

## Drive-By Christmas Was a Hit

by Deb Price

It was a cold, rainy Saturday on December 12th, but the weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of kids and their parents. The drive-by holiday event was sponsored by the Ovid Carriage Days Committee. Normally the event would be held on a Friday evening at the Lions/VFW Hall. With the current COVID conditions, the committee came up with a way to carry on the tradition of gift giving for kids in the community and an opportunity to see Santa & Mrs. Claus by creating a Drive-By event.

The response was tremendous, a line was formed at 3pm and over the next two hours, car by car, kids and their parents were treated to candy canes and specially made chocolate bars. Over 200 toys were handed out to kids by the Carriage Days Elves. Kids left their letters for Santa as they waved good-bye.



*Santa & Mrs Claus stood socially distanced as they waved to kids and their parents in front of City Hall in Ovid.*



*A continuous line of cars bringing kids to see Santa on Saturday, December 12th in Ovid.*

*Santa & Mrs Claus took a little break from waving to kids and wishing families a Merry Christmas.*

*Photos by Deb Price*



*Jodi Skutt, one of the Carriage Days Elves delivered toys to kids in cars.*



## Ovid-Elsie Area School Last Regular Meeting of 2020

by Dawn D Levey

ELSIE – The last regular meeting of 2020 for the Ovid-Elsie Area Schools Board of Education was held Monday, December 14, 2020. COVID-19 and the impact on k-12 student, staff and the community was once again the focus of the meeting. In addition, the teachers and staff are stepping up to provide a holiday celebration for the students was also at the fore front.

A monthly update on the Ovid-Elsie “Return to Learn Plan-Reconfirmation” was presented by Dr. Ryan Cunningham, superintendent and Mr. Randy Barton, assistant superintendent. The data is similar to last month and the pause has been extended for twelve days. Some of the CCRESA Courses were once again allowed to meet person-to-person, auto mechanic, pre-allied health, fire science, and construction. Currently the Ovid-Elsie District has 6 in quarantine, 4 POSITIVE cases, the worst week was the week of November 8. The big question, “when do students and staff return after winter break?” Additional data was reviewed regarding the local statistics of the community spread. Cunningham reported that 14 of 20 area schools are currently 100% remote, the majority staying remote until after the winter break. Seven will not be returning January 4; 6 of 20 not until the January 11, remaining considering staying out longer.

Cunningham recommended that staff and students return to in-person January 11, 2021. There is concern about coming back too early after holiday gatherings both by staff and parents. It was noted that contact with the Health Department has been minimal, because of the lag in reporting.

Officials took action regarding the recommendations made with a return date of January 4, 2021 remote and January 11, 2021 return to face-to-face learning. The recommendations were approved.

The administrative team will meet Tuesday, December 15, to discuss how to get everyone back face-to-face. The hope is that when second semester begins January 25, 2021, the majority students will be back and an attempt will be made minimize staff teaching in both arenas.

Mr. Randy Barton, recommended that we maintain our current course, remote learning until students return Monday, January 11, 2021. He also gave an attendance update for the entire district. Buildings are seeing greater participation, and the internet labs are being utilizes.

Both Leonard Elementary and EE Knight Elementary schools are planning an evening of lights and fun for the k-6 students Tuesday, December 15, 2020, “Light Night”. There will be materials, gifts and treats and great big “We miss you,” for the students. Also, a virtual spirit week is taking place.

At the high school a virtual choir concert was held Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 6:30. Also, attendance and participation is improving and a spirit week is underway. Recently there was an Ovid-Elsie senior who was a fatality of a car accident, the crisis team has been activated.

All buildings are making connections with the students especially those with limit contact. Overall attendance is improving.

Jesse Johnson, athletic director, commented that the status of winter sports is uncertain at this time. Currently districts are anticipating an update from the Michigan High School Athletic Association December 20, 2020. There is a hope that girls and boys’ basketball will begin soon.

In other actions officials approved the presented NEOLA policies.

Monthly action was taken to approve the December meeting agenda, the minutes of the November 16, 2020 meeting, approval of expenditures and the monthly financial statements. A thank-you was expressed to Stacie Rulison for her years of dedication to the district, also a memorial brick was purchased in recognition for her service. Rulison opted not to run for an additional term. The reorganizational meeting was slated for 6:30 pm, Monday, January 11, 2021, and 6:40 pm for the regular meeting. If allowable face-to-face for the January meeting.

The Board acknowledged the hard work by the staff and Happy Holidays to all.

**From the  
Meridian  
Weekly  
Family  
to Yours**

*Merry Christmas*  
- HAPPY HOLIDAYS -

**The Deadline  
for the  
December 27th  
paper is  
Tuesday  
December 22nd  
at 5:00 p.m.**



# Social

## Clarification

by Dawn D. Levey

ELSIE – Due to some confusion, I wish to clarify information included in the Elsie Village Council article that was printed December 12, 2020. Due to the discussion at the meeting regarding holding a committee meeting or a workshop and the number of village officials that could attend without reflecting a quorum I took it upon myself to research the issue. Please note that officials did not bring up or discuss the Michigan Open Meetings Act or any portion of the document. These are challenging times for municipalities, cities and villages to comply with MDHHS orders, to conduct the business necessary, and to comply with public acts.

## Correction

submitted by Alyssa Schueller

The address for OUCH Urgent Care Rapid COVID-19 Testing was listed incorrect in the December 13 Meridian Weekly.

The address is 724 E Superior St., Alma.



## Duplain Twp. Couple Invite You to See Their Christmas Display

DUPLAIN TWP — Harry and Jill Huntoon want people to know their Christmas lights are back up this year — and there are a lot of lights.

The Huntoons, 8550 N. St. Clair Road, have more than 55,000 lights set to music for the public to enjoy. They also have 50 Garfield characters set up throughout the display and reindeer sporting real antlers. Jill Huntoon made and painted the Garfield cartoon characters.

Harry Huntoon said they have a circle drive so people can make a one-way trip through the display.



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## Duplain Church of Christ

submitted by Trina Pontack

Join us on Dec. 24th for our candlelight service of worship as we celebrate our Savior-from the manger to the cross.

This year, Duplain Church of Christ will offer two different service times, one at 5pm and another at 7pm. Live stream will also be available on our DCC Facebook page.

## Carland United Methodist Church

Virtual Christmas Eve Service Dec. 24th at 7:30 p.m. on Facebook Live.

We hope you will join us for our online Christmas Eve Service with some pretty special guest performances you won't want to miss.

## Ovid Public Library

The Loving Hands Group has been busy this year creating hats, mittens, and scarves. They have so many they want to share them with the community, so they brought them to the Ovid Public Library where they are available without cost for anyone who has a use for them.

The Library is also redistributing Gently Used Coats. All sizes of coats are needed. There are many coats already at the library available without cost for anyone who has a use for them.

### Ovid Public Library Open Hours

Mondays 10:00 – 7:00; Wednesdays 10:00 – 5:00; Fridays 10:00 – 5:00

The Library will be closed for the Holiday on Friday Dec. 25, 2020 and Fri. Jan 1, 2021.

For further information, please call the library at 989-834-5800 or check our Facebook page.

*Merry Christmas*  
from your local independent agent

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Christmas Eve 9am - 1pm  
Closed Christmas Day  
December 26th 10am-1pm

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New Year's Eve 9am - 3pm  
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January 2nd 9am-2pm

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## Scholarship and Grant Applications Open Now

submitted by Lora Phelps

The Shiawassee Community Foundation scholarship and grant applications are open now! The deadline to apply is January 31, 2021. Nearly 90 scholarships are available to Shiawassee County seniors and continuing education students! Last year, more than \$180,000 was awarded to Shiawassee County students for their college and trade school educations. The application can be found at [www.shiacf.org/scholarships/](http://www.shiacf.org/scholarships/). Grants are awarded to qualifying organizations including non-profits that are tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, schools, municipalities, and other governmental entities that serve a charitable purpose. The applications are available at [www.shiacf.org/grants/](http://www.shiacf.org/grants/). Please contact the SCF at (989) 725-1093 with any questions. The grants are listed below:

PFC Shane W. Cantu Memorial Fund- to support veterans' programs and projects in the Shiawassee County area.

Alford & Alice Emmert Youth Fund- to award grants for youth education and/or training experiences that promote leadership, citizenship, academics, agriculture, natural sciences, music, or photography.

Ryan Jones Memorial Fund ALS Grant- to benefit patients diagnosed with ALS by providing services to ALS patients and organizations that serve ALS patients, to improve their quality of life.

Ryan Jones Memorial Fund Animal Welfare Grant- to benefit animal welfare organizations in Shiawassee County.

Kailey Elizabeth Jordan Memorial Fund- to award grants to accredited Michigan horse camps to allow Michigan disabled or terminally ill children (ages 16 & under) to benefit from therapeutic horseback riding.

Memorial Healthcare and Memorial Healthcare Foundation Community Health and Education Fund- to support health outreach programs primarily serving residents of Shiawassee County.

Montgomery Family Fund- to award grants for programs or projects that will benefit conservation, recreation, the arts, or people with special needs in Shiawassee County.

Playground Restoration and Maintenance Fund- to provide materials and supplies to volunteer groups for the repair or enhancement of public playgrounds and other recreational facilities for youth in Shiawassee County.

Mackenzie L. Watts Memorial Fund- to provide cardiac-related emergency equipment and/or programs to Michigan-based non-profit community organizations.

Debra Wegman Memorial Fund- to assist programs focusing on healthcare, education, arts and theatre, community improvement, ministry and spiritual enrichment, beautification projects (especially water-related), youth programs, senior programs, or programs serving other unmet charitable needs.

Russell and Annabelle Woodard Family Fund- to benefit family, youth, beautification, and/or preservation projects in Shiawassee County.

Youth Advisory Council W.K. Kellogg Fund- to support projects and programs primarily benefiting youth in the Shiawassee County area.

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## Ovid Public Library

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Ovid Public Library

Open Hours

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Wednesdays 10:00 – 5:00

Fridays 10:00 – 5:00

The Library will be closed for the Holiday on Friday Dec. 25, 2020 and Fri. Jan 1, 2021.

For further information, please call the library at 989-834-5800 or check our Facebook page.





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## *In Memory of Dr. Earl M. Slagh*

Born March 1st, 1908 in Holland,  
Michigan. Died Christmas Day 1989. For  
those of you who have a father, tender him  
with care, for you'll never know the  
heartache till you see his empty chair.  
Love, Michael, Talina, Chloe & Toby Slagh

## More SOS Online, Self-Service Station Options Coming

*submitted by Tracy Wimmer*

More SOS online, self-service station options Michiganders will soon have more ways to do business with the Secretary of State, including renewing their standard and enhanced driver's licenses and state identification cards at self-service stations and online. They will also be able to go online to request their own driving records and, when eligible, add a motorcycle endorsement to their license.

“This spring, customers will be able to do even more of their business with us at our self-service stations and from their homes,” said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. “This is another way we are continuously improving the customer experience at the Department of State.”

The new options will be available in March of 2021 thanks to a long-desired technology rehaul of the driver-record database. That new system will be securely merged with the upgraded vehicle record database that Secretary Benson implemented shortly after she was sworn into office in 2019. Work to rehaul the driver database has been in process since then.

The changes will also enable customers to use the more than 130 self-service stations the department has in branch offices and other locations statewide, including select Meijer, Kroger, and local grocery stores, to request an ID replacement, and add their name to the state's organ donor registry. Transactions on the machines are currently offered in English, Spanish, Arabic and Vietnamese. All accept credit card payments and some accept cash.

New procedures will also be implemented:

An electronic lien and title program will begin, making lien and title information available online for lienholders in lieu of a paper certificate of title.

The graduated driver licensing process will be simplified to reduce customer visits to the branch.

Mechanic testing registration will be available online only to mechanics with a Michigan driver's license or state ID. Also, while the new system is installed, from January 15 to March 15,

online registration for mechanic tests will not be available at all, and mechanics will need to make appointments at their branch offices to register for a test.

Additional details and customer conveniences made possible by the technology rehaul will be announced closer to the launch. Visit

launch. Visit [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS) to access online services and to find a self-service station near you.



# CHURCH DIRECTORY



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 103 Hanvey Street  
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[www.unitedchurchofovid.org](http://www.unitedchurchofovid.org)  
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 Pastor Eugene Blair

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**Worship Service**  
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## How to Cope with Holiday Blues and Find Joy in Season

*submitted by Millie Jezior*

ALMA, Mich. – Many factors can contribute to what is commonly known as the “holiday blues.” Whether it be environmental stressors, loss of loved ones, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, work factors, depression, anxiety, stress of a pandemic, or possibly Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a condition resulting from fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months, holiday blues should not be ignored.

With holiday blues, some may become depressed, develop unhealthy coping strategies or develop physical symptoms. Physical manifestations can include headaches, muscle aches and pains, excessive drinking, fatigue, irritability, overeating, or difficulty sleeping.

Regardless of the cause or symptoms, some of the following suggestions may help reduce the holiday blues and bring joy back into the season:

- Reduce expectations and adjust as needed
- Follow safety precautions and respect others' efforts in this area
- Share feelings with someone positive and supportive
- Start a new tradition
- Do something nice for someone else without telling them
- Participate in activities that are free
- Limit alcohol and sugar
- Reserve time for self-care such as meditation, aromatherapy or exercise
- Enjoy sunshine at every opportunity
- Say no to things you don't want to do
- Give the gift of time to someone special
- Get adequate sleep
- Do your best to stay present in the moment, appreciate the little things
- Express gratitude
- Don't hesitate to ask for help
- Write in a journal or send someone a letter
- Wrap gifts in comics paper or hand-decorated brown bags
- Post a positive statement on the refrigerator, mirror or door and recite it often
- Write down on paper and practice what you might say and do during difficult situations
- Limit your time with negative people
- Find something to laugh about such as watching a good morning or classic sitcom

morning or classic sitcom

Those unable to cope with stressors or feel stuck are encouraged to seek help. The Psychiatric Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) mental health day program at MidMichigan Medical Center – Gratiot is available for those who need additional support. Those interested in more information about the PHP program may call (989) 466-3253. Those interested in more information on MidMichigan's comprehensive behavioral health programs may visit [www.midmichigan.org/mentalhealth](http://www.midmichigan.org/mentalhealth).



In Loving Memory

*Memorialize your loved one in  
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# Editorial

Good morning or afternoon, whichever it may be when you read this ... life can be extremely busy at times. I have been up since four this morning and I really had intended to sleep in this morning. Apparently my body had a mind of its own and knew that I had more to address than I had anticipated. Does this mean that I'm attune with myself? Stranger things have been known to happen. I think that my computer is going wonky on me, it recommended that I should be 'attuned with myself' than reversed its recommendation after I made the change. Oh well, this too shall pass...

Yesterday was a bit invigorating...I made a quick trip into St Johns to pick up a few items. First I had to make a stop at Kroger, Dollar Tree, and then Wally World. Luckily my list was almost eradicated at those three stops. I also needed gas but wasn't happy with the \$2.19 a gallon price that I was seeing there so I held off on that purchase. In fact my brain forgot about it until I was passing through Elsie when it registered that I needed to fuel up and the local gas price was \$1.99 per gallon....of course I stopped. The gas pump had a bout of recognition issues...I used my debit card and it kept telling me that I needed to see the attendant. I told Vickie and she didn't have any messages on her end. I tried again.....got the same message.....so I fudged it. I entered it as a credit card and the gas flowed....I went home, fixed lunch and then took Prudence with me up to Clare....specifically the Collinsville Hardware Store. I needed to pick up a few things and to pay for another bag of black oil sunflower seeds. I had picked up three bags about ten days ago....when I dropped them off at my daughters' home, I found my receipt and the young teller had only charged me for two. I told the gal as she checked me out and she thanked me for being honest....I then asked her to put one on my bill so that I could make it right. She was very surprised because it had been her error.....I was even more surprised because the gentleman who was behind me in line told me how refreshing it was that I was honest. I just did what I thought was needed to mend an error....as much mine as hers. After all I didn't look at my receipt until the next day. Life is interesting.

I also stopped at the Country Store on Mission Road north of Mt Pleasant...I needed a bit more chocolate to finish my candy making. I also picked up some co-jack cheese and peanuts. This of course reminds me that I have yet to get some salted peanuts in their shell or any mixed nuts to have when folks stop by. Why else would the nut cracker and picks have made a pilgrimage from their spot to the coffee table in the living room? Have you ever noted what habits travel through generations?

I am pleased that my small tree is up and all but a couple of gifts are wrapped and sitting under the tree. I'm still waiting on those that were sent through the mail back on the fourth of this month....I'm beginning to think that they have been lost in the mail. You would think that something that was ordered at the November 28th and shipped on the fourth of this month from Northbrook, Illinois would be here by now. I hope that the tracking information is correct and that my package does arrive on this Saturday by 9PM. This should be interesting.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas that is filled with good memories and not minor mishaps. Remember why we celebrate and may God bless you daily throughout the year. Enjoy your family and traditions. Merry Christmas.

## A Little Common Sense

by Crystal Mitchell



## Thank You Ehlert Family

Letter to the Editor:

Ovid is truly fortunate to have citizens who care about the city and show that love in this loving display. I am speaking of the windows of the storefront just south of the Post Office. The Ehlert Family have literally put their love for the citizens of Ovid on display. Each set of windows is more creative than the last. Each has been memorable in its own way.

Those of us at the Ovid Public Library who enjoy the displays and know for certain that the displays are enjoyed by many residents want to express our thanks.

### We Thank You

The family of Chuck Spiess would like to thank everyone for thinking of us during this difficult time with your prayers, cards, email, food, visits and words of encouragement.

Thank you for the stories and memories you shared.

Your kindness was very much appreciated.

### The Spiess Family

Karen, Jason & April, Kyle & Marie,  
Tim & Sara, Kevin & Stacey and Families



## We are lighting a candle in each of our funeral homes...

Since Christmas is a time for remembering, we are lighting a candle in our funeral homes for all the families we have served the past year.

As you enjoy this Christmas season, we hope this gesture will serve to remind you of Holidays past and the importance of family.

May the quiet peace of Christmas fill your heart and home.

Samuel and Carol Smith  
& Family

## Smith Family Funeral Homes

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## In Loving Memory of Joe J. Fabus Jr. December 6, 1954 - December 19, 2003

17 years ago it broke our hearts forever when we had to say good-bye to you. I guess God needed you more.

But how do we go on? All the hurt, loneliness, heartache, sadness.....it does not go away. We think of you daily, especially in the Fall as we harvest without you. Nothing seems right without you by our side. Your presence is deeply missed. We miss you everyday and love you for all the precious memories we have of you to cherish.

Happy Birthday & Merry Christmas in Heaven as we have another blue Christmas without you.

You are forever loved & missed.  
Robin, Joey, Jason & families





# Sage Market

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## LAFCU Virtual Family Christmas Special

*submitted by Jan Jenkins*

LANSING — LAFCU was partnered with Grand Ledge Area District Library to present the LAFCU Listen & Learn Christmas Special, Tuesday, Dec. 15.

Viewers got to experience Santa reading a story, and there will be fun facts about reindeer from Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm, Clare. Musical performances will be by DeWitt Community Singers and Zachary Clark, a Lansing-area gospel singer and LAFCU help desk computer technician.

The primary goal of the fun holiday event is to encourage reading, especially for children up to 12 years old.

"We want to capture the spirit of Christmas to engage children in reading," said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer. "Reading is critical to vocabulary development and critical thinking — skills that lead to advanced education and meaningful careers. Research has shown engaged reading is interlocked with life success, and it can overcome traditional barriers such as gender, parental education and income."

"The community's success is important to LAFCU, and this is one way we can help young community members advance. It's also a great way to bring holiday spirit into your home at a time when in-person celebrations are limited due to the pandemic, so get the hot cocoa ready, don those ugly Christmas sweaters, and join us for the fun."

Because the event was virtual, Ellsworth Etchison said it was an opportunity for grandparents to share the experience with their grandchildren even if they are not physically together.

During the event, LAFCU announced details about the new Listen & Learn Program that will extend into 2021. It's a virtual program designed to encourage reading through fun, interesting and informative ways.

People interested in volunteering to read for future programs can register at <https://bit.ly/LAFCUVolunteers>

More information about the Listen and Learn Program is at [www.lafcu.com/read](http://www.lafcu.com/read).

To learn more about LAFCU, call 800.748.0228 or visit [www.lafcu.com](http://www.lafcu.com).



*Fun facts provided by Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm helped engage kids in reading with Santa at the virtual LAFCU Listen & Learn Christmas Special Dec. 15.*



*Participants were able to experience Santa reading a story during the virtual LAFCU Listen & Learn Christmas Special Dec. 15.*



# Happy Holidays

**Sending you wishes for a happy and peaceful season! Thanks for your support.**

**MAIN  
STREET  
PIZZA**  
132 S. Main St.  
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**Open Christmas Eve**  
11 am - 7 pm  
**Closed Christmas Day**  
**Open New Year's Eve**  
11am-10pm  
**& New Year's Day**  
11am - 11 pm

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- Pepper Jack
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# Sports

## Wolfpack Lands Woodruff, Ramirez, Clark Three on All-Shiawassee Area Boys Cross Country Team

LAINGSBURG -- Three Wolfpack harriers have been honored on the 2020 All-Shiawassee Area Boys Cross-Country Team, as named by the Owosso Argus-Press.

Lucas Woodruff, Miguel Ramirez and Caleb Clark were all selected to the honor squad, with Woodruff a prestigious 1st Team runner.

Carson Hersch of New Lothrop repeated as The Argus-Press All-Area Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year.

The senior, becoming the school's first two-time boys cross country All-Stater, placed fourth at the 2020 MHSAA Lower Peninsula Division 3 Finals Nov. 7 in 16 minutes, 13.6 seconds. Hersch, who ran third in the state last season, was unbeaten as a senior entering the MHSAA state meet. Hersch re-broke his own school-record time twice this fall and became the first two-time All-Stater in New Lothrop boys cross country history. Hersch, who owns the school record time of 15:30.8, placed fourth at the Division 3 state finals. He was a regional and MMAC individual champion and led the Hornets to a best-ever 12th-place team finish at the state meet.

The All-Area Team included:

First Team: Lucas Woodruff, Laingsburg. Woodruff finished 65th at the Division 3 state finals, clocking 17:18.0. The senior ran 10th at regionals in DeWitt in a season-best time of 17:07.0.

Caleb Rivers, Morrice: Rivers, a senior, captured All-State honors for the second year in a row, placing 21st at the Division 4 state finals in 17:27.6. He was fourth at the regionals, sixth at the Greater Lansing Invitational and second at the GAC Championships. Rivers clocked a season-best time of 16:48.6.

Levi Maier, Chesaning: Maier, a sophomore, finished 54th at the Division 3 finals in 17:13.3, a season best. Maier finished 15th at regionals (17:31.1) and was a first-team MMAC runner.

Drew Kohlmann, New Lothrop: Kohlmann, a senior, ran 62nd at the Division 3 finals in 17:17.2. He was 12th at regionals. Kohlmann clocked a season-best time of 16:55 and was a first-teamer in the MMAC.

Mason Warner, Corunna: Warner placed 104th at the Division 2 state finals, finishing the 3.1-mile course in 17:25.7. Warner's season-best time was 16:36.4 at the Flint Metro League Championships. He was a first-teamer in the Flint Metro Stars Division. He was 12th at regionals (16:58.8).

Second Team: Cole Yaros, New Lothrop. Yaros, a sophomore, finished 114th at the state finals in 17:55.5. Yaros recorded a season-best time of 17:20.5 at the Shepherd Bluejay Invitational. He was a first-teamer in the MMAC.

Logan Roka, Corunna. The sophomore placed 159th at the Division 2 finals (18:02.1). His season best time was 17:05.2 — which netted him 14th place at the regionals in DeWitt.

Aiden Campbell, Morrice, The senior ran 35th at the Division 4 state finals in 17:54.27. Campbell clocked a season-best time of 17:37.0. He was ninth at the Division 4 regionals (18:10.2).

Ethan Smith, Perry. The senior recorded a season-best time of 17:46.3. He placed 28th at the Division 3 regionals (18:31.4) and ran 13th at the Greater Lansing Cross Country Championships.

Ryan Heslip, New Lothrop. Heslip placed 155th at the Division 3 finals when he ran 18:21.6. He clocked a season-best time of 17:48.5. He was 21st at regionals (18:04.3).

Honorable Mention:

Owen Doerner, Morrice  
Jason Weber, New Lothrop  
Miguel Ramirez, Laingsburg  
Calvin Cody, Corunna  
Benjamin Hinkley, Perry  
Nathaniel Cochrane, Perry  
Kalon Boilore, Corunna  
Caleb Clark, Laingsburg  
Nick Hormann, Byron  
Jaden James, Chesaning  
Addison James, Chesaning

## Calling All Fifth Grade Artist

submitted by Hannah Reynolds

CHARLOTTE— The Michigan Arbor Day Alliance (MADA) is happy to announce the annual Fifth Grade Poster Contest! This 2020-2021 school year, Michigan fifth grade students are invited to use their best drawing, coloring, and painting skills, along with their imaginations and creativity to submit posters demonstrating the theme: Trees for our Health.

Students are encouraged to use their imaginations to create original posters featuring the theme. First-, second-, and third-place winners will be chosen by popular vote. Prizes will include a gift certificate for the winning student, a tree planting for the school or community, and a gift card for the participating teacher to help purchase classroom supplies. The first-place winner also will be recognized at our 2021 Virtual Arbor Day celebration.

Trees are great teaching tools. Teachers can include this contest in a lesson plan by talking about the many ways trees benefit human health. Research shows that trees improve our mental health by reducing stress and anxiety. Trees also filter the air we breathe. Educators can find helpful information on this subject under "helpful resources" on our website at <https://www.miarbordayalliance.org/poster-contest.html>

All entries must be received by mail by March 3, 2021. See the contest rules and download an Entry Form at <http://www.miarbordayalliance.org/poster-contest.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact Hannah Reynolds, the State Arbor Day Program Coordinator at [miar-borday@gmail.com](mailto:miar-borday@gmail.com).

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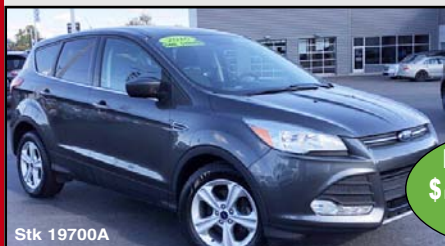


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# Editorial



## Religious Thoughts

by Phil Hoppersberger  
Graham Community Church

### “Merry Christ”

*“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).”*

Christmas is preparation. For weeks, I’d pore over a Sears catalog, preparing my Santa list to be perfect. It’s a wondrous memory, recalling the gut-twisting joy that these toys might be under my tree! “Tiny tots with their eyes all aglow” was totally me as a child.

And how about you? If you could have anything now, what tops your list and makes it “hard to sleep tonight?” A billion dollars; wisdom; an island in the Bahamas; President of the United States; a loved one resurrected? What would be your all-time top gift? For me, it’s easy...really knowing God, personally, as my best friend (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Imagine knowing the Creator of the universe—who made you, knows everything, can do anything, even give you those five things above—as your best friend. He’s the absolute greatest gift. If you agree, then I’ve got some real “glad tidings,” because it’s possible (1 John 5:11-13). The carols we sing now, like “God and sinners reconciled,” reveal it all.

“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail incarnate Deity.” God became a man, but why? “To ransom captive Israel” and give us “peace on Earth” with complete forgiveness, through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. But sin blocked this union, “long lay the world, in sin and error pining,” so He became sin and took our punishment (2 Corinthians 5:21). His love and justice merged on the cross, and our Judge became our Father. God’s friendship is under your tree right now (Romans 6:23)! So how do you get it?

You’ve practiced it every Christmas...just grab the gift...in simple faith, admit your sin, ask forgiveness, and change your attitude (God calls that repentance, changing your mind). Our attitude is conceit; we don’t think we’re that bad, or we’re good enough as is, but then why did Jesus have to die? In short, we don’t get holiness. God requires perfection, and clearly, nobody’s perfect. Even one sin stops this relationship (James 2:10), and just “believing” mentally is not a saving repentance...even demons believe and they’re not going to Heaven (James 2:19). So what do we do?

Real faith is action, but a meek action (grabbing this gift means genuine surrender). “Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.” Repent, believe, and ask Jesus to “enter in” your body. God made a way, but His love isn’t forced. He wants you to love Him, in humility to choose Christ, and put God back on top of your life.

Speaking of on top, did you know you top His list? That’s why He came...He loves you to death, literally. Even though you broke His heart, your repentance can be a thank you gift. “Let every heart prepare Him room.” Christmas still means preparation, but in your heart, so please take His gift and make Him a very Merry Christ!

**Have a Question for Andy?**  
Submit them to:  
ask\_andy@aol.com

You can also mail or drop questions off to: Meridian Weekly  
P.O. Box 11, Ovid, MI 48866

### 2020 Vision - A Christmas Star Will Appear

Dear Andy,

This Christmas is a tough time for many. Some due to lack of extra money to buy or afford traditional activities. Some activities will not be possible due to the COVID Epidemic. Over 300,000 people in America alone have died due to the virus or complications due to the Virus. My mother died at the beginning of the Flu season last year. I know that Christmas should be a time of happiness and I am just not feeling it. I am just in tears several times a day. Too much negative posts on FB and in the news. It’s Just Sad

Dear Just Sad,

First, quite watching the news and skip the negative posts. If it’s all that important, you’ll hear about it. Grieving at this time of year for our losses will be part of the healing process for most everyone in the coming year beginning with our 2020 choices to celebrate the holidays with just immediate family or stuck in an assisted living home with no visitors, singing carols over skype or facetime, living in the streets, less food than usual or less gifts. I think this year, we are realizing what is profoundly important...in one word it is “family.”

There are no perfect recipes to make holiday grief go away. Do what you need to do to honor your loved ones who have passed. There is a part of you gone. Time will make it easier, but the pain often returns without warning. It’s ok to cry and miss that person with all your heart. There is an emptiness only can only feel when you have experienced it personally. Do what makes you feel good.

We continue to celebrate our lost loved ones by keeping up some of their traditions. By doing acts of kindness in their name. Being a better person from the values you learned from their love and devotion to you. Plant a tree. Make a donation to a charity. Visit their grave site. Take flowers. Cook their favorite recipe. Remember the good moments. Find peace in your heart.

Something special is happening this year that will be a healing experience: On the day of the Winter Solstice, December 21, 2020 two of our brightest planets, Jupiter and Saturn, will line up and create a celestial vision that has not occurred for over 800 years. Look into the south west sky about 45 minutes after sundown, according to sky-watchers we will be able to see the “Christmas Star.” If you cannot find a clear spot, try for the next few days. It should be visible until at least the end of the month. Astronomers call it “The Great Conjunction,” but I am call it a visible sign that might have been called the “Star of Bethlehem” many years ago.

To everyone: Find joy in your journey. Have a Joyful, Safe and Merry Christmas 2020.

Andy@ ask\_andy@aol.





# Editorial



## The Weekly Sportsman

by Dan McMaster  
[theweeklysportsman@meridianweekly.com](mailto:theweeklysportsman@meridianweekly.com)

### 301 Stevens Turkey Thumbhole

The Weekly Sportsman often ponders what if someone could only own a three gun battery.

What would it look like??? What about just two firearms??? What about just one??? Hard decisions and in Michigan there are many things to consider such as wild game pursued, legal issues and technicalities, self defense, practicality, etc. It's a hard mental exercise for the Weekly Sportsman especially due to his love of a sporterized 1915 Swedish Mauser, a Lefever Nitro sxs in .410, a Remington 510 .22, numerous accurate .22 centerfires, many light recoiling sub gauge shotguns, etc. Well, this mental exercise is now over thanks to Savage Arms and their recent introduction of the Stevens 301 Turkey Thumbhole chambered in .410. Just to be clear... Weekly Sportsman is not willing to go down to ownership of a single firearm but there is an option out there that would work in Michigan if you want to hunt most game except for bears and elk.

Recently the introduction of TSS tungsten .410 turkey shotshells has caused two firearm manufacturers, Mossberg and Savage, to start threading extra full choke tubes on the end of camouflaged pumps and single shot shotguns. The idea of chokes for .410's is not something new as high end over unders often come with tubes for shooting clays and Winchester once made a 9410 lever action that had choke tubes but could only chamber 2.5 inch shells and now Henry Rifles has followed a similar path with their lever action .410's. While the original purpose of making light recoiling .410 turkey gun for children and women, or even a lightweight deep woods turkey gun, was accomplished the byproduct in the Stevens 301 turkey thumbhole is a one-stop and shop versatile firearm. Before you pass judgement and think the Weekly Sportsman has completely lost his mind please consider the following applications with particular loads and chokes:

Small game- a full choke and a box of 6's will take down squirrels and rabbits with very little damage to the meat

Deer- three inch Brenneke slugs fired thru a cylinder choke will take down a deer at close range.

Even shorter slugs made by Federal, Winchester, and Remington can take down a small deer for the week at deer



camp

Upland birds- open the bore up a bit and use a modified choke with a three inch shell with #5's or #6's and you can put any bird on the table up to and including the pheasant. For smaller upland birds like dove, grouse, and chukar you can probably get away with #7.5's.

Waterfowl-although on the pricey side there are several 3 inch steel and non-tox loads out there that can easily down ducks and moderately close geese.

Self Defense- Brenneke offers a nonlethal load of orange plastic buckshot size balls and Winchester has a Defender load designed for handguns that shoots discs and BB shot. Of course there are also several options of 3 or 4 stacked buckshot in a shell. Choose your opponent's poison.

Survival- due to its lightweight and breakdown capability don't be afraid to keep it as a truck gun or in a backpack when venturing into the wilderness. Pack a Ziploc baggie of chokes and shells and you will be prepared for almost any situation that arises.

Varmints- slugs for 'yotes and buckshot or #4 birdshot for woodchuck, opossum, and coons

Now lets drill down and examine this new multiple purpose firearm. Reminiscent of older .410 single shots from yesterday this shotgun breaks open for loading and comes apart in the usual three pieces; stock, forearm, and barrel. The typical bead sits atop on the end of the barrel.

The similarities end there as the synthetic ambidextrous thumbhole stock and forearm are an olive green with studs for sling mounting. The rear of the barrel has a scope rail that is short but ample in length enough to mount a red dot optic device. The Weekly Sportsman favors Aimpoints and recommends such optics, however, another and quite a bit cheaper option would be a Crimson Trace. Once again, the beauty in this firearm is the offering of chokes which makes it a very versatile firearm. The .410's of the past have usually been choked full which is about useless except for small game because a cylinder choke works best for foster and brenneke slugs, modified helps bird shot patterns, and extra or 2x extra full is best for turkeys.

The .410 is often scorned by many critics and is frequently considered a shotgun for a beginner or expert but as Dillon says, "The times they are a changin'", and this can be an ideal firearm for those from youth to old age. Christmas is just days away so consider purchasing the 301 Stevens Turkey Thumbhole for any outdoors person on your list. With a base price of around \$225 you absolutely can't go wrong with the versatility of this shotgun and the .410 shell it chambers.

-WS



## Religious Thoughts

by Chris Hearn  
[www.letsmeetgod.com](http://www.letsmeetgod.com)

How many of us have trouble in sharing our faith? Most all of us, I'm sure. Myself included.

Our desire to tell others about God is there, but still we feel nervous. Not up to the task. And that keeps from talking to others about God as we should. What can we do?

One thing is that we can be encouraged by the Apostle Paul. Here is some of what he wrote to the church in Corinth- "And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."

-1 Corinthians 2:1-5

When it comes to sharing our faith, this is very real. Very honest. Very relateable.

We probably know Paul as a great missionary who spoke to various people in various situations. Yet even he had "weakness," "great fear," and "trembling." Still, the answer to these things for Paul is the same answer for us- God and His power. Paul writes that the "Spirit's power" and "God's power" were with him when he spoke.

God hasn't changed. The same God that helped Paul will help you and me to have the strength and courage to tell others about Him. The next time you go to talk to someone about the Lord, ask God for courage, boldness, the right words, whatever it is you need.



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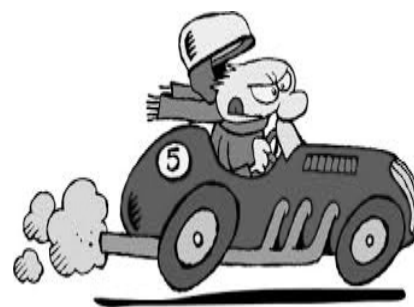
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## Jeff Daniels Alive and Well Enough - New Year's Eve

*submitted by Tara Peplowski*

EAST LANSING, MI — Emmy award-winning and Tony® nominated actor, director, singer/song-writer Jeff Daniels returns to Wharton Center's virtual stage on New Year's Eve for TWO livestreamed concert experiences from his home to yours! These shows will be intimate, entertaining, and unforgettable, featuring songs from his new album *Alive and Well Enough*. Music lovers and movie fans will enjoy Daniels' songs, playing and musicianship, and those stories only he can tell. Following each performance, there will be a short Q & A from questions submitted during the performance.

Tickets to the virtual concerts on Thursday, December 31st are on sale now and will be processed through Crowdcast.com. Ticket purchasers will receive a private link to the event via email. To purchase tickets to either the 8pm or 10:30pm per-

formance, visit the Wharton Center website at [www.wharton-center.com](http://www.wharton-center.com) for the Crowdcast link. Please be sure to visit the event page for the desired performance time (8pm or 10:30pm).

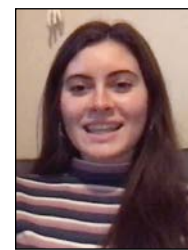
Jeff Daniels is probably best known to audiences as a film, television, and stage actor, from his Emmy-winning roles in Netflix's *Godless* and the HBO series *The Newsroom* to the popular film series *Dumb and Dumber*. He also received a Tony® nominee for his recent year-long role on Broadway as Atticus Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Most don't realize Daniels is also a talented playwright, musician, lyricist, and storyteller, with nearly four hundred songs, three hundred live gigs and engagements, and five albums to his name. His song-writing continually draws favorable comparison to Arlo Guthrie, the late John Prine and Steve Goodman.



Abigail  
Payment



Adam  
Eichenberg



Madeline  
Smith

## Pandemic Crisis Moves LAFCU to Double Number of Scholarships Given by LAFCU

*submitted by Jan Jenkins*

LANSING — Four recent high school graduates have each won a \$2,500 college scholarship through LAFCU's Write to Educate Essay Contest.

The winners are Abigail Payment, Ovid; Adam Eichenberg, St. Johns; Madeline Smith, Grand Ledge; and Jack LaFevre, South Lyon.

Typically, two winners are selected for this annual contest, but with the state's stay-at-home orders closing schools and interrupting seniors' final classes, traditions, graduation ceremonies and possibly college plans, LAFCU decided to support more graduates.

"The pandemic has been a huge disruptor in the lives of these students just as they are beginning to pursue their post-high school aspirations," said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer. "We decided we could do more to help this year's graduates. They have dealt with a great deal of uncertainty; we wanted to provide some financial stability."

The winners were selected based on their one-page essays about the role of technology in their lives and its positive or negative effect on personal safety.

Part of the contest is for each winner to select a charity to receive a \$500 donation from LAFCU on behalf of the winner. Expanding the number of winners also increased total charity donations from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

"The charitable-giving component within this contest helps demonstrate the leadership skill of 'giving back,'" Ellsworth Etchison said. "This year has shown how important it is for those who can, to step forward and help those in our community who are hurting."

About the winners

Abigail Payment, a 2020 graduate of St. Johns High School, is attending Saginaw Valley State University. She directed the LAFCU charity donation in her name to The Arc of Mid-Michigan, in support of people with developmental disabilities in Shiawassee, Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties.

Adam Eichenberg, a 2020 graduate of St. Johns High School, is attending Davenport University. The LAFCU charity donation in his name was directed to Child and Family Charities, which works to strengthen and support children, families and individuals in mid-Michigan.

Madeline Smith, a 2020 graduate of Grand Ledge High School, is attending Western Michigan University. She also directed the LAFCU charity donation in her name to Child and Family Charities.

Jack LaFevre, a 2020 graduate of South Lyon High School, is attending Western Michigan University. His LAFCU charity donation was directed to The Arc of Mid-Michigan.

The winning essays are online at [www.lafcu.com/writetoe-ducate](http://www.lafcu.com/writetoe-ducate).

Applicants did not need to be LAFCU members, but must have been attending high school in Michigan, LAFCU's geographical service territory.

The Lansing State Journal is the contest's community sponsor for 2020.

LAFCU has awarded \$55,200 for this essay contest since it began in 2009: \$47,200 in scholarships and \$8,000 in charity donations, which were added to the contest in 2012.



*During the Holiday Season  
more than ever,  
our thoughts turn gratefully  
to those who have made our progress possible.  
And in this spirit we say, simply but sincerely...  
Thank You and Best Wishes  
for the Holiday Season  
and  
Happy New Year!*

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