airport's Olivia Kemp lasted until the middle of the second round in their quarterfinal match-up. Hayden's other two matches in the lead-up to the finals took less than a minute. She opened the tournament by pinning Chesaning's Paige Heise in 29 seconds Friday. Kemp lasted 3:01 before being stuck to the mat. In Friday evening's semifinal, Hayden pinned Waverly's Victoria Carter in 54 seconds.

The three-time champ loves showcasing her skills, talents and the results of her hard work on the mat, but she also can feel the pressure that comes along with having a lot of eyes on her on and off the mat. She said tries to look at that as a blessing in disguise motivating her to do things the right way.

Veitch said there will likely be some focus next year on improving conditioning. Not many opponents are able to make it six minutes with Hayden, but he wants her to be ready for times like Saturday night when an opponent does.

"That was something I kind of messed up in too. I gassed my self out forcing that move," Hayden said. "I really gassed myself out, gassed out my forearms. I think another part I kind of messed up in was I warmed up for a really long time this time. I don't really know why. I really like to be ready, but sometimes you have to pace yourself even getting ready for your match. So, I think moving forward I need to really push myself on my conditioning and push myself mentally to know that even if I do get gassed I still have so much more I can unload.

"I have all the physical abilities. Sometimes you just have to dig a little bit deeper. When your arms are giving out, your legs are giving out, your lungs hurt, you still have so much left in you. Just gotta figure that out up here," she said pointing to her head.

Romeo's Kalli Manuel was the only girl to defeat Hayden this season, by an 8-3 score at the DeWitt Girls Invite the first weekend in January. Manuel was 42-0 this season and took over Hayden's place as the 155-pound girls' champ at the state finals Saturday.

Hayden is a year too late to be the state's first four-time state champion in the girls' division. Fowlerville senior Margaret Buurma (38-3) accomplished that feat by scoring a 1-0 win over Romeo's Belicia Manuel (30-3) in the 145-pound championship match Saturday.

Another first at the weekend's state finals was the awarding of the first MHSAA Girls' Team State Championship trophy which went to the Grand Haven girls. The individual finals were scored as a team tournament in the girls' division to decide the title. The Buccaneers closed the tournament with 69.5 points ahead of Lowell 59.5, Fowlerville 57, Romeo 56.5, West Bloomfield 50.5, Plymouth 49, Plainwell 42.5, West Ottawa 42, Riverview Gabriel Richard 40.5 and DeWitt 37.5 in the top ten. The Thornapple Kellogg girls were 11th with 36 points. Hayden's run to a title had the Caledonia "team" in a tie for 21st place with 28 points.

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