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Mulvanys named grand marshals for syrup festival

by Amy Jo Parish
Staff Writer

Both Don and Lisa Mulvany's earliest memories of the Vermontville Syrup Festival center around the grand parade. It seems only logical, then, that they were chosen as grand marshals for this year's event.

"I've been part of the parade from about 8 years old and on, I imagine," said Lisa. "I never really thought about it. It's always been part of our life. It's the syrup festival — we've always been in it or working it."

The two have an almost-nonchalant attitude toward the countless hours and

energy they have put into the festival each year. They have helped with the Vermontville Junior Farmers 4-H Club petting zoo for 16 years, co-organized the parade with Steve and Becky Galimore, helped Bonnie and Russ Laverty with the parade, flipped pancakes with the band boosters and even helped set up the sound system, just to name a few of their activities.

The couple said they donate their time, not because they feel obligated, but because they can see the positive affect the festival has on the community.

"We just enjoy helping

out wherever we can," Don commented on their reasons for working at the festival. "There's always someone who needs a hand. I still flip pancakes, I love it."

Though the couple's children have graduated from Maple Valley High School, Don still can be found every Sunday morning of the festival flipping pancakes in the fire barn with the band boosters. He even manages to sing while standing at the hot griddle after playing a gig with his band until 2 a.m. the night before.

In a way, the festival has become a social event for the Mulvanys. During the weekend, they get the opportunity to visit with almost everyone in the community and visitors who they might not have seen since last year's festival.

"I think each of us have different parts of the festival that we enjoy," said Don. "I love the parade, I really enjoy flipping pancakes. Lisa enjoys the arts and crafts, and we love visiting with people."

"I love the social aspect of it," agreed Lisa.

Vermontville Maple Syrup Association President Gene Fisher said

the couple was an easy pick to be the grand marshals because of their commitment to the festival.

"Their name was put up for all of the things they have done for the festival over the years," said Fisher. "They have been involved in a lot of ways that people don't even know about."

Quick to give credit to others, Don and Lisa said they couldn't have made such a difference if there hadn't been a whole network of people donating their time and talents. Rattling off a long list of names that includes the Lavertys, the Galimores, Dan Laverty and a host of others, the Mulvanys emphasize the roles that others have played in the festival through the years.

"We couldn't have done so much without so many people that helped," said Lisa. "It's a wonderful honor, but we always ask about everyone else who has worked so hard and hasn't gotten credit. We started out because we wanted to do community service and good things for our town."

Both Don and Lisa agree that the festival is more than just rides and sweet treats. It's a chance for the

community to come together and show off its best side.

"It's in our community and it benefits our entire

community," said Lisa. "How much more rewarding can it get to help out an entire community in one weekend?"



Don and Lisa Mulvany have a long history with the Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival, part of the reason they were named this year's grand marshals.



Don and Lisa Mulvany look over a scrapbook of photos from past festivals. The couple has been named as grand marshals for the parade this year. (photo by Amy Jo Parish)

Mobil station may get facelift

by Amy Jo Parish
Staff Writer

Robert Prater, owner of the Mobil gas station, presented the Vermontville Village Council with a proposal to buy a piece of land connected to the station. The property recently came up for sale, and Prater is hoping to obtain the land and use it to expand his store in the future.

Showing several photos to the council, Prater detailed several options having the extra land would create. Space for a safer pump configuration and expansion of the store itself were each dis-

cussed by Prater. If moved forward, Prater said the only thing that wouldn't change location would be the underground gas tanks.

Arranging the pumps in a "dive island" configuration, where drivers can drive straight into the station and pull beside a pump, is a safer and more convenient setup, said Prater.

"What we would like to do is redo that corner," Prater told the council. "We're concerned with how close the pumps are to the road."

Council President Doug Kelsey referred the proposal to the planning committee

for review since the lot in question is currently zoned for residential use and would have to be changed to commercial to allow Prater to move forward with his plan. The residence, currently located on the property, would be demolished as part of the plan. The planning committee will meet next on April 14 at 7 p.m.

Vermontville Maple Syrup President Gene Fisher also presented a report to the council and asked for permission to hold the grand parade. He also gave a glimpse of what the producers have in store for next year's festival.

"Everything's copasetic, and going good for the festival this year," Fisher told the council. "We have big plans for the 70th year next year. We're working on a big fireworks display."

Fisher said the festival committee is open to new ideas about how to improve the festival and would appreciate community input.

"It's not just a festival," said Fisher. "It's everyone working together and that's what makes it great."

At the meeting, the council also:

- Approved the \$50,000 purchase of a used street sweeper to replace the aging rig currently used. Treasurer Kay Marsh said the vehicle purchase has been budgeted into this year's numbers.

- Voted unanimously to enter into a class-action lawsuit being brought against Consumers Energy by the Michigan Municipal League. The suit charges that Consumers Energy has been overcharging municipalities. The council agreed to pay \$133.98 to enter the suit, an amount determined by the monthly cost of utilities for the village.

- Heard comments from Larry Trumble concerning a water-retention issue at his address on South Main Street. The council voted to look into the current piping and tile system at the address

to see if any repairs could be made to help with the water issues many residents on South Main are experiencing.

• Heard a report from Monte O'Dell of the Department of Public Works concerning engineering bids that were received by the village. Every three years, O'Dell said the village puts out for bids for a company to work with the village on any projects that may come up. Of the 14 companies who

were sent bid packets, 12 responded with bids.

• Motioned to table a decision to select a financial firm to complete the village's audits for the next year. The council will take the next month to research the proposals submitted and get any questions answered before voting to extend an offer of contract to one of the firms.

The next regular meeting of the Vermontville Village Council will be held on May 7 in the village office.

Blood drive to be held in Nashville at new location

A blood drive will be held by the American Red Cross at Grace Community Church in Nashville. The event will take place Thursday, April 9, from 1 to 6:45 p.m.

Those wishing to donate

must be 17 years old, weight at least 110 pounds, be in good health and present photo identification.

Call 269-948-2355 for more information.

In This Issue...

- Committee moves forward on dam removal
- Firemen's dance raises funds for department
- March goes out with a lamb
- Historical presentation made to Putnam District Library
- Spring sports previews

Committee is updated, moves forward on removal of Nashville Dam

The Nashville Dam Committee met in the village hall March 10 to hear updates on the dam removal project and to discuss monitoring and community outreach plans. Chris Freiburger of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources provided a tentative timeline for the removal process, suggesting that if engineering plans and permits were approved, the dam would be removed in late September or early October of this year.

Freiburger and DNR staff completed initial channel surveying in early March, and he explained the results using computer-generated three-dimensional models. The survey of channel depth and bank levels showed the location of the high, or riffle, points of the channel that will ultimately control the depth of the river. This information will help to determine where weir structures might need to be installed and how high these structures should be. With further study, this survey also will determine approximately which areas of land will be de-watered and emerge as river banks.

Freiburger explained that well before the dam structure was actually removed, the millpond impoundment would be drained to almost river level. This de-watering will be achieved by using the existing mill race gate to slowly release more water from the pond. The process

is expected to take two to three months. A final permit request for the water draw-down was filed with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on April 3. Once the permit is approved, the draw-down process will begin.

Several culverts that currently extend from streams to the millpond may have to be altered or extended to reach the new river channel. Freiburger expressed particular concern about one such culvert that channels water from the stream through Mulberry Fore under Kellogg Street. Following discussion of the village's maintenance schedule for Kellogg Street with Sandy Lundquist and Jack Holden, village council representatives to the dam committee, Freiburger announced that the project would provide funding and engineering plans to replace the culvert.

Joanne Barnard of the Barry Conservation District also addressed the dam committee concerning ecosystem monitoring and community outreach for the dam removal project. Several different kinds of monitoring will take place both before and after the dam is removed, including water chemistry, macroinvertebrate and algal sampling, and surveys of fish, waterfowl and mussels. Aerial and stop-time photography also will be used to document the



The Nashville Dam may be removed later this year.

process.

Chantel Caldwell, a biology student at Grand Valley State University, has received a grant from the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute's URGE program to study ecosystem responses to dam removal. Caldwell

will work with GVSU's Dr. Eric Snyder to conduct a variety of sampling before and after the dam is removed.

Barnard asked for the committee's help in identifying ways to keep the Nashville community

informed about the dam removal project's progress. Along with providing press releases to the media, committee members suggested finding a location such as a storefront to post project updates, posting information on the village and conserva-

tion district's Web sites and printing flyers for distribution in local gathering places. Barnard said she also is looking for ways to get students from the Maple Valley Schools involved in the project.

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Band booster reverse raffle tickets on sale

It's not too late to purchase reverse raffle tickets to support student athletes at Maple Valley High School through the Maple Valley Athletic Boosters.

The fourth annual reverse raffle will be held on Saturday, April 18, at the Nashville VFW and is a smoke-free event.

Tickets are \$100 per person and entitle holders to dinner, dancing, free drinks until midnight, and a chance to win up to \$4,000.

Registration starts at 5, dinner at 6, and the raffle begins at 7 p.m. There will be a DJ and dancing after the raffle.

To purchase tickets, call

Athletic Boosters President, Tal Gearhart, at 269-967-1219, or contact other booster members. During the syrup festival this year, be sure to stop by the boosters dunk tank in front of the bank, where people can take a shot at dunking their favorite teachers, coaches, and community members.

All proceeds will go to support student athletes at Maple Valley High School.

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

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Corner of Baseline & Church Roads
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Church Service 9 a.m.
Sunday School 10:30 a.m.
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Phone (616) 963-7710
MINISTER: VIRGINIA HELLER

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Sunday 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 6:45 p.m.
PASTOR MARC S. LIVINGSTON
Phone: 543-5488

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Vermontville, MI 49096
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6:00-7:15 Pioneer Club
Sun: 9:00 Sunday School
10:00 Church Service
11:00 Fellowship

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e-mail: grace@gc3.org

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5505 North Mulliken Road, Charlotte
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PASTOR KATHY SMITH
517-726-0526
Sunday Morning Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Adult Sunday School: 10:50 a.m.
Weekly Bible Studies
United Methodist Women: 3rd Thursday

KALAMO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Worship Services 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages 10:30 a.m.
PASTOR BRYCE FEIGNER
517-541-1144

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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
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Sunday School 11:15 a.m.
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Church Phone: 852-2043

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Wed. Evening Service 8:30 p.m.
AWANA 6:30-8 p.m. Wed.
PASTOR DANIEL E. SMITH

VERMONTVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
108 North Main, Vermontville
PASTOR KATHY SMITH
517-726-0526
Adult and Youth Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Weekly Bible Studies
United Methodist Women: 2nd Tuesday

Students celebrate Grandparents Day with special activities

On Wednesday, April 1, the Early 4s classroom at Fuller Street Elementary celebrated Grandparents Day.

Students were asked to invite grandparents, great-grandparents, uncle, aunt, parent or special friend to the classroom for special activities.

They completed several projects with their guests during center time, including a handprint flower and a "You are special to me" book and they decorating cookies. Early 4s also prepared several songs for their guests.

"Students had fun showing their grandparents our classroom routine," said Teacher Shannon Powers. "We finished the day by playing Number bingo and giving out key chain prizes to commemorate the day with the student's picture."



Cassidy Simpson paints with watercolors as her grandparents look on.



Mollie Hoover was pleased to have her grandmother and great-grandmother visit her during Grandparents Day.



Joshua Bross shows cookies he decorated with his grandma and grandpa's help.

Voter registration deadline nears for May 5 election School, community millage requests among local ballot issues

Monday, April 6, is the last day to register to vote for the May 5 election.

If your community has an election scheduled May 5 and you're not already registered, I encourage you to do so," said Secretary of State Terri Land, the state's chief election officer. "Local elections have an impact on the schools your children attend and the neighborhood you live in. Voting is an excellent way to speak out and make your voice heard."

To register, applicants must be at least 18 years old by May 5 and be U.S. citizens. Applicants must also be residents of Michigan and of the city or township in which they wish to register.

Voters may register in per-

son or by mail. The mail-in form is on the Department of State Web site at www.Michigan.gov/sos. First-time voters who register by mail must vote in person in their first election, unless they hand-deliver the application to their local clerk, are 60 years old or older, are disabled or are overseas.

To check registration status, residents may visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at www.Michigan.gov/vote. Residents also can find information on voting by absentee ballot, Michigan's voter identification requirement, using voting equipment and contacting their local clerk. In addition, they will find a map to

their local polling place and a sample ballot.

Residents are reminded of the voter identification requirement when at the polls on Election Day. They will be asked to present photo ID, such as a Michigan driver's license or identification card.

Anyone who does not have an acceptable form of photo ID or failed to bring it with them to the polls can still vote. They will sign a brief affidavit stating that they're not in possession of photo ID. Their ballots will be included with all others and counted on Election Day.

Voters who don't have a Michigan driver's license or identification card can show the following forms of photo

ID, as long as they are current:

- Driver's license or personal identification card issued by another state.
 - Federal or state government-issued photo identification.
 - U.S. passport.
 - Military identification card with photo.
 - Student identification with photo from a high school or an accredited institution of higher education, such as a college or university.
 - Tribal identification card with photo.
- Additional election of information can be found at www.Michigan.gov/sos.

Pre-homeownership classes to be offered

Housing Services for Eaton County will host a pre-homeownership class Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Goodwill Community Room located within the Goodwill Building at 350 Lansing Road, Charlotte.

A certificate will be awarded to participants who successfully complete the workshop. Additionally, participants will be notified if they qualify for additional program components such as credit repair, a MSHDA

mortgage, down payment assistance, home inspection expenses or home maintenance classes.

This workshop is free to the general public, but pre-registration is required. Participants may bring a sack lunch or dine out. No child care will be provided.

Call 517-541-1180 to register by April 15.

Grand Valley State University names dean's list

Grand Valley State University has announced the names of students who were placed on the dean's list for the fall 2008 semester. The list includes those students who have maintained a 3.5 grade point average and been enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits.

Local students honored for the fall semester include:
Bellevue — Stephanie Morse, Shaun Prickett.
Nashville — Lisa Hamilton.
Vermontville — Kyndra Root.

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SAT/SUN/TUE 1:30, 7:00
FR/MON/WED/TH 7:00

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT (R)
DAILY 4:40, 9:40

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (PG)
SAT/SUN/TUE 12:40, 2:45, 4:55, 7:10, 9:20
FR/MON/WED/TH 4:55, 7:10, 9:20

KNOWING (PG-13)
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FR/MON/WED/TH 3:50, 6:50, 9:30

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Winter reading program ends at the Vermontville Township Library

The fifth annual winter reading program for adult patrons of the Vermontville Township Library began Jan. 6 and ended with a grand prize drawing March 31.

"Feed Your Mind ... Read" was the theme for this year's program. Participants had a "menu" of types of books to read that coincide

with a food group. They had to fulfill the required amount of servings in each food group to complete a healthy food pyramid. When the minimum amount of servings for a section of the food pyramid was completed, a ticket was awarded that was entered into a drawing for prizes donated by local mer-

chants and service organizations. A second ticket was awarded when the maximum number of servings in a section was completed.

Winners in this year's program were: Lisa Trumble, Fawn McHenry, Cheryl Sheridan, Rose Batdorff, Janet Valdick, Charlotte Cowell, Amy Peters, Diona

Meyers, Rachele Gorton, and Katherine Cahoon.

"Without the help of our community and its generosity, library programs would not be possible," said Library Director Carla Rumsey.

Firemen's dance raises funds for department

The annual Firemen's Dance at Roadrunner's Bar in Vermontville raised funds for the department through a raffle and silent

auction. The night included dancing and dinner. Josh Pitcher (left) was the big winner of the night, winning a two-night, three-

day stay in Las Vegas. Denise Mead also won a \$500 gift certificate she can use to have her ductwork cleaned by Kan-

Heating. Chris Rumsey and Shane Hickey (above right) sell raffle tickets during the event.



Josh Pitcher receives a free trip to Las Vegas



Chris Rumsey and Shane Hickey sell raffle tickets

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ATTENTION Maple Valley Alumni

Survey sheets to be considered for a 2009 Maple Valley Memorial Scholarship are available at the superintendent's office. Completed surveys must be turned in to the superintendent's office by April 15th to be considered.

(Parents of Maple Valley Seniors—ask your child if they have completed their survey yet)

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Area Obituaries

Dorothy E. Ames

NASHVILLE - Dorothy E. Ames, age 97, of Nashville passed away peacefully on Friday, March 27, 2009 at Thornapple Manor in Hastings.



Dorothy was born in Nashville, on May 11, 1911 to A. Frank Hecker and Etta Mary (Messimer) Hecker.

She was raised in the Nashville area and attended Nashville Public School.

She married Mr. Carson D. Ames on May 29, 1930. They spent 55 years together living on the family farm in Kalamo where they raised their family together.

Dorothy was employed at the Eaton County Medical Facility for several years as a nurses aide until she retired.

Dorothy was a member of the the Kalamo Womens Literary Club, Happy Hour Birthday Club, Kalamo Historical Society, Kalamo WCTU, Nashville Garden Club, and the Nashville United Methodist Church.

She was a caring, loving mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and great great grandmother, always doing kind deeds for her family and many friends. She especially liked cooking family meals.

Dorothy is survived by her sons, Russell (Irene) Ames of Hastings, and David (Shirley) Ames of Hastings; her grandchildren, Randall (Becky)

Ames, Barbara (John) Spagnoulo, Cheryl (Ted) DeMott, Michelle (Tim) Ostergren, and Chris Ames; 12 great grandchildren and seven great great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Carson on May 25, 1990, 11 brothers and sisters, and her grandson Jeffery Ames.

Funeral services were held at the Daniels Funeral Home on Monday, March 30, 2009 with Pastor Cathy Christman officiating. Interment took place following the funeral service at Hillside Cemetery in Kalamo.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Nashville United Methodist Church.

Funeral Arrangements were entrusted to the Daniels Funeral Home in Nashville.

Sylvia Irene Craun

VERMONTVILLE- Sylvia Irene (Swift) Craun, 78, of Vermontville, died Saturday, March 28, 2009.

Mrs. Craun was born June 5, 1930 in Bellevue, the daughter of Rue and Hortense (Kelley) Swift.

Mrs. Craun attended Nashville Baptist Church for 30 years and was recently was attending Vermontville Bible Church. She was a member of the Vermontville Women's Club, the North Kalamo Birthday Club, and enjoyed volunteering for many organizations in the Eaton County area including Eaton County Clothing Bank, and the Eaton County Department of Social Services.

She is survived and will be greatly missed by her daughter, Kathy (Ron) Lane of East LeRoy; sons, Steven (Phyllis) Craun of Leslie, Gary (Pamela) Craun of North Manchester, Indiana along with six grandchildren, Laura and Brandon Craun, Joshua and Caleb Craun, Kelly

(Matt) Dye, Jessica (Mike) Carpenter and four great grandchildren, Brayden and Tyler Carpenter, Allyson and Marissa Dye and sisters, Donna Woods, and Rosemary Perkins both of Charlotte, brother-in-law Virgil (Mary) Craun of Homer, and sister-in-law Irene Brown of Lansing.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Harry Russell Craun in 1999 and their infant son David in 1951.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 31, 2009 at Pray Funeral Home with Pastors Dan Smith and Lester DeGroot officiating. Interment was in Hillside Cemetery, Kalamo.

If desired memorial contributions may be made to Barry County Hospice, Vermontville Bible Church or Nashville Baptist Church. Arrangements by Pray Funeral Home, Charlotte.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.prayfuneral.com

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Social News

Local churches plan Easter, Holy Week observances



Kuempel-McKay

David and Diana Kuempel and John and Toni McKay are proud to announce the engagement of their children Michael David Kuempel and Jamie Sue McKay.

Michael is a 1994 graduate of Maple Valley High School and Jamie is a 2001 graduate of Ionia High School and a 2005 graduate of Central Michigan University. Michael is currently employed at Cargill's Sunny Fresh in Lake Odessa.

The wedding ceremony will be performed on April 18, 2009 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Ionia, Michigan.

The days between Palm Sunday, April 5, and Easter, April 12, are among the holiest of the Christian calendar. Following is a listing of church services planned by local churches.

• Grace Community Church, located at 8950 East M-79 in Nashville, will hold Easter services during their regular times of 9 and 10:30 a.m. The church is also once again sponsoring the annual Easter Egg Hunt at Putnam Park in Nashville on Saturday, April 11, at 10 a.m. The hunt is open for students attending grades six and under.

• The Kalamo United Methodist Church is holding a joint Good Friday service with the Nashville United Methodist Church at the Kalamo UMC, April 10, at 6:30 p.m. An Easter egg hunt is planned for the young people on Saturday, April 11, at 1:00 p.m. Other games are also planned, and everyone is welcome. Easter Sunday services will be held at 9 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday school and a nursery attendant will be provided. The Church is located 8 miles west of Charlotte on M-79 to Ionia Road, then 1.5 miles south. You may listen to a radio broadcast of the Easter service at 9 a.m., Sunday morning on WLCM 1390 AM. For more information, visit www.kalamochurch.org or call 517-652-1580.

Abundant Life Fellowship Ministries will hold Easter Sunday services at 10:30 a.m. The church will hold no Good Friday events.

• The combined congregations of Ainger Bible Church, Bright Hope Bible Church, Chester Gospel Church, First Baptist Church of Sebewa and Vermontville Bible Church will hold Good Friday services at Chester Gospel Church at 7 p.m. The church is located at 3744 West Vermontville Highway, one block East of Chester Road. There will be a nursery for babies two and younger. A special children's ministry program for youths attending grades five and under will follow the service, along with a finger-food fellowship.

• Chester and Vermontville United Methodist churches will partner for a Good Friday service at 7 p.m. at the Gresham church. Pastor Kathy Smith said the service will, "Use music and drama to express what it cost God to send His son to the cross." A special Easter sunrise service will be held at 7:30 at the Vermontville church, followed by breakfast and the regular Easter service at 11 a.m.

• Grace Lutheran Church, located at 239 E. North Street in Hastings, has planned special events for the entire week. For Palm Sunday, the church will present a Passion play at its 8 and 10:45 a.m. services. On Maundy Thursday, a Potter's Liturgy will begin at 7 p.m. The annual silent crosswalk begins at 9:30 a.m. on Good Friday, with worship that evening beginning at 7 p.m. with Tenebrae, the service of darkness. On Holy Saturday, the Easter vigil will start at 7 p.m. On Easter Sunday, the church will celebrate the resurrection of the Lord with worship services at 6:30 and 10:45 a.m. Breakfast will be served following the 6:30 a.m. worship. There will be no Sunday school.

• Emmanuel Episcopal Church, located at 315 W. Center St. in Hastings (at the corner of South Broadway and West Center Street), is a member church of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and welcomes all to attend Holy Week services. The Maundy Thursday service will be at 7 p.m., with the wash beginning at 8 p.m. Thursday through 8 a.m. Friday. Good Friday service will begin at 7 p.m. The Easter Sunday service at 10 a.m. will include the Rev. Hugh Dickinson and the Rev. William D. Ericson as celebrants and F. William Voetberg directing music.

For more information, call the church office at 269-945-3014.

• Central United Methodist Church in Lake Odessa will hold Palm Sunday services at 9, with disciple discovery for all ages and a morning worship service with palm procession and Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m. Holy Thursday service will start at 6:30 p.m. The evening will begin with a light supper of soup and rolls followed by sacrament of Holy Communion. On Friday at 1 p.m., the Lakewood Area Ministerial Association Good Friday Service is scheduled. The Rev. Dr. Eric S. Beck, pastor of Central United Methodist Church, will be the afternoon preacher. Holy Saturday, from 9 a.m. to noon, will be the children's "Sonrise Breakfast," sponsored by the education committee. Children will explore the meaning and importance of

Lent and the Easter season. Easter Day services are planned for 9:00 a.m. and will feature disciple discovery for all ages. A worship celebration of the resurrection of the Lord will follow at 10:30 a.m. Call 616-374-8861 for more information.

• Lake Odessa Grace Brethren Church will celebrate the resurrection of the Savior on Easter Sunday, beginning with "Sonrise Service" at 7:30 a.m. in the church auditorium.

At 8:30 a.m., there will be a breakfast in the church basement, followed by an egg hunt for teens and children at around 9:30 a.m. The activities will end with a 10:30 a.m. worship service with music and a message. Pastor Bruce Pauley will be speaking on "The Mighty Wonders of Easter." The church is located at 2720 Vedder Road in Lake Odessa. For more information, call 616-374-7796.

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"Healthy Relationships = Happy Kids" is Family Workshop focus in Nashville

Tim Vine, a pastor and father of almost nine children, will present "Healthy Relationships equals Happy Kids" at the

April Family Workshops, sponsored by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Barry County.

Tim has been happily mar-

ried to his wife, Allison, for nearly 15 years. He has worked with students and families at the First Baptist Church of Middleville for

close to seven years and has been working with children and families for more than 15 years.

Tim and his wife don't claim to be experts or to have a perfect marriage. The information being shared at this month's workshop will be keys to communication, the exploration of what love really is, as well as how to show love to the people you care about.

Child care during the workshop presents activities related to the evening's topic.

The Family Workshop series includes a free pizza dinner for those who pre-register. "We know that many people are just getting home from work, so the free meal helps reduce the stress of getting to the workshop on time," said Karen Jousma, executive director of the Child Abuse Prevention Council.

The pizza dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. and workshop is from 6-7:30 p.m.

The workshops are in Nashville at Fuller Elementary Monday, April 13; Delton Elementary Tuesday, April 14; Middleville First Baptist Church on Monday, April

20; and Hastings First Baptist Church Monday, April 27.

Call 269-948-3264 to register for the workshop of your choice.

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In My Own Write

by Amy Jo Parish



Towns and people can be both typical and one of a kind

The dictionary defines unique as, "being the only one of its kind."

There are hundreds, if not thousands of cities, towns, villages and townships in Michigan. So, what makes a town or village unique? In one word: people.

From the resident whose family founded the village to those who have just moved in with a whole new viewpoint, it's the people who make a village unique.

Now, as you read this you may be thinking, "Yeah, we've got unique people all right, there's that guy who always ... or that lady who never seems to stop..." There are probably a few people who pop into your head when you think of some of our "unique" residents.

If you bought a brand new box of Crayola crayons and opened it to find only green wax sticks looking back at you, your pictures would be pretty boring, wouldn't they? If everyone drove the same make and model of car, that would be pretty boring, wouldn't it? Not to mention that it would make it almost impossible for me to find my car in the parking lot, and I already have enough trouble with that as it is. If there were only filet mignon to eat, even that would become bland after a time.

Get where I'm going? If we didn't have people in our community who were different from us, who would we talk about over coffee? Who would rattle our cages or make us think of a new solution to a situation? At the very least, who would entertain us?

We don't all laugh at the same jokes or like the same music, but isn't that how life is supposed to be? We were all

created with different interests, desires and physical features, and that's cool. That's what makes life interesting.

Now, I'm not saying that we have to be best buds with everyone we meet. I think everyone knows a few people they would rather avoid. I do, however, think it's okay to be different. We don't have to be friends with everyone, and we don't have to insult everyone we don't like, but we should be able to co-exist.

We have a bunch of people in our community who sit on boards, chair committees or just help out. Those people help to make our community unique. As the annual syrup festival approaches, I'm getting glimpses of all the people who work so hard to make it happen.

From people riding cows in the parade, to the guy who rides his motorcycle through the bar, the festival is a virtual billboard of the unique people in our community. That's what makes it fun to live in The Valley — people are allowed to be a little offbeat.

Now, people have commented on how schmaltzy I can be in these columns, but I just can't seem to help it. On television, we hear about the budget crisis almost non-stop. When things aren't going so well, I tend to look for a bright spot in the whole mess. Go ahead, call me a cockeyed optimist. That's just part of what makes me unique. I could go into all of the other things that make me a bit of an oddball, but I don't think we have enough paper on the press for that. Luckily I live in The Valley where being a little unique kind of goes with the territory.

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Mom, Dad & Harlee

Vermontville library to host author; has new items

The library will resume its summer hours April 7 and will be open until 8 p.m. on Tuesdays. Author Michael Schumacher will be visit the

March goes out with a lamb



Chris Fisher hoists his son Evan to shake hands with Russ Laverty's lamb.

Toddler Time had a guest speaker of the barnyard persuasion March 25 — a Suffolk ewe lamb came to visit.

This week's theme was "March goes out like a lamb." The children heard lamb stories, sang lamb (and sheep) songs, made a lamb craft and then ventured to the parking lot to meet a real lamb.

Russ Laverty donated his time, his lamb and his expertise for the youngsters.

Guests are welcome to visit Toddler Time, listen to stories, play games, make a craft, dance and sing, play and jump, and best of all make some new friends.

Toddler Time is held every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m., at the Vermontville Township Public Library. The program is run entirely by volunteers of Eaton Intermediate School District and focuses on pre-literacy, school preparedness and just plain old fun.

Activities typically consist of story time, dancing, singing, ABCs, 123s, a craft project and occasionally guest speakers. The program is specifically geared for children ages 0 to 5, but children of all ages are welcome.

Toddler Time themes for April are as follows:

- April 8 — Spring Break Field Trip - Butterfly Exhibit at Frederik Meijer Gardens. To join, meet at the library at 10:30 a.m. or meet up with the group in the lobby of the Frederik Meijer Garden at

11:30 a.m. Cost is \$3 per person (children and adults).

- April 15 — rainbows and raindrops.
- April 22 — Maple Syrup.
- April 29 — Pajama Party (don't get dressed just come in pajamas)
- May 6 — Mother's Day.

library as part of the 2009 Michigan Notable Books Author Tour. In anticipation of a high interest in this program, the Vermontville United Methodist Church has offered to host this event. *The Wreck of the Carl D: A True Story of Loss, Survival, and Rescue at Sea* will be shared beginning at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 19. For more information, contact the library.

New items at the library include:

DVDs

Rachel Getting Married, Bolt, Twilight, Seven Pounds, Slumdog Millionaire, Marley and Me, Quantum of Solace.

Adult fiction

The Centurion's Wife by Davis Bunn and Janette Oke, Delia's Gift by V.C. Andrews, Stormcatcher by Colleen Rhoads, The Durango Stage by Wayne D. Overholser, Deliver Me From My Enemies by Sharon Oliver, Married in Seattle by Debbie Macomber, On Every Side by Karen Kingsbury, Framed! By Robin Carroll, Cold Case Murder by Shirlee McCoy, Rawhide Flat by

Ralph Compton, Murder is Binding by Lorna Barrett, Bookmarked for Death by Lorna Barrett, The Matchmakers by Debbie Macomber,

Stephen King Goes to the Movies by Stephen King, Go with me by Castle Freeman Jr., Still Alice by Lisa Genova, Oh, Johnny by Jim Lehrer, Paths of Glory by Jeffrey Archer, The Caryatids by Bruce Sterling, Still Life by Joy Fielding, Batter Off Dead by Tamar Myers, True Detectives by Jonathan Kellerman, Kiss by Ted Dekker and Erin Healy, Corsair by Clive Cussler, A Love to Last Forever by Tracie Peterson, Spring Broke by Melody Carlson, Deceived by James Scott Bell, Belong to Me by Marisa de los Santos,

Adult non-fiction

Dreams from My Father by Barack Obama, the Complete Idiot's Guide to Baby Sign Language by Diane Ryan, Happy Gloves Charming Softy Friends Made from Colorful Gloves by Miyako Kanamori, Origami Card Craft: 30 clever cards and envelopes to fold by Karen Elaine

Thomas, A Week in the Life of NASCAR by NASCAR, I Used to Know That by Caroline Taggart, I'm Perfect, You're Doomed by Kyria Abrahams,

Tea Parties with a Purpose by Bobbie Wolgemuth, The Lionel Legend an American Icon by Robert Schleicher, Betty Crocker Just Cupcakes, the Gingerbread Architect by Susan Matheson and Lauren Chattman, That Went Well by Terrell Harris Dougan, The Home Book by Carol Spier, Martha Stewart's Encyclopedia of Crafts.

Junior and easy fiction

Tackyllocks and the Three Bears by Helen Lester, A Dance of Friendship by Katharine Holabird, The Berenstain Bears and the Mama's Day Surprise by Stan and Jan Berenstain, Just a Baseball Game by Gina and Mercer Mayer, A Day at the Fire Station by Richard Scarry, Sam's First Library Card by Gail Herman, Just a Thunderstorm by Gina and Mercer Mayer, The Berenstain Bears Hug and Make Up by Stan and Jan

LIBRARY, continued on page 8



Commission on Aging Menu and Schedule of Events

Hearty Menu

Monday, April 6
Baked potato bar, hearty chili, broccoli, applesauce, corn muffin.

Tuesday, April 7
Hot dog, baked beans, cole slaw, hot blueberry crisp, hot dog bun.

Wednesday, April 8
Meatloaf and gravy, mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes, diced peaches, dinner roll.

Thursday, April 9
Lemon chicken with gravy, sweet potatoes, asparagus, stuffing, fresh apple.

Friday, April 10
Macaroni and cheese, green beans, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit.

Cold Menu

Monday, April 6
Turkey and Swiss cheese, carrot raisin salad, mandarin oranges, wheat bread.

Tuesday, April 7
Egg salad, Spanish bean salad, tropical fruit, hamburger bun.

Wednesday, April 8
Chef salad, potato salad, pineapple tidbits, wheat bread.

Thursday, April 9
Roast beef and cheese, coleslaw, apricot halves, wheat bread.

Friday, April 10
Tuna pasta salad, broccoli raisin salad, fruit in jello, saltine crackers.

Activities Calendar

Monday, April 6: Hastings - April Birthday party; Nashville 5+ 10:30 a.m.; Crafts 10:30 a.m.; Card

Making 12:30 p.m.; Music with Sam. H,W,N-Reminiscence.

Tuesday, April 7: Hastings - Line Dancing. GL - 10:30-12:30 Cards.

Wednesday, April 8: Hastings - Music with Sam; Nails; Euchre 12:30-2:30 p.m.; Mini Massage 11 a.m.; Bible Study 12:30 p.m.; Delton - Reminiscence.

Thursday, April 9: Hastings - No Line Dancing; Easter Party 10:30 a.m. Nashville - TV Time; Delton - Puzzles, Trivia.

Friday, April 10: Hastings - Exercise 9 a.m.; Mixed Media Painting, 9:30 a.m.; Bingo 10 a.m.; Model Railroad. Woodland - Visiting.

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From Our Readers
 Local Citizens Speak Out On Issues

Change in command is a ploy

To the editor:
 Ploy or reality — who can fill General Motors' executive Rick Wagner's shoes? Obama's task force? Do politicians know the automotive business? Not likely. What a ploy to help GM get rid of benefits. Bankruptcy would allow the breaking of contract commitments and could take away pensions and health benefits for those retirees who worked 30 years and made

profits for GM year after year after year. Now what happens to the economy? How many of those retirees will spend to boost the economy? Plus, how many would survive? How strange, GM will get rid of benefit commitments and go on with business as usual. Who loses most? Obama and his "task force" won't lose a dime. AIG and their scavengers won't lose a dime. We, who dedicated our

lives to the backbone of this country, will get the brunt of this major ploy. Another way to look at it is what happened, AIG gave more to the campaign than GM. We, the people, need the help. Save our benefits. Let's band together. Write and call your senators; save the Midwest.
 Pat and Dennis Warner, GM retiree, Nashville

LIBRARY, continued on page 7

Berenstain, Show Me Your Smile! A Visit to the Dentist by Christine Ricci.
 A Day at the Police Station by Richard Scarry, The Magic School Bus and the Missing Tooth by Jeanette Lane, The Magic School Bus Takes a Moonwalk by Joanna Cole, The Trouble with Tilly Trumble by Lynn Manuel, Fancy Nancy Explorer Extraordinaire! by Jane O'Connor and Robin Preiss Glasser, Duck for President by Koreen Cronin, The Berenstain Bears Bike Lesson by Stan and Jan Berenstain, Pop-up House of Inventions Hundreds of Fabulous Facts About Your Home by Robert Crowther, Dirt on Their Skirts by Doreen Rappaport, Giggle, Giggle, Quack by Doreen Cronin, If You Were a Penguin by Wendell and Florence Minor, All God's

Critters by Bill Staines, Llama Llama Misses Mama by Anna Dewdney, Chicken Cheeks by Michael Black, The Pout-Pout Fish by Deborah Diesen, Duck and Cover by Jackie Urbanovic.
Junior and easy nonfiction
 The cardboard box book by Danny, Jake, and Niall Walsh, Follow that Map by Scot Ritchie, Bubble Homes and Fish Farts by Fiona Bayrock.
Young adult fiction
 Life As We Knew It by Susan Beth Pfeffer, Cracked Up to Be by Courtney

Summers, Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson, Prom by Laurie Halse Anderson, Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson, Max by James Patterson, If I Stay by Gayle Forman, Forever Princess by Meg Cabot, Doomwyte by Brian Jacques.
Young adult nonfiction
 The Geeks' Guide to World Domination by Garth Sundem.

Free tax help still available at CACS

Capital Area Community Services, Eaton County Service center, has appointments available to assist Eaton County residents complete and electronically file their taxes, free of charge. The assistance is by appointment only, which is available on Mondays and Wednesdays. For more information or to make an appointment, call 517-543-5465.

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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.
 This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To report discrimination call the Fair Housing Center at 616-451-2980. The HUD toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

CASTLETON TOWNSHIP NOTICE

The regular board meetings of the Castleton Township Board are the first Wednesday of each month, unless noted, at 7 pm at the Castleton Township Office located at: **915 Reed St. Nashville, MI 49073.**

The meeting dates are as follows:

April 1, 2009	May 6, 2009	June 3, 2009
July 1, 2009	August 5, 2009	September 2, 2009
October 7, 2009	November 4, 2009	December 2, 2009
January 6, 2010	February 3, 2010	March 3, 2010

The Castleton Township Board will provide auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials, to individuals with disabilities at the meetings upon five days notice to the Castleton Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Castleton Township Clerk by writing or calling:

Lorna L. Wilson
 Castleton Township Clerk
 915 Reed St. PO Box 679
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SPRING BRUSH CLEAN UP

The Village of Nashville will be picking up brush every Monday in April. Please place any brush, leaves, or limbs that you want picked up next to the curb by Monday morning.
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NOTICE

The Vermontville Township board will be accepting letters of interest from any Township resident interested in serving on the Vermontville township Fire and Ambulance board.
 Please submit letters to Vermontville Township, P.O. Box 215, Vermontville, MI 49096 by Thursday, April 30, 2009.
 Questions may be directed to any Vermontville Township Board member.
 VERMONTVILLE TOWNSHIP BOARD 06689252

Maple Valley Spring Sports Previews

Lion ladies are another year older and a year smarter too



The 2009 Maple Valley varsity softball team. Team members are (front from left) Catrina Misiewicz, Tiffani Allwardt, Jordan Beachnau, Tina Westendorp, Page Semrau, (second row) assistant coach Mike Beachnau, Julia Mischlich, Terri Hurosky, Fizza Abid, Cassie Knauss, Lindsay Mudge, Cedie Angus, Lydia Richards, Brianna Misiewicz, and head coach Mary Lesage. (Photo by Amy Jo Parrish)

The Lions couldn't wait to get their gloves in the dirt this spring.

It's been a long time since last spring, and the summer travel ball season. Maple Valley's varsity softball team has eight returnees from last year's varsity squad which won 17 games.

Some cold weather at the start of the spring, and practices indoors have slowed progress a little, but not too much because of the type of kids coach Mary Lesage has coming back.

"Experience, knowledge, and a passion for the game will be some of our strong points this year," said Lesage. "Most of these girls have been playing with each other for three and four years

now, so they know each other and what to expect from one another."

The Lions have a pair of pitchers returning, in junior Cedie Angus and sophomore Tiffani Allwardt.

Second baseman Jordan Beachnau returns to the infield along with short stop Cassie Knauss, first baseman Brianna Misiewicz, and third baseman Tina Westendorp. Terri Hurosky, Page Semrau, and Knauss could all see time at catcher.

Most of the top newcomers to the squad are outfielders, juniors Lydia Richards, Lindsay Hudge, Catrina Misiewicz, and seniors Fizza Syeda and Julia Mischlich.

"With eight returning players we have a strong

base to build with," said Lesage. "Knowledge and experience will go a long ways. With a few new layers coming up from last year's JV, they will be learning from last year's varsity players. We will have some depth to work with."

Maple Valley finished fourth in the Kalamazoo Valley Association last year, and start this season off with a couple tough home contests against Pennfield April 14, and Kalamazoo Christian April 16.

Galesburg-Augusta and Kalamazoo Christian are expected to be at the top of the league standings once again. The Rams are the defending Division 3 state champions.



Kyle Fisher

Lions look for growth as the baseball season progresses

The Lions are going to try and build themselves some ball players.

Maple Valley's varsity boys' baseball team returns a handful of talented players from a season ago, including senior short stop Kyle Fisher, senior outfielder Michael Paisley, and junior second baseman Kyle Burns.

There aren't a lot of players out for the team this season to help them out, so head coach Bryan Carpenter has a plan.

"We want to grow into a great baseball team by the end of May," coach Carpenter said.

"We have a solid core of kids, we just need to make

them baseball players."

That task will be easier thanks to their work ethic and their desire to succeed. Carpenter said that they are learning to play the game the right way.

The list of newcomers includes junior third baseman Steve Creller, junior outfielder Tyler Franks, junior catcher Brandon Cosgrove, and sophomore shortstop Coty Franklin.

At the end of May, the Lions will be hosting a Division 3 District Tournament. Winning that is a big goal of the team's this season.

As far as competing in the Kalamazoo Valley

Association, the Lions are hoping to grow into a thorn in the side of their tough league opponents. Kalamazoo Christian and Parchment return two of the league's top teams.

The league season begins as soon as schools return from spring break. Maple Valley hosts Pennfield April 14 and Kalamazoo Christian April 16.

Another thing the Lions are looking forward to at the end of May is a meeting with Lakewood, on the 20th. The brother of coach Carpenter, Keith Carpenter, has taken over the Viking program this season.

Maple Valley girls start KVA play home against Parchment

A tough slate of Kalamazoo Valley

Association games gets started for the Maple Valley var-

sity girls' soccer team when it returns from spring break.

The Lions have one last non-league tune-up, at home against Barry County Christian April 13, then its right into the KVA with a visit from Parchment April 15.

Lakewood scored an 8-0 victory over the Lion ladies in the final contest before the break.

Elizabeth Smith moves into the goal this season for the Lions, and is one of a handful of returnees for the Maple Valley squad coached by Chris Ricketts. Also back

are Amanda Paxson, Teketha Pifer, Emily Dietrick, Ashley Zander, Jasmine Grinage, Traci Grinage, and Sabrina Wright.

Kalamazoo Christian and

Hackett Catholic Central return the top two teams in the KVA once again. The Comets are the defending Division 4 state champions, and either them or the

Fighting Irish from Hackett have won six of the last seven Division 4 state titles.

Maple Valley takes on Hackett April 21, and faces the Comets April 27.

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The 2009 Maple Valley varsity girls' soccer team. Team members are Sylvia Laymance, Rachel Howard, Jenna Williams, Jessica Curtis, Emily Dietrick, Amber Burhans, Megan Primm, Ashley Zander, Karen Leung, Jacqueline Dankenbring, Sarah Rowley, Sarah Pena, Lindsey Hoffman, Sabrina Wright, Abby Hoyt, Amanda Paxson, Traci Grinage, 23-Teketha Pifer, Jasmine Grinage, goalie Lizzie Smith, assistant coach Meghan Howard and head coach Chris Ricketts. (Photo by Amy Jo Parrish)

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Rebuilding project starts with four state qualifiers



The 2009 Maple Valley varsity girls' track and field team. Team members are (front from left) Mallorie Densmore, Erin Shoemaker, Melissa Browne, (second row) Shawndenae Rost, Elizabeth Stewart, Catara Briggs, Kayla Shaw, Lauren J. Trumble, Kaytlin Furlong, (third row) Bryanna Clow, Pantera Rider, Mollyann Morehouse, Kristen Iszler, Kamey Gibbs, Megan Shoemaker, Karlee Mater, Lindsey Perkins, Tiffany Ryan, (fourth row) head coach Robert Browne, Jessa Cheeseman, McKenna Mater, Nicole Porter, Jaime Curth, and coach Cindy Allwart. Missing from photo is Stacey Fassett. (Photo by Amy Jo Parrish)

by Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Maple Valley hasn't used this word in a long time — "rebuilding".

The cupboard isn't bare for new Maple Valley varsity girls' track and field head coach Robert Browne, but the Lion team will look

much different than the one that won a Kalamazoo Valley Association championship and a regional championship last spring. The

Lions are still shooting to be close to those marks though.

"Our goal this year is a top two finish in both the league and the regional," said Browne. "This is a rebuilding year after losing eight talented athletes from last year's team, but we should still be a force with the girls we have."

The group of girls Browne has includes state medallists Stacey Fassett and Elizabeth Stewart and state qualifiers Mallorie Densmore and Karlee Mater.

Fassett, a senior, placed sixth in the pole vault last year at the Division 3 State Finals. Mater also qualified in the event, and the vaulters along with the throwers should lead the Maple Valley team to another strong showing in the field events this season.

"Our throwing crew is very young, but they are developing into very good throwers," said Browne.

The group is led by sophomore Tiffany Ryan and freshman Nicole Porter.

On the track, Stewart and Densmore were both part of the 400-meter relay and 800-meter relay teams which went to the state finals last spring. They helped their team to fourth place finish in the 400-meter event. Stewart was also a qualifier in the 400-meter run on her own.

Other key returnees for the Lions include Erin Shoemaker, who'll be in the sprints this year, Lauren Trumble in the middle distance races, Shawndenae Rost in the sprints, and Megan Shoemaker in the distance races.

The Lions are also expecting contributions from Kaytlin Furlong in the distance events and Mollyann Morehouse in the sprints.

There aren't a lot of newcomers to the team this year, Browne said that depth issues could hurt the team at invitational this season.

Pennfield, Schoolcraft, and Delton Kellogg could all push the Lions in the Kalamazoo Valley Association. The Lions will

start the league season at home against Constantine and Hackett Catholic Central April 14.

The Lions are 2-0 in duals so far this season, having scored a 97-28 win over Bellevue and a 77-60 win over Leslie on Wednesday.

Maple Valley had the top performer in four of the five field events. Fassett and Mater tied for first in the pole vault at 8 feet. Densmore won the long jump at 14-0. Porter won the shot put at 32-10 and the discus at 89-11.

Mater also won the 100-meter hurdles in 20.43 seconds, and teamed with Erin Shoemaker, Morehouse, and Stewart to win the 800-meter relay in 2:05. In the 400-meter relay, Mater was joined by Kamey Gibbs, Kristen Iszler, and Jessica Cheeseman for a first-place time of 1:07.

Densmore won the 100-meter dash in 14.13, and Pantera Rider was the 300-meter hurdle champion with a time of 57.79.

Lions boys have high expectations once again

by Brett Bremer
Sports Editor

Success breeds success.

Last spring couldn't have been much more successful for the Maple Valley varsity boys' track and field team. The Lions were 7-0 in Kalamazoo Valley Association duals. They won the KVA Championship Meet. They were regional champions. They placed fourth at the Division 3 MITCA Team State Championships, and third at the MHSAA State Finals.

That appearance at the MHSAA State Finals included

a state championship in the 1600-meter relay. Seniors Jeff Burd, Nick Thurlby, and Rob Morehouse return from that state championship foursome. Burd was also the state runner-up in the 800 and placed third along with Thurlby in the 800-meter relay. Thurlby was a four-time state medallist last season, also placing third in the 300-meter hurdles and fourth in the 110's. Junior Jimmy Brown was also a part of that third-place 800-meter relay team.

"Our leadership is awesome, probably the best I have had in my 10 years," said Lion head coach Brian Lincoln. "Along with great leaders, we have some of the hardest working upperclassmen that I have had. When they work hard it makes the underclassmen want to work hard too."

That's only the start of the returning talent for the Lions.

Other returnees include, seniors Dustin Houghton, Brandon Vaughn, Justin Kennedy, Josh Fulford, juniors Zac Eddy, Josh Hall, Jesse James, Adam Zank, and sophomores Luke Densmore, Brad Laverty, Joe Benedict, Trent Courtney, Josh Burd, and Aaron Piercefield.

"We have 18 returnees from last year, plus four that have returned after a year of two layoff. We have a total of 47 boys out," said Lincoln.

"Numbers are so big, it gives us depth in every event."

Newcomers to the team include senior Josh Perkins, sophomores Cody Lienhart and Cody James, and freshmen Garrett Rgid, Andy Pierson, Andy Zank, Austin Tobias, and Tyler Brumm.

"The boys have created some very high expectations the last few years," said Lincoln. "They expect to win when they step on the track.



The 2009 Maple Valley varsity boys' track and field team. Team members are (front from left) Josh Perkins, Anthony Molson, Dustin Houghton, Jeff Burd, Robert Morehouse, Joshua Fulford, Justin Kennedy, Brandon Vaughn (second row) Mitchell Hamilton, Cody Jones, Brady Halliwill, Petr Bedrich Saeed Saeed, Michael Miranda, Trevor Dukey, Joe Benedict, Zac Eddy, Maximilian Fischer, Josh Hall, (third row) coach Mike Hall head coach Brian Lincoln, Jimmy Brown, John Currier, Adam Zank, Chris Clark, Tyler Brumm, Niko Rose, Cody Leinhart, Garrett Reid, Jesse James, Brad Laverty, Andy Zank, coach Steve Hopkins, coach Charles Wymer, (fourth row) Darius France, Dylan Hall, Luke Densmore, Jake Ewing, Dakota Gross, Austin Tobias, Josh Burd, Andy Pierson, Adrian Conole Barrein, Trenton Courtney, Zach Melville, Alex Reid. (Photo courtesy of Superior Photography of Sunfield)

We will have to continue to work hard to be in the hunt again this year. They know they are the hunted and are going to get everyone's best shot. That has kept the focus and drive the first few weeks of practice."

The Lions are 2-0 in duals so far this season, having scored a 91-46 win over Bellevue and a 106-31 win over Leslie Wednesday evening.

Maple Valley used its depth to win all four relay races in the three-team meet. The team of Hall, Morehouse, Eddy, and Vaughn won the 1600-meter relay in 3 minutes 39.89 seconds. Brown, Kennedy, Vaughn, and Eddy won the 400-meter relay in 46.21 seconds. Brown, Kennedy, Eddy, and Jeff Burd took the 800-meter relay in 1:37.92. In the 3200-meter relay, the team of Laverty, Fulford, Perkins, and Morehouse won in 8:47.05.

Jeff Burd won the 200-meter dash in 22.87, and the 400 in 52.48. Morehouse took

first in the 800 with a time of 2:08.32.

In the field events, Laverty won the pole vault at 10-0 and Houghton the discus with a throw of 112-4.5.

The Kalamazoo Valley Association season begins after break, when the Lions host Hackett and Constantine April 14.

"I believe there are 4 or 5

teams that will be in the hunt for the league title," said Lincoln, including his team and Delton Kellogg, Pennfield, Olivet, and Schoolcraft.

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Michigan traffic deaths drop 10 percent in 2008 Deaths at lowest level since 1925

Traffic crashes, deaths and injuries all fell in Michigan in 2008, fueled in part by decreases in miles driven during summer months when fatal crashes tend to be highest. Traffic deaths dropped to

980 from 1,084 in 2007. 1925 was the last year Michigan had fewer than 980 fatalities.

Declines also were noted in alcohol, pedestrian and commercial motor vehicle

crashes and fatalities. Increases occurred among drug-involved fatal crashes and motorcycle crashes and fatalities.

Traffic crashes fell 3 percent from 324,174 in 2007 to

316,057 in 2008. Injuries dropped 7 percent from 80,576 in 2007 to 74,568 in 2008. Alcohol-involved fatal crashes also declined from 313 in 2007 to 297 in 2008.

"It will be difficult to discern what drove this large decrease in traffic deaths last year," said Michael L. Prince, director of the Office of Highway Safety Planning. "One factor is the state's extremely high safety belt use rate. Advancements in roadway and automotive engineering and in emergency medicine also played a

major role. However, we can't ignore that motorists curtailed their driving when gas prices were extremely high. Further study may allow us to determine what impact each had on traffic deaths last year."

While drug-involved fatal crashes increased substantially, from 90 in 2007 to 130 in 2008, analysts attribute this to better follow-up and reporting by police agencies.


The crash data also shows, motorcycle fatalities increased from 124 in 2007 to 127 in 2008.

• Teen fatalities (age 13 to 19) dropped from 277 in 2007 to 207 in 2008.

• Deer-vehicle crashes stayed nearly the same, dropping slightly from 61,907 in 2007 to 61,010 in 2008. There were 12 people killed in deer-vehicle crashes in 2008.


• Pedestrian fatalities dropped from 136 in 2007 to 115 in 2008.

• Bicycle fatalities rose from 18 in 2007 to 25 in 2008.



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Community breakfast planned to benefit camp

The men of the Vermontville United Methodist Church will be hosting a community breakfast at the church on Saturday, April 11, from 7 to 11 a.m. The crew will be serving eggs prepared any

way, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, and Texas toast. Beverages will include milk, orange juice and coffee.

"Let us wait on you and clean up, too," said Leroy Starks, who will participate at the event. "It's a great way

to start the day."

The church will be accepting free-will donations during the breakfast to support the New Beginnings Youth Camp in Albright.

Maple Valley student joins tech honor society

On Friday, March 20, 91 students of Eaton Intermediate School District Career Preparation Center were inducted into the ED Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS).

Among them was Courtney Cady, from Maple Valley, who is studying com-

puter graphics and Web design.

To qualify, students must maintain an A- or better in their career prep center class; receive a recommendation by a teacher regarding the eight work habits of courtesy and attitude, cooperation, initiative, quality of lab work and written work, working

well with others and following directions; and have no more than three absences during a semester.

Those students who qualify must also write a short essay, describing their notions regarding good character.

Airport directories, charts now available from MDOT

The 2009 Michigan Airport Directory and the 2009 Michigan Aeronautical Chart are now available from the Michigan Department of Transportation Aeronautics and Freight Services Bureau.

These publications, which have been produced since the 1940s, are a

pilot's guides to air travel in the state. New this year is a calendar of events in the directory. Also new are safety notes on border crossings, and updated safety requirements from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the chart.

Every active pilot in Michigan receives a free

chart, and all pilots who have an aircraft registered with the State of Michigan also receive a complimentary airport directory.

Both publications are available for purchase, either online at www.michigan.gov/aero or by mail, with a check or money order made out to the State of Michigan. Checks can be sent to MDOT, Finance Cashier, PO Box 30648, Lansing, MI 48909. A chart is available for \$8; or 10 or more for \$7 each. A set of flat charts for both peninsulas is \$10. Directories are available for \$10; or five or more for \$8 each. Add 6 percent Michigan sales tax to purchase price.

The Michigan Airport Directory is also available online at

http://www.michigan.gov/aero/0,1607,7-145-6777_7036---,00.html.

Mothers of Preschoolers to tour Moo-Ville

The Mothers of Preschoolers group from Vermontville Bible Church will host an ice cream social at Moo-Ville Creamery in Nashville.

All mothers of children ages birth to 6 are invited to join the group Thursday, April 16, from 10:30 to 11:30

a.m. for free ice cream and a tour of the creamery.

Mothers also may bring a sack lunch and stay longer to visit or play.

For more information, call Jessica Smith at 517-852-0750.