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# CASS CITY CHRONICLE

Complete coverage of the Cass City community and surrounding areas since 1899

VOLUME 114, NUMBER 7

CASS CITY, MICHIGAN - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020

.75 CENTS - 10 PAGES

## Fighting COVID-19

### Mini-ventilator next on Walbro engineers' list of contributions

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

Walbro LLC in Cass City is in the process of taking on a new challenge in the battle against COVID-19 – this time involving the engineering of emergency equipment designed to help tackle the shortage of ventilators available to hospitals across the country.

Walbro officials say they hope their efforts will ease anxiety among health care workers and patients alike who fear there won't be enough of the life-saving equipment to go around.

Brad Roche, engineering manager for Walbro's New Product Development Team, explained Walbro is adapting the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) E-Vent project with the goal of producing high volumes of what has been named the Walbro Mini-Ventilation Machine (MVM) to assist in the continued fight against the effects of COVID-19 and associated ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome).

"They (MIT) are working on a project like this. We're just taking it into production," noted Roche, who said the Walbro unit integrates a piece of medical equipment already widely in use — the bag valve mask, sometimes known by the name Ambu bag or generically as a manual resuscitator or "self-inflating bag", which is a hand-held device commonly used to provide positive pressure ventilation to patients who are not breathing or not breathing adequately.

Walbro engineers have created a mini-ventilator that replaces a human squeezing the manual resuscitation bag with a machine that provides the same action as it pumps air into the lungs, Roche said, adding an accompanying control unit is used to adjust settings related to respiration rate (number of breaths per minute), the amount of oxygen pumped into the lungs, etc.

The unit is intended for temporary, emergency use, Roche said.

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### Information coming on rules and testing

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Friday she plans to release more information this week regarding her plans to ease restrictions implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Michigan.

Whitmer says she's looking to "relax" some of her stay-at-home executive order restrictions May 1 based on information related to that state's regions, economic sectors, and the safety of employees and customers.

At the same time, she cautioned that some factors — including the status of testing — continue to change rapidly and will shape any future decisions. Tracing, sustained decreases in the number of cases and hospital capacity will also impact restrictions, she noted.

"I think the most important aspect is making sure that the best minds in medicine in our state are informing every decision that we make," Whitmer said.

"Every one of us wants to return to some semblance of normalcy. The fact of the matter is that the worst thing we could do is not be mindful of the public health implications and act in a manner that creates a second wave of COVID-19."

In the Thumb, Ann Hepfer, health officer for the Tuscola and Huron county health departments, says efforts are underway to further expand testing locally.

"The Tuscola County Health Department is working with Great Lakes Bay Health Care Center to expand testing to the county starting the Please turn to page 5.

### Fiery traffic crash under investigation

Troopers from the Michigan State Police post in Caro are continuing their investigation into a one-vehicle traffic crash that claimed the life of the lone occupant early last week.

According to reports, troopers were dispatched to the scene of the accident — the intersection of Maple Grove and Mayville roads in Tuscola County's Dayton Township — at about 10 p.m. Monday.

When they arrived, officers found a 1999 Pontiac Grand Prix engulfed in flames.

The Mayville Fire Department was also on hand and extinguished the fire.

Troopers did not release the name of the victim, who was pronounced dead at the scene.



**COME NEXT summer, Patricia Donovan-Gray will be retired after serving in the Tuscola County Treasurer's Office for 48 years, and she'll be ready to head out on the highway with her husband, Mark.**

### Tuscola County treasurer ready for the open road

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

An icon of Tuscola County government will soon be retiring. Treasurer Patricia Donovan-Gray won't be seeking re-election because she plans to close the books on her local government career after serving the county for more than four decades.

Gray became a part-time county employee in the treasurer's office in 1972 when she was just 17 years old.

As it turned out, investing in a teenager's ability to handle responsibility years ago paid significant dividends for the county as well as its residents.

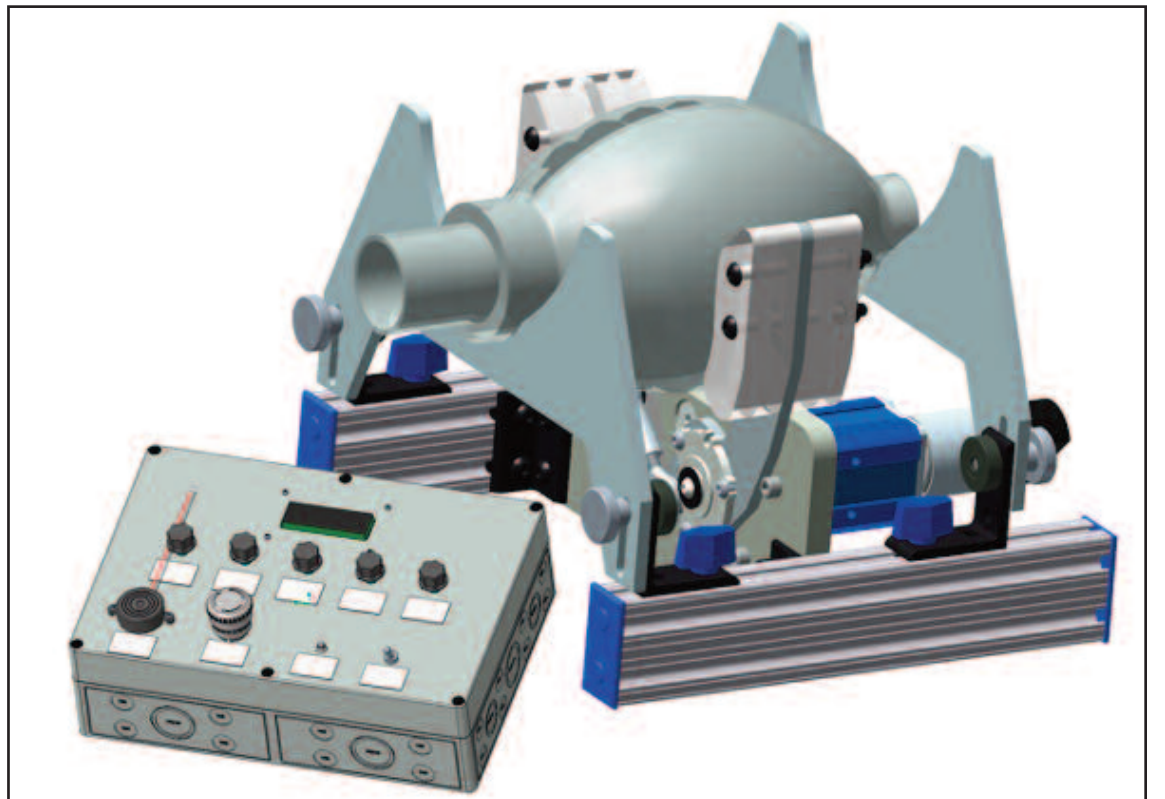
According to Gray, she was enjoying herself at the Tuscola County Fair when her grandfather told her about the job in the treasurer's office, and he suggested that she interview for it.

She did, was hired and the rest is history — actually, 48-years of history in the county treasurer's office.

Donovan-Gray was still a "teenybopper" in October 1972 when she was hired in the treasurer's office full-time after Sandra Singer left to fill a job opening in district court.

"I'm ready to retire now," Donovan Gray commented, noting she has

Please turn to page 5.



**THE TEAM at Walbro has designed a "mini-ventilator" that replaces a human squeezing a manual resuscitation bag with a machine that provides the same action as it pumps air into the lungs. An accompanying control unit, meanwhile, is used to adjust settings related to respiration rate (number of breaths per minute), the amount of oxygen pumped into the lungs, etc.**

### State hospital construction still on

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

After more than three years of wrangling, construction of the long-awaited new state psychiatric hospital near Caro in Tuscola County's Indianfields Township is supposed to be a go.

Tuscola County Commissioner Kim Vaughan said a deal is in the works to provide water to the new hospital.

"A water deal has been squared away, so it's looking good to go ahead," said Vaughan, noting there are currently 90 patients at the hospital along with about 430 workers.

The dispute between Indianfields Township and the city of Caro over paying for extending municipal water to the center was among the issues holding up the hospital project.

Local officials are cautiously optimistic this time that the hospital will be built.

A new psychiatric hospital was in the works in 2017, and there was even a groundbreaking for the project, with the Michigan Legislature having already signed off on funding the new facility in Caro. But just as construction was

to have started, newly-elected Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon halted the project and hired a consulting firm to review it.

Had that project moved forward at that time, it would have been

completed in 2021.

Waffling over the need, size and other issues of a new facility delayed the much-needed project for another few years.

"The expectation — as of March — was that we would have shown Please turn to page 8.

### McKenney running for sheriff in Sanilac County

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

Veteran Sanilac County Sheriff's Department Officer Steve McKenney recently announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for sheriff during the Tuesday, Aug. 4, primary election.

McKenney has served with the sheriff's department for 23 years.

He began his tenure with the department in the corrections division, later moving to the uniformed services division, where he worked as a road patrol deputy, as a drug unit investigator and, after being promoted to ser-

geant, as a unit supervisor for the Sanilac County Drug Task Force.

He currently works in the sheriff's department's detective bureau.

McKenney's other contributions to local law enforcement include bringing active shooter (ALICE)



Steve McKenney

Please turn to page 4.

# Obituaries

## Kristin M. Gamet

Kris Leenhouts-Gamet passed away Sunday, April 12, 2020 at Rose Arbor Hospice in Kalamazoo. She was born July 2, 1949 in Detroit, to Marian Deisler. In November of 1949 she was adopted by Harold and Alice (Mohan) Leenhouts and raised in Battle Creek.

She was a 1967 graduate of Battle Creek Central High School. Surviving are her sons, Pete (Kathy) Gamet of Deford, John (Michael) Gamet of Three Rivers and Andrew (Tracy) Gamet of Otsego; three brothers, Mike (Linda) Leenhouts of Battle Creek, Andrew (Becky) Hildebrand of Owosso and John Jackson of Supula, OK; nine grandchildren, Amber, Danielle, Krystal, Brittany, Joshua, Jacob, Courtney, AJ and Allan; four great-grandchildren, Christian, Elijah, Auden and Emerson and one due in September and six who claimed her as their grandmother.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Alice Leenhouts; birth mother, Marian Deisler Johnson; birth father, Melvin Jackson, brothers, Robert Jackson, Charles Jackson; sister, Cora Jackson; infant daughter, Heather Gamet and her ex-husband, Garry Gamet.

According to her wishes, cremation has taken place.

A memorial service will take place at a later time.

Contributions in memory of Kris may be made to her family for expenses.



## Ruth Guc

Ruth Lucille Guc, 93, of Cass City, died peacefully Saturday, April 18, 2020 in McLaren Bay Region, Bay City.

Sadly, due to Covid 19 restrictions on hospital visitation, her family was physically unable to be with her but instead sustained her with their constant prayers.

She was born May 7, 1926 in Killbuck, OH to Ulay and Geneva (Neville) Moody.

She married John P. Guc, Jr. September 24, 1949. They were married for forty-eight years until his death in December of 1997.

Ruth graduated from Caro High School. She had many interests which included sewing, baking, reading and caring for her flowers. Most importantly, many years ago, her husband John expressed it best when he said that he loved and appreciated her so much. He told his children what a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother she was. Above all, Ruth loved the time spent with her large family and the many beautiful family-filled Sunday gatherings. When she became the matriarch of her family, she gave selflessly of her time, patience and most of all her love. As a result, her family themselves were truly blessed.

Her family is humbly thankful to the nursing staff and forever grateful for the years of loving care given by Dr. J. Joseph, Dr. S. Dandamudi and Dr. T. Cherwin.

Ruth is survived by her children: Susan Guc of Bay City, Sheila (Kim) Fritz of North Branch, Sheryl (Steve) Shaw of Decker, Jack (Christina) Guc of Cass City, Sandy (Randy) Kelley of Cass City and James (Caren) Guc of Cass City; grandchildren: Gary (Tris) Fritz, Brian (Jessica) Fritz, Mark (Holly) Shaw, Lisa (Jason) Miller, Brent (Megan) Shaw, Sara Eisinger, Eli (Alyssa) Kelley, Nicole (fiancé, Brandon Horne) Kelley, Kirsten Guc and Hudson Guc; twelve great-grandchildren; sister, Louise Long and sister-in-law, Agathe Moody.

She was preceded in death by her husband, John; grandson, John Guc IV; brother, George Moody; sister-in-law, Julie Witkovsky; and brother-in-law, Stephen Guc.

A private family graveside service will be held at her grave in Novesta Township Cemetery at a later date. Memorials may be made to Rawson Memorial District Library of Cass City.

Family and friends may share memories, prayers and photos with the family at [www.kranzfuneralhome.com](http://www.kranzfuneralhome.com). Arrangements were made by Kranz Funeral Home of Cass City.



## Rose Ann Stewart

Ms. Rose Ann Stewart died peacefully, surrounded by family in Cass City, at the age of 68.

Rose Ann is survived by her son, Sean and daughter-in-law, Crystal, of Wayne; sister Alicia Moskal, of Caro; and partner, Donald Dorsch of Owendale.

Rose Ann was born August 27, 1951 in Detroit to the late John and Rose Moskal.

Rose Ann attended St. Hedwig Schools (Detroit) K through 12, graduating in 1969, she was a proud Knight and Alumni.

After spending the majority of her life in Metro Detroit, she retired to Owendale, with her loving partner Don for the past 10 years. Rose Ann was devoted to helping people and creating happiness for others. The lives she touched and the impact she made are evident through the memories of family and friends. Rose Ann's impression on others and her way of living followed one of her favorite sayings: "Live, Love, Laugh."

A celebration of Rose Ann's life will be determined at a later date.

Condolences may be shared at [www.ChampagneFuneralChapel.com](http://www.ChampagneFuneralChapel.com)



## Tanya Lee Warner

Tanya Lee Warner, 61, of Deford, died following a brief illness Saturday, April 18, 2020 in Covenant Health Care System, Cooper Campus, Saginaw.

She was born August 27, 1958 in Cass City to Earl Ray and Lois Louise (Lowe) Whittaker.

She married Jeffery Lynn Warner September 30, 1977 in Riverside Church of God, Cass City.

Tanya graduated from Cass City High School in 1977. She worked for Walbro Corporation in Cass City for more than ten years and later for the Tuscola County Medical Care Facility in Caro.

Tanya worked as a housekeeper there for ten years, retiring in 2018. She enjoyed outdoor activities such as camping in Sebawaing and fishing for walleye with Jeff. Tanya had a green thumb and this was evident in the care and beauty of her flower and vegetable gardens. She was skilled at riding and training horses. Tanya loved nothing more than her grandchildren and especially time spent making memories playing outdoors.

Tanya is survived by her husband, Jeff; daughter, Amanda Wilding of Deford; son, Tyler (Kathleen) Warner of Deford; grandchildren: Jayce, Brody and Lilly; brothers, Alfred (Joyce) Whittaker of Monroe and Luke Whittaker of Cass City; sisters: Helen (Norman) Lucier of Myrtle Beach, SC and Marilyn Walsh of Clermont, FL; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters: toddler, Diana Lynn Whittaker and Linda Squires.

Visitation will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 22, in Kranz Funeral Home, Cass City.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 22, in Kranz Funeral Home, Cass City with her brother, Bishop Alfred Whittaker of Victory Temple Church of God, Erie, officiating.

Due to the current health concerns and the executive order, social distancing and its gathering limitations of 10 people will be observed.

Interment will be in Novesta Township Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Family and friends may share memories, prayers and photos with the family at [www.kranzfuneralhome.com](http://www.kranzfuneralhome.com). Arrangements were made by Kranz Funeral Home of Cass City.



## ELKLAND TOWNSHIP CEMETERY Rules and Regulations

Planting of trees or shrubs is prohibited unless permission is given by sexton.

No decorative stones around markers or monuments.

One arrangement per grave site.

All flowers must be in containers.

All glass jars or bottles used for arrangements are prohibited.

Monuments and markers are to be installed by sexton.

All lots will be cleaned off on April 1st, and remain clean until May 1st.

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# In Our OPINION...

Clarke Haire  
Publisher

Tom Montgomery  
Editor

## Historical project focus on pandemic

*The COVID-19 pandemic is certain to remain fresh in our minds for many months to come, but what will we remember in five years? How about 15 years down the road?*

*How residents will remember this life-changing health crisis is the focus of a Michigan history initiative designed to capture individual COVID-19 experiences.*

*Michigan History Center officials recently announced the new effort, which gives residents the opportunity to share stories that reflect their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, for the benefit of future generations.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic is a critical moment in history, and the Michigan History Center is committed to documenting – through objects, archival materials, stories and experiences from diverse Michiganders – how the coronavirus is affecting Michigan residents in the workplace, at home, in communities and in many other settings.*

*The first phase of the three-phase collecting initiative is active right now. It offers a web-based platform for people to share and donate photos, videos and audio files that document their daily lives during this emergency, all of which will be considered for preservation in the Archives of Michigan's collections.*

*The following questions can provide a starting point in choosing what to share:*

*\*How are you communicating with family, friends and colleagues?*

*\*Have certain places become more important to you?*

*\*What is something that has brought you unexpected joy?*

*\*What steps have you taken to protect your health and the health of others?*

*"Archives and museums preserve and share the real stuff of the past, but we also have an obligation to collect and preserve the documents, images and objects that will help future residents understand our present," said Sandra Clark, Michigan History Center director.*

*"There is no question that the coronavirus emergency that is so deeply affecting all our lives is a significant history-making time. That's why the Michigan History Center is launching this collecting project now," Clark said. "We hope, too, that the shared experiences will strengthen our state's sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation."*

*The second phase is collecting three-dimensional objects and documents related to the coronavirus emergency for the Michigan History Museum system's collections.*

*In keeping with the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order, this phase will begin with a call to the public to help identify items and move to physically gathering them once it is safe to do so.*

*The third phase involves long-term collecting of stories, through oral history and StoryCorps interviews, memoirs and other materials that are created during the reflection period after an immediate crisis. These materials will be preserved in both the museum and archival collections.*

*Michigan residents can learn more about the initiative at Michigan.gov/MHCStories.*

## Drier Humor

by Mary Drier

Pussywillows and creamer vases



Back in the day, journalists used to have fans, or I guess you could say "groupies".

There were about six people who regularly stopped by the offices where I worked back when I was a staff writer. They would stop in to say "hello", and some to tell me how much they liked a column, article or photo that had been in the paper.

Some would stop in to check on me to see if I was okay after I had dealt with a health issue, and such.

And, there was an elderly Cass City woman who brought me a gift each year. I didn't need a calendar to know when spring arrived.

Although most assumed the lady had limited funds, she was rather well-off because of frugal living and careful money management.

Only a few people seem to understand that concept nowadays.

Anyway, this elderly Cass City lady would bring me a bouquet of pussy willow buds in a plastic vase that was an empty coffee creamer.

To most of my fellow workers, her gift didn't seem like much, but I really appreciated her effort. I don't think the young whippersnappers realized that elderly lady had to crawl up and down a ditch bank to get the twigs that had budding pussy willows.

And, there were times she included baby cattails in the bouquet, which also required this lady to climb up and down ditches. And, she saved the empty coffee-creamer container to use as a vase for my gift.

Although it may sound trite, it really is the thought that counts.

Her gift reminded me of my mother and grandmother, which was the best gift of all. My mother and I would pick a bouquet of pussy willows for grandma each year. While Grams would arrange them in a vase, she would tell me about a legend.

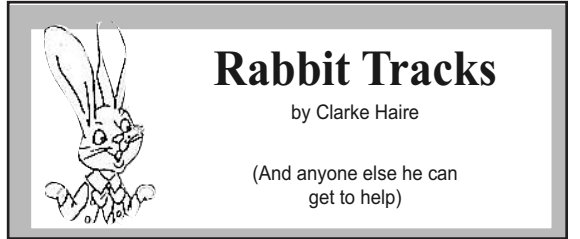
According to the legend, some kittens fell in a pond when they were chasing butterflies, and were drowning. The willows that grew along the pond were moved by the kittens' cries for help, so they bent their branches into the water for the kittens to grab and climb safely to shore.

Because of that, each spring since then willows sprout little fur-like buds where the little kittens clung.

Grams pointed out the legend taught some life lessons, such as not to focus on chasing pretty things to the point of ignoring the world around you, and that reaching out to help others makes the world a better

place.

And, even if the effort to reach out comes in an empty coffee-cream container as a vase, and the only cost of the gift was time and thoughtfulness.



### Rabbit Tracks

by Clarke Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

Read this story by Megan Landon, For MSUSpartans.com, and felt it was worthy of sharing:

When Michigan State baseball right-handed pitcher Mason Erla stepped onto the mound against Troy back on March 6, in Pensacola, Florida, he had no idea it would be for the last time this season. He went seven innings, striking out a career-high 12 and lowering his ERA to 1.04 after nearly six innings without a hit.

Erla, a redshirt junior, was feeling strong. And then, the season ended, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading the Big Ten and then the NCAA, cancel the rest of the season. Still, Erla can take solace in a strong 2020 season. He finished 2-0, with 42 strikeouts, in a team-high 26 innings pitched. He finished second in the Big Ten and tied for 10th in the NCAA in strikeouts, among several other top 10 statistical marks in the Big Ten and top 50 in the NCAA. He credits his increased his velocity, which came from deliberate workouts last summer. He did not play in a summer league, trying to up his arm strength. It worked, as his velocity increased to 93-95 mph consistently and even touched 96 mph last fall.

"I haven't had to worry about, 'Oh is my velocity good enough,' since then my velocity has been good, so I've been able to work on my other pitches as well," said Erla, a native of Cass City, Mich. "Which has really helped in all aspects of my pitching." Erla also worked on his confidence. In the 2020 season, his approach to batters and demeanor was noticeably different on the mound. He wanted to prove that he was better than 5.49 ERA from last season. "I think the asset to me is that I'm very level-headed, so whether it's going good or bad, I typically don't show much emotion," Erla said. "This year I had more of a mindset of attacking, just kind of a cockiness, like 'I'm better than you' basically, but I wouldn't really show it, that was really more so how I felt."

Junior left-handed pitcher Jesse Heikkinen remembers Erla's quietness in his first few years at MSU. Now, Erla isn't afraid to call people out and hold them accountable. His teammates respect and look up to him because he's more outspoken, leads by example and is comfortable being the center of attention. "You know what you're going to get out of him and his natural talents are amazing, but he's so competitive that it's like a different person every Friday when he pitches, I just look up to that because it's the same thing every time," said Heikkinen, who is also Erla's roommate. "He just throws strikes, and he throws hard. It's like, 'Here it is, try and hit it.'" "And when you're that aggressive and going at guys, that puts the pressure on the hitter because you know what you're going to get — he's going to come straight at you with his best stuff and the hitter just has to try and do what they can. And a lot of times they can't do anything." MSU baseball head coach Jake Boss Jr. believes Erla showed glimpses of brilliance throughout the 2019 season. Boss recalled Erla's 9-inning shutout against Indiana State, under the lights at McLane Stadium, where the Spartans won in extra innings on April 5. He always knew Erla's potential, and this season he was able to execute it.

"He's in control. There's no question about that," Boss said. "There's no situation that's too big for him and I think for me, that as a coach really puts my mind at ease the most. I've got a lot of faith in Mason, got a lot of confidence in Mason and again, he's able to make a big pitch when he needs to and he's able to get a strikeout when he needs to, and those are two things that from my perspective that really make me feel good when he's on the mound. That again combined with the fact that there's not a situation too big for him mentally where he's going to feel too much pressure or he's going to be too nervous to handle." Along with his increase in velocity, Boss said the spin rate on Erla's fastball sets him apart from other pitchers - making it a true strikeout pitch. "Velocity is good, but there are plenty guys that throw hard that can't get anyone out that can't miss a barrel so he's able to do that," Boss said. "He throws three pitches for strikes, the slider is very good, the changeup is very good ... gets ahead in the count, he gets everything that he needs to do to get guys out. He's able to locate his fastball, so you know with all that combined with the velocity really makes him a big-time arm and I think a really, really high prospect."

With the season coming to abrupt end on March 12, and Erla being eligible for the MLB draft, there are a lot of unknowns to what he will do next. He came to MSU with the goal of getting drafted and playing professionally. Spartan pitching coach Mark Van Ameyde is assured whether Erla goes pro or returns to MSU, his pitcher will be prepared. Erla, an interdisciplinary studies major, can use his remaining eligibility at MSU to stay no matter what happens in the draft.

"The way he was throwing was putting him in a position to make him a really high pick," Van Ameyde said. "The buzz was coming, and guys were coming out, he was really being set up for a start in another week or two down the road in terms of an opportunity in front of a lot of guys." Van Ameyde was referencing how there were over 20 scouts at the aforementioned Troy game on March 6. Also on the horizon was a possible showdown with Minnesota's top pitching ace, Max Meyer, when the Spartans were scheduled to face the Golden Gophers on March 27 that was generating a lot of buzz among not just scouts, but fans as well.

"There's nothing we can do about that now, but he was putting himself on that track," Van Ameyde said. "I think at this point there's a giant unknown because of what's going on across the country."

"Ideally, we're able to give him an opportunity to show scouts that what he did that first month of the season is what he is and what he's capable of, and that allows him to put himself in a real good position to get drafted high... there's so much to like about this guy that if they could just get an opportunity to see how far he's come from a year ago, I think they're going to love him."

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to the editor.**

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

## CASS CITY CHRONICLE

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(USPS 092-00)

## Green, Snover top Kingston class

Kingston Community School officials recently named this year's top graduating seniors.

Named this year's valedictorian is Johnathan Green, who boasts a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 4.0, while Joseph Snover earned salutatorian honors with a GPA of 3.972.



Johnathan Green

Green, the son of James and Lisa Green, is a member of the Kingston High School chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) and has served on the Tuscola County Community Foundation's Future Youth Involvement (FYI) Board. He has also been active in the school's robotics program.



Joseph Snover

Also an athlete, Green has been a member of the varsity football, track and field, and basketball teams, including the regional champion, state semifinalist eight-man football team and the basketball squad that won back-to-back North Central Thumb League titles.

His future plans includes attending Northern Michigan University, where he will study wildlife biology.

Snover, the son of Robert Snover, Jr., is also a member of the Kingston High School NHS, was a member of the second-place science team competing at the 2019 Tuscola County Academic Games, and has been active in the robotics program.

He plans to attend the University of Michigan in the fall to study molecular biology.

## News briefs

### Ubyly Homecoming canceled

UBLY — Organizers of the annual Ubyly Homecoming festival last week announced they have decided to cancel this year's celebration.

"It is with a lot of concern and heavy hearts that we have come to the decision to cancel the homecoming festivities this year," a statement on the group's Facebook page read.

"With all that is going on with this virus, we just had to think of the community and decided it was better to side on caution than risk getting people sick. We will look forward to 2021 and having a great time. For now, stay healthy and safe."

### McLaren expanding telehealth

BAD AXE — McLaren Thumb Region has expanded telehealth capabilities for patients in the community.

With social distancing and stay-at-home measures in place, McLaren Thumb Region clinicians have been seeking innovative ways to respond to patient needs. Clinicians have worked closely with McLaren Health Care to adapt existing telehealth technology to allow them to continue serving regularly scheduled clinic patients.

"The safety of our patients, community and medical staff is our priority," said Michael Johnston, President and CEO of McLaren Thumb Region. "We are strongly encouraging everyone to practice social distancing.

"We want everyone to know that our clinics are open and ready to serve the residents of our community during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Using telehealth technology to help the community connect with their healthcare provider is an important way we can assist patients in practicing social distancing and stay at home orders while getting the healthcare assistance that they need."

Patients will still schedule visits with their doctor's office just like they would a regular appointment. During the registration process, they will be offered the option of a telehealth visit and will receive a link from the scheduler to access their appointment.

Patients will connect to a virtual waiting room from their smart phone, tablet, or computer (with web cam) 10 minutes prior to their appointment, and their provider will connect at the designated appointment time.

Patients who would like to learn more are encouraged to contact their local provider's office.

### Trash Warriors invite youth

HURON COUNTY — Huron County MSU Extension officials are encouraging youth — 4-H and non-4-H members ages nine and older — to join an online 4-H club, the Trash Warriors, for a series of online educational meetings.

Beginning Earth Day today (Wednesday), the club will meet virtually every Wednesday from 4 to 5 p.m. Over the course of six weeks, youth will explore marine and plastic pollution in the Great Lakes. Marine debris is anything human-made that can be disposed of and intentionally or unintentionally ends up in rivers, streams, Great Lakes and oceans.

To register, visit the website <https://events.anr.msu.edu/4HTW/>.

The club will explore the issue of marine debris through film, community and research partner presentations, and stewardship activities kids can learn from home. Potential topics include microplastics research in the Great Lakes, ways to refuse to single-use, reuse challenges including a Trart (trash art) contest, recycling in your community, trash cleanups, and waste audits.

The meeting will take place virtually via Zoom (both computer and smartphone accessible) once a week. There will also be opportunities to share experiences and explore content on FlipGrid. Both Zoom meetings and FlipGrid will be limited to youth who register for the club. Access information including meeting links and passwords will only be sent to event registrants.

Compiled by Mary Drier and Tom Montgomery

## Geiger, Cregeur top Ubyly seniors

The Ubyly Community Schools recently announced graduating seniors Grant B. Geiger and Austin J. Cregeur will lead the Class of 2020 as valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively.



Grant Geiger

County Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) throughout his high school career.

He is also a member of Country Corners 4-H Club, Saturday youth bowling league, and the Holy Apostles Church of Ruth. Geiger is among the elite group of Boy Scouts who have earned the coveted Eagle — the highest rank in scouting.

His future plans include attending Michigan State University to major in agribusiness management and minor in marketing. Upon graduation from MSU, Grant plans to return home and work on his family farm.

Cregeur, the son of Aaron Cregeur and Maria Ahearn of Ubyly, has been part of Ubyly's basketball team for all four years of high school and has also played on the baseball team, earning first team all-conference honors as well as being an academic all-state selection. He has also been a member of the Ubyly chapter of the NHS and has umpired youth baseball for four years.

In the fall, he plans to attend Oakland University to double major in computer science and economics.

Ubyly School officials also recognized the following seniors who are graduating with honors:

\*High honors — Jazmyn M. Warchuck, daughter of Robert

Warchuck of Ruth and Amanda Warchuck of Elkton; Andrea M. Grifka, daughter of Kerry and Sheila Grifka of Ubyly; Katelyn E. Sweeney, daughter of Gregory and Tina Sweeney of Bad Axe; Abigail M. Sorenson, daughter of Gerald and Terry Sorenson of Ubyly; Isle R. Roggenbuck, daughter of Dean and Kristine Roggenbuck of Ubyly; Caleb J. Powers, son of Doug and Rebecca Klee of Ruth; Rachel D. Leppek, daughter of Ryan and Janet Leppek of Ubyly; and Sierra R. Walker, daughter of Todd Walker of Snover and Melonie Walker of Cass City.

\*Honors — Jaiden N. Schulte, daughter of Bryan and Amy Schulte of Ruth; Danielle J. Tschirhart, daughter of Duane and Rikki Tschirhart of Bad Axe; Ellie M. Peruski, daughter of Skatch and Tammy Peruski of Ubyly; Olivia J. Brown, daughter of Mark Brown of Pigeon and Lisa Brown of Ubyly; Hannah C. Melnik, daughter of Jeremy and Nicole Melnik of Ubyly; Lacey J. Pionk, daughter of Alfred and Pamela Pionk of Ubyly; Hannah L. Schroeder, daughter of David and Amy Schroeder of Ruth; Kali R. Dutcher, daughter of Douglas and Tiffany Dutcher of Ubyly; Alexia M. Vogel, daughter of Jay and Stacie Vogel of Bad Axe; and Jaelyn F. Toth, daughter of Kenneth and Lisa Toth of Ubyly.



Austin Cregeur

Geiger, the son of Bradley and Pauline Geiger of Ruth, has been involved in FFA, robotics, clay skeet shooting, cross country, baseball, the National Honor Society (NHS) and the Huron

## McKenney eyes sheriff's post in Sanilac County


Continued from page one.

training to the county's schools and community organizations, promoting the Stop the Bleed program to better prepare first responders in the event of a mass casualty event, and working to combat drug addiction through enhanced counseling and alternatives to jail.

McKenney is also a certified NRA instructor and owner of Carry with Confidence, where he specializes in handgun training.

McKenney is a lifelong Sanilac County resident. A 1991 Sandusky High School graduate who served in the U.S. Army Reserves, he resides with his wife, Michele, and their children, Ethan and Emma, in Lamotte Township, where he serves as the township zoning administrator and blight enforcement officer.

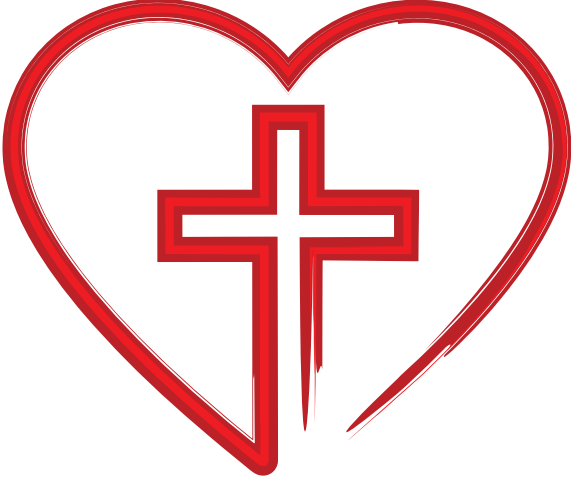
If elected sheriff, McKenney said he'll be committed to maintaining community policing, being fiscally responsible and breaking barriers to build a brighter future for Sanilac County.



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## Reporter's notebook

### Green Acres still the place for me

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor



I might have been a farmer if I hadn't settled on a career in journalism more than three decades (gulp) ago.

I'll confess it's been a fantasy of mine for years – still is. Hey, it makes sense; I enjoy working outside, I'm patient, I love to garden, I handle disappointment well, and I gave up the notion of being wealthy years ago.

Okay, so I'm not all that patient, and disappointment really drives me up a wall. But there are a number of similarities between farming and journalism.

When you think about it, farmers are skilled professionals who have to know at least a little bit about just about everything, be absolutely determined to get the job at hand done, and be prepared for the unexpected, right? Same thing for reporters.

Farmers have to be good at what they do, but in the end, they're at the mercy of the weather and markets, just as journalists are at the mercy of their sources. Let's face it, you can't make somebody talk to you anymore than you can make the sun shine, and without sources, you have no stories.

It goes without saying that most of us — farmers and newspaper editors — have been forced to embrace, or at least put up with, computers, although most forms of high tech gadgetry more often than not leave me staring blankly into space.

And I couldn't say for sure, but I suspect there are few things as satisfying to a farmer as an outstanding crop, when all the ingredients – seed, weather, skill and knowledge — come together just right. I know a really good story leaves me beaming for a few days. Of course, neither of us (reporters or farmers) have the luxury of resting on our laurels, and our work is right out there for all to see when we make a mistake.

In final analysis, I believe I settled on the right career for me.

In the first place, there's the matter of my math skills. I have none, which means my planted fields would draw outbursts of laughter from my neighboring farmers, and countless visits from UFO nuts in search of the being or beings that created those strange patterns with the giant, empty patches of dirt here and there.

Secondly, while there's a real satisfaction in planting a garden, caring for it and harvesting fresher vegetables than you can buy just about anywhere, a garden is still just a hobby. If the skies open up and rain down softball-sized hail, all I've lost is a small investment in money and time (depending on how carried away I get when the seed catalogues start arriving in the spring).

Bottom line? I don't want to have to rely on Mother Nature for my future.

And while I enjoy working outdoors, I don't particularly care to work that hard outdoors. I'm guessing the fact that operating large and very expensive equipment intimidates me is another drawback.

Oh well, I'll just stick with enjoying the best of both worlds. I don't mind earning a living writing as long as I can still spend plenty of time in my back 40 (feet).

## Tuscola Co. treasurer retiring

Continued from page one.

enjoyed her job and staff. "It's just not fun anymore with all of the many state mandates."

At the "advanced age" of 21 years old, Donovan-Gray recalled her bosses felt she had the skills to move to the bookkeeper position in the office. Then, at age 23, she was appointed as deputy treasurer under then-Treasurer Elgene Keller.

When Keller retired in 1987, Gray, who was 32 at the time, was appointed as interim county treasurer because she had years of hands-on training handling the millions of dollars that goes through the office as well as in handling investments.

She was elected Tuscola County Treasurer in 1988 and has held that position since. She oversees a budget of roughly \$14.5 million.

"I plan to retire at the end of the year," said Donovan-Gray, who pointed out that this year, as an election year, works out well for her departure because it lends itself to a smooth transition for the next treasurer.

Chief Deputy Treasurer Ashley Bennett has already announced she will be making a bid to be elected to the office and will start campaigning when the statewide "stay home" directive is lifted.

As for Donovan-Gray, she's ready to relax after shouldering so much responsibility since she was a teenager.

"I hope to do some traveling and whatever sounds fun," she said. "And, I want to get out before I get too old."

Some of that fun and travel will find Donovan-Gray as a passenger on the motorcycle she shares with husband Mark.

Although she drove her own motorcycle for a while, the out-going county treasurer says she now just wants to be a passenger, enjoying the scenery.

## Whitmer to address rules

Continued from page one.

week of April 27," she said over the weekend. "Over the course of the next week we will be working on the logistics related to implementing testing and working with our medical providers to ensure a smooth testing implementation."

Local health officials will continue to adhere to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines, according to Hepfer, who noted restrictions regarding who can be tested remain in place.

### Updated numbers

Between Monday, April 13, and Monday, April 20, the number of combined confirmed cases in Tuscola, Huron and Sanilac counties increased from 74 to 105, with the three counties' combined death toll rising from nine to 16 victims.

State officials reported Huron County has now recorded its first COVID-19-related fatality, but no other details were available at press time. Huron County has a total of 10 confirmed cases to-date.

As of Monday afternoon, Tuscola County had recorded 63 cases and 12 deaths, while Sanilac County has 32 cases and three deaths.

Statewide, Monday's total of confirmed cases reached 32,000, with a total of 2,468 deaths, compared to 25,635 cases and 1,602 deaths a week earlier.

In Tuscola County at least 12 of the confirmed cases and seven of the deaths have been reported at the Tuscola County Medical Care Community (TCMCC) in Caro, where several staff members have also tested positive and are off work until they meet CDC guidelines to return to work.

However, TCMCC officials recently reported that two of their residents have improved enough to be removed from isolation and quarantine.

"This is great news. They have worked diligently to contain this virus," Hepfer commented. "The TCMCC has not added any additional cases since...April 13. They still have residents that are positive for COVID-19, but they are treating these cases and they are in isolation to prevent the infection from spreading. Incubation period for new illnesses is two to 14 days, so (it will be) another week before we know for sure if there will be any additional cases."

"The TCMCC staff and administration are on top of this outbreak and implemented strict infection control practices from the time the very first case (was identified)," Hepfer said.

# Down Memory Lane

by Tina Pallas



### 5 YEARS AGO (2015)

Cass City High School senior Brendan Karwowski expects to wrap up his Eagle Scout project this week at Revive Ministries, where he has enclosed a food pantry storage area, providing volunteers with a room designed to make it easier to keep food distributions organized.

The Cass City Board of Education recently honored the latest recipients of the district's coveted Red Hawk Award of Excellence. They are third grade student Hailey Dubs, the daughter of Aaron and Carrie Dubs, and high school senior Katelyn Bensinger, the daughter of Ken and Tammy Franzel.

### 10 YEARS AGO (2010)

The Cass City Board of Education hired a new superintendent early Friday night, offering the job to a Cass City native with years of experience as an educator and administrator in the district. The board voted 4-3 in favor of hiring Cass City Middle School Principal Jeff Hartel for the job.

Mallory Powell of Cass City, a current ninth trimester student in the Doctor of Chiropractic program at Palmer College of Chiropractic, Davenport, Iowa, has been named to the dean's list for the eighth trimester. To be eligible for the dean's list, a student must achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.50 in all studies for the respective term on a scale of 4.0.

### 25 YEARS AGO (1995)

Richard Jr. and Pamela Brooks of Cass City announce the birth of their daughter, Brandy Bee Brooks, 8 pounds, 3 ounces and 20 inches long. Grandparents are Robert and Katherine McPhail and Richard Sr. and Paulette Brooks, all of Cass City. Brandy was also welcomed by one great-grandfather, Archie McPhail of Cass City.

Dale Miller, a senior at Cass City High School, recently enlisted in the Marine Corps' Delayed Entry Program (DEP). The DEP allows high school seniors to enlist into the Marine Corps and defer going to recruit training until after graduation from high school. Miller enlisted for 4 years and is scheduled to report for recruit training in San Diego, Calif., Sept. 11. Miller is expected to graduate recruit training in December, 1995. Miller is the son of Donald and Bridgett Miller of Cass City.

Jim Jezewski, 54, was honored Monday night for his long career as a volunteer fireman with the Elkland Township Fire Department. When the clock-plaque was presented by Chief Milt Connolly, Jezewski received a round of applause from fire fighters at the meeting. Jezewski completed 30 years with the department before he resigned Feb. 1.

### 35 YEARS AGO (1985)

Marine Lance Cpl. Paul L. Hutchinson, son of Donald R. and Geraldine H. Hutchinson of Cass City, has completed the Navy's Basic Electricity Electronics Course. While attending the self paced course at Naval Air Technical Training Center, Naval Air Station, Memphis, Millington, TN, Hutchinson reviewed basic electrical mathematics formulas, fundamental electrical formulas and the principles of alternating and direct current circuits. He also received instructions on basic circuit testing methods, which included the use of multimeters and audio signal generators.

Todd D. Forman, son of Clarence and Sandra Forman, Ubyly, has recently been promoted to private first class in the United States Marine Corps. Forman, a 1984 graduate of Ubyly Community Schools joined the Marine

Corps July 17, 1984. He is presently stationed at the Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, VA. Forman is expected to return home for a visit this May.

Born April 22 to Mr. and Mrs. Mike Otulakowski, a son at Hills and Dales General Hospital. The baby weighed nine pounds and nine ounces. Garrett Michael joins two sisters, Leann and Kary. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Walter and Mr. and Mrs. Gene Otulakowski, all of Cass City. Great-grandparents are Mrs. Lillian Otulakowski and Mrs. Anna Odoran, both of Cass City, and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Walter of Parma, Ohio.

### 40 YEARS AGO (1980)

Three baptisms were held Sunday morning at Good Shepherd Lutheran church. Baptized were Nathan Karl Weippert, son of Mr. and Mrs. Karl Weippert, Jr. of Cass City, Kristina Marie Voss, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Voss of Caro, and Kevin James, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Spencer of Deford.

Rev. Eldred Kelley officiated at the baptism of three-week-old Kary Lynn Otulakowski during the 11 a.m. worship service in Salem UM Church Sunday. Kary is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Otulakowski. Godparents are Mr. and Mrs. Neil Gubanche of Brown City, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Otulakowski, Debbie, Billy and Angie, Mrs. Lillian Otulakowski, Mrs. Anna Odoran, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Hutchinson and family, Rev. Kelley and sons and the Michael Otulakowskis.

Two Cass City women graduated from the Delta College registered nursing program Sunday during capping and pinning ceremonies. Ellen M. Trischler is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Trischler, Hurds Corner Road. A 1972 graduate of Owendale-Gagetown High School, she worked as a laboratory technician at Hills and Dales General Hospital for five years before starting nursing school. She continued at the hospital part-time and will now be employed there as a nurse. Lori I. Tuckey is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tuckey, 4681 Schwegler Road. A 1976 graduate of Cass City High School, she will be employed at St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw. Graduation ceremonies were held at St. Stanislaus church in Bay City.

### 50 YEARS AGO (1970)

The highlight of the year for the Chamber of Commerce annually is its banquet when the citizen of the year and the junior citizen of the year are selected and feted. Audley Rawson's long service to the community was recognized as he was selected for the honor by ballot vote of the most recent five previous residents to receive the award. The presentation was made by James Bauer, last year's winner, who recounted Rawson's long career of public service. Rawson was born in Marlette in 1893 and is a graduate of Marlette High School. He attended the first short course offered by Michigan State University. He farmed in Elkland township and was township supervisor from 1931-36. He was a State Representative for 8 years and a State Senator from 1943-47 for Tuscola, Huron and Sanilac counties. He retired to become a lobbyist for Michigan Insurance Co., a position he still holds.

Steven R. Auvil has been selected to receive the student award of the Michigan Chapter of Chemists at the meeting of the Chapter Saturday at Detroit Boat Club at Belle Isle, Detroit. Auvil will be presented a suitably inscribed bronze medal at the meeting and Rep. Weldon O. Yeager will speak. His subject

title is "Michigan-Today and Tomorrow." The award is one of a host of honors that Auvil has earned at Michigan State University as an all-A student. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Auvil of Snover. He is married to the former Pamela Gee and the couple has two sons, Steven Jr. and Dennis.

Rodney Krueger, retiring president of the Cass City Chamber of Commerce, reviewed highlights of the year before turning the reins of the Chamber over to Keith McConkey Tuesday night at the annual banquet of the organization held at Cass City High School. The financial report showed that Krueger and his board kept the Chamber in good financial condition by turning over a balance of over \$500 to the new regime.

### 75 YEARS AGO (1945)

The nomination of Alice Marie Bigelow for postmaster at Cass City was recently confirmed by the Senate. She was one of three candidates for the position. Mrs. Bigelow resigned her position as one of the visitors of the Bureau of Social Aid in Tuscola county to accept the position as acting postmaster. She started her work in that position on July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year of the Post Office department. Mrs. Bigelow first engaged in social work in 1935 and was the first employee that handled old age pensions in Tuscola county that year. With the exception of a year, she had been engaged in that activity from 1935 until last year.

Mrs. M. D. Hartt received word from her grandson, Robert M. Ryland, S 2/c, that he successfully completed his course at Fort Pierce, Fla., as radio signalman and he with several others were sent to Newport, Rhode Island, for a few weeks of special training. Robert has been in school except for two weeks when the class were at sea putting into practical training what they had learned in school. They arrived in Newport during the last cold spell and found it difficult to keep warm after being in the hot climate of Fort Pierce, Fla., all winter.

One letter has been received from Pvt. Robt. Turner, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Metcalf, of Ellington. Last week it was stated that according to a message from the war department, he was back under military control, after having been reported as missing since Feb. 13, in Germany. In the letter Robert says that he was a prisoner for six weeks and was at the time of writing in a replacement camp. He says that in camp five prisoners were given a loaf of bread and water as food for one day. The bread was made of wheat straw and barley.

Sgt. Arthur D. Popham, of Cass City, auto mechanic, is a member of an Anticraft Artillery Gun Battalion, whose 90-millimeter weapons, firing with precision at a range of 10 miles, have been knocking out German targets in Italy's Po Valley. Pfc. Myron D. Britton, cannoneer, and Pvt. Jay N. Crittenden, ammo handler, both of Caro, are members of the same battalion.

### 100 YEARS AGO (1920)

Peter Mihalich has purchased the residence property of Ivan Vader just west of the town hall. He will use the front of the building for his shoe shop and the rear for residence rooms.

On Friday evening about seventy-five of the friends of Dr. and Mrs. S. A. Bradshaw, carrying well filled baskets, gathered at their home on Leach St. for a reception and shower. The evening was spent in music and dancing. They presented Mr. and Mrs. Bradshaw with a leather cushioned oak rocker and a casserole. The guests departed in the wee small hours reporting a wonderful lunch, a wonderful time and everything to match.

# Council holds virtual meeting

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

The first virtual meeting of the Cass City Village Council Thursday night ran into a few technical problems.

Some council members could not dial into the meeting and some others could not connect with their computer. About the first 20 minutes of the 45 minute meeting was spent working out those issues.

After that, the meeting went smoothly with five agenda items addressed.

One was approving a service package with the Abadata Computer Corporation of Sebawaing. The company has previously provided administrative and network maintenance, and have been instrumental recently in doing the installation of virtual meeting software and training.

The council approved the purchase of two 100-hour packages of computer maintenance and services. The cost of each package is \$7,725.

The council also approved accepting the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) Fellowship Agreement and grant match of \$6,000.

The fellowship, which would last from from June 1 of this year to Aug. 31, 2021 was created to help address a common challenge Michigan's diverse communities

face such as a lack of sufficient capacity to achieve their economic development potential.

"We have discussed doing this, and I highly recommend we do this," said village Manager Debbie Powell. "They would be a full-time employee contracted with CEDAM, and not a village employee. They would work for 13 months."

It was suggested from the personnel committee

"We were fortunate there were only 10 across the state approved for this," said village President Dan Delamarter.

"I think we are going to get our money's worth out of this, and it is money well spent."

The CEDAM Fellowship Program will allow the village to make a significant impact in both community and economic development in the village.

Also, the village will be able to move forward with some street work.

The council approved Astec Asphalt, Inc., of Brown City to resurface Beechwood Drive from Hospital Drive to Hemlock Street, and Pine Street from Leach Street to Seeger Street. They had the low bid of \$188,583 with a 10 percent contingency.

Also a resolution to apply for \$160,000 in funding the Michigan Department of Transportation's Economic Development fund to help with the cost of resurfacing

Third Street was approved.

The cost to the village is expected to be about \$80,000.

"This is for the Third Street road reconstruction. We have funds through the Tuscola County Rural Task Force for Seeger Street, but not for the water main work on Third Street," said Powell. "(Approving) this we would only have to pay about 50 percent of repairing about three blocks when the water main work is done.

"If we can get that, it would be great. We would have to budget to fix that road after the main work."

The next order of business was approving the purchase of some free-standing playground equipment from GameTime, Sinclair Recreation of Holland, Michigan, for the Municipal Park for \$20,788 with a 5 percent contingency.

Powell explained the village was very fortunate to receive a \$5,117 discount, that the Pinney Foundation awarded the village \$5,696, and the Gavel Club of Cass City donated \$3,000, and the village had budgeted \$15,000.

"This is to replace the old unsafe playground equipment that we have talked about doing for awhile," Delamarter.

The equipment will be placed near the tennis courts at the front of the park. The equipment will include a new merry-go-round, a new arc swing, and a frog climber.

## Huron Co. sheriff: COVID-19 brings frustration, generosity to department

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

Like law enforcement agencies across the state, the Huron County Sheriff's Department has made a myriad of operational adjustments to comply with efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Towards that end, Sheriff Kelly J. Hanson says he's seen many examples of generosity in the community, but his department has also experienced its share of frustration.

"Like everyone else, these five weeks have been a challenge on different levels. Aside from trying to avoid the virus, we too are experiencing the frustration of the logic of some of questionable executive orders, with the fairness and enforcement of them being just as questionable," Hanson said Thursday.

"Imagine being asked by the state to patrol lottery outlets for proper social distancing, when buying flowers is forbidden, or going out on a motorized boat, (which) is not allowed — yet a sailboat is ok, even though many have motors affixed or built in.

"Myself and the deputies take many calls from people daily, looking for clarification of these orders, or wanting to be told that it's ok to disregard them," he added.

"The truth of the matter is, clarification remains difficult and we simply don't have the authority to supersede them. Our priority is the general safety of our county's people and that's what we're focusing on."

Hanson said he's been asked if his officers have arrested an individual or business for violating any of the governor's executive orders.

"No, we have not, but we've had to look into some complaints," he added. "However, depending on the incident, they either turned out to be within the parameters, or (the activity) ended by ceasing or changing to comply to a specific order. Or the incident just ended by not being looked into and was unfounded because of other priorities going on at the time.

"For the most part, these orders

are secondary to our normal operation and, because of common sense and cooperation when it comes to a possible violation, the likelihood of us charging anyone is very low."

Hanson noted he's been in daily contact with Huron County Emergency Management Director Randy Miller, and he's seen his frustration — as well as that of other county emergency management directors — from not being able to procure adequate PPE (personal protective equipment) from state channels. "Not to mention them having to find out important official information pertaining to their functions from Lansing through the media, second-hand, because standard operating procedures were simply disregarded on the other end.

"We and other local law enforcement agencies were forced to come up with our own PPE and supplies, and we had to be creative doing it," he said. "This included enlisting help from the Laker School District, Huron Area Skill Center and the USA School District. The Uby Schools further provided support by bringing electronic disinfectant equipment a number of times so far to disinfect our jail, office, substations and cars."

Hanson lauded a number of other businesses and individuals who have come through with hand-sewn masks and other supplies.

"Early on, we were not very well equipped at all. Fortunately, now we're in a much better way thanks to them all," He added.

Throughout the governor's "stay-at-home" executive order, Hanson said, his office has remained open and fully staffed, although some adjustments were made to protect the safety of deputies and inmates, as well as citizens.

"For the vast majority, myself and the deputies' health have been unaffected by the virus, but very concerning situations have occurred — one with a deputy's family member likely having it (COVID-19) early on, but apparently not serious enough to have required a test," he said.

"Since the beginning, when we

report for duty, temperatures are taken, and guidelines and plans have been in place to regularly clean common surfaces of workstations, patrol cars and other equipment. No one other than deputies and inmates have been allowed in our jail. New inmate bookings have been restricted, depending on the charge or sentence, with isolation observation periods including inmate temperature monitoring before they're eventually allowed into the general population.

"The overall population of the jail has been varying between 10 and 15 less than the last four-month average.

"For the most part, it's been business as usual for the patrol deputies," the sheriff continued. "Traffic has been considerably lighter, with fewer traffic violations and accidents, but crimes have continued to occur. Although no higher than usual for this time of year, domestic violence is still occurring and being dealt with directly."

Hanson has been in periodic contact with 84th District state Rep. Phil Green and Huron County Board of Commissioners Safety Committee Chairman John Bodis.

"We're all hoping for the virus situation to get better, especially the loss of life, and for the loosening of restrictions to begin sooner than later," he said.

"It...goes without saying that heavy financial tolls have been taken on our local citizens and businesses. In fact, I've committed my recently received personal stimulus payment to helping out eight struggling local individuals," Hanson added. "I consider myself very fortunate to have maintained a steady paycheck throughout all of this, unlike too many others who weren't that lucky.

"The financial woes of our state and local governments...are appearing to begin to set in on the reality of would've, could've, should've. Regardless, I and the deputies want the citizens of our county to know we've been there every day since this began, and we'll continue to be there after as it all gets worked out."

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## NOTICE FOR GILFORD TOWNSHIP

April 9, 2020 - MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting called to order at 7:30 P.M. using ZOOM phone conference. Board members attending the virtual meeting: D. Strasz, Treasurer; R. Haines, Clerk; J. Stockmeyer, Supervisor; A. Goss, Trustee; K. Houghtaling, Trustee. Order of agenda approved.

Public Comment: None.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Motion by D. Strasz, second by A. Goss to approve minutes. Motion approved.

Treasurers Report: Motion by R. Haines, second by K.

Houghtaling to approve Treasurers Report. Motion approved.

### REPORTS:

Supervisor: No Reese Fire runs. Motion by A. Goss, second by D. Strasz to approve Reese Fire contract for fire only. Motion approved. Limestone agreement for Pike Rd., 600 tons for \$11,400. Motion by R. Haines, second by D. Strasz to approve limestone agreement for Pike Rd. Motion approved with 4 year, 1 nay. Motion by K. Houghtaling, second by D. Strasz to allow J. Stockmeyer to sign the agreement. Motion approved.

Treasurer: 2019 taxes are closed. F65 and Qualifying Statements due within 6 months.

Clerk: Scribner error on new budget for Zoning Supplies, \$1,000.00 which was previously approved was omitted on spreadsheet, has been corrected. Motion by D. Strasz, second by A. Goss to pay bills. Motion approved.

Trustees: Parks and Recreation budget set for 2020-21 at \$33,645.00, bathrooms to be painted this year, would like to install cement walkway from sidewalk to pavilion this year. Gilford TWP Ordinance work is on hold due to virus.

Ambulance Representative: None.

Fire Department Representative: None.

Zoning Administrator: None.

Public Comment: None.

Motion by J. Stockmeyer, second by D. Strasz to adjourn at 8:12 P.M. Motion approved.

Robert L. Haines  
Gilford Township Clerk

# CHRONICLE SPORTS

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 contact Publisher Clarke Haire at  
 (989) 872-2010; fax: (989) 872-3810  
 clarke@ccchronicle.net

## Cass City Red Hawk thinclads add to list of athletes affected by coronavirus

by Clarke Haire  
 Publisher

Coming off solid showings last year, the Cass City Schools track teams will be sidelined in 2020 due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

For the Red Hawks' men's team, veteran Coach Jon Zdrojewski was eagerly awaiting the start of this year's campaign as graduation losses were few and returnees plentiful in what would have been Zdrojewski's 9th season in charge.

Gabe Farver, Jarod Naegele, Ethon Fetterhoff, Zac Brunke and Alie Kalokon headlined Cass City's graduation losses from 2019, but several returning letter winners were ready to take charge this spring.

Among the Red Hawks' anticipated returnees were Division 3 State Final qualifiers Justin Schaufele, Nick McArdle and Dylan Halpin.

Schaufele entered last year's re-

gional as the top seed in the long jump and the junior didn't disappoint, winning the event with a new personal best leap of 20' 10 1/2". Also in the field events, then freshman Halpin took fourth in the high jump at the Brown City regional, but his height of 6' 0" was an additional qualifier for the State Finals. McArdle, meanwhile, who entered the 3200 meter run seeded well out of the qualifying time of 10:07 – the junior's previous best time was 10:30 – and the top 2 seeds, Yami Albrecht from Caro and David Knarian from Bad Axe, have been unbeatable all season. Still, McArdle ran the race of his life and took 28 seconds off of his previous best time running a 10:02 in the event, allowing him to be an additional qualifier for the State Final meet.

"The additional qualifiers (that must meet a predetermined standard) are allowed so that the best in the state will have the opportunity to compete at the State Final

meet," explained Cass City Coach Jon Zdrojewski, noting that the top two finishers in each event automatically advance to the season ending meet.

Others key performers last year that were expected to excel in 2020 were junior Anthony Boscaglia and sophomore Alex Hopper in the sprints, while senior Drew Markel and junior Brandon Witherspoon were proven point winners in the distance venues.

In the field events, Zdrojewski feels sophomore Connor Herford in the shot put, and senior Jacob Schantz in the pole vault were ready for record break out seasons as were senior sprinter Lucas Swiderski and junior sprinter Anthony Boscaglia.

"I had lots of talent and a good team coming up," Zdrojewski noted.

Turning to the Lady Red Hawk track team, Coach Adam Dorland saw his thinclads win for the first time since 2016 last year and also sent a pair of athletes to the 2019 State Final meet – the school's first female qualifiers for the elite meet in several years.

"The streak is over! Not since 2013 has the girls' track program sent an athlete to the state meet," Coach Dorland said after last year's regional competition, adding, "The highlight of the day came from Madison Beckrow, who tied her personal record and was regional champ in the pole vault, clearing a height of 9'6". The super sophomore was currently tied for fourth place head-

ing into the state meet.

Senior Hailey Schmotzer was not going to be denied in the 100 meter hurdles. She took second place overall after just missing the cut last year. I couldn't be happier for the girls who get to go and experience the state meet for the first time. This is an awesome accomplishment and the hope is to turn the state meet into an expectation for the girls' track program."

Other regional medal winners for the Lady Red Hawks last year were the 3200 meter relay team of Riley Copeland, Layna Mathewson, Mary Muter and Marla Muter, who finished third, while the 400 meter relay team of Mathewson, Schmotzer, Beckrow and Brittany Hamilton placed sixth. Mathewson, Schmotzer and Hamilton were all seniors and would have been big shoes to fill on the 2020 roster.

Individual regional medal winners last year, were underclassmen Copeland with a fourth place effort in the 3200 meter run, Sierra Spry fifth in the long jump and Madison Ware sixth in the pole vault. All were expected to return for Dorland's third year in charge.

Other key veteran performers expected back in 2020 included Haven Bouverette, Marissa Petiprin-Ball, Kristin Stimpfel, Tasha Tageson and Tiana Tageson while the team's second year athletes are Laci Anthony, Abby Essex, Hannah Gilmore, Kalee Gray, Janelle Hartwick, Kendra Schmotzer, Autumn Sutton, Bre-

anna Wolschlager and Raeven Periso who should all be much improved with a year of varsity experience under their belts.



**RED HAWK Madison Beckrow sprints to the finish line in the 100 meter dash at last year's Reese invite.**



**CASS CITY'S Brandon Witherspoon takes the baton during the 3200 meter relay in 2019.**



**BOB SIMPSON, left, of Cass City bagged a dandy tom turkey early Saturday morning while hunting on state land in the area. He reported shooting this 25-pound bird at about 7:15 a.m. The tom boasted a 10-inch beard.**

### Cass City Red Hawk ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Meet senior Nick McArdle, he's Knights Insurance Agency Athlete of the week.

After a fabulous cross country career at Cass City School was capped by winning league and regional honors last year, McArdle was ready to lead the Cass City men's track team as its top distance runner.



**NICK MCARDLE**

Instead COVID-19 struck. "Nick is a hard worker and the type of kid that gives it his all – you know the type," said Coach Jon Zdrojewski.

College bound in the fall, Nick is expected to run at the next level.

Nick is the son of Nathan and Heather McArdle.

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## Cass City Elementary School Kindergarten Registration

**GSRP, Young 5's & Kindergarten enrollment forms will be available May 4, 2020 on our website [www.casscityschools.org](http://www.casscityschools.org)**

Forms will also be available in the Elementary School Office  
 office hours:  
**Monday & Wednesday's: 8 a.m. to Noon**  
**Tuesday & Thursday's: Noon to 4 p.m.**

Please include copies of the following items:  
 Child's Birth Certificate  
 Complete Immunization Record  
 Proof of Residency (drivers license)  
 2019 Tax Return (GSRP Only)

To register for **GSRP Program** use the following link:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfgxuBbiK\\_MFF5nnOF0WKHxzX0F-Z6UaIZRuPOo82oXWsr0DQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfgxuBbiK_MFF5nnOF0WKHxzX0F-Z6UaIZRuPOo82oXWsr0DQ/viewform)

**\*Enrollment will be for any child who will be 4 or 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2020.**

## Walbro focus on ventilator

Continued from page one.

"It's like a stop-gap for in between a real, full-featured ICU ventilator and (the alternative) of not having a ventilator," he said, adding Walbro officials have worked closely with pulmonologists, respiratory therapists, anesthesiologists, and CRNAs (certified registered nurse anesthetists) in designing the unit.

The Walbro design will cost far less to manufacture than various ventilator equipment on the market, which can run anywhere from \$7,000 to \$50,000, according to Roche. He said the Walbro mini-ventilator will cost perhaps \$3,500. And it has the potential to be used in a number of different applications, such as by ambulance crews, at field hospitals, and during emergency transfers from one hospital to another.

Roche said the mini-ventilator isn't yet ready for production, although the company's engineering team accomplished in one day what typically takes three to six months.

"We've submitted (the project) to the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) for initial approval, but it hasn't been fully evaluated yet," he explained last week. "Realistically, we've only been working on this for 15 days, so we're a ways from approval, (but) we're on a fast track."

One advantage for the Walbro mini-ventilator is that it utilizes a number of components already approved by the FDA for use by medical personnel.

Roche estimated Walbro would have about 100 of the mini-ventilators constructed last week, with those units going out to various hospitals for examination and feedback.

"We've got customers all over...that are asking for them now," he said, adding Walbro has the capability to manufacture 1,000 to 1,200 units by the end of this month if all goes well.

The company is projecting an eventual capacity of producing 48,000 units a month. However, Roche cautioned, "that all hinges on acceptance" by the medical community.

The demand could be great.

Walbro, which has earned a reputation as a global leader in the design and manufacturing of carburetors, ignition modules and fuel tanks for the small engine market, last month unveiled its first venture in the COVID-19-related medical equipment market to rave reviews.

That first effort focused on improving the safety of front-line hospital personnel at risk for exposure to COVID-19. Specifically, the risk faced by nurse anesthetists' and anesthesiologists' exposure to the virus while intubating patients battling the virus.

Walbro engineers put their heads together and came up with its own "aerosol shield", and the company's team managed an almost unheard-of progression from concept to manufacturing – just eight days – making it possible to distribute thousands of the new shields to hospitals both in Michigan and across the country.

Design of a new shield came at the request of some anesthesiologists who asked Walbro to take a look at an existing box-shaped, clear plastic shield that is placed over the patient's head and features two holes enabling a medical professional to reach inside the barrier to intubate the patient.

Walbro came through with a more streamlined shield that better protects healthcare personnel from the virus contained in respiratory droplets that are sprayed during the sort of coughing that occurs during the intubation procedure, in which a breathing tube is inserted through the mouth and then into the airway so that a patient can be placed on a ventilator to assist with breathing.

Roche said Walbro's new design resulted in a shield weighing just 3 1/2 pounds and made of a polycarbonate material that is durable and scratch-resistant, and can be sanitized with bleach, alcohols, disinfectants and soap without affecting its clear finish.

In addition, the rounder design makes it easier for a nurse anesthetist to see through the shield at any angle, and with no sharp corners, the chances that he or she will snag or rip open their personal protective gown or gloves is greatly reduced.

About 500 of the shields were built early last week, Roche said. He pointed out the company has already incorporated additional PPE (personal protective equipment) into the new design, including attached gloves and a covering with a suction unit that captures aerosol droplets and directs them into a filter.

In spite of those upgrades, Roche says the Walbro Mini-Ventilator has proven to be a bigger challenge.

"It's been a very mind-expanding experience for us at Walbro. This is a lot more complicated (than the aerosol shield)," acknowledged Roche, who said officials at Hills and Dales General Hospital have been a valuable partner in the venture, providing pieces of medical equipment and feedback from the hospital's medical staff.

"We just really want to help the medical professionals that are fighting this."

## New state hospital still on

Continued from page one.

els in the ground in the fall...Octoberish," said 84th District state Rep. Phil Green (R-Millington), who represents residents in Tuscola and Huron counties. "The size of the hospital is a 100-bed facility."

The original 2017 plan was to build a \$115 million, 200-bed, 225,000-square-foot hospital.

When that plan was halted, state officials began to look at other possible locations for the hospital.

Several Tuscola County officials had to prove for a second time the need to have a local psychiatric hospital, and the state agreed in October 2019 to build the hospital in the county and to have the money to do that in the 2020 budget.

"I have not heard of an update now that the COVID issues have risen," said Green.

The state is spending millions of dollars because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which officially reached Michigan in March and has largely shown no sign of slowing down significantly as the number of cases and deaths increase daily.

That is a concern.

The state's next fiscal year starts October 1, and the money allocated for the new hospital has not been spent.

This year's budget outlined \$63 million to replace the current Caro Regional Mental Health Center, and about \$5 million in one-time funding for demolition of vacant/uninhabitable properties at the Caro site.

In the meantime, hope abounds.

"I am thoroughly excited about the project being started. The patients will receive first class care in a first class facility," said Green. "Likewise, the frontline workers there will now have access to excellent facilities that will require much less maintenance."

According to Green, the expectation is to have patients in the new building during the spring of 2023.

# Legal Notices

## NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT.

Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in TUSCOLA County, starting promptly at 10:00, a.m. on May 21, 2020.

The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.

**MORTGAGE INFORMATION:** Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Eric Albrecht, a single man, whose address is 6709 Vassar Road, Vassar, Michigan 48768, as original Mortgagors, to CSMC Inc., DBA Central States Mortgage, being a mortgage dated July 27, 2007, and recorded on August 15, 2007 in Liber 1127 Page 806, Tuscola County Records, State of Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held through mesne assignments by

CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC, as assignee as documented by an assignment

dated March 28, 2019 and recorded on April 8, 2019 in Liber 01419 Page 00939, Tuscola County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of SIXTY-THREE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED FORTY-THREE AND 77/100 (\$63,443.77).

Said premises are situated in the Township of Vassar, County of Tuscola, State of Michigan, and are described as: PART OF THE SOUTH 20 ACRES OF THE SOUTHWEST FRACTIONAL 1/4 OF THE NORTHWEST FRACTIONAL 1/4 OF SECTION 30, TOWN 11 NORTH, RANGE 8 EAST, DESCRIBED AS: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE WEST LINE OF SAID FRACTIONAL SECTION 30 WHICH IS NORTH, 229.90 FEET FROM THE WEST 1/4 CORNER OF SAID SECTION 30; THENCE CONTINUING ALONG SAID WEST LINE NORTH 165.00 FEET TO THE NORTH LINE OF THE SOUTH 20 ACRES; THENCE ALONG SAID NORTH LINE OF SAID SOUTH 20 ACRES, NORTH 88 DEGREES 35 MINUTES 20 SECONDS EAST, 264.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 165.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 35 MINUTES 20 SECONDS WEST, 264.00 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING.

Street Address: 6709 Vassar Road, Vassar, Michigan 48768  
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance

with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

**ATTENTION HOMEOWNER:** IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: April 15, 2020 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing:

Kenneth J. Johnson, Johnson, Blumberg, & Associates, LLC, 5955 West Main Street, Suite 18, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. Telephone: (312) 541-9710. File No.: MI 20 4079

4-15-4



**TUSCOLA**  
Behavioral Health Systems  
A Michigan Community Mental Health Authority

## COVID – 19 Community Support Phone Line

Starting Monday, April 13, 2020

Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems (TBHS) has set up a **COVID-19 support line** through our main phone number 989.673.6191. This phone line is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm for individuals **not** currently receiving Community Mental Health (CMH) services. The phone line will be available for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis or until such a time where it becomes unnecessary. **This phone line is staffed by mental health professionals and can support people:**

- Who are struggling with feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Who are dealing with panic or anxiety over the possibility of getting sick, financial struggle, resource scarcity, or caregiving
- Who are first responders, essential employees, medical professionals on the front lines of the Coronavirus situation and struggling with burnout, anxiety, depression and feeling overwhelmed
- Who are sick at home, or caring for a sick family member and dealing with fear, anxiety, depression and feeling overwhelmed
- Anyone who could use someone to talk to during this difficult time.
- If the mental health professional determines that the issue is more severe than the COVID-19 Support Line can manage- they will refer individuals to appropriate resources.

If you leave a message and get a call back from the COVID-19 Support Line- it may come through as a blocked caller – phone contact may state private number.

**Anyone in Tuscola County can utilize the COVID-19 Support Line, you do not need to be using CMH services, or have a mental health diagnosis of any kind – it is for the general public.** The Support Line should not be used for crisis calls. If you or a loved one is in crisis please call TBHS and request Emergency Services. The COVID-19 Support Line is not meant to take the place of therapy/counseling or to treat or diagnosis any physical or mental health condition. It is a support resource for anyone in the community who could use a listening ear during this national emergency. **Those wishing to contact the COVID-19 Support Line should call 989.673.6191 and ask for the COVID-19 Support Line.**

While TBHS is not available to conduct any community trainings, speaking engagements or events during this time, our focus continues to be on supporting our community and sharing vital information via several different outlets:

TBHS Facebook page - updates and information related to caring for your mental health during times of crisis, healthy activities to engage in from home, information for families, links to other support service/resources, etc.

[www.tbhsonline.com](http://www.tbhsonline.com) - Comprehensive information about all TBHS programs and services, up-to-date information on hours of operation and locations, a resource page with links to COVID-19 information and resources

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### Community Development Fellowship Available

Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) is seeking a fellow for **Cass City** to implement community economic development projects, increase community engagement, and advance goals related to participation in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program.

**The fellow position is a full-time, contractual position for a 15-month term starting June 2020.**

**Scope of Work**

The fellowship includes training and professional development on topics such as:

- Community economic development 101
- Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) best practices
- Working with boards and commissions
- Managing conflict and meeting facilitation

**Fellows will also participate in statewide networking:**

- Representing CEDAM and the MEDC at statewide conferences
- Attending five professional development days in Lansing
- Attending two statewide conferences

**Fellows will complete projects that may include:**

- Evaluating and updating the Development Review policy
- Assessing public and private land for viability as housing or Redevelopment Ready sites
- Creating a marketing plan
- Drafting an Economic Development strategy

**Partnership building**

- Initiate and/or strengthen partnerships with community stakeholders
- Convene stakeholders to support project implementation, discuss progress, and identify possible areas of growth

**Communications**

- Develop a relationship with local news media (print, digital, radio)
- Formulate a local communications and media strategy to share about project progress
- Create content for social media and a CEDAM blog post to share project highlights

**Research and Reporting**

- Research best practices across the country to implement locally
- Create monthly, mid-year, and final reports detailing progress and accomplishments

**Qualifications**

The appropriate candidate will have a strong interest and background in coalition building and/or community organizing, planning, community economic development, and communications or a combination of such interests. The appropriate candidate must possess strong verbal and written communication skills, excellent attention to detail, the ability to work within a team or as an individual and be familiar with the Microsoft Office suite and Google Applications.

**Compensation**

This is a contractual position with a stipend of \$62,500, for the full scope ending after fifteen months. The contract requires monthly check-ins and reporting to monitor progress. This position requires statewide travel with fellows providing their own means of travel. Fellows will also be required to provide their own computer and software, internet, telephone, and any other technology required to complete the job. Contractors are responsible for their own payment of income taxes, as well as carrying business insurance.

**To Apply:**

Please send a resume, a cover letter describing how your experience directly relates to the list of desired qualifications above, and contact information for three professional references to madeleine@cedamichigan.org by the end of day on Monday, April 27. Please designate "Cass City" as the Fellowship Program for which you are applying.

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**THE WAVE** of the future is E-gaming. There are scholarships for gamers, a variety of careers, and competitions playing for high-stakes. Cass City started an after-school E-gaming club that is coordinated by Reed Keyser (pictured far right).

## E-gaming on fire

### Cass City students getting in on the ground floor

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

Parents who limit their child's video game time might want to re-think that idea.

Colleges are offering classes on video gaming, and some are even offering scholarships to good players, because gaming can branch out to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic) careers.

The Cass City School District got in on the ground floor of the video gaming wave by offering an after-hours E-sports club two afternoons a week before the governor ordered schools across the state to close their doors for the remainder of the school year.

"E-sports is a huge deal across the country. We are just starting to get ours started," said Reed Keyser, who is an Information Technology (IT) technician with the district, and who coordinates the gaming club.

"E-sports has been around for several years, but now it has really taken off," he added. "We felt it was good for our students to get in on this and learn about it. It is becoming a big trend in high schools and we wanted our students to experience that."

There are even special large arenas being built just for professional E-sports play.

"There are now six or seven colleges in Michigan that offer E-sports scholarships, and they play professionally against other colleges. Some colleges have entire buildings dedicated just to E-sports. It has really taken off over the last five years and it is going to continue to get bigger and bigger," Keyser predicted.

"It is a whole industry now where you can go to college for an E-sports degree, and from there are several different fields you can get into — any career that has to do with STEM can be tied into E-sports."

In addition, E-sports offers kids a different way to compete compared to traditional sports. Some students aren't interested in basketball, football or baseball, so E-sports offers them another outlet for competitive play.

And, gaming has many of the same principles as traditional sports do.

"In gaming, there is collaboration, communication, teamwork, and it requires problem solving skills," Keyser explained. "This is a great opportunity for kids that don't play any other sports. It is their way of competing and building team skills. They have to communicate and interact with others and do it quickly because the games move fast. You have to have good dexterity and hand-eye coordination."

Even though E-sports is fun and games, it is not all fun and games.

"Students in the club have to have good grades just like those in traditional sports...to qualify to play," Keyser said.

About \$2,500 in seed money to buy the gaming computers came from a grant through the Tuscola County Community Foundation, and the Cass City Schools matched that amount to buy 10 gaming computers.

The E-sports club has proven to be very popular. At the time

schools were shut down, there were roughly 27 kids signed up for the local club, which is open to students in grades seven through 12, although only the high school students are eligible to compete.

"The tournament play is only for high school students, but there are seventh and eighth graders in the club. This is the first year, so the seventh and eighth graders will be the foundation for future years," Keyser noted.

"We will eventually compete against other schools, and we have had our own in-house tournaments where all the kids in the club can compete."

Cass City's E-sports club is part of the Michigan High School E-sports federation, which has 22 schools. In the Thumb, aside from Cass City, Harbor Beach Schools has an E-sports club, with most of the other schools located south of I-69.

One of the nice elements of E-sports is there's no cost for travel; all of the competitions are played online over the Internet.

Keyser made it clear there are no "mature" games played in the club.

"Technology is second nature to these kids nowadays. They grew up with it. They have Chromebooks, i-Pads and a cellphone," he said, adding the gaming industrial really took off when all of the computers became smaller. "Everyone I know either has games on their phone, I-pad, computer or Chromebook."

Plus, some people make a really good living playing games. There are tournaments for cash prizes worth millions, and there is a big market to watch people play video games.

"On Twitch TV, people play computer games and it is streaming live, so people will watch them live play and pay to do that. Some gamers are making \$200,000 to \$300,000 a month. It's entertainment. A lot of the viewers will donate money to the streamers. That blows my mind," Keyser said, adding, however, that he would never pay money to watch someone game.

"The streaming gamers themselves are also entertaining personalities and are really good players. People will donate money to them. I've seen 40,000 to 60,000 people on one channel watching a game being played. Donations can be like \$2 to \$3, but the money is constantly coming in. I saw a guy make \$2,000 in the hour I watched him."

Keyser pointed out the last professional E-sports world tournament had more viewers than the Super Bowl.

Keyser, 50, has been involved in computers since the video games of the 1970s. The first video game he played was "Pong," which had a paddle on each side of the screen and bounced a ball back and forth by "hitting" it. Pong wasn't a very sophisticated game and it had to be hooked up to a television to play.

Over the years, Keyser has owned and played a variety of gaming systems from the Commodores, to the TRS-80, to the Sega and Play Stations. He has been a gamer for 40 years and, for the last 20 years, has built his own computers.

"It amazes me how the games have changed, evolved and how good the graphics have gotten. They are ultra-realistic. I like everything about the games from how they are developed to how they are coded and the artwork. The artwork is fantastic," he said. "It is amazing from where we started with video games to where they are now with the graphics and storyline."

"Some even get converted into movies because of the art, the writing and story that is involved. Some are like a book but in digital format."

Keyser graduated from Cass City High School. He went to Ferris College for two years and then entered the U.S. Air Force. Later, he earned a degree in Microsoft computer networking from Baker College when the school had a campus in Cass City.

He has worked in the local school district's IT department for eight years, taking care of the computers and networking.



Val Peters

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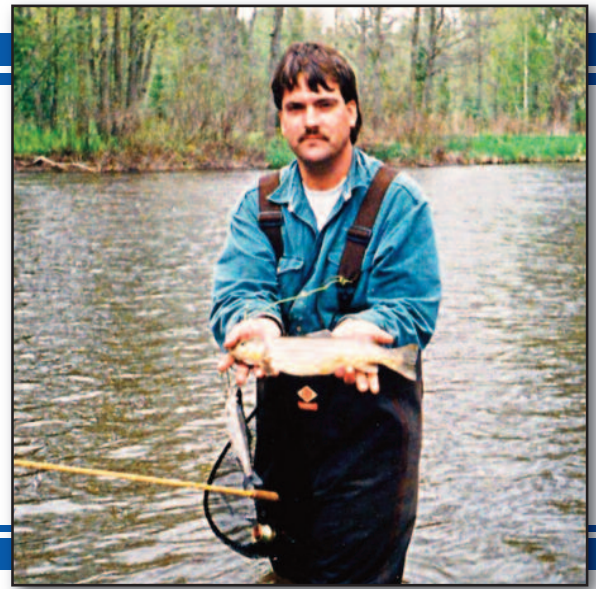
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