

Fenton well represented in Orange Bowl

Local athletes proud of their five years with Michigan football program

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

During their times with the Michigan Wolverines' football program, Fenton residents Kenny Allen and Matthew Godin have seen their share of highs and lows.

The program went through some of its greatest lows in 2014 when the Wolverines finished 5-7 overall, not even

See **FOOTBALL** on 19A



Kenny Allen



Matthew Godin

TRI-COUNTY TIMES
SUBMITTED PHOTO
Kenny Allen kicks a field goal during a University of Michigan football game. The Fenton resident is Michigan's starting place kicker and punter.



PAGE 1B
RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH THESE LOCAL NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS

Weekend Times

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016

2012 - 2013 - 2014 NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

School shooting plot suspect gets probation

Sentencing for third teen scheduled for next month

By Hannah Ball

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

One teen involved in the Linden school shooting plot was sentenced to five years probation in Genesee County Circuit Court Tuesday, Dec. 20.

Ryan Stevens, 19, spent nearly a year in jail after being arrested in October 2015 due to a social media post indicating he and two others, Kody Brewer,

See **PROBATION** on 20A

SUMMARY

Ryan Stevens, 19, one of the defendants in the Linden shooting plot case, was sentenced to five years probation on Tuesday, after spending nearly a year in jail.



The Reason for the Season



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELO

Jim Mascow and Beth Symanzik portray Joseph and Mary on Dec. 17 during the Tyrone Covenant Presbyterian Jesus Walk, an interactive, strolling rendition of the story of the birth of Jesus. Visitors are led by torch through the woods where they visit several stations, representing passages from the Bible. The event took place on Dec. 17 and 18.

Township approves 11 condos at Lang's Marina site

All units will have access to Lake Fenton

By Hannah Ball

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

The Fenton Township Board of Trustees approved, in a 5-1 vote, the rezoning of a parcel on Sonora Drive in order to turn

the old Lang's Marina site into condominiums.

There will be 11 condominium units — three will be lakefront and eight will share lake access. Six of the lots include attached single family units fronting Ford Street, three will be lakefront on detached single family units on

Lake Fenton, and the other two will be non-lakefront detached single family units.

The boat launch will be restricted to fire department use only. The plan allows for 10- by 20-foot dock slips, which have been reduced from 12- by 25-foot

See **CONDOS** on 20A



SUMMARY

The Fenton Township Board of Trustees voted to rezone the Lang's Marina site on Sonora Drive. The Lake Fenton waterfront location will feature condominiums. The developer is hoping to start construction spring of 2017.

The Tri-County Times offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26. The Times will not be publishing a Midweek edition on Wednesday, Dec. 28.

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS, MERRY CHRISTMAS.



Reality check — 'In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is incomprehensible to me how there can be so many hungry children, so many children without an education, so many poor.' — Pope Francis



One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly. Get a photo first. You'll never regret it."



Thank you, fellow town-folk. In just a few short weeks since I first counted all the beautiful Christmas lights, there are more than twice as many now on my nightly walk. Looks beautiful. Merry Christmas."



COMMENT OF THE WEEK

Merry Christmas to all. May your day be filled with family time, Christmas cheer, and a sense of giving and love for this wonderful holiday. Have a happy New Year also."

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

The Fenton Department of Public Works (DPW) clears sidewalks near City Hall in 2015. The DPW will have a crew on call for snow emergencies on Christmas Day.

Surprising number of people work on Christmas Day

■ Tow truck drivers, gas station attendants, medical personnel and many others on the job Dec. 25

By Hannah Ball

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

On Christmas Day, many will wake up to the joy of opening presents, making breakfast, and enjoying family and relaxation time in front of their Christmas tree.

However, not everyone gets the holidays off work.

One Tyrone Township resident, Celene Howard, will spend the day hoping no one needs her medical attention. Howard, who is a registered nurse at University of Michigan Frankel Cardiovascular Center, is working from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

Certain gas stations are open on Christmas as well. Here, a Holly Beacon and Bridge employee sells lotto tickets in January.

Christmas Day and gets paid triple the amount of a normal work day.

"I don't want to work Christmas, but I don't have kids yet so it's not so bad. I'm hoping the day will be quiet," she said.

"I hope for everyone's sake that I am bored at work. And since I work 7 to 7 on Christmas Day, we are opening gifts and having Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve," she said.

Howard is one of millions of Americans who will work this Sunday, Dec. 25. A quarter of Americans will be working on Christmas Day, according to USA Today.com.

This includes doctors and nurses, gas stations attendants, airport employees, firefighters, police, emergency responders, towing companies, and many other professions and businesses.

See **WORK** on 15A

Christmas by the numbers

■ Ninety-four percent of all Americans celebrate Christmas

By Hannah Ball

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

Christmas is a billion-dollar net-worth holiday, with consumers buying gift after gift, trees, decorations, food, and other holiday items. According to the National Retail Federation, 94 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas.

Here's Christmas by the numbers from 2015.

Consumer spending

In 2016, holiday retail sales reached more than \$655 billion. Christmas retail growth has grown 3.6 percent from 1999 to 2016.

The online e-commerce holiday sale season amounted to more than \$94 billion. Approximately 46 percent of holiday shopping will take place online.

Consumers spend on average \$805 on Christmas, and that number is expected to rise this year.

Presents

The United States Postal Service estimates it will ship 630 million

See **NUMBERS** on 20A



There are over 1 billion cookies left out for Santa every Christmas Eve, and he will eat approximately 336 million of them.



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Come *Heller* high water

andrewheller@tctimes.com

Just one more time please

Dear Santa:

If I could have one thing for Christmas this year, I wouldn't ask for a car. I wouldn't ask for world peace. I wouldn't ask for a winning lottery ticket.

I would ask to feel like my 10-year-old self on Christmas just one more time.

I would ask for the smell of the Scotch pine my dad would always get. No spiky, scentless short needle trees for him. He was a long needle guy all the way, and so am I.

I would ask for one more chance to trim the tree with everybody, even though Dad would always growl at us for bunching the ornaments too close and we kids (six of us) would always squabble. Dad's gone now. So is brother, Dan. I miss them terribly all year, but especially at Christmas.

I would ask for one more tree squint. Tree squinting — where you fuzz your vision and the bulbs double in size and shoot daggers of light in all directions — was a thing I did as a kid. For some reason, it made me feel peaceful and tingly all at once, which is an odd combination.

I would ask for one more 5 a.m. Christmas morning paper route run with my dad. I used to deliver the Milwaukee Journal and Milwaukee Sentinel. The Christmas Day editions were huge and the snow was usually neck deep to a little kid. (I grew up in the Upper Peninsula and never, ever knew a brown Christmas.) Dad — who wouldn't do this any other day of the year, rain, sleet or blizzard — would drive me around so I'd be done by 6:30, which was present time.

I would ask for one more chance to sit breathlessly atop the stairs with my brothers and sister, waiting, waiting, waiting for Mom and Dad to give us the all-clear to hit the living room. (For some reason, they always made a big show of going down first to make sure Santa came.)

I would ask for one more Heller present-fest. You've never seen the likes, trust me. We did it up big. By the time we were done, you couldn't see the floor. Sometimes



you'd step on the dog.

I would ask for one more Christmas with my grandmothers, Rose and Jean, who would always — like my mom and dad — insist on being the last to open their gifts because, to them, watching the kids open theirs was the best part of Christmas. At the time, I didn't understand how that could be so, but I got it the second I had kids of my own. Now I do the same thing.

I would ask for one more huge Heller Christmas breakfast (we went to church the night before). One more all-day game-fest. One more huge family dinner (thanks, Mom). One more chance to cook a steak (his annual gift) for my dog Barney. One more endless roaring fire. (Dad would burn most of the wrapping paper and boxes.)

But most of all, I would like — just one more time — to feel the wonder, magic and excitement of Christmas the way I felt it back then.

I miss it. Can you give me that, Santa? I'll be waiting.

Sincerely,
Andy.

“But most of all, I would like — just one more time — to feel the wonder, magic and excitement of Christmas the way I felt it back then.”

Hotlines

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.

IF YOU TRULY believe that the King starting a column with 'left wing nuts' is 'hateful rhetoric,' you are delusional. His insightful commentary is delightful and thought provoking. You just dislike him because he is a conservative. Perhaps you are the hateful one.

MY HUSBAND SAYS all he wants for Christmas is for me to order the 'Midweek Times' for him so he can once again read Foster Childs' 'The King.' He's tired of reading Heller's crap.

CONSERVATIVES ARE REALLY logical. They're all in favor of the unborn. But once you are actually born, you're on your own. No food stamps, no day care, no school lunches, no welfare, no free medical care. Your fine right up until the moment you are born, then you are (blanked).

MAYBE COMRADE PUTIN will release comrade Trump's tax returns.

AS I READ that the 'administration suggests that Putin was involved in U.S. hacking' to help Trump, I wonder why the administration-controlled FBI and Justice Department did not find the emails, or if they did and chose to keep them secret to help Clinton?

JUST READ TCTIMES article *Michigan Votes*. Senate Bill 1163 will give a for-profit corporation a subsidy (welfare) that

could amount to tens of millions of dollars. Why does no one complain about giving millions of dollars to corporations that are making profits?

YES, IT'S TERRIBLE the Russians hacked into our system. But, don't you think the content of the emails was worse? Regardless of how they became public, let's discuss their content and what they meant.

A HOT LINE that asserted that Mr. Obama created 12 million jobs. The only jobs Obama created are those where the government has contracts with private industry. Even a Democrat can determine that 12 million is not possible.

TO THE HOT-LINER who listed Obama's accomplishments, I agree with you completely. I stated I felt Obama was ineffective, not to criticize him. When Republicans took control of the house in 2011, they ceased working with him, forcing him to govern by presidential edict.

MY POINT WAS — that it is hypocritical for Trump to say it is wrong to do business in Mexico while he does business in other countries. You should be able to do business where you choose.

WANT TO STOP illegal immigration? Have really big fines on those who hire them, how about \$50,000 for each? Price of nine holes of golf would sure go up.

PUTIN'S INGENIOUS WEAPON to influence the election — the truth. The revelation of truth is not a bad thing. Putin simply stole and gave to the American people what correctly belongs to the American people. The truth.

DEMOCRATS COULDN'T CARE less about national security. They are only upset about Russian hacking because it undermined their ability to collectively create and maintain lies.

POETIC JUSTICE: A politician who intentionally violates cyber-security requirements is brought down by hacking.

YOU CAN BLAME Director Comey for Hillary's demise all you want if it makes you feel better. Truth is, Hillary is responsible for her own demise. Next election, do not pick a corrupt, lying, do-nothing candidate for the office of presidency and I'm sure your luck will improve.

EVERY VILLAGE NEEDS an idiot. I nominate the person who said that Castro and Trump are alike.
See **HOT LINE** throughout Times

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and Happy New Year*

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How do you spend Christmas Day?

Compiled by Tess DeGayner, intern

streettalk



"I spend it with my family and we eat a lot of food at my grandma's."

Charlotte Muraske
Fenton



"I usually spend it with my family."

Veronica Baran
Tyrone Township



"We always celebrate it on Christmas Eve so we don't have to wake up early on Christmas Day."

Donny Bar
Linden



"When I was a kid, we would just open one present early and then we did the rest on Christmas Day."

Kim Broom
Fenton



"My oldest son and two grandkids live right here so they'll come and my youngest and his wife will celebrate it with us."

Edward Farrell Jr.
Fenton

Less than a week to avoid vehicle registration fee hike

■ You can buy tags before Dec. 31, even if not due until June 2017

By Vera Hogan

vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

The day Michigan drivers have all been dreading is almost here, the day they have to shell out 20 percent more in registration fees for passenger vehicles and trucks.

The fee hike goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2017.

But there is good news for those who wish to be proactive.

According to the Secretary of State's (SOS) office, owners can register their vehicles up to six months early and avoid the 20 percent fee increase — if they register before Dec. 31.

According to SOS, early registration can be done online at www.expresssos.com or www.michigan.gov/sos.

"You can renew early for the lower fee as long as you register before Dec. 31," said an SOS spokesperson.

The increase is part of a \$1.2-billion road funding package that in addition to registration fees, will hike fuel taxes. It was signed by Gov. Rick Snyder on Nov. 3, 2015.

The road package is aimed mainly at funding major road fixes in Michigan.

According to the most recent data from the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), 38 percent of Michigan's roads are in poor to mediocre condition. The 2013 report claims 27.4 percent of Michigan bridges are structurally deficient and/or functionally obsolete.

The annual total for extra vehicle repairs and operating costs due to driving on roads that need fixing is just over \$2.5 billion per year in Michigan, which equates to \$357 per motorist.

Michigan's road funding package calls for \$600 million a year from the state's general fund to fix and maintain Michigan roads and bridges.

The \$1.2-billion won't be fully devoted to transportation until 2021. Many critics said major road fixes are overdue and needed immediately.

WHAT YOU MISSED in the MIDWEEK TIMES

Compiled by Vera Hogan

The following are stories you might have missed in the **Wednesday, Dec. 21, Midweek Times**. To subscribe and receive both the Midweek and Sunday Weekend editions, please call (810) 629-8282.

Don't step on that lake ice just yet

The ice on area lakes is about 2 inches thick, not strong enough to walk on, according to sheriff's deputies. The ice needs to be 4 to 6 inches thick.



Research leads historian to plane crash site in Holly

In 1954, a military jet went down in a farm that is now the Holly State Recreation Area. The pilot did not survive.

News briefs

ARGENTINE TOWNSHIP AND MICHIGAN REPRESENTATIVE HONOR PAST TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

The Argentine Township Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution honoring former Township Supervisor Robert Cole at its meeting on Monday. Cole was supervisor for 23 years, from 1988-1995, 1996-2000, and 2004-2016. "He has faithfully carried out duties of that office to the best of his abilities... Bob loves Argentine Township with his whole heart and truly cares about the community and the people in it," the resolutions reads. State Rep. Joe Graves attended the meeting and honored Cole for his work. "I had the honor to serve with Bob for four years when I was the clerk from 2004 to 2008. "It is with great honor and personal privilege to join with well-wishers and the entire Argentine Township community in saluting Bob Cole as he is most deservedly recognized for his years of dedicated public service," Graves said.

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News briefs

ARGENTINE TOWNSHIP HONORS PAST TRUSTEE

The Argentine Township Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution honoring former Trustee Teresa Ciesielski at its meeting on Monday. Ciesielski was a trustee from 2006 to 2016. "Teresa has used her professional knowledge and efforts toward community interest toward advancement while serving as township trustee. Teresa has served on the zoning board of appeals, Shiawassee River Coalition, and has spent many hours on the L.A.F.F. (Linden, Argentinae, Fenton, Lake Fenton) pathway and took these positions with due diligence," the resolution reads.

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seeing you in 2017!

Multiple-vehicle collision victim speaks out

■ 'I have never ever been so scared in my life, for my life.'

By Hannah Ball

hball@tctimes.com; 810-433-6792

One Fenton woman who was in the 37-car pileup on I-75 Dec. 10 has a message for drivers.

"I have never ever been so scared in my life, for my life. In a blinding snowstorm, slow the heck down. Keep both hands on the wheel. I don't care how important that cigarette is," said Cheryl Burtch.

SUMMARY

■ One woman involved in the 37-car pileup on I-75 Dec. 10 has a message for drivers — slow down and keep both hands on the wheel.

She was driving home from Great Lakes Crossing on I-75 in the fast lane. Near the Holly Road exit, the driver of a vehicle, which she believes was an SUV, had lost control of their vehicle in the slow lane and crossed two lanes of traffic.

"I can still remember



Cheryl Burtch's car was damaged in a crash on I-75, just moments before the 37-car pileup on Dec. 10. Behind her car, the vehicles involved in the pileup are visible.

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTO

seeing that screaming face looking at me," she said. Burtch swerved, but the vehicle ended up hitting the front of her car on the driver's side. Her car fishtailed, but she regained control of her car and pulled over to call 911.

"If I hadn't had both hands on the wheel, if I was smoking a cigarette, if I had been talking on the cell phone, I wouldn't have been able to get my car back under control," she said.

The airbag deployed and Burtch wasn't injured. Traffic was passing so close to her, she said, and visibility was low.

"I was sitting on the side of the road, seeing tankers and school buses going by too fast," she said. "If one of these guys lost control, a tanker could jackknife and take me out."

She pulled out her phone and opened up Facebook to message her kids. As she was typing, she looked up.

"I looked in the rearview mirror and watched a guy do three flips right behind me," she said. The car didn't hit her, but it flipped off the road. Burtch said she had trouble getting out of her car, because her foot was stuck, but she was eventually able to get out to help.

"As I got out to go help that guy, I could just hear the 'boom boom boom.' You know cars were colliding," she said. "It was just crazy."

Michigan State Police troopers arrived on scene soon after. People were taken to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

"The officers taking care of all of that mess, they were so efficient. It was like Batman to the rescue. It seemed like half of Michigan showed up," she said.

Burtch urges people to keep two hands on the wheel at all times, especially while driving in snowy conditions.

"In an instant, you're going to need to respond with both hands on the wheel," she said.

“If one of these guys lost control, a tanker could jackknife and take me out.”
Cheryl Burtch
Fenton resident

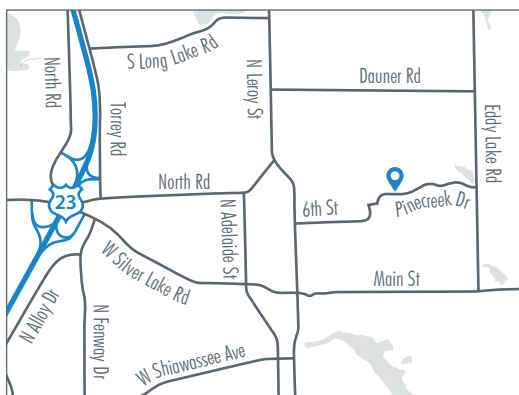
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Holly man's treasures to air on 'American Pickers' show on Dec. 26

On Monday, Dec. 26, viewers can catch a local man in a segment of "American Pickers," on the History Channel. The show will air at 9 p.m. American Pickers stars Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz visited John Lauve in July. They were interested in Lauve's classic collection of cars, motorcycles, WWII-era auto industry artwork, and "odds and ends." Lauve said scouts were sent out ahead of time to make sure he had some valuable items. He sold them a 1960s Norton Motorcycle, a Mini Cooper, corporate artwork and some other items. Lauve said the reality stars were knowledgeable and personable.

our town

Meet JIM WIEGAND

- Pastor at The Freedom Center
- Husband and father
- Celebrates Christmas every day

By Sally Rummel

news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

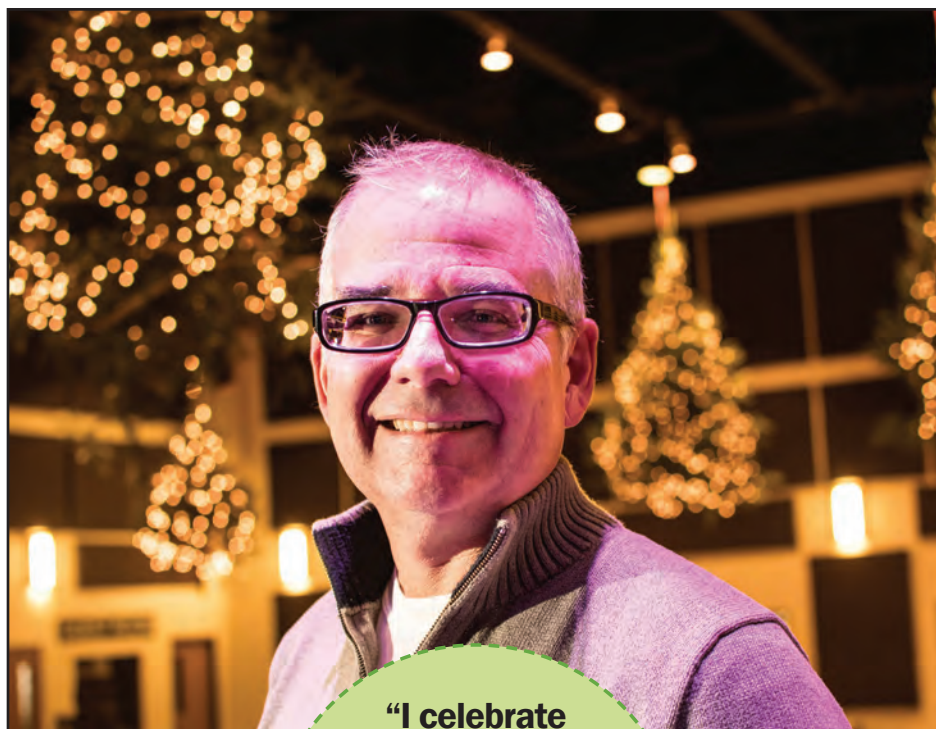
Jim Wiegand has served as pastor of The Freedom Center in Fenton, along with his wife, Dena, for almost 22 years. Prior to coming to Fenton at the ages of 29 and 26, respectively, he and Dena had been youth pastors at three different churches for 10 years. He loves the significance of Christmas, as the celebration of the birth of God's Son, as well as the family and community traditions that go along with the holiday.

I have heard you had an interesting life story before becoming a Christian. Would you please share that story?

My parents lived in Florida and I lived in Highland. I was 16 years old, living with friends and at times, in the back seat of my 1965 Buick Electra I had some debilitating addictions and was failing at school. My life was a series of mistakes and bad choices that caused me to be very fearful for a kid that age.

One day, two sisters invited me to a concert. When you haven't bathed in a month or so and any girl asks you to do something, the answer is yes! It turned out to be an outreach to kids my age.

The music was loud, hard and fun and I was having a great time (even though I was sober at the time). When the music suddenly stopped, one of the band members started talking about Jesus. It was in those moments that everything started to change. I walked into that concert very alone, very lost, but as he spoke, it was as if he knew me. It was like everyone else was there and somehow, he had chosen me to speak to. He answered my questions I'd



"I celebrate Christmas in my own way every day, so it's kind of fun when the world around you starts singing along."

Jim Wiegand
Pastor of The Freedom Center and lover of Christmas

never asked anyone. He addressed my doubts, my fears, my life and my destiny.

I can honestly say when I walked into that room I didn't believe in God and when I walked out I not only believed in Him but also believed that He believed in me. I suddenly had a relationship with my Creator.

Since that day, I've continued to walk with Jesus, who has been extraordinarily patient with me. It's like He's been teaching me how to walk for 35 years. Some days I get it right. Other days I'm not even close. All the days, I know He's still there, believing in me. **How can people today find meaning in the celebration of Christmas?**

I love Christmas and forgive me for saying so, but I also really enjoy the commercial part. I love walking into a local business and hearing, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King." I celebrate Christmas in my own way every day so it's kind of fun when the world around you starts singing along. To find meaning in the celebration of Christmas, I'd say it's a buffet. Find what you like about it and start eating. If it's people, enjoy them. If it's giving and receiving gifts, bury the people around you with those things. If it's shopping, then shop 'til you drop for the people that you love.

The only real mistake you can make is to miss what it's all about. It's the celebration of the birth of God's Son, given to the world as an offering of His love and the price that had to be paid for a home-

TRI-COUNTY TIMES
TIM JAGIELO

Jim Wiegand, senior pastor of The Freedom Center in Fenton, stands in the main sanctuary on Wednesday beneath the main stage lights.

less 16-year-old kid like me.

Obviously, you 'work' on Christmas. How do you find time to celebrate with your own family?

We have two services on Christmas Eve, at 6 and 8 p.m. We'll really enjoy that as a church and as family. My whole family is involved in the music, speaking and all the tech that goes behind it. This has always been

our Christmas tradition. We love seeing everyone all dressed up and singing the songs we only sing this time of year. I can't think of a better way for us to enjoy this day.

Because we have so many young families, we are actually closed on Christmas Day so that everyone can enjoy being together with the ones they love.

Did you raise your own children to believe in Santa Claus?

Christmas is one more expression of our faith and one more excuse to overeat and give gifts but beyond that, we live with this story as the centerpiece of our lives every day.

We told our kids honestly that Santa was a really good man who loved Jesus with all of his heart and gave gifts to children. These people who dress in the red suits are pretending to be like that man who lived long ago. Then we'd tell them not to tell their friends because some parents liked to let their children believe in Santa and we wouldn't want to ruin their fun.

What is your favorite Christmas tradition?

We get together with everyone who will join my family at the Chinese Buffet in Fenton for Christmas lunch at 12:30 p.m. The thing that makes it corny is that you have to come in your pajamas. Last year, we had over 100 people join us for lunch in their pajamas and it was a blast. I'd love it if anyone reading this wants to join us. **What do you hope to find under the Christmas tree for you this year?**

The health and happiness of my family and friends. More people helping us feed the hungry children of Haiti. The smiles on people's faces while they eat lunch together in their pajamas. Peace on earth and good will toward men.

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From all of us at Pointe Animal Hospital

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



Local family coming 'home for the holidays'

■ Entire Podjun family traveling from Wyoming and Kansas for special Christmas here

By Sally Rummel

news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

This Christmas, and all year long, there are angels who walk amongst us.

That's the belief of former Argentine Township resident Mary Ann Podjun, who opened up a Christmas card on Tuesday, sent by someone in Genesee County, and two crisp \$100 bills tumbled out onto the dining table at their Casper, Wyoming home.

The note inside the card said, "So sorry to hear about your mama. Praying for you all. Hope this will help a little with travel expenses."

These "pennies from heaven" arrived just in time for the Podjun's long drive from Wyoming back to Michigan, a 1,400-mile trek that began on Thursday, Dec. 22 and just may be the last time this native Michigan family may be all together.

All five of the Podjun's immediate family, plus two spouses and their first grandchild, 11-month-old Sawyer Fleming, will have driven from Wyoming and



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Chris and Mary Ann Podjun family is pictured here at grandson Sawyer Fleming's baptism in Burlington, Kansas earlier this year.

Kansas back to Michigan, to visit Mary Ann's mom, Jennie Vincent, 96.

Vincent recently suffered a serious fall, fracturing three pelvic bones, and is unable to walk. Currently undergoing physical therapy at The Oaks at Woodfield in Grand Blanc, the family discovered that her health issues are a lot

more serious.

"This may be our last opportunity to all be together in Michigan," said Podjun. Her mother will be meeting great-grandson Sawyer for the very first time.

It's a happy but bitter-sweet time, looking back at the reasons Chris and Mary Ann Podjun had to

"This may be our last opportunity to all be together in Michigan."

Mary Ann Podjun
Formerly of Argentine Township

leave their Fenton home in the first place. Michigan's economy dried up by 2008, leaving the Podjuns desperate for a new start. Their fourth generation well-drilling business had nowhere to go but up, and contract work in the rich fields of uranium was waiting for them in Casper, Wyoming.

The future of their family hung in the balance, too, with Nathan still a student at Linden High School, Adrienne in college and Dan at the cusp of adulthood.

One by one, their three kids joined them out west, leaving their 23 years of memories of home on Lahring Road. The family also had to leave behind Mary Ann's mother, and her two sisters, Norma and Shirley.

Since that time, Mary Ann has had to say goodbye to Shirley, who passed away in 2013 from cancer. After caring for Shirley, Mary Ann has also faced

her own cancer diagnosis and is now in remission from follicular lymphoma.

In another twist of fate, the drilling business has all but dried up in Wyoming, when oil prices started to drop in the summer of 2015. "Uranium is now experiencing an historic 12-year low and currently there are no drilling projects and no income," said Podjun.

Since moving out west, two of their children, Dan and Adrienne have gotten married — Dan to Kristin and Adrienne to Weston, and Adrienne is now a mother herself.

All of these ups and downs of life, work and family will all be forgotten as the Podjun family gathers this Christmas weekend for what may be the last time.

"I know I'm not supposed to dig to figure out which kind and generous soul gave us this gift," said Podjun. "But I wonder if whoever did this can ever understand what this gift means to us this particular year, in this particular circumstance? Signed me, 'humbled beyond words. Merry Christmas!'"



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mary Ann Podjun and her mother, Jennie Vincent, are pictured in a visit from 2015.

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | TIM JAGIELLO

The above photo was taken at a family gathering. Rules of lighting, composition and timing all apply, even during chaotic events such as Christmas morning.

Take your best holiday photos

■ Photography do's and don'ts include lighting, composition and timing

By Tim Jagielo

tjagiello@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

The month of December is filled with events — many related to the holidays and New Year's Eve.

No doubt, many friends and families will be getting together providing for a rare photo opportunity of grandchildren, cousins, parents and grandparents.

As media editor, my job is to make photos and videos for the newspaper and occasionally, offer unsolicited advice on how to do that yourself or to do it a little better.

This column is written for a very casual photographer. If you're intermediate or advanced, you'll be saying, 'Yeah, I know, Tim,' often.

But whether you are shooting with a phone, or an actual camera, there are three main things to worry about — lighting, composition and timing.

Lighting

We'll start with light. Every photo needs light. If it looks 'kinda dim' to you, it will be too dark for your camera.

Be aware that window or outdoor light is the best. If you shoot with your back to a window, that will put sunlight on your subject. If there is no sunlight, turn all the lights on,



Tim Jagielo

'Don't's' to remember

Don't take photos with objects behind the subject's head. It will be distracting or funny, later on.

Don't take a photo without a subject. Many casual photos tend to be from too far away. Unless you have a zoom lens, get closer.

Don't hold it vertically. Some photos are best composed this way. But usually, photos that show more background, than the subject's legs will tell more of a story. Shoot horizontally first.

and use the flash on your camera, or phone.

If you set up a portrait, or posed photo, have them face a window, so the sunlight is mostly hitting one side of their face.

If it's after 5 p.m., which is likely, use the flash. If it looks dark at all, use the flash.

If you have a digital camera, try the nighttime portrait setting, if so equipped.

Composition

Once you know how the lighting is working, you'll have to compose the image. Most photos in these situations should be shot horizontally. It's a little awkward with a camera phone, but trust me. Also, keep the subject close. They should take up about one-quarter of the image, or more. Try placing them a little off center, also.

When photographing children, or animals try getting lower, for a different perspective.

See **PHOTOS** on 15A



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LOOKING BACK *at this week in* NATIONAL HISTORY

COMPILED BY VERA HOGAN

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 a.m. 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, one that continues today.

DEC. 26

1946: In Las Vegas, Nevada, mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel opens The Pink Flamingo Hotel & Casino at a total cost of \$6 million. The grand opening, however, was a flop. Bad weather kept many other Hollywood guests from arriving. And because gamblers had no rooms at the hotel, they took their winnings and gambled elsewhere. The casino lost \$300,000 in the first week of operation.

DEC. 27

2004: In a game against the San Diego Chargers, quarterback Peyton Manning of the Indianapolis Colts finds wide receiver Brandon Stokely in the end zone for his 49th touchdown pass of the season, breaking the previous National Football League (NFL) single-season record held by Dan Marino of the Miami Dolphins.

DEC. 28

1900: Convinced that her righteous campaign against alcohol justified her

aggressive tactics, Carry Nation attacks a saloon in Wichita, Kansas, shattering a large mirror behind the bar and throwing rocks at a titillating painting of Cleopatra bathing. Carry Nation's lifelong battle against alcohol reflected a larger reformist spirit that led to laws against everything from child labor to impure food and drugs.

DEC. 29

1985: The "Railway Rapist" attacks 19-year-old Alison Day and abducts her from a London train. Her strangled body was recovered two weeks later. Although the perpetrator had attacked and raped many women since 1982, this was his first murder. On a single night in July 1985, he struck three times within a few hours.

DEC. 30

1936: At 8 p.m., in one of the first sit-down strikes in the United States, autoworkers occupy the General Motors Fisher Body Plant Number One in Flint, Michigan. The autoworkers were striking to win recognition of the United Auto Workers (UAW) as the only bargaining agent for GM's workers. They also wanted to make the company to stop sending work to non-union plants and to establish a fair minimum wage scale, a grievance system and a set of procedures that would help protect assembly-line workers from injury. In all, the strike lasted 44 days.

DEC. 31

1985: Former teen idol Rick Nelson dies in plane crash in De Kalb, Texas. Nelson's career as a recording artist began fading and essentially ended in the early 1970s. He continued to tour frequently, however, and it was on one such tour that he boarded a chartered DC-3 in Guntersville, Alabama, bound for a New Year's Eve appearance in Dallas. Shortly before reaching Dallas, however, the cabin of Nelson's plane apparently filled with smoke due to a fire of undetermined origin. While the two pilots of the plane would survive, all seven passengers on board, including Nelson, were killed.

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The lottery, if necessary, is scheduled to occur on Friday, March 10, 2017 at 9:00am.

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HOT LINE CONTINUED

IF YOU'RE ONE of those people who spend their day railing against liberal-minded people, I suggest you crawl out of your parent's basement and get a life.

IT IS VERY possible that Obama and Carter were two of the best presidents in history and that is why they got the Nobel Prize. Some people cannot see the goodness in these two men because they don't want to see it.

THE FENTON MUSEUM is now a beautiful showcase and decorated beautifully for Christmas. Thank you to Leo Doan and the Fenton Museum Board who worked tirelessly to make it all finally happen.

IT'S BEEN A wonderful 2016, but I'm still sad about the DDA tearing down part of Dibbleville. Hopefully they will not continue destroying our history in 2017.

WE'VE HEARD THE rhetoric, read the promises, watched the claims, but has anybody seen any real change, any real action?

GOOD MEN AND women are in Iraq getting killed right now, and the only thing you can complain about is the size of a toilet paper roll?

MY HEART GOES out to Dr. Kasper's family. He was very personable. He was my eye doctor. I don't know what I'm going to do now. He was very patient.

TO THE DPW of Fenton, they're doing a fantastic job. I know they've been working around the clock to keep our streets safe for us. Way to go. Thank you.

I JUST WANT to say how beautiful I thought Fenton was this summer. I'm proud to say that I'm from this town. I've been here about 40 years. I love it here. So thank you for making it beautiful. Happy holidays.

I HEARD THAT Trump wants to take everyone's Obama phone away from them and give them alarm clocks.

WHAT THE PERSON is trying to say is that he's too stupid to handle a big roll of toilet paper. What an idiot.

THANK YOU SO much to the Miracle Box group that sends care packages to overseas troops. It warms my heart to know there are such thoughtful people in our community. God bless you and Merry Christmas. Please keep up the great work.

SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT of McCaslin Lake residents have lived here their entire lives. Don't move out here trying to change everything. We like it the way it is. Leave it alone.

YOU CAN SAY whatever you want to about Obama, but I wish he sure did have a couple more years he could run.

YOU'D THINK REPUBLICANS would be more mad at the people who interfered with our election, not the people who uncovered said interference. Russia is our enemy, not the CIA or FBI.

PEOPLE, WOULD YOU please shovel your sidewalks? There are some of us who do have to walk. Get your kids out there. Thank you.

IT WOULD BE nice to walk from the barber's Monday afternoon in Dibbleville to home on the south side of town. It's sidewalks almost all the way and 99 percent shoveled all the way, except for that one house in the neighborhood.

BACK IN TOWN for the holidays. I went to St. John's Mass. When did it become romper room? Kids jumping on the pews, running up and down the aisle. Come on parents, do that at your own house, not the Lord's house. Show some respect.



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4130 WATERLAND DR, METAMORA

LAKE LAPEER \$744,999
179+ frontage on all sports Lake Lapeer w/2.87 acres. 6072 SF of finished living space, 4 BDR & 4.5 BA. Private setting, open floor plan, soaring ceilings, great natural light, crown molding. Finished walkout basement w/ kitchenette, workout room, sauna & pole barn.



6239 CANTER CREEK TRL, GRAND BLANC

PINE HOLLOW ESTATES \$1,199,000
Stunning Pine Hollow Manor 7900+ SF w/Finished Walkout. Built 2002 @ a cost of 2.5+ Million, 5 BDR 7 BA home boasts luxury! Nestled on lavish grounds providing pure privacy. Marble floors, granite, cherry, Swarovski Crystal, Enkeboll trim, 24k Gold Fixtures.



16215 GRAND VIEW RD, FENTON

SILVER LAKE \$1,050,000
76' frontage on all sports Silver Lake in private gated Isle of Bordeaux community. 4700+ SF of living space w/stunning views. 5 BDR & 4.5 BA. Maintenance free brick exterior, 4 car attached garage and generator. Finished walkout lower level with full kitchen.



15145 PINWOOD TRL, LINDEN

SILVER LAKE \$1,990,000
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900 PLUM TREE LANE, FENTON

ORCHARD HILLS \$214,999
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4273 W FOUR LAKES DR, LINDEN

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6208 CANTER CREEK TRL, GRAND BLANC

PINE HOLLOW ESTATES \$899,999
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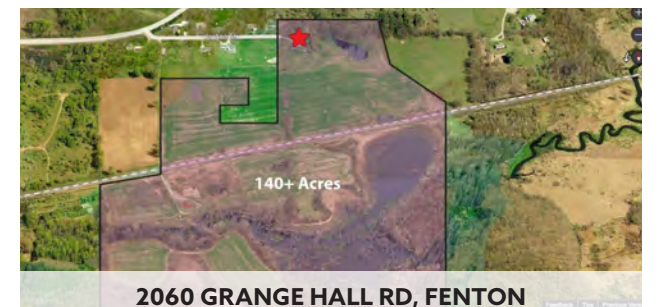
9351 THREAD RIVER DR, GOODRICH

ACREAGE \$349,999
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1048 GRANGE HALL RD, FENTON

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2060 GRANGE HALL RD, FENTON

ACREAGE \$750,000
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9850 BURNING TREE DR, GRAND BLANC

WARWICK HILLS \$1,199,999
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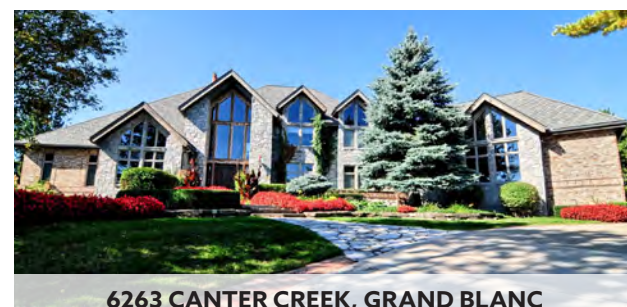
9161 SHINANGUAG DR, GOODRICH

LAKE SHINANGUAG \$549,999
100' frontage on all sports Lake Shinanguag, 4040 SF of finished living space, 4 BDR and 3 BA. Open floor plan, great natural light, hardwood floors, beautiful stone fireplace, gorgeous kitchen features granite, prep sink, & wine fridge. Large deck & patio!



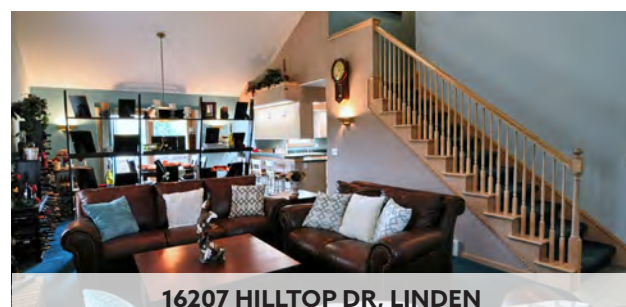
1500 TRIPLE OAK DR, FENTON

DOLLAR LAKE \$259,999
120' frontage on Dollar Lake (connects to Little Long Lake) 2718 SF of finished living space, 4 BDR and 3 BA. Finished walkout basement w/ large rec room, full bath + sauna, fireplace, office. 1 acre lot with 2 oversized 2.5 car attached garages, plus 3rd garage.



6263 CANTER CREEK, GRAND BLANC

PINE HOLLOW ESTATES \$1,750,000
Over 10,000 SF of Luxury Living! 5 BDR, 8 BA, nestled on 2.25 acres w/large pond and beautiful water views. 2 gourmet kitchens, 3 spiral staircases, theater room, wine cellar, 2 laundry rooms, 2 master suites, dog bath, heated floors, heated drive way.



16207 HILLTOP DR, LINDEN

ACREAGE \$209,999
2+ acres, 1900 SF, 3 BDR & 2 BA. Great room features natural light, brick fireplace & soaring ceilings. Bonus room can be used as family room, game room or office. 2 car attached garage & whole house generator included!



1222 VISTA DR, FENTON

FENTON SCHOOLS \$259,999
2712 SF, 3 BDR and 3.5 BA. Granite counter tops, island, tile backsplash, pantry, & breakfast nook. Large great room w/ fireplace and partially finished basement. Indoor pool, new windows in 2014 and much more. Large deck and patio for enjoying the outdoors.



8383 HENDERSON, GOODRICH

ACREAGE \$385,000
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3496 PONEMAH DR, FENTON

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80 CHATEAUX DU LAC, FENTON

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Social News

WEDDING



Zou-Hogan

Jezi Zou of Chengdu, China, and Jeremy Hogan of Holly, Michigan, were married on July 25, 2016 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The bride's parents are Dr. Wei Zou and Guanglin Peng. The groom's parents are Sheryl Smith of Holly, and Michael and Vera Hogan of Fenton. The couple held an outdoor, symbolic ceremony before family and friends on October 25, 2016 at Crapo Park in Holly, Michigan. Former Holly Village President Ryan Bladzick served as the symbolic officiate. A reception followed at the Holly Moose Lodge. The bride is a graduate of Chengdu Shishi High School and studied Literary Criticism at Southwest Jiaotong University. She works as an international tour guide for Beijing UTour International Travel Service Co., Ltd. The groom is a 1999 graduate of Holly High School and a sonar technician with the U.S. Navy. He will be discharged in January 2017. The couple currently lives in Honolulu, Hawaii. Upon the groom's discharge, they will divide their time between China and Michigan.

PHOTOS

Continued from Page 9A

Bear in mind the background. Whatever you put in the background becomes part of the photo, so use it to show what was going on at that moment.

Timing

The third important component is timing — taking the photo at the right moment (while also composed and lit well.)

This part takes a little bit of family observation. You want to take the photo at a 'peak moment.' For example — someone is laughing (take a photo); a wine cork is being popped (take a photo); someone's toddler throws a tantrum (also take a photo.)

Some cameras, whether phone or actual, are slower than others, so keep this in mind when timing your photo.

HOT LINE CONTINUED

LET ME REMIND you that a liberal arts major made the decision to launch the Challenger despite technical advice.

WHY ARE YOU guys so upset about Hillary's emails and servers? Seems to me that server is about the only one in the whole United States that hasn't been hacked.

I DO HOPE poor little Miley Cyrus is over her crying jag by now because Hillary lost. I must have worried about it for at least a minute.

BEFORE HE LEAVES office, Obama wants to be number one at something. Apparently it's going to be in pardons and commutations. He gave more yesterday, bringing his total to 1,176 commutations making him the number one president in history in terms of letting people out of prison.

THE CONSTITUTION READS 'We the people of the United States' not 'We the people of California' or 'We the people of Los Angeles or New York.' America has spoken. They have overwhelmingly decided on Trump and we need to back this decision.

WHEN THE DUST settles next year and books start getting written by Obama, we are going to learn that he came into power with very little experience, one of the most inexperienced presidents we've ever had.

THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING collegiate about a scam called the 'Electorate College.'

I WANT TO thank the service man in the car dealership who was very kind to me because I had to wait three hours to get my car done. Because of that, he paid my bill and said 'Merry Christmas.' I just think it was the nicest thing.

HILLARY DID NOT lose the election because of Russia, WikiLeaks or James Comey. She lost because Americans fear that our country would be become a killing field for Islamic terrorists

AMERICA, THE HOME of the free, where you may burn the flag and I may bear arms when you burn mine.

FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES, an Italian-controlled multinational corporation owns FCA US (Chrysler LLC), meaning those profits flow back to Italy. 'Murica! It's time to retire the Big Three rhetoric.



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

Emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance crews work on Christmas Day. Here, the Fenton fire and police departments handle a crash during a whiteout in February 2013.

WORK

Continued from Page 3A

Fenton Express Towing & Recovery is open 24 hours a day, including Christmas.

Robert Flood, a driver for the company, is working this Christmas. He said working on Christmas is "OK."

"We take our trucks and go home. If you get called out, and if you have to go out, it's no fun because you leave your family at home," he said.

If it's snowing out, he said the day will be busier.

"Just depends on the weather," he said.

Heather Peck, a manager at BP on

Owen Road in Fenton has worked the past four years on Christmas Day.

"I don't really have family and I don't really have babies so I work it so other people don't have to," she said. "It doesn't

bother me. Holiday pay makes up for it."

She gets paid double time on the day.

Normally gas stations are really busy on Christmas, she said, because everything else is closed. Peck said the time goes by fast.

"(Customers are) in a really good mood," she said. "Last year I think I made \$80 in tips."

“(Customers are) in a really good mood. Last year I think I made \$80 in tips.”

Heather Peck
Owen Road BP manager



Flint is home to a growing craft food and beverage sector.

If you're a foodie, the region has you covered! Flint has a growing number of restaurateurs joining the farm-to-table movement, top bars and restaurants, and microbreweries.

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | FILE PHOTO

Iman G. Meyer-Hoffman sits in prayer with other women in her Burton mosque.

What it's like to be Muslim at Christmas

■ Local woman appreciates the joy the season brings

By Tim Jagielo

tjagiello@tctimes.com; 810-433-6795

Christmas is everywhere — on the radio, on TV commercials, in the stores, and on everyone's mind. But what is this season like for someone who is not Christian, and doesn't celebrate Christmas?

Iman G. Meyer-Hoffman lives in Tyrone Township. She is Muslim, and an interfaith director for the Islamic Supreme Council of America, with a mosque in Burton.

Her name "Iman" means "faith" in Arabic.

She converted to Islam in 1996, when living in California. Her family "back home" celebrates Christmas, but are not active Christians. They'll still exchange gifts because so many family members have a birthday in December. "It's just a time to celebrate family," she said.

She said she enjoys the festive decorations, and likes when the spirit of the season uplifts people's moods.

"When Christmas makes everyone happy, that makes me happy," she said. On the other hand, she appreciates that she doesn't have to worry about going to the busy mall for shopping.

Meyer-Hoffman said that in a Muslim household, Jesus is celebrated and respected as a prophet along with Muhammad, and it is appropriate for Muslims to celebrate his birth.

This year is also special, because both Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad's birth fall in December. While Jesus' birth is Dec. 25 each year, Muhammad's birth date changes with the lunar calendar. Muhammad's birth and Ramadan happen at a different time each year. Christ and Muhammad's birth line up once every 33 years.

Her mosque is holding a joint Christian/Muslim service. The event is at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 14 at the Burton Siddiq Mosque, at G-4417 S. Saginaw St., Burton. It will celebrate the birth of both Jesus and Muhammad. Several area churches plan to take part in it.

"I think for a long time we've been a very diverse society. We're more of a diverse-faith society than people realize."

Iman G. Meyer-Hoffman
Tyrone Township resident

RELIGION IN U.S. HOUSEHOLDS

According to Pew Research Center, one in five American adults were raised in a mixed-religion household. This means both parents were different sects of Christian religion, Catholic and Protestant, for example, or Catholic and "unaffiliated."

Today, 27 percent of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996,) in the study reported that they were raised by two parents of different religions.

This percentage decreases from previous generations. Of those born before 1946, 13 percent reported being raised by mixed-religion parents.

Muslims also celebrate the birth of Jesus, who is considered a prophet in Islam as well. In 2016, the birth of Prophet Muhammad and Jesus both fall in December. A Burton area mosque will be holding a joint Christian, Muslim service to honor and celebrate both.

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"Our 24-hour access mailbox services are a convenience that more general and small-business consumers are discovering," said Les Beare, The UPS Store owner. "They like the fact that we provide them with a street

address, not a P.O. box number, as well as the option to receive an e-mail or a text alert when they have a package waiting," he added.

The UPS Store also provides a package only option for customers. "Package only is a great service. We can receive most packages a customer is expecting one-time or on a regular basis, without the need to purchase a mailbox," says Beare.

Other mailbox service options include mail holding and forwarding for snow birds or travelers—The UPS Store will hold your packages in a secure location for pick-up at your convenience or forward them to you, wherever you are.

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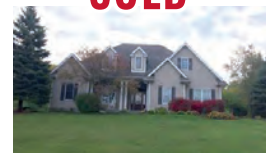
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JohnTremaine.com



FOOTBALL

Continued from Front Page

qualifying for a college bowl game.

How life has changed on the Michigan football team in two years.

Both players will end their extremely successful collegiate careers when the sixth-ranked Michigan Wolverines play the 10th-ranked Florida State Seminoles in the Orange Bowl on Dec. 30 at 8 p.m.

"I'm happy," said Matthew Godin, a Fenton resident who played his prep football at Detroit Catholic Central and now is Michigan's starting defensive tackle. "Our only goal right now is to hopefully finish strong and get a win. We want to definitely be remembered for these last two years of great football."

"This game is very important, but it's just like every other game. We want to win it," said Allen, who handles all of the placekicking, field goal kicking and punting duties for the Wolverines. "We want to start the new year with a win so we can start next season on a positive. Especially for the guys playing their last game, we don't want to go out and lose and have them start next year with a loss. Obviously, a victory is very important. It will be my last time wearing the Michigan helmet."

Godin's career

From the days he was making headlines as an Associated Press All-State performer at Detroit Catholic Central, Godin always knew he wanted to play at Michigan. It was almost a given considering his father, his brother and one of his sisters attended Michigan.

"That was my main goal ever since I was a little kid," Godin said.

Godin, a redshirt senior, gradually grew into a starting role. He was redshirt his freshman year, meaning he was able to keep four years of athletic eligibility because he didn't play his first year. In 2012 he earned his first varsity letter, playing in seven games as a reserve lineman and playing some on special teams. During his junior year, he appeared in eight games and recorded nine tackles, including one for a sack. He also recorded his only interception of his career in a contest at Northwestern.

During his senior season, he started high on the depth chart, playing in 11 games and making four starts. It was Michigan's first year under head coach Jim Harbaugh and the team prospered, improving from 5-7 to 10-3.

As a redshirt senior this season, Godin was a starting defensive tackle, posting 25 total tackles including two for losses.

"Every year I gradually played a bigger role," Godin said. "I've been dinged up a little since I've been here, but I've personally had a bigger role each season."

"I've been happy with my season. I've been playing hard and I'm happy. You always wish to make a few more plays, but I'm happy with the way the team has played and how I've played."

Allen's career

Allen always knew he wanted to be a Wolverine as well — so much that he turned down other scholarship offers to compete for kicking duties at Michigan as a walk-on.

His decision has paid off, and much like Godin, Allen gradually worked himself into being a vital starting performer for the Wolverines.

Allen saw limited duty during his first two seasons, redshirting his freshman year. He appeared in 11 games his junior year, but never attempted a punt or a kick during the season.

It was during his senior season, when Harbaugh took over as head coach, that



DARYL MARSHKE

Fenton resident and Michigan's starting kicker, Kenny Allen, punts the ball during a recent game against Indiana. Allen was not only the starting punter for the Wolverines, but was also the starting field goal kicker and placekicker.

Allen started to prosper. He won the starting placekicker role, converted 18-of-22 field goals and all 46 extra-points he attempted. He also had 78 kickoffs, sending 34 for touchbacks.

This season Allen's role was increased. He not only won the placekicking duties but also was the team's starting punter, making Allen one of the busiest special teams kickers in recent Michigan history.

SUMMARY

■ Area athletes Kenny Allen and Matthew Godin will start for Michigan in the Orange Bowl during the holiday bowl season.

Allen punted 46 times, averaging 42.6 yards a kick and placing 20 inside the 20. He also converted 16-of-20 field goals and all of his 52 extra points. He also kicked off 77 times, recording

touchbacks on 45 of those attempts.

Allen had his challenges dealing with all three disciplines and the extra wear during the season, at one time missing four field goals in two games. But since then, he's been perfect, nailing each of his last 12 field goals, including a 51-yarder against Iowa. His strong performance with all three disciplines made many people say if the Wolverines beat Ohio State in the final regular season contest of the year, he should've been named the game's most valuable player.

"When I struggled a little bit, I was having a hard time separating the kicking and punting and it drove my overall confidence down in both instances," Al-



GBMWOLVERINE.COM

Michigan starting defensive tackle and Fenton resident Matthew Godin (right) holds up the 2016 Florida Citrus Bowl trophy with teammate Willie Henry after the Wolverines defeated the Florida Gators last bowl season.

len said. "But I went back to practice and separated them as much as possible. Once I did that, it was natural and we haven't had any issues since then."

Ending at Michigan and the future

Both players are glad they fulfilled their Michigan dreams.

"I knew it would be tough, but you love it and you do it because you love it," Godin said. "That's what you signed up for. It's been a great experience."

"It's a dream come true," Allen said. "Everyone's dream is to play football and to be able to be contributing as much as they can possibly contribute. Now that I'm playing it's definitely a lot more special."

Both have ambitions to play as professionals. Allen is already doing some prep work for future kicking combines. He thinks he's probably built more to be a punter, but will keep his options open. For Godin, Michigan hosts its own combine day, so when the season ends, he'll be working in preparation for the combine. For both, they are glad to have been part of a senior class that has brought Michigan back to the top programs in the nation.

"Knowing my class — us fifth-year guys and some fourth-year guys — stuck through it, persevered and are now being successful these last two years is great," Godin said. "That's what I'll remember most from this experience. You grow together and we've been through so many ups and downs. It's great to end on a high."

HOT LINE CONTINUED

WE ARE ALL Americans, let's join together and celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus in the free and wonderful country we are so blessed to live in. Everyone reading this is pretty much in the top 3 percent of income on the planet. Give thanks to God for our good fortune. Merry Christmas.

■■■■
LINDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL parents in pick-up and drop-off loop — You do not have to wait until you are exactly lined up with the front door to let your kid in and out of the car. The sidewalk extends around the loop. You are causing back-ups and a dangerous situation when cars behind you get frustrated and try to get around you. Susie and Johnny can walk those extra 10 or 20 feet, I promise.

■■■■
PUTIN IS A butcher. Any friend of Putin is no friend of USA. He is Satan, pure and simple.

■■■■
DEAR FENTON RESIDENTS, please toss out your TVs and start reading. Your love of misinformation is only matched by your lack of education.

■■■■
WE SHARE THE same parking lot as the Fenton Police Department. My neighbor across the road was trying to take three bags of trash to the trash bin in the parking lot. She's almost 30. A Costco truck pulled up to make a delivery. He jumped out of his truck ran over and took her trash. What a great guy. Thank you. Have a great Christmas.

■■■■
I'M A LIBERAL and I don't want Obama to pardon Clinton because she hasn't done anything wrong. But I do want them to try Trump for treason for his contacts with Russia.

■■■■
YOU SAY A psychology degree is useless? My Bachelor of Science psychology graduate from MSU is working full time in an extended care facility, caring for the physical and mental needs of your loved ones. Exactly what do you consider useless?

■■■■
GOD BLESS YOU, Preston English. I don't know you but I love you man. I've been here my entire life, 1954.

Happy Holidays!

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PROBATION

Continued from Front Page

16, and Lamarr Dukes, 16 were planning a school shooting at Linden High School.

While in court on Tuesday, Dec. 20, Stevens reportedly apologized to the court and his mother, and broke down in tears at Judge Joseph J. Farah's sentence.

The teens were originally charged with conspiracy to commit first-degree, premeditated murder, a felony punishable by up to life in prison and false report or threat of terrorism, a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

In August, Stevens pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of attempted false report of terrorism, which was punishable by up to five years in prison. With the agreement,

the count of conspiracy to commit murder charge was dropped.

He had been released from jail on a \$1,000 bond with a GPS tether.

According to Stevens' Attorney, Marc Hart, Stevens has researched getting his diploma, gotten his driver's license, regularly attends church activities and has a full-time job.

The adult charges against Dukes were dismissed Sept. 26, and he was sent to a yearlong rehabilitation program in Grove City, Pennsylvania.

In November, Brewer pleaded no contest to one count of false report of terrorism and awaits sentencing in January of 2017. Dukes was transferred to the juvenile system.

CONDOS

Continued from Front Page

dock slips, subject to final approval by the Fenton Township Planning Commission, according to Operations Manager/Deputy Clerk Tom Broecker.

Construction is expected to start in the spring of 2017, according to Ghasan Saab of Corlin Builders, owner and developer of the condos.

The board had planned to vote on the rezoning at the Dec. 5 meeting, but postponed the issue due to questions about storm water drainage.

Kevin Cook, civil engineer with CHMP Inc., in Grand Blanc, has been in contact with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Genesee County Drain Commission over the storm water management issue. There was discussion over using a retention pond or filter the storm water with a pre-treatment device and drain into the lake.

Saab said they will build a retention

pond. The current conditions do not restrict them to a specific type of system, according to Broecker.

"Whatever they choose, their plans must still be approved by township, county and state agencies," he said.

Supervisor Bonnie Mathis was absent. Trustee Shaun Shumaker was the dissenting vote.

Shumaker said he voted no because it was not the original plan the board approved.

"The original approval required the developer to purchase more land. I believe the

non riparian docks were too large and intrusive for their location on the lake and in the development," he said. "I also was under the impression, when we first approved it that we were reducing the amount of boat slips in that area of the lake. With the new approval we will most certainly have an increase in the number of watercraft on the lake, which could become a public safety issue."

“With the new approval we will most certainly have an increase in the number of watercraft on the lake, which could become a public safety issue.”

Shaun Shumaker
Fenton Township trustee

NUMBERS

Continued from Page 3A

packages this holiday season. According to statistica.com, U.S. consumers expect an average of 13.9 gifts for the holiday.

Trees

According to the National Christmas Tree Foundation, 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold every year. Consumers spent an average of \$50.82 on real Christmas trees, and \$69.38 on fake trees.

Christmas tree retail value in the U.S. reached more than \$1.32 billion in 2015.

Cookies and milk

There are over 1 billion cookies left out for Santa every Christmas Eve, and he will

eat approximately 336 million of them.

More than 504 million glasses of milk will be left out for Santa, and he will drink approximately 94 million glasses.

Santa

Santa visits more than 504 million homes, according to anidea.com, a modern marketing agency.

Out of the 50 states, 42 celebrate SantaCon, a day of celebration where people dress up as Santa.

Approximately 150 million chocolate Santas are made annually, according to the National Confectioners Association.

Other

There will be approximately 1.76 billion candy canes made this year, which is enough for each U.S. resident to have more than five pieces.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the average person travels 275 miles for the holidays.

There have been over 20 different versions of "A Christmas Carol," according to askdeb.com, a site that provides answers and advice from real people.

Source: National Retail Federation, anidea.com, statistica.com

SUMMARY

■ According to the National Retail Federation, 94 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas.

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KATELYN SIEBERT

Siebert scored 10 points in the Blue Devils' victory vs. Genesee Christian.

Blue Devils just one win short of last season's total

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

The winter break seems to be coming at the wrong time for the Lake Fenton varsity girls basketball team.

At the moment, it's hard to believe there is an area squad

feeling more confident than the Lady Blue Devils.

Lake Fenton improved to 3-3 overall, or just one less victory than they had the entire season last year, by scoring a season-high 62 points in a 62-25 victory against the Genesee Christian Soldiers.

The victory was well earned with consistent play through all four quarters. Lake Fenton's de-

fense was strong, never allowing more than eight points in any given quarter. Meanwhile, the offense was just as consistent, scoring at least 12 points in every quarter.

"The team is starting to get an idea of who we are and what we could be capable of," Lake Fenton varsity girls basketball coach Brian VanBuren said. "We are not pushing as ef-

fectively as we will and not defending so well in the halfcourt right now, but our pressure has allowed us some wiggle room. We are hoping to cut down on our turnovers and get ourselves more opportunities to take advantage of better, and sometimes easier, shots."

CONTINUED ONLINE
AT TCTIMES.COM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016 | PAGE 22A | WWW.TCTIMES.COM/SPORTS

Sports



Adams leads our soccer team class

Fenton senior's goals, leadership makes him our boys soccer player of the year

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

The season didn't start out terribly well for the Fenton varsity boys soccer team and Liam Adams.

Early on, the Tigers recorded a draw against area rivals Linden in a non-league game. But there was no harm in that verdict. After all, Linden is typically one of the Metro contenders, so the Tigers weren't terribly concerned when that tie happened.

But then it happened. None of the players on the team had ever lost a varsity soccer game to Holly, but that was going to change. A late-game goal resulted in a loss to the Tigers' other bitter rivals. That didn't sit

well for Adams and his fellow teammates. Something had to change.

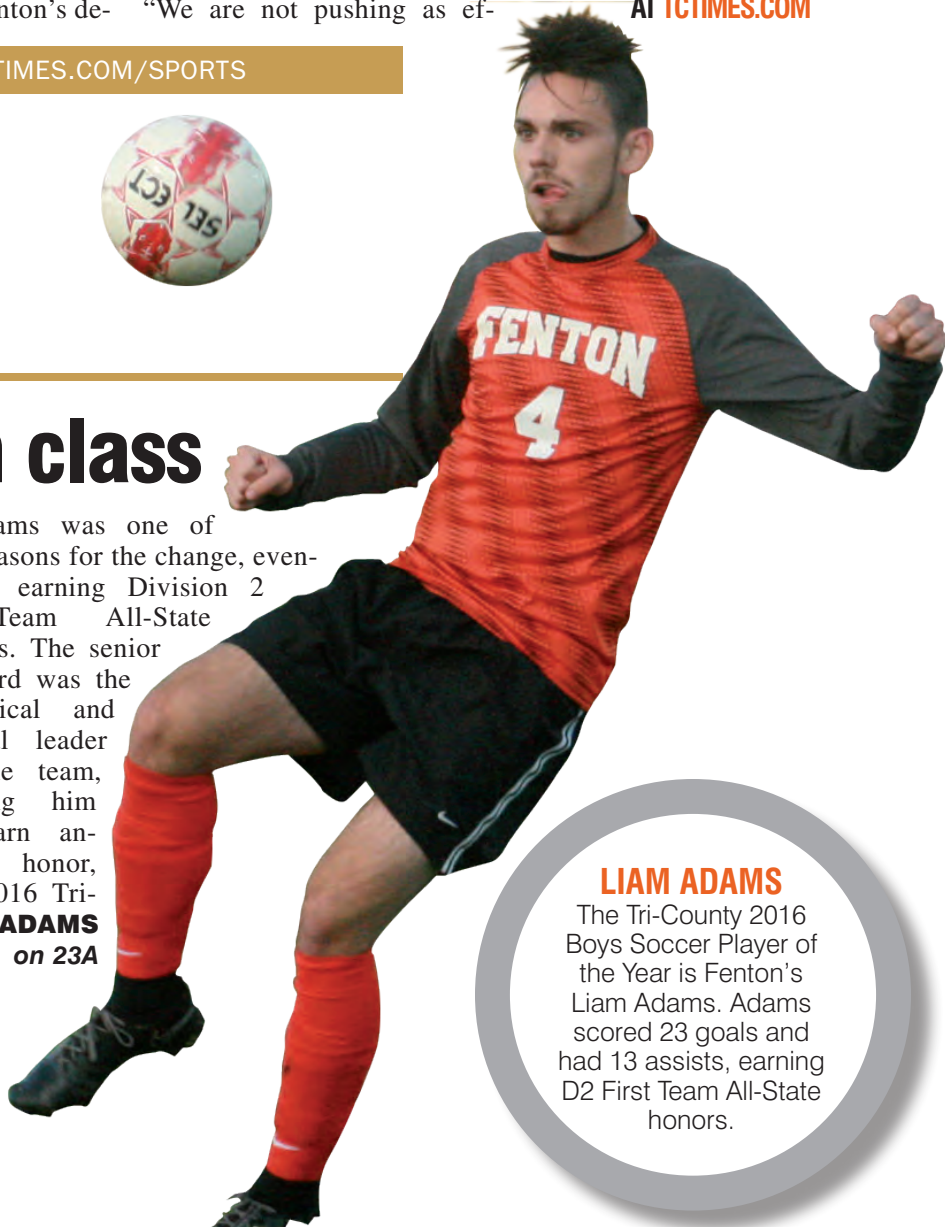
"It was a wake-up call, and time for us to get in gear and get serious about the season," Adams said. "We also wanted to stay relaxed, but we learned we had to stay together and also wanted to enjoy our time together."

The Tigers, and Adams, used the wake-up call to maximum effect. The Tigers would lose only one more regular season game the rest of the year. They also captured a co-Metro League title, a Division 2 district title and the school's first-ever Division 2 regional championship before finally seeing its season end in the state semifinals against Dearborn Divine.

The season eventually evolved into what was the best year in school history, and a 14-3-4 record overall.

Adams was one of the reasons for the change, eventually earning Division 2 First-Team All-State honors. The senior forward was the statistical and mental leader of the team, leading him to earn another honor, the 2016 Tri-

See **ADAMS**
on 23A



LIAM ADAMS

The Tri-County 2016 Boys Soccer Player of the Year is Fenton's Liam Adams. Adams scored 23 goals and had 13 assists, earning D2 First Team All-State honors.



Wyrick's putback sparks Fenton's win vs. Lakeland

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

Was it a shot, or was it a pass?

One thing is certain. Greg Lukas is going to call it a pass.

Whatever it was, it ended up being the start of the biggest basket of Fenton's

TRI-COUNTY TIMES | SCOTT SCHUBBACH — Nick Wyrick (left) scored 12 points in the Tigers' 41-37 victory against Lakeland on Tuesday.

varsity 41-37 boys basketball victory against Lakeland on Tuesday night.

With Fenton trailing by one with under two minutes remaining, Lukas attacked the basket, took a shot which didn't hit rim, went to the other side of the rim and was rebounded by Nick Wyrick, resulting in a putback hoop for Wyrick. The hoop put Fenton up by one point and the Tigers never trailed again in the non-league victory at home against Lakeland.

"I don't know if I should mark it as a missed shot or a pass, but whatever happened, big Nick rebounded it and put it in," Fenton varsity boys basketball coach John Gilbert said. "(Greg Lukas) will tell you he passed it over for the rebound, but I don't care how it got there. I'm glad big Nick got it and put it in."

It was the game's defining hoop. Fenton led most of the game, but Lakeland

See **WYRICK'S** on 23A

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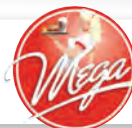
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LF boys play strong first half, defeat Soldiers

Blue Devils play strong first half to spark 49-42 victory

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

The Lake Fenton varsity boys basketball team is still looking to play its first complete game of the season.

It's a squad of many quality players from a year ago. And, of course, that team advanced to a Class B regional championship game while posting a 21-4 record. Capturing such magic doesn't always come automatically with the next season.

The Blue Devils are learning that lesson during the early portions of the year. Albeit playing against strong competition and being competitive in all three contests, Lake Fenton lost two of its first three games this season. On Tuesday, the Blue Devils moved back to .500 at 2-2 overall with a 49-42 road victory at Genesee Christian.

But even in that contest, Lake Fenton varsity boys basketball coach Jake Erway will admit that the Blue Devils didn't really come terribly close to playing a complete game. Lake Fenton led 32-16 at the half, playing strong defense, but then allowed the hosts to get back into the contest in the second half.

"We played well enough defensively in the first half and did a good job offensively in the first half taking care of the ball in the halfcourt and making good decisions," Erway said. "But in the second half we got out-played and out-hustled on both ends of the floor and had



TRI-COUNTY TIMES | DAVID TROPPENS
Lake Fenton's Isaac Golson (left) scored 12 points in the Blue Devils' 49-42 victory against Genesee Christian on Tuesday.

too many unforced turnovers. We did a bad job of communicating with each other, and did not have a lot of effort defensively. I credit Genesee Christian. They have a great coach and kids that work their butts off every night."

Offensively, Jalen Miller continued

his strong season, scoring a team-high 18 points while grabbing nine rebounds. Isaac Golson had 12 points and three rebounds.

CONTINUED ONLINE AT
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WYRICK'S

Continued from Page 22A

retook the lead with a hoop with 1:50 to go. However, Wyrick's hoop enabled the Tigers to regain the lead for good. Fenton quickly took a six-point lead late, but Lakeland responded by hitting three free throws during one trip to the line, cutting the gap to three. A.J. LePage iced the victory by making a free throw.

The Tigers are now 2-2 on the young season. The squad opened the season with a 69-54 loss to Lapeer but bounced back to defeat Swartz Creek 75-65. Just over a week ago, a road trip to Flushing was a given to be a challenge for the Tigers, and it ended up being just that, resulting in a 63-36 loss. Also compounding matters has been a high ankle sprain suffered by Patrick Controy, one of the team's senior starters. It's hoped he'll be healthier once the winter break ends.

"If you said going in we'd be 2-2, I would've taken that," Gilbert said. "We would've liked to be 4-0 and 3-1 sounds better, but 2-2 is OK. Flushing was tough... Lapeer was a big team out of the gate and were more physical than we were, and that's what happened against Flushing. Now we have time to work on things and get ready to make a push into the new year."

CONTINUED ONLINE
AT TCTIMES.COM

ADAMS

Continued from Page 22A

County Boys Soccer Player of the Year award.

After scoring 16 goals and 14 assists in his first three seasons with the program, Adams was moved to forward, and his numbers skyrocketed. He ended up scoring 23 goals and dishing off 13 assists during his senior season.

"He was kind of an attacking center-mid and he just kept pushing forward, so we figured why not just put him at forward," Fenton varsity boys soccer coach Matt Sullivan said.

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TRI-COUNTY TIMES | DAVID TROPPENS
Fenton's Liam Adams (right) runs away from the pack in a game this fall. He's our Tri-County Boys Soccer Player of the Year.

ALL TRI-COUNTY BOYS SOCCER TEAM

Player of the Year:

Liam Adams

Class: Senior Team: Fenton

Comment: Adams had an outstanding season, leading the Tigers to their first-ever state semifinal contest. Adams scored 23 goals and dished off 13 assists, earning Division 2 First-Team All-State honors. He's also our Tri-County Player of the Year.

Note: The Tri-County Times team is decided based on all-league teams. The Player of the Year is selected by the sports staff.

First team

Lucas Sammut
Julian Shier
Joey Reitano
Connor Horgan
Ameer Jawhari
Carson Birchmeier
Elijah Bourdeau
Ethan Postma
Derek Deighton
Chase Paulson
Ben Polehna
Zane Arnold
Patrick Conroy
Brady Young

School

Holly
Linden
Lake Fenton
Lake Fenton
Lake Fenton
Linden
Lake Fenton
Holly
Linden
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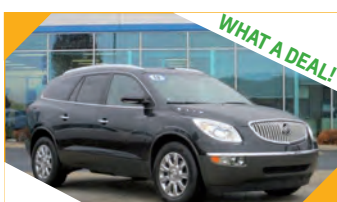
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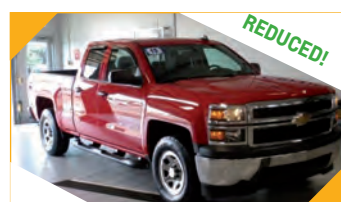
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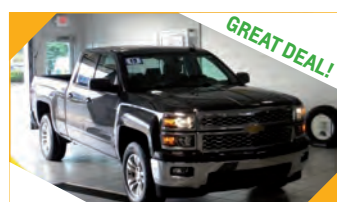
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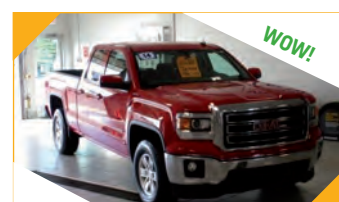
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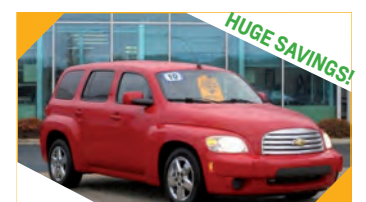
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