THE SUN AND NEWS
Your Hometown Newspaper Serving the Middleville, Caledonia and Gaines Township Areas
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TROJANS TAKE TITLE AT MONTAGUE TOURNEY
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A large crowd gathered Wednesday, Aug. 20, for the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new Dutton Elementary School in Caledonia. **Photos by Karen Turko-Ebright**

New $40M Dutton Elementary School grand opening draws big crowd

Karen Turko-Ebright
Staff Writer

Among a large crowd waiting in anticipation for the ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday outside the new Dutton Elementary School in Caledonia, a mother recalls her fourth-grade son's excitement when he heard his school will have a new playground.

"He's really excited to meet his teacher but he's really excited for the playground," Jessica Cardinal said. "It's got giant slides and really cool things to climb on. And, it's just really different and unique. I really like it."

Caledonia Community Schools Superintendent Dirk Weeldryer told the crowd the former Dutton Elementary School served the district well for 70 years and that he believes the new building will do the same.

"It's not just a beautiful facility but a lasting investment for our kids," Weeldryer said.

According to the school's website, CCS voters in 2020 approved an $88 million bond proposal aimed at improving facilities, security and technology across the district. Subsequently to the 2020 bond, voters passed an additional $61 million supplemental bond to further strengthen facilities and technology.

From that $61 million, $40 million was allocated to the replacement of the aging Dutton Elementary School.

The new 60,000-square-foot building reportedly includes more open space, the capacity to house an additional 150 students, larger instructional spaces, and a barrier-free accessible playground – thanks to a donation by Amazon – and air conditioning.

There are 22 classrooms in the new elementary divided into three wings. One wing includes kindergarten and program classrooms, while another wing is designated for first- and second-graders. Third- and fourth-grade students have their own wing.

Other rooms include spaces for music, art, Spanish classes, a media center, cafeteria and gymnasium.

During Wednesday's ceremonies, Weeldryer and DES Principal Shawn Veitch thanked the key players who helped plan and build the new school.

"You guys did a phenomenal job in designing and building this school," Veitch added. "From the bottom of my heart, thank you guys."

They also thanked retired Superintendent Jerry Phillips for his decades of service to the district, as well as the school board and community for its support.

Local residents said they were excited to have their children attend the new Dutton Elementary School.

"All three of my older kids have gone here," said Heidi Winters, who has lived in the district for about a decade. "I have a

See **OPENING** on 6

Contract negotiations underway with Cal teachers; school starts Monday

Teachers at Caledonia Community Schools will begin the new year without a contract this Monday, Aug. 25, as negotiations continue between the CCS Board of Education and the Caledonia Education Association.

The previous contract expired on July 31 of this year. Should an agreement not be reached before Monday, teachers will operate under the previous year's contract.

Board representatives say they offered the union a 4.5% increase to teachers' salaries and scheduled base salary increases, along with increases to starting base salaries for new teachers, at its most recent bargaining meeting.

Members of the CEA filled the board room during Monday, Aug. 18's regular BOE meeting.

The BOE and CEA will meet again for further negotiations on Thursday, Sept. 4.

A full recording of Monday's BOE meeting can be found at calschools.org/our-district/board-of-education/.

— KTE

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Eden Forest cuts ribbon for first phase of townhome project

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Representatives for Orion Construction and Red Stone Properties were scheduled to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, Aug. 22, celebrating the first phase of the Eden Forest townhome development in Gaines Township.

The development on 60th Street is located immediately west of the Kentwood Community Church and will feature 242 units, with 114 units to be completed this fall. According to developers, another 18 units will be finished next spring and the remaining 114 units will be completed in future years.

Land for the $29 million project, owned by 60th Street Ventures, was purchased from the church.

Eden Forest will offer four floor plans that will feature two or three bedrooms and range in size from 1,345 to 1,725 square feet.

Some of the amenities will include a common area greenspace, lawn care, snow removal and zero-entry townhomes.

A conditional rezoning for the project from a residential designation to single-family zoning was previously approved by the township.

This past spring, Brad Walsh with Orion Construction and 60th Street Ventures recently submitted a revised site plan for the 18.2-acre property, part of a larger development in that area. The first two proposed changes were approved by planning commissioners, but the third and fourth proposed changes were rejected.



A rendering of the Eden Forest townhome exterior. **Courtesy photo**

The first one called for the removal of one four-unit building along the southwest edge of the development to avoid impacting the adjacent wetlands.

Because one of the four-unit townhouses was so close to a detention area, it was removed from the site plan. Also, a nearby townhouse was redesigned as a six-unit building, rather than having just four units.

Redrawing the detention basin also prompted developers to move the playground close to the intersection.

"We ran out of space, frankly," Walsh said, while addressing township officials in April. "The pond just grew and the original location that we had back behind the building just didn't fit, because of the footprint of the pond expanding."

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MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The Aug. 18 meeting opened with roll call and the secretary's report. There are still two fish in the fishbowl.

Virginia's program was from the July/August 2023 TOPS magazine titled "Support Knows No Bounds." Virtual chapter members share struggles, tips, and grow close. Virtual TOPS chapters join people all over the United States and Canada. They meet on Zoom and only have 8-10 members. They grow to be longtime friends. It is an offshoot from online chapters. Members discuss what's happening in their struggles and helpful tips are exchanged. Having people listen goes a long way. Once you voice your struggle, it is no longer a secret and becomes easier to overcome. They still have bylaws and officers, use TOPS programs, and other sources. They have come to realize their biggest strength is each other. Everyone has their own strength and together they inspire every member. By having a smaller group, everyone's needs are met, and no one goes by the wayside.

Chapter members continued the contest by filling in one dot for each one-tenth of a pound lost.

Virginia won the Ha-Ha Box.

The meeting ended 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.

The chapter is looking for anyone interested in a group that supports weight-loss journeys without shame.

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

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Gaines Twp. to add columbaria to cemeteries

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Gaines Township will be installing columbaria, or vaults for burial urns, to the Blain and Dutton cemeteries.

Members of the Gaines Township Board of Trustees discussed specifics of the columbaria, including design and placement, during their Aug. 11 meeting.

A columbarium has individual compartments called niches where the urns are sealed in a permanent, above-ground structure. It provides a designated place for families to memorialize loved ones.

Gaines Township currently maintains three cemeteries, including Blain Cemetery on 68th Street in Cutlerville, the Dutton Cemetery on Hanna Lake Avenue and the South Gaines Cemetery on 92nd Street.

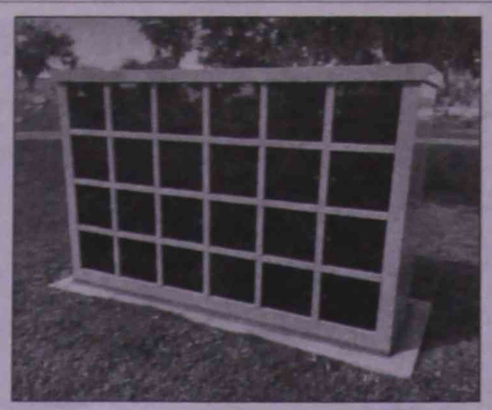
With the Blain and Dutton cemeteries having been expanded, the sites were chosen to have the new columbaria installed. One vault was purchased last year for Blain.

"Delivery was slowed by expansion at Blain," said Township Clerk Michael Brew.

At the Aug. 11 meeting, Township Manager Rod Weersing discussed the layout of the columbaria.

At the Dutton Cemetery, Weersing said there is a spot near the front of the cemetery that would have three columbaria placed in line on a rectangular cement pad. And, farther back, there is space to hold up to six columbaria on a rectangular pad.

Besides the initial one previously designated for installation at Blain,



This image shows the type of columbarium that will be placed at two cemeteries in Gaines Township.
Source: gainestownship.org

Weersing proposed that the township board authorize the purchase of two additional columbaria. That would be for a second one at Blain, plus one at Dutton Cemetery.

The price per unit, including shipping and installation, is more than $15,000.

Weersing said having the columbarium units shipped to the township all at one time will provide some savings. Money was already set aside in the 2025 budget for the purchase of two additional units.

"The nice thing is, they have units in stock right now that are tariff-free," Weersing added.

The columbarium in the Dutton Cemetery probably will not be installed until next year, unless a sidewalk-construction project that is taking place along Hanna Lake Avenue is completed before the ground freezes later this year. A related sidewalk project is also taking place in the cemetery.

"Could we buy two (columbaria) and put them both at Blain, so that we have three there at Blain?" Trustee Kathy

See **CEMETERIES** on 5

Yankee Springs board talks arsenic removal, road paving and more

From safe drinking water to pickleball courts, the Yankee Springs Township Board of Trustees covered a wide range of community topics during its regular meeting Thursday, Aug. 14.

Trustees spent a portion of the meeting discussing improvements to the township's arsenic removal system. While a previous engineering estimate put the price tag on such a process over $1 million, a new proposal from Peerless Inc. Water Systems of Kalamazoo suggests the project could be done for less than $500,000 by increasing the output of existing tanks and drilling a new well. The township has already secured a $75,000 grant toward the work. The Yankee Springs Township Clean Water Committee will return at next month's township board meeting with a recommendation.

Residents of the Payne Ridge subdivision weighed in on a proposed special assessment district to fund paving of their road. The project cost is estimated at $57,100, but questions were raised about how many households are included in the assessment. Residents said the petition was based on 17 households, while the township's calculation used 18 parcels. The board agreed to adjust the numbers and revisit the issue in September. Work is not expected to begin until October.

Fire Chief Dan Miller shared that the department responded to 15 daytime calls in July. With 17 firefighters and 14 medical personnel on staff, he said the department is holding steady and keeping on budget. Miller also announced an open house for Oct. 6 as part of Fire Prevention Week, inviting residents to tour the fire station and meet local first responders.

On the zoning front, the township received a court order requiring a resident to remove multiple vehicles from his property within 60 days or face township enforcement. Gravel mining also remains a hot topic, with 83 residents signing a petition opposing mining in residential areas.

There's good news for local park users. The township's pickleball courts are being expanded and should be ready by next week, while the walking path is receiving a finishing layer. A new shed is also scheduled for delivery on Aug. 24.

During public comment, residents expressed concerns about dirty water flowing into the township from Allegan County, as well as the dust and noise from potential gravel mining projects. Others asked the board to consider livestreaming meetings and to bring back an earlier public comment period, rather than waiting until the end.

Trustees closed the evening with remarks of appreciation. Treasurer Deb Mousseau reminded residents that summer taxes are due September 15, while Supervisor Rob Heethuis took time to explain the township's 1% administrative fee on property taxes, noting it helps fund office operations and is standard practice across Michigan.

The board will meet again on Thursday, September 11 at 6 p.m. at the Yankee Springs Township Hall. — *MM*

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Obituaries

Fredrick Dale Ainswort

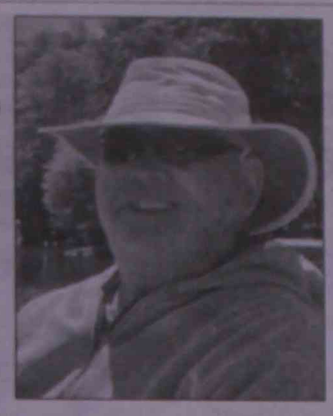
Fredrick Dale Ainsworth, affectionately known as Fred, passed away peacefully at his home on August 14, 2025, in Middleville, MI, after a courageous battle with esophageal cancer.

He was born on January 4, 1952, in Grand Rapids, MI.

Fred lived a vibrant and full life. He often reflected fondly on his childhood days spent at Barlow Lake, where he developed a love for fishing with his family, traditions he joyfully continued with his grandchildren. He also enjoyed camping and spending winters in Lake Havasu, Arizona. He had a profound passion for GVSU football and rarely missed a game. Fred especially loved attending his grandchildren's sporting events, always their biggest fan.

Following his marriage to Linda, the couple purchased their forever home on Barlow Lake, where they created countless memories together, stories that will remain cherished by family and friends. Above all, Fred was a devoted family man who dearly loved the Lord, his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Fred dedicated many years of his professional life to Keeler Brass, where he served as Plant Manager before retiring. His leadership, expertise, and dedication left a lasting impact on those he worked alongside. He was also immensely proud of his years of service with the Thornapple Township Fire Department, where his commitment to community and safety shone brightly.



Known for his infectious smile, quick wit, and love of telling jokes, Fred had a remarkable gift for bringing joy and laughter wherever he went. His warmth, generosity, and humor will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Fred is survived by his beloved wife of 30 years, Linda Ainsworth; his daughters, Amanda Dziewiatkowski and Jessica Holler; his stepchildren, Chris (Kim) Kropf, Mike (Stacey) Kropf, and Sara (Scott) Whisler; and his grandchildren, Breanna Griffin, Morgan Holler, Emily Kropf, Kenny Kropf, Robby Holler, Adia Whisler, Addison Whisler, Chase Whisler, Ellie Kropf, and Owen Kropf. He is also survived by many beloved aunts, uncles, cousins, and extended family, including in-laws.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Martha Ainsworth, and his brothers, Carl, Jim, and Dave Ainsworth.

Fred leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and treasured memories that will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and community.

Visitation will be held on Monday, Aug. 25, from 5–7 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church and Preschool in Caledonia. Additional visitation will take place on Tuesday, August 26, at 10 a.m., followed by the funeral service at 11 a.m. A luncheon will be served in the fellowship hall immediately following the service. For those unable to attend in person, the service will be livestreamed on the St. Paul Lutheran Church and Preschool Facebook page and YouTube channel.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests memorial contributions to Faith Hospice.

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Fire department to host blood drive Sept. 3

The Yankee Springs Township Fire Department, in cooperation with Versiti Blood Center, is hosting a blood drive from 2 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 3, at the fire station on Payne Lake Road.

Persons 17 years of age and weighing more than 110 pounds are eligible to donate. Appointments to donate are preferred but walk-ins are welcomed.

Those donating will be entered for a chance to win two tickets and a VIP experience to your favorite hometown football team.

For more information, persons may contact Versiti blood Center by calling 1-866-MIBLOOD or 269-795-9091. —*DM*

Public hearing to focus on public safety special assessment

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Members of the Gaines Township Board of Trustees will consider raising the township's yearly special assessment levy for public safety services to the maximum allowable amount after local residents have their say at a public hearing next month.

At their Aug. 11 meeting, trustees approved the scheduling of a public hearing during the board's regular monthly meeting on Sept. 8.

"You'll make the recommendation at that meeting," Township Manager Rod Weersing told board members. "This will be a public hearing so we can hear what the public has to say.

"You will have a copy of the budget prior to the Labor Day weekend," he added. "The draft budget will go in the board packet for the September meeting."

The agenda packet will be viewable online on the township's website, gainestownship.org.

"My recommendation is going to be to go to the max," Weersing said. "But you'll be able to make that decision after the public hearing and after you've had a chance to review the budget."



Members of the Gaines Township Board of Trustees discuss public safety services at their most recent board meeting Aug. 11. **Photo by James Gemmell**

Township staff will present the estimated costs for public safety services during the hearing and discuss recommendations that the yearly levy be lifted to the maximum 1.5 mills.

Trustees first voted in October 2021 to establish the 15-year adjustable assessment, citing the township's booming population and a corresponding increase in calls for police, fire and rescue services.

According to reports of a special meeting held at the time, township board members vowed to keep the annual assessment as low as possible.

The original levy of 0.6 mills for fiscal year 2021 generated $600,000 revenue to fund public safety services. For fiscal year 2022, the township board raised the special assessment rate to 0.75 mills.

And it has continued to rise, with the levy being set at 1.0 mills in 2023 and then 1.25 mills for 2024, helping generate about $1.6 million for public safety.

If adopted, the new levy will be placed on the 2025 tax roll. The average residential property owner would pay around $200 per year, compared to the current cost of about $160 annually.

Gaines Township officials have projected expenses of more than $3.5 million in fire and rescue services for fiscal year 2025, and more than $1.4 million for police services.

CEMETERIES

Continued from Page 3

Vander Stel said. "And then later on, once Dutton figures out where they're going to put the paths and everything, then we make a decision to buy that."

That was one possibility, according to Weersing.

"I think if you wanted to go with just Blain, I would go with one right now," he added. "(But) if you wanted to start preparing for Dutton, then my recommendation would be two."

The board voted 5-1 on a motion to approve one of the layout templates for the columbarium. Clerk Michael Brew cast the lone "no" vote, with another board member absent.

The board then voted 6-0 to purchase one columbarium each for the Blain and Dutton cemeteries.

The township clerk's office said it can provide details to residents who inquire about the cost to purchase a niche.

The township revised its cemetery ordinance in February for the first time in 47 years. The revision added a $50 administrative fee for township staff to research information, issue new burial-right certificates and update online records in the municipal data portal.

Another change states that the township will buy unneeded sites back at 50 percent of the current residential rate. Previously, the cemetery had stated that the township would buy back the burial rights for at the original price.

The cost to purchase a single burial plot in Gaines Township is $500 for a resident and $2,000 for a non-resident.

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School officials cut the purple ribbon in honor of the grand opening of the new Dutton Elementary School in Caledonia during ceremonies Wednesday, Aug. 20.



After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, families gathered outside to explore the new, barrier-free playground at Dutton Elementary School on Wednesday, Aug. 20.

OPENING

Continued from Page 1

senior at the high school this year and a first-grader here."

Winters said the new school was needed because the old school was aging and needed air conditioning.

"It was miserable for the staff and students with no air at the beginning and end of the school year," she said. "It's super exciting to see the new building and be able to be a part of it and see our community grow.

"My daughter is most excited about the gym, the lunchroom and the playground."

With a third-grader and first-grader attending the new school, Brian Dabakey plans on making more memories in Caledonia like he has for the last seven years.

"I think it will be pretty special from going to the oldest school in the district to the newest school," Dabakey said. "It will be quite the change for the kids.

"I know they are excited about it. We're excited about it," he added. "They want to see what the playground looks like."

For the Dabakeys and other CCS students, the upcoming 2025-26 school year starts Monday, Aug. 25.

Veitch is looking forward to the start of classes on Monday.

"I really feel blessed," Veitch said. "We had the bond in 2020 and then COVID happened and construction prices rose.

"We had some tough choices and I'm so grateful for the supplementary bond, that you believed in us and believed in this community to pass an additional bond to fulfill the dream that I am so excited to hand off to these kids and staff," he added. "Community, I thank you guys."

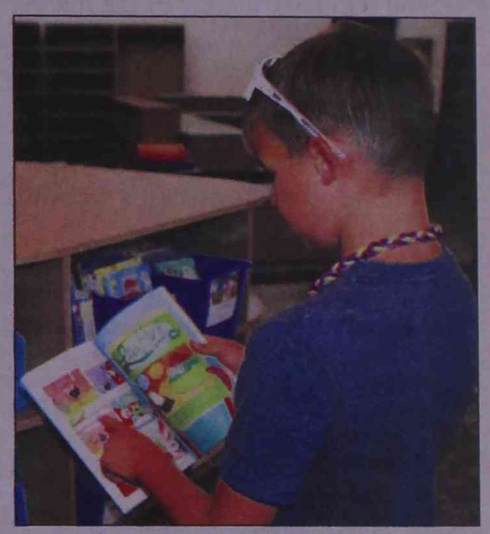
Veitch continued to address the crowd with enthusiasm throughout the ribbon cutting ceremony.

"The reason we are here today guys is I am so excited for our kids and staff," he said. "So excited that they can come into a state-of-the-art building with amazing classrooms they will get to enjoy.

"You'll see breakout classes that were intentionally designed for small group instruction to help all of our kids. You'll see a beautiful media center, beautiful classrooms that are designed for art, music and Spanish and an unbelievable gymnasium."

Veitch also reminded those in attendance to enjoy the new playground area.

"It warms my heart so much to have a barrier-free playground that all students can access the entire playground," he said. "I'm so excited for you staff and you students."



A student reads a book during the tour of the new Dutton Elementary School in Caledonia on Wednesday, Aug. 20.





Sporting News

Grand Re-Opening at The Ralph set for Tuesday

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

There was a press box in the parking lot Friday morning. It was in the stadium Friday evening.

The bleachers were still going up, and up and up.

Ralph E. Myers Stadium wasn't quite ready for the Caledonia High School football program's annual Purple and Gold preseason scrimmage Friday, Aug. 15. But all signs point to "The Ralph," as it became affectionately known under former head coach Derek Pennington, being ready for the Fighting Scot varsity football team to host Windsor Holy Names Catholic for the season opener Thursday, Aug. 28.

Caledonia Community Schools will host the 75th Anniversary Celebration and Grand Re-Opening of Ralph E. Myers Stadium, featuring a ribbon cutting ceremony Tuesday, Aug. 26. The event will celebrate the stadium's history and future, highlight the legacy of the 1950 Caledonia varsity football team, and connect alumni, students, and the community.

That event is scheduled to run from 6:30 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Caledonia Schools Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer, Caledonia High School Athletic Director Phil Miedema and Caledonia Education Foundation Executive Director Mallory Walsh plan to address the crowd beginning at 6:30 p.m. followed by the ribbon cutting. A walkthrough of the stadium, alumni story sharing and alumni director sign-up will go on between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The celebration continues at the first home football game, with more tributes to the 1950 football squad and some special remarks from Mark Uyl, Executive Director of the MHSAA.

The Purple and Gold scrimmage took place on the turf at Scotland Yard, home of the Caledonia High School lacrosse and soccer programs. The Caledonia varsity is led by first-year head coach Whitney Bell this season.



Caledonia new varsity head coach Whitney Bell directs his players during the annual Purple and Gold Scrimmage at Scotland Yard Friday, Aug. 15. Ralph E. Myers Stadium is slated for a grand re-opening Tuesday and to be ready for the Aug. 28 varsity season opener.



Caledonia sophomore quarterback Conlan Schultz breaks into the clear on a run during the Caledonia High School football program's Purple and Gold Scrimmage at Scotland Yard Friday, Aug. 15. **Photos by Brett Bremer**





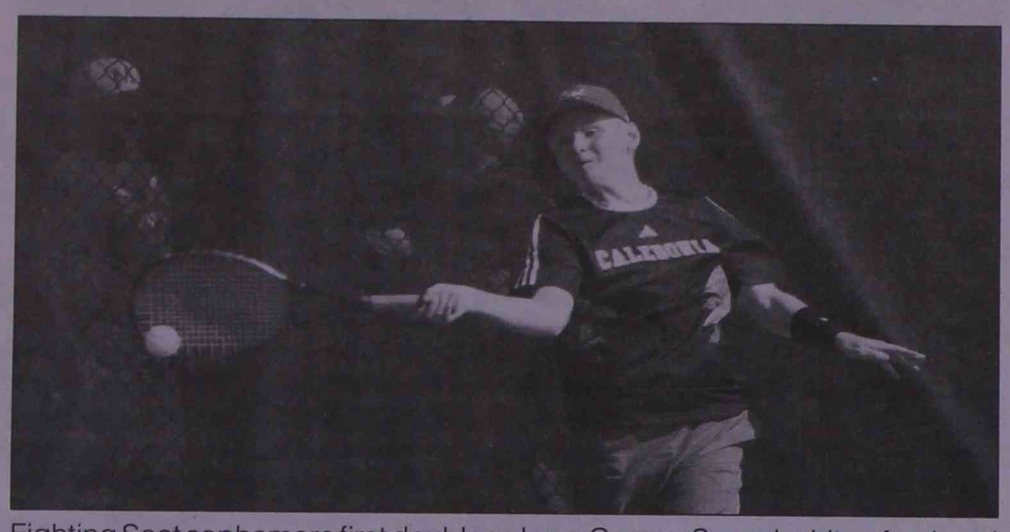
CHS tennis squad second at first two tourneys

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia varsity boys' tennis team opened the season by besting two out of three foes at its annual Dobber Wenger Invitational, which it hosted on the Bulldogs' courts in Byron Center.

The Bulldogs had the only team to best the Fighting Scots on the day. The Bulldogs swept their way to 8-0 wins in all three of its matches to take the tournament title.

Caledonia scored 5-3 wins over both Allegan and Mason.



Fighting Scot sophomore first doubles player Cooper Sowerby hits a forehand return during a match with senior partner Isaac Robotham at the Dobber Wenger Invitational in Byron Center Friday, Aug. 15. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Senior Hunter Derengowski bounced back from tough losses to the top players from Mason and Byron Center to score his first first singles win ever. Derengowski is a four-year varsity player for the Scots and is moving up from third singles this fall where he spent the past two campaigns.

He pulled out a win in a tiebreaker, 7-2, to take the first set against Allegan seniors Silas Neldon in their match and then secured the victory with a 6-2 win in the second set.

The Fighting Scots got a trio of victories from senior singles players in the victory over Allegan. Garrett Fales narrowly scored a 7-5, 7-6(5) victory at third singles over Tiger sophomore Carson Woodhams. At fourth singles, Colin Martin led 5-2 in the first set against Allegan junior John DeLaet before DeLaet retired from the match.

While the line-up has shuffled a bit, the Scots do have three regular singles players back from a year ago in Derengowski, Martin and Fales. Martin held down the first singles spot throughout 2024. Junior Quinn Stanley has earned that second singles spot so far for the Scots, after some time previously in the doubles line-up for the Caledonia varsity, but was bested by his Allegan foe Friday 6-1, 6-2.

Caledonia secured that win over Allegan with a couple of doubles victories. Senior Derick Prichard and junior Charlie Scott scored a 6-3, 7-6(6) win at third doubles. At number four, the Scots got a 6-1, 6-2 win from the duo of junior Isaac Judd and freshman Caleb Harrison.

The top two doubles flights both went to super tiebreakers with the Allegan guys pulling out wins in the end. The Scots won the opening set at both flights, but then couldn't quite hold on.

The first doubles match was an extended super tiebreaker with the Allegan pair of Noah Kuebler and Ian Gaulke pulling out a 12-10 win over CHS senior Isaac Robotham and sophomore Cooper Sowerby.

At second doubles, the Allegan team of Oliver Burnett and Wesley Goodspeed outscored CHS sophomores Quin Cook and Russell Grandon 10-7 in their super tiebreaker.

Fales and Martin both had wins on the singles side in the victory over Mason Friday. Grandon and Cook at second doubles pulled out a super tiebreaker 10-2 for a team point. Prichard and Scott at third doubles and Judd and Harrison at fourth doubles both took wins over the Mason Bulldogs too.

The Caledonia boys were right back at it Saturday at the Holland Tournament, where they finished second to Haslett. The Vikings took the day's title with 14 points ahead of Caledonia 13, Otsego 8 and Holland 5.

Cook and Grandon won the second singles flight with a perfect 3-0 day. They won all three matches in straight sets. Prichard and Scott matched that performance at third doubles, and the fourth doubles team of Judd and Harrison won its flight with a 3-0 mark too.

Caledonia was slated to travel to St Johns Friday, Aug. 22, for an annual evening invitational. Lowell comes to Caledonia for a dual on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

The OK Green Conference season will start for the Scots with another shot at Byron Center Sept. 10 at Caledonia High School.



Caledonia senior third single player Garrett Fales hits a serve in a tough two-set win over an opponent from Allegan Friday, Aug. 15, at the Dobber Wenger Invitational in Byron Center.



Members of the Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' tennis team celebrate their medal-winning performances at the four-team meet hosted by Mona Shores Monday. **Photo provided**

Mona Shores narrowly beats TK for invite title

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' tennis team went 2-1 as it opened the season at Muskegon Mona Shores Monday.

The Trojans took an 8-1 win over Western Michigan Christian, an 9-0 win over Portage Northern and fell in a tough dual with Mona Shores 5-4.

Mark Gielincki at fourth singles won a flight championship for the Trojans, and TK took titles at three of the five doubles flights. Sam Teachout and Layne Schilthroat won the first doubles title. Luke Archer and Aiden Riffel won at third doubles. Alex Eggleston and Mark Cuison won at fourth doubles.

Parker Sylvestre at second singles, the second doubles team of Graham Eden and Gideon Scott and the fifth doubles team of Joel Archer and Joey Krystyniak all placed second.

Mona Shores was a perfect 3-0 as a team with a 6-3 win over Portage Northern and a 9-0 win over Western Michigan Christian.

The host Sailors got a singles sweep and pulled out the fifth doubles match in their dual with TK for the team title. It was one of a couple extremely competitive duals on the day with the fourth singles match and three doubles flights decided in super tiebreakers.

Schilthroat and Teachout at number one doubles had one of two super tiebreaker victories for the Trojans outscoring the Sailor team of Connor Knop and Brennen Resiter 5-7, 6-1, (10-5). TK also had the second doubles team of Eden and Scott win 6-2, 6-1, Riffel and Luke Archer win 6-2, 6-2 at number three doubles and Eggleston and Cuison win 6-0, 5-7, (11-9) at fourth doubles.

The fifth doubles team of Issac Musnon and Bella Faoro helped the Sailors clinch the dual as they rallied for a 1-6, 6-3, (10-8) over Joel Archer and Krystyniak at number five doubles.

The top three Mona Shores singles players won fairly handily. There were three freshmen total competing in the top two flights. Mona Shores Reid Hackney beat the senior Wilkinson in the first singles match, and Mona Shores freshman Marcus Powell outscored fellow freshman Sylvestre in the second singles match.

Gielincki came the closest to pulling out a singles point for the Trojans in the dual with the hosts, but he fell to Micah Bement 6-3, 3-6, (10-7).

Mark Lepper playing third singles had his one win of the day in the sweep of Portage Northern for the Trojans. TK took an 9-0 victory over the Huskies, but five of the eight bouts were decided in super tiebreakers after players split sets. Lepper had one of those taking a 10-8 win in the end.

Gielincki at fourth singles won a super tiebreaker and the TK second, third and fourth doubles teams all won super tiebreakers against Portage Northern too.

Trojans take title at Montague tourney



The Thornapple Kellogg varsity boys' soccer team celebrates a perfect first day of the 2025 season after wins over Kelloggsville and Howard City Tri County at the Montague Invitational Saturday, Aug. 16. The Trojans defeated Kelloggsville 4-3 in a shootout and then knocked off Tri County 2-0 in the tournament championship game. TK is now 3-0-1 with a win over Zeeland East added to the tally Monday and a 0-0 draw at Wyoming Wednesday evening. **Photo provided**

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Scots see a lot of turnover in 2025 varsity line-up

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The summer has been a build-up of a mostly new scoring group for the Caledonia varsity girls' cross country team.

The program graduated four of its regular top seven scorers from the team that was third in the OK Green Conference and fourth at its Division 1 Regional last fall.

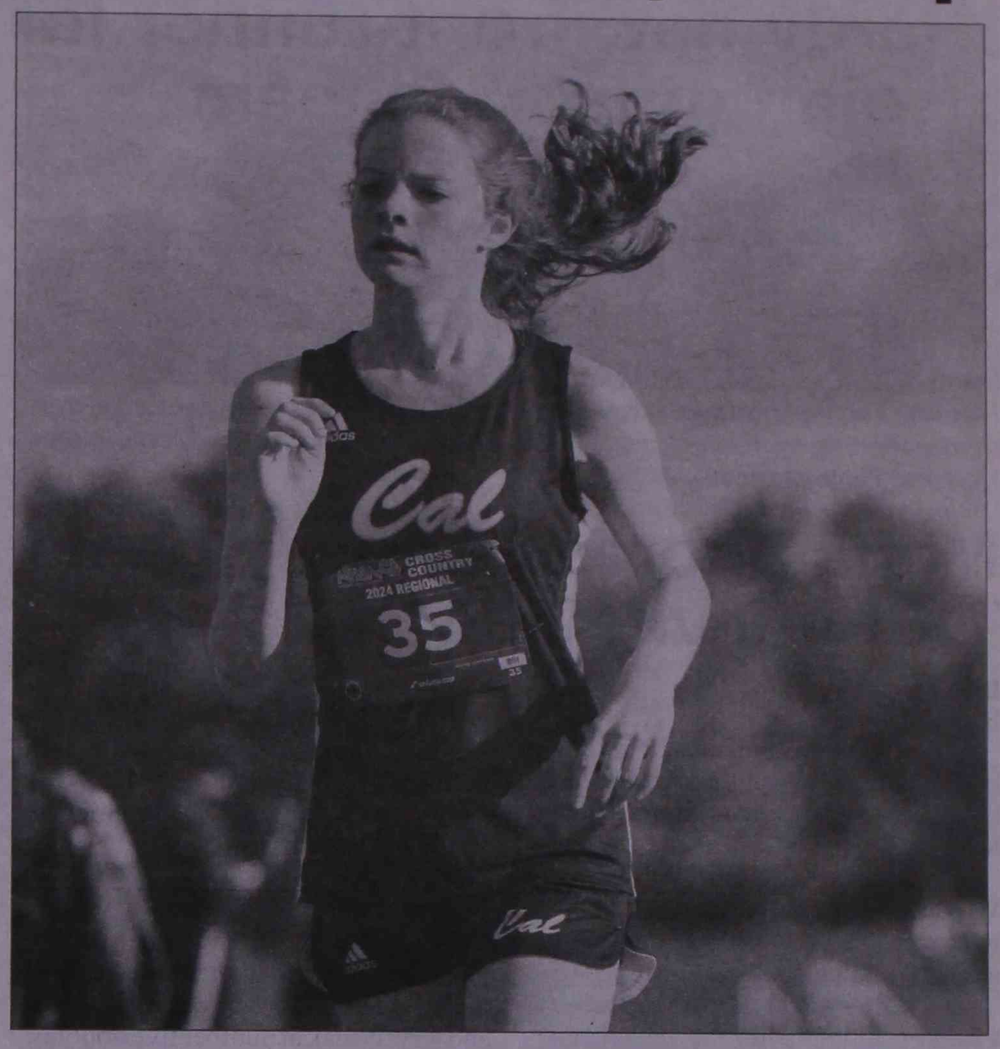
The top returnees for the squad are senior Hannah Bennett and junior Akaela Daman who were in the middle of the varsity scoring pack throughout much of 2024. Bennett ran her fastest race yet at last year's OK Green Conference Championship placing 15th in 20 minutes 11.9 seconds. She earned honorable mention all-conference for her efforts. Daman also had her fastest race of last season that day at Riverside Park.

"The senior leadership of Hannah Bennett and Sophie Douglass will really serve our team well as they did an outstanding job leading the girls throughout the summer," Caledonia head coach Ben Howell said. "We had a number of girls really dedicated with their summer miles this off season so I'm excited to see the improvements from Isabelle Horning, Elise Clarin, Charlie Bont, Nola Pearson, Cora Draft and Abby Tava."

He's also excited to see how freshman Kendall Van Ryn fits into the mis. He said she has really worked hard and put in a bunch of miles this summer too.

The Scots were set to see how they compete for the first time on Friday night, Aug. 22, at the annual South Christian Under the Lights Invite. Caledonia will also have its annual early morning dual with Thornapple Kellogg Friday, Aug. 29, at Caledonia High School.

"We are a long ways from being in state meet contention, but we're going to work hard throughout the season in hopes of putting ourselves in contention for earning one of those three spots that make it to the state meet. Last year we started in a similar position and worked our way into fourth place by the end of the year at the regional meet," Howell said.



Senior Hannah Bennett is one of two reguar varsity scorers back for the Caledonia varsity girls' cross country team this fall. **File photo**

Getting to the top of the OK Green Conference certainly won't be easy with talented squads at Byron Center and Jenison set to lead the way. Jenison had five of the conference's six fastest runners at the 2024 conference meet and only one was a senior.

The Jenison girls ran to a runner-up finish already this season at the Portage Central Early Bird Invitational Aug. 16, bested only by the host Mustangs at the 16-team meet.

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

Summary of Request: Public Services Special Assessment July 12, 2021, the Township Board of Trustees passed Resolution No. 2021-11, stating each year, on or before September 30, the Township Board would ascertain the Public Services costs for the coming year. Upon determining and establishing the amount to be assessed (based on unexpended funds, cash on hand, and the estimated projected costs for that year) shall hold a public hearing on the estimated costs and expenses, for police, public safety, rescue, and fire protection and on the distribution of the levy for the coming year (2026).

Property Address: All real properties in the Charter Township of Gaines

Date and Time of Hearing: September 08, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Location of Hearing: **Township Hall, 8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Caledonia, MI 49316.**

Any interested party may appear and be heard. Information related to this request may be inspected at the Gaines Township Hall, 8555 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, or contact the Township Manager's office at 616-698-6640.

In order to be entered into the public record, signed written comments must be received by 5PM on September 08, 2025.

Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations should contact Kim Triplett at 616-504-4332 one week prior to the meeting to request mobility, visual or any other assistance.

THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP BOARD
200 E MAIN ST.
MIDDLEVILLE, MI 49333
SYNOPSIS OF MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 11, 2025

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

Items approved:

1. Printed Agenda approved as presented.
2. Consent Agenda approved as presented.
3. Approved VK Civil expenditure for assistance in preparing the MI Health grant application.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41p.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.

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Hardy new front-runner for Trojan girls' X.C. team

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Thornapple Kellogg's Peyton Hardy built up to turn in two of her best times in two of the biggest races at the end of the 2024 season.

She broke the 21-minute mark at both the OK Gold Conference Championships where she placed fifth individually and at the Trojans' MHSAA Division 2 Regional Meet hosted by South Christian High School.

Hardy is the top returning race for the Trojan team this season, as 2025 graduate Ava Crews is off to run for Grand Valley State University.

The Thornapple Kellogg team has a strong group of scorers returning along with Hardy including senior Madison Kietzman, juniors Alaina McCrumb and Carmen Reynolds. That group helped TK to a seventh-place finish at regionals at the end of the season and a runner-up finish in the OK Gold Conference behind a talented, and young, South Christian team that qualified for the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 2 State Finals.

Kietzman is a four-year varsity runner who has pushed her PR down under the 21-minute mark a few times over the past couple years. She placed 12th at the conference championship meet last fall and has been top ten at the Barry County Meet in all three of her varsity seasons so far.

The TK ladies capped off their year in 2024 by winning another team title at the Barry County Meet.

TK head coach Sam Wilkinson said that there is a small group of three freshmen adding their talents to the team this season.

"We are excited to have them. We also have added junior Isla Tillema, who has a strong track pedigree which we are looking to develop on the cross country course as well," Wilkinson said. "This is not to discount our ambitious returners who are eager to improve and that I believe will make a positive impact on our team."

"We have a wonderful group of young ladies who are willing to work hard, support each other, and put their best foot forward. They are a competitive group. It's fun to see them go to work."

The competitive work was set to start Friday night, Aug. 22, as the TK teams were scheduled to head to South Christian for the Sailors' Annual Under the Lights Invitational. The Trojans compete again Friday, Aug. 29, at their annual Friday morning dual with the Fighting Scots at Caledonia High School.

"We are looking to be as competitive as we can in each race in which we toe the line. We are going to do our best to control what we can control while giving our best," Wilkinson said.

That South Christian team that won the OK Gold Conference last year will be the favorite again.

"We will all be doing what we can to chase them down. Placing in the top three in our conference would be pretty darn respectable and I believe we should be in the hunt for that," Wilkinson said.

The OK Gold Conference season begins with a race hosted by Grand Rapids Union Sept. 4. TK will host its annual Coach B Invitational at Gun Lake Sept. 8. That is the only "home" meet on the schedule for the TK team this fall.

Opening Game/Match and Key Games/Matches:

Our first meet will be at Under the Lights meet, on August 22nd, at South Christian, which is expected to be a fun meet once again. After that, we look forward to taking on Caledonia to have a more concentrated race without the bells and whistles of the Under the Lights meet.



Peyton Hardy closes in on the finish line at regionals at the end of the 2024 season. Now a junior, Hardy is the top returning runner for the TK varsity girls' cross country team this fall. **File photo**

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Seniors working in with junior returnees for TK golf

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Trojans lost a couple good seniors to graduation last spring, including one of the program's best golfers ever, but a contingent of sophomores who filled out the line-up for much of the season is back for a junior campaign.

There is a solid senior class too for the Trojans. While there aren't a ton of girls on the roster with a lot of varsity scoring experience, the team does bring back the trio of Vivian Hansson, Jordan Price and Sydney Martin who were all a part of the Trojans' five-team regional contingent last fall.

Hansson led the way at regionals a year ago, from that group of returnees, with a 35th-place finish in a field of over 60 golfers. She was 20th at last season's OK Gold Conference Championship.

The TK team was fourth in the OK Gold Conference a year ago.

Also back with the program this fall looking to score for the varsity are seniors Aalynn Pruis, Sophia Lahaie, Emma Reaser, Jersey Sias and Kara Smith. Junior Taylor Seif will look to add her skills to the varsity line-up too.

"We graduated a few very good golfers last year. We now have a young team experience wise, but they are hard workers," TK head coach Bob Kaminski said. "It will be interesting to see how much they improve this year."

A few of them have their baseline now. The team was 17th at the Kent County Classic Tuesday, Aug. 19. Hansson shot a 100 to lead the TK team. That put her 51st individually. Martin scored a 113, Lahaie a 117 and TK's fourth score was a 121 from the senior Smith.

The TK team followed that up by taking on Calvin Christian in a dual at Yankee Springs Golf Course Wednesday. They knocked off the Squires by a score of 208-214.

Martin had the low round for the day against Calvin Christian with a 44. Hansson shot a 49, Price a 53 and Reaser scored a 62.

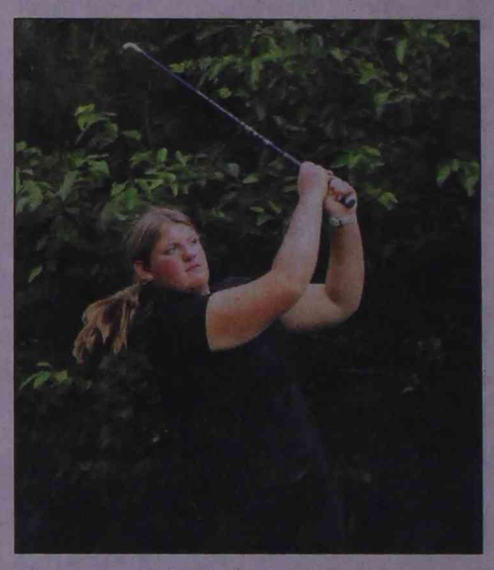
TK was set to host its annual TK Invitational at Yankee Springs Friday, Aug. 22. The OK Gold Conference season starts at Boulder Creek Golf Course Wednesday, Aug. 27, with Northview playing host.

Kaminski said he expects South Christian to be a strong squad again, and Northview and West Catholic will be challenging for spots in the top of the conference standings too.

"I am excited to see how we stack up with the other teams in our conference," Kaminski said.

"It should be a pretty competitive season this year," he added.

It was South Christian that ran away with the conference title last fall. The Sailors had four of the top five scorers at the conference championship, although graduation did take away some of that advantage.



Thornapple Kellogg's Vivian Hansson fires a tee shot during the 2024 TK Invitational at Yankee Springs. Hansson is one of three members of last year's regional squad back for the TK team this fall. **File photo**

