

It's already a 'Merry Christmas' for local stores

■ Holiday business has been brisk for tri-county area retailers

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

Christmas hasn't even arrived, but it has already been "merry" for most local retailers.

"We've been extremely busy this week," said Kelly Smith, manager of the framing department at **Billmeier Camera**. See **RETAILERS** on 16A

“All our numbers are up this year. We've seen sales jump a lot in the last few days as Christmas gets closer.”

Sara DeBord
Glik's manager

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Terry Green, owner of Billmeier Camera in Fenton, has one-liners ready for his customers, whether they come in for advice, to shop or for repairs. This time of year, sales can triple.



PAGE 3A
SOLDIER'S HOMECOMING SURPRISES SISTER

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2015
2012 - 2013 - 2014 **NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR**

'Puppy love' for Christmas?

Adopt-A-Pet rescues 39 dogs that need homes

See Page 9A



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Oreo, one of the 39 dogs rescued from Kentucky, rests with her puppies at Adopt-a-Pet in Fenton on Wednesday.

Fenton police report rash of credit card fraud

■ Area banks investigating over 50 incidents

By Sharon Stone

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Anyone who uses a credit or debit card is advised to monitor their accounts as often as they can, even if that means checking their accounts multiple times per day on their smartphone or laptop.

Fenton Police Chief Rick Aro said Det. Scott Townsend is investigating six recent fraud complaints involving counterfeit credit cards and unauthorized transactions. The chief added that two banks in the city are investigating 50 such cases, totaling into thousands of dollars.

As an example, Aro said a 73-year-old Fenton woman filed a credit card fraud complaint with Fenton police on

See **FRAUD** on 14A



SUMMARY

■ High-tech thieves are wreaking havoc with residents' credit card accounts. Fenton police are investigating multiple complaints involving counterfeit credit cards.



Sobriety Court provides second chance

Participants must agree to drastic lifestyle changes.

Page 7A



Parents oppose controversial school changes

Linden board explores options due to expected \$1.82 million shortfall.

Page 11A



A walk through the Old Testament

Tyrone Covenant brings story of Jesus' birth to life through annual Jesus Walk.

Page 22A

TEXT
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“I have a CPL and the scariest situation I can imagine being in is having to draw my weapon and use it to defend myself or my family. The only thing scarier would be not being able to draw that weapon to defend myself or my family.”



“Question for anyone out there. President Obama keeps calling the terrorist group ISIL. Everyone else calls them ISIS. Is there something I don't know?”



“Please tell me how electing a loudmouth braggart like Trump is going to help America? He has no experience in politics and no foreign affairs experience. This is not a job for a rookie. Hillary is a proven and experienced leader.”



COMMENT
OF THE WEEK

“To my mom: whenever I'm sad, you are there. Whenever I'm having problems, you are always there. Whenever my life goes out of control, you are always there. Let's face it mom, you're bad luck.”



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Birthday surprise!

■ Army Private Patrick McLellan surprises sister at Lake Fenton Middle School

By Sally Rummel

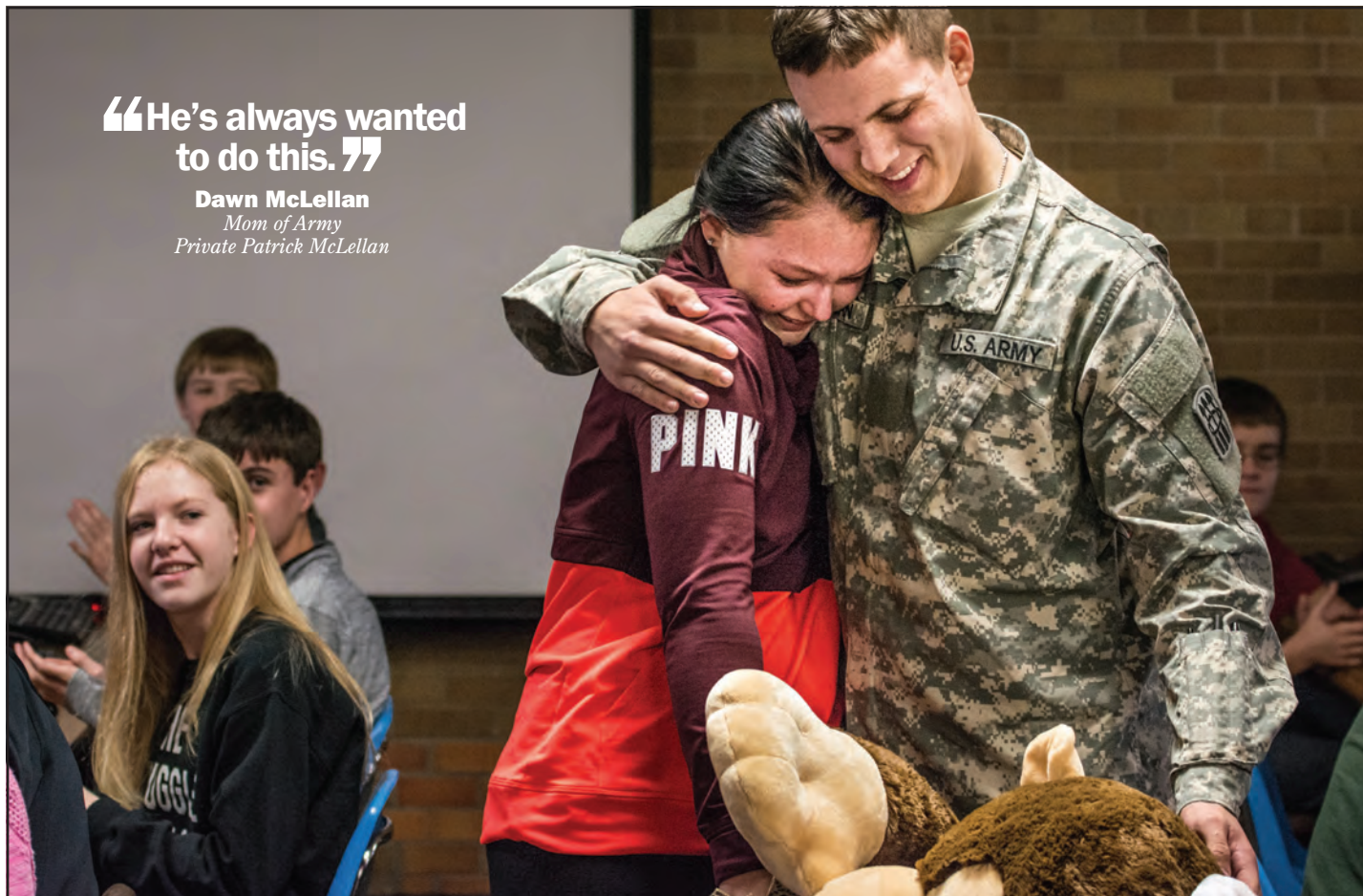
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Lake Fenton Middle School eighth-grader Haley McLellan hasn't seen her brother, Patrick, 18, since July, when he graduated from Army boot camp at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

But Haley got the surprise of her life when she was in class on Thursday, and Army Private Patrick McLellan popped into her classroom.

He was going to be home on leave on Dec. 21, in time for Haley's 13th birthday, but he decided to come home early to surprise her. "He's always wanted to do this," said their mom, Dawn McLellan, of Fenton Township. We're really proud of him."

Patrick will be home on leave until Jan. 3. He is a 2015 graduate of Lake Fenton High School.



“He’s always wanted to do this.”

Dawn McLellan
Mom of Army
Private Patrick McLellan

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Army Pvt. Patrick McLellan, 18, surprises his sister Haley, 13, with a visit to her class at Lake Fenton Middle School Thursday afternoon. The siblings hadn't seen each other in five months as he was stationed in Oklahoma. She was expecting to see him on Monday, her birthday. Haley was dismissed from class to enjoy dinner with her family.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | HANNAH BALL

Jade Allami (middle), 16, a foreign exchange student from Nantes, France rehearses for her first choir concert on Thursday. In France, students do not have the option to take electives.

Exchange students share their insights on culture differences

“Here, it’s good food but it’s more fattening and greasy. I’ve gained a lot of weight. We don’t even have tacos in France. It’s sad.”

Jade Allami
French foreign exchange student

By Hannah Ball

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American students are more privileged than they think, having options like music, art, and writing. Oftentimes they forget the rest of the world does not have these options.

Students in France do not have the option of taking choir, so one foreign exchange student performed in her first Holiday Choir Concert on Thursday at Fenton High School.



Satoru Okada



Jade Allami

See CULTURES on 14A

MEET

Hunter

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In defense of Christmas

Every year, as predictable as a full moon or Lindsay Lohan being arrested for shoplifting, some killjoy 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. I once believed that also, but no more.

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 that 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 families gathered together in the evening. No children's desperately scrawled letters to Santa. No jingling of the Salvation Army bell ringers outside the stores. And, unthinkable, 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 11 months? 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 is certainly 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

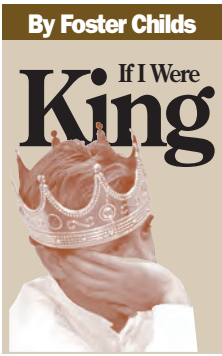
the season with the commercialized perspective of receiving gifts.

Gosh, do ya think? Doesn't everyone relate in some way to Ralphie'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.

That's a good thing — right?

Opinions offered in If I Were King are the author's alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Tri-County Times or its staff. Email the King at king@tctimes.com. Some content adapted from the internet.



“They are the same people who ultimately die with a full bank account, but an empty heart and an empty life.”

Hot lines

Submit at: tctimes.com, call 810-629-9221 or text to 810-771-8398

All submissions, if approved for publication, must be 50 words or less and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Tri-County Times. We reserve the right to edit for clarity, length and liability.

WE NEED GUN control and we need it now. President Obama is correct in addressing this huge issue with all the recent shooting incidents.

HOORAY FOR FENTON. The Jinglefest event two weeks ago was greatly attended and greatly appreciated by all. Whoever put the fireworks display on did a fantastic job. Our kids and out-of-town guests loved every minute of the parade and fireworks.

PRAY FOR SNOW. Santa does not travel well when there is no snow in the Midwest. His reindeer stop to graze instead of delivering presents to all the kids on his 'nice' list.

QUESTION FOR ANYONE out there. President Obama keeps calling the terrorist group ISIL. Isn't it ISIS? Is there something I don't know?

THE COLORADO KILLER was not a Christian terrorist — he was a looney terrorist. This is totally different from Radical Muslim terrorists. Or maybe they're the same.

SIGN ON NORTHBOUND I-75; suggestive truck route to northbound U.S.23 is Grange Hall/Silver Lake

Road. Why not research an expressway connector. I am sure all commuters would appreciate it.

A HOT LINE writer implied that both the left wing and right wing are bad. The right heroes are Washington, Jefferson and Franklin. The left wing's heroes are Marx, Lenin and Mao. The difference is obvious.

THE COUNCIL PEOPLE who voted to spend \$5,000 more for city trucks by shopping in the city should be ashamed. For 40 years before, if bids were equal then they would take the local bid. If not, they would take the lower bid. Quit wasting our money.

I AGREE WITH the opinion by Foster Childs. I have become a fan of Donald Trump who does not preach hate but preaches a sane approach for protecting America, which is what we have to do right now. We have to remember over 90 percent of terrorism is Muslim-oriented.

TRUMP THUMPED BY his own remarks. Can someone tell Donald that it is unconstitutional to deny immigration rights to any specific group based on race, creed, color or religion. What a blowhard.

FIVE TERRORISTS HAVE been on the run

and now one American traitor is in jail. This court martial is a gift to President Obama from the Pentagon but it further demonstrates our president's poor judgment in making this horrible trade.

THE REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE is so stupid that they're handing the election to Hillary because they don't like some of the things that Trump says. If he runs as an independent, Hillary is a walk-in.

THE STATEMENT THAT most mass shootings are by so-called Christians: what and who is a Christian? A Christian is a person who has taken Jesus Christ as his savior. They obey the 10 Commandments which includes thou shall not kill.

IN THE U.S., cancer survival rate is at 65 percent compared to 45 percent in Canada and England. Also, almost twice as many patients are being treated for diabetes and having hip replacements and seeing medical specialists compared to England and Canada. I'm sorry Obama and Hillary, but your health care plans are failed plans.

THERE'S NEW NEWS that there are 11 states that have more people on healthcare than employed, whether you're talking food stamps, housing, child care, Medicaid, or other benefits. This fits in nicely with Obama's plan to socialize the United States and have the government take care of people.

See **HOT LINE** throughout Times

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Compiled by Hannah Ball, staff reporter

How does Santa visit everyone's house in one night?

Question asked to Argentine Elementary students

streettalk



“In the sleigh with the reindeer.”

Alexa Croff
Age 5



“On his sleigh. Maybe he flies over the house and drops presents in the chimneys.”

Liam Schmidt
Age 4



“His reindeer have a lot of energy. I think they go 61 mph and sometimes you can't look in your living room.”

Delaney Winslow, Age 4



“A sleigh. His reindeer will help him. Magic. The elves help, too. They follow him.”

Madison McCann
Age 4



“I think there's a bunch of Santas that bring them in a huge bag. I made my list.”

Case Ryneearson
Age 5



“With magic. Christmas magic. Reindeer pull his sleigh.”

Vincent LaCelle
Age 5

Times office closes for Christmas

■ Visit tctimes.com or the Times Facebook page for any breaking news

By Sharon Stone

ssstone@tctimes.com; 810-433-6786

In the spirit of Christmas and spending time with family and loved ones, the Tri-County Times' office will be closed on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 and Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

The Times also will not be publishing or mailing a newspaper on Wednesday, Dec. 23 or Wednesday, Dec. 30.

In the event of breaking local news, the Times editorial staff will be on call around the clock. To contact the editorial department, email news@tctimes.com or stay connected through tctimes.com and the Times Facebook page.

Merry Christmas from the entire staff at the Tri-County Times.

THIS WEEK'S INSERTS

- READ** • Alpine Marketplace
- Arby's
 - CVS Pharmacy
 - Harbor Freight
- READ** • Holly Foods
- Kmart
 - Rite Aid
 - Sears Hometown Stores
 - Target
- READ** • VG's

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Sobriety Court provides second chance

■ Participants must submit to random drug and alcohol testing twice a week

By Vera Hogan

vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

Those who get caught drunk driving for the second time in Genesee County may be able to get a second lease on life.

In November, the Genesee County Sobriety Court became state certified. According to Char Sierakowski, a Sobriety Court probation officer, being state certified gives them the opportunity to work with the Secretary of State's office.

"Some individuals in the program may receive a restricted license through the Secretary of State," Sierakowski said. "This allows them to drive to and from treatment, to work, and to make visits with their probation officer and court appointments."

Sobriety Court is not new in Genesee County. It was operated informally (not state certified) for a few years under 67th District Court Judge Larry Stecco. It is now operated under Judge Vikki Bayeh Haley of the 67th District Court in Mt. Morris.

"She took over in November when we became state certified," said Sierakowski.

Some of the current participants of the Sobriety Court are grandfathered as far as requirements under Stecco's program. None of the Sobriety Court participants under the current state certified program are ready yet for graduation.

Since treatment is individualized, it may be that participants graduate from the program individually rather than in groups.

"This is an intense program," said Sierakowski. "There has to be some degree of willingness because this is a lifestyle change."

The Sobriety Court Team completed training during the week of Dec. 7. The team consists of a prosecutor, defense attorney, a judge, three probation officers each with different roles, a community advisor who helps with alcohol — and drug-free events, and a treatment providers, said Sierakowski.

"Our program is a work in progress at this point," she said. "We are in the process of tweaking and working any kinks out."

The main goal is to keep the public safe,

Sierakowski added.

In order to qualify for the Sobriety Court program, one has to have two alcohol convictions, the second of which had to be after 2011.

"We do not accept violent offenders and participants must be residents of Genesee County," said Sierakowski.

In addition to treatment, participants must submit to random drug and alcohol testing twice a week, and meet regularly with a probation officer and attend court hearings. Those in phase 1 of the program must attend court twice a month. Once they are in Phase 2 and beyond, they only need to attend court once a month.

Participants may also be subject to ignition interlocks on vehicles they own.

"At some point there is community service in order to give back," said Sierakowski.

"It's really exciting

to talk with graduates and hear about the outcomes they never thought could happen," she said. "It's such a great thing to hear."

Denise Ketchmark of Fenton Township, an attorney with offices in Flint, said Sobriety Court is good if the people who qualify do what they are supposed to do.

"Oftentimes, these specialty courts are used by the participant to avoid a harsher penalty, such as jail or prison," Ketchmark said.

It's either all or nothing though.

If there are "too many forgivenesses" by the court due to a participant's failure to abide by the terms of Sobriety Court, the purpose of Sobriety Court is undermined by the rule breakers," she added.

"As a defense attorney, I love this as an alternative for my client, but if the client continues to drink and uses 'I've relapsed' as an excuse, it takes away from the integrity of the Sobriety Court and ruins it for those who are serious about sobriety," Ketchmark said.

“There has to be some degree of willingness because this is a lifestyle change.”

Char Sierakowski

Genesee County Sobriety Court
probation officer

Sobriety court graduate says without it, future held jail or death

By Vera Hogan

vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

While the Genesee County team finishes tweaking its newly state certified Sobriety Court program, there is one local woman, who graduated from the Oakland County (52-2 District) Sobriety Court in 2008, grateful for her experience.

She has been sober since March 5, 2006 and it has changed her life.

"I have been sober now for nine years and nine months," said Jenny Sucher. "It has been the most incredible journey I have ever taken in my life, with ups and downs and many miracles along the way."

See **SOBRIETY** on 20A

“Drinking gave me courage and made me more outgoing. Now I know that I can do all those things sober.”

Jenny Sucher

Sobriety Court graduate

DRUNK DRIVING STATS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

According to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), action by Michigan lawmakers in 2013 extended the .08 BAC per se limit until 2018.

MADD calls on Michigan lawmakers to make .08 BAC permanent and to enact legislation requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. They say Michigan would also benefit from high-visibility law enforcement activities.

In 2013, there were 255 drunk driving fatalities statewide (.08 BAC or higher): 255 representing 26.9 percent of all total traffic deaths, a 2.3 percent decrease from the previous year. Additional statistics include:

- Alcohol related crash injuries (.01 BAC or higher): 4,633
- Alcohol related crashes (.01 BAC or higher): 8,892
- DUI arrests: 34,393
- DUI convictions: 16,470
- DUI refusals: 3,636
- Taxpayer subsidy of drunk driving fatalities: \$1.3 billion

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And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

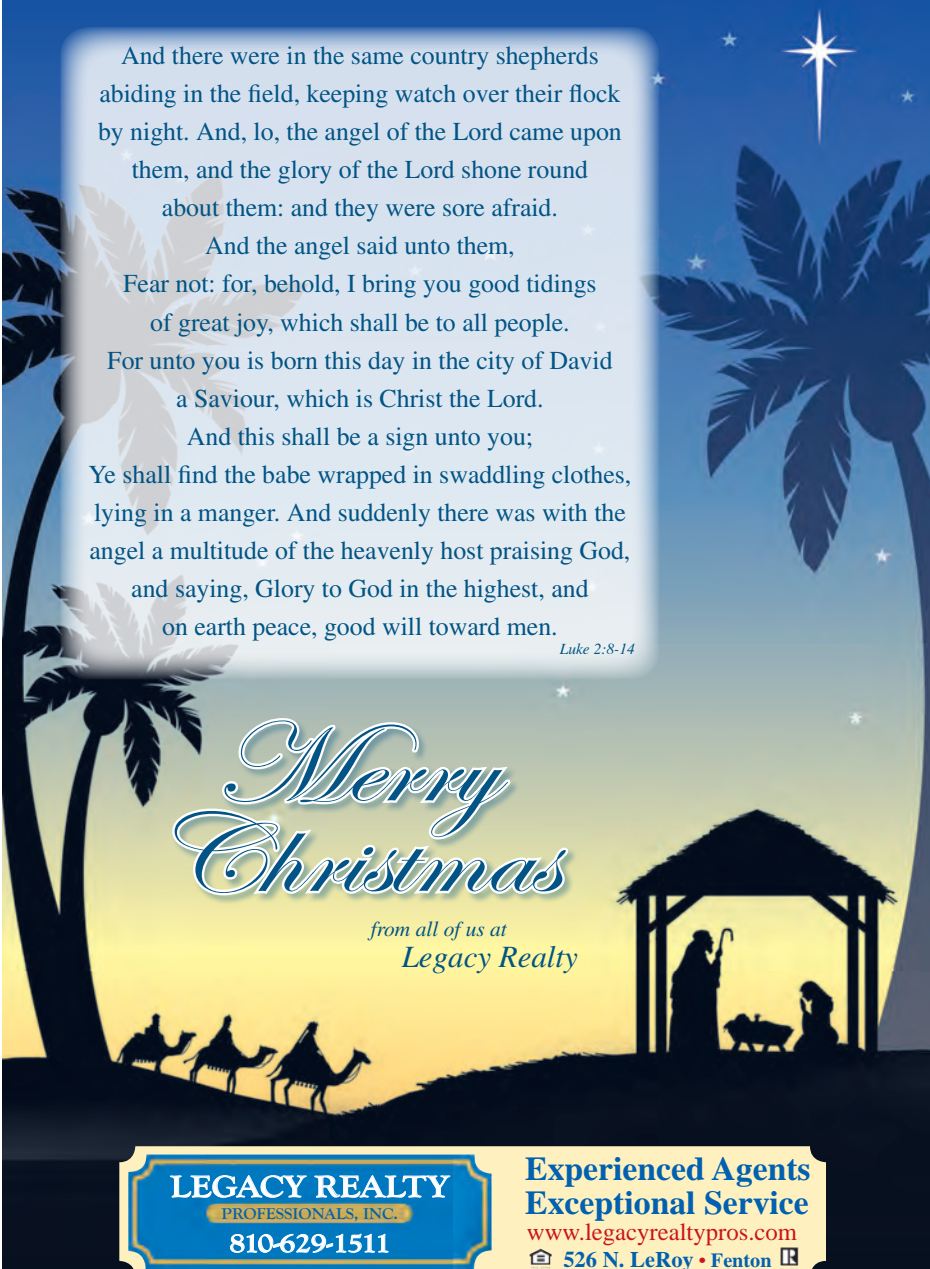
For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:8-14

Merry Christmas

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LOOKING BACK

at this week IN HISTORY

COMPILED BY VERA HOGAN

LOCAL

5 YEARS

Sunday, Dec. 26, 2010

Negotiations continue with Michigan Brewing Company at the old fire hall site. The Fenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is negotiating with Michigan Brewing Company, for a restaurant development at the old fire hall, built in 1937. Negotiations involve a lease-to-own agreement with the firm.

10 YEARS

Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2005

CDBG money could fund teen's home makeover. A wheelchair-bound teenager living in Fenton Township may soon be able to wheel his way into his bedroom for the first time. A Board of Trustees decision will allocate \$55,000 of 2004 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds toward necessary improvements at the teen's home.

15 YEARS

Sunday, Dec. 24, 2000

Deputies transport accused killer back to Michigan. After waiving extradition in Missouri, Tabitha Lee Maynard, the 21-year-old Lake Fenton High School graduate (1997) accused of killing her father last Monday morning, was brought back to Michigan by Genesee County Sheriff's deputies. Richard Maynard, 46, was pronounced dead late Tuesday night after being shot with a handgun while he slept.

20 YEARS

Sunday, Dec. 24, 1995

City grants sewer tap-in extensions. More than \$900,000 in water and sewer tap-in revenue was given up last Monday as the Fenton City Council voted to grant a handful of developers and business owners a six-month extension to start their projects at old tap-in rates.

25 YEARS

Sunday, Dec. 23, 1990

Eyeing new home. Linden city manager has vision. City Manager Greg Moyer is envisioning a new setting for Linden's offices, which could include a community center for public use. Moyer confirmed that he toured the old Evans Food building and talked with the owner. The sale price is listed at \$150,000 and the building would be perfect for Linden, according to Moyer.

30 YEARS

Sunday, Dec. 22, 1985

Best Western Hotel for Fenton. A new, 60-unit Best Western Hotel could be open for business May 1. Located at 3255 Owen Road (currently Mega Coney Island and Arby's sites), behind the Steak and Cakes Restaurant, the hotel will employ about 30 people.

Correction:

In the story, "Students with disabilities learn valuable skills on the job," published on Sunday, Dec. 13, it was incorrectly reported that Lockwood of Fenton was an assisted living facility. Lockwood of Fenton is an independent senior living community.

NATIONAL

DEC. 20

1957: While spending the Christmas holidays at Graceland, his newly purchased Tennessee mansion, rock-and-roll star Elvis Presley receives his draft notice for the United States Army.

DEC. 21

1988: Pan Am Flight 103 from London to New York explodes in midair over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 243 passengers and 16 crew members aboard, as well as 11 Lockerbie residents on the ground. A bomb hidden inside an audio cassette player detonated in the cargo area when the plane was at an altitude of 31,000 feet. The disaster, which became the subject of Britain's largest criminal investigation, was believed to be an attack against the United States. One hundred eighty nine of the victims were American.

DEC. 22

1978: John Wayne Gacy confesses to police to killing over two dozen boys and young men and burying their bodies under his suburban Chicago home. In March 1980, Gacy was convicted of 33 sex-related murders, committed between 1972 and 1978, and given the death penalty. At the time, he was the worst serial killer in modern American history. George Ridgway, known as the Green River Killer, overtook Gacy in November 2003, when he admitted to murdering 48 women in the Pacific Northwest.

DEC. 23

1888: Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, suffering from severe depression, cuts off the lower part of his left ear with a razor while staying in Arles, France. He later documented the event in a painting titled Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear. Today, Van Gogh is regarded as an artistic genius and his masterpieces sell for record-breaking prices; however, during his lifetime, he was a poster boy for tortured starving artists and sold only one painting.

DEC. 24

1923: President Calvin Coolidge touches a button and lights up the first national Christmas tree to grace the White House grounds. Not only was this the first White House "community" Christmas tree, but it was the first to be decorated with electric lights, a strand of 2,500 red, white and green bulbs. The balsam fir came from Coolidge's home state of Vermont and stood 48 feet tall.

DEC. 25

1996: Six-year-old JonBenet Ramsey is killed in her Boulder, Colorado, home. John and Patsy Ramsey, her parents, called police at 5:52 the following morning to report that their daughter was missing. Although police found a ransom note demanding \$118,000, the money would never be necessary, because JonBenet's body was found under a blanket in the basement that afternoon. The crime soon became a national sensation.

DEC. 26

1972: Former President Harry S. Truman dies in Independence, Missouri. Then-President Richard Nixon called Truman a man of "forthrightness and integrity" who had a deep respect for the office he held and for the people he served, and who "supported and wisely counseled each of his successors."

Puppy love for Christmas?

■ **Adopt-A-Pet rescues 39 dogs in need of 'forever' homes**

By **Hannah Ball**

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Thirty-nine new dogs that recently arrived in Fenton Township are seeking homes.

Jody Maddock, director of Adopt-A-Pet in Fenton Township, and her husband, Mark, brought back 39 dogs of various breeds Monday night, after driving nine hours each way to retrieve them from Kentucky.

"Last week we received a call from a shelter that was overwhelmed with mama dogs with puppies from a rural area in Kentucky," she said. "It's at the Appalachian Mountains and the stray population is out of control. They are doing what they can to help but are a very small shelter and needed help."

They weren't able to bring back all the dogs they wanted, but they did make sure to take females so they wouldn't continue reproducing more puppies.

"We put lavender in their crates and played music to help keep them calm and as stress free as possible," he said.

Some of the dogs need medical attention and many are too young to be adopted.

"They will not be ready for adoption until they are cleared in a week," she said. They will be ready for adoption during the week of Dec. 21. "Once they are fixed, updated on all of their medical (needs), checked for parasites and evaluated by our vet they will be ready to join their new families."

Seventeen of the dogs were able to go to foster homes around the area.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Adopt-A-Pet staff members Anjela Sullenger (right) and Kelley Dutcher towel dry Noodle on Wednesday. Noodle was so dirty when she came in, she needed two baths. She came in with puppies of her own.

“Once they are fixed, updated on all of their medical (needs), checked for parasites and evaluated by our vet they will be ready to join their new families.”

Jody Maddock
Adopt-A-Pet director

"We are so thankful for the volunteers we have. That is such a big help," she said. "Our staff and volunteers are working very hard to keep the remaining animals at our center clean and taken care of."

While the shelter always needs volunteers, currently they're in need of canned and dry puppy food.

Maddock said food like Chicken Soup for the Puppy Lover's Soul, Diamond Naturals, 4Health, and others are great. They also need supplies like bleach, paper towels, laundry detergent, and gift cards for pet stores or Tractor Supply to buy supplies.

Volunteers must attend their new volunteer orientation before they can start, which takes place the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. or the third Saturday of the month at 2 p.m.

WHAT YOU MISSED in the MIDWEEK TIMES

December 16, 2015 edition



Wreaths Across America

Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly Township was flooded with supporters of veterans and their families on Dec. 12. Every gravesite received a wreath, sponsored by individuals and businesses for the annual Wreaths Across America event.

Engineers hired for Silver Lake Road bridge project

The city's engineering firm, OHM (Orchard, Hiltz and McCliment) of Livonia, will be embarking on another major project this spring — the Silver Lake Road bridge reconstruction.

Busiest time of the year for post offices

Santa isn't the only person working hard to make sure presents are delivered on time. Post offices and shipping centers experience a significant increase in traffic during the holiday season.



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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SALLY RUMMEL

Mike Stahl and Nicole Distel of Holly discuss features of one of the homes they toured for House Hunters with Realtor Ann Hernandez-Gabler of Legacy Realty (right).

Holly couple stars on 'House Hunters'

Local business owners and their Realtor tell what it's like to be 'under the spotlight' on national TV

By Sally Rummel

news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

What do Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Holly, Michigan have in common?

They are both Christmas-themed communities, hand-picked by HGTV as locations for its popular "House Hunters" show this holiday season.

This Christmas episode, featuring Mike Stahl and Nicole Distel of Holly, and Realtor Ann Hernandez-Gabler of Legacy Realty in Fenton, will air for the third time on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.

The Times will not divulge which of the three houses this couple finally chose in their search for "the perfect home."

How did HGTV find Holly, Michigan on the map?

"They (HGTV producers) were looking for Christmas-themed communities, so the name 'Holly' came up on their Internet search," said Distel.

"What could be more Christmasy than Holly?" added Hernandez-Gabler, who said that Holly's famous Dickens Festival is what drew her and her husband to live in Holly in the first place.

Once they located the site for the show, HGTV producers were searching for a couple with an interesting story to tell, and were hoping Hernandez-Gabler would know where to find them.

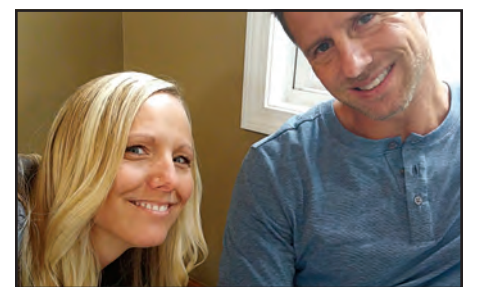
She immediately thought of Distel, whose home she had sold over the summer. This couple was looking for a larger home for their blended family of four kids ages 9 to 19, three of whom still live at home.

"Their home search has to fit in with HGTV's filming schedule," said Hernandez-Gabler. "It's not a slam dunk. It has to go through a whole vetting process."

Titled "Lots of Land or On the Water in Holly, Michigan," this episode chronicles this couple's search for their dream home, despite the fact they both had differing views on what "perfect" meant for their family — on the water to enjoy their pontoon or on the land with more acreage for outdoor recreation.

"I wanted a house with old farmhouse-style character and Mike wanted an updated, contemporary home," said Distel. "The main thing we did agree on was that we wanted a bigger house so that each of our kids could have their own bedroom."

The search ended with three final homes the couple had to choose from. The first was a farmhouse with 12 acres, the second was a house on the water and the third was an



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SALLY RUMMEL

HGTV's House Hunters will air its Christmas episode on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. It will feature Holly couple, Nicole Distel and Mike Stahl.

updated, contemporary ranch-style home.

What was it like to be filmed for TV?

"It was actually more work for Ann than it was for us, because she had to do all the behind-the-scenes stuff," said Stahl, who owns Stahl Tech Heating & Cooling in Holly. "It took more time for her to make appointments and get permission from the homeowner to have a camera crew at their house."

The biggest surprise for the couple was how much time it took to produce enough footage for a 23-minute show. "They filmed for days," said Stahl. "We even went to Bronners in Frankenmuth one evening to shop for a wreath."

While you might think that these three local "stars" would be fully made up and costumed for the show, they actually wore no make up and chose their own clothing. "I got my clothes right here at Marta's Loft in Holly," said Hernandez-Gabler.

"It did change our personal lives," admitted Stahl. "I had to work late into the night for my business, because we'd spend all day shooting."

But they all admitted it was a very enjoyable experience.

What was the best part of the experience?

"I watch 'House Hunters' all the time, so for me it was very surreal to actually be on the show," said Distel. She found herself recognized by people in town after the show aired, and had the fun of feeling like a celebrity. "I saw you on HGTV" she was told numerous times at a recent holiday event in Holly.

For Hernandez-Gabler, the most fun was seeing how HGTV put it all together, showing all the different personalities involved. "It was fun to see how the story came together."

For herself professionally, she said, "There aren't many agents who can say they've been on a nationally syndicated TV show."

Parents oppose school changes

■Linden board explores options due to expected \$1.82 million shortfall

By Hannah Ball
hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Linden — As the cost containment discussion continued for Linden schools during a public forum on Monday, parents questioned whether the choices were the best academic options for their students.

Because Linden schools expect to lose approximately 253 students within the next three years, resulting in a revenue loss of 1.82 million, and less than 1-percent fund balance by the end of 2016-2017, the Board of Education has held public forums to discuss options with concerned parents and staff.

At this week’s public forum, Interim Superintendent Russ Ciesielski went over three options for a cost containment plan and how much each option could save the district.

He said the district has looked at getting rid of “limited low-hanging fruit,” like curriculum expenses and substitute teacher costs, to minimize costs, but it’s not enough.

Grade level centers

The three options for grade level centers, which splits the elementary grades between the three buildings, have garnered the most debate.

The first option is having kindergarten-first grade in one building, second and third grades in another, and fourth and fifth in the last building. This option could save \$656,000, meet class size targets, have simplified busing schedules, and staggered start times for the elementary buildings.

However, the district would see a reduction of eight staff members and students would experience three transitions before they reached middle school, something some parents do not like.

The second option is to put kindergarten through third grade in two buildings and fourth and fifth grades in one building. This could possibly save \$492,000, meet class size targets, and have staggered start times.

Students would only experience two transitions, but the kindergarten through third grade buildings would not have equitable class sizes, academic consistency, simplified busing, and students wouldn’t have peer groups until fourth grade.

The third option is putting kindergarten and first grade in one building and second through fifth grade in the other two buildings, which could save \$492,000. Target class sizes could be met, but there wouldn’t be simplified busing, and the second-through-fifth-grade buildings would not have equitable class sizes or peer groups.

With the current option, the district could save \$574,000 with seven staff reductions, but could see split classrooms, and would not have appropriate class sizes, equitable class sizes, simplified busing, peer groups, or academic consistency.

Moreover, with the last three options, it becomes harder to maintain academic consistency and to manage the student population with regards to classrooms and transportation, Ciesielski said.

Currently, Central Elementary and Hyatt Elementary receive Title 1 monies. All buildings would receive this money with the first option, but not with options two and three.

With the current configuration, Linden

Elementary does not receive Title 1 monies. Split classrooms, where two grades are taught in one classroom by one teacher, would be likely with the current configuration.

“It really depends on the student population. It could be a last-minute decision,” Ciesielski said.

Trimesters to semesters

This option could possibly save \$82,000 to \$328,000 over the next six-plus years. Personnel would be reduced by approximately one to four staff members, less money would be sent on curriculum supplies, but students would have fewer academic options.

Full-day Young Fives program

Currently, the district receives half of the \$7,391 FTE (full-time equivalent) per student for the Young Fives program, and as of count day this year, 31 students were enrolled. With a full-day program, the district would receive the full amount.

A few parents in attendance Monday spoke about how difficult the grade level centers would be for young children who need consistency, not

more transitions, and if it’s the best option academically.

One parent, Zak McGraw, moved with his family from Livonia to Linden specifically for the schools. He said he doesn’t like that his son would have so many transitions.

“It would be horrible. It would force us to look at school of choice,” he said.

Parents Jason and Elizabeth Heffner, who have four children, said the grade level centers could alienate larger families because parents would have to drive to numerous schools to drop off or pick up their students.

One Linden mother, who has three young boys, said they chose to come here specifically because they wanted their kids to be in the same school.

“I’ve been a kindergarten teacher for 15 years and kids need consistency. I think it would be ridiculous and I think you would be losing new people coming in and we would consider school of choice,” she said.

No decision has been made at this time. Ciesielski stressed that the board has been receiving helpful feedback from staff and parents and he encourages people to give suggestions.

“It would be horrible. It would force us to look at school of choice.”

Zak McGraw
Linden parent

Fund Balance declines

- **The fund balance**, which is the district’s reserved money that is used for operations, has declined significantly over the last few years.
- **In 2014-2015**, the fund balance was approximately 10 percent. At the end of this school year, it will be 5 percent.
- **The fund balance** will be less than 1 percent by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Frequently suggested options

A few people have suggested closing Argentine Elementary to save money. Interim Superintendent Russ Ciesielski explained this option is not viable because the district needs to use all the buildings to fit all the students. Another suggestion is increasing the amount athletes pay to play sports, or “pay to participate.” If the rates increased, the district risks losing students and money if they opt out of playing sports because of the increase.

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CULTURES

Continued from Page 3A

Jade Allami, 16, from Nantes in western France, was excited to have the opportunity to take choir.

“We have to take very boring classes,” she said. In France, students don’t choose their own classes, nor do they have electives. At Fenton, she’s taking choir, journalism, and forensic science for electives.

Allami is a sophomore for her first semester, but a senior for her second so she can graduate.

“Everybody’s really welcoming,” she said. “(School) is one of the most different parts of both countries. I think American school is better because you don’t have that many classes a day so you can focus on one class.”

She’s getting as involved as she can with managing the basketball team, running technical operations for a school play, and joining the lacrosse team.

“We don’t get involved in anything in France,” she said.

Allami lives with the Richardson family, and one of her host sisters, Paige, goes to Fenton High School.

She’s welcomed the American culture, but the hardest part has been getting used to the food.

“Here, it’s good food but it’s more fattening and greasy,” she said. “I’ve gained a lot of weight. We don’t even have tacos in France. It’s sad.”

She doesn’t miss much, but she misses cheese. “That sounds dumb but you don’t have cheese, you just have cheddar,” she said.

Allami said she was excited to experience Thanksgiving.

One surprising thing for Allami was

FRAUD

Continued from Front Page

Dec. 12. She learned that someone had just purchased \$2,487 in merchandise from the Fenton Walmart using her credit card. The suspect attempted to use the card again in Howell, but the card was declined.

Aro said the Fenton woman was still in possession of her credit card.

What police and the Secret Service, which is also investigating, believe is happening is that counterfeit cards are being made with actual credit card account numbers. These cards are then being sold on the online black market, based on zip code. Aro said buyers of these cards might opt to buy cards

within a specific zip code so that it won’t stand out when shopping.

When asked how these numbers were obtained to make counterfeit cards, Aro said based on their recent complaints, a business in Fenton was the victim of computer hacking a few months ago, when savvy thieves retrieved credit card and debit card information from their system. The business has fixed the issue with firewalls and other precautions, however, patrons and other businesses are now seeing signs of this high-tech fraud.

The police chief urges constant

monitoring of accounts and possibly setting up alerts with financial institutions to ensure any unusual transaction results in an alert to the authentic cardholder.

If an unauthorized transaction appears on a cardholder’s account they should immediately call their bank and shut down that account before more transactions are made.

Aro added that much of this type of fraud could be prevented if every employee at every store was required to verify the credit card being used matches the driver’s license of the shopper.

SUMMARY

■ High-tech thieves are wreaking havoc with residents’ credit card accounts. Fenton police are investigating multiple complaints involving counterfeit credit cards.

white eggs. “The first time I saw white eggs my host mom was next to me and I was like ‘do you paint your eggs?’” she said.

It also took time for Allami to adjust to the differences in greetings. “To say ‘hi’ to someone in France you kiss them on both cheeks. Here, you hug people. In the beginning, I didn’t know how to react. I wanted to kiss everybody but they felt weird when I did that so I stopped,” she said.

Since they have very mild winters in Nantes, she was happy to see snow during the storm last month but she’s not used to the cold.

Lake Fenton High School has a foreign exchange student from Yokohama, Japan.

When Satoru Okada, 17, came to America

this summer to study abroad, he chose to go by the name “Joe.” He’s staying with an area couple, Tim and Rachel Draeger, and their three daughters.

His favorite part about being here has been flying in a small plane his host father owns. They’ve gone up five or six times, with the highest altitude of 8,000 feet.

“We always use cars, sometimes airplane. But in Japan, almost all the time I use the train,” he said. “The train

is so crowded, especially during rush hour.”

His host family are huge Michigan State fans. He’s been to games in East Lansing.

Okada misses Japanese food, like curry and rice. “Here, a lot of people eat a lot of sour cream and cream cheese. Just a little bit of a surprise,” he said, adding that he really likes the ribs his host mother makes.

He said he’s enjoyed school at Lake Fenton and has made many friends. Okada joined after-school sports, playing football for the junior varsity team and joining the wrestling team. He said the coaches and his teammates have been great.

American classes are very different from Japanese classes. “In Japan, the students only sit down at the table and take notes almost whole classes. Here, we have to take notes but it’s more discussion and we talk to each other. It’s more fun,” he said.

“To say ‘hi’ to someone in France you kiss them on both cheeks. Here, you hug people. In the beginning, I didn’t know how to react.”

Jade Allami
French foreign exchange student



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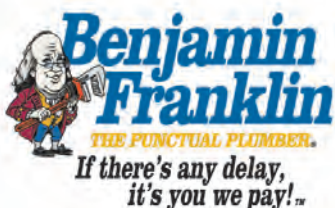
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RETAILERS

Continued from Front Page

"People started shopping later, it seems, so now all of a sudden, Christmas is coming up quick. We went from 'where is everybody?' to doing a month's worth of work in about a week and a half."

Fenton Township resident and owner of the Sears Hometown Store in Fenton said, "Overall sales volume is up from last year, and with some snow it should get even better. People are certainly in the shopping spirit."

Despite the unseasonable, snowless weather, retailers are reporting brisk holiday sales. Frank Mosher of **Mos' Art Jewelers** in Fenton said that this unusually warm weather has been good for business this Christmas. "Snowstorms and 5 degrees are bad for my business," he said. "Good weather always brings people in."

Many retailers have noted that the warmer temperatures have caused some shoppers to procrastinate this season.

SUMMARY

Local retailers have seen a big boon in business this Christmas shopping season.

Colder weather would likely help some retailers, including **Glik's** in Fenton, well-known for carrying exclusive cold weather brands like The North Face and UGG boots. But store manager Sara DeBord says that the Christmas shopping season has gone very well. "All our numbers are up this year. We've seen sales jump a lot in the last few days as Christmas gets closer. Customers love our new Hunter rain boot brand."

Bridge Street Exchange owner Kevin Begola in Linden said that business is getting busier the closer Christmas gets. "We're really starting to see it 'liven up'," he said. "Stormy Kromer hats for men and especially for women, Shinola watches, other Michigan-themed items and small gifts are popular. I think it's going to be madness now 'til Christmas Eve."

Tara Wakeham, co-owner of **The Iron Grate** in Fenton, has been very busy this season with sales in her downtown boutique, although "the holiday kind of snuck up on us because of the weather," she said. "We carry such unique things. That's really the Christmas spirit, finding just the right gift for someone special."

Jon Gerych of **Gerych's Distinctive Flowers & Gifts** in Fenton has enjoyed a good season so far. "I think it will be even better this week," he said. "We've still got a good stretch coming up yet. The weather's been good for delivery and lower heating bills and gas prices are making things easier for people. We've got lots of great gifts at Gerych's for under \$25."

Ronny Medawar of **Medawar Jewelers** in Fenton has just one word for this season, "'wonderful.' We are so proud of the growth of our store in our hometown. It's the largest growth in any of our stores. We've been really busy since Thanksgiving. There's been a huge response to our largest sale ever. We're making room for our new styles and designs for 2016."

"Overall, sales volume is up from last year and with some snow it should get even better. People are certainly in the shopping spirit."

Eclections of Fenton is celebrating its eighth Christmas season this year. "It's exactly what we've expected it to be," said owner Nicole McCurdy. "The weather hasn't affected us too much, as we're not heavy into cold weather gear. Alex & Ani is still the hot thing for gifts this year."

MICHIGAN VOTES

WHAT YOUR LEGISLATORS VOTED ON RECENTLY

MichiganVotes.org is a free, non-partisan website created by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy to provide concise, non-partisan, plain-English descriptions of every bill and vote in the Michigan House and Senate. With one click, you can approve or disapprove of key votes by your legislators using the VoteSpotter smart phone app. This report was released Friday, Dec. 11.

Senate Bill 481: Authorize school recreation millages

To revise a law that allows several local governments to create a "recreational authority" with the power to impose a 1 mill property tax, by allowing school districts to create such an authority. The tax can be used for swimming pools, recreation centers, public auditoriums, public conference centers, and parks, upon the approval of voters. This law does not prohibit the recreational facilities from being located at a school, but it does require them to be open to the public.

Passed 36 to 1 in the Senate

Sen. David Robertson (R-Dist. 14) ☒ YES
Sen. Mike Kowall (R-Dist. 15) ☒ YES
Sen. Joe Hune (R-Dist. 22) ☒ YES
Sen. Jim Ananich (D-Dist. 27) ☒ YES
Sen. Ken Horn (R-Dist. 32) ☒ YES

Senate Bill 508: Criminalize posting revealing images on internet

To make it a crime to post on the internet any sexually explicit picture, photograph or video of a person without his or her consent and with the intent to threaten, coerce or intimidate, if the material was obtained under circumstances that which a reasonable person would know were meant to remain private, subject to some specific exceptions.

Passed 38 to 0 in the Senate

Sen. David Robertson (R-Dist. 14) ☒ YES
Sen. Mike Kowall (R-Dist. 15) ☒ YES
Sen. Joe Hune (R-Dist. 22) ☒ YES
Sen. Jim Ananich (D-Dist. 27) ☒ YES
Sen. Ken Horn (R-Dist. 32) ☒ YES

Colder days help business at **French Flamingo** in downtown Holly, according to owner Sandra Kleven. "But we're still on par with our prior (two) years. People like our good prices and late hours. Shawlette scarves that can be worn as a shawl or as a scarf are popular and our hobo (fingerless) gloves are a big hit as always."

"It's been a great Christmas season," said John Winglemire of **Winglemire Furniture** and **Joseph's Oak Shop** in Holly. "The last two years have been wonderful, definitely an uptick. There are lots of tourists in town."

At **Stevens Furniture** in Fenton, many of their customers are taking their holiday sitting down — literally. "We sell a lot of recliners, mostly La-Z-Boy, for Christmas," said co-owner Gary Suszek. "With the weather being nice, we've had a lot of out-of-town shoppers. So far, it's been a good season. We'll be busy after Christmas, too, with year-end sales."



TRIVIA GREAT QUOTE

Q Who said "You can sum this sport up in two words — you never know?"

A Lou Duva, who trained 19 world boxing champions made the comment.

FENTON SWIMMERS SPLIT RECENT MEET

The Fenton varsity boys swimming and diving team accomplished about what they could've expected in a dual meet against Grand Blanc and Powers.

Fenton lost to area power Grand Blanc 135-51, but defeated Powers 120-63 in the Tuesday night meet.

The Tigers didn't take any overall firsts at the event, but did earn three overall seconds and three more overall thirds in individual events.

Zac Miceli earned two of the individual runner-up efforts, taking second in the 200 individual medley (2:10.42) and the 100 butterfly (57.18). The other was earned by Kyle Banner who recorded a second in the 500 freestyle (5:21.93). Banner also finished third in the 200 freestyle (1:59.0). The other individual thirds were earned by Jacob Vickers in diving (154.70) and Evan Bartow in the 500 freestyle (5:25.23).

The Tigers' top relay performance came in the 400 freestyle relay. Banner, Michael Fabatz, Justin Beemer and Miceli placed second with a time of 3:33.44.

The meet was Fenton's final competition until after the holiday break.

Lady Bronchos' late-game comeback falls a tad short

By David Troppens
dtroppens@tctimes.com

It was a case of two different halves for the Holly varsity girls basketball team at Holly High School on Tuesday night.

The Bronchos dominated the first half, but Pontiac Notre Dame Prep dominated the second half, earning a 42-39 victory against the Lady Bronchos.

The visitors started out strong, taking an early 16-

12 lead, but Holly (2-3) dominated the rest of the first half, going on a 16-2 run. Just moments after a Paige Reid three-pointer, Kaitlyn Smith capped the run with another trey, putting the Bronchos up 28-18. Holly led 28-20 at halftime.

However, the second

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | MARK BOLEN

Holly coach David Hall talks to his team during a recent time out. The Lady Bronchos lost to Pontiac Notre Dame Prep 42-39 on Tuesday.

half was all Notre Dame Prep. Sarah Beckett gave the Fighting Irish their first lead of the second half at 33-32 in the fourth quarter with two converted free throws. Notre Dame didn't slow down after getting the lead. The

See **BRONCHOS'** on 18A



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | DAVID TROPPEPENS

Holly's Steven Redmond (left) attempts a layup against Lake Fenton's Jake Zielinski during the Bronchos' 74-48 victory against the Blue Devils on Tuesday.

Holly looks like normal self, beats Blue Devils

■Hodges' 28 leads Bronchos past Lake Fenton

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

Lake Fenton — Two games into the season, the Holly Bronchos have frustrated themselves and their fans as the 2015-16 edition of the varsity boys basketball team has struggled to find its identity.

On Tuesday, the Bronchos (3-0) took a big step toward finding that positive identity. The Lake Fenton Blue Devils were the unfortunate victims in Holly's progress.

Holly shared the ball better, converted more free throws and just played a style of basketball Bronchos' fans have come to expect over the last couple of years en route to a pretty impressive 74-48 non-league victory against the Blue Devils at Lake Fenton High School.

The Blue Devils are no slouch themselves. Lake Fenton is blessed with some downright talented players. However, the combination of Holly playing "Bronchos' basketball" and Lake Fenton being in foul trouble kept the Blue Devils from presenting too great of a challenge against the

two-time defending Metro League champions.

"We are going in the right direction," Holly varsity boys basketball coach Lance Baylis said. "We still had some lapses but we are definitely headed in the right direction."

"We started playing Holly basketball," said Holly senior Ian Hodges, who led all scorers with 28 points. "That's how everyone plays in practice. I just want to be a leader and want to lead by example. I'm not the most vocal person. I just let my game talk and let everyone else follow. That's how we turned the third quarter around."

Lake Fenton hung with the Bronchos for most of the first half, but what was just a 32-23 deficit after two converted free throws by the Blue Devils' Jalen Miller, quickly became a 38-25 halftime deficit, sparked by a Hodges steal, two Hodges converted free throws and a Hodges buzzer-beating shot at halftime. Still, the Blue Devils must've felt they were within a strong run away from getting back into the contest when the second half started.

See **HOLLY** on 19A

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Blue Devils open with strong showing at Hartland tournament

By David Troppens

dtroppens@tctimes.com; 810-433-6789

The Lake Fenton varsity wrestling team began the season ranked No. 4 in Division 3 according to michigangrappler.com.

The Blue Devils showed why, placing fourth in the always-tough Hartland Tournament on Saturday.

The only teams to finish ahead of the Blue Devils were ranked squads, including the tourney hosts. Hartland is ranked No. 1 in Division 1.

The Blue Devils had four individual champions. Defending state champion Trent Hillger began the season just about as perfect as you can by earning five first-round pinfall wins, eventually earning the 285 title.

Saben Spangler (130) also went 5-0 and pinned Hartland's Hayden Culver in the final to earn his title. Meanwhile, Hunter Corcoran (125) and A.J. Geyer each went 4-0 en route to titles. Geyer had three pinfall wins, while Corcoran had two pinfall victories and a tech fall win.

Sean Trombley (135) made it to the finals, but had to settle for second place and a 4-1 record. Ryan Franks finished with three pinfall wins but had to settle for third place. Meanwhile, Jackson Nevandomski went 4-1, but had to settle for fifth.

Linden hosts Linden Team Tournament

The Linden wrestling team finished in second place in its own tournament.

The Eagles defeated Lakeview, Bendle and Battle Creek Central to earn a spot in the semifinals. Linden defeated Chippewa Valley 46-24 in the semifinals, but lost to fifth-

See **DEVILS** on 19A

Griffins grounded vs. L'Anse Creuse

■ Loss doesn't impact squad's perfect Metro League record

By David Troppens

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If a team is going to have an off-day, the Metro League Griffins selected the right game to have one.

The Linden/Fenton co-op hockey program took an early lead, but witnessed a strong L'Anse Creuse North squad take over from that point, earning a 7-2 victory against the Griffins.

Bobby Temple scored about a minute into the game off of assists from Jake Thompson and Tyler Bourassa. However, before the period was up, L'Anse Creuse owned a 2-1 lead.

The Griffins never tied the contest again. In fact, L'Anse Creuse made it four unanswered goals before the area co-op scored again. This time Brendan Buerkel assisted Temple's 12th goal of the season, cutting the margin to 4-2. However, that's as close as the Griffins got.

Despite the loss, the Griffins have had a strong start to the season, and still own a 5-2-0 mark overall. The team is unbeaten in two Metro League contests, earning early-season victories against the Kearsley, Holly and Brandon co-op program (KBH United) by a convincing 6-0 margin and against the Swartz Creek, Clio and Flushing co-op team.

Against KBH five different players scored goals. They were Temple (twice), Thompson, Bourassa, Buerkel and Mitch O'Lewin.

The squad played in the Alpine Blue Line Tournament on Friday and Saturday. The games were the squad's final contests during the 2015 portion of the winter schedule.

The Griffins play non-league Davison, Dec. 4 at the Dort Federal Credit Union Event Center.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | MARK BOLEN

The Metro League Griffins' Brandon Diener (left) and another teammate on the right sandwich check an opponent in a recent hockey game. The Fenton/Linden co-op hockey squad lost to L'Anse Creuse North on Tuesday, but remain a strong 5-2-0 for the season and are still undefeated in Flint Metro League action.

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BRONCHOS' Continued from Page 17A

gap grew to as many as six before the Bronchos made one last charge. Reid hit consecutive three-pointers, tying the game at 39-all with 1:28 left in the contest. However, the Bronchos never scored again, while the Irish (2-1) made 3-of-4 free throws down the stretch, earning the victory.

Smith led all scorers with 17 points, while Reid finished with 11. Jenna Pepper and Taylor Vines had four points each. Smith also had six assists, five steals and four rebounds. Except for Reid hitting 3-of-8 from behind the three-point arc, the rest of the team netted just 1-of-15 from the same distance.

Boys Basketball

Holly JV 44, Linden JV 33

The Eagles led at halftime but couldn't keep pace with the Bronchos during the second half. Nick Koan led the Eagles with 12 points and five rebounds, while Andrew Burns netted seven points. Jacob Conly led the Eagles with eight points and five steals.

Holly Freshman 61, Linden Freshman 52

Linden's Travis Klocek netted a

game-high 26 points, but it wasn't enough to lead the Eagles to victory.

Wyatt Syjud led the Bronchos with 14 points, while Noah Rook netted 14 points.

Max James had seven points for Linden.

Gymnastics

LFLF 136.9,

Saline 131.05

The Linden, Lake Fenton and Fenton co-op squad (LFLF) posted a season-high score to defeat Saline Thursday night.

Lake Fenton's Miranda Stephens led the squad by earning the all-around title with a four-event score of 35.625.

The top three positions were captured by LFLF teammates. Linden's Blake Hutchings finished in second in the all-around with a score of 35.475, while fellow Linden student Sabra Robinson placed third with an all-around score of 32.825.

The LFLF squad has already had a strong start to the season. The team placed first at the Fowlerville quad with a team score of 136.325, and also took first at the Huron Valley Invitational with a team score of 134.77.

DEVILS

Continued from Page 18A

ranked Gaylord in the finals 47-27.

The Eagles had five wrestlers finish 5-0. They were Luke Zimmerman, Bryce Davis, Patrick Kerr, Dawson Blank and Koleton Strauss.

Mitchell Kerr, Jaylin Steedman and Justin Cygnar earned 4-1 marks while Caleb White, Chandler Monsey, Cade Dickson and Stojan Prusac had three wins each.

Holly at Greenville Team Tournament

The Bronchos (4-3) travelled to Greenville and came home with a 2-3 record.

The Bronchos earned a 44-35 victory against Petoskey and a 76-0 victory against Wyoming. Holly lost to Sturgis 39-34, Greenville 54-24 and Caledonia 42-30.

Colton Cleaver (152) had the best day of any Broncho, posting a 5-0 record, including four pinfall wins. Jimmy Gray (215/285) competed in four matches and won all four contests.

Cade Dallwitz (171) and Wyatt Scribner (125) held 4-1 records, while Mitchell Nelson (130/135) and Dan Stallard (140) each had 3-1 marks.

"Sturgis and Caledonia came down to the last match in each case, so we were right there," Holly coach Don Pluta said.

Fenton at Flushing quad

The Tigers' Tommy Adams won both of his matches, but it wasn't enough to keep Fenton from dropping a pair of duals against Carman-Ainsworth and Birch Run.

Adams (145) won both of his matches via pinfall. Fenton had three other wrestlers win matches against Carman-Ainsworth. Christian Frasier and Glen Kroger won two matches by pinfall in the second period. Jake Church also won a match by major decision.

Against Birch Run, Foster earned a pinfall victory in just 31 seconds, while Andrew Goodman earned a pinfall victory with just eight seconds remaining in his match.

Lake Fenton vs. Goodrich, Durand

The Blue Devils lost to Goodrich, but earned a split by defeating Durand.

"After the first week, I found out that we are not quite where I thought we were, but it's an easy fix and we will get to where we need to be," Lake Fenton coach Vance Corcoran said. "We are still a young team that apparently needs a little work on a few things, but nothing major that we can't fix quickly."

HOLLY

Continued from Page 17A

Hodges made sure that Lake Fenton run never happened. In fact, he made sure the Bronchos ended up having it. Holly still led by 13 when the Bronchos' defense forced four straight steals. Two were provided by Hodges and another two were recorded by Adam Tooley, resulting in transition hoops for Holly. Hodges was the beneficiary of many of those scoring chances, scoring 15 of his game-high 28 points in the third quarter.

Hodges hit two treys, nailed a perfect 4-of-4 free throws after getting fouled on transition attempts. He also made two traditional layups. On one he was fouled as well. He converted his fifth free throw of the period, putting the Blue Devils up 61-33 with 35.7 seconds left in the third quarter. From there, the Blue Devils (1-1) weren't ever able to get back into the contest.

While many Bronchos had big games, none was better than Hodges' day. Hodges netted 8-of-16 shots, including 3-of-6 from behind the three-point arc. He had a team-high five steals, grabbed three rebounds and took a charge. He also was a perfect 9-for-9 at the charity stripe, a spot the Bronchos have struggled at all season long. As a team Holly hit on 25-of-34 free throws. Meanwhile, the Blue Devils only attempted 18 free throws, netting just 10 of them.

"Coach put the stats up yesterday and we were shooting like 67 percent as a team which he said was one of the lowest (percentages Holly has ever had)," Hodges said. "We just have to make shots."

Holly scored eight of the game's first 10 points and led 8-2 after Hodges hoop inside with 4:59 left in the opening quarter. After that point, the Blue Devils cut the gap to just three. The first time came about 14 seconds later on an Isaac Colson layin and converted free throw off a foul while attempting the layup. The Blue Devils were within 8-5 at that point, and only trailed 15-10 after a Andrew Foerster layin with 24 seconds left in the opening quarter.

The Blue Devils cut the gap down to three one more time. The final time came on a breaking layup by Colson, making it a 19-16 Holy lead. However, Holly went on a 13-2 run, blowing the Bronchos' edge to 32-19 late in the opening half. The Blue Devils rarely saw the lead sneak out of double-digits after that point.

"We talked a ton about transition defense and not being in the dead zone," Lake Fenton coach Jake Erway said. "We were just not doing our job on defense. We were jogging back to half-court instead of sprinting back to protect our basket. I know they had at least 10 transition points in the second quarter



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | DAVID TROPPENS

Lake Fenton's Chris Bell (left) tries to find a way to dribble by Holly's Blake Staffne in the Bronchos' 74-48 victory on Tuesday.

and that kept it from being a close game (at halftime)."

Fouls really hurt the Blue Devils as well. Miller and Jake Zielinski suffered foul troubles, each having three in the first half. Miller, one of Lake Fenton's most potent offensive players, played about eight minutes due to foul troubles.

"It's tough when Jalen Miller and Jake Zielinski had three fouls in the first half," Erway said. "Jalen is arguably our best player and I think he played eight minu-

ets tonight. That hurts a ton. We had 20 turnovers and our goal was 13. Twenty is way too much."

Kyle Woodruff finished with 18 points, while Paris Partee netted 10 points and grabbed five rebound for Holly. Adam Tooley had a team-high 12 rebounds and five assists. Lake Fenton didn't have a player who scored double-digits. Zielinski finished with nine points with six of those coming in the fourth quarter. Colson finished with eight points.

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PREP REPORT

BOYS BASKETBALL

► **Rochester 51, Linden 39:** The Eagles hit on just 13-of-53 shots during the contest, resulting in the home loss. Linden took care of the ball, committing seven turnovers, but the Eagles couldn't make up for their cold shooting.

Cole Sarkon led the Eagles with eight points, while Garrett Strang, Logan Steiert, Tyler Hoerberling and Gavin Lund had six points each. Hunter Michael collected seven rebounds.

► **Rochester JV 46, Linden 20:** Linden was paced by Corbin Sines who finished with six points and seven rebounds. Noah Giacomantonio had four points, seven rebound and five steals, while Blake Knox had four points, four rebounds and four steals.

► **Rochester Freshman 58, Linden 26:** Travis Kloczek led the Eagles with 10 points, while Richie Linn netted four points.

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SOBRIETY**Continued from Page 7A**

Sucher describes her life now as “wonderful.” She has accomplished things she never thought possible, such as earning her GED (General Education Diploma), going to college, earning an associate’s degree and starting her career as a remote medical coder from home.

“I am closer to my family than ever and this is all because I am sober,” Sucher said. “The long lasting friendships I have made on this journey will be with me forever. Helping others is what I live for now, always giving back what others have given me over the years. I couldn’t ask for anything more in my life.

But it wasn’t always this way.

“I started drinking at the age of 21,” said Sucher. “I did sneak wine coolers before that age but my drinking really took flight on my 21st birthday and lasted up until my last

DUI (driving under the influence).”

Sucher entered the court system in approximately 2003 when she got her first drunk driving ticket.

“It all went downhill from there,” she said. “I ended up getting three drunk drivings all together, but was blessed to have two of them run concurrently with each other so I did not face a felony.”

Sucher’s problems started when she quit school while in the 11th grade and continued making bad choices.

“The result of that as I got older was very low self esteem and just thinking that I was just not smart enough,” Sucher said. “This is when I started drinking heavily to numb the pain of not being good enough. Drinking gave me courage and made me more outgoing. Now I know that I can do all those things sober.”

Sobriety Court is an intense program.

“You have to do Breath-A-lyzers, random drug tests, counseling, AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) three times a

week to daily, get a GED and a job, and attend routine appointments with your probation officer and routine court hearings with your judge,” said Sucher. “It was very intense but for me, that is what I needed.”

Sucher said her parents gave her tremendous support.

“I am so grateful for my mom taking me to all my appointments and also going to all the court hearings,” she said.

“One of my favorite parts of Sobriety Court, oddly enough, was the court hearings with my judge at the time, Dana Fortinberry. She was so invested in this program and in us. She pushed us because she knew we could accomplish amazing things if we just tried.

“I remember saying to her at the end of Sobriety Court, ‘thank you for everything, I am so grateful’,” Sucher said. “Her response to me and I carry this with me to this day was ‘you did the work.’”

Continued on next page



JOIN US FOR OUR HOLIDAY WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Gatherings

**4:00pm in the
Family Life Center**

**9:00pm & 11:00pm
in the Sanctuary**





Fenton United Methodist Church

119 S. Leroy Street • Fenton • 810-629-2132
www.fentonUMC.com • FentonUMC.office@gmail.com

Welcome to
Linden Presbyterian’s

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

7:00pm

LESSONS & CAROLS

10:00am • December 27th



Linden Presbyterian Church
119 W. Broad St. • Linden
(810)735-5755

St. Rita Parish of Holly

Invites and Welcomes All
to Celebrate Christmas!

**Communal Rite of Reconciliation
with Individual Confession
and Absolution**

Monday, December 21 • 7:00 pm

Nativity of the Lord Vigil Mass

Thursday, December 24
4pm, 6pm, 11pm

Nativity of the Lord Mass

Friday, December 25
9am & 11am

Vigil of Mary, The Mother of God Mass

Thursday, December 31 • 7pm

Mary, The Mother of God Mass

Friday, January 1 • 10am



309 E. Maple St. Holly,
Michigan 48442
248-634-4841

Central Church of the Nazarene

1261 W. Bristol Rd. Flint, MI 48507

centralnazarene.com

facebook.com/flintcentralchurch

Christmas Eve

6:30 PM



Join with us for CHRISTMAS EVE

Pastors:
David Eshleman & Larry McMellen

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

503 S. LEROY • FENTON, MICHIGAN
810-629-7801

www.ffpc.org • Visit us on Facebook

Candlelight Family Service.....

7:00 p.m.

Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 p.m.

"Sobriety Court made me take a long look at myself and do what I needed to do to make me a better person," she added. "My life was falling apart before Sobriety Court, but with the court and all of the people that make this program happen, I got another chance to be who I always wanted to be. You get what you put into it and the more you open up and try to face your issues during this whole process, the better you will become."

What would have happened without Sobriety Court?

"I don't like to think of 'what if' because I believe that everything happens for a reason and I thank God every day for Sobriety Court and all the wonderful people that helped me along the way," said Sucher. "I will say though that I probably would have continued drinking and making very poor decisions that would have ended in jail time or death."

Jenny's judge

Former Oakland County Judge Dana Fortinberry said, "Sobriety Court was, without a doubt, the most rewarding program I participated in during my time as judge of the 52-2 District Court."

"Working together with the probation department, the prosecuting attorney, the defense bar and many generous and supportive community members, we provided a strict framework in which offenders struggling with alcohol addiction could get sober and reclaim their lives."

"As these determined program participants attained and maintained sobriety, they also became loving

and stable family members, excellent employees, great role models for other program participants and very productive members of society. These are accomplishments most of them never thought they could make happen in their lives, but each success in the program added self confidence, which then fueled even more success."

"Our bi-weekly courtroom sessions were filled with serious discussions about life choices, but also with laughter and tears of joy," Fortinberry said. "I'm still in touch with several of our program graduates, and I'm always amazed when they thank me. I tell them honestly that it is I who should be thanking them. The determination and courage they demonstrated along

their individual journeys to sobriety are imprinted upon my heart forever."

Fortinberry said when she retired from the bench, the Sobriety Court program had a 94 percent graduation rate and a zero percent recidivism rate.

"That means no one came out of the program and got arrested again for drunk driving, which is obviously a huge benefit to the community," said Fortinberry.

Of her graduate, Jenny Sucher, she said, "Jenny is an amazing young lady who truly accomplished a complete 180-degree turn in her life while she was in the program. I respect her immensely and I think everyone will know why when they read her story."

JOIN US FOR OUR HOLIDAY WORSHIP

Hope Lutheran Church

**SHARING THE
GREATEST
GIFT OF ALL**



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
5:00PM & 7:00PM

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
10:00AM

Pastor Jim Rolf

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Lutheran
Church**

806 Main St. Fenton (810) 629-7861
www.trinitylcmsfenton.com
Pastor Dean G. Dumbrille

✦

A SAVOR IS BORN!
Please join us as we proclaim the
wonderful news!

**Christmas Eve Candlelight
Communion Service**
December 24 at 4:00PM, 7:00PM,
and 11:00PM

**New Year's Eve
Communion Service**
December 31 at 7:00PM




**Tyrone Community
Presbyterian
Church**

Pastor Linda Living - Hawley

Join us for our
Christmas Eve Service
Thursday, December 24th at 6:00 pm



9141 Hartland Rd. • Fenton
810-750-0350



**COME
SHARE
HIS LIGHT!**

**Christmas Eve Service
@ 7:00 P.M.**



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**TYRONE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Sunday Worship Service
December 20th
10:15 a.m.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight
Communion Service**

December 24th
6:00 p.m.

10235 White Lake Rd. Fenton, MI 48430 • 810-629-1261
www.tyronepc.org

Candle Light Service at all Gatherings

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GATHERINGS

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WWW.RANDYWISEBUICKGMC.COM



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

For the event, Joseph was portrayed by Kyle Jacobs, and the Virgin Mary by Hannah Clement. The manger featured actual animals that were tended to between group stops. See more photos online at tctimes.com.

A walk through the Old Testament

■ Tyrone Covenant brings story of Christ's birth to life through annual Jesus Walk

By Tim Jagielo

tjagiello@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

Tyrone Twp. — The Old Testament prophets were alive and well at the Tyrone Covenant Presbyterian Church Jesus Walk, held last weekend.

On Saturday at dusk, the fog and lilting music created a mystical atmosphere.

Families were led by lantern through the wooded trails to hear from many Old Testament character portrayals, including Zecharia, who was visited by the angel Gabriel.

Zecharia was portrayed by Pastor Jim

Mascow, who was enjoying the balmy weather. "We're used to blizzards," he said, breaking character after a group had moved on. "We do this regardless of the weather."

There are several stations, all set up in large, re-purposed construction forms for concrete, played by members of the church. The shepherds have real livestock, which include sheep, goats and alpacas.

The nativity was also live — save for the doll in place of baby Jesus.

The walk's final station represented Christ in the modern world, and groups were then led back inside for snacks and light refreshments.

Preparation for the annual event takes all year, but kicks off in November.

“We do this regardless of the weather.”

Jim Mascow
Tyrone Covenant
Presbyterian Church pastor

HOT LINE CONTINUED

QUITE A CHRISTMAS gift again this year for the president, his family, relatives and friends of his daughters. A free vacation to Hawaii, all \$15 million expenses in courtesy of the taxpayers.

ALL YOU TRUMP critics better open your eyes and your minds. He is the only candidate who is not enslaved by the current corrupt system. Unless you want the same old immoral liars, cheats and thieves that call themselves Democrats and Republicans, vote for Trump.

NOTICE THAT OBAMA never goes head to head with Putin or Netanyahu. He sends one of his minions to do the talking.

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THE COUNTY Times

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Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!



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are coming to town!

Mega: Saturday, December 19th • 4:30- 6:30pm

Bostons: Sunday, December 20th • 6:00 - 8:00pm



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Coney Island

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810-750-2234



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Vic Canever
FENTON



We will be closed Christmas Eve day and Christmas Day for our employees to enjoy the holiday with their families

TO ALL OUR LOYAL CUSTOMERS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES: HAVE A SAFE & MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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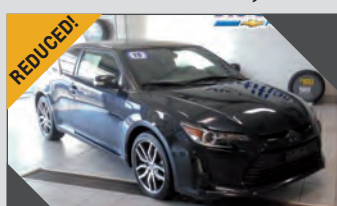
2015 CHEVROLET SILVERADO WORK TRUCK
Stk# 1332100A **\$21,000**



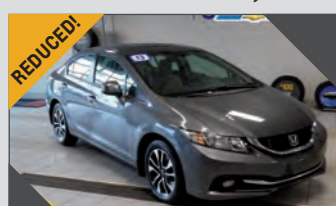
2008 CHEVROLET AVALANCHE 1500 LTZ
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