

CASS CITY CHRONICLE

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75 CENTS ~ 16 PAGES - 1 SUPPLEMENTS

Investigators await autopsy results in local man's death

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

The Cass City Police Department is continuing its investigation into the death of a local man who was discovered deceased in his Pine Street apartment over the weekend.

Cass City Police Chief Craig Haynes identified the man as Daryl Scott Douglas, 27, 6338 Pine Street.

According to Haynes, a local officer was dispatched to Douglas' apartment Saturday at about 7:50 p.m. to investigate a reported unattended death.

"He (Douglas) failed to show up for work Saturday morning," Haynes said, adding co-workers went to Douglas' apartment after being unable to reach him by phone.

Police called in a medical examiner/special investigator to assist at the scene. An autopsy was scheduled for Monday to determine the cause of death, Haynes said.

Car accident claims lives of two teens

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

The Sanilac County Sheriff's Department is continuing its investigation into a one-vehicle fatal traffic crash that claimed the lives of two county teens last week.

Sanilac County Sheriff Garry Biniecki identified the victims as Danielle N. Torrez, 17, of Crosswell, and Dakota A. Moore, 18, of Applegate.

According to investigators, the crash occurred shortly after 11 p.m. Tuesday on Roach Road, west of Crosswell Road in Lexington Township.

"Sanilac County Central Dispatch received a 911 call from a 20-year-old female from Lexington reporting

Please turn to page 4.

Local woman among three hurt in crash

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

Three people, including a Cass City woman, were injured in a two-vehicle traffic accident last Wednesday morning in Tuscola County's Fairgrove Township.

Tuscola County Sheriff's deputies along with an MMR Ambulance crew responded to the scene of the accident - Hinson and Gilford roads - at about 7:52, according to Undersheriff Glen Skrent.

"A vehicle that had been northbound on Hinson Road, driven by a

Please turn to page 2.



CASS CITY'S Pinktober - A Community with a Cause finale drew hundreds of area residents to the downtown area for fun and free treats Thursday night. Above, "Fairway Fairy" Amanda Kester handed out goodies in front of Fairway. At right, Chewee, a white Chihuahua, and Chile, a black Chihuahua mix, arrived dressed appropriately and seemed to be enjoying a stroll along Main Street with their owners, Lyle and Heather Severance, Cass City.



Community with a cause

Pinktober finale draws hundreds, October events raise thousands

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

Cass City's fourth annual Pinktober - A Community with a Cause observance in support of the American Cancer Society (ACS) is now in the books, and organizers say they couldn't be happier with the participation and generosity the community again exhibited to help fight a disease that has impacted so many lives.

"I think just everyone came together," commented Joey Kreeger, who headed up a small army of volunteers in charge of organizing the month-long event held each October. "It was amazing, and I hope it keeps going forward."

Last year's combined Pinktober activities generated some \$10,000, and the 2014 effort is nearing that mark - more than \$8,300 to-date, with contributions and event proceeds still coming in.

Kreeger was quick to thank everyone - dozens of volunteers along with individuals, organizations and businesses - who made this year's month-long observance another success.

"Whether you were a sponsor, a volunteer, donated an item, drew a picture, decorated a window, attended an event or simply wore pink, this month would not happen without each of us coming together and doing all these things," she said. "Not only did we have a lot of fun in October, but we also raised a lot of money."

Pinktober 2014 kicked off in conjunction with a Cass City home varsity football contest. The half-time featured the lighting of sky lanterns purchased in honor of cancer victims and survivors, according to

Please turn to page 8.

Survey says: Hills and Dales among "Top Places to Work in Healthcare"

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

Hills and Dales General Hospital has boasted documented survey results in the past revealing patient satisfaction - and then some - with the care they received at the Cass City hospital. But they're not the only ones whose experience has been a positive one.

Employees say they, too, are more than satisfied with Hills and Dales as an employer.

In fact, Hills and Dales General Hospital was recently named one of the Top 100 Best Places to Work in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare Magazine, considered the health care industry's leading source of business, policy, news, research and information.

This is the first time ever that Hills and Dales made the top 100 list. The local hospital, ranked

81st in the latest survey out of some 2,000 health care organizations that participated in the project, is just one of four healthcare groups in Michigan to make the top 100 list.

"Each year, employees of Hills and Dales complete an anonymous survey given by the Best Companies Group, who partner with Modern Healthcare. Based on the results they are ranked against other healthcare organizations who also take the survey," said Danielle Blaine, Hills and Dales' public relations director.

"The process is transparent; employees are given an in-depth survey with questions about leadership, culture, working environment, training and other factors," Blaine explained. "They are also asked to judge their overall satisfaction with their workplace." Each employee is given a secure link to complete their survey, a process that typically takes about 20-minutes and was

conducted over the course of a two-week period in June-July.

Employers, meanwhile, are asked about their company policies and practices, benefits and the demographics of their workforce. The end result is analyzed and extensively compared to other healthcare organizations who have taken the survey.

"This survey is something we have been doing for quite a few years," Hills and Dales President and CEO Jean Anthony said. "We use the results and anonymous comments to strategize about our employee satisfaction. It has helped identify the changing needs of our employees and has moved us forward as an organization."

The positive results aren't a coincidence, according to Anthony, who pointed out Hills and Dales has its own Employee Satisfaction

Please turn to page 6.



TUSCOLA COUNTY Probate Court Judge Nancy Thane was recently presented with the Honorable Robert E. Weiss Award for Excellence in Judicial Leadership for her efforts to overcome barriers for children in need of adoption. Thane is pictured above (front row, far left) with the team she assembled to focus on how best to achieve permanent outcomes in the best interest of kids and in a timely manner.

Overcoming barriers

State court honors Tuscola County judge for innovative approach to streamlining permanent adoptions

by Tom Montgomery
Editor

A Tuscola County judge has been honored with a prestigious award for her efforts to overcome barriers to timely adoptions of youngsters.

Nancy L. Thane, Tuscola County's probate judge, was recently presented with the Honorable Robert E. Weiss Award for Excellence in Judicial Leadership. Thane accepted the honor during the State Court Administrative Office's Adoption and Permanency Forum Oct. 16.

"I am honored and humbled to be recognized for the work that we are doing here in Tuscola County," Thane said. "Our focus is always on doing what's best for these children who are in need of permanency in their lives. I am so pleased to see that our efforts are getting results."

Thane's core innovation recognized by the award is her initiative in identifying a core team of lawyers, Michigan Department of Human Services per-

Please turn to page 4.



HIGH SCHOOL senior Cryssie Warren and sixth grade student Bryce Fernald are the first Cass City Red Hawk Award of Excellence recipients of the 2014-15 school year. Both students were recently honored by the Cass City Public Schools staff, administration and school board.

Warren, Fernald named first Red Hawk award winners for 2014-15

Cass City School officials honored the first recipients of the coveted Red Hawk Award of Excellence for the 2014-15 school year during a monthly board of education meeting last week.

They are high school senior Cryssie Warren, the daughter of Vicky Warren, and sixth grade student Bryce Fernald, the son of Aaron and Kate Fernald.

The Cass City Board of Education along with the district's teaching staff and administrators present the Red Hawk Award of Excellence to a student(s) from each building during the months of October, December, February and April.

Staff members nominate students based on leadership, service, outstanding behavior, excellent academic performance, being most improved or other accomplishments in or outside of school.

The nominees and their families are invited to attend a school board meeting, where school Supt. Jeff Hartel presents each recipient with a maroon ribbon and certificate, and the board members personally congratulate each winner.

At the high school this month, social studies teacher Sean Zawilinski and math instructor Susanne Forster nominated Warren for the honor.

"Over the past four years, both of us

have worked with Cryssie in teaching capacities and as a reading coach," they wrote in their nomination letter. "We watched her as a young woman who seemed angry and unhappy most of the time. She seemed to delight in making others uncomfortable, disrupt class and play the 'race card'. She made poor choices that landed her into in-school suspension. It felt as though this was a nut too hard to crack.

"Last year we both noticed that the nut had begun to crack," they continued. Cryssie began to dress not only more appropriately, but also in a manner that made her look nice. We saw more effort being put into her studies. The biggest changes were that she asked for help, spoke nicely and used manners, began to help others, and smile."

Warren also began to get involved in her church and started writing a journal to help organize her life, according to Zawilinski and Forster, who were pleased to also learn the local senior has set her sights on attending college.

"What an inspiration to other students," they said. "We both agree that Cryssie had renewed our faith in our students, mankind and why we went into teaching.

"That nut that cracked last year has sprouted a tall and strong oak sapling. We can't wait to see it grow

and spread its roots and branches."

Fernald, meanwhile, was nominated by sixth grade teacher Josh Stern, who said Fernald exemplifies all aspects of what a winner of the Red Hawk award should be.

"First and foremost, Bryce expects the best from himself," Stern wrote in his nomination letter. "In the short time he has been in my classroom this year, I see the effort that he puts into learning on a daily basis and the high expectations that Bryce sets for himself.

"Academically, Bryce is near the top of the class and, because he is willing to work hard, he will stay on top," Stern said. "(He) is a leader among the sixth graders at Cass City Elementary. Other students look to Bryce for ideas, answers and how to behave. Bryce came up with some great ideas for the homecoming video that was made at the elementary school, and the class supported his ideas with enthusiasm.

"Bryce has a great sense of humor that allows him to be friendly with and include all students," Stern added. "Bryce participates in (athletics), so he stays very busy with extra-curricular activities while still keeping his grades high. I look forward to watching him achieve success through his year in sixth grade and beyond."

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Hills and Dales makes top 100 list

Continued from page one.

Committee that meets separately from the hospital's senior administration team, but also works closely with administration to examine and discuss possible changes that lead to an improved situation for both employees and patients.

"Making the Top 100 list this year proves that we are achieving our goals and that feels really good," Anthony added. "We want our employees to love their job and enjoy coming to work every day. This survey is a testament to the hard work each person has done to bring us to where we are today."

Dr. Donald H. Robbins Jr., M.D., echoed Anthony's sentiments.

"As chief of staff, I know and see the importance of employee satisfaction every day; it impacts the experience our patients have," he said.

"Compared to when I came to Cass City three years ago, we have made numerous improvements, and I think we are in a very good position to maintain our hospital," Robbins added. "The medical environment is extremely competitive. Through the decisions made by our board of trustees as well as a very competent administration, our medical staff has been allowed to expand. They have encouraged and created an extremely comfortable environment in which to work.

"If we as medical providers can translate this positive philosophy to the community, then we will have accomplished our goal," he said. "This work experience has been the most rewarding career choice I could have made."

Dale Fritz, the hospital's director of facilities, also said he's also pleased with the survey results. "As the chairperson for the Employee Satisfaction Committee, it is very exciting to see our hospital make the top 100 list," he said. "We have been diligent in maintaining a culture of teamwork, positive attitudes and fun while providing top-notch patient care. It's rewarding to see a few of

the changes we've implemented over the past few years make an impact on the overall satisfaction of employees.

Fritz added, "This organization cares about our employees and these results reiterate our commitment to them."

That commitment was recognized in 2013 by the Studer Group, a nationwide outcome-based health care performance firm that awarded Hills and Dales with an "Excellence in Patient Care" award based on exemplary "patients always received help as soon as they wanted" results from patient surveys completed the same year. The honor placed the hospital in the top ranks of more than

850 U.S. health care organizations that partner with the Studer Group to achieve, sustain and accelerate their clinical, operational and financial performance.

Combined with state-of-the-art diagnostic and other equipment, the ability to access the latest in medicine-related consulting resources, and the recent launching of its new electronic medical records system, Hills and Dales has positioned itself to be a leader in health care in the Thumb, according to Anthony.

"The happier the employees, the better the patient care and the better the patient outcome," she said. "We're doing the right things to put the processes in place, and it's a pretty nice place to work, too."

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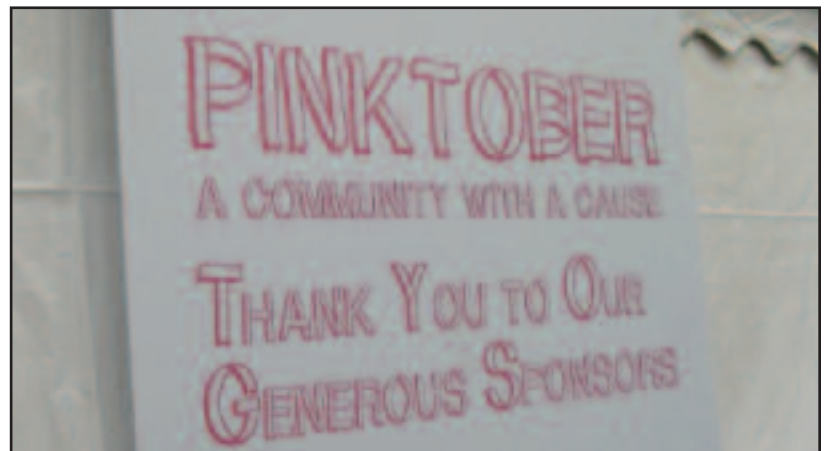
JOEY KREEGER, coordinator of Cass City's annual Pinktober – A Community with a Cause observance, hands out treats during Thursday night's finale celebration.



THE POPULAR Pinktober Talent Show returned again this year in conjunction with the Cass City Pinktober finale celebration. Pictured above, belting out her rendition of "Let it Go", is Ilana Blattner, 16, a junior at Cass City High School.



LIAM FIELDS, who is closing in on his second birthday, was dressed up as a Wizard of Oz Monkey and accompanied by his mom, Stacey Fields of Cass City.



CASS CITY Chronicle Advertising Sales Director Krysta Boyce (seated) was busy at the Chronicle booth, welcoming visitors and giving away more than 300 cupcakes, 200 bottles of water, 50 rubber ducks, dozens of pink necklaces and bracelets, and some 500 pieces of candy.

Pinktober raises thousands

Continued from page one.

Kreeger, who reported lantern sales netted \$635 which, along with \$2,600 raised during the Pretty in Pink Girls' Night Out Auction will go to the Love for Lexi Paying it Forward project to benefit local youngsters diagnosed with cancer. The Girls' Night Out raised another \$1,340 in ticket sales.

Kreeger, who noted Cass City Oil and Gas won the 2014 window decorating contest, said the moving Pinktober pink toilet fundraiser generated \$316, with residents/businesses each paying a minimum \$20 to have the interesting decoration moved from their lawn or business to that of the next "victim".

In addition, Christine Anthony, owner of Captured By Christine Photography in Cass City, again organized her Pinktober Cutest Kids Contest. Cute kid photos were posted around downtown, and residents were invited to "vote" for their favorite by donating money in an accompanying canister. The results were not available at press time this week.

The popular "5K Glow Ta Ta Trot", meanwhile, generated nearly \$2,140 in contributions, and the AYSO auction brought in more than \$240.

Another Pinktober fundraiser – the second annual Elkland Township Cemetery Walk – was among the first Pinktober fundraisers this year, generating about \$1,050, all donated to the ACS on behalf of the community.

Thursday's finale festivities, including Pink-or-Treat in the Street, again drew participation from more than three dozen businesses and other vendors who were on hand to distribute free treats and information downtown. Hundreds of youngsters and parents took part, many arriving in costume.

Later in the day, the annual Cass City's Got Talent show took the stage at Rotary Park, but attendance suffered as a result of cold, wet weather. Kevin Estrella claimed this year's talent crown, competing against acts featuring Ilana Blattner, Anna Burke, Victoria Cumper and Taylor Cumper.

Kreeger spearheaded as well as played a key role in organizing Cass City's first Pinktober celebration. She explained the idea grew, in part, out of a desire to launch some sort of community-wide activity in the fall. She was also familiar with American Cancer Society programs that tied in with her business at the time – VIP Salon – such as donating wigs for cancer patients and providing free breast cancer screenings for women who can't afford them.

From there, she said, "It just all came together." "Obviously, this is about awareness – (for women) to get checked. That's the main thing," Kreeger point out, adding surviving cancer depends on early detection. "If you've got something, you've got to take care of yourself."

As for Pinktober, Kreeger indicated this year's observance met most expectations and served as another example of the Cass City community's dedication to doing more than just talking about cancer.

"This month I believe we did raise awareness and show support," she said. "And we raised funds to find a cure."



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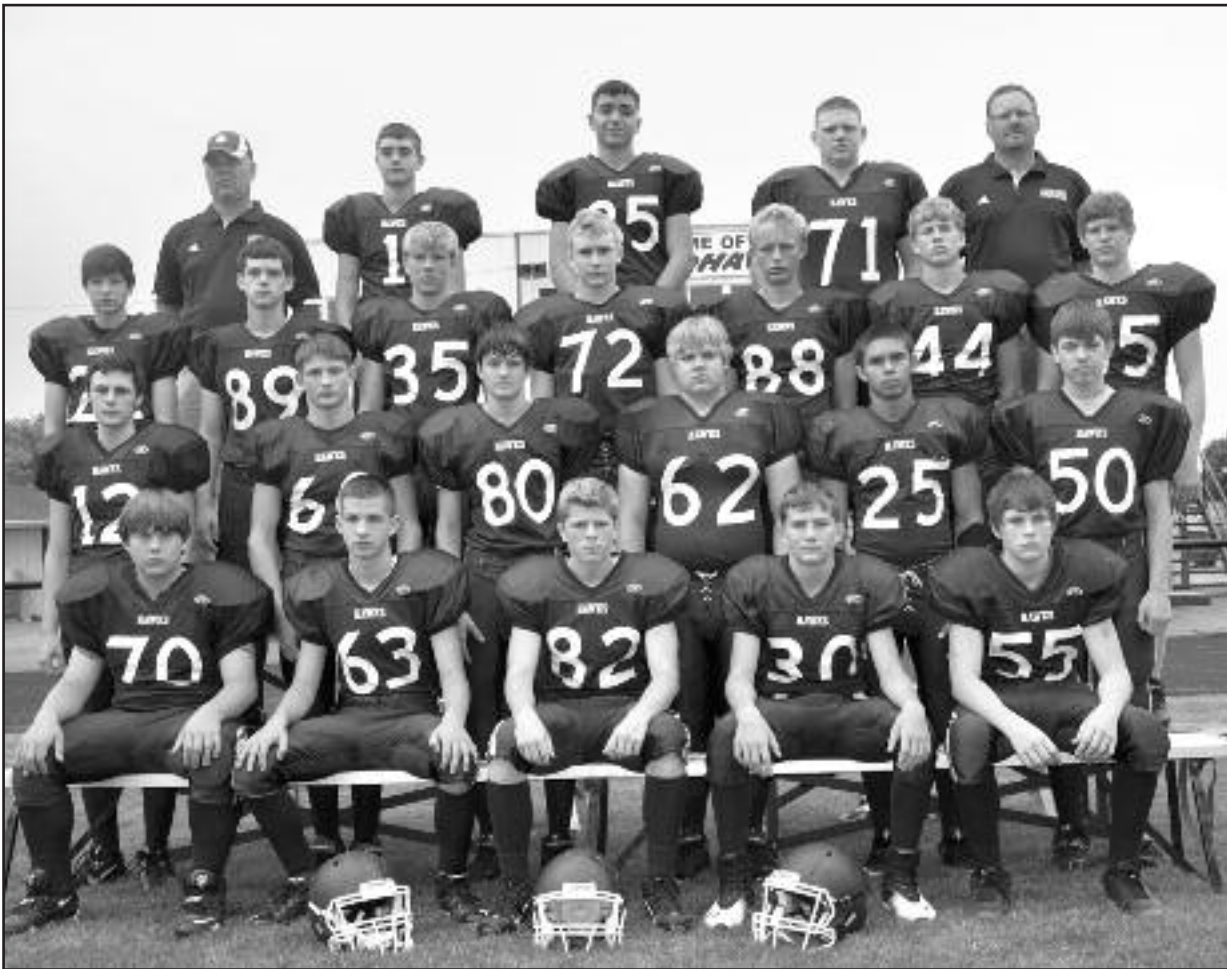
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THE 2014 CASS City junior varsity football team outscored their opponents 348-88 en route to an undefeated season. They are: (front, l-r) Connor Sines, Bryce Bukoski, Adam Michalski, Wyatt Dickson, Mike Ziegler (second row) Chase Denniston, Darren Dickson, Seth Osentoski, Alex Naegele, Shaede Perzanowski, Eric Peters (third row) Brendan Hamilton, Dustin Powell, Darren Miller, Austin Hull, Gene Hulburt, Brad Hacker, Garrett Deitering (back row) Coach Tavis Osentoski, Hunter Vaughan, Cole Chippi, Brady Warford and Coach Josh Stern. Not pictured is Lawson Alberts.

DNR offers bow hunting safety tips

Michigan's bow hunting season opened Oct. 1, and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conservation officers are sharing tips for a safe bow hunting experience.

"Bow hunting is a popular pastime in Michigan and we want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable hunting season," said Sgt. Tom Wanless, supervisor of the DNR's hunter education program. "There are some common-sense safety tips every hunter should review before heading to the woods."

The top safety tips for bow hunting are:

- *Before you go out, inspect equipment, including your tree stand. If anything is worn, frayed, cracked or peeling, replace it or get it fixed. If using a compound bow or crossbow, make sure the cables and pulleys are in good working order.
- *When sharpening broadheads, be careful and take your time.

- *Practice tree-stand safety. Nearly every year, a Michigan hunter is killed or seriously injured because he or she fell out of a tree stand. The DNR recommends using a full-body safety harness to get into and out of your tree stand.
- *If using a tree stand, always use a haul line to raise and lower your gear.
- *Keep arrows in the quiver until you are ready to use them. A common injury is to stab or injure yourself or a hunting companion while carrying arrows in your hand or nocked on your bow.
- *Obtain permission from a landowner before hunting on his or her land, or using their land to access public land.
- *Never take a shot at a deer that is beyond the maximum effective range at which you are comfortable shooting.
- *If you are successful, field dress

your deer and cool its meat immediately. Michigan's unpredictable weather means we sometimes have warm October days. Warm temperatures can cause the meat to spoil quickly.

*When heading out to the woods, make sure you tell someone reliable where you are going and what time to expect you back. This information is valuable in helping conservation officers or sheriff's deputies to find you if you are lost.

Also, think about carrying a cell phone, a compass, a flashlight and other small safety items when in the woods.

For more information about Michigan's conservation officers, go to www.michigan.gov/conservationofficers. For more information about hunting in Michigan, go to www.michigan.gov/hunting.

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Schneeberger's ATHLETE of the WEEK

Congratulations to this week's Schneeberger's Athlete of the Week award winner, Mason Erla.

The junior quarterback came up large in Friday's pre-district victory over Marlette and Cass City will need another outstanding performance from the 6' 5" signal caller this week against Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port to be successful as the Red Hawks seek the first gridiron district crown in school history. On offense, Erla was flawless, handling each snap in brutal conditions that included a driving north wind with rain and snow all night long. On defense, Erla recorded a team-best 9 tackles.



Mason is the son of Michelle and Chuck Erla.

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Brown City	30-13
Memphis	50-14
Harbor Beach	6-42
Lakers	12-16
Bad Axe	40-50
Vassar	26-21
Reese	18-6
USA	50-6
Caro	Forfeit
Marlette	14-8



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EPBP Lakers (10-0)

Capac	26-7
Brown City	34-7
Ubyly	36-22
Cass City	16-12
Vassar	38-14
USA	36-8
Bad Axe	32-30
Reese	30-0
Beal City	14-13
Sandusky	18-0



Mason Erla



Sawyer Cuthrell



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Nick Perry



Ethan Hulburt



Joseph Kampo



Jose Nazario

THE 2014 Cass City varsity playoff roster also includes sophomores Brad Hacker, Seth Osentoski, Chris Denniston, Shaede Perzanowski, Darrin Miller, Darrin Dickson, Brady Warford, Alex Naegele and Cole Chippi.

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Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. The latter is in case it is necessary to call for verification, but won't be used in the newspaper. Names will be withheld from publication upon request, for an adequate reason. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

We will not publish thank you letters of a specific nature, for instance, from a club thanking merchants who donated prizes for a raffle.

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ATTENTION - Cass City Class of 1955, it's that time again. Our 60th reunion will be on August 8, 2015. Mark your calendars. Info will follow this coming spring. See you there. Fox. 5-11-5-2

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A MUST SEE!!!
 2 Unit rental home. Great investment property. Both apartments are 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, living room and kitchen, lower level has laundry hook up area and a huge country kitchen. New carpeting and paint, ready to move in and keep the upper level rented for income. Each unit has separate electric and gas meters. Call today to set appointment to see. CC-697

SOLD!!!
 Cute and cozy, this 3 bedroom bungalow needs you to make an appointment and come see it. So many updates have been done, roof, windows, plumbing, electric, furnace and AC, hot water heater, kitchen cabinets, and flooring. Yard is half an acre and has a barn for your storage needs. This is a really adorable home and might be exactly what you are looking for. CCT-519

REDUCED!!!
 3 unit apartment building. 1 unit has 3 bedrooms, 2 baths. The other 2 are 1 bedroom, 1 bath units. There is a fireplace in each of the 1 bedroom units. Common laundry area with one washer and dryer to accommodate all 3 units. Most appliances are still in the apartments. The units are clean and ready for tenants. CO-385

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SOLD!!!
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Great starter or retirement home! Well maintained 2 bedroom Ranch on a nicely landscaped lot. Home features many upgrades including new flooring, light fixtures and bath with walk-in tub. Owen-Gage schools. TO774

Deer crossing. Lots of frontage with the road and the two tractors. 40 wooded acres with a sandy knoll opening in front for your camp. Driveway and electric on property. A643

Condo time and living is easy. No grass to mow, no snow to plow. This home looks out to the woods for a great view. Vaulted ceilings, 3 baths, finished walk out. You can look today, immediate possession. TCC1694

Letters to the Editor

Will Cass City end up being the next Detroit?

Continued from page 3.

services for improvements at the wastewater treatment plant in the amount not to exceed \$977,000 and to authorize the village manager to execute the URS agreement.”

This motion was unanimously passed. I would like to know why this liability approved in October 2013 has never shown up on any of the financial statements that are available to the public. Please explain how this made it through any audit. Isn't this at least misinforma-

tion? Also, from other village council meetings, two law firms were hired to represent the village, so how much has this cost, and has the village reaped any benefit from spending what appears to be \$1 million? From an article in the Chronicle, it would appear the village seems happy they don't have to pay their bills, like the \$740,000 bill which is over a year old. Is this the face we want Cass City to have – someone that will run up high bills and then gloats about not paying them?

Concerning the village manager, I would like to know why he turned over more of his duties to the “special project manager”.

First, what management experience does the “special project manager” have? Is he qualified to take the place of the village manager at the planning commission meetings or any of the other duties he has been given? How much are we paying the village manager to come into work after 10 a.m., have lunch around noon, and be doubtful if he will return before 2 or 3 in the afternoon? Now, it seems he has turned over a lot of his management duties to others who may not even be qualified!

From the last somewhat clear financials that were provided to the citizens at a village council meeting, it is shameful how much money is spent on poor management.

Most seniors have to face the financial reality of making a choice of flushing their toilets on a regular basis or buying much needed medicine because their taxes, water and sewer bills are too high.

This type of management has severely lowered the quality of life for all of us. Proof of this would be evident in the recent council vote for the purchase of a new boiler for the municipal building. While I agree that a new boiler may be necessary, I do not agree that a much more expensive company from Saginaw should have been chosen as the winning bidder. Per the council minutes reported in the Chronicle, three bids were reviewed – they were \$12,000, \$28,000 and \$40,000. It was reported that the council voted on the second bid for \$28,000. The reason was that it was the same BTU rating as the present boiler.

It is a fact that today's heating units are much more efficient and do not need as high of BTU ratings as the old furnaces. In this case the \$12,000 price would have been the proper one to accept. For that matter, since the old boiler seems to be working, why was a new expensive one needed? It appears we may owe over \$1 million for charges that the council has approved at the village manager's request already.

If all liabilities against the village were paid now, does the village have enough cash to meet all of its unpaid liabilities passed by the village over the past two years? Surely the village council would never agree to sell junk bonds to cover bad debt. Isn't this how Detroit solves its problems? Will we head down the same path as Detroit? Cass City becomes the Little Detroit?

After all, we can see what happened to Detroit, let's not start sliding down that slippery slope.

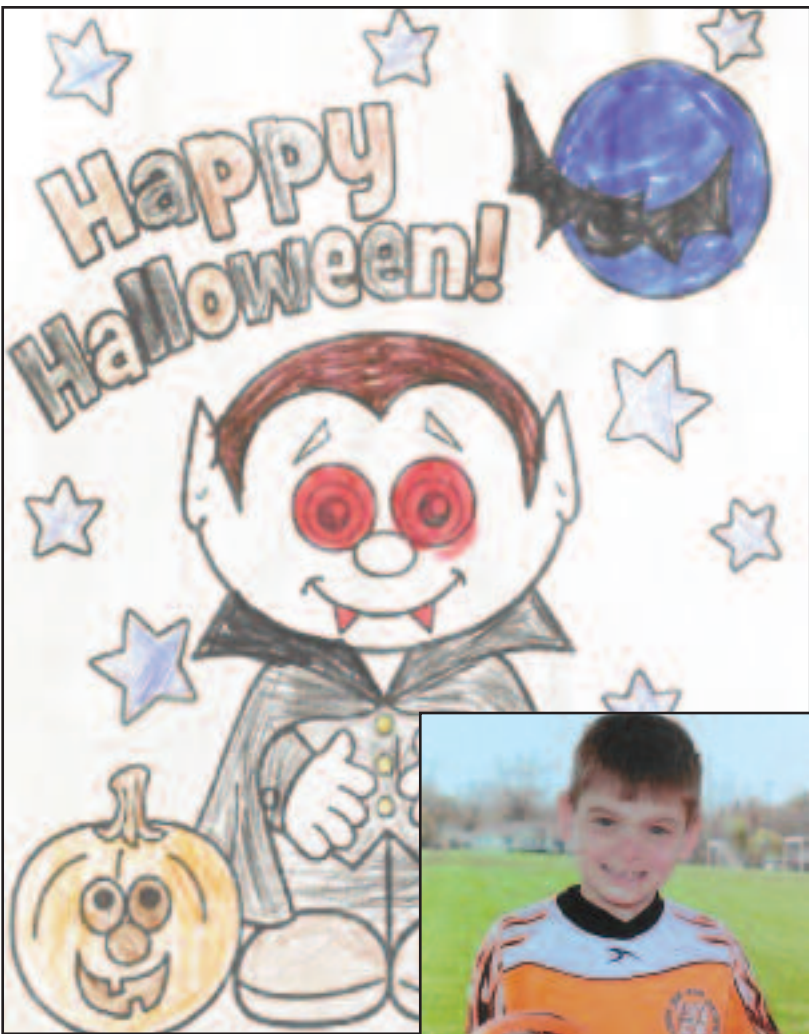
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