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# CASS CITY CHRONICLE

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

VOLUME 114, NUMBER 16

CASS CITY, MICHIGAN - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2020

.75 CENTS - 10 PAGES

## Revenue falls by \$1 million in new school budget

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

It's been years since the Cass City School Board of Education has been forced to adopt a new budget with the prospects of having \$1 million less in revenue to work with, but that was the end result during a regular monthly meeting Monday night.

Cass City Schools Chief Financial Officer Allison Zimba outlined the income and expenditure

projections for the coming year during a special budget session prior to the regular meeting.

The greatest impact on school finances stemming from the global COVID-19 pandemic will come in the form of a drastic reduction in funding from the state, which is facing its own financial challenges.

While state officials have estimated funding cuts ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 per student in the coming year – and it's even possi-

ble Lansing could order revenue cuts retroactive to the 2019-20 school year — Zimba told the board she has incorporated a projected loss of \$700 per student in Cass City's 2020-21 spending plan.

Locally, the loss of \$700 per pupil adds up to \$690,000, but the net loss to the district would actually be roughly \$450,000 after a federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act subsidy is figured into the

equation.

Zimba noted the district will net savings in the current fiscal year from a variety of sources, most related to reductions in spending on staffing, such as for the daycare program and substitute teachers, since schools were closed in mid-March statewide due to the pandemic. There have also been savings in athletic, transportation and custodial costs.

Cass City's final 2019-20 budget projects total revenues at \$10,570,751, with expenses set at \$10,015,774, leaving the district with a surplus of nearly \$555,000

and boosting its healthy fund balance to \$2,485,861 – an amount equal to roughly 23.5 percent of the general fund budget.

"That's great for this year, because we're going to need it for next year," said Zimba, who explained the proposed 2020-21 spending plan, which goes into effect July 1, projects revenues of \$9,575,384 and expenditures totaling \$10,136,234, which is expected to reduce the fund balance by about \$560,000, leaving Cass City with a fund balance of \$1.93 million, which is equal to 14.3 percent of the general fund. Please turn to page 8.



THE CASS City Rotary Club's annual Music in Rotary Park is a go this year, and the Mysterians (pictured above during a previous appearance in Cass City) will kick off the series Friday, July 3, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. "Their genre is the 'oldies' and they are famous for their October 1966 hit song, '96 Tears'," Rotary Club member and event organizer Carolyn Sorenson noted.

## On with the show!

### Music in Rotary Park set to kick off July 3

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the summer of 2020 into the season of cancellations, but

Cass City Rotary Club officials offered some good news last week in the form of plans to again host their annual summer concert music series.

From bluegrass to country to

classic rock, the Music in Rotary Park concert series has filled the summer night air with music in downtown Cass City for the past dozen or more years, and this year's programs promise more of the same.

The 2020 series will kick off Friday, July 3, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with the return of The Mysterians, formerly known as Question Mark and the Mysterians, which was propelled to national prominence in the 1960s with its number one hit on the Billboard Hot 100, "96 Tears".

"Their genre is the 'oldies'. Two of the original band members, Robert Balderama and Frank Rodriguez, will be playing along with two other, newer members of the group, Tom Barshaff and Rudy Levario," noted Cass City Rotary Club member and event organizer Carolyn Sorenson.

"Rotary discussed whether we'd have concerts last month, and we thought we'd try to start them (at the) end of July or August. However, with things opening up more now, we discussed again this month and decided to start earlier," Sorenson said of the decision to launch the summer series in early July.

"We feel it's important for our community to be able to gather with their friends and neighbors and enjoy music and be outdoors, while still maintaining social distancing and promoting good health," she added. "We feel our park enables us to be able to do both."

"While speaking to a few of the bands, they have also emphasized how good it will be to be able to

Please turn to page 4.

## Charges issued against driver in Huron Crash; man turns himself in

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

The man wanted for crashing his pick-up truck into the Huron County Medical Care Facility in Bad Axe earlier this month – with his five-year-old son inside the vehicle – turned himself in to authorities early Monday afternoon, Huron County Sheriff Kelly J. Hanson said.

The Huron County Prosecutor's Office last week issued formal charges against the suspect, Billy James Werth Jr., 36, of Crosswell, who fled the scene following the accident.

"It appears he had been out of state for some of the time we were looking for him," said Hanson, who reported Werth was arraigned in Huron County District Court and was in the process of posting a \$5,000 bond.

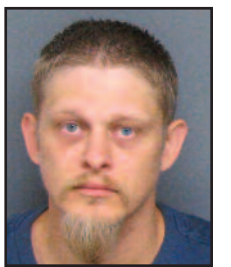
Werth was wanted on a three-count warrant charging him with felony unlawfully driving away of an automobile, and two misdemeanor charges — leaving the scene of an injury accident and

reckless driving.

The bizarre incident unfolded June 11 just before 11:30 p.m. when the pickup truck rammed into the medical care facility on South Van Dyke Road.

"Deputies found that a 2008 Dodge pickup was eastbound when it left the roadway, striking a gas main, then a tree and then ended up (inside) the building's chapel on its top," Hanson said.

Deputies reported Werth had fled the scene with his young son, and they found evidence that Werth had been injured in the collision. "A puppy that was likely a passenger of the vehicle as well was found possibly injured and taken by a good Samaritan," Hanson



Billy Werth Jr.

Please turn to page 2.

## Tuscola County Jail plan stalls again over finances

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

Over the last 20 years, there have been millage proposals, studies and architectural drawings drafted in an effort to secure updates or construction of a new jail in Tuscola County.

Those efforts were either rejected by voters or stalled due to finances and/or or lack of county commissioners' support to move forward.

Despite recent renewed efforts to address the aging jail facility, little progress has been made over the past two years. The jail issue, which has been an ongoing item on the commissioners' agendas, was briefly discussed during the last county board meeting.

"The jail study is done. The sheriff is waiting until we can all meet in person to do a PowerPoint presentation," said Tuscola County Building and Grounds Director Mike Miller. "He doesn't think doing a PowerPoint presentation online would be effective."

Commissioners have been conducting virtual meetings since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"At this point, I don't think it is even worthwhile for us to even listen to a presentation," said Commissioner Dan Grimshaw. "Are we going to take on a multi-million (dollar) issue for a county jail?"

"I guess that is a valid point, but you did pay for the study," Miller responded. "I would think we would at least get it presented so we have it."

"Right now it is not a pretty (financial) picture to go out for a project," said Grimshaw who is a member of the jail's latest study group.

However, finances don't stop commissioners from giving themselves each a \$2,000 raise as well as striking down previous action in order to be able to qualify to receive county paid medical insurance at a cost of about \$17,000 per commissioner. If all five commissioners take the health insurance option that becomes available the first of the year, the combined cost would be \$95,000.

The main section of the Tuscola County Jail was built 54 years ago, so it is showing its age. As a result, officials are finding it increasingly difficult to find replacement parts for repairs and to comply with ever changing state regulations for jails.

The decision to take another look at jail needs resurfaced again two years ago.

Please turn to page 10.



THE 2020 Cass City Freedom Festival was canceled last month due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the annual fireworks display is a go this year, festival organizers announced Friday. Plans call for the popular display to get underway at Cass City Recreational Park at dusk Saturday, July 4.



## Sheriff: save yourself some grief; take your keys, lock your house

Huron County Sheriff Kelly J. Hanson is reminding area residents to hang on to their car keys and lock their doors following a series of attempted vehicle thefts in the county.

"Late this (Friday) morning, our office responded to a residence on Section Line Road, just west of Harbor Beach in Sand Beach Township, where a resident there learned an individual had been in his vehicles" the previous night, Hanson reported.

"While looking through trail camera images...distorted pictures taken around 10 p.m. showed what appeared to be one

male subject going through the complainant's diesel pickup and small car. It was as if he was looking for keys, but fortunately neither had any in them," he said. "Notable valuables in both were left untouched.

"The subject then headed toward the complainant's house and ended up out of the camera's range," the sheriff added. "It was believed it was very possible that entry was being contemplated. Luckily, no pry marks or evidence of forced entry was found on the windows or doors.

"This incident is one of four others like it that has occurred in our

county over the last two months," the sheriff noted. "This time, though, there were no keys in an ignition, or unlocked doors or windows to aid in the crime.

"Residents are asked to never leave keys in their vehicles and to always lock their residences and outbuildings when they're not home or asleep. Never take for granted that just because you live in a rural area that no one will steal your vehicle or illegally enter your home."

Hanson added, "These incidents happen more than many realize, and a little extra effort can help prevent a lot of grief."

## One fatality, several hurt in crash

A two-vehicle crash in Huron County last week claimed one life and left several people injured.

Huron County Sheriff Kelly J. Hanson stated the crash was reported shortly after 5 p.m. June 14 at the intersection of Sebewaing Road and Bay Port Road in Sebewaing Township.

Investigators said a 2014 Chrysler van driven by 35-year-old Ashley Horetski of Port Austin was northbound on Bay Port Road, south of Sebewaing Road, when she failed to stop at the in-

tersection. She and her children, ages 15, 11 and 7, then collided with a westbound 2010 Dodge Journey driven by 58-year-old Gerald Steinbis and his two passengers, all of Bad Axe.

Both vehicles rolled and came to rest in the northwest area of the intersection, according to Hanson.

"Unfortunately, Gerald died at the scene and his passengers, 48-year-old wife Beverly Steinbis and 27-year-old Justin Ackerman, were injured," he said. "All (occupants) in the Horetski vehicle were injured as well (and) were

taken to Scheurer Hospital.

"All but one were eventually flown or taken by ambulance to out-of-county hospitals," Hanson added.

Assisting deputies at the scene were Sebewaing police, fire and ambulance units, the Owendale Fire Department, Scheurer Ambulance, Elkton EMS, ACW Ambulance, Central Huron Ambulance and the Huron County Road Commission.

This accident remains under investigation.

## Circuit court proceedings

### Several appear on felony charges

*Editor's note: while the COVID-19 pandemic has forced Tuscola County officials to close the courthouse doors to the public and scale back court proceedings initially, criminal cases are still being adjudicated via video conferencing.*

The following people recently appeared in Tuscola County Circuit Court on various criminal charges:

\*Kristie N. Knapp, 31, Fairgrove, pleaded no contest to charges of larceny in a building and larceny of money or property valued at \$200 to \$1,000 June 9, 2019, in Wisner Township.

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered in the case and bond was continued. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

\*Crystal D. Price, 33, pleaded no contest to charges of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder, child abuse (third degree), interfering with electronic communications, and two counts of domestic violence between July 1 and Aug. 13 in the village of Reese.

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered and bond was continued. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

\*Tyrone L. Crosby, Jr., 39, Caro,

was sentenced to 365 days in the county jail following his conviction on a charge of criminal sexual conduct, second degree, between Dec. 29, 2016, and April 18, 2019, in Wells Township. He was also convicted of being an habitual offender (two prior felony convictions).

In addition to jail time, he was placed on probation for 60 months and ordered to pay court costs and fines totaling \$758.

\*Donald L. Lumley, Jr., 24, Caro, was sentenced to 90 days in jail following his conviction on a charge of assault with a dangerous weapon (felonious assault) Oct. 4 in Caro.

He was also placed on probation for 36 months and ordered to pay costs and fines totaling \$258.

\*Audreanna M. Johnson, 26, Caro, was sentenced to three to 15 years in prison following her conviction on charges of perjury (two counts), and two counts of delivery of marijuana to a minor between Aug. 25, 2014, and March 15, 2019, in Caro.

She was also ordered to pay costs and fines totaling \$462 plus restitution of \$2,412.10.

\*Joseph A. Babcock, 25, Caro, pleaded no contest to domestic violence, third offense, March 2 in

Caro. He was also convicted of being an habitual offender (two prior felony convictions).

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered in the case, bond was revoked and the defendant was remanded to the custody of the sheriff's department. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

\*Jose E. Nazario II, 20, Cass City, pleaded no contest to failure to comply with the Sex Offenders Registration Act by failing to report in person and notify his probation agent immediately after establishing several designations used in Internet communications or postings Jan. 22 in Caro.

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered and bond was continued. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

\*Ashley L. Houghtaling, 37, Munger, pleaded no contest to welfare fraud involving more than \$500 between November 2013 and August 2018 in Tuscola County. She was also convicted of being an habitual offender (three or more prior felony convictions).

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered and bond was continued. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

\*Tiffany M. Phelps, 29, Caro, pleaded no contest to charges of larceny in a building and larceny of less than \$200 Jan. 12, 2019, in Caro.

A pre-sentence investigation was ordered and bond was continued. Sentencing is to be scheduled.

## Charges

Continued from page one.

noted.

As the investigation continued into the early morning hours the next day, deputies discovered Werth and his son had made it to the boy's mother's residence in the Crosswell area.

"Sanilac Deputies responded (to the residence), but the driver once again fled on foot. Deputy Sgt. Neumann responded to that residence and learned the full identity of the suspect driver," Hanson said. "He further learned the suspect had also stolen a vehicle to get out of the (Bad Axe) area, from the Misty Meadows Trailer Park, which was a couple miles west of the accident scene."

Hanson indicated there's evidence that the suspect stopped at a number of other residences in search of a getaway vehicle before finding one at the trailer park.

He said investigators were able to confirm that the child was okay. He was left with his mother.

# Obituaries

## Karen A. Mayer

Karen A. Mayer, 67, of Cass City, passed away Saturday, June 20, 2020 at Covenant Healthcare, Saginaw.

She was born May 28, 1953 in Cass City, to the late David and Wilma (Hartsell) Ashmore.

Karen married Ronald Fritz July 14, 1990 in Caro. Ron passed away December 13, 2007.

Karen loved attending church events and local festivals, such as the Freedom Festival, the Potato Festival and the Pumpkin Festival. She had an incredible memory for dates and events, and kept everyone informed of such things, most of all she loved time with her grandchildren.

Karen is survived by her children, Cory (Lea Albrich) Mayer and David Mayer, both of Cass City and Wilma (Joseph) Smith of Freeland; step-sons, Michael Fritz, Jonathan Fritz and Timothy Fritz; and 7 grandchildren.

Visitation will be Friday, June 26, from 4 until 7 p.m. at the Thabet Funeral Home, 6255 Main St., Cass City and Saturday, June 27, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. at Cass City United Methodist Church, 5100 Cemetery Rd. Funeral service at 11 a.m. with Pastor Robert Paul officiating.

Burial will be in Grant Township Cemetery, Grant Township.

Please share condolences at [www.thabetfuneralhome.com](http://www.thabetfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements were made by Thabet Funeral Home of Cass City.



## Tina Soldan

Tina Marie Soldan, 48, of Bad Axe, formerly of Cass City, passed away Monday, June 15, 2020 at McLaren Thumb Region, Bad Axe.

She was born June 13, 1972 in Cass City, to Floyd and the late Sharon (Smith) Soldan.

Tina worked for Thumb Industries, she was also a stay at home mom. She loved gardening, the outdoors in general, painting, crocheting and loved time with her family, especially her grandchildren.

Tina is survived by her partner of more than 30 years, Michael Harris, children, Jessica (Bruce Horning) Harris of Cass City and Matthew Harris of Bad Axe; grandchildren, Kenneth Harris, Aiden Horning and Colton Horning; her father, Floyd Soldan of Cass City; sisters, Leah Dohn of Kinde, Merry Soldan and Charlotte (Denzial) Jones, both of Cass City; and many loving nieces, nephews and great-nephews.

Cremation has taken place and a celebration of Tina's life will take place, Saturday, June 27, 2020 at 3 p.m. at the Cass City Gun Club, 2676 Englehart Road.

Please share condolences at [www.thabetfuneralhome.com](http://www.thabetfuneralhome.com)

Arrangements were made by Thabet Funeral Home of Cass City.



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**In Our  
OPINION...**

Clarke Haire  
Publisher

Tom Montgomery  
Editor

## Cigarette tax hike could prove costly

*Guest editorial  
by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy*

Michigan lawmakers could be thinking about gaining back some revenue lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic by upping cigarette taxes, but studies suggest such a measure would be offset by an increase in tobacco smuggling across state lines.

That's according to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which released its annual update on cigarette tax evasion and avoidance among U.S. states. The report estimates the percentage of cigarette consumption that can be attributed to smuggling.

Using data from 2018, the most recent year available, New York continues to have the top in-bound smuggling rate in the nation, with more than over 53 percent of all cigarettes consumed smuggled in from elsewhere. California was close behind at 48 percent, followed by Washington (40 percent), New Mexico (36 percent) and Minnesota (36 percent).

The largest shifts include Rhode Island, which leapt from the 18th highest smuggling rate in the nation to eighth place, and Connecticut, which moved from 11th place to seventh.

Michigan ranks 15th in the nation, with a net smuggling rate just below 20 percent. That total would be higher, but cigarettes are also smuggled out to Canada.

The state's smuggling rate is down from more than 34 percent since the first study was published in 2008, which employed data from 2006. This is likely due to the fact that Ohio and Wisconsin raised their excise tax in the intervening years, which gives Michiganders less reason to casually smuggle, and an overall decline in smoking rates.

The latest model shows that the majority of tax evasion comes from individual consumers, rather than large scale, longer-haul shipments.

If no smuggling existed, Michigan's treasury would bring in an estimated \$207.4 million more in cigarette tax revenue than it currently does.

By contrast, the Indiana treasury made almost \$60 million as a direct result of smuggling as Illinois- and Michigan-based and other buyers made the Hoosier state their source state for cheaper smokes.

Lawmakers across the country are considering raising cigarette taxes in an effort to recover revenue lost from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, state policymakers should remember that increased excise taxes on cigarettes would likely increase cigarette smuggling, which could actually lower state revenue.

"Some lawmakers may be tempted to raise Michigan's cigarette tax to help backfill the state's current budget hole," said Michael LaFaive, senior director of fiscal policy at the Mackinac Center and a co-author of the study. "They should not. Smuggling and other lawlessness would increase and it would likely just further enrich lawbreakers, Indiana retailers and their state treasury."

The study was co-authored by Todd Nesbit of Ball State University and adjunct scholar with the Mackinac Center, and Ulrik Boeson, senior policy analyst with the Washington D.C.-based Tax Foundation.

## Drier Humor

by Mary Drier

The A, B, Cs of maturing



Since my birthday in May, I've been thinking a lot about aging.

Because I'm older than most of those I spend time with, I've come to realize the generation gap is a very real thing that is growing day by day.

A recent conversation I overheard and tried to participate in made me realize the gap between my generation and the young whippersnappers is a chasm rather than just a gap.

I heard the younger ones lament about having to help their parents or grandparents over and over again when it comes to using electronic devices. According to them, they have had to help the elderly members of their family numerous times with the same electronic device issues, and they "still just don't get it."

Like what is so hard about doing x, y, or z, they explain in what sounds like a foreign language to me, so I understand others who are also mature who cannot figure out technology instructions.

When I hear them talking about how to work some electronic devices and why the older generation can't figure out how to operate them, all I can think is the A, B, Cs of getting older stand for Always Being Criticized.

Those wet-behind-the-ears munchkins go on about how to work computers, software updates, applications, hardware, smartphones etc., and how they can't understand how the old folks don't know how to operate them.

First off, let me set the record straight on timelines; we are the generation that started out on manual typewriters and had to use Whiteout, which is a gloopy paste brushed on paper to cover up typos.

We are trying to transition to computers. It is amazing to us just to be able to hit backspace to fix a mistake.

And, back in the day, the difference between software and hardware was when mom mistakenly put your underwear in the wash with clothes that were being starched.

Back in the day, having a smartphone was considered switching from a shared rotary dialed party-line, land-line phone to phones with push buttons on a single phone line that didn't have to be shared with others.

Today's generation doesn't realize we grew up with television shows in black and white on TV sets that could only pick up two or three stations, depending on how good the rabbit-ear antenna was.

The next big "upgrade" for television for us was a sheet of plastic that had hues of green, pink and blue. That was great for watching the outside scenes on the television show "Bonanza," but it made closeup shots of an actor's face weird.

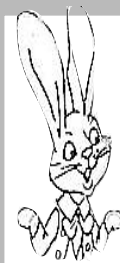
Satellite television brings a plethora of programs and a wide variety of options that we are not used to dealing with.

So excuse us for you having to take the time to explain a couple of times how to do something on an electronic device.

And, the Internet has only been around for about 26 years. It was my generation that developed it. We lived pretty well without Google for decades.

When it comes right down to it, us in the mature generation are owed a lot of thanks from the techno generation.

Without us to help you learn, you would still be wearing diapers. And, you would not be able to text as fast as you do without us helping you with your dexterity by giving you Cheerios to eat to help your hand-eye coordination.



### Rabbit Tracks

by Clarke Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

A phone call from former Cass City resident Francis Withey Monday morning revealed that he recently turned 80 years old.

The one-time United Parcel Service employee is still very active and celebrated the milestone by purchasing a 3-wheel Ski Doo motorcycle. While Withey is known as an avid snowmobiler, he has never owned a bike before now.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Social Security Administration (SSA) would like to remind folks to review their Social Security Statement online. The Statement has important Social Security information and, if applicable, estimates of your future benefits.

If you are working, we encourage you to check your Statement yearly to make sure your earnings record is correct. The Statement also will help in planning your financial future.

To view your most recent Statement, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/reviewyourstatement](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/reviewyourstatement) and sign in to your account.

On June 10, 2017, the SSA added a second method to verify your identity each time you sign in to your account. This is in addition to your username and password. Using two ways to identify you when you log on will help better protect your account from unauthorized use and fraud. Now, when you sign in to your account you will complete two steps:

- \* Step 1: Enter your username and password.
- \* Step 2: Enter the security code we send you by text message or email, depending on your choice (your cell phone provider's text message and data rates may apply).

With instant access to your Social Security Statement at any time, you will no longer receive one periodically in the mail, saving money and the environment. Thank you for Going Green!

## Letters to the Editor

### Dr. Hall story fabricated?

Dear Editor:

I really regret having to write this letter to you. It was debated for some time as to whether I should or should not. Unfortunately, after having several people question me, I felt I had to write. I am writing this on behalf of Dr. Richard Hall's family. You recently took it upon yourself to write an article about his retirement. You had scheduled an interview with him, but he decided to cancel the interview. Instead of you honoring his wishes and not doing an article, and possibly doing just a small notice, you took it upon yourself to fabricate what appears to be a personal interview with him. You even say, "he smiled as he said". As we both know this never happened, and when I questioned you about it, you said the following, "no good intention goes unpunished" and that "in 35 years, no one has ever questioned my integrity". May I ask what the good intention was here? Where is the integrity to fabricate an article? Maybe if you had contacted a member of his family, they could have explained it to you. He wanted to retire very much like he has lived his life, quietly and reserved. No, this could not be done, so instead an interview was faked. Is this good journalism? My son read it and immediately said, "none of that sounds like anything my grandpa would say". This is also what has been

Please turn to page 6.

## CASS CITY CHRONICLE

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## Music in Rotary Park set

Continued from page one.

play this summer — Robert Balderama from the Mysterians also reiterated how nice it will be to be able to play after the pandemic, and (they're) very excited to come back to Cass City on July 3.

Sorenson, who also thanked all of the sponsors supporting the series, pointed out that the concerts are free of charge and are scheduled to run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each night, weather permitting, and all are welcome to bring a lawn chair and a friend.

This summer's full line-up includes:

\*Friday, July 3 — the Mysterians.

\*Friday, July 10 — Random, featuring members Don Childs, John Merz, Mike Sattelberg, Dennis Longuski and Greg Planck, who bring their own style of classic rock and country music to the stage. In addition, Knights Insurance of Cass City will be on hand with snacks in the park.

\*Friday, July 17 — No concert.

\*Friday, July 24 — Sonas, featuring fine Celtic and early American music. Group members are Tom Krause, Dee Dee Tibbits and Kelly Sible.

\*Friday, July 31 — The Fulchers. Tom, Tommy and Mindy are back this summer for an encore performance, singing and playing a variety of music.

\*Friday, Aug. 7 — Leftovers, Classic rock and country music featuring band members Don Childs, Tim Omstead, Kerry Penland and Kory Batschke.

\*Friday, Aug. 14 — The Tom and Jerry Show featuring Jerry Lamoureux and Tom Guinther. The popular duo will bring a variety of music to the stage for all ages.

\*Friday, Aug. 21 — The Mercurials, featuring original tunes and folk/Indie music, sponsored by Clements Boarding, with snacks in the park. Band members are Anthony Lee of Caro, Steve Progoreski of Reese, Nate Dzuba of Saginaw, Harvey Remington of Bay City, and Sam Clements of Cass City.



**LOCAL FAVORITES** The Tom and Jerry Show, featuring Jerry Lamoureux (left) and Tom Guinther, will take the Music in Rotary Park stage Friday, Aug. 14.



**MICHIGAN Gov. Gretchen Whitmer last week extended the state's emergency declaration related to the COVID-19 pandemic until July 16. However, she has indicated that if the COVID-19 cases continue to decline, businesses such as movie theaters, gyms and bowling alleys throughout the Lower Peninsula will be allowed to reopen by July 4.**

## County (employees) back to business

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

Although all Tuscola County employees are back to work, county buildings remain closed to the public.

"We will now be back in the office five days a week. The doors will still be locked, and services will be provided by appointment," said county Controller-Administrator Clayette Zechmeister, noting the phone numbers for all offices are posted on the doors.

"Payments are still being accepted through a drop box, through the mail, or through the GovPay site available at tuscolacounty.org," she added.

Tuscola Commissioners recently approved a motion directing all employees to return to work, but during a previous committee of the whole meeting, a board discussion suggested it was up to the controller-administrator to make that call.

"Commissioners are not responsible for running the county. Commissioners only handle financial oversight," said board Chairman Thom Bardwell. He said it was up to Zechmeister, department heads and elected officials to decide on reopening the county.

County building doors have been closed since mid-March in compliance with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's executive orders, which were designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Zechmeister used the governor's information to help form the no-

tice on the county's closure, and she also contacted Bardwell, Emergency Services Director Steve Anderson, and the county's health officer.

"I was directed by the board chair that we lock the doors," said Zechmeister, who pointed out elected officials and department heads were looking to the commissioners for guidance on returning to work.

Commissioners Kim Vaughan, Mark Jensen, and Dan Grimshaw also voiced support for county employees to return to work.

"We should not need to tell them. They are in charge of their offices," Grimshaw stated.

However, before the county could open, it had to have a preparedness and protocol plan in place. Zechmeister attempted during two previous meetings to explain that a plan had to be approved before the county could reopen, but her attempts were re-

buffed by some commissioners.

During a special meeting on May 21, a plan was adopted after several revisions. Grimshaw made several changes to the last plan that he helped co-write with Anderson before it was adopted.

After that, there was another commission meeting on May 28, but nothing was said at that meeting about employees returning to work.

According to Zechmeister, all offices now have face masks and protective shields, and the county's plan incorporates recommendations related to social distancing, protective equipment and appointment procedures.

Those who are allowed access to county services by appointment will not have their temperature taken, but they will have to answer some health questions and be required to wear a face covering.

More information is available by calling (989) 672-3890.

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**Karalee Nusz - Caro**  
**Jozie Chippi - Cass City**  
**Alexis Miller—Lakers**  
**Jacob Miller—Lakers**  
**Logan Gutierrez - Millington**  
**Allison Dennis - John Glenn**  
**Maegan Hodder - North Branch**  
**Jonathan S. Hudson - Reese**  
**Jade Perez - Traverse City West**



## Reporter's notebook

### Of Father's Days past and present

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor



A candy bar, a flyswatter, a notebook and a pen.

Not exactly what some fathers might consider a bonanza on Father's Day, but those simple gifts and others like them, each given in love and with only the enthusiasm a youngster can muster, added up to my best Father's Days ever.

Of course, that was back when our three girls and our son were still quite young.

My wife, Deb, occasionally reminds me of those special memories, saying she can still remember how excited the kids all were to pick out their own gifts for dad. Those were lean financial days for us, but our youngsters didn't know it. They were too wrapped up in helping to make this day special for their old man, who did his best to show his appreciation and excitement over each gift, each smile, each hug.

It was more adoration than I figured I deserved, I suppose because I always felt like I struggled as a dad, never quite sure of myself when it came to communicating how much the kids meant to me and how much I loved them.

Honestly, I still feel a bit lost and unsure if I'm getting the message across to them.

My own parents were divorced when I was still quite young, so I always felt that I missed out on the day-to-day observations my friends had of their dads, and how those observations helped to shape them into the dads they went on to become.

Now, I probably couldn't adequately describe exactly what makes a great father, but I know one when I see one. And it usually leaves me feeling a little envious when I compare my own dad skills.

It goes without saying that a parent who struggles with an addiction over a period of years probably should feel that way, even after they've put a few years of sobriety behind them — and to the gnawing regret that comes with knowing you frittered away precious time by allowing that addiction to put distance between you and the ones you love.

I've been sober now for 8 1/2 years, but that feeling still gnaws at me from time to time. However, it hasn't prevented me from putting a great deal more effort into being a dad, even though my kids have long since left the nest and are raising their own families. I want to be around them, listen to their struggles, encourage them and, of course, tease them whenever the opportunity presents itself.

When they think about me, I hope my kids see a man who treasured watching them grow up into the fine adults they've become, who loves his children unconditionally (even though I often fail when it comes to showing it), and whose over-the-top sense of humor — even the avalanche of "dad jokes" they've endured over their lifetimes — is proof positive that a good laugh is often just the right medicine.

More importantly, I hope they see me as an example of hope — that no matter how badly you've screwed up in life, it's possible to start again and try to make things right if you're willing to pick up your faith, roll up your sleeves and put everything you have into it.

As a dad, that's a legacy I can live with.

Looking back, I can remember watching in amazement as Jennifer, Christie and Lindsey and, later, Brandon, each came into this world. And I've watched them grow into wonderful adults who have faced their share of struggles, but are still giving life their best shot, each in their own way, each enjoying their own successes.

These days, our "kids" are adults in their 20s and 30s, but they still set aside a little time each year on Father's Day — even if it's simply to call and tell me they're thinking about me — to let me know they think I'm special, in spite of all of my very human shortcomings and failures.

I hope they know just how much I appreciate that — and them, for still making me feel the way I did when I opened those giftwrapped candy bars, flyswatters, notebook paper and pens so many years ago.

# Down Memory Lane

by Tina Pallas



## 5 YEARS AGO (2015)

It will be some time before the sprawling deVor Dairy Farm in Decker, devastated by what National Weather Service (NWS) officials have since confirmed was an EF-1 tornado, is up and running full speed again. But the farm was already milking some 1,000 cows the day after the twister struck during the late evening hours of June 22, thanks to a tidal wave of support from individuals and businesses alike. Just minutes later, the Sanilac County Sheriff's Department confirmed a tornado near M-53 and Deckerville Road. The EF-1 tornado that struck the deVor operation touched down about four miles northwest of Decker, ripping through a 20-mile path ending about two miles southeast of Deckerville, with winds of up to 95 miles per hour, NWS officials reported.

Les and Donna Auten of Cass City and Michael and Connie Gaeth of Pigeon announce the engagement of their children Paul Gaeth and Samantha Suzanne Auten. Samantha is a nurse and is currently employed at the Huron County Medical Care Facility in Bad Axe. Paul is a computer technician and is employed at AVCI in Pigeon. A May 14, 2016 wedding is being planned.

John W. Hunt has completed the purchase of five acres of land in the industrial park. The Thumb-based trucker plans on building a terminal for maintenance and repair of his fleet. The major hauler of milk for the Dairy Farmer's of America (DFA) plant estimates five to 10 employees will be working at the site.

## 10 YEARS AGO (2010)

Kim Schadd of Elkton introduces her daughter, Sara, 2 1/2, to some young goats at the Maplewood Petting Zoo, one of many attractions set up at Cass City Recreation Park Saturday during Cass City's annual Freedom Festival.

Three area residents were recently named to the dean's list at Alma College during the 2010 winter term. They are: junior Lysa Knight of Cass City, a 2007 graduate of Cass City High School and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Knight, Cass City; senior Mark Recker of Ubyly, a 2006 graduate of Ubyly High School and the son of August and Lucille Recker, Ubyly; and senior Michelle Schoenlein of Caro, a 2006 graduate of Vassar High School and the daughter of Wayne and Judy Schoenlein of Caro. To be named to the dean's list, a student must earn a minimum 3.5 or better grade point average while completing at least 13 credit hours of coursework during the term.

## 25 YEARS AGO (1995)

A veteran Montrose School District official will take over the reins as superintendent of the Kingston School District. The Kingston Board of Education last week hired George Goodchild, 50, after narrowing a field of more than a dozen candidates to just 2; Goodchild and Andrew Cook of Swartz Creek. Interviews of the finalists were held in May and the school board offered Goodchild the job during its June 26 monthly meeting. Goodchild, who has 17 years of administrative experience, has spent the bulk of his 29-year career in education in the Montrose School District, where he currently serves as supervisor of operations.

The Cass City native Sharie DeLong recently spent 3 weeks looking for ways to make 5 wildlife preserves better places for the animals that live in them. The Michigan State University senior traveled and worked with 16 other college students, 2 university professors and the chairman of the Kenya Wildlife Service, Perez Olindo.

Cornerstone College announces that Jandi Hillaker has been placed on the dean's list for the spring semester, having earned a grade point average of 3.875. Hillaker is a 1991 graduate of Cass City High School and is the daughter of Jack and Rona Hillaker. In order to qualify for the Cornerstone Dean's List, students must take a minimum of 12 course hours and must

achieve a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Elmer and Janet Francis hosted a small lawn wedding reception June 25 for their grandson, Curt Medrano and new wife Jenni of San Antonio, Texas. Guests were from San Antonio, Cass City, Reese, Millington, Kingston, Saginaw, Laingsburg, Caro and New Orleans, La.

Leslie Merchant, a delivery driver for United Parcel Service, was recently recognized by the company for completing 20 years of driving without an accident. Merchant works out of the UPS facility located in Cass City. "It's basically just working at safety all the time. You have to drive your vehicle plus everyone else's to insure safety. Also, don't get ahead of yourself it develops bad habits." Merchant and his wife, Marcia, have 2 children.

## 35 YEARS AGO (1985)

Friends of Mr. and Mrs. John Webb visited them Friday when they celebrated Mr. Webb's 81st birthday. Dessert was served. Birthday cards included one from President and Mrs. Reagan. Visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Willard Dodson, Mrs. Rose Worstell, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Clarke and Mr. and Mrs. E. Carmack Smith.

Tonia Champagne, 10, daughter of Roger and Bonnie Champagne of Freeland and, granddaughter of Lawrence and Dorothy Holik, Cass City, has been selected as a finalist in the 1985 Miss Michigan National Pre-Teen Pageant to be held at the Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, Aug. 31. The winner of the pageant will receive a \$1,000 savings bond, crown, banner and a round trip flight to the National Pageant to compete with other state winners for the title of Miss National PreTeen of 1986. Contestants will be judged on poise-personality, talent, interview and appearance. Her hobbies include roller skating, bicycling, swimming and sticker collecting.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Smith observed their 50th wedding anniversary Wednesday, June 19, when the family gathered at Wildwood Farms for dinner. An open house was held Sunday afternoon when 40 relatives and friends called. Guests came from Boalsburg, Pa., Oxford, Kalamazoo, Bay City, Vassar, Lapeer, Caro and Cass City.

## 40 YEARS AGO (1980)

May Fader should clean out her purse more often. The last time she did, it won her \$5,000. The Green Road, Cass City, resident bought a state lottery "Michigan Baseball" instant card at the Ku Ku Kow restaurant in Caro in May, put it in her purse, then forgot about it. A week or so later, on May 22 to be exact, she came across the card, rubbed off the numbers and found she had won \$5,000.

Carrie Blades of Hurley Road and Kit Okerstrom, Huron Street, were chosen "most identical twins" by the Michigan Twins association at its annual meeting last weekend in Pontiac. The twins, who were born on the Fourth of July, have also served as co-presidents and co-secretaries in the organization.

Although the incorporation of Owendale as a village goes back only 75 years — an event being celebrated July 4-6 — its history goes back much farther than that. The first settlers in the area were Chippewa Indians. Some were still living in the area as late as 1874.

Leigh Anne Hager, 18, of Marlette, riding her quarter horse, "Big Brother," was the high points winner in the 4-H Junior Wranglers Horse Show. Greg Smith, 14, of Bad Axe, was the runner-up points winner in the show. His pony, "King" is 20 years old.

The Annual Harold Isard Open of the Cass City Golf League best ball tournament was held Monday at Rolling Hills Golf Course. Margo Isard presented the trophy to team captain Rod Wright. Members of the team are John Haire, Russ Richards, Wright and George Mika.

## 50 YEARS AGO (1970)

Robert Arthur Bullock, 26, son of Mrs. Helen Bullock, Mayville, was awarded a bachelor of arts degree

in arts and letters from Michigan State University at commencement exercises Sunday, June 14. Bullock, a graduate of Deckerville High School, is married to the former Joy Turner and they have a son, four-year-old Robert Jr. They are presently residing in E. Lansing where he works for the Lansing Oldsmobile Division. In the fall he plans to return to his studies to work toward a bachelor of fine arts degree.

Lynn Marie Bilicki, 22, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bilicki of Wilmot, was awarded a bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts from Central Michigan University Saturday, June 6. She was graduated from Kingston High School in 1966 and will return to CMU in the fall for graduate study.

Dean William Hulien, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hulien, Cass City, has been awarded a bachelor of science degree in business administration from Ferris State College. A 1966 graduate of Cass City High School, he recently enlisted in the Navy and left Sunday June 28 for basic training.

Second Lt. and Mrs. Gary Tracy visited his parents and family over the weekend, June 20 and 21. Tracy just graduated from Officers Training School in Virginia and will report for more schooling in Maryland. Lt. Tracy has had four years in the Air Force as a Lab Technician and at the present time is with Ordnance in the Army.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hendrick and two children of State College, Pa., Mr. and Mrs. Fred Smith and son David of Clarkston and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Smith and children surprised their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Smith, June 20 when they came to celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, which was June 19.

Mrs. Dorothy Jenkins of Millington, formerly of Cass City, won third place in a statewide student cosmetology contest held in Lansing. She won similar honors at the school she is attending and was one of 23 stylists entered in the state finals. Contestants were judged on adaptability, execution and originality. Mrs. Jenkins is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Crawford of Deford.

## 75 YEARS AGO (1945)

Mrs. Ward Law, formerly Mrs. John Ball, has the distinction of having three children who were graduated from high schools last month. Lawrence Ball, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Ball, Sr., and Miss Lorraine Murray, daughter of Paul Murray, are members of the class of 1945 of the Cass City High School and Miss Marion Ball belongs to this years graduating class of the Sebawaing High School.

Sgt. V. M. Hoadley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arville Hoadley, of Lansing, has been visiting his grandmother, Mrs. Guy Hoadley, of Greenleaf township, and other relatives for the past few days. Sgt. Hoadley was married April 7, 1945, to Miss Beryl Banbridge, chief radar operator in the British A. T. S. Mrs. Hoadley is expected to join her husband in Lansing as soon as transportation can be arranged. Sgt. Hoadley returned from England about a month ago and was sent to a hospital in Texas for a short time. He received several wounds while serving as a paratrooper and saw service in the Far East, Sicily, Italy and Yugoslavia. He is a wearer of the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Presidential citation. After leaving the hospital in Africa, he was stationed for a short time in Ireland and later spent a year in England.

## 100 YEARS AGO (1920)

Chas. Wood was one of nine Tuscola county boys who attended the High School Camp Conference at Camp Hayo-Went-Ha at Old Torch Lake last week. He returned home Monday and is very enthusiastic regarding his outing. Morning sessions at the camp were devoted to addresses by noted Y.M.C.A. speakers and to athletics in which tennis, baseball and swimming predominated. In the baseball teams, all but one has a Tuscola County boy playing the position of pitcher.

## Thumb facilities remain alert, prepared for virus

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

While the number of new COVID-19 cases in the Thumb has declined significantly in recent weeks, area hospitals have remained on alert and prepared to address patients exhibiting symptoms of the virus, just as they have since March.

"We are and have tested many COVID patients. Most of them are tested outside the facility, but we do also see some through the ER (emergency room)," said Danielle Blaine, marketing director at Hills and Dales General Hospital in Cass City.

"I am not aware of any that we have as inpatients," she added. "We would typically send them to Covenant if they needed extended COVID care."

Officials at McLaren - Caro Region Hospital, meanwhile, took extra steps by setting up a special COVID-19 testing facility outside of the hospital.

"We have had some post-COVID 19 patients here," said McLaren Caro Region President and CEO Marc Augsburger.

There are also special facilities set up in the state to handle COVID-19 cases. Those designated sites are called "hubs."

"There is a hub in Grand Blanc and there is the Medilodge in Frankenmuth. It is a good facility," said Ann Hepfer, health officials for both the Tuscola and Huron county health departments. "They have a separate building from the rest of the facility."

The hubs are for long term-care patients that might be released from the hospital, according to Hepfer.

"They can recover at the hub before being released to a COVID-19-free, long-term care home," she explained. "Long-term care facilities who have COVID-19 cases can also transfer to the hub."

Although many of the cases of virus confirmed in Tuscola County have been linked to long-term care facilities, there were a number of cases found at the Pioneer Work and Learn facility, which is a court-placed youth center in Vassar.

"Those in Vassar did not go on to develop serious cases, and that is not surprising because it was in a youth population," Hepfer said.



Val Peters

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# Whitmer's announcement paves way for schools to open in the fall

by Tom Montgomery  
Editor

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has given schools the thumbs up to start planning for in-person classes in the fall — with strict safety measures in place — although details related to the plan won't be released until the end of the month.

Whitmer announced last week that she will release an executive order and a "robust document" called Michigan's Return to School Roadmap June 30 that will provide specifics on what will be required and recommended for schools.

"Our students and educators have made incredible sacrifices these past few months to protect themselves and their families from the spread of COVID-19," Whitmer said. "Thanks to our aggressive action against this virus, those who have done their part to flatten the curve, and the heroes on the front lines, I am optimistic that we will return to in-person learning in the fall.

"Schools must make sure to enact strict safety measures to continue protecting educators, students and their families," she added.

"The most important thing we can do when developing a return to school plan is closely examine the data and remain vigilant in our steps to fight this virus," said Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Chief Deputy for Health and Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun.

"I will continue to work closely with Governor Whitmer and the Return to Learn Advisory Council to ensure we continue to put the health and safety of our students and educators first. This is a big step, and we will remain flexible to protect everyone who steps foot in a Michigan school."

The state's "roadmap" will set the minimum health and safety requirements, although districts may choose to enact more aggressive ones in consultation with local public health officials. The minimum requirements will apply to

all schools, including traditional public, charter, private, and parochial schools.

## Judge: gyms can open

While the courts have largely supported the governor's executive orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a federal judge last week overruled Whitmer's order prohibiting gyms and other indoor fitness centers from opening.

U.S. Circuit Court Judge Paul Maloney ruled those businesses may open effective Thursday, June 25, saying the state's attorneys failed to present scientific evidence justifying the continued closure. He granted a preliminary injunction against Whitmer's executive order that closed gyms across the state.

The decision came in response to a lawsuit filed by the League of Independent Fitness Facilities and Trainers Inc. and a group of 22 companies operating gyms in Michigan.

Whitmer, who reportedly planned an immediate appeal, had argued gyms should remain closed for now given their "heavy respiratory activity, shared indoor spaces, and shared surfaces."

However, Maloney pointed out that other types of businesses have been allowed to reopen provided they adhere to new safety rules.

"With this ruling, the court is playing a dangerous role it should not play: second-guessing and upending the data-informed decisions that have saved thousands of lives in Michigan," Whitmer spokeswoman Tiffany Brown said.

## Nursing home testing

Early last week, state health officials issued a new mandate requiring coronavirus testing of all nursing home residents and staff.

The decision came after MDHHS officials spent two weeks individually calling 447 of the state's nursing homes, according to MDHHS Director Robert Gordon.

In the end, they tabulated 1,947 nursing home deaths in 447 facil-

ities with nearly 33,000 residents attributed to the COVID-19, representing 34 percent of all coronavirus deaths in Michigan. In addition, as of June 14, there had been 20 staff deaths, 7,163 confirmed cases among residents and 3,133 cases among staff.

Every nursing home in Michigan must complete at least one round of testing by July 3. Weekly testing will then be required for all residents and staff in nursing homes located in most of the Lower Peninsula.

Closer to home, Thumb health officials offered good news last Wednesday during a weekly status report on local numbers related to the pandemic.

"As of June 17, 2020, Tuscola County Health Department is reporting a total of 213 confirmed cases, 17 probable cases, and 26 deaths. In the past seven days, we have added 10 additional positive cases...and one death," said Ann Hepfer, health officer for the Tuscola and Huron county health departments.

"In Huron County, this is awesome news — no new cases in seven days. They are holding at 52 confirmed cases," she added. "This is certainly an improvement and we are remaining flat.

"(In) very early in March I used the analogy that through our mitigation tactics were trying to build a wall up like we do in flooding with sandbags to stop the water from overflowing. We would apply patches where we needed them," Hepfer said. "Finally, we have can see those public health efforts are working...(and the) waters are starting to recede.

"That is essentially what the Governor is doing by opening up little pieces of our economy, piece by piece, as we are monitoring for little spikes in the virus. We can now quickly react to those spikes, we have testing strategies in place, we have built strong partnerships that are working together, we know that practicing social distancing, (and) washing your hands for 20 seconds like it will save your life, and wearing masks are those 'sand bags' that will hold this virus behind those walls.

"This takes all of us — I mean all of us; businesses, churches, schools, healthcare — every one of you to not set us back.

"A lot of people have suffered from (this pandemic)...such as businesses, families who lost loved ones to this virus, families who could not be at their loved one's side while they taking their last breath in the hospital, health care workers who will suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders from this experience, all of those that suffered the stress and fear of catching the virus, and then the loneliness and isolation of the 'stay at home' orders," Hepfer continued. "None of us can afford for this to happen again. We must remain diligent to wearing the mask and get back to social distancing."

## Latest numbers

Between Monday, June 15, and Monday, June 22, the number of combined confirmed cases in Tuscola, Huron and Sanilac counties increased by 11 — from 301 to 312 — with the three counties' combined death toll rising by just two fatalities, from 32 to 34.

As of Monday afternoon, Tuscola County had recorded 215 confirmed cases, an increase of eight compared a week before, and 26 deaths (an increase of one); Huron County had recorded 55 cases, up from 52 cases a week earlier, with three deaths (an increase of two fatalities); and Sanilac County, 42 confirmed cases and five deaths (no change).

Statewide, Monday's total confirmed cases reached 61,409, with a total of 5,853 deaths, compared to 60,064 cases and 5,772 deaths a week earlier.

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## News briefs

### Argyle Township Board meets

ARGYLE — Because this is an election year, the Argyle Township Board of Trustees recently took steps to protect election workers and the public.

Board members decided that barriers and face masks for election workers will be necessary this year.

The board also approved the purchase of two eight-foot barriers and one, three-foot barrier, and 12 face masks from Window Products of Holland, Mich., at a cost of \$567.

In other business, Supervisor Jerome Foote informed the board that Joann Langenburg resigned as zoning administrator and a replacement needs to be found. Foote asked Amy Grifka if she would take over that position, and she agreed.

Grifka has previously expressed concerns over grass not being mowed, trash piling up on some properties and a trailer being used as a storage shed. She voiced those issues during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Also, the board moved ahead with plans to repair flag poles and to install flag lighting at the township's cemetery and park. Clerk Edward Pfaff will supply the labor to complete the work.

### Concealed firearm class slated

CASS CITY — There will be a concealed pistol class Saturday, June 27, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cass City Gun Club, 2676 N. Englehart Rd., Cass City.

The cost for the class is \$100. The cost for a renewal class is \$50. To register or for more information, call Darlin Herford at (989) 375-2591 or Bryan Hemerline at (989) 737-2441.

### Daley set to host office hours

LAPEER — State Senator Kevin Daley (R-Lum) will hold office hours with constituents throughout the 31st Senate District, which includes Tuscola County, this week.

The office hours will be Friday, June 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Historic Farmers Market of Lapeer Pavilion.

Daley will be available to answer questions and provide information and assistance, as well as take suggestions on issues affecting communities and businesses in the district. No appointment is necessary.

Participants are encouraged to wear masks and to bring lawn chairs or other type of seating in order to maintain proper social distancing.

More information is available by logging onto the website SenatorKevinDaley.com or by calling (517) 373-1777.

### Virtual state 4-H awards planned

MICHIGAN — While many plans for the summer have been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's 4-H State Awards Celebration will still take place today (Wednesday) via a virtual format.

"4-H state award delegates started this rigorous journey early in 2020, and even though we are sad that we will not be able to celebrate their hard work in person, we do still feel it is important to provide an opportunity to recognize them for their amazing accomplishments," said Patti Errer, 4-H program coordinator, MSU Extension-Huron County.

"Our goal is to keep as much of our program and experience intact for the delegates as we can, even through virtual delivery. The 4-H State Awards Celebration was initially slated to take place during Exploration Days on Wednesday evening, following dinner," she noted.

"In our communication earlier this spring, we asked our delegates to continue to hold that timeframe as we developed plans for an alternate delivery method. Our 4-H State Awards Celebration will take place on Wednesday, June 24, starting at 6:30 p.m." Anyone wishing to attend the 4-H State Awards Celebration will need to preregister for the event at: [https://msu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_HXdp-cG3RYqd-M7TfHUIyq](https://msu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HXdp-cG3RYqd-M7TfHUIyq). Once you have registered for the event, the system will send you the zoom link to log in and watch.

Compiled by Mary Drier and Tom Montgomery

## Letters to the Editor

### Dr. Hall feature fabricated?

Continued from page three.

said by the people I have had approach me here in town. They too have said that none of that sounded like Dr. Hall. I doubt whether you will publish this letter in its entirety, but I certainly hope you will. I hope you will admit you faked the interview. I hope you have not faked things in other articles you have written. Also, please do not even try to apologize for this. The person who needs to be apologized to the most, is not even here to accept the apology. Someone who was left out of the article. Of course, how could they be included in a fake interview? The person who was left out, is what upset my son immediately, and is what the people in town who approached me noticed right away, also Dr. Hall would never, ever have looked back on his career without first acknowledging that person who was most insulted by this fake article. That would be his partner, his assistant, the unselfish person, who without them, he never would have achieved anything, that would be his wife, Marjorie. To do any article about him, without talking to him, and letting him talk about who helped him most is the biggest problem. Besides the fact of doing this article and getting many, many facts wrong. It was an injustice to him, to his family and most of all to her.

Dwight Thabet  
Cass City

Editor's note:

Mr. Thabet,

Your allegations that we fabricated or made up any portion of the story on Dr. Hall's retirement is, simply, ludicrous.

As I explained to you previously, I was approached by officials at Hills and Dales General Hospital with an idea to write a story recognizing/honoring Dr. Hall's many years of service to our community. A phone interview was scheduled with Dr. Hall, Jean Anthony (Hills and Dales president and CEO) and me. We didn't want to meet in person due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you said, correctly, that interview was canceled. However, I was subsequently contacted by Danielle Blaine, director of marketing at the hospital, who suggested that she could approach Dr. Hall and ask him for some background and quotes related to his career, and send that information to me so I could still write a feature of sorts. I agreed.

Please note: Danielle told me she would ask Dr. Hall to read and approve of the information she planned to forward to me before proceeding. She kept her promise and sent the information and quotes to me AFTER Dr. Hall read and approved what she had prepared. She also forwarded some comments to me from Jean Anthony, praising Dr. Hall's service to the community.

I then wrote the story using the exact quotes and information given me.

I invite you to verify this account with Danielle and/or Jean.

Tom Montgomery, editor

## NOTICE FOR GILFORD TOWNSHIP

### June 11, 2020 - MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting called to order at 7:30 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present: D. Strasz, Treasurer; R. Haines, Clerk; J. Stockmeyer, Supervisor; A. Goss, Trustee; K. Houghtaling, Trustee. Order of agenda approved. Public Comment: What is being done about junk on road right of way in Gilford? What was answer to "can you shoot a dog trespassing on your property"? Best to check with police/sheriff before shooting. 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 J. Stockmeyer to approve Treasurers Report. Motion approved.

#### REPORTS:

Supervisor: No Reese Fire runs. Roadside mowing, motion by A. Goss, second by D. Strasz to accept bid from Discrete Diesel for 3-year contract at \$4700 per year (2 mowing per year). Motion approved. Gas regulator station near Gilford to be upgraded. Letter sent to Road Commission requesting additional funding for bridge work. Zoning Administrator has resigned, looking for a replacement. Motion by R. Haines, second by A. Goss to appoint J. Stockmeyer as interim zoning administrator. Motion approved. Discussion on CDC requirements for re-opening the Hall. Will inquire modifying office window for accepting payments etc. without entering office. Roadwork on Deckerville road cost overrun due to cement stabilization needed.

Treasurer: Audit is in process, primarily without meeting on site. Tax bills going out end of June. Newsletter going out with tax bills, looking for items to include in newsletter.

Clerk: Record number of Absentee Ballot requests for August, ballots should be sent out the week of June 29nd. Discussion on possible Blight Ordinance, pros and cons, enforcement, costs etc., will consider when Covid-19 allows completion of the revised Zoning Ordinance. Motion by K. Houghtaling, second by A. Goss to pay bills. Motion approved.

Trustees: Planning Commission meeting canceled due to Covid-19. Ambulance Representative: 59 total runs in 2019, which was 28 less runs compared to previous year. February 6 runs, March 1 run, April 0 runs.

Fire Department Representative: Reese Fire hose testing, trying to make up training due to Covid-19. Trackside donated \$550.00. Fairgrove Fire board and meeting: 4 new fire fighters added, 3 retired, some helped with Midland flood, will attend AF graduation, will do training on home explosions, hose testing coming, small fire at Quality Roasting, 8 runs to Gilford TWP.

Zoning Administrator: None. Public Comment: Some Juniata TWP wind turbines are being constructed. Motion by R. Haines, second by J. Stockmeyer to adjourn at 9:40 P.M. Motion approved.

Robert L. Haines  
Gilford Township Clerk



# Immunizations, screenings available again at the local health department

by Mary Drier  
For the Chronicle

Local health departments are now offering immunizations and screenings by appointment only.

“Immunization rates are low, and children’s hearing and vision testing needs to be done. When school was canceled in March, kids missed much of that testing,” said Ann Hepfer, health officer for both the Tuscola and Huron county health departments.

“Doing that testing is mandated under the law, and there are kids who have to get ready for kindergarten,” she added. “Those testing requirements still have to be met, even with on-line education.

“So far the state has not said that they have waived any of those screenings, so we have to continue like they are in effect.”

Vaccinations are necessary to help prevent a number of illnesses, including meningitis, chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, mumps and tetanus.

The health department also offers hearing and vision testing for preschoolers, kindergartener and other school-age children. If you missed kindergarten round up, your child needs to be screened before school starts.

“We have all of the necessary precautions in place to protect you and your family during your visit with us. We will prescreen you for illness when you make your appointment and again when you reach our doors,” Hepfer said.

“You must wear a mask, (but) your child does not have to if it induces fear and anxiety,” she added, noting the health departments have masks available for

those who do not have one.

Hepfer pointed out that health department officials are taking every precaution to keep patients and their families, as well as staff members safe during their visits. “The registered nurse will only be in the room long enough to give the vaccination. That will be about five minutes or less.

“We have streamlined our process to limit face-to-face encounters, and we will social distance to conduct the education and answer any questions (patients) might have.”

The following are new rules established by the health departments:

- \*No additional visitors.
- \*Read the screening questions posted on the entrance door, and don’t enter if you answer “yes” to any of them. Staff members will also ask screening questions.

- \*No waiting in the lobby – appointments will be spaced in order to avoid back-ups in the lobby.

- \*The health department will provide masks if needed along with hand sanitizer, which is readily available and recommended for use.

- \*All staff promote social distancing, mask wearing and disinfecting surfaces.

The Tuscola County Health Department is located at 1309 Cleaver Rd. in Caro and can be reached by calling (989) 673-8114. The Huron County Health Department is located at 1142 S. Van Dyke Rd. in Bad Axe. The phone number there is (989) 269-9721.



**A TURKEY vulture takes a brief break before continuing the search for its next meal south of Cass City last week. Turkey vultures, a bird species native to Michigan and most of North and South America, are carnivorous scavengers boasting wing span of up to six feet and a keen sense of smell that enables them to locate carrion while soaring above fields and woodlots.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
for  
**NOVESTA TOWNSHIP**  
will be held  
**Saturday, June 27**  
at **9:00 a.m.**  
New Township Hall  
3016 N. Cemetery Rd., Cass City, MI 48726  
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Novesta Township Clerk

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**Cass City Red Hawk ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**

Meet 2020 Cass City graduate Justin Schaufele, the Knight Insurance Agency Red Hawk Athlete of the week.

Schaufele competed on the school’s bowling team during his high school career, but it was his success on the Red Hawk track team that separated him from the crowd. Schaufele’s best event was the long jump – he also competed in the hurdles for Coach Jon Zdrojewski – winning the field event at the Huron County Meet of Champions as a junior and advancing to the State Final meet. He was expected to be a team leader in his final go-around before Covid-19 wiped out the season.

“It’s been a long time since I had someone leap over 20 feet,” said Zdrojewski, adding, “Justin would do whatever was asked of him, super nice kid.”

Justin is the son of Jeff and Deanna Schaufele. He plans to attend Saginaw Valley State University in the fall.



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## School revenue plummets

Continued from page one.

percent of the general fund budget.

The casualties in the process of drafting the new budget include one teaching position and one administrative position.

No specific teacher has been named, but school officials said the athletic director/assistant principal post now held by Lindsay Bitzer, who was hired to fill the position late last summer, has been cut. Bitzer reportedly has accepted an assistant principal's job with the Caro Community Schools.

Zimba pointed out that, for now, hourly and administrative pay increases scheduled for the coming year are on hold, which will save an estimated \$20,000, and "The CCEA (Cass City Education Association) has been very responsive with making accommodations to their current contract."

Of course, the district values all of its staff and will compensate them as planned in the coming year if it's feasible, Zimba said. However, she added, many key questions will remain unanswered for months to come, especially specifics related to state funding amounts in the coming year. While schools are required by law to adopt new budgets by the first of July, the state isn't expected to approve its new spending plan until October or later.

"We're going to give it (budget estimates) our best shot here in the dark," she said. "We're just going to hope for the best."

In a related matter, the board approved an annual resolution to seek a school state aid note (loan) to maintain cash flow during the months when schools don't receive regular state aid payments. The board approved borrowing \$1 million this year, compared to \$700,000 last year.

### Back to school?

Turning to plans for the 2020-21 school year, the board set Aug. 24 as the tentative first day of school in the fall, and briefly discussed the newly-drafted Cass City Public Schools Continuity of Learning Plan, which outlines proposals for resuming classes in 2020-21.

While the governor and lawmakers are both expected to announce their own plans later this month for ways to safely start in-person learning again, the local plan outlines specific options, depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those options, drafted by a committee composed of school board members, administrators, teachers and others, all incorporate recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local health officials and include safety measures such as social distancing, PPE (personal protective gear), hand washing and regular building cleaning protocols.

Also addressed are measures related to health screening measures, building entry points, signs to assist with traffic control, hand sanitizer in all classrooms and other locations, organization of meals, etc.

The Cass City "back to school" plan outlines three options, including returning to the traditional five days per week of in-school instruction, although an online option would also be available to families not comfortable with their children physically returning to school.

The second option involves a combination of in-person and online instruction, and the third option focuses on total online learning should schools be closed again by concerns over the pandemic.

"This is the best information that we have now," school Supt. Jeff Harter said of the document, which he pointed out ensures local school officials will be prepared to make a quick transition from one option to another based on future circumstances.

"I think we've hit all the areas we need to hit. We just have to monitor what we're doing," he added.

### In other business

In other business during Monday, the board:

\*Awarded sale of bonds to fund upcoming voter-approved capital improvement projects in the district. The winning bid came by BOK Financial Securities, which offered the low interest rate of 1.74. Five other bids were submitted ranging from 1.75 percent to 3.06 percent.

In the coming year, the district will tackle several major second-phase projects totaling about \$2.3 million. They include new boilers at the elementary school, a new roof at the elementary building, bathroom renovations throughout the elementary and in two high school restrooms, a new district-wide wireless network, and heating, cooling and ventilation installation in the high school offices.

\*Accepted "with regret" the resignations of two veteran para-pros, Joan Sattelberg and Cathy Meck.

\*Heard from Amy Cuthrell, who voiced support of and praise for Bitzer in her performance as Cass City's athletic director and assistant principal.


Cuthrell indicated Bitzer went above and beyond on the job by making individual connections with students and, as athletic director, by a strong hands-on approach to the athletic programs, including setting up virtual signing ceremonies for local athletes taking their athletic skills to the collegiate level.

\*Adopted an annual resolution continuing the Cass City Public Schools membership in the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

# Happy 62<sup>nd</sup> Wedding Anniversary

to J.D. Evans & Lillian Gibbard  
on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020


**Congratulations to another milestone of your lives from your loving family!**



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Daniel & Christina Gibbard  
Christine & Greg Moore  
Sandra & Dan Taylor  
Kimberly & Kevin Thiel  
The late Thomas Gibbard

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Tory & Cyrus Healy, Wesley & Amanda Gibbard,  
Gregory & Sherry Moore, Mike & Erin Moore, Katie  
Moore, Heather Moore, Brian & Lauren Taylor.

**Great-Grandchildren**  
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Gabrielle Laming, Liam & Zander Healy,  
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### Cass City Missionary Church

4449 Koepfgen Rd., Cass City, MI 48726 • 989-872-2729  
Worship Service 8:30 a.m. • Sunday School 9:45 a.m. • Worship Service 10:50 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m. • Wednesday Family Night 6:30 p.m.  
Pastor: Phil Burkett • Associate Pastor: Joel Schwendinger • [www.casscitymc.org](http://www.casscitymc.org)



### Cass City United Methodist Church

5100 Cemetery Rd., Cass City, MI 48726 • 872-3422  
Worship: 11:00 a.m. (Summer 9:30 a.m.) • Sunday School - Sept.-May 9:30 a.m.  
Community Dinner - Monthly (2nd Wed. at noon)  
Pastor: Bob Demyanovich • [www.casscityumc.org](http://www.casscityumc.org)



### Community Baptist Church (Independent Fundamental)

4446 Ale St., Cass City, MI 48726 • 989-872-4088  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m. • Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Service 2:00 p.m. • Wednesday - Pray/Bible Study & Youth Group 6:00 p.m.  
Pastor: Rev. Nathan Whipple



### Deford Community Church

1392 N. Kingston Rd. • 872-4055  
(1/4 mile south of Deford on Kingston Rd.)  
Sundays - 10 a.m. | Wednesday - 7 p.m.  
Pastor: David Cooper • Associate Pastor: Ross Foley  
[DefordCommunityChurch.org](http://DefordCommunityChurch.org)



### Evangelical Free Church of Cass City

6430 Chestnut Blvd., Cass City, MI 48726 • 872-5060  
• Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. • Worship at 10:30 a.m.  
Midweek Bible Studies

Pastor: Jim Allred • Like us on Facebook!

### First Baptist Church

(Independent, Fundamental)

Barrier Free

6420 Houghton St., Cass City, MI 48726 • 989-872-3155  
Sunday School All Ages 9:45 a.m. • Sunday Morning Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service 6:00 p.m. • Wednesday Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
AWANA Clubs 6:15 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday - Kids4Truth Club - Teen Club 6:15 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Pastor: Christian Wright • Website: [www.fbccc.us](http://www.fbccc.us)



### First Presbyterian Church

Barrier Free • State & National Historical Registry  
6505 Church St., Cass City, MI 48726 • 872-5400 • Worship Service 10:45 a.m.  
Exercise Program: Mon., Wed. & Fri. at 9:00 a.m.  
After School Adventure (K-6) - Call for winter schedule.

### Fraser Presbyterian Church

3006 Huron Line Rd., Cass City, MI 48726 • 872-5400  
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Coffee Hour following worship



### Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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Worship Service 9:30 a.m. • Bible Class & Sunday School 10:45 a.m.  
Pastor: Steve Bagnall  
[www.goodshepherdlutherancasscity.webs.com](http://www.goodshepherdlutherancasscity.webs.com)

### Living Word Worship Center Church of God

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Worship Service: 11:00 a.m.  
Family Training Hour: Wednesday 7 p.m.  
Pastor: Jephtha Bryant



### Mizpah Missionary Church

4631 N. Van Dyke, Cass City, MI 48726  
Sunday School: 10 a.m. • Sunday Service: 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Group 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. • Wednesday Kids' Club 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.  
Pastor Dale Bullock 989-872-2828

### Novesta Church of Christ

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Associate Minister: Austin Keller at Ubyly & Student Minister: Don Mecomber  
Visit our website at: [www.novestachurch.org](http://www.novestachurch.org)

### Our Lady Consolata Catholic Church

4292 S. Seeger St., Cass City, MI 48726 • 665-1027  
Website: [www.olconsolata.org](http://www.olconsolata.org)  
Mass Times: Saturday 4:00 p.m. November 1 thru March 31  
Saturday 5:00 p.m. April 1 thru October 31  
Cass City - Sunday: 8:00 a.m. • Sebawaing Holy Family Site - Sunday: 10:30 a.m.  
Priest: Fr. Theo Nnabugo



### Potter's House Christian Fellowship

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**LARGE GARAGE SALE** - Thursday-Saturday, June 25-27 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Something for everyone. Sale in pole barn in back, rain or shine. 3416 Cemetery Rd., 2-1/2 miles south of Cass City on east side. 14-6-24-1

**HUGE BARN SALE** - July 2, 3 & 4 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 4462 Jacob Rd. West of DNR. Lumber for woodworking, furniture, tools, bikes, two trailers, steel wheels, hardware, crystal quartz, doors and more. 14-6-24-2

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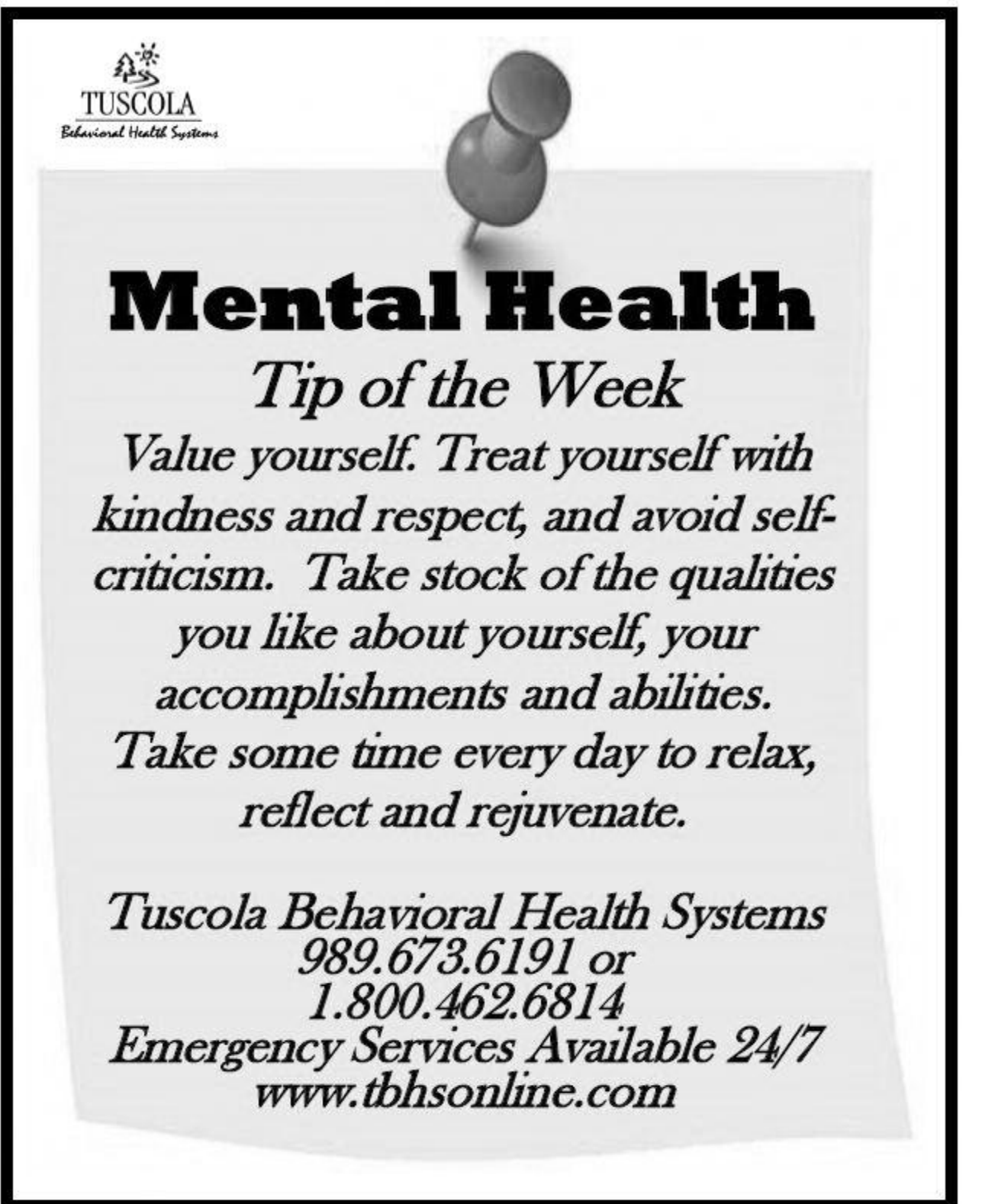
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# County jail plans stall again

Continued from page one.

In 2018, the National Sheriffs' Association conducted a study in order to determine ways to meet the jail's future needs. The conclusion of the 43-page study was that the jail is "outdated, inefficient and unsafe for staff and inmates."

The study recommended several improvements such as creating additional space for inmates, updating the control center, and more. However, the authors noted it would not be practical to try to transform the current jail into a modern facility that meets current needs.

In the end, the study "strongly recommended" construction of a new jail facility.

Because of that, county commissioners hired the architectural firm Byce Engineers and Architects in May 2019 to prepare a jail feasibility study at a cost of roughly \$17,500, which was funded by the county's Jail Capital Improvement Fund.

Byce Engineers and Architects developed a plan for 160 beds and a 25-bed intake facility with an observation area. That's the proposal Sheriff Glen Skrent is looking to present to commissioners.

The jail, located in the sheriff's department behind the courthouse at 420 Court St. in Caro, was built in 1966 with a 46-bed capacity.

There have been several renovations since. In 1988, renovations were done to create 56 beds. In 1997, major renovations and an addition were completed to create an 80-bed facility. And, interior renovations were tackled in 2012 to create a dozen more beds, for a total of 92 beds, due to chronic overcrowding.

But even the more recent renovations are showing their age now, according to Skrent, who says the design and condition of the current jail facility make it difficult to meet new regulations.

Under state law, for example, inmates must have a private conference room area at their disposal to talk to their attorneys and meet with Department of Health and Human Service and mental health service workers, clergy and representatives of various other agencies.

In order to meet that requirement, a storage closet was converted into a meeting area.

In addition, in recent years there has been an increase in females being incarcerated, and space to house them is also an issue.

Aside from separating inmates by gender, they also have to be separated by security classification, risk, custody level and type of crime.

"The facility is not staffed as it could be to meet the requirements," the latest jail study states. "The lack of staffing puts the staff and inmate population at a higher risk."

Skrent, referring to state and federal rules regarding housing inmates, explained inmates are classified as male, female, intoxicated prisoners, prisoners suffering withdrawal or being overdosed on drugs, and those suffering from mental health issues when they arrive at the jail. Younger offenders, meanwhile, need to be segregated to ensure their safety.

"With more and more classifications being required by state and federal rules, such as transgender (individuals), more pressure is put on us to safely house these inmates. Mental illness, depression and suicidal thoughts are increasing in society and in the inmates we house," Skrent explained. "There is very little space for any counseling, treatment or rehabilitation."



**IN SPITE OF renewed efforts to address the aging Tuscola County Jail, little progress has been made over the past two years. The issue, which has been an ongoing item on county board agendas, was briefly discussed again during a recent meeting of the commissioners.**

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This 3 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath home is located on a large lot in Cass City. Includes a large family room, a natural fireplace, dining room, 2-car garage and lots of storage space. Great location. TCC1831

Immediate possession comes with this 10 acre Amish farm in Novesta Township with shed, animal barn, fencing, chicken coop and garden area. Home has 7 bedrooms, large kitchen and metal roof put on fall of 2018. CY2789