Sheriff’s department seeks help identifying break-in suspects

By Sharon Stone
sstone@tctimes.com; 810-433-6786

Fenton Twp. — The Genesee County Sheriff's Department is investigating a summer burglary and is asking the community for help in solving the crime.

Det. Sgt. Michael Ignash said detectives are attempting to identify two suspects caught on surveillance video from the business next door. See SUSPECTS on 5

Fenton in ‘solid’ financial shape

By Anna Troppens
atroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Fenton — The city is in solid financial condition, the annual audit from Abraham & Gaffney, P.C. shows.

Alan Panter presented audit results to Fenton City Council at Monday’s worksession, saying the city has 23.9 percent in fund balance reserves, up from 23.5 percent the year before. It increased by $86,155.

A minimum of 15 to 20 percent fund balance, for the city’s See SOLID on 16

Experts: Financial outlook for 2011 brighter

By Tim Jagielo
fjagielo@tctimes.com

Unemployment is still high and people are feeling the effects of the recession and the shrinking of the economy that ended last year, but most indicators point to slow and steady growth for the United States, and the local economy in 2011.

“The market, job outlook, and consumer spending seem even a little bit better recently, it might not be your imagination.

I’ve been in business for 22 years. I’ve never seen such opportunities in investment and real estate.”

Patrik Welty
Realtor

A day at the museum

Kyle Martin (right), and Chance Curtis, third-grade students at North Road Elementary School in Fenton, check out the Grossology exhibit at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum in Flint Tuesday afternoon. The students also learned about early Michigan settlers during the field trip at the museum.

Argentine man dies in crash on U.S. 23

By Sharon Stone
sstone@tctimes.com

A 27-year-old Argentine Township man was killed in a one-vehicle rollover crash on U.S. 23 in Mundy Township early Tuesday morning.

According to Mundy Township police, Casey Masak was driving a Dodge Avenger, southbound on the highway at 12:37 a.m. The crash occurred between Grand Blanc and Reid roads. Masak was fatally injured. Two female passengers, ages 28 and 40, both

See CRASH on 16
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Extreme cold is tough on our pets

By Anna Troppens
atroppens@tctimes.com

Many dogs enjoy a fun romp through the snow, but when temperatures fall, it’s important for pet owners to make sure their animals stay warm enough.

It’s especially important for puppies and kittens, which cannot regulate their body temperatures as well as adult pets, said veterinarian Gary LaBar, of Pointe Animal Clinic in Fenton. If it’s below 40 degrees, puppy and kitten owners need to be very careful, he said. Small animals have potential for frostbite on their feet, and the thin skin of their ears.

Larger dogs, of 50- to 60-plus pounds, need access to an insulated doghouse if they are kept outdoors, LaBar said. The doghouse should have an insulated floor and walls.

Stop an earache

Stop an earache by heating an onion half in the microwave for two minutes, until warm. Wrap in a soft cloth or paper towel and apply the flat side to your ear for 15 minutes. The heated vegetable emits sulfur, an anti-inflammatory gas that relieves pain.

Personalize your home with wall photos

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

The Christmas tree is down and the decorations have been packed away. But, your home doesn’t have to look plain and bare after the holidays. You can create a new “sparkle” in 2011, even with a drab winter landscape outside.

The best place to start is with your own photos. Whether you use holiday pictures from this most recent Christmas, or go back to your family’s youngest years, you can create a gallery of photos that can line your stairway, fill an empty nook or cran-ny, or make a statement above a mantle or fireplace.

“Photos should be on your walls or in a photo book, not just stored on your computer,” said Terry Green, photographer/owner of Billmeier Camera in Fenton. “I firmly believe we are doing a disservice to future generations by not printing out photos. We’re taking 10 times the digital photos we used to take with film, but we’re printing above a mantle or fireplace.”

Hints for hanging photos

Page 15

Are you having problems with restless, tired legs at the end of the day?

VARICOSE VEINS WORSEN OVER TIME

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Are Republicans the party of change?

When the 112th Congress officially convenes today, the question most of us have is, will it still be business as usual, or will we really see change from the Republicans?

The changes Americans want can be summed up in one word — REDUCE. Reduce government spending. Reduce the national deficit. Reduce the (or eliminate) earmarks and pork. Reduce (or eliminate) briberies by lobbyists and special interests. Reduce Americans’ taxes. Reduce (or eliminate) illegal immigration. Reduce government intrusion into our lives. Reduce government lying, cheating and corruption. Reduce the powers and increase the accountability of the incompetent IRS. In other words, reduce the government in every way.

Nov. 2, 2010 was undoubtedly a wake-up call for the direction Washington was (is?) going and how it is conducting government business. But, it was also a condemnation of what the people we have elected have become.

That is why I would bet the farm that Barack Obama will be a one-term president. Why? Because President Obama made the audacious claim in the beginning of his presidency that his administration would ‘clean up both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue’ with ‘the most sweeping ethics reform in history.’ He repeatedly pledged, that ‘an Obama Administration is going to have the toughest ethics laws of any administration in history.’ But, what we’ve actually got from his administration is even more of the same old government corruption — back-door deals, sidestepping of constitutional procedures, manipulating the American public, buying votes with outrageous bribes to unions and other special interest groups, broken campaign promises, and complete disregard for the intelligence of the American voters. The new faces in Washington should take note of this or they will end up as ‘one-termers’ also. America is watching very closely.

Good morals preceede good laws, which is why our government is in the shape it is in today. Unless the people and their legislators are grounded in morality, the best of laws will be broken and more illogical, self-serving laws will be passed, further eroding the future of our nation, our children, and our country.

— Cam Wojciechowski
Deerfield Township

— Stan Delahay
Fenton Township

— Sue Callahan
Linden

— Kathy Anthony
Swartz Creek

— Bob Squire
Holly Township

— Kurt Wildfong
Grand Blanc

What would you do if you won the Mega Millions jackpot?

I think the first thing I’d do is take care of family. Certainly an amount would go to charity. My wife would like a new home.

— Cam Wojciechowski

I’ve got three (kids) in college, that’d be a start, paying off their tuition. I’d probably support my church and charitable organizations.

— Stan Delahay

There’s a few people I’d give money to that are having some hard times. There are some philanthropic programs I’d support, and then I’d go somewhere warm.

— Sue Callahan

“Spend it. Our church needs to rebuild the kitchen and a couple of bathrooms. I would spend that first. Then, I’d buy a Smart Car.”

— Kathy Anthony

“We’d help out the less fortunate, more kids than anything. We would give scholarships for education, clothes, and good Christmas gifts.”

— Bob Squire

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— Stan Delahay

“I would retire. pay off my bills, give to charity, and probably move someplace warm.”

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— Kurt Wildfong

The January blues

The Christmas tree is down and the decorations have been put away until next year. The celebrations, holiday parties are over and all the presents are unwrapped. Many people experience a letdown at this time of year and get the January Blues. My resolution this New Year is to get back to the gym (like millions of other people) and lose a couple pounds. Exercise is what I do to beat the blues this time of year.

Hit the jackpot

Winning the lottery, is it the American dream or a nightmare? By the time you read this column, some lucky person could be the winner of the $330 million Mega Millions jackpot. I think of all of us at one time or another dream about winning a jackpot in the lottery. I know I do. I will be one of those people standing in line to purchase a ticket or two on my way home from work this evening.

But, winning the lottery isn’t all it is cracked up to be, according to an article about some past lottery winners. Some lottery winners ended up penniless in a matter of a few short years. Some went bankrupt and one ended up divorced and addicted to crack cocaine.

But, I hope you enjoy dreaming about what I would do if I won. Would I stop working? Travel? Buy a house on the oceanfront? Help mankind? Write the book I have always wanted to write? I, indeed, would probably do all of the above.

But, what I do know is that money has never been the driving factor in my life and it does not buy happiness. It makes life easier. But it isn’t what really makes me happy. If it were money that made me happy, I couldn’t have given up my career with the government to become a newspaper reporter. It is the people in my life that makes me the happiest. If I ever did win the lottery, I would spend more time with my family and friends. Anyway, it’s fun to dream about it and that definitely helps beat those January blues.

Recipes

Are you looking for a new recipe for an upcoming family gathering or a Super Bowl party? Do you have a recipe you would like to share with Tri-County Times readers? Just click on the ‘Living Section’ at www.tctimes.com and then go to ‘My Recipes.’ Follow the instructions to share your favorite recipe.
City accepts deeds to Orchard Hills

Officials want to control how arsenic contamination in soil is handled

By Anna Troppens
atroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Fenton — It’s official — the city of Fenton is obtaining deeds to Phase 2 of Orchard Hills. Certain areas of the land, seven acres, have soil contaminated with arsenic from pesticide use on orchard trees, decades ago.

Fenton is obtaining the property, which hasn’t been built upon, from Genesee County, due to unpaid taxes. City officials have said they feel a responsibility to residents in the area, because of the arsenic contamination.

On Monday, City Manager Lynn Markland worked on transferring deeds from the county to the city, receiving confirmation that day that the process had begun. He said there are multiple deeds, due to several different lots being involved.

It could cost $50,000 to $70,000 to address arsenic problems in the areas where the orchards were, Doug McDowell, from McDowell & Associates, who was a consultant for the developers of Orchard Hills, has said. McDowell & Associates also performed an environmental study, for $2,100, before Fenton accepted deeds to the land, to protect the city from liability for contamination that took place before it owned the property.

The completed study showed what Fenton officials expected, Markland said. It documented past uses of the land, and known contamination.

If the city owns the property, it can apply for grants to help with the cleanup. If a developer owns the land, they potentially could use a Brownfield Authority and tax increment financing to help with their plans. They might be able to use future taxes they would pay on the site for cleanup, to make their development more feasible, planning consultant Carmine Avantini has said.

The land could be developed and added back onto the city’s tax rolls, Avantini said.

Roy and Elaine Widm movement into Orchard Hills in 1993. At the council work-session on Monday, Roy said he has been receiving many phone calls from people asking him what is going on with Orchard Hills, since he was president for the development. He isn’t president any longer but he and his wife would like to become involved again with Orchard Hills issues, he said.

They know the history and would like to keep things going the way they are, he said. Previous efforts included attempts to change the zoning.

“Our previous efforts included attempts to change the zoning. “Now we have a good piece of real estate, and we want to keep it,” he said.

Mayor Sue Osborn said she appreciates what the couple is doing and looks forward to working with them.

The property transfer from Genesee County to the city, due to unpaid taxes, also includes 603 Main St., which neighboring property owners have expressed interest in having. City officials haven’t decided what to do with it, since they don’t have the deeds yet, Markland said.

In addition, Fenton has accepted three lots from the county, which are in the Orchard Hills development, that are ready for housing construction, he said.

SUSPECTS

Continued from Front Page

According to the security system, the break-in occurred at the Resale Reboot Shop on North Fenton Road in Fenton Township at approximately 10 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 27, 2010.

In the surveillance video, the unknown man and woman are seen with a laptop, which was stolen from the upscale consignment shop. The suspects stole $125 cash, some jewelry and an IBM ThinkPad laptop computer.

If anyone has information about the break-in, they are to call Ignash at (810) 424-4306. A video showing the suspects with stolen merchandise can be viewed online at www.tctimes.com.
Hot Line continued

We've been told for ages it's coming, so when is the city's new website ever going to be updated?

It is against the law to serve alcohol within 500 feet of a church. I am not opposed to alcohol consumption or distribution. However, I am opposed to a city government that picks and chooses which laws it will obey. If you don't like the law, contact your legislators in Lansing to have it changed.

To users of Rose Ponds Park, I have just finished clearing the trail with large loppers. It would be wonderful if someone would finish the job with a gas chain saw. Maybe, in the spring, we could remove the deer carcass from the trail.

Who stole my wine collection? Fifty-plus bottles, I'm so sad about this. Let me know if anyone sees beautiful red wines around town. They are mine.

Did the city of Fenton interview any of the loyal, longtime city employees to move up to the position of the director of public works? Just asking.

I am sad to hear the city chose not to renew the contract with Wastee Management. Both the trash collectors and recycling men who picked up our waste weekly were wonderful people. They will all be missed by my family, especially Mr. Ezelin, the recycling collector who went beyond his normal job description. Thank you all for your service.

People taking a casual walk in the undeveloped subdivision off Eddy Lake Road in Fenton should really wear orange. I live nearby, and there is so much gunfire it's scary. I can't believe the police don't patrol that street more often.

Freedom isn't free, so stop whining and pay your taxes.

I am just about fed up with these people who keep smoking in their cars and homes when they have non-smokers there. Especially minors. Isn't there anything that can be done? Maybe the state needs to get involved.

I was a passenger in the Your Ride van that got stuck in the creek between Charlevoix Drive and the entrance to the Georgetown apartment complex on Wednesday morning. I would just like to thank the few people who tried to help dig us out, including the two young men who came to try and push the vehicle, and the older man who helped transport me to the other vehicle. I extend my deepest gratitude.

BraVo, to Linda! schools for providing an introductory lesson in economics to the elementary students. However, where was the tax person in your lesson plan? This is a perfect opportunity to effect positive change in the long term by teaching how wrong it is to overpay to others. Kids are smart and will surely be very disappointed to see their earnings from hard work simply vanish.

The new waste removal contractor in Fenton has a variety of great recycling and waste management choices. So stop whining and have the materials you want recycled or stored on your property. The new collection schedule and drop-off locations are in your mailboxes. We can all do this.

To the lady who feels that she is being violated at airport security checkpoints, who are you going to complain to if you ‘violated’ at airport security check points, to the people who continue to sit on their plane for an hour after everyone else has left the airplane you used to be riding in?

The high price of gasoline is due to the people who continue to sit on their buffets and collect unemployment, plain and simple. Get up.

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MAN SHOPLIFTS LIQUOR
At 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 28, a Fenton police officer was sent to a grocery store in the 18000 block of Silver Parkway to investigate a retail fraud complaint. Lt. Jason Stater said employees told the responding officer that a white male selected a half gallon and a fifth of vodka from the liquor aisle and walked out of the store without paying for the two bottles. An employee followed the man outside and watched as he entered a blue Monte Carlo and drove away. The employee provided the license plate number on the car to police. The case remains under investigation.

SMOKE INVESTIGATION
City of Fenton firefighters were dispatched to an automobile dealership in the 2500 block of Owen Road at 11:54 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 31, to investigate a possible structure fire. Fenton Fire Chief Robert Cairnduff said a Fenton police officer out on patrol spotted heavy smoke coming out of the back of the building. A crew arrived on scene at 12:01 a.m. The fire chief said it was quickly discovered that an oil burner was being used and releasing a lot of smoke. Mutual aid to nearby fire departments was canceled.

CAR STOLEN FROM PARK AND RIDE
At 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 3, a 45-year-old Fenton Township man reported to Fenton police that his 2003 Buick Regal had been stolen from the park and ride on Silver Lake Road. He said he parked it in the lot at 2:20 a.m. on Jan. 2 and when he returned on Monday, it was gone. There was no broken glass in the area and he had both sets of car keys. The car was entered into the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) as stolen and the case was forwarded to GAIN, the auto theft investigative network.

BABY JESUS STOLEN
At 6:48 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 2, a Fenton police officer was dispatched to the Fenton Community & Cultural Center to investigate a theft. A witness reported that they observed two male subjects grabbing the baby Jesus statue that is in the middle of the floor and running around the building. The responding officer was unable to locate the suspects or baby Jesus. If anyone has information about this theft, they are to call Fenton police at (810) 629-5311.

DOG OWNER FACES CHARGES
At 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 2, a Fenton police officer was sent to the 300 block of East Shiawassee Avenue on a report of dogs running at large. Lt. Jason Stater said a 56-year-old Fenton man said as he exited his home he was approached by two large dogs that were growling at him. A neighbor rushed to his aid and chased off the dogs. The officer learned where the owner of the dogs lived and made contact with a 48-year-old Fenton woman. The woman told the officer that she didn’t know how her pit bull and rottweiler got loose.

EMERGENCY CALLS DOWN
Fenton Fire Chief Robert Cairnduff said the department’s number of runs was the lowest since 1997. He said the fire department averages 500 total calls per year. For 2010, the fire department responded to 466 emergency calls.

VANDALS EGG VEHICLES
Residents in the 14000 block of Eastview Drive in Fenton Township have filed complaints with the Genesee County Sheriff’s Department. On Monday, Jan. 3, a resident reported that she noticed that her elderly mother’s Suburban had been egged, again. She said the vehicle, and vehicles belonging to some of her neighbors, have been the target of vandals several times in recent weeks.

JEEP DRIVER TICKETED
A 23-year-old Milford woman was ticketed for disregarding a traffic signal at the intersection of Adolescent Street and Shiawassee Avenue following a crash at 5:26 p.m. on Jan. 3. Lt. Jason Stater of the Fenton Police Department said the Jeep was traveling northbound on Adolescent Street, failed to yield to a southbound Jeep Liberty. From the impact, the Jeep rolled over and crashed. Both women reported minor injuries.

“Of course we are concerned how this works. Will the IRS be able to collect their money before the Court collects support for all four of his children in both cases?”

Your question raises the issue of the importance, under the law, of the child support obligations of a parent for the benefit of their child or children. The law has long recognized that child support obligations have a special priority. This is illustrated in the recent Michigan Supreme Court case of In Re Beck, where a father whose parental rights had been terminated, was still held to be liable for the support of his children pursuant to a divorce judgment.

Additionally if a parent files for bankruptcy, the child support obligation is not discharged. There are also a number of federal and state statutes that underscore the significance of child support and provide methods for collection.

For example, if a parent is behind in his or her child support, there is a federal and state income tax refund offset program that includes various state and federal agencies.

Generally speaking, this program provides for both the federal and state income tax refunds of a parent who is in arrears to be intercepted, and instead, go toward unpaid child support. There are exceptions to this as some other governmental obligations may have an even higher priority. Full details of this program are available online.

If a parent is working, most divorce judgments provide for the automatic deduction of child support by the employer from wages. A child support income withholding order must be paid before all other garnishments with one exception. If there is an IRS tax levy that has been entered prior to the date of the child support order, the tax levy takes precedence. The date that the child support order was entered and not the date it was received by the employer is key.

Also under the law, a higher percentage of the employer’s disposable income can be withheld for child support.

There are many other aspects to these types of cases that are best left to an individual conference with your attorney or your Friend of the Court caseworker. You should contact one or both at your earliest opportunity.

Robert M. Crites & Associates

If you are considering applying for Social Security or SSI benefits and have questions about the procedure or law call our office. We will analyze your case, give you some suggestions that will help you with your application, and send you an information packet showing you where and how to apply for your benefits.

Robert M. Crites Attorney at Law
Flint Office
1030 S. Grand Traverse, Flint Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-12pm & 1:30pm-5pm
Swartz Creek Office
9001 Miller Road, Swartz Creek Hours: Tues & Thurs 7:30pm-9pm
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• Social Security Benefits For Children
• Social Security Claims By People Over 50

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1). Benefits will, of course, be drawn sooner and therefore drawn longer;

2). SSD benefits are paid at almost exactly the same rate that would be paid if one waits until age 66 to start drawing social security retirement benefits which is about 25% more than would be paid - at age 62.5.

3). Medicare is available 2 years after the first date that the applicant is determined to be eligible for monthly SSD benefits.

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Meet Christopher Iacobelli, M.D.

Credentialed at Genesys Hospital of Grand Blanc and McClaren Hospital of Flint

- 1999 graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine
- 2001-2002 Chief Resident at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc
- 2009 Flint Journal “Favorite” of Genesee County

Practicing medicine in Fenton since 2002, Christopher Iacobelli, M.D., a resident of the Fenton area, is a Board Certified Family Physician and is well studied in all aspects of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. He currently practices at Parkway Family Medicine, located at 17200 Silver Parkway in Fenton, and is still accepting new patients. When scheduling an appointment with Dr. Iacobelli, you can take comfort in knowing that he will be the one to see you, not another physician.

Dr. Iacobelli, unequalled in his diagnostic capabilities, provides a wide array of services right inside his office, including x-ray and laboratory. He also offers on-site diagnostic testing through National Diagnostics. All of these tests are read by Radiologists that were hand selected by Dr. Iacobelli and are specialists in each practical area of testing.

He works closely with specialists at all area hospitals, as well as those located at University of Michigan, Beaumont, Detroit Medical Center, Karmanos, Henry Ford Hospital and The Mayo Clinic.

Dr. Iacobelli is in the process of designing the Iacobelli Medical Center, a modern, state-of-the-art medical facility, which will allow him to care for his patients more efficiently with the most current technology available for decades to come. The Iacobelli Medical Center will be located in the Fenton area and is scheduled to open sometime in the Fall of 2011.

Dr. Iacobelli is still accepting new patients!
To make an appointment or receive information on becoming a patient, please call his Medical Assistant, Misty at 810-714-9660.

Christopher Iacobelli, M.D.
810.714.9660
17200 Silver Parkway, Fenton

paid advertisement
Medicare general enrollment and general information

By Cynthia Edwards
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Need Medicare Part B? If you’re eligible, now is the time to sign up. The general enrollment period for Medicare Part B runs from Jan. 1 through March 31. Before you make a decision about general enrollment, let us fill you in on some general information.

Medicare is a medical insurance program for retired and disabled people. Some people are covered only by one type of Medicare. Others opt to pay extra for more coverage.

Understanding Medicare can save you money. Here are the facts.

There are four parts to Medicare: Parts A, B, C and D.

Part A helps pay for inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing care, hospice care, and other services. Part B helps pay for doctors’ fees, outpatient hospital visits, and other medical services and supplies not covered by Part A.

Part C allows you to choose to receive all of your health care services through a provider organization. These plans, known as Medicare Advantage Plans, may help lower your costs of receiving medical services, or you may get extra benefits for an additional monthly fee. You must have both Parts A and B to enroll in Part C. Part D is the Medicare Prescription Drug Program.

Most people first become eligible for Medicare Part B enrollment without having to pay higher premiums if you are covered under a group health plan based on your own current employment or the current employment of any family member. If this situation applies to you, you can sign up for Medicare Part B without paying higher premiums any month you are under a group health plan based on your own current employment or the current employment of any family member; or within eight months after your employment or group health plan coverage ends, whichever comes first.

If you are disabled and working (or you have coverage from a working family member), the same rules apply. Most people are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part B when they become eligible. If you don’t enroll in Medicare Part B when you first become eligible to apply and you don’t fit into one of the above categories, you’ll have to wait until the general enrollment period, which is Jan. 1 through March 31 of each year. At that time, you may have to pay a higher Medicare Part B premium.

For more information about Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D, visit the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website at www.medicare.gov or read The Social Security Administration’s publication on Medicare at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10043.html.

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTOS
Medicare is a medical insurance program for retired and disabled people. The general enrollment period for Medicare Part B runs from Jan. 1 through March 31.

B. In 2011, the standard premium is $115.40. Some high-income individuals pay more than the standard premium. Part B premium also can be higher if a person does not enroll during the initial enrollment period, or when they first become eligible. There are exceptions to this rule. For example, you can delay your Medicare Part B enrollment without having to pay higher premiums if you are covered under a group health plan based on your own current employment or the current employment of any family member. If this situation applies to you, you can sign up for Medicare Part B without paying higher premiums any month you are under a group health plan based on your own current employment or the current employment of any family member; or within eight months after your employment or group health plan coverage ends, whichever comes first.

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Games help seniors keep a sharp mind

By Tim Jagielo
tjagielo@tctimes.com; 810-433-6785

Are you over the age of 35? If so, your brain has already started to lose mass. This means information you are not using could start to slip away.

By the age of 90, the brain will have lost enough mass until it is about the weight of the average 2- year old’s. “That idea means that we have to keep (the brain) active not to lose that information,” said Jennifer Flack, who practices psychology in Fenton. The elderly population, she said.

There are many things people of all ages can do to keep their minds sharp, and these are things you may already own, or have nearby.

Flack said activities that link the mind and body are ideal for seniors. “Sudoku puzzles are good, but a Rubik’s Cube would be better,” she said.

The (Nintendo) Wii works well for the elderly population, according to Flack. The interactive gaming system challenges the player to call upon hand-eye coordination, and puzzle-solving skills at the same time.

Seniors can also be prone to depression. Flack said social activities are especially important for seniors who experience the passing of friends and loved ones. She suggests the board game Scrabble, because it not only requires the player to recall and use different words, but is at least a two-person game.

Flack recommends book clubs, and any other regular social event for seniors to keep the mind active and avoid depression. Adults of any age need to use what they’ve learned in order to retain the knowledge. “Any puzzle that uses some sort of manipulation is good for adults,” she said.

Flack recommends daily calendar puzzles that have different word and number puzzles. A board game is a good activity for seniors as it requires players to recall and use different words.

She recommends daily calendar puzzles that have different word and number puzzles.
Reverse mortgages

Is one right for you?

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

If you are a senior age 62 or above, and have had problems making your financial ends meet while living on a fixed income, you may be tempted to consider a reverse mortgage. Known as a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM), reverse mortgages are offered through the Federal Housing Administration. Information can be found online at www.hud.gov. Homeowners are cautioned against applying for a reverse mortgage from any company that is not approved by HUD.

What is a reverse mortgage?

Reverse mortgages have a different purpose than a traditional mortgage. With a traditional mortgage, a homeowner uses his or her income to repay the debt, building up equity in the home. With a reverse mortgage, a homeowner is taking the equity out, in cash. With a reverse mortgage, the debt increases while the home equity decreases, as the homeowner gets more and more cash and more interest added to the loan balance.

With a reverse mortgage, the loan and the interest on the loan are paid off when the property is sold. This can be during the homeowner’s lifetime or after his or her death — the sale price of the property pays back the loan, even if the sale price is less than the combination of the loan and interest.

Carrie Aeschliman of Star Mortgage of America, Inc., Fenton, suggests that the reverse mortgages should be considered carefully with a trusted advisor. Star Mortgage provides seniors with a free face-to-face consultation that will answer all his or her questions.

According to Aeschliman, if a person is 62 years of age or older and has equity in a home, a reverse mortgage can turn that equity into cash, a line of credit, monthly income — or a combination of all three. Unlike a traditional mortgage, there are no monthly mortgage payments and the proceeds are tax-free. There are no income qualifications or credit requirements. The person retains ownership and lives in the home as long as they choose.

According to Ann Rockman, assistant vice president at The State Bank Loan Store in Fenton, a reverse mortgage is an expensive way for a homeowner to finance a home. “All the fees are collected up front, with higher interest rates than a forward mortgage,” said Rockman. “A reverse mortgage can be a great loan for someone in the right situation,” said Rockman. One example is, if a homeowner still has a long way to go to pay off their mortgage and has trouble making payments on a fixed income.

The drop in home values in the last couple of years has had a major effect on reverse mortgages, said Rockman. The loan is based solely on the value of the home, and those values have definitely declined. “Another option for a senior who is struggling with a mortgage payment is to move into income-based housing, but there are limited possibilities locally,” she said.

A person considering the option of a reverse mortgage should speak with an experienced lender. While The State Bank no longer offers this option, Rockman said most mortgage lenders do have a reverse mortgage program.

To be eligible for a HECM reverse mortgage:

- You must be age 62 or older.
- You must either own your home outright or have a low mortgage balance that can be paid off at closing with proceeds from the reverse mortgage.
- You must live in the home. The home can be a single family home or a one- to four-unit home, as long as the borrower occupies one unit. HUD-approved condominiums and manufactured homes that meet FHA requirements are also eligible.
- You must receive consumer information from an approved HECM counselor, such as GreenPath in Flint (1-800-718-7077).

Pros

THE BENEFITS FROM A REVERSE MORTGAGE

- Provides easy access to the equity accumulated in the home.
- Delivers increased tax-free monthly income.
- Eliminate monthly mortgage payments.
- Provides funds to improve quality of life.
- Allows the homeowner to live in the home.
- Can be used for both refinancing and purchase of a primary residence.

For more information, visit:

- HUD’s Home Equity Conversion Mortgages for Seniors
- AARP reverse mortgage information

(Source: Star Mortgage of America, Inc.)

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Five reasons to plan your own funeral

Most people don’t like to think about their own mortality. Planning your own funeral means acknowledging that you will indeed one day die. It also means getting what you want for the right price while offering yourself and your loved ones peace of mind. If you’ve considered planning your own funeral, here are five reasons to stop procrastinating and start planning:

Get what you want
When you plan your own funeral, you ensure that you get everything you want and nothing that you don’t. You can decide what you want done with your remains, whether it’s to be buried, cremated or donated to science. If you choose to be buried, you can choose your own burial plot, mausoleum and casket. If you’d rather be cremated, you can choose whether to place your ashes in a cumburium, which is a mausoleum dedicated to this purpose, or be scattered according to state laws. You can also choose the type of memorial service you want by requesting that your loved ones throw a party to celebrate a life well lived, without your body present, or decide to have a traditional funeral service with a viewing of your casket — or anything in between. Planning your own service will ensure the guests honor and remember you the way you’d like them to.

Most funerals are planned after the person has already died. It’s done by family members who are grieving the loss of someone they love. The decision whether to pay $1,200 for a quaint, cozy coffin or $8,000 for the platinum, silk-lined casket with gold trim will be made from the heart — not the head. Making decisions ahead of time can reduce the amount of “emotional” money spent.

By planning ahead, you can also make sure that your loved ones are aware of any available death benefits. Social Security pays a one-time lump sum, and the Veterans Administration has a benefit for veterans. Your private insurance, trade union or church may have benefits that you’re entitled to, as well. Planning ahead means you can have all this information available for your loved ones. Many reputable funeral homes have knowledgeable staff that will provide this valuable assistance at no additional cost.

Pay in advance
You may want to consider pre-paying for your funeral if you’re trying to “spend down” your assets to qualify for Medicaid. This would typically only be done if you’re planning to stay where you are and feel confident that the company you are choosing is reputable. Funeral homes that are family-owned and have been in your community for a long time are generally honest and highly skilled in assisting you in this delicate process.

Lessen the burden on your loved ones
Losing someone you love is an emotional and very difficult time. Scrambling to make funeral arrangements and find the money to pay for them are not ideal ways to spend the first few days of grieving. By planning your own funeral in advance, you’ve given your loved ones a gift. You’re allowing them to focus on their grief and celebrate your life without worrying about what to do next.

Peace of mind
Planning your own funeral gives you peace of mind. You’ll know that, when the time comes, things will be done your way with your money.

A pre-paid funeral can help your family by ensuring that the costs of your funeral are covered. This can help to ease the financial burden on your loved ones.

A pre-planning guide is a valuable tool that can help you to plan your funeral in advance. It can help you to make informed decisions about your funeral arrangements. A pre-planning guide will provide valuable information to help you make informed decisions.

According to Roger Sharp, owner of Sharp Funeral Homes, when pre-planning and pre-paying your funeral services you not only have peace of mind that your wishes have been recorded, but you also have the confidence that you have made a sound financial decision. When you pre-pay, the cost of services and merchandise are guaranteed, which can lead to substantial savings. Your money is secured in an interest-bearing escrow account until the time of need.

If you don’t feel you are ready to pre-pay, Sharp Funeral Home can complete an Emergency Record Guide to keep your wishes on file at no cost or obligation, he said.

“At Sharp Funeral Homes, we can assist you in every aspect of pre-planning your services,” Sharp said. “We have experienced staff members dedicated to pre-planning, as well as a full time marker and monument coordinator.”

“I can’t imagine if thought was given why someone wouldn’t pre-plan their funeral. We plan everything in our lives ahead of time from grocery shopping, to vacations, to a walk in the woods because it allows us to have control.”

A Temrowski Family Funeral Home in Fenton, if pre-payment is desired they offer secure burial accounts so funeral monies are there when needed arises. A pre-paid funeral can help your family immensely at a time of utter devastation.

Dryer Funeral Home in Holly also extends the service of pre-planning funeral arrangements.
Five ways to simplify the technology in your life

Your family’s pockets, purses and backpacks are probably packed with gadgets, as technology expands into all aspects of home and work life. It seems like every device is turning into a mini-computer that texts, talks, syncs and computes. However, do we really need every device to do everything?

Simplifying the technology in your life can make you more serene and even more productive.

**GO BASIC**

Most people use computers for web surfing, word-processing and email. So why get one with the latest feature-film making software? A basic desktop should suffice, without expensive processing chips and the bells and whistles needed for cutting-edge video. Or be thrifty and trendy by buying a tiny Netbook for less than $300.

Consider utility software that keeps computers running smoothly. There are several programs from brands like Norton, McAfee and others that keep your hard drive clean and running fast.

**CELL PHONES**

Unless you’re a text-crazed teenager or senior executive, why choose a cell phone with more features than your laptop? Select a phone that does one thing really well — makes telephone calls.

Choose a phone with a simple display and only those buttons you really need, such as dedicated volume controls. For example, U.S. Cellular offers a straightforward model with large dial-pad keys and simple-to-read display. It even includes a noise suppressor, making it easier to hear when background noise is loud, a slow speech option that reduces the speed of the voice on the other end of the line, and frequency altering for those with hearing problems.

And, if you’ll be travelling, consider a simple global phone, such as the Verizon Escapade, that’s usable from more than 220 worldwide locations. Without excess features, it’s one of the lowest priced global phones, so you can check on the kids or grandkids while in tourist mode. And, it includes a simple camera to capture images of your travels.

**CAMERAS**

The average photographer doesn’t need to know f-stops to take beautiful shots. Instead of a camera suited for a National Geographic explorer, try a simpler model. While big family vacations may require big cameras, point-and-shoot models are all that are needed for that weekend barbecue.

**PASSWORDS**

From online banking to e-mail, multiple passwords guard against identity theft. It’s important to remember them all. Consider selecting passwords thematically. As an example, all of your financial accounts should use variations of your favorite food, or all e-mail accounts should use your pet’s name.

**COORDINATE GADGETS**

Do you really need an mp3 player, camera, netbook, e-reader, and home PC? Make sure your gadgets don’t overlap in function. You may even help the environment, since gadgets are often less eco-friendly than paper and pen.
Tips for retiring in an uncertain economy

With the dust finally settling around the nation’s economic crisis, baby boomers are taking stock to see if their retirement plans need revised.

There are many ways to adjust to today’s economy — from working longer to changing investment strategies or living situations.

The bad news for many is that some of their safety nets may no longer be viable. Declining real estate values mean many can’t turn to homes for money. Tumult in financial markets resulted in declines in 401K plans. And, some experts say Social Security may not be there when needed most.

For the second consecutive year, Social Security benefits didn’t rise, something which hasn’t happened in more than 75 years. And, beginning in 2016, payroll tax revenue will be insufficient to pay full Social Security benefits, according to Allen W. Smith, a retired economics professor and author of “The Looting of Social Security.”

“A pledge in the 1980s to only spend Social Security funds on benefits was broken by every presidential administration since.”

New priorities

Many are shifting investment plans to ensure the money they need within five years of retirement is safe in low-risk investments, like fixed-income funds. This can help them endure short-term market drops while the money they need later grows in more aggressive investments.

Belt tightening

Many who are approaching retirement age are cutting back on spending and putting more into savings, in case their Social Security benefits are cut. Practicing austerity, and wisely investing the money that is saved, is one of the most viable options for seniors.

With Social Security benefits accounting for nearly 40 percent of average income for retirees over 65, Smith is advising seniors to exercise caution in their financial decisions. Purchases that can be delayed probably should be delayed, and for those still in good health, working a little longer than planned could make a big difference in quality of life when they do retire.
OUTLOOK
Continued from Front Page

Jim Kruzan, a certified financial planner at Raymond James Financial Services in Fenton, has been in the business for 28 years. “I think this year is going to be a halfway decent year,” he said. Kruzan expects to see 3-percent growth in the economy for 2011, which would be strong by corporate earnings, he said.

Kruzan does not see big change in the stock market. Standard and Poors (S&P) was up 13 percent last year, and he expects it will be up 15 percent in 2011. This is because of corporate earnings, he said.

Corporate earnings should be high for the next several quarters. This means that large companies are not necessarily hiring, but their balance sheets are improving and earnings are up. “The market tends to follow earnings,” Kruzan said. “Earnings will be robust.” In other words, as earnings improve, so does the market, he added.

According to Kruzan, General Motors Company announced there would not be any wage increase in 2011 for salaries. “A lot of companies have done the same thing.”

Corporate earnings will be higher, but Kruzan expects some “volatility or short-term drops and gains in the stock market. Expect the market to pull back early 2011,” he said.

Kruzan expects the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates low over 2011. Bonds will earn less, because as interest rates are lowered, bonds will look less attractive to investors. “Weak bonds mean better stocks,” he said. Those that own bonds may be surprised to see they’re not as safe as they were.

“People will probably put money where it looks best, which is into stocks.” One of the biggest drivers of the U.S. economy is the real-estate market.

Patrik Welty, a real estate broker, has 22 years of experience. He owns Legacy Realty in Fenton, where he also lives. His business, as a whole, saw a greater volume of transactions in 2010, than in 2009. Realtors handled more home sales, but prices went down, and a large part of the sales was “short sales.” Short sales are homes that the bank allows the owner to sell for less than what is owed, a practice that can hurt the market as a whole.

Welty sees prices stabilizing in the early part of 2011, and even experiencing modest growth by the end of the year. “I think we bottomed months ago,” he said. In 2010, the market overall had a healthy amount of transactions, but at 45 percent lower prices than four years ago. In late 2010, foreclosures were also reduced.

Welty said consumers and small businesses need to get over fear of spending. “That’s when prices will start to recover, and that’s going take time,” he said.

“It’s an excellent time for consumers and a number of sectors to be investing and buying,” he said. “I’ve been in business for 22 years. I’ve never seen such opportunities in investment and real estate.”

Fenton has a large amount of vacant commercial space, which is not a good thing, Welty said.

The University of Michigan expects unemployment in Michigan to be around 12.4 percent, lower than the 13.3 percent for the first 11 months of 2010.

The Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic growth estimates unemployment is currently 12.4 percent in Michigan.

WALL PHOTOS
Continued from Page 3
practically none of them. If you don’t have any kind of back-up for your computer, your lifetime of photos may be lost.

One way to display photos is by using a gallery of five, framed prints (old numbers work best for home decor), unified, with either a theme or a frame style. According to ehow.com, black-and-white shots look best on a colored wall, and color photos look best if the wall color doesn’t match.

For an eye-popping focal point, choose one dynamic photo printed in an extra-wide format, using large photo processing equipment such as the one Green uses at Billmeyer Camera. “Big prints speak volumes,” said Green. He also likes the use of panoramic photos for visual appeal, making a large panoramic print cut into quarters for a continuous theme. “Panoramics are hot right now,” he added.

Another way to add new sparkle to your home is with metallic. “Every space needs a bit of shine,” said interior design/TV personality Nate Berkus on a recent Today Show episode. Metallic finishes, fabrics and accessories can take this trend as far as a homeowner wants to go with it, acting as “jewelry” for a room, according to HGTV.com.

The trend of recycling and re-purposing items for use in decor is another way to update decor for this winter. Even an old canvas-

line sweater can find new life and purpose as a throw pillow — adding warmth, texture and sophistication to a couch or chair.

Another suggestion is to create your own art with old silk scarves, old maps or other objects not commonly used to personalize and accent your walls. “Arts what you make it,” added Berkus.

The important trend for decorating this year is to love what you have and use what you love. Creating a personal environment at home with photos, objects and art that have meaning, makes a space all one’s own — and is within anyone’s budget.

Hints for hanging photos
• Before permanently hanging your artwork in a gallery setting, arrange pieces of art on the floor to see how they look together as a grouping, or make a template of each piece and hang with re-usable adhesive.
• Group four same-size photos together in a four-square arrangement to give the vision of one large picture. You may also use a larger photo in the center, placing smaller pictures on each side.
• Balance the impact of the frames — they don’t have to match perfectly, except in a more formal setting.
• Hang pictures at eye level.
• When hanging a picture over a sofa, leave only a 3- to 6-inch space between the picture and sofa, so they look “connected.”
• Pictures don’t always have to be displayed on the wall. They can be placed in place of pillows on a plate rack, or can be displayed on an easel.
In operating income, while the water fund Panter said. The sewer fund had $521,000 sent significant services the city provides, who haven’t been replaced.

There have been personnel cuts, with positions eliminated and staff members who haven’t been replaced.

Fenton’s water and sewer funds represent significant services the city provides, Panter said. The sewer fund had $521,000 in operating income, while the water fund had $354,180.

Federal stimulus (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; or ARRA) funding of $804,000 provided for part of $2 million in sewer lift station improvements. Mayor Sue Osborn said Fenton’s water usage is decreasing. She asked what impact it’s having on the water fund.

Treasurer Cindy Shane said council increased the water capital charge. This was by 85 percent, with water usage rates increased by 14 percent. Some of this was for the $2.7 million Adelaide Street water improvement project.

The water fund will improve, she said. Shane believes Fenton will build up some cash in it. Stephen Guy, operator in charge of the water plant, said usage has recently increased by .3 percent.

The quarterly sewer capital charge increased by 14 percent. Issues included lagoon draining and cleaning, which the city did not plan for, Councilman John Rauch said. But, it needed to be done. The fund has improved from last year and the year before that, Manager Lynn Markland said.

“We are keeping an eye on it,” Shane said.

Fenton’s millage rate is 10.6226, rolled back from 11 mills in 1989-2001, she said. As property values increased, the city had to roll back its millage rate. Thus, Fenton is operating on less.

Fenton received $949,000 in federal funding, for items including sewer lift station improvements, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and a Byrne Justice grant for safer communities. More than $500,000 in federal funding requires a separate audit of the federal money, Panter said.

SOLID
Continued from Front Page
primary operating/general fund, is recommended. That is so Fenton has adequate reserves and cash flow, Panter said. Its fund balance, on June 30, 2010, was $1.59 million.

General fund revenues ($5.76 million) are down $383,000, or 6.2 percent, from the previous fiscal year. There have been personnel cuts, with positions eliminated and staff members who haven’t been replaced.

By Sharon Stone

Dewey’s Auto Center dies

Retired owner of Dewey’s Auto Center dies

By Sharon Stone

Jan 3 at McLaren Regional Medical Center. He was 65.

Dewey Johnson, the original owner of Dewey’s, knew Brehmer, of Fenton, as the Goodyear tire representative back when he was running the business. The shop was destroyed by fire in 1977 and Johnson turned to Brehmer for help with rebuilding.

Johnson and Brehmer hired mechanic Jerry Lesperance in 1985. Lesperance and Brehmer eventually formed a partnership in 1999 and ran the business together until Brehmer’s retirement in June of 2009.

“He was a good man to work for,” said Lesperance.

Funeral services for Brehmer will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 3 at McLaren Regional Medical Center. He was 65.

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**DEAR DR. DONOHUE: My doctor prescribed statin drugs to control my LDL cholesterol. First I took lovastatin (Mevacor) and then simvastatin (Zocor), but I had muscle pain and weakness with them. I am reluctant to start the pravastatin (Pravachol) that he now has prescribed. Are there alternatives? How about Endur-acin? CoQ10 has been suggested. — D.L.**

**ANSWER:** Statins are the most potent cholesterol-lowering drugs, including lowering LDL cholesterol and cholesterol, the kind that clings to artery walls. They’ve been used for 20 years, and their safety record has been good. Some people develop muscle pain. Those people can try a different statin. You did. However, you might be reacting a bit too fast in rejecting pravastatin (Pravachol). It is the statin that most infrequently is involved with muscle complaints. I do know any herb on the list of herbs you included (in an edited part of the letter) that compare with medicines for cholesterol control. However, there are things you can do to lower cholesterol, including reducing your saturated fat and cholesterol intake. Saturated fats are the fats found in many meats, whole-fat dairy products and many other commercially prepared foods. You have to look on the label. Omega-3 fatty acids lower cholesterol. They’re found in fish and cannot stand fish, take the omega-3s in pill form.

Questran, Celestid, Welchlor and Zetia are cholesterol-lowering drugs that are unrelated to statins. Niacin can increase HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol) and lower triglycerides, fats that also figure into artery clogging. Endur-acin is a slow-release preparation of niacin. Slow-release preparations were introduced to lessen flushing, one of the side effects of niacin.

Coenzyme Q10, or CoQ10, is an antioxidant made by the body and also is available in pill form. Antioxidants counter the damaging byproducts coming from cell chemistry. I don’t see any references mentioning that it lowers cholesterol.

The cholesterol booklet gives an in-depth treatment of cholesterol. Readers can order a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue — No. 201W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (a cash) for $4.75 U.S. or $6 Canada with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

**DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I am an 80-year-old male. I work out on a Cybex weight machine and also on a treadmill. I was diagnosed as having an umbilical hernia. Please discuss it. Is surgery recommended at my age? Will working out aggravate it? — C.R.**

**ANSWER:** All hernias are protrusions of internal organs or tissues through a defect in the wall that’s supposed to hold them in place. In your case, the defect is the umbilicus — the navel, the bellybutton. With age, the scar that closes the umbilicus (the site where the umbilical cord from the placenta attaches to the fetus) weakens, and a hernia can form.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate them in his column whenever possible. Readers may write him or request an order form of available health newsletters at P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.
The holiday season is over, which means most sports have started, but still have well over half of their events remaining. Still, this is a great time to tune into what’s going on with our Tri-County Top Five Teams of the Winter.

S. Linden wrestling — The Linden wrestling program looked to be headed for a semi-rebuilding season entering this year, and still may be in that mode. But even if that’s the case, the Eagles are still a program that all Metro and area teams realize they must compete against with respect. The Eagles were ranked second in the season, and could sneak back on that top 10 list with a win against Holly tonight.

4. Holly boys basketball — This is another team that looked poised to be in a rebuilding year. With all but one key player lost to graduation from a year ago, the Bronchos are out to prove that this program is for real regardless of the obstacles presented. So far, the Bronchos have done a very good job proving just that. They are 4-0 and remain tied for first place in the Metro League with the Fenton Tigers. It looks like it could be another exciting prep basketball season for area Metro fans.

3. Fenton boys basketball — The Tigers enter the season as the clear favorites in the Flint Metro League, and so far have proven those preseason expectations to be pretty accurate. The Tigers are 3-0 in league play, however, Fenton has a couple of other big goals this season. The Tigers want to prove they deserve respect beyond the Metro, and have earned some with wins against Davison and Flint Southwestern outside the league. While others are undefeated in the Metro, until someone proves otherwise, the road to the Metro title runs through Fenton.

2. Holly wrestling — The Bronchos have had a pretty solid start to their season, recently finishing third in the very competitive Oakland County Meet. The squad returns a defending state champion, and has several other very strong wrestlers. Holly is tied for sixth in the state in Division 2. They have a big match against Linden tonight.

1. Lake Fenton wrestling — It’s scary how good the Blue Devils’ wrestling program has already been, but as January hits, Lake Fenton will finally be featuring their entire team. Lake Fenton finished second to county power Davison at the Genessee County Meet and has already beat Goodrich in league play. This team is only going to get better as the season continues.

By David Troppens

The Holly varsity boys soccer team can be successful. Again, enough had to be done with its “team play.”

It seemingly was a team without a superstar. However, as the season went on, one player did emerge as being that star. That was Devinn Papuga.

If it needed to be done, Papuga did it for the Holly Bronchos. Usually he played defense. But if someone was needed at midfield, he could be moved. The same at forward. Need a set play? Papuga delivered for the Bronchos there as well. He even made one of the season’s biggest saves in net.

And through it all, he helped lead the Bronchos to their first-ever Flint Metro League soccer title in school history.

For these reasons, Papuga is the Tri-County Times’ Boys Soccer Player of the Year.

“To me, soccer is soccer,” Papuga said about his willingness to play any position. “I can adapt to any position, in my opinion. I used to play goalies. I used to play forward and midfield, and now I play defense. I feel I can play all of the positions at a reasonably high level.”

No one agrees with that comment more than Holly varsity boys soccer coach Mike Steibel. “He was a kid that everyone looked up to,” Steibel said. “He could play any position. You could put him at back on defense because that’s where his mindset is. He can play forward. So, that Rochester Adams, we put him there and he put a lot of pressure on them. And we’ve even put him at keeper. He can do it all.”

Papuga’s defensive ability was proudly on display during Holly’s season. The Bronchos didn’t lose a single Metro League game and only allowed a single goal against three of the eight Metro League foes they faced.

“I like the fact knowing that no one could get by us,” Papuga said. “When I played on top, I was thinking that they couldn’t get through and score.

“It wasn’t just the defense, but our goalie (Ryan St. John) helped us out and got us out of a lot of situations. Ryan played amazing this year and helped us out.”

But, again, Papuga wasn’t a one-trick pony. Despite being primarily a defender, he found time to score. Papuga had six goals and seven assists during the season.

In some ways, Papuga goes out with what was one of the most historical seasons in Holly history. A year ago the squad lost the Metro title in the last game of the season. Papuga admitted the team may have been a little “big-headed.”

After drawing Lapeer East in the Metro opener against this season, Papuga thought that may have been the case. But, with Papuga’s help, the Bronchos changed that attitude and fought hard for seven straight league wins, frequently blowing out their foes.

“Last year we were big-headed. We thought no one could bring us down,” Papuga said. “Come the Oxford game, we thought we were going to destroy them, but we didn’t at all. We didn’t play to our potential.

“This year, even after the East game, we were way too big-headed. But that was kind of our hit to the face, and we woke up. We were aggressive and played with way more possession this year than we have in previous years. We were smarter and not as big-headed.”

Steibel said Papuga was a key reason for the attitude change. “He’s a good leader,” Steibel said. “He kept everyone under control in terms of emotions and attitudes. He’s a good all around player and kid.”

Holly’s Papuga leads our boys area soccer team Versatility proves key to senior’s game

All Tri-County Boys Soccer Team

Player of the Year Devin Papuga

Class Senior • Team Holly

Comment: He was the Bronchos’ most versatile player, even playing some in net. The first-team All-Metro selection scored six goals and dished off seven assists. He was part of a defense that allowed just three goals in eight Metro League contests.

Note: The players on the team and the Player of the Year were selected by the sports staff.

Rest of first team

Zach Bakos Matt Becker Eric Micallef
Eric Mowery Tony Grams
Ryan St. John (GK)
Spencer Quick (GK)
Gerry Andrews
Sam Caldwell
Brad Farthing Matt Rogers
Jazime Yanez II Austin Knight

Grade Freshman Senior Senior Senior Senior
School Linden Holly Holly Holly Holly

Rest of first team

Evan Wilhite Alex Ayala
Cambridge Orange

Grade Freshman Freshman
School Linden Lakewood

Rest of first team

Derek Miller

Grade Freshman
School Linden

Rest of first team

Linden

Grade Freshman
School Linden

Rest of first team

Jared Traves

Grade Freshman
School Linden

Rest of first team

Cody Thorpe

Grade Freshman
School Linden
Linden boys open 2011 with first win of season

By Al Zipsie

The Southern Lakes Parks and Recreation’s Gym Stars recently won the Huron Valley Winter Invitational on Dec. 12. The 17-member team took home over 40 top-three performances. The team’s next competition is at Hyatt Elementary School in Linden on Jan. 22.

Gym Stars squad wins Huron Valley Winter Invitational title

By David Troppens

The 10-year-old group did well. Reagan Wilson won the all-around, taking first in the bar and second in the beam and vault. Lauren Foss won the beam and took third on the floor. Sophie Austin won the vault and the floor and placed second in the all-around. Other top-three placers for Gym Stars were: Danielle Welanin, second on vault and bars; Macy Mitchell, third on floor; and Avery Offer, third on bars, beam and all-around.

In the 10.5-age class, Madeline Carr won the all-around, earning first in the vault and beam, while placing second in both the floor and bars. Kearsley’s Kevin Baker (right) takes a shot in the Eagles’ 76-54 victory against Kearsley Monday night.

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**Linden girls still searching for an offense**

By David Troppens
dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

**Linden** — The Linden varsity girls basketball team has one-half of the equation to victory working well.

At least the Eagles did on Monday night.

They held Kearsley just to 37 points, including just 13 second-half points. However, offense is another story.

The Eagles mustered just nine field goals all game long, resulting in a 37-23 loss to the Hornets.

“Our defense is getting better,” Linden’s varsity coach Ben Varner said. “They play so hard. They are diving for balls and working hard. We held someone to under 40, but we have to find a way to score more than 23 points. When you hold someone to under 40, you should win? That’s the goal right now. We feel if we do that we can win, but we have to score. We have to score some points.”

Linden (0-7) never held the lead and had its final tie come at 4-4 after two converted free throws by Jordan Sargent. However, Kearsley scored the game’s next five points and never lost that lead.

But it wasn’t like the Eagles ever quite either. In fact, their defensive effort was pretty impressive for most of the game, particularly in the second half. Trailing 24-12 at the half, the Eagles used that defense to muster a comeback.

Forcing Kearsley into four turnovers and 0-for-4 shooting during the first three minutes of the second half, the Eagles began to make a run. Katelyn Dunleavy hit a layin and Dani Stuarts hit a free throw, cutting the gap to 24-15 with 6:17 left in the third quarter. About 90 seconds later, Sabrina Kinney dished a ball to Stephanie Dobias for a converted jumper. The lead was now just 24-17.

Linden cut the gap to 25-19 with 3:35 left in the third quarter on a 17-foot jumper by Katelyn, but it could never get any closer, despite having three possessions to do so.

Kearsley then capped the quarter with seven points in the final 1:46 of it, raising the gap back to 32-19 just moments after it looked like Linden had clawed back into the game.

“We had one shot and a couple of turnovers in that span and it goes from six points to 13,” Varner said. “We are hurting ourselves a little bit. We still have to figure out a way to get the ball in the right person’s hands and get that person to shoot the ball when they are open.”

Linden hit on just 9-of-37 shots from the field and turned the ball over 23 times. Kearsley (2-4) didn’t do that much better, netting just 12-of-35 shots from the field, and turning it over 27 times, but the Hornets did present some stings at the free-throw line, converting 12-of-15 shots from there.

Dunleavy led Linden with six points, six rebounds and three steals. Sargent had four steals and four rebounds. Kinney finished with five points. The game’s only double-digit scorer was Kearsley’s La-Trecce Robinson with 11 points.

Linden hosts Lapeer East Friday at 6 p.m.

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**STARS**

Continued from Page 9

on the floor. She also placed third on the bar. Abby Koza won the vault and bar, while placing third on the floor and all-around. Meanwhile, Blake Hutchings won the floor and took second in the all-around with seconds in the vault and bar.

The 11-age class was led by Jessica Richert, who placed second in the all-around with seconds on the bar vault. Miranda Stephens was third in the all-around, taking second on the beam and third on the bar. Isabelle Brown placed third on the floor.

For the 12-year-olds, Shaanti Smith placed first on the beam and third on the vault and floor. Riley Wilson was first on the vault and Emily Fay was first on the beam.

Gym Stars competes again on Jan. 22 in an event held at Hyatt Elementary School in Linden.

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**GREAT WAY TO END 2010, LIONS**

Just about a month ago, I did something it seems I do way too many times with my column — I ripped the Detroit Lions.

At the time, the Lions were 2-9 and still trying to find a way to win a road game and a division contest.

It’s amazing how much has changed since that article.

The Lions went from the NFL’s most underachieving squad that couldn’t do anything right, to one that, suddenly, could do little wrong.

In one week, they erased their first losing streak with a victory against Green Bay, ending their long losing streak within the division. The next week, they ended their NFL-record-long road game losing streak.

And it didn’t stop there. The Lions found a way to overcome a fourth-quarter deficit on the road and beat Tampa Bay, and then capped the season by figuring out how to ice a game late with a home win against the Vikings.

Indeed, during these last four weeks, the Lions have shown us something. And, honestly, it’s nice to be able to say some nice things about them. And, just as nice, it felt good being able to wear my Lions’ garb around with my head lifted high.

For much of the season, the Lions “looked” like a better team, but it wasn’t reflected in the standings. But, now, that’s not the case. At 6-10, the Lions won’t be mentioned among the NFL’s elite teams, but at least they are respectable, and are a respectable team with some strengths.

Amazingly, their biggest strength is on defense — the defensive line. Ndamukong Suh was a beast, performing better than anyone could’ve ever expected. Led by his presence, the Lions quickly had one of the NFL’s top producing defensive lines in football. In many games, their pressure was able to mask what is still a very weak back seven.

On offense, Calvin Johnson had the surefire Pro Bowl season I demanded he have this year, and the tight ends produced at a high level. And while starting quarterback Matthew Stafford hardly spent any time on the field, the offense still produced. So, it was a productive season.

But, while there were some positives, let’s not forget there is still work to do.

---

**THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

The Lions have progressed, but let’s not kid ourselves, they’ve progressed to a record that just about every NFL team has reached at least a couple of times within the last five seasons. As I said a couple years back, once the Lions got to this point, it’s not like they’ve really earned that much. They are just to a point that they should’ve never fallen below for much of the last 10 years.

Rather, the key is what they do from this point on and. Can the Lions improve their front seven, get that brassing running back or improve the offensive line to the point that they can take the next step? Answering those questions will be how Martín Mayhew will be judged in the near future, not based on this 6-10 season. And, honestly, that’s how it should be.

It’s all right to feel good about progress, but all we’ve seen is an ‘E’ program becoming a ‘D’ program. Taking the next steps are much more difficult.

The goals are already out there. The Lions should be playoff contenders next season. And, with a good offseason, that should be more than possible. I’m reasonably optimistic the Lions can take that next step, but they have to actually go out and do it.

This year’s end to the season was nice. But, it has to lead to something better.

Really, it didn’t tell us that much about the front office. Next year we’ll get our answers.
**New Private Party**

**Classifieds**

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Regional Medical Center. Funeral services will be held 1 PM Thursday, January 6, 2011 at Sharp Funeral Homes, Fenton Chapel. Visitation was held 7-9 PM Tuesday, 3-5 and also will be held 7-9 PM Wednesday. Those desiring may make contributions to the Humane Society. Norman was born May 28, 1945 in Detroit, the son of Thomas and Helen Mary (Pugh) Brehmer. He was a 1963 graduate of University of Detroit High School and attended Detroit Institute of Technology. Mr. Brehmer was a member of DeWeyos Auto Center since 1977 and retired as owner in 2005. He was a member of Fenton Chamber of Commerce. Surviving are his wife, Lara (Sue) Brehmer; children, Jesse and Angelina Soriano; and five grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Burial will be in Michigan State Burial Park, Fenton. The family will receive friends from 2-5 and 7-9 PM Tuesday.

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