

# CASS CITY CHRONICLE

VOLUME 87, NUMBER 42      CASS CITY, MISSOURI - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1994      FIFTY CENTS      12 PAGES PLUS ONE SUPPLEMENT



**TOM AND BRENDA Fulcher, Cass City, described their experiences during a 9-day trip to Saint Petersburg Monday night at Rawson Memorial Library. The program included a display of souvenirs (left).**

## Fulchers tell of trip Average income in Saint Petersburg \$20 per month

Tom and Brenda Fulcher, probably more than most area residents, have a keen sense of appreciation for what they have and where they live.

That appreciation came across Monday night as the Cass City couple shared their experiences on a trip to Saint Petersburg, Russia, last year with about 2 dozen area residents gathered at Rawson Memorial Library.

The Fulchers painted an interesting picture of contrasts during their hour-long program, alternately describing historic sites and artistic treasures, and their impressions of a people whose standard of living pales in comparison to that enjoyed in this country.

The couple was among 105 people who went on the trip last March. The group included 80 members of the Bay Choral Society of Bay City, including Tom, who performed in Saint Petersburg.

The Fulchers narrated a series of video slides, offering their impressions of the journey from Chicago to Amsterdam to Helsinki to Saint Petersburg.

As the plane approached its final destination, Tom noticed there was very little traffic in the city, despite a population of some 5 million people.

He joked about his uneasiness over flying, a feeling that didn't go away as the plane landed in Saint Petersburg and a group of men, dressed in black, surrounded the plane.

The welcome was less than friendly. "As we were getting off the plane, they wouldn't smile, they wouldn't say anything," he recalled.

Brenda added her greeting to the bus driver who transported the group was met with no response. "He just stared straight ahead," she

said.

The group was taken to a dingy looking building to have their passports checked. There were men wearing brown uniforms there, according to Tom, who pointed out brown, black and gray were the dominant clothing colors everywhere they went.

**DINGY**

Dingy also described the outward appearance of the 5-star hotel where the group had reservations.

But inside, there was beautiful mural, Brenda said. "It was very lovely inside and clean."

The beds in the Fulchers' room were attached to a wall and fitted with well worn mattresses, Tom said. He chuckled and added, "We had cable TV. You turned it on and couldn't get anything, but they told us it was cable TV."

The couple explained there was a lady in charge of each floor of the hotel. She would sleep on a cot behind her desk, Tom explained. He showed a card the couple would present to their floor lady in order to receive their room key.

"You tipped them very well, so they wouldn't let just anybody into your room," he said.

"We tipped her with makeup, eye shadow, perfume, ink pens," Brenda added.

The room featured a view of a partially finished addition to the hotel. "There were a lot of unfinished buildings in the city," Brenda observed. "It was like they ran out of materials and just stopped building."

She indicated the hotel was typical among city buildings in its appearance, in part because of the widespread use of diesel fuel and burn-

ing coal. "There was a black film on everything."

For the most part, people rely on their legs or mass transportation, because few can afford cars. Those who do have autos don't use their headlights at night because they can't afford to replace them, according to Tom, who said the windshield wipers are removed to prevent their theft.

People can purchase gasoline once per month. When the gas stations run out, they simply close up, Brenda said. The same is true with stores and other businesses, Tom remarked.

**SMALL FAMILIES**

The Fulchers said families in Russia are small, with parents, children and grandparents living in 2-room apartments.

"If you have 2 children, you're considered very rich," Tom said. "On the streets, you would see people our age or older, but very few young people."

Brenda commented most of the women they saw were "very thin because they don't have very much food, and they walk everywhere."

The country is far behind in terms of machinery. They grow food, but lack refrigeration and transportation, she explained. "Everything we drank was warm," she added.

The Fulchers said they literally couldn't drink the water in Saint Petersburg, because the city was built on a swamp and the water wasn't safe for consumption.

Champagne was served at every meal, and caviar was common fare, the couple said.

Brenda recalled one of the restaurants visited by the group. "You didn't order. They served what they had prepared for that day," she

said. "There were lots of cats everywhere."

"We didn't know what we were eating," Tom added.

"Tom lost 12 pounds and I ate a lot of bread," Brenda continued. "Their bread is delicious."

Unemployment in Saint Petersburg is high, and the average income is about \$20 a month. Brenda pointed out teachers aren't very well paid, earning \$15 a month. Doctors earn \$25 a month, Tom said.

"When they go shopping, they know exactly what they want because they save the money for it," Brenda remarked, referring to the response she received when she would ask about going shopping. "They could not understand that (impulse shopping)."

**WEALTH**

The wealth of the royal families of the past offered a sharp contrast, according to the couple, who showed several photos taken during tours of huge summer and winter palaces, featuring intricate architecture and liberal use of gold. Museums offered great works of art.

Admission was free, but there was a charge to take a camera in, Tom noted. Visitors are allowed to photograph everything — a sign of new political freedoms.

Another sign was the many street vendors seen, offering everything from toys and food to cigarettes and liquor. However, freedom is somewhat limited, he pointed out. "We were followed throughout the entire time we were there. They called them body guards," he said.

And change evidently is difficult for some. Brenda recalled a small change in the group's itinerary required a lengthy discussion.

Please turn to page 8.

## Board lifts restrictions on duties of Chief Connolly

Elkland Township Fire Chief Milt Connolly has been returned to active duty, 5 months after agreeing to remain behind the scenes following a controversy in which fire fighters rebelled against his leadership.

Connolly was reinstated through a motion approved by the Elkland Township Board during a monthly meeting last week.

Personality conflicts and growing frustration among firemen culminated last August, when fire fighters presented a petition to the board asking for Connolly's resignation. The firemen indicated to the board they would not be willing to work with the chief fighting fires.

After much discussion, it was agreed the chief would continue to handle administrative duties, but not attend fires.

Following last week's meeting, Supervisor Dave Milligan said township officials have since made strides towards a solution.

**COMMUNICATION**

"We're hoping we can work with Milt and open up lines of communication between the firemen and the chief, and alleviate any problems," he added. "They're a good bunch of people. We certainly hope everybody will be able to work together."

Fire fighters indicated they will make an effort to improve the situation, although not everyone is completely satisfied.

"The problems that we had 6 months ago are still there today," commented Ron Pawloski. However, he said fire fighters would not allow differences with the chief to affect area residents' safety.

"We wouldn't do that (refuse to work)," he added. "We wouldn't leave the community high and dry without a fire department."

"I think a majority of the men are going to get along with him (chief)," commented newly-elected Assistant Fire Chief Charles Tunis. "As long as he remains fair, I think we'll see an improvement in the department."

Tunis' optimism is based in part on planned changes in the department such as decisions being made by the chief with input from his officers, and regular meetings between the officers and chief.

"Lack of communication has been a big problem," Tunis acknowledged, adding, "I think there's going to be a channel open now for the firemen to get their frustrations or grievances up to where they're heard."

Another newly-elected officer, Jim Jezewski, agreed, saying he's pleased township officials are going to be keeping closer tabs on department operations.

"I think it's going to be a matter of time before everything is resolved," he said, "but we're trying to look at the positive side."

Connolly, a 30-year department veteran who was

named new chief in July 1992 following the retirement of Dick Root, expressed hope that problems surrounding the department have been resolved.

In a related matter last week, the township board approved the slate of officers elected by the fire department for the new year.

They are: Charles Tunis, assistant chief; Ross McCallum, first captain; Mike Stec, second captain; Jim Jezewski, first lieutenant; Randy Middleton, second lieutenant; James Orth, treasurer; and Janet Hurley, secretary.

**HALF THE PENALTY**

In other business, the board approved a motion to halve the penalty and interest on delinquent personal property taxes.

Property owners who are delinquent in their property taxes are normally charged a 4-percent penalty the first month and one percent interest per month thereafter,

according to township Treasurer Art Randall. He said it's hoped the reduced penalty will serve as an incentive to pay the late taxes, which date back 5 or 6 years.

Randall didn't have an estimate on the number of delinquent taxes or the total revenue due the township.

A deadline will be set to get in on the reduced penalty offer, Randall said, adding, "We're thinking 60 days, maybe 90."

Also last week, the board:

- Voted to purchase a computer and related components. Wallace said the equipment will cost roughly \$2,000.
- Rescheduled the date to assist senior citizens in filling out their homestead property tax credit forms. Seniors can receive help Jan. 29 from 9 a.m. to noon at the fire hall.
- Appointed Elwyn Helwig, John Maharg and Roy Wagg to the township Board of Review, which is scheduled to meet March 14 and 16.

## Rear-end crash kills James Roblin

A Caro man was killed and 4 others were injured last week in the second traffic fatality recorded in as many weeks in Tuscola County.

The victim was identified as James W. Roblin, 42, 2078 Forest Dr., by Tuscola County Sheriff's deputies, who reported the accident occurred Thursday on Mertz Road at the Bevens Road intersection.

Roblin was a passenger in a vehicle driven by Jason R. Profit, 19, of Caro. He told deputies he was southbound and had stopped to make a left turn when he was struck from behind by another vehicle.

Profit stated his turn signal was on prior to the crash. The other driver, David J. Garrett, 22, of Caro, told

deputies he saw Profit's brake lights, but didn't think his vehicle was stopped.

Injured in the accident were Profit and his other passenger, James E. Putman, 27, of Caro, and Garrett and his passenger, Danielle M. Contreras, 18, also of Caro.

All of the occupants were transported to Caro Community Hospital. A hospital spokeswoman had no information on Garrett, but said the others were treated and released.

Reports indicate Roblin was the only occupant in the Profit vehicle not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash. Contreras was not wearing a seat belt; it's unclear whether Garrett was.

The accident remains under investigation.

## Help for teens needed

## County seeks foster families

Tuscola County Community Mental Health officials are looking for a few good men, women and couples in the area.

The job? Foster parenting in a unique, voluntary program aimed at bringing hurting families back together.

"As more and more family units break down, community resources are now called upon to act as parents for 'youth at risk'." This includes schools, churches, police and courts," said Melissa A. Sugden, a foster care licensing worker and child and family case worker with Community Mental Health.

"This responsibility is putting pressure to house these children in foster homes while the family unit is seeking treatment and becoming stabilized."

That's where area residents come in, according to Sugden, who said there is a real need for more foster families.

There are 67 foster care homes licensed in Tuscola County by the courts, Department of Social Services, Teen Ranch and Community Mental Health. The latter currently has 3 licensed homes, including one in Cass City.

Sugden would like to license another 10 or 12 homes.

The greatest need, she said, is for persons willing to work with teenagers. This

is a structured program that differs from others in that it's Please turn to back page.



**BE CAREFUL — The arrival of several Amish families to the area in recent months prompted state transportation officials to erect horse and buggy signs east of Cass City on M-81, and north and south of M-81 on M-53, in an effort to prevent traffic accidents. The signs were installed last week.**









BARB HUTCHINSON outlined a program for the Cass City Historical Society at a reorganizational meeting Monday, Jan 10.

Update for EMS personnel

EMS personnel in the Thumb will have an opportunity to update their continuing education credits the weekend of Jan. 22 and 23.

An ongoing education course will be held on these dates at the Port Austin Fire Hall in Port Austin. Sixteen (16) credits will be offered to all licensed personnel attending. The weekend course will be taught by Linda Upthegrove, EMT-S/I-C, and Dennis Karr, EMT-S.

Cost is \$75 for the weekend or \$5 per credit. For additional information or to pre-register, contact Upthegrove at 738-7455 or Karr at 658-2295.



THE CASS CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY reorganized and elected a new board of directors. From left: Marian Keating, Barb Hutchinson, Audrey Katzenberger and Sherryll Seeley. Also named was Jack Esau, not at the meeting.

Reorganize

14 residents vote to revive historical society

Fourteen concerned citizens voted to reorganize the Cass City Historical Society Monday night, Jan. 10, at a meeting held for that purpose at the Rawson Memorial Library.

- Barbara Hutchinson conducted the meeting, which included the playing of portions of tapes featuring long-time residents telling of experiences in the early years.
The tapes were produced by the Society before it became inactive.
The group would like to see this work continue and be augmented by other efforts to provide a permanent record of the community.
Projects outlined, in addition to the tapes included:
-Collect and identify local history photographs.
-Publish a written history of the area.
-Collect area family histories.
-Assist persons requesting genealogical information.

We would love to see this wall (library) covered with photographs of historical interest every month, Hutchinson told the group.
The various projects that the Society wants to undertake cost money and one of the first aims of the group will be to determine how best to raise operating funds.
Presently there is \$156 in the club coffers. Memberships are \$5 and senior citizens are admitted at \$2.50.
When the club became inactive the officers were Audrey Katzenberger, president; Fred Matthews, secretary; and Jack Esau, treasurer.
Two of the former officers were elected to the 5-person board of directors, which will select new officers. Named were Katzenberger, Esau, Hutchinson, Marian Keating and Sherryll Seeley.

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NEED HELP
The members present are asking that persons with photographs or other memorabilia that is of historical interest contact the library.

Your neighbor says I stay inside as much as possible

The recent record cold has area residents shivering and Florida snowbirds grinning. This week's neighbor, Janice Mika, says she isn't doing anything special to combat the cold.

I just stay inside as much as possible, she smiled, when asked what measures she was taking to beat the weather.
It's Michigan and it's winter, the Shabbona resident said.
Mika and her husband, John, did get a winter break before Christmas. They traveled to North Carolina to spend time with 2 children and 3 grandchildren.
One reason that the Mikas are here during the winter is the requirements of their jobs. He is employed by Walbro in Caro. She works with 2 to 5-year olds in the Head Start program in Sandusky.
In addition to her job, she is active in the CARESS program, which is dedicated to helping young mothers.
The Mikas have 6 children in their combined families.



Soybean vote ballots still available

Soybean growers have until Jan. 21 to obtain absentee ballots for the Feb. 9 vote on the national Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Program.
The referendum will ask soybean producers if they want to continue the current assessment of 1/2 of one percent of the value of each bushel of soybeans sold (about 3 cents for a \$6 bushel). The assessment is used to fund the Soybean Promotion and Research Checkoff (SPARC).
The absentee ballots can be obtained from any Michigan State University Extension county office during regular business hours.
All absentee ballots must be returned to the county Extension office by Feb. 2 to be eligible for the ballot count.
Growers who do not obtain absentee ballots can vote in person Feb. 9 at the county Extension office. Any grower who certifies that he/she produced soybeans will be eligible to vote.

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Elkland Township Senior Citizens
If you desire help in completing your homestead property tax credit forms we will be at the fire hall (township office).
If you understand the forms and do not need help filling it out it is not necessary to have it completed at the township office.
SATURDAY January 29
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ROAD CREWS were kept busy Monday, trying to keep up with blowing snow drifting onto area roadways. Snow and bitterly cold temperatures are expected to dominate the local weather pattern this week.

Kingston school

Unique 1st day program set

Kingston students will open the new semester next week with a special "1st day program."

The theme of the new program, scheduled for Jan. 25, will be "We Care," and the major topic will be substance abuse.

No regular classes will be held that day. Instead, students will rotate to hear a series of speakers, including a physician, a state trooper and possibly a judge. The event is part of the Kingston staff's plan to help its students become successful at school and successful in life.

"It's a pleasure working with the Kingston staff," said Nick Jaskiw, a Tuscola Intermediate School District psychologist who spends many of his working hours in Kingston.

"Kingston is a Class D school that is doing many things some Class A schools would find unique. And Kingston is committed to its Child Study Program."

The Child Study Program, initiated in January 1993, was implemented last fall. The effort is funded by the local school, which has released special education teacher Karen Crisp for one hour each day to coordinate the program.

Students having difficulty in the classroom are referred by their teacher to Crisp. After the referral, a thorough review is made of the student's records. The teacher files a report, and the child's parents are asked to file a parent input form with the Child Study Team.

The team, composed of the parents, teachers, Crisp, the school psychologist and an ISD social worker, then meets to discuss possible intervention strategies that may help the student. Finally, they are ready to meet with the student to help him plan a program that will help him succeed in school.

Someone from the team continues to meet with the student on a weekly basis to

go over his planner and evaluate success.

UNIQUE

"The Child Study Program is unique because the Child Study Team gets all the information on a child (his background and needs) in just one or two settings," said ISD itinerant social worker Peggy Nutt-Airgood.

"The team is able to find out what has worked or has not worked with that child for a teacher or teachers in the past. The teachers have such a vast array of knowledge. The referral process within the Child Study Program makes that knowledge available to the entire team in a timely fashion. The team is then able to more quickly and effectively help the student."

"With the Child Study program," Nutt-Airgood added, "the teachers feel like they have a voice, like they're not out on their own. Child Study has generated many other kinds of growth here at Kingston among teachers as well as students."

"The school is no longer just an education institution," commented high school Principal F. Wayne Wright.

"We've had to become a social institution. Child study is another role education has assumed because it has been forced upon us," he said. "As well as help the child become successful at school, the educator must deal with the child's problems at home and within the community."

"It's simply impossible for the school counselor to handle all of that with every student. Within our district, just over half of the students come from what the government considers impoverished homes."

James Robinson, junior and senior high counselor at Kingston, pointed out Child Study is the result of school officials' attempt to find

help for students who don't fit into other needs categories.

"We were seeing far too many kids referred to special education that really didn't need special education," he explained. "A number of students in Kingston schools come from a problem background. Many live at Teen Ranch or in a foster home. These kids are carrying a lot of baggage."

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

"Some of our students have moved back and forth among a number of different schools. Their self-esteem is low; they may have vision or hearing problems. Some have gone through a number of different problems," Crisp said.

"Fortunately," she added, "Kingston students are very supportive of each other. We can say we've seen improvement in kids' self-esteem. Those falling through the cracks are now saying, 'Maybe I can make it after all.'"

As part of the Child Study Program, students with failing grades in 2 or more classes are asked to sign a learning contract.

In doing so, the student agrees to attend every class on time; bring his materials; have homework signed in advance by his parents; seek help when needed; be a cooperative, contributing and participating class member; do his best work on each assignment; and not to challenge a failing grade if he violated the learning contract.

"Child Study is a systematic process," Jaskiw noted. "If one approach doesn't work with a child, we go on to approach 2 or 3 and so on until we are able to help, one way or another, as many children as possible."

"We are trying lots of things," Crisp added. "We've just arranged for tutoring for one of the students. The child's whole outlook has changed. I think it's really going to work."

"The learning contract says to the child, 'We care.' In many cases, that's just what they need," Wright concluded.

4-H safety course set

4-H Safe Tractor Operation and Farm Machinery Safety courses are being offered in Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola counties.

Co-sponsored by the Huron County Health Department, the 4-H Councils and county Farm Bureaus, they are open to all youth 10 years and older.

In Tuscola County, classes will be held starting Jan. 25 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Detroit Edison Building in Cass City.

All classes will meet from 7 to 9 p.m., once a week for 7 weeks. Youths must be pre-enrolled, and the \$5.00 fee must be pre-paid.

Enrollment may be done by calling Geraldine R. Smith or Sandra Koglin at the Huron County Health Department, 1-800-833-8550 or 1-517-269-9721.

A class can be scheduled to begin later in the year if there is enough interest in the community. Persons interested in a class that would begin in March are asked to call.

The instructors are farmers, or come from a farm background. These courses are classroom instruction only, and meet all of the federal requirements for youth 14 and older to qualify for a "Certificate of Training" for agricultural employment.

More foster families needed

Continued from page 11

strictly voluntary; parents request help from the program and sign their child in.

"That's what makes the treatment a lot better, too. Parents actually want it," Sugden added.

Foster parents must meet all state guidelines to be licensed, a process that takes 3 to 4 months. Their role is to provide youth with a stable, wholesome environment in which youth receive guidance, structure and understanding.

"A home can be licensed from one to 6 children. While a child is in placement, foster parents will receive training and support, and the youth will receive counseling and case management services and rules," Sugden explained.

Regular visits to the home are part of the support provided by community mental health, she noted. "The fos-

ter home is not left to cope alone.

"As society gets more complex, so do the problems. 'Intensive specialized foster homes' must be developed for juveniles with substance abuse problems, adolescent sex offenders and youth with emotional problems," Sugden said. "While residing in foster care, these youth receive treatment and counseling."

"Foster parents are not expected to provide treatment or counseling themselves, but they must have good communication skills and be able to provide a good structured environment."

Also needed are families willing to take youth in emergency situations, such as when a youth runs away and can't go home in the middle of the night.

"These 'safe homes' prevent some youth from being detained when all they need is a place to stop and be safe while their thoughts catch up with their actions," Sugden explained.

"It is hoped that church support groups and others will agree to help reunite these families and foster understanding before more serious problems develop."

Sugden said licensed foster homes receive payment for caring for children. Also, clothing, an allowance, school and medical expenses are reimbursed.

"When the level of commitment is increased to provide 'intensive specialized foster care' and 'safe homes,' the daily rate is increased," she noted. "Foster parents also receive training and ongoing support for the special needs."

The ultimate goal of foster care is to reunite families, Sugden pointed out.

Being a foster parent isn't an easy job, she said, but

there are rewards.

"Foster parents are truly special people. They have made the commitment to reach out and share their lives and homes to make the future better for a youth," she added.

Residents interested in learning more about the foster care program are asked to contact Sugden at 1-800-462-6814, or (517) 673-6191.

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Lindi Parrott & Brian Hicks

The Student of the Week is selected by the Cass City Student Council.

Cass City Students of the Week are Brian Hicks, son of Fred and Carol Hicks, and Lindi Parrott, daughter of Deb and Rick Parrott. Both are in the 11th grade and were recently chosen for the Tri-County Honors Band. The concert is scheduled for Jan. 30 at 3 p.m. at Cros-Lex High School.

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