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

CLS GUYS GO FAST AT FINALS, WANT TO GET FASTER
PAGE 9-10



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KCSO: No one injured after gunfire during domestic dispute

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

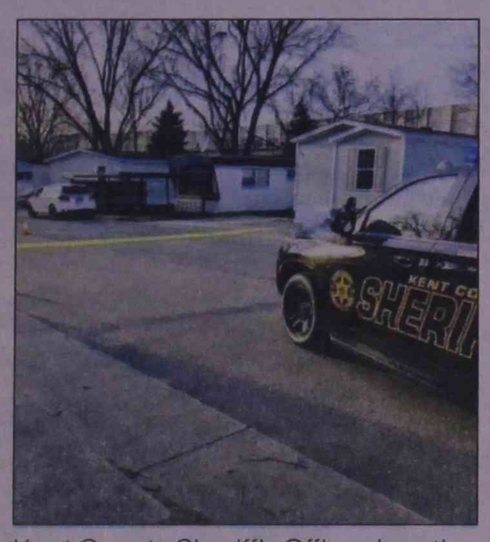
Kent County Sheriff's Office deputies say no one was injured during a domestic dispute Tuesday evening when gunshots were fired in Cutlerville.

They took a 37-year-old woman into custody at a residence in the Cutler Estates Mobile Home Park.

That's in the Cutlerville area of Byron Township. It is located south of M-6 off Division Avenue, which is the border with Gaines Township.

Deputies said the 37-year-old man she had an argument with was not struck by the gunfire. There was no word on what started the squabble. No names were released.

Potential charges had not been announced at the time of this report.



Kent County Sheriff's Office deputies say no one was injured during a domestic dispute Tuesday evening when gunshots were fired in Cutlerville. **Courtesy photo**

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Gaines Township officials discuss vision for future park space, trails



The Gaines Parks & Trails Committee members held a meeting at the Gaines Township Hall on March 5, with the committee's next meeting set for April 16. **Courtesy photo**

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Gaines Township Supervisor Bob Terpstra has said ever since he won the August 2024 primary that one of his priorities would be to focus more attention on developing parks in the township.

"It clearly is a vision and a goal of the trustees," he said at the time. "We are committed to putting more money in the budget to develop the parks and trails – maybe purchase some land, even. I'm excited about making Gaines Township more outdoor friendly and recreation friendly."

The vision may be gaining momentum based on recent actions by the township board and the Gaines Parks & Trails Committee. That momentum is being fueled, at least in part, by a 2022 online survey in which residents expressed a desire for more park space, playgrounds and recreational opportunities. Those opinions were later included in the township's Parks & Trails Master Plan was adopted in 2023.

Since then, the conversation has not abated. Last month, Gaines Township trustees authorized spending up to $3,000 to have a 20-acre parcel of property appraised for potential park development. Staff did not disclose the location of the heavily wooded parcel, but did say Plaster Creek runs through it.

Township Manager Rod Weersing, however, recently said he was not optimistic because of the slow pace of

See **GAINES** on 4

Midvilla Flats breaking ground Thursday

Molly Macleod
Editor

Developers at the Midvilla Flats are set to officially break ground next week, marking a significant milestone in the project that has been years in the making.

Construction Simplified, developers of the six, three-story, 24-unit apartment building complex, invite locals to join them at the project's groundbreaking ceremony next week, Thursday, March 27, at the construction site at 4611 N. M-37 Hwy in Middleville. The ceremony begins at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday with a meet-and-greet,

See **GROUND** on 3

Caledonia Mock Trial team competing at states this weekend

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer

The Caledonia Mock Trial team advanced to the state finals this week after its outstanding performances at recent competitions.

Four Caledonia teams competed at the regional competitions — two at the Oakland County Regional on Feb. 21 and two at the Kent County Regional on March 8. The team of Alexander Hochwarth, Isabella Wierzbicki, Meghan Ruthven, Av Jordan, Olivia LaHaie, Sebastian Rissley and Mason Langeland took first place at the Oakland County Mock Trial Regional Tournament. They earned a spot in the state finals tournament held at Veterans Memorial Courthouse in Lansing this weekend, March 21-22.

"The students have put in an exceptional amount of effort in preparing for this year's case, which centers around a first-degree murder charge," said Caledonia High School Teacher and Mock Trial Advisor Jenny Jonkman. "They have done an outstanding job of carefully analyzing the facts to build a compelling and convincing argument."

This marks the second consecutive year Caledonia teams have won regional competitions and secured a spot at the state championship. Last year's team finished as semi-finalists for the entire state, setting a high standard for this season. The returning students—Alexander Hochwarth, Sebastian Rissley, and Meghan Ruthven—have leveraged their experience from competing at the highest level to maintain momentum throughout the current season. All three have understood the importance of collaboration, continuous improvement and learning from each other to lead and mentor new students the complexities of the competition, Jonkman said.



Members of the Caledonia Mock Trial team pose for a photo at a recent competition. Seven mock trial students are set to compete at the state tournament this weekend. **Courtesy photo**

"Regardless of team assignment, all the students pushed one another to improve, collaborating to strengthen their cases," Jonkman added. "From refining their persuasion skills to thinking creatively, responding to objections, and supporting each other, the teamwork on display has been impressive."

Caledonia High School Mock Trial and Intro to Law is an elective class, helping students hone their skills in law, problem-solving, collaboration, public speaking and critical thinking. The program was introduced after Elizabeth Yard, a local attorney and Caledonia parent, met with the school administration to bring a mock courtroom experience to the students. Over the years, student interest in the program has grown significantly, rising from an after-school club to expanding into two elective courses. Students learn to think critically and creatively about complex legal issues, making it a unique and valuable opportunity for young minds, Jonkman said.

"At the beginning of the season, many students had little knowledge of law, but by the end, they are confidently citing federal rules of evidence in front of real judges and attorneys in a courtroom," stated Jonkman. "Their dedication and work ethic are consistently impressive, and I'm excited to see them take on the state finals."

Caledonia Mock Trial is competing this weekend at Veterans Memorial Courthouse in Lansing, March 21-22.

Cal FFA earns top honors at State Convention

Noah Peterson
Staff Writer

Caledonia FFA members earned top honors and valuable experiences at the Michigan State University FFA State Convention earlier this month.

Sixteen Caledonia High School students spent three days at Michigan State University for the 97th Michigan FFA State Convention, where students networked with other FFA chapter members, toured the food science facilities and Mobile Food Unit at MSU, visited the MSU Dairy Store and attended sessions and listened to keynote speaker Lasada Pippe. Delegates Noah Herbst and Maddie Lockwood attended a Legislative Reception at the State Capitol.

"State Convention was an amazing opportunity," said delegate and greenhand (first-year member) Maddie Lockwood. "It was a time to not only learn more about FFA and the world of agriculture, but also an opportunity to become closer with my FFA teammates."

Two teams competed and advanced at both district and regional competitions. The "Parliamentary Procedures" (Pattrick VanderKolk, Kenzie Krentz, Brinley Lyzenga, Maddox Bockover, Emma Petz, and Emma Palmer) team placed 12th, earning a Bronze Award. The "Jr. High Conduct of Meetings" (Trenton Schiefla, Adam Peereboom, Grace Bailey, Daniel Calhoun, Deegan Pecha-Gnat, Evan Diehl and Nicholas Ulloa) team placed 10th, earning a Silver Award.

In addition, several students earned in-

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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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HONORS

Continued from previous page

dividual honors. Senior and chapter vice president Carly VanderRoest received the Silver Proficiency Award for Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), the Gold Academic Award, the Gold State Degree, and was voted the 2025-2026 MI FFA Sentinel. Senior Patrick Vanderkolk received the Challenge 24 Recognition Award for taking part in the agriculture education opportunities that Michigan FFA offers, along with the Gold Academic Award and State Degree Award.

Both VanderRoest and Vanderkolk will be earning six credits to MSU (if they so choose to attend) as they graduate from CHS since they have successfully earned their FFA State Degrees and will complete the Agri-Cal CTE program offered at CHS.

"I have been to MI FFA State Convention four times now, each time has been a different experience," said VanderRoest. "This year was unique because I got to see more of the background as I was running for a State Officer position. It is always a fun experience to see how things change over the years and I can't wait to help put on next year's State Convention as a State Officer."

Caledonia's FFA club has had a strong reputation since 1934. Though times have changed and the once very rural farming community is becoming a bit more developed, FFA members say ag is still strong.

"Our students competed at a high level against other FFA chapters from across the state, and I couldn't be more proud of their dedication and hard work to get there," commented first-year FFA advisor Erin Robertson. "Beyond the competition, we had some incredible experiences touring campus, attending sessions, observing other teams compete and visiting the food science lab and mobile lab facility."

Caledonia FFA's next competition will be at the MI FFA Meat Rabbit Contest on May 1.



Caledonia FFA Members attended the 97th Michigan FFA State Convention at MSU March 5-7. **Courtesy photo**



Midvilla Flats developers Construction Simplified are celebrating the groundbreaking of the project at a ceremony next week Thursday, March 27, at 3:30 p.m. in Middleville. Here is a look at the construction site as crews prepare to break ground. **Photo by Molly Macleod**

GROUND

Continued from Page 1

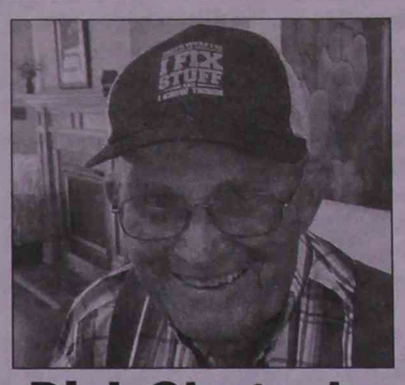
followed by the groundbreaking and speeches at 3:45 and a celebration at 4:15 p.m. at Riverdog Tavern.

The project, which will create 144 "workforce housing" units, is projected to cost $20 million and be complete in the spring of 2026. It is located at the site of the former Middle Villa Inn, which was demolished in 2015. The six buildings will be constructed on the 13.3-acre parcel.

A tax-increment financing agreement agreed to by the Barry County Board of Commissioners in August 2024 was a major hurdle for the project.

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

HAPPY **BIRTHDAY!**



Dick Stager to celebrate 95th birthday

Dick Stager, long-time resident of Middleville, is celebrating his 95th birthday. An open house will be held in his honor on Saturday, April 5 from 2 to 5 p.m. at 257 High Ridge Ct., Middleville. All are invited, but please do not bring a present.

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GAINES

Continued from Page 1

negotiations.

"We're still in discussion with the developer," he said. "They keep changing their mind on what they want to do there.

"And the latest iteration would not make it worthwhile for us to participate in. So, we're trying to find something we think would be workable to present to the (township) board."

Gaines Community Development director Dan Wells was approached about a possible purchase option for a second parcel of property of 20-30 acres not far from the first parcel.

And, more discussion about parks is underway as spring arrives. Terpstra met with the township's Parks & Trails Committee on March 5.

"To develop a plan for new initiatives in Prairie Wolf (Park) and additional greenspace, and acquiring new properties," he said. "It was a great day … we have a good plan and focus going forward."

"We had a very welcomed roundtable, collaborative meeting," added Parks & Trails Committee member Brian Diemer. "Bob (Terpstra) challenged each of us, as experts in our fields, to list the top priorities we needed to address in the years to come with our Gaines parks and trails.

"We were given the opportunity to present each of our priorities, as we see them. Then, they all went up on a board, where we voted to determine the township's priorities," Diemer added.

Terpstra said he plans on spending more time helping to set a vision for initiatives, including parks, in the township.

"Much of the visioning and research will take place in 2025 in preparation for building enthusiasm and support for resident participation and fundraising in 2026," he said.

And, he has the full confidence of the township manager.

"I think that Bob (Terpstra) is doing a great job of leading the charge for the future of the parks in the township." Weersing said.

Gaines Parks & Trails Committee chairwoman Dana Lehmann said committee members wanted to add more parks and greenspace to the township's inventory for a long time.

"Our updated (township) master plan documents the shortage of this resource," she said.

Township Trustee Kathy VanderStel in 2024 recommended last year that Gaines trustees dedicate some of the township's remaining American Rescue Plan Act funds for parks and trails, including potential land acquisition.

"If we don't grab it now, we're going to lose that opportunity," she said, referring to all the recent residential and commercial development in the township.

In December, the township board authorized spending up to $35,000 for a Natural Resources Inventory to be conducted before the township begins renegotiating a sewer service agreement with the City of Grand Rapids. The existing contract expires in 2028. "I just see this as very important for our township to act on it now, versus kicking it down the road again," VanderStel said at the time. "Because we're all seeing property being developed everywhere, chopped up, sold. And some of that – especially the Plaster Creek watershed area – we'll never get something like that back again once it's put into a private developer's hands. Those are huge assets to our community."

The township already owns a parcel on 84th Street, west of Kalamazoo Avenue, that it has been eyeing for potential development of a park called Cody's Mill.

Lehmann said the property potentially could be home to sports courts or ball fields, or a playground. Though, Weersing added more research needs to be done to determine how the Cody's Mill space might be used.

Originally, officials considered using the space as an active park, instead of a more passive-use one like the 45-acre Prairie Wolf Park. But officials were apprised that the Cody's Mill site has a grading issue in terms of how it is sloped.

"It drops off," said Weersing, pointing out that it might be good for sledding. "You can see the top of the hill and then it goes pretty steeply down to the back."

As for Prairie Wolf Park, residents have expressed a desire for the township to add permanent restrooms and a pavilion be built at the site.

"We've considered putting an outdoor educational center at the park, along the lines of the Outdoor Discovery Center (in Holland), the Whittenbach Wege Center (in Lowell) or the Blandford (Nature Center, in Grand Rapids). I'd love to know if people would be interested in that," Lehmann recently told the township board.

Developers are also playing a role in developing additional park space within the township.

In February, Wisconsin-based developer Continental Properties submitted a revised site plan to the township's Planning Commission for a proposed apartment project on Hanna Lake Avenue in Dutton. Part of the proposal would entail a 6.7-acre section of dedicated park land along Hanna Lake to honor the legacy of the Verduin family which farmed the area for more than a century.

The Planning Commission postponed making any recommendation on the park until the township board can review the proposal, with board members needing to discuss various issues, including how the township would maintain the park.

Also, Lehmann said the Parks & Trails Committee is working closely with the Gaines Historical Society to help "keep the rich history of Gaines Township visible."

"Just think of the fantastic possibilities if everyone that has interest in parks and open space were to be involved in helping to vision and support ideas for growth," she added.

Gaines Township officials discuss vision for future park space, trails

The idea of increasing park space, trails and other recreational opportunities in Gaines Township seems to be gaining momentum, according to township officials.

The following is a timeline of some events in the efforts to address the issue:

2022 – Township officials conduct an online survey, in which residents expressed a desire for more park space, playgrounds and recreational opportunities.

August 2022 – Township trustees discuss the possibility of setting up a parkland acquisition fund, noting that more and more land is being snapped up for development.

2023 – Township approves Parks & Trails Master Plan.

December 2024 – Township board authorizes spending up to $35,000 for a natural resources inventory to be conducted before the township begins renegotiating a sewer service agreement with the City of Grand Rapids, with the existing contract set to expire in 2028.

March 5 – Discussions at the township's Parks & Trails Committee include developing new initiatives in Prairie Wolf (Park) and additional greenspace, and acquiring new properties.

April 16 – Next meeting of the township's Parks & Trails Committee at 11:30 a.m.

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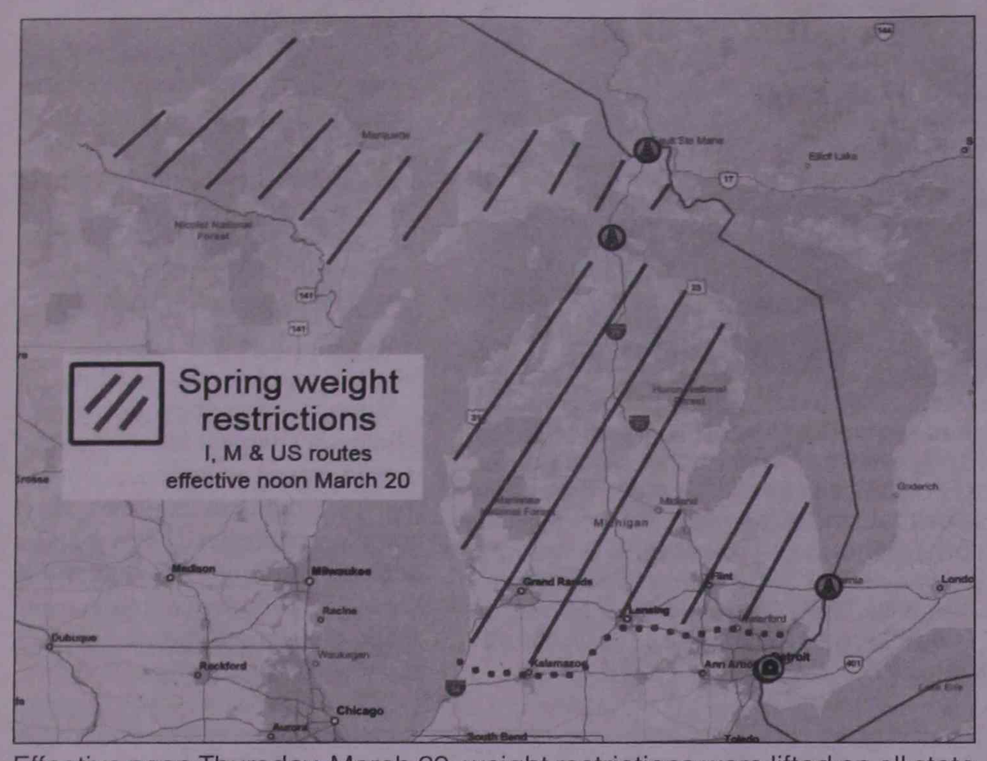
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Annual spring weight restrictions roads changed Thursday



Effective noon Thursday, March 20, weight restrictions were lifted on all state trunkline highways from the southern Michigan border north to and including the route beginning on M-43 at the I-196 Business Loop intersection in South Haven. **Courtesy image**

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) continues to adjust spring weight restriction areas in an annual move to protect roads.

Effective noon Thursday, March 20, weight restrictions were lifted on all state trunkline highways from the southern Michigan border north to and including the route beginning on M-43 at the I-196 Business Loop intersection in South Haven continuing to the US-131 interchange in Kalamazoo County, then south on US-131 to the I-94 interchange, east on I-94 to the I-69 interchange in Calhoun County, north on I-69 to the I-96 interchange in Eaton County, east on I-96 to the M-59 interchange in Livingston County, and then east on M-59, ending at the I-94 interchange in Macomb County.

Frost restrictions are still in effect for the remainder of the state and will be imposed and enforced on all state trunkline highways north of the route detailed above. State routes typically carry M, I, or US designations.

In the restricted areas, the following will apply:

• On routes designated as "all-season" (designated in green and gold on the MDOT Truck Operators Map), there will be no reduction in legal axle weights.

• All extended permits will be valid for oversize loads in the weight-restricted area on the restricted routes. Single-trip permits will not be issued for any overweight loads or loads exceeding 14 feet in width, 11 axles, and 150 feet in overall length on the restricted routes.

• On routes designated as "seasonal" (designated in solid or dashed red on the MDOT Truck Operators Map), there will be a posted weight reduction of 25 percent for rigid (concrete) pavements and 35 percent for flexible (asphalt) pavements, and maximum speed of 35 mph for some vehicles.

Drivers must follow the speed limits for weight restricted roads, per state law. Go online for speed restrictions for trucks and the rules for propane fuel delivery and public utility vehicles.

When roads that have been frozen all winter begin to thaw from the surface downward, melting snow and ice saturate the softened ground. During the spring thaw, the roadbed softened by trapped moisture beneath the pavement makes it more susceptible to damage. This contributes to pothole problems already occurring due to this winter's numerous freeze-thaw cycles.

MDOT determines when weight restrictions begin each spring by measuring frost depths along state highways, observing road conditions and monitoring weather forecasts. Weight restrictions remain in effect until the frost line is deep enough to allow moisture to escape and the roadbeds regain stability.

County road commissions and city public works departments put in place their own local road seasonal weight restrictions, which usually but not always co-

See **ROADS** on 6

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View Newspaper Group sales professionals honored

LAPEER — Leadership at View Newspaper Group is proud to announce the company's 100+ Club Class of 2024.

Each sales professional honored achieved more than 100 percent of their individual sales goals for the entire year of 2024. A dinner and celebration attended by View Newspaper Group leadership, the honorees and their guests was held at Frankenmuth Brewery to honor the group on Wednesday, March 12.



The View Newspaper Group 100+ Club celebration held March 12 honored sales team members who achieved more than 100 percent of their annual sales goal in 2024. Pictured here are View Newspaper Group Controller Jill Nichols, honorees Lorraine DeHues and Michele Guerra, North Oakland Advertising Manager Eric Lewis, honoree Jim Misener, View Newspaper Group President Rick Burrough, honoree Nikki Howard, Brand Manager Emily Caswell, Advertising Director Pete Clinton, Graphics Manager Jen Ward, Greenville Daily News General Manager Amber Rood, View Newspaper Group Thumb Area Consultant Jody Woltman and View Newspaper Group Publisher Wes Smith.

View Newspaper Group Publisher Wes Smith said, "We take great pride in honoring the 100+ Club Class of 2024 to acknowledge and show our appreciation for their dedication, hard work and outstanding sales achievement."

The 100+ Club Class of 2024 includes Michele Guerra, Nikki Howard, Murray Callahan, Jim Misener and Lorraine DeHues.

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BCEA to host recycling presentation March 26

Barry County Earth Alliance is looking to help local residents who have questions on the benefits and best ways to recycle.

The BCEA is hosting an informational presentation with Emma Dillman of the Kent County Recycling Center at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26, at the Hastings Public Library on East State Street in Hastings.

Dillman will share information on the importance of recycling, common misconceptions and how individuals can make a meaningful difference in the community's environmental impact, according to a press release by the BCEA about the event.

The presentation will include "Watch Your Waste," a video tour of what happens after a recycling bin is emptied into the truck. — *DM*

ROADS

Continued from Page 5

incide with state highway weight restrictions. Signs are generally posted to indicate which local routes have weight restrictions in effect.

For weight restriction information and updates, call 800-787-8960, or you can access this information on MDOT's website at Michigan.gov/Truckers, under "Restrictions." All-season routes are designated in green and gold on the MDOT Truck Operators Map, which is available online. You also may sign up to receive e-mail alerts.

Trucking companies located in New Jersey and Canada can obtain information by calling 517-373-6256. — *MM*

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State runners-up have late answer for Scot comeback

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Caledonia went from four goals down a little less than three minutes into the second half to even with a little less than three minutes to go in the game.

The thrill of the comeback bid only lasted eight seconds though. Forest Hills Eastern senior Jack Kishman took off towards the Caledonia net after winning a draw and raced right in to score what proved to be the winning goal.

Forest Hills Eastern closed the 2024 varsity boys' lacrosse season being handed the MHSAA Division 2 State Finalist trophy at the U of M Lacrosse Stadium in Ann Arbor last June, after falling to Detroit Catholic Central in the state championship match, and the Hawks opened the 2025 season by pulling out an 8-7 win over the Caledonia boys at Scotland Yard Wednesday.

The Hawks led 6-3 at the half in Caledonia and then jumped to a 7-3 advantage with a a goal by sophomore Baron Prominski 2:58 into the second half.

"I told the guys coming out of halftime win the quarter," Caledonia head coach Kolin Herron said. "That was the big thing - take it one quarter at a time. We knew that we were getting beat on the ground balls. We needed to clean that up ... it was 7-3. Finished 8-7 against the state-runner-up I have to be proud of that considering we were out six guys also to start this game. No complaints about how that second half finished out. Would have liked to have taken the dub there, but the first half we just have to clean up some of those mental mistakes."

The Scots did win that third quarter, 2-1, with Senti riffling in a shot off an assist from Haan as the horn sounded to end the period. It was 7-5 going into the fourth quarter.

Caledonia lost the last few seconds of a man advantage to a turnover, but got the ball right back in the Hawks' end and all the momentary hiccup did was create some space midway through the fourth quarter. Senior Teagan Chu found freshman Corbin Ryder streaking to the net and hit him with a pass which he then put by the Hawk keeper to get their team within 7-6 with 6:19 to go.

The clock wound down to under two and a half minutes to go with the Scots pressing. A few shots bounded wide until Chu found senior Brady Hilaski at the top of the offensive zone and he managed to get a shot under the Hawk keeper. Officials had to runs in to dig under the Hawk netminder to find that the ball had crossed the goalline.

After the Hawks took the lead back, the Scots managed a couple decent chances from Senti firing around screens in the closing seconds, but couldn't put one on frame.

Haan was the only guy with two goals for the Scots. Junior Rylan Bultema and sophomore Ryder Born both found the net once in the first half. Chu closed the contest with four assists. Senti had a goal and an assist.

Being stronger, and smarter, with the

See **SCOT** on 8



Caledonia senior Brady Hilaski celebrates his late goal which tied the Scots' match with visiting Forest Hills Eastern late in the fourth quarter Wednesday at Scotland Yard. The Hawks did rally for an 8-7 win in the end. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

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YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a special public hearing will be held on April 8, 2025, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall, 284 N. Briggs Rd., Middleville MI, within the Township, as required under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Zoning Ordinance for the Township.

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

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

1. **ZBA 25-01-01; Parcel ID 16-030-003-00; 2751 Russell Road and 2753 Russell Road, Wayland MI 49348.** The property is zoned Gun Lake Residential Lakefront. The property owner, Benjie Vista, requests a variance to allow division of this parcel into two parcels pursuant to Article XX of the Yankee Springs Township Zoning Ordinance.
2. **ZBA 25-03-02; Parcel ID 16-030-040-51; 2173 Mac Drive, Wayland MI 49348.** The property owners, Erick Leep and Susan Fox, appeal from the decision of the Zoning Administrator requiring them to remove an outbuilding constructed without a zoning permit in violation of Articles V and XII of the Yankee Springs Township Zoning Ordinance.
3. **Such other business as may properly come before the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

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

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

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

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Gaines Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing to consider the following request:

Summary of Request: Request for a dimensional variance to reduce the front yard setback of the western property line from 60 feet to 15 feet to construct a 1,040 square foot residential accessory building in the A-R zoning district.

Property Address: 10676 Eastern Avenue SE, Wayland, MI 49348

Parcel Number: 41-22-32-300-055

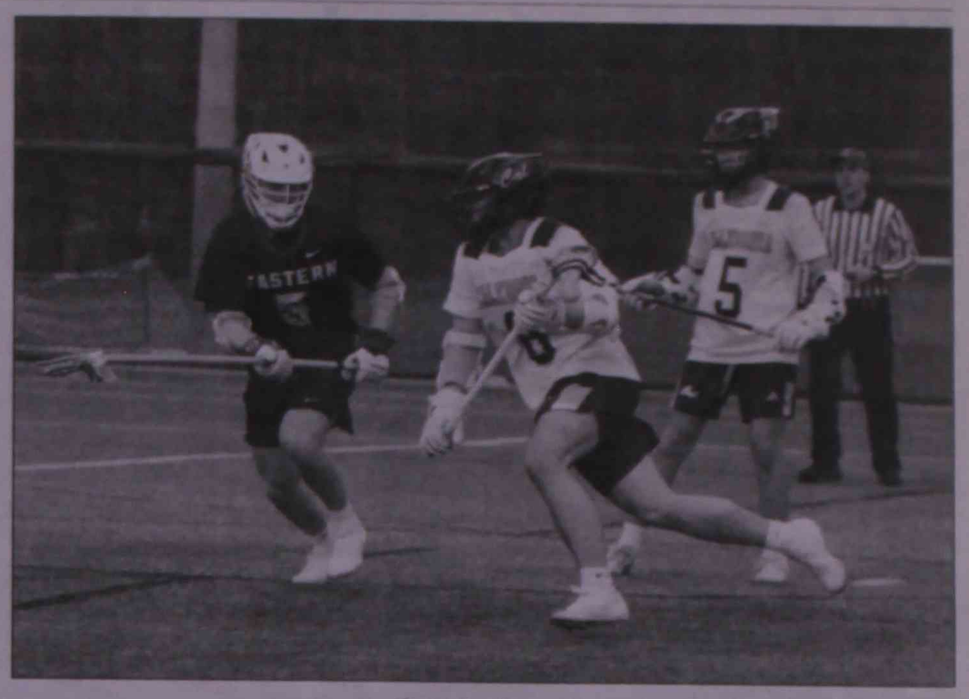
Applicant: Bruce Sheler

Date and Time of Hearing: April 9th, 2025, at 7:00 PM

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

Any interested party may appear and be heard on said proposal. Information related to this request may be inspected, by appt., during regular business hours at the Planning Department window located in the Gaines Charter Township Offices. For information related to this request, contact Dan Wells at (616) 980-6188 or dan.wells@gainestownship.org. To be entered into the public record, signed written comments must be received by 5:00 PM on February 27th, 2025.

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



Caledonia sophomore Emmett Haan attacks the net during the first half of his team's contest with visiting Forest Hills Eastern at Scotland Yard in Caledonia Wednesday evening.

THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP BOARD
200 E MAIN ST.
MIDDLEVILLE, MI 49333
SYNOPSIS OF MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 10, 2025

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

Items approved:

1. Printed Agenda approved as amended.
2. Consent Agenda approved as amended.
3. Public Hearing regarding the 2025/26 Township Budget.
4. Approved motion to hire a recording secretary.
5. Approved participation in the Barry County Fair Booth.
6. Approved plan with the Barry County Road Commission.
7. Approved Paul Henry Trail Maintenance Plan.
8. Approved General Appropriation Resolution Fiscal Year 2025/26.
9. Approved Township Supervisory Salary Resolution 2025/26.
10. Approved Township Treasurer Salary Resolution 2025/26.
11. Approved Township Clerk Salary Resolution 2025/26.
12. Approved Trail Commitment Resolution 2025/26.
13. Approved TTES Firefighter Pay Scale for 2025/26.
14. Approved TTES Compensation and Leave Policy 2025/26.
15. Approved one-day BS&A payroll training session.
16. Approved the update of the Personnel Handbook.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 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.

SCOT

Continued from Page 7

ball in the second half helped keep the Hawks from putting it in the goal as often themselves in the second half.

"Moving the ball from defense to offense, what we call the clear, is super important in lacrosse," Herron said. "We had to make sure we took care of the ball, took our time moving it up the field and found the open guy. We made sure that we had some of our offensive players playing defense, so that way we could swing the ball out to them quick. That helped for sure. Overall, just getting our heads up and taking care of the ball there."

The Fighting Scots had a solid 13-6 season overall in 2024, but fell to Mattawan in the regional semifinal round of the MHSAA Division 2 Tournament.

"We're going to take on that identity of playing fast and playing physical," Herron said. "We're going to come out and smack you in the mouth. Offensively, tonight we did have to slow it down just because we are shot guys, but in the future we're going to push it fast. I think we did that a lot last year with the personnel we had, and I think this year is just as talented if not more. We like a lot of what we see. We have some good senior leaders, and we have a lot of good young guys who are going to come out and play physical on defense and play fast and physical on offense. Being physical on offense is just as important as being physical on defense."

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CLS guys go fast at finals, want to get faster

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

"One more year. One more year, one more chance."

That was a thought in the head of Caledonia senior Ethan Snapper after he and his teammates narrowly missed out on a school record and a state medal in the 200-yard freestyle relay and he narrowly missed out on a state medal in the 50-yard freestyle at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals at the Holland Aquatics Center Friday, March 14.

"I think it is rather foreboding, next year if I come to practice twice as much I'll go twice as fast. I am gearing up or that 11 second 50 free," he said with a chuckle.

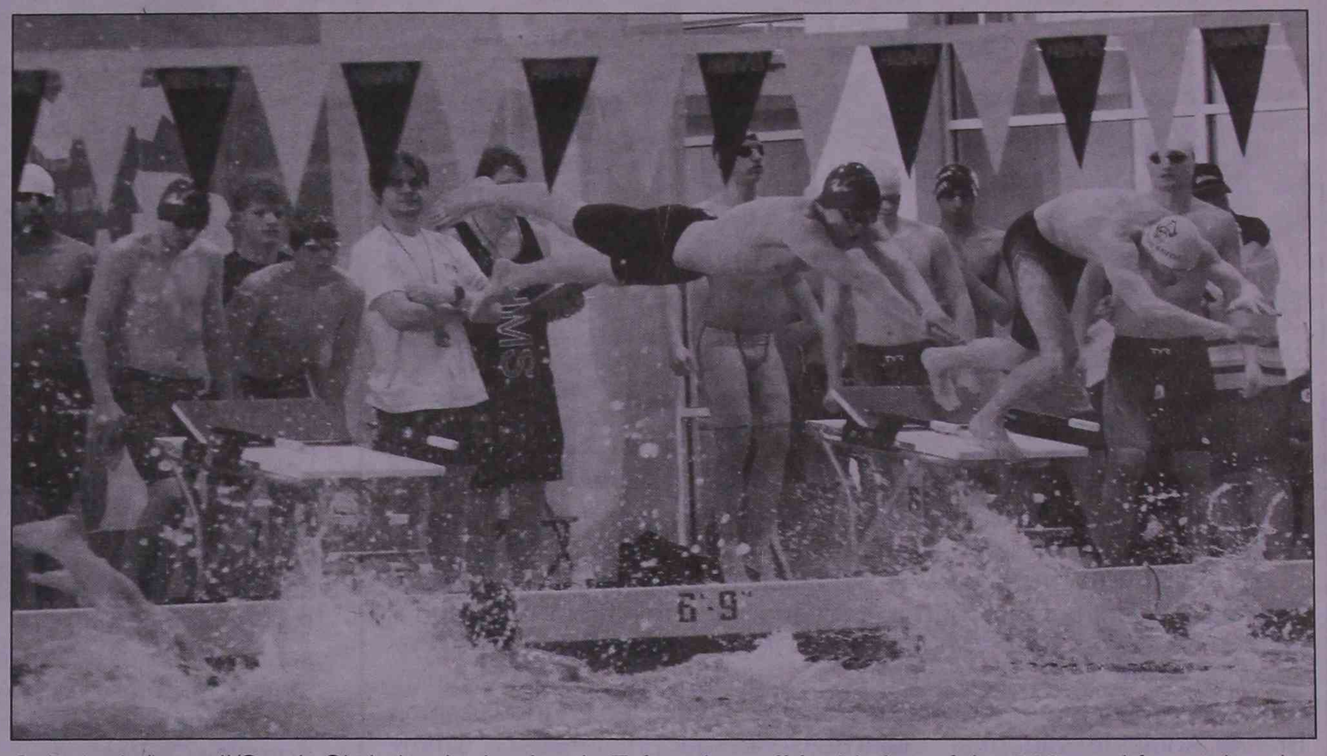
Snapper set his own personal record in the 50-yard freestyle at 22.19 seconds while winning his preliminary heat of the race at the state finals. The time put him in 19th overall. The top 16 earned spots in the March 15 finals of the Finals and spots on the state medal stand.

He also combined with Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian (CLS) varsity boys' swimming and diving teammates junior Austin Tufts, senior Sam Jones and junior Anders Foerch to put up a season-best time of 1 minute 29.68 seconds in the 200-yard freestyle relay. That left the foursome in 17th place at the end of the preliminaries and just five hundredths of a second off a school record – just off two major milestones.

"Everything went right," CLS head coach Todd De Jong said. "They worked on technique a lot. They worked on speed a lot. Having our own pool was huge in doing that. It showed. It showed. Their starts and relay exchanges really showed every piece of hard work they have put in on this."

There was a slim chance the foursome would get the opportunity to chase the school record at the finals Saturday, as they were the top alternate should a team ahead of them decide to scratch out of the finals, but that opportunity didn't materialize.

It it had, it would have made for an exceptionally busy day for Snapper who also was slated to participate in the MSBOA State Solo & Ensemble Festival at Portage Northern High School the morning of March 15.



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian junior Austin Tufts takes off for his leg of the 200-yard freestyle relay as teammate Ethan Snapper touches the wall and teammates Sam Jones and Anders Foerch look on from the deck March 14 during the preliminaries of the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals at the Holland Aquatics Center. **Photos by Brett Bremer**

"Ethan is just amazing," De Jong said. "We'll just put it that way. I can't take too much credit simply because, he's actually a very good cellist, so we don't get him a lot. We don't get him every day, because he couldn't make it every day with us being at the other pool. This is just really raw talent. I look forward to next year, having our pool and then he can come to practice every day. He is going to be amazing, but his cello playing is amazing too, because he practices under the principal cellist for the Grand Rapids Symphony.

See **FINALS** on 10

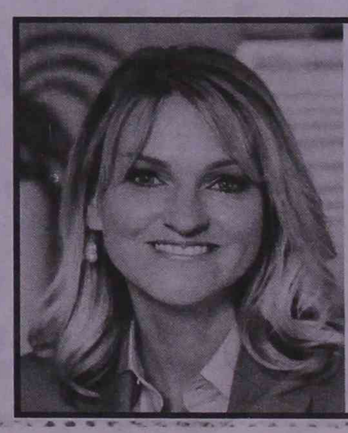


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TKWC youngsters ready for MYWAY State Finals



The TKWC youth wrestling club had 23 wrestlers place in the top four of their class at the March 8 MYWAY Regional in Hudsonville to earn spots in this weekend's MYWAY State Finals at Wings Event Center in Kalamazoo. Pictured are TKWC state qualifiers (front from left) Zander Holderman, Tristen Craig-Wright, Sawyer Jones, Lila Ybema, Levi Morey, Brayden Polmanteer, Hayden Hall, Riley Hall, Mavin Case, Austin Quint, (back) Chandler Simerly, Cole Price, David Sheely, Ben Landon, Ashton Braska, Adelaide Holderman, Blake Bossenberger, Emma Gibson, Jimmy Manne and Abram Dutcher. Missing from photo are Hendrix Sokoloski, Brinley Ybema and Rosalyn Sleeman. **Photo provided** — *BB*



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian junior Ethan Snapper pumps a fist after setting a new personal record in his preliminary heat of the 50-yard freestyle March 14 at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals. Snapper finished the preliminaries in 19th place at the Holland Aquatics Center.

FINALS

Continued from Page 9

"I look at it this way: he has developed so much discipline there, it just carries over right into here. He has a positive attitude."

Snapper competed in club swimming between the ages of 7 and 11, but then took a break from competitive swimming before joining the CLS varsity team as a freshman. After a season of swim practices in Grand Rapids, cello rehearsals, his own time working as a music tutor and all the other things that go along with being a high school student Snapper cut swimming from his schedule his sophomore year.

He said the new pool at the Cal Community Center was the predominant factor in bringing him back to the swim program. He thinks next year he might be able to practice twice as much during his senior season without having to spend so much time on the road getting to practice, and with more available times to get work done in the water.

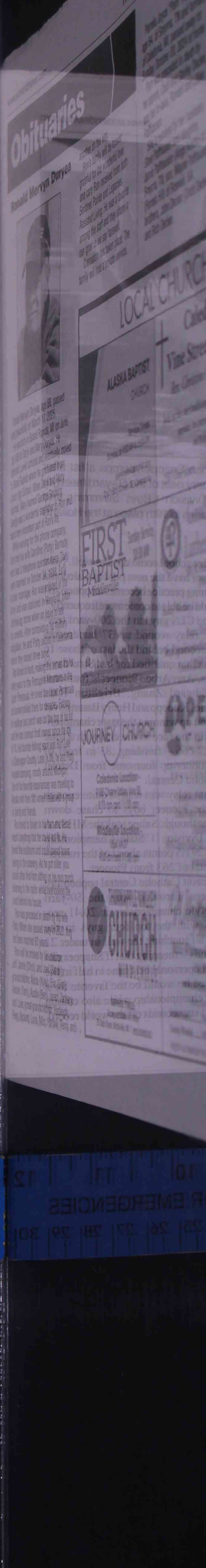
"I am in the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, and we have rehearsals on Mondays so I skip practice on Mondays," Snapper said. "I also teach lessons to people six to ninth grade-ish, and that is after school some days as well. Now that we have the new pool in Caledonia morning practice becomes an option so I should be able to come more frequently."

The CLS guys in the 200-yard freestyle relay wound up 37 hundredths of a second behind the last of those 16 teams that qualified for last Saturday's finals. Ann Arbor Pioneer's foursome of Edward Zhang, Brighton Han, Charles Knoepp and Henry Baumhover wound up winning the state championship in the race in the end with a time of 1:24.66 – finishing .83 in front of the runner-up foursome from Detroit Catholic Central.

That relay win wasn't quite enough for the Pioneer boys to chase down Saline though. Saline took the MHSAA L.P. Division 1 State Championship with 291.5 points ahead of the runner-up total of 263 from Pioneer.

Detroit Catholic Central sophomore Camren Turowski won the 50-yard freestyle championship in 20.41 seconds with the top four guys in the race all touching the wall in under 21 seconds – meaning that if Snapper can cut his personal best time in half in the 50 free he would be the favorite for a state championship while also cutting about six seconds off the world record.

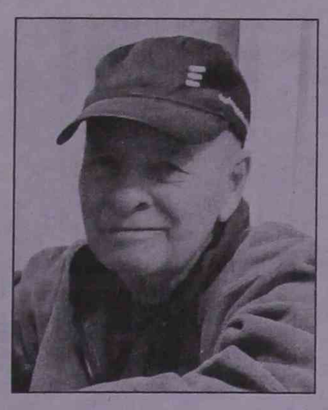




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Obituaries

Ronald Mervyn Duryea



Ronald Mervyn Duryea, age 88, passed away peacefully on March 17, 2025.

He was born in Grand Rapids, MI on June 26, 1936 to Daryl and Mary Duryea. He attended Lowell schools and eventually moved to Grand Rapids where he graduated from Union High School. When Daryl and Mary divorced, Mary married George Stocking. George was a wonderful stepfather to Ron and was a very important part of Ron's life.

While working for the phone company, Ron met his wife Caroline (Patty) Barnaby who was a telephone operator there. They were married on October 24, 1958. Early in their marriage, Ron was enlisted in the Army and was stationed in Maryland, often hitchhiking home when on leave to see his sweetie. After completing his military obligation, he and Patty settled in Caledonia, where they raised three boys.

Ron loved to hunt, making the annual trip for many years to the Porcupine Mountains in the Upper Peninsula. He loved the Upper Peninsula and snowmobiled there for decades. Fishing for walleye and perch was on the top of his list and he was a proud boat owner since the age of 18. His favorite fishing spot was Burt Lake in Cheboygan County. Later in life, he and Patty enjoyed camping, mostly around Michigan. One of his favorite experiences was traveling to Alaska with their fifth wheel trailer with a group of family and friends.

Ron loved to tinker in his barn and there wasn't anything that he could not fix. He loved the outdoors and could spend hours taking in the scenery. As he got older, you could often find him sitting on his sun porch listening to the radio while overlooking the pond behind his house.

Ron was preceded in death by his wife Patty. When she passed away in 2020, they had been married 62 years.

Ron will be missed by his children: Jeff, Jamie (Chris), and Joel (Sandy); grandchildren: Alecia (Kyle), Eric (Erin), Amber (Tom), Austin (Ben), Jared, Zachary, and Luke; great-grandchildren: Hadleigh, Reeg, Beckett, Luna, Milo, Harlow, Remi, and another on the way.

Ron's family will be forever grateful for the wonderful love and care Ron received from both Sentinel Pointe and Legacies Assisted Living. He was a favorite among the staff and they share in our grief as we say farewell.

Cremation has taken place. The family will hold a private service.

Pamela Joyce "Pam" Paffhausen



Pamela Joyce "Pam" Paffhausen, age 64, of Smyrna, TN and formerly of Caledonia, MI, passed away on Sunday, October 20, 2024 at home.

Pam was preceded in death by her parent, Cecil and Shirley Decker, and her in-laws, Ronald and Lillian Paffhausen.

She is survived by her husband, Steve Paffhausen and daughter, Jamie Paffhausen (Ange Austin) of Smyrna, TN; son, Wayne Paffhausen (Forrest Hill) of Roswell, GA; brothers, John Decker (Debb Decker), Ken Decker and Rich Decker.

Pam was always active with friends and family. Pam found joy in many hobbies, including boating, gardening, scrapbooking, and attending craft shows. Her love for flowers and the outdoors was evident. She created beauty wherever she went and embraced life with enthusiasm.

A celebration of life service for Pam will be held on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. at Blain Cemetery in Caledonia.

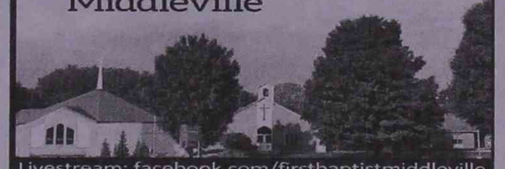
Donations can be made in her honor to the Alzheimer's Association.

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"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

Van swims his fastest butterfly yet at state finals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

An impressive freshman season for the Grand Rapids Gars' Gabriel Van concluded with a 17th-place finish in his preliminary heat of the 100-yard butterfly Friday at the MHSAA Lowe Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals.

Van set a new personal record with his time of 53.44 seconds cutting almost a quarter of a second from his seed time at the Holland Aquatics Center.

That time put Van just 14 hundredths of a second behind the last of the 16 qualifiers for Saturday's finals. The top 16 all earn state medals.

The Grand Rapids Gars team is the varsity boys' swimming co-op comprised of Thornapple Kellogg, Unity Christian, Hopkins, West Catholic and West Michigan Aviation Academy.

In the end Saturday, it was Saline senior Diego Valdes on the top of the butterfly medal podium with a finals time of 49.15 seconds. He was more than a second ahead of the runner-up, Ann Arbor Pioneer junior Edward Zhang who touched the wall in 50.37.



Grand Rapids Gars freshman Gabriel Van races through the water in his preliminary heat of the 100-yard butterfly Friday, March 14, during the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Boys' Swimming and Diving Finals. Van placed 17th in the preliminary race with a personal record time. **Photo by Brett Bremer**

Van was an all-conference swimmer in the OK Rainbow East Division this winter winning the 100-yard butterfly at the conference meet and finishing second in the 200-yard individual medley.

Saline and Ann Arbor Pioneer were 1-2 in the weekend's final team standings too, with Saline capturing the state championship with a final point total of 291.5. Ann Arbor Pioneer was second with 263 points ahead of Northville 224, Zeeland 176, Detroit Catholic Central 175, Grandville 134, Milford 111, South Lyon 101, Bloomfield Hills 95 and West Ottawa 85 in the top ten.

Pioneer beat out Saline by 35 points a year ago for the D1 championship.

Valdes' win in the 100-yard butterfly was one of three individual championships for the Saline boys. Sophomore Issac Adanin won the 200-yard individual medley in 1 minute 48.24 seconds and the 100-yard breaststroke in 56.23.

It is the first swim state championship for the Saline boys since 2013.

Ann Arbor Pioneer had victories in the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle at the meet.

Detroit Catholic Central sophomore Camren Turowski matched Adanin's two individual wins. He took the 50-yard freestyle in 20.41 and the 100-yard freestyle in 44.64.





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