



BELLEVILLE - AREA INDEPENDENT

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Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren

FREE

Mystery message to Environmental chair sent to attorney

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At the Jan. 15 meeting of the Van Buren Township Environmental Commission, chairman Norm DeBuck said he had received a strange e-mail that concerned him.

He handed over his cell phone to Director of Public Services Larry Lockett for him to read the message.

Then, township board liaison Trustee Donald Boynton asked to see the message and the phone was handed over to him.

They agreed it should not be discussed publicly, but should be turned over to the township attorney.

At the Dec. 18 meeting, Director of Municipal Services Ron Akers informed the commission that the township's attorney advised against openly discussing the ongoing lawsuit with Republic.

Akers said if any commissioners are contacted by Republic's legal counsel, they should bring it to Director Akers' or Supervisor McNamara's attention.

The subject of the message to DeBuck was not discussed at the Jan. 15 meeting and when asked by Trustee Boynton if he knew the person who signed it, DeBuck said he did not.

In other business at the 27-minute meeting on Jan. 15, the commission:

- Heard Director Lockett explain that he missed the last meeting and Director Akers was present instead. Lockett said his younger brother passed away and he went to Dallas;

- Was informed by Lockett that he purchased a light meter for the police to use when a violation of the light ordinance is being investigated. Commissioner Tony Gibbons explained that at a previous meeting he complained about a light from Moon Star Express trucking business that is streaming onto Rawsonville Road. It is

(continued on page 6)



Independent photo by Rosemary K. Otzman

Thirty-fourth District Court Judge Lisa Martin, at left, officially swears in three members of the Belleville Area District Library Board who were elected in November. From left are Alma Hughes-Grubbs, Joy Cichewicz, and Dr. Maria Jackson-Smith. The oaths were taken on Jan. 14 before they were seated for their four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation.

Libraries ask Wayne County to pay for audit of penal fines

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Representatives of the Belleville Area District Library attended a recent meeting at the Romulus Library where they were invited to discuss owing money for penal fines they were given by the state.

In December, the Belleville library was informed it has been paid \$139,087.48 too much over the last ten years and needed to pay it back. The problem was that the Wayne County Treasurer's office had been using the wrong percentages.

The Library of Michigan had set a Jan. 31 deadline for libraries to say whether they

would accept the proposed agreement.

At the regular meeting of the Belleville Area District Library Board on Jan. 14, library director Mary Jo Suchy reported to the board that she and board president Sharon Peters attended the Romulus meeting.

Although the mistakes made at the Wayne County level over ten years that went on to the state level had some libraries getting too much money for penal fines and some getting too little, those at the Romulus meeting were just those that were being asked to give money back to the state.

No interest has been mentioned, she said.

Director Suchy said the consensus was that the owing libraries were working toward a settlement, not agreeing to the state's proposed agreement.

She said the consensus was that Wayne County should conduct an audit of those penal fines to make sure they are correct.

Suchy said the state agreement would withhold upcoming penal fines over a period of years and the overages would be paid off that way. Or, she said, Belleville has enough money to just pay it off all at once, if the board decides to do so.

Suchy presented each board member with

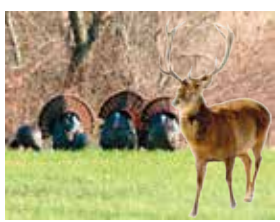
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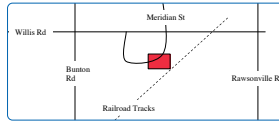
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SECOND FRONT PAGE

District Library

(continued from page 1)

a huge packet of information on the penal fines for all the libraries over the past ten years.

She said the initial proposal is from the Library of Michigan. But, some at the meeting said the statute of limitations is six years.

Board member Joy Cichewicz, who also is a library director in Ypsilanti, asked if the county has no responsibility for this mistake?

Board president Peters said at the meeting the Plymouth librarian brought forward the idea of responsibility.

Peters said she brought up the idea that the mistake should be shared fiscally by Wayne County.

"None of the libraries in Wayne County are responsible for this problem," Peters said.

It was noted that the Detroit Public Library may be separated from the problem.

Newly sworn-in library board member Dr. Maria Jackson-Smith asked how this happened.

Suchy said it is her understanding that the courts with circuit courts had their penal fines distributed at their courts instead of putting it in the big state library pot for distribution countywide.

Suchy said all the discussions are in the early stages but the consensus is for the libraries to consider the state agreement, the county has to pay for an independent audit.

"There's no guarantee this won't happen again," Cichewicz said. "It is their responsibility."

Peters said some of the libraries don't think their numbers from the state are correct.

"This is a good first step," said board vice president Linda Priest.

Cichewicz made the following motion, which was seconded by treasurer Tonya Stoudemire and passed unanimously:

"Motion to participate in a settlement solution facilitated by the Library of Michigan that addresses the miscalculation of penal fines by Wayne County, provided that:

• Wayne County agrees to pay for an independent auditor to review all payments to the Wayne County Treasurer from the Courts and all payments to the Wayne County Libraries to determine the accurate penal fine disbursement numbers from 2014 through 2024;

• And, to provide copies of the completed audit to the Wayne County Libraries and to the Library of Michigan."

The State of Michigan website explains: Michigan is the only state that constitutionally mandates the use of penal fines as a funding mechanism for libraries.

Michigan has enacted statutes requiring that all fines collected for violations of the state penal laws are paid to the local county treasurer. The courts determine the percentage of each fine/fee that comprise "penal fines" and the percentage of each fine/fee that comprise court "costs." The county treasurer receives the penal fines collected by the courts in that county. The

District Library Board gives 3.5% raise to Director Suchy

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Belleville Area District Library Director Mary Jo Suchy was given a 3.5% raise in pay by the library board during its regular meeting on Jan. 14.

Board treasurer Tonya Stoudemire, a member of the personnel committee, said inflation was 2.7% and the committee didn't want to just keep up, but to give more.

This would be in addition to her 2024 salary of \$99,158.

Personnel committee chairwoman Linda Priest said director evaluation forms were distributed in December to all board members for the anonymous evaluations of Suchy.

She read a three-page evaluation, beginning by saying the comments showed Suchy was performing her job at a very high level.

Priest explained the completion on goals for 2024 and plans for her new goals in 2025.

After the evaluation, board members gave their own compliments to Suchy on how she runs the library and interacts with staff and visitors.

"Our director has institutional knowledge and was deputy for a very, very long time before becoming director," board president Sharon Peters said.

Suchy said she started in 1987, knowing she would be working to get librarian credentials, and she's been here ever since.

Cichewicz said Suchy "is truly one of the premier directors in our state" and Priest added, "It's great to work with her. She doesn't make you feel stupid when you ask a question."

Suchy said, "They teach us in library school there's no such thing as a dumb question." She added, "I'm in love with this community."

In other business at the Jan. 14 meeting, the board:

• Heard treasurer Stoudemire present the financial audit for 2023-24 by Alan C. Young and Associates, which she said was a clean audit. The total revenues on June 30, 2024 were \$3,409,220 and the total expenditures were \$3,135,080. The fund

county treasurer then distributes those penal fines to eligible libraries within that county on a per-capita basis using service population numbers supplied by the Library of Michigan.

There are 25 or 26 libraries in Wayne County and this all started when one of the libraries noticed the problem a few years ago and investigated, Suchy said.

balance on June 30, 2023 was \$6,017,000 and the fund balance on June 30, 2024 was \$6,291,140;

• Heard Suchy ask the board to make adjustments to two parts of the salary policy, increasing the maximum pay of a director's position to \$99,600 and librarian position pay from \$17 to a maximum of \$18. She said they weren't hitting the top figures in the policy until this year. The board voted unanimously to make the changes. She said the raises for staff are going to be 3.5%;

• Heard Suchy announce the monthly Memory Café for people having memory difficulties and their caregivers has become very popular. They frequently work on an art project which is placed on temporary display in the library lobby. She said jazz nights resume at the library with The Aston Neighborhood pleasure Club on Wednesday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. February features Elder Master Storyteller Ivory

More looking back:

30 years ago, this is what was happening in the tri-community

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

We are celebrating completion of our 30th year of publication by printing stories from our earliest issues to show what was happening in Belleville, Van Buren, and Sumpter.

In our third issue of the *Independent* on Jan. 19, 1995, which had 12 pages, our front-page story was headlined: "Critics: Cleanup plan moving too fast" and concerned the cleanup of toxic Willow Creek with much work to be done in Van Buren Township.

A long story detailed the Department of Natural Resources public hearing on Jan. 12, 1995, that was held at Van Buren Township Hall, but contained only a handful of residents from VBT of the 150 present. VBT residents said the township didn't let them know about the hearing.

VBT officials said the township didn't put out any notices because the meeting was being announced by the DNR.

Most of those present were public officials

About a decade ago, someone with institutional knowledge retired from Wayne County and since then the libraries in the county have been overpaid and underpaid in court penal fines because the needed percentages being used were wrong.

Peters said, "It will be interesting negotiating with Wayne County."

Williams from the Detroit Association of Black Storytellers on Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 6:30 p.m. "Michigan Roots, African American Migration in Michigan" will be presented at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 10, by Rozlyn Kelly;

• Learned the new solo exhibit in the atrium of the library are artworks in several media, all by Danielle Whitehead. The exhibit will be there for three months;

• Heard Peters urge board members to attend the annual meeting of the Friends of the Library at 11 a.m. on Jan. 25. "We would not be where we are without the Friends," she said. Suchy added that the Friends will be celebrating their 40th year; and

• Learned the new stair treads have been installed, children's storytimes resumed after the holiday break and "Game Day! Game Day!" that was such a success during the Belleville High School football season, is being brought back for the basketball season.

and residents of Ypsilanti Township. Ypsilanti Township Trustee Karen Lovejoy Roe said her township tried to put inserts in the weekly *Ypsilanti Courier* to alert citizens, but they didn't know how many people get that paper.

Trustee Roe said the 30 days of public comment, which was to end Jan. 23, was not long enough.

She said she and others asked the DNR for an extension of the public comment period since the 2-inch-thick Proposed Remedial Action Plan was put into the official depository, the Ypsilanti District Library, on Dec. 23 and then the next day the library closed for 9 days for the holidays.

VBT property owner Marilyn Hieber said she found out about the meeting by accident after she found stakes behind her property. She said it took eight calls to VBT hall before she found out about the project in her back yard.

The \$70 million cleanup plan involves Edison Pond on the north shore of

(continued on page 6)

OPINIONS

Editorial

Friends of Library to celebrate 40 years of helping

Friends of the Belleville Area District Library will celebrate their 40-year anniversary on Saturday, Jan. 25, during their annual membership meeting at 11 a.m. at the library. The public is invited to attend to get to know the work of the Friends and, perhaps, decide to join in to help their work.

After the election of officers for the year and a few brief annual reports, the Friends will hear messages from local officials on "Bridges," specifically how the library has bridged the way between the municipalities.

Present will be State Rep. Reggie Miller, Van Buren Township Supervisor Kevin McNamara, Belleville Mayor Ken Voigt, and an official from Sumpter Township.

Then there's a pizza party and tour of the library's current art exhibit.

The Friends put on the two used-book sales each year to earn money to help provide items and services for the library. There's an area in the library where you can buy used books throughout the year.

Friends also pay for or put on other events at the library and offer support for library services. Many of the library board leaders throughout the years started out as members of the Friends.

Board president Sharon Peters urged the board and the public to support Saturday's event in appreciation for all the Friends do for the library.

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Otzman

On Jan. 15, a picture of Sam Veliu, the owner of Sam's Place in Belleville, was on the front page of The Detroit News. Sam also owns a restaurant in Livonia. The story was about rebuilding Livonia to get a downtown and his restaurant would probably get torn down, but he said he is for a renewed Livonia.

He said he came from Albania. ***

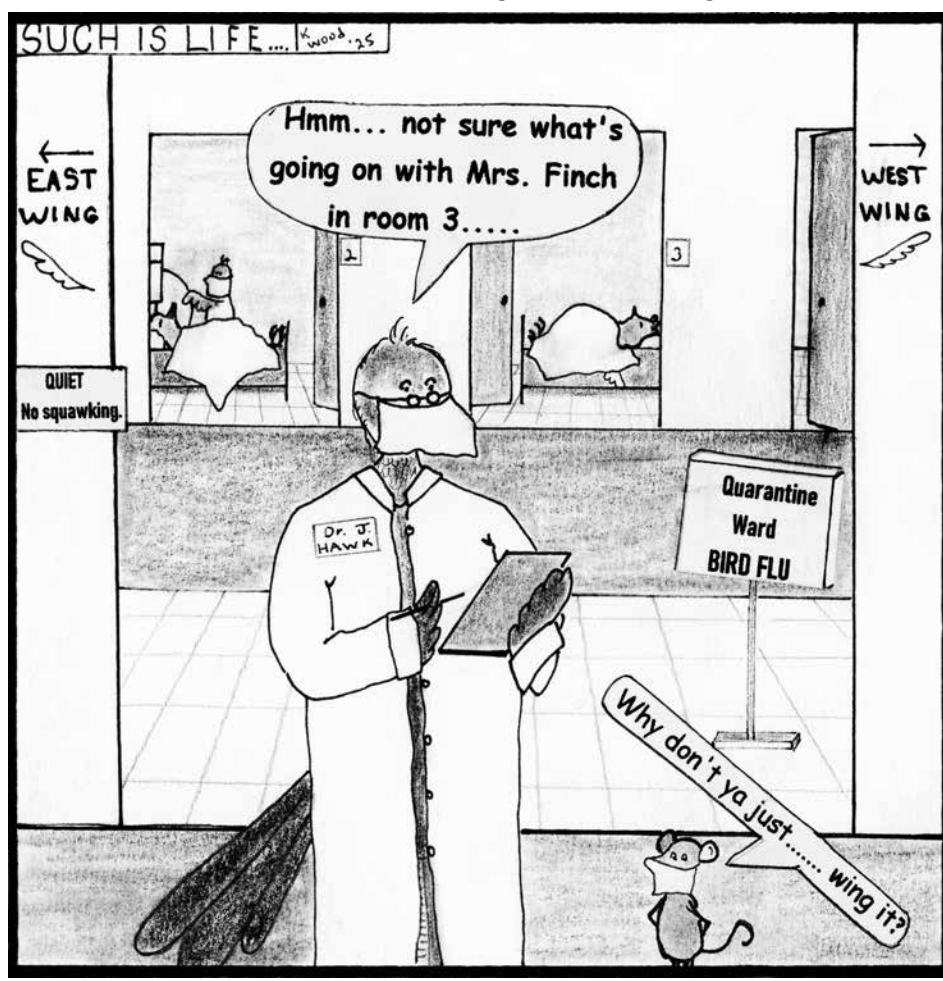
Recently I heard on the scanner a 911 call for help because a cat was stuck behind the family's water heater and couldn't get out.

We have cats and I find it hard to believe that the cat couldn't get out if the family just left the room and let it work at it. Just the way you never find a dead cat in a tree. They can get down and do if the family just doesn't get so hyper. ***

On an upcoming agenda of the Van Buren Township Planning Commission we are advised there will be consideration of a Chick-Fil-A restaurant to be constructed on the southern-most Menards outlot and a plan to completely tear down and reconstruct the McDonald's restaurant on Belleville Road.

Both projects have made it through all the staff reviews and are ready to come before the planning commission for consideration. ***

While I was reading the Jan. 19, 1995 *Independent* to gather news from 30 years ago to report in our "Looking Back" feature, I found a story that was placed right next to Marilyn Locke's series on quilt blocks in the Community Quilt that just had been hung at the Fred C. Fischer Library. Marilyn was chairperson of the quilt project, which has 30 blocks, each showing a local site.



She wrote 30 stories on the blocks, which ran week by week.

The story next to the quilt series was about how Diane Eissinger, a local glass artist, had told fellow members of the Michigan Glass Guild about the Belleville quilt and they discussed how to do a similar community project.

After the idea was published in the Michigan Glass Guild newsletter, the response was immediate. A representative of the Dearborn Council for the Arts and the Downriver Council for the Arts contacted the guild and offered a grant to complete a glass quilt for the Ronald McDonald House.

The Ronald McDonald House is a place for parents of hospitalized children to stay. Diane said stores who specialize in glass offered their scrap bins free to artists who will be working on the quilt.

Each glass artist was to do a square in his or her specialty, whether it be hot, blown glass, leaded, or fused glass. They also plan to put together a brochure to explain the blocks, the artists, and the techniques similar to what Marilyn Locke did for the Belleville Community Quilt. ***

Last week's scheduled meeting of the Belleville Downtown Development Authority was not held due to a lack of quorum - that's the number needed to make the meeting official with just over half of the members present. The announcement of the canceled meeting

also contained the announcement that the DDA chairperson, Alicia McGovern, had resigned.

The Belleville City Council was scheduled to meet on Tuesday instead of Monday this week because of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The original agenda sent out for the Jan. 21 meeting included a bond presentation by a Miller Canfield attorney and a vote to approve an intent to bond for up to \$3.5 million for various city projects, including rebuilding of the Horizon Park boardwalk, water bank stabilization, and road repairs.

The bond or bonds would also pay for the bond attorney. The attorney wouldn't say how much that would be until the council decided on how much it wanted to bond for, according to the paperwork in the original agenda packet.

On Tuesday morning, we got a notice from the city that the bond attorney and the bond vote were no longer on that night's agenda.

We were quite surprised to see it there in the first place since the council had barely mentioned moving forward on bonds. Once the council votes and its intention is published in the newspaper of record (the *Independent*), voters will have 45 days to object. ***



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To the editor:
 Sumpter Township currently uses a *base rate* when charging its residents for their water usage. In some instances, that *base rate* may be higher than the amount of water actually used, resulting in a higher water bill.

To help residents who are at least 65 years of age, and who own or are purchasing their own residence, Sumpter Township offers an exemption, which insures that those residents only pay for the amount of water they actually use.

To claim that exemption, the resident needs to fill out a very simple SENIOR CITIZEN AFFIDAVIT and show a driver's license or other form of identification.

This exemption is only for those seniors who get their water from the township and does not apply to those who may get their water from a mobile home park or through other outside sources.

In addition to the above township program, there is also a utility and water assistance program from Wayne County for those who qualify.

You can pick up the SENIOR CITIZEN AFFIDAVIT form and information on the Wayne County assistance program at township hall, located at 23480 Sumpter Rd., where the courteous and knowledgeable employees will be glad to help.

If you want the forms and information mailed to you, or dropped off at your residence, along with water-conservation and energy-saving tips, email randbryce6@gmail.com or call (734) 358-2823 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Randall Miller
 Sumpter Township resident

Friends meeting to feature local officials

To the editor:
 You are cordially invited to the Friends of the Belleville Area District Library Annual Membership Meeting at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, in the Cozadd Room of the Belleville library. Members of the Friends and the public are invited to attend.

The Friends of the Library are celebrating the 40th year since its inception in 1984. There will be a short business meeting to give annual reports and elect officers for

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2025.
 "Building Bridges" will be the theme for the meeting, highlighting honored guests: Reggie Miller, 31st District State Representative; Kevin McNamara, Van Buren Twp. Supervisor; Ken Voigt, City of Belleville Mayor; and a dignitary from Sumpter Twp.

The officials have been asked to give their views on how the library has been a connecting bridge for the tri-communities over the years.

A pizza party and tour of the library's current art collection will follow the program. Come and find out what the Friends have to offer the community and how you can help out.

Friends of Belleville Area District Library

Open your home to a foreign exchange student

To the editor:
 World Heritage International Student Exchange Program (WH), a non-profit, public benefit organization, is seeking local families to host foreign exchange students this coming school year.

World Heritage students come from a variety of countries worldwide: Italy, Denmark, Spain, France, Germany, Ukraine, Japan, Australia, to name just a few. They are between the ages of 15 and 18 years, and they are enthusiastic and excited to experience American culture, family life, school, sports, etc.

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World Heritage also offers qualified American students the opportunity to learn another language and culture by spending a school year, semester or a summer with a host family in another country.

If interested in hosting an exchange student or becoming an exchange student abroad, please call me at 1-800-888-9040, visit www.world-heritage.org or send an email to info@world-heritage.org to request more information or start the application process.

Students are eager to learn about their American host family, so begin the process of welcoming your new son or daughter today. The memories and the relationship you create with your exchange student will stay with you forever.

Debra Garbon, program director
 World Heritage
 1-800-888-9040
info@world-heritage.org
www.world-heritage.org

Environmental

(continued from page 1)

very strong and when it is raining at night it interferes with safe driving. The light will be checked out and maybe can be repositioned, Luckett said;

- Heard DeBuck ask if there are any plans for the widening of Rawsonville Road since it is solid traffic in the morning and evening. Rawsonville is a traffic artery and it should be done. Luckett said he has an upcoming meeting with Wayne County about road projects and he will ask about it. Trustee Boynton said he will check with SEMCOG and Washtenaw County, since Washtenaw maintains Rawsonville Road, the border line between Washtenaw and Wayne counties;

- Heard Luckett announce the Huron

River Watershed Council is seeking volunteers for a Jan. 18 count of winter stoneflies which will indicate water quality throughout the watershed;

- Learned from DeBuck that he was able to put winter fertilizer on his sod fields this winter, after being unable to do so last winter because it was too warm. He said you can't drive the fertilizer spreaders on the ground when it's not frozen because then it leaves tracks on the sod;

- Heard Boynton reply, when asked about housing starts in the township, that housing is going pretty well and developers are completing subdivisions that are uncompleted;

- Heard Luckett report that work continues on the Denton Road Bridge and they hope to have it completed by this time next year. DTE has completed its portion of the

project and contractor E.C. Korneffel has mobilized on the bridge. They completed asbestos abatement and started bridge removal;

- Heard DeBuck say he would like to see "waterfall lights" as a part of the holiday light display on the entry into the township. He saw them in Colorado and put some on his house. He said it would be nice to welcome people into the township with these special lights;

- Heard Commissioner Jill Yob said she tried out for a part in a dinner theater presentation of "Murder at the Pie Auction" to run March 8 and 9 at the Black Box Theater at the township community center. She said she got a small part and is delighted to be a part of it all; and

- Heard Commissioner Ron Merritt talk about the horrible road conditions on Mott Road between Denton and Dellor. He said he went to see a friend and got a flat tire after hitting a hole that was two-feet deep.

He said people are driving onto lawns to avoid the holes in the road and one hit a German Shepherd pet, who now has just three legs.

In the approved minutes from the Dec. 18 meeting, Director Akers gave updates on the following projects:

- Ashley Capital is building a few new buildings off of the site on Haggerty Road;

- DTE is building an addition to its building on Haggerty Road;

- McDonalds on Belleville Road is going through site plan review to knock down the building and rebuild it;

- Chick-fil-A has an application submitted for a site in front of Menards;

- Zippy Car Wash has started work in front of the Van Buren Urgent Care on Belleville Road; and

- Camping World completed its site work and now is doing work on the inside of the building.

Looking back

(continued from page 3)

Belleville Lake and a possible toxic landfill on the North I-94 Service Drive in VBT.

The story said everyone wants to see a cleanup of the Willow Run Creek, but several chemists questioned the methods proposed by Conestoga-Rovers, Ltd, a Canadian firm with offices in Romulus.

The firm was hired as a consultant by the parties potentially responsible for the pollutions: General Motors, Ford Motor, the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority, Ypsilanti Township, Wayne County, Chrysler Corporation and the University of Michigan.

A high concentration of PCBs and a host of heavy metals and other toxins polluted Willow Creek, which empties into Belleville Lake, starting in 1942. The chemicals came from wastewater treatment systems at the Willow Run Bomber Plant. The creek was last used to deposit sludge in 1964.

Now there is a thick mat of vegetation covering toxic sludge up to 15 feet thick.

Although authorities have been studying the problem since 1978, the pending International Tradeport zone around Willow Run Airport has put the cleanup on a fast track.

Promoters of Tradeport fear businesses will not want to be a part of the project if the Willow Creek pollution problem is given federal Superfund designation, which is threatened.

The potentially responsible parties are voluntarily paying for the cleanup, but

work must begin by September to avoid Superfund.

Sites slated for dredging include a lagoon and Tyler Pond in Ypsilanti Township near Willow Run Airport and Edison Pond, which is surrounded by Van Buren Park on three sides and a residential area on the fourth.

In addition, since Conestoga-Rovers proposes on-site landfilling of the sludge, a toxic landfill is to be constructed. There are three sites proposed, two of them in Van Buren Township.

To clean up Edison Pond, the sludge is to be trucked out the VBT Park entrance on Old Denton Road to the on-site landfill north of I-94 and will take a route from Old Denton west on the South Service Drive to Rawsonville Road and north to the landfill.

Also, in the Jan. 19, 1995 paper there were the following stories:

- "Belmont Manor tenants voice concerns over apartments," where people who live in the Belleville apartment complex say they cannot get the management company to act on their concerns, such as frost on the inside walls of their apartments and heating problems. Tenants said they have had no success going through the proper channels, so they are bringing them to public attention by going to the Belleville City Council. Mayor Glenn Silvenis directed City Manager Reid Charles to look into the problems. Mayor Silvenis said the problem at Belmont is one of the reasons the city is tightening up the rental codes.

- Belleville City Council hired McKenna Associates to put together a recreation plan

(continued on page 8)



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Obituaries



Alan Lee (Rouster) Czaplicki

ALAN LEE CZAPLICKI

(December 26, 1945 – January 18, 2025)
Alan Lee (Rouster) Czaplicki, age 79, of Belleville, MI, passed away on January 18, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family. He was born on December 26, 1945, in Detroit, MI, to Adolph Czaplicki and Lois Bevelhymmer. After his high school years, he met and married Susan and they spent 50 wonderful years together. He worked for Ford Motor Company for 31 years as a welder and driver. Alan also loved to golf and would invite many friends to join him in his love of golfing. He was also a great artist making many of the banners for the city. Alan enjoyed his retirement in 2004, which he put to good use, helping mentor the Bethany Bible Awana children. He had great perseverance in his life, and it showed in all he lived through. Most of all Alan loved the Lord and was a very faithful servant.

Alan is survived by his loving wife, Susan Czaplicki of Belleville, MI; his siblings, Claudia (Rick) Zawacki of Farmington Hills, MI, Denise (Dennis) Smylie of Northville, MI, William (Gretchen) Rouster of Ypsilanti, MI, Ted (Irene) Rouster of Van Buren Twp., and Faith Rouster of Willoughby, Ohio; his sister-in-law, Nancy Snyder of Harrison Twp., MI; his great friend, Mike (Linda) Aimone of Belleville, MI; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and neighbors.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Adolf Czaplicki, Lois Bevelhymmer, and LeRoy Rouster, and two brothers-in-law, Rodney Sopha and David Snyder.

A visitation has been planned for Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m., with a 12 p.m. service led by Garrett Nimmo at the David C. Brown Funeral Home, 460 E. Huron River Drive, Belleville, MI, 48111. Burial will follow at Tyler Cemetery in Van Buren Township. www.davidcbrownfh.com

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Phyllis (Taylor) Stiltner

PHYLLIS (TAYLOR) STILTNER

(September 3, 1941 – January 18, 2025)
Phyllis (Taylor) Stiltner, of Westland, Michigan, age 83, passed away on January 18, 2025, at Trinity Hospital surrounded by her family. She was born on September 3, 1941, in Fredricktown, Missouri to Harley and Delphia (Anthony) Reeves. After her high school years, she married and began her family, raising five children and being an involved and loved grandmother, as well. Phyllis had a sassy and fun personality. She attended the Ridge Road Church of Christ for many years. Phyllis loved to sew and color in her spare time. She also loved music, but most of all she loved her family, and it showed. She will be truly missed. Phyllis is survived by her children, Jimmy (Tina) Taylor of Belleville, MI, Johnny (Theresa) Taylor of Belleville, MI, Joseph (Yolie) Taylor of Ypsilanti, MI, Jack (Kelli) Taylor of Belleville, MI and Judy (Mike) Samons of Ypsilanti, MI, 18 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren (with one on the way), and 1 great-great grandchild, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and neighbors.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband James Taylor, second husband Eugene Stiltner, her siblings: Virginia, and sister in infancy and her half-brothers, Art, Curtis and Victor and her half-sister, Rosemona.

A visitation has been planned at David C. Brown Funeral Home, 460 E. Huron River Drive, Belleville, Michigan on Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 4 pm until 8 pm and a visitation before the funeral service on Friday, January 24, 2025 at 9:30 until the service time of 10:30 a.m., Pastor Randy Weaks will officiate, a burial will follow at Knollwood Cemetery in Canton, MI.

LAEL HOPE JACKSON

(December 7, 1936 – January 15, 2025)
Age 88, of Van Buren Township. Survived by daughters Virginia Genter, Rosie McCloskey, Rachael Jackson; son Robert Rieger; grandchildren; great-grandchildren. Cremation rites have been accorded. Arrangements by David C. Brown Funeral Home. www.davidcbrownfh.com

FRANKLIN ODELL RICE

(February 8, 1943 – January 12, 2025)
Age 81, of Belleville. Survived by five children Paul, Rhonda, Ron, Julie, Melanie; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; good friend Iwilla Moody. Service was Jan. 17 at LifePointe Church. Arrangements by David C. Brown Funeral Home, Belleville. www.davidcbrownfh.com

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Independent photo by Janet Millard

On Jan. 17, the Twisted Willow Soap Company, 331 Main St., held its grand opening with a Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting. Present, from left, were Bronwyn Sawdey, Lynette James, Ian Under, Joey King, Samatha Jensen, Bill Dion, Steve Jones, LeAnn Crouch, Erin Dion, Janine Houle, Dinara Strikis, Colette McClinton, Kevin Martin, Randy Brown, Sarah Warring, Carrie Castino, Nancy Gladstone, and Jessy Harper.

Looking back

(continued from page 6)

that would make the city eligible for more than \$500,000 in state recreation grants for a five-year period. The council plans to go to the Downtown Development Authority for reimbursement for the \$6,500 project.

- More than 175 people packed the Van Buren Township Hall for the Jan. 17 regular township board meeting to support the reinstatement of Jennifer Delano as director of the September Days Senior Center. More than 50 people stood along the walls of the meeting room and spilled out into the hallway. Delano was fired after 3.5 years on the job. Township Supervisor David Jacokes and Community Services Director Michael Long repeated there were deficiencies in the program, but the seniors wouldn't listen.

- In the "Extra Things I Know" column, we wrote about the Ann Arbor News doing a story about the Independent, which

touched off a string of radio reports in Ann Arbor, WAAM news shows carried my comments and I was interviewed live on the stations Morning Show. It sure is a lot of fuss over a free, tabloid newspaper in the 48111 area. When I asked the radio show producer what the big deal was about a newspaper in a town that is covered by four others, he replied, "When you start a newspaper from scratch, that's news." We thanked Ann Arbor News Reporter

Marjorie Kauth Karjala of Van Buren Township for a balanced, fair report on the birth of our paper.

We will publish more history from 30 years ago as space allows.

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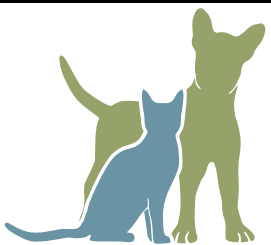
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ORPHAN OF THE WEEK

LOLA



MEET LOLA!

Lola's journey has brought her full circle. Originally adopted from FMAR as a kitten, she was recently surrendered back to us when her owner faced health challenges and could no longer care for her. Understandably, Lola is feeling a bit lost and unsure of her surroundings.

This sweet girl has been spending much of her time hiding, but don't let that fool you—once you take the time to get on her level and show her some love, she melts right into your hands, revealing the affectionate cat she truly is. Lola just needs a patient and loving home where she can come out of her shell at her own pace.

Lola is also front-declawed, so she'll need a safe indoor-only home where she can feel secure. She's in need of a little help to regain her healthiest self as well. Lola has put on a bit of extra weight and needs to lose about 6 pounds to feel her best and comfortably groom herself again. In fact, we had to shave her back when she first returned because she couldn't reach it on her own.

With time, love, and a bit of support on her weight-loss journey, Lola is sure to blossom into the confident, cuddly companion she's meant to be. Could you be the one to help her write the next chapter of her story?

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Things to do in the Belleville area...

- **Friday, Jan. 24** – Potato Pancake Dinner from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Fellowship Hall, 28320 Waltz Rd., New Boston, (734) 654-6366. Dinner ticket is \$15. Carry-out dinners begin at 5:30 p.m. Features: All-you-can-eat homemade potato pancakes, sausage, applesauce, dessert, and beverages.
- **Friday, Jan. 24** – Dinner, 5 p.m. until gone at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Also, meat raffle at 6:30 p.m.
- **Friday, Jan. 24** – Pvt. James D. Donovan VFW Post 78, 39270 W. Huron River Dr., Romulus, is back with Tacos and Margs from 5 to 7 p.m. Proceeds to benefit the Building Fund. (734) 941-3030
- **Saturday, Jan. 25** – Annual membership meeting of Friends of the Belleville Area District Library, 11 a.m. Theme of the meeting is "Building Bridges" and the public is invited.
- **Saturday, Jan. 25** – President's Fund Raiser at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. DJ/Karaoke Mix Anthony Richendollar at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each. Raffles, silent auction, 50/50s to raise

funds for Inspirit Salon and Spa which offers services to support patients during and after cancer treatment.

- **Friday, Jan. 31** – Dinner, 5 p.m. until gone at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Also, Trivia with DJ to follow at 7:30 p.m.
- **Friday, Jan. 31** – A Night of Family Feud provided by the Auxiliary at Pvt. James D. Donovan VFW Post 78, 39270 W. Huron River Dr., Romulus, (734) 941-3030. Doors open at 6 p.m.; game starts at 7 p.m. Up to six players per team, \$5 per player. Bring snacks to share at your table; drinks can be purchased in the club room.
- **Sunday, Feb. 2** – St. Anthony Men's Club 55th annual raffle, drawing between 2-3 p.m., St. Anthony Parish Center, 409 W. Columbia Ave., Belleville. \$10,000 grand prize, need not be present to win. 2nd prize is \$1,000 and 3rd, 4th, and 5th prizes are \$500 each. Only 300 tickets printed. If fewer than 250 tickets sold, raffle will revert to a 50/50 format with five prize of 40%, 4%, and 2%. Contact: Pete Pitzen, (734) 699-8563.
- **Friday, Feb. 7** – Dinner, 5 p.m. until gone at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Also, DJ/Karaoke Mix Anthony Richendollar at 7:30 p.m.
- **Friday, Feb. 14** – Dinner, 5 p.m. until gone at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Also, meat auction at 6:30 p.m. and two-person band, Flaunt Love
- **Sunday, Feb. 16** – Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra at 3:30 p.m. at Lincoln High School Performing Arts Center, 7425 Willis Rd., Ypsilanti. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for students/ seniors/children, and \$30 per family. www.ypsilantisymphony.org
- **Friday, Feb. 21** – Dinner, 5 p.m. until gone at the Van Buren Eagles, 3996, 9961 Beck Rd. Also, Trivia with DJ to follow at 7:30 p.m.

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Correction: It should be Aaron Lang

The name of Aaron Lang was misspelled in a school board story on page 3 in last week's paper. There is no "e" on the end of his last name. We apologize and regret the error.

-- Rosemary K. Otzman, editor

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More Letters

Food need in community continues to grow

In 2024, the Emergency Food Closet housed at Belleville First United Methodist Church, 417 Charles St., served 328 families with an increase of 54 families over 2023.

2,352 bags of food and refrigerator items including a meat, a lunchmeat, a dairy product, a loaf of bread and a 4-roll pack of toilet paper were given out. We had 207 new clients; 44% of our families were aged 60+.

Everyone receives food on his/her first visit. To continue to receive food, a referral is needed and one must be a resident of Van Buren and Sumpter townships or the city of Belleville. Referrals can come from a school social worker, a pastor, a physician, a health agency, or the Salvation Army.

In 2024, due to the increase in food costs and the number of clients, food was distributed bi-monthly. The food closet is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If Van Buren Public Schools are closed due to weather, then the food closet will also be closed.

When the food closet is closed, food can be found in the Little Free Food Pantry located on Charles Street.

\$72,990 was spent on food, toilet paper, bags, postage, and ads in 2024. All of the workers at the food closet are volunteers.

Without the partnership of the philanthropic philosophy of Meijer and its Simply Give program, we would not be able to provide food as we currently do. We are partners with the Belleville Meijer store at 9701 Belleville Rd.

The Winter Simply Give Campaign started Dec. 29, 2024 and runs through March 29, 2025. There will be two Double Days – the first is Saturday, March 1 and the second is Saturday, March 22. If one purchases a \$10 Simply Give Card on either of these Double Days, Meijer will match with \$20, for a total donation of \$30!

If you would like to support the food closet, non-perishable food items dated 2025 and later are always needed. Each

weekly bag contains canned soup, canned vegetables and fruit, canned tuna or chicken, canned chili or canned pork and beans, mac and cheese, and cereal. Personal care items including toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, dish soap, laundry soap, Kleenex and paper towels are always needed.

Monetary donations can be made payable by check to Belleville First United Methodist Church with "Food Closet" written on the memo line. Checks can be mailed to the church or dropped off at the church office Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

I would like to thank all the community residents, local churches, community agencies, and local businesses for their support by hosting food drives, donations of food and personal-care items, or donations of money. The need in our community continues to grow. Thank you for helping to fill that need!

Marilyn Wood, coordinator
Emergency Food Closet



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Musings

By Janet Millard
Independent
Advertising Director



On Saturday the 25th at 11 a.m. the Friends of the Library will hold their annual membership meeting. This would be a good time for you to learn more about this very active group and meet the newly elected officers. In fact, they will be elected at this meeting. There is a slate, so no fear about getting roped into something before you are ready. If getting involved more with the library has been on your agenda, now is the time.

Just a reminder that the Van Buren Public Schools Education Foundation is bringing back the Wild, Wild West at the BYC on Saturday, Feb. 1. Dinner, entertainment, auctions and a little try-your-luck gambling are waiting for you at this yearly fundraiser for putting the frosting on the cake for our local school district teachers. Check to make sure tickets are still available -- VBPSEF@gmail.com. It would be a shame to miss the fun, catch up with some friends, and maybe even make a few new ones!

Last Friday, there was a nice crowd to welcome the city's newest retail shop, the Twisted Willow Soap Company. They have a whole lot more than soap so be sure you check it out. Last year we welcomed Thrifts & Gifts to the Main Street to join our other shops -- Garden Fantasy on Main, Crafted Modern, & and BB's Belleville Boutique. Don't feel like you have to wait until extended hours on the Third Thursdays in the Ville start up again in March. March will bring more popups to Main Street and before you know it the Farmers Market will start.

Do you have a business item you would like to see in this column? Call Janet Millard at (734) 699-9020.

Birthdays

- Jan. 28 – Debbie Stevens
- Jan. 29 – Pete Pitzen
- Jan. 30 – Wanda Watkins

Romulus VFW holding drive to collect clothes for homeless veterans

The Pvt. James D. Donovan Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 78 at 39270 W. Huron River Dr. in Romulus is taking donations to help Michigan Veterans Foundation Homeless Veterans.

Suggested donations are sizes Large-3XL, sweat shirts and pants, socks, underwear, hats, gloves, coats and jackets.

The plan is to deliver in February. Call (734) 941-3030 for information.



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Sumpter author Vern Watson to speak on his book at Ypsilanti church

Vern Watson of Sumpter Township, author of the book "Against the Odds, A Story of Inspiration Living the American Dream," will tell one of the stories from the book at a Ypsilanti church on Feb. 2.

He will share one of the 108 stories from his book that he said was a miracle in his life. Watson said it will be the first time he has told the story in a public setting.

He said until recently he hadn't shared the story even with his family. Then, with what he calls inspiration, he wanted to make it public and share it with everyone.

Because it was a miracle, he will be sharing it at the church he attends: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 941 S. Grove Rd., Ypsilanti 48198, at 11:10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 2.

"Come and hear. Come and see. Come and feel the power of this story for yourself," Watson said. "It will be the best experience you can imagine. It will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

"Against the Odds, A Story of Inspiration, Living the American Dream" is available from Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Google Play, iTunes, and others. The book is sold both as an eBook and a paper book. Walmart.com, the online store, is selling it in the paper edition only.

When the book was published in 2024, Watson said he placed a copy in the Belleville Area District Library.

At the church, Watson will be speaking in English, but his story will also be in Spanish at the same time. Besides that, there will be ASL, sign language, available.

VBT resident Wigginton climbs steps of tallest building in 47th state

James Wigginton of Van Buren Township, a Vietnam-era Marine and multiple world record holder, continued his quest to climb the stairs of the tallest building in all 50 states with his climb of the Panorama Building in Miami on Jan. 9.

This is his 47th state to-date. Number 48, Hawaii, is scheduled for Jan. 26 or 27.

Wigginton said, while the climbs to-date already represent a ninth world record for him, the more important message is that the climbs are being done to bring awareness and funding to Folds of Honor.

Folds of Honor is a veteran-led organization that has, over the last 18 years, provided more than 58,000 scholarships to the children of fallen military and first-responders.

The climbs are also being done to bring awareness and funding to the Punya Thyroid Cancer Fund at the University of Michigan, which has helped fund thyroid cancer research and treatment at the U of M. This has helped extend the lives by as much as five times as long for more than 5,000 patients since 2014.

For those who would like to donate: Folds of Honor is at FoldsofHonor.org. Punya Thyroid Cancer Fund is at <https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#/give/basket/fund/796525>. Both are qualified 501c(3) tax deductible entities.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.



More Letters

Van Buren Area Little League seeking sponsors

To the editor and business owners:

The cost of operating a successful youth organization can be costly. Sponsorship provides the opportunity for the community to support its local youth and allow the league to maintain a reasonable registration fee.

The Van Buren Area Little League will make every effort to promote and thank

all of our sponsors. We believe this offers local businesses a reasonable advertising opportunity as well as healthy community exposure.

The willingness of sponsors to contribute to our league is a reflection in the interest of our young and very-committed athletes. Sponsorship levels run from \$250 donation

to \$5,000, with each level including more advertising benefits. Federal ID# 46-3194910; State ID# 71324C; State ID# 71324CWe.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your participation and support. Make checks payable to "Van Buren Area Little League" and mail to Attn: Treasurer VBALL, P.O. Box 95, Belleville, MI 48112.

Include sponsor name, contact name, and email.

For boys and girls, ages 4 to 13, who wish to sign up to play, registrations dates are now through Feb. 28, with late registration March 1-15. Opening day is May 3. Follow us on Facebook.

Antoine Weston
president@vanburenarealittleleague.org

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Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

Public Notice

Van Buren Township – Belleville Road Widening Project Open House

The **first open house** for the **Belleville Road Widening Project**, a critical infrastructure initiative aimed at improving traffic flow, safety, and accessibility along Belleville Road between Ecorse and Tyler Roads.

This event will provide an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about the project's final design, ask questions, and share any thoughts or concerns you may have. Your feedback is important as we work together to enhance our community's roadways, pedestrian facilities and utility infrastructure.

Event Details:

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Van Buren Township Hall Board Room 46425 Tyler Road

At the open house, you will have the chance to review project plans, speak with project team members, and provide input. We are committed to transparency and collaboration, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on this important project.

Should you have any questions before the event or require additional information, please feel free to contact us at mcoburn-dda@vanburen-mi.org or 734-699-8941.

Published: January 16, 2025 & January 23, 2025

BHS at-home games

• **Friday, Jan. 24** – Boys and Girls Bowling vs. Fordson, 3 p.m., at Lodge Lanes; Girls JV Basketball vs. Dearborn, 5:30 p.m.; Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Dearborn, 7 p.m.

• **Tuesday, Jan. 28** – Boys Freshman Basketball vs. Livonia Churchill, 4 p.m.; Boy's JV Basketball vs. Livonia Churchill, 5:30 p.m.; Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Livonia Churchill, 7 p.m.

Note: Students and colleagues at Belleville High School are mourning the passing of retired teacher and coach George Devore. Coach Devore was a long-time coach of cross country, track, and boy's swimming, he will be greatly missed.

Jamie Cichowski
Athletic Secretary
Belleville High School

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VBT LDFA reelects Dotson chairman, Kudlak vice-chairman

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Although he was absent and excused from the Jan. 14 meeting of the Van Buren Township Local Development Finance Authority, Michael Dotson was reelected chairman of the LDFA for 2025.

Van Buren Public Schools Superintendent Peter Kudlak was elected to the position of vice-chairman, a position he was appointed to in late 2024.

Alex Dine was elected second vice-chairman.

Vice-chairman Kudlak presided at the 12-minute meeting in the absence of Dotson.

In other business at the meeting, the LDFA reviewed the draft synopsis of the 2024 finances prepared by Township Deputy Supervisor Dan Selman. He said all the changes are left in red ink so they can be easily seen. At the next meeting, a clean copy will be presented, he said.

The report gave an overview of the LDFA activities from its beginning to today.

The original purpose of the LDFA was to finance and construct eligible public improvements for the Visteon Village project which was completed in 2004. In order to complete public improvements, the LDFA established a development plan and tax increment financing plan which identified the improvements, estimated the costs of the improvements and estimated the amount of tax revenue the authority would capture based on the proposed improvements.

In order to finance the construction of the public improvements, the LDFA issued bonds to cover the costs of the improvements and those bonds were guaranteed by the township's ability to tax. Those public improvements have been completed.

Due to economic conditions, the LDFA

was unable to capture sufficient tax revenue to cover scheduled debt service due to the shortfall, which occurred on Oct. 1, 2019. This triggered a continuation of litigation over a longstanding legal dispute with the LDFA and township against the original developer Visteon, over the obligation relating to the Series 2003 Tax Increment Bonds, the Series 2006 Tax Increment Revenue Refunding Bonds, and the Series 2015 Tax Increment Revenue Refunding Bonds issued by the township for improvements on certain real property for the development of Visteon Village, now known as Grace Lake Corporate Center.

In 2019, the LDFA and the township structured a loan agreement with "advances" from the township to the LDFA to cover the shortfall amount of the debt service. These "advances" were necessary to meet the bond obligations due on April 1 and Oct. 1 each year until the bond obligation is fulfilled.

In 2023, the township and LDFA reached a settlement agreement with Visteon. The terms of the settlement were that Visteon agreed to pay the sum of \$12 million to Van Buren Township in two installments of \$6 million. In return, the township and LDFA agreed to release Visteon of any future obligations related to assisting in the repayment of the bonds.

On July 1, 2023, the township received the first installment of \$6 million. On July 3, 2024, the township received the second

installment of \$6 million.

Per legal counsel, the settlement funds went toward repayment of the "advances" for the debt service. The principal and interest amount paid off was \$8,216,264.35. The LDFA is currently paying semi-annual debt payments with the remaining Visteon settlement money supplemented by semi-annual tax capture revenues. As of Dec. 31, 2024, the LDFA's cash balance was \$2,672,630.88.

With the terms of the settlement agreement satisfied, the Visteon matter is now closed.

As specified in the most recent audit (2023), the primary focus of the LDFA is payment of debt obligations from tax captures. Due to this, there were no capital or promotional projects by the LDFA in 2024.

At the end of the Jan. 14 meeting, Deputy Supervisor Selman asked those present to help the township in filling a janitor's position that is open. He said hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and although the job is not glamorous, it is a solid job. Those interested can apply on line.

Selman said he knows he sounds like an old man when he says this, but in earlier times, people would fight for a good job like this. Now, there are no applicants.

Absent and excused from the Jan. 14 meeting besides Dotson were LDFA members Leonard Armstrong and David Schreiber.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

(continued from page 14)

- 1335 – operating while intoxicated arrest, Willis Rd. / Sherwood Rd.
 - 2012 – welfare check, Rustic Ln.
 - 2221 – noise complaint, Rustic Ln.
 - 2228 – fire dept. assist, Oregon St.
- Also on this week's log are 238 patrol checks, 77 traffic stops, and 15 misc. details.

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

POLICE VEHICLE AUCTION

On January 31st 2025, the Van Buren Township Police Department will conduct a public auction of impounded and abandoned vehicles. The auction will begin at 10:30am, at **J&T Towing and Storage**, 287 Industrial Dr. Belleville MI, County of Wayne, where the following will be offered for sale to the highest bidder.

2016	LINCOLN	SW	5LMCJ1C97GUJ23686	24-14013
1997	JEEP	SW	1J4FY49SXVP495847	24-14255
1991	JEEP	SW	2J4FY69S6MJ125390	24-14255E
1996	JEEP	SW	1J4FJ68S5TL255966	24-14255B
2005	PONTIAC	4D	1G2ZG528354123119	24-13897
2005	CHEVROLET	SW	2CNDL73F856126182	24-14255B
2013	JEEP	SW	1C4BJWFG9DL650561	24-14255D
2010	CHEVROLET	4D	1G1ZC5EB1A4128756	24-14001
2003	GMC	PU	1GTEC14X13Z180146	24-14146
2002	FORD	PU	1FTZR45EX2TA03014	24-14826
2008	FORD	SW	1FMCU93158KB39711	24-14429

At 11:30am, the auction will move to **Great Lakes Towing** and storage, 42350 Van Born Rd. Belleville MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicles, are offered for sale to the highest bidder.

2014	JEEP	SW	1C4RJFCT2EC269040	24-13903
2007	CHEVROLET	SW	1GNFK16317J166535	24-14381
2016	BUICK	SW	KL4CJASB8GB642327	24-10487
2003	HONDA	SW	5FNRL18633B124590	24-14819
2004	FORD	SW	1FMFU18L54LB12277	24-14649
2012	DODGE	4D	1C3CDZAB0CN237606	24-14095
2016	KIA	4D	KNAFX5A87G5588612	24-13713

All vehicles are sold in "As is condition." Bidding on all impounded vehicles will start at the amount due for towing and storage. Vehicles may be deleted from this list at any time prior to the start of the auction.

Leon Wright MMC, CMMC., Van Buren Township Clerk,
Published: January 23, 2025

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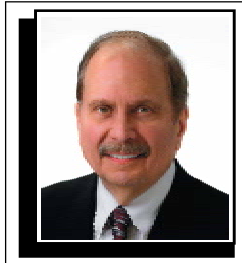
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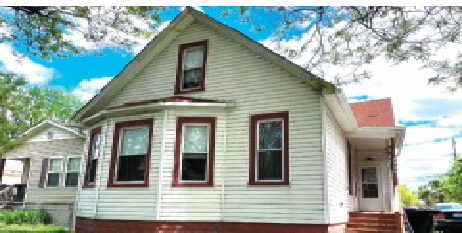
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