



BELLEVILLE - AREA INDEPENDENT

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Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren

FREE

Belleville Police Chief Gene Taylor to retire as of March 28

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Belleville Police Chief Gene Taylor has decided to retire as of March 28.

Taylor has been police chief since April 4, 2005, after the Civil Service Commission recommended him to replace retiring Chief Paul Davis.

Chief Taylor said he turned in his retirement papers Feb. 22, the day after the cantankerous Civil Service Commission meeting that heard an appeal on health care benefits from Keith Boc, who retired Feb. 28.

Chief Taylor, 59, has worked for the Belleville Police Department for more than 36 years.

He said he was not pushed out, but it has been obvious to the public that he was in an unfriendly work environment after his demotion by City Manager Diana Kollmeyer in the fall of 2012 that was rescinded by the Civil Service Commission.

He was demoted, when he got back from a medical leave, allegedly for trying to find a way to get a patrol car fixed on time payments that wouldn't have to be approved by the council.

Former Police Chief Hal Berriman returned to fill in as chief when Taylor was demoted to corporal and Berriman is reportedly going to be back to fill in until the city gets a new, permanent police chief.

Taylor hasn't had a raise in more than seven years.

At the end of a May 2012 meeting of the Belleville Civil Service Commission, Chief Taylor asked for a pay raise, since he hadn't had one in six years at the time.

"You may as well go out and spit in the wind," replied City Manager Kollmeyer.

Retired Sgt. Bob Dawson and Taylor started work for the Belleville Police Department on the same day and the same shift in September 1977. Dawson retired

about five years ago and came back to help on a few occasions.

Sgt. Dawson filled in for Chief Taylor after Taylor suffered a mild heart attack in March 2009 and had heart bypass surgery.

Chief Taylor said he will really miss his real bosses, the residents of the City of Belleville. Taylor is known for digging into his own pocket to help the needy in Belleville.

Besides sending turkeys over to those who are struggling to eat, he has bought disposable diapers for single mothers, and flowers for hospice patients. He has taken injured animals to his rural New Boston home to nurse back to health.

But, Chief Taylor says, if he will be known for nothing else, he will be known as the only Belleville Police Chief in history to bring an African elephant to town.

There had been a spaghetti dinner at Edgemont Elementary School that raised more than \$600 to help pay for the elephant's expenses, but Taylor dug into his own pocket for the rest needed.

On Earth Day in April 2010 he brought Laura, a 30-year-old elephant, to Edgemont School for the day to teach children of the community about the animal kingdom.

Taylor has been active with the Mothers Against Drunk Driving and has been active throughout the region representing Belleville in public safety matters.

In January, former Mayor Pro Tem Kay Atkins, owner of Threads 'n' Treasures quilt shop, presented Taylor with a quilt she made for him to thank him for everything he does for the community.

That quilt is on display at the quilt show that opened last Saturday at the Belleville Area Museum.

Taylor has been an enthusiastic promoter of flying the American flag on Flag Day each year and has sold and donated many flags to residents throughout the tri-community.



Independent photo by Rosemary K. Otzman

Velia Gutierrez Lauerman of Hudson, right, did an Antique Bed Turning at Saturday's opening of the Belleville Area Museum Quilt Show that runs for the month of March. Helping her was Elsie Smrcka of Augusta Township. Lauerman said Bed Turning is where you put a number of quilts on a bed and tell about each one as you turn them down to see. It's usually used to sell quilts. She will be appraising quilts for people at a Bed Turning set for 6-8 p.m. Thursday, March 20, at the Belleville Area District Library. Those participating, at \$20 each, will receive written appraisals. A portion of the fee will go to the museum.

Jackson bound over for murder

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Richard Jackson, 39, of Van Buren Township has been found competent to stand trial for the murder of his wife and on Feb. 26, 34th District Court Chief Judge Tina Brooks Green held his preliminary exam and found enough evidence to bind him over to circuit court for possible trial.

The judge's decision followed testimony of four witnesses who described Jackson's belief that his wife Travisteene was cheating on him, his multiple threats to shoot her and her lover, the variety of wounds on his wife's body, and the plastic bag around his neck with duct tape when he answered the door at his home to police coming to check on his welfare.

Jackson was scheduled to be arraigned on the information at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice at 9 a.m. March 5. He has been jailed without bond since Dec. 17 when

he was arrested by Van Buren Township police. Judge Green continued the no-bond

(continued on page 12)



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SECOND FRONT PAGE

District Library shows proposal for satellite to Sumpter Board

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Three members of the Belleville Area District Library Board were present at the Feb. 25 meeting of the Sumpter Township Board of Trustees to show them a proposal to turn part of the community center into a satellite library.

Present were Library Board president Mary Jane Dawson, Building Committee chairwoman Joy Cichewicz, and Building Committee member Michael Boelter. Cichewicz and Boelter live in Sumpter.

The proposal is in keeping with the District Library Agreement signed by Sumpter, Van Buren, and Belleville, that stipulates if a new library building is constructed north of Hull Road, Sumpter Township would have to provide a site for a branch library.

The library board has selected the Department of Natural Resources property on the lake just north of the Belleville Bridge as a construction site, so Sumpter has to provide a satellite library site.

This is all contingent on if voters in the library district approve a bond issue and operating millage in the August primary election. The cost is yet to be determined and the ballot language is yet to be written.

Sumpter Township attorney Rob Young explained that the previous Friday he and Sumpter Trustee Alan Bates met with Dawson, Cichewicz, and Boelter, along with the library's attorney John Day, talking about how the satellite would be put together in Sumpter.

Based on the initial discussion, Young said, the allocation of funds for the project would clearly exceed the \$200,000 amount in the agreement.

"You can have an opinion ... but voters will decide ... they could turn it down and the library board would have to go back to the drawing board," Young said.

Young said it was important for Sumpter to have a committed plan, so it could go into effect if the millage passes.

"If it doesn't pass, this is all for naught," Young said.

Young said he thought rather than just a few talking about it, they should come talk to the board to tell their plans.

"When you walk into the voting booth," Young said, "You want to have information to base your vote on."

Cichewicz spoke for the library group, saying the plan that was held up before the meeting was based on recent conversations with Trustee Bates and attorney Young, and previous conversations with Supervisor Johnny Vawters.

The satellite library would be put in the classrooms at the community center formerly occupied by Head Start, plus an additional classroom across the hall.

"I think this is a wonderful location for a



Independent photo by Rosemary K. Otzman

Joy Cichewicz, chairman of the Belleville Area District Library Building Committee, explained plans for a satellite library facility in the Sumpter Community Center. She said if library bond/millage proposals pass in the August election, up to \$1 million in upgrades would be done to the community center for the library satellite.

library," Cichewicz began, noting a lot of libraries are now being put in strip malls and former schools. She said they are more likely to be used if they are in busy areas and sharing the facility will save costs.

She said the committee is trying to cost things out to prepare for a bond and they will come back to the board over the summer as plans progress.

She pointed out 24/7 pickup lockers at the building's entry that would allow people to pick up material after hours. She pointed out a big screen TV for a monitor to the computer classes they will have.

She said although the 3,600 square feet planned is below the 4,303 recommended square footage that their consultant Anders Dahlgren gave in 2012, "We will put more in the space."

She said the building already has air conditioning and bathrooms, so that would be shared with the library and the library would pay its share.

She said the library will be open from 25 to 32 hours a week and they have to figure out when it will be used.

A fact sheet was passed out that showed the library plans to have 16,000 items (books, DVDs, CDs, magazines), 22 computers (18 public, two staff, teaching area), 36 reader seats, and special use space, totaling about 3,600 square feet.

Trustee Bill Hamm asked about the parking and said they close off the back parking in the spring because of the septic systems. For special events, parking is

jammed, he said.

Cichewicz said she has been driving by the community center at different times to check on it and the parking lot never looked full to her. She suggested the library wouldn't be open when there are special events.

Trustee Bates said the library will take care of its portion of the utilities and they will work out a maintenance agreement.

When asked, Clerk Clarence Hoffman said that Head Start paid \$17,000 a year to use that space and that was just rent.

Attorney Young said the rent and reimbursement of utilities was put together by the library architect, "With a lot of input from the board," Cichewicz added.

"Nobody's asking you to approve anything tonight," Young said. "It's not the township's project."

Trustee Peggy Morgan stated, "There is no Plan B or other option."

"Not yet," said Cichewicz.

She said they looked at a portion of the medical center property to build on after the medical center was found inappropriate.

She said Vawters suggested the community center since Head Start left.

Cichewicz said they are planning \$900,000 to \$1 million of improvements to the community center, larger than the \$200,000 in the Agreement. She said it would cost two or three times that to build.

"The architect would want me to qualify, qualify, qualify," Cichewicz said.

She said Vawters was interested that

the library was going to put in a lot of technology.

"Whisler is the one who's pushing this project," said Mary Ban from the audience, referring to library architect Dan Whisler.

Ban wanted to know how much the project will cost to the taxpayers.

Cichewicz said the library board is looking at the figures and has until April to figure it out.

Ban said people she has talked to are shocked that the library wants to leave the present site. She said the school board quickly knocked Elwell School down because the library wasn't satisfied with it.

"The library needs to be kept in downtown Belleville, so Belleville won't die," Ban said, adding, "You shouldn't be appearing here until you have numbers to give us."

"We need to know how you feel about that plan," Cichewicz said.

"This is the only way you can sell a library on the water - with a fishing dock," Ban said. "Mrs. Otzman puts reports in the *Independent* about your meetings. Nothing has been presented as to construction costs ... I have had people laughing at this. People cannot believe that when a safety issue is No. 1, they can't believe you are putting it on that curve that backs up to the freeway each afternoon."

"I asked them to come and explain," Young said.

"People want to know the tax they'll be asked to pay," Ban said.

"Everyone will have a chance to vote for this," Young said.

"You need to keep the people of Sumpter Township informed or you're defeating your purpose," said Trustee Morgan.

In other business at the Feb. 25 meeting, the Sumpter Board:

- Approved lease/purchase of two 2014 Ford Police Interceptor SUVs for a cost of \$56,616 out of the 2014-15 police budget;

- Approved signing a one-year agreement for storage of camera videos with evidence.com for \$3,939.60;

- Approve rescheduling the 2014-15 Community Development Block Grant public hearing for 6 p.m. March 11 because more time was needed for publication under CDBG rules;

- Approved paying warrants of \$547,284.30 on a roll-call vote;

- Heard Jason Maciejewski give a presentation on Senior Alliance and its services to the community;

- Learned the children's Easter Egg Hunt will be put on at noon, Saturday, April 12 at Graham Park; and

- Approved a resolution naming Hennessey Engineers as the CDBG coordinator for Sumpter Township.

OPINIONS

Editorial

Should ACLU threat lead VBT to repeal begging law?

Last fall the American Civil Liberties Union sent a communication to Van Buren Township saying the VBT ordinance against begging is unconstitutional.

After some consideration, the VBT attorney recommended the township repeal its present begging ordinance and revisit it in 24 months or so after some case law has been established.

At Tuesday's regular board meeting, VBT Supervisor Linda Combs said the ACLU is looking for a test case and if VBT enforced its begging ordinance, "They could use us as their test case."

There is no state law that says begging is illegal, said Treasurer Sharry Budd. Trustee Jeff Jahr, an attorney, said the township's present ordinance is broad and general and not specific enough to survive a constitutional challenge.

Jahr suggested they look at the issue at a workshop session with the attorney and public safety director present, neither of which were at Tuesday's meeting. He said besides repeal, the township attorney had a second option: To write an aggressive conduct ordinance.

The board voted to postpone consideration of repealing the begging ordinance until it can be further discussed.

Let your board members know what you think about the begging ordinance, which probably isn't being enforced right now in Van Buren Township.

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Otzman

Keith Boc, the City of Belleville's Director of Public Services who retired Feb. 28, reportedly has a part-time position with the City of Romulus in the Water Department. He reportedly came to work on his last day in Belleville wearing a suit. Some coworkers said they had never seen Keith in a suit before.

City Manager Diana Kollmeyer has taken over management of the DPS for now. Reports are that Hennessey Engineers will take over the responsibility on a part-time basis.

At Monday's council meeting, Kollmeyer thanked the DPW workers who did snow removal over the weekend "all by themselves."

The Quilt Exhibit at the museum is wonderful – again. At Monday's Belleville City Council meeting, Councilman Tom Fielder said there were from 120 to 130 quilts on display. He ought to know. He is president of the Historical Society.

He also announced that Belleville Police Chief Gene Taylor's new quilt, with his name on it, is on display. That quilt was created by former Mayor Pro Tem Kay Atkins to thank Chief Taylor for everything he does for the community.

Councilman Fielder also took the time at Monday's meeting to publicly thank Keith Boc. Fielder said whether he was an elected official or just a private citizen, Boc was "always courteous when I had issues... The city is much better off for his service." Boc didn't attend his last city council meeting which featured a surprise party for him as he retired.



I counted 18 new utility poles that had been erected on the west side of Sumpter Road just north of the Sumpter Township hall. Sumpter Clerk Clarence Hoffman said DTE said they were moving their lines out of the woods and to the roadside. They had been having a problem with tree limbs and downed lines in that area where the lines were way back from the road.

I got an email concerning Cornell Anton's letter in last week's paper: "I sure enjoyed and definitely agree with everything Cornell Anton said about 'Fishing and Libraries' in his letter to the editor. Voting NO is my intent, too. But after reading your article mentioning the attorney who coached 34 millage ballot questions and 33 passed (on page 19 of last week's paper) voters will need to read ballots carefully, just to be certain that NO means NO. It will be very helpful to see the ballot information promised for publication in May (in same article on page 19). The *Independent* has always been dependable with that and I appreciate it very much."

Last Friday's Building Committee daytime meeting for the District Library Board was more than six hours long. I must commend the library people present who sent out a librarian to Jet's Pizza to get a couple of pizzas and then announced that everyone at the meeting was welcome to eat the pizza with them. That included the members of

the audience, who had dwindled to about three by the time the pizza came.

They had to send someone out to order and pick up the pizza on a very cold day because the library phones were down.

This pizza-sharing was very nice and I certainly appreciated it. You may remember my recent complaint about a meeting I attended in another community where those meeting ate lunch in front of me and ignored me completely. The librarians have more class.

Van Buren Township got its first royalty payment of \$140,201.97 from EQ/Wayne Disposal and is due to get at least \$325,000 a year. VBT Supervisor Linda Combs brought the subject before the township board at a work/study session on Monday. She wants their input on how the money should be used.

She apparently didn't like the plan her predecessor, Supervisor Paul White, had for using the funds he negotiated for cultural projects and she even put the Cultural Advisory Committee on vacation. If you've got an idea on how to use the money, contact your favorite township board member.

So far the township gave \$5,300 of the funds to the museum to cover its 2013 shortfall and in 2014 \$20,000 more is allocated to the museum.



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152 Main St., Suite 9,
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734-699-9020
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Editor: Rosemary K. Otzman
Home phone (no ads, please): 697-8290

Advertising Manager: Bob Mytych

Sports Editor: Bob Mytych

Bookkeeper: James Otzman

Production Manager: James Otzman

Office Manager: Jackie Garner

Business Manager: Gerald McKelvey

Editorial Cartoonist: Bob Mytych

Writers: Diane Madigan, Angela Netro

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Letters

I'm voting YES on the new library

To the Editor:

I read the letter last week from Mr. Anton, Jr. and wonder if he has even seen the new Library plans.

The new Library is being built with "fishing access" for anyone interested in fishing. Not just for the sole purpose of fishing.

In the plans there is a wonderful boardwalk area along the waterfront with areas to sit and relax along with a planned walking path for people to take a stroll on a beautiful day. There are also terraces planned along the second floor.

For people who might not want to be outside, the wall of windows planned for the lakeside will be a great alternative to being outside. Sitting inside with a book in hand or on your laptop just enjoying the lake. Not to mention all the room planned for the expansion of the collection.

The Library is so much more than just a "place to get books." They have become the center of communities. If not the heart, then at least a major organ. A place for people to meet up. Computers to access the internet with and class to teach you how. Access to WiFi for people who may not have it at home. Just a place to go in the cold and the heat.

I urge everyone to take a look at the proposed plans for the new Library to really understand what they are trying to bring to the community.

In all honesty, I have to say I have had the pleasure of working at the Library for the past four years and there isn't a nicer group of people to be a part of, but my family roots in this community are much deeper.

My great-grandmother lived here along with my grandparents and my Dad and Mom. My Dad graduated from Belleville High along with my brothers and I. My kids are the 5th generation.

My family has lived here for well over a century and watched it grow and change. We've watched the Library change, too, and I think it's time again for a change.

I'm voting YES on the new Library.
Respectfully,
Lori (Budrick) Willson

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Library: Location, location, location

To the Editor:

Location, Location, Location!

One of many rules taught in Entrepreneurship 101 is that one needs to select the proper location of their facilities that will meet the **NEEDS** of their cliental.

This is a **major** item left out of the Belleville Area District Library location selection equation.

Oh, yes, they did consider the traffic flow -- or did they? -- with the placement of another traffic light and left turn lights / lane to impede the already belabored commuters who travel through and not to the City of Belleville.

Oh, yes, they did consider some of the flow by suggesting a pedestrian overpass over Belleville Road (from where) to the library. Just who is going to use this overpass? How will the Belleville, Sumpter, Van Buren Township citizens benefit from this debacle?

Oh, yes, they can use it when the parking lot is full, they have to park at the strip mall, and they can then walk to the library! Another thing to maintain and clear in the winter snow!

But let's get back to traffic flow and client needs. The most heavy traffic is going north on Belleville Road in the morning with the planned library location on the right side. This traffic is going to work, commuting to I-94 or ensuing environs or distant destinations -- NOT to the library!

The traffic flow is going south on Belleville Road in the evening and planned library location is on the left. This traffic is going home, planned stops at local merchants (?) and even time for coffee and some relaxing at the library.

But, this involves a left turn, wait for the light, and do the same to get out of a parking lot located in a position with limited vision of oncoming and ongoing traffic. Oh, yes, we have a traffic light that will stop that flow of traffic.

This site selection is based on esthetics, a view of the lake, the sunsets, a colloquial setting, and DNR schmoozing for financial aid.

This site selection is not based on traffic efficiency or traffic modality, or the advantage of the current location in Belleville. In fact it does beg the question of whether there is a need for a library -- food for another letter.

Not too much consideration of client use vs. BADL pontification! Library bond issue - **VOTE NO!**

Sincerely

Cornell Anton, Jr.
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BC stands for "Belleville Canton" Cab and is owned and operated by the same family who ran a cab service in Belleville for many years.

The Belleville Area Museum has opened a new quilt exhibit titled "It's a Man's World" now through March 29, featuring a collection of antique and contemporary quilts. There will also be special series of bed turning showings throughout the month and a quilt appraisal session on March 20 at the library. Children's sewing classes will take place on March 22 with a cost of \$1 per child. Admission to the exhibit is \$2. Museum hours are Tuesdays, from 3 to 7 p.m., and Wednesday through Saturday, from noon to 4 p.m. Call (734) 697-1944.

The month of March is Mars Madness at the Yankee Air Museum and admission is free. For three Saturdays, March 8, 15, and 22, the museum is offering a new hands-on exhibit called Exploration Station Exhibit, featuring the planet Mars. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, there will be a robotics course to challenge yourself with, build a Mars habitat and land a Mars Rover on a bulls-eye target without running out of fuel. Themed activities will also take place during the scheduled times. To learn more, call (734) 483-4030 or visit www.yankeearmuseum.org.



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Obituaries



Juanita Cullin

JUANITA M. CULLIN

(December 31, 1934 – February 28, 2014)

Juanita Mae Cullin, 79, of Litchfield, OH passed away peacefully on Friday, Feb. 28, 2014 at Burbank Parke in the care of Hospice.

She was born December 31, 1934 in Ypsilanti, MI to Dollie Mae and Leonard Chapman. She married Glenn A. Cullin on November 6, 1954 in Belleville, MI.

They moved to Ohio in 1964, where they settled in Litchfield and raised their four children. Juanita was a homemaker who loved her family. She loved to play cards and was an avid Wolverine!

Juanita is survived by her husband Glenn, of 59 years; daughters Kelly (Bill) Haden of Napa, CA, Kitty Cullin of Medina, sons Kerry (Jane) Cullin of Lodi, and Kirk Cullin of Litchfield; 6 grandchildren Kipp (Keri) Cullin, Derek and Michael Cullin, Alesha (Matt) Smith, Covey and Cullin Haden; and great-grandchildren Peyton Smith and Elijah Haynes. She was preceded in death by her parents and grandson Zachary Cullin.

A Funeral service was held Wednesday, March 5, at 11:00 AM at the Parker & Son Funeral Home, 210 Medina St., Lodi, OH (330-948-1122), with Medina County Hospice Chaplain Ruthellen Moore officiating. Burial was at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, OH.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of Medina County, 5075 Windfall Rd., Medina, OH 44256. Online memorials may be left at www.parkerfuneralhomes.com.

Correction:

We misidentified public official in Sumpter list

On page 1 of the Feb. 20 *Independent*, we misidentified one of the elected officials listed in the Sumpter Township 2013 Employee Wages and Costs to Township list.

It should be Trustee Don Swinson (not David). We regret the error and apologize.

-- Rosemary K. Otzman, editor



Louise G. Leonard

LOUISE G. LEONARD

(April 6, 1944 – February 16, 2014)

Louise Giles Leonard, age 69, of Dry Creek Road, Clearfield, Kentucky, passed away Sunday, February 16, 2014, at the U.K. Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky.

She was born April 6, 1944, in Trenton, Michigan, a daughter of the late Jess and Ruby Mae Kidd Giles. Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Gerald Ernest Leonard, one brother Earl Giles, and one great-granddaughter Jessica Leonard.

She is survived by her companion Herman Bruce Leonard of Clearfield; six stepdaughters, Karen Brown of Belleville, Michigan, Gail Ianni of Westland, Michigan, Debbie Eaton of Hinesville, Georgia, Darlene Gibson of Dundee Michigan, Diane Peterman of West Jefferson, Ohio, and Denise Leonard of Millersport, Ohio; 12 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Louise was a graduate of Rowan County High School and Virginia Ferrell Beauty School in Wayne, Michigan. She was a hair stylist and owner of Hott Heads in Morehead and Perfect Image in Belleville, Michigan.

Visitation will be Saturday, March 8, 2014 from 4-6 P.M. at David C. Brown Temporary Viewing & Funeral Chapel, 500 E. Huron River Drive, Belleville, Michigan, with a Memorial service to follow at 6:00 P.M.

Please sign her on-line guestbook and share a memory for her family to cherish at www.davidcbrownfh.com.



Anthony Moon

ANTHONY 'TONY' MOON

(February 4, 1974 – February 20, 2014)

Anthony Jerome "Tony" Moon, 40, died February 20, 2014 at his home in Wayne.

He worked at Mike's Red Apple in Belleville for several years and also Romulus House.

He is survived by his fiancé Joanie Remington; his parents Gerald and Gail Moon; his children Katelyn, Rachel, Dallas, A.J., Austin, Jake, and Kylie; grandchildren Lily and Genevieve; and siblings Jeri, Charles, Roger and Dawne.

Services were held February 24, 2014 at Husband Family Funeral Home, Westland.

Upcoming Meetings

• Monday, March 10 – Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education at 7 p.m. at the Belleville High School Commons.

• Tuesday, March 11 – Van Buren Township September Days Endowment Committee, 11 a.m. Also, VBT Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA), 2 p.m. Also, Sumpter Township workshop at 6 p.m., followed by regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. Also, VBT Board of Zoning Appeals, 7 p.m. Also, Belleville Area District Library Board, 7 p.m.

• Wednesday, March 12 – Van Buren Township Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m.

• Thursday, March 13 – Keystone Academy Board of Directors, 6 p.m. Also, Belleville Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m.

Court Watching

Jared Ritchie competent for preliminary exam, set for March 12

By Diane Madigan
Independent Court Reporter

The results of a psychiatric competency order issued by Judge Brian Oakley on Dec. 18 found Jared Dean Meeks Ritchie, 18, competent to stand for a preliminary exam.

Ritchie, a Sumpter Township resident, is accused of shooting his step-brother with a shotgun on Oct. 27 at their home in the 23000 block of Elwell Road. He then took off and Sumpter Police used Nixle and Facebook alerts to find him. Ritchie had to be retrieved from Oklahoma by federal marshals, who arrested him in Tulsa as he got off a Greyhound bus.

Ritchie is charged with six felonies; assault with intent to murder, armed robbery, assault with intent to do great bodily harm, felony assault with a dangerous weapon, felony firearms, and discharging a weapon in or at a building.

On Feb. 26, 34th District Court Chief Judge Tina Brooks Green approved the stipulation/agreement between Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Kristen Capling and Ritchie's court-appointed attorney David Lankford, and ordered a preliminary examination on March 12, although Judge Green said it should have been scheduled for Feb. 26.

Sumpter Township Detective John Toth was unable to be in court for the case on Feb. 26 because of illness.

A cash bond of \$100,000 was continued and Capling said they will start to find the witnesses.

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**They're reading the Independent
everywhere**

Richard and Linda McPhee of Van Buren Township read the *Independent* at Joker Marchant Stadium in Lakeland, FL, the spring training home of the Detroit Tigers. They read with great interest the front-page story on the winter storm, with the picture of snowy Belleville Pro Hardware, since hardware owner Mike Windiate is Richard's brother.

You are invited to submit a photo of someone reading the *Independent* in an exotic location. Please include the name and address of the person you wish to get the free subscription when it is printed. Include your phone number if you want us to let you know just before goes in the paper. A person may use this offer to get a total of two free subscriptions.

If you aren't going to an exotic location, just send us \$30 for postage to an address inside Michigan or \$35 out of state, and we'll provide mail delivery of the *Independent* so you won't miss a single, exciting issue.

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Independent photo by Bill Otzman

Joseph Moore was back on the job at the Frosty Boy parking lot on Main Street on Sunday morning in 10-degree weather. He had taken a few months off where he "stayed home, stayed warm, and hibernated." The four-inch snowfall delayed him a few minutes on Sunday, but he was out by 6:15 a.m. selling *Detroit Free Press* Sunday editions at a reduced rate – with copies of the *Independent* tucked inside. He plans to be on the job at 6 a.m. each Sunday from now on and has a special offer. From now until Easter, he is offering the Sunday *Free Press* for only \$1 to all those who show up between 6 and 7 a.m.

Shaylett Stuckey, office manager at Keystone Charter Academy in Sumpter Township, has been named Mrs. Motor City for 2014. She will be competing at the Mrs. Michigan pageant on March 29 in Grandville. She is looking for Belleville-area sponsors for this endeavor.



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Independent photos by Rosemary K. Oztman

Creating art pertaining to eagles on Saturday afternoon at the Bayou Grill were, from left, Karen Mida, Sam Mida, featured artist Bob Mytych, Tammy Mida, Ella Mida and Rachel O'Brien. The Alligator Artists Kids Club is sponsored by the Belleville Area Council for the Arts and the Bayou Grill.



Dog Clinic in Sumpter

Dave Cappelli brought his dog Tia for a blood test and inoculations at Sumpter Township's annual dog clinic on Saturday afternoon. Dr. Kristy Mannarelli from Sumpter Pet Clinic was on hand to care for the dogs. Next Saturday, 1-4 p.m., the clinic will repeat, this time with professionals from the Milan Veterinary Clinic. Sumpter Township puts on the clinic so residents can get reduced inoculation rates for their dogs. The clinic is located in the DPW garage area.

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Sumpter Township Public Notice

Sumpter Township
2014 March Board of Review

NOTICE TO THE TAXPAYERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF SUMPTER TOWNSHIP
THE BOARD OF REVIEW OF SUMPTER TOWNSHIP WILL MEET AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL, 23480 SUMPTER ROAD, ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

March 4 th 2014	Organizational Meeting 5:00 pm
March 10 th , 2014	2:00 pm to 9:00 pm appointments
March 11 th , 2014	9:00 am to 12:00 pm appointments
March 13 th , 2014	9:00 am to 4:00 pm appointments

All Hardship/Poverty Applications must be received by 4 pm Friday March 13, 2014. If hardship/poverty application is not received by this date/time, the petitioner will be rescheduled to the July Board of Review.

For appointment to petition to Board of Review please call (734) 461-6201 ext 2229

Sumpter Township Clerk
 Clarence J. Hoffman Jr.
Sumpter Township Supervisor/Assessor
 Johnny Vawters

Publish: February 20, 2014
February 27, 2014
March 6, 2014

Belleville, Van Buren Police capture man who abducted Detroit woman

By Rosemary K. Otzman
 Independent Editor

Belleville and Van Buren Township Police worked together to arrest a Dearborn man who police believe abducted his girlfriend from her home in Detroit and drove her to Belleville.

Belleville Police Chief Gene Taylor said the driver of the vehicle had a traffic accident at Fifth and Main in Belleville just before 10 p.m. on Feb. 23 and took off running. His passenger told police she had been abducted from her home in Detroit.

The driver tried unsuccessfully to break into a residence in the 200 block of North Liberty and then kept running.

Belleville Officer Matthew Vandeweghe with the assistance of VBT Sgt. Bart DeVos and Officer Pat Wehrman tracked him along the lake shoreline to an unoccupied apartment in the 100 block of North Liberty Street where he was hiding.

Belleville Police Sgt. Schrencengost took part in the case.

Mahdi Soueidan, 26, was arrested and arraigned by 34th District Court on charges of two unauthorized entries and leaving the scene of an accident. Then, the Detroit Domestic Violence unit came and picked him up from the VBT lockup on warrants for the abduction.

Fight at BHS

Chief Taylor also reported that there were three arrests for disorderly conduct at about 9 p.m. Monday following a fight at the district playoffs basketball game at Belleville High School.

Chief Taylor said the majority of the eight or nine people fighting were not from the Belleville area, according to the report. He said there were many students recording the fight with their cell phones.

Chief Taylor said the three arrested were ticketed and released from custody. Belleville lost the game, he added.

St. Vincent DePaul Charity Basketball game is March 29

The second-annual St. Vincent DePaul Charity Basketball Game is set for 7 p.m. Saturday, March 29, at the Belleville High School gymnasium.

The event is a faceoff between Van Buren, Belleville and Sumpter Police and Fire Departments. The Flame Fighters won last year, but the Crime Busters are planning to take the victory away from them this year.

Door prizes include a flatscreen TV, iPad, 50/50 raffles and more.

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Murder charge

(continued from page 15)

status.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Nicole James brought four witnesses to testify at the Feb. 26 preliminary exam to successfully show probable cause that premeditated murder had been committed and Jackson was involved.

Assistant Medical Examiner

The first witness was Dr. Chantel Njiwaji of the Wayne County Medical Examiner's office. She explained the post-mortem exam she did on Dec. 18 that brought her to the conclusion that the cause of death was a stab wound to the leg and the manner of death was homicide.

Although she described several cuts to the body around the neck that shows the victim had been asphyxiated (but not strangled), the stab wound on the back of the left thigh, from back to front, transected vessels that caused her to bleed out.

Other injuries included a 3/4" stab wound to the left breast near the edge of the left lung, two 2" deep incisions on the right knee, and stabs to the left palm and dorsal (back) right arm.

When Legal Aid attorney Mark Procida questioned the neck pressure testimony, Dr. Njiwaji said there was contact pallor that showed pressure had been applied to the neck and she wanted to rule out strangulation as cause of death.

She found the victim had been asphyxiated, something was around her neck and she was unable to breathe, but there were no bruises on her neck and she was not strangled. Cause of death was the stab wound on the back of the right leg which caused blood to pool in that area.

Dr. Njiwaji said there were just speckles of blood on the victim's clothes. She said when the victim's heart stopped, the blood stopped bleeding from the stab wounds.

Mafikuyomi Awosika

The next witness was Jackson's good friend Mafikuyomi Awosika, who said Jackson called him twice on Dec. 16, and they talked for three hours the first time and two and a half hours the second time.

Awosika said he and Jackson had been friends for nine years and their kids went to the same preschool.

Awosika said Jackson called him highly upset because he said he had proof that his wife was cheating on him. The call came at 8 a.m. and Awosika said he was in his office at his desk. He said Jackson was hyperventilating and couldn't get his words out.

Awosika said he was trying to get his hands on a pistol to hurt her lover, her, and the children. Awosika testified that Jackson said he wanted to put three bullets in the lover's head and two in his chest, two bullets in her head and two in her chest, and two in their daughter's head and one in her chest.



Jackson

"I cut him off before he got to the son," Awosika told the court.

He said Jackson said he wanted to get a sniper rifle and shoot him from a long distance. Awosika testified that Jackson wanted to call Awosika's brother to beat up the lover.

Awosika said Jackson kept saying, "'Til death do us part," that's what they signed up for.

Awosika said he told Jackson the beef was not with the lover, but with his wife and he needed to talk to her about it.

Awosika said during the first three hours on the phone, he had left his office and was driving around talking to Jackson. After that call was over, Awosika said he talked to his wife and she said to tell Travisteene, so he called her and told her some of the information, but not all the details. Awosika said his wife told him to call her back and tell her everything, and so he did.

Awosika testified that Travisteene must have talked to Richard because Richard called him an hour after the first call and asked him why he told his wife. That second phone call lasted two and a half hours and there was someone else named Gerald on the phone with Richard.

"I was trying to convince him to meet me somewhere, to talk to his wife. I told him we were going to get the kids ..." Awosika testified.

Awosika said his wife went over to pick up the Jackson children from their home for their safety and his wife invited Travisteene to come with them, but she declined.

He testified Jackson said, from eight to 12 times during their conversations, "'Til death do us part."

When the defense attorney questioned Awosika, he testified this was the first time Jackson ever said his wife was having an affair. Awosika said Jackson said he had evidence and during the phone calls he was crying and speaking in a normal voice, distraught, but never angry.

Awosika said one of the first things Jackson said was that he was going to take his own life.

Awosika said he did not call police.

"If you thought she was in any danger, you would have called," said defense attorney Procida, and Awosika agreed that was true.

"You continued to tell him to talk to his wife. You didn't think anything was going to happen. Your wife went to the house," Procida said.

"We were fearful for the children," Awosika said, adding that his wife was more worried about them than he was. "We offered Mrs. Jackson the option to come to our house. My wife picked up the children."

He said he never called the police because, "I thought I knew him well and I did not think he would hurt Travisteene. My wife was more concerned than I was."

Judge Green asked, "You never contemplated sitting here testifying?" and Awosika replied, "Never."

Lt. Charles Bazy

Next witness was VBT Police Lt. Charles Bazy who testified he was working the 6

p.m. to 6 a.m. night shift on Dec. 16-17, when he contacted Jackson on his cell phone. He said officers were doing a well-being check on him and were unable to get Jackson to come to the door.

Lt. Bazy said Jackson answered his cell phone and said he didn't want to answer the door and he was "tired of living." Lt. Bazy said he told Jackson that the officers will force their way in and he didn't want anyone to get hurt.

Lt. Bazy said Jackson said he just wanted to sit there and eat his chicken. It was around 3 a.m.

In about 15 minutes, Jackson opened the door and Lt. Bazy said he could hear on the phone the sound of handcuffs being applied. He stayed on the phone until Officer Christopher Herrick said, "He's secure," and they hung up the connection.

Lt. Bazy testified he went out to the scene, the house at 6352 Greenwood Ct., and Officer Michael Papin advised him that there was a deceased woman on the floor in the living room. There was a plate on the kitchen table, not far from the body, with a chicken leg on it.

When defense attorney Procida cross-examined Lt. Bazy, the officer added that when Jackson came to the front door he had a white plastic bag around his neck with black duct tape and he took a picture of that in case it would be needed later.

Sgt. Michael Papin

VBT Police Sgt. Michael Papin was the final witness. He testified that on Dec. 17 at 3:40 a.m. he and three other officers were dispatched to a suicidal male and possible wife. The defendant came to the door and Sgt. Papin made contact with him.

He said he searched him for weapons and asked where his wife was. Sgt. Papin testified that Jackson said, "Down the hall and to the right."

He said no one came to the scene before their group. He said Jackson had a white plastic bag with black duct tape around his neck.

The living room is just off the kitchen,

(continued on page 14)

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HELP WANTED

Van Buren Township Police Dispatch Log

The following are selected calls for VBT Police.

Sunday, Feb. 23:

0042 – property damage accident, Martz/Hoeft
0708 – larceny from auto, Westlake
1041 – personal injury accident, Michigan Ave. / Rawsonville Rd.
1050 – property damage accident, Robson Rd.
1153 – noise complaint, Westlake
1343 – larceny from auto, Westlake
1603 – intimidation threat, Ecorse Rd.
1632 – suspicious situation, Van Buren Park gate
1809 – property damage accident, Haggerty/Ecorse
1939 – suspicious person, Savage/Martinsville
2120 – assault & battery, Lighthouse Dr.
2300 – property damage accident, Haggerty/Tyler

Monday, Feb. 24:

0013 – noise complaint, Westlake
0959 – hold-up alarm, E. Walden Dr.
1117 – malicious destruction of property, Winchester St.
1205 – special detail, Tyler Rd.
1415 – fraud, Tyler Rd.
1518 – larceny from auto, N. I-94 Service Dr.
1601 – fraud, Victoria St.
1604 – private property accident, Belle Tire
2146 – felony assault, Beckley

Tuesday, Feb. 25:

1009 – special detail, S. Wayne Rd.
1118 – fraud, Parkwood Dr.
1155 – operating while intoxicated, S. I-94 Service Dr. / Ryznar Dr.
1209 – larceny, Ventura Dr.
1550 – sexual assault, Tyler Rd.
1555 – private property accident, Southport Bldg 7
1636 – assault & battery, Jeremy Rd.
1739 – personal injury accident, Beck/Ecorse
1756 – property damage accident, Robson/Morton Taylor

Wednesday, Feb. 26:

0049 – weapons violation, Belleville Rd.
0631 – private property accident, S. I-94 Service
0646 – fight, Quirk Rd.
1029 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1252 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
1327 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
1541 – private property accident, Westlake
1557 – private property accident, Bemis Rd.
1641 – private property accident, Westlake Cir.
1811 – property damage accident, Michigan Ave. / Denton Rd.
1917 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1924 – disturbance, Hardwood Dr.
2050 – missing person, Quirk Rd.
2124 – larceny, S. I-94 Service Dr.

Thursday, Feb. 27:

0028 – assault & battery, Parkwood Dr.
0745 – property damage accident, Ecorse/I-275
0814 – property damage accident, Mott/Dellor
0838 – property damage accident, E. Huron River Dr. / Haggerty Rd.
1333 – trespassing, Hardwood Dr.
1416 – missing person, Quirk Rd.
1555 – harassment call, Lenmoore Ave.
1651 – fraud, Denton Rd.
1717 – welfare check, Belleville basement
1914 – property damage accident, Ecorse Rd. / Haggerty Rd.
2024 – assault & battery, Meadows Cir.
2257 – suspicious vehicle, National RV

Friday, Feb. 28:

0634 – property damage accident, WB I-94/rest area
0725 – private property accident, Pond Ridge Dr.
0730 – property damage accident, E. Huron River Dr. / RR tracks
0733 – suspicious person, McBride School
0935 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
1155 – suspicious person, Village Green Ln.
1203 – fight, Parkwood Dr.
1300 – larceny, McBride Ave.
1302 – agency assist, Belleville
1310 – suicide or attempt, Rogers Ave.
1340 – assault & battery, Michigan
1628 – water leak found, S. Ponderosa Trl.
1629 – assault & battery, Denton Rd.
1635 – private property accident, Haggerty Rd.
1715 – private property accident, Haggerty Rd.

1836 – fraud, Belleville Rd.
2240 – noise complaint, Patty Ln.
2310 – disturbance, Locust Dr.

Saturday, March 1:

0012 – disturbance, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0239 – operating while intoxicated, Haggerty Rd. / Ecorse Rd.
0337 – personal injury accident, Morton Taylor Rd. / Van Born Rd.
0548 – assault & battery, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0604 – disorderly conduct, E. Archwood Dr.
0812 – suicide or attempt, Hull Rd.
0926 – unauthorized driving away of auto, S 19
0947 – trespassing, Ridge
1044 – assault & battery, Edison Lake Rd.
1144 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1301 – malicious destruction of property, Haggerty Rd. / Tyler Rd.
1355 – harassment call, Jackson St.
1628 – fraud, Belleville BP
1844 – suspicious situation, Harmony Ln.
2025 – intimidation threat, S. Woodbury Dr.
2128 – private property accident, Brandi
2201 – personal injury accident, Haggerty / WB I-94

2227 – assault & battery, S. Bellridge Dr.
2232 – property damage accident, EB I-94 / Haggerty
2254 – assault & battery, Westlake
2309 – assault & battery, Buchanan St.

Also on this week's log are 179 traffic stops, 35 of which are on the I-94 and I-275 freeways.

Belleville Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Feb. 23:

0048 – civil matter, Henry St.
1146 – intrusion alarm, W. Columbia Ave.
1326 – intrusion alarm, W. Columbia Ave.
1443 – suspicious situation, Menlo Park Dr.
1541 – assist fire dept., Menlo Park Dr.
2144 – property damage accident, Main/Fifth
2219 – suspicious person, N. Liberty St.

Monday, Feb. 24:

0737 – civil matter, Carmell St.
1436 – animal complaint, W. Columbia Ave.
2240 – agency assist, Haverhill

Tuesday, Feb. 25:

1013 – disorderly conduct, W. Columbia Ave.
1028 – assist fire dept., Belle Villa Blvd.
1231 – information, Main St.
1237 – property damage accident, Egan's
2055 – fight, W. Columbia Ave.
2058 – agency assist, W. Columbia Ave.
2158 – assist fire dept., Belle Villa Blvd.

Wednesday, Feb. 26:

0650 – agency assist, Quirk
0950 – found property, Belle Villa Blvd./Carmell
1032 – assist fire dept., Sumpter Rd.
1349 – disorderly conduct, W. Columbia Ave.
1349 – found property, W. Columbia Ave.
1815 – intrusion alarm, N. Liberty St.
2129 – property check, Sumpter Rd.

Thursday, Feb. 27:

0354 – assist citizen, Main St.
0842 – property damage accident, Sumpter Rd. / Spencer St.

1048 – private property accident, South St.
1439 – property damage accident, E. Huron River
1439 – warrant arrest, Westland PD
1801 – assist citizen, Main St.
1854 – assist fire dept., Loza Ln.
2125 – serve warrant, Estrada Dr.

Friday, Feb. 28:

0326 – intrusion alarm, Main St.
0639 – noise complaint, Church St.
0738 – intrusion alarm, E. Waterbury Ct.
0823 – narcotics crime, W. Columbia Ave.
0958 – weapons violation, W. Columbia Ave.
1203 – disorderly conduct, W. Columbia Ave.
1335 – juvenile complaint, Owen Middle School
1409 – trespassing, W. Columbia Ave.
1659 – civil matter, W. Columbia Ave.
1817 – intrusion alarm, E. Wabash
2142 – suspicious situation, Victorian Ln.
2216 – vehicle lockout, Main St./Fifth St.

Saturday, March 1:

0053 – liquor violation, Main St.
0439 – agency assist, W. Huron River Dr.

0451 – suspicious person, Harbour Pte. Dr.
0822 – assist citizen, Hull
1110 – vehicle lockout, Madelon St.
2011 – vehicle lockout, Henry St.
2042 – suspicious person, N. Liberty St./First St.
2108 – suspicious situation, Main St.

Also on this week's log are 25 traffic stops.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Feb. 23:

0204 – flee & elude, 11000 bl. Rawsonville Rd.
0257 – citizen assist, 12000 bl. Rawsonville Rd.
0503 – property damage accident, 24000 bl. Clark
0852 – personal injury accident, 19000 bl. Sumpter
1109 – fire dept. assist, Washington
1239 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Harris Rd.
2058 – civil dispute, 48000 bl. Willis Rd.
2119 – suspicious incident, 46000 bl. Claxton Dr.
2125 – assist other agency, 13000 bl. Rawsonville
2327 – property damage accident, Oakville Waltz

/ Clark

Monday, Feb. 24:

0109 – fire dept. assist, Rustic Ln.
0544 – unauthorized driving away of auto, 17000 bl. Sully Dr.
0821 – civil dispute, 25000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1226 – suspicious incident, 19000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1325 – fire dept. assist, 44000 bl. Judd Rd.
1539 – threats complaint, Birch
1702 – property damage accident, 13000 bl.

Rawsonville Rd.

1932 – family trouble, Greenmeadow

Tuesday, Feb. 25:

1427 – suspicious person, Karr/Wear
1528 – well-being check, Willis/Rawsonville
1819 – fire dept. assist, 26000 bl. Karr Rd.
1850 – subpoena service, 44000 bl. Wear Rd.
1913 – subpoena service, 26000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1927 – subpoena service, 44000 bl. Clay Rd.
2017 – subpoena service, Maple
2242 – warrant arrest, Rustic Ln.

Wednesday, Feb. 26:

1102 – alarm, 44000 bl. Wear Rd.
1303 – fire dept. assist, 48000 bl. Judd Rd.
1341 – well-being check, 47000 bl. Bemis Rd.
1404 – civil dispute, Greenmeadow
1545 – suspicious incident, Carriage Ln.
1600 – suspicious incident, Sumpter/Dunn
1826 – fire dept. assist, 43000 bl. Willow Rd.
1946 – 911 hang up, Nevada
2043 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Harris Rd.
2324 – warrant arrest, 45000 bl. Willow Rd.

Thursday, Feb. 27:

0457 – fire dept. assist, 46000 bl. Judd Rd.
0643 – suspicious incident, Rustic Ln.
0743 – fire dept. assist, Birch
0910 – animal complaint, Sumpter/Harris
0928 – down wires, 46000 bl. Dunn Rd.
0945 – fire dept. assist, 12000 bl. Rawsonville
1243 – larceny, 43000 bl. Arkona Rd.
1301 – alarm, 44000 bl. Dunn Rd.
1550 – alarm, 18000 bl. Savage Rd.
2336 – fire dept. assist, 23000 bl. Elwell Rd.

Friday, Feb. 28:

0035 – fire dept. assist, 48000 bl. Wear Rd.

0128 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Willis Rd.
1017 – threats complaint, 27000 bl. Martinsville
1134 – suspicious person, 43000 bl. Harris Rd.
1211 – trespassing complaint, 50000 bl. Willis Rd.
1304 – citizen assist, 24000 bl. Carleton West Rd.
1712 – fire dept. assist, 48000 bl. Willow Rd.
1814 – animal complaint, Stonecrest
1857 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Bemis Rd.
2000 – well-being check, 26000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
2107 – fire dept. assist, 51000 bl. Willis Rd.

Saturday, March 1:

0226 – flee & elude, 44000 bl. Paris Dr.
0926 – fire dept. assist, Birch
0938 – civil dispute, Brookside Dr.
1045 – truancy, Timberlane
1051 – citizen assist, 24000 bl. Carleton West Rd.
1254 – fire dept. assist, 21000 bl. Elwell Rd.
1416 – family trouble, 51000 bl. Willis Rd.
1432 – 911 hang up, Nevada
1559 – civil dispute, 20000 bl. Elwell Rd.
1900 – alarm, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1905 – disorderly person, 23000 bl. Bohn Rd.
2022 – fire dept. assist, 21000 bl. Dale Dr.
2230 – subpoena service, 19000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
2303 – suspicious incident, 45000 bl. Willis Rd.
2330 – suspicious incident, 19000 bl. Sumpter Rd.

Also on this week's log are four follow-up investigations, 25 miscellaneous details, 73 patrol checks, and 43 traffic stops.

Murder charge

(continued from page 12)

Sgt. Papin testified, and that's where Officer William Bettendorf found a body under a blanket. Sgt. Papin said he checked for signs of life, pulse on the left wrist and respiration, but he noticed she was stiff.

"I called Command and requested a supervisor," Sgt. Papin said.

He testified the table with the chicken leg was 10-15 feet from the body. He said they checked each room for further suspects or victims and found no one. There was no forced entry.

Assistant Prosecutor James then made a motion to bind Jackson over to circuit court on a charge of first-degree, pre-meditated murder.

Defense attorney Procida said the pre-meditation was missing in the evidence and Jackson's best friend didn't think he was a danger to his wife.

Judge Green disagreed, saying if a defendant says, "I'm going to do that and then within 24 hours I do it, that's probable cause for a jury to decide."

Judge Green then bound Jackson over to 3rd Circuit Court at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice at 9 a.m., March 5.

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Library Committee tries to cut back on expenses for new library design

By Rosemary K. Oztman
Independent Editor

Members of the Belleville Area District Library Board's Building Committee met last Friday and then again Wednesday to try to whittle down a \$21.8 million estimated construction budget so it will be sellable to the voters in the August primary election.

On Friday, the more than six-hour meeting was attended by library Building Committee chairwoman Joy Cichewicz; committee members Michael Boelter and John Juriga; library board president Mary

Jane Dawson; architect Daniel Whisler; library director Deb Green; and library deputy director Mary Jo Suchy.

Also attending for most of the six hours were members of the public: Barbara Miller, Phillip Miller, Diane Madigan, Paul White, and the *Independent*.

Yesterday's meeting was after the *Independent* went on the presses for the week, so there is no report on what was accomplished there.

The committee's report is expected at the March 11 library board meeting. The board wanted to have the figures ready to be voted on at the April 8 meeting, but may have to set a special board meeting so the ballot language can be approved in April for the August election, as required.

Eleven pages called "Opinion of Probable Construction Costs" was distributed by architect Whisler, who led the meeting on Friday aimed at cutting the total figure down to something the board would approve.

The proposed bond amount of \$21,772,763 was shown on the front of the draft, with "Affiliated Project Costs by Others" beneath, showing \$1,011,203 expected from the Department of Natural Resources, plus an amount to be determined by the Van Buren Township Downtown Development

Authority and others for on-site and off-site enhancements.

But, Whisler said the DNR has informed them they would be putting in a gravel trail not asphalt along the lake and has questions about the toilet facilities. Fisher folk may have to come in the library front door to use the library toilets, he said.

No final decisions were made on anything, but here are some of the things discussed:

- **The size:** Whisler said the size is designed at 49,000 square feet, when it was supposed to be 45,000. He said it could be reduced totally by putting the plan on a photocopy machine and reducing. A size of 40,000 square feet was suggested but Dawson put down her foot: no smaller than 45,000. Whisler said his figures are based on \$195 per square foot in basic construction cost and he presented a list of libraries and their construction costs for comparison;

- **Sidewalks:** Van Buren Township's Director of Planning and Economic Development Arthur Mullen reportedly suggested they widen the sidewalk to 8-10 feet down to the bridge and in the future up Quirk Road to the I-94 overpass. The VBT DDA, who may pay for this amenity

for bikers and walkers, has invited the architect back in March;

- **New furnishings:** They are assuming all the furnishings at the new library building on the DNR site will be new. There were suggestions to use some of the furniture at the present site and some of the shelving at the present site at the satellite site being planned for Sumpter;

- **Bond cost:** Philip Miller pointed out that a \$21.8 million bond would cost more than twice that to taxpayers once the interest payments are included. Whisler said most library bonds are 20 years. It is expected the library would be paying 5.5% interest on the bonds. He expects there will be one year in planning after the bonds are approved by voters, and 18 months in construction. Whisler said for a \$15 million bond, taxpayers have to borrow and pay back \$40 million. He said, "Borrowing costs money";

- **What to cut?** There was general agreement that the vegetative roofs could be cut and the number of terraces reduced, but the geothermal system would save money, so keep that. Seventy wells four inches in diameter and 400 feet deep have to be drilled for geothermal. They also agreed tentatively to cut out the \$43,125 emergency generator for the geothermal system. It was generally agreed the electrical vehicle charging station in the parking lot could be cut as well as the public address system. An expected expensive sewer lift station is not needed because they will be using a forced main and grinder pumps at a cost of \$6,000.

More changes are sure to be made at the March 5 meeting before the presentation to the board at the 7 p.m. March 11 regular meeting, which is open to the public.

Van Buren Area Little League registration

Van Buren Area Little League registration continues from 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 8, in the Denton Room at Van Buren Township Hall. A VBALL Community Board Meeting will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 16, in the Denton Room at VBT Hall.

Pet of the Week Friends of Michigan Animals Rescue "AUTUMN"



Autumn will be a delightful furry companion to have through winter, spring, summer and fall! She's a gentle, sweetly shy girl that would love a home where she is loved and doted on everyday of the year. In return, she'll give her fur-ever family endless amounts of unconditional love and companionship to enjoy. **Autumn** has a beautiful shy heart that can take a bit to warm up but is worth waiting for when she opens up and shares it. She likes gentle pets and attention and can often be found in the crowd of cats welcoming volunteers she knows. Her ideal home would include a quiet, relaxed environment where she can enjoy cat-naps, snacking and even some playing at her leisure. **Autumn's** pretty tortoiseshell coat is dappled in highlights of fall colors that will add a warm touch to any home. No need to wait for fall come meet **Autumn** any time of the year, she's spayed, vaccinated, tested neg. for FeLuk/FIV and micro-chipped. Call Friends of Michigan Animals Rescue at 734-461-9458 or visit our website fmar1.org for more info.

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