Help sought for family that lost home to fire

By Tom Glavey | News Editor
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JUNIATA TWP. — A Vassar-area church is helping a family of four that lost its home to a Monday morning fire.

Fire and water damage prevents Jonathon and Elizabeth Downer, and their two daughters, ages 6 and 1, from returning to their fire-damaged home at 3305 S. Vassar Road, according to Vassar Fire Department personnel.

“Between the water and the smoke and everything, it’s uninhabitable, now,” said Vassar firefighters Dennis Fent.

Monday’s blaze broke out about 11:30 a.m. Monday in the home north of M-46 in Tuscola County’s Juniata Township.

No injuries were reported due to the fire, according to Fent. The family’s dog alerted them to the fire, allowing family members to exit the home safely, according to Elizabeth Downer. Officials with the Vassar Church of the Nazarene, east of Vassar, are collecting funds for the family members, who are living with relatives.

Donors can write a check payable to “Vassar Nazarene Church” and write “Fire Assistance” in the check’s memo line. Mail the check to Vassar Church of the Nazarene, 3822 W. Saginaw Road, Vassar, MI 48768.

“We will then write a check to the family, and 100 percent of what is given goes to the family,” said Pastor Jim McEllis of the Vassar Nazarene Church.

Donors also can drop off clothes at the church.

“If nobody is here at the time, they can just leave the goods under the porch canopy so that it stays it out of the fire,” said Fent.

The family’s dog alerted them to the fire, allowing family members to exit the home safely.

The Advertiser

Caro hires new DPW director

By John Schneider

Detective Sgt. James Hook, a 27-year veteran of the Tuscola County Sheriff’s Office, is retiring from the force to take a new job with the Michigan Attorney’s General Office.

CARO — Long time coming,” Lane said. “We went through a handful of processes, changes in the position and an increase in wages. There were different interviews and we finally found someone who I think is worth taking a shot on.”

Caro has been looking for someone to lead the two departments since March 2021, when Caro Department of Public Works and Utilities Director Jeffrey Graham announced he was leaving for a similar position in Lapeer. Also that month, Curtis Wells, the city’s water plant supervisor, announced his retirement, effective in July.

Since, the city has been attempting to fill the two positions, with minimal luck. So in October, Lane received permission from the council to find one person to fill both positions. The city had posted the individual job listings online with a potential salary of about $80,000 a year.
The Advertiser welcomes letters to the editor that comment on and further the public debate on topics of general interest. To submit a letter, please email your letter to SendNews@advertiser.com. All letters must be signed with a legible name, address and phone number. Submissions that exceed 200 words are less likely to be considered for publication in the print edition of the Advertiser. We reserve the right to edit or refuse any letter submitted.

Letters to the Editor must be signed and carry the telephone number of the writer for verification purposes. The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any letter submitted.
CARO – Bob Mantey has a goal. Tuscola County’s drain commissioner wants to keep the annual cost of drain work down.

“I’ve always said we’d try to get this down to $250,000 to $300,000,” Mantey said in his annual report to the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners, “but I’m going to be honest with you. I don’t want to think with inflation and fuel prices that we are going to go under $300,000. I don’t see that happening. We can be in that $300,000 range, but I don’t see us going under it unless something changes with everything that has been happening.”

Mantey anticipates the drain-at-large budget will hit about $376,000 this year, largely due to higher costs of things like labor.

“I can’t really give you a number, sounds like a lot of money,” he said, “but hundreds of millions of dollars come into this county from agriculture gross production. I think this is kind of insignificant. Our tax base for the agricultural community wouldn’t be as high as it is without keeping the drains open.”

Mantey thinks the reason the drain-at-large costs went up is due to higher material costs. “I don’t think it is too late,” he said. “I think it is the material costs. That was probably $20,000 to $25,000 more than we had anticipated.”

Mantey said another factor raising costs is “we are spraying an awful lot of drains” to cut down on the growth and keep the drains running. In time the spraying saves on taking trees out, he said, which quadruples the cost of clearing a drain.

“That just adds a tremendous amount to the cost,” he said.

Still, Mantey said the drain office is focusing its attention this year on drain maintenance. The office also is catching up on projects delayed by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. The drain office is part of a larger task force of people working to clear drains running. In time the spraying will hit about $376,000 this year, large.

Mantey’s office didn’t hit that target this past year either, though much of the higher costs were used to catch up on projects not done due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the resulting work stoppage. But he also thought it was money well spent.

“So this year it won’t be $150,000, but I don’t see that happening. We can be in that $300,000 range, but I don’t see us going under it unless something changes with everything that has been happening.”

Some of these projects, he said, start as an agricultural drain and eventually become something of a stream. In those cases, he said, the counties often hire a special firm to go down the drain taking out dams and fallen trees as well as other obstructions. That keeps the drains more natural.

“The only problem doing that is,” he said, “every three years you have to do it again. But the cost savings still is tremendous to have somebody come in by hand rather than trying to clear a path (mechanically).”

The bill paid by Novesta Township isn’t typical, however. Mantey said the cost of an agricultural drain in a township usually comes in at $20,000 to $30,000. He doesn’t get concerned unless the cost rises above that. “But usually there is a reason for that,” he said. “A lot of tree removal adds costs to a project.”

Whether he has his annual goal or not, however, Mantey isn’t planning to win any popularity contests.

“Tuscola is not known as a high cost county,” he said, “so the project is on hold. The court case is to be heard April 8. Another large project is the North Branch of the Flint River, which covers 147,000 acres. “We also are a small county,” he said. “But usually there is a reason for that.”

Mantey said another factor raising costs is the higher ticket jobs facing the drain office is ones shared across county lines. The drain office is part of a lot of inter-county drains. “Inter-counties are usually good-sized drains,” he said.

“They add quite a bit to the costs.”

The Sheboyganing Intercounty Creek, which involves Tuscola, Saginaw and Bay counties, is the biggest project coming up. The decision by the three-county board to do the work is being appealed. Mantey said, so the project is on hold. The court case is to be heard April 8.

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“They add quite a bit to the costs.”
Smoke and fire damages this house north of Vassar that once was home to Jonathon and Elizabeth Downer, and their daughters, ages 6 and 1. The Vassar Church of the Nazarene is collecting donations for the family. The public can donate when attending 11 a.m. worship services on Sunday, and on April 3, at the church at 3822 W. Saginaw Road.

Help sought for family that lost home to fire

FROM A1

Caro hires new DPW director

FROM A1

Tuscola County detective, James Hook, hired by state

Photo by John Cook / The Advertiser

waste water products – one at the end of each fiscal year – $15,000 is broken down into three $5,000 payments – one at the end of each fiscal year.
Huron County

BAD AXE – A popular trick among the scamming community targeting residents of Huron County this week.

According to a press release from Sheriff Kelly J. Hanson, at least 15 phone calls made to residents Tuesday and Wednesday claimed to be from a “Sergeant Johnson” from the Huron County Sheriff’s Office.

The caller notified residents with past criminal convictions that a second DNA test was needed.

The caller then tries to convince the victim to purchase gift cards to pay for the DNA test. Once the victim supplies the gift card numbers and expiration date, the potential thief uses the money on the gift card for their personal use.

Hanson said victims have lost at least $1,000 to the scammer or scammers.

“A and two deputies even personally made to residents Tuesday and Wednesday,” Hanson said.

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“For the caller, leave no indication that he would stop anytime soon.,” Hanson said. The Huron County Sheriff’s Office does not have a Sgt. Johnson in its employment, and the office would never ask for gift cards as payment.

“Residents need to hang up and understand that law enforcement does not do business this way,” Hanson said.

A similar scam made the rounds in July in Tuscola County. A caller claiming to be a Sgt. Novak (again, there is no sergeant by that name within the department) with the Tuscola County Sheriff’s Office called convicted sex offenders from phone number 989-391-3157. The scammer told victims there was no issue with a previous DNA test and that $1,500 was needed for a new test.

In that instance, the scammer also requested the amount be paid with a gift card.

Tuscola County

New Millington Twp. budget includes changes

By Mark Haney / Reporter

HANESY@TCADVERTISER.COM

MILLINGTON TWP. – In 2022-23, Millington Township is expecting more of the same, more or less.

The budget approved Monday by the township’s Road Commission, the township’s Board of Trustees and the township’s Road Commission.

The Millington Arbea Fire Dept. as well as the $95,000 cost to repair the 28 of a mile of Murphy Lake Dam replacement. The payments will continue for 15 years.

The township does not have a Sgt. Johnson in its department (by that name within the department) with the Tuscola County Sheriff’s Office called convicted sex offenders from phone number 989-391-3157. The scammer told victims there was no issue with a previous DNA test and that $1,500 was needed for a new test.

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The budget includes the township’s share of the cost of a new fire truck for the Millennium Arbea Fire Dept. as well as the $145,000 cost to replace the 28 of a mile of Murphy Lake Dam replacement. The payments will continue for 15 years.

The township also will be making improvements to some roads. Loomis said, but those projects haven’t been chosen yet.

The shared fire board also is looking to replace the Chevrolet Suburban used by the fire department for medical emergencies with a four-door pickup truck. That may occur during the coming budget year.

The board also

Decided against becoming a charter township. Every 10 years the board has to decide whether or not to become a charter township. “But there is no benefit to becoming a charter township,” Loomis said.

Approved allowing the Southern Links Trailway board to expand its membership.

Right now the board is limited to people who live in the villages of Millington, Otter Lake and Columbiaville as well as Genesee County’s Forest Township, Lapeer County’s Marathon Township and Millington Township. “Some of the entities have trouble finding people to be on the board,” Loomis said, “but they have other people outside their borders who want to be on the board.”
St. Frances Mission Store nears $300,000 of donations

Four named to Dean’s List at Northern Michigan

MARQUETTE – Northern Michigan University has announced its fall graduates qualifying for a spot on the Dean’s List with a grade-point average of 3.50-3.99 and Dean’s List.


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A6 --- Saturday, March 26, 2022, The Advertiser
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Gas price sink slowly, but will they rebound?

CARO — After hitting a record $4.33 on March 11, the national average for a gallon of gasoline has fallen to $4.25. The primary reason is the lower global price of crude oil, which peaked shortly after Russia launched its war in Ukraine, but is now more than $20 lower and hovering near $105/bbl.

Domestically, gasoline demand is defying seasonal trends and has dipped slightly, perhaps in response to higher prices at the pump. “Usually this time of year, with warmer weather and longer days, we’d see an uprick in gasoline demand as more people hit the road,” said Andrew Gross, AAA spokesperson. “But we had a slight drop in demand last week, which may be due to higher pump prices. In our new survey of drivers, 59% said they would change their driving habits or lifestyle if the cost of gas hit $4 per gallon. And if gas were to reach $5, which it has in the Western part of the country, three-quarters said they would need to adjust their lifestyle to offset the pump price.”

According to new data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA), total domestic gasoline stocks fell by 3.6 million bbl to 241 million bbl last week. Gasoline demand also decreased slightly from 8.96 million b/d to 8.94 million b/d. The drop in gas demand is contributing to price decreases, but the recent reversal in oil prices is creating downward pressure on pump prices. If the oil price continues to decline, pump prices will likely follow suit.

Today’s national average for a gallon of gas is $4.25, which is seven cents less than a week ago, 72 cents more than a month ago, and $1.37 more than a year ago.

Quick Stats

The nation’s top 10 largest weekly decreases: Maryland (−46 cents), Delaware (−20 cents), Florida (−18 cents), Georgia (−17 cents), Washington, D.C. (−14 cents), Connecticut (−13 cents), Virginia (−13 cents), Rhode Island (−13 cents), New Jersey (−12 cents) and Alabama (−10 cents).

The nation’s top 10 most expensive markets: California ($5.85), Nevada ($5.11), Hawaii ($5.08), Washington ($4.72), Oregon ($4.70), Alaska ($4.69), Arizona ($4.61), Illinois ($4.50), New York ($4.50) and Washington, D.C. ($4.36).

Oil Market Dynamics

At the close of Friday’s formal trading session, WTI increased by $1.72 to settle at $104.70. After crude prices spiked in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, crude prices changed course in reaction to China announcing new lockdowns alongside rising COVID-19 infection rates last week. However, crude prices could increase further this week as EU foreign ministers, who will meet Monday in Brussels, decide whether the 27-nation bloc should join the United States in banning Russian energy imports, including crude oil. Additionally, EIA reported that total domestic crude stocks increased by 4.3 million bbl to 415.9 million bbl last week.
TUSCOLA COUNTY

Winter to make a dramatic return in Michigan and the Northeast due to polar vortex

By Alex Sosnowski | AccuWeather

People from the Great Lakes to the northeastern United States may want to keep heavy coats and snow brushes handy as Old Man Winter and his buddy, the polar vortex, are not quite done with the region just yet, AccuWeather meteorologists warn.

Cold air from northern Canada will move into the Northeast beginning this weekend. "While this may not be the final blast of wintertime cold for the Northeast, it will certainly pack some punch," AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Brett Anderson said.

The polar vortex has weakened and is in the process of splitting, AccuWeather Lead Long-Range Meteorologist Paul Pastelok explained earlier this week. When the polar vortex is in a strong phase, it tends to hover near the North Pole and the coldest air stays locked up near and north of the Arctic Circle. But, when the coldest air stays locked up near and north of the Arctic Circle, it will often befunneled southward. "A direct discharge of Arctic air will sweep into the northeastern quarter of the nation this weekend," AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Brett Anderson said, adding that the cold will persist into early next week.

Temperature departures of 10-20 degrees Fahrenheit below average are set in store, forecasters say. Typical highs in late March range from around 40°F in northern Maine to the low 60s around the Chesapeake Bay. At the peak of the cold wave early next week, high temperatures are likely to be in the 30s in Boston and New York City, near 40°F in Philadelphia and the mid-40s in Washington, D.C., where the National Cherry Blossom Festival is underway. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February.

"Widespread, gusty northwest winds may send AccuWeather RealFeel® temperatures plummeting as low as zero°F across the Appalachians and into the 20s along the I-95 corridor as soon as Sunday morning," Anderson said.

Cloud cover and a breeze may prevent the temperature from plunging to midwinter levels at night, but the temperature is forecast to dip below freezing over much of the region, including in many of the major cities along the Interstate 95 corridor early next week.

People who have started outdoor gardens may need to cover tender plants, and meteorologists caution that potted plants should be brought indoors.

Snow can cover grassy areas and even leave a bit of slash on some paved surfaces from time to time over the mountains this weekend and into next week. A few snow showers mixed in with rain showers are not out of the question in parts of the I-95 corridor as well.

As the big dip in the jet stream pivots northeastward during the middle of next week, a warmup is in store for the region which may allow temperatures to swing above average for a few days. However, more abnormally cold air may return in early April.

"Looking at long-range weather patterns across the globe, there is support for another big dip in the jet stream in the Northeast perhaps centered on April 3 and 4," Pastelok said.

After that, AccuWeather’s long-range forecasting team expects more typical temperature fluctuations for the middle of April.

As the big dip in the jet stream will likely send AccuWeather RealFeel® temperatures plummeting as low as zero°F across the Appalachians and into the 20s along the I-95 corridor as soon as Sunday morning, the weather will feel more like early February. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February. 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Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachians for a day or two as the weather will feel more like early February. Highs may not even hit the freezing mark over the central and northern Appalachian
State champ Bennett leads All-Advertiser wrestling squad; Millington, Cass City highlight first team

By Scott Bolsby | Sports Editor sports@tcadvertiser.com

STATE CHAMPION — Manus Bennett of Marlette.

By Scott Bolsby | Sports Editor sports@tcadvertiser.com

In boys’ competition, Marlette junior Turlough Bennett earned a fifth-place finish in Division 2 after a 49-3 overall record and holding a 9-2 GTC record.

Bennett won a state title as a freshman in the 103-pound class and took third in the 125-pound weight class last season.

North Branch senior and أوليفر signee Darren McLeod (140) earned a sixth-place finish in Division 2 and completed the season with a 49-3 overall record to represent the Advertiser coverage area on the all-state list.

Millington senior Hayden Holmes (140) represented The Advertiser area as the third-all-stater joining Bennett and McLeod. Holmes took seventh place in Division 3 with a 13-4 sixth-place match to close out his career with a 43-13 record.

Millington senior Luke Sherman wrapped up his senior season with a 41-3 record and an earlier-than-anticipated exit from the finals in the first round of the consolation bracket.

Another wrestler to make it to states was the second-time in his young career was Vassar sophomore Chase Nickerson. Nickerson also captured a district and regional championship.

Despite not earning all-state honors, Cass City junior Cameron Gottschalk enjoyed a successful season that helped Cass City to a conference runner-up status and team district title; won conference championship in 145-pound weight class.

WRESTLER: Manus Bennett
TEAM: Marlette
GRADE: Senior
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: Division 2 state champion in 140-pound class; scored 1008 points and 50 pin during the regular season; won Division 2 district and regional champion; place finisher at regional; won state championship.

WRESTLER: Hayden Holmes
TEAM: Millington
GRADE: Senior
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: Finished season with 46-3 record, earned all-state in Division 3 with a seventh-place finish in the Division 3 140-pound class, first team all-conference.

WRESTLER: Gabby Dinneworth
TEAM: Mayville
GRADE: Freshman
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: Competed in first MHSAA-sanctioned girls’ finals; all-state in girls’ division with a seventh-place finish; claimed third place in girls’ region.

WRESTLER: Luke Sherman
TEAM: Millington
GRADE: Junior
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: State final qualifier; claimed fourth season with a 41-3 record; district champion; took third place at regionals; first team all-conference.

WRESTLER: Chase Nickerson
TEAM: Vassar
GRADE: Sophomore
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: District champion and regional champion; two-time state qualifier; finished sophomore season with a 30-6 record; holds a 51-14 overall record through first two seasons on varsity.

WRESTLER: Cameron Gottschalk
TEAM: Cass City
GRADE: Junior
WEIGHT: 140
HIGHLIGHTS: Runner-up in district; took third place in regional; finished season with a 41-12 record; helped Cass City to a conference runner-up status and team district title; won conference championship in 145-pound weight class.

WRESTLER: Chelsea Rouch
TEAM: Cass City
GRADE: Freshman
WEIGHT: 125
HIGHLIGHTS: Competed in first MHSAA-sanctioned girls’ finals; all-state in girls’ division with a seventh-place finish in 125-pound weight class; finished seventh in girls’ regional.

WRESTLER: Vassar
GRADE: Sophomore
WEIGHT: 125
HIGHLIGHTS: District champion and regional champion; two-time state qualifier; finished sophomore season in a 43-6 record; holds a 51-14 overall record through first two seasons on varsity.

Second Team

Cheyren Lesko, Freshman, Vassar
Tiffany Anderson, Freshman, Frankenmuth

North Branch senior Darren McLeod (with pen) is joined by family and coaches at Washago Country Club Saturday. He’s joined by his parents (far right), Kevin and Carol McLeod, along with sister (far right sitting) Kate and coaches (standing from left) Jon Haywood and Keil Jorgenson.

McLeod will study business advertising at Olivet College; district champion; took third place at regionals; finished career with a 138-26 record.

Gottschalk, (140) compiled a 37-12 individual record this season and seized a Greater Thumb Conference individual championship. He qualified for the state finals before bowing out in the second round of the consolation bracket to the eventual sixth-place finisher.

Cass City closed out the season as a team with an 18-11 record and a 9-2 GTC record, falling to Brown City in the final conference dual of the season – a match that decided the conference championship.

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Tigers’ last 2 spring slams belong to ... Kreidler?

By Jason Beck | MLB.com Tigers Reporter

Yes, it’s only Spring Training. But the skip in Ryan Kreidler’s step as he rounded first base Wednesday afternoon after a go-ahead grand slam in the seventh inning is big in just about any league, even one named after fruit.

“Hopefully I can do it outside of Spring Training,” Kreidler said after the Tigers’ 6-6 tie with the Pirates at Joker Marchant Stadium. “But it’s exciting to get it done here. It shows. Including Wednesday’s grand slam, he’s 7-for-19 with three home runs and lofted it onto the berm.

Not only did Kreidler open at Double-A, he was hitting behind top prospect Riley Greene in the batting order. His 39 strikeouts over 24 games in the opening month for the SeaWolves raised some question whether he was overwhelmed. But while his home-run rate stayed relatively consistent, his strikeout rate dropped as the season went along and he learned how pitchers approached him.

In Wednesday’s case, he was ready for a first-pitch breaking ball over the plate after Pirates reliever Austin Brice threw it to Detroit’s previous two batters. Eric Haase took a curveball just off the plate for a walk to load the bases with one out before Brice went back to the big breaking ball to fan Victor Reyes for the second out.

Kreidler batted .304 with seven homers, 15 home runs over 88 games at Erie last year. He earned a ticket to Triple-A Toledo when the Tigers promoted Greene and Spencer Torkelson in August. Kreidler batted .306 with seven homers, 22 RBIs and a .926 OPS with the Mud Hens, and earned a spot in the Arizona Fall League before a calf strain limited him to three games for Salt River.

Kreidler batted .306 with seven homers, 22 RBIs and a .926 OPS with the Mud Hens, and earned a spot in the Arizona Fall League before a calf strain limited him to three games for Salt River.

Jason Beck has covered the Tigers for MLB.com since 2002. Read Beck’s Blog and follow him on Twitter @beckjason.
1. LITERATURE: Who wrote the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay”?

2. TELEVISION: Eric Taylor was the dad in which 2000s TV drama?

3. MATH: What is the Arabic numeral equivalent of the Roman numerals MDCCLXXVI?

4. GEOGRAPHY: Where is the Tyrhrenian Sea located?

5. FOOD & DRINK: What is the primary ingredient in the canned product SPAM?

6. ADVERTISING SLOGANS: What product did football player Joe Greene promote in the “Meet Joe Greene” TV commercial?

7. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How fast do honeybees fly?

8. MOVIES: Who was the famous person portrayed in the movie “Lust for Life”?

9. HISTORY: When was Elizabeth II crowned queen?

10. EXPLORERS: Which early European explorer named the Pacific Ocean?
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MEETINGS/ EVENTS

BINGO
Wed. & Fri. 6pm-9pm
Progressive Jack Pot
Early Birds

FRIENDS OF MUSIC SERIES
March 25th 12 p.m.
Giuse, Ces. Cellto ensemble, held at Presbyterian Church of Caro.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 9 p.m. at the Unionville American Legion Hall.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 681 meets the first Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at 248 W. Main St., Mayville.

CARO VFW
100 W Caro Rd

HIRING NOTICE
CITY OF CARO
DOPTED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE TEAM LEADER
City of Caro has 1 opening for a Seasonal Maintenance Team Leader for 29 hours per week at $13 per hour for approximately 17 weeks. Duties include trash and litter removal, grounds keeping, facilities maintenance and other related work as assigned and to act as a crew leader for 3 DPW staff and 2 Seasonal Workers, ensuring they are completing work in a safe, efficient, effective, professional and timely manner. Please submit a completed City of Caro employment application and letter of interest to: City Clerk, 317 S State St., Caro, MI 48723, via email to clerk@carocity.net or visit our website at CityofCaro.org.

HERBICIDE APPLICATION NOTICE
Consumers Energy, 1465 W. Pam Road, Jackson, MI, informs us that it is planning to apply herbicides to its right-of-way in order to maintain the reliability of its gas pipeline system. The herbicide will be applied with hand-pumped backpack sprayers. The crops will selectively apply herbicides to woody tree species throughout the pipeline right-of-way as needed. Crop and gardeners will be advised.

Horticists that will be used are a combination of the following: Garlon 3A (active ingredient, Triclopyr), Milestone (Al: Aminopyralid), Escort XP (Al: Metsulfuron Methyl), Garlon 4 Ultra (Al: Triclopyr) and Stalder (Al: Imazapic) spray mix, with 80% water as a diluent.

The application is scheduled for April 1st through December 31st in Tuscola County. All treatments will be completed according to label requirements and all state and federal requirements. Please call 989-673-8148 if you have something sunny on your plate and it disappears when you turn your back. I’m completely vetted and guessed is to be around 1-2 years old. I’m full of energy and love to play, so I would do well in a home with children or other young playful felines. For more information, contact Chaplain Caro at 4 p.m. — public is welcome. For more information, please contact Chaplain Caro at 4 p.m. — public is welcome.

LIVING WITH PARKINSON’S
Support Group is held from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Holiday Inn Express, 545 River Rd., Fenton, MI 48431. For more information, contact Susie at 989-462-0805.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS – For information, please call 1-800-230-4805.

STEPPING UP AA Group meets at 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays at Grace Lutheran Church, 885 Saginaw St., Vassar. For more information, please call 989-777-4646.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – meetings, schedules, and/or information for Huron and Tuscola Counties go to twac.ws; or call 989-676-4996 for more information. Habits and hang-ups lead by Renae Benn.
Walker family affair

Michigan Outdoors with Tom Lounsbury

When I climbed out of my Jeep at the end of a long drive, the first thing I did was to enjoy the unique and pleasant aroma of wood smoke – combined with the earthy scent of the steam rising up from the boiling maple sap.

It is an atmosphere like no other, and it was flooded with fond memories of working in a neighbor’s “sugar bush” when I was in high school. It was hard work collecting maple sap from numerous maple trees with a pair of five-gallon buckets, and hauling them when filled to a storage tank, but it was sure was a great way to have a pleasant and close association with nature.

Not far from the end of the trail, nestled in the woods, was the Walker family’s “sugar shack,” which had smoke rising out of the chimney, and soon boiling with steam escaping from an opening near the roof. Inside the shack tending to matters were Bob Walker of Kingston and his two grandsons, Hugh and Oliver Walker of Cas City. They had just finished gathering maple sap, and were in the process of boiling some of it into maple syrup.

On top of the iron woodstove were two stirring pans, one for warming fresh sap, which was then added to the one boiling the sap down into maple syrup. According to Bob, doing this speeded up matters because adding cold sap to the boiling process quickly drops the temperature, and in this world, a proper temperature means everything. This is one of the many things he has discovered (sometimes the hard way) since he began making maple syrup.

Being very outdoors-oriented, especially regarding family activities, Bob and his wife Darlene purchased the 57-acre woodlot near their home in 2007, with the main intent of using it for hunting purposes. They are proud of the fact their grandchildren have been able to tag their first deer and wild turkeys on the ground, and “gathering sap” is usually performed as a family, including grandchildren.

The shack is a barrel-shaped kiosk which is kept filled, and sap is drained from it through a screen to remove any debris, before going through the boiling process. To collect sap, plastic “taps” are inserted into holes bored in the trees, and durable plastic wine sacks are used for collecting the sap. These provide an enclosed container which keeps out debris and moisture.

It typically takes at least 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup, which requires a whole lot of boiling. According to Bob, 219 degrees is a target temperature to watch for, and if not careful, it is easy to burn and ruin a batch of syrup. A hydrometer and thermometer are keys to success during the operation. An old-fashioned method involves dipping a spoon into the syrup, and to observe the color and texture while it is being drained off.

According to Bob, the best syrup is the first to be made, when the sap starts running. It is of a higher sugar content and has a deep amber color. Although there are more maple trees in their woods, the Walker family taps only 44 trees, which are in close proximity to the sugar shack, and have proven to make enough annual syrup for the entire family, and quite a few for friends. As a “sugar maple” peddler, one can never be too tidy in their collection and processing methods, before boiling.

Bob Walker, age 18 (right), of Cass City, enjoying some downtime in the Walker sugar shack, while boiling freshly gathered maple sap into maple syrup.

Photograph by Tom Lounsbury | The Advertiser

The Walker family uses durable plastic wine bags, which readily keep out moisture, precipitation, for gathering sap. Some maple trees are large enough to have two or more taps.

Photograph by Tom Lounsbury | The Advertiser

Walking’s Woods is a favorite location for a wide variety of outdoor pastimes, including maple-syrup making, enjoyed by the entire Walker family.

Although gathering sap can be on the tedious side, rendering it into maple syrup in the sugar shack can be rather relaxing. All that is required is keeping an eye on the ongoing “batch,” and feeding trends to the stove to maintain a consistent temperature. This allows plenty of time for some quality family camaraderie the Walkers thoroughly enjoy.

Whether it is gathering maple sap or boiling matters down into maple syrup, it all involves teamwork and is definitely a family affair in the “Walker Woods.”
Anglers are reminded to report marked and tagged fish they may encounter while fishing. Fisheries managers are continuously monitoring fish populations using clipped and marked fish. Reports can be made by filling out our Eyes in the Field form.

All anglers 17 years of age and older are required to have a fishing license.

SOUTHWEST LOWER PENINSULA

SAGINAW BAY: The rivers and oaks opened up and they were running high and muddy. Anglers were targeting yellow perch and bluegill. The Quanicassee River is open but there was ice at the mouth of the river.

SAGINAW RIVER: Some perch anglers were out in the lower Saginaw River and reported fast current, muddy water and a lot of debris coming downstream. Some anglers were jigging and trolling for walleye out of the river mouth around fishing depths of 20 to 60 feet. Anglers who went out there reported they encountered muddy water, and a lot of ice still in the bay offshore making it difficult to venture out very far. The boat launch at the mouth of the Saginaw River is now open.

GEIGER ROAD: Some of the tributaries around Fish Point were beginning to open but were running high and dirty.

GRAND RIVER (LANSING): Anglers were catching smallmouth bass on crankbaits in the late afternoon hours. There were some catches on nightcrawlers, but crankbaits performed the best.

NORTHEAST LOWER PENINSULA

TAWAS: Anglers were catching a few perch in 15 to 20 feet off minnows. The Tawas River was open and a couple boats were fishing in the bay. They marked a few fish, but it was slow.

LITTLE BAY DE NOC: Perch anglers reported improved fishing success. Anglers were catching perch on wigglers and minnows. Areas that were targeted include deeper water out of Kipling, with ideal fishing depths of around 40 to 45 feet. There were low catch numbers reported from these areas. Lake trout were seen in deeper water out of Kipling, with ideal fishing depths ranging from 10 feet to 280 feet. Pressure increased around river mouths, specifically the Falls River with anticipation of brown trout and steelhead moving into shallower water. Anglers were having success while using cut bait with lots of scent.

KEWEENAW BAY: There were good reports of catches of lake trout in deeper water. Most anglers hoping to catch deep lake trout were in depths below 200 feet fishing on the bottom. Pressure increased around river mouths, specifically the Falls River with anticipation of brown trout and steelhead moving into shallower water. There were low catch numbers reported from these areas. Lake trout were seen in depths ranging from 10 feet to 280 feet. Anglers were having success while using cut bait with lots of scent.

PINE RIVER: Fishing picked up dramatically with anglers catching coho, splake and smelt. There were reports of some nice herring also being caught. Some nice catches of whitefish were also reported.

TUSCULA TODAY.com

Contact: Lauren Henry 989-673-3169, Ext. 4098
Registration: McComb Elementary Room 98 & 99 Wednesday, April 13th, 6:30 P.M.

What to bring:
• Birth Certificate
• 2021 Tax Return
• Driver’s License

Kindergarten Clinic: May 23-26 by Appointment

Kindergarten & Young 5’s

Play Pals

PRE-SCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN, YOUNG 5’s ROUNDUP

Wednesday, April 13th, 2022

• All students who will be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2022 are eligible for kindergarten.
• All students who will be 5 years old on or before October 1, 2022 are eligible for Young 5’s
• Students who will be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2022, are eligible for preschool screening. Those accepted in preschool must meet income eligibility requirements. All ages 3 and 4 years can apply for possible programming.

Contact: Heather LaBerge or Natalie Hoffman 989-673-3169, Ext. 4001
Registration: McComb Elementary Gym Wednesday, April 13th, 6:30 P.M.
By Alex Szwarc | For the Advertiser

CARO — From police work and military service, to a job as a mail carrier and now employed in real estate, Gary King possesses a wealth of experience.

The 77-year-old is a broker and owner of Real Estate One in Caro. Come May, King will mark his 15th anniversary working for that company.

Two associate brokers, and three Realtors, along with King, work out of the office, located at 361 N. State St. The office opened in 2007.

King noted there are no other Real Estate One offices in Tuscola County. There is one apiece in Huron and Lapeer counties.

“I wear many hats,” King said. “When I first got out of the Navy, I worked for GM, did mobile home sales for a year and worked for the railroad for nine years.”

King then worked full-time for the U.S. Postal Service in Caro as a carrier for 21 years, retiring in 2005. He graduated from the police academy in 1982 and spent about 16 years working part-time for the Caro Police Department. He left the law enforcement agency in 1996.

“Some weeks I worked 40 hours and some weeks more,” he said. “And that was in addition to working at the post office.”

Through his association with a broker in Caro, King was encouraged to get his real estate license and start selling properties, something he did full-time for nine years.

“I believe the people we come in contact with are a bonus to the endeavor we have,” King commented.

From the Caro office, King and the real estate team primarily service Tuscola County. He said they also work the entire Thumb area.

With the daily work drastically varying, “When the crunch hit in the early ’80s, I had to get a job,” King said. “I had five kids and house payments.”

King, of Caro, grew up in the Alcona-Fangrove area, graduating from Alcona-Fangrove High School in 1963. He then served two years of active-duty in the Navy and spent 18 years in a reserves unit.

When asked what the transition was like working with that company in May. He has worked as a mail carrier for the U.S. Post Office in Caro, and as a part-time police officer for Caro.

King said the Caro office focuses on residential sales, with some commercial work, which isn’t as readily available.

“Regardings farms and agricultural property, he notes that he has sold land parcels, usually to a larger farm.

Kim described the current state of home sales as “really good,” adding that its inventory is low. In late January, the Caro office had about a dozen properties listed for sale online.

“We don’t have the available properties like we would have five years ago,” he said. “When we list them, most have been sold within three or four days.”

“Any time we can help, I’m happy to help,” he said.

Having spent all of his life in Tuscola County — minus a few years in the Navy — King said he likes the people.

“The market isn’t the hottest in the world, but it’s steady,” he said.

Real Estate One’s Caro office can be reached at (989) 672-6050.

Gary King, a broker and owner at Real Estate One in Caro, marks his 15th anniversary with that company in May. He has worked as a mail carrier for the U.S. Post Office in Caro, and as a part-time police officer for Caro.

King said the Caro office focuses on residential sales, with some commercial work, which isn’t as readily available.

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“We don’t have the available properties like we would have five years ago,” he said. “When we list them, most have been sold within three or four days.”

In response to what success looks like, “I believe the people we come in contact with are a bonus to the endeavor we have,” he said.

Having spent all of his life in Tuscola County — minus a few years in the Navy — King said he likes the people.

“The market isn’t the hottest in the world, but it’s steady,” he said.

Real Estate One’s Caro office can be reached at (989) 672-6050.
Vassar’s Cook GM Super Store aims to grow

By Tom Gilchrist | News Editor
gilchrist@tcadvertiser.com

VASSAR — The Cook GM Super Store welcomes buyers of new and certified pre-owned cars, and has welcomed in a number of new employees as well, recently.

“We’re trying to add more employees,” said Ken Wolverton, general manager of the dealership at 1193 W. Saginaw Road (M-15) in Vassar, and of Mike Young Buick-GMC Inc. at 312 N. Main St. in Frankenmuth.

Cook GM Super Store "hired a new body technician and an additional service technician, and we have a new body shop manager who started in December for us," said Wolverton.

“We have a new used car manager who came over to Vassar with us from Frankenmuth, and worked for us in Frankenmuth for a number of years.”

The Cook dealership also has a new sales manager, Chelsea Weaver, “who we promoted from within,” Wolverton said.

Frankenmuth, and worked for us in that area customers have come to stressed that area customers have come to “If anything, we’re trying to probably add on,” said Wolverton, who oversees the dealership’s general manager. Wolverton, with 19 years of experience in automotive sales, began working at Cook GM Super Store in July, joining dealership veteran Gary Piekos, who also serves as the Vassar dealership’s service manager.

While new car inventory on dealership lots has declined in recent months due in part to a global microchip shortage, Wolverton stressed that area customers have come to rely on the Cook sales staff through the years.

“Especially more challenging, but this too a ton of repeat business,” Wolverton said.

“Most of the people that are buying from our sales staff have bought from them in the past. There’s a trust factor there.”

About 90 percent of the dealership’s sales of new cars go to buyers who are GM workers or retirees, or family members of those folks, who receive the GM employee discount price, according to Wolverton.

“Obviously, with the chip shortage and the supply shortage, vehicle prices across the nation have skyrocketed because of supply and demand; however, for new vehicles in the area here, we still have our GM pricing, which provides prices that still are lower than anybody else can (obtain),” Wolverton said.

A customer can “tag” a new vehicle for himself or herself by consulting the Cook sales staff to decide which car to purchase, and then paying a deposit to hold the vehicle for the buyer when it arrives at the dealership.

“You can order it, or if we have one that’s coming in that’s built and not tagged, somebody can put a deposit on it and hold it.”

Corby Vandefifer is the new used car manager at the Cook GM Super Store, based at the dealership’s lot at 1014 W. Saginaw Road where it sells certified pre-owned vehicles.

Cook GM facilities have been familiar stops on Vassar’s main drag for decades, whether customers are visiting the dealership and its service center or body shop, its certified pre-owned sales lot just east of there, or the budget lot at M-15 and Division Street in downtown Vassar.

“If anything, we’re trying to probably add on,” said Wolverton, who oversees a staff of about 65 employees at Cook locations in Vassar.

“We’ve definitely added on, because we’ve added another subperson.”

The dealership also recently remodeled its body shop, now managed by Kevin Burk.

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See COOK | C5
CARO — On Feb. 23, 1922, more than 100 Caro business owners and employees formed the Caro Chamber of Commerce. The chamber is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year by expanding its brand, and that’s good news for Caro residents.

With its eye on the future, the chamber — led by Director Stacy Windham — hosted a big to-do on Small Business Saturday (Nov. 27). Dozens of local businesses participated in the event, made more special by prize bags and 50-percent-off gift cards sold to community members to be used at locally-owned businesses.

The December Gingerbread Village festival was also enhanced this year. More than 4,000 toys were given away to local children, thanks to a joint effort between the chamber, Caro St. Christopher Parish and Flint-based Catholic Charities of Genesee and Shiawassee counties.

The festival also featured a “Breakfast with Santa” event, exotic animal show and traditional lighting of the Christmas tree at the empty lot west of Harvest Your Craft café.

Windham is dedicated to making the chamber a joint community affair, and has been working with entities such as the city of Caro and its Downtown Development Authority.

“It’s super great to have everyone working together for the development of our downtown,” Windham said last year. The easing of COVID-19 restrictions is perfect timing for the chamber’s 100th anniversary. For the first time since 2019, the chamber will host both of its two biggest yearly events — Caro Cars and Crafts and the Caro Citizen of the Year banquet. Each was canceled in 2021, and Cars and Crafts was scrapped in 2020 due to the coronavirus.

Cars and Crafts is scheduled for June 3 and 4 — Friday and Saturday. Food vendors will occupy Sherman Street between the Tuscola County Courthouse and Continental Home Center, and craft vendors will pop up throughout downtown. This will be the first time the Caro Farmer’s Market — completed in late winter 2021 — will be utilized for Cars and Crafts festivities.

And on Saturday, June 4, a portion of M-81 in Caro will be shut down for a few hours as classic cars and motorcycles are displayed downtown.

The Citizen of the Year banquet is set for April 23.

Windham has also made good on her pledge to give the chamber a stronger social media presence. The Caro Chamber of Commerce Facebook page is updated daily. And a new feature — a business spotlight — highlights a local business periodically. The chamber presently has 95 members.
By Scott Bolsby | Sports Editor
sports@tcadvertiser.com

REESE — Timbers Golf Club at 7300 Bray Road in southwestern Tuscola County is preparing to open for its 26th season.

The course opened in August of 1996 with nine holes, but soon expanded to 18 holes, and has operated since as a daily fee golf course with season memberships.

Timbers lies in Tuscola County and is only minutes from Genesee and Saginaw counties, but continues to attract golfers from beyond those three primary counties.

“Seventy percent of our golfers live within 25 miles of the golf course,” course General Manager Robert Zientek said.

“We have started to see many new faces from the Detroit, Lansing, and Grand Rapids areas the last couple years. Prior to 2020, individuals and groups coming from Canada made up nearly 30 percent of all our tee times,”

Zientek noted how Timbers is aiming to make scheduling a tee time easier than ever before, with just a few clicks or the tap of your smartphone.

“We have a new point-of-sale system and tee sheet via Golfnow,” he said.

“It allows the golfer to book tee times, order food, and view course rates on a day-to-day basis from an app that can be downloaded for free on their phone.”

If paying daily for a round of golf is not your thing, season memberships are available.

“We offer three different membership types,” Zientek said. “‘Weekday,’ which is Monday through Friday anytime; ‘Week,’ which is Monday through Friday anytime along with Saturday and Sunday after 1 p.m.; and the ‘Ultra’ which is Monday through Sunday anytime.

“All memberships include golf shop and restaurant discounts along with guest rates.”

New membership prices for the Weekday format are $750 for one person and $1,300 for a couple. A new Week membership is $900 for a single and $1,500 for a couple.

The Ultra membership is $1,350 for a single and $2,150 for a couple.

Zientek mentioned the course has made major purchases in recent years.

“We have purchased new carts and equipment the last two years,” he said.

“We, fingers crossed, are hoping to not make any large purchases this year. But, as the saying goes – ‘Man plans, God laughs.’

Major changes also are taking place inside the course’s Timbers Grill restaurant,

Photo by Tim Sheridan | The Advertiser

Golf Digest writer penned this about Timbers Golf Club in Tuscola County: “The beauty, tranquility and unique challenge of golfing Michigan’s north country are what you’ll discover at The Timbers: and all just five minutes east of Frankenmuth and nine miles from the Birch Run Outlet Mall.”

Timbers Golf Club, at 7300 Bray Road in Tuscola County’s Tuscola Township, has purchased new golf carts and equipment in the past two years. It also operates Timbers Grill, a restaurant open to the public. For information on course memberships or scheduling scrambles or outings, call 989-871-4884 or visit www.timbersgolfclub.com.
FROM C2
Wolverton said, “Let’s say it wasn’t pre-ordered, and it’s coming in to us for stock. If anybody wants it, they could put a hold on it with a deposit. “If they don’t take it, the deposit’s refundable.”

Wolverton encouraged buyers to check with a Cook sales staff member to see which vehicles are on the way.

“We have a list of incoming units that aren’t sold, or aren’t in hold, and we tell them about that,” he said. “Or if somebody wants to put the order in, we put the order in.”

March is “Truck Month” at Cook GM Super Store, which offers more rebates on sales of new pickup trucks that month.

In addition, customers buying four new tires in March can receive up to a $200 mail-in rebate, while rebates also are offered on new brakes, shocks and struts purchased in March.

Demand for used cars has been soaring in recent months, according to online sources.

Corby Vandefifer, Cook GM’s new used car manager, said that’s the case at Cook’s certified pre-owned car lot at 1014 W. Saginaw Road, where buyers can view 128 vehicles.

“Used car sales are through the roof; we’re enjoying it,” Vandefifer said.

FROM C4
including an increase of staff by 100 percent that includes old familiar faces and some new ones.

Timbers will pay it back to local communities with the ingredients it uses in the food served at Timbers Grill.

“We will be buying meats, breads and buns and vegetables and fruits from local vendors this year,” Zientek said. “It might be a tough summer, so the least we can do is buy from and support other local businesses.”

Timbers continue to gear up for the upcoming season full of outings, scrambles and charity events.

“We are booking for the 2022 season,” Zientek said. “We shape all events to what the group or vendor wants. We offer many different meal and golf options. Cost depends on day of the week, time of the year, number of players, and the food package.”

For more information on Timbers Golf Course check out www.timbersgolfclub.com or call 989-871-4884.
The Vintage Greenhouse, 6003 Fulton St. in Mayville, now sells new women’s clothing in addition to offering estate sale services, vintage and handmade items, and crafting and enrichment classes. The store is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.
New career blooms for buyer of Millington flower shop

By Alex Newby | For the Advertiser alex@advertiser.com

MILLINGTON — Karen Nelson looks forward to learning a new skill — as a small-business owner in the flower industry.

Since late January, Nelson has owned the Country Mouse Flowers & Gifts Inc. in Millington, at 4849 State Road, north of Main Street. The business, formerly Country Mouse Flower House, has been in operation for more than 30 years.

Nelson, of Vassar, purchased the shop from Clara Mosher.

“It’s kind of magic,” Nelson said as she began to explain how she entered the flower industry. “It’s the type of business I’ve always wanted to get into.”

She previously spent more than 30 years in retail sales, working for Meijer Inc. She most recently worked as a food line leader at Meijer’s Burton location on Center Road.

Nelson officially opened the shop Feb. 7, in time for Valentine’s Day.

“I wanted to be more one-on-one with customers,” she said. “Working through where customers come in and are feeling grief because they lost loved ones, along with weddings and joyous occasions too.”

Nelson, who lived in Millington before moving to Vassar, noted that she likes utilizing her creative side.

“I recently started with another company after retiring from my first,” she said. “My husband came home and said (the flower shop) was for sale.

Maybe it was preordained that Karen Nelson bump into Clara Mosher after that. “I was at a store buying supplies, I turned around and Clara and Gary (Mosher) were standing behind me,” Karen Nelson said.

“She looked at me and I looked at her and one thing led to another, and lo and behold, I’m buying,” Nelson said.

Since Nelson and her husband, Todd, noticed the Country Mouse Flower House was for sale in December, Karen Nelson said life has been very fast-paced.

“I’ve been trying to get everything set up in my name and opening business accounts,” she said. “Getting in contact with all of the vendors and knowing who the vendors are. I’ve been working hand-in-hand with the seller who has been very gracious in assisting us and navigating me through everything.”

Since Mosher sold the business “as is,” Nelson indicated she won’t have to completely stock the business.

“I’m purchasing the stock that remains in the store,” she said. “The vendor has closed the store in the other location.

She mentioned she has her own ideas of what will be offered that is new, but wants to get her feet on the ground first and offer what was previously offered.

“There hasn’t been a florist in the area for quite some time and a lot of florists that did exist have unfortunately gone out of business,” Nelson said. “I want to build on other avenues like having a local artist corner.”

In regard to how she plans to attract new customers, she said she plans on getting the word out via advertisement, Facebook messages, websites and staying active in the community.

“Knowing what’s going on in the community so that I can have something to offer to them when it’s needed,” she said. The number of workers that flower shop will employ is to be determined, Nelson said.

“It depends on how the business grows,” she added. “Because it has the potential, it could be slow-growing until the word gets out that we have reopened the shop, and on the other hand, it could go gangbusters because there is not a shop around anymore.”

Nelson said the Millington community is very close-knit and welcoming.

“They are good people with a good hometown in a small community,” she commented.

To learn more about the business, email karen@countrymouseinc.com or call (989) 871-4589. It is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Todd and Karen Nelson operate Country Mouse Flowers & Gifts Inc. at 4849 State Road (M-15) in Millington. The business is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.
Central Shop Rite doing ‘some pretty cool things’

James Haines, right, owner of Vassar’s Central Shop Rite supermarket, and produce specialist Tammy Silk, welcome customers to the store, equipped with an LED lighting system and a new refrigeration system where food and beverage products enclosed within glass doors to protect food products.

Instead of plucking a package of ground round or yogurt off an open shelf, shoppers now reach inside doors to refrigerated zones housing everything from meat to cheese to eggs to beer.

“We’ve done some pretty cool things here lately, it’s been fun to be able to reinvest into the company,” Haines said of the new refrigeration system.

“There is, absolutely, an energy savings, but the ultimate advantage is for our customer. We are selling a better product. Our customers are taking a better product home.”

Casey Burke, Central Shop Rite’s meat department manager, said many customers have complimented the store at 500 Goodrich St. on the fact its ground beef from round, or store-made bulk sausage, or popular store-made jalapeno cheese brats, now stay cool behind glass doors.

By Tom Gilchrist | News Editor
gilchrist@tcadvertiser.com

VASSAR — By upgrading his hometown supermarket, James Haines figures he’s improving things for his customers, and community.

“We have to embrace change, absorb technology, and welcome science,” said Haines, owner of Vassar’s Central Shop Rite supermarket, which has installed a new refrigeration system along with glass doors to protect food products.

Instead of plucking a package of ground round or yogurt off an open shelf, shoppers now reach inside doors to refrigerated zones housing everything from meat to cheese to eggs to beer.

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SEE CENTRAL SHOP RITE | C9
Central Shop Rite puts customers first

A customer named Ed strolls past products behind new glass doors protecting food items and keeping more even temperatures inside the refrigerated cases. “I shop here all the time,” Ed said. “This is the only place I go. I like the store.”

FROM C2

“This system allows a longer shelf life, but the main thing is there’s less temperature fluctuation inside the case,” Burke said. “In an open-air case – which is what most stores have – the product in the back is way colder than the stuff in the front.

“And as the product runs through its defrost period, it will constantly fluctuate in temperature, whereas behind these doors, there’s very little temperature fluctuation from front to back.

“Sometimes in those open-air cases we used to have, the stuff in the back would freeze. You don’t want meat to constantly freeze and thaw, and then freeze and thaw.”

Haines said that about five years ago the store installed a glass-door-enclosed refrigeration system housing packages of salad items – which previously sat on shelves in refrigerated, but open, areas.

“When we did that, it was amazing the difference that we saw – instantly,” Haines said. “In an open case, the temperature of the product will change up to six degrees during the day. The product in the front is always warmer than the product in the back.

“With the doors in place, the temperature changes less than two degrees, and the temperature is the same throughout the case. The doors also protect food or beverage products inside them.

“In the world we live in today, with COVID-19 and all the viruses and everything, the doors actually do add some sort of a value of protection – of security,” Haines said. “It feels better that you have that barrier there.”

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LUCAS INMAN
Theatre major from Saginaw

Photo by John Cook | The Advertiser
Michael Sheppard, meatcutter at Central Shop Rite, stocks shelves last week. The store has installed a new refrigeration system that keeps many of its food products behind glass doors. Customer response has been overwhelmingly positive, according to employees.

SVSU was voted the #1 college campus in Michigan. What does that mean? When you join SVSU, you join the Cardinal family, a caring community of scholars, mentors, experts and friends. We are committed to providing students with the support they need to do their best — emotionally, physically and academically.

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LUCAS INMAN
Theatre major from Saginaw

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Gymnastics program vaults Vassar schools into limelight

By Tom Gilchrist | News Editor
gilchrist@tcadvertiser.com

VASSAR — Insiders see the Vassar Public Schools’ gymnastics program differently these days, according to Suzy Weldon.

“Several coaches have come up to me and said that ‘Wow, Vassar has come a long way. You don’t look like a recreational program anymore,’” said Weldon, coach of Vassar’s co-op gymnastics program involving athletes from five high schools.

“They feel we’re more competitive now. We have beaten teams that were in the top 10 in the state, and Vassar has never done that. Our motto from the get-go is that we’ve always had fun on our team. I told the kids ‘You can still have fun, and there’s nothing wrong with that. I like to have fun, too, but sometimes, winning is fun.’

“I know it sounds terrible, but I said ‘There’s nothing wrong with being more competitive.’

“Vassar’s school gymnastics program, founded by coach Walt Purigroski in the 1970s, has expanded to include students from Vassar, Reese, Caro, Frankenmuth and Bay City Central high schools.

“Two Vassar students – senior Teagan Wilkinson and junior Haley Strunk – are the Vassar Vulcans on the team. Other members are Kennidie Vrable of Caro; Piper O’Rourke of Frankenmuth; Reese students Courtney Kalkman, Mallory Hughes, Ellynne McCoy, Emma Hughes and Lindsay Demong; and Bay City Central’s Danielle Withrow, Natalie Withrow, Taylor Nadolski, Delaney Hopkins, Addy Priest and Addi Sajdak.

“Whether her gymnasts grew up in a local youth program or honed their skills in gymnastics clubs, Weldon said the two groups “complement each other, because they both bring strong assets to the program.”

“My Vassar girls came from the youth program – where they’re exposed to high-school rules,” Weldon said. “Where the girls that came from the bigger programs, and the bigger clubs, were taught the (U.S.A. Gymnastics) rules.”

See GYMNASTICS | C11
Gymnastics program vaults Vassar schools into limelight

Daniele Witterdot, a Bay City Central High School student, competes in a gymnastics meet for Vassar High School's co-op program. The Advertiser Photo by Suzy Weldon, hopes to acquire a building – or use of one – as the home for the program and its equipment. Weldon said she'd like to use a building or pole barn in the Richville area as her program’s new home.

FROM | CSD
which are the plus-rule levels.

“What’s neat about the Vassar-Reese program – because both schools were together in the youth program – is that taught them more of the team concept, and to win it for the team. The other girls did it mostly for the individualized aspect – for themselves.

“These girls that took part in the bigger programs stressed more technique, and more drills than that. These kids complement each other, because the ones who were individualized are learning how to be part of the team, but their lines, and their gymnastics skill, is more clean, and involving more fitness.”

Weldon, a Reese High School teacher, competed in a gymnastics for two years while a student at Western Michigan University. She also competed on a Holland High School squad that won four consecutive state titles.

During her junior year at Holland, Weldon won state individual titles on the vault, the floor exercise and in the all-around category.

Weldon was named “Coach of the Year” in 2021 by the Michigan High School Coaches and Judges’ Association. That same year, Sydney Histed – a Reese student competing on the Vassar squad – won “Senior Gymnast of the Year” in the state.

This season, the Vassar co-op squad broke a team scoring record that was set in 1999 when Kristi Schluckbier, a Reese Public Schools student competing on the Reese Public Schools, Maggie Pearcy of Reese Public Schools, Makenna Hoeppner from Fairgrove Schools and Kendyll Weakman from Luke’s Lutheran School in Vassar.

The Vassar co-op gymnastics program may write a check to Vassar High School, Attn. Weldon, a Reese High School teacher, competing for a Vassar youth gymnastics program for participants in grades 7 to 12. One hundred youth-gymnastics qualifiers were set to come to a meet hosted by Vassar Public Schools earlier this month.

Qualifiers from the Vassar youth program were 13-year-old Elizabeth Rose of Akins-Fairgrove Schools and Makenna Hoeppner of Rudolph’s St. Michael’s Lutheran School. Twelve-year-olds Kendyll Wooldam of Millington Community Schools, and Mackenzie Hasenhuettl of Christian School, and 10-year-olds Meredith Bauer of Reese Public Schools, Maggie Pearcy of Caro Community Schools and Lily Guzman of St. Luke’s Lutheran School in Vassar.

Weldon, a Bay City resident, aims to improve Vassar’s co-op program by acquiring the use – or ownership – of a building to house the program’s equipment, including the spring floor. She said the program receives a two-hour slot for practice inside the Central Elementary School gym, which also is used by middle-school athletes. The spring floor, stored in segments that must be attached before use and dismantled afterward, takes time not only to set up, but tear down.

“Our spring floor, most of the time, only gets set up for one event,” Weldon said. “The kids don’t even get exposed to it, and it hurts us, overall, if we don’t get to practice on it, because the floor exercises ends up being our weakest event because we don’t get to practice it.”

If the program found its own venue in or near Vassar, the floor could be left in place. “Richville would be, like, the perfect spot (for a gymnastics venue),” Weldon said. “If someone can build me a facility, I’m OK.”

Weldon also is interested in hearing from an owner of a heated pole barn or other building.

“If I even pay rent for it – I don’t care,” she said. “If I start a youth program, there’s definitely the capability of me paying rent for it.”

Anyone wishing to provide space for the gymnastics program, or wanting information on joining Vassar’s youth program, may email Weldon at SuzyWeldonGymnastics@gmail.com.

“There’s a lot of interest in gymnastics in this,” Weldon said. “I have Vassar kids asking for more time. I have parents emailing me or calling me because they want their kids to be exposed to gymnastics, or have classes.

“Unfortunately, I can say ‘Yeah, we offer this class’, because the gym is taken up by other sports events. Currently, it’s really hard for us to offer that, but there’s definitely a need in the Thumb area for something like that.”

Those wishing to support Vassar’s co-op gymnastics program may write a check payable to “Vassar Public School” and write “Gymnastics” in the memo line. Mail the check to Vassar High School, Attn. Suzy Weldon, 220 Athletic St., Vassar, MI 48768.

Weldon said she’s not asking the school district to rent or buy a building for the gymnastics program.

“I think it will help Vassar in the long run, because all the time that we use the school gym, it’s not being used by our practices, they can open it up to other activities,” she said.

**Programs and Events**

- **TOUR OF THE COUNTRY**
  - May 25, 2022
  - Various locations
- **Kubota Event**
  - $1,100 instant rebate on qualifying implements
  - Valid through June 30, 2022
- **Farm Depot**
  - Caro,
  - (989) 675-6172
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6190 Hospital Drive, Suite 107, Cass City, MI
CARO — Tractor Supply announced today the completion of an exciting remodel of the entire store at the Caro location that will transform the shopping experience for local customers.

The enhanced store features an improved layout for convenient and accessible shopping as well as a new Customer Service Hub with upgraded digital tools to help customers find what they need. Additionally, customers can now shop from an expanded assortment of apparel, tools, hardware, pet food, animal feed and more.

“At Tractor Supply, we constantly work to improve the customer experience, from product offerings to in-store features. These exciting upgrades have completely transformed our store, making it an even better option for customers shopping for Life Out Here,” said Lori Dirker, manager of the Caro Tractor Supply store. “We are excited for customers to visit our new space that now features more products than ever before, including our new apparel department, expanded feed and pet selection and broader tool assortment. We know that customers will love these upgrades as much as we do, and we hope to share them with both familiar and new faces from the Caro community.”

Additional improvements to the Caro location include a new Tractor Supply Pet Wash for owners and their friendly, four-legged family members. Customers can now pamper their pets with a bath in an easy and convenient washing station loaded with professional-grade equipment and high-quality products. Pet owners will have access to elevated wash bays, grooming tables, specialty shampoos, use of brushes, combs and towels as well as a waterproof apron and professional dryer all for just $9.99. Tractor Supply also carries an assortment of pet accessories for customers to shop for after the bath, including toys, beds, collars, leashes and more. With these enhancements, the Caro Tractor Supply continues to serve the needs of homeowners, livestock and pet owners, gardeners, hobby farmers, ranchers, traditions and others.

Tractor Supply customers can shop from a wide range of products including workwear and boots, canine and pet supplies, autoimmune and riding mowers, pet food, lawn and garden supplies, power tools, fencing, welding and more.

The Caro Tractor Supply store, at 1255 Cameron Rd, keeps regular business hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. To learn more about Tractor Supply Company, visit TractorSupply.com. For information on Tractor Supply’s Neighbor’s Club loyalty program, please visit NeighborsClub.com.

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FREE PRESCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN, YOUNG 5’s ROUNDUP
Wednesday, April 13th, 2022

For qualifying families:

• All students who will be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2022 are eligible for kindergarten.
• All students who will be 5 years old on or before October 1, 2022 are eligible for Young 5’s.
• Students who will be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2022, are eligible for preschool screening. Those accepted in preschool must meet income eligibility requirements. All ages 3 and 4 years can apply for possible programming.

Play Pals Preschool

Contact: Lauren Henry
989-673-3169, Ext. 4098

Registration: McComb Elementary Room 96 & 99
Wednesday, April 13th
6:30 P.M.

What to bring:
• Birth Certificate
• 2021 Tax Return
• Driver’s License

Kindergarten & Young 5’s

Contact: Heather LaBerge or Natalie Hoffman
989-673-3169, Ext. 4001

Registration: McComb Elementary Gym
Wednesday, April 13th
6:30 P.M.

Kindergarten Clinic: May 23-26
by Appointment
The Lighthouse is a sub-acute, transitional, and long term rehabilitation facility dedicated to increasing the independence of our clients. The Lighthouse is committed to helping our clients heal quickly and achieve a better quality of life. We provide an exceptional Outpatient client care experience that promotes healing and recovery in a compassionate environment. Our hands-on approach integrates the most current evidence-based treatment in each individualized one-on-one session. We continually strive to improve the health of our local communities, for all ages, through a passionate commitment to clinical excellence and exceptional service. The measure of our success will be found in the trust we build and in the successes of those we heal.

Leaders in Brain Injury Rehabilitation since 1987

The Lighthouse is a sub-acute, transitional, and long term rehabilitation facility dedicated to increasing the independence of our clients.

The Lighthouse is committed to helping our clients heal quickly and achieve a better quality of life. We provide an exceptional Outpatient client care experience that promotes healing and recovery in a compassionate environment. Our hands-on approach integrates the most current evidence-based treatment in each individualized one-on-one session. We continually strive to improve the health of our local communities, for all ages, through a passionate commitment to clinical excellence and exceptional service. The measure of our success will be found in the trust we build and in the successes of those we heal.

For more information about our services, please visit us online at: lighthouserehab.com

Caro: (989) 673-2500
1655 E Caro Rd., Caro, MI

Traverse City: (231) 263-1350
4040 Beacon St., Kingsley, MI

Thumb Cellular transitions to Voice over LTE (VoLTE)

Thumb Cellular, the Thumb of Michigan’s locally owned and operated cellular carrier, is in the process of enabling Voice over LTE (VoLTE) for all active customers. Once fully transitioned, Thumb Cellular customers will experience improved call quality and expanded coverage when traveling outside the Thumb region.

“We’re thrilled to offer VoLTE as a no-cost service enhancement to our customers,” said Tracey Schenk, Thumb Cellular Director. “We’ve been working on preparations for VoLTE for many months and customer transitions are now underway.”

VoLTE, sometimes also called HD Voice, will transition all cellular voice calls from Thumb Cellular’s legacy 2G and 3G networks to its advanced 4G LTE network. With VoLTE, voice calls will have improved clarity and more natural sounding audio, calls will connect faster, and customers will notice improved battery life from their phone. Though VoLTE uses the LTE data network, there are no changes to a customer’s service plan or the way they are billed.

“VoLTE is a bridge from the past to the future,” said Schenk. “As legacy 2G and 3G networks prepare to shut down nationwide by the end of 2022, this technology is the stepping stone needed to prepare us for further network upgrades and improvements.”

While Thumb Cellular is committed to keeping its legacy networks operating for as long as possible, several roaming partners have already began decommissioning theirs. For customers who frequently travel, enabling VoLTE now will greatly improve their call coverage when in “extended” network mode.

Customers who have not already been transitioned to VoLTE will be contacted by Thumb Cellular over the coming weeks and months. For those who wish to enable VoLTE immediately, they may visit their local Thumb Cellular office in Bad Axe, Caro, Pigeon or Sandusky, or call 800-443-5057 during normal business hours.

For more information about the VoLTE transition, including device compatibility and software update directions, visit www.thumbcellular.com/volte.