Early Michigan winter gives Mt. Holly a boost

Season pass sales up 30 percent this year

By Tim Jagielo

Groveland Twp. — David Dicks and his family from Linden are excited about skiing.

Last Thursday, David and wife Jody brought their two sons and a neighbor friend out for an ideal day at Mt. Holly. They are surrounded by hundreds of other enthusiasts who had the same idea.

“I’d rather do this than anything outdoors in the winter time,” said David, while hanging out for a moment near the snowboarding run, with Jody, Son Simon, 9, added that he prefers skiing over playing his Xbox. The Dicks family has only been into skiing for a couple years.

They’ve also committed to season passes, which at full price runs at around $500. They are part of a 30-percent increase in season pass sales, according to Mt. Holly general manager Mark Tibbitts. He said more season passes are an indication of a strong season ahead for a resort that experienced virtually no snow in the 2011-12 season.

These extra season pass sales means skiers are ready to commit, and take a gamble in the sport. “To us it’s just really exciting, people are planning on indulging themselves in this sport,” he said.

The day after Christmas, Mt. Holly is busy due to Christmas break and ideal snow conditions. Season pass sales are up 30 percent, and the resort is ahead of the 2012-13 season.

“Skiier interest has been elevated by what looks like ‘a real winter,’” said Tibbitts. “Rain, ice storms, it’s kind of normal in Michigan winters.”

Traditional landlines to be phased out by 2017?

Police, AARP concerned about impact to seniors and emergency services

By William Axford

axford@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Copper landlines may be phased out of Michigan starting in 2017. Senate Bill 636 would allow phone companies to discontinue phone services via copper landlines. Instead, phone companies may be allowed to have customers mandatorily switch to wireless services or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

State Sen. Mike Nofs (R-Battle Creek) initiated SB 636, which has passed through the Michigan Senate and has advanced to the House. Consumers Energy has made quick work of restoring power to residents who lost it, starting on Saturday, Dec. 21. To some, however, the effort isn’t quick enough. Fenton has two areas without power — one concentration in Dibbleville, the other near Dauner Road on North LéRoy Street. A neighborhood near Bevins Lake in Holly is still out, and Linden has a group just starting...
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How resolved is your resolution?

Top five New Year’s resolutions and what you can do to improve your odds of succeeding

By Amy Mayhew

Now that it’s officially 2014, it’s time to make good on that resolution you made during your New Year’s Eve party. And while the thought of it may add yet another dimension to the post-party haze, it’s comforting to know that at least some people make good on them.

In fact, according to a study in Forbes Magazine, the stuff that resolutions are made of — or that is, the desire for self-improvement, is what drives more than 40 percent of Americans to cut the deal in the first place.

But sadly, for all the good intentions, only a few of us actually achieve our goal — just 8-percent, according to research done by Scranton University.

What we say we’ll do may surprise you. According to a poll conducted by General Nutrition Centers and Quicken, the fifth most popular resolution made by Americans is simply to enjoy life more.

## Summary

- Keeping goals simple and tangible, and having faith in your abilities will increase your chances of keeping those New Year’s Resolutions.
- Based on our hectic lifestyles, and how most of us struggle to make ends meet, it’s no wonder that “enjoying life more” has become a more popular resolution in recent years. Let’s face it — enjoying life more leads to a happier and healthier you.

The fourth most popular resolution among Americans is to quit smoking. Fortunately, many over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies now give smokers easier access to proven means of quitting.

### Top 10 New Year Resolutions
1. Spend more time with family and friends
2. Exercise to get fit
3. Quit smoking
4. Tame the bulge
5. Enjoy life more
6. Quit drinking
7. Get out of debt
8. Learn something new
9. Help others
10. Get organized

See Resolution on 5
FROM THE LEFT

Clarence Page
Nationally syndicated columnist

2013: A year to ‘twerk’ your ‘selfie’

If you managed to get through 2013 with-out ‘twerking,’ ‘vaping,’ ‘taking a selfie’ or ‘mining a bitcoin,’ rest easy. I think your life may be the richer for it.

Some words in each year are new. Others are old but find new life in new times. Among the most-used words in 2013, prominent themes include money, narcissism, entitlement, self-delusion and overflowsing waste. As a social critic, I am grateful to find so much sustenance for my inner grump.

Examples include:

Affluenza: A theoretical term in psychology for what most people call ‘a spoiled kid.’ Lawyers cited affluenza in 2013 to defend a wealthy 16-year-old Texas kid who killed four people and paralyzed one while driving drunk. The judge apparently bought it. He sentenced the kid to 10 years probation, no jail, and a new eye.

Healthy: A theoretical term in psychology for what some people call ‘a healthy depression.’

Watching my grand-daughter graduate from college. I smiled watching her walk across the stage.

Dr. Jeremy M. Grove DDS 501 S. Bridge Street, Linden • 810-735-7511 www.dentistirlinden.com

FROM THE RIGHT

Cal Thomas
Nationally syndicated columnist

Big Brother 2013

In his classic novel 1984, George Orwell warned about the evils of a totalitarian state dominated by a single ruling party with total power over its inhabitants. Oceania, his fictional superstate, is under constant surveillance by the authorities. The character known as ‘Big Brother’ reminds everyone he is constantly monitoring the citizens of Oceania, mainly by ‘telescreen.’

At the end of 2013, the federal government may not yet have telescreens, which in Orwell’s imagination had the ability to eavesdrop on people’s conversations and broadcast propaganda, but it does have the nonfiction equivalent — data collection, drones and other technological invasions of privacy. Our government does have the National Security Agency.

And because we have the NSA, and drones and all the rest, U.S. District Judge Richard Leon recently ruled, in an ongoing civil lawsuit, that it’s ‘significantly likely’ that the agency’s wholesale collection of our phone records is unconstitutional — a clear violation of the Fourth Amendment’s promise of against unreasonable searches and seizures.

President Obama has said, ‘Nobody is listening to your telephone calls.’ He named a panel to review the NSA’s methods and the balance between privacy and security. The draft report, expected to be released next month, seems to favor privacy over security.

So which is it?

In Washington’s tainted political atmosphere, you can be for maximum freedom and privacy — until there is a terrorist attack.

NSA Director Keith Alexander claims 50 potential attacks were prevented because of the government’s surveillance programs, but we only have his word for it.

Freedom is a precious commodity. Like virtue, once it is given up it is difficult, if not impossible, to regain.

Jihadists don’t discriminate between political parties. They have vowed to kill as many Americans as possible. Striking the right balance between security and freedom is critical to both. Recent history provides num- meroius examples of nations that have traded freedom for security and gotten neither.

What must be avoided is the kind of think- ing Orwell warned against: ‘Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.’
Feeling SAD?

▶ Lack of light in winter months can affect brain chemistry, lead to depression

By William Axford

The cold and dark weather can make people feel SAD all winter. While feeling sad from time to time is a natural part of life, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a depression that is associated with the changing of the season, particularly in the fall and winter.

According to the Mayo Clinic, SAD can cause feelings of hopelessness, social withdrawal, over-sleeping and loss of interest in activities.

The changing of seasons at the end of the year leads to fewer hours of daylight, which affects some people more than others. The happiness-inducing brain chemical serotonin can lower in levels during darker days, triggering a depression. Melatonin is a hormone associated with sleep and may increase during the winter as well. Overall, the fewer hours of sunlight may alter your biological clock, causing your brain to think the body needs more sleep than it actually does.

SAD is more common in women but the symptoms are more severe for men, according to the Mayo Clinic.

With Michigan winters lasting three months or longer, SAD can affect a sizable portion of the state’s population. Webmd.com lists light therapy, antidepressants, counseling and exercise as possible treatments for SAD.

Light therapy can include sleeping with dim lights that simulate dawn or sitting near bright lights every morning. Ultraviolet light, full-spectrum light, tanning lamps and heating lamps are not recommended for light therapy. Webmd.com estimates that it can take three days to two weeks for people to start responding to light therapy. Light therapy works by resetting a person’s biological clock to spring and summer, possibly increasing serotonin levels and decreasing melatonin levels. Exercise also has the same effect.

The National Library of Medicine states that there are no tests to identify SAD. People who are unsure if they have SAD or a similar disorder should meet with a healthcare provider and review their past symptoms. Alcohol and non-prescribed drugs should be avoided by those who identify with SAD. Eating healthier foods and getting the correct amount of sleep can also alleviate symptoms.

Summary

▶ The low amount of light during the winter months can cause depression for some people. Light therapy and exercising can offset the symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
MT. HOLLY
Continued from Front Page

He’d much prefer this combination of a blanket of snow, and temperatures that maintain the snow, along with their guests’ comfort. So far, he said attendance is good, despite the early December erratic weather which included rain on at least two occasions. Each time it rains he said it takes a few days to bring skiers back. They’re “way ahead” of the 2012-13 year so far.

Skiers like David were able to start nearly a month early this year. Traditionally, the days after Christmas are when ideal ski conditions tend to start.

But had Mt. Holly lost power, generators would not have handled the lifts and lights required to run the place. “Consumers (Energy) loves us, three months of the year,” said Tibbits.

If there wasn’t natural snow, it costs the ski resort $4,000 every 12 hours to coat the slopes with artificial snow. These are costs that in the 2011-12 season, which left much of the landscape brown, were a factor. But today, all they have to do is maintain the historically thick, 3-feet of snow all over the resort.

GETTING STARTED WITH SKIING

Mt. Holly general manager Mark Tibbits said the most economical way to start is in the “Discover Michigan Skiing” program, which offers programs that run from $20 to $40 for beginners. Go to gooskimichigan.com and follow the “programs” tab at the top. Scroll to the “discover Michigan skiing” heading. The program is for any beginner, aged 7 and older. This program, a regular Mt. Holly lift ticket is $35 on the weekend and $34 on the weekdays. Rentals are $27.

Tibbits strongly suggests a basic lesson before getting started, which would teach you how to stop and use the lifts, among others. Private lessons are $55, and group lessons are $22.

LANDLINES
Continued from Front Page

House of Representatives.

“The new and innovative technology brought us the telephone in the 19th century and now broadband and 4G wireless in the 21st century,” Nofs said in a Dec. 5 press release. “This legislation establishes the process for transitioning to new technology while ensuring citizens’ continued access to reliable home phone service. This legislation will not remove landlines, it will modernize them.”

Concerns about possible delayed emergency response times and communication for seniors have been raised in opposition to the legislation. The Michigan Sheriffs’ Association (MSA) and the American Association of Retired People (AARP) are urging state representatives to vote down the legislation.

“The ability of our citizens to have a sure, reliable, affordable and available means to contact us in an emergency is absolutely necessary and can make the difference in life or death. SB 636 will remove that ability,” Robert Stevenson, executive director for the MSA said in a recent press release.

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), traditional landline customers in Michigan have dropped from 6.5 million in 2002 to 2.6 million in 2012, a 60-percent decrease. Pew Research reports that as of May 2013, 91 percent of adults in America have a cellphone.

Out of 1,300 AARP members surveyed, 85 percent of them said they currently use a landline phone. A majority of members polled said they oppose SB 636.

Phone companies would only be able to terminate traditional landline services as long as another service provider is in the area or if the existing phone provider offers a comparable service. Customers have to be notified 90 days before their landline services are discontinued and may contact the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) for an investigation regarding access to emergency services. Phone companies will have to continue providing landline services if the MPSC finds no other service providers in an area or if contact to emergency services is negatively impacted.

Nofs insists that the legislation will keep lines of communication open for seniors and 911 services.

“The Internet has changed the way the world works, and it has already changed how millions of people talk on the phone, Nofs said. “This bill ensures our constituents are protected while delivering new and improved technology. It’s the best of both worlds.”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TELEPHONE

1876 — Alexander Graham Bell has his first successful experiment with his invention, phoning his assistant, “Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you.”

1919 — Dial telephones have come into existence and coast-to-coast phone service is standard.

1979 — Analog cellphones are used in Tokyo, spreading to other countries during the 1980s. Cellphones continue to be popular in the 1990s, causing more people to abandon their landline phones.

1997 — Ericsson is the first to use the term smartphone but it isn’t until the late 2000s that smartphones come with an operating system, be it Android or the iPhone.

Protecting yourself against credit, ATM and debit card loss and fraud

Recently, the national retailer Target has been in the news regarding the theft of some 40 million customer credit and debit card records from its computer database.

When all is said and done hopefully the ultimate damage to consumers will be minimal but events such as these remind all of us that the credit, ATM and debit cards that we carry are precious commodities and it is important to protect them and the data they contain to the fullest extent possible.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has several publications with useful tips on keeping your cards and account information secure, which are available online at the website. They include exercising caution about giving account information over the phone, cutting up old cards, and opening monthly statements promptly and comparing them with your receipts. A very important additional tip is to never carry your personal identification number (PIN) in your wallet or purse or write it on your ATM or debit card. If the unthinkable happens and your cards are stolen, federal law gives you certain protections, which are dependent upon the type of card that has been lost. The rationale behind that is that a credit card is a form of bank loan while an ATM or debit card accesses your own account.

If it’s a credit card, the maximum exposure is $50 but if you report the loss before any unauthorized use there is no liability.

For ATM, debit card or fraudulent transfers, the exposure is $0 if reported within two business days of learning about the loss or theft, and $500 if the report is made more than two business days and less than 60 calendar days after a statement is sent. A report after 60 calendar days exposes you to a loss of all money in the account up to the date of the report.

If it is debit card data only but the card isn’t lost, there is no liability if you report it within 60 days of the statement being sent to you.

Here the wisdom found in the expression ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’ can’t be overstated. I would advise going to the FTC and other websites for much more on this.
U.S. health improves in 2013

**Michigan ranks 34th out of 50 states in America’s Health Rankings**

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

The good news is that Americans made a "notable shift" toward better health in 2013. The bad news is that Michigan slipped down to 34th place among the states based on health rankings from healthiest state in the U.S. (Hawaii) to the least healthiest state (Mississippi).

The findings were reported by America’s Health Rankings, which released its annual report on Dec. 11.

In other good news nationally, there appears to be a leveling off of the obesity epidemic, with the percentage of adults who are obese — defined as roughly 30 or more pounds over a healthy weight — holds steady. This is the first year since 1998 that obesity rates didn’t increase, according to a report from the United Health Foundation.

America’s Health Rankings uses data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Medical Association, Census Bureau, Department of Education and the Government Accountability Office to look at 27 measures, including tobacco and alcohol abuse, exercise, infectious diseases, crime rates, public health funding, access to immunizations, premature birth rates and cancer and heart disease rates.

Gains were seen in more than two-thirds of the measures analyzed, including a decline in smoking rates to 19.6 percent of the population, a drop in physical inactivity from 26.2 percent of adults who had done no activity outside of work for 30 days, to 22.9 percent of adults.

Among the challenges noted in the report is an increasing percent of diabetes diagnosed among adults. Approximately 9.7 percent of adults are affected by this chronic condition, about double the rate in the mid-1990s, according to the report. This disease is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. and contributes to heart disease and stroke, the first and fourth leading causes of death, respectively.

According to a thumbnail report on Michigan in the rankings, health strengths of this state are low incidence of Salmonella infections, low percentage of uninsured population and a small disparity in health status by educational attainment. However, Michigan’s challenges are its high prevalence of smoking and binge drinking, obesity and high violent crime rate.

In the past year, Michigan’s smoking rate remained constant at 23.3 percent of adults. Approximately 1.9 million adults smoke in this state. Nearly 1.9 million adults are physically inactive and almost 2.5 million adults are obese.

In good news for Michigan, the violent crime rate decreased by 22 percent in the past 10 years, from 555 to 455 offenses per 100,000 population. In the past year, the percentage of children in poverty increased from 22.7 percent to 19.2 percent of persons under 18 years old. In the past five years, air pollution decreased by 40 percent and immunization coverage increased from 60.2 percent to 68 percent of adolescents aged 13 to 17.

In Michigan, 52.7 percent of adults aged 25 years and older with at least a high school education report their health is very good or excellent, compared to only 25.6 percent with less than a high school education, resulting in a gap of 27.1 percent.

Bringing numbers even closer to home, Genesee County ranks 80 out of 83 Florida counties, according to the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program — a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

A total of 23 percent of Genesee County residents use tobacco, compared to 19.6 percent nationally. Thirty-six percent of residents are obese, compared to 25 percent nationally.

**STATE-BY-STATE RANKINGS**

1. Hawaii
2. Vermont
3. Minnesota
4. Massachusetts
5. New Hampshire
6. Utah
7. Connecticut
8. Colorado
9. North Dakota
10. New Jersey
11. Nebraska
12. Idaho
13. Oregon
14. Washington
15. New York
16. Maine
17. Wyoming
18. Iowa
19. Rhode Island
20. Wisconsin
21. California
22. South Dakota
23. Montana
24. Maryland
25. Alaska
26. Virginia

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ANSWER: Pulsatile tinnitus is ear noise, usually heard in one ear, that’s synchronous with the heartbeat. The noise can arise in the carotid arteries in the neck, arteries in the vicinity of the ear, malformed vessels in the head and neck or disturbed blood flow through veins of the head and neck. Impacted earwax is another cause. Your daughter has had many tests that should have uncovered blood vessel problems. I’m at a loss to suggest a cause of her tinnitus. If her hearing is not as acute as it was, that might be the problem. Has she seen an ear, nose and throat doctor? If not, she should. An ENT doctor would pick up on that. She might be able to tolerate tinnitus at night if she turns a bedside radio to soothing music.

DON JON
Jon Martello (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is a strong, handsome, good-old-fashioned guy. His buddies call him Don Jon due to his ability to “pull” a different woman every weekend, but even the finest fling doesn’t compare to the bliss he finds alone in front of the computer watching pornography. Barbara Sugarman (Scarlett Johansson) is a bright, beautiful, good-old-fashioned girl. Raised on romantic Hollywood movies, she’s determined to find her Prince Charming and ride off into the sunset. Wrestling with good old-fashioned expectations of the opposite sex, Jon and Barbara struggle against a media culture full of false fantasies to try and find true intimacy in this unexpected comedy written and directed by Joseph Gordon-Levitt. R, 1 hr. 30 min.

SWEETWATER
In the late 1800s, a beautiful former prostitute (January Jones: “Mad Men”) is trying to build an honest life with her husband in the rugged plains of New Mexico. When she catches the eye of a sadistic and powerful religious leader (Jason Isaacs: Harry Potter series), her life is violently turned upside down. She embarks on a bloody course of vengeance with the assistance of a renegade sheriff (Ed Harris: Pollock, The Hours, A Beautiful Mind, Apollo 13) who has pretty violent tendencies of his own. R, 1 hr. 35 min.

Listen to music using iTunes Radio
iTunes Radio is Apple’s new music streaming service. iTunes Radio lets you create personalized stations based on one or more artists, songs, or genres of your choice. You’ll have access to more than 250 DJ-curated and genre-focused stations. However, iTunes Radio doesn’t offer access to live Internet radio streams.

To use iTunes Radio, simply open Music app and tap the Radio button in the tab bar.

The tip is provided by Handbook for iPhone Lite.
Health problems? Find the light

Spending time outdoors during pleasant, sunny weather is a pastime enjoyed by many. New research finds that it also may be vital to senior health.

The vitamins and health benefits provided by the sun are important for everyone to receive, especially the senior population. And while medical professionals know that sun exposure is crucial for elders, specific recommendations for just how much are hard to pin down.

Skin types, time of day and geographic location all play a role in determining an optimum amount for each individual. Consult with your physician to find out what would work best for your body.

VITAMIN D

The Vitamin D Council recommends that on days that you do not get enough full body sun exposure that you take a supplement to help keep your levels high.

You can also give your body a boost by eating Vitamin-D rich foods, like fatty fish, beef liver, egg yolks and fortified cereals. The council, however, urges people not to depend on food alone for their vitamin D intake.

EYE HEALTH

The British Journal of Ophthalmology recently found that elders may have both a higher need for natural light and a harder time getting it compared to younger people.

This can lead to the lack of blue light from the sun, which usually helps the brain produce melatonin to regulate the body’s sleep-wake cycles.

This eye issue can lead to insomnia and other medical problems that can be major factors in conditions like depression and heart disease.

DON’T OVERDO IT

Spending too much time outdoors without protection from the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) light can be damaging to the eyes and skin.

Seniors are also susceptible to overheating or dehydration in warm conditions, so use your judgment when you’re trying to take advantage of the sunlight.

Avoid extremely hot and humid days that can drain your energy. On days you do go outside, drink plenty of water and mix in a few breaks inside instead of spending hours working in the garden without breaks for rest or hydration.
By Sally Rummel

The saying is that “less is more,” and that certainly is true when it comes to downsizing your home and uncluttering your life.

With kids grown and out of the house and retirement years looming perilously close, Mark and I decided that selling our house and moving into a small condo would make a lot of sense. Not only would it give us a chance to rid ourselves of much of the “stuff” we’ve accumulated in over 35 years of marriage, it would also be a good financial move.

Certainly, half the house would cost half the taxes, half the house payment and half the utilities. Not to mention the fact that a condo lifestyle would offer freedom from outdoor chores (neither of us have ever really liked lawn mowing or snowplowing).

That dream became a reality when we moved into a 1,336-square-foot condo on Nov. 1, downsizing from our 1,988-square-foot family home of 15 years. While the process itself was not easy, in fact, it was downright challenging to juggle all the balls required to make it happen — the end result has been well worth it.

Now I can look out of the windows of our second floor condo and view the beauty of our Michigan winter from an “outsider’s” perspective, not worrying about how we’re going to plow through it to get to work or salt the sidewalks for company. That’s being done for us as part of our homeowner association fees. By the way, those fees aren’t any more than we were already paying on our own at home for lawn mowing/aerating/fertilizing, etc., plus snowplowing, saving for a new roof, etc.

Other advantages to our condo lifestyle include the accessibility of all our rooms, belongings, etc., in a very well planned smaller space. We really aren’t lacking any amenities of a full-size three-bedroom home, other than that extra bedroom. In our new arrangement, Mark’s office space multi-tasks as a bedroom for our 2 1/2-year-old granddaughter, Ava, for a wagon ride outside the Fenton condo she shares with her husband, Mark.
Tech-savvy seniors

Age group of 65 and older is fastest growing group to use social media

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-1828

Lee Asplund of Fenton carries her iPhone with her just about everywhere she goes. She uses it to check her email, her Facebook messages, the weather, even to order what she needs from Amazon. But most importantly, she uses it to keep in touch with family, especially her grandchildren, who range in age from 9 to 40.

Not only does she sport an iPhone and new laptop, she also uses her Kindle to download books, her Kindle Fire, a Bluetooth speaker set, a Blu-Ray player to stream the latest movies, even a wireless printer that she can operate from her phone.

That makes Asplund a very youthful 83 years old, and a shining example of how useful and comfortable technology can be for anyone at any age. In fact, seniors age 65 and older represent one of the fastest growing age groups to use social media, according to Pew Research Center’s American Life Project. More than half of this age group now uses the Internet, compared to only a sixth back in the year 2000.

“My grandkids don’t call, they text,” said Asplund, mother of four, grandmother of six and great-grandmother of two. “I had to get on the bandwagon if I wanted to stay in touch.”

This octogenarian does more than just stay in touch. During the recent ice storm in Fenton, she was out snapping photos with her iPhone’s camera, digitally sending them to her grandson Josh, who lives in Arizona. “I use my iPhone for just about everything,” said Asplund. “I even have a flashlight app that I find very useful.”

She also likes to play games on her iPhone. “I’ve got about 25 people who like to play Words with Friends with me,” she said. “That way, my brain doesn’t get rusty.”

Asplund was also pleased to find a brand new Dell laptop computer under the Christmas tree this year. “I’ve had an Apple Mini for years, but it was outdated, so my kids got me a new Windows computer,” said Asplund. She says she doesn’t use her computer as much as her iPhone, because she carries her phone with her all the time.

Asplund admits that she’s pretty much self-taught on her computer and her iPhone, although if she “gets stuck,” her children or grandchildren will walk her through it. “I’ve always been able to figure things out on my own,” she said. “I’ve just kept my brain working all these years. When my husband had a stroke at age 56, I had to take care of everything at home. When stuff broke, I fixed it.”

For residents age 50 and older who found new computers, tablets or iPhones under the Christmas tree this year, there is help out there to familiarize yourself with your new tech toys. The Loose Senior Citizen Center in Linden has iPad classes coming up in February, taught by local computer expert Kelly O’Connell. Beginning iPad classes will be held Wednesday, Feb. 5 and 12. This class will familiarize a new user with the camera, calendar, mail, notes, photos, iTunes, iPod, videos, App Store and more.

A more advanced class, iPad 2, will take place on Feb. 19 and 26. This class will take iPad skills a step further by helping participants understand settings, iPad tricks and how to maximize this new technology.

Mott Community College also offers computer training for seniors through its Computer Technology Center. For more information about classes, call (810) 232-2512.

When asked if most of her friends have kept up with technology like she has, Asplund admits she may be ahead of the curve of other seniors. She attributes it to an active mentality and a youthful approach to life.

“When I look in the mirror, I know what age I am, but in my heart, I’m still in my 40s,” said Asplund.

Lee Asplund is leading the learning curve in her age group by embracing the technology of tech gadgets like her iPhone 4 and her new laptop computer.
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Bearden does it all for Fenton

Tigers’ versatile senior setter/hitter named 2013 Tri-County’s Most Valuable Volleyball Player

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

Fenton varsity volleyball coach Linda Rusaw knows Ashley Bearden well. After all, she’s known Bearden since the day she was born. “I saw her when she was about a day old,” Rusaw said. “I gave her her first ice cream and her first cherries. I don’t have any girls so she’s the closest thing I have to a daughter.”

There’s a reason why they’ve known each other for so long. Bearden’s mom is Fenton’s JV coach Tracey Helms, so it was only natural when Bearden took a liking to volleyball that Rusaw would be one of the first to know. And thankfully for the Fenton volleyball program she did because Bearden is our 2013 Tri-County Most Valuable Player of the Year. “I have known her as long as I can remember,” Bearden said about her relationship with Rusaw. “I think it has helped me to always push myself. Our relationship has always been to try to make me the best player I can be. She’s always there.”

During the fall, Bearden was there for the Tigers in just about every capacity you can imagine on the volleyball court. She was one of the team’s primary setters, making 2,381 good sets out of 2,411 attempts. She finished the season with 926 assists, earning a new school record. She also could hit when asked to do that, earning 255 kills and a 29.5 hitting percentage.

In the back row, she was pretty dynamic as well. She led the Tigers with 427 digs. Bearden also provided strong on the service line, converting 622 of her 661 service attempts inside the court. She also finished with 99 aces, tying a Fenton school record. This was her third season collecting a varsity letter with the squad, also earning first-team All-Metro League her junior and senior seasons. She also was a member of our Tri-County Volleyball squad last year. She concluded this season making All-Region (also earned that honor her junior year) and notching All-State Honorable Mention status this fall.

The Tigers finished the season with a perfect Metro League record and their fifth straight league crown. Fenton followed that by winning a Class A district title for the second straight year. See BEARDEN on 14

2013 was loaded with championship efforts

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

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a two-part series looking back at the 2013 sports season in the tri-county area.

When it comes to looking back at the tri-county athletic scene in 2013, two words enter the mind — league championships.

If we counted them right, tri-county schools — Lake Fenton, Fenton, Linden and Holly — accounted for 21 outright or shared league/conference championships during 2013.

So here comes our issue. When it comes to making a list of the year’s most memorable performances, so much success makes it impossible to include everyone. We don’t want to make the list too long, where being on it has no meaning because “everyone is on it.” But we also don’t want to keep performances off of it if we think worthy. So we have this year’s list at 13 items.

Who and how do we make this list? Well, the sports staff is subjectively making it. And when we say “sports staff” we mean one person — the guy with the byline on this article. How are the events sifted through? Well, that’s tricky. We can say a lot of things, but for the most part it’s just a gut feeling.

In other words, this is about as unscientific as it gets. So if you are looking for the Fenton girls basketball district on the list or can understand why teams that won just one postseason match are on the list, go ahead and complain. And, remember, the local sports editor is kind of nutty as well.

No. 13 - Fenton girls golf: The Tigers had another outstanding season. See 2013 on 15

Fenton’s Ashley Bearden was an outstanding setter, defensive player, attacker and a leader for the 2013 Tigers’ varsity volleyball team. Her strong season has earned her our 2013 Tri-County Most Valuable Volleyball Player award.
BEARDEN
Continued from Page 13
straight season before bowing out of the tourney in the regional semifinals.
Bearden was pleased with her season, individually.
“I was just trying to improve as much as I could from the year before and want-
ed to get the team farther than the year before,” Bearden said. “I definitely do
think I got better. I think I got better ev-
every practice and every game.”
“The thing about Ashley is she’s just a
divil around good player — serving, setting, hitting, and digging. She has all
the skills,” Rusaw said. “What sets her
apart is she has so much desire to be her
best. That’s what truly sets her apart. She
puts a lot of time in to make it to her
player she is. Sure there are people that
hit harder and are more physically gifted,
but volleyball is sometimes about guts
and determination and those qualities
come through with Ashley.”

Bearden has played other sports. She
was on the tennis and basketball team up
through her sophomore season, but they
couldn’t pull her away from volleyball.
She says she loves everything about vol-
leyball.
“I love team sports and I love that it’s
not really an individual thing,” Bearden
said. “You have to rely on passers, hitters
and defenders. It’s the team aspect that I
really love about it.
“I love every part of volleyball. I love
hitting, but setting is my main position
and I enjoy setting too. I love it all.”
Her passion for the sport comes honest-
ly considering her mom also has that
same passion. Helms coached her daugh-
ter when she started playing volleyball in
the fifth grade at Holly Academy.
And from there, she continued her path
to Fenton volleyball. Eventually Rusaw
had her chance with Bearden when she
attended AGS Middle School, playing on
the volleyball squad while there.

ALL TRICOUNTY VOLLEYBALL TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volleyball MVP</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Bearden</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Setter/Hitter</td>
<td>Fenton</td>
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</table>

**Comment:** Ashley Bearden did it all for the Fenton Tigers in 2013. The All-State Honorable Mention selection tied a school record with 99 assists, recorded 255 kills, set a school record in setting with 926 assists, and led the team with 427 digs. Oh, and she was the team leader as well. She was an easy pick for our Tri-County Volleyball Most Valuable Player.

**Rest of first team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Carly Granger</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Setter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Klawitter</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Setter</td>
<td>Linden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassidy Rourke</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Setter</td>
<td>Linden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca McDonald</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Setter</td>
<td>Linden</td>
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**Note:** The team, and Player of the Year, were selected by the sports staff.

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2013 IN REVIEW

**On the Way Up**

Five people/team/concepts about sports that saw their stock rise in 2013:

1. Mark Dantonio
2. Holly boys/girls basketball
3. Sports networks
4. Soccer in America
5. Winter Olympics

Note: You see those promos of the 2010 Winter Olympics, and it seems impossible that was almost four years ago. I’m excited for more, particularly the curling.

Soccer is booming on television in America, and everyone wants a piece of U.S. national soccer (men and women), the English Premier League, the Champions League and the World Cup. You can now turn on your television and watch about six English Premier League games during any given weekend. It wasn’t that long ago that you’d be lucky to see six soccer games on TV dur-
ing an entire year.
The growth of soccer is related somewhat to the sports networks.
Yeah, NBC Sports Network and Fox Sports Channel still have a way to go to making their stations viable on a 24-hour basis, but that will happen in time. And for NBC Sports Network, that time is close with the English Premier League, the National Hockey League and the upcoming Winter Olympics. Twenty years ago, there was ESPN, now we have college conferences with their own cable stations.

Holly boys and girls basketball are undefeated entering the winter break, and there’s every reason to think they’ll continue their winning ways when the regular season ends. The boys want to go undefeated. It could happen. The girls probably won’t, but remain the favorites to win the Metro League.

Michigan State football coach Mark Dantonio is among the hottest commodities in all of sports nationally, and the Spartans have him. Michigan State needs to find a way to keep him under wraps the next five, 10, or 30 years. No one is talking about Michigan football these days. They are talking about Michigan State in the Rose Bowl, MSU beating Ohio State, the Spartans winning a conference title. It’s amazing to think how close they came to ending the season undefeated and in the BCS title game.

**MSU’s Mark Dantonio**
2013

Continued from Page 13

The de

Note: captures league title for first

place more for their continued
cap. However, they earned this

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other Class A district title, which

season. They also captured an

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gers captured their sixth straight

tigers, which can be best described as Ti

team created a new era — one

the Fenton varsity volleyball

Oxford left the Metro, however, with many teams competing for

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or better rounds. At state, the

was routinely posting even-par

messaging to be talented, but probably not at the levels they established.

But the team's depth was stronger than expected and Moss was routinely posting even-par or better rounds. At state, the team's 727 score kept them just 20 strokes out of second place.

No. 12 - Fenton volleyball's continued Metro/district successes: During the first half of the 2000s decade, Metro League volleyball was one of parity, with many teams competing for league championships. When Oxford left the Metro, however, the Fenton varsity volleyball team created a new era — one that can be best described as Tiger dominance. The Fenton Tigers captured their sixth straight Metro League crown this fall, doing it in undefeated fashion. The last time the Tigers have lost a dual meet in Metro action is Oct. 25, 2007. And this year was no exception as the Tigers cruised to another perfect league season. They also captured another Class A district title, which was a nice feather in the team's cap. However, they earned this place more for their continued perfection in Metro action.

No. 11 - Holly baseball team captures league title for first time in 43 years: A gallon of gas in 1970 cost about 36 cents. The year 1970 also represented the last time the Holly baseball team won a league crown — at least until May 21, 2013. On that date, Holly defeated the Swartz Creek Dragons 6-5 in a nine-inning affair. The win meant Holly tied Clio at 10-6 in league action, earning both teams a co-title.

Alec Miller broke a 5-5 tie in the bottom of the ninth, with an RBI-single, earning the Bronchos a share of that crown. Drew Eggleston pitched a complete-game five-hitter, earning the win on the mound.

No. 10 - Fenton football wins Metro League: The defense only allowed a TD in the final minutes and Fenton quarterback James Claborn threw for 222 yards, leading the Tigers to a 22-7 victory against the Swartz Creek Dragons during the eighth week of the football season.

The win clinched the Tigers a co-Metro League title. With a victory against Lapeer West a week later, Fenton could’ve won the title outright, but lost a 14-13 verdict. Against Creek Matt Cuhar caught a 25-yard TD pass while Claborn ran another score in. Dominic Weiss scored on a four-yard scamper as well.

The title would’ve ranked higher if Fenton won the outright championship against West.

No 9 - Lake Fenton/Linden capture playoff victories: For Linden, just making the playoffs was quite the ride. The Eagles had to win their last two regular-season games just to make the playoffs. They did and faced the Lapeer West Panthers in the opening round of the playoffs, ending the school’s 2013 football season with a 10-7 victory. Linden’s defense was strong, stopping two West offensive drives in the fourth quarter, preserving the win. A four-yard TD pass to Austin Buerkel and a 27-yard field goal was all the scoring Linden needed.

Lake Fenton lost the GAC Red crown a week earlier in a loss to Montrose, but bounced back by crushing Williamson 35-15. Neil Allor scored four TDs, leading the Blue Devils. Stryker DeGaylor recorded a safety to spark the defense.

No. 8 - Four track teams capture league titles: The Lake Fenton boys earned their second straight GAC Red crown with a whipping of the field. The Blue Devils scored 145 points, or about double of any other team in the field. It iced a dominant season for the Blue Devils on the track.

In the Metro league, the Linden boys captured the conference meet, earning the Eagles a share of the crown with Holly. The Bronchos went undefeated during dual action. The Holly girls also had to share a title after Brandon won the Metro Meet. Holly went undefeated during dual play.

2013 IN REVIEW

On the Way Down

Five teams/organizations steadily regressing in 2013.

1. Jim Schwartz
2. Matt Stafford
3. Dan Hoke
4. Mike Ilitch
5. Detroit Red Wings

Note: For the second straight year, the Lions have representation on the down list. Last year, it was the team in general. This year, it’s their prize quarterback who can’t stop turning the ball over and their ex-head coach who can’t keep himself from yelling at the home fans. What a flop we saw by the Lions this year. They went from 6-3 to being out of the playoff race before the last week of the season. How is that possible? Ask Schwartz. It’s the second time he’s accomplished the task. He had to be fired. During the second half of the season Stafford looked like a lost quarterback. Stafford must find some of that old magic he displayed a couple of years ago.

Brady Hoke was the “Michigan man” the Wolverines desired. And now the Wolverines aren’t only second-fiddle to Ohio State, but also Michigan State. After an 11-2 first season that saw the Wolverines go to the Orange Bowl, Hoke has seen the team only regress in Big Ten action, falling to fifth in the Legends Division this year. Who even watched their bowl game this year? He needs to right the ship quick.

Mike Ilitch has seen his best days with the Wings end. Hey, it was going to happen eventually. However, it looks like the Tigers might be nearing their window of opportunity for a World Series title as well. Rumors are flying around about his health as well, and that’s not good when you are 64.

The Red Wings had to suffer a “down” period eventually. They are still a solid organization but they aren’t the Stanley Cup contender they were awhile back. It was an outstanding run for about two decades.
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