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July 26, 2026 VOLUME 35 • ISSUE 1848 12 PAGES

From the Desk of Ryan Portenga, Superintendent Ashley Schools...



Ryan Portenga

To All Within Bear Country...

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I write this letter of introduction to you as your new school superintendent - a role/ responsibility that I am truly honored and grateful to hold. As I settle in, I wanted to take a moment to reach out, introduce myself, touch on a few district items, and include a few tidbits regarding the upcoming school year.

For over twenty years, I have served public education in different capacities... as a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, principal, and - most importantly - as a parent. In each capacity, I have been inspired by students, educators, and families alike - the "three-legged stool" within our industry - and have humbly been a part of some incredibly transformative work. Whether the service was within urban, rural, or suburban school communities, I have had the pleasure to work with students that have gone on to excel in the trades, within higher education, as entrepreneurs, within our various military branches, as public servants, and in countless other vocations/ roles. In short, my cup is filled on a daily basis through service to these students - and I have never been more proud to be a public school educator.

On the personal side of things, our family lives just down the road in Muir on a property that seems to be a "centerpoint" for all of our activities. My wife (Sarah) serves within the medical field supporting pediatric endocrinology - focusing her time in Ann Arbor, Lansing, and Grand Rapids. If you know a child that has diabetes, there is a chance they have worked with her! Whether it's softball, volleyball, hunting, piano, basketball, cross-country, or theater, our three daughters (Aubrey, Ellie, and Sophie Shae) certainly keep us busy. Yet, if it's not our kiddos keeping us busy, it's our family animals - or our new puppy, Cody. The Portengas are always on the go!

While serving as your superintendent, I will make every effort to foster a culture of connection, collaboration, and transparency- with the goal being to pursue the highest of standards, to champion all efforts within academic, artistic, and athletic programming, to focus on togetherness as often as possible, and to honor and execute the objectives established within our District Strategic Plan. As you'll undoubtedly find out, I'm not a "have to" sort of leader; I'm a "get to" - meaning that I wake up each day excited to "get to" work, lead, collaborate, and achieve as a public school educator.



Clinton County 4-H Fair August 2nd thru August 6th. More information on page 12.

OE Track Named Doug Long Track Complex

by Dawn D Levey



Doug Long

ELSIE – The regular meeting of the Ovid-Elsie Area Schools Board of Education was held Monday, July 20, 2026. Major highlights of the evening were the designation of the OE track as the Doug Long Track Complex in memory of long-time teacher and coach Douglas Long and long-term planning of the facilities and infrastructure.

The memorial, a remembrance of Doug Long's many years of dedicated service, leadership, and lasting contributions to Ovid-Elsie Area Schools and its student athletes. It was noted that the cost associated with the signage will be funded through private donations with no cost to the district. Officials unanimously approved the designation.

Mr. Mark Horak, superintendent, reported that the Class of 1976 held a fund raiser at their class reunion that raised $2,500. The funds will be designated for a scholarship for students who chose to pursue a career in Agri business or the trades. Next, a facilities committee was appointed. The members are: Brooke Wooley, Josh Miller, and Kevin Nash.

Horak presented a facilities planning presentation noting that this is just informational. This in an information gathering proposal for long-term planning regarding facilities and infrastructure. HVAC is a concern and a number of other infrastructure concerns in the aging building. Long-term planning is being proactive instead of reactive. Currently building issues and unexpected maintenance issues put pressure on the general fund. Noting that this could be the prerequisite to a potential bond proposal.

Today – waiting for the results of the MDE facilities assessment. In addition, Kingscott completed an informational walk through all the buildings at no cost to the district. Again, this is fact finding and gathering information. The planning process includes facilities assessment, project priorities, community input, board discussion and future discussion regarding next steps.

The purpose of the facilities committee is to an interview architecture and construction manager firms; recommend the hiring of the firms to the board, noting that the board retains control of decisions. Time line – July committee appointed and recommends to the board; August hire the firms to complete the studies and recommendations.

Horack further reported that the Ovid-Elsie District qualifies for approximately $31.8 m preliminary bonding capacity. If that is the direction the board decides to take. There would not increase taxes but an extension to the current bond. This is the planning stage, the board will make the decision on how to proceed after evaluations, studies and recommendations are complete.

Lastly, Horak reminded officials that the August Board meeting Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

continue on page 2

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Welcome Potluck

St Cyril Catholic Church will be hosting a Welcome Potluck for Father Vincent on Sunday, August 9th after Mass. Plan now to join in the fellowship. The church is located at 517 E. Main Street in Bannister.



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O-E from front page

Officials took action to appointment of Kyle Opperman and Michael Senyko to four-year terms to the Michigan International Prepotory School Board of Education, the district's charter school. Next, officials took action to appoint a delegate and alternate to the Michigan Association of School Boards annual delegate assembly slated for October 15, 2026. Appointed were Mrs. Becky Williams and Mrs. Brooke Wooley alternate.

Action was taken to approve the school bond qualifications and loan fund. The vote was four to three, with Mrs. Mary Thompson, Mrs. Sue Greer and Mrs. Becky Williams voicing numerous questions and concerns regarding the financial need. Thompson stated, "I felt the issue should have been tabled, pending further information."

The O-E Board of Education took action to authorize the superintendent to develop and distribute Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) for architectural and construction management services related to a comprehensive district facilities assessment and long-range facilities planning. The approval included authorizing the Board Facilities Committee to review qualifications, conduct interviews and provide recommendations to the Board of Education for approval.

Operating Procedure for review and discuss. This document is to onboard new board members. Formal approval is not necessary.



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Mark Your Calendar National Night Out in Elsie August 4th

by Dawn D Levey

ELSIE, MI — Elsie United Methodist Church invites residents and neighbors to come together for an evening of fun, food, and fellowship at the 4th annual Elsie Community Block Party in celebration of National Night Out. The event will take place on Tuesday, August 4, from 6–8 PM on Church Street, between W Main and Pine Streets.

The evening will feature live music and entertainment from community favorites Jack and Tess Clarkson, plus free food for all attendees. This year's theme is "Summer & the Tropics"—so break out your favorite Hawaiian shirts, sunglasses, and flip-flops, lawn chairs and come ready for fun!

"This event is all about bringing our community together and strengthening the connections between neighbors, first responders, and local services," said organizers. "We encourage everyone to bring their families, meet someone new, and enjoy a great evening in Elsie."

In the event of rain, festivities will be moved indoors to the Elsie United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.

ovid-elsie DANCE & TUMBLING

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MEET THE CANDIDATES

John Plowman Looks to be Retained as Road Commissioner



John Plowman is asking voters to retain him as Shiawassee County Road Commissioner. The former, nine term, County Commissioner was appointed in 2024 by the Board of Commissioners, to fill out the term of a resigned member. In his role as commissioner, he served six years as the liaison to the road commission.

Plowman currently serves as Chairman of Gennessee, Lapeer and Shiawassee (GLS)Region 5 Planning & Development Commission. He also serves on the Shiawassee Co. Parks & Recreation Commission and the Midwest Michigan Trail Authority (CIS Fred Meijer Trail) which serves Clinton, Ionia and Shiawassee Counties.

“If elected, by our county residents, I will continue to work with other road commissioners, directors, employees, residents and other governmental entities to make our county roads the very best they can be. The concept of governing extends far beyond oversight of the budget and commission policies. It’s about working as a team to shape the future of roads in our county,” explained Plowman.

John and Mary, his wife of 52 years, have three children and six grandchildren. The couple owned and operated Plowman Ford and Plowman Gas & Oil in Perry for many years.

Maasdam is one of the local candidates for U.S. House of Representatives



Matt Maasdam, age 51, is one of the local candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives.

A veteran Navy helicopter pilot, he met his wife Laura while attending Navy survival school. The couple has two teenage boys, age 13 and 15.

Maasdam earned a BA degree at the University of Michigan and a MPA through the Harvard Kennedy School

"I swore an oath to defend our country and Constitution when I became a Navy SEAL," Matt says. "Over 20 years, I deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, and the Pacific. I served in the White House as President Obama's Military Aide, carrying the nuclear codes and leading emergency response for the President.

"I'm running for Congress because I refuse to stand by while politicians tell us we can't afford housing or health care, even as they spend billions on unnecessary wars and tax breaks for billionaires. I swore an oath to protect the Constitution, and I'm watching President Trump shred it -- it’s time for leaders who fight back against Trump and for the American dream."

Maasdam faces three fights, he says, informed by what he hears across the district: "I’m going to fight for the Constitution: Against Trump’s reckless ICE raids, unnecessary wars, and threats to our elections. I’m going to fight for your wallets: Trump and Tom Barrett ripped away health care and put tariffs on everything, stealing the American dream from working families to give billionaires more. I'm proud to stand with labor, and to have the most labor endorsements in this race.

"I’m going to fight against corruption: Too many politicians serve themselves, trading stocks and using tax dollars as a slush fund. In the Navy, I fought for America. In Congress, I'll fight for you."

O’Berry Throws Hat in the Ring for Shiawassee County Road Commissioner



Dave O'Berry, age 57, has announced his candidacy for Shiawassee County Road Commissioner, facing incumbent John Plowman in the August primary.

O'Berry is married and has two daughters. He is a graduate of Morrice High School and studied business and diesel mechanics at Lansing Community College. A heavy equipment operator and business owner, he worked for 32 years for the Shiawassee Co. Road Commission and has 38 years owning and operating his own excavating company.

A priority is " ... making more money available for local road improvements and providing quicker response times during winter storms," Dave says. "If elected, I'll rely on my years of actual road work experience, not politics, to make the best decisions for the traveling public."

William Lawrence for 7th Congressional District



William Lawrence, 35 is running for Congress, Michigan’s 7th Congressional District

Incumbent: No

Marital Status: Married to wife (Dinah)

Education: East Lansing High School, Swarthmore College

Occupation: Community Organizer and Policy Advocate

ADJUSTED PORTION:

Experience: I'm a Lansing native, nonprofit leader, and organizer who has spent my career taking on the political establishment for working families. I co-founded the Sunrise Movement, helping defeat Donald Trump in 2020 and winning $3 billion in climate and green jobs investments for Michigan's 7th District. Back home, I helped found the Michigan Rent Is Too Damn High Coalition and the Mid-Michigan Tenant Resource Center, fighting Wall Street evictions and protecting tenants rights.

Issues: People are fed up with an economy that works for billionaires and corporations, not working families and small businesses. We can't afford gas, groceries, or rent, and if you’re not feeling it, your kids or grandkids are. Voters are sick of politicians who don't show up. When opponents refused to debate, I held a town hall instead, and I ran a food drive for medical debt after Barrett cut SNAP and ACA subsidies. I'm focused on issues that unite voters: money out of politics, stopping AI data centers and pointless wars, funding Social Security and healthcare, and making the top 1% pay their fair share like the rest of us.

Additional comments: I came home to Lansing because Mid-Michigan will always be home, and I'm ready to fight for my neighbors. I'm the only candidate in this primary with deep, lifelong ties and the largest volunteer operation in the race. We're building a movement strong enough to win in November and hold this seat in 2028. I'm running to protect this community, and Michigan's land, air, and water.



The Meridian Weekly sent out Candidate Profile questioners earlier this month for contested races in our circulation area.
These candidates responded to our questioneer.

Stephen Schlaack Earns United Steelworkers District 1 Endorsement

Letter to the Editor:

Stephen Schlaack, Democratic candidate for Michigan State Representative in the 71st House District, has earned the endorsement of United Steelworkers District 1.

"I'm honored to have the support of United Steelworkers District 1," Schlaack said. "USW represents people who make things, fix things, move things, and keep whole sectors of our economy running. That work does not always happen in the spotlight, but Michigan does not function without it."

Schlaack, an Owosso native, has a professional background in supply chain, procurement, healthcare, manufacturing, and systems improvement. He said the endorsement reflects the campaign's focus on working families, strong communities, and practical representation in Lansing.

"Working people are not just a line item. They are not a cost to be squeezed," Schlaack said. "They are the reason anything works in the first place. I'm running because the 71st District deserves a representative who respects work, understands how systems actually function, and will stand up for the people who keep our communities moving."

Michigan's 71st House District includes communities across Shiawassee County and portions of Genesee and Saginaw counties, including Owosso, Corunna, Durand, Perry, Chesaning, Gaines, Argentine Township, and parts of Mundy Township and Swartz Creek.

United Steelworkers District 1



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Worship Service: 10:30am
Pastor:
Kendra Holcomb - Densmore

Bannister United Methodist Church
103 Hanvey Street
Pastor: Zella Daniel
Sunday Worship 11:15am

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Worship Service: 9:30 a.m.
Pastor: JD Paik

Obituaries

Judith (Jill) Ann Ralston Burr



Judith (Jill) Ann Ralston Burr, 80, died peacefully January 1, 2026, at home in Virginia Beach, VA.

Jill was born May 27, 1945 in Atascadero, CA to Noel P. (Pat) and Marie E. Ralston. When Jill was four, the family moved to Okemos, MI, where Jill first met Rich in ninth grade. After graduating from Michigan State University, Jill taught elementary school for several years until Rich joined the U.S. Navy. Always ready for travel and new experiences, Jill embraced life as a Navy wife. From Maine to Hawaii, she found the unique beauty in each place. In Virginia Beach, she turned her passion for reading and helping others into a career with the Virginia Beach Public Library system. Among other positions, she was President of Virginia Association of Law Libraries. After retirement, she volunteered extensively with the Friends of the Virginia Beach Public Library, serving two terms as president. Avid about physical fitness, Jill maintained an active lifestyle, whether teaching aerobic dancing, hiking, walking, or playing with grandchildren. She was also a talented seamstress, making the wedding dresses for herself, her daughter, and daughter-in law and knitting numerous hats, mittens, sweaters, and scarves for her loved ones.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 59 years, Richard H. Burr, daughter Kristin L. Burr of Wynnewood, PA, son Gary S. Burr of Trenton, ME, son-in-law David Brown, daughter-in-law Julie Burr, and grandchildren Marissa and Miles Burr and Clara, Leila (Max) and Meredith (Alex) Burr Brown. Preceding her in death were infant twin daughters Lori and Robin and a brother, Gary, who died in childhood.

She is also survived by her sister, Susan (John) Coon of Mt Pleasant, MI; brother Peter (Michele) Ralston of Bellevue, WA; and brothers/sisters-in-law Daniel and Dianne Peterson of Marietta, GA; Don and Joanne Ricks of East Lansing, MI; and David and Lori Burr of Southlake, TX.

The family would like to thank the hospice staff at Westminster Canterbury at Home for the loving care they provided during Jill's last months. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Friends of the Virginia Beach Public Library, Westminster Canterbury at Home Hospice, or a charity associated with strokes and stroke prevention.

A memorial service to celebrate Jill's life will be held 11:30 am on Thursday, August 6, 2026 at Okemos Community Church, 4734 Okemos Road, Okemos, Michigan.

Editorial

Planet Perspectives



by Alison Kozlowski

Wildfires & Air Quality

Recently Michigan has seen prominently hazy skies and concerningly poor air quality. These conditions are a result of one of the most destructive issues the environment faces: wildfires. These wildfires are occurring in Canada and Minnesota, but are affecting the Midwest and Northeast US.

Climate change has been the major cause of these intense wildfires. Rising global temperatures cause earlier snowmelt and frequent drought, creating longer wildfire seasons. The extreme temperatures and low humidity allow fires to ignite and spread quickly, making forests more flammable. Lightning strikes have also been a cause, as well as human activity.

These fires produce thick smoke plumes that are carried through wind patterns and spread across the Great Lakes region. This smoke pollutes the air, causing the air quality to reach unhealthy and hazardous levels. This poor air quality is harmful and especially impacts those with respiratory or heart conditions.

Wildfires have long posed a big threat to the environment. They emit greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and consequently make more frequent and intense wildfires. The loss of vegetation degrades soil and increases erosion. The destruction of the forests disrupts ecosystems and demolishes habitats.

The recent wildfires directly show how the effects of climate change are more apparent now than ever. The consequences of human impact on the environment are not approaching, but are here. We can help our planet by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and environmental footprints.

Editorial



A Little Common Sense

by Crystal Mitchell

Another week has zoomed past and I haven't gotten much done. There are still weeds to be pulled and a garden to water… And now I have a rather large limb from my weeping willow that gave me quite a scare. It dropped from the top of the tree right after I had mowed under it. It was rather spooky and a bit of a close call. I thanked God that it missed me, must be I still have a few more purposes to be fulfilled. I am blessed. Last night was another learning experience for me… I need to add more dirt to my raised beds and water them every other day. Because my potato plants were dried out, I pulled them and had a nice pan of mini red Pontiacs for supper last night. I may pull the rest tomorrow afternoon and have another bunch with butter and sprinkled with original ranch dressing. It will be yummy. Probably followed with a nice piece of muskmelon.

On Sunday morning my grandson, Celly borrowed my pickup to move some furniture from Port Huron to Lansing. The move went well and he returned the truck around eight in the evening. I got to meet Gabby and thoroughly enjoyed our converstaion. She enjoyed my cats and was happy that they had been able to use my truck. (Fortunately they didn't need to remove the cap). Which according to them had a bigger bed and could handle more then they had expected. They barely got out of here when I got a phone call about an available sofa with a queen sized foldout bed. So I texted Celly and asked if they were interested. Surprisingly the were, and they are enthusiastic about the wine cask end tables and matching coffee table. I believe that everyone involved is happy. So my pickup is making another trip on Monday morning. I am glad that I don't have to lift anything.

Last Saturday was my birthday and I was taken out to lunch after the St John's Farmer's Market closed for the week. Folks helped me to tear down and load the truck, I then stopped at the bank and went to the restaurant of our choice. I had a very enjoyable day but was happy to get home for a nap. I do admit that I was surprised at all the 'Birthday Wishes' that a received on Facebook, the texts that I received and of course the cards. Several made me laugh. This Saturday my kids are giving me a 'birthday party' at the barn. The food will be good and I do believe that there will be a lot of laughter.

On Monday I got a tidy sunburn while I mowed the lawn. I'm surprised that the top of my head wasn't burned, I haven't been able to find my hat since Isabella was here and took care of things. I'd better dig through my tubs upstairs to find my other hats. I have some baby clothes to drop off at the 'Baby Pantry' in Elsie, an outfit for Leigh Leigh, and a bag of yarn that Isabella left here. I have started my Christmas shopping. May your days be filled with blessings and opportunities, may God bless you, and smile.

Crystal Mitchell©2026



Editorials are welcome. 200 words or less.
Email to: news@meridianweekly.com.
Must include name.



Faith Focus

by Phil Hopersberger
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"That Awkward Silence"

"This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong (Proverbs 30:20).'"

Weddings. The worst part of "you have to go to" this wedding is the bored, silent strangers at your reception table. It's so awkward. Try this ice-breaker: "Do you think you'll go to Heaven when you die?" Most folks assume they're not that bad. It's always, "I'm pretty good." We assume…good people go to Heaven.

But are we good? We assume…sin is just being naughty, and God knows deep down we're sorry and mostly good (compared to that stinker Putin). We assume…a Santa-God tousles our hair, winks us into Heaven, and says, "You tried your best." But by age 70, one sin a day is 25,550 sins (multiplied by the 117 billion who've ever lived and that's a Titanic wink)!

Judge Judy wouldn't ignore 25,550 transgressions, but God will? Our logic…nobody's perfect. God will make some accommodation. We conjure up a Cosmic Scale to weigh our good and bad deeds, but do we need 25,551 good works to make the cut? Or 25,552 to be safe? Sounds silly to say aloud, and despite a record of 25,550 wrongs, we still assume…we're pretty good.

We assume an awful lot. Odd we don't assume the Bible's take: "Whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." Guilty? But I believe in God. "The demons also believe, and shudder." If good works and believing doesn't get us into Heaven, then…? That awkward silence rears its ugly head again.

Try this ice-breaker: "Why do you think Jesus had to die?" It's pretty important, so take your time, but not too much. There's still one more "you have to go to" event… your own funeral.



The Weekly Sportsman

by Dan McMaster
theweeklysportsman@meridianweekly.com

Wildfires & Hotshots

The Weekly Sportsman has been saving this review of three books released in 2025 about the increasing number of wildfires and those who combat them every day in the western United States. Now seems like an appropriate time to share all three books to help explain and put into context all the wildfire smoke that has been drifting south and making recent days very uncomfortable and intolerable for Michigan residents to say the least. The three books are Hotshot: A Life on Fire by River Selby, Wildfire Days by Kelly Ramsey, and When it All Burns: Fighting Fire in a Transformed World by Jordan Thomas. The Weekly Sportsman burned, no pun intended, through all three books to read about the rigorous training and day to day work of Hotshots employed by the US Forest Service. Often considered the elite of those who fight wildfires they are highly trained wildland fire handcrews that perform some of the most demanding and hazardous tasks wildland firefighting and their profession requires the highest level of physical fitness and leadership. They are often considered the special ops or special forces of the firefighting profession. All three books meticulously cover the daily life of a Hotshot but also the changing cultural and climatic changes causing some of these gigantic and massive wildfires out west. Whether the fires have become more common due to the weather, budget cuts, or the lack of proper forest management the reader quickly becomes educated that this is a growing crisis. All three books of course have authors dealing with their own personal tragedies and backstories but if a reader can sift through all the information shared there is a lot that can be learned about the profession and resources required to fight wildfires. Probably the most interesting historical perspective comes from Thomas, a self proclaimed liberal, who is currently working on a PhD in anthropology. He spent a lot of the book discussing indigenous controlled burns that were commonplace centuries ago in California which not only helped with forest management but also was a tool used in wild food production. The Weekly Sportsman suggests reading all three to get a true balanced perspective of Hotshots and wildfires but also be prepared to read about some social issues that may be uncomfortable to some.

-WS

OFFICE HOURS

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 8:30am - 12 Noon
Wednesday: Thursday: 8:30am-4:00pm
Friday: Closed

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CITY OF LAINGSBURG
NOTICE OF PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST
FOR THE AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION
TO BE HELD AUGUST 4, 2026

A public accuracy test for the AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION to be held AUGUST 4, 2026, will be conducted on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the City Hall Office located at 114 N. Woodhull Street, Laingsburg, Michigan.
The public accuracy test is conducted to assure that the program and the computer being used to tabulate the ballots of the election are in conformance with the procedures prescribed by law.

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"No Shy Colleen" Authors Presentation at Ovid Library

submitted by Elizabeth Rice



The Ovid library will have a presentation on August 11th at 1:00pm.

Pat Commins and Elizabeth Rice will be discussing our new book, "No Shy Colleen".

This book contains stories about Irish immigrant women and/or their daughters in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of the reasons these women came to America were to escape the devastating famine raging in Ireland, to find relief from political oppression, to experience religious freedom and to leave lives of dire poverty. Some women traveled alone but many traveled with their family, including very young children.

In America, these women often had to step outside the usual occupations that social norms deemed appropriate for women during this time. Many of these women cared for their children and managed a household. Additionally, they became farmers, ranchers, miners, shopkeepers, businesswomen, teachers, nurses, doctors, social and labor activists, factory workers as well as many other professions.

We are pleased to present an overview of these true stories-one story from each of the fifty United States and Washington, D.C. The stories illustrate the women's courage, fortitude, loyalty to their families as well as their integrity and ingenuity. We think listeners will agree these women were 'no shy colleens .

The authors will have books available for sale. As well, there will be copies of the authors' first book, "Irish Immigrants in Michigan: A History in Stories". Their first book details true stories of Irish immigrants who settled in Michigan in the 19th century.

Pat Commins was born in Ardee, County Louth, Ireland. He is a retired teacher and administrator who studied in St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, London and University College Dublin. Pat has traveled widely throughout his career.

Elizabeth Rice is a retired teacher who lives in Michigan. Elizabeth graduated with a B.A. from Albion College. She earned an M.A. from the University of Michigan. She has a keen interest in people and their stories. Elizabeth has been listening to family stories from a young age, which inspired her to become a writer. She is captivated by learning life lessons from simple experiences, people she meets, nature, and unexpected encounters.

Wilson Thicket Brings Their Virtuosic Program to St. Johns on July 29th

submitted by Bill Tennant



Wilson Thicket, one of the premier string bands in the Midwest, will be bringing their virtuosic acoustic journey in three-part harmony to St Johns for an exciting performance on Wednesday evening, July 29 at 7:00. This "not to be missed" concert will take place at the William E. Tennant Performance Shell in the beautiful St. Johns City Park.

Wilson Thicket has the soul of an Appalachian string band, but there is more to this Thicket than just a patch of bluegrass. They combine a hand-picked group of top singers, instrumentalists, and songwriters that Michigan has to offer, with decades of performing experience under their collective belts. Old school favorites, creative covers, and dynamic original songs are all delivered with captivating vocals and creative instrumental mastery. This music has plenty of roots and lots of grass. There may be some thorns, but also some flowers. Welcome to the thicket.

"This is one of our exciting repeat groups this year," explains Bill Tennant, concert coordinator. "This band does it all – the great harmonies – outstanding instrumentalists – this, along with their great program that includes some bluegrass, but much much more – Wilson Thicket is definitely a group everyone will thoroughly enjoy – they are the real deal!"

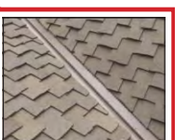
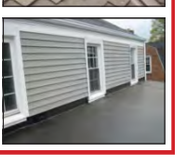
Individually, all four members of Wilson Thicket are excellent award-winning musicians in their own right. But collectively, they feed off of each other rising to new heights. Jason Dennie (Mandolin/Guitar/Vocals) is a three-time Cammy Award Winner for Best Folk/Bluegrass Instrumentalists. Aaron Markovitz (Guitar/Mandolin/Vocals) won a Detroit music award for outstanding recording with the group Escaping Pavement's "The Night Owl." Keith Billik (Banjo/Vocals) is the creator and host of The Picky Fingers Banjo Podcast, a show listened to by banjo enthusiasts worldwide. Scott Kendall (Upright Bass) has been playing in bluegrass bands for most of his adult life plus other groups vested in a wide variety of musical styles.

The Concert in the Park series is co-sponsored by the Clinton County Arts Council and the City of St Johns. We are also acknowledging The Butler Financial Group at this concert. We are grateful for their support as a season sponsor again this year!

Bring a chair or blanket – visit the Lion's Club Food Trailer - the concert takes place rain or shine. The concert is free, but donations are greatly appreciated and needed to support the series each year.

So, set your GPS to 801 W Park St, and enjoy an evening of music you won't soon forget! The CCAC receives funding from the Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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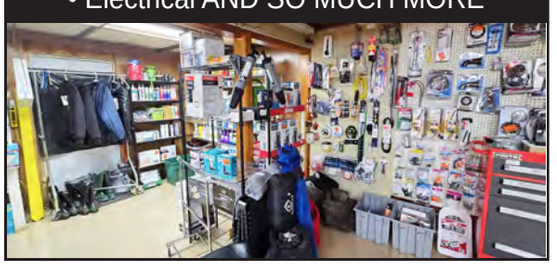
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Photos by Dean Paxton and Carriage Days Committee

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Victor Township
Clinton County, Michigan
6843 E. Alward Road, Laingsburg, MI 48848
Proposed Board Minutes of July 14, 2026

The regular board meeting of Victor Township was called to order by Supervisor Wiswasser at 7:01 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a roll call of Board members in attendance.
Present: Wiswasser, Willoughby, Pesch, Prange. 11 citizens were present.
Public Comment: none
Approval of Agenda: Motion by Prange, seconded by Pesch, to approve July 14, 2026, agenda.
Motion carried unanimously.
Approval of Minutes: Motion by Pesch, seconded by Wiswasser, to approve June 9, 2026, regular board meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
Treasurer's Report: Motion by Prange, seconded by Pesch, to accept the July 2026 Treasurer's report. Motion carried unanimously.
Approval of Bills and Payroll: Motion by Willoughby, seconded by Pesch, to disburse June 2026 bills. (Paid July 14, 2026) Roll call: Members voting yes: Pesch, Willoughby, Prange, Wiswasser. Motion carried. Checks # 12897-12917, in the amount of $340,696.85. (This includes payment to hall renovation & park project.)
Motion by Willoughby, seconded by Prange, to disburse June 2026 payroll and payroll related expenses. (Paid July 14, 2026). Roll call: Members voting yes: Willoughby, Pesch, Prange. Motion carried. Checks # 13382-13390 in the amount of $16,254.70.
Sayles entered the meeting at 7:25 p.m.
Commissioner Fickes Report:
o The Commissioners reported to the Department of Treasury Clinton County's taxable value at $4,252,719,966
o The Opioid Settlement Advisory Steering Committee appointment recommendations first meeting will be in August.
o Work to fill Planner and Deputy Administrator positions continues.
o Broadband Taskforce met on June 29 and reported that the ROBIN grant funded construction will be completed this summer. Over 3200 locations will be connected to high-speed internet. BEAD funded construction will begin later in the year which will connect another 3000+ locations.
o The Commissioners approved rezoning requests to realign county park properties.
o The commissioner meetings are recorded and can be located on the Clinton County website, clinton-county.org and on YouTube.
Planning Commission Report: The Planning Commission updated the board on the township historical group, main hall updates, and the master plan survey and updates. They will continue to review the last masterplan and add or make changes to the new plan.
Laingsburg Public Library: The library has sent the proposed library agreement to the Townships of Sciota, Woodhull, Victor, and the City of Laingsburg to create a library district. Also proposed is a district-wide millage to cover the amount required by the State of Michigan to qualify for state aid and services. They are hoping to place the proposal on the ballot November 3, 2026.
In the meantime, the Library is open and has many programs to offer people of all ages. See www.laingsburg.mi-chlibrary.org for up-to-date information or check out the Laingsburg Public Library on Facebook.
Briggs District Library: Briggs District Library offers many programs for all ages. There is a millage on the August Primary Ballot to renew the expiring millage. See briggsdistrictlibrary.org or call 989-224-4702 for more information.
Cemetery Director: The mausoleum has been taken down, and the area will be assigned to burial spaces for sale.
Pesch left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.
Maintenance and Facilities:
New bathroom accessories/hardware are being installed in the park restrooms.
o The floors and tiles have been cleaned.
o Drain issue in Parking lot is being addressed
Unfinished Business:
Park Project: Things are going as expected and are keeping to the schedule.
Hall Project: Discussion was held regarding replacing the existing drinking fountain with a high-low water cooler with bottle filler as part of the building project. Parts are unavailable for the existing fountain. Motion by Wiswasser, seconded by Sayles to add the proposed drinking fountain to the hall building project in the amount of $3,465.00. Roll call: Members voting yes: Prange, Willoughby, Wiswasser, Sayles. Motion carried.
GOGov Mobile App Coming Soon!
In addition to the township's website, Victor Township will soon offer a mobile app, Victor Township Connect, providing residents with another convenient way to stay informed.
With the app, residents can customize the notifications they receive by selecting the topics that matter most to them. Victor Township Connect will officially launch on August 7, 2026.
More information, including download details, will be available on the township website at victortownship.org.
Round Lake Weeds: The process is underway to create a special district to collect monies for weed control at Round Lake.
New Business:
Laingsburg Library Agreement: Discussion regarding the submitted agreement from the Laingsburg Public Library. There were questions raised by the board regarding the wording of the agreement. Motion by Sayles and seconded by Wiswasser to table acting on this agreement until the Victor Township Board can get further clarification from our attorney and he can review the agreement with the other attorneys involved in this agreement. Motion carried unanimously.
Motion by Wiswasser, seconded by Sayles to adjourn at: 9:21 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.
Copies of Contracts, Resolutions, Agreements, Budget Amendments, and Minutes are on the Victor Township Website (www.victortwp.org) and at the Clerk's office in the Township Hall.

Lianne Prange
Victor Township ,Clerk

Elsie and Ovid-Elsie High All School Reunion

submitted by Kella Carter



A wonderful time was had at the Elsie and Ovid-Elsie High All School Reunion on July 12th by former students from the Elsie and the Ovid-Elsie High Schools. Everyone celebrated and shared memories, long-lasting friendships, and the school's enduring place in our communities.

Our unique history was created by two villages, who at the time were arch-rivals in sports, being six miles apart, coming together for the good of the communities, then building a consolidated high school in the middle of a cornfield. Who else can say that!?! History and memories sure have been made by the original Ovid and Elsie High Schools and then after becoming Ovid-Elsie High School.

During the reunion, there were several classmates who had known each other since kindergarten, or 4th grade, 7th grade or other times, laughing and reminiscing about so many memories. They may not see each other that often but it sure was wonderful to connect, at the Elsie Legion Hall. The event welcomed Elsie graduates from 1952 all the way to Ovid-Elsie graduates of 2007. A delicious meal was prepared by Country Spice Catering. Thank you to Dana Blank and her two students who did an interesting presentation of what O-E students are doing to impact our world outside of O-E. Thank you to Kirk Baese for being the MC and bringing his fun game, Name That Tune. A special thank you to the committee who were behind the scenes: Pat Courtier Jorae, Rita Allen Boyd, Caroline Woodard Long and Kella Carter.



If you could not make it this time, don't miss out and plan to attend next time in 2028!

For this fun event to continue, more people ARE NEEDED to join the planning committee. It is fun to get together, and more hands make easy work. We especially need any suggestions on how to get the word out to people. You can get more information about helping and with any suggestions please contact Carolyn Long at: 989-277-4826.



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Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee Silent Auction, Volunteer Celebration & Annual Meeting

submitted by Helen Rathbun



The Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee's Silent Auction, Volunteer Celebration and Annual Meeting is Thurs. August 6th at Fortitude Farms & Events Clubhouse, beginning at 4:30 pm. All Respite Volunteers are invited, RSVP needed by July 29th. Volunteer's tickets are complimentary thanks to the following sponsorships; $1000 Sponsors-Hemenway Business Service, Jackie Hurd, Horizon Bank, the Family of C. Diz and Muriel Clark, in Memory of C. Diz & Muriel Clark. $500 Sponsors; Mowinski Financila & Youngs Owosso, $300 Sponsor Midwest Bus.

The event is open to members, volunteers, families served by the program, and the public. To purchase tickets, $25 per person (if not a volunteer), RSVP by July 29th but sooner if possible, 989-725-1127 office@respitevolunteers.org

Some of our Silent Auction items are: Pair of Jan Dorer watercolors, 2 wooden bowls made by Lee Stevens, one is a River Pattern Bowl, Fawn photo & Eagle photo plaques with clock made by Ron Raines, State of Michigan Basket with delicious items from Copper Top Country Store from Andrea Meyers, Sparty cutting board made by John Bressette, Perry Shell Gas Station framed photo by George Nama, Colorful 32 in x 48 in quilt from Owosso Crazy Quilters, Bright Colored Star Pattern Baby Blanket made by Donna Nault, Angel Gift Basket with 2 vintage Napco Angels, Vintage Hand Carved Elephant Soapstone Vase, Just Love Art -Tea Light & Gift Certificate for class or products from Dede Rafaelli, Brighton Bling Jewelry, David Vaughn framed print, MSU, U of M, & Detroit Tigers Sachels made by Pam Malaska, Stero Boom Box made by Don Giffei, Fleece Sailboat pattern throw, 1 Dozen Delicious Homemade Cookies for a year by Kathy Raines, & much more. Some photos are posted on the website and facebook. Please come to our office for the entire printed list.

Slate of officers: Brent Mowinski, Chairperson, Rev. Tony Moore Vice-Chairperson, Lori Chant, Treasurer, and Penny Corbin, Secretary

Renewing Board Members: Lori Chant, Penny Corbin, Kathy Raines, Brent Mowinski, & Pastor Katie Wallen.

Other board members include; Cody Chapman & Rebecca Napier

Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee provides services to adults with health challenges (primarily seniors) in Shiawassee and help to their family caring for them. Respite Volunteer staff schedule home visits to provide; information about all the in home and senior services available, home safety suggestions, case management, and matches each person with their own volunteer to visit, usually weekly for 1-3 hours. Volunteers are matched with one person, and provide friendly visiting. For information, to request services, and to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 989-725-1127

CLINTON COUNTY LEGALS

SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - CLINTON COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Clinton County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Heath M Colley, A Married Man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), solely as nominee for Quicken Loans, LLC, its successors and assigns Date of mortgage: July 12, 2021 Recorded on July 16, 2021, in Document No. 5312893, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Rocket Mortgage, LLC, fka Quicken Loans, LLC Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Seventy-Two and 07/100 Dollars ($299,372.07) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Clinton County, and described as: A PARCEL OF LAND IN THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 22, TOWNSHIP 7 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, BINGHAM TOWNSHIP, CLINTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS: BEGINNING ON THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 22, 1766.50 FEET EAST OF THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 22; THENCE EAST ALONG SAID SOUTH LINE OF SECTION 22, 200.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 378.75 FEET, THENCE WEST 200.00 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 378.75 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. Commonly known as 1275 E Parks Rd, Saint Johns, MI 48879 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Rocket Mortgage, LLC Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400

1599780
(07-26)(08-16)

SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - CLINTON COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Clinton County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Catherine Alexander, A Single Woman and Bradley Lewis Parish, A Single Man As Joint Tenants with Full Rights of Survivorship Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), solely as nominee for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: April 3, 2025 Recorded on April 4, 2025, in Document No. 5353001, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Forty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Ninety-Five and 87/100 Dollars ($148,195.87) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Clinton County, and described as: Commencing 938.4 feet West of the center of Lansing Street on the South line of Park Avenue in the City of St Johns, Clinton County, Michigan, running thence South 10 rods, thence East 50 feet, thence North 10 rods, thence West to the place of beginning, all in Section 17, Town 7 North, Range 2 West, Clinton County Records. Commonly known as 607 W Park St, Saint Johns, MI 48879 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400

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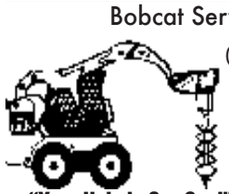
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UM Health-Sparrow Earns Nation's Highest Stroke Care Honors for Ninth Straight Year

submitted by John Foren

LANSING, Mich. – University of Michigan Health-Sparrow has once again received the American Heart Association's highest recognition for stroke care, earning the Get with the Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus achievement award.

The designation marks the ninth consecutive year UM Health-Sparrow has secured the Gold Plus status, a streak that places it among the nation's elite programs for treating the fifth-leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the U.S.

As the only comprehensive stroke center in Mid-Michigan, UM Health-Sparrow provides a spectrum of care, from emergency transport to post-discharge follow-up.

"This recognition reflects the unwavering commitment of our entire stroke team to deliver the right care, at the right time, every single time," said Ann Marie Creed, President of UM Health-Sparrow Lansing. "When a stroke strikes, our team has proven year after year that we can meet that challenge at the highest national standard."

UM Health-Sparrow was also named to the Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll, acknowledging success in reducing stroke risk among diabetic patients.

Stroke occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain is blocked by a clot or bursts, killing brain cells. Early detection and treatment are critical to improving survival, minimizing long-term disability and accelerating recovery.

UM Health-Sparrow's stroke center includes rapid-response ambulance protocols, 24/7 neurology coverage and highly specialized providers, ensuring that patients receive specialized care without the delays of long-distance transport.

For more information about stroke services, risk factors and warning signs, visit UofMHealthSparrow.org/Stroke.

Laingsburg & Ovid Lions Clubs
2026 Golf Outing - 4 Person Scramble
Saturday, August 8
9:00 AM - Shotgun Start
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Collectible Coin Online Auction. Bidding open @JohnPeckAuctions.com. NGC graded coins, mint sets, gold, Peace dollars, Liberty's, Eagle's, Indian heads, antique silver coins. Nationwide shipping available. Offices Gladwin & Charlotte. Call 989-345-4866. CPM

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AUGUST 2ND - AUGUST 6TH

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2026 FAIR SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, JULY 26TH
- FAIR SET UP

FRIDAY, JULY 31ST
- TACK HAUL IN & DECORATIONS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST
- ANIMAL/PROJECT ENTRY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2ND
- POULTRY & GOAT SHOW

MONDAY, AUGUST 3RD
- PROSPECT & SHEEP SHOW

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4TH
- RABBIT, SWINE & BEEF SHOW

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5TH
- DAIRY SHOW & LIVESTOCK SALE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6TH
- KIDS DAY

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7TH
- FAIR CLEAN UP



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