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Vermontville won't seek grants for water project

by Shawna Hubbarth
 Staff Writer

The Village of Vermontville will not pursue grants and low interest loans for a potential water project this year.

This decision came from the council last Thursday night after a public hearing where the majority of residents came to speak out against the proposed projects.

Fleis and Vandenbrink engineers Don DeVries and Randy Kirsunas were on hand to discuss possible water project proposals. The firm was paid more than \$20,000 to work up a report and project options.

Kirsunas said the firm worked with several different agencies, and considered recommendations by the Department of Environmental Quality. In the last DEQ evaluation the village water system slipped from "satisfactory" to "marginal."

Kirsunas said the report and options provided deal with the needs of the water system in the village for the next 20 years. He said according to the latest census, growth is expected to be minimal in the next 20 years.

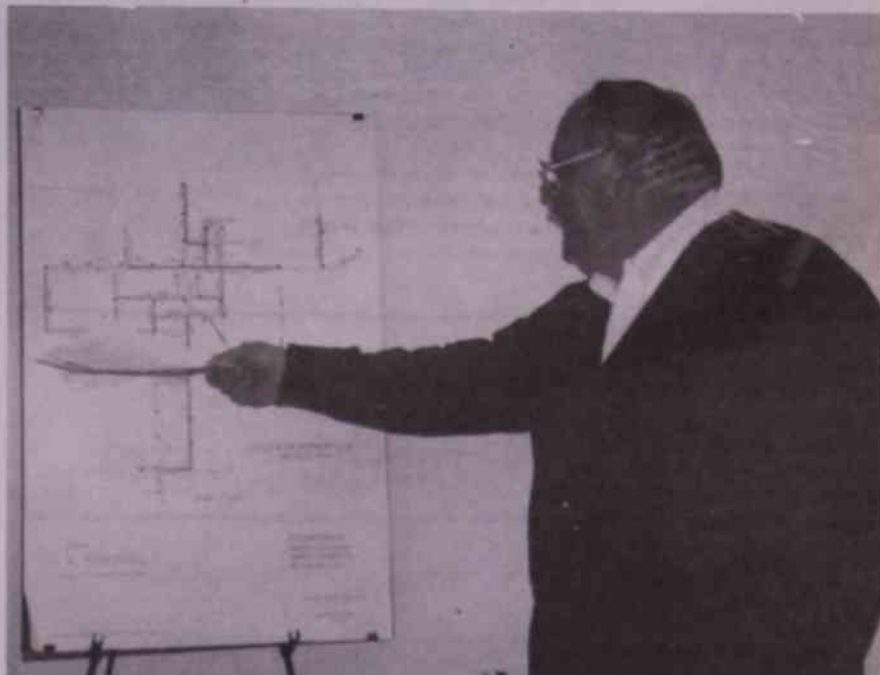
"You have about 789 people here, the current population, with a projected growth to 820 in 20 years," he said.

Kirsunas went over the current need for another lift station, said the water tower tank has reached its life expectancy, and said all the main in town does not meet current state regulation of what is the required size of new main being put in.

He discussed two proposals, with barely any price difference with the first one at \$2,431,800, and the second at \$2,432,300.

He talked about low interest loans available right now through Drinking Water Revolving Fund, and the possibility of getting grant/low

See water project, pg. 2



Fleis and Vandenbrink Engineer Randy Kirsunas describes one of the water system improvement plans at the council meeting last Thursday. The council decided to not pursue grants and low interest loans for any project this year.

New Queen Samantha Mater has long history with festival

by Shawna Hubbarth
 Staff Writer

Samantha Mater, the new syrup queen, has a long history with the Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival.

Her first memory is of the egg toss when she was 3 years old. She won the children's parade costume contest four times, and she even lost her two front teeth at festival.

Now she reigns over the

annual festival.

"I love the festival, I get excited every year to go and have fun," she said. "My sister was queen in '95, and I was always around it, so it's always been something I have wanted to do."

Winning the title of queen tops a long list of accomplishments for her. Heavily involved in 4-H, she has been a past secretary, treasurer and historian of the

Vermontville Junior Farmers. She is currently the reporter for the club. She serves on the Eaton County 4-H Advisory Council, is the vice president of the Junior Fair Board and has held different offices on that board, and has worked in various capacities at the Eaton County Fair.

She was a recipient of the 2001 "I Dare You" and "Outstanding Teen Leader" award, and has written and received grants from the Wal-Mart Foundation for a landscaping project.

Mater said she loves to read, and enjoys the outdoors and raising rabbits, poultry and sheep. She also works as a waitress at Good Time Pizza.

She will attend a week-long leadership conference camp this summer that she won a scholarship for.

"My syrup making experience started when I was about 9 years old," she said. "We went tapping and collecting with the Haigh family, and my family and I helped them throughout the entire syrup making process. I was still too young to actually realize that I was learning something, but I remember how much fun I had running around in the woods and watching the sap boil at the sap house. I really enjoyed looking at their collection of antique spiles they had on display. What really sticks out in my mind is the sweet taste of hot dogs we had boiled in pure sap!" she



For Samantha Mater, being the Vermontville Maple Syrup Queen runs in the family. Here she is (at far left) as a young girl, with her sister Sarah who was crowned queen about eight years ago, with her brother Mike, and mom Jeri and father Jim.

wrote in her essay submitted in the queen contest.

Mater said the experience of being queen, and her reign with alternate Jessica Cowell already has been a lot of fun.

"We have hosted a big group of international exchange students and took them to Round Lake Road to tap a tree with them," Mater said, "and then brought them back to the Maple Manor and took them through the process of making syrup."

See Syrup Queen, pg. 3



Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival Queen Samantha Mater and alternate Jessica Cowell.

In This Issue...

- Syrup Queen alternate sees lots of fun ahead
- Vermontville sets hearing on sewer, water bill hike
- Local actor gets vote in Bellevue performance
- Maple Valley spring sports coverage in this issue

Water project, continued from page 1

interest funding from Rural Development. Both possibilities would have to be applied for and the application needed to be filed by May 1 to see if the village was awarded the money. At that time, he said the village could consider going ahead with a project or not.

The monthly rate increase would be approximately \$30.00, based on 5,000 gallons use. Grant money could take that figure down some too.

"It would be no different than taking a mortgage out on your house," he explained. "It's a 20-year loan at 2.5% interest rate and the water customers would pay that back every month."

But Councilman Doug

Kelsey, who said he believes an issue of this magnitude should be brought to vote on by the people, said he was hesitant to apply for the grants because if the village did get them maybe council members would get carried away in the excitement and push for the project to go through.

One resident said, "This sounds like it lacks the justification for only 31 projected growth people over the next 20 years. If a new well is an absolute need, then we should be considering that."

Another resident agreed and asked why there were not more options that varied in price range a bit.

Krisunas said one of the reasons to go for a more costly project is that the village is more likely to get half of the project paid for in grant money if it chooses the larger project. Grant money and low interest loans are not available for small projects.

Kelly Williams said, "I strongly suggest that we do not need a 200,000-gallon water tank."

Williams went on to say that as a member of the planning commission she felt that size was too large, even in the case of an emergency.

"And I ask the council that if it is done that the village people be allowed to vote on it," she added.

Marion Alexander said that the price difference between a 200,000 tank and a smaller one would be only a half to one percent cost of the total project.

Williams said stretched out over a 20-year loan, that would make a significant difference nonetheless.

Other residents said the estimated bills were based

on a 5,000 use of the system, but they use much more water than that.

One man said the project sounded "crazy."

DeVries said the cycle to apply for the grants is once a year, in May.

Council then decided to table the whole issue and not seek grant approval.

"Well what we are here for tonight is to decide whether or not to go for the grant money, this will not bind us to any project," said Councilman and Village President pro Tem Don Martin.

Kelsey said he was not comfortable with the plan as it was set up.

Missionaries to Germany to visit Assembly of God

The Rev. Dean Gardner, recently approved Assemblies of God missionary to Germany, will be the guest speaker at Nashville Assembly of God at 735 Reed St. Sunday, April 14, at 11 a.m.

With more than 82 million citizens, Germany is Europe's most populous nation. United

Germany includes the former East and West Germanies in a centrally located region nearly the size of California. Germany is the industrial hub of Europe and one of the world's leading economies.

"But prosperity and international influence belie the great spiritual need among Germans," said Gardner.

Although the nation was the home of the Reformation, today's Germany is largely unevangelized, said Gardner. Many who claim affiliation with a church have never made a personal commitment to Christ, he said.

Dean and Robin Gardner have long anticipated this opportunity to minister in Europe.

"It has been over 20 years since God first spoke to my heart about missions ministry,"

Dean says. "Robin has known and shared this burden from the day we were married. It has never diminished over the years, but has increased in intensity."

In preparation for that ministry, the Gardners attended the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri, where Dean earned an M.A. in Missiology in 1977. Since they have been involved in pastoral ministry in Michigan, serving as youth, senior, and associate pastors.

"All of these experiences have contributed to the outreach we plan to pursue in Germany," said Robin.

The Gardners and their two children, Heather and Tiffany, will be starting a church for these servicemen in their families in the Wurzburg, Germany area.

"Military personnel are ripe for a spiritual harvest," said Dean. "They are in a new culture and are experiencing an unsettled time in their lives, especially after the events of Sept. 11. They need the peace and guidance that only Jesus Christ can offer."

Recycling drive planned

Sunfield Boy Scouts will have recycling at the west end of Carl's parking lot in Sunfield from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 13.

The scouts will accept:

- Newspapers — tied or in grocery bags.
- Glass — clear, clean, no caps.
- Aluminum — with no paper or plastic coating.
- Tin cans — flattened, clean, with no labels.
- Magazines — tied of in grocery bags (no Reader's Digest).

Scouts ask that items not

be dropped off early. The next recycling date will be the second Saturday in June.

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Wednesday Evening
Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.
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BASELINE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

9617 E. Baseline Rd.
Corner of Baseline & Church Roads
(2 miles east of M-66 on Baseline)
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service 11 a.m.
(Nursery Provided)
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and many other activities.
Phone: (616) 963-7710
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301 Fuller St., Nashville
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Sunday:
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P.M. Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Evening
Worship 7 p.m.
REV. ALAN METTLER

CHESTER GOSPEL CHURCH

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Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Evening Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Family
Night Service 6:45 p.m.
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Phone: 543-5488

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Church School 10 a.m.
Fellowship Time
After Worship
REV. ERIC LISON

SOUTH KALAMO CHURCH

Corner of Kalamo Highway & Ionia Rd.
Sunday A.M. 10:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Evening at 7 p.m.:
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Youth Group • Adult Worship
PASTOR JEFF SWIFT

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Adult Class 10:50 a.m.
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PASTOR MARK THOMPSON

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8593 Cloverdale Road
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A.M. Service 11:15 a.m.
P.M. Service 6 p.m.
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A.M. Service 11 a.m.
P.M. Service 7 p.m.
Wed. Service 7 p.m.
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PASTOR DEANO LAMPHERE
PASTOR MATT ROHDE

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State and Washington streets
Worship Service 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School 11:15 a.m.
PASTOR DIANNE BOWDEN
At Home: 852-0685
Church Phone: 852-2043

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Worship 9:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
PASTOR SUSAN TROWBRIDGE
(517) 852-1993

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M-79 West
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m.
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Wed. Evening Service 7 p.m.
AWANA 7:30-8:30 p.m. Wed.
PASTOR DANIEL E. SMITH
ASST. PASTOR LES ANDERSON

VERMONTVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Roman Catholic Latin Mass
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Sunday Mass 9 a.m.
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FATHER PAUL ANDRADE

Syrup Queen, continued from page 1



Syrup queen Samantha Mater is very active in 4-H and has won numerous awards as a part of the Vermontville Junior Farmers.



Here '02 Vermontville Maple Syrup Queen Samantha Mater is shown (right) helping out with sap collection as a young girl.

We then had a pancake breakfast with them at the church. It was a lot of fun and we met people from all over the world and they learned about making maple

syrup.

"We are going to try to go to as many places as we can and make an effort to talk to all the producers at festival because they are the important people, the ones who are making the syrup."

Mater said she and Jessica both have been busy working on the float that will

carry them in the parade and parades throughout the area.

"We are painting it white and doing relettering and adding new flowers and vines. Its actually more work than we thought."

Another focus of her time as queen will be getting the word out to radio and news stations. She said promoting the festival includes trying to reach as many people as



Samantha Mater, at four years old, riding the kiddie rides at festival. She now reigns over the festival as queen.



Queen Samantha Mater and alternate Jessica Cowell have met many new friends during their reign so far, in an effort to spread the word about maple syrup and the festival.

possible. She is also looking into giving tours to state politicians at the festival.

She herself has participated in the happenings at festival for as long as she can remember.

"My 4-H club hosts the petting zoo every year, and I also play in the band. Every year since I was little I participated in the children's parade. I remember some of my costumes. One year I was a candle maker and one year I was Alice from Alice in Wonderland."

She said her favorite way

to eat syrup is to pour it over ice cream.

"We are just going to spread the word about festi-

val," she said. "Its a great time, and something I look forward to every year. This year will be especially fun."



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Barry County MSU Extension Office

April 10	Horse Judging Team Meeting, 6:30 p.m., HHA in Ag room.
April 13	4-H Babysitting Classes start 9 a.m., Extension Office.
April 17	4-H Advisory Council, 7 p.m.
April 18	Fair Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Expo Center.
April 18	Shooting Sports Leaders Meeting, 7 p.m.
April 22	Rabbit Developmental Committee Meeting, 7 p.m., HHS Ag Room.
April 24	Horse Judging Team meeting, 6:30 p.m., HHS, Ag room B 123.
April 27	4-H Judged/Comp Trail Ride (Ionia)
April 27	Horse Jamboree at MSU - State Horse Judging Competition.
April 29	Mandatory Fair Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Expo Center.
May 2	Fair Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Expo Center.
May 4	Open Horse Show, 8:30 a.m., Expo Center.
May 5	Speed Show, 10 a.m., Expo Center.

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Syrup Queen alternate see lots of fun ahead

by Shawna Hoffarth
Staff Writer
Vermontville, Maple
Syrup Queen alternate Jes-

sica Cowell has attended
every syrup festival since
she was born. This year she
will preside over the festi-

ties with Queen Samantha
Mator.
Cowell's first memory of
the festival was catching lit-



Alternate Jessica Cowell (left) and queen Samantha Mator enjoy a taste of maple taffy at this year's sugaring off celebration.



Syrup queen alternate Jessica Cowell is active in 4-H, and is show here in the ring with a steer, competing at the Eaton County Fair.



fic piglets in a game at festival.
"My first memory is catching the pigs," she said. "You had to go in a pen and catch them and put them in a sack."

She also remembers the animal dressup costume parade. One year she took second place with her pygmy goat when they dressed as cowgirls.

Cowell said she decided to try for the queen and alternate quite a while ago.

"It always looked like a fun thing to do. My Aunt Becky was queen in 1980."

Cowell participates in band and jazz band at school (she is self taught on several instruments that she plays) in volleyball, softball, is active in 4-H and her church band.

She is the daughter of Sue and Ken Cowell, and has two younger siblings, Sam, 14, and Dusty, 12.

She said her first experience in helping make maple syrup was going with her dad to help Merle Martin gather sap before he put up all his lines.

"I gathered and handed the buckets to them when I wasn't busy playing in the snow," she said. "A few years after that I also helped him bottle his sap into his cans for him so that it could be sold."

This year was a better season than last she has been told.

"I heard the season went pretty well," she said. "We had a long season compared to last year with the thaws, and refreezes."

"I helped collect this year — actually on the coldest day," she laughed. "It hailed, snowed and was windy, but it was still fun."

Cowell said she and Mator plan on attending many parades and events to represent the festival.

"We are going to Char-

lotte Frontier Days, Potomac and Chesaning to their snow boat parade... We met some really interesting peo-

ple when we hosted exchange students from Lansing Community College and

Continued next page



Alternate queen Jessica Cowell is active in 4-H. Here she is with one of her prize winning pygmy goats.

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The family of Forrest Babcock Sr., William & Tony Babcock of Louisiana, surviving brother, James & Forest Jr., Edna Edwards & family wish to thank the citizens of Nashville & Barry County for their support and caring during the illness and death of our brother, father & dear friend.

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The Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival is set for April 26, 27 and 28 this year, and queen Samantha Mater (left) will preside over the celebration with alternate Jessica Cowell.

From previous page

showed them the syrup making process."

Cowell said she is dedicated to promoting the festival.

"I want to tell people how good maple syrup tastes and what you can use it for and

make with it."

She said she wants to promote the talent show because that is one of her favorite highlights of festival.

She said she is learning new things about maple syrup and the yummiest thing has been her discovery of maple taffy, which she

made at the sugaring off celebration earlier in the season.

"It was so good, it's my new favorite way to eat Maple Syrup."

Cowell said she is looking into volunteering this summer at Hayes Green Beach Hospital in Charlotte.



Not long ago, both girls hosted exchange students on a trip through the woods, showing them how to tap for syrup and then treated them to a pancake breakfast.

"I think that would help me in my goal of going to college to become a physical therapist or massage therapist," she said.

**VERMONTVILLE
Maple Syrup
Festival
TALENT SHOW**
Friday, April 26
Call 726-1077 or 852-0882

Three Divisions:
• Ages 6 and under
• Ages 7 - 17 years
• Ages 18 and over



Here is alternate queen Jessica Cowell (second from the left), many years ago at festival competing in the pet costume parade as cowgirls with her pygmy goat.

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Friday, April 26 • 4 pm-10 pm
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from Michigan State University

When: April 12 • 7:00 p.m.
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PARENTS OF MAPLE VALLEY PRESCHOOLERS
(All children ages 2 1/2 - 5 yrs.)

If your child will be 5 years old by Dec. 1st, call 852-9468 (starting April 8th) for Kindergarten Roundup Registration.

SPECIAL DATES: April 16th, 7 p.m.— Kindergarten Parent Orientation and Story Hour at Fuller Street Elementary

If your child will be 4 yrs. old by Dec. 1st, call 852-2075 or 852-9794 (starting April 8th) for Early Fours Registration Information

If your child is between 2 1/2 - 4 yrs. old and you are concerned about your child's development, speech, coordination, behavior or learning, call 852-9468 (starting April 8th) for information about Pre-primary Services.

Vermontville sets hearing on sewer, water bill hike

by Shawna Hubbarth
Staff Writer

The Village of Vermontville will hold a public hearing on whether or not to raise sewer and water bills by \$2.50 each at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 11.

The council set the public hearing at last week's regular meeting.

In other business at the meeting the council:

• Heard from Summerfest founder Ron Felder, who told the council that every year the festival gets better. This will be the third year for the festival, which highlights music, food and family entertainment in Vermontville.

This year, he said, the date is set for Sunday, Aug. 11, from noon to 7 p.m.

He said he would like not to use the downtown stage this year because people complained that the bleachers on the street were too



Charles Viele sits in on his first meeting as a new member on the Vermontville village council, following the March elections. He replaces Lloyd Wolever, who did not seek re-election.

hot. "I would like to put them in the shade near the park so people are more comfortable," he said.

Felder said he is making

other changes as well, including moving from pork dinners to pork sandwiches, and have more antique cars come in. He is thinking of renting a tent.

The council granted him permission to get Main Street blocked off from noon to six.

Council member Theresa Spagnuolo-O'Dell cautioned him about holding raffles without licenses. He said he would look into it.

• Received a proposal from Councilman Doug Kelsey to look into contracting with an outside firm for pay-

roll service. He said he would bring all the information to the next council meeting.

"It would be one less headache for the village clerk," said Councilman Tom Williams.

• Learned from Clerk Shirley Harmon that the village will do Mayor Exchange Days this year with Bloomingdale. The dates are set tentatively for May 20

and 22.

• Heard from Department of Public Works Director Tony Wawiernia that the village needs to form a safety committee for village employees by OSHA standards.

• Heard from Spagnuolo-O'Dell that she has received some calls from village residents about doing their own sidewalks and they want to know if the village will re-

imburse them for the labor. If a resident elects to do his or her own sidewalk that is slated for resurfacing the village will pay one-third of the concrete fee. It was referred to the sidewalks and streets committee for a decision.

• Approved building referrals at 313 South Main and 360 South Main.

Area Obituaries

William E. French

LAKE ODESSA - William E. French went to be with his Lord Wednesday, April 3, 2002 at his residence in Lake Odessa, Mich. at the age of 71.

He was born Dec. 30, 1930 in Pontiac, Mich., son of Ernest and Clara French. Mr. French attended schools in both Battle Creek and Charlotte.

He served in the United States Air Force for six years.

In 1967, Bill married Mary Jean, the couple just celebrated 35 years of marriage in March.

Bill retired from General Motors after 33 years of employment, also had

worked at Kenyon's TV and Appliance in Lake Odessa, MI, and was a volunteer fireman for 10 years, and was a Boy Scout leader.

He enjoyed animals, fishing, camping at Snow's Lake, and loved life and laughter.

Mr. French was preceded in death by his father, Ernest French; son-in-law, James Danny K. Benham; brother-in-law, Chuck Joseph.

Surviving are his wife, Mary Jean French; mother, Clara French of Lake Odessa; children, Debra and Erhard Freitel of Battle Creek, Dawn and Steve Pifer of Saranac, Mike and Deb Barnes of Bellevue, Vicki Benham and Jeff

Lackey of Lake Odessa, Sherri and Ron Piercefield of Lake Odessa, Dennis Barnes of Ionia, Connie and Tim Reynolds of Kalamazoo, Rodney and Wanda French of Otsego, and Leslie Stinson of Colorado Springs, Co.; sister, Rita Joseph of Potterville; brother, Don and Janice French of Battle Creek; aunt, Mildred Le Tourneau of Homosassa, FL; grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral service was held Monday, April 8, 2002 at the Lakewood United Methodist Church (M-50, Lake Odessa). Mr. John Waite and Rev. Curt Jensen officiated. Burial was in Lakeside Cemetery, Lake Odessa.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions to Ionia area Hospice or the charity of your choice.

Arrangements were made by the Independent Family Owned Funeral Home in Sunfield, Rosier Funeral Home, Mapes-Fisher Chapel.

For more information, log onto www.legacy.com.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act and the Michigan Civil Rights Act which collectively make it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, age or marital status, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

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Vermontville GFWC plans book review Thursday

The Vermontville General Federation Women's Club, in conjunction with the Vermontville Library, will hold its monthly book review at the Methodist Church at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 11.

This month the group will discuss "Evening News" by Marly Swick. The story is about a terrible accident in which fault lines immediately appear, revealing them as a family divided. A mother finds herself pulled between her grieving husband and her shocked son. As she strug-

gles to piece her family back together she has to teach herself the hardest lesson a mother can learn "how to forgive your child the unforgivable."

The book review is open to anyone with an interest in reading and discussion. Contact Carla Rumsey at the Vermontville Library for next month's title to review.

Books for the discussion group are obtained on loan from surrounding libraries through the Vermontville Library.

Commission on Aging Schedule of Events

Commission of Aging Events

Wednesday, April 10 - Hastings, crafts/nauls; Nashville, Country Strings; Woodland, trivia, blood pressure day; Delton, trivia.

Thursday, April 11 Hastings, line dancers, music; Nashville, bingo; Delton, friend day.

Friday, April 12- Hastings, bingo; Nashville, popcorn day; Woodland, bingo.

Monday, April 15 - Hastings, music; Nashville, bring a friend; Woodland, bingo; Delton, exercise.

Tuesday, April 16 - Hastings, line dancers, exercise,

our favorite kids, Alz. meeting 1 p.m., bd. meeting 2 p.m.; Nashville, Grandma Kids.

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Maple Valley Spring Sports Previews

Baseball

Maple Valley's varsity baseball team is coming off an outstanding 2001 and should be a force again this year under new head coach Bryan Carpenter.

"We have the talent to compete for the league title," Carpenter said. "We also want to advance into the state tournament again."

Last season, the Lions went 18-8-1 overall and 12-1-1 in the Southern Michigan Athletic Association, good for a share of the league title. They also won their district.

Returning stars include southpaw senior pitcher Darin Thrun, who went 8-2

cern, but Carpenter likes the team's speed, defense and overall depth. Valley will duke it out with Bellevue and Olivet for the top spot in the SMAA.

The Lions throw out the first pitch of the season at 4 p.m. today, hosting Hastings in a doubleheader. Lakewood comes in for a doubleheader on Thursday, and the Lions travel to Portland St. Patrick on Friday. Those games also begin at 4 p.m.

Soccer

This is the inaugural season of varsity girls' soccer at Maple Valley, and head coach Chris Ricketts will know a lot more about the



The Maple Valley varsity girls' soccer team. First row (from left): Penny Curtis, Michelle Strong, Vanessa Faurot, Becky Guernsey, Camille Wieland, Marta Roscklewicz, Amber Strickland. Second row: Jessica Lawless, Amber Pimm, Jerrica Ashcroft, Christi O'Dell, Melissa Jewell, Maya Kurbanuoba, Sarah Sheick. Third row: Chris Ricketts, Muriel Wieland, Marcus Fischer, Becky Bumford, Philipp Linsemann, Carlos Valdivia, Sarah Perry, Pedro Perazzo, Nicole Ruciaski, Kenny Haze.

"They have to realize they have the potential to start a new winning era at Maple Valley in softball," Brumm said. "They have the speed, competitiveness, attitude and work ethic."

"Our goals are to be in every game and finish in the upper half (of the SMAA)."

Leslie, Olivet and Dansville are the usual suspects

at the top of the league.

Back for the Lions are juniors Jessie Grant (SS) and Jamie Jones (C), seniors Lisa McElroy (3B), Nikki James (1B) and Bethany Swift (2B), and junior Holly Clouse (LF).

Key additions include juniors Jessica Cowell (P), Dawn Rhoades (C), Jessica Mansfield (1B), Michelle

Silsbee (OF, 2B), Jennifer Grant (utility) and Holly Forest (OF), sophomore Elisha Gibson (utility), and freshman pitcher Kyndra Root.

Bob Brumm is the assistant coach of the Lions.

Maple Valley opens the season today at 4 p.m. with

See spring sports, pg. 11



The 2002 Maple Valley varsity softball team. Front row (from left): Jamie Jones, Jessie Grant, Jennifer Grant, Nikki James, Bethany Swift, Lisa McElroy, Dawn Rhoades. Back row: Coach Duska Brumm, Holly Clouse, Holly Forest, Elisha Gibson, Jessica Cowell, Kyndra Root, Michelle Silsbee, Coach Bob Brumm.

with a 2.03 ERA, 69 strikeouts and only seven walks in 2001. Senior middle infielder Ryan Goris batted .385 with 25 RBIs and 17 stolen bases, senior outfielder Mike Hirneiss hit .319 with 13 RBIs and 27 stolen bags, and senior outfielder Jeremy Wiser hit .304 while batting in 11 runs and collecting 10 stolen bases.

Juniors Jimmy Hirneiss (OF) and Britt Leonard (P, SS, 2B) will help bolster the Lion lineup.

Pitching depth is a con-

team after they get a few games under their belts.

Nearly 20 players turned out for the squad, which plays host to Delton on Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. The Lions begin a stretch of four straight road games on Thursday with a 4 p.m. game at Charlotte; they don't return home until May 2 against New Covenant.

Softball

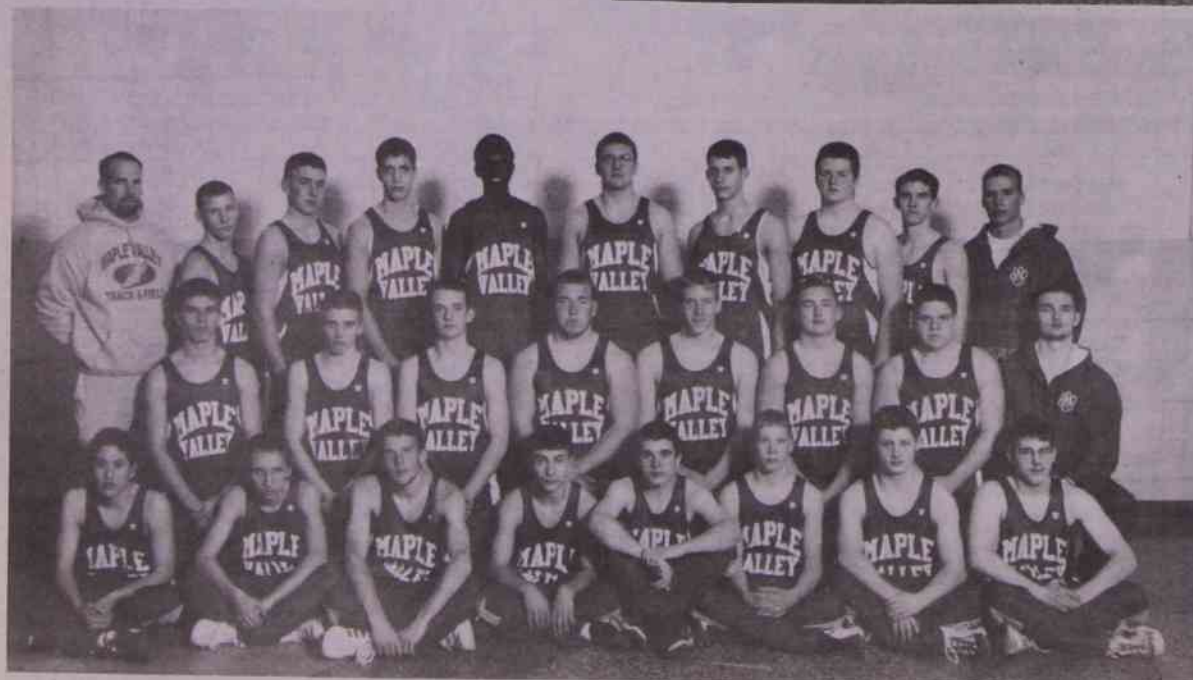
Third-year varsity softball coach Duska Brumm wants her team to recognize the opportunity before it.



The 2002 Maple Valley girls' track team. First row (from left): Chayla Robles, Akiyo Ueshima, Sarah Cook, Miranda Farr, Shelbi Cousins, Syandra Siefert, Natalia Savchak, Stefanie Joostberns. Second row: Summer Hill, Donna Cripe, Melissa Nisse, Ashley Gordeneer, Cashel Harp, Danielle Hulsebos, Micah Tobias, Kari Emerick, Megan Garvey. Third row: Coach Rob VanEngen, Ashley Collier, Amber Terberg, Jessy Frayer, Kelly Wilson, Meagan Halliwill, Ashley Trumble, Coach Bethany Poyer, Coach Cindy Allwardt. Fourth row: Coach Jerry Sessions, Cassie Hirneiss, Kaitlyn Hammond, Amy Strickland, Lisa Hamilton, Jessica McMillen, Jessica Ellison, Tara Gordenski, Coach Gary Hamilton.

Sports preview photos by Perry Hardin

The 2002 Maple Valley boys' track team. First row (from left): Jason Woods, Andrew Cook, Jason Wymer, Devin Musser, Paul Morgan, Jason Craven, Dustin Brown, Mike Gibbs. Second row: Rich Wilson, Andrew Kenyon, Jeff Bowman, Bryan Smith, John Terberg, Brandon Hopkins, Nate Hienze, Coach Hopkins. Third row: Coach Lincoln, Eric Totten, Jeff Taylor, Jason Beardslee, Akok Malek, Josh Grasman, Josh Beardslee, Adam Cogswell, Dan Brooks, Coach Sloan.



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GET MORE NEWS! Subscribe to the Hastings Banner. Only \$25 per year in Barry County. Phone (616)945-9554.

For Rent
 ATTN EATON COUNTY: do you need help paying your rent? The Section 8 & Existing Housing Rental Assistance Program (Section 8) administered by the GLHC may be your answer. Section 8 is a federal program that helps people pay their rent. If your income qualifies, your assisted unit meets housing quality standards & the unit rent is within all available limits, we may be able to help you pay your rent. A waiting list for applicants who qualify for rental assistance is being established for Eaton county. The waiting list will open April 10th, 2002 & close April 30th, 2002. Application forms will be available two ways: 1) send request to Grand Ledge Housing Commission, P.O. Box 549, Grand Ledge, MI. 48837. 2) Pick up an application at 104 W. Seminary, Charlotte, MI. Completed application with a resident verification must be returned before May 1st, 2002 to: GLHC, P.O. Box 549, Grand Ledge, MI. 48837.

MINI STORAGE AVAILABLE: 10x10's, 10x15's, 10x20's. Brand new buildings. Call: Space Your Storage Place at 616-374-1200.

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 2 FREE GARAGE SALE signs with your ad that runs in any of our papers. Get them at J-Ad Graphics, 1351 N. M-43 Hwy, Hastings. At the front counter.

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Recreation
 FOR SALE: SUZUKI 125 - 3 wheeler \$500 obo. (616)948-4328 after 6pm.

School Lunch Menus

Elementary Schools (Maplewood & Fuller)

Lunch Menu

Wednesday, April 10
 Chicken nuggets, roll and honey, tater tots, raspberry sherbert, 1/2 pt. milk.

Thursday, April 11
 Fuller Hungry Howies. Pizza, tossed salad, fresh fruit, cookie, 1/2 pt. milk.

Friday, April 12
 Nachos, break sticks, green beans, applesauce, 1/2 pt. milk.

Monday, April 15
 Cheesie bread stick, spaghetti, apple, blue raspberry juice bar, 1/2 pt. milk.

Tuesday, April 16
 Chicken tenders, mashed potatoes, orange wedges, graham crackers, 1/2 pt. milk.

Note: Maplewood Elementary will be serving breakfast this year starting the first of the school year.

Maple Valley Jr./Sr. High School Lunch Menu

Wednesday, April 10
Choose One - Chicken nuggets, pizza, chicken sandwich, pasta bar. **Choose Two** - Garden salad, mashed potatoes, raspberry sherbert, juice. Milk.

Thursday, April 11
Choose One - Hot Pocket, cheeseburger, pizza, taco bar. **Choose Two** - Garden salad, whole kernel corn, carrot sticks, fresh fruit. Milk.

Friday, April 12
Choose One - Grilled cheese, chicken sandwich, pizza, salad bar. **Choose Two** - Garden salad, green beans, applesauce, fresh fruit. Milk.

Monday, April 15
Choose One - Cheesie bread sticks, pizza, chicken sandwich, salad bar. **Choose Two** - Garden salad, spaghetti, apples, juice. Milk.

Tuesday, April 16
Choose One - Chicken tenders, pizza, cheeseburger, taco bar. **Choose Two** - Garden salad, broccoli, peaches, juice. Milk.

NOTICE

The Village of Vermontville will be flushing hydrants Wednesday night, April 17th, and Thursday night, April 18th. Beginning at 9:00 p.m. This may cause temporary discoloration of the water.

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NOTICE VILLAGE OF NASHVILLE RESIDENTS

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APRIL 15, 2002 - MONDAY
 APRIL 16, 2002 - TUESDAY

APRIL 22, 2002 - MONDAY
 APRIL 23, 2002 - TUESDAY

100

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING VERMONTVILLE TOWNSHIP EATON COUNTY

The Vermontville Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft Township Master Plan on May 2, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the hearing is to accept public comments on the draft plan that is being considered by the Planning Commission for adoption. A copy of the draft plan is available for public inspection at the Vermontville Township Library during regular business hours. The hearing will be conducted at the Township offices located at the Opera House in the Village of Vermontville, Michigan. All Township residents are encouraged to attend the hearing and express their opinions.

Vermontville Township Planning Commission

102

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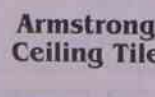
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Local actor has role in Bellevue play

"God's Favorite," one of the lesser known Neil Simon plays, will be performed at the Bellevue High School auditorium at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20, and on Sunday, April 21, at 2:30 p.m.

Simon transfers the biblical Book of Job to a Long Island mansion where the Benjamin family resides. Tycoon Joe Benjamin is visited by a messenger from God and is asked to denounce his faith or suffer the consequences. What ensues, as Joe tries to stick by his principles, is a hilarious sequence of tribulations, from unmentionable itches, to a fiery inferno. His eccentric

wife and quirky children add to the depth of this comedy.

"God's Favorite" is directed by Bill St. Andrew of Charlotte, a veteran of local theater. This is St. Andrew's fifth year as director of Bellevue Theater's spring play. His other works have included "Lost in Yonkers," "Having a Wonderful Time, Wish You Were Here" and "No Sex Please, We're British."

He's also appeared on the stage in numerous musicals in the Battle Creek area.

Don Pierce of Vermontville, playing the part of the crusty and cantankerous Joe Benjamin, has directed and acted in a variety of local

productions and has just been cast in his first feature film.

Linda Pierce of Vermontville, plays Joe's wife Rose. She has been involved with musical theater for nearly thirty years and has performed in numerous plays with The Revue in Vermontville and the Marshall Players. Some of her favorite parts include the role of Mammy in "Lil Abner," Princess Winifred in "Once Upon a Mattress" and Agnes in "I Do, I Do." She also enjoyed playing the Witch in "Into the Woods" and was the narrator in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," both at The Re-

vue in Vermontville.

The comedic role of Sidney Lipton, God's feisty but troublesome messenger, is played by Tim Lake of Marshall. Debbie Lundeen will portray the Benjamins' quirky daughter. Other cast members will include Scott Smith of Bellevue; Tim Nolan as the wayward son, David Benjamin; Denise Poyer and Don Goben as the Benjamins' not-too-subservient maid and servant.

"God's Favorite" tickets are \$8 for the general public and \$7 for students. Tickets may be reserved by calling the box office at (616) 763-3793, or by e-mail message to bellevuetheater@yahoo.com



Don Pierce of Vermontville (left) as tycoon Joe Benjamin, is getting some "heavenly" challenges from Tim Lake of Marshall as God's messenger, Sydney Lipton.

Spring sports previews, from pg. 8

a home doubleheader against Hastings. Lakewood comes in for a doubleheader on Thursday, and the Lions travel to Portland St. Patrick on Friday. Those games also begin at 4 p.m.

Boys' Track

Despite its inexperience — 15 of 32 team members are freshmen — the Maple Valley boys' track team should follow up last year's second-place finish in the SMAA with another strong showing.

"Distance and field events should carry us this year, (and) we should be very competitive in the league," third-year head coach Brian Lincoln said. "Some kids that have been with me for three years are starting to step up and become leaders."

"We could have some athletes reach the state meet if they continue to work hard."

Top returnees include juniors Josh Grasman (throws), Jeff Taylor (distance), Mike

Mead (middle distance), Andrew Kenyon (middle distance) and Rich Wilson (pole vault), senior Brandon Hopkins (sprints, throws), and sophomore Josh Beardlee (hurdles).

Seniors John Terberg (high jump, relays) and Bryan Smith (throws) and freshmen Jeff Bowman (sprints), Jason Beardslee (sprints, long jump) and Akok Malek (middle distance) will boost the lineup.

"As our freshmen continue to improve and get stronger, we will get stronger as a team," Lincoln said.

Olivet, Leslie and Webberville will vie with Valley for the SMAA title.

The next action for the team is April 20 at the Portland Invitational, which the Lions won last year. Their home opener is a double-dual against Bellevue and Morrice on April 23. Key matchups include the meets at Leslie on April 30 and at Olivet on May 14.

jump).

Head coach Gary Hamilton, in his 19th season, worries about a lack of depth and experience in both the 3200 and the high jump, but he hopes to progress in those events as the season moves forward.

"Our goal is to contend for a league championship and qualify as many girls as we can for the state finals on June 1," Hamilton said.

Along with Maple Valley, Olivet, Bellevue and Leslie are the contenders in the SMAA. The May 14 meet at Olivet will be key, Hamilton said.

The next action for the team is April 20 at the Portland Invitational. Their home opener is a double-dual against Bellevue and Morrice on April 23.

Ed. Note: The varsity baseball team photo is scheduled for this week and will appear in a future edition of The Maple Valley News.

Girls' Track

The 2002 girls' track team at Maple Valley enjoys solid overall depth and a number of stellar returnees from last year's 9-0 SMAA championship squad that placed second at regionals.

Seniors Sarah Cook (hurdles, high jump, discus), Miranda Farr (pole vault, long jump), and Shelbi Cousins (pole vault, high jump, discus) return for the Lions, as do juniors Micah Tobias (sprints, hurdles), Ashley Gordeneer (pole vault, shot, discus), Cashel Harp (shot, discus) and Melissa Nisse (long jump, sprints, 800), and sophomores Summer Hill (800), Donna Cripe (sprints), Megan Garvey (sprints, long jump), Stefanie Joostberns (400, 800), Chayla Robles (distance) and Kelly Wilson (throws).

New contributors include freshmen Jessica McMillen (distance), Amy Strickland (hurdles, sprints), Lisa Hamilton (pole vault, long jump, 400), Tara Gordenski (pole vault, distance), Kaitlyn Hammond (sprints) and Jessica Ellison (sprints), sophomore Meagan Halliwell (throws), and senior Akiyo Ueshima (hurdles, long

WRESTLING CLUB RESULTS

Maple Valley Wrestling Club results from Harper Creek High School on Mar. 30:

Group 0:
Landon Hess, 3rd Place (55 lbs)

Group 1:
Nicholas Iszler, 2nd Place (40 lbs)

Devin Greenfield, 2nd Place (52 lbs)

Paul Hosmer, 3rd Place (55 lbs)

Hunter Hess, 3rd Place (61 lbs)

Andrew Lamance, 3rd Place (67 lbs)

Chantz McManamey, 1st Place (72 lbs)

Colton Parish, 1st Place (Hwt)

Group 2:
Cole Hess, 2nd Place (70 lbs)

Group 3:
Ronnie Smith, 1st Place
Ryan Brooke, 3rd Place (100 lbs)

Jesse Miller, 2nd Place (100 lbs)

Jorge Miller, 1st Place (105 lbs)

Group 4:
Raven Skirlock, 2nd Place (85 lbs)

Tyler Corwin, 2nd Place (90 lbs)

Jamie Corwin, 1st Place (95 lbs)

Christopher James, 2nd Place (100 lbs)

Tory Roberts, 3rd Place (100 lbs)

Cadets:
Ben Boss, 1st Place
Kevin Fassett, 2nd Place

Eric Totten, 1st Place
Tyler Greenfield, 3rd Place

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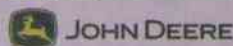
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