Package shipping could be savior of the USPS

“While we lost all that (letter) business to the Internet with email, this is a nice recovery.”

Rob Phillips
Customer Service Supervisor, Fenton Post Office

By Tim Jagielo
jagielo@tctimes.com; 810-433-6785
Fenton — It’s 5:30 a.m. on Thursday at the United States Postal Service (USPS) building in Fenton.

Before a room full of rolling carts, clerk Jim Roberston is scanning freshly dropped off bulk packages with what looks like a yellow robotic arm, casting a blue glow on objects beneath like a tractor beam. The scanner is taking a photo of the package label, and directing
See USPS on 11A

‘Shop Local’ campaign a boon for hometown retailers

Businesses see increased foot traffic, more big ticket sales

By Ryan Tackabury
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

People in the tri-county area may wake up on Christmas morning to find a little extra under the tree. December has been a busy time for many businesses as they see an increase in sales compared to this time last year.

For Chip Beltinck, it is an exciting time to be the owner Sawyer Jewelers. He decided to wait to move the business into its new location to not disrupt sales during the busiest time of the year, and this decision seems to have paid off.

“Sales are up compared to last year,” Beltinck said. “We are seeing
See SHOP LOCAL on 8A

New video features 10 area merchants giving you their best sales pitch

Can be viewed online at tctimes.com

By Sharon Stone
sstone@tctimes.com

If you haven’t seen them yet, you’ll want to check out the videos of nearly a dozen tri-county area merchants that have worked with the Times to produce short, catchy videos that feature some of their favorite gift ideas.

These videos can be viewed by going to tctimes.com and scrolling down to See VIDEO on 6A

To view short, catchy videos of local shop owners previewing their favorite Christmas gift ideas go to www.tctimes.com.

Ronnie Duke arrested for attempted jail escape

Fenton man with lengthy criminal past chips away at cell wall

By Sharon Stone
sstone@tctimes.com

Ronnie Duke is back in the news. According to a Detroit News article this week, the 47-year-old Fenton man allegedly attempted to escape from the Monroe County Jail. He reportedly chipped away at See ESCAPE on 8A

“Why would any American care that we may have tortured captured terrorists? They kill our soldiers daily, they lop off the heads of live Americans and release a videotape it. Our perception of all this is warped by mainstream media. Cut off heads vs. enhanced interrogation? Are we really debating this?”

“Each time you bash President Obama you further weaken our nation. He has made some mistakes, but his heart is in the right place. Give him a break.”

“Bars can stay open an additional two hours if they pay a ransom to the dysfunctional state? What lunatics ever voted for this? We are surely selling our souls to the devil.”
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OFFICIAL CORNERSTONE MOVE DATE IS JANUARY 15, 2015
Bestsellers make excellent gifts

From Grisham to King, there is a reasonably priced book out there for everyone

By Ryan Tackabury
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

If you are looking for a last minute gift — you may have more options than you think at your local bookstore. A gift of literature has the potential to be very personalized. You can pick a subject you think at your local bookstore. A gift — you may have more options than out there for everyone

Gray Mountain ($29.00)
John Grisham

Follow the story of Samantha Kofer, a lawyer at a prestigious Wall Street law firm, as she leaves her comfort zone and moves out of the big city to work as a legal clinic intern in a Virginia coal-mining town.

Grisham is typically known for his courtroom thrillers, and this novel’s change of pace may make it a great read for old Grisham fans and newcomers alike.

The Escape ($28.00)
David Baldacci

John Puller makes for one capable protagonist — a combat veteran and special agent with the U.S. army. In his newest outing, Puller is pitted against an equally talented foe — his own brother, who has been convicted of treason. After his brother escapes from prison, Puller must hunt his own brother down to face justice, while learning that all may not be quite as it first seemed.

A bestselling author, Baldacci’s latest work is sure to appeal to those who like a military theme to their stories, and an extra portion of suspense.

Hope to Die ($29.00)
James Patterson

Det. Alex Cross has faced many challenges in his day, but he may have finally met his match — and then some. With his family taken from him, Cross must do whatever it takes to save the lives of those he loves most.

Patterson is famous for his cliff-hangers that make his books difficult to put down. An excellent gift for fans of thrillers and detective stories, you can consider gifting “Hope To Die” with the novel that precedes it, “Cross My Heart.”

Tom Clancy: Full Force and Effect ($30.00)
Mark Greaney

A tale of high stakes international politics, this newest entry in the storied career of United States President Jack Ryan will leave you on the edge of your seat. As a new dictator rises to power in a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons, President Ryan finds himself in a plot against his very life.

Mark Greaney picks up the reins of the late Tom Clancy, writing a military prose that is both exciting and thrilling.

Gone Girl ($15.00)
Gillian Flynn

The bestselling novel was recently made into a critically lauded film of the same name and may make another excellent gift.

When Nick Dunne’s wife goes

President Ryan

FOR THE REST OF THE STORY, SEE PAGE 3A
In defense of Christmas

Every year, as predictable as a millionaire Hollywood actor condemning capitalism, some kijelly mounts their soapbox to tell us that Christmas no longer has any meaning because Americans spend too much money on Christmas gifts and evil retailers have made a mockery of the true meaning of Christmas.

To them I say quit being a miserly Scrooge — if you can’t say something nice about a period each year where the vast majority of Americans feel compelled to buy a gift for those they love, well — just shut the fire-truck up.

For argument’s sake, let’s imagine that we didn’t celebrate Christmas. No festively decorated Christmas trees in every home. No twinkling lights in the downtown areas of each municipality. No sappy Christmas movies to be enjoyed by popcorn-loving families gathered together in the evening. No children’s desperately sprawled letters to Santa. No jingling of the Salvation Army bell-ringers outside the stores. And, unthinkably, no universal feeling of hope and joy for the entire world.

How would the world be improved by ending each year in the same way we lived the previous 360 days? How would that make us better? How would society be better absent the sentiment and love that inexplicably abounds each Christmas season? Do some spend more than they should, or can afford? Absolutely. But it is done with the best of intentions — wanting to please the people they love. That, in my book, is a forgivable sin. The act of giving a gift to someone you love and respect is one of the greatest joys of humanity.

I once read the sage observation that people who choose to make a statement by not partaking in the ritual of Christmas gift-giving are not particularly noble — they are particularly cheap. They are the same people who ultimately die with a full bank account, but an empty heart and an empty life.

And what about children? The holiday season is always accompanied by some professorial talking head on TV admonishing us that today’s children don’t get the real meaning of Christmas — that they simply associate the season with the commercialized perspective of receiving gifts. Gosh, do ya think? Doesn’t everyone relate in some way to Ralph’s wondrous awe at receiving his coveted lever-action, spring piston, smooth-barreled, adjustable sight, gravity feed Red Ryder Winchester Model BB gun? Do we really expect young children to focus on the theological aspect of Christmas? Isn’t it enough to know that most children’s happiest memories center around Christmas?

At the end of the day, gift-givers are giving the greatest gift of all — happiness — to both the buyer and the recipient. And at the same time celebrating the birthday of Jesus.

And that’s a good thing — right? Opinions offered in The Tri-City Times are the author’s alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Tri-City Times or its staff. E-mail the editor at eking@tctimes.com.

submitted at: tctimes.com, call 810-629-9221 or text to 810-711-6216

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Submit at: tctimes.com, call 810-629-9221 or text to 810-711-6216.
Gas pipeline debate continues

Residents, industry reps voice pros and cons at local ‘Scoping’ meeting

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@tctimes.com • 810-433-6792

There were roughly 300 people present at the Flint Scoping meeting Dec. 10 at the Holiday Inn Gateway Center in Mundy Township. The meeting was held in front of a panel from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC is the agency which will ultimately approve or disapprove of the ET Rover Pipeline.

FERC has been conducting scoping meetings to receive input from individuals who are either in favor of or against having a gas pipeline on their property. It is part of the process of creating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Roughly 30 people spoke and many submitted written comments to the panel. The bulk of the comments were in opposition to the pipeline. Some said it would have a negative impact on the environment, such as degradation of soils, water and air.

Some spoke of the natural beauty of where they live and they wanted to have something to pass on to their heirs. Some told the panel they were unhappy with the treatment from land agents who came to their property to discuss the pipeline in their domain, a process of obtaining “legal” use of the land.

The issue of declining property values was discussed as well as a potential for increased homeowners insurance and the inability to obtain mortgages on their home should that be needed.

Because of the size of the pipeline, 42 inches, and the pressure of the liquid natural gas, many people were concerned for their safety. There is a blast radius of nearly 1,000 feet in the event of an explosion.

Those who approved of the project argued principally for economic gains. Union workers and laborers around Michigan said this would bring in jobs. In support of the pipeline project, and a speaker at the meeting, was Amanda Sumerix, director of communications at the Michigan Forest Products Council. In an email, Sumerix summarized her testimony from the meeting. “We are here to voice our support for the proposed Rover natural gas pipeline. We do so because it is a promising opportunity for Michigan landowners, an important boost to our infrastructure, and an investment from a company committed to working with landowners and protecting Michigan’s environment and natural resources.”

Sumerix also spoke of the benefits to the economy, not only with the jobs the pipeline construction will bring, but also with the benefit from the state’s first access to energy reserves produced within the Marcellus and Utica shale region.

Most importantly, she said, “We are confident of the Rover project’s ability to do right by Michigan property owners.”

Amanda Sumerix
Michigan Forest Products Council, director of communications

Most importantly, it said, “We are confident of the Rover project’s ability to do right by Michigan property owners. Many people have voiced concerns over the way they were treated by subsidiaries of Energy Transfer. We understand that Energy Transfer has acknowledged these instances, and has taken the measures to avoid them in the future.”

Like many residents along the proposed pipeline path, Fenton resident Ronald Kardos is opposed to the pipeline for many reasons.

“My personal concerns are many but at the scoping meeting I spoke primarily about soil degradation and the ways in which the installation of a pipeline degrades water quality whether it is in terms of drinking water, the ways it will affect our streams and wetlands and subsequently the wildlife in Michigan,” said Kardos.

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TIMES NEWSPAPER DRIVER ROUTES:

See ad on page 19A
**VIDEO**
Continued from Front Page
the video “2014 Tri-County Times Gift Guide.” Click the arrow on the screen to watch local business owners give you their best gift ideas in 10-30 second videos.

“It’s our most recent tool to promote shopping local,” says Times Business Director Gail Grove. “The videos have received rave reviews from all involved.”

In less than 10 minutes, viewers can learn about unique area businesses they may be aware of but have never actually visited. They will get a glimpse inside the local shops, meet their owners and learn about the many unique and reasonably priced products available.

These videos are invaluable to the merchants as well as their customers and provide the advantage of shopping locally without leaving your home.

Best of all, knowing who your local merchants are helps to build a relationship that can last a lifetime.

The professional-quality videos were filmed and produced by Tim Jagiello, the Times associate editor, photographer/grapher/ videographer.

**Local merchants featured in Times’ new videos**
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- Eclecctions
- Vaporia
- Serendipity Day Spa
- Diamond Sports Gear
- Sawyer Jewelers
- Goin’ Postal
- Howard’s Hidden Treasures
- La Petite Maison
- Sweet Variations
- Sears Hometown Store
- Eclecctions

**IN AN INTERVIEW,** Obama said that he has felt like he was treated like one of the help at The White House. The truth is that all of the help that work at the WH are more qualified with real life work experiences than President Obama is.

I’D LIKE TO thank the family on Bennett Lake Road for having such a beautiful decoration on their front lawn. They did a lot of work and I want to let them know it’s appreciated. Thank you.

I’D LIKE TO wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

**HOT LINE CONTINUED**

**YOU HAD A** recipe in on Sunday, which was absolutely fabulous for caramel corn. It was spicy hot caramel corn. I gave some of it away and everybody liked it. I plan to make some more this evening.

**WE HAVE A** resurgence of mumps with our hockey players. Wait until all the illegal people start living within us and they start bringing in all these diseases that we thought we had under control. These kids have not been inoculated.

**Most residents support ‘Clean Power Plan’**

More than 120 Michigan companies now build wind and solar power components. However, Michigan ranks 17th in the nation for the rate of carbon emissions emitted by its power plants, which means we have more work to do. That is what this Clean Power Plan is for.

The Clean Power Plan already aligns with the views of Michigan residents, policies that are already set in place in this state, and the direction of the state’s economy.

The EPA plans to finalize the Clean Power Plan by June 2015. Once that happens, each state will begin developing its own compliance plan.

**An unhealthy environment**

Michigan currently gets more than 50 percent of its electricity from coal, a leading producer of soot, and a major contributor to smog on warm days. In fact, Michigan ranks fifth in the nation in premature deaths, hospital admissions, and heart attacks attributed to coal-fired power plant pollution. These health impacts cost Michiganders more than $1.5 billion per year in health-related damages.

Source: Miairmihealth.org

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**IN AN INTERVIEW**

Obama is.

**Tell your Michigan** legislators that we can and should think of ways to increase the amount of renewable energy and energy efficiency we use in our state. After all, our energy policy can protect our health.

Miairmihealth.org
Nearly half of Genesee County roads rated ‘poor’

Many Fenton city and township roads on the list following ‘2014 road condition survey’

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

If you’ve put many miles on your vehicle driving Genesee County roads, you already know the poor condition of many of these roads.

Now it’s official: the 2014 road condition survey from Genesee County reports that 41 percent of the federal-aid eligible roads maintained by cities, villages and the Genesee County Road Commission (township roads) are failing. Forty-six percent are considered “fair,” while only 13 percent are rated “good.”

“More funding needs to be found to help with maintaining and improving our streets,” said Dan Czarnecki, director of Fenton’s Department of Public Works (DPW).

Federal-aid eligible roads in the city of Fenton include LeRoy Street, Shiawassee Avenue, Owen Road and North Road. “However, there are many streets in the city that aren’t eligible for federal aid funding that need just as much work, and aren’t included in that 41 percent,” said Czarnecki. “Here in Fenton, we have 16.4 miles of federal aid eligible streets, yet there’s another 36.6 miles of streets the city of Fenton needs to find the funding for to make the necessary improvements.”

Street maintenance is currently funded through Public Act 51, which collects monies from gas taxes and registration fees.

In Linden, 29 percent of city roads earned a “poor” rating, with 72 percent “fair” and 27 percent “good.”

In Linden, 29 percent of city roads earned a “poor” score, including Rolston Road west of Ripley and a portion of Silver Lake Road. A total of 71 percent of Linden city roads earned “fair” marks and 0 percent earned a “good” rating.

Seymour Road in Argentine Township also got a failing grade.

The state of Michigan is considering several road-funding initiatives through the legislature in coming weeks. “I have yet to see how the state is planning to make changes in funding, or how they plan to spread out the funds to all governmental jurisdictions that must maintain streets and roads,” said Czarnecki.

DRINKS

Continued from Page 3A

with red wine, pomegranate vodka and fruit flavors.

“Gimmie the Loop” is one of the rotating cocktails at The Rough Draught Coffee and Barroom, located in the Cornerstone building in downtown Fenton. “It’s a wine cocktail with cognac, grapefruit juice, lemon juice, sugar and sauvignon blanc,” said David Martinez, head bartender.

Martinis

Martinis made with seasonal flavors continue to be one of the most popular drinks on the menu at most bars and restaurants.

“Our Pumpkin Pie Martini, with a graham cracker ‘crust’ is really popular,” said Shafer of the Fenton Hotel. “Now that we’re close to Christmas, the Jinglefest Martini, named after the Fenton Festival, is getting more popular. It’s chocolate, cinnamon and vanilla flavored.”

The Misteltoe Martini is an often-requested drink this time of year at The Holly Hotel. “It’s made with Grand Marnier Cosmo with vodka, lime juice, crushed cranberries and a sprig of mint,” said Ritter.

Holiday Eggnog

“We make our own handmade eggnog here at The Rough Draught,” said Martinez. “It’s one of three special drinks being served this Saturday (Dec. 20) as part of a National Lampoon Christmas Vacation Party.”

Traditional holiday eggnog is also a favorite at The Holly Hotel, made with Tia Maria coffee liqueur.

Warm drinks

“When the weather is cold, people tend to turn to creamy, hot drinks,” said Shafer of The Fenton Hotel. “We sell a lot of Spanish coffees and Irish coffees this time of year.”

Most Spanish coffee recipes usually contain coffee, a coffee liqueur like Tia Maria or Kahlua, rum and whipping cream. Irish coffee is made with coffee, Irish whiskey or Bailey’s Irish Cream, sugar and heavy whipping cream.

At The Holly Hotel, wassail is one of the most requested beverages this time of year. A Christmas tradition from the Middle Ages, it continues to be associated with warmth, the gathering of loved ones and holiday cheer. There are many versions, but its main quality is warmth, spice and some form of fruit. The Holly Hotel’s version is made with warm apple cider, cranberry mix, orange, cloves, Appleton brandy and banana liqueur.

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WEEKEND TIMES
Sunday, December 21, 2014
7A
SHOP LOCAL
Continued from Front Page
larger ticket items being sold, which in the last seven years, buyers were very conservative where this year we are starting to see the trend come back. We are seeing some larger, nicer items being sold.”

Beltinck is very excited to see Sawyer Jewelers move into its new location in the Cornerstone building, and has announced doors will open on Jan. 15, 2015.

Mike Vrooman of Medawar Jewelers said that they have also seen an increase in business, and although he isn’t certain as to exactly why, he is glad.

The trend Vrooman has noticed this year? “I am kind of surprised how many people are buying engagement rings this year. Last year, there wasn’t this many.”

Jewelry is not the only merchandise that is doing well this year.

Sears Hometown Store in Fenton has also seen an increase in foot traffic and sales. “It’s been a good start and we have a few days left, so we’ll see how it ends,” said owner Jeff Stone.

Stone attributes the increase in sales to volume — selling more sets of tools and appliances, not necessarily higher ticket items. “We are getting more people walking through the store,” he said.

Ashley Smith and her brother Matthew of Linden window shop in Fenton.

ESCAPE
Continued from Front Page
the wall in his cell and concealed his activity for months. In May, jail workers discovered his handy work before he was able to escape.

This is just the latest incident in a long list of criminal activity for Duke.

After a conviction in February 2013, Duke was out on personal bond and knew he was supposed to show up in June 2013 to begin his sentence at a West Virginia prison. He was sentenced to 13 years in federal prison for his involvement in one of the country’s most extensive mortgage fraud schemes. In addition to prison time, he was also ordered to pay nearly $95 million in restitution and a $1 million fine.

Instead of reporting to the prison, he stayed out of sight. Investigators eventually caught up with him and arrested him in Salline in February 2014. While in custody, he reportedly attacked a female federal prosecutor in a Detroit courtroom. At that time, we was transported to the Monroe County Jail.

Some of Duke’s co-defendants, now in federal prison, used proceeds to purchase luxury items, including a helicopter, cars, boats, residential properties, and for extensive travel to the Caribbean and foreign vacation destinations.

Duke is a long-time criminal, first convicted of embezzlement in Allen Park in 1986. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison for receiving stolen property and briefly escaped from prison in the Upper Peninsula before he was released in 1993. He later moved into mortgages, even though Michigan regulators banned him from the mortgage business in 2006.

If convicted as charged, Duke could face an additional 10 years for the attempted jail escape and failure to turn himself in, and another 20 years for assaulting the federal prosecutor.

Bridge Street Exchange in Linden is in a unique position — as last year was their first holiday shopping season they were open. However, they too have certainly noticed an impact. Owner Kevin Begola said that they have seen an increase in the number of shoppers stopping in.

For Fenton’s Open Book, sales have been steady, with owner Karen Piacentini noting much of an increase or decrease in overall sales from this time last year. “There are no big, popular books out right now that you have to have, which usually increase sales,” she said.

‘Unbroken’ and ‘Killing Patton’ are the best sellers, but ‘Killing Patton’ probably is not as big a seller yet, but I think it’s still a really good story.”

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BUY 1 GET 1 FREE
Wrap, Sandwich, Salad, Bowl or Chicken Dinner
The biggest determination of what eyeglasses you should pick for your face is the shape of your face. You want a pair of glasses that will complement your face, after all, everyone is going to see them.

Leigh Balius, optician at McDowell Eye Care in Fenton said, “Face shape is important when it comes to choosing a style of eyeglasses, but prescription and a patient’s need also factor in.”

Not all prescriptions work with all frames.

Square face
A person with a square face has a broad forehead with a strong horizontal jawline and is proportional in width and length. If you have a square face, your best eyeglass choices will be round or oval glasses. Dark and bold colored frames will look best on you. The idea here is to add contrast to your strong facial features. Avoid too many angles, and glasses that are geometric or square in shape.

Heart-shaped face
If you have a heart-shaped face, then you have a broad forehead that gets slender on the way to your small chin. High cheekbones are also a trait of the heart face. You can balance the widths of your face by choosing oval and round-shaped frames. Thinner, light colored glasses will help balance out your narrow chin. Avoid drawing too much attention to your upper part of your face with dark glasses or top heavy, decorative designs.

Oval face
The oval face is marked by a lightly curved jawline that is just a little narrower than the forehead. Cheekbones are high and angled. This is known as the most versatile face, which means that any style, shape, color or design will work for you. Just don’t pick any oversized frames that are too large for your facial features.
Feelings mixed for those with Dec. 25 birthdays

By Ryan Tackabury
newst@ctctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Al Verscheure of Tyrone Township will be turning 46 on Christmas Day and it’s a birth date he loves. “Everything’s closed for my birthday,” he said. “It’s not a rat race. I love the relaxation and time spent with my family.”

He and his whole family on his mother’s side get together for a huge celebration. “We have a big birthday cake, and we get birthday and Christmas gifts,” he said. “Even as a kid, I always got both. My wife, Jennifer, and daughter Alicia still share the same opinion however. “As a kid it was tough because you don’t have your own day. You’re always spending it at your Grandma’s house, that kind of thing,” said Mike Stapula of Brighton.

Stapula said that as a kid, he did not have birthday parties on his birthday, though his parents would try to do a separate celebration for him on Christmas. However, his birthdate is not all that bad — it just depends on how it is approached. “As I got older, it’s not really that big of a deal,” Stapula said. “My family tends to celebrate Christmas Eve together and on Christmas, it’s my birthday, so it’s a separation.”

Emily Fernelius of Fenton is torn — she both loves and hates having her Christmas birthday at the same time. This type of separation that helped Stapula also helped Fernelius appreciate her own birthdate more. “My parents

TRI-COUNTY TIMES / SUBMITTED PHOTO

Al Verscheure and his Aunt Carol both celebrate birthdays on Dec. 25. A huge family gathering with birthday gifts and a cake add to the fun of their family Christmas celebration.
USPS  
Continued from Front Page

Robertson to put the parcel in the corresponding carrier’s rolling bin.

This time of year, letters, of course, used to be the biggest item being shipped. “Now parcels are everything,” said Rob Phillips, supervisor of Customer Service. “While we lost all that business to the Internet with email, this is a nice recovery.”

This has been the busiest week of the year for Fenton’s post office, where Phillips said parcel shipments can go up from an average of 1,200 per day, to more than 6,000 per day. The same amount of staff sorts the packages for the city’s 26 routes, and adds about 20 hours of extra overtime per day.

Amazon.com is still one of the biggest retailers, along with others like Target and Zappos. These packages first went to the Allen Park sorting facility, then to Flint, and finally delivered on pallets and large containers, to be broken down by these clerks. Not counting packaging, Phillips guesses there are seven different stages at least, “including the ringing at your door.”

With all that cardboard flying around, when asked if he’d like to add anything, Phillips urges customers to keep their tracking numbers. If a package is lost, it makes it possible to find.

“Six thousand packages a day — I can’t find your package,” said Phillips, “needles in the haystack.”

BIRTHDAYS  
Continued from Page 10A

were always really good about it,” Fernelius said. “The morning we woke up it was Christmas, and after that it was Emily’s birthday. We didn’t even talk about Christmas.”

Her presents were always wrapped in birthday wrapping paper — not Christmas-themed wrapping paper. “I got so lucky, I couldn’t ask for better parents for that whole situation,” she said.

One of the few things Fernelius said she can do on her birthday is to go see a movie — though she recalls last year that wasn’t an option, thanks to the blackout caused by the winter storms.

“The only other thing I didn’t like is when I turned 21. I couldn’t go out,” she said.

However, with the bad comes the good. “I kind of get three birthday parties at most,” Fernelius said, as she has family gatherings for both sides of her parents’ family and her own immediate family.

Chase Brancheau, 16, of Fenton shot this 8-point buck on Nov. 15 in Iosco County.
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Ugly Christmas sweater trend growing (unfortunately)

Popularity of hideous holiday attire makes for lots of laughs

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@tcctimes.com; 810-433-6702

For a few years now, the ugly Christmas sweater has grown into a truly loved icon of the holidays. Once upon a time though, that ugly holiday sweater was the gift that no one wanted to receive, and then they felt hideous and out of place the next year at Christmas, feeling obligated to wear it to the family get together.

Now there are ugly Christmas sweater parties where you are asked to wear the ugliest of this once-hated holiday treasure. When it comes to holiday sweaters, some people may think they are all ugly. If you’ve been invited to an ugly Christmas sweater party, or maybe your work is hosting a competition for ugliest Christmas sweater for their Christmas party, you now have some big decisions to make, from where to shop to what kind of “ugly” look you want to go for.

One of the quickest places to find an ugly Christmas sweater that is not likely to have a twin is the local thrift store. However, you run the risk of finding ratty, old, itchy sweaters this way.

Many retailers are now carrying ugly Christmas sweaters as such, rather than just calling them holiday wear. You might even come across a display full of fun and interesting ugly sweaters, from Star Wars to your favorite sports team.

You don’t have to buy a pre-ugly Christmas sweater though. Get creative and make your own. Add festive things like tinsel, pompons, snowflakes and more. Some stores have sweater kits available or you can make a quick visit to the craft section.

Fenton resident Chelsea Schulz hosted the “Ugliest Christmas Ever” at her home for her friends. She said that everyone was to dress up in the ugliest Christmas attire they could find, bring a dish to pass and a white elephant gift to exchange. In an email, she said, “Christmas is my favorite time of year and since the majority of my friends have relocated to various cities in the state, Christmas is normally the only time we all find our way back home.”

“With work, family, church and all other Christmas parties being formal, this was a great way to cut loose and enjoy the silly and sometimes gaudy things that come with Christmas.”

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All The Light We Cannot See ($27.00)
Anthony Doerr

Set before, during, and after World War II, this novel tells the story of French girl Marie Laure and a German orphan, Werner, who find themselves on two very different life paths that eventually converge.

Praised for its flavorful writing and optimistic message, this may be the right selection for those who enjoy historical fiction and those enjoy an inspirational story.

Revival ($30.00)
Stephen King

The modern day master of horror brings us a new tale exploring life after death. When a new minister, Charles Jacobs, and his wife arrive, the inhabitants of a small town in Maine fall in love with them, including young resident Jaimie Morton. When the minister’s wife and son die in a tragic accident, Jacobs casts aside his religion. Years later, Morton and Jacobs find their lives cross paths once again, leading to all of the twists and chills one would expect from one of King’s works.

Merry Christmas

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STATE POLICE WARN OF PHONE SCAMS
The Michigan State Police remind citizens that neither the IRS nor the Michigan State Police will try to contact residents and ask for money over the phone. MSP will only contact individuals in person to confirm a warrant or post any type of bond money. If anyone has any doubts about who is on the phone, hang up and contact the local police department or the Michigan State Police. The MSP Metro Post has received numerous complaints across Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties in reference to this type of scam.

ITEMS STOLEN FROM UNLOCKED VAN
At 2 p.m. on Dec. 15, Fenton police responded to an apartment on Foley Glen Drive on a report of a larceny from auto complaint. A 29-year-old resident told officers that someone had entered her 2006 Chrysler van and stole her Garmin GPS, as well as other personal items. Police remind everyone to always keep the doors of their vehicles locked.
‘Miracle Boxes’ on way to troops overseas

Sixty holiday packages packed and sent by Linden Cub Scouts

By Yvonne Stegall
ystegall@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Cub Scout Pack 211 out of Hyatt Elementary in Linden recently worked on a project to help support our troops. The Scouts and their parents came together with donations and packed them up to ship to military troops who are currently spending their holidays overseas.

According to Louise Downs Blain, with the Desert Angels, they packed more than 60 boxes of donations.

The Desert Angels, Inc. is a non-profit organization out of Auburn Hills that collects and mails items needed by troops stationed overseas. They call these boxes “Miracle Boxes.”

Blain said, “Each item they collected, each box that was packed, each hand written letter, was totally focused on love for our great country and the men and women who protect and defend. Changing our world, one Miracle Box at a time.”

Cub Master Claudine Hildreth said, “The boys had a great time putting together the packages to be sent overseas, and it helped reinforce the lesson of helping the community and being a good citizen.”

Hildreth said that normally they had a contact overseas that they mailed items to each year, but this year that person is no longer overseas. On their search for help in mailing their collected items, they came across Desert Angels. “They are a great organization,” Hildreth said.

Desert Angels, Inc. is always looking for names and addresses of loved ones serving in harm’s way.

“We want to send your loved one a miracle Box,” said Blain. “This is how we serve our troops, as they serve and protect our country!”

Send names and addresses to: Office@TheDesertAngel.org or go to their website thedesertangel.org/mailbag.htm.

EYEGLASSES

Continued from Page 9A

Round face

A round face has full cheeks, a wide forehead and a rounded chin. Provide contrast to the round face by opting for square or angular frame styles. Don’t pick round glasses, or frames that are too small for your face.

Diamond face

The diamond face is the rarest, and it has an angular jawline with wide cheekbones and a narrower forehead. Balance and enhance diamond facial features with oval or rimless frames, or those with strong brow lines.

You don’t want to draw attention to your narrow eye line if you have a diamond face, so avoid eyeglass styles that are narrow or thin framed.

“Look for a frame that reflects your personality or the look you want to achieve. Just like with shoes it’s hard to make one pair of glasses fill every need,” Balius said.
Tigers’ offense heats up vs. Brandon

Fenton boys earn first win of season, 70-53

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

Fenton outscored Brandon 20-7 in the first quarter and then scored at least 15 points in every period, eventually earning an easy 70-53 victory against the Blackhawks.

Fenton bustled out to a 20-7 lead after one quarter and never looked back. The Tigers (1-1, 1-1) took a 55-32 lead into the fourth quarter. Brandon made the final score look a bit more respectable with a 21-15 edge in the final period.

“I think our intensity and commitment to playing as hard as possible was reflected in that first quarter,” Fenton coach Tim Olszewski said.

Fenton’s offense was pretty balanced with five players scoring at least nine points. Dillon Gardner scored a game-high 15 points, while Greg Lukas had 14 points. Austin Bossenberger, Jake Cairns and Hunter Costello each poured in 10, while Brandon’s Alex Williams added nine points.

Holly only worried about themselves

Bronchos cruise past Kearsley, 54-44

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

The Holly varsity boys basketball team has one squad on its mind—it’s the Holly Bronchos.

The Bronchos put together an impressive 31-13 first half against the Kearsley Hornets and held to a 54-44 victory on Tuesday. Holly played its entire roster during the second half. Kearsley did cut the gap to 33-21 early in the third quarter, but still trailed 44-27 entering the fourth period. Kearsley cut the gap to as close as seven in the fourth, but never seriously threatened the lead. Kearsley used a deliberate halfcourt offense to try and slow the Bronchos’ offense in check. It helped in that it kept Holly’s scoring down, but the Bronchos still improved to 2-0 in the conference.

Lake Fenton’s Jalen Miller (right) scored a game-high 18 points against the Rams.

“Defeat Montrose comfortably, 55-39

By David Troppens
droppens@tctimes.com

Lake Fenton — It seems when the Lake Fenton varsity boys basketball team leaves the locker room at halftime, the squad comes out as an impressively energetic and inspired squad.

It happened against Linden when the Blue Devils outscored the Eagles 33-18 during the second half of their first game this season, leading Lake Fenton to a victory. It happened again on Tuesday in the squad’s home opener of the season against Montrose as well.

Now, it’s a matter of figuring out how to get that second-half mojo going in the first half of games as well.

Both teams appeared sluggish during the first half, as Lake Fenton and Montrose entered halftime tied at 18-all. However, it was the Blue Devils who were the much better team in the second half, nailing a sizzling 15-of-24 shots from the field during the final 16 minutes and sparking a pretty comfortable 55-39 victory over the Rams.

“We picked up the momentum,” said Lake Fenton sophomore Jalen Miller, who had a game-high 18 points and seven rebounds. “Our momentum in the first half was low…I don’t know (what we can do to play) in first halves like we do second halves.”

See DEVILS on 19A

Devils cruise in second half

GRIFFFINS LOSE IN A SHOOTOUT, 4-3

The Metro League Griffin’s are playing some exciting hockey in recent weeks.

The Griffins, a co-op hockey team with students from Linden and Fenton, played their third straight one-goal contest on Wednesday night.

The squad lost 4-3 in a shootout against the L’Anse Creuse North Crusaders.

The Griffins’ only goal in the shootout attempt, but then the Griffins missed theirs in an attempt to force a second round of the shootout.

The Griffins trailed 2-1 entering the third period, but won the third period 2-1. The Fenton-Linden co-op got goals by Brendan Buerkel and Connor Phillips (power play goal) to help establish the tie.

Phillips also scored the Griffins’ only goal in the second period.

Mitch O’Lewin and Buerkel had two assists each, while Phillips and Buck Hudson had an assist each.

In goal, Manny Vomvolos made 25 saves.

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Merry & Bright!
DEVIILS
Continued from Page 18A
halves). Our coach was just talking about that. We have to find a way to get our our our momentum back a little bit. We played well when we had the lead but we didn’t capitalize on it as much as we could.”

The Blue Devils outscored Montrose 20-11 in the third quarter. The Rams did score the first two points of the second half, taking a 20-18 lead, but Lake Fenton went on a 20-8 run after that. The run started with two converted three-pointers by Zielinski. After the second one, Montrose called a time out with Lake Fenton leading 24-20. After the time out, Miller took over with consecutive driving hoops. The second came on Miller’s own steal and breaking layup. Montrose called another time out and now trailing 22-4 with 4:44 left in the third quarter. Montrose was still within 30-25 with 2:30 left in the quarter, but a kickoff pass from Miller to Zielinski resulted in a breaking foul and two converted Zielinski free throws. Miller followed those points with a driving six-footer, raising the gap to 34-25.

Lake Fenton led most of the fourth quarter by double-digits. Junior guard Christopher Bell controlled the offense during that period, recording nine of his 15 points in the final eight minutes. He also dished out three fourth-quarter assists. Bell either scored or assisted on all but one hoop in the fourth. And when Bell is involved, the Blue Devils are getting good shots, as proven by their 75 percent field goal shooting in the final period.

That’s been us for the first three games and the first two scrimmages. We have to find a way to play like that well in the first half,” Lake Fenton coach Jake Erway said.

“We have not been to the standards we think we are capable of in the first half, and if we want to contend for a league championship we have to figure out a way to play two halves. The second half, that’s how we should be playing. We played smarter, played a lot more aggressive and we pushed the ball. That’s when we are at our best. We have to find a way to do that from the opening.”

Bell also finished with seven assists and eight rebounds, both team highs. Tony Hathaway had six boards. The Blue Devils held Montrose to 12-of-34 shooting and forced 18 turnovers.

The Blue Devils (2-1) will get a chance to work on getting those first halves like their second halves next week, playing in the Inland City Tournament. The Blue Devils open against Marlette at 6 p.m. on Sunday, and will play either at 6 p.m. or 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

“I think it will come with time, being able to start first halves better,” Zielinski said.

“We are a faster team than last year,” Miller said. “We like to move the ball. We have more talent.”
HOLLY
Continued from Page 18A
Metro and to 2-1 overall by the time
the night was over.
“We take care of our business
and that’s fine,” Holly coach Lance
Baylis said. “A win is a win. We’ve
been up by nearly 20 against two of
the better teams in the league, so I’m
pleased. Our focus is our team and
not the other teams and what they
do. I wish everyone the best and
hope everyone does well. I hope my
coaching friends win as many games
as possible, but we are just focused
on getting Holly basketball better.”
The Bronchos played without
point guard Parker Rowe, who was
nursing a leg injury. Steven
Readman replaced Rowe and
did a credible job, finishing
with four points, six rebounds and
two steals in his first varsity start.
Joshua Simms led the Bronchos
with 16 points, while Jake Daniels
finished with 15. Kyle Woodruff
struggled offensively, scoring just
five, but he did have five rebounds
and two blocks. Adam Toole added
five points and six rebounds. Isaac
Casillas had a team-high nine
rebounds and four assists.
“We have to keep on trying to
maintain our focus in the second
half,” Baylis said. “It happened
against Fenton and it happened
against Kearsley. We are going to
have a lot of games we are up by
a lot and we are going to have to learn
how to maintain our focus and keep
the pedal to the medal.”

Tigers looking to rebuild after magical year

Talented youth has Fenton feeling good
about present, future

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

With eight seniors on last year’s
squad, the Fenton varsity boys swim-
ning and diving squad had a season to
remember.
This season, the team loses those
eight seniors, but the Tigers are looking
like a squad with a promising future as
well.
And when it comes to the Metro
League, defending it is a strong goal
once again this winter.
The Tigers opened their dual portion
of their season by losing a tight 95-85
duel to Powers on Tuesday at Fenton
High School. However, the Chargers
are not a Metro squad so it won’t im-
 pact their Metro race chances. Instead,
it gave the team, who was missing a
few participants, an understanding that
it was a meet they probably would’ve
won if they had their full compliment of
performers.
“The expectations are high,” Fenton
swim coach Brad Jones said. “Even
though we dropped one to Powers, 90
percent of the guys had their best	imes,
better than they were last year. So this
not being a league contest and the cir-
cumstances surrounding the meet, I’m
pretty happy with it and where we are.”
Led by graduated senior and Oakland
University swimmer Brant Cassidy, last
year’s squad finished 17th in the state.
Most of the swimmers surrounding Cas-
sidy were fellow graduated seniors.
One of the reasons Jones is excited is
the maturation of what could be the next
great swim class for the program, the
sophomores. He sees a lot in that class
that made last year’s seniors successful.
The squad also has senior Austin Landis
and junior Zac Miceli, who return with
state experience from last year.
“Landis and Miceli are coming back
from our state team,” Jones said. “Indi-
vidually, we have high expectations for
both of these guys. We are hoping to see
a lot from our sophomores. We expect
the second-year group to step into their
own. We had a very big group of fresh-
men last year and we are excited about
this group. They are not last year’s se-
niors yet, but they are one step closer.”

TIGERS’
Continued from Page 18

duff and Ross Ebert each had nine points,
while Beau LePage netted seven.
“The offensive side of things we did
evertheless well,” Olzewskei said. “What
I mean is our shots fell. One of the things
we need to understand is there will be
nights when the shots won’t fall and we
have to get better in the other areas we
focus on so we can still be successful.
We were able to overcome some issues
because we shot extremely well. There
are going to be days where we are going
to shoot lower percentages and we need
to improve in those other areas. And I’m
confident we will.”
The Tigers displayed a potentially
explosive offense in their home opener
against the Holly Bronchos last Friday.
Despite losing, Fenton scored 81 points,
including 49 in the second half. During
that second half, Fenton nailed an effi-
cient 16-for-29 from the field. Included
in that second-half mix were eight three-
pointers. Four Fenton players scored
in double-digit in that game, and neither
was one of Tuesday’s double-digit scor-
ers. Just two games into this year, the Ti-
gers have had six players already score
double-digits in a game.
LePage also had six assists, four re-
bounds and three steals. Senior
Brandon Reid had four steals and four
blocks, while Peyton Coffman and Lu-
kas had four rebounds each.

Hannah Evo led the Tigers with 15
points, including netting nine of her points
in the third quarter. She also had eight re-
bounds. Madison Shegos also recorded 12
points and seven steals.

Holly 41, Kearsley 31
Holly took a 11-4 lead in the first quarter
and blew open that gap with a 12-2 third-
quarter edge, earning the Bronchos their
first Metro League victory of the season.
Kaitlyn Smith scored 19 points, lead-
ing all scorers. Jenna Pepper and Brooke
Jackman added six points each. Paige
Reid had four points, eight rebounds and
four assists.

Flushing 52, Linden 32
The Eagles were outsized 18-5 in the
second quarter, eventually resulting in the
loss. Sterling DeGayner led the Eagles
with 14 points, while Taylor Smith netted
12 points.
By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

The North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit gives us one more reason to get pumped up and ready to face the month of January, while experiencing North America’s largest and most prestigious automotive event.

Detroit pulls out all the stops in showcasing the glamour and excitement of the automotive industry in this once-a-year show. The NAIAS will have on display the most innovative auto designs for 2015 with more than 500 vehicles given the full “red carpet” treatment.

The show will be open to the public from Saturday, Jan. 17 through Sunday, Jan. 25 at Cobo Arena in Detroit. A Charity Preview will offer the first spectacular glimpse of the event on Friday evening, Jan. 16, offering one of the most exclusive, high-profile events in the U.S. Since 1976, the Charity Preview has raised more than $91 million for children’s charities in southeastern Michigan. It is the largest single-night fundraiser in the world.

The NAIAS has almost a century of history in Detroit. For the first several decades of its existence, however, the show’s focus was strictly regional. In 1987, a visionary group of auto dealers within the Detroit Auto Dealers Association asked the question: Why not make the event truly international in scope? Now, the NAIAS pursues a vision of continually redefining what it means to be an international event.

Ticket prices for the public show are: Adults $13, Seniors 65 and older $7, Children age 7 to 12 $7 and 6 and under free with a parent or guardian. Tickets may be purchased online at www.naias.com or the day of the show at ticket booths located in the Cobo Center concourse. For more information about tickets, call (248) 283-5173.

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Last-minute gift ideas for auto buffs

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

Car lovers are some of the easiest people to buy gifts for because there are so many choices in every price range. Everyone can use gift certificates to a favorite store or service business. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Under $50
• Trunk organizer
• Detailer bag
• Gift certificates for car washes
• Boar’s hair wheel brush
• Garage parking sensor
• Custom license plates
• Pet seat protectors/covers
• Wheel/tire kit
• Emergency tool kit
• Car mats

Under $100
• Emergency radio
• Portable GPS Navigator
• Camel sheepskin seat cover
• Automatic cordless tire inflator
• Leather auto organizer

Under $25
• Gift certificate to any auto parts store
• Wash and wax kits
• Car care sampler kits
• Digital tire gauge
• Original Life Hammer
• Microfiber cleaning cloths
• Headlight restoration kit
• Garden hose nozzle attachment

Lots of ideas for every price range
Ready your vehicle now for safe winter driving

► The right supplies in your car will help you respond to an emergency

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

There are more ways to increase your winter driving skills than simply slowing down, safety experts agree.

Here are a dozen simple things you can carry in your car or truck to help avoid emergency problems in these cold driving times.

Every vehicle should have a windshield ice scraper, flashlight and hand warmers, plus an extra set of clothing, according to Danielle Reaume, a customer service representative at Lasco Ford in Fenton. These will be helpful in case your vehicle leaves the road unexpectedly.

“Some people carry a small box in their trunk or behind their seat with general items, including a set of pliers and perhaps some road salt,” added Reaume.

Throw a blanket and winter hat into your emergency box, too, experts agree, plus that extra pair of gloves can come in very handy.

A small shovel is helpful if you find yourself stuck in a snow bank. Some shovels fold up for easier storage in your vehicle.

Perhaps you’ve heard that sprinkling cat litter in your tire’s path can give you traction, so including a bag can be a good idea. Also, a simple cardboard box can help get you moving when it’s placed under a tire on a slick road.

Carry an extra reflector or hazard light to help warn others about your stopped vehicle. These can be battery operated or plug into a car lighter, for greater safety.

Why not keep non-perishable food in your vehicle, too, to keep you satisfied until help arrives. The calories can also help keep you warm. Taking along a bottle of water can also keep you hydrated.

Carrying a tow strap in your emergency kit can help you get pulled out of danger by a fellow driver.

Lastly, keep a pad of paper in your glove compartment or that emergency box with your insurance roadside assistance phone number and even your local garage’s number, in case those are needed.

The time to gather things such as this is now, to help you and your vehicle stay safe on the roads all winter long — just by planning ahead.

Area experts agree that motorists should put together an emergency bag to keep in their car just in case they become stranded in winter weather.

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Some restrictions apply. Cannot be used with any other discount.
One coupon per customer. Expires 12/31/15. TCT

$25 off ONE COMPLETE FRONT BRAKE JOB
— or —
$50 off ONE COMPLETE FRONT & REAR BRAKE JOB

No cash left any other offer.
One coupon per customer. Must present coupon upon arrival. Expires 12/31/15. TCT

GIFT CERTIFICATES MAKE GREAT STOCKING STUFFERS!

Have a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

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