

# In-door dining closed for another 11 days

## ■ Order ends Dec. 20; indoor gatherings discouraged

On Monday Dec. 7, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Ser-

vices (MDHHS) has extended by 12 days the epidemic order that restricts indoor social gatherings and other group activities. The additional 12 days will allow the department to determine the

full impact of the Thanksgiving holiday on the spread of COVID-19 across Michigan.

Under the Dec. 7 order, MDHHS continues to urge families to avoid indoor

gatherings, and only two households may gather inside, with strict protocols recommended. Individuals should wear masks consistently whenever

See **IN-DOOR DINING** on 7

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# Weekend Times

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## Fenton police preparing for Shop With a Cop

■ Police department accepting donations until Friday, Dec. 11; officers help buy Christmas presents for families in need

By Hannah Ball

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, local police departments are still finding ways to do Shop With a Cop, a program in which police departments buy presents for families who need help during the holidays.

Officer Nick Jones with the Fenton Police Department said this is the third year they're doing Shop With a Cop. It'll be different from previous years. To identify which families are in need, the school resource officers talk with school administrators at Fenton schools and communicate that information to the FPD.

See **SHOP** on 7



(Top) Santa plugs in the lights on the Christmas lighting display at Symphony Linden on Saturday, Dec. 5. Attendees walked around the care facility to enjoy the more than 44,000 lights put up by Linden Pay It Forward and volunteers to bring holiday joy to the guests. See story on Page 6. Photos: Hannah Ball

## Armed robbery in Fenton

■ Suspect apprehended less than an hour later in Grand Blanc with victim's wallet in his pocket

By Hannah Ball

A 40-year-old male from Flint is behind bars after committing an armed robbery in Fenton on Dec. 3.

Lt. Jeff Cross of the Fenton Police Department said on Thursday, Dec. 3, around 3 p.m., they received a call that a 33-year-old male from Fenton was robbed at gunpoint. The man said a white male approached him on Caroline Street, near River Street, and pulled a gun and demanded his wallet.

The victim gave the suspect his wallet and the suspect ran northbound toward Silver Lake Road.

Cross said Fenton police were on scene within a minute and See **ROBBERY** on 10



“Anybody know what “review of the records” means with the COVID deaths? With the hospitals, doctors, etc. so

computerized, I cannot believe folks cannot read and input a COVID death.”



“It's been 18 years and don't think I forgot about the

guy who hit me and left me for dead on N. Leroy, always watch for bikers.”



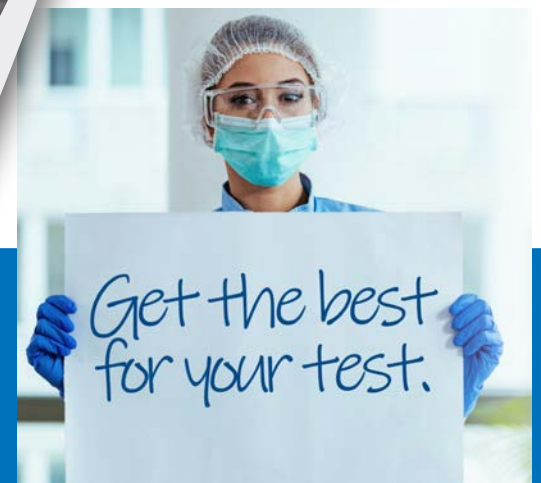
“I can't help but notice that the coronavirus didn't magically disappear right after the elec-

tion.”





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# Young cancer survivors deliver joy, hope

■ Return to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital bearing Christmas gifts to oncology and bone marrow transplant floor

By Sharon Stone

The Times began following the story of Phoebe Keech in 2013. The nearly 2-year-old Deerfield Township girl had just been diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). She underwent chemotherapy for two-and-one-half years.

Just prior to her 5th birthday she had gone into remission.

Now 9 years old, Phoebe has recently graduated to long-term survivorship for ALL, a pediatric cancer since she has been in remission for five years.

Phoebe (Team Phoebe) and Toby Versola (#43VersolaStrong) have come together to spread home for the holidays by asking for toy donations, gift cards, and hospital room make-overs to young people fighting cancer and blood disorders at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

As previously reported in the Times,



Toby Versola, 16, was 14 when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma. His family and Phoebe Keech's family are gathering donations to take to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. **Times file photo**

in September 2018, then 14-year-old Linden Eagle Toby Versola was diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma, a cancer that starts in the lymphocytes.

Toby had taken a hard hit at football practice a few weeks prior to his diagnosis and his parents took him to a family doctor for X-rays. The doctor called and said to take Toby to another hospital for a CT scan right away. That appointment revealed a large mass. He was immediately sent to University of Michigan Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor.

Toby's mother, Courtney Versola, said he got a diagnosis of remission in the winter of 2018. Moving forward, he prepared for his JV season of football. Two weeks before the season started he had his one year post scans with his oncology team. In August 2019, Toby was given a diagnosis of relapsed Hodgkins Lymphoma.

After hearing the results, Courtney said Toby picked himself up. He shook it off. Then bravely looked at her and said, "Mom, I got this." Toby was in and out of the hospital for four months.

See **SURVIVORS** on 9

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## Sharin' the spotlight A generous, special community name?

By Editor Sharon Stone

**T**he tri-county area has so many people stepping up to help others during these challenging times. We also have many creative and driven business owners who are doing anything they can to save their small business and the hard-working men and women they employ.

As I write or read in the Times the heartwarming and extraordinary things ordinary people are doing all around us, I feel comforted and encouraged knowing that we will emerge this COVID-19 pandemic a closer community.

For example, Fenton elementary teacher Jenn Horton, who used to be a restaurant worker, created a fundraising campaign to help our out-of-work restaurant workers pay some of their bills or buy a few Christmas presents for their family. In just a week, she raised nearly \$13,000 of her \$20,000 goal. One local restaurant owner himself

donated \$1,000 to her cause.

A few restaurants in town have gone deep into their pockets to provide outdoor dining areas to keep their business afloat and to provide a paycheck to their employees. The owners of the FirePlace Bar & Grill, The Barn and The Fenton Fire Hall have gotten creative with igloos, tents, heaters, firepits and even a new roofed patio so

that they comply with the COVID-19 restrictions. Sitting next to a warm and cozy campfire and enjoying a tasty beverage and burger reminds me of tailgating at a cold football game, so I look forward to checking these out.

Another story that touched my heart is about 9-year-old Phoebe Keech and 16-year-old Toby Versola who continue to improve after undergoing years of treatment for cancer. Their two families joined forces and are helping to bring smiles to other kids who are battling cancer. On Friday, they delivered much-appreciated gifts to the oncology and

bone marrow transplant floor at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, a place they know too well.

A future story the Times is working on is about a couple in Holly who are fixing up children's used bicycles to make them look new. They are going to donate them to families in need.

I can't wait to check out all of the Christmas and holiday paintings that Linden Hotel co-owner Karen Stroud did on business windows in downtown Linden.

I'm sure there are many others, young and old, who are spreading kindness, providing a warm meal, a gift for a child, or lending a hand to a neighbor. That's what makes this community so special. Let me know if there is someone who has stepped up to make someone else's day a bit brighter. There could be a future Times story in the making.

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Sharon Stone

## Hotlines

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■■■  
**JUST WHEN YOU** thought he couldn't get any whinier, he loses the election.

■■■  
**TO EVERYONE COMPLAINING** about the choices our governor is making - put yourself in her shoes. While I may not agree 100 percent with her all of her decisions, she does not get paid enough to keep the residents of Michigan safe and healthy.

■■■  
**IF YOU SPENT** the last nine months not wearing a mask, going to birthday, graduation and Halloween parties, then you are the reason the Michigan Health & Human Services department shut down the restaurants again.

■■■  
**CONGRATS TO OUR** next president Joe Biden.

■■■

Compiled by Hannah Ball, staff reporter

Question asked to Tri-County Times' Facebook followers

## What's the best or worst job you've ever had?

## | streettalk



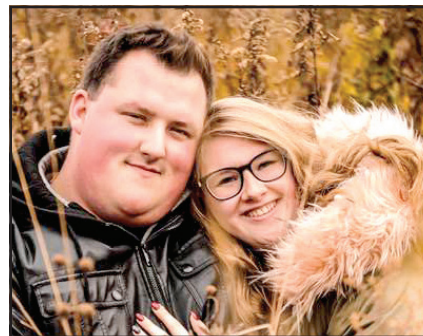
"Best job: mowing lawns for cutting edge lawn care ( Mosher Tree Service) back in the day. Worst job: desk job straight out of college."

**Bob Hitchings**  
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"My best job was at Donut Land when I was in high school! The original location was where the Mug and Brush then moved to the plaza at the end of Stevens furniture. Best job ever!"

**Tonya Booher**  
Fenton



"Worst: assistant manager at the Fenton Kmart until the day it closed."

**Brennen Brinker**  
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"Best: Ford Rouge Firefighter/EMT  
Worst: magazine salesman over the phone."

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## Hurley encourages people to protect mental wellbeing

■ Be kind to yourself, take time for activities that bring you joy

Holidays can be a stressful time for families and individuals. Add in the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic, and anyone's mental health may suffer. That's why it's so important to work toward protecting our mental wellbeing from the get-go or to seek help when our usual coping mechanisms aren't quite cutting it anymore.

Paying attention to how we feel is the first step. According to Recco Santee Richardson, PhD, LPC, Clinical Therapist, of Hurley Mental Health Associates, with all the

holiday commotions, it's easy to be caught off guard if we become anxious, upset or worried.

"We need to be mindful of how we're feeling and have a plan for if we do start to have such feelings. We need to be aware of any subtle or sudden changes in our moods or behaviors," he said.

That plan he's referencing is a plan to take care of ourselves. It could involve getting enough sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, exercising, getting fresh air or just taking time to enjoy the moment.

"The things that bring a smile to our faces or make us relax, we have to make sure we do those," Richardson said.

See **HURLEY** on 6



Recco Santee Richardson

## Symphony Linden guests enjoy holiday light display

■ Linden Pay It Forward and assisted living facility partner to bring Christmas cheer to guests, community

By Hannah Ball

Symphony Linden now looks like a winter wonderland with a light display with Santa, presents, reindeer and more made from 44,000 lights.

Pay It Forward and Symphony partnered to bring holiday cheer by putting up Christmas lights for the guests at the assisted living care facility. They started accepting donations in November, and held the lighting ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 5.

Santa plugged in the lights.

Stephanie Johnson, Linden Pay It Forward project manager, said they raised \$4,242 in three weeks.

"We have approximately 44,000 lights and about 60 volunteers helping hang the lights as well as a lot of DIY projects. The lights will stay on until Jan. 2. We started with nothing, not even a strand of lights when we took on this project," she said.

They're very proud of how the community helped them get this done in three weeks. They're planning on making it an annual tradition.

"It was a lot of pressure and was very time consuming but totally worth it. Wendy Wagner and I want to thank our husbands, Rich Wagner

and Chad Johnson, for putting up with the craziness and going above and beyond to help us along with our kids," she said.

Johnson said they want to thank their sponsors, including Sharp Funeral Home, Linden Child Development Center, and ELGA Credit Union. STATEMS donated 98 boxes of lights.

Organizers came up with the idea after Linden officials announced that holiday events, including the parade and fireworks, were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aimee Noye, nurse liaison at Sym-



Volunteers decorated a tree to look like a Linden Pay It Forward knome at Symphony Linden. Organizers raised more than \$4,000 in three weeks for the entire lighting project. Photo: Hannah Ball

phony Linden, said the turnout was more than she could have imagined.

"This has just been the most amazing thing. I wanted it to be so special for these guests and for their families and the employees and the community. I could never have done it without Pay It Forward and the Linden support, the vendors. It's amazing. I almost wish it was Christmas all year round," she said.

On Saturday, the guests looked out the windows at the display, and a few waved glow sticks. Noye said they're going to do their best to get the guests out in wheelchairs or walking around to see the lights from outside. Organizers are considering doing something like this in the summertime.

Rodney Roberson, general manager/administrator, said he called the former owners and thanked them for "having the foresight" to put the facility in Linden.

"It doesn't always have its advantages location wise, being away from the main hospitals, but this is why we're at where we're at," he said. "You can't beat the people who come together and put this together for us and our guests. It's beyond words. You don't see things like this except in small towns and communities that are close knit like this."

“This has just been the most amazing thing. I wanted it to be so special for these guests and for their families and the employees and the community.”

Aimee Noye  
Symphony Linden nurse liaison

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## Privilege

Years ago, there was a television show on the CBS network called “I’ve Got A Secret” where celebrity panelists would question a contestant and then try and guess their “secret,” which typically was something notable or unusual.

Without going into any further details about the show, when it comes to secrets, the law has its own version of how it deals with them in what is commonly referred to as “privilege.”

An example of privilege is when a client goes to an attorney and communicates confidential information so that the attorney can give them legal advice. When this occurs, the communications are considered to be private and, unlike the television show, generally not subject to disclosure. This is called “attorney-client privilege.” The reasoning behind it is to allow the client to completely confide in the attorney.

This is the oldest privilege and dates back to 1577. There are a number of others under both federal and state laws.

In Michigan, we have at least 15 other privileges under statutes, the common law, and Michigan Court Rules.

I won’t list them all here, but they include physician-patient privilege, clergy-penitent privilege, and husband-wife privilege.

Although each of the privileges remain secure when they are in effect, it is important to note that there are certain exceptions and exclusions.

Continuing with the attorney-client example, the privilege does not apply in the following situations:

- (1) when an attorney-client relationship is not established;
- (2) when the communication was not truly “confidential” such as when it was made in the presence of a third party who is not affiliated with the attorney;
- (3) when the client intentionally waives the privilege; and
- (4) when the client’s confidential communications involve the threat of

## IN-DOOR DINING

Continued from Front Page

they are inside with individuals not in their household, and are recommended to pick only a small group to see regularly.

Bars and restaurants must remain closed for dine-in service, but can remain open for outdoor dining, carry-out and delivery. Gyms are open for individual exercise with mandatory masking and additional strict safety measures.

Casinos, movie theaters and group exercise classes remain closed. Professional and college sports meeting extraordinary standards for risk mitigation may continue without spectators. Colleges, universities and high schools will continue with remote learning, with no in-person classes.

“Hope is on the horizon, but we need an additional 12 days to determine the full impact of the Thanksgiving holiday on our efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “This is all about protecting our families and frontline workers until we eradicate this virus once and for all. With recent daily case counts averaging well above 6,000, the daily death toll at alarming levels and the risk of hospitals becoming overwhelmed, we must work together as Michiganders and listen to our health experts. This may be the most difficult time yet in our struggle with COVID-19, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

The order will keep existing measures

future criminal acts.

Each privilege has its own set of rules. For example, the attorney-client privilege is narrowly construed while the physician-patient privilege and clergy-penitent have broad application. The purpose of the husband-wife privilege is to promote marital harmony and all records arising out of a privilege are also considered to be private.

The law of privileges is based on public policy and is meant to protect certain interests and relationships. Over the years there have been some modifications, but on the whole, there is general agreement that it has accomplished its goal.

**“Hope is on the horizon, but we need an additional 12 days to determine the full impact of the Thanksgiving holiday on our efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus.”**

**Gretchen Whitmer**  
*Michigan governor*

in place through Dec. 20 and does not include a blanket stay-home action. Employees who work in jobs that cannot be performed from home can continue to go to work, including those in manufacturing, construction and health occupations. Outdoor gatherings, outdoor dining and parks remain open. Individualized

activities with distancing and face masks are still allowed: retail shopping; public transit; restaurant takeout; personal-care services such as haircuts, by appointment; and individualized exercise at a gym, with extra spacing between machines.

“We each have a personal responsibility to wear a mask consistently and minimize indoor gatherings, so we can protect our frontline heroes and loved ones,” said MDHHS Director Robert Gordon. “If we

don’t, the disease will continue to spread and people will continue to get sick and die.”

## SHOP

Continued from Front Page

Normally, officers will take these children shopping at a local store and the kids can pick out presents for their families.

Jones said they are unable to do this due to COVID-19 and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s orders. They have an alternative plan, but Jones said they’re keeping it mostly a secret.

The department will purchase gift cards through Walmart and VG’s as well as gas cards, and some businesses have donated money for toys and books. Jones said they have another surprise for the children.

This year, they’re doing Shop With a Cop for 21 families, and maybe more. Last year, they had 20 families.

So far this year, they’ve raised \$5,500, an increase from last year’s \$4,000. Donations are being accepted through this Friday, Dec. 11.

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# GDL locations begin door-side pickup on Thursday, Dec. 10

■ Call or go online to arrange for pick-up; library in-house programs canceled until June 1

To assist in the reduction of COVID-19 cases in Genesee County, the Genesee District Library (GDL) will begin door-side pickup at all 19 branches on Thursday, Dec. 10.

Though the libraries will be closed, patrons can place holds from home online, or by calling their local branch to check out items and arrange for pickup. Patrons are asked to please wear masks when they come to the door. Library hours at all 19 branches will remain the same.

Returned items should be put in the outside drop boxes. Library users who have borrowed library materials in their possession do not need to worry about due dates or late fees for the items checked out.

Digital library services are plentiful, free and available 24/7 at thegdl.org. Library users are encouraged to access books, videos, television, music, comics and magazines from home. Patrons who do not know how to access digital services can go to <https://www.thegdl.org/digital/> and view brief instructional tutorials. Those who need a library card can sign up online at <https://www.thegdl.org/get-a-library-card/>.

All in-house programs have been canceled until June 1, but GDL offers a wide variety of virtual programming, including story times, play groups, escape rooms, trivia, teen games and more. Visit <https://www.thegdl.org/events/> for a complete list.

GDL leadership will continue to monitor the situation via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD).

For more information on how to reduce your risk of exposure of COVID-19, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, MDHHS or GCHD.

## HURLEY

Continued from Page 6

Although it can be depressing that many festivities are out of the question due to COVID-19, remain hopeful. Stay busy and take this time to plan for something next year, as soon as it's possible. Use phone calls and virtual gatherings to stay connected. It's also a great time to pull out those memory books. If you do feel sad, embrace it.

"Let it run its course—it's an important feeling. Depression is the accumulation of sad experiences that were not processed adequately," Richardson said.

Since the holidays can be extra hard on children ages 8 to 12—more so than for teens, Richardson recommended listening to how those children feel and trying to accommodate them as much as possible. The elderly, who often view family as a lifeline, also may find their mental wellness hit especially hard by the physical distancing required by COVID-19 this holiday season. Richardson encouraged family and friends to send cards and make frequent phone calls to help their loved ones maintain that human connection.

Being kind to ourselves is crucial. Richardson urged people to not feel shame or guilt if you can't buy everything our families deserve and to not get upset if someone can't get time off work. "Do not feel bad about what you can't do or where you can't be in person," Richardson said. "That's nothing to feel guilty about. That's where we get holiday depression."

If you or your loved ones experience mental health difficulties, don't struggle alone. Seeking help is admirable and Hurley Mental Health Associates are here for you every step of the way.

As one of Michigan's largest outpatient mental health clinics, this highly skilled team is known for customizing therapy to meet the needs of each patient, whether they're an adult, child, adolescent, teen, minority, or individual with handicaps or disabilities. Contact Hurley Mental Health Associates at (810) 262-2100 or [mentalhealthinfo@hurleymc.com](mailto:mentalhealthinfo@hurleymc.com) to schedule an appointment today.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

COMPILED BY SHARON STONE

### McLaren Flint Welcomes Vascular Surgeon to Medical Staff

Bara Zuhaili, MD, a board-certified vascular surgeon, has joined the medical staff at McLaren Flint.



Bara Zuhaili

Dr. Zuhaili is seeing patients at Michigan Vascular Center, 5020 West Bristol Road, in Flint.

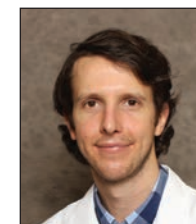
Dr. Zuhaili completed his fellowship in Vascular Surgery at McLaren Flint. He completed

his residency at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He earned his medical degree from Damascus Medical School in Damascus, Syria.

Dr. Zuhaili is accepting new patients and can be reached by calling (810) 732-1620.

### McLaren Flint Welcomes Pediatrician to Medical Staff

Eric Nowicki, MD, a board-certified pediatrician, has joined the medical staff at McLaren Flint. Dr. Nowicki is seeing patients at The Children's Office, 2184 South Ballenger Highway, in Flint.



Eric Nowicki

Dr. Nowicki completed his residency at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago in

Chicago, Illinois. He earned his medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit.

Dr. Nowicki is accepting new patients and can be reached by calling (810) 232-5627.

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Phoebe Keech poses with her friends on the the University of Michigan Women's Lacrosse players. Phoebe is an honorary teammate via Team Impact. Submitted photo

SURVIVORS

Continued from Page 3

In the fall of 2019, he got another diagnosis of remission. He was now ready for an autologous bone marrow transplant. Toby was in the hospital for 22 days. While there, he was blessed by Wish Upon A Teen. This program specifically was a Design My Room sponsor.

“After one of his long walks around the 7E pediatric oncology and BMT floor at C.S. Mott’s Children’s Hospital, he walked into his room and was greeted

by Executive Director Nancy Sovran and an amazing decorated room,” Courtney said. “All new bedding, cool lights, Bluetooth speaker, art supplies and more. The impact this had on Toby was amazing. He immediately felt a little better knowing he could relax and hangout in an almost normal feeling room.”

Toby will now start his road to physical therapy with hopes of getting back on the football field for his varsity year. “Through this he has learned to be compassionate toward others and show kindness without knowing their journey,” Courtney said.

This will be the second year the #43VersolaStrong family will gift 32 stockings to the super heroes of 7E. Along with this, their #43VersolaStrong is kicking off their first annual Design My Room Sponsor fundraiser. With everyone’s donations, they have sponsored four rooms to be decked out.



The two families raised hundreds of dollars to purchase toys for children at C.S. Mott’s Children’s Hospital’s Oncology & BMT floor. Submitted photo



The Keech and the Versola families delivered toys to children at C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital to help make their Christmas a little brighter. Submitted photo

These sponsors will go directly to four teens’ rooms at C.S. Mott’s Children’s Hospital’s Oncology & BMT floor.

Go to [wishuponateen.org](http://wishuponateen.org) to make a donation.

Phoebe’s mother, Carrie Keech, said that due to COVID, many holiday happenings at the hospital will look very different this year.

The amount of support both families received was more than they could have possibly imagined and prompted this project.

This project started in September (Childhood Cancer Awareness month), when the school Phoebe attends donated to wear gold (pediatric cancer ribbon color) and raised funds to buy toys for kids at the hospital — an idea entirely Phoebe’s.

The Keech’s family and friends also donated around \$750 worth of gifts and one local business owner, Gary Holvick of Holvick & Associates, donated 32 gifts for each of the 32 hospital rooms on the pediatric oncology

“We are proud of our warriors, proud of our family and friends, and proud of our community.”

Carrie Keech  
Phoebe Keech’s mother



Cutline to come. Cutline to come. Cutline to come. Cutline to come. Cutline to come. Submitted photo

floor at Mott.

“This was around \$1,300, absolutely amazing,” Carrie Keech said.

Toby’s family is tabulating their donations.

The families drove to C.S. Mott on Friday, Dec. 4 where met with Childlife

advocates and loaded the donated toys onto carts that were wheeled to the seventh floor.

“Courtney Versola and I are proud moms,” Keech said. “We are proud of our warriors, proud of our family and friends, and proud of our community.”



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# Lake Fenton High School will be vaccine distribution site

## ■ Genesee County Health Department will inoculate people in school facility

By Hannah Ball

The Lake Fenton High School will be used as a COVID-19 vaccine distribution center once a vaccine is available to the Genesee County Health Department.

Lake Fenton Community Schools Superintendent Julie Williams said the

district doesn't have any information on particular dates that a vaccine will be available.

"I am happy to assist our community partners by providing our facility for such an important task. It is also nice for our families and community members to have this available right here in our district," she said.

The district doesn't have to do any preparations at this time.

Lake Fenton High School was chosen

as a vaccine distribution site because Ralph Coaster, former superintendent, signed an agreement with the county that states that the facility is a Point of Dispensing (POD) under the county's Emergency Operation Plan.

"The Genesee County Health Department will staff and run the vaccine clinic when it takes place," Williams said. "If they need volunteers to assist with check-in or provide direction through the building, we will ask staff

members if they are interested in assisting. The current plan is to administer the vaccines after school hours. If that changes, we will adjust accordingly."

The GCHD has identified five other school districts to be used as vaccine distribution sites. This includes Flint, Grand Blanc, Davison, Mt Morris and Flushing school districts.

Holly will also have a location where people can receive inoculations. Fire Chief Steve McGee, who's part of Oakland County's Emergency Operations Center, said one of the old fire halls will be used later this month.

The Genesee County Board of Commissioners gave tentative approval on Wednesday, Dec. 2 to start establishing pods to distribute the vaccines at certain school districts. People will need two doses administered at separate times. The earlier rounds of vaccines will be allocated for health care workers, nursing home residents and staff and first responders. The GCHD expects vaccines to be available to the general public in the spring.

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## ROBBERY

Continued from Front Page

searched the area. Law enforcement from Linden, Genesee County and the Michigan State Police with their K9 unit assisted. These agencies did not find the suspect.

Approximately 15 to 20 minutes later, the 40-year-old male suspect entered a Check 'n Go in Grand Blanc. Cross said the Grand Blanc City Police Department had been dealing with robberies at this location. The department received a call, and the 40-year-old suspect was apprehended. He had the 33-year-old Fenton man's wallet in his pocket.

The victim was uninjured and shaken. Cross said the weapon was described as a black semi automatic handgun, but law enforcement discovered it was a BB gun. Because the item was used in commission in a crime as if it was a real pistol, it fits the criteria for an armed robbery.

The suspect has not yet been arraigned for the Fenton armed robbery, so his name will not be published yet.





Fenton varsity girls swim coach Brad Jones (right) is the D2 MISCA Swimming and Diving Coach of the Year.

# Jones wins D2 swim coach of the year honors

By David Troppens

The 2019-20 girls swim season was an outstanding one for the Fenton Tigers.

Actually, it was a historical one as well.

The Tigers had their first two-time event individual state champi-

onship performance state meet when Gracie Olsen won the 200 freestyle and the 100 butterfly at the Division 2 event November 2019.

The Tigers also continued their string of Flint Metro League championships, a run that now extends 17 straight seasons.

The program's outstanding season didn't go unnoticed, and neither did Fenton varsity girls swimming and diving coach Brad Jones's efforts.

He was named the 2020 Michigan High School Athletic Coaches

See **JONES** on 12

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020 | PAGE 11 | MYFENTON.COM/SPORTS

## Sports Times

### Prep sports will 'pause' a little bit longer

By David Troppens

It looks like the pause involving Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) action is going to last a little longer.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's COVID-19 pause which was expected to end as early as today was extended 12 more days during a press conference Monday afternoon.

The initial three-week pause was set to end after Tuesday ended, but will now be extended to Dec. 20. This means all prep athletics will be on hold at least another couple of weeks.

The decision will impact the end of the fall sports season as well as the start of the winter sports season. The tri-county fall athletic team most directly impacted by the decision is Fenton's varsity girls swim team. The Division 2 state swim meet was suspended less than a week before it was supposed to compete when the first pause was established during a Whitmer press conference on Nov. 15. The MHSAA had planned on hosting the state swim meets on Dec. 23 with other plans slated to conclude the state volleyball and football playoffs as well. If the state opened up today as planned, winter sports competition was scheduled to start Jan. 4. It's unclear if that date will change due to the new COVID-19 restrictions.

"We realize the crisis our medical caregivers and first responders are navigating and understand the need to continue the pause," MHSAA executive director Mark Uyl said in a prepared release.

"However, the MHSAA had provided a detailed plan to both Governor Whitmer and MDHHS that would have completed fall tournaments with no spectators as safely as possible during the month of December along with allowing winter sport practices to resume. While we are disappointed in today's announcement, we will continue to look forward as we remain committed to play three sports seasons to their conclusion. The MHSAA Representative Council will meet on Wednesday of this week to chart out another plan for finishing fall and re-starting winter."

Of course, Fenton varsity girls swim coach Brad Jones is among those upset with the extended restrictions. Jones saw his varsity boys swim team lose out on its chance to compete at the state



Fenton varsity girls swim coach Brad Jones and Fenton swimmer Gracie Olsen exchange in a celebration moments after Olsen won a state title a year ago. This year's state meet will likely be suspended again.

meet last spring. The squad was getting ready to leave to the state meet when it was suspended and

See **PAUSE** on 12

### David's Dabblings

Some thoughts about sports and others not dealing with sports at all



### LET'S ANSWER A FEW SPORTS QUESTIONS

Let's tackle a handful of questions today.

#### Should the Detroit Lions bring Matthew Stafford back next season?

Maybe the Lions try to find their heir apparent for Stafford and keep him another year. That's a possibility. However, the earlier he's out, the better you can change the culture around a new leader at the quarterback position. Keeping him would be a lot of dirty laundry the Lions don't need blurring the future direction of this organization.

I don't think Stafford is garbage, but I do think if he was going to make an impact in Detroit, it would've happened by now.

Stafford still has a losing record as an NFL quarterback and has yet to lead the Lions to a playoff victory. Is that all his fault? Of course not. But it's fair to say some of it is his fault. He's also making a huge amount of money and that keeps the Lions from helping make the team better around him, so it's fair his contract is keeping the Lions from possibly addressing those issues as well.

I think Stafford will be back next year. There's no crime making that decision. But at the

See **DABBLINGS** on 12



## JONES

Continued from Page 11

Association (MISCA) Coach of the Year.

"Being selected coach of the year certainly a nice surprise," Jones said. "But I think more importantly it represents our program and things they've done the last few seasons. Personally for me, the state of Michigan has a tremendous amount of amazing coaches so to be selected is an incredible honor."

Jones is the longest current running varsity head coach in Fenton High School, coaching for 31 seasons (most of those seasons at Fenton). During that time he's built the most dominant women's program in the Metro League with his girls team winning 17 straight league titles. They have won every single title since the Metro League has honored a league champion. The boys are starting to build an impressive resume as well. Fenton's men have won each of the last seven Metro titles. That means Jones has been part

of 26 league championships.

"It's the type of kids that we have in our program that has made 31 years so easy," Jones said. "It's simply all about the kids and the kids I've had. I'm certainly fortunate to have the support of some amazing kids who buy in to the program and work hard. As a result, we've been pretty successful. ... Put that combination together and it's very easy to go to work in the morning."

Getting to work in the morning consists of getting up at 4:30 a.m. during most normal practice days. The team is on deck at 5 a.m.

"I hate being away from the pool," Jones said. "I love spending time with the athletes. I love going to practice and seeing them every day."

The Tigers also had its 400 free-style relay team of Olsen, Lillie Kromer, Delaney Fries and Abigail Dolliver finish in third place at last year's D2 state meet, an all-time best for the Tigers' program. Fenton finished the state meet with an eighth-place team performance.



Fenton's Abigail Dolliver dives into the pool during the Tigers' state meet experience last season. The state meet may take while before it happens this season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PAUSE

Continued from Page 11

eventually canceled. Now, his girls team is going through the same issue, while his boys team is experiencing a suspension of the start of its season.

"I feel horrible for the kids," Jones said. "The worst part of this is they are the ones that put in the time and have done everything they've been asked to do and now it's being put off again. That's the hard part, continuing being the bearer of bad news to athletes. Not just ours but every athlete has done what has been asked of them. We are ready for the boys season and we want to finish the girls season, but we are not able to do that now."

"I hate being away from the pool."

There is no down time or off season when you coach swimming. That's part of what I love to do is spend time with the athletes and see them every day."

Jones said many of his state-qualifying swimmers have found other plans to try to keep in condition for the eventual state meet. Of course, none are currently being trained by Jones as the destinations vary for each swimmer. Jones said the athlete's character has come through during the this COVID-19 era.

"There's nothing normal about this year. That's for sure," Jones said. "Our athletes have proven how resilient they are and they've had to adjust on decisions that are made on a second's notice. They have handled this better than I have."

## DABBLINGS

Continued from Page 11

very least, the Lions need to find his replacement. He's in his 30s and has a bad back. It's time to move on. He'll probably do well in a different environment as well. Sometimes that's all someone needs.

**Prep sports are on a pause**

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's press conference on Monday means prep sports will be delayed at least another 13 days.

It sucks. I hate this decision for a lot of reasons, primarily for the Fenton varsity girls swim team who wants to compete in the Division 2 state swim meet. That's what the emotional side of me says.

The practical side of me says, it's the right decision. Two months ago, many of us didn't know anyone who had been diagnosed with the virus. That's not the

case any more. In fact, the number for me has skyrocketed into double-digits. Luckily, most have recovered and are doing fine. Still, the state is seeing hundreds of deaths a day. It makes sense to wait another two weeks to see if we can curb this virus.

**Michigan vs. Ohio State**

Hopefully the game is able to go on. There are some Michigan fans who hope it doesn't happen because Michigan will likely get crushed, but that's a bad way to approach this. Even if you don't care about either team, this is one of the top two or three rivalries in college football history. If it can be played, it needs to. I'd doubt there is a player on either team that wants to see the game canceled. This game is the primary reason some of those student-athletes made their decision to play at either school. Hopefully it does get played.

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Many of the worldwide deaths from the coronavirus pandemic remains to be seen as time humans have faced and caused by a deadly virus — and it is not the first, the last.

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# Obituaries

Times

## Patricia Morris

1925 - 2020

Patricia Morris - age 95, of Linden, passed away Monday, December 7, 2020. A private service will be held with burial in Fairview Cemetery in Linden. Those desiring may make contributions to The



garden and reading her Bible daily. She loved watching her children and grandchildren play sports and other school activities such as concerts and Marching Band. Pat was also an avid University of Michigan

fan. Rain or shine, you could always find Pat at McDonald's in the morning having coffee with the gang. Surviving are her children, Michael (Marcia) Morris, Cheryl Morris, Randall (Cindy) Morris, Colleen (Greg) Dyke, Kathleen (Norm) Butts; grandchildren, Jason, Ryan, Kelly, Jeff, Matt, Stephanie, Joshua, Zachery, Cody and Danielle; 16 great-grandchildren; sister, Jackie Burkett. She was also preceded in death by her parents; two brothers; and two sisters. Tributes may be shared at [www.sharpfuneralhomes.com](http://www.sharpfuneralhomes.com).

Sharp Funeral Homes



## Shirley Ann Wright

1942 - 2020

Shirley Ann Wright - age 78, of Fenton, passed away Thursday, December 3, 2020. Funeral Mass was celebrated 11 AM Monday, December 7, 2020 at St. Augustine Catholic Church, 6481 Faussett Rd., Howell. Burial followed in St. Augustine Cemetery. Visitation was held 2 - 8 PM Sunday at Sharp Funeral Homes, Linden Chapel, 209 E. Broad St., Linden and from 10 AM until the time of Mass Monday at the church. Those desiring may make contributions to the American Cancer Society. Shirley was born July 15, 1942 in Pontiac, the daughter of Roy T. and Emma D. (Amburgey) Gramer. She was a graduate of Linden High School and was married to Carl Wright in 1961. She is survived by her husband, Carl; children, Dale (Maggie) Wright, David Wright and Duane (Nicole) Wright; grandchildren, Jason, Paige, Molly, Dylan, Taylor, Noah, Jacob and Julia; siblings, Roy (Grace), Judy (Bud), May (Duane), Mary Jo (John), Al (Tammy). She was preceded in death by her parents; and daughter-in-law, Sue. Tributes may be posted at [www.sharpfuneralhomes.com](http://www.sharpfuneralhomes.com).



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11 Silvery

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16 1/20 ton (Abbr.)

17 Humdinger

18 Moving truck

19 Narnia's Aslan, e.g.

20 Antitoxins

21 Munchie

23 Enthusiasts' emotions

25 Roe provider

26 Group of quail

27 Debtor's letters

28 Muslim maiden

30 Thee

33 High-backed chairs

36 Earthling, in sci-fi

37 Flavor

38 Go over the books

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2 One

3 Tuneful

4 Spanish wine town

5 Mad

6 Tavern offering

7 Forehead

8 Conductor's wand

9 Whine

10 English channel?

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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GORRI

PRAGH

WUTOIT

TAUDEP

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Answers in this Sunday's edition of the Tri-County Times

We need to expand. We need more bamboo for the new hut resort.

This island is really booming.

MINI NURSERY

THE NURSERY THAT SOLD BAMBOO WAS EXPERIENCING ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Horoscopes

For the week of  
December 7, 2020

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, exciting news could be coming your way that could bring much joy into your life. It's just what you need right now. Enjoy the ride in the coming days.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

People may be trying to convert you by telling you their thoughts and opinions, Taurus. You can listen, but follow your own mind with important decisions.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, before you try to prove your point to others, make sure you have all of the facts and proof to state your case; otherwise, sound thoughts may fall on deaf ears.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, be confident this week and do not take "no" for an answer. It can be easy to get thrown off course when others offer their views on how things should be done. Stand firm.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

You may be surprised how cutting edge your thinking can be, Leo. Put some effort into innovative ideas. Be a leader at work this week and welcome any new suggestions.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Let others know you will not be a pushover, Virgo. Sometimes you cave to the pressures of others, especially when you feel the need to help out. Focus on your needs this week.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, if you know you have something important to share or do, be bold and make your move. Waiting for others to go first may cause you to miss an opportunity.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, sometimes you are so resolute in your thinking that you feel the need to get your ideas across to everyone. Do not make promises unless you can keep them.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, even if your ways of doing things have served you well, it may be time to revise your modus operandi to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, a quick call to a friend can easily turn into a lengthy conversation. There is much to say and catching up to do. Enjoy the time you have with this person.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you may feel a bit pressured to start something you really aren't ready for. Take it slowly and think it through before you jump into the action.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

You may be anxious to get moving with a new plan that you've hatched, Pisces. If you have all of the facts, move ahead.



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