

Laingsburg City Council Discussion on Commerical Cannabis Production and Loss of Paramedics for Ambulance Services

by Karen Anderson, Laingsburg Correspondent

LAINGBURG - On Monday, February 1, 2021 the Laingsburg City Council met for their regular monthly meeting over Zoom. All Board members were present. After the meeting was called to order Paula Willoughby, City Clerk, reviewed the agenda. No Public Comments. The regular business items included January Minutes and Treasurers Reports which were reviewed and motions for approval were passed.

Next on the agenda, Willoughby presented information regarding the Grant with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). A proposal for Resolution 2021- 01 for road improvement on Grand River to Doyle and several local roads. Application for a \$250,000 grant, matching \$250,000 with additional engineering costs has been proposed. The total cost of the City's share will be approx. \$310,000. The motion for the resolution was approved. The committee will proceed with the bidding process. Another motion will be presented at a future date for recommendations to obtain matching funds. The decision to match the project might include a bond and/or monies from other projects that have come in under budget.

The board proposed consideration for a Marijuana Micro-grow amendment. Prior to the vote on the amendment, Mr. Craig Luna, a Laingsburg resident, made an inquiry presenting a possible interest to open a Commercial Grow Processing facility. It would have no retail and provide product for the two retail businesses on Grand River scheduled to open soon. Luna is willing to provide top line equipment to mitigate the odors. He is working with Michael Daly-Martin, Shiawassee County Planning Commission for compliance. At this time Micro-grow retail business can grow 150 plants. Concerns regarding the odor from the grow dispersing processing is being discussed by the LBCA and the City planners.

According to the City Council and the Planning Commission, there are no plans currently or regulations in Laingsburg to allow a Commercial grow-business, which allows 300 to 500 plants. However, there was controversy over allowing the growing of plants with odor from the processing from either the retail or commercial business. It was also discussed about finding a stand-alone building for a Commercial business which could create much needed revenue for the growth of the City. From an economic profitability view point....if there are investors in a Commercial property there will be a significant increase in tax revenue and would create sever-



al jobs

Other communities allowing growing operations and processing of product have reported enforcement of the zero tolerance for odor has been challenging. Some have claimed a drop of property values and loss of business due to the increased growth by not controlling the odor. Some other obstacles by the Planning Commission may include rezoning of specific structures to be compliant for downtown regulations.

There are 2 Micro-grow retail businesses currently approved. Some business owners are concerned about the effects of the odor and how the customers of the 3 outside restaurant dining areas and a clothing business in the downtown area, and nearby residents would be affected.

The motion for an amendment to the micro-grow retail marijuana businesses to not grow product was not passed.

That means at this time they could eventually apply for a permit to grow up to 150 plants for their retail business. Currently the status of the approved businesses is in compliance with the State of Michigan and the City of Laingsburg.

Annual Reports: The annual report for the planning commission was read by each member prior to the meeting. The update presents the Master Plan and its goals. A motion was passed to approve the plan. (The current plan is on file for public view can be requested at the City Council office) Next, on the agenda, the Bills were reviewed, and motion passed to pay the bills as presented.

The 2021 – 2022 Budget is in the process of being reviewed and input from committee chairs and City Depts. Library budget and purchase of an additional building are in the process of budget projections. The budget is pending until some additional plans are considered prior to the final budget vote. Requests from department heads need to have their budget projections submitted promptly. Funding the share of the Street project, Library Building and the purchase of vacant property are priority on the budget plan. The council is planning a balanced budget for the March 2021 meeting.

Committee Reports: Parks - Jody Franks reported the progress of the Amphitheater. She stated they are moving forward with positive progress. To date, after review of liability insur-

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Let's Spread Some Love

by Deb Price

It's the time of year when Cupid's Arrows make their way to our friends and loved ones. Kids make those special Valentine's for this classmates, grandparents and others as a way to spread some love. At Ovid Healthcare, Medical Records Coordinator, Betsy Schack and Administrator, Kelly Martin put their heads together and came up with a "Let's Spread Some Love" program for the residents at the facility.

"Keeping a smile on a residents face while your own is covered and masked isn't easy. Our staff tries very hard here everyday to make patients happy since visitors are not allowed due to the pandemic. So our thinking took us outside the box and just in time for Valentine's Day," said Betsy. A mail box, graciously donated by the Ovid Lions Club, and made real pretty by Ovid's own mail lady, Mary Perrier has been placed at the drive in the front of the facility for the community to drop Valentine messages to the residents. Ovid Healthcare would like to invite everyone to send some love to the residents by dropping off a Valentine wish or simple letter in the red box out front of the facility now thru February.

Valentine wishes can be directed to a resident by name or to anyone of the 47 individuals that live there. Those that have a specific name on them will be delivered to that person and the others will be distributed evenly to residents by staff members. Let's show the residents how much this small town community loves them by spreading some cheer with a Valentine to brighten their day.

Ovid Healthcare is located at 9480 E. M-21, Ovid. For those unable to make the drive to the facility please send your Valentine wishes thru the mail.



Pictured here with the Valentine Love Box are (L-R)Shelby Bush (Activity Aide), Betsy Schack (Medical Records Coordinator), Tammy Fisher (Activities Director), Jessica Garcia and Angie Hill (Activity Aides). Photo by Deb Price

Social

Blood Drive at Duplain Church of Christ

On Tuesday, February 23, 2021 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. the Duplain Church of Christ will be holding a blood drive.

For information or appointment, visit redcrossblood.org (sponsor code DUPLAINCOC) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



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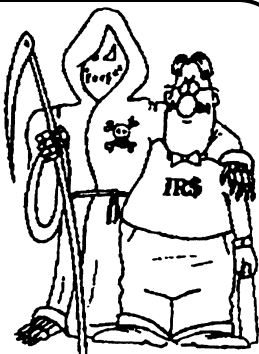
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SAT Test Scheduled for Shiawassee Scholars

submitted by Renee Dotson

The Shiawassee Scholars program is working with the Cook Family Foundation, Owosso High School, and College Board to ensure a safe testing environment for the potential Shiawassee Scholars, Class of 2025. Health screening and social distancing will be a top priority as the program complies with the State of Michigan orders in affect as well as being in compliance with College Board's regulations for testing.

The March 13, 2021 SAT test for Shiawassee Scholars will be held at the Owosso High School, 765 E North St. This is a NEW LOCATION; it is best set up for social distancing and ability to keep students with classmates from their same district.

Parent drop off is in the East Parking Lot. Due to COVID restrictions, only students will be allowed in the building. Students will bring home necessary documents, i.e. Health Screening Questionnaire to be completed at home the morning of March 13, Student Identification Form and a list of testing items to bring. SAT Admission Tickets are mailed to student's home from College Board.

If you have not registered your 8th grader yet, there is still time! Don't delay, registration closes on February 11. Instructions to do so can be found at shorturl.at/buHW2. If you have further questions, contact Renee Dotson @ 989-743-3471 or dotson@sresd.org.

C.A.C.S. Receives Technology Grant

submitted by Becky Zemla

Capital Area Community Services, Inc. has received a technology grant to provide a tablet or a hotspot to low-income residents of Shiawassee County. Each type of device comes with pre-paid broadband service through 12/31/2021.

Financial Requirements: Must meet 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline: Family size: 1 - 30 day max income \$2,147; 2 - \$2,903; 3 - \$3,660. For each additional member add: \$757.

Additional Requirements: The household has been specifically and negatively impacted by COVID-19 through - A financial reduction or loss of income. An increase in daily living expenses specifically related to COVID-19. Access to technology is insufficient to essential employment, education, daily living, and/or health related internet technology.

If you believe you or your family meet this criteria, please contact CACS at 989-723-3115. Office hours are: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Get Cozy Stay Warm

Ovid Public Library New Books

Are you tired of being stuck indoors? How about heading to the library and picking up a book to read. We have lots of new titles to choose from - from fiction to mystery to inspiration to thrillers. There is something for everyone.

Here are some of the new titles we have:

INSPIRATION: Forever Hidden by Tracie Peterson

MYSTERY: The Scorpions Tail by Preston and ChildT

Deep into the Dark by PJ Tracy

Before she Disappeared by Lisa Gardner

FICTION: Before the Ruins by Victoria Gosling

The Last Garden in England by Julia Kelly

The Art of Falling by Danielle McLaughlin

The Perfect Guests by Emma Rous

THRILLER: Twenty by James Grippando

The Russian by James Patterson

Till Murder Do Us Part by James Patterson

The Breaker by Nick Petrie

JUNIOR FICTION: Field Trip Fiasco by James Patterson

Cat Kid Comic Book by Dav Pilkey

We also have Valentine Books out for the younger kids. .

There is also magazines and DVDs. Lots to choose from.

We look forward to seeing you here just be sure to wear your mask. We are open Monday 10-7; Wednesday 10-5 and Friday 10-5. You can call us with any questions at 989-834-5800.

Shiawassee Sheriff Warns of Ongoing Phone Scam

CORUNNA — The Shiawassee County Sheriff's Office last week warned area residents about a phone scam involving callers claiming to be from the federal government.

According to the Sheriff's Office, callers are informing residents they must go to the store to purchase gift cards, with instructions to provide the caller with the unique code on the back of each card.

"There is no form of government that will make you pay any debt by store gift cards," officials said. "They tell you there will be a warrant and police will come to your house to scare you into doing what they ask."

The Sheriff's Office encourages residents to hang up on the caller and/or call (989) 743-9111 to be reassured whether the call is valid or a scam.

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HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY



Mary Harris is turning 90 on February 17th!!

In her honor there will be a drive thru event on
February 20, 2021 at her home:
8445 Old Woodbury Rd., Laingsburg from 2-4p.m.
Please drive thru and say Happy Birthday Mary!
Or blow your horn in her honor!

She would love to receive cards.
Please Send to Mary at:
8445 Woodbury Rd Laingsburg Mi 48848

Moolenaar to Serve on the Appropriations Committee for a Third Term

Congressman John Moolenaar will once again serve on the House Committee on Appropriations this term. The committee is considered to be one of the most powerful committees in Congress and it is responsible for writing the bills that formally set the funding levels for departments, agencies, and programs in the federal budget.

As a member of the committee he will serve on the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies subcommittee for a second term, and on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies subcommittee for a third term. These subcommittees have oversight over the Department of Agriculture, including its Office of Rural Development, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education.

“As Michigan’s senior member of the Appropriations Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to advocate for our state’s most important priorities including rural development, funding new infrastructure, supporting our farmers, protecting the Great Lakes, and advancing research for cures to cancer and Alzheimer’s,” said Moolenaar. "These priorities support our rural communities, create jobs, and help Michiganders of every generation build a better future for our state."



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2020 Water Quality Report for City of Ovid

This report covers the drinking water quality for the City of Ovid for the 2020 calendar year. This information is a snapshot of the quality of the water that we provided to you in 2020. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state standards. Your water comes from three (3) groundwater wells; one at 437 W. Front Street (approximately 50 feet deep), and two at 9240 E. M-21 Street (approximately 290 feet deep each). The State performed an assessment of our source water to determine the susceptibility or the relative potential of contamination. The susceptibility rating is on a seven-tiered scale from "very-low" to "very-high" based on geologic sensitivity, well construction, water chemistry, and contamination sources. The susceptibility of our source water is as follows: Well #2 (437 W. Front Street) rating = MODERATE, Well #6 (9240 E. M-21) rating = MODERATELY LOW, and Well #7 (9240 E. M-21) rating = MODERATELY LOW.

There are no significant sources of contamination in the City of Ovid water supply.

If you would like to know more about this report or the susceptibility assessment report, please contact; Richard Simpson, DPW Superintendent, City of Ovid, 114 E. Front Street, Ovid, MI 48866, ph.: 989-834-5550, e-mail: supt@ovidmi.org.

• **Contaminants and their presence in water:** Drinking Water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the **EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791)**.

• **Vulnerability of sub-populations:** Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune systems disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

• **Sources of drinking water:** The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. Our water comes from wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

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- den-
- **Contaminants that may be present in source water include:**
 - * **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.
 - * **Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.
 - * **Pesticides and herbicides**, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture and residential uses.
 - * **Radioactive contaminants**, which are naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.
 - * **Organic chemical contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which provide the same protection for public health.

Water Quality Data

The table below lists all the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the 2020 calendar year. The presence of these contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done January 1 – December 31, 2020. The State allows us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year. All of the data is representative of the water quality, but some are more than one year old.

Terms and abbreviations used below:

- **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL):** means the highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG):** means the level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

• N/A: Not applicable ND: not detectable at testing limit ppb: parts per billion or micrograms per liter ppm: parts per million or milligrams per liter pCi/L: picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity).

Regulated Contaminant	MCL, TT, or MRDL	MCLG or MRDLG	Level Detected	Range	Year Sampled	Violation Yes/No	Typical Source of Contaminant
Arsenic (ppb)	10	0	0	N/A	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Runoff from orchards; Runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
Barium (ppm)	2	2	0	N/A	2019	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge of metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	0	N/A	2020	no	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.35	0.32-0.35	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Sodium ¹ (ppm)	N/A	N/A	14	N/A	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits
TTHM Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	80	N/A	0.133	N/A	2020	No	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
HAA5 Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	60	N/A	0.007		2020	No	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Chlorine ² (ppm)	4	4	0.6	0.1-0.7	2020	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Alpha emitters (pCi/L)	15	0	2.9 ± 1.7	N/a	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Combined radium (pCi/L)	5	0	3.9 ± 1.3	N/A	2020	No	Erosion of natural deposits
Total Coliform (total number or % of positive samples/month)	TT	N/A	0	N/A	2020	No	Naturally present in the environment
E. coli in the distribution system (positive samples)	See E. coli note ³	0	0	N/A	2020	No	Human and animal fecal waste
Fecal Indicator – E. coli at the source (positive samples)	TT	N/A	0	N/A	2020	No	Human and animal fecal waste

Information about lead: If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Ovid is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline 1-800-426-4791 or at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/lead>.

Infants and children who drink water containing lead could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. Some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over many years could suffer liver or kidney damage. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal doctor.

The City of Ovid is committed to providing residents with safe, reliable and healthy water. The City of Ovid is not mailing a copy of this report to Ovid residents, but you may stop by the City Office at 114 E. Front St. and pick up a copy. City Office hours are M-F 9:00 a.m. – Noon and 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. A copy of this report is posted at the City Office, United States Post Office, Ovid Library, Ovid Café, Clinton County Health Dept, and is published in the Weekly Newspaper.

We invite public participation in decisions that affect drinking water quality. The City of Ovid Council Meeting is the Second Monday of each month at the City Offices, 114 E. Front St., Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. For City Council meetings, enter the City Office building at the side southwest entrance.

Inorganic Contaminant Subject to Action Levels (AL)	Action Level	MCLG	Your Water ⁴	Range of Results	Year Sampled	Number of Samples Above AL	Typical Source of Contaminant
Lead (ppb)	15	0	2 ppb	0 ppb-43 ppb	2020	1	Lead service lines, corrosion of household plumbing including fittings and fixtures; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (ppm)	1.3	1.3	0.2	0.1ppm-0.3pp	2020	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

CERTIFICATION: WSSN: 05100
I certify that this water supply has fully complied with the public notification regulations in the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, 1976 PA 399, as amended, and the administrative rules.
Signature: Richard Simpson Title: Superintendent Date Distributed 1/07/2021

Editorial



A Little Common Sense

by Crystal Mitchell

This has been another busy week and I've been learning more about where to shop in the Saginaw area. My neighbor Karen picked me up this morning so that I could do a bit of shopping. Didn't have much cash with me but I did enjoy investigating the stores. Karen needed a new recliner and it was the last item that we found. She took me to a marvelous thrift store that had lots of books, dishes, clothes, and home décor items. I looked through many of the goodies and picked up a zip lock baggie filled with satin ribbons in several colors. Nope I didn't need them at the time of purchase but they did tickle my fancy and I could envision using them when I got back into crafting. I also picked up a couple of hardbound books to help stretch my imagination.

It was a pleasant trip and I got to spend the time just relaxing and riding. I finally was able to practice the Ollie experience. I've heard of these stores for a few years but never made it to one until today. Mostly the cats and Prudence and the birds benefited from my shopping spree. The cats got a new toy to test their focus, Prudence gained new eating dishes and a new kind of dog food, and the birds are getting more suet cakes to keep them happy. I also picked up some early Christmas gifts for my family. I have learned to get it when I see it or miss out on some good deals. I don't like to miss out on the good deals.

Speaking of imagination....I have finally decided to do a bit more work on "Esmerelda Crystal's Victory Garden". It is a children's story that I wrote back in oh three and I've had it on the back burner for a while. It is time to bring it up to boil and finish the story. I have envisioned what my character looks like and hope that I can sell the image along with the story. I do wish that I was talented visually and folks could see what I want them to see. Such is life and expectations...

I didn't get any uninterrupted sleep last night. So today I am missing it (the sleep) very much....I feel a bit doopey and do believe that my eyes have bags that sag past my knees. That being said, I have noticed that I am enjoying mailing things out to folks. Yes, I do mail out some of my monthly bills.....there is no fun in that. However, the distribution of old photos to friends and family has been a real delight. Plus it would appear that I will be sending out some old books to interested parties. Correspondingly I am beginning to find the delight of sending out notes to others, in these days and times, a lively note is just as good as a heartfelt hug. So start hugging your friends and family from afar. I do agree that the postal service is lacking at times. So give the mail service time to make your deliveries. Before Christmas I had paid the extra to get priority shipping.....their guarantee of three day delivery was false.....my packages took over ten days to reach their destination. First class mail was taking three weeks.....one of the priority packages went to Grand Rapids, one to Texas and one to Odenton, Maryland. The Grand Rapids package never reached its destination. Need I say more?

Oh, the other thing that I have started doing is listing "stuff" on the local yard sale site. My kids may be right, some of the dishes and such that I have hold more value than I expected. Besides that I have two cords of dried ash that I need to get out of my shed. I won't be burning wood for heat anymore.

Enjoy the sunrises and the sunsets.....seek the small joys and be blessed daily. Use your common sense and learn from it. God bless. Crystal Mitchell©2021

EUMC In-Person Service

by Dawn D. Levey

ELSIE – Elsie United Methodist Church located at 160 W Main Street, Elsie is once again offering in-person worship services Sunday morning 9:30 am. Pastor JD Paik and the EUMC family welcome all to attend. Attendees are asked to wear a mask and to social distance. For individuals who prefer to worship in the comfort and safety of their home virtual access is available on Facebook Live on the Elsie United Methodist Church Facebook page and by tele-conferencing 1-425-436-6364, access code 456-423-1.



Religious Thoughts

by Chris Hearn
www.letsmeetgod.com

Jesus' coming to earth, including His ministry, death on the cross and bodily resurrection from the dead, was something that God didn't want for anyone to miss. Theoretically, God could have come to earth and stayed under the radar the whole time. Jesus could have taught a few people, but never performed any miracles. He could have somehow got people mad enough at Him to be put on the cross to die. Perhaps. But if God did this, few would know of it and even fewer would care. And that is the polar opposite of what God wants for humanity.

God wants for all people to know Him. God wants for all people to hear the Gospel. God wants to come to people and enter into personal relationships with them. God wants for people to know the forgiveness, joy and peace that can only come from knowing Him.

Jesus traveled around in His ministry. He performed miracles and healed people. He preached in synagogues and ate meals in peoples' homes. He was interactive. He was relational. He was joyful! Jesus was truly God with us.

Do you know Jesus today? Not just heard about Jesus or read about Him or talked about Him or thought about Him. But do you personally know Jesus today?

There's no better time like the present. Now is the time of grace and salvation.

As Paul says, *"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor; now is the day of salvation."*

- 2 Corinthians 6:2

If you do not know God personally and would like to, then I invite you to pray or talk to God. For example, you can say, "Dear Lord, I admit that I have done wrong and am in need of your forgiveness. Please forgive me of my sins and bring me into a personal, loving relationship with you. I believe that Jesus is fully human and fully God. That He died on the cross for my sins and rose bodily from the dead. I thank you for your grace and offer of forgiveness and eternal life. In Jesus' Name. Amen."



Winter Sports is back and we will be previewing Winter Sports team in Ashley, Laingsburg and Ovid-Elsie included will be all varsity winter sports teams including boys and girls basketball, wrestling, bowling, swimming and competitive cheer. Questioners have gone out to coaches and as soon as we can get team photos for all Winter sports teams we will introduce all of them to you. In addition to team photos, we will include coaches previews, schedules and information as to any restrictions the season may have involving spectators. Also included will be information including WOES broadcasts and streaming availability.



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

Just Wondering

Dear Andy,

Our family has enjoyed reading your advice column in The Meridian Weekly over the past four years. It has been entertaining, informative, helpful, and sometimes weird. We were wondering what kind of questions your readers can send in for advice? Also were wondering about your experience or qualifications for giving advice? Just Wondering

Dear JW,

Thank you for reading the Ask Andy advice column. Good questions. In answer to the first question, one of the objectives is to offer a public venue to address some local concerns or daily challenges from readers in our small towns and rural communities. So, anything goes. If a request for advice is too personal for printing, I will privately respond via an email. If an email is inappropriate, I will block it. Otherwise, I look forward to any questions sent to me.

The written word has intrigued me since I first learn to read in my primary school days. For this type of column, it can be difficult to figure out exactly what the person is asking. Without gestures or facial expressions, tone of voice it is challenging to understand what a person is trying to convey. As for me, it is also a welcome challenge to express humor, sarcasm, or sincerity when responding with advice. Word choice is imperative to complex interpretations in text or writing. So, if anyone requires or needs clarification on a response, I will respond to that as well. I might not always be right for you and I appreciate learning from my readers.

As for qualifications, I am a certified Mediation Specialist earned at Pepperdine University. I earned my living for many years as a negotiator in court for settlements. As well as negotiating with my 2 children, step children and foster children and a spouse for 42 years. I earned my undergrad at Michigan State University and I have a Master's Degree in Secondary Education from Grand Canyon University. My love of words and writing is my passion. I love to learn from every person I have ever met. And, oh ya, I have also been called a "know-it-all" from way back. However, if a topic is out of my area of expertise or appears to be of a critical nature, I will refer the reader to one of our outstanding tri-county community professional services or resources to help with their concerns and issues. Also, a note to our readers that my views may not always reflect the views of the editor or staff of paper, so do not go blaming them for anything I might say.

Thank you for asking Andy at ask_andy@aol.com. Send me your emails about anything.

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Senior Spotlight



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How Often to See the Doctor

Routine health checkups are a key part of staying healthy. Older adults may feel like they're always visiting one doctor or another. But what is an acceptable frequency for doctor appointments?

The answer isn't always so cut and dry, and many health professionals have mixed feelings even among themselves over the magic number. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults over the age of 65 visit the doctor more than twice as often as 18- to 44-year-olds. According to Paul Takahashi, a physician at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., adults should see their primary care physicians at least once a year to make sure diseases are being properly managed and to stay current on preventative screenings.

Visiting the doctor more frequently does not necessarily add up to better health, and it actually can do the opposite. Dr. Peter Abadir, an associate professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, says frequent visits to health facilities where sick people congregate puts one at a higher risk of illness or infection. Visiting the doctor only when necessary is one way to avoid risky exposure.

Doctor visit frequency is not a one-size-fits-all answer. A yearly physical or checkup is a given, even for people who are healthy. People with a family history of certain conditions, like sleep disorders, cancer, high blood pressure, and other conditions, may need to see a doctor more frequently than those with no such histories. In addition, patients may need referrals to certain specialists who work together to provide an overall health plan. That can increase the number of appointments and shorten the intervals between them. Johnson Memorial Health offers some statistics.

- People visit the doctor four times a year on average.
- Studies show that poor or uninsured people prolong the time between doctor's visits.
- Individuals with high blood pressure may need to see the doctor four times a year to ensure medications are working properly.
- Patients on dialysis see the doctor several times a week.

Dr. Jennifer Caudle, a family physician and assistant professor at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford, NJ, says too often people visit the doctor only when they are really sick. That works to their disadvantage because the appointment will focus only on treating the illness instead of addressing other preventative care and screenings. Balance is necessary in regard to health care.

Patients can work together with their doctors to develop screening schedules that are customized to their particular profiles. These schedules can be modified as health history information changes or as patients age. Doctors can dial back or increase health visits as needed.



Why Seniors are at Greater Risk for COVID-19

It has been more than a year since the world learned about the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Since December 2019, there have been tens of millions of reported cases and nearly two million deaths worldwide attributed to COVID-19, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University Center for Systems Science and Engineering.

Experts are still unclear how prevalent the virus really is because a large number of cases are not reported due to mild or asymptomatic infections. But there's no denying COVID-19 can be very risky for one large segment of the population.

The chances for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at the greatest risk, offers the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC further indicates that eight out of 10 COVID-19 deaths reported in the United States have been in adults who are 65 and older. Compared to younger adults, older individuals are more likely to require hospitalization if they contract the illness. People between the ages of 75 and 84 are at eight-times more likely to be hospitalized and 220 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the youngest patients.

There are some key reasons why older adults are at higher risk. Vineet Menachery, an immunologist at the University of Texas Medical Branch who studies coronaviruses and their effects on aging immune systems, older adults are more likely to suffer from underlying conditions that can hinder the body's ability to recover from illness. In addition, a greater propensity for inflammation in the body and changes in the way the immune system responds with age are other mechanisms that increase seniors' risk for COVID-19. Furthermore, COVID-19 affects the part of the lungs that delivers oxygen to the bloodstream and removes carbon dioxide. As a person gets older, the lungs are not as elastic and this can affect gas exchange and other functions. Being older coupled with having cardiovascular disease, asthma and diabetes also can raise the threat level of COVID-19.

Seniors must be extra diligent to engage in behaviors that reduce their risks. Epidemiologists recommend the following:

- Wash or sanitize hands whenever possible, especially upon entering and leaving public buildings.
- Shop and travel during off-peak hours, such as early in the morning, to avoid crowds.
- Use contactless payment methods rather than handling money.
- Ask friends and family to do your shopping and run errands for you.
- Wear masks over the nose and mouth and stay at least six feet away from others.
- If the COVID-19 vaccine is available to you, ask your doctor more about it and get vaccinated if it's safe to do so.

Learn more about at-risk groups at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html.

Planning pays in retirement



Personal savings are key to living comfortably

Michael doesn't see himself living on the beach when he retires, but he'd like to vacation there with his wife. He worries he isn't saving enough in the 401(k) account he has at work, but he isn't sure what more he can manage with two kids, a mortgage and credit cards.

Michael faces two dilemmas: Saving enough money for a comfortable retirement, and making those savings last his lifetime. Like most Americans, having money in retirement may depend on part-time jobs, personal savings and tax-advantaged retirement savings accounts.

A financial representative can help people like Michael understand their options, such as 401(k) and 403(b) plans, annuities, and individual retirement accounts (IRAs).

The key is to set goals and get started. The longer you wait to start saving, the more you will have to save to reach those goals.

Let's start the conversation.



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Senior Spotlight



How Seniors Can Approach Exercise

Exercise is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. By making exercise part of their day-to-day routines, people of all ages, including men and women over the age of 65, can greatly improve their overall health.

The American Academy of Family Physicians notes that seniors should aspire to be as active as possible. Exercise is a great way to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine and has been linked to reduced risk for diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis. Though adults with chronic illnesses may be hesitant to exercise, the AAFP notes that it's possible for men and women who have been diagnosed with such conditions to exercise safely. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that regular physical activity is one of the most important things seniors can do for their health and can potentially prevent many health problems associated with aging.

Frequency of exercise

Seniors, particularly those who have not exercised much in the past, may not know how much exercise they need to reap the full rewards of physical activity. Though it's best to discuss exercise with a physician prior to beginning a new regimen, various public health agencies advise seniors to get at least 2.5 hours of moderate aerobic exercise each week. Brisk walking is one example of moderate aerobic exercise. Seniors who want to sweat a little more when exercising can replace moderate aerobic exercise with one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous exercise, such as jogging, each week.

Is strength training safe for seniors?

The CDC advises seniors to incorporate muscle-strengthening activities into their weekly fitness routines twice per week. Lifting weights, working with resistance bands, heavy gardening, and even some forms of yoga qualify as muscle-strengthening activities. Exercises that use your body weight for resistance, such as sit-ups and push-ups, also can help build strength. Always speak with a physician before beginning a muscle-strengthening exercise regimen and, if possible, work with a personal trainer, especially if you're a novice.

When to stop a workout

It's imperative that seniors recognize when to stop working out. Exercising more than is recommended by your doctor can increase the risk of illness or injury. In addition, stop exercising if any of the following symptoms appear:

- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Swollen joints
- Nausea
- Tightness in muscles or joints
- Pain anywhere in the body
- Throbbing or burning sensations

Exercise can help seniors stay healthy and feel more energetic throughout the day. Before beginning a new regimen, seniors should discuss physical activity with their physicians.



Nursing Home Care and the 'Look-back Period'

Health care plans provide access to medical care and other necessities and reduce out-of-pocket health-related expenses. Each plan is different, and depending on where you live, your coverage may vary.

People quickly find that many healthcare plans do not include provisions for long-term health care, such as paying for nursing facilities. Understanding how health plans work and learning about potential financial reviews for nursing home payment qualification is a good idea for anyone concerned about financing their future health care needs.

Health care basics

Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada have access to a universal health care system that is paid for through their taxes, according to the Government of Canada. Each province or territory has its own health insurance plan that covers a variety of services.

In the United States, health care is largely privately managed, with most employers offering access to various health coverage plans. Government subsidized plans include Medicare, which is for retirement-age individuals and younger people with disabilities. Medicaid is a joint state- and federal-run government program that provides health coverage to low-income individuals and families.

Just as in the United States, health insurance in Canada does not pay for nursing home care in most cases. In the United States, unless an individual meets low-income criteria, nursing home care is paid for by the resident; otherwise, people who qualify for Medicaid can have their nursing home expenditures paid for by that program. To receive Medicaid assistance, applicants should expect a financial review, including a look-back period.

What is the look-back period?

The senior health, finance and lifestyle resource Senior Living advises that Medicaid is a "last resort" method of financing nursing home costs. Individuals are expected to use other means of payment first and "spend down" their assets. When financial resources dwindle, Medicaid will kick in to provide coverage.

To ensure that individuals simply do not transfer money out of their accounts to avoid paying for nursing home care by their own means, Medicaid requires a look-back period into applicants' finances to determine if there were any violations to rules regarding asset transfers.

Most people engage in some sort of long-term planning to protect a portion of their assets so that they can be used to support spouses or children. According to rules, an applicant is permitted to transfer certain monies to his or her spouse, provided the spouse isn't also applying for long-term care through Medicaid. Most money and tangible asset transfers (check with your state Medicaid office for the most current rules) must have taken place 60 months (5 years) prior to application for Medicaid. Penalties will be instituted when rules are broken, namely gifts or asset transfers that take place within the look-back period. This could delay Medicaid acceptance.


Paying for long-term care can be complicated business with look-back periods and required spend-downs. It is in a person's best interest to seek the guidance of a financial planner who specializes in elder care to navigate these financial waters.



Did You Know?

Health screenings are a vital component of preventative health care. Specific screenings for older adults can help them stay healthy. Healthline and WebMD recommend older adults schedule these routine tests. The frequency of the screenings may depend on individuals' health histories, so each test should be discussed with a physician during adults' annual checkups.

- Blood pressure check
- Blood test to check cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Colorectal cancer exam starting at age 50
- Weight screening to check for gains or losses
- Prostate cancer screening for men age 70 and older
- Breast exam and mammogram for women, starting at age 40
- Pap smear and HPV tests at the recommended intervals advised by a doctor
- Hearing test
- Osteoporosis test
- Shingles and pneumococcal vaccines
- Eye exam
- Periodontal exam once per year



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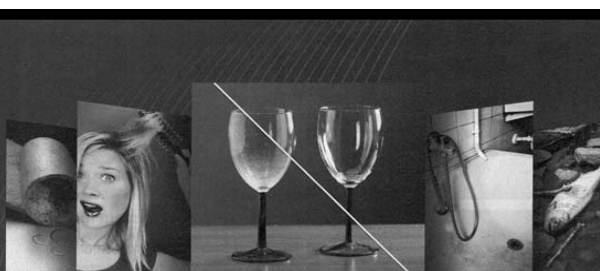
OID TOWNSHIP Clinton County PUBLIC NOTICE

The Ovid Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed township budget for fiscal year 2021-2022. The meeting will be held in person and electronically. In person meetings are subject to change to electronic meetings. The hearing will be held during the regular Board Meeting of the Ovid Township Board on February 11, 2021, at 6 p.m.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection at the Ovid Township Administrative Offices, 1015 Baese Court, Ovid, MI.

Ovid Township will post information confirming whether the Township Board will meet and hold the Budget Public Hearing in person or electronically on its notice that will be posted on the township doors. This notice complies with MCL 141.436 and MCL 211.24e

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Laingsburg cont' from front...

ance, the committee agreed unanimously that no fee be charged for the use of the Amphitheater; however, reservations will be required, and donations will be accepted. The committee is planning arrangements with Dr. Jennifer Strickland, Drama Dept. at Laingsburg High School to hold the school's annual play in May.

Library - Gail Geasler reported that the Library budget is being developed. They are waiting on contractors for a bid. Determination of the costs to remodel of the building to expand will be a significant budget item. The City Library is considering the property to the east of the current location. The structure of the building has been approved to meet code.

LSW - Report of Fire calls: 31 runs, 32 Ambulance calls. Announcement that Police Chief Dan DeKort was promoted to Captain. Nine firefighters have received their COVID injections. The City only has 1 paramedic on staff. Advanced Ambulance Services are a 24-7 facility. The Fire Chief is working with the Shiawassee Medical Control officer to find options to provide emergency services for the Community. There is an issue with ambulance service statewide to hire and retain paramedics. Options to be considered may be joining with MMR, Owosso, or Perry to provide services. Last year the city had over 400 runs. Pay is often low with no benefits. The board needs a plan to proceed with the ambulance service. Budget for the LSW comes from surrounding townships and billing of individuals. The cost is easily at \$170,000 a year: Paramedics are paid \$13.00 per hour in Laingsburg. If a \$3.00 raise were offered at \$16.00 per hour, it would equal \$60,000 a year and the Laingsburg community needs 3 additional paramedics. Options for ambulance services could come from a nearby city, such as Perry, who would cover the rural community and take over Mercy Ambulance serving Victor Township. The committee is seeking options.

DWS - One employee is out due to COVID but snow removal and maintenance upkeep is being covered without difficulty at this time. Regarding the property behind 300 Grand River that was surveyed last year: The ally must be kept clear for traffic and deliveries. Recycling fund raising and set up is in planning stages to resume in the Spring. No recycling currently, due to COVID. Cameras are being set up and lights will eventually be on timers or motion sensors. Consideration is being taken to not disturb the adjoining residents living near the Pavilion and Amphitheater in the park.

The Mayor concluded the meeting with an announcement that the Springtime Festival has been approved for Memorial Weekend, pending COVID restrictions. Planning was approved by the Laingsburg Lions Club and moving forward for 2021 activities. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

City Council public meetings are held at 7:00pm on the first Monday of the month. During COVID-19 restrictions, the meetings will be held on the City Zoom. If residents would like to have a subject considered on the agenda, they should contact the clerk at City Hall. 517-651-5374. Previous City Council Agenda and minutes can be viewed online once they are approved at the following regular monthly meeting.

Board members are Mayor Michael Culpepper, Alan Ducastel, David Rhodabeck, Brian Fredline, Marcie Nickols, Gail Geasler and Dena Judd. City Clerk is Paula Willoughby.



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Rep. Filler Highlights Local Vaccine Distribution Efforts

submitted by Christina Guenther

State representative offers praise for frontline workers, info for residents State Rep. Graham Filler today praised the efforts of local health care professionals who are working hard to facilitate the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and offered helpful information for residents waiting to receive their shots.

"I truly appreciate the hard work being put in by our local healthcare workers," said Filler, of DeWitt. "I know the vaccine rollout is proving to be a difficult challenge, but our local health departments, hospital systems and private businesses like Meijer are really stepping up to the plate. I want to thank them for their efforts."

Filler also highlighted the innovative efforts of Sparrow Health System, which is offering drive-through testing and vaccinations at the former Sears facility in Frandor Plaza. Sparrow Spokesperson John Foren said the idea to use the building came from leaders who were part of the Sparrow Incident Command Team that formed out of the pandemic. The health system needed a site with innovative design and access to the community. The owner, Gillespie Group, and lessee, Sears, fully supported the transformation, and the project began in May.

"Sparrow has garnered national and even international attention for its seamless and efficient drive-through testing and vaccination process," Filler said. "It's great that we have such a safe and convenient resource for people in our community."

With 17 employees and volunteers, Foren said 600 people are being vaccinated there daily and there is still room to provide hundreds more as the COVID-19 vaccine supply increases.

Vaccinations are currently being offered across the state for people in Phase 1A – which includes EMS workers, essential health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities – and Phase 1B. This second phase includes individuals 65 years and older and frontline, essential workers in critical infrastructure. For example, education, food and agriculture, utilities, police, firefighters, corrections officers, transportation and grocery store workers.

Residents who are eligible can receive more information about how to get vaccinated by visiting:

Mid-Michigan District Health Department:

www.mmdhd.org/covid-vaccine-information;

Sparrow Health System: www.sparrow.org/vaccine

Meijer: clinic.meijer.com

McLaren Greater Lansing: www.mclaren.org/main/coronavirus-vaccine

Spectrum Health: www.spectrumhealth.org/covid19/covid-19-vaccine

University of Michigan Medicine: www.uofmhealth.org/coronavirus/vaccine-info-update

Anyone who is unable to access the websites can also call 2-1-1 to request help setting up an appointment.

ATTENTION

Fairfield Township Residents

The Board of Appeals will be held at the Fairfield Township Hall located at 7988 W. Henderson Road, Elsie, on

**Monday, March 8, 2021,
1pm - 4pm & 6pm - 9pm***

and

**Tuesday, March 9, 2021
9am - Noon* and 6pm - 9pm
(*Assessor Present)**



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The Weekly Sportsman

by Dan McMaster
theweeklysportsman@meridianweekly.com

Hunting with Wild Bird Bill

This last Christmas Eve the Weekly Sportsman spent the day hunting for wild pheasants with son Aidan and good friend Bill Vander Zouwen from Hudsonville. A week later on New Year's Eve the group, sans Aidan, hit the fields again to try for some birds close to the buzzer as the late season ended on New Year's Day. Over those two days the group hunted public and private land in four counties with varied habitat and mixed results.

The Weekly Sportsman really loves hunting with different friends and their dogs as a lot can be learned from watching others in the field. Bill brings a lot of experience to the field as he holds not only a Master's degree in Wildlife Ecology but spent over 30 years working for the Wisconsin DNR. His positions included Farmland Wildlife Researcher, Upland Game Staff Specialist, and 20 years as Wildlife Ecology Section Chief. Long story short, he was in charge of management programs for many species of wildlife including pheasants. Currently he is serving as Pheasants Forever's Regional Field Representative for Michigan. Clearly a hunter with a lot of field experience and knowledge. You could call him a pheasant hunter purist as he only pursues wild birds and really doesn't care for game preserves nor European tower hunts. As a matter of fact, this Michigan native has hunted wild birds all across the state as he makes it a point to hunt with volunteers from numerous chapters. It's a good way for him to check on habitat projects and bird numbers while at the same time being able to discuss Pheasants Forever issues with volunteers who are so important to the organization and its mission. Work aside he just has a passion for pheasants and his two bird dogs Jaeger and Riley.

The Christmas Eve hunt started on public lands just north of Cass City in Tuscola County.

Weather that morning upon departure from Owosso was mild with no wind, a moderate temperature and no snow. Upon arrival the temperature was about 15 degrees colder and very windy with a couple of inches of snow blanketing the landscape. The cover was primarily grass along with an unharvested corn field that looked very promising but no such luck. Like most public land, there is often pressure from other hunters and from the tracks it was clear the area had been worked heavily the days prior. Only one other hunter was in the area that morning but he was never really that close.

As the weather warmed and the snow melted the decision was made to head north to Gagetown in Huron County and try some other public land. All around the famous Octagon Barn there are public parcels open to hunting and several have specifically been planted to provide food and cover for ring-

necks. The field hunted in the afternoon had cover so tall that sometimes visibility was limited. Despite plentiful sign like tracks and runs that were visible, no birds were flushed that afternoon. The Weekly Sportsman has both of these locations on the list for future hunts but probably much earlier in future seasons.

A week later on New Year's Eve the Weekly Sportsman met Bill in Durand to hunt a friend's family farm located on the county line in Gaines Township, Genesee County. You couldn't have asked for better pheasant hunting weather so late in December. The Weekly Sportsman had just acquired permission to hunt this farm and didn't really know what to expect. Most of the farm land had been chisel plowed and no birds were flushed. However, it quickly became obvious when walking the farm that the fence and hedge rows could be very productive when crops haven't been harvested. Another location mentally added to the list for early season hunting. With gear and dogs loaded up the next destination was central Shiawassee County.

The Weekly Sportsman has had permission to hunt two adjoining parcels in Owosso Township for several years but just hasn't had the chance. One of the parcels is a somewhat active gravel pit but the other has not been mined for many, many years and is now overgrown with grass, scrub trees, and phragmites. Part of the parcel is farmed and it borders a large field that was planted to corn this last growing season. It didn't take long to start seeing sporadic fresh tracks in the light snow and they appeared to be single birds traveling back and forth from the old cornfield down a very steep hill of grass toward some phragmites. Continuing northward the grass became taller, no doubt due to uninterrupted topsoil, and the very fresh tracks increased tenfold. Bill's dog Riley, a black colored British Field Labrador Retriever, started acting real birdy but no birds flushed. After covering the area thoroughly one could only surmise that they decided to fly away from the area.

Deciding to head back the route changed in an effort to hunt the phragmites and follow up on all those single bird tracks. The Weekly Sportsman traversed the steep hill about midway and Bill and Riley went low along a pond and the phragmites. It didn't take long for a rooster to flush and Bill to shoot. The rooster fell and Riley quickly retrieved it just a couple feet out on the ice.

Being able to watch it all play out from an elevated position and at that distance was quite the sight to see. Those five seconds or so seemed almost to play out in slow motion like the Weekly Sportsman was watching a hunting show on a very large widescreen. A scene that has been replayed over and over again from memory.

That single bird was the fruit of about 10 hours of field time spent over two days from Gagetown to Owosso. Some would say that it was a lot of work and time for a single bird but it was well worth it. The Weekly Sportsman was able to hunt with his son on one day and a friend on both days. New hunting locales were checked out and the Weekly Sportsman's ability to determine age of pheasant tracks in snow was enhanced. Bill took home a wild Shiawassee rooster for his dinner table. Best of all is that time was spent doing something loved very much outdoors.

On a side note, you never know when your last hunt will come so it is important to value and cherish each opportunity given to go hunting or fishing or whatever you spend time doing. This was almost the Weekly Sportsman's last hunt and if it had been there would be no regrets, however, with a new outlook on life there will be a concentrated effort to spend even more time with family and friends whether it be hunting, fishing, and maybe even backpacking. Life is short and I encourage you to do likewise.

-WS



Sports

Ovid-Elsie Bowling







submitted by Matt Fabus

The Ovid-Elsie Varsity bowlers took to the lanes at Richfield Bowl on January 30th for their first match of the season.

The girls went up against Bendle and won 22-8. High scores were Gracie Schultz 151; Ashland Particka 131; Morgan Douglass 139, 152; Mikayla Kelley 181, 173; Lizzy Underhill 172, 153.

The boys won 30-0 against Bentley. High scores were Ian Hehrer 201, 196; Tommy Terpening 203; Evan Hehrer 180; Steve Zedemont 201; Corbin Kelley 180, 246.

The next match is at Riverbend in Corunna against Chesaning.

FEB. 8		Indoor	Outdoor
SPORTS AND COVID-19			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact sports that can be played with a mask can proceed with contact practice and competition beginning Monday, Feb. 8. • Where contact sports participants cannot remain masked, they must be limited consistent with the testing protocol specified in MDHHS's Guidance for Athletics issued February 7, 2021. • Non-contact sports where distancing can be maintained and a mask is not possible can continue with no changes. <p>For more information about sports and COVID-19, visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus. Questions or concerns can be emailed to COVID19@michigan.gov.</p>	Non-contact sports		
	Contact sports		
	Contact sports and cannot mask safely		



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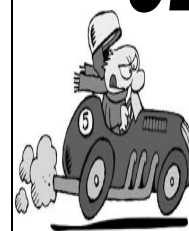
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Different Types of Chocolate to Give This Valentine's Day

Chocolate is a popular gift on Valentine's Day. According to the Nielsen Company, Valentine's Day is the third busiest holiday for chocolate sales, following Halloween and Easter. More than 70 million pounds of chocolate are purchased each year and offered as Valentine's Day gifts. Chocolate connoisseurs can learn more about the different types of chocolate to find the one their loved one will find most appealing.

- Milk chocolate: Milk chocolate is produced with low levels of cocoa and high amounts of sugar and milk. In addition, it contains cocoa butter and chocolate liquor. Milk chocolate often is made up of 3.39 percent butterfat, 10 percent chocolate liquor and 12 percent milk solids.
- Semi-sweet chocolate: Semi-sweet chocolate is largely an American creation and term. It contains at least 35 percent cocoa solids and is darker than sweet dark chocolate. The amount of sugar varies across brands.
- Bittersweet chocolate: Bittersweet chocolate typically contains at least 50 percent chocolate liquor, but some will have between 70 and 80 percent. The sugar content is unregulated, so one manufacturer's bittersweet may not be as bitter as another's.
- Baking chocolate: Also known as bitter chocolate, this is pure chocolate liquor made from ground cocoa beans. It may look like chocolate, but it is used in recipes where it is combined with sugar. It should not be eaten on its own.
- White chocolate: White chocolate has cocoa butter but no chocolate liquor or cocoa products. Therefore, it is not truly chocolate.
- Candy coating chocolate: This has no cocoa butter and uses vegetable or palm oils in the recipe. It often is used in dipping or enrobing because of its excellent melting ability.
- Couverture chocolate: In the United States, the ideal standard for couverture chocolate involves a minimum of 35 percent cocoa solids and 31 percent cocoa butter. This chocolate is tempered and used when coating ingredients or dipping items in chocolate.

Chocolate shines on Valentine's Day. Gift givers can select a chocolate variety that appeals most to their recipients' palates.

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