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Maplewood may expand after-school programming

by Sandra Ponsetto
Staff Writer

If the Maple Valley School Board approves the curriculum at its regular meeting Monday, Jan. 13, Maplewood Elementary will expand its after-school program in February to include classes and activities from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

The "Sex Can Wait" curriculum being proposed for the Monday and Wednesday

program will be funded through a million dollar grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health through Michigan Abstinence Partners (MAP).

The grant (\$200,000 a year for five years) will be administered through the Eaton Intermediate School District (EISD). The grant will be distributed to five school districts in Eaton County, including Maple Valley, based on a student

population.

Karen Kirchoff, a Title One para-professional at Maplewood who oversees the current after school program along with Heidi Reilly, said she is happy to see the program expand.

"This is something Mr. (Maplewood Principal Fred) Davenport and I have both wanted to offer. We want to offer more than just the tutorial."

Currently, on Tuesday

and Thursday afternoons from 3 to 4 p.m. Maplewood offers "Power Hour" which allows students to work one-on-one with a Title One para-professional or a student from one of Norma Jean Acker's leadership students from Maple Valley High School.

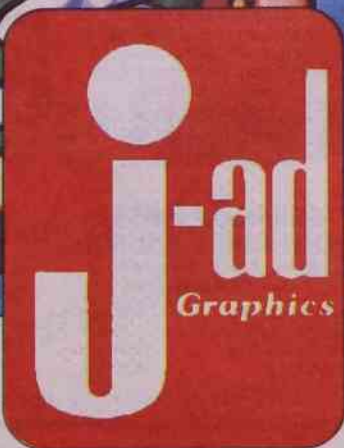
"If parents sign a permission slip, the students can come on these afternoons to receive help with homework, complete a project



Randy Quantrell, Sarah Olin and Sarah Culhane enjoy a laugh while doing their homework at Maplewood Elementary's Power Hour last year (photo courtesy of Karen Kirchoff).



All the best to you and your family this holiday season from all of us at J-Ad Graphics



In This Issue...

- First-graders learn about Christmas Around the World
- Santa welcomed at Vermontville Township Library
- Vermontville artist sculpts angel tree memorial
- Domestic fight leads to runover of local man

Maplewood 5th-graders send stocking to soldiers

by Sandra Ponsetto
Staff Writer

Troops overseas will have a merrier Christmas, thanks to the students in Bob Smith's fifth grade class at Maplewood Elementary.

The students made stockings and filled them with candy, gum, cards, games and other small non-perishable items to send to soldiers serving their country overseas.

"I have a friend who belongs to a support group for soldiers," explained Smith. "I was sent an e-mail about this project to send stockings to soldiers. So, I said we do it and I asked the other staff (at Maplewood)

if they would like to do it too."

Smith's class made the stocking out of red construction paper and yarn and filled them with materials donated by local merchants. The Mobile station, Vermontville Hardware, Charlotte Plaza Floral and the Quality Inn in Charlotte all donated items to fill the stockings.

Smith said students filled the stockings with gum, hard candy, toys, small cameras, shampoo, razors, soap, pens, pencils, sewing kits, notepads, cocoa, coffee and handmade cards and letters.

Smith's mother, Rosemary Smith, and his sister,

Connie White from Perry, also helped by sewing fabric stockings and donating materials to fill them.

"We were able to fill 115 stockings," said Smith. "Nationwide, over 15,000 stockings were filled and sent to the soldiers."

Smith said the group that is organizing the stocking delivery OPMALSTAR (Operation Make A Life Enriched Say Thanks And Remember) sent them verification that their stockings had been received and delivered.

"We also adopted a sailor named named Lucas. He's serving on a ship somewhere but we don't know where he's at, but we've



Jordan Gilbert, fifth-grade teacher Bob Smith and Heather Wood stuff construction paper stockings with candy, gum and other non-perishable treats.

been writing to this sailor," said Smith.

Smith said that OPMALSTAR also hooks servicemen and women up with

schools who have students that wish to correspond with them.

Anyone interested in find-

ing out more information about OPMALSTAR can log on to the web site at OPMALSTAR@aol.com.



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Commission on Aging Menu & Schedule of Events



Hearty Meals
Wednesday, Dec. 25
Merry Christmas
Thursday, Dec. 26
Roast pork w/gravy, stuffing, Brussels sprouts, carrots, pineapple.
Friday, Dec. 27
Creamed tuna, biscuit, winter blend, yellow squash, plums.

Monday, Dec. 30
Bean soup w/ham, asparagus, bread pudding, crackers.

Tuesday, Dec. 24
All sites closed.
Lite Menu
Wednesday, Dec. 25
Merry Christmas
Thursday, Dec. 26
Italian pasta salad, poppy-seed corn, tropical fruit.

Friday, Dec. 27
Cottage cheese, pea and peanut salad, pineapple, dinner roll.
Monday, Dec. 30
Chicken pineapple salad,

potato salad, mixed fruit, dinner roll.

Tuesday, Dec. 31
All sites closed.

Events
Wednesday, Dec. 25 - Closed Christmas Day.
Thursday, Dec. 26 - H - Puzzle Day; N - Nashville

Puzzle Day; D - Puzzle Day, Friday, Dec. 27 - Hastings, Bingo Woodland, Puzzle Day.

Monday, Dec. 30 - All Sites - Reminiscence Corner.
Tuesday, Dec. 31 - COA Closed - Happy New Year.

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ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

803 Reed St., Nashville
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Sunday:
A.M. Worship 11 a.m.
Evening Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Evening:
Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.
PASTOR GLENN BRANHAM

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)
Youth Groups, Bible Study and many other activities.
Phone (616) 963-7710
REV. GLEN WEGNER

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

301 Fuller St., Nashville
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday:
A.M. Worship 11 a.m.
P.M. Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Evening:
Worship 7 p.m.
REV. ALAN METTLER

CHESTER GOSPEL CHURCH

3744 W. Vermontville Hwy.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Evening Worship 6 p.m.
Wednesday Family
Night Service 8:45 p.m.
PASTOR MARC S. LIVINGSTON
Phone: 543-5488

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

110 S. Main, Vermontville
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Church School 10 a.m.
Fellowship Time
After Worship
REV. ERIC LISON

SOUTH KALAMO CHURCH

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

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Phone: (517) 852-9228

GRESHAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

One mile N. of Vermontville Hwy. on Mulliken Road
Church Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m.
Adult Class 10:50 a.m.
PASTOR KATHY SMITH

NORTH KALAMO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
PASTOR MARK THOMPSON

MAPLE GROVE BIBLE CHURCH

8593 Cloverdale Road
(1/2 mile East of M-66,
5 mi. south of Nashville)
Sunday School 10 a.m.
A.M. Service 11:15 a.m.
P.M. Service 6 p.m.
PASTOR GEORGE GAY

NASHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

304 Phillips St., Nashville
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
A.M. Service 11 a.m.
P.M. Service 7 p.m.
Wed. Service 7 p.m.
PASTOR LESTER DeGROOT
PASTOR DEANO LAMPHERE
PASTOR MATT ROHDE

NASHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Located on the corner of 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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250 N. Main St., Vermontville
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Worship Service 11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6 p.m.
Wed. Evening Service 7 p.m.
AWANA 7:30 p.m. Wed.
PASTOR DANIEL E. SMITH

VERMONTVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

108 N. Main, Vermontville
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Church Service 11 a.m.
PASTOR KATHY SMITH

MOST HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

Roman Catholic Latin Mass
314 Main, Middleville
Sunday Mass 9 a.m.
616-795-9030
FATHER PAUL ANDRADE

Six-year-old Nashville girl donates to Locks of Love

In O. Henry's inspiring Christmas story "The Gift of the Magi," a young girl cuts and sells her long brown hair to buy a Christmas gift for her husband.

This year in Nashville, 6-year-old Cathleen Seaton who is blessed with a thick mane of soft, brown hair decided to cut it and give it to Locks of Love so they could make a wig for a sick child who has lost his or her hair due to illness or chemotherapy.

Cathleen's parents, Charles and Angie Seaton, say they are very proud of their daughter.

"Cathleen is like that," said Angie. "Most kids her age don't really care about things; but, even when she was little, Cathleen was always thinking about others."

Angie said her daughter had been growing out her hair and decided a few months ago that she wanted to have it cut.

"I had heard about Locks of Love from my mother," she said. "I asked Cathleen if she wanted to wait a little longer so her hair would be at least six inches long, and she said, 'yes.' She's a very easy going little girl."

Cathleen who turned 7 years old just a few days after her hair cut said she doesn't miss her long hair at all.

"It felt a little funny," said Cathleen about having her hair cut into a chin length bob.

But, Cathleen said she likes her new hairstyle and wants to keep it short now that it has been cut.

"We took her to Styles 'R' Us for her haircut. She really loved it and got all



Cathleen Seaton, before she donated her hair to Locks of Love.



Cathleen Seaton beams a radiant smile as she sports a bouncy new haircut this Christmas.

giddy and started bouncing around," said Angie.

Cathleen has asked if she could find out who the little boy or girl is that will be getting a wig made from her hair. However, Locks of

Love isn't able to do that because it's too hard to keep track of all the donors and where their hair goes. Plus, the recipients all are under the age of 18 years of age, so their privacy must be pro-

tected. "Cathleen is still very proud of herself," said

Angie. "She will tell people, 'I helped a little boy or girl who is sick.'"

For more information about Locks of Love, call 1-888-896-1588.



In memory of

Virgil Currier

February 1933 - October 1996

I'm Spending Christmas With Jesus Christ This Year

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below. With tiny lights, like Heaven's stars reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear. For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear. But those sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.

I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring. For it is beyond description to hear the angels sing. I can't begin to tell you of the splendor of this place. Can you imagine Christmas with our Savior, face to face? I know how much you miss me, the pain inside your heart. But please remember, loved one, we'll not forever be apart. I'll ask the Lord to strengthen you as I tell Him of your love; And give you peace and comfort that can only come from above.

So let your hearts be joyful and let your spirit sing. For I am spending Christmas in Heaven, and I'm walking with the King!

Happy New Year Merry Christmas
I love and miss you,
Becky

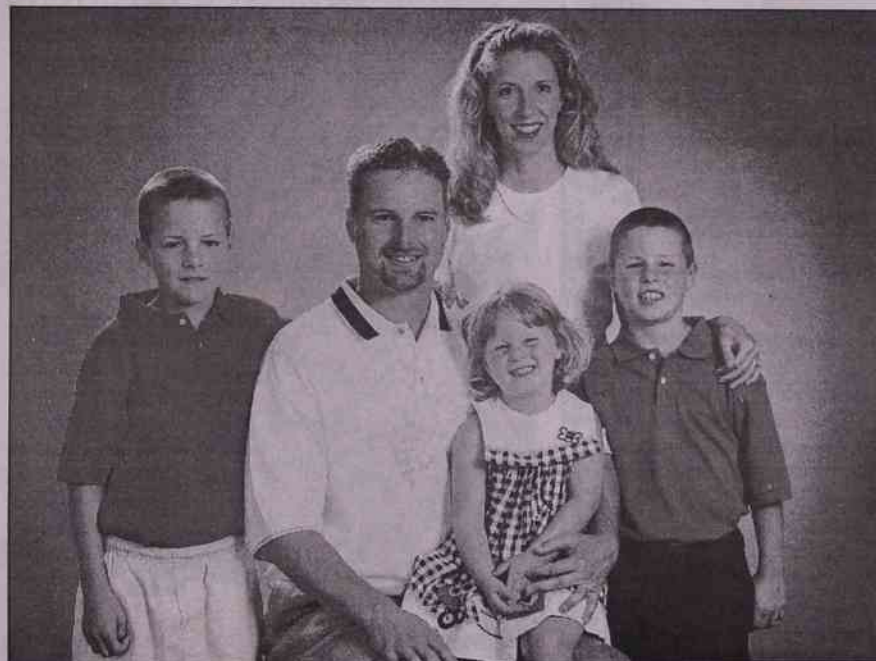


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MOVIE GUIDE



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WED 4:30, 7:20, 10:05
TH 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:20, 10:05

SHOWTIMES 12/24 - 12/26
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (PG-13)
DIGITAL/STADIUM SEATING
TUE 11:25, 2:55
WED 2:55, 6:25, 9:55
TH 11:25, 2:55, 6:25, 9:55

MAID IN MANHATTAN (PG-13)
TUE 12:15, 2:40, 5:00
WED 5:00, 7:10, 9:25
TH 12:15, 2:40, 5:00, 7:10, 9:25

WILD THORNBERRYS (PG)
TUE 11:50, 1:35, 3:20, 5:05
WED 3:20, 5:05, 6:45
TH 11:50, 1:35, 3:20, 5:05, 6:45

STAR TREK: NEMESIS (PG-13)
WED THES TUE 11:00, 1:40, 4:20
DRUMLINE (PG-13)
WED/TH 9:00 PM

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Vermontville artist sculpts angel tree memorial

by Sandra Ponsetto
Staff Writer

When Jane Aldrich's son, Jerry, looked at the old walnut tree all he could see was cords of firewood. When Vermontville artist Mark Myers looked at the same tree, he saw angels, eagles and lions emerging from the weathered limbs.

After three summers of part-time work, Myers said he feels that the "Angel Tree" he sculpted at the request of Jane Aldrich in memory of her two daughters, Jill and Janet, is nearly finished.

"I'm done for the year but I'll be back next summer to add a few more details like to the feathers and the an-

gels' faces," said Myers.

Aldrich said she appreciates the time and details Myers puts into his work.

"I know some days it just doesn't work for him and he needs to walk away and do something else. But when he feels it and sees it, he will put it in," she said, noting that he had recently opened the angels' eyes and added fingernails to their hands. "He has really put a lot of himself into this tree."

Myers agreed, "Some days when it's not going right I leave and work on something else."

Both Myers and Aldrich said that in the future Myers will landscape the area around the tree with rocks



Mark Myers carved angels, eagles, doves, a lion, a lamb and other images of nature into this memorial to Jill and Janet which was commissioned by their mother, Jane Aldrich.

gathered from her property and a little waterfall.

"I told him we'd let my pocketbook recover a little first," said Aldrich with a

laugh.

Aldrich said that anything worth having is worth waiting for.

Aldrich's daughter, Jill, died almost 40 years ago at the age of 6 and her other daughter, Janet, died nine years ago.

Aldrich said she always knew she wanted to do a

memorial for her girls, but nothing ever seemed right.

"I didn't want to plant a tree and I didn't want a gazebo with a plaque on it," she said.

"One day it hit me to take that old walnut tree that had been hit by lightning so many times and have it turned into a memorial," she said. "When the time is right things fall into place."

"I had heard about Mark's work and I had him come out here to take a look, and he said it could be done," said Aldrich.

"This really serves two purposes; it keeps the tree from falling onto the house and Mark has turned it into a great angel tree for my daughters," she added enthusiastically.

Aldrich and Myers shared their ideas and vision for the project right from the start and found that their thoughts were surprisingly compatible.

"We just really got along," said Myers. "She had a plaque and she wanted to put it up there at the top, so we did. Jane is the greatest. She is just a really neat lady. Our ideas clicked on the whole thing."

"We just talked and threw out a lot of ideas of what I saw and what she would like," said Myers, who does all of his work with a chain saw, a couple of chisels and a small hand sander.

"I gave him a photograph of my daughters," said Aldrich. "I knew I needed to have one as an angel be-

cause I know the littlest one is an angel. When he started on it I told him I would like something with an angel."

Aldrich's other daughter, Janet, worked with disabled children in Charlotte, so the two thought an angel would also be an appropriate memorial for her as well.

As the project progressed, the angels became almost real for both Myers and Aldrich.

"I think the angels really pulled him in, just like my daughters would," said Aldrich. "The littlest was such a bubbly little girl. You couldn't get near them without them opening up to you and drawing you in. My oldest daughter was the same way."

Aldrich said that whenever she or Myers were up the scaffolding they would find themselves talking to the angels just as they would have to Jill or Janet.

"It was like, 'I'm sorry, I have to step on you for a moment...'" said Aldrich.

Besides the angels, Myers and Aldrich decided to incorporate a variety of other symbols into the work.

"He came up with the idea for the eagle on top," said Aldrich.

"The eagle is like a guardian," said Myers.

"I asked him who the guardian was, and he said, 'It's you,' and I said, 'You bet it is,'" said Aldrich.

Aldrich said that a rotted limb behind the eagle sug-

Continued next page

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Vermontville artist Mark Myers poses with the sculpture of a little girl playing on a tire swing that hangs on the back of the Angel Tree.

From previous page

gested to her the idea of a nest with eaglets in it. She talked to Myers who eagerly carved the birds and added large twigs to form a realistic looking nest.

"I say he must have known my daughters," said Aldrich. "The largest eaglet reminds me of my oldest daughter because of the way she has her mouth open. She was almost six years older than her sister and she was always saying, 'Mom! Jill did this,' or, 'Jill did that,'" said Aldrich with a chuckle.

On the back of the tree, on a limb that used to hold a real tire swing that all of Aldrich's children played on, Myers hung a tire swing that he carved out of a solid piece of oak.

Next, using a piece of the walnut tree, Myers carved a figure of little girl and put it in the swing.

"It's really in memory of all the children that have ever played in that swing," said Aldrich.

"I swear Mark must know my great-granddaughter because that little girl he carved has her legs and her butt," she added with a laugh.

Some details Myers added on his own, taking inspiration from the quiet countryside that surrounds Aldrich's farm.

"I carved a turtle at the base of the tree, just because it's part of nature; she didn't see it until about a month after I had done it," said Myers.

"This is a really neat place to carve, up here on this hill," said Myers. "This is God's country up here; it's beautiful... just unbelievable... I see deer and wild turkeys while I'm working."

Myers also added doves, butterflies, vines and a sunburst to the tree, using things he saw on the farm around him.

Aldrich suggested the lion and the lamb which spring from a tree branch in front of the eagle.

"It's the lion and the lamb from the Bible, living in peace together," said Myers.



A 500-pound wooden gargoyle sits atop an unused chimney of the Aldrich farmhouse in Vermontville.

Myers' girlfriend, Kim Hirneiss, often came to help with the work.

"I just do some of the sanding with a little hand-held sander," said Hirneiss modestly.

Aldrich laughed when she remembered watching Myers and Hirneiss working on the tree together.

"She'd be working down below with the sander and he'd be up above chipping away. All those chips would fall down on her hair and all you could see were two little eyes when she took her glasses off," said Aldrich.

Both Myers and Aldrich said they are pleased with the way the tree has turned out.

"Everything just fell together," said Aldrich of the Angel Tree.

Aldrich said that as the project drew to a close, her son decided that the house also needed a gargoyle. Myers promptly set to work carving one out of a 500-pound piece of solid oak left over from one of his other projects.

The gargoyle's horns were carved out of two pieces of walnut from the angel tree.

"Gargoyles date back to ancient times when they were believed to ward off evil spirits," said Aldrich. "My son saw a small gargoyle that he liked and Mark kind of worked from that."

Although a gargoyle is meant to ward off evil spirits, Aldrich said she did not want an ugly one sitting atop her house.

"I wanted him to have a nice face, and he does. He looks nice sitting there on top of the house," she said of the gargoyle with its bemused grin, pointy tail and wings.

It was Hirneiss who first suggested wings for the gargoyle.

"The wings were done separately. I did him first without them. But Kim said right from the start that it needed wings," said Myers appreciatively. "Then Jane and Kim both said he needed wings and a tail, so I added them on."

"It's the first gargoyle I've ever made," said Myers admiring his handiwork from the gentle slope of a nearby hill.

"Yeah, but it was a really neat idea," said Hirneiss.

The piece was recently hoisted into place on top of an unused chimney on the roof of Aldrich's farm house.

Aldrich said she likes her son's gargoyle.

"He just looks like he belongs there, like he's as old as the house," she said.

"I'm not one for the run-of-the-mill. I don't do it to one-up anyone; I just know what I like. I don't care what everyone else does," said Aldrich. "I don't go with the crowd unless it feels right."

"My son and I know what we like. What we like best of all are sunsets and they are free. There's nothing the outside world has to offer that we don't have here. We are quite content."

"I just do my own thing — but nothing illegal or fattening," she added with a laugh.

Even though Aldrich doesn't follow the crowd, she doesn't mind the people who come out to her farm on Nashville Highway to admire the Angel Tree.

"It's so nice to have peo-

ple come out here and have look at it," she said.

Aldrich, a cook at the Eaton County Jail, told of coming home one day to find a minister and his wife looking at the tree.

"He was blind and she was describing everything for him," said Aldrich. "She described there being a dove of Noah and a dove of peace and the angels bursting free of the vines at the base of the tree."

"I wanted the tree for me, to let my daughters know that I hadn't forgotten them," said Aldrich. "But people have gotten so much out of it. I am so pleased God has given this to us."

"People look at the tree and see things I never

thought of," she continued. "I had no idea what the tree would mean to other people. Hopefully, they will take things from what they see in the tree and go away a better person."



"It's marvelous. We see the girls, but they see beyond, they see a broader

meaning and take that home with them," said Aldrich. "I want people to look at the tree and go away knowing that there can be peace in this world."

Mark Myers can be contacted about his work at (517) 599-0098.

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Domestic fights leads to man being run over by car

A Nashville man suffered minor injuries to his left leg when his girlfriend allegedly ran over him as he was getting out of their vehicle in Castleton Township during a verbal argument Dec. 10, according to the Hastings Post of the Michigan State Police.

Troopers reported the victim said he and the woman were arguing inside the car in the 4000 block of Thornapple Lake Road when the woman began to assault him.

"He then began to exit the vehicle and (suspect) began to drive away while he was still partly in the car," troopers said. "He fell to the ground and the vehicle

drove over his left leg."

The woman told police the man jumped out of the car while it was still moving.

The 35-year-old Nashville

woman was lodged in the Barry County Jail for felonious assault. The 31-year-old victim refused medical treatment for abrasions to his elbow and bruises to his leg.

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Volunteers Pat McClelland, Salema Woodman, Kelly Wilson and Dawn Fletcher pose with a sampling of the gifts sold at this year's Santa's Secret Shop at Fuller Street Elementary.

Santa's Secret Shop successful at Fuller Street Elementary

Many Fuller Street Elementary students went home clasping carefully chosen and wrapped gifts in their mittened hands last week, thanks to Santa's Secret Shop.

Organizer Dawn Fletcher said the annual event was a success again this year. Fletcher and others who volunteer their time, don't measure success in terms of profits, but in the happiness of the children buying the gifts for family and friends.

"I do this for the kids. If it wasn't for the kids, I wouldn't do this," said Fletcher. "The PTO doesn't make a profit on this. I think there's maybe a five cent markup on the low priced items. Santa's Secret Shop is about giving kids an opportunity to save their money and spend it to buy gifts for their family."

Fletcher earlier this year personally selected all the items that would be offered to Fuller students this year at Santa's Secret Shop.

In November each student received a catalog with a price list and a bank, which allowed them to decide what they would like to buy and to start saving their money.

Fuller Street Elementary art and music teachers, Jill Schantz and Lori Thomas gave up their room and taught their classes from a push cart so their room could be used to set up Santa's Secret Shop.

The students were assisted with their shopping

and wrapping by students from Norma Jean Acker's leadership classes at Maple Valley High School, PTO members and the parents of children at Fuller Street.

"We couldn't do this without the volunteers," said Fletcher. "These are people who took time away from their own families to be

here." Volunteer Pat McClelland doesn't find the time she spends at Santa's Secret Shop a sacrifice.

"The kids love to buy gifts and keep them secret from their families," she said. "I love to watch their faces."

Nashville United Methodist Church sets serve tonight

The public is invited to attend Christmas Eve services at the United Methodist Church of Nashville located at the corner of State and

Washington in Nashville. There will be a Christmas Worship Service at 7 p.m. and a Christmas Communion service at 11 p.m.

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Three fire departments respond to house fire



Firefighters from Nashville, Bellevue and Johnstown fire departments battle a house fire on Butler Road Friday afternoon.

by Sandra Ponsetto
Staff Writer

A house fire was discovered early Friday afternoon when a truck driver noticed flames and smoke coming from a house on Butler Road between M-66 and Guy Road.

"I live just a mile down the road and I was driving by when I saw the smoke and flames coming from the house near the woodstove chimney," said Brad Carpenter, who works for the Michigan Milk Producers Association.

Carpenter used his cell phone to call 911 and the Nashville Fire Department was toned out at 12:37 p.m.

When they arrived on the scene, the Nashville Fire Department called the Bellevue and Johnstown fire departments for backup.

Also responding to the scene was a State Trooper from the Hastings Police Post and Eaton County Sheriff's Deputy and the Nashville EMS.

The firefighters were still on the scene at press time on Friday and Nashville Fire

Chief Bill Wilson was not available for comment.

Carpenter said he didn't believe anyone was at home at the time of the blaze because there are normally two cars in the driveway and there were none there that afternoon.

Obituaries

Josephine Amalio

HASTINGS - Josephine Amalio, age 92, of Hastings died Dec. 19, 2002 at Tendercare of Hastings.

Josephine Amalio was born Aug. 25, 1910 in Detroit the daughter of the late Leandro and Rose (Evola) Marcelino.



She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Angelo Amalio; two sisters, Mary Maniaci and Rose Grammatico; one brother, James Giordano; one great granddaughter, Jacqueline Rose Stuart.

She is survived by two sons, John (Laura) Amalio of Nashville and Louis (Rosemary) Sirianni of St. Clair Shores, MI; three grandchildren, Deana (Randy) Morris of Nashville, MI, Teresa (David) Stuart and Hudsonville, MI; Angela Amalio of Oregon; nine great grandchildren, Caitlin, Britney, Jacob, Nicholas, Zachary, Joseph, Gabrielle, Hannah and Nathan; nieces and nephews, Rosemary (Lenny) Cusamano of Utica, MI, Diane Scrivo of Ventura, CA, Margaret (John) Blevins of Neptune Beach, FL, Ralph Scrivo of Ventura, CA, Mr. and Mrs. L. Maniaci of Fort Gratiot, MI, Mr. and Mrs. J. Giordano of Livonia, MI and Mr. and Mrs. J. Amalio of Washington, MI.

Respecting family wishes, there will be no services. Arrangements were made by Maple Valley Chapel.

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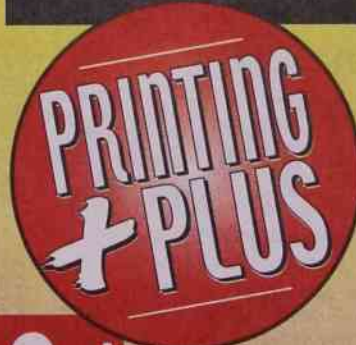
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First-graders present Christmas play at Fuller

Last Wednesday Fuller Elementary students in Tammi King's first grade class presented a Christmas play "Beth Humbug, The Christmas Grump" last week for family and friends.

"It's the infamous story of something going wrong with Christmas and somebody needs to save it," said Fuller Street Administrative Assistant Joan Leos. "In this story, it is a little girl, a mouse and a cat that save

the day."

The school cafeteria was filled with parents, grandparents, siblings and friends, according to Leos.

"It couldn't have been a bigger success," she said.

According to Leos, King likes to incorporate theater and drama into her classroom.

"Every child had a special role to play and being in something like this gives the children a chance to step



Dan Alexander, one of Santa's elves, narrates the story.

outside of themselves and learn about stage presence, etiquette and the beauty of song," said Leos.

Following is a cast list of this year's performance: Beth Humbug, Courtney Walker; Charlie Checker,



Students in Tammi King's first grade class take to the stage for the dress rehearsal of "Beth Humbug, the Christmas Grump."



Courtney Walker portrays the title role of Beth Humbug in Tammi King's annual Christmas production.



Austin Gonser plays Santa, accompanied by the doll maker (Mallory Cogswell) and Head Elf Charlie Checker (Storm Ewing).

Storm Ewing; Santa, Austin Gonser; Mrs. Claus, Kourtney White; Merry the Mouse, Breanna Hienze; Holly the Cat, Megan Green; Christmas Elves: Daniel Alexander, Mallory Cogswell, Bobby Goodman, Racann Kienutske, Ryan Myall, Teresa Primm, Garret Shaw and Seth Szymanski; Reindeer: Nick Bartlett, Kyle Brumm, Dayton Carter, Donald Hampton and Dylan Kennedy.

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Dr. Bruce Pryor is celebrating his 80th birthday on December 28. In remembering the many, varied experiences of practicing medicine for over 50 years in Hastings, he recalls with fondness the joy and happiness he's experienced while living and working in this very special community. Since we are creating a memory book for him, we would love to have cards and notes from his friends, former patients, and colleagues. Please include memories that have been shared through the years. Mail to: 820 West Madison, Hastings, MI 49058

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Devote some time to cuddling with your child and a good book. (The love of early reading, and later school success, has been tied to positive experiences with adults introducing books to infants, and even the unborn.)
 We all need someone.
 Brianna, age 5, after listening to Celine Dion sing "All by Myself" on the radio, said, "Mommy, that lady needs to get some friends!" (From "The Magic of Children")
 December is National Stress Free Family Holiday Month—Cuddle with your child, for him/her and for you.
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First-graders learn about Christmas around the world



Theresa Duffy shows students how to cut out a construction paper bluebird. The bluebird is a traditional Swedish holiday decoration.

by Sandra Ponsetto
Staff Writer

Clutching their passports stamped at each port of entry, first grade students at Fuller Street Elementary recently visited six different "countries" to learn how Christmas is celebrated around the world.

Each of the school's six first grade teachers, chose a country and decorated their room to reflect something of that country's culture and Christmas celebration. Students then rotated through each classroom, learning a little bit about how the holidays are celebrated in each country that was represented.

Tammi King, who thought up the idea of "Christmas Around the World," turned her room into a brief stopover in Germany.

In her room the children got to taste lebkuchen, a traditional German Christmas cookie made with almond, dried citron and spice.

King told the students that the tradition of the Christmas tree and Christmas lights started in Germany.

"Martin Luther was the first one to put candles on his tree because they reminded him of stars in the

sky shining through the tree branches," said King.

In her classroom students learned that Santa Claus is known as St. Nicholas in Germany and that children put out shoes rather than stocking for St. Nicholas to fill.

The shoes are filled with candy, nuts and fruit.

"That's nasty," said some of the students when they considered eating goodies out of their shoes.

King also noted that the children don't leave treats for St. Nicholas, they leave carrots for his horse.

Students also learned that two of America's most beloved Christmas carols, "Silent Night," and "O Christmas Tree," originated in Germany.

Guajardo greeted students at the door to her room in a festive traditional Mexican dress.

Once inside the students drank an authentic Mexican hot cocoa drink and learned how the poinsettia, a plant native to Mexico, became associated with Christmas.

"I'm thoroughly enjoying myself," said Guajardo.

"The kids are very interested in learning about everything, especially the clothing from Mexico.

Indeed, besides the colorful dress that she was wearing, Guajardo had decked her walls with other Mexican garments, including skirts, blouses, sombreros and serapes.

Down the hall, Theresa Duffy was showing students how to cut out paper bluebirds.

Duffy told students that on Christmas Eve it is traditional for children in Sweden to hang a bluebird on the family Christmas tree.

The students also tasted ginger cookies and shortbread cookies with cinnamon on top which are authentic Swedish Christmas treats.

The students also learned about St. Lucia, which is celebrated around Christmas time on the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice. St. Lucia was a young girl who brought food to the Christians when they were hiding in the catacombs during the time they were being persecuted. St. Lucia wore a white robe tied at the waist with red ribbons and



Passports in hand, Fuller Street Elementary first-graders follow teacher Andrew Peabody from his classroom, where they learned about Christmas in France, to Paula Guajardo's room where she taught them about how Christmas is celebrated in Mexico.

wore a wreath crown with candles on it to light her way as she walked through the forest to reach the catacombs. The Swedes remember her by having the eldest daughter of the family dress

like Saint Lucia and bring treats, such as rolls and hot chocolate to family members on the morning of winter solstice.

In Andrew Peabody's room, the students learned

about how Christmas is celebrated in France and a few words in French.

The students made small Noel banners, which Peabody said the French use to

See Christmas, page 11

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Athlete of the Week

Krystal Root

Maple Valley High School
(Nashville) Volleyball

Saturday, Dec. 14 at Bath the Maple Valley varsity volleyball team had a tough day, but Root 17 service points, including 8 aces.

She had 31 assists for the day and 2 solo blocks.

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Lions' riders took ninth place at state finals

Back in October, the Maple Valley Equestrian 'C' team headed down to the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit for "four days of fame," as sophomore Jessica Ellison called it, at the state finals.

Although equestrian isn't an official MHSAA sport

yet, with help from the school and the community doing pop can collection fund raisers and the like the girls were able to earn enough money to take the trip, and they finished the weekend ninth out of 19 teams in the C division.

In total 57 teams with about 600 riders took place in the four day event.

The five member team included seniors Kristen Vanderhoef who earned 34 points in Saddleseat, Western Equitation, and Reining, and Kaylene Rutledge who scored 11 points in Western Showmanship, Western Equitation, Trail, Barrels, and the Two-Man Relay.

"Sacrifice was definitely something we had to deal with," said Ellison. "We had to do some events that we never did before."

Ellison earned 17 points for the squad, participating

in Hunt Seat Equitation, Hunt Seat Showmanship, Saddleseat Showmanship, Western Showmanship, and Hunt Seat Bareback.

The team's other sophomore is Jessica McMillen, who earned the team a point while performing in Western Showmanship, Western Equitation, Hunt Seat Bareback, and Western Bareback.

Andi Cohoon, only a freshman, got the team 22 points in the Barrels, Flags, Keyhole, and as the second half of the Two-Man Relay.

Ellison said that the girls had great fun at the finals with the help of their coaches Jill Vanderhoef, Don Jewell, and Tammy Flower.

"We didn't necessarily win, but it felt like it to us. After all, we were at the "Super Bowl" of equestrian events."



Maple Valley's Equestrian C team poses in front of the State Fairgrounds, where they rode to ninth place at the state finals from Oct. 24-27. The team was

made up of five members, Andi Cohoon, Kristen Vanderhoef, Kaylene Rutledge, Jessica McMillen, and Jessica Ellison.

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The "Stream Map of Pennsylvania" was completed in 1965 after a thirty-year effort by Howard Higbee, a former Penn State Professor.

Professor Higbee succeeded in creating a map of the highest detail possible—a map that shows every stream and lake. He painstakingly plotted by hand, the location of 45,000 miles of streams onto a 3 by 5 foot map.

The map sold extremely well—until it was lost several years after it first appeared in print. Incredibly, the printer entrusted with the original drawing and printing plates, declared bankruptcy, then carelessly hauled Higbee's 30 years of work to a landfill.

The few remaining dog-eared copies became a prized fisherman's possession. Professor Higbee was offered \$400 for one of his last maps. And state agencies were forced to keep their copies under lock and key.

Experts told Professor Higbee that reprints were impossible, because the maps were printed in non-photographic blue.

Then, in 1991, at the age of 91, Howard Higbee's dream came true. Computers made it possible to reprint the map. Holding an updated map, Howard said, "I never thought I'd live to see this day."

Then, by combining Professor Higbee's knowledge with computer technology—the STREAM MAP OF MICHIGAN was created.

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Army Reserve Spec.
Lucas R. Willcutt has been re-called to active duty to support the mission of Operations Noble Eagle or Enduring Freedom at an undisclosed forward operating location.

The reservist is a member of the 303rd Military Police Company based in Jackson, Mich., who, along with numerous other members of the company, will be deployed.

Noble Eagle is the official name given to the U.S. military operations associated with the homeland defense and support of federal, state, and local civil agencies in the United States. U.S. military reserve component members have been activated to help guard, protect and defend America from within her borders, shores and skies.

Enduring Freedom is the official name given to the biggest U.S. military mobilization since the Gulf War in 1991. Members of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces have been deployed and reserve components activated to support the war against global terrorism, combating the international terrorist network or regime

forces outside of the United States.

Willcutt is a military policeman with three years of military service.

He is the son of Linda L. Willcutt of Lansing and Donald F. Willcutt of Nashville.

The specialist is a 1997 graduate of Maple Valley Junior Senior High School.

Ronald J. Williams

Air Force Airman Ronald J. Williams has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Doug Williams of Nashville, and is a 2002 graduate of Hastings High School.

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Santa Claus welcomed at Vermontville Twp. Library

When Santa visited the Vermontville Township Library earlier this month, he heard Christmas wish-lists from dozens of the area's youngest citizens.

Every child received a gift book, an oversized "Night Before Christmas" bookmark and a paper bag containing a variety of



Santa visits with a young friend at the Vermontville Library.



This young lady strikes a thoughtful pose on Santa's lap as she considers what she wants for Christmas.

Christmas trinkets.

Kaye Setchfield from Eaton County's Early Childhood Development also was on hand to answer questions and hand out cartoon character suncatchers.

During the past few weeks the children have helped decorate the library by making ornaments. The ornaments were then entered

into a holiday drawing. The winners and prizes are: Katherine Leinhart, popcorn tin and puzzle; Amanda Forest and Kassy Chase, animal activity books; Donnie Jensen and Alexis Knapp, fuzzy reindeer horn headgear.

The library will be closed Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1.



First grade teacher Paula Guajardo, wearing an authentic Mexican dress, reads students a story about the legend of the Poinsettia.

Christmas, continued from page 9

welcome visitors to their homes during the Christmas season.

Students had a chance to sample French laced cookies, which are a holiday staple in that country.

In Ruth Ralph's and Glenda Steward's classroom, students were transported to England, where they had a chance to sample authentic English shortbread and make a small cornucopia, which is a traditional holiday decoration in England.

The students also learned that caroling door-to-door

has its origins in England, as does the sending of Christmas cards.

Ralph told the children that in England, they call Santa, Father Christmas and the people say, "Happy Christmas," rather than "Merry Christmas," as is done in the United States.

In Mary Keely's classroom the students learned about Christmas in Italy, where gifts aren't brought by Santa Claus, Pere Noel, Father Christmas, St. Nicholas or gnomes. Instead they are brought by La Befana, an old woman.

Children go around the town in Italy and sing Christmas carols to different families on Christmas Eve and then they light candles, tell Christmas stories and eat lasagna or spaghetti.

In lieu of either of those traditional dishes, Keely provided mini-pizzas for a snack.

Teachers all reported that the children had a wonderful time going from "country to country" and learning about the variety of different holiday customs around the world.

More childrens' letters to Santa

Tonight Santa will be loading up his sleigh with toys and other goodies for boys and girls all around the world.

These letters, reprinted with permission of the jolly old elf himself, give us a glimpse of what some of the children in Maple Valley are hoping to find under the tree and in their stockings this Christmas morning.

Dear Santa,

My name is Alexandra Jean. How are you doing this year? I've been trying very hard to be good this year. I'm nine years old. I like making snow angels with my little sister and making snow men in the winter. How is Mrs. Claus doing? How are the elves, are they busy making new toys for everyone around the world? I would like these for Christmas: Any Game Boy Advance game, Electric Arcade, Barbie Super Stamp Set, Enchanted Fountain Light Bright Cube.

I love you Santa,
AJ (Kirby)

Dear Santa,

How are you? My name is Brittney Rose. I have tried to be good all year real hard. Mommy is writing this be-

cause I'm only three years old. How's Rudolf and all the other reindeer? Is the North Pole a cool place to live with all that snow? I like snow, making snow angels and snowmen. Here is my list for Christmas: Beauty and the Beast Doll House, ponies, Sassy Stables, Pretty Baby.

I love you Santa,
Brittany Rose (Kirby)

Dear Santa,

I want a Harley Davidson remote control. I want a Play Station and a singing fish and a remote control truck, and a stuffed animal Santa. For Justin, a Blues Clues animal. I also want some wrestlers.

Love, Dayton and Justin

Dear Santa,

Hi. I would like the following things for Christmas: a Spiderman game, race car, robot, and a truck. I have been good this year. We are remodeling our house, but you can still get in.

Love, Grant Adrianson
Age 4

Nashville Strings planning potluck

The Nashville Strings will host its annual potluck dinner at noon Wednesday, Jan. 1, at the Maple Leaf Grange located three miles south of Nashville on M-66.

The public is invited to attend. Everyone is asked to bring their own table service and a dish to pass. Meat and drinks will be furnished.

After the dinner there will be music and dancing, compliments of the Nashville Strings.

Squad size a factor again as Lions fall to Lakewood, Delton

Maple Valley's varsity wrestlers headed to Lakewood for the second time this season, Tuesday Dec. 17, and for the second time had to make the bus ride home without a win.

Delton and Lakewood's B team both took victories over the Lions.

The Delton Panthers just edged past the Lions 39-33.

Both teams rosters aren't quite filled out, and the Lions actually won four of the seven matches that happened out on the mat, three by pin.

At 125, Joey Desrochers pinned Delton's Jeremy Herrington at 2:43.

Ben Boss also earned six points for Valley with a pin at 135. He took down To-

bias Wischemann 1:24 into the first round.

Ben Swan, at 275, earned the other Lion pin by taking down Eric Ryan 29 seconds into round number two.

Matt Brumm was the other winner on the mat for the Lions. He earned a 16-12 decision over Delton's Cory Bourdo.

Eric Totten and Andrew Gaber both earned victories against voids in the Delton lineup.

The Lions couldn't keep it quite as close against Lakewood's B team, with the final score ending up 60-18.

Desrochers at 125, Boss at 135, and Josh Grasman at 215 all recorded a pin for Valley's total of 18 team

points.

Desrochers took down Mike Lieby at 3:16 for the win.

Boss's pin came at 4:19 against Lakewood's Adam Wrubel.

Lakewood's Pat Weeks took Grasman into the third period before falling at 5:12.

Valley hit the mats again last Saturday, when they hosted the Maple Valley Invitational, after the paper went to press.

Next up for the Lions is the Wayland Team Invitational on Saturday Dec. 28.

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Castleton Twp. Board

DECEMBER 4, 2002

Called to order by Supervisor J. Cooley.

Approved the agenda. There was no public comment.

Approved the minutes from the November meeting.

Accepted the treasurer's report.

Amended the budget.

Approved the bills in the amount of 7428.22.

Road Commission annual meeting will be 1-8-03 at 1 p.m. at the road commission.

Accepted committee reports.

Made Board of Review appointments.

There was no correspondence.

Heard board comments.

Adjournment.

Lorna L. Wilson, Clerk

Attested to by Supervisor J. Cooley (104)

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Senior citizens beware

Elderly man duped out of \$5,000 by scam

by Shelly Sulser
Staff Writer

An area senior citizen was tricked out of \$5,000 last week by an unknown telephone caller who said the money was needed to process a \$500,000 lottery prize, said Trooper Phil Vannette of the Hastings Post of the Michigan State Police Friday.

The 81-year-old Dowling area man lives on a fixed income and is out the money unless authorities are able to prosecute the perpetrator and obtain restitution which Vannette said is very unlikely.

The man told police he has played the "Australian lottery" for four to five years which involves sending about \$20 per week to an address in Canada. (It is illegal for Americans to play foreign lotteries, according to Vannette.)

On Dec. 12, the man received a call from a person claiming to be an agent with the Australian lottery.

"He was told he had won \$500,000 in the Australian lottery and they gave a telephone number in British Columbia to call," said Vannette. "He called and the man told him he had to send \$550 to get the check."

The victim told the man on the other end of the telephone that he would not send any money until he had a check.

"So they sent him a check for \$30,000," said Vannette. "He took it to the bank here in Hastings and deposited it into his account. They called him back and said they needed \$5,000 for transfer fees and taxes, they needed it in cash and they needed it via Western Union."

The victim followed the instructions and sent \$5,000 to an address in British Columbia, Canada.

"A couple days later, the \$30,000 check was found to be counterfeit," said Vannette.

"It was drawn on World Bank in Canada."

Vannette is now working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in an effort to identify the perpetrators.

"They said there is a lot of that type of fraud going on there," said Vannette. "An awful lot."

Vannette warns older citizens to be wary of such offers.

"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," added Trooper Bryan Fuller.

Police said seniors citizens are frequent targets of solicitors who receive everything from fraudulent bills in the mail and donation requests to the calls like the Dowling man received.

"If you have a relative or a friend who is older, if you can help them keep track of their bills and what they're sending out, it could save them a lot of trouble," said Vannette. "There are a lot of unscrupulous people that just prey on elderly people. This man is embarrassed and devastated."

Penny hockey tourney includes 90 5th-graders

A large yellow chart in the hall kept track of the wins and losses of the 90 fifth grade students who participated in the penny hockey tournament, sponsored by teacher Josh Meersma at Maplewood Elementary.

The students played one-on-one penny hockey at various times throughout the school day, with the winner going on to compete in the next round.

"The kids really enjoyed the tournament," said Meersma, who made and painted all the wooden penny hockey boards himself. "Penny hockey is a lot like pool. You have to pay attention to the angles."

Last Monday, more than 75 students crowded the school cafeteria to watch Matt Siple and Deon Pointer shoot it out in the final championship round.

When Siple scored the



First place winner Matt Siple and second place winner Deon Pointer hold the penny hockey board that they used in the championship round of the fifth grade penny hockey tournament at Maplewood Elementary.

winning goal, his prize was to receive a custom penny hockey board, made to order by Meersma. However, Siple liked the red, white and blue board he won the championship on and claimed it as his prize.

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Lions pick up second straight SMAA victory

The wind, and rain, and snow, and cold may have stopped Hopkins varsity boys' basketball team from visiting Maple Valley last Wednesday night, but the elements couldn't stop the Lions from making their trip to Morrice on Friday Dec. 20.

Whether it was the weather, or the Orioles, nothing could stop the Lions from blowing the game open in the second half.

Valley got stuck playing Morrice's style of game in the first half, said Lion Coach Jeff Webb.

The Lions went into the

halftime locker room down one, but by the time it was time to head back into the snow and onto the bus the Lions had pulled off a 20 point victory, 59-39.

The Lions started pressing in the second half, and although they haven't done much of it early this season, "did a nice job with it. Forcing turnovers, and getting easy baskets," said Webb.

Maple Valley capitalized on turnovers to earn their second straight win in the SMAA. The Lions are 2-1 overall.

Four different Lions scored in double digits led by Jeff Taylor's 14-point night. Ryan Grider was next on the list with 13 points, followed by Jason Beardslee with 12, and Eric Smith with 10.

Jimmy Hirneiss wasn't too far behind with 7, and Dustin Mead tossed in 3 points.

Morrice built its lead with a sagging zone in the first half, and keeping it a half court game. After having some trouble with the outside shot, the Lions started working their inside out game things got a little better as they forced Morrice

out of the zone. Then Valley made some adjustments at halftime, and the rest is a 21-point turnaround in the second half.

The next game for the boys in blue is a Saturday evening contest, Dec. 28, at the Kellogg Center against a tough Pennfield team from the Kalamazoo Valley Association.

Coloring contest winners announced

The six winners the annual Maple Valley News 220 Coloring Contest have been announced.

Winning \$25 gift certificates were Austin Furlong and Lisa Mater. Rhonda Jo Yoder and Amber Matthews won \$20 gift certificate and Alexandra Ernel and Shad Grentz won \$10 gift certificates.

The contest was open to children ages 10 and under. They were judged in two categories: Children 6 and under and ages 7-10.

The gift certificates may be redeemed at participating merchants by Feb. 28.

Merry Christmas
...from all of us at Vermontville Grocery

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16 oz. Asst. Var. West Pac Frozen Veggies. 89¢	Pop Secret (3 pk.) Homestyle Microwave Popcorn \$1.39	2 lbs. Parade Colby, Colby Jack, Mild Cheddar Block Cheese \$4.99
14-16 oz. Cole's Garlic Bread Garlic Toast \$1.69	1/2 Gallon Hudsonville Ice Cream \$2.99	Asst. Var. 2 Liters Coke \$1.19 Plus Dep.
11 oz. Island Sun Mandarin Oranges 2/\$1	Asst. Var. McCormick's Gravy Mixes 2/\$1	26 oz. Mountain Top Pies 2/\$5
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