

Cass City's 31st Annual



JULY 2-4, 2009

SPECTACULAR PARADE

10:30 A.M., SATURDAY, JULY 4

**Classic
Car Show**

**Book Sale &
Craft Show**

**Sports - Golf
Hoops & More**

**Food All Around
The Park**

**FIREWORKS
SATURDAY AT DUSK!**

Cass City's 31st Annual FREEDOM FESTIVAL

**Schedule of Events
July 2 - 4, 2009**

Thursday, July 2

- Rolling Hills Golf Tourney, (989) 872-3569 - 1 p.m.
- Music from "Victory Stories" in Rotary Park - 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Friday, July 3

- Festival Starts - 4 p.m.
- Maplewood Petting Zoo & Pony Rides - 4 to 9 p.m.
- Craft Show - 4 to 9 p.m.
- Methodist Church Ice Cream Social at South Pavilion - 4 to 8 p.m.
- Minor League Boys at the North Ball Diamond - 5 p.m.
- Classic Cars meet at McDonald's - 6 p.m.
- Little League Boys at the North Ball Diamond - 7 p.m.
- M-T Pocket Pullers' Tractor Pull at the Cass City Hill - 7 p.m.
- Gary Brandt Music at Lions Pavilion - 7 to 9 p.m.
- Classic Cars Parade - 7:45 p.m.
- Mulligan's Moonlight Golf, (989) 872-8002 - 9:30 p.m.

DUSK - FIREWORKS PREVIEW!!!

Saturday, July 4

- Hills & Dales Rehabilitation & Fitness 5K & 8K Race - 8 a.m.
- Craft Show - 9:30 to 5 p.m.
- Book Sale at Lions Pavilion - 9:30 a.m.
- Parade Entries meet at Chemical Bank - 9:30 a.m.

BEFORE THE PARADE

- Baker College Snacks (coffee, lemonade, popcorn)
- Small Kids' Decorated Bike & Pet Contest

GREAT PARADE - 10:30 a.m.

AFTER THE PARADE

- 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
- Titabawassee Fife & Drum Corp. at the gazebo
- Classic Cars & 2-Cylinder Tractor Display - Near DPW Building
- Lions Club Chicken BBQ & Hot Dogs - Lions Pavilion
- Plus Food Vendors in the Park
- Tir Na N'Og Irish Dancers & Excel Dancers at Baker College - 12:30 p.m.
- Chamber of Commerce Kids' Area - 12 to 4 p.m.
- (\$5 wrist band for all day or \$1 per ride)
- AAUW Kids' Paint-In, East of gazebo - 12:30 p.m.
- Maplewood Petting Zoo & Pony Rides - 12:30 p.m.
- Mid-Michigan Mini Tractor Pulling Association's Tractor Pull at the Cass City Hill - 2 p.m.
- Arlen Bannick / Eastern Michigan Music Makers at the gazebo - 1 to 5 p.m.
- Tail Waggers by the gazebo - 2 p.m.
- All-Star Football Game - 7 p.m.

DUSK - FIREWORKS!!!

**CLASSIC
CAR CRUISE**

**SPORTS
EVENTS**

**BOOK SALE
CRAFT SHOW**

**FUN KIDS
ACTIVITIES**

**FIREWORKS
SATURDAY
AT DUSK**

July 4 Festival stories written and pictures coordinated by...

Patricia Emenpour

FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

Cass City's Fourth of July Festival has seen many changes...

Annual festival dates back to '79 during gasoline crunch

The annual Fourth of July Freedom Festival has come a long way since it first started in 1979.

Established during the gasoline crunch, the festival gave people something to do without having to travel far.

"The festival started at a time when gas prices were high. People felt that we ought to stay home and celebrate where everything was free, it was an alternative to going somewhere," said Lambert Althaver, who has lived in Cass City since 1954.

However, little did anyone expect, the festival has turned into a multiple day event, bringing in people from all over.

The first festival had a parade with 15 entries, featured Wayne Warren's hot air balloon and the 25-member Kitchen Band from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). That year, the Cass City Lions Club sold 1,000 chicken halves, which has now become a "must have" tradition. "I look forward to the Lions Club chicken every year," Emily Phillips,

the festival's financial secretary said. "It is my favorite."

Despite the festival's success, it started to carry a huge financial burden. Over the next five years, the festival had not broken even financially and the possibility of ending the new tradition had started to worry its organizers.

In order to cut expenses in 1984, the festival skipped out on fireworks and had to eliminate the tractor pull. For entertainment, a demolition derby replaced the tractor pull.

Even the festival's biggest money-maker - the beer tent - was cut. Instead of having the festival on the weekend after or before July 4, the festival was held on the Fourth of July, a Wednesday, so the popular tent didn't get a "weekend run." Since then, the beer tent has remained eliminated.

Some events that took place included a concert featuring the Tom Thumb Singers, a dog show, a lumberjack demonstration, and the local branch of the American Association

of University Women (AAUW) had its annual Paint-In for kids.

"Sometime in the mid-1980s, the Michigan International Guard flew over town with some jets. It was really awesome," said Gary Jones, a past parade and festival coordinator.

By 1991, the festival started to get back on its feet and had its second annual Civil War camp reenactment.

"One of my other favorite events was when we had the Civil War reenactments. There were tents, camp fires...even the people dressed up in period costumes," Jones said. "They had a mock battle between the Yankees and Confederates."

Also in 1991, Cass City's Freedom Festival parade had become "giant" with more than 100 entries. The festival had started making other changes. Sand volleyball replaced the mud volleyball, professional clowns were hired, and the festival brought in a miniature car club from Sandusky to entertain the crowds.

In 1995, the festival had 22 little girls compete in the Little Miss

Fourth of July pageant.

By the time 1998 rolled around, Jan Moore's community choir started to become a favorite event as they presented a patriotic cantata.

Other popular events by the late 1990s included the M-T Pocket Pullers competition, which returns again this year.

Throughout the years, festival organizers have tried to bring in new and exciting events. In the past couple of years, kid's inflatable attractions have been popular.

Last year, for the festival's 30th annual celebration, the Maplewood Petting Zoo returned, along with Cass City's Excel Dancers.

Kevin Mulligan, this year's festival chairmen, said this year should be exciting and will hopefully be a success.

"The Fourth of July has a huge historical significance...it is our country's independence and it is nice to celebrate like this in our community. Even if we are down a few parade entries this year, I'm positive it will still be a fun and exciting time," he said.



EVERY YEAR the Fourth of July committee brings in someone to put on a firework show to end the Freedom Festival with a bang. On Friday night there will be a preview and Saturday is the grand show.

Fireworks Galore

Mark Schramke and company will light up the sky on July 3 and 4

Mark Schramke and his crew are excited to put on a firework show for both Friday and Saturday night.

His company, Schramke Fire Equipment from Saginaw will put on a 5 to 10 minute mini-show on Friday and will have the big show on Saturday evening at dusk.

"The big show should last anywhere from 20 to 25 minutes. I don't want to spoil it, but we are going to have a few new cool shells this year, they will really make the sky sparkle," he said.

According to Schramke, the fireworks for both nights combined cost Cass City approximately \$5,500.

However, the committee has put on various fundraisers to help defray that cost.

"The show will be worth it," Schramke said. "It is really cool."

Schramke has been running shows for 14 years now.

"My wife calls it my hobby job," he said. Schramke is also the fire chief for Spaulding County.

With a crew of 4 other firefighters, Schramke said setting up is the most work, and the guys will have their work cut out for them.

"Setting up the mortar tubes and loading up the guns take the longest and then we have to load the show," he explained.

This year, the audience can expect to see some new shells towards the end that produce a different sound, according to Schramke.

"I don't want to give too many details, I want to keep people in suspense," he teased.

Most of his fireworks come from Wolverine Fireworks, based out of Kawkawlin, Mich., which is one of the largest firework companies in the world.

For Schramke, the best part of putting on a firework show is the finale.

"I love at the end of a show, when you hear cars beeping their horns and people clapping, it makes it all worth it," he said.

Schramke said he would love to come next year to Cass City if he is invited again.

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FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

Grand Parade to attract thousands to Cass City

With the beat of the Cass City High School Marching Band and the stomp of the Clydesdale horses, the parade will start the Fourth of July Freedom Festival off with a bang.

Richard Little, parade coordinator, said the parade is well worth seeing. "The parade kicks off the day," he said. "It takes a lot of work and a lot of time to put the parade together, but it is worth it and is an exciting thing to see."

Last year, Little took over coordinating the parade from Gary Jones, who was in charge of the parade for over 20 years.

Little is excited, as this is his second year putting the parade together.

"It gets hard sometimes. I had to get in contact with everybody. I sent over 100 letters out and got in touch with about 50 personal contacts," he said. "But this year was a little easier because I already had everyone's names down in the computer from last year."

According to Little, he started the parade planning back in January.

"I had to continue to follow up with all the people to make sure they still wanted to be in the parade, it does take some work to convince the people sometimes," he said. "Altogether, it is nice because as we celebrate the Fourth of July, a lot of people will come into town."

The parade is also the most expensive event, aside from the fireworks, according to Emily Phillips, financial secretary for the festival.

Phillips said the festival committee



spent almost \$2,500 last year on the parade alone.

"We have to pay for the entertainers and there are also a lot of little expenses involved, like the awards for example," she said. This year, trophies are awarded for president's choice, most attractive and most patriotic. There will be 3 judges: Linda Bailey, Linda Gray, and Melva Coleman.

The parade will begin at Brooker Street off of west Main Street. The

lineup starts at 8:30 a.m., and each entry will be given a number that corresponds to their spot at the side of the parade route.

"I am asking people to please align their entry next to their assigned number," Little said. "The parade will hopefully start at 10:30 a.m. sharp."

With over 60 entries, the parade will include different music and dancing groups, Clydesdale horses, businesses, youth groups, marching

bands, church groups, a restored carriage and much more. The parade will also feature a children's section for ages 12 and under.

"We will give a prize to every kid," Little said. "It's nice to see the kids decorate their bikes and pets in the patriotic theme."

In the children's parade, parents may walk along with their child. Line up for the children's section is at 10:00 a.m. sharp at the Chemical Bank

parking lot. There is no cost to participate.

Little, who also plans the Christmas parade in Cass City, said he will probably help plan the parade next year, too.

"I've been coming to the festival for as long as I can remember and I'll probably do it again next year. I enjoy it," he said. "The only thing that I don't like is that I don't get to see the parade and people's reactions. But I

Music entertainers, dance groups, tractors, classic cars, restored carriage, kids' parade with decorated bikes and pets and much more...

Off with a bang


FROM THE favored Clydesdale Horses to colorful floats, the parade will feature entries from all over Michigan. As one of the most popular events of the festival, the Fourth of July committee expects Main Street to be lined with people. The parade will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday.

do get to see them go by as I get everyone together with my nephew, Michael Little."


This year's grand marshals are Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Simms.

"I chose them because they have worked hard for so many years," Little said.

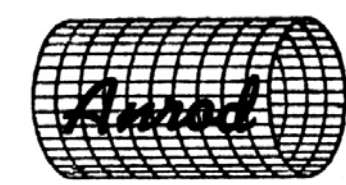
The parade will go from Brooker Street to the Cass City Memorial Park, ending at the pavilion and all participants will receive a memorial ribbon to commemorate the day.



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FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

AAUW sponsors free kids' paint-in



KIDS CAN PAINT for free at the Paint-In sponsored by the American Association of University Women Cass City/Thumb area branch. The Paint-In has been around since the first Fourth of July Freedom Festival. Located just east of the gazebo, the AAUW will have the area set up from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Children will be plenty busy this weekend at the Freedom Festival.

One of the most memorable activities, the children's Paint-In, sponsored by the American Association of University Women Cass City/Thumb Area Branch, will be back for the little Picassos and van Goghs in the area.

The Paint-In will take place on Saturday from 1 to 3 p.m. east of the gazebo in the park.

The AAUW will provide the necessary art supplies for the children and the activity is free.

"We will have easels set up for the kids to paint. We provide all the materials, including brushes, the tempera paint and a shirt," said Ann Craig, the AAUW member in charge of the event.

According to Craig, the Paint-In has always been a part of the festival.

"We've been doing this since the first festival, since the beginning," she said. "And the kids always enjoy it. It's wonderful to have something free for the kids to get involved with."

Diane Williams, president of the AAUW said it is important for the AAUW to be a part of the Fourth of July festivities.

"It is very important for us to be out there, it's just something we do. We are a service organization and it's nice to be just out there and visible," she said.

At the Paint-In, there will be 3 volunteers supervising each shift, according to Craig.

"Once the kids finish their painting, they can hang it on a clothes line to dry and then later they can come pick it up," she said.

Williams said the AAUW also does various other volunteer activities throughout the year.

"We sponsor a Halloween carnival at the middle school, we do Christmas wreaths in November and we have a big fundraiser called the Flamingo

Fling, so that we can sponsor scholarships to women pursuing higher education," she said.

The AAUW also provides a book to

elementary children through the Reading is Fundamental program. This local branch has been around for 45 years.

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Vendors from around the state bring their arts and crafts, ready to sell

Craft show expected to be big hit

From purses to potholders, the craft show will host a variety of vendors from around the state.

The craft show will feature various objects and items made by others to be sold, for both men and women to enjoy.

According to Chris Allen, coordinator of the show, the vendors will begin selling in the park at 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday and from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

"I'm excited, I think we are going to have something for everyone," she said.

Allen said getting the craft show took some work.

"I sent out about 150 letters, some to those who had previously come to

one of our festivals and then some to others. I also had some other people email me, asking for applications, so then I started doing the email applications," she said. "I think this year will go really well."

After each vendor filled out an application, noting their personal information and what type of craft they would be selling, they had to pay a \$25 fee, according to Allen.

"We are going to have a lot of different things. We'll have a lady selling Mary Kay, another selling candles, and others who will be doing raffles for their organization," she said. "I am actually looking forward to some of them myself."

Anywhere between 30 and 50 ven-

dors will be at the event, Allen predicted.

Some of the items sold will include handmade jewelry, baby books, potholders, purses, garden displays, doll quilts and wooden games. There will also be an antique photo booth coming from Caro and a lady who sells framed photographs.

She said the vendors come from all over the state, but the majority comes from Macomb, Genesee, Lapeer, Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac counties.

Allen also said there will be a lady coming from Decker who makes pictures out of pressed flowers.

"They really are nice," she said. "We will also have someone coming who does tag engraving for pets and for those who take medications and have to wear a tag just in case of an emergency. We are also having another come that does sculptures out of fabrics... I just love craft shows, I try to go to them all."

For Allen, who has lived in Cass City for 7 years and hasn't missed a craft show, having vendors come to the festival is important.

"I think having an arts and crafts show is a really good idea for people to come into our town and for them to enjoy it. Sometimes people don't want to do the other activities, so it's nice to have something for everybody," she said.

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FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

"Land of the young, dance of the young."

Tir Na N'Og dancers gear up to perform traditional Irish styles

Bringing their dance styles all the way from the kitchens in Ireland to the streets of Cass City for the first time, dancers from Tir Na N'Og Gaelic School of Dance and Music will perform after the parade this Saturday.

The group will walk and dance down Main Street with their float featuring fairies, leprechauns, Irish music and a dance called céili, similar to square dancing.

Tir Na N'Og, a Gaelic word that translates into "Land of the young, dance of the young" came from the time of the druids.

According to Debbie Freeman, owner and operator of the dance group, said the druids believed when they left this world, they went to Tir Na N'Og, a place of love and music and where you are always young.

"The word Tir Na N'Og represents what we do," Freeman said. "We are noncompetitive, family oriented and focused on enjoyment and fun."

For Freeman, her goal was to create something family oriented.

"Our goal is not to be a ballet, tap, jazz type of competitive school. In-

stead, we teach the history, dance and language of Ireland. It is about learning the culture," she said.

The program started as an official school 7 years ago, under Freeman's instruction and has 2 locations, one in Memphis and another in Lapeer.

"I live in Michigan now, but I used to live and dance in Ireland. We used to push everything aside in the kitchens and just dance. My mom

country style of dancing.

With about 70 dancers, adults and children alike, Freeman and her family teach 3 times a week for 4 hours each night.

"We have all ages show up, as long as their legs can keep moving, they are here," she said.

From performing with the famous troupes like Trinity and Lord of the Dance, to volunteering at different

will feel comfortable enough where they are creative and do their own thing. Secondly, dancing improves health. It really is a lot of exercise, footwork and timing," she said. "However, we also learn about teamwork and a different culture."

Sheila Brown, daughter of Nancy Simms, attends the school with her 3 children and will be performing at this year's festivities after dancing for only 4 months.

"We will all be walking in the parade and dancing after," she said. "We love doing it because it is fun, plus it really gives us a chance to show off our talents."

Freeman said she will always be a part of Tir Na N'Og for the rest of her life.

"I plan to teach for the rest of my life, until my legs stop moving and then I'll sit there and point," she joked.

As the group prepares for their performances, which will also include singing, the audience members are encouraged to join.

"We like to get people from the audience to join," Freeman said. "So be prepared."



THE IRISH DANCE GROUP, Tir Na N'Og will bring to Cass City a little bit of Ireland. Tir Na N'Og, a Gaelic word that translates into "Land of the young, dance of the young", came from the time of the druids. Debbie Freeman, owner and operator of the dance group, said the druids believed when they left this world, they went to Tir Na N'Og, a place of love and music and where you are always young.

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FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

In the Spotlight



DATING BACK TO the early 1900s, a restored carriage will grace Main Street with its elegance. The Park Phaeton Carriage, now owned by the Historical Society, once belonged to Jacob Striffler, of Cass City, who died in 1925. Kate Fernald and her children will dress up in period outfits and sit in the carriage as it rolls down the parade route.

Restored carriage, vintage clothing will take viewers back in time

Cass City will be able to go back in time as The Park Phaeton Carriage rolls down Main Street during the annual parade.

Owned by the Cass City Historical Society and on loan to the Octagon Barn, the carriage was given to the Society in the 1970s by Eleanor Nique Dillman, the granddaughter of Jacob Striffler, the original owner and an early settler of the Cass City area. Striffler died in 1925. He was a farmer, cattle buyer, farm implement dealer, stockyard manager, and auctioneer. He also served as treasurer, township supervisor, and road commissioner and as a trustee and the president of the village of Cass City.

According to the Historical Society, sometime in the early 1900s a manager of a stockyard in Buffalo, NY bought a new automobile in Michigan and asked Striffler if he could have it shipped to Buffalo for him. In exchange for the favor, he gave Striffler the carriage.

For many years, this carriage was seen at the Freedom Festival during the Fourth of July Parade, but over time mice got into it and destroyed some of the upholstery.

The Historical Society had the entire carriage restored by Al and Sue VanSlyke of Irons, MI and had the lanterns restored by a specialty company in Montana. The Pinney Foundation also sponsored the restoration of the carriage.

According to Katie Jackson, president of the Historical Society, this year will be exciting because the riders will be wearing period clothing. "I was looking for someone who was tall, thin, and blond to fit the dress and then I was told I should ask Kate Fernald," she said.

Fernald, a dental hygienist and stay-at-home mom of 3, said she would do the honors of riding in the carriage with her children and wear the dress. Fernald is the wife of Aaron Fernald,

the principal at Campbell Elementary School.

The dress belongs to the Octagon Barn, whose members bought a number of articles of clothing to portray the early 1900s, like the woman who would go to the Hamptons to see the races, Jackson explained.

"The dress is not an authentic, but it really does look neat," she said.

Jackson wrote a biography of the carriage and it said, "The Park Phaeton Carriage would have been considered a commercial vehicle for places such as large parks that would be driven by a chauffeur giving rides to its owner, or to customers. It was considered the Cadillac of vehicles in its day."

Two elaborate horses will pull the carriage. They will be brought to Cass City from the same owner who brought them last year.

"He was willing to come back and do it again. He really gets the horses dressed up nice," Jackson said.

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FOURTH OF JULY

WEEKEND CELEBRATION

In the spotlight: '66 Chevy Super Sport

Antique car show always popular



THE THUMB AREA ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB will honor Bob Hirn and his 1966 white Chevy Super Sport this year. He will drive his car in the Classic Car parade on Friday and during the grand parade on Saturday. Hirn also owns a 1929 black and brown Model A Ford. Outside of owning 2 classic cars, Hirn has also been co-chair for 14 years of the Fall Family Days Weekend held in August at the Thumb Octagon Barn in Gagetown.

The Thumb Area Antique Auto Club will have its annual car cruise on Friday night.

Starting at 6 p.m. near McDonald's, about 50 classic cars will go through Cass City down Main Street and around other area roads. The cruise will end around 7:30 p.m.

According to Jim Perry, coordinator of the car cruise, he tries to feature at least 10 to 12 cars from Cass City. There is no entry fee to participate in the cruise.

"My wife, Geri, and I have been putting this show on for about 20 years and we like to keep it to the people here. But we also have cars from all over the Thumb area and it's nice," he said. "We have people coming from Harbor Beach, Caro, Bad Axe, Marlette, from all over."

Each year, according to Perry, one car and its owner is honored and gets to be engraved on a plaque. Last year, Bad Axe's Bill Armstrong and his '44 Coupe were honored.

This year's winner is Cass City's Bob Hirn and his 1966 white

Chevy Super Sport. Perry nominated him. Hirn will show off his car in both the car cruise on Friday night and at the parade on Saturday morning.

For Hirn, being honored along with his car is interesting, considering the reason he has the car in the first place.

"After my wife, Mary Ann and I got married, we ended up buying a '66 Chevy two door hard top in 1965. Then in 1987, at a car showing in Midland we heard about the '66 Chevy Super Sport. We sort of bought it to reminisce about the other car; it was a way of stepping back in time."

Hirn said he was surprised to see how few miles the car had when he first bought it.

"The Chevy just needed a little touch up. It only need very little work and upholstery and it only had 46,000 miles on it. Now, it only has between 54-55,000 miles on it, which isn't that much for a car this old," he said. "I don't plan on selling it. One day, I'll have to sit down with my son to see what he wants to do with it and maybe then I'll have to sell it. I have no idea what it is worth, though."

Hirn also has another classic car, a

1929 black and brown Model A Ford. "The Model A Ford has its original paint color and interior. But I'm not going to show this one, just the '66 Chevy," he said.

Hirn is from the west side of Detroit and moved to Cass City in 1964 to work as a high school biology teacher.

Outside of owning 2 classic cars, Hirn has also been co-chair for 14 years of the Fall Family Days Weekend held in August at the Thumb Octagon Barn in Gagetown.

In his spare time, Hirn also collects tractors.

"I'm in an old tractor club, I like collecting them," he said.



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Jurassic Adventure coming to Freedom Festival

When the Cass City Fourth of July Freedom Festival committee said they like to do things big, they meant it. Because dinosaurs have found their way to be a part of this year's festivities.

That is, a 24-foot long by 29 foot wide by 15-foot high Jurassic Adventure inflatable, with 4 large dinosaurs attached, will be available for kids to play on.

"We had to get the Jurassic Adventure, it just looked so cool," said Dee Mulligan, event coordinator for the kids' area and director of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Cass City Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the kids' fun area and will expand it with 5 other large size inflatable attractions.

According to Mulligan, the other inflatable activities include a Scooby Doo Bounce House, a 24 foot Giant Slide, a 40 foot long Obstacle Course, a Baseball Batting Cage Game, and a 40 foot long by 27 foot wide by 16 foot high "Adrenaline Rush" that is for all ages, adults included.

"The inflatable activities are open to anybody and everybody," she said. "More importantly, we really wanted something for the kids to do. We have the Paint-In, which is wonderful, but we wanted something more for the

kids. That way, when families come to the festival, everyone has something to do. The adults have the entertainment and the arts and crafts, and the teens usually do the whole sports thing, like the 3-on-3 basketball tournament, but now we have something that the kids can really enjoy too."

The inflatable attractions will be rented from Funtastic Inflatables based in Burton, Mich., and will cost around \$2,000 for all 6 attractions combined for the 4 or so hours.

Last year, the Chamber of Commerce was left "in the red" as they didn't make as much money as they spent.

However, this didn't stop them from

bringing back the kids' section, and even bigger than before.

"We hope this year, we will be able to make more money to get out of being in the red. If we could fix that niche, that would be great. But either way, we will still keep on trying to make the kids' area better, while still making it cheap. Just because the economy is bad, doesn't mean the kids still can't have fun," Mulligan said. "We want to have something for the kids to do, so that the whole family will stick around, and that is affordable, even for those who have lost their jobs."

The Chamber of Commerce is charging \$5 for an all day pass wristband.

If someone doesn't want to pay for a wristband, they can purchase a \$1 ticket for each individual inflatable.

The kids' area will be open noon to 4:30ish on Saturday, according to Mulligan. The attractions will be located between the Lions' pavilion and

including all the little ones. I'm sure this year they will be amused," she said.

For more information and pictures of the inflatable attractions, please visit www.funevents.us.

Variety of food offered at festival

Do you want a barbecue sandwich? Some apple dumplings? The Lion Club's chicken?

Cass City's Fourth of July Freedom Festival will have all of the above and more.

From the United Methodist Church's ice cream social to the smoothies from Bechler's Fun Foods, the annual festival will have plenty of food available to go around.

The committee expects 7 to 9 different vendors to sell their food on both Friday and Saturday.

"We wanted to bring in different vendors, so we could have a large variety of food," said Emily Phillips, chairperson in charge of food vendors for the committee. "I had a lot of people call me, but I didn't want them all to be making the same thing."

Phillips said she sent out letters and had people call her asking about the festival.

"We usually like to bring in vendors from the previous year, and a couple other new vendors. I got almost 25 different phone calls of people asking about our festival, but I had to call and check to make sure we didn't have the 7 different stands selling the same hotdogs," she said.

Each vendor is required to pay a \$30 fee and pass the food safety inspection, while getting their food licenses.

"In the past year or so the cost for licenses has more than doubled, so it really is getting harder for these vendors to come. Especially this year, the Fourth of July festival is actually on July 4, which is a Saturday and a lot of people stay in their hometowns," she said.

However, this year, the committee expects to have the same number of vendors as years past, even after starting late on the planning due to a small miscommunication among the committee.

"I think people will enjoy what we are bringing," Phillips said. "We usually should have the final list done by early June, but we had a late start this year. But we aren't going to be down in numbers."

Concessions are expected to open at 4 p.m. on Friday and all day Saturday. "Just don't expect to get a barbecue sandwich right away in the morning," Phillips joked.

Some of the items on this year's menus include: fries, hotdogs, corn-dogs, pulled pork, beef briskets, ribs, cotton candy, ice cream, floats, smoothies, chicken dinners, apple dumplings and more. There will also be a variety of beverages sold.

The food vendors will be set up in the park near the tennis courts.

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Center for Rehabilitation sponsors 5K run, 5K walk and 8K run

Hills & Dales ready for 13th annual run/walk

Ready, set...run to Hills & Dales, as the Center for Rehabilitation is gearing up for their 13th annual run/walk on Saturday.

There will be 3 races, a 5K run, a 5K walk, and an 8K run, according to David Wohl, director of Rehabilitation.

There will be various age groups for each race. The age groups are broken up for 14 years old and under, 15 to 19 years old, and then it goes by every 5 years up to the masters' group, which is anyone 60 years old and up.

Anyone interested in participating can register for \$15 ahead of time by visiting either the Cass City or Caro Hills & Dales Center for Rehabilitation.

Wohl said they will take participants on site up until the race starts for \$18, but online registration closes on July 3 at 4 p.m. To register online, go to www.hdghrefbah.com. The fees pay for the t-shirt, and snacks and drinks at the finish line, along with an entry for a door prize drawing.

Registration begins at 7 a.m. on Saturday at the Medical Arts Building across from the hospital and the race starts at 8 a.m.

"We always have the race early in the morning so that our participants can watch the parade. Everyone, whether they walk or run will get done in usually about an hour," Wohl said.

According to Wohl, the Center for Rehabilitation started the race to try to improve health in the area.

"We wanted to participate in the Fourth of July Freedom Festival and we also wanted to show the people that physical fitness is important," he said.

Last year, the race had about 90 participants of all different ages.


"It really is a nice thing for Cass City to offer a race like this, especially for being a small town. There really isn't anything else like this in the Thumb area," Wohl said.

Sports, competitions bring excitement to Freedom Festival

From golf to football to tractor pulls, there will be several competitions to enjoy at this year's Fourth of July Freedom Festival.


Each year, the sporting competitions are some of the favored activities, especially as this year marks the second time Cass City will host the All-Star football game. Festival goers will be sure to appreciate the excitement, fun and good ol' sweat. To learn more about each event, read the following:

Rolling Hills Golf Tournament



The Rolling Hills Golf Tournament will start at 1 p.m. July 2. This 4-man golf tournament brings out the best players in the Thumb, according to Rick Champagne, a committee member who oversees some of the sporting events for the festival. Players of every skill level will find this 18-hole course to be a good test for their long and short game. There will be cash prizes, 50/50 raffle, hotdogs and dinner after everyone plays. The tournament takes place at the golf course located at 6586 Milligan Road.


3-on-3 Basketball Tournaments



There will be teams of various age, size and talent levels set up against other teams of a similar make-up to watch compete for the bragging rights

member who also lives in Cass City. The cost is \$15 for non-members to race, and \$10 for members. If people from the public have tractors and want to participate, they must come an hour early to have their tractor inspected for specifications. Ribbons and cash prizes will be awarded.


M-T Pocket Pullers



The M-T Pocket Pullers' Tractor Pull will be at 7 p.m. on Friday, July 3 at the Cass City Hill. The M-T Pocket Pullers is a family-oriented group that was established in 1991. The non-profit and charitable organization is named after the word "empty" because their logo is a guy pulling out empty pockets. The organization donates money to charities like Big Brothers, Big Sisters and the American Cancer Society. Anything from 13hp garden tractors to small V-8s pull in the group. The event is open to the public. For more information regarding their rules, please visit www.mtpocketpullers.com.

Minor League Boys' All Star Game & Little League Boys' All Star Game

The Minor League Boys' All Star Game is scheduled for 5 p.m. Friday, July 3 and the Little League Boys' All Star Game is set at 7 p.m. the same day. Both games will be held at the north ball diamond. The 5 best players from 5 minor league and 5 little league teams were chosen to compete in the All-Star games. A majority of the children will be between 7 and 10 years old. There is no fee from them to play. According to Champagne, the games are popular and are a fun activity to watch in an atmosphere of wholesome community participation.



"Frankenmuth always has their race on July 4, so the serious runners will probably end up going there instead," he said. "However, people should take advantage of this because it improves their chance of getting an award."

Trophies will be awarded to the overall male/female and masters' male/female winners of each individual race. Trophies and medals will also be given for the top 3 places in each age/gender division. T-shirts will be given to all participants, along with free passes to Hills & Dales Health & Fitness Center.

"There will also be raffle drawings at the end of the race for free fitness memberships and other great prizes," Wohl said.

The races will be professionally timed by Miller Race Management.

All Star Football Game



With the help and support of Cass City's community, along with other local communities, according to Champagne, outgoing seniors throughout the Thumb area will be able to play one last football game together. Throughout the past months, local coaches and the Sport Writers Association of the Thumb handpicked the finest outgoing senior players for the game. The players will come from Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac counties, and also from teams in the Greater Thumb Conference. A total of 25 schools will send their nominated students to play in the game. The players will be separated into 2 teams; the Greater Thumb West Conference vs. the NCTL North to make the Northwest team. They will play a regular, 4-quarter tackle football game with official referees. The All-Star Football Game will take place at 7 p.m. at the park on Saturday before the grand fireworks show.

Mid-Michigan Mini Tractor Pulling Association's Tractor Pull



The Mid-Michigan Mini Tractor Pulling Association provides pulling contests at some of Mid-Michigan's other large fairs and festivals. The event will be at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 4 at the Cass City Hill. There will be different races depending on the type of classes, some include; Garden Tractors, Ultra-Light modified tractors, and V-8 powered minis. The event is tailored to family oriented fun. The race is open to the public and free to watch. But there is a fee to participate, according to Pam Hawley, a

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In the Spotlight

After more than 25 years, Jones still a big part of Cass City’s annual fest

From working with the Freedom Festival committee for over 25 years to volunteering with the village council, Gary Jones, a retired General Cable Corporation employee has made an impact in the Cass City community.

Although Jones, 69, is trying to ease out of working with the committee, he still keeps coming back.

“A long time ago, a friend asked if I would give him a hand with the parade, and from then on I have helped put it together,” Jones said. “It wasn’t until last year, when Richard Little took over and I think he has done a good job.”

Jones said one of his favorite aspects of the festival is the parade.

“Although I never really could see it, just hearing people say that it was great was a nice thing. To hear people reflect and say they enjoyed themselves made it all worth it. I’ve just had a lot of fun times and memories,” he said.

Despite his efforts to play a minimal role in this year’s festivities, Jones is helpful to the committee because he understands the work that the Freedom Festival requires.

“Not every aspect of the planning is very glamorous, but it really is nice to see how the festival has grown,” he said. “This year is different for me though. Instead of giving direction, I am taking direction.”

According to Kevin Mulligan, chairman of the festival, Jones has put a tremendous effort into the festival.

“Gary is a good guy. For him to volunteer so much of his time is really great,” he said.

All Fourth of July planning aside, Jones is a busy person. He is the chairperson for the Cass City United Methodist Church trustees, secretary of the Cass City Lions Club, on the Cass City Village Council, and on the Downtown Development Authority/Economic Development Council.

“Everyone wants you on their committee when you’re retired,” he joked.

Jones, a 1957 Cass City High School graduate, said he has had many different experiences throughout his lifetime.



Gary Jones

“I attended MSU and it really helped me a lot throughout my life. I used to be a Crop Insurance Adjuster, which was completely unrelated to working at the General Cable Corporation,” he said. “But I knew the difference between beets and corn and dry beans and soybeans.”

Now that Jones is retired, he likes to fish, golf and hunt in the fall time.

“Yeah, I like to fish... a lot and I used to be really addicted to golf, now I go about once a week,” he said. “I also have 3 motorcycles that I like to ride around.”

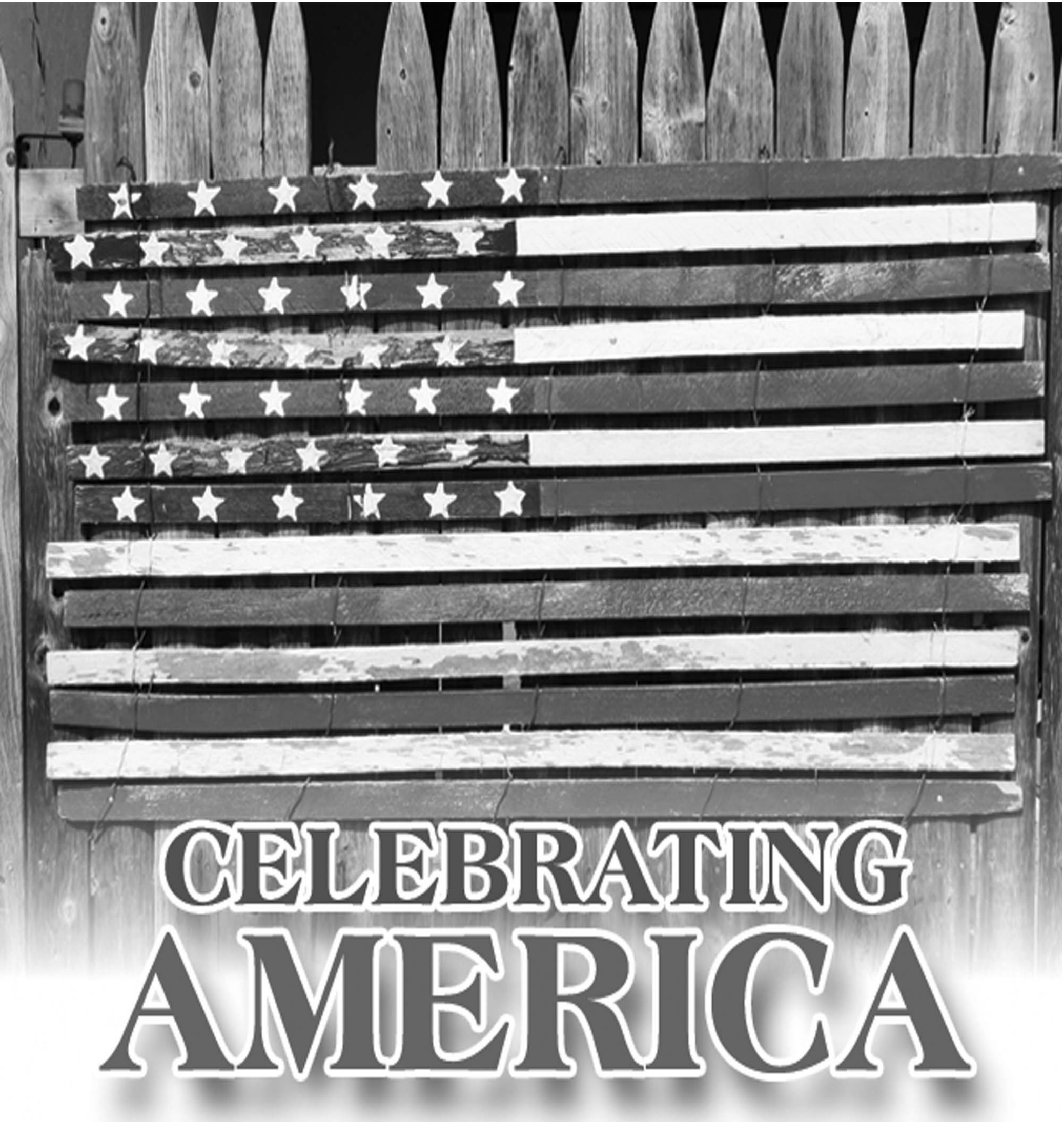
And when Jones isn’t fishing, golfing or hunting, he is spending time with his wife, Doris or his 7 pound dog, Lucy.

“She’s so small, you can just carry her around,” he said.

Jones is also a big fan of seafood.

“I love shrimp and lobster and sushi. I can’t really get it around here, but I’ll go to Red Lobster for it or something. I love seafood,” he said.

Jones has one brother, Richard, and 3 grown children; Michelle, Matt and Mike.



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Wishing You and Yours a Safe and Happy Independence Day Weekend!

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After the parade

Excel dancers ready to perform again



THE EXCEL DANCERS will perform at Baker College following the Tir Na N’Og Irish Dance group at 12:30 p.m. Jeralyn Herp, owner and instructor of the studio, said they perform every year because the people enjoy it.

Dancers from ExcelDance Studio of Art in Cass City will perform again at the Fourth of July Freedom Festival.

The dancers will walk the parade with their float that has been passed down for years and perform at Baker College following the Tir Na N’Og Irish Dance group at 12:30.

Jeralyn Herp, owner and instructor of the studio, said they perform every year because the people enjoy it.

“It’s good for the community to see the talent they have,” she said.

Herp said she isn’t sure how many girls will perform, but they will do numbers from their dance recital that was held on June 4 and 5.

“I had a lot of different dances to choose from, but I made sure not to pick any that included acrobatic tumbling because we will be on the pavement,” she said.

“But that is really what I do every year.”

Although the ExcelDance Studio does perform every year at the festival, the exposure and public performing will still benefit the dancers and their families.

It allows the families another chance to see their kids dance, and it’s good for the kids to get out there and dance again, Samantha Swiderski explained.

Swiderski, now one of the senior dancers, was dancing at the studio back when it used to be Sally’s Dance Studio.

“I’ve been dancing since I was 3 years old. I do jazz, tap, ballet...everything,” she said. “But my favorite is ballet. I’m such a perfectionist.”

Swiderski plans on attending Grand Valley State University to become a medical technologist.

“Although I’m not going to pursue a dance career, I still plan on dancing in college with their dance team or something,” she said.

For Swiderski, performing at public events like the Cass City Fourth of July Freedom Festival is fun. She has performed at the festival already 4 times in her life.

“I like dancing at the festival, it gives people who didn’t make it to our recital a chance to see what we have been working on all year,” she said.

The 17-year-old said that aside from dancing, she enjoys shopping with her friends, horseback riding and doing gymnastics.

Swiderski is only one of 160 to 190 other students, according to Herp, that attend the ExcelDance Studio in Cass City.



Samantha Swiderski

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