Six-month coma changes life of former triathlete

By Sally Rummel

Mason Barker had the world by its tail. Working on his master’s degree in accounting at Michigan State University (MSU) back in 2008, he spent every spare second he wasn’t studying, training on his bike, the track or in the pool as a triathlete, planning to compete in an Iron Man competition in Wisconsin the following week.

“He was in the best shape of his life,” said his parents, Pat and Kathy Barker of Cohoctah, owners of Nutrition Works in Fenton. For Mason, the Iron Man opportunity never came. On a bright, sunny day in August 2008, a woman hit Mason while he was training on his bike, catapulting him and his family into the new, uncharted world of traumatic brain injury.

At the time of the dreaded phone call telling her that her son had been in an accident, Kathy was at MSU, moving her daughter Leah back into her dorm. After rushing to Sparrow Hospital in Lansing to her son’s unknown fate, she grasped at a nurse’s words, “He’s alive.” and let those words motivate and inspire her to help bring Mason back from a coma that ensured him for the next six months.

Past victim of bullying inspires students to break the cycle

By Sharon Stone

Lake Fenton — Students at Lake Fenton Middle School listened intently as Chris McBrien shared his personal stories of being bullied by a classmate when he was growing up.

The middle school students filled the gym for an all-school assembly last Wednesday. McBrien also traveled to Torrey Hill Intermediate School, Fenton’s Andrew G. Schmidt Middle School and Linden Middle School for similar assemblies.

Because he knows firsthand what bullying is like, he shared his story to encourage students to break the cycle of bullying.

Fenton investigates options for 911 dispatch

By Anna Troppens

Fenton — Before it makes a decision on the future of 911 dispatch, Fenton is investigating its options. The city is waiting for information from Genesee Central, Manager Lynn Markland said at the Jan. 10 meeting. Genesee Central will give Fenton a tentative agreement to review, for the city to use the county’s dispatch.

Summary:
The city of Fenton is exploring options for its 911 police, fire and ambulance dispatch. Fenton’s dispatch equipment is aging and needs replacing, or the city must switch to using Genesee Central 911 dispatch instead of its own system. The city is exploring the costs of each of these options.

Property owner seeks $2,500 for damages from water main break

By Anna Troppens

Fenton — The owner of property on the southeast corner of Adelaide Street and Silver Lake Road is seeking $2,500 in damages, from a burst water main in September. City officials say the contractor for the Adelaide Street project, not Fenton, is responsible for the claim.

John Chad said the $2,500 is for replacing the furnace, water damage
Man arrested on suspicion of Fenton hair salon break-ins

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

A 42-year-old Davison man is in custody awaiting arraignment for breaking into two Fenton hair salons. Lt. Jason Slater, of the Fenton Police Department, said a police officer was dispatched to a hair salon in the 1400 block of Torrey Road at 11:44 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 15, for a commercial business alarm. Upon arrival, the officer saw that the front door had been smashed in. Two laptop computers were missing.

Early the next morning, an officer out patrolling observed a smashed front door of a hair salon in the 15000 block of Silver Parkway. The officer was unable to contact the salon owner, but did arrange for a construction company to board up and secure the broken door. An alert was sent to other police departments to see if any had similar break-ins.

Novi police contacted Fenton police and advised them that they had a 42-year-old Davison man in custody. The man was picked up after a witness called police with a description of his vehicle following a break-in at a Novi hair salon. The vehicle the man was driving was reported stolen from Davison.

While being interviewed by Novi police, the Davison man admitted to the Fenton break-ins. Fenton police drove to Novi and brought him back to Fenton for processing and questioning the next morning, where he admitted to the two break-ins.

Slater said the man claimed he broke into the businesses to fuel his substance abuse habit. The man was later transported to the county jail, awaiting his arraignment.

Nearly fifty apply for Holly Village police chief position

➤ Committee will narrow field to six applicants

By Tim Jagielo
jjagielo@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

Holly — The personnel committee reviewing resumes for the position of Holly Village police chief have some homework to do, following their meeting on Thursday. There are nearly 50 applicants for police chief position to sift through by Jan. 27, according to committee and village council member Tom Clark.

Each committee member will narrow the field to around eight applicants. At the Jan. 27 meeting, the committee as a whole will condense those choices down to six, and will set times to interview them.

The top three from that process will be interviewed by the village manager, who will then make a recommendation to council, who has to vote on a new, permanent police chief.

Sgt. Michael Story, of the village police department, has been filling in as police chief since the former chief, Rollie Gackstetter, retired in December.

Clark, who was a former police officer, said the pool of applicants is mixed, and has some small people in the running. “We’ve got some really good ones. It’s going to be really hard to find one that can be the number one,” he said.

Along with Clark, on the committee to interview the applicants are Holly Area Schools Superintendent Kent Barnes, retired Holly police officer Buster Winebrenner, Pastor Ed Pidley of First Baptist Church, village of Lake Orion lot Chief Jerry Marsh, and Lt. Gary Parsons of the Michigan State Police.

Clark said the goal is to have a permanent police chief by the middle of February.

The top applicant for village manager is Jerry Walker, who served in a dual role of manager and police chief in the city of Walled Lake, has brought up the possibility of combining those roles. Clark said that option is not being considered at this time.

PROPERTY

Continued from Front Page

and property weren’t covered with insurance, because the water was from outside.”

The contractor for the Adelaide Street project, DiPonio, broke a 12-inch water main at the corner of Adelaide Street and Silver Lake Road, said Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Leslie Bland, of the city council meeting.

There was water in the basement, which is home to Pipsqueak Boutique. HPW workers placed a pump in the parking lot and put sand bags in the basement.

There was water entering the building through basement windows, but no water on the floor, he said. “The sump pump was handling it.”

Chap, on the other hand, said the sump pump couldn’t keep up with the water entering the building through windows. He turned in his claim on Oct. 3, 2010, to the city. “You don’t know who to ask,” he said. “We went to the city.”

The contractor’s insurance company — not the city of Fenton — is responsible for addressing the property owners’ claim, Bland said.

Administrators have talked repeatedly with a contractor and contractor.

Mayor Sue Osborn asked city attorney Stephen Schultz to check into the issue and report back on it. The contractor for the Adelaide Street project should take care of it, Osborn said.
Ice fishing is pastime, way of life for many

By Tim Jagielo

It feels colder than the 25-degree temperature out on Lake Fenton on Monday afternoon. The sun is bright, the sky is cloudless, and wind pushes at the half-dozen ice shelters, a stone’s throw from the lakeshore off Torrey Road in Fenton Township.

Summary

Ice fishing is a winter sport that takes shelter, patience and time.

Christopher Balasko, 43, a burly fellow with an impressive red beard, hauls a sled laden with his ice-fishing equipment from the shore, including a propane-powered space heater, several small fishing rods (called jiggers) and a two-liter of Diet Coke.

Balasko has a wooden and well-insulated ice shanty, with skis mounted on the roof, upside down, so it can be moved to the end of the season. The shanty warms up quickly with the space heater. “It could be 90 degrees in here with the heater,” he said.

There are several techniques for ice fishing, and each pro has their preferred method. Instead of 10-inch holes drilled with a hand auger, Balasko’s ice shanty has two larger rectangular holes at either end of his shelter. He hefts a weighted metal spear with nine prongs of about 8 inches each. “It’s a dying age,” he said. “A lot of people ain’t spearing anymore, there’s not many spearmen any more.”

Instead of reeling his catch in with a reel and hook, Balasko, spears his prey with the 3-pound metal spear that he has tethered to the inside of his shelter. He compares it to hunting deer. It takes accuracy to snare the fish with his spear, and not simply injure it so it dies elsewhere.

The spear itself is more than 4 feet long, but is not overkill for the fish he is trying to catch. His goal is to catch a record-breaking, 52-inch pike that has escaped capture because it could not fit through a regular 10-inch hole. “I sit on the chair waiting for a ‘big guy’ to come through,” he said.

He guesses the pike is 20 years old, and would mount the fish for display instead of eating it. To attract a big fish, Balasko uses big bait, minnows up to about a foot long. “My job is to protect the bait,” he said.

Balasko keeps smaller fish away from his bait until a larger one comes by. After a few hours of watching the water, he only saw six walleye come near his shanty. His friend, about 40 feet away, caught a 24-inch pike.

See ICE FISHING on 11

Is handwriting a dying art?

Local graphologist decodes what writing tells

By Anna Troppens

As increasing numbers of people tap away sending text messages and communicate via e-mail and Facebook, those who study handwriting hope the practice of teaching cursive continues. However, modern use of the handwritten letter is waning. “I’m finding some who can’t even read cursive,” said certified graphologist David Littmann, of Rose Township.

In honor of National Handwriting Day — Saturday, Jan. 23 — Littmann shared some information about the study of handwriting, what purposes it serves and what it can reveal about someone.

What is graphology?

Graphology is the study of handwriting, especially to analyze the writer’s character. Source: www.thefreedictionary.com

Tri-County Times | Tim Jagielo

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David Littmann, of Rose Township, analyzes a handwriting sample for Local resident Sue Weinard last week. The sample is on the left; his notes are on the right.

Gary Slinker, of Mundy Township, gets his ice shanty ready for ice fishing Monday afternoon on Lake Fenton.

See HANDWRITING on 5

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Wednesday, January 19, 2011

www.tctimes.com
Hail to the chief

In the days since the shootings in Arizona, there’s been a flood of reaction by politicians. Most of what they have been saying is self-serving and stupid. But, among all the useless rhetoric one voice spoke loudly and clearly to both silence and chastise those who were using the tragedy for personal gain.

That one voice was President Obama, whose speech at the memorial service in Tucson last week was articulate, intelligent and eloquent. The president spoke movingly about each of the victims whose lives were cut short. He named each individual, whose quick thinking and actions prevented even more lives from being lost.

And, without a bit of self-interest or political exploitation, he clearly and forcefully urged all Americans not to ‘use this tragedy as one more occasion to turn on each other.’

You can rest assured that Obama, as the leader of his party, was surely advised to use the atrocity in Arizona for political gain. But, he chose to ignore that counsel. Rather than pointing fingers or assigning blame, let us use this occasion to expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy, and remind ourselves of all the ways our hopes and dreams are bound together.

Obama has been fairly criticized for many things, but on this occasion, he executed his presidential duties with class, grace and intelligence — all in the interest of our country. It’s amazing what can happen to someone when they remove fools like Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid from their inner council. Maybe Obama is finally starting to figure some things out for himself — all to the betterment of our nation.

According to recent polls, the president has matched his highest approval rating in more than a year, with 54 percent of Americans approving of Obama’s job performance. Support for him hasn’t been this high since April 2010 after he signed the health care reform bill into law.

Hail to the chief — for now anyway.

There is financial motivation on both sides of the global-warming coin. One of the biggest money-makers in the conflict is none other than Al Gore, a global-warming blowhard. Global warming would be far more believable if all of its proponents promoted responsible stewardship of the environment, instead of gathering carbon credits to enable them to drive their wasteful SUVs.

Clear your sidewalks. The city of Fenton Code of Ordinances Sec. 29-15 states that the sidewalks need to be cleared within 12 hours of snow accumulation or the city will clear them and charge the abutting property. So, why are most sidewalks still snow covered or icy nearly three days after the last snow? Maybe the city should charge people and use the funds to offset high water bills.

Right on, king. You can handle it.

I would like to say congratulations to the Fenton White Wolves Lego Robotics Team for placing ninth out of hundreds in the state of Michigan. This year, the theme was ‘Bio Medical.’ The Wolves designed a biodegradable stern.

All you ‘sheeple’ out there blaming Bush, blaming Obama need to wake up. It doesn’t matter who’s in the White House. That has nothing to do with the current employment crisis. The problem is corporatism, not which party controls the White House.

The reason people are tailgating you on the expressway is not because they’re alluring and it’s not because they can’t drive for themselves. The reason people are tailgating you on the expressway is not because they are tailgating you on the expressway.

The reason people are tailgating you on the expressway is not because of the Republicans. If you pay taxes, you have paid less the past 10 years because of the Republicans.

You can handle it.

I’ve been determined to never let the one to the far right, maybe the city should charge you people and use the funds to offset high water bills.

Winter/Spring 2011 class schedule

Wednesdays—Feb. 2-May 10
12:30 pm—Imagine That! (ages 3½–5)
Adult attends last 10 minutes
4:45 pm—Move & Groove (ages 4–6)
5:45 pm—Family Time (ages 0–2 with adult)

Thurdays—Feb. 3-May 19
9:30 am—Village (ages 0–18 months with adult)
10:30 am—Our Time (ages 1½–3 with adult)
11:30 am—Family Time (ages 0–2 with adult)

Family Time (ages 0–2 with adult)
3:30 pm—Family Time (ages 0–2 with adult)

Class held at
Transfiguration Lutheran Church
Located at: 14176 N. Fenton Rd. • Fenton
Email: blanchardstudio@aol.com

ENROLL ONLINE: www.blanchardstudio.net OR CALL: 810.813.0036

Just the facts

One thing I can guarantee as the editor of the Times is that the news will not be withheld from publication for any reason. Last week, a person who was a subject of an upcoming news story, for personal reasons, asked that it not be published. The news article was determined to be a matter of public record and of interest to residents. The person actually suggested that if it did run, her spouse who is in law enforcement in our coverage area probably would not be cooperative if the Times ever needed information from him.

Well, the story ran, and the facts were provided accurately. The Times has a pledge to provide news that is informative, educational and entertaining. And, we will continue our pledge of excellence in all of those areas.

Firefighter of the year

I just wanted to publicly congratulate Fenton Fire Chief Bob Cairnduff for being selected as Firefighter of the Year by his department. I covered the city of Fenton for many years as a reporter for the Times, and when he was selected as the fire chief. Bob has moved the fire department forward, and is not only respected by his peers, but by the entire community.

Congratulations, Bob, for a job well done.

My pet peeve of the week

Ever try to travel up or down Lahrng Road when parents are dropping their children off to the schools in that area in the morning?

Let me tell you, it is an accident waiting to happen. I can’t tell you how many times I have almost hit by a car ripping out onto Lahrng Road, as if expecting that every car on the road is pulling into the school. Getting off the cell phones might be helpful too.

Got a pet peeve? E-mail me at edenison@tctimes.com.

State of the State

Now Governor Rick Snyder will be giving his State of the State address today. Be sure to tune in and see what’s on the horizon for our great state.

Enjoy your week.
“Handwriting is brain writing.”

David Littmann

certified graphologist

Handwriting traits and what they mean

- High bar on the “T” — The person has high goals.
- Lots of loops and no angles — interested in being friendly and helpful and in getting along with others.
- Lots of space between words — doesn’t like crowds or people “invading their space.”
- Dots all j and i letters — doesn’t miss details.
- Doesn’t cross the T completely — sees the big picture, the “forest instead of the trees.”
- Larger left margin than right — not tied to the past and not afraid of the future.

Source: David Littmann, certified graphologist

Reasons for teaching cursive

- Cursive writing improves continuity, fluidity and focus of thought in written communication.
- Connected writing increases written speed, attention span, coordination and control.
- Cursive promotes the efficiency of the mind, raising the dynamic interplay of the brain’s right and left hemispheres.
- Cursive builds neural connections, emphasizing constructive and release (down and up) motions.
- Cursive refines motor skills, more stimulation and motor memory.
- In contrast to printing, cursive is easier to learn and rarely results in letter reversals.
- Cursive helps left-handers avoid developing hooked-wrist positions when writing.

Source: American Association of Handwriting Analysts.

Continued from Page 3

Neurologically, experts are finding that the fingertips have 3,000 nerve endings that lead to the brain. Handwriting works these nerve endings, while keyboard tapping and typing doesn’t result in the same stimulation and coordination.

“I am not diminishing the value of that technology for speed,” Littmann said. “There are tradeoffs, though.”

A handwritten letter is a coordination of motor memory and physical and emotional connectedness with others, he said. In addition, printing words deprives the printer of mental and emotional benefits he or she would receive by writing curvilinear, he said. Most printers, for example, do not have the feeling of connectedness with others that those who use cursive have.

Someone’s handwriting can tell a lot about them, and there are 450 variables graphologists look for. Furthermore, handwriting is unique, and there is a one in 68 billion chance of exactly copying someone else’s writing.

People use handwriting analysis to assess personality, preferences, thinking style and compatibility with others. It is useful in screening executives, determining workplace compatibility and telling what type of environment and work recent graduates would do best with, he said. In the legal system, graphology is used in setting up key jurors so members are compatible or favorable in some way, and in divorce cases. Handwriting can reveal physical weaknesses, Littmann said.

A “river,” or line of empty space through a page of handwritten text, shows that the writer experienced a traumatic or life-altering event. It is even possible to pinpoint when the event took place, he said. After examining one woman’s handwriting sample, Littmann asked whether something life altering happened when she was 62. The woman, who was 66, said she was in a terrible car accident four years earlier.

Looking at a writing sample from area resident Sue Weinand, Littmann said she wrote numbers carefully, with no ambiguity. Weinand replied she did bookkeeping and accounting for many years.

A state police officer once asked Littmann to examine the handwriting of a convicted man, to get Littmann’s input. The graphologist looked at a lot of the man’s writing, noticing the bar of “T” strokes had upswings and looked like daggers. “It was like a scythe,” he said. He determined the man had a fetish or propensity for knives or daggers.

The police officer’s jaw dropped. He told Littmann the man would be in Michigan prison for life, for attacks on two young women.

Handwriting helps left-handers avoid getting along with others. He has high goals.

Most people write with their left hand, so it is important to keep your left hand closer than your right side, he said.

When writing, don’t overthink the words you are typing.

Handwriting is a full brain activity. It activates both left and right hemispheres. It connects the visual and tactile parts of the brain, he said. Littmann uses a line under each letter to see how well it is written.

Handwriting is filled with movement, it stimulates the brain, he said. It makes it easier to learn the alphabet, he said.

The brain is a muscle, and the brain is exercising when writing, he said. The brain is more active when handwriting, he said.

Handwriting is brain writing. David Littmann, certified graphologist.

...
Two seats will be available on Fenton school board

- Deadline to register for May 3 election is Feb. 8

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

Fenton — Two, four-year seats on the Fenton Area Public Schools Board of Education are up for election on May 3. Terms of the incumbents, President David Walker and Roger Ellis, expire June 30. They have the option of running for re-election.

The board seats are the only issues on the Fenton schools ballot.

“lt’s a great opportunity to serve the community,” Superintendent Timothy Jalkunen said. “It’s a great opportunity to work to continue to have quality education in Fenton schools, to continue the programs that make Fenton great.

“It’s a great opportunity to be involved in the schools.”

People are involved in the school district at different levels, he said. It can range from helping their children with their homework to attending parent/teacher organization meetings, to going to school programs to support students.

Becoming involved as a school board member allows someone to impact the direction the school district is going in and help set its policies.

Nominating petitions and Affidavits of Identity for individuals interested in running for the Fenton Board of Education are due by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 8. Interested candidates must be a registered voter, reside in the school district and comply with the Campaign Finance Reform Act, as amended. Information on this act may be obtained from the Genesee County Clerk’s Office.

Petitions can be obtained from the Genesee County Clerk’s Office at 900 S. Saginaw St., Flint. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the office can be contacted at (810) 257-3282. The forms must be filed at the Genesee County Clerk’s Office no later than 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 8. In addition, the candidate in lieu of petitions may submit a non-refundable, $100 filing fee. The fee must be paid on or before the filing deadline for petitions.

Fenton Right to Life, Genesee Right to Life & St. John’s Respect Life are holding a
Candlelight Vigil
Saturday, January 22 at 6:30 pm
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Main Sanctuary
600 N. Adelaide St.
Fenton, MI 48430
810-629-2251

Please Join Us
This is the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade and organizations throughout the country will be having vigils on this day.
Children are welcome.

IRS WILL NOT ALLOW FILING OF TAX RETURNS WITH CERTAIN FORMS UNTIL MID-FEBRUARY OR LATER!

On December 17th, 2010 Congress enacted a vast tax bill. Due to the very late date of the bill, IRS will not allow filing of tax returns that include Schedule A, Tuition and Fees Deductions, and Educator Expense Deductions until mid-February or later.

The Team at TAX CENTER is here for you year-round! Call with any questions or tax related concerns.

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HOT LINE CONTINUED
TO THE PARENTS of Fenton High School students, who feel the need to drop off or pick up your child in the student parking lot, as a student at the school, I have nearly been hit by some of you or had my designated parking spot taken twice in the last week. I was even stuck behind one of you sitting in the middle of the lot. Use the parent loop. That’s what it’s there for.

WHO IS THE ‘scholar’ who thinks he or she has the right to dictate how fast a person can safely drive in snowy conditions on Grange Hall Road, and then demand them to stay home if their speed doesn’t please you? If you don’t like it, pull over and pick your nose until you’ve distanced yourself. You don’t own the road.

THE PERSON WHO wrecked their car on Broad Street in Linden near the cemetery needs to rebuild the bricks or pay someone to do it.

By a show of hands, students at Lake Fenton Middle School react to questions asked by motivational speaker Chris McBrien.

BULLYING
Continued from Front Page
It’s like to be bullied, McBrien, who is a trained motivational speaker, fine arts teacher, classically trained comic actor and variety artist, is visiting schools across the country to spread his anti-bullying message.

Using humor, puppets and magic, McBrien was able to grab the attention of the students.

Bullying is a difficult topic for many schools as it can be very hard for children to “fit in” in the world today. The last thing a child wants is to be singled out, picked on or have to live in fear, said McBrien. Children often do not realize that bullying is not only physical but also verbal and comes in many forms not often openly recognized.

McBrien was not only verbally bullied, he was physically bullied. He feared going to school and feared telling his parents. His confidence was shaken to its core and his grades suffered.

He told the kids that the old philosophy of just putting up with a bully is a “load of trash.” By a show of hands, he asked how many of the kids in front of him have ever accidentally picked on someone or had been picked on. The majority of sixth- through eighth-graders raised their hands.

McBrien told the students there was one boy who picked on him when he was growing up in Iowa. After slipping and falling on ice in the school playground, the other kid walked over and struck his head so hard, as he lay on the ground, that it caused him to lose consciousness. Fearful of what could happen if he told on the bully, he even lied to his father while he was hospitalized.

Feeling the effects of being bullied on a regular basis, McBrien said he feared the risk of being a bully himself if he fought back.

Having had enough of this bully, McBrien told of how one day when he was speaking in front of his classmates, he finally spoke out. He confronted the bully in front of everyone and soon, others were speaking out against the bully. Apparently, McBrien wasn’t the only student to be bullied by the other boy.

He advised the middle school students that if anyone ever bullies them in any way, to speak up. He told them, “Say, quit bullying me. Don’t swear or call them names.

“Bullies want to be quiet. Bullies don’t want other people to know. They are cowards.”

After this turn of events, McBrien said his dad was so proud of him for finally speaking out.

At his school’s 20-year reunion, McBrien and the bully resolved their issues after it was revealed that the bully had been bullied by his own brothers. McBrien knows that this other man will forever have those memories of being bullied and being a bully.

McBrien ended his visit by telling the kids not to do things they will later regret. The cycle of bullying can be stopped.

Colton Care, an 11-year-old sixth grader, was glad to say that he has not seen any bullying at his school. “Our school’s really good. “If it does happen, it’s terminated quickly.”

If he were to ever witness someone bullying another, Colton said he would have no problem with walking up to the bully and telling him or her to leave that person alone. “Then, I’d tell a teacher.”

Chris McBrien’s anti-bullying assemblies were made possible by a cooperative arrangement with Lake Fenton, Fenton and Linden school districts.
A second chance
You’ve just received and paid a speeding ticket. You know, as a result, that you’re going to get points on your driving record and the ticket will be reported to your insurance company by the Secretary of State, which could result in an increase in your insurance rates. It is not a happy day for you.

But wait, there may be hope and before all hope is lost, you may be interested in what follows.

For eligible drivers who receive certain types of civil infraction traffic tickets, there is a new Michigan statute that provides a way for the points to not go on one’s driving record and for the ticket itself to not be reported to the driver’s insurance company. Here are the pertinent details.

If you received a ticket on or after Dec. 1, 2010, you may be eligible for the new program. Drivers must meet certain qualifications including the following:

• Have a valid non-commercial license with two or fewer points on their record.
• The violation was not in a commercial motor vehicle.
• The violation was not a criminal offense.
• The ticket is an ‘eligible’ ticket. This means the ticket is for three or less points and not for careless or negligent driving or a similar violation. There is a list of tickets that qualify on the Secretary of State website along with some other qualification conditions.

If you are eligible for the program, the Secretary of State will send you a letter to the address on your driver’s license. If you decide to take a Basic Driver Improvement Course (BDIC), you have 60 days to pass it. If you take the course and pass within the time period, the Secretary of State must be notified.

There are no appeals from a failure but you can take a course as many times as you want in order to pass within the 60-day period.

The BDIC providers are all approved by the state. The course itself consists of a defensive driving curriculum that meets or exceeds the standards of Michigan law. The courses may be online or in a classroom, and the cost cannot exceed $100. You are only allowed one successful completion of a BDIC.

If you pass, there will be no points and no report to your insurance company. However, the ticket information will still be on your record and can be used for other purposes by the state.

There are many other details regarding this program that I won’t mention here. The Secretary of State website has much more on this topic.

Fenton Fire Chief Robert Cairnduff (left) was named 2010 Firefighter of the Year by the Fenton City Firefighters’ Association. Posing with Cairnduff are Josh Sturgis, president of the Fenton City Firefighters’ Association, Marshall Colley, secretary/treasurer and Bobby Maksymowsky, vice president.

Cairnduff named Firefighter of the Year

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

Fenton — City of Fenton Fire Chief Robert Cairnduff was selected as the department’s 2010 Firefighter of the Year. He was presented with the award during the fire department’s annual Christmas party in mid-December.

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Tyrone has a lot of paperwork at its township hall. Instead of having collections of paper, officials are looking for money in the upcoming budget for electronic document storage.

Supervisor Mike Cunningham said they are looking into electronic data storage, and which papers they can store electronically and which ones they need to keep for a hard-copy signature.

Officials would like to ensure it’s easy to access documents in the future, and electronic data storage will enable them to do some housecleaning. It will eliminate multiple copies of unneeded paperwork, Cunningham said.

They might need to update a computer server and software to do so. Tyrone was in the process of obtaining proposals.

News briefs

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By Sharon Stone
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Assistant manager to keep job in Fenton

▶ Not selected for city administrator position in Dewitt

By Anna Troppe atroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6782

Fenton — He made it into the final three from a pool of 105 applicants, but Assistant City Manager/Downtown Development Authority Director Michael Burns is staying in Fenton. He applied for the lead administrator position in Dewitt, near Lansing.

“The person they selected had about 11 years’ experience,” he said. “He had more experience than I did, and I think that’s what they needed.”

Burns had three interviews. Making the final three was an accomplishment, he said.

Dewitt is a very nice community, very well managed and professionally run. “I didn’t get it, but we have a lot of work to do here,” he said.

Throughout the process, many council members and residents told Burns they didn’t want him to leave and are happy with the work he’s been doing in Fenton. That was encouraging, he said.

He began his job in Fenton in February 2009. Most assistant managers eventually look to become a lead administrator, Burns has said.

Fire Chief Robert Cairnduff said city administrators’ meeting with Genesee Central took place the first week of January. Fenton and the city of Flint are the only municipalities in Genesee County that do not belong to the Genesee Central consortium.

Fenton administrators are finding out what Genesee Central would include, if the city needs to or decides to join. Cost details haven’t been worked out yet, Cairnduff said.

Markland said, a few years ago, the state passed a law changing how dispatch is funded, with the goal of including cell phones. Counties collect money to fund dispatch and distribute it to communities based on the communities’ population.

With this change, Fenton lost $60,000 annually, he said. It receives around $140,000 annually to help pay for its dispatch.

In addition, $181,000 is the minimum the city needs to replace its dispatch system, Markland said. With everything Fenton needs to do, the cost would be around $300,000.

TRI-COUNTY TIMES Submitted Photo

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Correction: In the article, “New police chief embraces small-town setting,” published on Wednesday, Jan. 12, it stated that police department’s annual budget was $1.1 million. It should have stated that the police department’s annual budget is $450,000.

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COMA
Continued from Front Page
While the doctors didn’t give Mason’s family much hope for his recovery, they took to heart the words of Jill Bolte Taylor in her book, “Stroke of Insight,” that said, “I’m in here, come and get me.”

The Barker family never left Mason alone in his hospital room, nor did they sit in a corner of his hospital room, wringing their hands in despair. Instead, Kathy used her natural healing background and did everything in her power, with the help of Pat, Leah, older brother Taylor, and friends, to stimulate him — from bringing in cooked bacon to arouse his senses to putting head-phones on him to stimulate his brain.

“We stayed there every single night for a year, on a chair next to his bed,” said Kathy. “We made sure he was turned correctly in alignment every two hours all night long. Mason never once had a bedsore, even after being immobile for so long.”

Tracey Comis, manager of Nutrition Woods, said that Kathy and her family’s dedication to Mason was a big part of his healing. But for Kathy, Tracey was one of her own “angels” in this journey. “I’d have lost the business without her,” said Kathy. “The gift she gave me in taking care of my business allowed me to spend every second with my son.”

After six months of hospitalization on an evening when the entire family was there, Mason uttered his first words, “no” and “cold.” It was then that the Barkers realized that their son was coming back out of a coma, in spite of the dire predictions of many in the medical community.

“We believe in the power of faith, prayer, determination and persistence,” said Kathy. “We never let a negative word be uttered in Mason’s hospital room. We’ve even had a sign that told people that everything said had to be positive and encouraging.”

After a year of rehabilitation at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti, Mason finally had reached the point that he could leave the hospital setting and move into a home in Brighton that would work with him toward independence and provide him with skills for the future. “Now, Mason is walking with assistance from a cane,” said Kathy, who visits her son nearly every day at Willowbrook Rehabilitation Center. “That’s a new milestone, it’s huge.”

Mason, now 24, has no recollection of the accident, but has begun to reclaim parts of his former life, such as his keen sense of humor, some of the jargon from his former accounting studies. He even presented the toast as best man at Taylor’s wedding last May.

Friends from his graduating class at Byron High School Class of 2004, and

TRI-COUNTY TIMES
SUBMITTED PHOTO
Mason Barker, then 22, and a former triathlete at Michigan State University, used to cross the finish line at races with a handspiring. “He was in the best shape of his life,” said his mother, Kathy Barker.

friends from college have stood by his side throughout this long journey — joined by well-wishers from all over the world who sent him encouraging, inspirational words through www.caringbridges.org — a patient information website, that connects people who are going through serious health challenges, with friends and family.

Kathy has chronicled this journey through seven journals she has written in the past 2½ years, hoping to someday write a book that will help other families with traumatic brain injuries. “I wish I had had someone in this position who could have helped us,” said Kathy. “But, we had such a supportive network in the wellness community that provided so much help.”

She credits her natural health background with giving her the patience to see the beauty in all of Mason’s small changes and improvements. “We’re so used to ‘taking a pill’ and getting a result,” said Kathy. “It’s just not like that with traumatic brain injuries.”

What causes a coma?
Comas are caused by injury to the brain. Brain injury can be due to increased pressure, bleeding, loss of oxygen, or buildup of toxins. The injury can be temporary and reversible. It also can be permanent.

More than 50 percent of comas are related to head trauma or disturbances in the brain’s circulatory system. Head injuries can cause the brain to swell and/ or bleed. When the brain swells because of trauma, the fluid pushes up against the skull. The swelling may eventually cause the brain to push down on the brain stem, which can damage the RAS — a part of the brain that’s responsible for arousal and awareness.

(Source: WebMD)

ICE FISHING
Continued from Page 3
He knows that some ice fisherman drink alcohol out on the ice, but he prefers to stay away from beer while fishing. “It’s better sober,” he said.

For safety, Balasko suggests ice fishing with a friend. Balasko will easily spend eight hours some days sitting in his shelter, waiting for the ‘big one’ to come by. He said his fiancé doesn’t mind. “She knows I having fun,” he said.

While the weather is bad, drive slow. I’ve noticed most people driving safely this winter, but there are still those crazies who think that it’s safe to drive faster. I did a donut on Silver Parkway, and I was driving slow and trying to stop at the light. Thankfully, there were no other cars in the area for me to hit. Drive slow and save a life, maybe yours.

OH, I AM all about a class-action lawsuit for the $255 quarterly fee imposed by Fenton Township on sewers. I could pay my other bills and support my family better with that money. This is one of the reasons we are going to be putting our home up for sale.

THANK YOU SO much to the two men who stopped to help push my car into the gas station. It had been a terrible week and when most people would keep going on, without any hesitation, you were there to help. Your kindness and thoughtfulness will not be forgotten. Thank you, again.

HOT LINE
Continued from Page 2

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DEAR DR. DONOHUE: What can you tell me about peripheral artery disease in my legs? How about the ballooning of those clogged arteries? Where is a good place to go for that procedure? — E.K.

ANSWER: Activity causes chest pain in people with clogged heart arteries. It causes leg pain for people with clogged leg arteries — peripheral artery disease. Angina is the chest pain of heart artery clogging; intermittent claudication is the leg pain that comes from clogged leg arteries. The obstructed arteries can’t deliver enough blood to leg muscles when a person walks. The leg muscles signal they’re being shortchanged in their blood supply by rebeling with pain.

The pain can occur anywhere in the legs. If the blockage is high up, thigh pain is the result. If a bit lower down, it’s calf pain. Lower down even more produces pains in the feet. “Intermittent” indicates that the pain leaves when the person rests.

Doctors may recommend cigarette smoking, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol are some of the things that lead to artery clogging. Aging is, perhaps, the biggest contributor to it. About 17 percent of men and women older than 65 have this problem.

A doctor confirms the diagnosis by measuring blood pressure at the ankle and comparing it with blood pressure in the arm. The two readings should be about equal. If the ankle blood pressure is much lower, it indicates that there’s an obstruction in the leg arteries.

Treatment involves a diet that reduces the amount of fat and cholesterol; it’s essentially a diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, with less red meat and more fish. Although walking brings on pain, walking is a treatment, too. The person walks to the point of pain, rests and then resumes walking. Medicines like aspirin, Plavix and Pletal can be beneficial.

You ask about the balloon treatment. It’s the same kind of procedure used to open clogged heart arteries. A slender tube, or balloon catheter, is inserted in the leg, inflated balloon at its tip is inched through the artery to the point of obstruction. When that’s reached, the doctor inflates the balloon to squash the obstruction. The population of your city is 50,000. I am sure many competent doctors there are versed in this procedure and can treat PAD as well as it can be treated anywhere. Ask your family doctor for a name.

The booklet on PAD explains the ins and outs of this common problem in detail. To obtain a copy, write: Dr. Donohue — 1098W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for $4.75 U.S./$6 Canada with the recipient’s printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I expect sore muscles the day after I exercise hard. They tell me I had a real workout. When my muscles are sore, I take the day off. I’ve been told to exercise regardless of sore muscles. Do you agree? — M.O.

ANSWER: A low level of exercise circulates blood to aching muscles and quickens healing. All-out exercise doesn’t give the muscles a chance to fully recover. You shouldn’t do resis-
tances exercises (weightlifting) on the same muscles on consecutive days.

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.

Balding can be helped by medicines. Propecia is the brand name. The generic name is finasteride. Finasteride slows hair loss in men. The medicine is not effective if the hair loss is already complete.

Dr. Donohue is a board-certified family practice physician. Write him care of the Times, Times Midweek, 915 N. Union St., Alexandria, VA 22314-1994.
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**Tri-City hockey squad splits weekend games**

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

Sometimes results don’t match the actual play of a team.
That may have been the case for the Tri-City Chiefs last weekend.
The team played two games over the weekend. One was against Gaylord. Coach Ryan Hoover thought the team played well, and yet it lost 4-1.
On Saturday, the team played the Northwest Warriors, but not quite as strong as the previous night, but still won an easy 6-3 verdict.
“Overall, I thought we outplayed them (Gaylord), and we played very well,” coach Ryan Hoover said. “We thought we had a chance to win, but we didn’t bury our chances. I was still happy with our performance.”
“We came out a little flat (against Northwest). We kind of knew they were not very good and we didn’t come out too hard. We couldn’t get ourselves to play at the same level as we did against Gaylord. But we did enough to get the win.”
Against Gaylord, the Chiefs outshot their foes, but ended up allowing two power-play goals, helping establish the difference between the two teams. The Chiefs got their only goal from Jake Stone, on assists from Luke Conner and Tyler Merritt.
In net, Hannah Fremd went the distance, making 26 saves.
“I thought we were the better team, but we gave up two power play goals,” Hoover said. “I thought the two penalties we got were a little weak. I don’t like to blame the refs, though. Their power play was excellent, and they capitalized on them.”
Against the Warriors, the Chiefs dominated. Lucas Tunningley had two goals, while See HOCKEY on 16

**Metro boys basketball race heating up**

Tigers, Bronchos are two of four teams in title hunt

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

Entering Friday night, the Fenton varsity boys basketball team looked poised to almost already lock up its Flint Metro League crown.
Considered the overwhelming favorites to defend their co-league title a year ago, the Tigers were up one game on every team in the Metro entering Friday night’s contest with Swartz Creek. A victory on Friday would mean the Tigers would be two games up on the field before anyone had reached the league’s halfway point, almost already ending the Metro League title race.
However, it’s amazing how one upset can change things. Swartz Creek shocked Fenton 63-51, putting four teams within one game of first place with nine league contests remaining. And guess who are tied atop? They are the co-Metro League champs from a year ago — Fenton and Swartz Creek. Just one game out are Holly and Kearsley.
Suddenly, what could’ve been separation Friday has created what promises to be an exciting second half of the Metro season.
“Everybody is talking about Fenton, and for good reason. But we shared the Metro League championship with them last year, and our guys are a little insulted that nobody talks about Swartz Creek,” Creek coach Jeremy Trent said.
“Everyone is talking about Swartz Creek this week. And for the second straight season, the Dragons were the team that helped get the Tigers back with the rest of the field. Last year, Fenton was 10-0 overall when the Dragons defeated Fenton 72-54 at Creek. This season, the Dragons did it on the Tigers’ own home court.”
Fenton coach Tim Olszewski understands what the upset means to the title race.
“It’s going to be a tough race and a tight race,” Olszewski said. “I, however, had the upmost confidence in our team, kids and program that what occurred here Friday night, woke up a sleeping giant. We were all accountable for what happened Friday night, and sometimes losing can do wonders. Swartz Creek, Holly and Kearsley are all tough teams and anything can happen, but I think we lost sight of some things.”
Holly’s Austin Hopkin (left) attacks the basket against Fenton’s Charles Herzog in a recent game. Fenton and Holly are two of the four teams with control of their own destiny in this year’s Metro League race.

**Holly boys edge Lapeer West, 61-55**

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

Suddenly, with Fenton’s loss to Swartz Creek, the Metro League varsity boys basketball race has opened up.
And one of those teams that appears to have a second life is the Holly Bronchos.
Holly, who had lost two straight Metro League contests, including a tight verdict against Fenton, rebounded from that skid with a 61-55 home victory against Lapeer West on Friday night.
The Bronchos (5-2, 5-3) trailed 17-12 after one quarter, but progressively snuck back into the game. By halftime, they trailed 33-30. Then, in the third quarter, the Bronchos took over. Holly scored the first seven points of the third quarter, and never trailed again.
“I’m proud of my guys,” Baylis said. “At halftime we made some adjustments to their offense and became disruptive to their offense. We didn’t let Lapeer West run their cuts and screens.”
It worked. Led by Anderius Merritt.
See HOLLY on 15

**Fenton swimmers open league season with win**

By David Troppens
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It’s a young team.
It’s a team with not a ton of varsity swimming experience.
But as the Fenton varsity boys swim squad begins the Flint Metro League season, Fenton coach Brad Jones is encouraged by what he’s seen.
He had to be recently during the Tigers’ first Metro meet of the season. They defeated Lapeer 105-75.
“From the first day to present, the difference has been night and day,” Jones said. “They have surpassed all of our expectations. Therefore, we are looking to take second in the Metro behind Brandon this year.”
The Blackhaws are loaded with talented and experienced swimmers, so Brandon would be a hard team to catch. However, anyone else in the Metro remains within reach. And that showed against Lapeer.
The Tigers won all three relays and had five other individual first-place performances.
The team had two swimmers — Adam Ransom and David Congdon — earn first-place performances in four events.
The pair teamed up in the 400 freestyle relay with Alex Chase and Adam Andrecki for a first (3:50.12), while each helped another relay to a first. Congdon teamed with Anthony Miceli, Chase and Aaron Summers to win the 200 medley relay (1:59.57), while Ransom teamed with Andrecki, Josh Bryant and Summers to win the 200 freestyle relay (1:44.01).
See SWIMMERS on 16
**LF grapplers capture tourney title**

Blue Devils remain ranked third in Division 3 in state

By Al Zipsie

Lake Fenton’s varsity wrestling team won its first individual wrestling tournament of the season, topping the 23-squad field at the Jim Mooney Williamson Classic.

The Blue Devils, who won a team dual at the Heritage Invitational a week earlier, had five champions, two second-place finishers, and a third-place performer. Winning championships were Buddy Poyner (130), Zach Corcoran (140), Justin Melick (145), Chris O’Gunn (152) and Drew Morris (171). Todd Melick (119) and Connor Brancheo (160) took seconds, while Bryce Hopkins took third place (125).

Lake Fenton won with 238 points ahead of second-place Holt 229.5. The Blue Devils trailed Holt by more than 20 points after the first round and 13.5 after the second but rallied.

Mitchell (32-1) reached the milestone of 150 career wins with a first-round pinfall over Mason’s Austin Barr. A senior, Morris had a 6-2 decision over Holt’s Kyle Shaw in the finals.

O’Gunn earned his title with a 5-2 victory over Grand Ledge’s Korey Knapp. Seniors Poyner, Corcoran and Justin Melick all went unbeaten in four matches. Poyner (32-1) had a pinfall in 1:44 over Holt’s Drew Dyer. Melick upped his record to 27-3. The defending state champion had a default in the final. Corcoran (31-1) had a 5-1 decision over Haslett’s Taylor Grenawalt in the final.

Todd Melick, a state runner-up last year, clocked off falls in 27 seconds, 1:30 and 1:20 before falling in the final to Mason’s Conor Yousey 11-4, the defending Division II 119 state champion.

The Blue Devils, who are ranked third in the State in Division III, will be at full force Wednesday with the entire lineup for the first time this season. Lake Fenton will only get better as James Demember, Jake Hosting and Kade Denam will make their season debut.

Lake Fenton (8-0 in the GAC) has its final home meet of the regular season Wednesday as they take on LakeVille and New Lothrop, who is ranked second in Division 4. On Saturday they travel to Stevensville Michigan for the Lakeshore Invitational.

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

The Fenton varsity wrestling team needed a weekend to instill some confidence within the program. The Tigers got that at the Gibraltar Carlson Individual Tournament on Saturday.

Fenton finished fourth out of 12 teams, earning two weight class championships.

“After that horrendous effort against Holly, the kids stepped up and wrestled well,” Fenton coach Bruce Burwitz said. “We had a lot of kids wrestle well.”

Sean Rusaw (160) went 5-0 and won his title by defeating Romulus’ Ryan Jackson in 24 seconds by pinfall in the title match. Meanwhile, Preston Wetzel (152) also won a title, defeating Woodhaven’s Shawn Johnson by technical fall in his title match.

“(Sean’s) wrestling very well,” Burwitz said. “He took third last week and upset the No. 1 seeded guy. He ended up losing in overtime to the eventual champ last week and won it this week.

“Preston has been doing more and more stuff every week. He’s a real coachable kid, and is not afraid to try a couple of things, which is great.”

Pat Turner (130) made it to the title match, but lost his final match, meaning he had to settle for second. Jacob Wykes (135) placed third, while Carl Coster was fifth (205).

Fenton faces Lapeer West and Kearneys Wednesday at home.
HOCKEY
Continued from Page 14
Sean Meyer, Evan Lattner, Conner and Cameron Brands had a goal each. Evan Haller had three assists.

“We were up 6-1, and it could’ve been worse.” Hoover said. “We hit posts, missed nets. We could’ve easily been 10 goals. But it was good. Everyone got in and everyone played a lot.

SWIMMERS
Continued from Page 14
Individually, Ransom won the 200 individual medley (2:17.94) and the 100 butterfly (1:01.48), while Condgon won the 500 freestyle (5:21.01) and the 100 backstroke (1:06.07). Ken Carbary had the team’s other first, winning the 500 freestyle (5:36.77).

Other strong swims for Fenton included Carbary in the 200 freestyle (2:03.35), Andresski in the 100 freestyle (58.59) and Bryant in the 100 freestyle (59.98).

The Tigers hosted Carman-Ainsworth Tuesday night for a dual meet. On Friday and Saturday, the team hosts the County Meet.

“With the majority of our team first-year swimmers, our goal is to get as many swimmers back to the finals on Saturday as we can,” Jones said.

Fenton’s Ken Carbary (front, center) dives in the pool during a recent meet. The Tigers won their first Metro League meet of the season recently, defeating Lapeer.

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Fenton’s Connor Muntin (left) dribbles against a Swartz Creek player during Friday’s game. Fenton and Holly are two of the four teams with control of their own destiny in this year’s Metro League race. Swartz Creek is tied for first with Fenton, while Holly and Kearsley are a game behind.

RACE
Continued from Page 14
have a lot of confidence in our kids and our team, and I think we’ll handle Friday night’s loss to Creek in a very positive way.”

One team that loved to hear what happened to Fenton on Friday was the Holly Bronchos. Holly lost a tough contest to Fenton just four days earlier and were nursing a three-game losing streak before defeating Lapeer West 61-55 on Friday night. Suddenly, the Bronchos find themselves just one game out of the lead. And with two games remaining against Swartz Creek, and one each against Fenton and Kearsley, the Bronchos have control of their own destiny for at least a co-Metro crown.

“It’s going to be exciting, and that’s why I love this league,” Holly coach Lance Baylis said. “For all the people that put this league down, this is what high school basketball is all about. Anyone can beat anybody, and there are teams that have a great chance to play spoiler.

“It’s exciting. We are pretty much where I thought we could be. The Kearsley or Fenton game could’ve gone either way. There is a lot of basketball to play.”

With a starting unit that includes Ryan Hickoff, Dylan Hickoff and Eric Mowery, the Tigers still have to be considered the favorites to win the Metro title, just as they have each of the last two seasons when they won co-league championship, but now there’s less wiggle room.

“The league is pretty much the way I thought it would be,” Olszewski said. “If you go back to conversations at the start of the season I thought Creek, Holly and Kearsley would be tough, and Lapeer West would be kicking it up a bit and that’s what we got. I think we all knew winning the league with an undefeated record was near in possibility. Any team that’s going to win the league will have one or two losses.”

The four-team chase to a Metro title has officially begun.
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