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SLAGEL AND GAYLORD SCORE VICTORIES AMONG STATE'S BEST AT MISCA MEET
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Around 10 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 18, more than 50 hikers gathered behind the Middleville Village Hall to hike down Main Street and up to Mt. Hope Cemetery, where a new one-mile section of the North Country Trail in Middleville enters into forested village property. **Photo by Amy Seymour**

Celebration hike in Middleville draws big crowd

Karen Turko-Ebright
Staff Writer

The Chief Noonday Chapter of the North Country Trail celebrated a mile-long section of newly constructed trail on Saturday, Oct. 18, with organizers counting more than 50 hikers at the event.

"Volunteers worked three long work days to open up this trail through dense undergrowth," said Eric Longman, the CNC president. "The new trail eliminates about a mile of roadwalk along Crane Road."

Around 10 a.m. last Saturday, the hikers gathered behind the Middleville Village Hall to hike down Main Street and up to Mt. Hope Cemetery, where the trail marked by blue blazes enters into forested village property. The trail stretched through a mature forest on private property to Crane Road.

The NCT cuts through Middleville State Game Area and eventually up into the Upper Peninsula, before the 4,900-mile pathway ends in North Dakota.

"Middleville is a great supporter of the NCT, being a trail town," said Former CNC president Jane Norton, now chairperson of the committee that planned last week's hike. "Hikers from Middleville and Barry County were there to support the new trail. The hike was 4.6 miles out and back from the village hall."

A ribbon-cutting was held at the newly installed gate at Mt. Hope Cemetery, where local leaders made a series of brief comments, including speeches by Village Manager Craig Stolsonburg, North Country Trail Association representative Kate Lemon, Barry County Commissioner Catherine Getty and Nate Beard, the village's interim Department of Public Works supervisor.

"The safety of getting the trail off-

See **HIKE** on 3

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CHS equestrian team brings home state titles



The Caledonia High School equestrian team celebrated not one, but two state championships Sunday, Oct. 12, at the Midland County Fairgrounds. The Fighting Scots won Division A and Division E titles at the 2025 Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association State Championships. The program has now won seven state championships since notching its first in 2002 with the previous five coming in Division A. Team members this fall include (front row, from left) Loralei DeHoek, Sophie Edmondson, Nina Stiver, Sadie Barnes, Sophie Burnis, Layla Bouwens, Maci Nichols, Hailey Bouwens, (back) Maddie Lockwood, Matt DeHoek, Bryn Malocu, Grace Rabbit, Amelia Hodges, head coach Kim Fredericks and Ella Fredericks. **See more on page 14.** **Courtesy photo**

Gaines Twp. set to finalize '26 budget

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

The Gaines Charter Township Board will likely vote at its Nov. 10 meeting on a final budget plan for fiscal year 2026.

The township's tentative general budget is $7.91 million. In comparison, the Michigan Legislature recently approved an approximately $81 billion state budget in early October.

"With the latest revision, the township will be losing around $137,000 in constitutional revenue sharing," stated Township Manager Rod Weersing. "That hits the general fund budget from what was originally projected for 2026."

Michigan townships will lose about $63 million, or 6.3%, in constitutional revenue sharing for FY 2026. That is because the new state budget will remove the state sales tax from gasoline beginning Jan. 1, 2026. Townships will lose revenue from the 6% tax on gasoline.

However, the state has implemented several mechanisms to partially compensate for the loss of constitutional revenue sharing. Lawmakers enacted a new 24% wholesale tax on marijuana that's projected to generate about $420 million in annual revenue that will go to improve roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

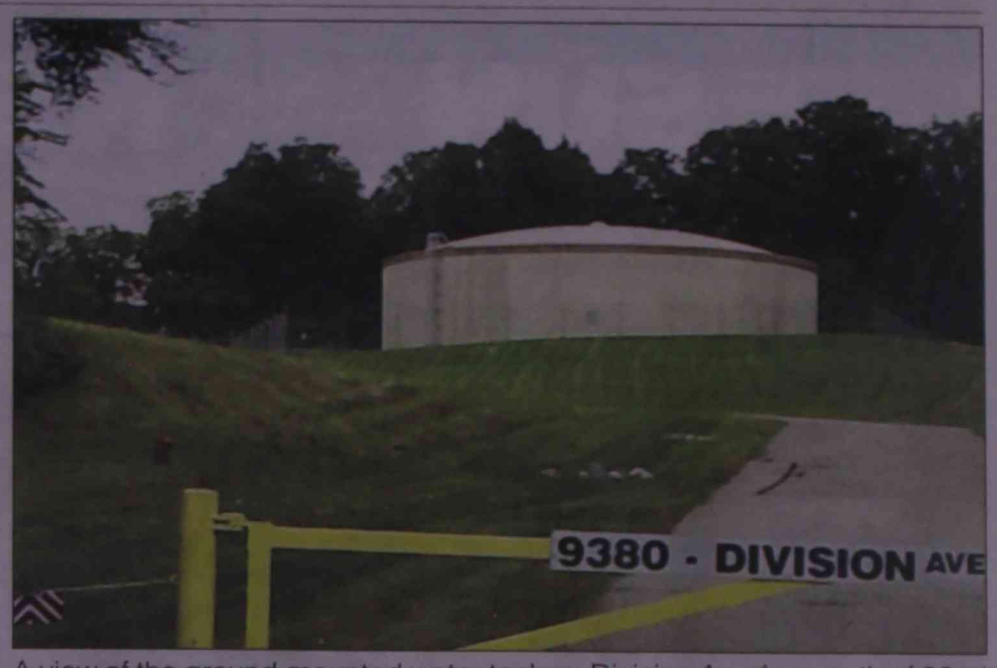
Also, a new public safety grant program provides funding for townships to use for public safety operational and capital expenditures.

Weersing said the new public safety revenue should add about $81,000 to the township budget. Though, the overall net revenue-sharing loss from original projections will be about $56,000.

If the current projections hold up, he added Gaines Township's numbers could actually surpass the 2025 approved budget for revenue sharing by around $33,000.

While working to finalize budget plans, township officials are expecting the arrival of a new $1.7 million platform fire truck from Wisconsin-based Pierce Manufacturing in early November.

Also, Weersing said a project to install a ground-mounted water-storage tank along Patterson Avenue, about half a mile south of 68th Street, is set to go out for bids. Some officials have estimated it will cost more than $5 million to build the tank and install the connecting pipelines.



A view of the ground-mounted water tank on Division Avenue, south of 92nd Street, in Byron Township, that is used by Byron and Gaines townships. **Photo by James Gemmell**

The water tank will have a capacity of 2-million gallons and will be paid through Gaines Township's water fund, while the cost of the 40-foot-wide tank will be evenly split between Byron and Gaines townships.

They received a notification from the City of Wyoming in the summer of 2024 that the Byron-Gaines Utility Authority (BGUA) must increase its water-storage capacity. The BGUA is jointly run by both townships and operates the water and sewer systems for both municipalities.

Gaines has only one connection to the Wyoming water system and there has been a long-running concern among some township officials about a potential break in that connection at some point in time. That could leave a large portion of the township without a public water supply.

Officials have also stated a second connection with the Wyoming water system might cost more than $20 million.

"We have a water tank that we have to build," Gaines Township Trustee Tim Haagsma said at the board's Oct. 13 meeting. "That project is going to be minor in price compared to the second water connection that is desperately needed and is the next thing that the Sewer and Water Committee engineer is working on.

"I've said this before, that that's going to be significant in cost," he added. "We need to have the money available to do that. Once we do that, that (water and sewer) fund may be lower than I think we would like."

Officials are also having to look at addressing aging infrastructure, with more than 214 miles of underground water mains in Byron and Gaines townships.

"We have infrastructure that's in the ground that's older than 50 years, and

See **BUDGET** on 8



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Officials prepare for election, voting equipment changes

James Gemmell
Contributing Writer

Nearly every municipality in Michigan will have to replace its voting equipment sooner than later, as the optical scan voting machines that were widely installed in 2017 approach the end of their projected 10-year lifespans.

"So right now, the (state) Bureau of Elections in Lansing is going through and looking at what equipment they will be endorsing," Gaines Charter Township Clerk Michael Brew said. "They're going through tests of election equipment. They're putting it through rigorous testing, making sure that it accomplishes what they want to accomplish – its accuracy, all the rest of that stuff."

Many vendors of voting equipment are seeking the endorsement of the Bureau of Elections.

The state has already started securing new equipment, which comes with advanced data encryption. And state officials say they're expecting new contracts for voting systems to be finalized soon.

Several municipalities already are asking the state to help fund the upgrades.

Kent County Clerk/Register of Deeds Lisa Posthumus Lyons said it is not certain when the state Bureau of Elections will begin the next round of election-equipment purchasing.

"But to be ready, our messages to the cities and townships since 2017 have been to encourage the saving of dollars for the next purchase, as it is not anticipated that federal dollars will be available," she said.

The recently approved state 2026 budget reportedly allocates $28.6 million for election administration and services. That includes $9.6 million to strengthen election security, with equipment upgrades and cybersecurity testing included in that funding.

In September, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission announced that it had awarded $15 million in federal funding to states for election administration and security. The grant money includes a 20% match that states must make available within two years after it is disbursed. Michigan was awarded $272,272 with a required match amount of $54,545.

On Oct. 9, the Toronto-based election vendor Dominion Voting Systems was sold to Liberty Vote, based in St. Louis, Mo. Dominion's election equipment was used in 27 states last year.

Municipalities throughout Kent County have used Dominion Voting Systems equipment since the fall of 2017. Michigan voters still marked paper ballots, and the Dominion machines tabulated them electronically. That produced a paper trail for manual recounts and audits.

"The current voting equipment used in Kent County was purchased and implemented in 2017 on a 10-year contract," Posthumus Lyons said.

"While the current contract is coming up on its 10th year, our equipment is not at the end of its lifespan. The certification remains valid, and all equipment is well-maintained and tested for accuracy prior to each election," she added.

Two questions will appear on the Nov. 4 general election ballot in Gaines Township. One is for a 10-year renewal of a regional enhancement millage of 0.9 mills in the Kent Intermediate School District. The other is a new $110 million bond proposal in the Byron Center Public Schools.



The Nov. 4 general election is fast approaching. **Photo by James Gemmell**

Brew said he is not anticipating a big voter turnout for the off-year election.

"Just like in May, it probably will be a slower election," he said. "We're noticing that the absentee ballots are very, very slow in coming in. But it may be that, nearer to the date of the election we'll get a big influx of absentee ballots."

The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

"If you happen to arrive right at 8 p.m., you'll still be able to stand in line and vote. But anybody after 8 o'clock, we have to cut it off," Brew said.

Absentee ballots can be turned in until 8 p.m. that evening.

"At that point, we have to lock the drop boxes and they would no longer be accepted," Brew said.

See **ELECTION** on 6





HIKE

Continued from Page 1

road was a big win for all hikers," Norton said. "This message was heard from all the speakers."

Longman added the new section of trail "opens up a great opportunity for Middleville" to attract more hikers to local restaurants, shops and area businesses in the downtown area.

The CNC, with 533 members, is responsible for 120 miles of the NCT as it travels through Calhoun, Kalamazoo and Barry counties. Monthly hikes are open to anyone and monthly workdays that help maintain the quality of the trail are done most months.

More information may be found online at the NCTA website, northcountrytrail.org/.

Obituaries

Thomas David Fischer

Thomas David Fischer, born January 6, 1945, passed away peacefully on October 18, 2025 at the age of 81.

Tom was born in Holland, MI, grew up in Caledonia and later retired with his wife Carolyn in Northport.

Thomas was preceded in death by his wife Carolyn in February 2024. They were married for 58 years.

Tom is survived by his son, Vincent (Michelle) Fischer; daughter, Lisa (Steve) Kent; grandchildren, Brady (Christina) Fischer, Hailey (Jeff) VanDuyn, Hillary (Rick) Blain, Austin (Laura) Fischer, Andrew (Lauren) Kent; great grandchildren, Olivia, Kenzie, Mia, Wesley, Cason, Kingsley, Kartor, Letty, Boston, Woodrow and baby Fischer expected in February. Tom is survived by his sisters, Judy VanderKolk and Connie Lynch, brothers and sisters-in-law, and many nieces and nephews.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Warren and Thea Fischer; grandson, Trent; sister, Kathy (Tom) Tolan and brother, David (Melissa) Fischer.

Tom was an excavator for many years in Caledonia and surrounding areas; he owned a lawn and garden store by Gun Lake and later raised buffalo, which he truly enjoyed.

Tom loved animals and the outdoors. Tom brought his family and friends on many adventures with his business ventures and



creative, fun-loving mind.

Tom and Carolyn touched many people with their compassion and their willingness to help others. Tom enjoyed entertaining friends, dancing and mostly being with his family. Tom helped create so many great memories that his family and friends will cherish forever.

Tom was a wonderful example of hard work, unconditional love, resilience, responsibility, integrity, true love and kindness. Tom wrote his own story right until the end!

The family would like to thank the people who worked at Woodlawn Meadows where Tom was a resident for the last several months of his life. They took wonderful care of him and showed great compassion towards him, along with Interim Home Care and Hospice who lovingly cared for him when he needed it most.

A private family graveside service will take place on October 27, 2025.

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MIDDLEVILLE TOPS 546

The Oct. 20 meeting opened with roll call and the secretary's report. There are now two fish in the fishbowl.

Perimenopause is the beginning of the end of a women's reproductive years and comes with a lot of hormonal changes. During that time, women notice shifts in mood, sleep and weight. Muscle mass lessens with age, which slows metabolism. Less energy to function occurs. Unless we do strength training or physical activity, we will gain weight. Once estrogen lessens, where fat is stored changes. We tend to accumulate it around the waist instead of the hips or thighs, which in turn is linked to higher insulin, type 2 diabetes or heart disease. To manage weight during this time, keep moving. Even a little helps. Eat to feel good and fuel the body. Focus on sleep and stress. Ask for help when symptoms become overwhelming. Menopause is not the end of anything—just a new beginning.

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

Virginia lost 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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AUCTIONS

POLICE AUCTION- VIN # 1GNKRGKD3HJ342696. Monday, October 27th at 9am at Tires 2000 Middleville.

Caledonia High School singers selected by the MSVMA Regional Honors Choir



Congratulations are being given to 18 singers from the Caledonia High School choir program for being selected to the Michigan School Vocal Music Association Regional Honors Choir. These students auditioned and were chosen to perform with the top singers from area schools and will have the opportunity to audition for the state honors choir in December. The singers, pictured here, include (front row, from left) Ella Rigley, Lydia Shoesmith, Kat Jaquish, Alma Cortes Dias, Lilliana Klein, Charlie Scott, Addison Cook, Alister Brew, (back row) Sophie Steenwyk, Benji Rewa, Allison Malone, Caleb Parlin, Savannah Robinson, Zahara Muriithi and Malachi Hanson. Honored vocalists not pictured include Kylee Zimmerer, Derick Prichard and Parker Diemer. **Courtesy photo**

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Serenity Village nears completion, welcomes new board member

Officials with Serenity Village, an end-of-life care facility, announced that its location in Barry County is nearing completion.

According to a statement by Serenity Village, the news marks a milestone toward opening its doors to serve terminally ill residents from Barry County and surrounding communities.

As Serenity Village prepares to welcome its first guests, officials welcomed Fred Jacobs as the newest member of the organization's board of directors.

"We are thrilled to have Fred Jacobs join our board," said Stephanie Fekkes, Serenity Village chairperson. "His insight and dedication to compassionate care align perfectly with our values and vision."

With construction nearly complete, Serenity Village is also launching a "Year-End Giving Campaign" to help furnish the home, train volunteers and ensure operational readiness.

Persons may make a secure contribution online at serenitybc.org or via mail to Serenity Village, P.O. Box 414, Hastings, MI 49058-0414.

For more information, individuals may also email director@serenitybc.org. — *DM*



Serenity Village, an end-of-life care facility, announced recently that its location in Barry County is nearing completion. Last month, the facility opened its doors to the public for an open house. **File photo**

Supper club hosting free sourdough workshop, plant-based dinner Nov. 2

Fall has arrived, and a local club is offering locals an opportunity to learn how to bake homemade bread perfect for pairing with soups and other warm meals. The Hastings Healthy Living Supper Club is hosting a free workshop at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 2, that will teach attendees the ins and outs of baking sourdough bread.

The free workshop, which will also provide a plant-based dinner for attendees, will be held at the Hastings Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Attendees can expect to watch a demonstration by guest instructor Kasey McFarland, an expert sourdough baker. McFarland will walk participants through how to make the perfect loaf while they enjoy a meal featuring vegetarian soups and warm sourdough bread.

Participants can browse sourdough starter, bread and other goodies available for purchase.

The workshop and dinner are free to attend; goodwill donations will be accepted.

The dinner and workshop will be at the Hastings Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 904 Terry Lane, off Star School Road, in Hastings.

Those interested in the workshop are asked to register by Thursday, Oct. 30, to reserve a dinner plate. Organizers say spots are filling up quickly. Participants can reserve their seats by calling or texting 269-804-9959 or emailing Hhealthyliving-supperclub@gmail.com

— *MM*

ELECTION

Continued from Page 3

Local voters may request an absentee ballot until 4 p.m. on Nov. 3.

"If you haven't received your ballot, or if you need to spoil your ballot for whatever reason, you can certainly come into the township office and we will replace your ballot," Brew said. "Or get you a ballot if you haven't received one. Or, if you find that you're going to be out of town on election day."

There is no in-person early voting in Gaines Township for the November election. According to local officials, that is only required for statewide and federal elections and is left up to the discretion of local clerks on whether they would allow early in-person voting.

Brew said Gaines Township is not hosting early voting due to the cost considerations.

"We will have to do early voting next year for the statewide elections and any federal elections," he added.

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Building Brands

Let go of your ego and brand yourself a team player


Emily Caswell

The team at View Newspaper Group makes it our mission to give back to the communities we serve. We do this in many ways, including sponsorships and donations, which last year totaled more than $180,000. That is in addition to the thousands of dollars of free and discounted advertising space we offer nonprofits to share their mission, promote an upcoming fundraiser and more. View team members also give of their time and talent by serving on area nonprofit boards, being active members of area service clubs and volunteering where needed throughout the community.

Giving back is a huge point of pride for our organization, so a few years ago when I was asked by a local nonprofit to emcee their annual fundraising event I was happy to do so.

This particular event is fun and loud and since it's hosted near Halloween has an annual theme to encourage attendees to dress up. Of course, I dress up too. In past years I've been careful to pick something comfortable as I'm on stage for several hours. This year I did the same, but my costume idea required a wig. I had never worn a wig and greatly underestimated how wildly uncomfortable it would be. Plus, the wig would not stay in place so I was constantly adjusting it. After a few minutes on stage it was not looking good. As I stood there gazing out at more than 200 community supporters I thought to myself, it's a good thing I don't have a big ego.

While I wished I could have executed the costume with a bit more talent, in truth I don't really care how I looked on stage. No one else did either. The event was a huge success, attendees had tons of fun and the nonprofit raised much-needed funds for their mission. My faulty wig played no role.

As I worried what to wear the following week to a speaking engagement I thought back to my failed costume. I realized that just as no one cared about that, no one cared what I wore to the lunch meeting either. They cared about what I was going to share with them about View Newspaper Group.

In the business world appearances (and fashion!) are important to an extent. What's more important is that you are confident. But there is a big difference between being confident and having a big ego.

An article from *entrepreneur.com* sums up those differences. "... confidence is a requirement: It drives you to realize your vision, and gives you the resilience to pick yourself up when you hit a roadblock. It's having faith in your abilities and believing in yourself. In contrast, ego is self-interested. It seeks approval, accolades and validation. It's resistant to feedback. In life, ego can be annoying to those around you. In the workplace, it can break your career. Whereas confidence is fueled by passion and commitment to success, an egocentric outlook closes your mind to new solutions and keeps you from growing."

The article goes on to discuss some of the risks an inflated ego can pose to your business, your brand and you as a business leader. Here is my take on a few of the worst offenses. If you let your ego rule, you may:

- **Stop listening:** From the article, "Being egocentric restricts the ability to listen to other points of view and other people's concerns. Soliciting advice from others — be it friends, partners, investors or mentors — is the best way to bring fresh ideas and perspectives to your business."
- **Prioritize yourself over the business:** In some cases you may be the business (or least the face of it) so the two are intertwined and that's a good thing. The article points out that the key is making sure your team members, customers and clients are still a part of the decisions you make.
- **Take all the credit:** If you ever catch me taking sole credit for any success at View Newspaper Group, please stop me. Everything we do in this organization is fueled by our leaders and our hardworking team members. I've seen many people in leadership roles say things like "I came up with this campaign ..." What? I don't think so. No one works in a silo. Maybe you developed the campaign language, for example, but who inspired you, who supported you while you took time to brainstorm, who put the campaign in motion through graphic design? There is no "I" in team.
- **Be lame:** If your ego is too big to wear an ill-fitting wig on stage in front of 200 people, you are probably a little lame. Take the work seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously.

When is a time you've had to set your ego aside to succeed? Email me at *ecaswell@mihomepaper.com.*

Emily Caswell is the Brand Manager for VIEW Group, the branding division of View Newspaper Group.

Legal advice offered at no cost to Barry County seniors

The Legal Services of South Central Michigan-Battle Creek office will conduct in-person interviews for legal advice and possible representation, without charge, to interested Barry County seniors next month.

Those who wish to speak with an attorney should visit the Barry County Commission on Aging, 320 W. Woodlawn Ave. in Hastings, between 10 a.m. and noon on Wednesday, Nov. 5.

Legal Services of South Central Michigan-Battle Creek office is a nonprofit organization that provides legal assistance, representation and education to low-income people in Calhoun and Branch counties and seniors in Barry, Branch, Calhoun and St. Joseph counties. The agency seeks, through its board, staff, volunteers and pro bono attorneys, to ensure that its clients are given equal access to the justice system. The advice and counsel at the senior sites are funded primarily the CareWell Services Southwest through the Michigan Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports under the Older Americans Act of 1965. — *MM*

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Hunters help feed those in need with record donations

A Michigan Department of Natural Resources program connecting donors, wild game processors and charities to help feed those in need reportedly processed 140,000 pounds of donated venison during fiscal year 2025, which ended Sept. 30.

That equates to more than 560,000 servings of venison and sets a new annual record for the program, which allows hunters to share their harvest by donating deer at participating processors and helps distribute venison donations across Michigan.

"Every year it seems like more hunters choose to donate their harvest to the program, which helps feed even more of our neighbors across the state," said Hunters Feeding Michigan program specialist Joe Presgrove. "I frequently receive calls and letters from the local food pantries thanking the program for providing much needed protein to their communities."

The success of what Presgrove calls "such an amazing program" is largely due to the hunters who choose to donate their harvest, the individuals who donate money toward processing expenses, the hardworking, dedicated processors, and the Food Bank Council of Michigan and the Feeding America food distribution network.

Since 2007, the program has provided more than 3 million servings of protein-rich venison to those in need.

The DNR urges outdoor recreationists, when purchasing their licenses or permits, to consider adding a monetary donation to Hunters Feeding Michigan.

"Your contribution covers processing costs, turning donated deer into meals," Presgrove said. "A donation of just $3 provides a venison meal for over four Michiganders."

For more information about the program, visit Michigan.gov/HuntersFeedingMichigan. — *DM*

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BUDGET

Continued from Page 8

we need to make sure that we have the money (available)," Haagsma said.

Treasurer Laurie Lemke noted it is impossible to know when there might be another major pipe break in Gaines Township.

"There is no way to predict it," she said. "We just have to respond when it happens."

"If you want to see a catastrophic cost of a sewer project, look at the North Kent Sewer Authority when they had to align miles of pipe because the bottom was all gone," Haagsma added, referring to a June 2024 water main break that caused damage to about 200 homes.

But, Lemke said the township has "large reserves" for water and sewer services.

"We've got $28 million in case they bust a pipe," she said.

However, those reserve funds can only be spent on water and sewer. Just as the $2.3 million in building department reserves is dedicated in the township budget strictly for building.

"If we knew that the revenue sharing was the same this year as last year, I would feel better with us prioritizing some of these things and saying, 'Yeah, let's go for it,'" added township clerk Michael Brew. "But the different way that the state has come up with their calculations on what they're going to give us in revenue sharing scares me."

Brew said that Gaines Township eventually will also have to pay its share of the cost when Kent County decides to purchase updated voting equipment, possibly within a couple of years.

"This is $160,000 that's going to come out of the township," he said. "We know that that's coming."

Parks and trails are yet another issue for local officials, with Township Supervisor Bob Terpstra making them a priority since taking office nearly a year ago. And Parks and Trails Committee chairwoman Dana Lehmann has been pressing the township board to approve funding for park projects.

"I just don't know at this point where we could realistically say, 'Yeah, there's going to be money available for all of these things, or some of these things," Brew said.

Given the budget uncertainty, Terpstra said he does not know which parts of the parks and trails initiatives to pursue. Weersing said there has been discussion about hiring a consultant to do a study on what is feasible.

"He (would) give us some good, viable ideas on the park, the landscape and what would fit well where," Lemke said.

Trustee Rob DeWard said the board should find out what residents are actually willing to pay for park improvements by putting a millage request on the ballot.

"If they want it, let's find out through a millage," he said. "Let them vote for it. Let them tell us how bad they want it."

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SEN. ALBERT: Despite positive steps, Michigan's state budget remains unsustainable

Sen. Thomas Albert

It took much longer than it should have, but Michigan finally adopted a new state budget shortly after the new fiscal year began Oct. 1.



State Senator Thomas Albert

There are some positives in this new budget, and I am thankful that it was adopted in a way that avoided disruption in state services. But I voted against the budget plan because, overall, it is unsustainable moving forward.

This structural problem began when Michigan Democrats burned through a $9 billion state budget surplus a few years ago — needlessly expanding the size of state government instead of investing in infrastructure, saving money or lowering taxes.

Despite Republicans' best efforts to rein in spending, the newly approved budget relies too heavily on new taxes and tax shifts. Legislative leaders already acknowledge that annual budgets in the coming years will likely be hundreds of millions of dollars short, which would require more cuts — or worse, more taxes and fees — to remain balanced as required by state law.

The additional investment in Michigan roads outlined in this budget — ramping up to $1.9 billion annually — is desperately needed, but it relies too heavily on tax increases and missed opportunities to capitalize on recent tax changes at the federal level. Ultimately, these costs will be passed along to Michiganders through higher prices or lost jobs.

The budget deal separates or "decouples" Michigan from some recent changes in federal tax law, costing state businesses an estimated $540 million more than they would otherwise have paid in the new fiscal year. Worse, it makes Michigan less competitive moving forward. Why would businesses create new jobs here when there will be a significant tax advantage in neighboring states?

A new wholesale tax on marijuana products is expected to cost businesses and taxpayers roughly $420 million, although I highly doubt it will rise that much. The marijuana industry is already suing in an effort to block its implementation.

The budget deal would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to restructure an assessment on health insurance providers that raises about $650 million a year. This cost is primarily passed along to Michiganders through higher insurance premiums, and a state agency should not have that kind of authority.

As part of the roads deal, local governments will miss out on an estimated $63 million in constitutional revenue sharing that helps communities pay for police, fire and other services. This reduction hits rural townships particularly hard. While I support investments in Michigan schools, this budget spends money in the same ways we always have — which is unlikely to produce better results. Michigan ranks below the national average in achievement test scores despite spending more per student than most states. This plan does not address glaring issues with chronic absenteeism and only gives lip service to cellphone distractions in schools.

Would it be better to spend $200 million on the governor's plan to add accountability and resources for failing schools or to give one-time bonuses to educators regardless of student performance? Students would have been better served by leaving compensation solely to local bargaining and focusing our attention on failing schools. Unfortunately, the governor's targeted improvement plan will have to wait.

I also disagree with the decision to shift an additional $400 million from the K-12 School Aid Fund to universities, which again is part of funding shifts to free up money for road repairs.

House Republicans deserve credit for some significant achievements as they negotiated with a Democratic-led Senate and a Democratic governor. I applaud the decision not to renew funding for the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve Fund, a failed economic development program I have sought to eliminate for the past few years.

New transparency requirements ultimately will help reduce spending on pet projects and hopefully screen out some of the undeserving recipients. The budget plan also takes a step toward reining in the size of state government by eliminating 2,000 "ghost employee" positions that, for the most part, have remained unfilled.

It is difficult to craft a state budget that everyone will be happy with when political power is divided. But we cannot continue down the unsustainable path of raising taxes and making life more expensive for Michiganders.

State Sen. Thomas Albert represents the 18th District, which includes Barry County and portions of Allegan, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Kent and Ionia counties.

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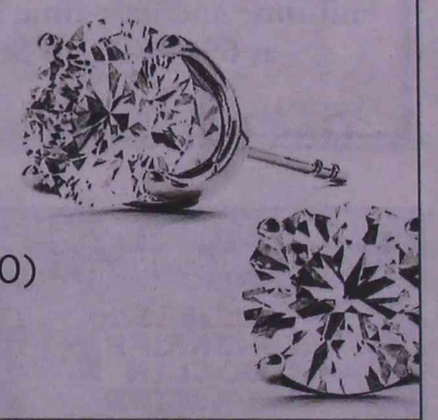
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Youth Advisory Council students gathered in costume downtown Saturday, soliciting donations for the Barry County Humane Society. **Photo by Hunter McLaren**



Thornapple Kellogg students Katie Scobey, Chloe Yates and Meghan Skidmore raise funds for the Barry County Humane Society during the YAC Roof Sit on Saturday.

YAC Roof Sit raises $2,500 for Barry County Humane Society

Hunter McLaren
Contributing Writer

The Youth Advisory Council successfully raised nearly $2,500 for the Barry County Humane Society during its annual "roof sit" Saturday.

The YAC is a board made up entirely of Barry County students created by the Barry Community Foundation in 1996. YAC members meet to discuss community needs throughout the county, running fundraisers and tackling community service projects. YAC members also approve tens of thousands of dollars in grant funding to various Barry County organizations every year.

This year, students chose the Barry County Humane Society because of a large and unexpected intake of cats at the shelter this year. The costs will help cover costs from spaying/neutering, food and medicine. Although the fundraiser has been called a roof sit since its inception, YAC students have never actually sat on a roof. For a time, they did sit on scaffolding, although that was discontinued due to safety and liability reasons.

Now students gather downtown to raise awareness, collect donations from passersby and go door-to-door. Delton Kellogg sophomore Alyce Donley said she joined YAC after attending last year's roof sit. The group is always accepting new members, and Donley encourages anyone interested to look them up on social media and talk to their school advisors about joining.

"I came to this last year and became a part of YAC," Donley said. "It's a very fun time and you can make a lot of friends here."

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TK girls even conference record at Wyoming, get two wins at quad

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Thornapple Kellogg varsity volleyball team evened its OK Gold Conference record at 5-5 with a three-set win at Wyoming Tuesday evening.

The Trojans won by the scores of 25-17, 25-23, 25-17.

TK closes the conference season in the week ahead with home matches against West Catholic Monday,and against Wayland Wednesday, Oct. 29.

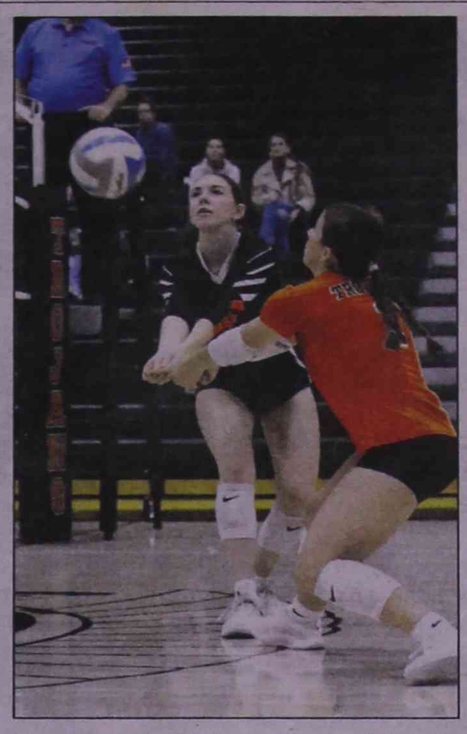
TK also had a home quad on the schedule for Thursday, Oct. 23. That was the second Thursday in a row the Trojans filled the high school gymnasium with volleyball.

Sparta swept through its three opponents at the Thornapple Kellogg Quad in Middleville Thursday, Oct. 16, pulling out two tough sets against the host Trojans to finish the day as the top team.

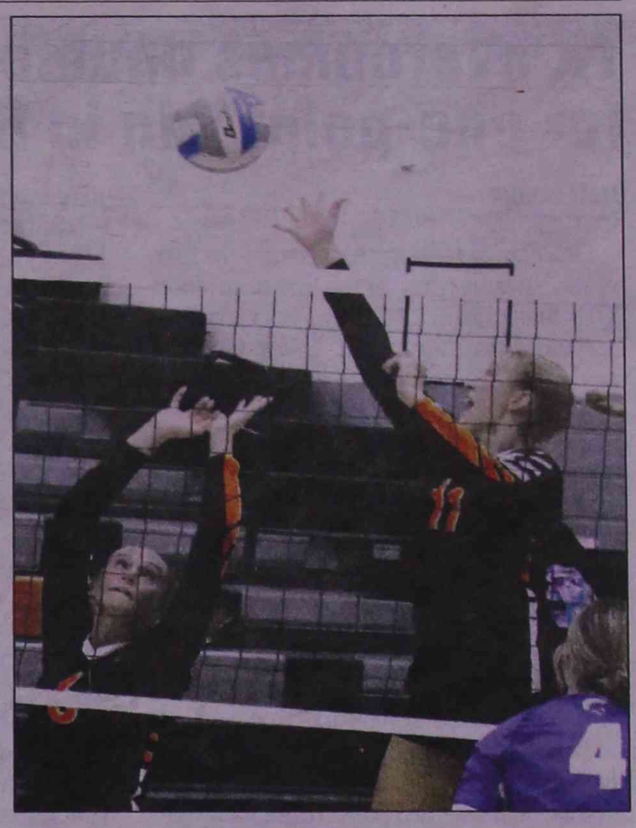
Sparta's win over the host Trojans was by the scores of 26-24, 26-24. TK beat the Tri-Unity Christian girls 25-12, 25-17. The Trojans closed the day with a 25-16, 25-14 win over the visiting Saxons.

In that match with the Spartans, the TK ladies had late leads that they just couldn't quite close out. TK had two shots at set point in the opening set before the Spartans took the win. TK had a five-point lead at 19-14 in set number two, but the Spartans fought back to lead 20-19 and then finished off the victory.

Sparta bested the Hastings Saxons 25-17, 25-19 in their match-up, and then the Spartans completed their 3-0 day with a 25-21, 25-18 win over Tri-Unity Christia



Thornapple Kellogg junior Maddy Eitel steps over to pass a ball against Sparta Thursday, Oct. 16, in front of senior teammate Alexa Eden during a quad hosted by the Trojans in Middleville. **Photos by Brett Bremer**



Thornapple Kellogg junior Reece Ritsema (11) flips an attack over the net during her team's match against Sparta at the quad hosted by the Trojans in Middleville Thursday, Oct. 16.

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TK overcomes double digit deficit for one-point win in Black finale

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Thornapple Kellogg has as many as five regular season wins for the first time since 2018 thanks to a 22-21 win over visiting Holland Christian in OK Black Conference play Friday, Oct. 16, in Middleville.

The Maroons had a 21-10 lead with 5:41 to play in the third quarter, but TK rallied to get into the end zone two more times the rest of the way while shutting out the Maroon offense.

Quarterback Micah Dock had a one-yard touchdown run with 18 seconds to go in the third quarter to get TK within 21-16.

The TK defense forced a three-and-out and the Trojan offense headed right back for the end zone across the first half of the fourth quarter. Zach Eldridge had one big conversion on a third-down run and another on a 25-yard pass from Dock that kept the chains moving. Debo Robinson plowed into the end zone on a 25-yard run with 6:10 to go to put TK up 22-21. A two-point pass fell incomplete, leaving the Trojans' susceptible to a Maroon game-winning field goal attempt.

That chance never materialized for the Maroons. They got close though. Holland Christian moved the ball for a first-and-ten at the TK 24-yard-line, but with a minute and a half to go Brekin Mcwhinney and Preston Gummo teamed up to sack Maroon quarterback Will Grant. On the next play, second-and-16, TK defensive back Camden Peter intercepted a pass up the Maroon sideline to effectively seal the TK win.

It was the second straight season the Trojans and Maroons have played a one-point ballgame that came down to the closing seconds. The Maroons took a one-point win in Holland a year ago. TK bounced back to win its final two games of 2024, and the Trojans moved their record 5-3 overall this season and 3-2 in the OK Black Conference.

TK was slated to host Wyoming for the regular season finale on Friday, Oct. 24, and the Trojans will learn their MHSAA postseason fate on Sunday evening. TK went into the ballgame with Wyoming 25th in playoff points among the Division 3 teams in the state of Michigan. The top 32 in each of the MHSAA's eight 11-player football divisions qualify for the state postseason which begins the weekend of Oct. 31.



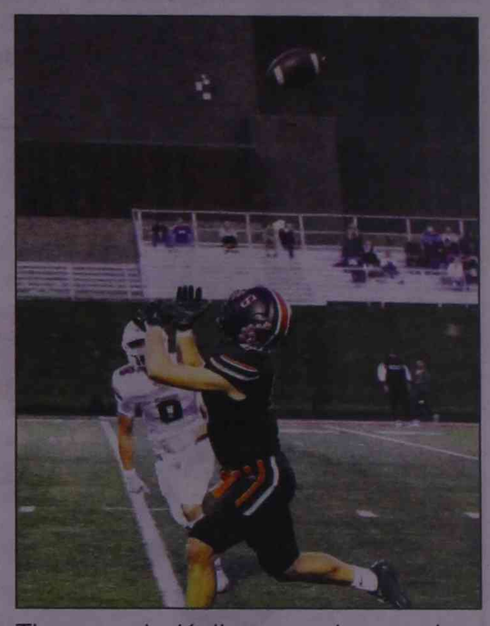
Thornapple Kellogg's Lucas Ploeg is greeted by head coach Jeff Dock as he hustles off the field during the Trojans' 22-21 win over visiting Holland Christian Friday, Oct. 17. **Photos provided**

Thornapple Kellogg led Holland Christian 7-0 last after scoring on its first possession of the ballgame. A big pass from Dock to Eldridge put TK into Cougar territory, but a flag for an illegal block kept the play from being a touchdown. On the next snap, Dock lofted a 29-yard touchdown pass to Elliott Neff in the right side of the end zone. Mason Chivis hit the extra-point kick.

The Maroons evened the score at 7-7 with two minutes to go in the first half. They started a possession just beyond midfield after an interception. Wide receiver Simon Grotenhuis made a juggling catch in the back of the end zone on third-and-goal from the four on a pass from Grant for the touchdown, and the extra-point kick was good.

A quick two-minute drive got TK as far as the Maroon seven-yard-line before the half, and Chivis booted a 27-yard field goal to put TK in front 10-7 at the half.

The Maroon charge in the second half started when TK fumbled on the third snap of the second half. Holland Christian recovered at the Trojan 29-yard-line. On the very next play, Grant scrambled 29 yards to the end zone. The extra-point was good to put Holland Christian in front 14-7 two minutes into the second half.



Thornapple Kellogg senior receiver Zach Eldridge runs under a pass during the Trojans' one-point win over visiting Holland Christian Oct. 17.

The TK offense turned the ball over on downs at the Maroon 39 a couple minutes later, and Holland Christian added to its lead with 5:41 to go in the third quarter as Grant and Grotenhuis hooked up again. A pump fake by Grant and an out-and-up from Grotenhuis had the Maroon wideout open behind the TK defense for a 31-yard touchdown reception. An extra-point made it 21-10.

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Becky and Nathan's goal is to teach their kids selflessness and instill the spirit of giving by blessing others. "God tells us to give generously and to do so without a grudging heart," explains Nathan, "and this experience provides a way to make giving a part of their lives as they grow into young adults and future community leaders."

If you want to learn more about creating a family fund, call Bonnie Gettys or Annie Halle at 269-945-0526, to ensure your gifts support your family's hopes and dreams.

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Caledonia senior Codie O'Krangley shoots her tee shot from high above the green on number 17 at The Meadows in Allendale Friday, Oct. 10, during day one of the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals. She shot a two-day score of 89-79-168 to place 25th in her third finals appearance.
Photos by Brett Bremer

O'Krangley comes roaring back on day two of D1 Golf Finals

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

It was a heck of a second day for Caledonia senior Codie O'Krangley as she closed out her time as a Fighting Scot varsity golfer at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals over the weekend.

Only seven girls shot better than O'Krangley's 79 on day two of the D1 State Finals at The Meadows, on the campus of Grand Valley State University, in Allendale Saturday.

An 89-79-168 over the course of the two-day, 36-hole tournament, had O'Krangley in 25th place overall.

She was 19th at the D1 Finals as a junior and 39th at the end of her sophomore season. The 168 is the lowest total score in her three Finals appearances.

It was an especially stellar final ten varsity holes for the Fighting Scots senior. She was seven over through her first eight holes during Saturday's round and then was even for the final ten holes of the tournament. She shot four on the par-4 11th and 12th holes. She had a three on the par-3 number 13 and a five on the par-5 number 14.

She followed up that run of pars with her first birdie of the day, a three on the 323-yard, par-4 number 15. O'Krangley added pars on 16 and 17 before a double-bogie on the par-four number 18, the toughest hole on the course.

O'Krangley bounced back for a par on the 418-yard, par-5 number one and then finished off her round with a birdie on the 343-yard, par-4 number two. She closed the day with 11 pars and two birdies.

That stood in contrast to five pars and one birdie, on the par-4, number five during Friday's opening round.

Plymouth senior Annie Flavin won the individual state title with a score of 71-77-148. Even the state runner-up, Macomb Dakota junior Marissa Monteith, didn't shoot as well as O'Krangley did Saturday. Monteith closed her weekend with a 71-81-152.

It was a tight pack in the top ten, filled with three Northville girls. Northville

See **GOLF** on 19

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Please be advised that a portion of the
Paul Henry Thornapple Trail (south of Main Street) will be
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Monday, December 1, 2025,
reopening on Tuesday, December 2, 2025

The southern portion of the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail
that is within the Village limits (the first one-half mile),
including the first two bridges and the Mill Pond,
will remain open, as well as the northern portion.

NO HUNTING IS ALLOWED IN THESE AREAS

The remaining southern portion of the trail,
from the Village limits to Irving Road,
crosses private property and is closed to the public
during the November hunting season.

Posted October 22, 2025
Rhonda Van Polen, Village Clerk

8196 Broadmoor Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316
Phone: 616.891.0070
Fax: 616.891.0430

PUBLIC NOTICE
Charter Township of Caledonia
Kent County, Michigan

CALEDONIA CHARTER TOWNSHIP REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

PRECINCT 1 POLLING LOCATION CHANGE NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Precinct 1 (Village) polling location has **CHANGED** for the upcoming Kent ISD Special Election to be held on November 4, 2025 in the Charter Township of Caledonia, Kent County, Michigan

For this election ONLY, Precinct 1 registered voters will vote at
Caledonia Christian Reformed Church
Located at 9957 Cherry Valley Avenue SE Ave, Caledonia MI 49316
(lower level)

This change is for the November 4, 2025 Special Election ONLY.
Precinct 1 voters will return to their prior polling location for all future elections.

Questions? Please contact:
Charter Township of Caledonia Clerk's Office
8196 Broadmoor Avenue SE
Caledonia MI, 49316
616-891-0070, ext. 215

Fighting Scots add sixth and seventh MIHA state championships

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

There have been a lot of recent seasons where the Caledonia team is just a powerhouse.

This wasn't one of those from the start.

The Fighting Scots grew into champions in the fall of 2025.

The Caledonia High School equestrian team won Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association (MIHA) Division A and Division E championships the weekend of Oct. 9-12 at the Midland County Fairgrounds.

The Division A title, in a competition of the state's largest teams, came down to the final event with the Caledonia girls pulling out a 322 to 319.5 win over the reserve champs from Hudsonville.

"It was down to the last minute," Caledonia head coach Kim Frederick said. "We didn't know if we were winning or not until they announced our names. The last two classes Sunday morning was what pushed us up," Frederick said. "Really it came down to the judges Sunday morning, who they liked better I guess."

"We were very thrown back," she added, "because we didn't really know. I mean I did my math in my head and I was hoping, but at two and a half points, I could have thought wrong. When they said it we were first in awe for a second, and then everybody just hugged each other. It was super sweet to see the team come together and be excited for each other. There were a lot of tears. A lot of excitement and happiness. Coming into it a lot of the team members thought maybe we would get third place. We got first. It was wonderful. They just didn't expect it. It is tough competition all around. It's just very special and means a lot."

She said it had been about five years since the Scots went into a season less certain of their ability to finish at the top of the state finals.

The two state championships make it seven in the history of the Caledonia program. The Fighting Scots won three straight Division A championships in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and finished as the reserve state champions in Division A in each of the past two seasons.

This year, the Fighting Scots were the reserve champions (second place) at both their district and regional competitions.

"This team was quite special, because it is a new and up and coming team with a lot of younger riders and only three seniors. We didn't expect to win this year," coach Frederick said.

That senior trio this season included Sophie Burnis, Grace Rabbit and Nina Stiver.

"They were our captains this year, and they were wonderful at it. They really took heart of keeping the team together, keeping the spirit high even

See next page



Caledonia's Loralei DeHoek, joined by assistant Carly Vanderroest, is the Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association's first Division E state champion. She took two first place finishes in all eight classes she competed in at the Midland County Fairgrounds Oct. 16-19. **Photo provided**

8196 Broadmoor Ave. SE
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CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP

Phone: 616.891.0070
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PUBLIC NOTICE
Charter Township of Caledonia
Kent County, Michigan

CALEDONIA CHARTER TOWNSHIP REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

PRECINCT 6 POLLING LOCATION CHANGE NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Precinct 6 polling location has **CHANGED** for the upcoming Kent ISD Special Election to be held on November 4, 2025 in the Charter Township of Caledonia, Kent County, Michigan

For this election ONLY, Precinct 6 registered voters will vote at
Alaska Baptist Church
Located at 7240 68th Street, Caledonia MI 49316

This change is for the November 4, 2025 Special Election ONLY.
Precinct 6 voters will return to their prior polling location for all future elections.

Questions? Please contact:
Charter Township of Caledonia Clerk's Office
8196 Broadmoor Avenue SE
Caledonia MI, 49316
616-891-0070, ext. 215

Continued from previous page

when we weren't doing well at the beginning of the year, and doing some things other than just going to practices and meets. They did a really good job of keeping the team spirit alive, but they also brought in points too."

Bullock Creek was third in the Division A competition at the finals with 269.5 points ahead of Edwardsburg 257, Wayland, 242, Howell 201, New Boston Huron 128 and South Lyon 127. That Wayland team beat out the Caledonia girls for the District 19 Division A championship this fall at the Barry County Fairgrounds, and bested the Fighting Scots at regionals too.

"We were still learning," Frederick said of some early season struggles. "Our horses and riders were learning how to do it, just because for a lot of them, probably half the team, it was new to them. And, it was tough competition. The competition was really tough around the area."

She said it was exciting going neck and neck with Hudsonville at the finals.

The top scoring classes for the Fighting Scots were the Saddle Seat Pattern and Saddle Seat Equitation contests. They got 76 points in those two classes alone with 41 coming from the Saddle Seat Pattern competition on the final day of the finals. The Saddle Seat Pattern and the Two-Man Relay were the two Sunday events.

The Scots had one rider place first and second in the Saddle Seat Pattern class, another place first and fourth, and a third place sixth.

"We do the same exact pattern the whole entire season, so it is a pattern that becomes one of the ones that we have perfected throughout the season. The riders that we slot in who do the best at it were really good. It is their main discipline usually."

Bryn Malocu, Layla Bouwens and Macy Nichols tallied those points for the Scots in the Saddle Seat Pattern class.

The team tacked on nine more points in the Two-Man Relay class with the teams of Rabbitt and Burnis, Sophie Edmondson and Amelia Hodges, and Nichols and Sadie Barnes competing.

"A lot of those teams, running speed was new to them too," coach Fredrick said. "So we were also teaching horse and rider, and a couple of the riders how to do speed and it was something that they were learning as well. It was a very positive thing. We ended up doing really well on our hand-offs in the relay race. It is hard how to teach a non-speed horse what to do, and to have it all go well in a quick amount of time so you can beat people."

The Scots finished strong, but they also got off to a good start to the finals.

"I was very excited by the Western Reigning class and our showmanship, because we tend to not do very well the first day, and we did very good," coach Frederick said. "All of our patterns went great. The judges appreciated the way we did our patterns and place as well. The girls flawlessly worked on their flying knee chances for their Western Riding class. They got those down pat, so that gave us some extra bonus points."

This was the first season of Division E championship competition. In February, the MIHA approved the creation of Division E for riders with disabilities. Loralei DeHoek chose to compete in Division E this fall and beat out her competitor from Walled Lake Central 160-83 at the state finals.

"She worked really hard," coach Frederick said. "She was much happier this year. She was comfortable doing it. She nailed her patterns. Her and her new horse have become really good together."

Coach Frederick said that many of her girls showing and competing all year round really keep the program strong even in a season like this when the team took a big hit from last spring's graduations.

PUBLIC NOTICE
GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING SYNOPSIS
October 2025

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

1. Reviewed the Consent Agenda
2. Approved the Meeting Agenda
3. Heard a report from Joe Whalen, Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry, on recent intervention training conducted for 21 staff and volunteers with opioid settlement funds
4. Discussed the management of Township Reserve funds
5. Held a Public Hearing on the proposed 2026 Operating Budget
6. Held a Public Hearing on the special assessment street light district for Thornapple Farms Phase III
7. Approved the consent agenda
8. Discussed a Zoning Text Amendment for Electronic Changeable Messaging Signs
9. Approved Thornapple Farms Phase III final plat
10. Approved the first amendment to the consent judgment for Prairie Wolf Station
11. Approved an interim construction agreement allowing Prairie Wolf Station early starts
12. Approved the new platform truck additional expenditures
13. Approved the replacement of a thermal imaging camera
14. Approved the extension of the METRO Act contract
15. Approved two utility bill relief requests
16. Discussed a proposed ordinance to amend the existing Water and Sewer Ordinance (No. 493)
17. Approved the Water and Sewer agreement for Townline Elementary
18. Discussed long range budget priorities
19. Adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

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

Michael Brew
Gaines Charter Township Clerk

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8196 Broadmoor Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316

CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP

Phone: 616.891.0070
Fax: 616.891.0430

PUBLIC NOTICE
Charter Township of Caledonia
Kent County, Michigan

CALEDONIA CHARTER TOWNSHIP REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

PRECINCT 4 POLLING LOCATION CHANGE NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Precinct 4 polling location has **CHANGED** for the upcoming Kent ISD Special Election to be held on November 4, 2025 in the Charter Township of Caledonia, Kent County, Michigan

For this election ONLY, Precinct 4 registered voters will vote at
Lakeside Community Church
Located at 6201 Whitneyville Avenue, Alto MI 49302

This change is for the November 4, 2025 Special Election ONLY.
Precinct 4 voters will return to their prior polling location for all future elections.

Questions? Please contact:
Charter Township of Caledonia Clerk's Office
8196 Broadmoor Avenue SE
Caledonia MI, 49316
616-891-0070, ext. 215

Slagel and Gaylord score victories among state's best at MISCA Meet

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The only girls to surpass the 400-point mark at the state finals in 2024 were the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 and Division 3 state champions.

Grand Rapids Gators' junior Lydia Slagel put herself on that level Friday, Oct. 17, at the MISCA Meet at the Holland Community Aquatic Center. Taking on 32 of the state's best high school divers, Slagel took the championship in the diving event with a new personal and team record score of 406.25 points in an 11-dive competition.

It was an outstanding weekend for the area girls in Holland as the Caledonia girls performed well in the pool Saturday too. Fighting Scot senior Sophie Gaylord won the 100-yard freestyle and finished as the runner-up in the 50-yard freestyle.

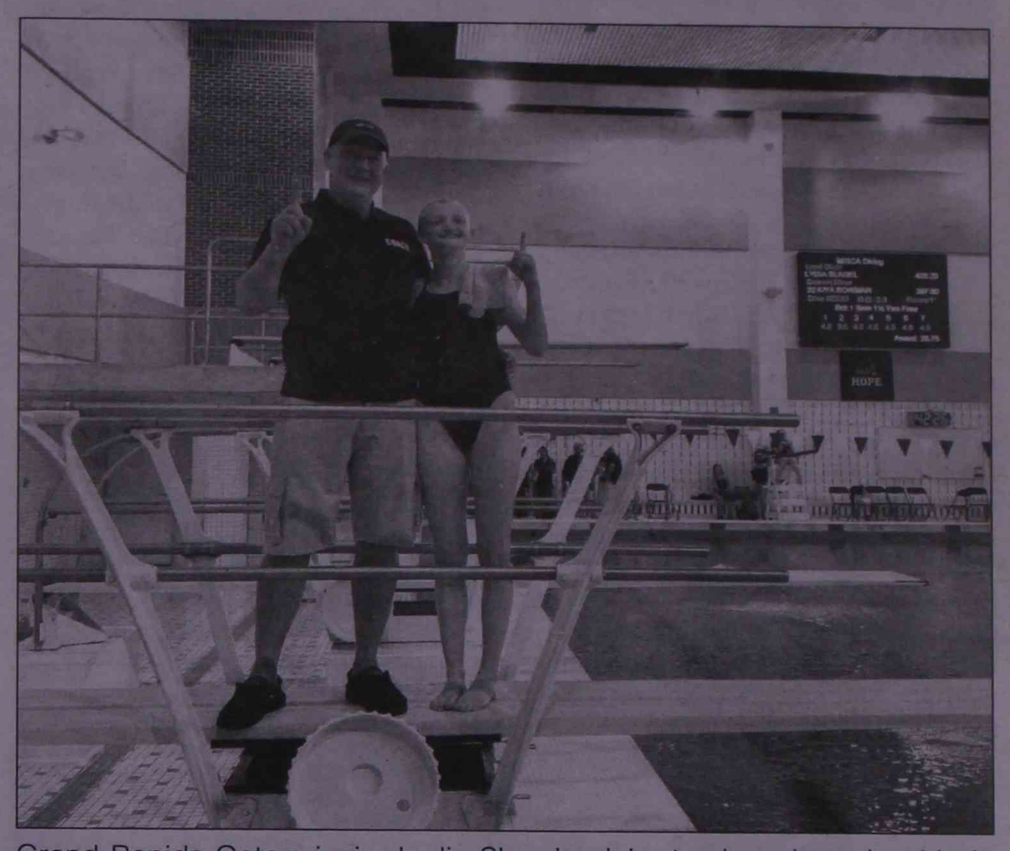
Slagel was fourth at the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Swimming and Diving Finals as a junior in 2024. She was the only girls to score more than 400 points at the 2025 MISCA Meet.

Kalamazoo Central senior Kiya Bowman, another state medalist from Division 1 a year ago, was second with a score of 387.80 points and Delton Kellogg/Hastings sophomore Aubrey Yarger, the MHSAA L.P. Division 2 diving state champion from 2024, was third with a score of 374.65 points.

Gaylord swam to a winning time of 52.12 seconds in the 100-yard freestyle, an event with 71 competitors who all finished the race in less than a minute. Lake Orion senior Briana Hernandez was the runner-up in 52.91.

In the 50-yard freestyle, Gaylord turned in a personal best time of 23.60 seconds. She was about half a second behind Holland Christian junior Camryn Siegers who was the champ in 23.01.

Gaylord was three tenths of a second faster Saturday in the 50 freestyle than she was when she placed sixth at the D1 State Finals last fall. Her time in the 100-yard freestyle was six hundredths of a second faster than her former teammate Bella Trieb swam at the state finals last year to place fifth in that race.



Grand Rapids Gators junior Lydia Slagel celebrates her championship in the diving competition at the MISCA Meet in Holland over the weekend with diving coach Todd Bates. **Photos provided**

Caledonia had a good contingent competing Saturday, and Gaylord was also a part of two top-five relay finishes. The Fighting Scots had the team of Gaylord, Mya Vanderzwaag, Aliya Van Hofwegen and Caitlyn Morris finish second in the 200-yard medley relay at the start of the meet. They turned in a time of 1 minute 48.82 seconds to beat out Northville by five hundredths of a second for second place. Jenison raced to victory in that one with a time of 1:45.91.

The Fighting Scots had a fifth-place finish in the 200-yard freestyle relay with the team of Vanderzwaag, Kailey Hall, Amelia McCann and Gaylord clocking in at 1:39.22.

The Caledonia team of Van Hofwegen, McCann, Hall and Morris placed 21st in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a time of 3:49.01.

Vanderzwaag placed 12th in that 100-yard freestyle race with a time of 54.85 and she was tenth in the 100-yard breaststroke in 1:08.16. A junior, she placed 13th at the state finals in the 50-yard freestyle last season as a sophomore and was 26th in the prelim's for the 100-yard breaststroke. Her time in the 100-yard breaststroke Saturday was more than a second and a half faster than she swam in that race at the state finals last year.

Caledonia had four girls in that 100-yard freestyle competition. Morris was 25th in 55.64 and Van Hofwegen placed 55th in 57.41.

See next page

100 East Main Street ~ Middleville, MI 49333
269-795-3385
www.villageofmiddleville.org

The Village of Middleville Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 7:00 pm has been

CANCELED

The meeting has been rescheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Posted October 8, 2025
Rhonda Van Polen
Village Clerk

100 East Main Street ~ Middleville, MI 49333
269-795-3385
www.villageofmiddleville.org

The Village of Middleville Downtown Development Authority (DDA) meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 5:30 pm has been

CANCELED

The meeting has been rescheduled for Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 5:30 pm.

Posted October 8, 2025
Rhonda Van Polen
Village Clerk

Village of Middleville
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the September 23, 2025 Regular Council Meeting, that were approved on October 14, 2025, are posted at the Village Hall at 100 E Main Street and on the website at www.villageofmiddleville.org.



The Caledonia group is all smiles during the annual MISCA Meet at the Holland Aquatic Center Saturday. Senior Sophie Gaylord, (back, second from left) won the 100-yard freestyle and placed second in the 50-yard freestyle. The Caledonia team had two relay teams place among the top five and a number of other outstanding individual performances.

Continued from previous page

Morris added a 37th-place time of 25.59 in the 50-yard freestyle. Hall was 11th in the 50-yard freestyle in 25.78.

McCann raced in the 200-yard freestyle and placed 25th in 2:00.62, and added a 53rd-place time of 1:03.93 in the 100-yard butterfly. She was a state qualifier as a freshman last year in the 200-yard freestyle.

Lily Klein placed 45th in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:04.36.

The Caledonia team is a co-op with Lowell and South Christian girls. The Grand Rapids Gators are a co-op team headed by Thornapple Kellogg which also includes student-athletes from West Michigan Aviation Academy, Hopkins and West Catholic. Slagel was the lone representatives for the Gators at the annual late-season gathering of the top varsity girls' from across the state in Holland.

Diving regionals this season are set for Nov. 13. Slagel is working to compete in the MHSAA Division 1 Diving Regional in Hudsonville.

Caledonia and the Grand Rapids Gators will be a part of the part of the OK Conference East Division Championships the weekend of Nov. 7-8.

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

VILLAGE OF MIDDLEVILLE
THORNAPPLE TOWNSHIP
THORNAPPLE-KELLOGG SCHOOLS
THORNAPPLE AREA PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION (TAPRC)

The Thornapple Area Parks and Recreation Commission (TAPRC) has completed the process of updating its Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan and will publish the draft Plan for public review. The Parks and Recreation Plan will be available at the following locations for at least 30 days and until the final public hearing on the plan:
www.thornapple-twp.org, Thornapple Township Offices, 200 East Main Street
www.villageofmiddleville.org, Middleville Village Offices, 100 East Main Street
www.tkschools.org/, Thornapple Kellogg Administrative Offices, 10051 Green Lake Road

The Parks and Recreation Plan is intended to help guide improvements to recreation facilities in the community. The process to develop the Plan included community input elements. Now that a draft of the Plan has been completed, the TAPRC Board is offering a public comment review period to give residents and stakeholders an opportunity to review and comment on the Plan prior to adoption.

To provide written comments on the draft Recreation Plan, please mail comments to TAPRC, P.O. Box 459, Middleville, MI 49333.

Each entity will be considering the adoption of the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan at the public hearing. Public hearings on the draft Plan are scheduled as follows:

Thornapple Township, December 8, 2025 *@ 7pm, 200 E. Main St., Middleville MI*
TK School Board, *December 8, 2025 @ 7pm, TK Early Childhood Center, 3316 Bender Rd., Middleville, MI*
Village of Middleville, *December 16, 2025 @ 7pm, 100 E. Main St., Middleville, MI*
TAPRC Board Meeting, *December, 17, 2025 @ 6pm, 200 E. Main St., Middleville, MI*

The draft Plan is available and may be examined by the general public at the location and websites noted above and at the public hearings. All interested persons are invited to submit their comments in person or in writing at or before the public hearings.

The TAPRC will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed material being considered at the hearing, to individuals with disabilities upon seven (7) days' notice to the TAPRC Chair. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the TAPRC Chair at the address or telephone number listed below.

P.O. Box 459
Middleville, MI 49333
(269) 795-7202

8196 Broadmoor Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316

CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP

Phone: 616.891.0070
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PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET FOR 2026 FISCAL YEAR

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Township Board of the Charter Township of Caledonia will hold a public hearing on November 5th, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., at the Caledonia Township Hall, 8196 Broadmoor Avenue SE, Caledonia, Michigan, to hear and consider comments regarding the proposed Township budget for the January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 fiscal year. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection at the Caledonia Township Office, 8196 Broadmoor Avenue SE, Caledonia, Michigan, during Township business hours.

The property tax millage rate(s) proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

All interested persons may attend the public hearing on November 5, 2025, and be heard with respect to the proposed budget and the proposed property tax millage rate(s). This notice is given pursuant to Act 43 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1963 (Second Extra Session), as amended.



Rockford fights off visiting Scots in OK Red Conference showdown

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Rockford improved to 6-2 overall this season with a 34-10 win over the 3-5 Caledonia varsity football team in Rockford Friday, Oct. 17.

The Rams built a 17-0 lead in the first half before a 58-yard touchdown pass from the Fighting Scots' Andrew Hanna to Aaron Collins got their team on the scoreboard.

Rockford extended its lead to 24-7 at the half and led 34-7 at the start of the fourth quarter.

Capree Thomas scored on a one-yard run in the final minute of the ballgame for the Fighting Scots.

The Rams rushed for 192 yards on the evening with senior quarterback Brayden Daniels carrying the ball 17 times for 116 yards and two touchdowns.

Daniels was also 11-of-22 passing for 126 yards. He was intercepted once by the Scots' Carter Berends.

Fighting Scot senior quarterback Andrew Hannah was 9-of-22 passing for 114 yards. He was intercepted twice by the Rams.

Collins had three receptions for 61 yards. Tyden Schuch added three receptions for 39 yards.

Senior Colton Sheely was on 15 tackles for the Fighting Scots and Lincoln Senti had eight tackles.

Daniels scored the game's first points on a 19-yard touchdown run four minutes into the ballgame. Ram defender Caden Leddy soon took a third-and-15 pass out of the hands of Hanna while pressuring him in the backfield to set up a second Ram touchdown. This time senior quarterback Luke Ahern scored on a two-yard run.

The teams traded punts rom there until Ram kicker Dawson Hoekert hit a 31-yard field goal to go in front 17-0.

Berends picked off a deep shot from the Rams with a little less than two minutes to play in the first half, setting his team up with a chance to score before the intermission. Two snaps later, Hanna hit Collins behind the Ram defense for a touchdown. Landry Mueller was 2-for-2 on extra-point kicks for the Scots in the ballgame.

Rockford managed to quickly go the other way for one more score before the half though. Daniels had a big scramble into Caledonia territory. He scrambled again for a seven-yard score with three seconds to go in the first half.

Hayden Peoples scored on a seven-yard run for the Rams in the third quarter, and Hoekert booted a 27-yard field goal to finish the scoring for the Rams.

The Fighting Scots were set to close the 2025 season at home against Jenison Friday, Oct. 25.

Scots get pair of OK Green Conference volleyball wins in Muskegon

Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

The Caledonia varsity volleyball team upped its OK Green Conference record to 5-3 with wins over Mona Shores and Reeths-Puffer.

The Caledonia girls knocked off the Sailors in five sets in Muskegon Thursday, Oct. 16 and then headed back to Muskegon for a three-set win over the Rockets Tuesday.

The Scots won by the scores of 25-13, 25-15, 25-11 at Reeths-Puffer this week.

Aubrey Reynolds had a team-high 13 kills against the Rockets. Quinn Zeigler and Lydia Bell chipped in six kills each. Zeigler also had a team-leading three blocks.

Kayleigh Miersen fired eight aces for the Scots from the service line.

Miersen also added 14 digs. Avery Seif led the Scots with 17 digs. Kyla Charles had eight digs and Reynolds finished with seven.

Reese Stafford put up 13 assists and Charles had 11.

The Caledonia girls won by the scores of 23-25, 25-21, 25-27, 25-16, 15-13 at Mona Shores Oct. 16.

Reynolds had 17 kills, Charles 14 and Bell ten. Charles had ten total blocks and Kayla Briseno chipped in six. Seif led the Scots in digs with 26 and Reynolds had 25. Charles and Miersen had ten digs each.

Stafford put up 30 assists and Charles 21 in the win over the Sailors.

The Fighting Scots were slated to host Jenison Oct. 23 and will close out the OK Green season Tuesday, Oct. 28, at Muskegon. The Fighting Scots head to Lowell for a quad Oct. 30 to close out the regular season.



Caledonia senior Codie O'Krangley awaits a turn to putt on the number 15 green during day one of the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals Oct. 17 at The Meadows in Allendale.

GOLF

Continued from Page 13

won the team state championship with scores of 322-321-643. The Northville girls had the best score during each day of the competition. They were ten strokes ahead of the field after day one and extended their their lead on day two.

Macomb Dakota finished as the state runner-up with a score of 333-339-672. Dakota passed Okemos on day two to move into second place. The Okemos girls were third with scores of 332-342-674 and Rochester Adams placed fourth in the field of 18 teams with scores of 333-348-681.

White Lake Lakeland was fifth in the team standings with a two-day score of 700 ahead of Portage Central 702, Grand Blanc 703, Byron Center 705, Clarkston 709 and Brighton 722 in the top ten.

Northville was led by junior Naaz Gill who was fourth individually with scores of 77-77-154. Northville also had sophomores McKenzie Stevens and Cam Baker tie for seventh with overall totals of 158. There were two other girls tied for seventh to fill out the top ten.



Caledonia senior Codie O'Krangley (right) and head coach Veronica Van Wagoner go over strategy from off the side of the fairway on number 15 during day one of the MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 1 Girls' Golf Finals Oct. 10 at The Meadows on the campus of Grand Valley State University in Allendale.

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Josh Lamphere
Medicare Specialist

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