City approves the purchase of 911 equipment

Police department to upgrade its emergency dispatch system

By Sharon Stone

Fenton — On Monday, the Fenton City Council unanimously approved a proposal that will allow the city’s police department to upgrade its 911 emergency dispatch center by purchasing new equipment. With funding provided by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the cost of this equipment cannot exceed $253,127. Including the costs of the tower grounding and consultant fees, which were already covered and an estimated $15,000 for electrical work, the total cost reaches about $278,000.

Based on early projections, the DDA had set aside $320,000. Police Chief Rick Aro said the vendors that were selected were chosen based on their experience and warranties. “We’re getting the most bang for the buck,” he said. See DISPATCH on 6.

The Fenton Police Department will be updating its 911 emergency dispatch center, using funds provided by the Downtown Development Authority.

City hires firm to search for better water

Effort will cost up to $10,970

By Sharon Stone

Fenton — On Monday, the Fenton City Council voted in favor of allowing up to $10,970 be spent for exploration of better quality groundwater. This will allow AMEC BC Engineering & Scientists, Inc. (AMEC) to explore areas within city limits that might provide higher quality groundwater. See WATER on 7.

Hot time at the Holly Dickens Festival

Doctor Infernal executes his “flaming finale” at Holly Dickens Festival on Saturday, wowing visitors with his fire-eating act. The festival also included 11 vendors, a choir and children’s activities. See story on Page 13.

Is ‘Big Brother’ watching you?

Activity-recording program exists on most smartphones and tablets

By William Axford

City hires firm to search for better water

Summary

Carrier IQ is tracking software that records keystrokes and online activities on mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets. Users are concerned that passwords and other privileged information may be sold to companies and other agencies.
Fenton Township to become ‘active community’

By William Axford

axford@tctimes.com, 810-433-6792

The Fenton Township Board of Trustees adopted a resolution last week that may allow more sidewalks and bike paths on the main roads. The decision came after a presentation from Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone (SAGE), a group that presenter Victor Lukasavitz described as “a collaboration of local advocates, non-profits, private and public government organizations working together to advocate for and support active living initiatives.”

“We’re trying to design streets today that are for the good of the community, and not just good for transportation over a few stretch of miles,” Lukasavitz said.

Some of the suggestions included in the presentation were converting four-lane roads into three lanes and using the extra space for bicycle lanes or sidewalks. Also suggested was creating trails that include signage and a clear ending destination.

Lukasavitz said that a community benefits greatly once it becomes more accessible by foot. Generally, the values of homes increase by 20 percent and local businesses see an increase in sales.

Perhaps the most important aspect of having a more active community however is health. Active Live Director at Crimm Physical Foundation Lauren Holaly said that nearly 20 percent of children and 65 percent of adults in America are overweight.

“Have a truly active community, residents should be able to go anywhere they need to in 20 minutes by foot,” Holaly said during her portion of the presentation.

In order to adapt the roads in Fenton Township into a more walkable community, the board of trustees must approve an ordinance to start the project. The board is expected to construct an ordinance and vote on it in a future meeting.

News briefs

PIACENTINI RESIGNS FROM DDA AND LDFA

Due to his appointment to Fenton City Council, it was necessary for Michael Piacentini to resign from the Fenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA), as well as the Land Development Finance Authority (LDFA). Fenton City Council accepted his resignations on Monday.

COUNCIL MAKES DDA APPOINTMENTS

On Monday, Fenton City Council ap- pointed Terry Green and Tom Bertschy to serve on the Fenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Green is owner of Bilmerick Camera, which is located within the DDA district. He lives in the DDA district and he has been involved with the chamber of commerce. Bertschy works for The State Bank on North LeRoy Street. He serves as board member of the Fenton Area Public Schools Education Foundation, Fenton Rotary and is a member of the Fenton Regional Chamber of Commerce.

RAUCH APPOINTED TO BOARD OF REVIEW

The Fenton City Council reappointed John Rauch to the Board of Review. Rauch did not seek reelection to the Board of Review. He continues to serve on the Fenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA), as well as the Land Development Finance Authority (LDFA).

Spent it here. Keep it here.

SHOP LOCAL.

INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY.
Smart Solutions

1. Sticky situation
When your little one’s gum ends up on his shirt or your rug, fill a resealable plastic sandwich bag with ice and apply it to the sticky spot for 10 minutes. As the gum gets cold, it shrinks and hardens, making it easy to peel off and toss away without damaging fabric.

2. Buildup in toilet
To whisk away unsightly buildup in your toilet, drop a denture tablet overnight, then flush. The effervescent compounds in the tablet will suffice, the Tri-County Times (USPS 018-092) is published every Wednesday in Fenton, Michigan. Periodic postage paid at Fenton, Michigan 48430. Subscriptions: No non-member subscribers. Postmaster: Send address changes to Tri-County Times, 251 North Fenton Drive, Fenton, Michigan 48430. Periodical postage paid at Fenton, Michigan 48430. Subscription Rate: $38.00 per year. No non-member subscribers. Postmaster: Send address changes to Tri-County Times, 251 North Fenton Drive, Fenton, Michigan 48430. Periodical postage paid at Fenton, Michigan 48430. Subscription Rate: $38.00 per year. No non-member subscribers. Postmaster: Send address changes to Tri-County Times, 251 North Fenton Drive, Fenton, Michigan 48430. Periodical postage paid at Fenton, Michigan 48430. Subscription Rate: $38.00 per year.

School Choir

It’s not just about singing

Builds friendships, hones social and performance skills, instills confidence and more

By Tim Jagielo

Smiles spread on the faces of patients and their families as they entered the doors of Genesys Health Park in Grand Blanc Township on Thursday. Each person was greeted with the warm sound of Christmas carols, sung by a high school choir as they left the winter cold, and entered the atrium of the hospital.

Among the choirs performing was the Linden High School Ensemble. Each student was sharply dressed. The group soon attracted a large audience, who wouldn’t believe that the students had worked

See SINGING on 9

Mind your manners

Even with the popularity of e-mail, Facebook and other social media, some rules of holiday etiquette never change

By Sally Rummel

If a person gives you a gift and was not there to see you open it, you should write a hand-written, thank-you note to express your appreciation for the gift. That’s the word from Lizzie and Peggy Post, co-authors of “Emily Post’s Etiquette, 18th Edition: Manners for a New World” and descendants of etiquette expert Emily Post.

For gifts you receive in the presence of the gift-giver, a casual e-mail note will suffice, but a hand-written note is always appreciated. You’re never in the wrong if you send a personal, hand-written note, according to Post’s book. E-mail is OK if it’s someone you e-mail frequently, but for others who don’t use e-mail as their main communication, it may come across as an insincere, “easy way out” expression of thanks. When in doubt, a hand-written note is always the preferred method of thanks.

One suggestion for parents of kids — even grown ones — who get Christmas stockings every year is to include a package of fun thank-you notes in the stocking. That way, there’s no excuse for not writing thank you notes after the holiday, and they’ll serve as a gentle reminder that this is an expected activity after the festive fun of gift opening.

Questions about gift giving

How do I handle it when someone unexpectedly gives me a gift, especially at work, when I don’t have a gift to give him or her in return?

A gift is a nice gesture, not a holiday requirement, so a person receiving an unexpected gift shouldn’t apologize. This is a time when words spoken can

See GIFT on 6
A December to remember

Seventy years ago this month, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and brought America into a war that had begun in Europe in 1939.

In his masterful new book ‘December 1941: 31 Days That Changed America and Saved the World,’ Craig Shirley takes readers back to a very different America. Through hundreds of stories and advertisements culled from newspapers, Shirley not only transports us back in time, but also reminds this generation that denial about an enemy’s intentions can have grave consequences.

Each chapter in the book deals with a single day of December 1941. We go to the movies with Clark Gable and Betty Grable, view the ‘upper society’ of New York, and listen to radio stars like Jack Benny and Walter Winchell, the acerbic columnist and powerful radio gossip.

The major players are all here: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Winston Churchill and countless generals and admirals, as well as other military and political figures familiar to any student of history. But the real stars were our parents and grandparents and their friends and neighbors.

Record numbers enlisted in the military. This ‘greatest generation’ was not necessarily braver than other generations; its men and women were simply imbued with a profound sense of duty.

That call to duty is evident in a letter from a young man to his father, which was typical, says Shirley, of the sentiment of December 1941: ‘Dear Dad, There is a war on and I am now in it, but that must not be a cause for you to worry. Of course there is danger and there will be more danger to come but if I am to die a soldier’s death, so be it... You must think of me as doing my duty to God and country. I am not afraid to die for this... Until then I remain and always, Your Loving Son.’

Dec. 7, 1941 may be a day that ‘will live in infamy,’ but that month, those years, and that war revealed an American character still on display in our military today, though it’s somewhat lacking in our civilian population.

AS A CHRISTIAN, I am disturbed by Christians demanding that non-Christsians recognize the Christmas holiday. We are supposed to live our lives in such a way that others around us think about Christ, not demand they recognize our holidays.

Would Christ walk into Kmart and demand that an atheist say Merry Christmas?

TODAY, WENT TO the Fenton High School band performance. The students put on an incredible evening of entertainment called ‘An Evening at the Cinema.’ Mr. Perkins taught each performer to become something bigger than one’s self, and taught the audience that notes speak louder than words. Good thing, I left speechless.

WONDERING WHY the ‘Welcome to’ part of the ‘Welcome to Fenton’ is so small on the new signs. You can’t even see it until you’ve almost passed by.

I SURE WOULD like to know what a certain family on Cogshill Street is doing every single night. Starting around suppertime, and sometimes going until after midnight, it sounds like someone is playing something with a sleigh hammer. For Pete’s sake, it’s been months.

Do your project during the daytime.

IF THE REPUBLICAN Party is of the rich and the rich only, how do you explain that approximately 50 percent of the public votes Republican and approximately half of our Congress is Republican. Must mean 50 percent of the people in this country are rich.

IN RESPONSE TO the article about bullying in our schools, our admin-

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If you could give one gift to the world, what would it be?

"I would give money to the poor, because some people don’t have a lot of food."
— Nicole Rushton

"I would give food to the hungry because money is tight right now."
— Brie Sanford

"I would give money to the homeless to use for shelter because it’s cold outside."
— Abby Suemore

"I would give money to kids in Afghanistan so they can afford to have a teacher for the whole year."
— Mitchell Carriduff

"I would give shelter to kids who live in igloos. It’s too cold out to live in those."
— Ryan Adams

"I would give plants, because people keep cutting them down."
— Nathan Klump
New fire department hoses — $5,000

By Tim Jagielo

Holly — On Tuesday, the Holly Village Council voted 6-1 to allocate $5,000 to the Holly Fire Department. The money is coming from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which must be used on a public service in the community and to help those of moderate-low income.

Council member Jason Hughes cast the dissenting vote. He said he wanted the CDBG funds to be used to market the village to potential residents to help attract the resident’s higher water bills. “The biggest complaint this community has is that the water bills are extremely high,” he said.

His ideas included using the funds to possibly reinstate the economic development task force, to recruit new residents to Holly. “The only way we’re going to bring those bills down is to recruit new residents,” said Hughes. “Today, we have done very little to market our community.”

President Jeff Miller said there was nothing in place at the moment to implement Hughes’ idea, and the CDBG funds had to be used soon, and the fire department’s needs are the most vital.

He also said fire protection is a bigger priority. Other options for CDBG funds included parks or helping seniors in the community.

“This is not a wish list, this is a necessity to put out a fire.”

Jackie Campbell
Holly Village council member

Fenton Area Toastmasters welcomes new members

Fenton Area Toastmasters has two new members, Joshua Gates and Paola Couture. Gates is pastor of First Baptist Church in Fenton. He has joined Toastmasters with the goal of improving his skills and sharing with the community. He has already given several speeches and competed in two competitions.

Couture recently moved to this country from Mexico with her husband. She joined Toastmasters to gain a better command of the language and to get over her fears of speaking in public.

Fenton Area Toastmasters meets every Friday at the VG’s Support Center, 209 S. Alley Drive, Fenton, from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. Guests are always welcome. For more information, call (810) 629-5447 ext. 401 or visit www.fentonfreestoasthost.us.

Toastermaster International is a non-profit organization dedicated to honing leadership skills and oral communication.

Calling all of Santa’s helpers

It’s that time of year once again for Holly Area Youth Assistance’s (HAYA) Toy Project. The 29th annual Jacobson/Quinn Toy Project, sponsored by HAYA, is accepting new, unwrapped toys and monetary donations. Organizers are in need of books, educational games, dolls, puzzles, action figures, soccer balls and footballs.

The program was established in 1982 to provide low-income families with toys at Christmas. This year, HAYA anticipates giving presents to 350 to 400 children living within the Holly Area School District. In past years, each child typically receives two toys or gifts and stocking-stuffing items.

The public is invited to help with gift-wrapping on Thursday, Dec. 15, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and if necessary, on Friday, Dec. 16, in the old ambulance building at Cyclone Park.

Gift delivery helpers will also be needed to take the presents to homes on Saturday, December 17. Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m. at the Cyclone Park building.

For additional information, contact HAYA at (248) 328-3181.

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**DISPATCH Continued from Front Page**

The approximate balance of $40,000 that the DDA set aside would remain available to the dispatch center in the event of necessary inclements for the Next Generation 911 or fees in the future.

“I’m excited,” said Aro. “We’ll be one of the first couple of cities in the state to implement this new technology.”

Of Genese County, Flint and Fenton cities are the only municipalities that have their own 911 emergency dispatch centers. For years, there had been talk of joining the county’s 911 emergency dispatch system, however, Fenton City officials had long valued the faster response times of its police and fire departments.

Aro said the current 911 equipment is outdated and replacement parts are unavailable. Funding to cover costs of dispatch personnel, about $150,000, comes from service fees collected by cell phone companies. If the council voted against the upgrade and had the city join the county’s system, that $150,000 would have gone to the county, which most likely would have caused the police department to shut down its lock-up and close its doors beyond regular business hours, since there would not have been personnel to handle operations.

After the favorable vote, Aro said he was happy with the outcome. “We certainly took a long, hard look at this issue,” he said. “We debated. Because of this, I believe we’re heading in the right direction.”

The chief now has the task of putting together a contract for a local vendor for installation and maintenance, since the equipment company, Modacom, is based in California. He hopes to have the new system up and running by the end of January or early February.

With their careers on the line, Aro said he thinks his dispatchers felt a sign of relief with council’s unanimous decision to proceed.

Aro is convinced that a significant reason to keep the dispatch center infrastructure is because of the city’s ambulance contract with STAT EMS.

“That will continue,” he said.

**GIFT Continued from Page 3**

mean as much as a gift, so be gracious and appreciative for the kindness and effort shown. Make sure to write a sincere thank-you, and make a mental note to put this person on your gift list next year, if it seems appropriate.

According to Post, people are way too sensitive about reciprocation. It’s OK to receive something from someone and the only thing you give in return is a sincere thank-you. If you start giving excuses for not having a gift to give in return, you’re taking the focus away from the gift that was given and drawing it to yourself.

**Q** I have a friend who spends lavishly on holiday gifts, and I can’t afford to spend as much. What should I do?

**A** You should never, ever feel you have to strain your budget to purchase a gift. Whether it’s a Christmas gift, wedding or birthday gift, Post said in her book. When you put thought into a gift, and you really consider the person and what he or she would like, the price of the gift doesn’t matter.

**Q** Is it OK to return a gift?

If someone has given you a gift receipt with his or her gift, it’s a tacit invitation to go ahead and return it, said Post in her book. If it’s from a big brand store and tags are attached, it’s still fine to exchange it. Just ask yourself how comfortable you’d be if the giver ever asked you why you didn’t wear it. Never ask for information so you can return it. ‘You’re not owed a perfect gift.”

**MANNERS Continued from Page 3**

return the gift, you can still thank them for the thought and intent of the original gift. You can end the note by wishing them well and letting them know you look forward to seeing them again. Even a thank-you note written late is better than no thank-you note at all, according to Post.

**HOT LINE CONTINUED**

I LOVE all the Christmas decorations outside, the beautiful lights, and all the festivities. The only thing I don’t care for are the blue lights. Why do people like blue lights? I don’t know, but I like all the other lights. Merry Christmas.

WE ARE RETIRED and on a fixed income. We have to budget and there are things we have cut out. Now, I am told because I am Republican, I am rich. Hmm, haven’t seen it yet. The Republicans have taught us that you have to live within your needs, and don’t expect handouts. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

I ASSUME THAT the person complaining about the Baby Boomers and their mindless consumerism, doesn’t own a big-screen TV, an iPod, or a cell phone. They probably sit in a dark room reading by a candle. I can tell you that the Baby Boomers are responsible for inventing or perfecting every device that is near and dear to your heart right now.

**UPDATE on the Screen case**

A few weeks ago I wrote a column about a case out of Allegan County (People v Rose) involving a defendant who was convicted of criminal sexual conduct and other felonies involving a child. The child was allowed to testify at trial behind a screen so that the defendant could not see her and him.

The Michigan Court of Appeals upheld the conviction and found that under the special circumstances presented, including the 8-year-old child’s fear of the defendant, the defendant’s Sixth Amendment right to have face-to-face confrontation with the witnesses against him and his due process rights were not violated by use of the screen.

The Michigan Supreme Court granted leave to appeal the Court of Appeals decision on Feb. 2. On Dec. 9, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that after considering the legal briefs and oral arguments of both parties, the previous order granting leave to appeal was vacated because the Court was no longer persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed by the Court.

What this means is that the ruling of the Court of Appeals stands, and the defendant’s conviction remains affirmed.

This ruling is an example of how the law allows a court to reconsider a previous decision when additional facts or circumstances are presented.

The law has long recognized this possibility as it ensures that courts at all levels can reach a different conclusion than the initial ruling when it is warranted. This is a matter within a court’s sound discretion and there is clearly nothing wrong with a court being able to ensure a correct final decision is made.

This is something that doesn’t happen often but under the law, there are good and valid reasons for the procedure.

**YEAH, ADULTERY WAS so horrible with Clinton, but now it’s OK, wow.**

**SO, BUSH IS completely thoughtless and your information is absolutely correct.**

**I E-MAILED ONE of our local stores to see if they could special order an item that I knew no one in the area carried, because I wanted to shop local. Not only could they order it, I received it fast and they assembled it for free.**

**MY PARENTS complain about the insulting, rude teacher at Fenton schools by holding a meeting with the teacher and principal? Complaining in the Hot lines doesn’t solve the problem.**

**MY FAMILY WENT to the Dickens Festival in Holly this past Sunday. I just want to say what a wonderful time we had. Keep up the good work, Holly.**

**I’M SICK OF all the Republican debates.**
WATER
Continued from Front Page
Councilman Mike Piccinetti voted against it, saying that he would likely to have seen this project as a line item on the budget. He said it is a good idea but $10,000 is a significant cost for an improvement.

If higher quality water were found, fewer costly chemicals would be needed to treat the water. Dan Czarnecki, director of the Department of Public Works, told council members that the city’s treated municipal water currently meets all standards and testing requirements. Increasing and fluctuating costs of chemicals, however, adds to the cost for that end result.

Steve Guy, director of the water plant, said they spend about $70,000 annually on sodium hydroxide and about $220,000 in total chemical costs to treat the water. He believes that if better groundwater were found, the amount spent on chemicals would decrease.

AMEC has proposed a three-phase project, with the first one being a determination of what water is available and a review of the hydro geological data. If better water were found within city limits, they would begin to look at the second phase of the project.

It is unknown at this time what the second phase of the project would cost the city.

The water department has an annual budget of about $2.7 million. It has about $328,000 on hand that could be used on this project. Czarnecki said although there are funds available, he would not consider the water fund to be a healthy fund, yet. Unexpected expenditures, such as water main breaks and faulty pumps could occur at any given time and a reserve must be available.

Mark Sweatman, of AMEC, said he expects work associated with the first phase to be completed by the end of next March.

Councilman Les Bland said he believes that this needed to be done. However, he was not sure that now was the right time. He predicts the second phase of the project to cost considerably more than $10,000. “I don’t think the water department can look at this kind of expenditure.”

“It’s good water, but may be hard.” Mayor Sue Osborn said, overall, the $10,000 being spent on the first phase was not a large cost, considering that the city would at least have an answer. “We need to proceed cautiously,” she said.

Councilwoman Patricia Lockwood said the council could do nothing or do what the residents have asked for and find ways to lower costs. She wants to do what is best for the residents and this $10,000 could be money well spent in the long run.

Councilwoman Cheryl King said she believes that the first phase is a good plan.

Summary
Fenton City Council approved a request by the water department to spend nearly $11,000 to hire a company to search for better quality groundwater.

Police&Fire

Woman’s Jewelry Stolen
Fenton police are investigating a theft of jewelry complaint, from an 18-year-old woman living in the 16000 block of Silver Parkway. Lt. Jason Slater said the complaint came in on Dec. 7. The woman said four pieces of jewelry, valued at $4,000, were missing from her residence. Police are continuing to investigate and will be interviewing anyone who had access to her home.

LouD NoiSe
On Dec. 7, Fenton police responded to an apartment in the 300 block of Treat-Out Drive to investigate a loud noise complaint. Police made contact with the 18-year-old male resident and his two male friends, one 19, from Rose Township and one 16, from Fenton Township. The teens admitted to drinking and preliminary breath tests revealed a blood alcohol content of .168 for the Fenton Township male and .212 for the Rose Township male. Those two were ticketed for Under 21 Consumption and the resident was ticketed for Under 21 Possession. Beer and liquor was destroyed at the scene.

Delinquent Account
On Dec. 12, a 25-year-old Fenton man reported to Fenton police that when he tried to open an account at a cell phone store, an employee informed him that an account, with his Social Security number, already existed, but with another name. The account was also delinquent. The store was notifying the parent company and the victim was advised to report the incident to police.

Woman Assaults Brother
At 4:40 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10, Fenton police responded to a home near Jennings and Owen roads to investigate a domestic assault complaint called in by a 21-year-old female resident. The woman said her 28-year-old brother, who lives with her, assaulted her. Police interviewed the siblings as well as witnesses and determined that the woman had been the aggressor in the assault. She was arrested and taken to the county jail. The case has been turned over to detectives who will present the file to the prosecutor.

Argentine Police Department seeking reserves
Reserve Officer program approved by township officials
By Sharon Stone
sststone@tctimes.com, 810-433-6766
The Argentine Township Board of Trustees approved a request to restart the Reserve Officer program at its November meeting. Police Chief Daniel Allen requested the program be restated so that a few reserve officers would be available to provide invaluable assistance to his department, at no cost to the township.

The police department had a reserve officer program from 2001 to 2007.

Allen said he would like to have as many as eight reservists on hand to work alongside the certified officers. There are most likely some individuals in the community who would like to volunteer in this capacity. Those interested must be at least 21 year of age and they would be required to pay for their own training and gear. There is some gear, which was used by the past reservists.

Training would mirror training that certified officers take part in and background checks would be required. Allen said his policy is very specific on qualifications.

Those interested should contact the chief at (810) 735-5317. The deadline to apply is Jan. 1, 2012. If an applicant has attended a reserve academy, some training requirements can be waived.
Thursday, December 15 • Friday, December 16 • Saturday, December 17, 2011

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dozen

97¢

**limit 3**

**SAVE AT LEAST .32**

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10 - 12 oz.

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**White Milk**

(gallon); or Country Fresh Egg Nog (quart)

$2.49

**SAVE AT LEAST .50**

**Fresh Deli Sliced Jennie-O Turkey Breast**

$2.88 lb.

**SAVE AT LEAST 2.11 lb.**

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Members of Fenton High School’s Bella Voce choir rehearse Monday morning, under the direction of Brad Wright. Fenton has an open choir, but Bella Voce members must try out.

SINGING
Continued from Page 3
on their music for only three weeks, or eight rehearsals prior to the performance.

Leading the students was choir director Shari Ravert. “(Choir) teaches you to handle yourself under pressure,” she said. “Even if you feel you are under stress.”

Student Nick Bonardelli, 14, enjoyed the challenge. “It was a lot of fun,” he said. “I was still nervous though, with only eight rehearsals.”

This is his first year in choir, in high school. “It helps me definitely to be outgoing,” said Nick.

He chose choir over other electives because he likes music, and found it more interesting than the other electives.

Choir is one out of many elective classes from which students can choose.

At Linden, band, art, physical education, video production and theater are all available, and all provide different ways to enrich the student’s life. All area high schools have different choir programs.

At Fenton High School, members of the Bella Voce all-women choir meet for several hours every week. Bella Voce members have to try out.

Choir director Brad Wright is good natured and energetic, but does not treat the group with kid gloves. He drives the choir to perform better. “Did that sound like decisiveness?” he asked during rehearsal Monday morning. “Did that sound like decisiveness?” He called out sections that he felt hadn’t worked on their music at home.

Lydia Berkey, 14, and Brianna Mattila, 15, are both freshmen and members of the choir. Lydia said she is not used to being pushed this way in a choir class. “I think it’s good because he has high expectations for us,” she said. “Because he pushes us so hard, we’re not afraid to try things in other classes,” said Brianna.

“I think it gives me more confidence for everything.”

Lydia Berkey
Bella Voce choir member

The group has already performed one show, and is preparing for the next show on Thursday. Both students said being in choir helps them in other areas of their lives. “I think it gives me more confidence for everything,” said Lydia.

This is the benefit of choir that Ravert sees in her own students. She watched them put their fears aside to perform in front of total strangers, after they scrambled to learn new music for the show. She said that this same confidence can carry someone through an important job interview without losing their cool. “Music is such an integral part of our lives,” Ravert said.

Aside from instilling confidence, choir gives students a place to belong. Both Brianna and Lydia describe their choir as a family unit. “You’re in the trenches together, it’s like being part of a club,” said Ravert.

Lydia and Brianna said they have fun in the class, even though they have to work hard at what they do. Both have challenges inherent to their position in the choir. Lydia is a low alto, and must push her lower register, while Brianna is a second soprano, and has to stretch her upper range. “Sometimes we have to hit a really high low note, and then go up to a really high note,” said Brianna.

They both enjoy learning new music from different genres, and meeting new people through the choir. “They’re more comfortable around other people,” said Ravert.

Most of the area high schools have an open choir program, and other choirs for more serious singers. If you love music and a solid challenge, choir might be for you.

HOT LINE
CONTINUED
I HAVE AUTHORED a saying and invite everyone to use it. ‘The Conservatives all agree in the constitutional amendment regarding freedom of religion. They are strong supporters, as long as you choose one of the Christian ones.

THE LINDEN HOLIDAY Happening was a beehive of activity, Santa, local artists’ demonstrations, art show, 100-plus people at the Masonic Lodge, people lining the streets of Downtown Linden, and instead of capturing all of this activity, you select a picture of a person with two dogs. Lyme.

IF WE ARE going to have medical can- nabis in Michigan, then we need to stop busting local growers. If we do not allow people to grow cannabis in Michigan, it will be outsourced to cartels, gangs and even the Taliban. Keep cannabis lo- cal. Fenton, stop busting local growers.

IT’S TOO BAD that most people miss out on life. They go through life half- dead, yes physical, but not spirit-filled. God put you here and he gives you everything you need to have a good life. It’s too short. Enjoy it.

YES, I JUST wanted to find out if all the patriot flag waving Americans celebrated by going out and buying a new Japanese car.

DOCTORS ARE the most thoughtless, insensitive, aggregate human beings walking in this planet today.

I FIND IT interesting that the person who is complaining about the principal still being around after some altercation and is blaming it on the union. The principal is an administrator and is part of management. Management does not have a union, so you can’t blame it on the union. Blame it on management, where most of our problems arise.

WELL, IF PEOPLE don’t like the fact that union workers are union workers, they didn’t have to take the job from non-union shops. They could form a union. We get benefits because we work for them.

I’D LIKE TO wish my Times carrier a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and all the other carriers, too. I always get my Times on time, in good weather or in bad. Thank you very much to all the Times’ carriers. You all work very hard.

TO THE PERSON who has the miscon- ception that Medicare is a free handout and is saying it’s a drain on the national economy, it’s something we pay for. It’s not free. That’s something we pay $125 a month for, just to have health coverage.

I GOT MY Sunday, Dec. 11 Times, and the online comments have a hotline that says Obama is the best thing ever for this country. What are you people, on some kind of drugs down there? Why don’t you put that crap on the back page?

PERHAPS THE LINDEN High School band director is similar to a coach for football, volleyball, softball, or track. He takes the best students who are musi- cally inclined, dedicated and committed to excellence, to make the program excellent. The Linden band program is known for outstanding the state and they have gone to state championships sev- eral times in the last 17 years.

WELL, YOUR’re RIGHT about one thing. Warren Buffett writing a check to the government would be throwing his money away, as it would be the next thousand millionaires writing their check, with you writing your check, with me writing my check. The government does nothing but throw the money away.

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The UPS Store in Fenton helps keep holidays hassle-free

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“Whether it’s helping you personalize and send out your holiday greetings, packing and shipping your gifts so they arrive safely, or having someone sign for all your holiday packages, we’re a convenient one-stop shop that can handle many of our customers’ holiday logistics,” said Les Beare, The UPS Store owner.

With extended holiday and weekend hours to accommodate customer’s busy holiday schedules, The UPS Store gives customers more time to get their packages out the door.

Customers can bring their packages to The UPS Store Certified Packing Experts, who offer The UPS Store Pack & Ship Promise, which reimburses customers the cost of packaging materials and service as well as shipping costs in the event a center-packed item shipped via UPS is lost or damaged. Visit www.theupsstore.com/psp for details.

For customers who prefer to do it themselves, Beare offers the following tips.

• Begin with the most perishable; a new cardboard box designed for shipping, professional-grade packaging tape and packaging material like foam packaging peanuts or bubble cushioning (at least 2 inches all around).
• Include a label on the inside of the package with the destination and return addresses.
• Use a shipping option, such as UPS, that provides a package tracking number.
• Take batteries out of toys, electronics, etc., before shipping and wrap them separately to avoid contact with metal.
• Seal homemade holiday treats in an interior airtight container or plastic bag before packing them. Use an expedited air service, such as UPS Next Day Air® or Second Day Air.
• Ship wrapped gifts and luggage ahead to your destination, especially if traveling by air.

Mondays are typically the busiest shipping days and Dec. 12 to Dec. 16 is expected to be the busiest week of the year.
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(ALPINE PLAZA)
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RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APESThe film is a new take on “The Planet of the Apes,” in present day San Francisco where man’s own experiments with genetic engineering lead to the development of intelligence in apes. Oscar-winning visual effects house WETA Digital have created photo-realistic apes rather than costumed actors. James Franco stars as Will Rodman, a neuroscientist trying to develop a cure for Alzheimer’s disease by testing on chimpanzees, giving them a human level of intelligence. A test subject’s baby, Caesar, is orphaned. As Caesar’s intelligence continues to grow, he begins to stake his claim as the leader of his new primate counterparts, which will ultimately lead to the rise of the planet of the apes.

KUNG FU PANDA 2Po is now living his dream as The Dragon Warrior, protecting the Valley of Peace alongside his friends and fellow kung fu masters, The Furious Five. But Po’s new life of awesomeness is threatened by the emergence of a formidable villain, who plans to use a secret, unstoppable weapon to conquer China and destroy kung fu. Po must look to his past and uncover the secrets of his mysterious origins; only then will he be able to unlock the strength he needs to succeed.

DETECTIVE DEE AND THE MYSTERY OF THE PHANTOM FLAMEAction-packed, visually breathtaking Sherlock Holmes-style mystery choreographed by Master Sammo Hung, set in an exquisitely realized steampunk version of ancient China. On the eve of her coronation as Empress (Carina Lau), China’s most powerful woman is haunted by a chilling murder mystery. Two men in charge of building a gigantic monument to her have burst into flames, leaving behind only black ash and skeletal bones. Recognizing this threat to her power, she turns to the infamous Dee Renjie (Andy Lau), a man whose unparalleled wisdom is matched only by his martial arts skills.

FRIGHT NIGHTRemake of the 1985 gothic horror cult classic. Charley (Anton Yelchin) is a high school senior who’s on top of the world — he’s running with the popular crowd and dating Amy (Imogen Poots), the most coveted girl in school. But trouble arrives when Jerry (Colin Farrell) moves in next door. He seems like a nice guy, at first. But there’s something not quite right, and no one else, including Charley’s mom (Toni Collette) seems to notice. After his classmates start to mysteriously disappear without a trace, Charlie discovers that there is more to his new neighbor than meets the eye.

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DEAR DR. DONOHUE: How much stress does sex put on the heart? I don’t have a heart problem. I know two fellow workers, who, according to scuttlebutt, died while having sex. They were about my age. — R.L.

ANSWER: Scuttlebutt isn’t a reliable source of information. Blood pressure and heart rate rise during sexual relations, but not so much as to be a source of concern for most men and women, even those who have had a heart attack. The energy expenditure is approximately the same as climbing two flights of stairs. That is, walking, not running, up those flights. Most people who have had a heart attack can resume an active sex life within three to six weeks of having the attack. The exact amount of time has to be determined by the person’s physician, who takes into account the magnitude of the heart attack and how well the heart is currently performing.
Holly Dickens Festival draws hundreds for holiday fun

By Tim Jagielo

Visitors around the state flocked to the Dickens Festival held in downtown Holly this weekend. And despite the winter temperatures, guests were warmed when watching fire-breathing Doctor Infernal, eating steaming bowls of chili in the Holly First Baptist Church’s warming tent or laughing at the Punch and Judy puppet show.

Shane Purdue, a former Holly resident who now lives in Owosso, brought his family to the Dickens Festival to enjoy the annual Christmas tradition. “It’s already a fun tradition,” he said.

The First Baptist Church of Holly displayed a living nativity scene, with live barnyard animals. Church member Patty Cieply was dressed in nativity garb, and greeted visitors. She said the animals helped draw people in, and bring them closer to Jesus’ birthday. “It’s an important time of the year,” she said.

The main street area also featured games for kids, including bowling, and live performances. Doctor Infernal was back with his fire show, which amazed visitors.

The Dickens Singers performed Christmas carols and an ice sculpture was carved in front of the township office building. There were roasted chestnuts, turkey legs, kettle popcorn, toasted almonds and hot dogs for hungry visitors.

Many of the downtown businesses were open for business.

Alesha Williams, of West Bloomfield, brought her two young children to the festival for the second time. “We had a lot of fun last year and this year,” she said. To her, this year was no exception.

Dickens Festival Committee member Holly Jablonski, of the Holly Candle Shoppe, said the event kept downtown businesses busy. “I’d have to say they were at a record high,” she said.

This year, the festival took over all of Battle Alley and Saginaw Street downtown with 11 vendors. “People were in cheerful happy moods. We didn’t hear a single complaint,” she said.

Jablonski said she appreciates all the sponsors and volunteers, but added that it’s going to take much more support to return the festival to four weekends again.
Bronchos capture beautiful ‘ugly’ win against Clio, 53-50

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

Holly coach Lance Baylis says it a lot. It really doesn’t matter how you win. It’s just that you win, particularly when you enter the local doughnut shop.

“All they ask you when you go in the local doughnut shop is if you won,” Baylis said. “And we won. In three weeks no one is going to care how you won. We won ugly, but I’ll take winning ugly every time.”

The Bronchos overcame a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit with a remarkable end in regulation, and then won the contest against the Clio Mustangs 53-50 in overtime Monday night.

‘Trailering by two with 25 seconds left, the Bronchos had the ball. Eventually Jared Plawski was fouled with 2.9 seconds left. He missed the first free throw, setting up a must-miss second shot. He did. It bounced off the front of the rim right back to him. He caught the line shot back to him off the rim, dribbled in the lane and hit a floating, setting up overtime.

In the overtime, Holly held Clio to just two points, earning their third Metro League win in as many games.

“Clio called a time out which was absolutely beneficial to us,” Baylis said. “It gave us a chance to talk about what we were going to do.”

The Bronchos struggled for most of the game, but particularly in the third quarter. Holly led 24-20 at the half, but was outsored 19-5 in the third, setting up the 10-point deficit. The Bronchos spent the fourth quarter trying to cut into that lead, and did so reasonably well, setting up the final play in regulation.

The Bronchos have yet to play what Baylis would consider outstanding ball, and remain 3-0, in first place in the Flint Metro League.

NEWBIES TAKE MANY TOP SPOTS AT RUN LIKE THE DICKENS EVENT

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

Holly — Temperatures were well below freezing.

Yet, a record field of 1,345 participants and 1,245 finishers were at the ninth annual of the Run Like the Dickens 5K and 10K Road Race, Saturday.

And because of the depth of the field, the field produced few overall area winners. But one traditional name surfaced. Fenton’s Sue Larsen captured the women’s overall title in the 5K run, posting the eighth-best time of the entire field with a time of 18:10. She won the women’s event by nearly a minute.

Larsen, who has been concentrating on marathons lately, competed in the Chicago Marathon a couple of months ago, but dropped out during the race. Now, she’s working on getting back to her traditional distances.

“I’ve decided to go for the shorter distances for awhile — the 5K to half-marathons,” Larsen said. “I was focusing on this first turn, and not slipping because it was pretty icy. The rest of the course was pretty good.”

Larsen said the cold was a challenge.

“Some people do better in cold than the heat,” Larsen said. “I’m definitely a heat runner. This is too cold for me. Once the temperatures start dipping under 30, it’s too cold for me. I just wanted to hold a six-minute pace. I think I was a little better than that, but it’s nothing stellar. Once we get into spring next year, my times will start going down.”

The men’s overall 5K winner was Eli Nasr. The Stoney Creek senior dominated the field, finishing with a time of 16:29. He runs cross country for the school, but says his best running event is the 1,600 meter run. In fact, the first-time participant in the event said that’s why he was in Holly.

“I am working for a PR in the 1,600 meters this year in the state meet,” Nasr said. “I had a difficult season last year so me and my coaches made this nice little plan we are going to follow. This was a 5K tune-up to see where I am at. I am building up. I feel pretty good.”

In the 10K event, two other first-time runners to the Holly running event took the top spots. Milford’s Mike Andersen, 24, earned first, winning with a time of 31:51.

“TRI-COUNTY TIMES DAVID TROPPENS (Above) The 10K run of the ninth-annual Run Like the Dickens road race begins. In the center of the photo is race winner Mike Andersen. The women’s 10K winner was (right) Jenny Scherer, and the men’s 5K winner was Eli Nasr. There were a record-setting 1,345 runners at the event.

HOLLY BRONCHOS FALL IN FIRST-BATTLE PLACE WITH MUSTANGS, 47-29

By David Troppens
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Holly — The Holly varsity girls basketball team has been making serious strides toward being a Metro League contender over the last two years.

The Bronchos are getting close. But on Monday, the defending Metro League champions showed them that they still have a few steps to go before reaching the top of the mountain.

The Bronchos (3-1, 4-1) dropped their first Metro League contest of the season, netting just seven field goals in a 47-29 loss to the Clio Mustangs on Monday night.

“We got beat by a better team,” Holly coach David Hall said. “We have nothing to be ashamed about. If we make a few more shots, we are right in that game. But we didn’t and we had to play desperation (down the final stretch). We couldn’t get in the bonus. They made adjustments. We’ll be fine.”

In a lot of ways it was a game that was determined at the charity stripe. Holly’s offense struggled from the field all night long, but what the Bronchos did do in the opening half was get the ball underneath to Alyssa Copley. It worked. While she made just one field goal, she netted a perfect 8-for-8 at the free-throw line. The Bronchos made 10-of-11 free throws in the opening half and were tied 17-all entering the second half.

However, the free-throws story was reversed in the second half,
Holly’s Anthony Gonzales (top) placed second in his weight class at the East Kentwood Invitational on Saturday.

**Holly places fourth in East Kentwood invite**

By David Troppens
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Holly varsity wrestling coach Don Pluta expected the challenging East Kentwood Invitational to be a good test of his squad on Saturday.

It ended up being just that.

And for the most part, the Bronchos passed the exam with pretty good grades.

In a field that included many state-ranked teams and many more state-ranked wrestlers, the Bronchos finished a very strong fourth place at the event.

“I was so happy and pleased,” Pluta said. “Driving home from East Kentwood, we realized we went against some big dogs and we held our own. We wrestled outstanding. We made some mistakes, but they were correctable mistakes. Our effort was outstanding.”

The Bronchos placed fourth, only behind Davison, Brighton and Dundee. Davison is ranked No. 2 in D1 action, while Brighton is No. 4. Dundee is ranked #2 in D3. Holly is ranked eighth in Division 2.

The Bronchos also beat seven other teams that entered the meet with a ranked squad.

The Bronchos’ sole champion was Shawn Scott (189). Scott defeated Sparta’s James Rogers by a 17-6 major decision in his title match.

Two other Holly wrestlers made it to the finals. Anthony Gonzales (140) lost by pinfall to Lowell’s Gabe Morse in his finals match, while Mason Cleaver (135) lost to Lowell’s Nate Limmex 4-1 in his title match.

Two others finished third. Tyler Gibson (119) placed third, while Kyle Pepper (135) took third after opening the tourney unseeded. He beat two state-ranked wrestlers en route to his third-place finish. Meanwhile, Zack Jones (130) took fourth and Joel Schuerman placed sixth.

Andrew Scott (152) didn’t place, but finished 2-2, beating two state qualifiers.

Holly is now off until the Oakland County Tournament this weekend.

“I’m really happy with our performance. See PLACES on 16

**Baseball players give back this Christmas**

*Team attempting to stuff a truck with food and clothing*

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

Fenton — A local youth sports team is working on more than hitting and pitching this winter. They are working to make a difference in the community in which they live and play.

The 12 boys on the Fenton Crush Travel Baseball team have made it their mission to give back this holiday season by holding a Stuff-A-Track food and clothing drive on Saturday Dec. 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at VG’s Grocery on Silver Parkway.

“When the players brought the idea to the coaching staff, we were all on board — within days we had the event planned,” said Mike Gross, head coach. “It warms my heart to know that these boys aren’t only good ball players but good kids.”

Gross said the team has already adopted a family for this Christmas, but the boys wanted to do more. “The boys want to go to the food bank and deliver food,” he said. “Once you start looking, you see how much help is needed.”

Along with the basics of skills, agility and strategy for baseball, the coaching staff for the Crush works to instill a strong sense of sportsmanship and giving to their team. Assistant Coach Chris MacIntosh said, “It’s not enough to play your game, we want them to learn that teamwork and heart play a huge role in success.”

The team hopes to fill a large panel truck with non-perishable food, household items, personal items, new or gently used clothing and everyday necessities.

Everything collected will be donated to Carriage Town Ministries in Flint. They are asking those in Fenton and surrounding communities to stop by and make a donation of any size on Dec. 17.

**Lake Fenton girls fall to Saginaw Nouvel, 50-35**

By Al Zipsie
dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

Holly — The Lake Fenton girls basketball team suffered its third straight setback, losing to Saginaw Nouvel 50-35.

Lake Fenton led only once, scoring the first point of the game on a Hannah Rummel free throw. Nouvel didn’t score until midway through the opening quarter but it gave them the lead for good. The Blue Devils struggled to get the offense going, scoring only six points in the first quarter.

Lake Fenton pulled within a hoop twice in the third quarter, and cut the deficit to six at 41-35 with under three minutes left in the game. However, Lake Fenton would not score again. Nouvel iced the game by making free throws, scoring the game’s final nine points.

“The final score was not indicative of how close the game really was,” said Lake Fenton coach Matt Gildner.

“We had to start to foul at the end, and they scored at the free-throw line to win the game.”

“The offense has to learn to move the ball. We need better ball handling and to make sound passes. We need to get the ball in to the interior. We need to get together on some phases tonight, but we still have more to work on.”

The Blue Devils’ interior players have scored 36 points. Mackenzie Gotrum scored 12 points, scoring 14 points in the paint.

“I was going to the basket stronger than the last game,” said Gotrum. “Tonight, I think it was our lack of talking defense. I don’t think we have had as much practice time as some other teams. We will get better and be ready for our league games.”

Sidney Scott had six points and nine rebounds, while Faith Weir had 10 boards. Nouvel was led by Taylor Hengesbach’s 12 points. Rachel McInerney chipped in 11 points.

Nouvel led 11-6 after the first quarter and 25-18 at halftime. The Devils scored the first five points of the third quarter, and a Scott bucket cut the lead to 25-23. Jordan Neve (Brandon) scored a drive to the basket bringing it back to 25-25. Just when it looked like Lake Fenton was poised to take the lead, Hengesbach hit a three-pointer, putting Nouvel up 32-25.

Gotrum and Rummel both hit a pair of charity tosses, cutting the lead back to six points at 39-33 and 41-35, respectively.

The Blue Devils (3-1) hope their challenging non-league schedule will help them as they open GAC play with a game at Montrose on Thursday.

**Bronchos edge Brandon**

By Al Zipsie
dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

Ortonville — Holly’s varsity boys basketball team had to battle off a feisty Brandon squad, but at crunch time came up with a 54-47 Metro League victory Friday.

Nick Keller had an old-fashioned three-point play with a hoop and a free throw, bringing the Blackawks to within three at 50-47 with 58 seconds left in the game. However, the Bronchos came up big, scoring on two straight trips down the floor off the fastbreak. First, Donovan Williams scored. Then Nic Stoll threw down his second dunk of the game with 31 seconds left for the exclamation point.

Freshman Isaac Casillas put Holly ahead to stay with a three-pointer with 43 seconds left in the first half, putting the Bronchos up 29-26 at the half. Holly led 45-33 going into the final period, but the Blackawks battled back.

The lead was as little as 48-44, but Holly’s Jared Plasski then came up with a steal, eventually hitting two free throws.

That gave Holly a 50-44 lead with 1:25 left in regulation. Brandon cut it back to 50-47, but then came the final hoops by Williams and Stoll.

Holly had a balanced attack led by senior Casi Williams, who had 15 points. Stoll and Austin Hopkins added 10 points each. Quinton Cook led Brandon with 16 points. The Blackawks hit five three-pointers, helping keep them close.

“There are three thậm is three-year varsity players in Nic (Stoll), Jared (Plasski) and Austin (Hopkin),” said Holly coach Lance Baylis. “And another senior, Dono- van (Williams), is a good athlete. Michael Alexander had a great game with 10 re- bounds. In the second half it was off to the races; we ran better than the first game.”

Stoll enjoyed his two dunks.

“Sure the dunks are fine. Hopefully they will come more often,” said Stoll who will be playing at Michigan Tech next year. “We are a good passing team. We didn’t expect (Brandon) to come back. They just don’t go away.”

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