

After much anticipation, Deli on Main in Stockbridge opens to an appreciative crowd



Jennifer Devine smiles as she welcomes customers on the first day of business, Oct. 5, at Deli on Main, 124 E. Main St., Stockbridge. Photo credit Mary Jo David

was light and friendly with patrons complimenting the product and beverage displays, the salad and sandwich assortment in the coolers, the deli meats and cheeses, and the fresh produce and meat availability.

"Love this idea!" "Anything for more food options." "So glad for a new business opening its doors." These, along with about 10 variations of "We're very excited!" were just some of the comments overheard in the first hour the deli was open.

Deli on Main is licensed as a grocery store establishment and Brandon wants to set the correct expectations with their customers.

See Deli on Main on page 13.

SCN editing team wins first-place award in national communications contest



Agnes Geiger, Mary Jo David and Judy Brune (pictured l-r) took home the first-place award in the Editing For Print or Online category in the 2025 NFPW contest. Photos provided by Geiger, David and Brune

Entries that won first-place in individual state contests or in the at-large competition were automatically entered into the national contest.

Mary Jo David and Agnes Geiger received a first-place award in the national competition for their combined work in the Editing For Print or Online category. Judy Brune, also a member of the SCN editing team, contributed her editing skills, but was not included on the national award winner list because she is not an active member of NFPW. (Brune was included in the first-place award in the at-large competition.)

The award was announced and presented at NFPW's 2025 National Conference in Golden, Colorado.

See SCN on page 2.

by Mary Jo David

There was certainly much hype in the lead-up to Deli on Main opening for business on Sunday, Oct. 5 at 124 E. Main St., in Stockbridge.

Folks had been hearing for months about the new deli, but earlier plans to open were hampered by supplier limitations and licensing delays. To their credit, husband and wife owners Jennifer and Brandon Devine went out of their way, through word of mouth and social media, to keep people posted on what to expect. The community—and more importantly, the Devines—never gave up.

On Oct. 5, at 11 a.m., people were lined up when the doors opened. Once inside, the mood in the store

Understanding changes to Stockbridge area transportation services Making sense of the alphabet soup



CATA, WAVE, and LETS state they plan to work with one another to figure out solutions to address those who have public transportation needs in our area. Photos from respective organizations' websites.

At a town hall meeting held on Sept. 24 at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center, residents of Stockbridge and the surrounding area expressed both frustration and concern over the recent announcement that CATA Rural Service (CRS) would be taking over all transportation services for Stockbridge beginning Oct. 1. This service would be replacing the WAVE, which had been providing service to the Stockbridge area for several years.

NOTE: CATA=Capital Area Transportation Authority. WAVE=Western Washtenaw Area Value Express.

Unfortunately, the meeting did little to dispel attendees' concerns and frustrations as the CATA answers to attendee questions that day were considered vague at best by this attendee. Since then, many residents have yet to use the new-to-them service, out of fear of the unknown, especially those needing transportation to Chelsea.

The change is due to a lack of funding. The WAVE had been providing services to Stockbridge thanks to funding from Stockbridge Township and a grant through Chelsea Hospital.

See CATA on page 20.

by Melissa McPherson

At a town hall meeting held on Sept. 24 at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center, residents of Stockbridge and the surrounding area expressed both frustration and concern over the recent announcement that CATA Rural Service (CRS) would be taking over all transportation services for Stockbridge beginning Oct. 1. This service would be replacing the WAVE, which had been providing service to the Stockbridge area for several years.



Men of the Hour: In honor of International Men's Day, see pages 4-5 for two community members making a difference.

Stockbridge Halloween Lamppost Contest: See pages 8-9 for photos and voting information.

Munith Halloween Parade: See page 21.

Stockbridge Soccer claims first league title: See page 22.

Pioneer Day: See page 24.

Rural Perspectives: Giant puffballs grow differently than mushrooms



Diane Gray Constable

by Diane Constable

The giant puffball (*Calvatia gigantea*) is one of our largest fungi. This easily identifiable giant mushroom grows in fields and forests in late summer into fall.

It grows quickly, usually after a rain, to be about the size of a soccer ball. On average, it grows up to a foot across. The largest one found weighed in at nearly 50 pounds!

It doesn't have a root per se but a thin cord called a mycelium. This connects the puffball to its food source, such as a rotting tree root, dead grass or leaves, or other organic material, helping recycle the nutrients of the dead plant material back into the soil.

Puffballs grow differently than most mushrooms, all the spores form and develop inside the body of the fungi. As the 7 trillion spores mature, the outside of the puffball will turn light brown to a darker brown signaling that



The giant puffball grows quickly and can grow to a foot across on average, eventually reaching the size of a soccer ball. Photo credit Diane Constable

the spores are ripening. At this point, when the puffball is disturbed, it will easily crack open and release the spores in a puff of dust. It is so fragile even a raindrop will cause it to break apart.

A puffball is edible, but care must be taken to determine 1) it is indeed a giant puffball, and 2) it isn't too old. Once its bright white color starts to fade and turn brown, it is not OK to eat. Deer, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, and even box turtles like to eat these puffballs.

The Native Americans used the spores for various things, such as to stop bleeding and prevent infections. Early Americans would burn the spores to create a smoke that would make bees sleepy in order to collect the bee honey.

In the mid 1800s, this smoke also was studied as a potential anesthesia for surgery. The spores have been found to have antibacterial, antifungal, and antimicrobial properties and can fight some infections nearly as well as modern antibiotics. A study in the 1960s showed that the spores may have some cancer-inhibiting effects.

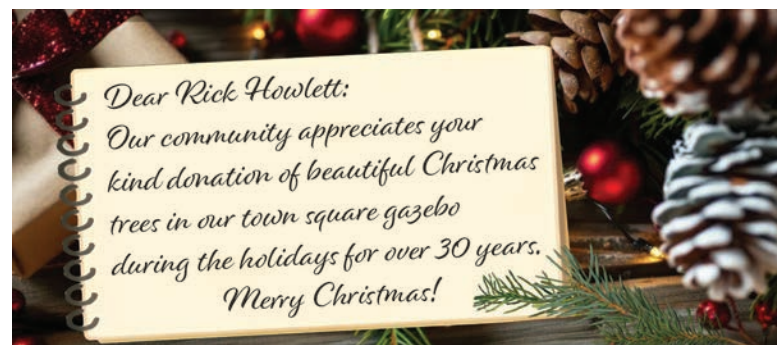
Fun facts: The oldest fossil of a puffball was found in Mexico and is believed to be 22 million to 26 million years old. The giant puffball also produces more spores than almost any other species on Earth.\

As an avid photographer, Diane Constable regularly puts her formal education in both nature and photography to good use. Diane also enjoys gardening and her dogs. She serves on the board of the Ann Arbor Dog Training Club and is editor of the club's newsletter.

SCN page 1

Judges commented on SCN's very "newsy" newspaper, noting it was filled with a variety of information that should appeal to its readers.

"An excellent community publication—keep up the excellent work for your readers," the judges wrote in their feedback.



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Festival of Lights

NOVEMBER 29, 2025
SHOP SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

LIST OF EVENTS:

DOWNTOWN STOCKBRIDGE
♦ Elf Stops (Library hrs: 10 – 2 pm)

TOWN SQUARE, 3:30 – 5:30 pm
♦ Santa's Visit
♦ Letter to Santa Workshop
♦ Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides (Ends at 5:20)
♦ Entertainment

5:30 pm
♦ Holiday Sing-Along

6:00 pm
♦ The Light Parade Begins
♦ Tree Lighting

VILLAGE LIGHT CONTEST – WINNER ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE.

For parade application: stockbridgeareachamber@gmail.com



Clyde Whitaker

Clyde's Corner Feedback ensures readers enjoy Clyde's true, but shorter, stories

by Clyde Whitaker

I have never considered myself a writer. To my way of thinking, a writer is someone who has authored books, writes for a daily

publication, or has years and years of experience—much more than I have.

Looking back, my columns have been about things I've pulled from my memory, which luckily, I have a lot of, and life stories told to me by our local friends.

I laugh when people come up to me and ask, "Do you make those stories up?" I have written 45 stories in our Stockbridge Community News and I can tell you that they are all true-life experiences, nothing fake.

When I started on this journey with "Clyde's Corner," my stories were too long, apparently, for Ed Wetherell. Stopping up at McDonald's one day a few years ago, Ed came up to me and said, "I love your stories, but they are too damn long." Well, I was not expecting to hear that, but I appreciated his honesty.

He didn't like starting to read a story then having to thumb through the paper to find the ending somewhere else. I never looked at it that way, I always thought the longer the better. So, thanks to Ed's honest assessment, I now try to keep my columns short enough to fit on one page. Thanks, Ed!

It also amazes me when I talk with people like Kim Smith and others, who say the first thing they look for in the paper is "Clyde's Corner." This is very humbling and I appreciate it. I'm glad people find my columns interesting. My Uncle Willis Jackson, who is quite a character, joked recently that my column last month had moved up to the third page in the paper.

Seriously though, I appreciate all of you who find my stories interesting. And your feedback is always welcomed.

I plan to continue "Clyde's Corner" until the paper tells me to stop, lol, so maybe I am a writer after all.

Well, it's time to sign off. I hear you, Ed: "Your stories are too $ long!"

Bye for now!

Clyde Whitaker is a 1973 Stockbridge graduate. He and his wife, Mary, raised four children in Stockbridge, and they still reside in the Stockbridge area.



Clyde Whitaker is a big supporter of all things Stockbridge. Here, he and his wife, Mary, show off shirts from one of the newer businesses in town—Redbear Bikes. Photo provided by Clyde Whitaker



Clyde's hometown of Stockbridge is the focus of many of Clyde's stories and his photography. The Stockbridge Township Hall has graced the square since 1892.

Letter to the Editor An Open Letter to the Community

As a lifelong resident of Stockbridge, I have witnessed the extent to which this town can support its members through community outreach and the connection among residents who regularly come together in a shared sense of community.

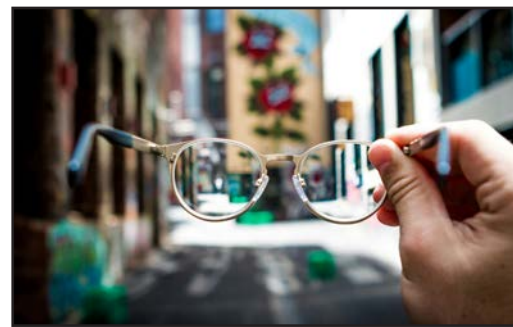
However, to my dismay, I have also heard harmful rhetoric from some I share this community with, especially against transgender people. From excuses for why transgender people should not be allowed to use the bathroom of their choice, to public Facebook comments condemning the promotion of transgender literature, to thinly veiled criticisms of transgender children solely for their gender identity, this thread has sewn its way into our lives.

As we close in on Transgender Day of Remembrance on Nov. 20, a day dedicated to honoring transgender people lost to senseless violence, these memories have persistently

Beauty is not just found in 'the eyes' of the beholder

by Jill Ogden

Living with a degenerative retinal disease, I've watched my world slowly dim as my vision has faded. Over the years, I have lost many things. I have lost the ability to see colors, recognize



Beauty can be found all around us. We simply need to recognize it. Photo credit Josh Calabrese at unsplash.com

faces, or watch the waves roll across the water. My heart aches for the little joys I miss, like, print books, paper planners, smiles, sunsets, rainbows, storm clouds, and even my reflection in the mirror, something I often disliked in my teens. I miss the beautiful things I can no longer see.

Last autumn, I visited the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, a place overflowing with beauty. The experience was bittersweet. I stroked the soft petals of geraniums lining the porch, traced the intricate moldings, felt plush textured carpets underfoot, pressed my cheek to embroidered fabrics, and admired the exquisite craftsmanship of antique furniture and decorative art throughout the hotel. In that moment, I found myself grieving for all the beauty that now lay beyond my reach, all the sights I haven't seen in years and won't see in the years to come.

Yogic philosophy suggests that beauty is an essential quality of the universe, woven throughout nature and present in all things. From this perspective, seeking beauty connects us to our true selves and nourishes our sense of wholeness. The appreciation and yearning for beauty lives within us all. While vision loss sometimes brings sorrow for what I once could see, I'm learning that I have a choice in how I respond. There are days when grief and bitterness surface, but my longing for beauty encourages me to notice and embrace what remains, in whatever form I can experience it.

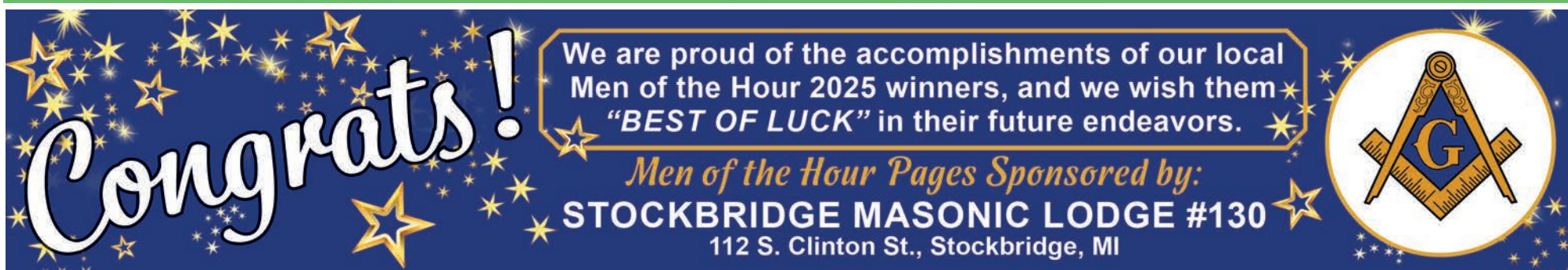
This awareness helps me to value the richness still present in my life, even when it comes in new shapes and sensations. I find beauty in the sound of my children's laughter, the welcoming aroma of a roast as family gathers, the warmth of a loving hand, the wind whispering through the trees, the scent of crisp autumn nights, and the song of crickets in the darkness, the taste of tart apple softened by caramel, and the gentle embrace of the autumn sun.

See Beauty on page 16.

weighed on me. This year, the world is approaching this date under the weight of increasing discrimination against transgender people. In the midst of this turbulence, we should all extend our support to the transgender community, especially its youngest members.

It is not far-fetched to assume that people want their loved ones to grow up healthy, happy, and safe. Parents and guardians might expect their children to follow a similar path as their own, and it can be confusing, overwhelming, or frightening when their paths follow directions parents did not expect.

See Letter to the Editor on page 13.



November 19 is recognized as International Men's Day to "celebrate, worldwide, the positive value men bring to the world, their families, and communities." In our November issue, Stockbridge Community News is featuring Men of the Hour—two men from our own little corner of the world who make a notable difference in our community: Mike Williamson and Gary Ludtke

Mike Williamson: A busy life built on teamwork at home, at work and in the community he's made stronger



Mike Williamson has dedicated his life to his family, community coaching, and sports writing, not to mention, a full-time job at Jiffy Mix. Photos provided by Mike Williamson



Mike and his family enjoying time at Whitefish Point in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Pictured (l-r): daughter Makayla, Mike, Mike's wife Kim and daughter AJ.

by Melissa McPherson

When asked to describe Mike Williamson in one word, his friends would say, loyal. Whether he is with his family, at work, on the field, or in the community, Mike always gives 100% to those around him and is always eager to lend a hand.

Mike was born in Flint, Michigan, but after his dad, Ernest Williamson, landed a job at Jiffy Mix in 1975, the Williamsons relocated to Dansville. In 1979, the family moved again to Stockbridge and settled there for good. Ernest and Mike's mom, Gail, raised Mike and his brother Kevin by setting strong examples, especially on the importance of commitment. The elder Williamsons will be celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary in early 2026.

Mike's wife, Kim, shares a similar story. Her family also moved to Stockbridge after her dad was hired as a miller for Jiffy Mix. Mike knew Kim's family for years because he coached her younger brother in football. But the two did not meet until Kim's mother set them up on a date. Mike and Kim have now been married for 19 years and have two daughters together: AJ, who is 17, and Makayla, who is 14.

Like his father, Mike's path led to a career at Jiffy Mix, where he began working 35 years ago. His job is a physical one; sometimes he lifts as much as 11,000 pounds over the course of an eight-hour shift on the food production line. He is the go-to person for fellow employees, and even managers, when they have questions or a problem that needs to be solved.

However, while he values his job at Jiffy Mix, it is not where his passion lies. Mike's real passion is sports.

As a kid, he participated in baseball through the Stockbridge Recreation Program and was on the baseball team in high school. He also played football for Stockbridge and was a member of the school's first-ever state playoff team in the fall of 1987. Mike's good friend Russ Rowe remembers it fondly.

"It was quite a memory and quite an experience," Rowe said. "Mike was always just a tremendous leader on the team."

When asked about his favorite sport, Mike said, "While I love football, baseball has always been my favorite sport."

See Williamson on page 5.

Gary Ludtke: Commitment, consistency lead to a 50-year trifecta in 2025

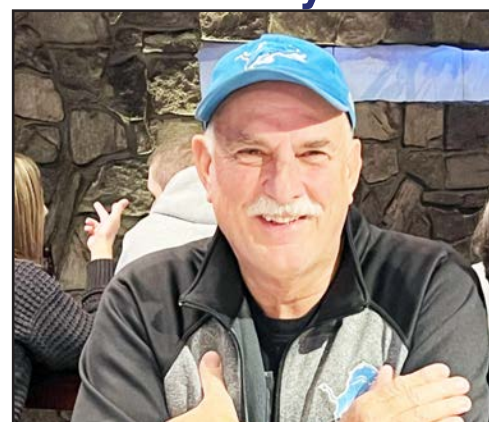
by Mary Jo David

"I could talk about Gary Ludtke all day," old friend Archie King said with fervor. That kind of enthusiasm is usually reserved for very special people, and it just might be that Gary Ludtke fits the bill.

Gary was born in Jackson. (If I had a dime from everyone who tells me they were delivered by Dr. Weddon...!). He grew up in neighboring Gregory, where his dad sold insurance out of their home and his mom raised the kids. He is the youngest of the Ludtke boys—including Bob and Richard—by 14 years. His father passed away when Gary was only 18, but even at that young age, enough of his dad had rubbed off on Gary that it seemed quite natural for him to make a career of the insurance business after he graduated college.

This year, Gary is celebrating the trifecta: 50 years since college graduation, 50 years married to his wife Roberta, and 50 years working with Prudential. No one can deny, those are some phenomenal stats!

Some of Gary's fondest memories involved playing pickup games of football and baseball with neighborhood kids, and later at school. King was one grade ahead of Gary, but they became fast friends as youngsters in Gregory. When Gary was 15 and Archie was 16, the two played in the Mickey Mantle baseball league together.



Gary Ludtke has spent most of his adult life in Stockbridge, where he has been involved in so many of the organizations that have helped Stockbridge thrive. Photos provided by Gary Ludtke



Family and traveling are two passions shared by Gary Ludtke and his wife, Roberta, pictured here visiting Puerto Rico.

"Gary was a great pitcher. In 1969, our team was second in the state. We were two runs away from competing in Dallas, Texas, that year," King recalled. "Later Gary went on to play baseball at Alma, and for a long time—maybe even now—Gary had the lowest ERA there," he added.

Besides baseball, in high school, Gary played football and basketball. He also played clarinet and bass drum in the band, performed in school plays, and served as president of the Stockbridge High School Class of 1971.

Baseball wasn't the only thing to catch Gary's attention at Alma College. It turns out, his future wife, Roberta, also was enrolled there. But to hear Gary tell it, "For a while, I was her second choice."

See Ludtke on page 5.

Williamson page 4

He recalls his younger years playing neighborhood pickup games at the Smith ball diamonds or in the yard of the apartments across from the elementary school. But one of his biggest memories is the Tigers winning the World Series in 1984.

As an adult, Mike has pursued his passion for sports and continues to forge a legacy in the community through coaching. When asked, he mentioned he's following in the footsteps of his former baseball coach and mentor Archie King.

Mike became involved in youth sports in the early 1990s when he was asked by Rowe to help him coach fourth and sixth grade football for the Panther TD Club.

"I was trying to go to college and coach at the same time. Sometimes my classes would go a little longer than planned, or I would have an exam, so I needed to have an assistant coach," Rowe recalls. "I couldn't think of anybody better, so I asked 'Willie' to help me out. He has such a strategic defensive and offensive mind that, after a while, I just kind of handed it off to him to be head coach," Rowe says with a laugh.

Shortly after he started helping with the TD Club, another friend, Tammy Love, reached out to Mike to coach JV softball for Stockbridge. He eventually moved to baseball and was the varsity baseball coach and JV football coach for the Panthers. After leaving coaching for a short time, he returned to coaching recreational sports when his daughters were young. He has continued coaching ever since.

Although he is not one to take compliments easily, he's proud of the relationships he has built with the athletes. "So many of my past athletes tell me I am their favorite coach and that I taught them a lot," he shared. Comments like these mean the world to him.

Mike is proud of the athletes as well. Last spring, Stockbridge High School received a letter from a softball umpire complimenting Stockbridge's JV team and the school's fans on their humility and politeness. This is more proof that Mike's coaching is about more than just numbers on a scoreboard.

For the past 26 years, Mike has worked as a sports writer for The Sun Times News, previously known as the Stockbridge Crier until it was bought by a new owner and began covering Washtenaw County. Mike currently covers local sports for both The Sun Times and the Stockbridge Community News. When asked how he manages to juggle writing for two papers, coaching, and working a full-time job, Mike says he has to do a lot of planning ahead. He also gets help covering sporting events from friends Dawn and Dennis McCann.

"Without them," he says, "I would have to change my scheduling a lot."

That's one of the things Mike especially loves about the Stockbridge community—this ability to help one another and to work together.

"It's easy to sit on the sidelines and watch and then complain when things are not going the way you want them to, but it's so much better to step up and help make our town and the schools a little better," Mike said. He expressed a similar sentiment at length in a Stockbridge group's Facebook page where parents were posting their disappointment with this year's Homecoming football game debacle. Although he wasn't responsible for any of it, Mike injected a voice of reason and remembered to thank all those who helped address the problems that arose due to the game being delayed extensively.

Despite his busy schedule, Mike still finds time for his family. He and his wife Kim enjoy time together and one of their shared interests is working on jigsaw puzzles. He attends plays in the area with his older daughter, AJ, and while he loves to attend Makayla's softball games as a spectator, he is also excited for the opportunity to coach her in JV softball this coming spring.

If you ask Mike how he measures success for his own life, his answer is simple: "I wouldn't change a thing." For him, success isn't about winning. It's about the family he loves, the students he's coached, and the community he's helped strengthen, one season, and one story at a time.

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Ludtke page 4

She had a thing for pitchers, but I asked her to a Sadie Hawkins dance, and eventually I won out over the left-hander!"

To meet Gary only in the last five years or so as I did, it would be tough to believe he considered himself to be a shy kid.

Others who have known him a long time usually point out that he's always had a great sense of humor.

"I was always mindful of adults and pretty consistent as a kid, but I had some, shall we say 'influences,' in my youth! You know, when you grow up on the streets of Gregory you had to be a little tough," he said with a smile.

Consistency came up a number of times in our conversation. Now in his 50th year working in retirement planning with Prudential, he is responsible for overseeing a hospital's large 403B plan, which means a couple thousand clients depend on him and his consistency for their retirement needs.

Even with all of that responsibility, Gary found time to volunteer for numerous organizations in the community—the Lions Club, the DDA, Christmas on the Square, Halloween decorating, and local parades are just the beginning. He often juggled presidencies of many organizations, but when it came to his civic engagement, he seems most proud of two community gems: The Stockbridge Area Education Foundation, including working with Dorene White, Meredith Hanna, and Jill Peck to establish SAEF's Festival of Tables fundraiser, and working along with Larry Lindemer to raise the funds to start the Stockbridge Area Arts Council.

He also volunteered as a deacon and elder in the Stockbridge Presbyterian Church for years.

Like Archie King, Susan Dailey grew up just down the road from the Ludtke family. Her dad, Dan Howlett, stood up in the senior Ludtke's wedding.

Dailey recalls that "Gary's family and our family were just like ... family!" And when they got older and Gary and Roberta moved into their first home just across Elizabeth Street in Stockbridge from the Daileys, the bond became that much stronger.

"Gary is a very good man—honest and fun," Dailey stressed. "He cares about Stockbridge as much as I do, and would help in any way he could if it meant a better Stockbridge."

Says Gary, "When you grow up active in a small town, you get to know so many people so much better than you ever could in a large city. I feel strongly that it was an advantage for me and also for my kids to grow up here."

Speaking of family, we've saved the best for last. When it comes to figuring out what makes Gary tick—there's only one answer, and that is his family. He is extremely proud of his 50-year marriage to Roberta, not just for its longevity but for its strength.

"I have a very happy marriage, a lovely home, and we are fortunate to have a close relationship with our two kids, Chad and Emily; Chad's wife Lindsay; and our grandkids," he said. Chad is a special education teacher in Birmingham, Michigan, Lindsay is an occupational therapist, and Emily is an accountant at Amazon in Washington, D.C.

Roberta and Gary are known for their lovely home and the beautiful gardens they work on together. Some of their best times are spent traveling—often with family or friends—and making each other laugh.

And then there's his train obsession—oops, I mean hobby! But that would be another story for another day.

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

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8th ANNUAL

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REMAX
Susan Giguere





Who We Are

Founded in 2016, the Stockbridge Community News is a Michigan nonprofit organization, IRS-licensed to operate as a 501(c)(4) organization (# C4-4001565).

An unpaid, volunteer board of directors oversees all SCN operations.

Our monthly, printed newspaper is free and mailed at no-cost to members of the local community. Complementary printed copies are also made available at strategic locations in the community. Print subscriptions are available for a fee to those outside SCN's postal distribution boundaries.

Articles are posted online throughout the month and are available to view for free at stockbridgecommunitynews.com

Our Mission

To promote the common good and shared well-being of residents in the greater Stockbridge area through the collection and publication of local news and useful community information.

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Our Writers

Stockbridge Community News depends on our team of talented, local writers who regularly volunteer their time to ensure we deliver newsworthy content each month. Writer names are reflected in the bylines that appear with each story.

Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

Patrice Johnson, an SCN founder and first editor-in-chief (2016-2021)

We would love to hear from you!

Please share any article ideas or community events you think SCN readers would be interested in. You are also encouraged to contact us with your advertising questions or for information about volunteering.

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRESS WOMEN
Winner of National First Place Awards, At-Large Awards
and Honorable Mentions

Outreach in Action

I spy good homes for used books

by Jo Mayer and Paul Crandall

Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home.

—Anna Quindlen

Indeed, books do provide a kind of home for many readers. And after turning that final page, many start looking for a good home for the book.

While space constraints prevent Stockbridge Community Outreach



Deanna "Sherlock" Kruger spies a title she's interested in from one of the little libraries in our area. Photos by Jo Mayer and Deanna Kruger

from accepting books, readers looking for that next home for their books do have options.

Many are surprised to learn that Goodwill Industries accepts books. Goodwill has outlets in Chelsea, Jackson, Mason and other nearby locales.

Another potential destination for your book: The Friends of the Library groups serving various public libraries. It's always a good idea to call ahead to determine how things work for a particular library and its Friends group.

The recent boom in "little libraries" provides yet another option.

Outreach volunteer and intrepid geo-caching aficionado Deanna Kruger recently focused her detective skills on finding all the little libraries available within the Stockbridge Community School District. She shared the list with us so we could share it with you.

Many of these little libraries display a plaque announcing their affiliation with Little Free Library (LFL)—a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Thinking of setting up your own little library? The LFL equips, educates, and guides volunteer stewards in doing just that. Among the organization's rules: The little library must be available to all and open 24/7.

Little libraries do more than connect people with new books; they also help connect people to each other. According to the LFL website, 72% of volunteer stewards have met more neighbors because of their Little Free Library.

More information is available on site at LittleFreeLibrary.org.

Important note: Outreach clothing and household goods donations

As a reminder, Outreach is not accepting used clothes or household goods in November or December, with the exception of outer winter wear. We will reopen for these donations in mid-January.

Thank you for your understanding and support!

This column is sponsored by Stockbridge Community Outreach. Our local food pantry, crisis, and referral center is located in the Stockbridge Activity Center (old middle school) near Cherry and Elm streets in Stockbridge. Office hours are 1-3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday and by appointment. Contact us at Outreach49285@gmail.com, 517-851-7285, or find us on Facebook.

Little Library Locations Key

- 1: Stockbridge Library, 200 Wood St., Stockbridge
- 2: Heritage School, 222 Western St., Stockbridge
- 3: Eastbridge Circle Road, Stockbridge (near condo mailboxes)
- 4: Mechanic Street in Stockbridge (between West St. and Wood St.)
- 5: Gregory Community Church, 126 Church St., Gregory
- 6: Waterloo Twp. Hall, 9773 Mt. Hope Road, Munith
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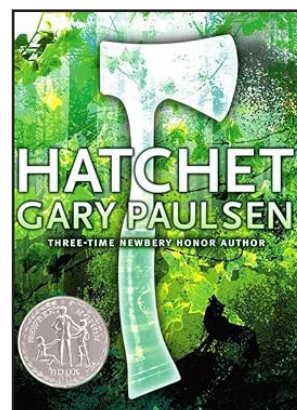
Reading Between the Lines 'Hatchet': An iconic and inspiring story for young adults by Gary Paulsen

by Joan Tucker

Gary Paulsen is a three-time Newberry Honor Author and captures the attention of young readers by writing this story from the perspective of Brian Robeson, a 13-year-old boy starting an adventure in a small Cessna 406 airplane.

So many emotions are going through Brian's head at the start of his journey. Top of mind are the struggles with his parents' recent separation, but he is happy to be heading to a visit with his father in the oil fields of Canada.

Admittedly, fear is what Brian feels when sitting in the co-pilot's seat in the plane's cockpit. He has never been in an airplane, let alone this very small aircraft that feels like a tin can. His discomfort is palpable, and to make matters worse, the pilot is a man of few words. Later in the flight, though, the reticent pilot surprises Brian by explaining the instruments and then offering his co-pilot a chance to fly the plane—truly a young boy's dream.



An emergency prompts a 13-year-old boy to deal with his emotions while learning problem-solving skills beyond his wildest expectations. Photo credit amazon.com

Unfortunately, an emergency ensues, requiring Brian to be more than just the co-pilot on this trip.

What's so inspiring are the lessons Brian learns along the way by making mistakes—such as pulling too hard on the controls and putting the plane into a nosedive or testing out controls he's unsure about. Miraculously, Brian is able to crash-land the plane in a lake deep in the Canadian forest. However, this landing is not without mishap and injury to the plane and Brian. He survives and painfully makes it to the shore, and passes out. When he wakes, he realizes he has nothing but the clothes he is wearing and the hatchet his mother had gifted him strapped to his belt.

Thus begins the survival lessons for a young boy stranded in the wilderness. It takes him awhile to figure things out. For example, he is starving and eats too many gut berries (Brian's term for what is known as chokeberries) and becomes very sick. Just as with flying, through his mistakes, he learns—slowly sometimes—that persistence pays off in the end.

One of my favorite lessons is when Brian discovers that striking his hatchet against rock can make sparks. But starting a fire seems to take forever. Through trial, error, and patience, his efforts pay off in the end. He uses that patience again and again through his day as he tries to spear fish and then figure out how to cook them over his fire.

Often, Brian gives in to tears of overwhelming emotions, but eventually he realizes it is up to him to survive. He thinks the tears do him no good, but personally, I think the tears were necessary to help him deal with his scary situation. Once the emotions were dealt with, his problem-solving abilities took over. As a result, Brian becomes a stronger, more confident, teenager.

I love how Brian wakes slowly to the light of the day and birdsong in the wilderness. He really takes notice of his environment around him and appreciates the beauty of the sky, clouds, lake, and trees, as well as the stars at night. There is no one to talk to, so he whistles to the birds and they call back. What's most amazing is Brian's self-discovery of how to be present in the moment and enjoy what is around him.

He doesn't forget this lesson when he is back home with his mother, his friends, and the life he is familiar with. Seeing the beauty that resulted from catastrophe is something he won't forget.

Read "Hatchet" to find out how Brian learns the survival skills on his own in the wilds of the Canadian forest. Discover aspects of his journey that help him become a strong, self-confident teenager.

"Hatchet" is a story that moves readers, with an ending that won't disappoint.

Joan Tucker is a lifelong learner who appreciates books she can share with family and friends. She enjoyed her career as a registered nurse of 40 years.

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Faces of Addiction: Nine different—but powerful—words pierced through silent veins of addiction



Tina Cole-Mullins

by Tina Cole-Mullins

(Editor's Note: Faces of Addiction is a continuing series about people who experience drug addiction and the difficulty of recovery. By telling their stories, they hope to help others who are struggling and encourage them to seek treatment and healing.)

When you're born into addiction, trauma isn't just something that happens—it's in the very air you breathe. For Allison, this was her reality.

Her father was an alcoholic. Her mother was addicted to drugs. Allison received no guidance, no love and no warnings.

"There was no one to say 'drugs are dangerous' or even, 'we care,'" Allison said. "At 13, I tried to speak up, to ask for help, but my cries went unnoticed."

That was when Allison began partying with weed and alcohol. By 14, she was offered cocaine in the backroom of a trailer.

"I just wanted to forget. I wanted to be numb," she said.

At 17, someone she trusted sold her to a 29-year-old drug dealer to settle a debt. That betrayal deepened her trauma and crushed her soul. Within two years, she was using heroin, meth, OxyContin, Xanax, Klonopin—anything she could find. Three years in, she began injecting drugs and eventually learned to make meth herself. She lost her marriage and temporarily lost custody of her children.

Her turning point came on Oct. 7—now marking eight years of sobriety. But it didn't begin with strength. It began with surrender.

"I wish I could say I did it alone, but I didn't," Allison said. "My son said nine words to me one day—words that pierced through the fog."

The words were: "What's wrong Mom, didn't you get your drugs today?"

Two days later, Allison walked into treatment and never looked back.

Allison knows many people who have relapsed, including her sister, whom she hasn't spoken to in three years. But Allison chose a different path—for her children, and for herself.

When asked about the role of mental health in her recovery, Allison was clear: "It was everything. Addiction isn't just about the drugs—it's about the pain underneath. You can't heal if you don't face the trauma."

Therapy helped her unpack the years of buried hurt. Recovery, she says, isn't just about sobriety—it's about rebuilding identity and learning to love yourself again.

"The memories will always be there, but so will the love and support I've found," she said.

Though sober, Allison still struggles with employment, transportation, homelessness and stability—reminders that her recovery is ongoing.

According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), only 25% of meth users remain sober for a year without formal treatment. This is often due to stigma, untreated trauma and a lack of support. In contrast, more than 70% of those who engage in structured programs like therapy, peer support, and integrated care achieve lasting sobriety.

For those navigating recovery alone, success depends on building routines, managing triggers, and staying accountable through self-guided strategies. Creating a personal sober support system is key—but so is tapping into the broader culture of recovery, where shared stories, mutual encouragement, and community values help transform isolation into connection and survival into healing.

Revisiting Richard's story

Richard's descent wasn't slow—it was seismic. One hit of meth, and everything changed. "It was only a matter of time before I was cooking anyplace I could...", Richard said, in "Faces of Addiction: Through the Eyes of the Incarcerated," a story that appeared in SCN's August 2018 edition. Within two years of his first use, Richard was incarcerated on a seven-year sentence.

"I will always be an addict," he said in that story. "The only difference is if I'm using or not."

Now, more than a decade out of incarceration, Richard is working, rebuilding his life, and talking sobriety. He's also taken financial responsibility for his mother's household as she battles major health issues.

Like Allison, Richard was confronted with nine piercing words: "Are you even serious about stopping using the sh—?"

His response: "Yes! I just don't know how right now. It's so hard trying to work full time, do everything at the house alone, take care of my mom's stuff, and have time for a relationship. I don't know how to get it all done without the energy of [the meth]."

Richard is rebuilding relationships once lost to addiction and addressing the trauma bonds behind them, such as with the person who asked those nine words. Trust is being rebuilt—slowly, but not impossibly.

Routine masks reality: Richard wakes up, goes to work, pays bills. But addiction doesn't always disrupt—it can coexist with routine, quietly eroding resolve and relationships. Sobriety is conditional. He's not incarcerated. He's not in treatment. He's not using it every day. But he's not free either.

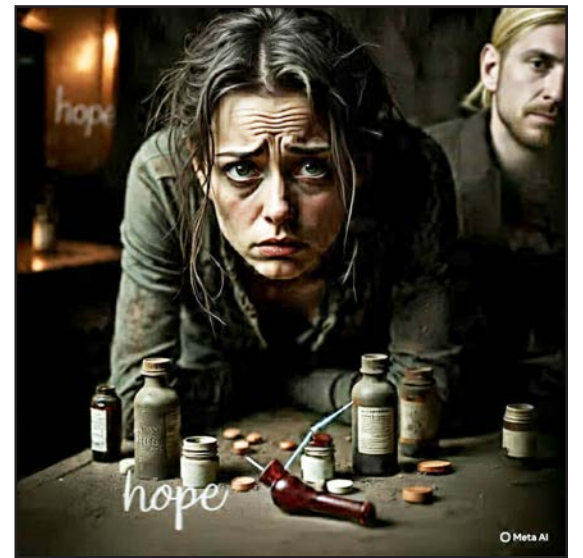
The cravings still whisper. The habits still linger. Addiction thrives in chaos and silence. Richard now speaks more openly about sobriety, questioning why he uses the meth at all. The chemical high does nothing. The process of seeking it is exhausting.

"I don't think I'll make it to 61 if I keep going like this," he said.

The question isn't whether he's using—it's whether he's ready to stop. Sobriety is a daily choice, not a guarantee. Not all addicts get sober—it's not about chance or luck. It's about hard work and working the steps.

Author's Note: If you're in the dark right now—there is light. Recovery isn't perfect. It's messy, hard, and sometimes feels impossible. But it's worth it. You are worth it. Don't let your past define your future. Reach out. Ask for help. And if no one listens, keep speaking until someone does. You're not alone. Healing is possible.

Resources for dual-focus treatment centers (addiction and mental health): Henry Ford Behavioral Health, Washington Way, Jackson: Offers detox, outpatient, and residential programs. Integrates mental health care with addiction treatment. Contact: 517-205-4001; henryford.com/locations/behavioral-health-washington-way **Hope House** (men & women), Jonesville: Gender-specific residential programs addressing addiction and co-occurring disorders. Contact: 517-849-2333; mvabhs.com/contact/ **Victory Clinical Services (VCS)**, Lansing: Specializes in opioid addiction treatment. Offers methadone maintenance, Suboxone, Vivitrol, counseling including group therapy and acupuncture detox. Contact: 517-394-7867 (Lansing); 517-784-2929 (Jackson); victoryclinic.com **Prevention & Training Services (PATS)**, Lansing: Provides outpatient treatment, relapse prevention, and assessments. Specialized programs for women and domestic violence survivors. Uses cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT). Contact: 517-323-8149; patslansing.com/



Addiction thrives in silence and chaos. Recovery isn't perfect, but it is possible. You are worth it. Photo created using Meta AI.



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Community Calendar

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays – Prepared Meals for Seniors, noon to 2 p.m. at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center

Mondays

- Craft Drop In (Ages 8 and up) at the Stockbridge Library
- Walking Group meet-up, 6:30 p.m. at Veteran's Park in Stockbridge

Tuesdays

- Garden Club, 6:30 p.m. at Trillium Gardens

Wednesdays

- Discovery Storytime (For Babies, Toddlers, and Children), 10:30 to 11 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library
- Pop-up food distribution for anyone in need, 1 to 3 p.m. at Stockbridge Community Outreach
- Bingo, 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion

Thursdays

- Coffee chats, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library
- Ladies Night, 6 to 9 p.m. at Trillium Gardens
- Celebrate Recovery, Stockbridge at Crossroads Community Church) A welcoming, community-focused format. Dinner (meal is free) is at 6 p.m. Large Group begins at 7 p.m. Open Share begins at 8 p.m. Fellowship and coffee immediately after c3michigan.com/celebrate-recovery

Second Thursdays

- Book Clubs, 4 to 5 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library

Fridays

- Discovery Storytime (For Babies, Toddlers, and Children), 10:30 to 11 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library
- Keep Calm and Carry Yarn, 1 to 2 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library (Occasional Fridays. Call Library for dates.)

First Saturdays

- Quilting Club, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library

Nov. 4 - Garden Club, 6:30 p.m. at 140 S. Clinton Street.

Nov. 4 - Sons of American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post

Nov. 8 - Digital Privacy & Security workshop, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library

Nov. 8 - Free Chicken Supper at Plainfield Methodist Church, takeout only, freewill donation

Nov. 10 - American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post

Nov. 11 - Veteran's Day

Nov. 11 - Stockbridge Library closed for the day for CADL Conference

Nov. 15 - Natural Dye & Shibori Workshop for adults & teens, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library.

Registration required.

Nov. 17 - Friends of the Stockbridge Library Silent Auction begins (ends Nov. 30)

Nov. 19 - Outreach Thanksgiving Assistance Applications Due

Nov. 19 - Community Thanksgiving Meal & Craft Sale, noon at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center

Nov. 21 - Outreach Thanksgiving Food Donations Due

Nov. 23 - Hanging of the Greens Service, 11 a.m. at Stockbridge United Methodist Church

Nov. 24 - Senior Center Book Discussion Group "The Lion Women of Tehran"

Nov. 25 - Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post

Nov. 27 - Thanksgiving Day Free Community Dinner, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Heritage Elementary.

Nov. 29 - Festival of Lights Parade in Downtown Stockbridge (See ad on page 2 for full event schedule). Cookies, hot chocolate, crafts and more before the parade at Stockbridge United Methodist Church

For more community events visit: www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

To add your community events to our free community calendar, email submissions to stockbridgecommunitynews@gmail.com.

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Kelsey Rasmussen

Positive Parenting The Art of Repair: Building bridges after conflict

by Kelsey Rasmussen

Somewhere along the line, I've learned that gratitude is the antidote to anxiety, and curiosity is the antidote to judgment.

Drs. John and Julie Gottman describe repair as the secret ingredient for

relationships to thrive. In previous months, we've shared some research-based wisdom from the Gottmans' book, "And Baby Makes Three." We've covered topics about parents being on the same team; how to slow down and delight in our baby; the importance of cooling down conflicts before they escalate; and replacing the "four horsemen" (criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling) with a soft start-up, expressing daily admiration, listening with humility, and emotional self-regulation.

Now the most important piece: What happens after an argument? According to the Gottmans, masters of relationships don't let injuries accumulate.

A friend laughed when I told her I walk to my kids' "cool down" chair, sit, and count to 10 when I get frustrated. So yeah, I give myself time-outs. When I cool down and then apologize to my husband or children for a poor reaction or impatient tone, I am modeling a characteristic and "repair" I want to see in them, too. To me, this humility and self-awareness is a strength.

"Repair" means acknowledging what went wrong, taking responsibility for your part, and reconnecting with the person you hurt. It's not about being perfect; it's about being willing to make things right. Some people think of apologies as a sign of weakness. The Gottmans and I disagree.

Some repairs will be awkward. Some will happen hours or days after the conflict. That's OK. What matters is that you try. Sometimes the other person isn't open to repair, and it's best to forgive and either wait or part ways.

One helpful tool is creating a family repair plan, modified for your family from ideas like this:

For adult partners

- Check in within an hour after a conflict or agreed-upon break time.
- Start with "I'm sorry for..." and name your specific behavior, not just a general apology.
- Ask, "Is there anything you need from me or want me to understand?"
- End with a physical reconnection—a hug, holding hands, or whatever feels right.

For parent and child

- Get down to their eye level.
- Name what happened: "I raised my voice when you spilled the juice."
- Acknowledge their feelings: "That probably felt scary."
- Take responsibility: "I made a mistake. We all make mistakes sometimes, but we don't want to be a family that yells at each other. I'm sorry and I love you, always."
- Offer reconnection: "Can I give you a hug?"

See Positive Parenting on page 17.



During calmer times, build a "repair basket" containing items that can help facilitate a reconnection with your partner or your children. Photo created with Google Gemini

Jeff Caskey

Brad Caskey

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Thank You

The Stockbridge Community News thanks those in the community who continue to send donations. Special thanks to those listed here whose donations were received in the mail between Sept. 25 - Oct. 24. We truly appreciate the support of our community, and we look forward to continuing to provide a quality, local paper. Donations can be sent to Stockbridge Community News P.O. Box 83, Gregory, MI 48137

• Denise and Larry Allen

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"Dear Gabbie" is written with the simple hope of bringing a few smiles to your day and is not meant to replace the advice of professionals ... especially your mom!

Dear Gabbie,

It seems drivers are more impatient than ever, and so many are riding my bumper these days! How can I get them to stop?

For the love of all that is good and holy, can all you tailgaters just back off our Buick booties and Toyota tushies?!

Here is the simple advice I gave my own new-driver cubs when they were a little too close to the car ahead (while I instinctively jammed a brake pedal that did not exist):

"How about taking your foot off of the gas pedal for just a few seconds to create more space?" [Insert highly offended teenage eye roll here!]

This isn't groundbreaking guidance, as everyone on the planet who has taken driver's training has heard of this technique. So, how about we ALL work on applying that little nugget of knowledge?

But, not surprisingly it isn't the tailgater who wrote asking for advice. Dang it.

Gone are the days when you had the option of jamming on your brakes or clearly hand-signaling to the tailgater that he or she is "No. 1" (in so many words). With the heightened occurrence of road rage nowadays, nobody should risk antagonizing someone who might be one thread-width away from keeping their cool.

Instead, control what you can. Make it easy for the tailgater to pass when it's clear and legal; slow down a bit and hug that right line. Or, try gradually slowing down. Sometimes those "bumper sniffers" just need a clue they're a tad too close.

If you're still dealing with a Backend Brat, it's time to put on that blinker and make a safe turn onto a side road or into a parking lot. Let that car continue ahead of you, then merge back on the main road and continue on your merry way, with your emotional well-being intact!

Then, I implore you, resist the urge to zoom up and ride their bumper.

Safe travels!

Gabbie

Letter to the Editor page 3

The best thing we can do in this scenario, and for all transgender people, is give them the space to understand themselves and explore their identities in safe ways, educate ourselves, and show them unconditional love and support as they navigate these tumultuous periods of their lives. They will be happier and healthier knowing they have people in their corner.

I have witnessed the extent to which this community can come together in unity and reach out to those in need; it is heartbreaking to think that some people may be excluded based on their identities. This Nov. 20, as thousands commemorate our transgender siblings who died unjustly, let us not contribute to the violence that has taken these community members; rather, let us consider the humanity we all share, open our community to everyone, and encourage diversity in its members. We are strongest when we all stand together.

And to any transgender people reading this: I see you, I hear you, and I am here with you.

Sincerely,

Your Neighbor

Letters to the Editor are included in the print edition of Stockbridge Community News when space allows.

SCN does not publish letters of a political nature or that contain hate speech. SCN reserves the right to withhold and/or deny publication of a Letter to the Editor.

Deli on Main page 1



BYOB takes on new meaning as "Be Your Own Barista" at Deli on Main, which provides everything you need, including instructions to make barista-worthy beverages. Photo credit Becca at Redbear Bikes

features. Salads run the gamut—from the "Stockbridge Summer Salad" to a "Township Green Goddess." In addition, other specialties include the "Founders' Charcuterie Board," "Buffalo Chicken Bites," and "Prosciutto-Wrapped Mozzarella."

When backed into a corner by this editor to pick a favorite, Jennifer picked the "Stockbridge Club," but Brandon was tougher to pin down!

Said Brandon: "I made the menu; I love everything!" But when forced to pick one, he admitted their smoked brisket is his favorite.

The Devines are well suited for this latest venture. Brandon has worked in the hospitality industry for 30-plus years; Jennifer has more than 20 years in retail along with hospitality experience. They still own a hospitality management company.

The couple spent three years scouting out the right location for their business and estimate that licensing and locking in suppliers took about 60 days longer than usual.

"Up until very recently there hasn't been a lot of purveyors and suppliers that come to this area," Brandon explained. "We've reached out to people we've worked with for a long time—Sysco, Lipari, and U.S. Foods—to make this work."

Jennifer grew up in the Dexter and Whitmore Lake areas. Brandon grew up spending time between Livingston and Ingham counties. What he most recalls from his youth were the times spent visiting aunts and uncles on big farms in the area.

"As kids, we visited each other's farms. We sat around the table and broke bread together. Coming back here meant returning to a place where people care about where their food comes from," Brandon said.

As a 5-year-old, Brandon recalls his grandpa taking him up to Wellston, Michigan, where they ate in a restaurant, and he had a pancake big enough to cover his entire plate. Sensing his excitement, his grandfather finagled them a tour of the kitchen, and that did it. It sparked Brandon's interest in the food industry for life, and Deli on Main is an exciting new chapter.

Stop in and visit Deli on Main at 124 E. Main St. in Stockbridge. Initially open seven days a week (11 a.m. to 8 p.m.), the deli will likely begin winter hours in November. Right now, that looks like 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and closing one day during the week. Visit their Facebook page for up-to-date news at www.facebook.com/delionmainstockbridge/ or visit their website at delionmain.com. Phone: 517-525-1525.

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Stockbridge Community Outreach Holiday Programs

NEED HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS? Accepting applications 10/27 to 11/26. Apply by 11/19 for Thanksgiving and by 11/26 for Christmas.

OUTREACH NEEDS HELP! We need families adopted for Christmas, food for baskets and money to fill gaps. Families will be available to adopt the first week of Nov.

CONTACT OUTREACH at 517-851-7285 or visit Stockbridge Activity Center, 305 W. Elizabeth St., Rm 120, during office hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 1pm-3pm.



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- Replace the shot put area
- Repave parking lots
- Add more parking near the ball fields
- Upgrade the press box and concession area
- Add new T-ball field

HERITAGE SCHOOL

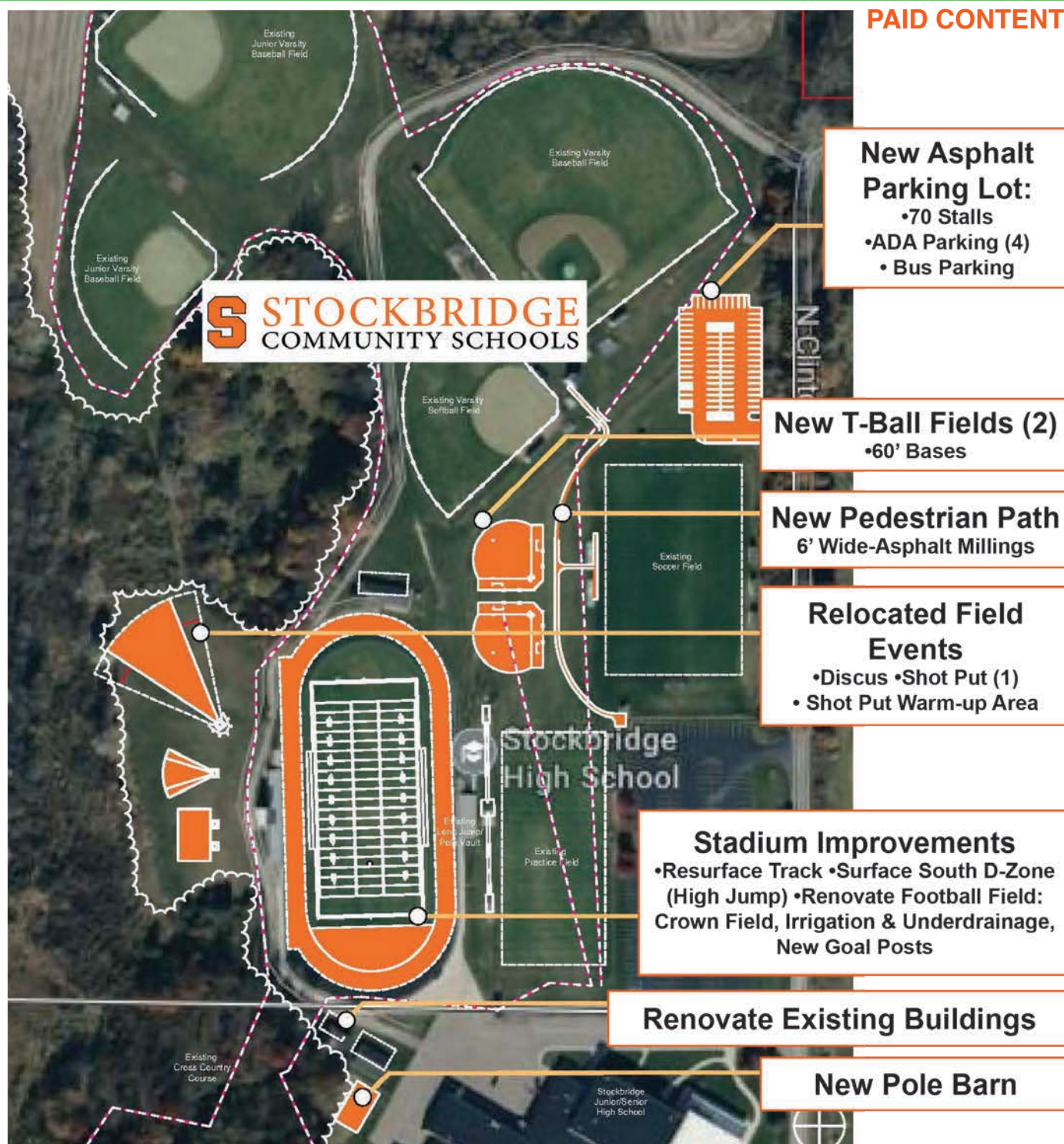
- Replace boilers
- Replace student devices and technology
- Replace classroom equipment and technology
- Replace the roof

DISTRICT

- Purchase buses
- Replace infrastructure to support modern technology

SMITH ELEMENTARY

- Update the kitchen and cafeteria
- Renovate restrooms
- Replace student devices and technology
- Replace classroom equipment and technology
- Replace the roof
- Repave the parking lot
- Add more parking spaces near the school



Every building has a lifespan, and even well-maintained spaces need updates to stay safe, efficient, and ready for the future.



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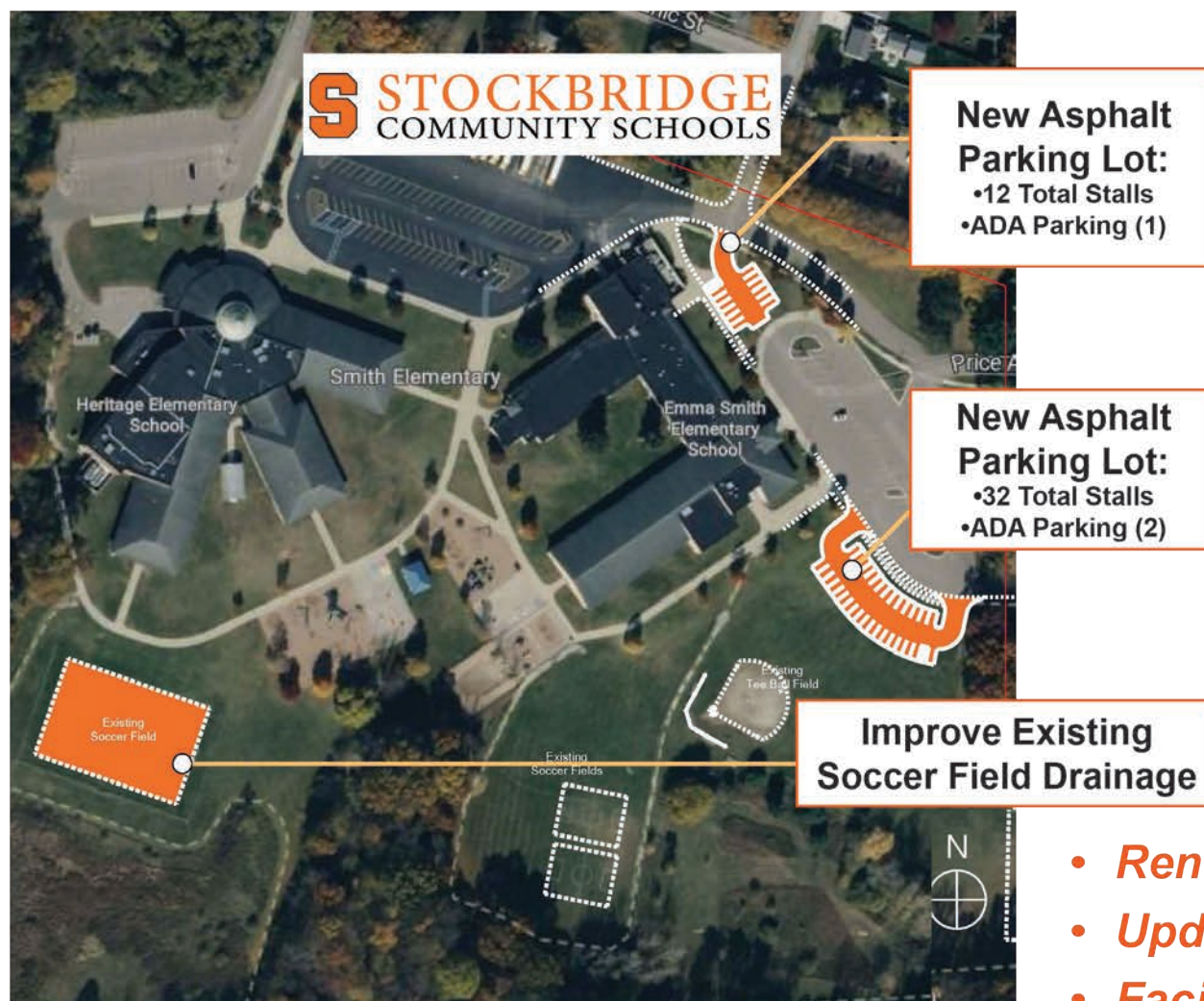


Stockbridge Community Schools is excited for the opportunity to work together with our community — building spaces where our kids can learn, grow, and thrive!

This is a no-mil increase bond - your annual tax rate will not go up if this bond proposal passes.

Investing in Our Stockbridge Area Students... Understanding the 2025 Bond Proposal

PAID CONTENT



The Stockbridge Community School District is asking the community to consider a bond proposal on November 4, 2025. Over the past few months, we've met with teachers, staff, coaches, transportation workers, and community members to listen to their ideas and needs.

The projects in this bond are needed to keep up with and improve the quality of services we provide. While consistently working to create more opportunities for students and staff, many of the items are simply about replacing old equipment and fixing areas that need repairs. We'll spread the purchases from this bond over the next five years so that our students and staff can benefit from these improvements for the next ten years and beyond.

- **Renovate Locker Rooms**
- **Update Kitchen & Cafeteria**
- **Facility Improvements**
- **Add Parking Spaces**
- **New Technology & Equipment**
- **New Ag Science, FFA & Storage Pole Barn**

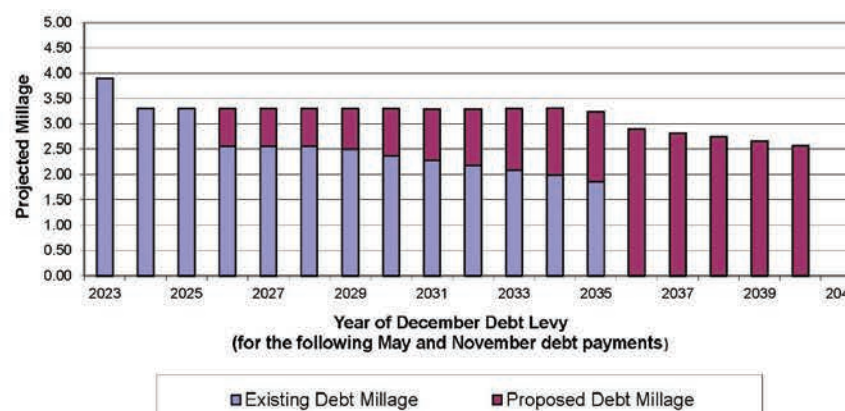
QUESTIONS

BRIAN FRIDDLE
Superintendent
517-851-7188, ext. 5503
friddleb@panthernet.net

**Your vote on
November 4, 2025,
will help shape the
future of our Stockbridge
area schools and our
community.**



STOCKBRIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BOND MILLAGE
PROJECTION FOR A NOVEMBER 2025 BOND PROPOSAL



The debt millage projection is contingent on several variables including: the future Taxable Value and the interest rate on the proposed bonds.

**If approved, this bond
would generate about
\$15.1 million and be
paid off in 16 years.**

This bond will fund practical improvements that benefit every part of a student's day — from safer buildings and updated classrooms to better spaces for learning, playing, and growing. It's a responsible investment in a safer, stronger school experience for all Panthers.

This is a no-mil increase bond - your annual tax rate will not go up if this bond proposal passes.

Staff Spotlight: Students fortunate special ed teacher Amber Robidou traveled full circle and arrived back in her hometown



Mary Jo David

by Mary Jo David

Although she grew up in Stockbridge, Amber Robidou took the long road—by way of Colorado and Montana—before becoming a teacher here at Heritage School.

Her years in Colorado and Montana were spent teaching special education, but she was initially hired in Stockbridge to teach fifth grade. After four years, she made the switch to special education here, and many consider this her calling.

While in Montana, Robidou won an annual, area-wide special education award. It was especially meaningful to her because people she worked with nominated her for the award. Even more recently, when Robidou's husband, Jacob, also a teacher, returned to Montana for a visit, one of their previous co-workers, who has 28 years' experience as a teacher, told Jacob that Amber was the best special ed teacher he'd ever worked with.

Encouragement like that is especially welcomed by Robidou because, by nature, she's not one to pat herself on the back.

"I'm a big second-guesser," Robidou explained. "So hearing from other people, people I have great respect for, that I'm doing something right, well, that is really encouraging."

Growing up as Amber Boyd in Stockbridge, she was heavily involved in athletics. She played basketball, ran track (as an adult, she has completed 10 half marathons), and was a cheerleader; she was also on the National Honor Society and Student Council. After Stockbridge High, she attended Michigan State University, where she initially majored in business. But by the end of her sophomore year, her true calling had surfaced and she changed her major to special education.

In her words: "I'm not sure why it didn't occur to me sooner. Growing up, I babysat and spent a lot of time with my cousin Cody who has Down syndrome. I observed and volunteered at his school in Mason, and I realized I really enjoy working with students with special needs."

As Robidou learned firsthand, teaching special education varies immensely from state to state and over time. In Montana, she worked in a district that had 20 paraprofessionals to assist the teachers. She herself has had as many as five paraprofessionals to work with students one-on-one. But times have changed, and now she has one paraprofessional to help with her caseload of fourth- and fifth-grade special ed students who come to her for reading and math intervention.

"Our special education goal is to get small group and one-on-one time with these students," Robidou explained. "In a regular classrooms, it's hard for them to experience success. In my classroom, they can experience that boost of confidence they need from meeting goals. And my biggest goal for them is that they see their growth and progress and know they can accomplish important things."

Robidou's students especially enjoy "Classroom Dojo," where they earn points for things like timeliness, showing responsibility, staying on task, participation, persevering, and being a good teammate. Later, they get to cash in those points. Recently, one of her students saved 100 points and chose to cash them in for a Starbucks pastry. Robidou's husband picked it up and brought it to the school that day.

Speaking of Jacob, this writer wondered how Robidou convinced her husband, who was born in Montana, and her seventh- and tenth-grade (at that time) stepchildren to pick up and move to Michigan? It might surprise readers to learn that the school system she left in Montana, which was in the Bozeman area, was not nestled amid the mountains and grasslands we often picture when we hear people talk about that state.

"In fact, it wasn't rural at all," Robidou said. "It was like a mini Los Angeles, with many people relocating there from California. The cost of living was rising all the time." So maybe it wasn't such a hard sell after all!

The family has settled nicely in Stockbridge and it has grown to include two younger children who are now old enough to attend Stockbridge schools—Logan in fourth grade and Mason in second grade.

As a parent herself, Robidou recommends that parents keep encouraging their children, stay actively involved, and most importantly, advocate for their children.

She assures her students' parents that the Stockbridge School District is a good place for her special education students to grow and learn.

"The kids in this district are so open and for the most part very friendly. I don't sense that the kids I have in my class are treated differently because they come to my room for special education services. And my students are so fun and funny. I could write a book about the things they say that make my day!"

Robidou also has great things to say about the people she works with—from her boss to her co-workers.

"The staff at Heritage are awesome! The atmosphere here is welcoming and positive, which makes my job so much easier. In some way, I'm an island in special education, so it makes a world of difference that I can collaborate and work with others who respect what I want for my students," Robidou said.

Yes, her job involves a lot of paperwork, and sometimes she struggles to separate her work life from her home life. But the rewards abound. Take for instance the day one of her students hugged her out of the blue and told her "You're the best and I'm glad you never gave up on me."

Now, that's enough to melt any teacher's heart!

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Beauty page 3

These things remind me there are always new wonders to discover. Each day, beauty offers itself, whether it be a kind word, heartfelt conversation, or even learning to see one's self in a new way.

Beauty can be found all around us. We simply need to recognize it.



After returning to Stockbridge, Amber Robidou taught fifth grade and now teaches special education. Photos provided by Amber Robidou



Jacob and Amber Robidou (center, back) spend quality time together with their family, including (l-r), Gracee, Logan, Mason and Noah.



Special ed teacher Amber Robidou and student Tessa give a thumbs up at Heritage School.

SEWING AND ALTERATIONS

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Bridge to Wellness

The greatest gift of all: Tips for coping through the complicated holiday season



For more joy and less pressure, simplify holiday traditions and choose those that truly matter. Photo credit Houcine Ncib on unsplash.com

by Anna Webber

The holiday season is often described as "the most wonderful time of the year," but it can bring a complicated mix of emotions for many people. Along with joy and celebration some can experience stress, pressure, and loneliness. Between family gatherings, financial demands, travel, and high expectations we may place on ourselves, it's easy to feel overwhelmed.

The good news is, you can find healthy ways to cope and rediscover balance during this busy time of the year.

Coping and finding balance

A helpful first step is simply acknowledging what you are experiencing. The holidays can stir up grief, stress, or disappointment, just as much as excitement. Giving yourself permission to feel what you feel, without judgment, can make it easier to move forward in a healthy way.

From there, it helps to set realistic expectations. It's tempting to aim for a picture-perfect holiday, but that can lead to burnout. Simplifying traditions and choosing those that truly matter to you can create more joy and less pressure. It is also important to give yourself permission to say "no." Your holidays do not have to look like someone else's, or even like your own from previous years, in order for them to be meaningful.

Taking care of yourself is also key in coping well. Self-care often takes a back seat during the holidays, but it is most needed during stressful times. Regular sleep, balanced meals, and physical activity help support mood and energy. Even taking small breaks, such as stepping outside for a walk, practicing deep breathing, or listening to music, can provide a reset.

Pairing all of the above with gratitude and mindfulness can shift perspective. Whether it's noticing a small act of kindness, enjoying a seasonal tradition, or simply pausing to cherish the moment, these practices can help calm things during an otherwise stressful time. Remember: Caring for yourself isn't selfish; it allows you to show up with more energy and patience for others.

The pros and cons of holiday gatherings

Holiday gatherings can also be stressful. Family dynamics and other relationships can be challenging, which is why setting healthy boundaries around your time, energy, and resources is so important. If a gathering feels overwhelming, you might shorten your visit or plan smaller get-togethers that feel more manageable. Being clear and kind in your communication can prevent unnecessary tension and resentment.

On the other hand, connection can be a powerful antidote to holiday stress. If you are experiencing loneliness or grief, those feelings can be eased by reaching out to a friend, attending a community event, or volunteering your time. Surrounding yourself with people who make you feel supported, whether through family, friends, or community, can bring a sense of comfort and belonging that carries you through the season.

Ultimately, the holidays do not have to be perfect to be meaningful.

See Bridge to Wellness on page 20.

STOCKBRIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS

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Donations may not be tax deductible.

Positive Parenting page 12

For siblings or playmates

- Never force an apology, but encourage a sincere one after both children have calmed down.
- Help them notice: "I see you took the toy from your brother's hands."
- Help them recognize feelings: "Look at his face. How do you think he feels?"
- Guide them to action: "What could you do to help him feel better?"
- Celebrate their repair: "You gave it back and said sorry. Thank you!"

Activity Highlight: During a calm time, talk about and build a "repair basket" together to facilitate reconnection. Work together to fill it with small items that mean something to you both and promote positive interactions: a favorite book to read together, a deck of cards for a quick game, a playlist of songs your family loves or dances to, a ball and gloves. Keep it in a common area and practice how you might use it during tenser times.

Kelsey Rasmussen is a local resident and full-time parent of preschool-aged twins.



John and Theresa
Kightlinger

Ask an Expert Understanding options for collision repair costs

by John and Theresa Kightlinger

The following column is a continuation from the October issue of the Stockbridge Community News.

Nearly 70% of drivers will face some form of collision repair in their driving lifetime, highlighting the importance of understanding potential costs involved. Collision repair cost can vary widely based on the extent of damage, type of vehicle, and choice of repair shop. Whether it's a minor dent or major structural damage, knowing what factors influence the cost can help you navigate the repair process more confidently and ensure you're getting fair value for the work needed.

Understanding repair costs

- **Types of vehicle damage.** Vehicles can suffer from various types of damage during collisions. Common types include dents, scratches, broken glass, and damaged bumpers. Each type requires a different repair method, affecting the cost. Cosmetic damage like scratches or small dents usually costs less to fix. Structural damage to the vehicle's frame or suspension system is more serious. It needs extensive work and thus costs more.
- **Minor vs. severe repairs.** Minor repairs might include fixing small dents or replacing a side mirror. These are less expensive and take less time. Severe repairs involve significant bodywork or replacing major parts like the engine or transmission. These not only increase the repair bill but also extend the time your vehicle spends in the shop. The choice between repair and replacement depends on severity. For minor issues, repairing is often sufficient. But for severe damage, replacing parts may be necessary. Severe damage also can affect a vehicle's performance and value over time. It might lead to further issues if not addressed properly.
- **Insurance coverage and costs.** Insurance plays a big role in managing collision repair costs. Different policies cover various aspects of collision repairs. Liability insurance won't cover your own car's damages, while comprehensive coverage will. Deductibles influence out-of-pocket expenses for repairs. Choosing a higher deductible can lower your premium but means paying more at the time of repair. After a claim, there's a chance your premiums could increase. Insurance companies adjust rates based on risk assessment, which includes past claims.

Taking control

Vehicle accidents throw a wrench in your day, but knowing the ropes of collision repair costs can soften the blow. You've walked through preparing for accidents, choosing repair options, picking a body shop, and understanding costs. This info arms you with the knowledge to navigate repairs without getting side-swiped by unexpected expenses. It's all about making informed decisions to get your ride back on the road without breaking the bank. Now's the time to take control. Don't wait for a fender bender to catch you off guard. Review your insurance, bookmark a go-to body shop, and keep this guide handy. Ready for smoother sailing after an accident? Let's make it happen. Your car, your rules. Drive safe, stay informed, and remember: Knowledge is power when it comes to managing collision repair costs.

John and Theresa Kightlinger own My Body Shop at 401 N. Clinton St., Stockbridge. The couple have lived in the area and raised their children here over the past 20 years. John has been in the auto body business since 1985, and Theresa began work at General Motors after high school. Between the two, they have been working on cars for more than 75 years.

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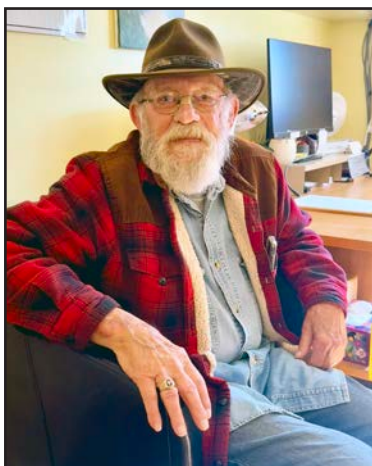
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Active Aging November activities, member 'Takes 10,' and center director bids a fond farewell



You'll regularly find Bob sharing a joke and a smile at the Stockbridge Area Senior Center. Photo credit Stacey Mason

by Stacey Mason

Upcoming SASC activities. At noon on Wednesday, Nov. 19, the Stockbridge Area Senior Center will be holding our free Community Thanksgiving meal (donations are always welcome). At the same time, we will be hosting a craft sale featuring items made by the members of the SASC. A few items to look for: Christmas ornaments, soup mix in a jar, dish scrubbies, bows for decorating or gifts, and more! Come out for a great meal, fellowship, and to shop for the holiday. We can't wait to see you!

Bob Cunningham 'Takes 10.' This month the Stockbridge Area Senior Center is featuring member Bob Cunningham, who agreed to answer 10 "What's Your Take" questions in order for all to get to know him better.

1. Do you drink coffee, tea, or something else in the morning?

Bob: Coffee in the morning and all day! I'll leave here and go home and have more coffee.

2. What's one thing you own you should throw away?

Bob: Old clothes! I have some of my dad's I need to get rid of.

3. Do you prefer apples or oranges?

Bob: Apples, they taste better.

4. What's your earliest memory?

Bob: Playing in the yard at about 4 years old.

5. What's the best sandwich?

Bob: Peanut butter and jelly.

6. What's your favorite memory?

Bob: Catching fish at around 7 years old and playing in a nearby creek.

7. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Bob: Ireland. The pictures look pretty.

8. What's your favorite smell?

Bob: Vicks VapoRub. I rub a cream on my wife's arthritis, and it smells just like Vicks. I love it!

9. What's the scariest animal?

Bob: Grizzly bears. I wouldn't want to run into one!

10. What do you love most about the Stockbridge Area Senior Center?

Bob: The people! I enjoy all the different people.

Next time you stop in the center, you'll find Bob and his wife, Anne, right near the coffee. Both are great center members, always sharing jokes and a smile. Take a look at the SASC Facebook page and you'll spot a nice picture of Bob with his wife, Anne!

On a personal note. As of Oct. 31, I am done as the director of the Stockbridge Area Senior Center. I took this position just over a year ago. Although I knew full well it was a deep pay cut from what I was used to, it sounded both challenging and fun. At the time, my husband and I agreed to give it a year and then evaluate the impact on our finances. Unfortunately, we took more of a hit than expected.

I have loved my time at the Senior Center! The members, staff, and board of directors are all wonderful people. I discovered this town is FULL of wonderful people who are always trying to do a whole lot! Kudos to each one of you!

I want to make one last personal appeal for donations to the Stockbridge Area Senior Center. This center is vital for our older adults and their families. I've had multiple members tell me how grateful they are to have a place to socialize, eat a good meal, and get resources. Please find it in your heart to make a year-end donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, or more. The center needs the community's support to



sustain operations.

Thank you to everyone who welcomed me and helped me be the best director possible!

Stacey Mason is the director of the Stockbridge Area Senior Center (SASC)—a great place to spend time. Visit stockbridgeareaseniors.org or call 517-480-0353 for information.

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STOCKBRIDGE TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2025

Stockbridge Township Supervisor CG Lantis called Stockbridge Township Regular Board Meeting to order on October 20, 2025, at 7:01pm at the Stockbridge Township Hall. Members present at the Stockbridge Township Board Meeting: Supervisor CG Lantis, Treasurer James Wireman, Trustee Ed Wetherell, Trustee Terry Sommer; Member absent Clerk Becky Muraf. Pledge of Allegiance Moment of Silence Wetherell motion to accept the Stockbridge Township meeting agenda as printed Sommer Second All in Favor Motion Carried Citizens' Comments: Discussion Sommer motion to approve Stockbridge Township Board Meeting Minutes for October 7, 2025, as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried Sommer motion to approve Stockbridge Township Board Meeting Minutes for September 15, 2025 as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried Wireman Motion to approve the Stockbridge Township Financial Report as printed, Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried Police update 52 calls for service in the month of September 2025

Memorial Wall – Sommer reported that the Past Township Supervisors will be added to the wall.

Old Business- Special Use for BCI Dumpster Rentals. Board took a break from 8:25 to 8:34. Wireman motion to table to do further research. No support for motion. Motion failed; Wetherell motion, Sommer second to approve the resolution to deny Bell Commercial and Industrial Special Use Permit. Roll Call Vote Sommer Yes, Wireman No, Wetherell Yes, Lantis Yes. Motion Carried

New Business – Sommer motion to approve cleaning pay to \$500 Monthly. Wetherell second. Roll Call Vote Sommer Yes, Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman motion to approve the Building Department Clerk pay to \$17 Hour. Sommer second. Roll Call Vote Sommer Yes, Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried Board discussed police contract. Board discussed 219 Elm flooring Sommer Motion to pay the Stockbridge Township board monthly bills in the amount of \$57,075.95 Wireman Second All in Favor Motion Carried Citizens' Comments: Discussion Lantis adjourns the Stockbridge Township regular board meeting at 9:03 pm BM

Obituary

Carol M. Caroen



Carol M. Caroen
March 16, 1947 to Oct. 18, 2025

Carol M. Caroen, age 78, of Stockbridge, Michigan, passed away peacefully on October 18, 2025, at Faith Haven Care Centre in Jackson, MI, surrounded by the love of her family.

Born on March 16, 1947, Carol spent the last 27 years building a beautiful life in Stockbridge after relocating from Lansing. A talented and dedicated hairdresser, she was self-employed for many years, bringing joy and confidence to others through her work.

Carol was a devoted member of Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian

Catholic Church in Bunker Hill. Her greatest joy came from spending time with her family — especially in the kitchen, where she created cherished memories baking with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She found peace and happiness traveling with her beloved husband, Jack, to their cabin in Grand Marais, a place that brought her closer to nature and the simple joys of life.

Those who knew Carol will remember her as a generous, loving soul who never hesitated to lend a helping hand. She led with kindness and compassion, always the first to volunteer when someone was in need.

On June 13, 1998, Carol married the love of her life, John C. "Jack" Caroen, who survives her. She is also lovingly remembered by her children, Scott (Kimberly) Witgen of Mesa, AZ, Melissa (John) Hruska of Lowell, MI, and Terry (Noelle) Witgen of Rockford, MI; her stepchildren, Tina (Bruce) Brookhouse of Williamston, Rebecca Caroen-Smith of Stockbridge, and Christopher (Tracy) Caroen of Pleasant Lake; nine adored grandchildren; eight precious great-grandchildren; and her sister, Alice Piggot of Lansing.

She was welcomed into eternal life by her parents, James and Patricia Kavanagh and her brothers, Joseph and Donald Kavanagh.

A celebration of Carol's life was held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home in Stockbridge, while burial followed at Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian Catholic Cemetery in Leslie, MI. Family and friends were invited to gather at the funeral home beginning at 10:00 a.m. to share memories and honor her life.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority (SAESA), in gratitude for their dedicated care and service.

Carol's light, love, and laughter will be deeply missed but forever remembered in the hearts of all who knew her.

CATA page 1

When the hospital grant ended, Stockbridge Township went to Ingham County to ask for the \$50,000 needed to fund the program in the next year but was told CATA was already receiving money to service the area, so, request denied.

CATA/CRS presence in Stockbridge

Many residents at the September meeting expressed concern over never having heard of CATA Rural Service, stating that they could not recall ever seeing a CATA bus in the area. But according to CATA, in the past year, they have provided nearly 400 rides to and from Stockbridge. Clients in Stockbridge have traveled to and from Dansville, Mason, Williamston, Webberville, East Lansing, Okemo, Leslie, and Lansing for school, medical appointments, shopping, and leisure trips.

CATA buses, like the WAVE transportation, provide curb-to-curb services to riders and can assist riders who need help getting to their doors safely. CATA buses are ADA compliant and can accommodate a rider with any type of mobility device.

Of course, CATA is only part of the solution. While transportation services typically define themselves by county, our community often defines itself by the school district. In our area, there are seven townships sitting in four counties, so what happens to those needing transportation to a different, nearby county?

Rides to Chelsea via CATA

The biggest concern that residents had is how they were going to get to their appointments in Chelsea, an area that CATA, which serves Ingham County, had not provided service to in the past. At the meeting, a CATA representative stated that residents would be allowed to transfer to the WAVE and continue their trip from there. But a transfer location had not been set up between the two providers. And, many residents were concerned about their own, or a family member's ability to transfer from one service to the other, especially in winter.

Since that September meeting, CATA has stated that it will honor all medical trips for those who previously relied on the WAVE to travel between Stockbridge and Chelsea.

However, CATA does not plan to travel regularly into Washtenaw County for nonmedical trips. CATA's preference is that customers transfer to the WAVE for travel into Chelsea. Both CATA and the WAVE have expressed a willingness to provide transfers from one service to the other, but at the time of this publication, no agreed-upon location has been set. CATA has stated that in the absence of an agreed upon transfer point, it will provide residents rides to Chelsea for essential services like medical appointments and grocery shopping.

Rides to Chelsea via LETS

For those living in Livingston County, transportation is covered by LETS (Livingston Essential Transportation Services). LETS, like the previous WAVE service, offers transportation to anyone traveling within and around their service area regardless of residency.

LETS also travels within a 5-mile radius of the county line, which will allow residents in Gregory and other nearby Livingston County locations to travel to locations in Stockbridge—for example Stockbridge schools—without a transfer to WAVE or CATA. LETS also allows riders to travel outside of the county for medical trips, but will require a transfer for things like grocery shopping. LETS has dedicated staff on hand to help riders book rides requiring transfers and encourages anyone needing a ride outside Livingston County to book a ride as far in advance as possible, up to 30 days.

Stockbridge area is a special case

If all of this seems complicated, that's because it is. Our community is unique in the number of counties and townships it encompasses, and most transportation services were designed to operate within a county, not a school district. The good news is that CATA, WAVE, and LETS have all stated they plan to work with one another to figure out solutions that will work for everyone.

While the Stockbridge community would love to see a seamless service like the previous WAVE service they enjoyed, which crossed county lines there and back, the alternatives seem to be committed to getting residents where they need to go.

By using the services provided, we as a community can help identify where the gaps are and how they need to be filled, which is the first step to better services and maybe achieving more funding.

- **CATA:** You can book a ride with CATA in as little as a day in advance by calling 517-394-2282. CATA runs Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Information on fares and a service map can be found at cata.org.
- **LETS:** To book with LETS, call 517-546-6600. Rides in-county can be made up to two weeks in advance. For those needing trips outside the county, you will be connected with a mobility manager who will help make your trip as smooth as possible. LETS runs Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. and has limited Saturday and Sunday availability. Routes and fares can be found at milivcounty.gov/lets.

Stockbridge Community News will continue to follow this story as it develops. If you have used CATA or LETS to travel and would like to share your experience for a future story, please contact Melissa at melissa@melissamcpherson.com. If you have previously used WAVE and have had to switch to CATA or LETS, we'd love to hear from you as well.

Bridge to Wellness page 17

By acknowledging your feelings, setting healthy expectations, caring for yourself, and focusing on connection over perfection, you can navigate this season with greater ease.

Even small choices toward balance can help you feel more grounded and present this holiday season, which may just be the greatest gift of all!

This column is sponsored by the Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition. Anna Webber, LMSW, is a behavioral health navigator and SRSly Manchester program coordinator for Chelsea Hospital.





S

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STOCKBRIDGE SPORTS

Volleyball team picks up several wins



Zoey Horstman returns a shot for the Panthers. Photo credit Mike Williamson

by Mike Williamson

The Stockbridge volleyball team continues to battle its way through a tough season with districts just around the corner for the Panthers.

Maple Valley. Stockbridge picked up a pair of wins, including a 3-0 Big 8 win over Maple Valley Sept 30.

Zoey Horstman led the Panthers with eight kills, with Alexa Satkowiak chipping in with seven.

Chyanne Lindquist recorded three kills and Maddie Bickley-Ford two. Emma Monaghan had three aces and Infinity Bills two. Kaley Hetrick added two digs.

Michigan Center. On Oct. 9, the Panthers swept Michigan Center 2-0. Satkowiak and Horstman led the way with seven kills each. Lindquist added three kills and Madeline Topping two. Bills recorded six digs and Ava Lucas three, while Monaghan served up four aces.

Pinckney. The Panthers dropped a tough match to Pinckney 0-2 on Oct. 2. Satkowiak had a big night with a team-high 15 kills.

Topping and Melina Sayre had two kills each and Hetrick two digs. Laura Humrich had a team-high nine digs, and Bills six. Monaghan served up three aces.

Jackson. The Panthers also fell to Jackson. Justyna Szycka picked up three kills for the Panthers. Satkowiak added five kills and Sayre two kills. Monaghan chipped in with six digs, Humrich five digs and Lucas three digs.

Stockbridge cross country shows depth and determination through Big 8 season

by Mike Williamson

The Stockbridge cross country program turned in a season of grit and growth across a challenging 2025 fall slate that featured four Big 8 Jamborees, the Hudson and Greater Lansing Invitationals, and the home Stockbridge Invitational. Led by junior William Gancer and freshman Lucy Chapman, both the boys and girls teams steadily improved their times and pack placement as the season unfolded.

Girls team: Chapman and Satkowiak lead consistent pack

The Stockbridge girls opened the Big 8 campaign strong, finishing fourth at Jamboree No. 1 with 115 points on their home course Sept. 23. Freshman Lucy Chapman (22:10.52) led the Panthers, followed by junior Emily Satkowiak (23:18.81). Veterans Zoe Buddenborg (25:29.52) and Shelby OKoney (27:52.78), along with freshman Rachel Avis (28:48.75), who rounded out the scoring five, while Ella Hardesty (32:03.59) added depth in her first varsity start.

The girls competed without a full scoring lineup at the Stockbridge Invitational Sept. 27, but Chapman (22:35.3) and Satkowiak (22:19.2) continued to post consistent mid-22s. Freshman Avis set a personal record (26:17.7), while OKoney (28:21.2) and Hardesty (33:03.12) both improved on their early season marks.

At Big 8 Jamboree No. 2 in Reading Sept. 30, the Panthers repeated their fourth-place finish (110 points), led again by Chapman (23:03.17) and Satkowiak (23:36.75). Buddenborg (27:27.78), OKoney (29:06.75) and Avis (32:17.14) completed the scoring, while Hardesty (34:22.54) continued her steady development.

On Oct. 4, the Hudson Invitational saw the team place 10th (234 points), with Chapman (22:36.70) and Satkowiak (23:20.71) again pacing the Panthers. Buddenborg (26:26.98), Avis (29:33.27) and Hardesty (33:03.12) completed the lineup.

At Big 8 Jamboree No. 3 in Concord Oct. 7, Stockbridge had its best all-around day of the season—fourth place (107 points) with three personal bests. Chapman ran a season-best 21:28.16 and Satkowiak was close behind in 22:00.81. Buddenborg (25:20.79, personal record) and OKoney (25:56.68, personal record) both broke their previous bests. Avis (27:14.71) and Hardesty (30:32.88) rounded out the lineup.

At the Greater Lansing Invitational Oct. 11, the team did not have enough runners to score but continued to shine individually. Chapman (21:30.70) and Satkowiak (21:57.70) both turned in season-best marks, while Avis (26:47.10) continued her strong freshman campaign.

On Oct. 14, the Panthers wrapped up the Big 8 season at Maple Valley (Jamboree No. 4) with another strong fourth-place finish (125 points). Chapman (21:53.85) and Satkowiak (21:57.26) once again led the way. Avis (28:32.74) and Hardesty (30:27.32) finished the season with their best consistency of the year.

See Cross country on page 23.

Soccer team claims first league title in school history



The Stockbridge soccer team won the first soccer league title in school history with a 2-1 win over Bronson to clinch the Big 8 title. Photo credit Russ Rowe

by Mike Williamson

The Stockbridge soccer team made history this season by winning the Big 8 Conference title for the first soccer league championship in school history.

On Oct. 6, the Panthers pulled out a hard-fought 2-1 win over Bronson to finish 5-1 in the Big 8 and clinch the league title.

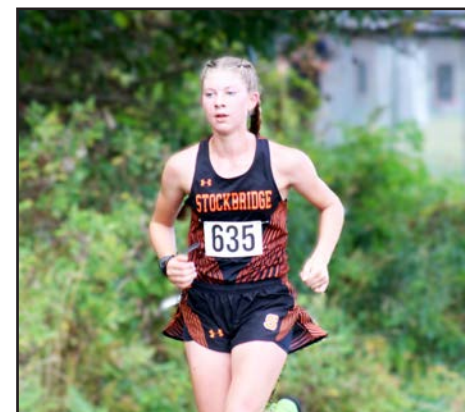
Stockbridge closed out the season by winning four of its last five before falling to Jackson Christian 8-0 in the first round of districts Oct 8.

The Panthers defeated Maple Valley 4-1 on Sept. 22, Quincy 2-1 on Sept. 29 and Pottersville 2-1 on Oct. 1 before the title-clinching win over Bronson.

Koen Hill and Daniel Villegas finished as the team's leading scorers for the season.

Goalkeeper John Fox was stellar in net for the Panthers over the final two weeks when Stockbridge allowed just one goal in four of the last five regular season games.

Stockbridge finished 6-13 overall on the season.



Freshman Lucy Chapman was the top finisher for the Panthers girls cross country team at the Stockbridge Invitational. Photo credits Mike Williamson



Sophomore Alex Avis, of the Panthers boys cross country team, battles for position with a Quincy runner at the Stockbridge Invitational.

STOCKBRIDGE SPORTS

Stockbridge football team wins 3 of last 4 games



Brandon Hamlett, shown here in a game with Union City, rushed for 300 yards and six touchdowns in the Panthers 64-32 win over Sand Creek. Photo credit Mike Williamson

by Mike Williamson

The Stockbridge Panthers have turned around their 2025 football campaign with a powerful mix of explosive offense, defensive grit, and late-season toughness, winning three of their final four games to improve to 4-4 overall and finish 4-2 in the Big 8.

Panthers explode past Sand Creek

Stockbridge rolled to a 64-32 home victory over Sand Creek Oct. 17, fueled by a record-breaking night on the ground. The Panthers racked up an incredible 511 rushing yards, setting the tone for their identity as a physical, high-tempo offense.

Senior quarterback Noah Sandecki threw for 63 yards and a touchdown, while adding 122 yards and a rushing score. Senior running back Brandon Hamlett was unstoppable, rushing for

300 yards and six touchdowns on 19 carries, averaging more than 15 yards per touch.

Evan Lockhart added 46 rushing yards and a touchdown, while Aidan Bradley contributed 57 receiving yards and a touchdown on two catches. Jayson Conant chipped in 6 receiving yards, and seven different players recorded rushing attempts in the victory.

Defensively, Domenic Ciminelli and Hamlett each had seven tackles, while Wesley Recchy, Noah Beauregard and Sandecki anchored the front. Eric Allison and Kameryn Gross each tallied a sack, and Bradley recovered a fumble. Stockbridge's defense held firm late, keeping Sand Creek off the board in the fourth quarter.

Panthers rally past Reading

Stockbridge delivered another impressive performance with a 32-20 win over Reading Sept. 26. The Panthers used a balanced attack and a strong second half to take control of the game.

Freshman quarterback Elijah Muzzin opened the scoring with a 24-yard touchdown pass to Conant. After Reading pulled ahead 14-6, Sandecki responded with a 30-yard strike to Conant before halftime.

Sandecki took over after the break, rushing for touchdowns of 5 and 62 yards while tossing another score to Conant. He finished 5-for-5, passing for 53 yards and two touchdowns, adding 127 yards and two rushing TDs. Muzzin added 24 passing yards and a touchdown.

Conant caught five passes for 76 yards and three touchdowns, and Hamlett ran for 94 yards on 12 carries.

On defense, Beauregard recorded seven tackles and a tackle for loss, while Cordero intercepted two passes and Hamlett added one more. Stockbridge's defense forced three turnovers and shut down Reading's offense through the second half to secure the win.

Springport stifles Stockbridge

On Oct. 3, the Panthers ran into one of the area's top teams and fell to Springport 53-0. Despite the setback, Stockbridge continued to battle throughout the contest.

Quarterbacks Sandecki and Muzzin combined for 88 passing yards, with Sandecki throwing for 62 yards and Hamlett leading the ground game with 49 yards. Conant hauled in three catches for 42 yards, and Sandecki added two for 26. Grant Howlett and Bradley also contributed receptions.

Defensively, Beauregard led the team with 12 tackles and two for loss. Ciminelli added 10 and Hamlett finished with eight. Though outmatched, the Panthers' effort never wavered, setting the tone for a strong finish to the year.

Stockbridge pulls out win at Maple Valley

The Panthers pulled out a hard-fought 20-13 road win over Maple Valley Oct. 10, grinding out a physical game that tested both teams in the trenches.

Sandecki led the offense, completing 10-of-16 passes for 165 yards and two touchdowns, while rushing 14 times for 77 yards. Hamlett added 17 yards and a touchdown on 12 carries, and the passing attack featured five different receivers.

Lockhart made a key impact with two receptions for 69 yards and a touchdown, while Conant caught three passes for 49 yards and a score. Bradley, Hamlett and Howlett also contributed to the air game.

Defensively, Hamlett led with eight tackles, followed by Ciminelli (7), Beauregard (6) and Sandecki (6). Xavier Zimmerman recorded an interception, while Conant, Cody Asquith and Ciminelli each recovered fumbles as Stockbridge forced four turnovers to seal the win.

The Panthers wrapped up their regular season Oct. 24 with a home game against White Pigeon and slim hopes of a state playoff spot with a win.

Cross Country page 22

Boys team: Gancer's dominance sparks Panthers

The Stockbridge boys opened their Big 8 campaign with a sixth-place finish (127 points) at Jamboree No. 1 Sept. 23, led by William Gancer's individual victory (17:01.80). Sophomore Alex Avis (20:07.77) and classmates Steven Karowich (22:05.01) and John Fox (22:40.09) formed a solid core, with freshman Owen Peckham (22:06.90) and Wyatt OKoney (24:14.94) rounding out the team.

At the Stockbridge Invitational Sept. 27, Gancer finished seventh overall in 16:43.9, leading the Panthers to 19th place (486 points). Avis (20:22.5), Karowich (21:28.2), Peckham (21:28.8), OKoney (25:01.5) and Owen Cipta (31:59.3) completed the lineup.

The team climbed to fifth (127 points) at Big 8 Jamboree No. 2 Sept. 30, again paced by Gancer (18:00.04, second place). Avis (21:04.65), Karowich (22:30.87), Peckham (22:32.24) and Fox (23:22.76) scored. Gavin Suter (23:53.64) and OKoney (25:29.44) added depth.

At the Hudson Invitational Oct. 4, Gancer captured first place in 16:51.19, his second invitational win of the year. Avis (21:39.19), Karowich (22:14.06), Peckham (22:14.06) and OKoney (27:12.11) secured a 16th-place team finish (356 points).

The Panthers continued their climb with a fifth-place showing (125 points) at Jamboree No. 3 in Concord Oct. 7. Gancer finished runner-up (17:09.66), while Avis (19:40.22), Karowich (21:39.16), Peckham (21:41.64) and Fox (23:15.66) made up the scoring five. OKoney (23:23.06) and Cipta (29:33.51, season record) also competed.

On Oct. 11 at Greater Lansing, Stockbridge delivered one of its most complete races. Gancer clocked a personal-record 16:33.8 for 26th overall in a massive field. Avis (19:27.7, personal record), Peckham (20:37.1, personal record), Karowich (20:37.1, personal record), OKoney (22:56.0, personal record) and Cipta (30:02.5) all posted season- or career-best marks.

The team wrapped up the Big 8 schedule Oct. 14 at Maple Valley (Jamboree No. 4) with another fifth-place team finish (134 points). Gancer placed second again (17:10.06), while Avis (20:18.48), Peckham (20:52.83), Fox (22:22.35, personal record), OKoney (23:09.19), Suter (23:09.59, season record) and Cipta (31:17.39) closed out the scoring season.

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