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Meet the two newest members of the Stockbridge School Board



James "Jimmy" Chapman



Justin Richardson

compiled by Mary Jo David

(Editor's Note: James "Jimmy" Chapman and Justin Richardson were sworn in as new board of education trustees in January.)

Introducing school board member James "Jimmy" Chapman

Hello Stockbridge friends! I am one of the new board of education trustees. My appreciation of education could not be greater. For a portion of my over 20-year career in the construction industry, I was heavily involved with training. As a training instructor I helped train new apprentices and journeypersons in the skills, knowledge and attitudes for success in the commercial trades.

My wife and I have five children, two of whom have graduated, one is graduating this year, and the younger two over the next few years. We also work together on a small farm, raising chickens, goats, cattle, horses, and a fair amount of hay. We attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Chelsea and enjoy serving in the community.

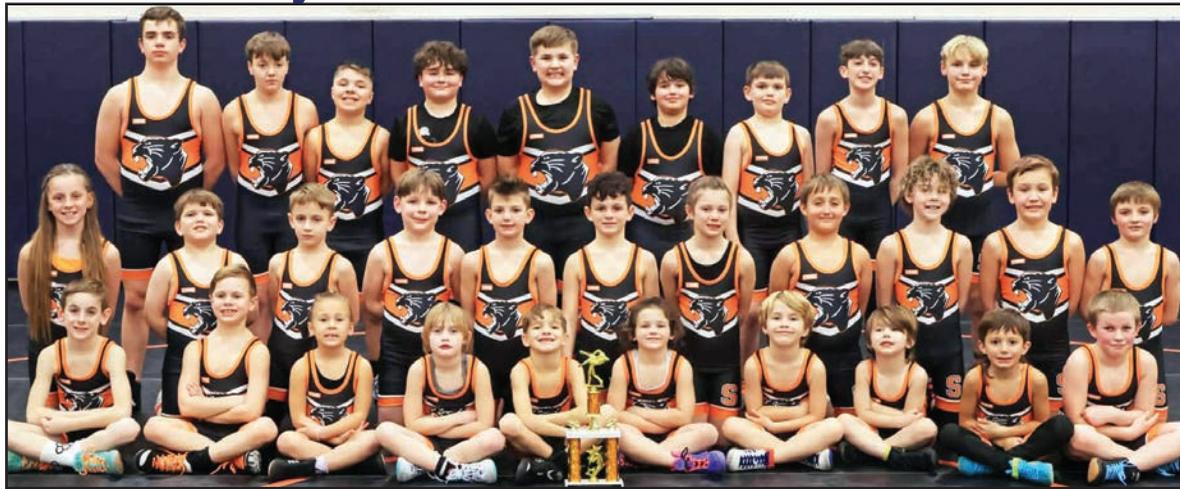
In my new role as a trustee, I will strive to be an instrument in wise decision-making, keeping the education of all our children the priority to the best of my ability and the ability of the school district. As we, the Stockbridge community, seek out common ground and work together, we will help our children succeed in whatever path life chooses. See you around and Go Panthers!

Introducing school board member Justin Richardson

A lifelong Stockbridge resident, I am proud to be a new member of the Stockbridge School Board. Drawing on more than 12 years working at Consumers Energy, I bring strong skills in forecasting, budgeting, negotiation, and cross department collaboration—experience that supports responsible resource management and student success.

See School Board on page 7.

Stockbridge Mayhem youth wrestling takes third in Mayhem Madness Tournament



The Stockbridge Mayhem Wrestling Club is made up of students in grades K through 8, many of whom hope to qualify for the MyWay States competition. Photo credit Double D Image Creations

by Melissa McPherson

Over 500 wrestlers, from 43 different clubs in and around Michigan came to Stockbridge on Jan. 11 to compete in Mayhem Madness, the first-ever MyWay tournament hosted by the Stockbridge Mayhem Wrestling Club.

See Mayhem Wrestling on page 15.

Shifting seasons as we welcome the vernal equinox, or first day of spring



During the vernal equinox, the amount of daylight equals the amount of darkness across the world. Photo credit Diane Constable

the amount of daylight and warmer temperatures will increase in the Northern Hemisphere, while these same will decrease in the Southern Hemisphere. The word "vernal" comes from the Latin word for spring ("ver"), and "equinox" means equal night.

Historically many nationalities and religions celebrate this change of season as the beginning of a new year, complete with celebrations and festivals to acknowledge the return of the sun, the beginning of the growing season, and a time of renewal. The Druid structure of Stonehenge in England is an example of an ancient structure built to celebrate the vernal equinox, as is the Mayan pyramid found in Yucatan, Mexico.

The Chinese believed that if you were to balance a raw egg on its end on the day of the spring equinox, it would be a sign that all of nature was in harmony.

But there is more to this annual astrological occurrence.

See Equinox on page 15.

by Diane Constable

We are quickly approaching March 20, the date of this year's vernal equinox, also known as the first day of spring. It is the date upon which the amount of daylight equals the amount of darkness across the world. The sun rises true east, parallel to the equator, and sets true west. Due to the orbit and the tilt of the earth,



2026 Women of Note: See pages 4-6 to celebrate these women who make a difference in our community.

Outreach Meal of the Month: See page 8 for this program that is back by popular demand.

Community Calendar: See page 9 for March events.

Stockbridge Sports continue to dominate: See pages 10-11.

Festival of Tables 2026 Auction: See page 15 for information on this year's online auction.

Coming Home 2026: See page 20.

Rural Perspectives: Melodious song sparrows sing mostly year round



Diane Gray Constable

by Diane Constable

The song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) is our most common native sparrow—and most vocal. Its scientific name is ancient Greek for "song finch, melodious." This sparrow is found throughout the country—with some variations in appearance—in more than 30 known subspecies across North America. Those in our area have a streaky breast with a notable dark spot in the center. They also have a dark russet-colored stripe behind their eyes and two on the "cap" of their head.

Song sparrows are mostly year-round residents but may go a bit south during hard winters. They are often seen at bird feeders and also feed on the ground by walking around kicking backward through the vegetation to uncover food. Like most sparrows, they eat a wide variety of food. In winter, they eat seeds such as ragweed, clover, buckwheat and sunflower. In warmer weather, they like



small fruits and insects, spiders, snails and worms.

Come spring, the males can be seen and heard singing with head thrown back near the top of small trees and shrubs. They can have more than 20 songs, and the female can recognize its mate's song from the others. They all can recognize the slight variations of their neighbors' songs.

The nests are found on the ground and up to 15 feet high, in grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees, sometimes close to houses. The female builds the 4-to-8-inch

Song sparrows in our area have streaky breasts with a dark center spot. They feature a russet stripe behind the eyes and two on the "cap." Photo credit Diane Constable nest made of grasses and fur. She lays up to six eggs, with two to three broods per year. The blue-green eggs hatch in about two weeks. Ten days later, the chicks leave the nest, although the parents keep a close eye on them for another three weeks until they can take care of themselves. Song sparrows will grow to be 5 to 6.5 inches with a wingspan between 7 and 9 inches, and weigh a whopping 1 to 2 ounces. They can live up to 11 years.

Fun Fact: Song sparrows living close to humans can become very friendly and have been known to be trained to come to bird feeders at the ring of a bell.

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.

Bridge to Wellness

Wellness Coalition pursues feedback and ideas, announces new board members

by Matt Pegouskie

In January, 37 community members joined Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition (SAWC) to learn more about what the coalition does, its history, and how people can get involved with coalition planning and activities.

The evening started with pizza from four different restaurateurs in the Stockbridge service area and music provided by Paul Crandall. People then had an opportunity to network with each other and the 5 Healthy Towns Foundation (5HF) to explore ways the coalition and greater community could work together to create projects that address "Eating Better, Moving More, and Improved Mental Well-Being."

A quick presentation by 5HF highlighted where SAWC has been, how it works, and where it would like to go.

See *Wellness Coalition* on page 18.



In January, community members joined the Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition at a Meet, Greet and Eat event to learn about the coalition's past activities and future plans. Photo provided by Matt Pegouskie

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Clyde Whitaker

Clyde's Corner

'Dad, I cut my hand': A look back to 1967

by Clyde Whitaker

My story this month should resonate with all of you who worked on the Krummrey Farm in Stockbridge at one time or another, while providing insight to others not familiar with life on a muck farm.

In the summer of 1967, I was 12 years old. Ever since I was 8 years old, I had worked with my dad on the Krummrey Farm, and the summer of '67 was no different. Up at 6 a.m., ready to work on the farm by 7 a.m. All summer long.

On one particularly hot day in July of '67, I was on my knees crawling in the burning black muck, topping onions into a crate. "Topping onions" was a process that involved pulling out a handful of onions, by their stems, from the muck. You'd then use sharp hand shears to cut the onion heads off the stems, letting the onions fall into a crate until it was full. The object was to fill as many crates as you could, as fast as you could; the more crates, the more money!

The year 1967 also was the year when The Doors released their hit song "Light My Fire." It was this song that was blasting out of someone's transistor radio that day while I was topping onions.

Then it happened. I was multi-tasking. I pulled up a big handful of onions from the muck, while at the same time, looking over at the girls in the next row. As I continued looking at the girls, I ran the sharp cutting shears through the onion stems.

My left hand started feeling warm. Looking down at my hand, it was no wonder. Blood was gushing from the whole side of my hand where I had run the sharp cutting shears right through it. Dropping the shears, I immediately ran over to my dad, holding my bloody left hand up in the air. Dad was shaken and instructed Don Krummrey to take me up to see Doctor Beckwith in town for stitches. With my hand wrapped up in my dad's red handkerchief, uptown we went.

Doctor Beckwith cleaned out my wound then proceeded to numb my hand with a long needle inserted along the cut line. That brought tears to my eyes. Man, it hurt so bad! The good news was, it was worth it. When he stitched up my hand with a needle and thread, I didn't feel a thing, lol. This whole event sidelined me for a bit, but I was eventually able to go back and finish out the summer.

Other items of note from 1967: The Apollo 1 fire disaster that killed astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee. Major riots occurred in Detroit. Super Bowl I was played in L.A. And the first human heart transplant occurred in South Africa.

The Beatles 1967 album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was released that year. Protests about the Vietnam War still persisted. On television, "The Andy Griffith Show" was the top-rated program. The movie "The Graduate" was released, and Rolling Stone magazine was launched. Last, but not least, gas was about 33 cents per gallon—wow!

Well, there you go my friends. A little of this and a little of that to see you through another month. Stay well.

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.



Located just south of Stockbridge, the brown area pictured here was a muck field back in the day. It also was the field where Clyde Whitaker cut his hand in the summer of 1967. Photo credit Clyde Whitaker

The brilliant young engineer behind Dexter's famous stone viaduct

by Doug Marrin

Reprinted with permission from *The Sun Times News*, Feb. 2, 2026. Note: This article was originally published on Aug. 10, 2022.

Author's note: February is Black History Month, a time to honor the achievements, resilience, and lasting contributions of Black Americans whose stories continue to shape our shared history and future.

The railroad bridge over Dexter-Pinckney Road leading out of Dexter is a civil engineering marvel designed by a brilliant 25-year-old UM graduate, Frederick B. Pelham.

Dexter's stone viaduct is known for more than one reason. Trucks often get stuck beneath the archway made for horses and buggies. However, Dexter's infamous truck trap might not be catching vehicles today if it weren't for Charles Warner's cow that gave birth on Sunday morning, March 20, 1887.

When Charles Warner didn't go to church that morning, his parents grew worried. The Dexter Leader reported what happened next in its March 3, 1887, edition:

"A sad and fatal accident which has cast a pall of gloom over the entire community, occurred in our village between the hours of three and four o'clock last Sunday afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Warner had started to call on their son Charles whose residence is a short distance across the rail road [sic] track west of the village; as they reached the crossing the Limited Express, (west), running at 45 miles an hour, came suddenly around the curve and signalled for the crossing. Mr. and Mrs. Warner were then crossing. Mr. Warner being slightly in the advance, passed over in safety, but Mrs. Warner evidently became slightly confused, hesitated an instant, and just as she stepped from the track was struck by the pilot of the locomotive, throwing her head against the cylinder, crushing her skull and killing her instantly."

The "pilot" of the locomotive refers to the cowcatcher, not the engineer. The day after the accident, an inquest determined the railroad was not at fault. The Dexter Leader reported on March 28 that the community was so grieved by the tragedy the businesses closed on the day of the funeral.

See Dexter bridge on page 16.



Frederick Pelham stands atop the completed arch over Mill Creek in Dexter, MI. Photo from literature of Michigan Central Railroad.

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Movie: 6-7 PM (brief discussion to follow)

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Celebrating Women of Note

March is
Women's History
Month

Booster, Lion, coach, board member: Lyn St. Dennis wears many hats well in serving her community

by Mary Jo David

Camping is what attracted one of this year's Women of Note to our area. Lyn St. Dennis and her husband, Mike, landed in Unadilla Township by way of Waterford and then Ann Arbor, where Lyn worked at the Veterans Hospital. Eventually, the couple purchased 10 acres and built their home on Kaiser Road very near Bruin Lake State Park.

In the almost 50 years since moving to the area, Lyn has made her mark in the community in a myriad of ways.

Both she and Mike coached T-ball and youth soccer (a sport Lyn admitted to learning as they coached!). With their young sons, Chris and Andy, involved in sports, "Athletic boosters was our first foray into belonging to a group in the area," Lyn said. "Schools were struggling to pay for sports."

Boosters bingo was a major fundraiser for the school sports program. "It was nothing to have 100 people on a Saturday night for bingo," Lyn recalled.

Lyn reminisced fondly about the accomplishments of the club at a time when she was treasurer.

"Boosters fundraising back then earned close to \$50,000 a year. That's how we raised the money for the Stockbridge football field and the track."

In the late 1980s, the international Lions Club began to admit women as members. After their youngest son, Andy, graduated from high school, Lyn joined husband Mike in the Lions Club.

One thing became clear early in the conversation with Lyn—neither she nor Mike are likely to take on passive roles when they volunteer.

"Mike was president for a while, and we both did a stint as scholarship chairpersons," Lyn said. Even now, almost 30 years after their initial involvement, Lyn continues as program treasurer for the Lions Foundation and Mike is secretary.

"Over the years, our local Lions did Sundays with Santa, the scholarship program, a pulled pork tent at All Clubs Day, and the Easter Egg Hunt. But our club is aging, so we've scaled back somewhat," Lyn explained.

Don't be fooled by the term "scaling back," because as it happens, the leaner, local Lions still manage to collect donations on annual White Cane Days, organize the annual Easter Egg Hunt, collect trash along designated local highways three times per year, and host a December auction dinner with proceeds going to Christmas shopping for adoptive families through Stockbridge Area Outreach.

See St. Dennis on page 6.

Gwen Reid helps the community provide food, services, and compassion with a smile

by Mary Jo David

Recognizing those who run Stockbridge Community Outreach is not easy. Everyone wants to remain in the background so Outreach as a whole can be recognized—and rightly so. Outreach does so much good in the community; the nearly 50 volunteers, including its board, all deserve recognition.

But there's something to be said for those who keep Outreach not just afloat, but thriving. To that end, we were able to finally convince Outreach Executive Director Gwen Reid to be featured as one of the 2026 Women of Note.

For the few who might not know, Stockbridge Community Outreach is a nonprofit food pantry and crisis center serving those who live within the Stockbridge School District boundaries.

"So much of what I oversee was set up by Karen Smith before I took over in 2021, or it is handled by Lori Hendrick, who is our volunteer coordinator and so much more. Really, I feel as though my job is just to maintain; I'm a 'carry-on-er,'" Gwen said with a chuckle!

Au contraire! Those who work closely with her see so much more as Gwen has made the executive director role her own.

Outreach board chairperson Jo Mayer adds perspective, "Gwen 'maintains' an ever-changing cast of volunteers, donors and clients—all while overseeing a budget of over \$150,000—and ensures grant protocols and deadlines are met. She orders food and supplies to keep our pantry and TMO program stocked. She helps bring special programs like the Meal of the Month, Mobile Health Clinics and parent-child playgroups to the area. All this is in addition to her main job of assisting people in crisis."

Before joining Outreach, Gwen was a social worker for Community Mental Health in Lansing for 32 years. As a caseworker, she visited people in their homes in rural communities like Stockbridge, Webberville, and Leslie. She retired in 2019 and began volunteering with Outreach.

See Reid on page 6.



Lyn (right) and Mike St. Dennis continue to enjoy very active lives—often with friends and family. Here they are pictured on a ski trip out West in 2016. Photo provided by Lyn St. Dennis



Outreach Executive Director Gwen Reid welcomes clients, volunteers, and donors with her warm and caring manner. Photo provided by Gwen Reid

Celebrating Women of Note

March is
Women's History
Month

Kim Killinger leads by example from the front office, church or in the community

by **Melissa McPherson**

Kim Killinger is an organizer. In her role as secretary at Stockbridge Jr./Sr. High School, she is relied upon daily for her organization skills and follow-through.

Although it's not in her job description, the Stockbridge Community News regularly benefits from Kim's super power. Whether preparing for the newspaper's extensive coverage of the annual high school Honors Night evening, planning the layout of the multi-page senior class photo spread every year, or just verifying random names and details for various high school events the newspaper regularly covers—SCN counts on Kim, and Kim never disappoints.

Over the years, Kim has been active with the Chamber of Commerce, Athletic Boosters, and the Panther Cubs PTO. She currently serves as a student council adviser at the high school and has previously supported student-led service efforts, including a pro-life group that participated in volunteer work.

Kim is also deeply involved at her church in Williamston. For several years, she served as the children's ministry director, where she helped rebuild programs following COVID shutdowns. She is also part of a team that organizes outreach events, including a Harvest Festival each October and other family-centered gatherings. Allen Berger, pastor at the Free Methodist Church in Williamston, has seen, firsthand, the love Kim has for her community.

"Kim is one of the most caring, giving, loving people I know. She loves people deeply, and she will sacrifice greatly to help others. She does that with joy; she does it behind the scenes in so many ways, and she is just an amazing woman. I am so fortunate to know her," he says.

Small in stature, this is a woman who puts faith and family first. She can often be found in the stands, cheering for her son and his friends at a game. Family has always been at the center of Kim's life. She and her husband, Jeremy, will celebrate 28 years of marriage this October. The couple met as teenagers after Kim moved to Stockbridge at the end of her eighth grade year. Jeremy lived just a mile up the road and was in the same grade as her brother.

"He says the first time he saw me, he knew I was the girl he was going to marry," Kim says.

See Killinger on page 6.

Willah Weddon: Pioneer journalist and devoted mother

by **Alex Weddon, Amy Tomlin, and Patrice Johnson**

Willah lived with grace, grit, and a gentle sense of humor.

Our mom—Willah Weddon—was pretty cool. She, like all our neighbors along Dexter Trail and Brogan Road, made do with what she had. Willah could ride a horse, drive a tractor, bottle-feed orphan lambs, and manage a clutch of five curious children on the 80-acre farm outside Stockbridge—all while producing syndicated journalism that reached 17 states.

She was, in the truest sense, a Michigan original.

Roots in Oakland County. Willah Mary Skinner was born Sept. 1, 1922, to a family whose surnames still mark mailboxes in White Lake Township—Skinner, Jones, Marshall, and Fisk—names remembered, too, at the Kelley-Fisk Farm Museum. Valedictorian of her Comstock High School class, she went on to graduate from Western Michigan University. Her father held steady work during the Depression, an experience that shaped her lifelong sense of duty to those less fortunate and her gratitude for small blessings.

The warmth of home. Coming inside during winter with cheeks stung red, we kids knew hot cocoa awaited. Summer meals revolved around garden harvests from a plot eldest son Todd and Mom cultivated. Our Victorian farmhouse brimmed with plants grown from seed—including Mom's avocado tree, sprouted from its pit, inching toward the living room ceiling.

Mom was a champion debater in high school, and she passed that love of careful thinking to her children. Todd and Patrice competed at Stockbridge High School, and lively discussions around the oak dining table ranged from politics to physics.

Never a person to complain, Willah looked at life through good-natured, observant blue eyes. She appreciated a dip in Jones Lake, a flickering campfire, and a child's laughter.

"If you can't say something nice," she'd remind us, "don't say anything at all."

Breaking into the Press Corps. Willah Weddon was the first woman admitted to the Capital Press Corps in Lansing in the early 1970s. The press room was, in those days, a cigar-smoking men's club. She was denied access to the room and a space to type. No mail slot bore her name.

See Weddon on page 13.



Kim Killinger, in red, gathers with her family last Christmas. Pictured, l to r: Kim's son Evan, daughter Alexis, husband Jeremy, daughter Peyton and son-in-law Jeremy Pilch. Photo provided by Kim Killinger



In 1994, the Michigan Legislature passed a joint resolution honoring Willah Weddon as Michigan's Woman of the Year. Photo provided by Alex Weddon

Celebrating Women of Note

March is
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Month

St. Dennis page 4

"This year we raised money through our auction to buy Christmas gifts for a family of 10 and a family of 11," Lyn said.

Up until last fall, Lyn served on the board of the Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation (SAEF) and continues to assist with the SAEF annual online auctions. She also has coached middle school girls basketball and volleyball and high school golf for girls and boys.

In recollecting all of this community involvement as part of the interview process, Lyn admits that the volunteering she is most proud of is the 15 years she spent coaching eighth grade girls volleyball, which later morphed into helping run the community recreation coed adult volleyball program prior to the COVID pandemic.

As a coach, she didn't believe in cutting girls during a tryout process, and the one time she had to do that, she hated it.

"I was a tomboy growing up, and as a mom, I raised two boys. But I remember what it was like to be a girl at that age. As a middle school coach, I felt it was my job to teach girls how to be confident at a time when their self esteem was so fragile. And who's to say someone can't develop skills and become a better player just because a tryout didn't go well," said this intuitive coach.

Emily Lindstrom grew up in Stockbridge and played on one of Lyn's eighth grade volleyball teams.

"Lyn was an inspiring coach," recalls Lindstrom. "It was not about the win but about doing your personal best. If we made a mistake, she wouldn't get upset, she just encouraged us to make it up later in the game. That advice still sticks with me today."

Lyn realizes that coaching was good for her, too. "The year I coached basketball was the year our son Andrew was diagnosed with schizophrenia. It was a tough time. After that, the years coaching volleyball were good for me on so many levels. It helped me to grow as a person, too."

As she considers what volunteering has done for her, she encourages others to do their part.

"Volunteering is a great way to meet people and make friends. Initially you might not think you have the time—we were busy working and raising kids—but you just do what you can do," Lyn said.

Whether at work, at home, or out in the community, Lyn St. Dennis believes you have to have fun and enjoy the people you are with.

"I measure my success through my relationships with others. I like to help make things happen—not just for myself, but for everybody."

Photos provided by Lyn St. Dennis. See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Killinger page 5

Together they have three children: Alexis, 24; Peyton, 22, who has been married for nearly a year and a half; and Evan, 15, a freshman who keeps his parents busy with school sports, including basketball and football.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Kim's family moved to Stockbridge because of her father's job with the airlines at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Before deciding to relocate, for years, her dad commuted six hours each weekend to be home with his family.

While most would not consider Stockbridge a large district, after attending a small private school, the larger public school felt overwhelming to Kim at first.

"I was really quiet," she recalls. "I kind of kept to myself and had just a few friends."

Sports helped her find her place. Kim played volleyball and ran track, gradually becoming more involved in school life, especially when she began dating Jeremy, who played football and baseball.

After high school, Kim attended Baker College, earning an associate degree in accounting and a bachelor's degree in business management with a concentration in accounting. She and Jeremy left Stockbridge for a short time, settling on some family land in Fowlerville, but they never truly left, for years Kim drove her kids to Stockbridge every day for school.

"I liked the smaller community, and we were so much a part of it already because Jeremy was coaching. For many years I would say that we lived in Stockbridge and slept in Fowlerville."

When Alexis was in second grade, the family decided to move back to Stockbridge.

When she is not attending games and church, or serving her community, Kim loves to bake. She runs a small business called Sweet Creations by Kim that specializes in chocolate covered treats and cake pops.

As she considers what she is most proud of, Kim doesn't point to a single accomplishment.

See Killinger on page 12.

Reid page 4

As a young person, she spent considerable time with her grandmother on Joslin Lake. Later she and her husband, Dan, raised their daughter, Christine, in Eaton Rapids; then Gwen and her husband moved to Joslin Lake.

So what prompts someone to leave a career in social work to take on the challenges of a community outreach program?

"I've always worked with disabled people and the underserved. Finding them help and getting them on a path forward is so important," Gwen said. "I knew before coming to Outreach that 'the system' is difficult to work through. So many people give up rather than get the help they need."

Outreach is a safe place where people can come and talk about their needs with staff who try to help.

"It's through casual conversations here that we learn maybe someone needs diabetic supplies," Gwen said. "So we say, 'Hey—do you have Medicaid? You can get them delivered to your door.' The more we talk, we find out the person is eligible for Social Security but didn't know how to apply. With our help, they now have health care and an income each month. It wasn't instantaneous, but we helped them gain stability."

The stories are endless—people are doing well one minute and suddenly lose a source of income. Or they have a regular job but it doesn't pay enough to feed their family. Or, for whatever reason, they can't pay for groceries or an electric bill. Christmas is huge—so many just want to know their kids will have a good holiday.

"I love that when someone comes in, volunteers make them feel good. Outreach is a friendly, social place. People feel they fit in here," Gwen said.

Outreach volunteer Paul Crandall thinks Gwen has a lot to do with the organization's welcoming atmosphere. "Her warm and caring manner and sense of humor have given her many, many admirers. So capable, conscientious and hard-working, too. Outreach is just extraordinarily lucky to have her at the center of things."

So much is free at Outreach. The weekly Wednesday (fondly referred to as "Gwensday") pop-up food distribution that typically serves 100-plus families per week, the store with clothes and household items—all free.

"I tell high schoolers about it, but it takes some coaxing to get them here. Thrift and vintage shopping are popular right now, so why not drop by Outreach and see what we have to offer?"

Financial assistance and once-a-month shopping at the inside pantry require clients to qualify.

Outreach operates on grant monies and donations. Gwen is responsible for ensuring the grants get written and donations keep coming. Chelsea Hospital Community Benefit Program covers many of Outreach's operating expenses. Other financial help and food purchases rely on donations from the community. And all of it is appreciated.

"My job is the best; I have a great seat," Gwen remarks. "I get to interact with all those who come in to support Outreach with donations, and I also get to talk with those who come in for help. They're always very thankful, but I tell them, 'Don't thank me, thank the community; our community takes care of its neighbors.'"

All photos provided by Gwen Reid and Jo Mayer. See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

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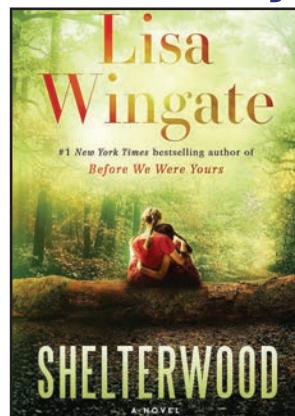
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Reading Between the Lines In 'Shelterwood,' alternating timelines eventually lead to a satisfying conclusion

by Mary Jo David



"Shelterwood" was picked for me. That is to say, upon agreeing to lead the next month's book club discussion, I thought it best to read the book first!

Although I was familiar with author Lisa Wingate, I was not aware of this particular book in her list of works. In fact, I had only read one previous title by Wingate, and that was "Before We Were Yours." While my recollections of that book had become fuzzy over time, I remembered enough to look forward to reading another of her books.

Reading about injustice is hard. Reading about injustice as it pertains to young children is even harder. Stay with the story to see how the pieces come together.
 Image credit Amazon.com

My first inclination is to assign "Shelterwood" a genre of historical fiction, yet I am also inclined to think of it as more of a modern-day mystery. That's because, in true Wingate fashion, the book was written with alternating timelines—regularly shifting between occurrences that took place in 1909 and those that happened in 1990. My frustration with this nonlinear approach caused me to research "Shelterwood" reviews to see how other readers felt about being transported—chapter by chapter—back and forth through time. My nonscientific survey determined that I wasn't the only one frustrated with the jarring time changes. But like me, many of the reviewers ultimately succumbed to the style and continued reading. And those who did generally awarded the book with four stars.

Two things became obvious to me as I was reading "Shelterwood": I knew next to nothing about Oklahoma's statehood and geography, and the tiny bit I knew about the Osage Nation and how these people were used for their oil rights could fill a thimble. I credit Wingate with doing a thorough job researching the book, so that in the end, I came away feeling much more knowledgeable about Oklahoma and the Osage.

"Shelterwood" focuses on two different women—Valerie Boren-Odell (or "Val"), a modern-day National Park Service law enforcement ranger, and Olive Augusta Peele (or "Ollie Auggie Radley"), a precocious, bordering on high-handed, 11-year-old whose world fell apart when her father disappeared and her mother remarried.

When the bones of young children are found in a cave in a soon-to-be-opened national park in Oklahoma's Winding Stair Mountains, Boren-Odell is driven to try and solve the mystery against all odds. While readers can certainly sympathize with Boren-Odell's challenges, I'm inclined to believe that more are invested in the struggles of Ollie Auggie and the small band of orphans she is trying to save. Considering that each chapter ends with something akin to a cliffhanger, that adds up to a lot of challenges and struggles.

One common thread woven throughout all the chapters in "Shelterwood," is that every chapter begins with an excerpt from a variety of actual historical references like congressional hearings, meetings, and articles centered on what was happening to children who were at the mercy of the land barons in Oklahoma in the early 1900s.

Reading about injustice is hard. Reading about injustice as it pertains to young children is even harder. The trick is to make yourself stay with the story long enough so that slowly but surely all the pieces start to come together. In that respect, Wingate doesn't disappoint.

School Board page 1

I am actively involved in the community, volunteering in coaching youth sports, school events, and local meetings, which gives me a clear understanding of the district's needs and priorities.

My decision to serve on the board reflects my commitment to public education and the community I and my family—including my wife Taryn and our children Henry and Madelyn—are deeply rooted in. I am motivated to help ensure Stockbridge Community Schools continue to grow, adapt, and provide meaningful opportunities for every learner.

As a board member, I will prioritize thoughtful decision-making, transparency, and collaboration, and look forward to working with district leaders, staff, families, and community partners to support the ongoing growth and success of Stockbridge Community Schools.

Photos by Becky Ames



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.

Our Board of Directors

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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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Outreach in Action

Meal of the Month back by popular demand

by Jo Mayer and Paul Crandall

"We tried it, they liked it, so we're doing it again!"

—Cindy Ashley, Outreach pantry coordinator

In 2025, Outreach piloted a monthly cooking program for five months, inviting 30 regular Outreach pantry shoppers to join this Recipe-of-the-Month cooking club—now fondly referred to as "Meal of the Month." The effort was supported financially by the Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition (SAWC) and 5 Healthy Towns Foundation.

Last year's theme was soups, with each participant receiving basic cooking and pantry supplies for starters and then a soup recipe and ingredients each month—along with personal advice and coaching.

It was popular! Clients looked forward to a new offering each month and often compared notes with other participants.

When they began clamoring for another round, pantry coordinator and program innovator Cindy Ashley started planning the 2026 iteration of Meal of



Outreach volunteers Barb Taylor and Cindy Ashley prepare supply boxes for the February Meal of the Month.

Photo by Jo Mayer

of the Month.

"Casseroles!" said Cindy, announcing the 2026 theme.

First step: Buying 9-by-13-inch glass casserole dishes to give out. Among lessons learned in the 2025 pilot: Not everyone has access to an oven. So Cindy devised alternate instructions for those who rely on crockpots (this accounted for about 5 out of the 30 participants in 2025).

Distribution of the materials and the first month's recipe for 2026 began on Feb. 9. The program will run monthly through June 2026.

Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation and SAWC/5 Healthy Towns have provided partial funding, with individual donations making up any shortfall. Those who would like to help provide food supplies for the monthly recipes can watch our Facebook page for updates on what is needed each month.

Here is February's recipe for those who would like to "join the club."

Italian Sausage and Veggie Casserole by Cindy Ashley

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 pounds Italian sausage, casings removed, crumbled, browned in skillet, drained and set aside.
- 2 cups broccoli florets.
- 1-1/2 cups shredded cheddar (divided).
- 1 teaspoon onion powder.
- 1 bag (30 oz.) frozen tater tots.
- 1-1/2 cups sliced carrots.
- 1 can mushroom soup.
- 3/4 cup sour cream.
- 2 cups cauliflower florets.
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder.
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Oven instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F; spray 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick spray.
2. In large bowl, add soup, sour cream, 3/4 cup of cheese, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper. Mix well.
3. Add all of the vegetables and sausage; stir well to coat.
4. Spread mixture into prepared casserole dish.
5. Top with the remaining cheese.
6. Arrange tater tots in a single layer on top.
7. Bake uncovered for 35-40 minutes, until golden brown.
8. If desired, put under broiler for 2-3 minutes for extra crisp.
9. Sprinkle with parsley to serve, if desired.

See Outreach on page 9.



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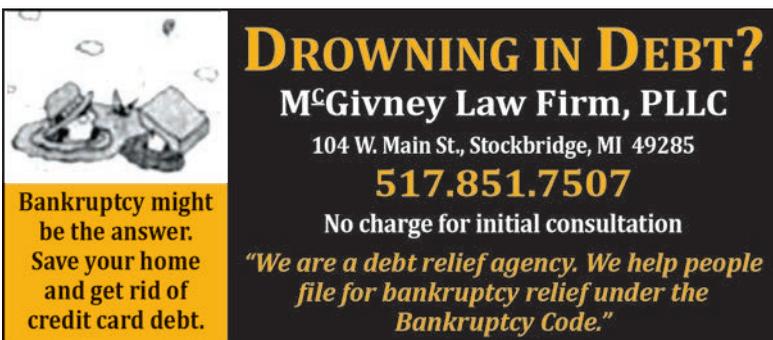
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Community Calendar

Everyday

- Sledding station: Behind Smith Elementary. Weather permitting. Free.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays - Prepared Meals for Seniors, noon to 2 p.m. Stockbridge Area Senior Center.

Mondays

- Craft Drop In (Ages 8 and up) at the Stockbridge Library.

- Cardio dance, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Village Hall. Free*.

- Cardio drumming, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Village Hall. Free*.

- Line dancing, 7 to 8 p.m. at Village Hall. Free*. No class March 2.

- First Mondays: American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.

- Second Mondays: Book discussion, 11 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library.

Tuesdays

- Fiber Arts Group meets for knitting, crochet, weaving, spinning, etc., 4-5 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library.

- First Tuesdays: Sons of American Legion Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.

- Fourth Tuesdays: Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion Post.

Wednesdays

- Yoga, 10-11 a.m. at Village Hall. Free*.

- 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 p.m. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge American Legion.

- Guided hands-on art projects, 6:30-8 p.m. at Village Hall. Register to reserve materials. Email Debbie at stockbridgeparks@vosmi.org.

Thursdays

- Coffee chats, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Stockbridge Library.

- American Legion Thursday meals, 4:30-7 p.m. Open to the public.

- Ladies Night, 6 to 9 p.m. at Trillium Gardens.

- Celebrate Recovery, Stockbridge at Crossroads Community Church. A welcoming, community-focused format. Dinner (free) is at 6 p.m. Large Group at 7 p.m. Open Share at 8 p.m.

Fridays

- Discovery Storytime (For Babies, Toddlers, and Children), 10:30 to 11 a.m. Stockbridge Library.

- Keep Calm and Carry Yarn, 1 to 2 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library (Occasional Fridays. Call Library for dates.)

- Cardio drumming, 7-8 p.m. at Village Hall. Free*.

- Indoor pickleball, 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Heritage School. Free.

Saturdays

- Vinyasa Flow Yoga, 9-10 a.m. at Village Hall. Free*.

Mar. 4 - Drop-in STEAM Lab for science or art projects, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Stockbridge Library.

Mar. 8 - Daylight Savings Time - Spring those clocks forward!

Mar. 9 - Stockbridge Library Book Group, 11a.m. to noon. Book: "The Ride of Her Life" by Elizabeth Letts.

Mar. 10 - SRSly Screen Agers Next Chapter, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Stockbridge Jr./Sr. High School.

See ad on page 3.

Mar. 13 - Family movie and craft night, 4 to 6 p.m. Movie: Shrek. Stockbridge Library.

Mar 14 - Intro to Gardening, 11 a.m. to noon. Adults & Teens. Stockbridge Library.

Mar. 17 - St. Patrick's Day.

Mar. 18 - Music with Ms. Beth. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Babies through preschool. Stockbridge Library.

Mar. 18 - Drop-in STEAM Lab for science or art projects, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Stockbridge Library.

Mar. 15-21 - Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation Festival of Tables online auction. See ad on page 15.

Mar. 22 - Festival of Tables auction item pickup. See ad on page 15.

Mar. 25 - Drop-in STEAM Lab for science or art projects, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Stockbridge Library.

*Where indicated, gratuities are welcome but not required.

For an online calendar of more community events visit: www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

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

For a full list of library events, visit cadl.org and select the "Events" menu.

Outreach page 8

Slow cooker instructions

1. Spray inside slow cooker or use crockpot liner.
2. Layer half of the tater tots in the bottom of the crockpot.
3. In a large bowl, mix soup, sour cream, 3/4 cup of cheese, and spices.
4. Add vegetables and browned meat; mix well until everything is covered.
5. Spread mixture gently over the tater tots in the crockpot.
6. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top.
7. Layer the remaining tater tots over the cheese.
8. Cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or on low for 6-8 hours.
9. Sprinkle with parsley to serve, if desired.

Special note:

In sadness and gratitude we note the passing of both Evelyn and Sandie Kay over the past couple of months. Mother and daughter each contributed many years to keeping Outreach active in our community. We honor and remember their generosity.

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.

STOCKBRIDGE SPORTS

Competitive cheer team qualifies for regionals



The Stockbridge competitive cheerleading team qualified for regionals for the first time in 18 years. Photo from Facebook via Alexis Killinger

by Mike Williamson

The Stockbridge competitive cheer team kept alive the best season in school history by qualifying for the D4 Regionals with a third-place finish at Vandercook Lake, Saturday Feb. 21.

It is the first time Stockbridge has qualified for regionals since 2008.

The Panthers put together a consistent day across all three rounds, finishing with a total score of 667.50 to secure the automatic regional qualifying spot. Stockbridge opened with a solid 213.8 in Round 1 before posting

a 180.2 in Round 2 to sit in contention heading into the final round.

The Panthers saved one of their best performances for last, delivering a 273.50 in Round 3 to lock in third place and hold off a tightly packed field.

Hanover-Horton claimed the overall title with a score of 754.86, while Leslie finished second at 696.28. Stockbridge's total was comfortably ahead of the rest of the field, including Vandercook Lake (649.61) and Allen Park Cabrini (650.42).

The Panthers finished second overall in the Big 8 after second-place finishes in each of the jamborees this season. Quincy claimed the top spot in the conference.

See *Cheerleading* on page 11.

Stockbridge bowlers compete at Division 4 Regionals in Jackson



The Stockbridge boys bowling team competed in regionals Feb. 18. Photos provided by Chris Young

by Mike Williamson

Stockbridge's boys and girls bowling teams took on a strong field at the Division 4, Region 28 tournament held Feb. 18 at Jax 60 in Jackson, with several Panthers turning in solid performances against tough competition.

On the boys side, Stockbridge finished 7th overall with a total of 2360, posting baker games of 95, 114, 119, 151, 116, 106, 179, and 89, along with team games of 692 and 699. Blissfield claimed the regional title with 3568, followed by Vandercook Lake and Jackson Lumen Christi.

Individually, John Fox led the Panthers with a 955 series, finishing 21st overall. Fox rolled games of 165, 193, 126, 212, 126, and 133 to pace Stockbridge. Teammate Jackson Gauthier added an 834 series, while Lucas Hoard finished with 810. Nathan Chrisinske posted 788, and Travis Whitney rounded out the scoring with 775.

In the girls regional, Stockbridge placed 8th with a score of 1279. The Panthers recorded baker scores of 68, 61, 47, 60, 101, 53, 68, and 62, with team games of 379 and 380. Jackson Lumen Christi took home the



The girls bowling team also took part in Division 4 Regionals in Jackson. regional title with 2428.

Leading the way for Stockbridge was Faith Young, who rolled a 751 series to place 15th overall. Young's steady performance included games of 119, 110, 129, 142, 119, and 132. Melody Loomis added a 679 series, while Justyna Szycka finished with 665 to round out the Panthers' top performers.

Lady Panthers basketball team battling in Big 8



Madeline Topping led the Panthers in scoring against Springport. Photo credit Mike Williamson

by Mike Williamson

With the state playoffs looming, the Stockbridge girls basketball team is battling near the top of the Big 8 Conference standings.

The Panthers sit at 9-3 in the conference and 14-6 overall.

Quincy. Stockbridge took down Quincy 46-33.

Melina Sayre led Stockbridge with 10 points, followed by Bella Pybus with nine.

Emma Monaghan added eight points, Zoe Buddenborg seven and Jaylee Chapman four. Payton Hernly and Madeline Topping had three points each, and Makenna Porter two.

Leslie. Stockbridge rolled past rival Leslie 60-25.

Topping and Buddenborg each scored 13 to lead the Panthers.

Pybus and Porter finished with eight each and Sayre had six. Chapman and Aliyah Numenin added four each. Monaghan and Tayla Trapp scored two each.

Maple Valley. Stockbridge outscored Maple Valley 16-0 in the opening quarter and cruised to a 43-26 win.

Buddenborg led the way with nine points and Topping seven.

Porter and Monaghan scored six each, Hernly five, Chapman four, Numenin three and Sayre one.

Springport. Topping scored nine to lead Stockbridge past Springport 42-25.

Monaghan and Buddenborg scored eight each and Pybus seven. Porter and Sayre each had four points, and Hernly two.

Concord. The Panthers gave D4 top-ranked Concord all they could handle in a 35-34 loss.

Buddenborg led the way with 12 points.

Topping and Sayre added nine points each, while Pybus and Monaghan scored two each.

Stockbridge's Hays qualifies for wrestling regionals

by Mike Williamson

Stockbridge's Klara Hays was the lone Panther to move past districts Feb. 14-15, when Hays finished fourth and moved on to the regionals in Jackson.

Hays picked up one pin on her way to the fourth-place finish.

The boys team saw their wrestling season come to a close at the district tournament, with several Panthers battling through tough brackets but falling short of advancing.

See *Wrestling* on page 11.

Panthers boys basketball ends regular season play at third place in the Big 8



Bradley Buddenborg tied the school record with eight 3-pointers against Reading. Photo credit Mike Williamson

by Mike Williamson

The young Stockbridge boys basketball team finished third in the Big 8 Conference with a 10-4 record and finished 16-6 overall heading into the D3 district tournament.

Maple Valley. The Panthers used a 21-6 run in the second quarter to pull away for a 61-36 win over Maple Valley.

Jay Crow led the Panthers with 16 points, four rebounds, and four steals, while Remington Christie added nine points and five rebounds.

Evan Lockhart chipped in with 11 points. Noah Sandecki and Bradley Buddenborg had

eight points each. Tucker Lott added six, Brandon Hamlett two, and Koen Griffith one.

Springport. The Panthers could not overcome a five-point, first-half deficit in a 54-46 loss to Springport.

Buddenborg led Stockbridge with 19 points and six rebounds, while Crow finished with 10 points and six boards.

Sandecki added seven points, Lockhart five, Griffith three, and Lott two.

Addison. The Panthers rolled to a 70-42 win over Addison.

Crow led the way with 16 points and six rebounds, while Buddenborg added 15 points and six steals.

Lockhart added 13 points and eight rebounds. Sandecki scored seven points and Lott six. Griffith, Vince Rogozinski, Aiden Bradley and Kameryn Gross had three each, and Hamlett one.

Concord. The Panthers were held scoreless in the third quarter in a 49-28 loss to Concord.

Crow was the top scorer with seven points and Lott added six to lead Stockbridge. Christie chipped in five points, Griffith and Sandecki four each, and Lockhart two.

Quincy. The Panthers jumped out to a double-digit first half lead and held off Quincy for a 69-61 win.

Sandecki led Stockbridge with 18 points.

Buddenborg added 17 points and Crow 15. Lott chipped in with eight points, Lockhart seven, and Christie four.

Union City. Stockbridge outscored Union City 44-17 in the second and third quarters in a 66-41 win.

Crow had a huge night with 33 points, including seven 3-pointers to lead the Panthers.

Buddenborg added 13 points, Sandecki nine, Lockhart six, Christie three, and Lott two.

Bronson. The Panthers fell to Bronson 46-45.

Crow led the charge with 18 points, while Sandecki added 10.

Buddenborg added nine points, Lott four, Gross and Lockhart two each.

Reading. Stockbridge rolled past Reading 68-40.

Buddenborg nailed six triples and finished with a team-high 22 points.

Crow added 14 points and Lott eight. Sandecki, Griffith, and Lockhart scored six each. Christie added four points, and Hamlett two.

Quincy. Stockbridge closed out the regular season with a 54-45 win over Quincy.

Buddenborg led the Panthers with 19 points.

Christie added 14 points and Crow 10. Lott chipped in with five points, Rogozinski three, Griffith two, and Sandecki one.

Cheerleading page 10

Stockbridge hosted the final Big 8 jamboree of the season Feb. 15 and was leading after the first two rounds, but Quincy outscored the Panthers in the third round to pull out the win.

Stockbridge Invitational. The Panthers hosted their own Invitational Feb. 6 and claimed the top spot. The home team put together three strong rounds to finish with a total score of 625.60, holding off a tightly packed field that saw the top four teams separated by just over 25 points.

Stockbridge opened with a solid Round 1 score of 199.10 before tightening things up in Round 2 with a 166.20 to sit near the top at the break. The Panthers then sealed the title with their best work of the day in Round 3, posting a 260.30 to pull away from the competition.

Holt finished second with a 612.36, followed closely by St. Charles at 611.90. Alma (600.20) and Western (586.08) rounded out the top five, while Dansville placed sixth with a 514.64.

Wrestling page 10

At 132 pounds, Jayson Conant opened his day in strong fashion, earning a first-round pin in 4:41. Conant's run ended after a loss in the quarterfinals, followed by a defeat in the consolation bracket.

Bradley White (138) also picked up an opening-round win with a technical fall. White dropped his quarterfinal match and was eliminated after a loss in the consolation round.

Domenic Ciminelli (285) received a first-round bye and advanced to the quarterfinals, where he was edged in a sudden victory decision. He responded with a consolation win by technical fall before his tournament ended in the consolation semifinals.

At 106, Reid Royal earned a first-round decision victory, but was defeated in the quarterfinals and later knocked out in the consolation bracket.

The Panthers received a tough draw in the team district and fell to eight-time defending D3 state champion Dundee 79-0.

Ciminelli had the closest match of the night falling 5-2 at 285.

Big 8 Jamboree. The Panthers finished seventh at the Big 8 Jamboree hosted by Stockbridge.

At 106 pounds, Reid Royal battled his way to a fourth-place finish to score two team points. After receiving a bye in the quarterfinals, Royal dropped a hard-fought 11-6 decision in the semifinals. He advanced through the consolation bracket with another bye before falling in the third-place match by major decision.

Brennen McCalla turned in a solid showing at 150 pounds, placing fourth and contributing 8.5 team points. McCalla opened with an impressive technical fall victory in the quarterfinals, but was pinned in the semifinals. He responded with a fall in the consolation semifinals to reach the third-place match, where he was pinned late to finish fourth.

At heavyweight, Domenic Ciminelli led the Panthers with a third-place finish and 12 team points. Ciminelli dominated early with a first-period pin in the quarterfinals before falling in the semifinals to a tough opponent from Maple Valley. He bounced back in strong fashion, earning a quick fall in the consolation semifinals and closing out his day with an 8-0 major decision victory in the third-place match.

Observerland. The Panthers finished 12th out of 18 schools at the Observerland tournament.

At 157 pounds, Colin Stacey led the way with an impressive second-place finish, earning 26 team points. Stacey opened with a bye before recording three straight pins to reach the finals, including wins in the second round, quarterfinals, and semifinals. He ultimately finished runner-up after a tough match in the championship bout.

Domenic Ciminelli battled through a deep bracket at 285 pounds to place sixth, scoring 11.5 team points. After opening with a pin in the first round, Ciminelli dropped into the consolation bracket, where he responded with a major decision and a technical fall to advance before finishing sixth overall.

At 106 pounds, Reid Royal earned a fifth-place finish and added 11 team points. Royal bounced back from an early loss with a strong run on the backside, picking up a pair of falls to secure a spot on the podium.

Kaleb Regan competed at 126 pounds, gaining valuable experience and contributing three team points.

Grant Howlett also had a solid showing, scoring 11 team points.

See Wrestling on page 13.

Obituaries

Genevieve M. "Marie" Stanfield



Genevieve M. "Marie" Stanfield
Oct. 15, 1938 to Jan. 26, 2026

Genevieve M. "Marie" Stanfield, age 87, of National City, MI, formerly of Gregory, MI, passed away on January 26, 2026 at Faith Haven Senior Care Centre in Jackson, Michigan.

Marie was born on October 15, 1938 in Unadilla Twp., Michigan, to Duane and Ellen (Johnson) Jacobs. She married Richard L. "Dick" Stanfield on April 26, 1958, and they lived in Gregory, MI for many years.

Marie worked as an administrative assistant to the principal for Stockbridge Community Schools for many years. She also served as the sexton for Plainfield Cemetery for 30 years and was the treasurer for Unadilla Township for several years. In 1999, she and Richard retired to National City, Michigan. Her favorite hobby was collecting dolls

and little figurines. Most of all she loved spending time with her grandchildren.

She is survived by her children: Susanne Twining of Stockbridge, Michigan, and Brian (Jodi) Stanfield of Gregory, Michigan; nine grandchildren; and her siblings: Norman Jacobs of Applegate, Michigan, Eleanor (David) Jacobs of Perry, New York, and Kevin (Cindy) Jacobs of Munith, Michigan; as well as many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dick, in 2013; her sister, Elizabeth Townsend; and her son-in-law, John Twining.

A graveside service will be held at Plainfield Cemetery at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to Plainfield Cemetery. Arrangements by Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home, Stockbridge.

Sandra Alice Kay



Sandra Alice Kay
Sept. 1, 1956 to Feb. 2026

Sandra Alice Kay was born September 1st, 1956 in Detroit, Michigan, to Evelyn and Ronald Kay, followed by her younger sister, Jeanne. She dedicated her life to public service and was a social butterfly, deeply ingrained in the Stockbridge community.

Sandie served as editor and reporter for the local newspaper, The Town Crier, through the '90s and 2000s. She also served as an EMT with the Stockbridge Ambulance Service. Later in her career, she served as the school nurse and office administration for Stockbridge Community Schools. Sandie volunteered in every aspect of the Stockbridge community, including organizing the community Thanksgiving dinners, and assisting in the Christmas toy drives at the local Community Outreach Center. She was even awarded the State of Michigan Volunteer of the Year Certificate by the Michigan Governor.

Sandie was a bookworm, known to read several books per week, and she loved music, dancing, and singing. She especially loved singing "Happy Birthday" in her very own special manner. An unforgettable serenade for those who were lucky enough to experience the performance live. A loving and generous soul, Sandie played a motherly role to many youths growing up in Stockbridge and impacted countless lives in a positive manner.

Sandie loved her friends, her family, and "her man" Larry. Sandie is survived by her son, John and wife Camila, her son, Sam and Winter, and her grand dogs, Prescott and Fiji.

She was a friend to everyone, a stranger to none, and loved her Stockbridge community members. She could be found on Sundays at the Crossroads Community Church, even as her health declined, she never wanted to miss Sunday service.

Sandie will be missed by all, and the Village of Stockbridge lost a community pillar with her passing.

A Celebration of Life was held on Friday, February 13, 2026, at the Mackinder-Glenn American Legion Post #510 in Stockbridge. Visitation was from 5-6 p.m., with brief service and time of sharing at 6 p.m., followed by dinner catered by Smokehouse 52 BBQ.

Arrangements by Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home, Stockbridge.

James Carson Asquith



James Carson Asquith
Jan. 5, 1954 to Jan. 3, 2026

James Carson Asquith, age 71, of Stockbridge, Michigan, passed away peacefully on January 3, 2026, at the Hospice House of Mid-Michigan in Lansing.

James was born on January 5, 1954, in Jackson, Michigan, to Elwin and Natalie (Moeckel) Asquith. He spent most of his life in Stockbridge and graduated from Stockbridge High School in 1972. During his high school years, James proudly served as captain of the golf team. After completing the Business program at Michigan State University in 1976, he went on to manage restaurants throughout Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Inspired by a tradition of summer family travels, James enjoyed road trips in retirement throughout the United States, with a keen interest in Yellowstone National Park and historical sites. He patiently researched the family genealogy while caring for the gravesites of seven generations in the Stockbridge-Munith-Waterloo area.

James is survived by his sister, Grace (John) Fuerst of Grand Junction, Colorado, and his nephew, Jacob Fuerst of Ventura, California, and numerous cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Elwin and Natalie Asquith.

A private burial will take place at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made in James' memory to the Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority or the Stockbridge Library.

Arrangements were handled by Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home.

Karen L. Cobb



Karen L. Cobb
May 25, 1957 to Feb. 10, 2026

Karen L. Cobb, age 68, of Houghton Lake, MI, passed away on February 10, 2026. Karen was born on May 25, 1957, in Jackson, the daughter of Lyle and Alice (Andrews) Atwood.

Karen enjoyed spending time outdoors and could often be found at the beach, hunting and fishing, riding four-wheelers, foraging for mushrooms, or spending time with her dog, Maya. She also enjoyed cooking and baking. Karen worked as an administrative assistant for the Salvation Army.

Karen was married to Larry Cobb for 43 years.

She is survived by her daughter, Kalee (Zeke) Williams of Decatur, Alabama; two grandchildren, Ezra and Kaden; her siblings, Donald (Carol) Atwood, Cynthia Atwood, Barbara Jean Crowley, and Alice (Ron) Wood, all of Jackson; and several

nieces and nephews, including, Mark (Carmen) Barden, Eric (Jennifer) Barden, and Dustin (Elissa) Atwood, as well as several cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and an infant twin sister, Sharon.

A Memorial Service was held at Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home, Stockbridge, on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 11 a.m., with Pastor Missy Noll officiating. Burial followed at Pleasant Grove Cemetery in Munith. The family received friends at the funeral home on Saturday from 10 a.m. until the time of service.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Salvation Army.

Arrangements by Caskey-Mitchell Funeral Home, Stockbridge.

Killinger cont. from page 6

"I'm proud of all of it for different reasons," she admits. While she loves working with and supporting young people in the community, Kim says that her biggest goal for her life is that her kids grow up loving Jesus and wanting to serve the Lord and give back to their communities.

Kim values compassion, generosity and positivity. She leads by example, whether from the sidelines of a football field, the front office of the high school, or from the pews in her church. Kim's life reflects a quiet but steady commitment to her family, her faith, and to the young people growing up in the community she's proud to call home.

Photos provided by Kim Killinger. See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.



"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,

I have a friend who likes to show everyone photos on his phone—not just one or two photos, but many, many photos. After a while, I start to zone out. Am I the problem?

**Signed,
Say cheesed**

Dear Cheesed,

It's not you! The convenience of cellphones has made it easy for people to snap pictures of anything and everything. The problem is when these photo enthusiasts don't know where to draw the line between sharing something interesting and putting their audience to sleep.

Sure, a couple killer shots of the Grand Canyon can be exciting, but 10 or 20 shots later it just starts to look like a crack in the sidewalk.

Short of leaving a copy of Stockbridge Community News folded to the "Dear Gabbie" page with this advice, I may not have a sure-fire answer for how to curb this bad habit, but here is one thing you can try: When your friend pulls his phone out, be ready. After viewing one or two photos, ask if you can hold the phone to see the photos better. Spend a moment looking at a few more, maybe zoom in on one or two, and then politely hand the phone back and bring the conversation around to another topic.

Gabbie

Wrestling cont. from page 11

Howlett picked up multiple wins in the consolation bracket, including several pins, to make a deep run before his tournament came to a close.

Durand Invitational. Stockbridge finished 7th out of 14 schools at the Durand Invitational.

At 106 pounds, Reid Royal finished third, scoring 11 team points. After receiving byes in the opening two rounds, Royal dropped a tough semifinal by technical fall before bouncing back in the consolation bracket. He earned a major decision in the consolation semifinal and capped his day with a pin in the third-place match (1:47).

At 126 pounds, Kaleb Regan also placed third, leading the Panthers with 17.5 team points. Regan opened with a first-round bye and followed with a pin in the quarterfinals. After a semifinal loss, he responded with a dominant technical fall in the consolation semifinals and secured third place with another pin (3:35).

Jayson Conant competed at 132 pounds, finishing fourth and adding 10.5 points. After a first-round bye, Conant fell in the quarterfinals but battled back through the consolation bracket with a pair of wins, including a pin and a technical fall, before dropping the third-place match.

At 157 pounds, Colin Stacey contributed six team points. Following a first-round bye, Stacey dropped his quarterfinal match but responded with a win by forfeit and a quick pin (0:36) in the consolation rounds before being eliminated in the next match.

Grant Howlett delivered a strong performance at 165 pounds, finishing as runner-up with 18 team points. After two byes, Howlett earned a semifinal pin (0:39) to reach the championship match, where he finished second.

At 285 pounds, Domenic Ciminelli also placed second, scoring a team-high 20 points. He advanced with a quarterfinal pin (0:21) and followed with another pin in the semifinals (0:20) before finishing runner-up in the finals.

Weddon page 5

So, she set up an office next door.

Ever gracious, Willah entered the orbit of politicians and news hounds in Michigan's capital, eventually winning over her reluctant colleagues. She founded the Women's News Bureau and throughout the following decade, she interviewed Ronald Reagan, Robert Kennedy, Pat Nixon, and every Michigan governor seated since the late 1940s.

Emmy award-winner Tim Skubick, anchor of WKAR's "Off the Record," told Patrice, "Willah broke the glass ceiling. She was a legend in Lansing." His face lit with gratitude as he recalled her mentorship.

Michigan Gov. George Romney told her son Alex, "Your mom is a good journalist and friend."

Over her career, Willah earned 82 first-place state awards and 13 national awards. She authored seven books now featured in the Michigan History Museum. In 1994, the Michigan Legislature passed a joint resolution honoring her as Michigan's Woman of the Year. Husband Edward Weddon, MD, stood at her side through thick and thin.

When the Press Corps finally invited her Women's News Bureau to their exclusive "Humble Open" golf tournament, Willah entered Alex as the Bureau's golfer. He won low score, low net, and the skins money for an eagle. Willah graciously let the glowering crowd drink up the winnings.

On the road. Son-in-law Jim Johnson tells of volunteering at the Kiwanis concession trailer in Chelsea during a festival. With a side street cordoned off, he watched as Willah's white Dodge Dart—rearview mirror affixed with duct tape and chewing gum—wove past orange barricades and parted the crowd like river waters.

"I needed to get through," Willah later explained.

Patrice's childhood friend Judy Williams remembers car rides. "Willah drove while smoking a cigarette and looking at us in the backseat. I would yell, 'Car! Car!' so she'd turn around. She was a fun lady with lots of stories to tell."

When asked why she drove straddling the centerline, Willah replied, "I like to keep my options open."

A legacy in love. Summers, night-owl Willah rose with the sun to cart daughters Amy and Patrice to horse shows across the state. The blue station wagon sagged low as it hefted the hand-welded red horse trailer—a treasure Mom had purchased with her earnings.

"She believed in family first," Amy shared. "Though she earned myriad awards as a writer and leader, she was never pretentious. She was amazing. She was our hero."

Lying near death at the age of 85, Willah smiled and squeezed son Bradley's hand. "We had a lot of amazing adventures, didn't we?"

Willah died June 21, 2008, and no Christmas Eve is complete without family members reading one or two of her stories. Her tales bring to life the authentic and endearing experiences of five children growing up on a family farm.

Willah Weddon's Library of Michigan author profile can be found at: libraryofmichigan.state.mi.us/authors/Author/Details/568

See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.

Staff Spotlight: For Stockbridge school bus driver Meredith McManaman, keeping kids safe is non-negotiable



Mary Jo David

by **Mary Jo David**

Many things stood out while interviewing school bus driver Meredith McManaman, but the most notable is that, in the life of a bus driver, every minute counts.

McManaman drives Bus 17-04, better known to younger kids in the Stockbridge School District as the "Lion" bus. She starts her day at 5 a.m. so she can be at the bus yard by 5:45. Once there, she has about 15 minutes to "pre-trip" her bus, checking the oil, the air brakes, tire pressure, and overhead lights. Pre-tripping helps ensure the bus is mechanically sound, fueled up, and ready for the route.

By 6:06, Bus 17-04 is on the road and headed for its first stop in its 60-mile route for students of the Jr./Sr. High School. After picking up this first wave of about 25 students, she's headed to drop them off at school in plenty of time for the 7:15 unload time.

By 7:26, she is heading back out to pick up 56 or so of her Smith and Heritage students. Her last elementary student is picked up at 8:20, and they are at Heritage to unload by 8:33. Here is where the drop-off routine begins to take on the characteristics of a football play worthy of the big leagues. At Heritage, the eight buses are unloaded four buses at a time. The last drivers in each pack communicate with all other drivers to let them know when their last student has cleared the bus area so the buses can move out safely. Then, off to Smith they go. At Smith, Brenda Clear, as the most senior driver and the last bus of the eight, performs a block—meaning she positions her bus to make sure no other vehicles can get through the bus line while students unload at Smith.

McManaman has a second job working part time for Stockbridge Township. So immediately after returning to the bus lot in the morning, she heads off to work a three-hour shift at the township. That leaves her with about an hour and a half to herself in the afternoon before she has to return to the bus lot for her afternoon route.

Once again she pre-trips the bus and then heads over to the Jr./Sr. High School. At 2:22, she leaves the high school, and drops off the last of the Jr./Sr. High students at home by about 3. At that point, she may take the bus for fueling before heading over to the elementary schools to pick up her students for the ride home.

The afternoon elementary "play strategy" differs from the morning in that it calls for a more refined plan—one that allows extra time to make sure all students are accounted for.

Occasionally parents have made other arrangements for pick-up or students have been given a pass to ride a different bus, so it's imperative extra time is spent in the afternoon to make sure students are where they need to be. Once McManaman takes off with her bus loaded, her last elementary drop-off is at about 4:45 and she's back at the bus lot by 5 p.m. When her schedule allows, she also drives for Stockbridge sporting events.

McManaman is one of Stockbridge's newest bus drivers, but supervisor Nikki Clear says she has caught on quickly. In a district with very few substitute drivers, McManaman can be relied upon to take on more challenging routes when other drivers are out for the day. When this happens, a sub takes on McManaman's easier route or her route gets split and merged with another route temporarily. Says Clear, "She has been a great addition to our team and family."

Stockbridge school bus drivers train for about six weeks to learn about pre-tripping and all the ins and outs and rules for driving a bus.

"The first time I drove the bus, I was 100% petrified," McManaman exclaimed. "And that was when the bus was empty, and I was driving in a parking lot!"

She eventually figured out it wasn't much different from driving a truck with a really huge steering wheel and hauling a trailer.

As the mom of a 12-year-old daughter, McManaman knows that kids go through all sorts of phases, and she readily admits that driving the bus is the easy part.

"Keeping track of what is going on inside the bus is the most challenging. It's similar to a classroom but with 50-70 kids," she said.

Her non-negotiable rule on the bus is that students must remain sitting in their seats and out of the aisles. In training, she learned students are safer in a school bus than in a passenger vehicle, but only if they remain seated correctly in their seats.

She encourages parents to reassure young students that it's OK to feel a little nervous at first and the bus driver is there to keep them safe. As for older students, she'd like parents to remind them to be respectful of others.

"When I was younger and going into college, I wanted to be a teacher. I love working with kids and I think I have a good way with them," she said.

To McManaman, being a bus driver is more than just providing transportation; it's about creating a safe, welcoming, and positive start and end to every student's school day.

All photos provided by Meredith McManaman. See additional photos at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.



Meredith McManaman drives Bus 17-04, aka: the Lion bus, for the Stockbridge School District. Photos provided by Meredith McManaman



Having a 12-year-old daughter helps to remind McManaman that every child goes through different phases.

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Bad drivers are everywhere. Should you have a run in with this particular breed, remember My Body Shop. We'll get your car back to its original condition and get you back on the road. No bones about it.

Equinox page 1

As the minutes of daylight increase, ecological changes are triggered. Softly blowing south winds bring the early smells associated with spring, and with them, you can watch for coming changes. The landscape is in transition, from white snow to brown mud, then to green grasses and flowering plants. Water levels change with the melting snow; soil begins to defrost and release its nutrients. Vernal ponds form, which support many early plants, migrating waterfowl, and amphibians. Later, as summer approaches, the ponds will dry up awaiting the next vernal equinox.

The increasing sunlight following the vernal equinox triggers proteins in plants—called phytochromes—that activate plants to begin growing. We see this in swelling buds on trees and shrubs and some plants starting to send out shoots and leaves, which will feed the awakening birds, insects, and mammals.

Dormant insects react to the increasing sun and warmth due to photoreceptors in their brains. They become more active and search for food and mates. Monarch butterflies wintering in Mexico are triggered to revive from a semi-stupor to begin their journey north to Michigan and other northern states.

Birds, too, are chemically affected by the increased daylight that results in hormonal changes. Migrant birds begin their pilgrimage north to their breeding grounds. The male feathering begins to change to its breeding plumage, and its singing becomes more frequent and more complicated as it tries to attract mates. Females choose mates and start nesting behavior, all triggered by the vernal equinox.

Mammals also sense the increase of sunlight through retinal light-sensitive cells in the eyes, called ganglion cells, which are not involved in vision. Seasonal changes in mammals also include coat density and color changes; hibernating animals begin to awaken and search out food and mates, while moving toward spring feeding grounds.

In today's modern world, the vernal equinox is also a time for us human mammals to celebrate and enjoy spring by increasing our outdoor activities, planting crops and gardens, and of course playing baseball!

Mayhem Wrestling page 1

The club, made up of students in grades K through 8, has experienced rapid growth since 2022, expanding from a team of eight kids who participated in a few local events per year to a current team of about 30 members.

Stockbridge Mayhem placed third overall at the tournament with 18 members placing in the top four in their brackets, seven of whom placed first. These wins don't come by accident. The club has been working hard since November, practicing three times a week and attending tournaments on the weekend. The effort has been paying off, and many members are hoping to qualify for the MyWay States, which will be held in March.

Thank you
for your
support!

- Carrie and William Heene
- Christine Walker
- Denise and Larry Allen
- Fred Moon
- Jo Ann Waller
- June and Bernard Risner
- Linda and Clare Risner
- Ralph Schumacher

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 Dec. 25 - Feb. 20. 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

To donate, visit
www.gofundme.com/stockbridgecommunitynews.com



Festival of Tables

March 15-21, 2026

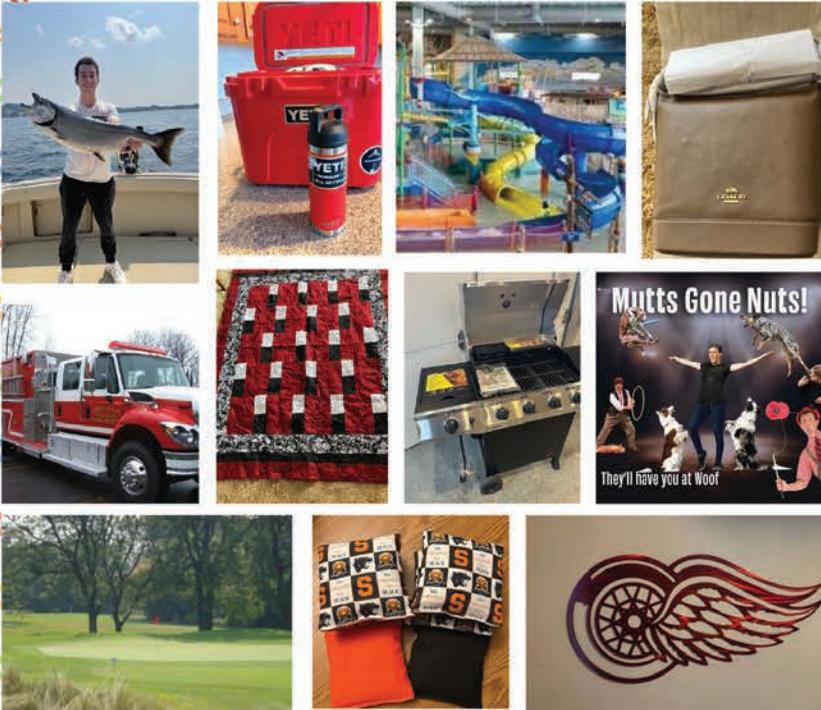
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2026 Virtual Online
Annual Fundraiser
March 15th-21st

The Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation serves the community of the Stockbridge School District. Our mission is to fund programs and projects that create or enhance educational opportunities available to area residents.



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Dexter bridge page 3

After the funeral, Dexter residents began petitioning the railroad to build a bridge at the crossing.

The Michigan Central Railroad assigned its young African American civil engineer Frederick Pelham to design two new bridges for the location—one over the road and the other a few hundred yards farther over Mill Creek.

Pelham was born in Detroit at the end of the Civil War in 1864. He graduated from Detroit High School with the highest honors. His father, Robert, was a stonemason, and Frederick frequently worked with him. Frederick excelled in math and attended the University of Michigan, where he received an engineering degree. Frederick was president of his graduating class and graduated at the top of his class in 1887, three months after Mrs. Warner was killed. He was immediately hired by the Michigan Central Railroad and began a career in bridge design and construction.

The Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress (John M. Green, 1915) says of Pelham, "The railroad company gave him a position as assistant civil engineer, which he held up to the time of his death. During his service with the Michigan Central Company, he built some 20 bridges along the road. One bridge at Dexter Michigan, is a skew arch bridge. There is only one like it in the country."

A skew arch design is used when a bridge is not perpendicular to the crossing, and the stone angles must be cut accordingly.

The assignment to build the bridge was a remarkable accomplishment for any 25-year-old, even more so for a young African-American man in the 1800s. But looking at the family from which Pelham came gives insight into the young man's drive and accomplishment.

Pelham's parents, Robert and Frances, were free persons and landowners in Virginia. In the 1850s, however, they left the state "where they still were subject to widespread discrimination and onerous legal restrictions, including a prohibition against obtaining an education." Robert Pelham Sr. firmly believed in the value of a good education and moved his family north to get them one.

Five of the seven Pelham children graduated high school "at a time when few Americans of any race did so." Robert Pelham Jr. became a journalist, civil servant, and businessman in Detroit and later in Washington D.C. He and his brother Benjamin co-founded and edited the Detroit Plaindealer in 1883. Joseph became a school principal. Meta became a teacher and worked for the Plaindealer. Emma married William Webb Ferguson, the first African-American man elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. He represented Wayne County. Delia married African-American aristocrat George A. Barrier. Frederick, the youngest, followed the high standards set by his older siblings and became a distinguished civil engineer for the railroad.

Work began on Pelham's bridges in Dexter. The earth was moved out from under the railroad track. A temporary wooden support system was installed for the large rocks taken from Mill Creek. The large stones were moved by hand and hewn on-site to the exact size and shape to fit the unique masonry of Pelham's skew arch bridge.

The Dexter Leader gave readers an update on January 17, 1890, "The work at the Mill Creek railroad bridge is completed for the winter. The abutments are all in and nothing more will be done until the bridge is raised in the spring."

And on June 6, 1890, "The temporary railroad bridge across Mill Creek was put in last Sunday."

After that, the Leader reported no more construction updates. The exact date when the new bridge officially opened is unknown. But there was a plaque placed on the bridge commemorating the achievement. Frederick Pelham's name was not included on the plaque. It is speculated this was because the custom was to list only local dignitaries, or it could have been because of his race.

We don't hear any more about the bridge. It was doing its job of keeping travelers safe from passing trains. But its sister bridge a few hundred yards away spanning Mill Creek briefly made the news on February 13, 1891, when the Leader reported, "Henry Pryer fell from the railroad [sic] bridge onto the ice below last Saturday, a distance of nearly twelve feet [sic]. No bones were broken and he is on the gain at present writing."

Times change, and we often cannot predict the direction the decades will take us. When he built his unique bridge in Dexter, little did Pelham know that one day, residents would find great amusement in seeing modern drays getting stuck underneath. They would view color photos of it on a small screen in their hands just moments after it happened, wherever they are, because of something called the internet, on something called Facebook.

Funny for us, not so much for the truck drivers or those having to reroute unexpectedly. But it's been happening ever since there were trucks big enough to get stuck. It seems like word would spread. One can't help but wonder what Pelham would think if he saw his bridge repeatedly rammed by vehicles he could never have imagined, and yet it still stands.

One thing leads to the next, as things always do. Charles Warner's cow gave birth that Sunday morning in 1887, and here we are with two stone structures still in use today, as elegant as they are durable.

These are remarkable accomplishments for such a young man at the start of his career. And who knows what he could have achieved if his life hadn't been cut short? Frederick Pelham died at his parents' home in Detroit in 1895 of acute pneumonia at 30.

Sources and a link to the original article can be found online at www.stockbridgecommunitynews.com.



Another truck got stuck under the bridge on the day this article was written. This one didn't get its top shaved off. Photo courtesy of Samantha Wesley.

Published in Uncaged, February



by **Tori Tolbert, Uncaged Reporter**

At Stockbridge Junior-Senior High School it feels like students are pushed to choose between the arts and sports even if no one says it directly. I notice it in the morning announcements sitting in the first hour when a sports announcement comes on like "the basketball team won" and I look around and see their new warm-up gear. That's when I think about what the school chooses to celebrate. Some activities are treated as if they represent the school while others are expected to exist quietly in the background.

I see the divide most clearly between sports and fine arts. When there's a big game coming up everyone knows about it. Posters go up. Sometimes there are pep rallies. The next morning scores are shared and athletes are congratulated in the hallways or in class. Their achievements are visible and that visibility matters.

At the same time that attention comes with stereotypes and pressure. I've heard athletes told to focus more on their sport even when schoolwork is piling up. Missing class for games is normal but then they're expected to catch up on everything later. Some athletes feel like they're only valued for what they do on the field, not for the effort as students in the classroom. That kind of pressure is exhausting in a different way. Sophomore Aliyah Numinen shared that she is exhausted from all of the expectations.

"We are in the Big 8 and our games are 30 minutes to two hours away and then we get piles of homework," Numinen said.

Not only does she often question how she is going to get that work done, she often feels that she is incorrectly stereotyped as an athlete.

"I feel like I get stereotyped as stuck up and really loud but I'm really quiet," Numinen said.

On the other side, fine arts face a different stereotype, invisibility. When choir or marching band performs the experience feels almost the opposite. Concerts and exhibitions happen. People clap and say "good job" and then it's over. Most of the time nothing is said afterward. No announcement. No follow-up. It's like the performance disappears as soon as it ends.

Marching a band takes more work than people realize. Rehearsals can last for hours, summer camp is still necessary, and even though exhibitions don't have ratings, judges still watch closely and write comments. Just because there is not a final score doesn't mean those comments don't matter. They show that someone noticed the effort. But once we return to school that effort usually isn't mentioned at all.

This really became personal for my fellow partner last year at Solo and Ensemble. We earned a Division 1, which is the highest score you can get. The judge listened carefully and gave written feedback on my performance. That didn't come easily and I remember feeling proud of myself. The next day at school I honestly expected something just a quick mention, but nothing was said.

If a team wins a game it gets announced right away sometimes more than once. A Division 1 in music represents the same level of achievement. The difference isn't the work, it's how that work is treated.

See *Uncaged* on page 19.



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Active Aging More than luck: SASC recognizes initiative in action

by Alexa M. Ten Eyck

When the calendar turns to March, talk of luck fills the air. It often takes credit for the good things coming our way. Yet lasting success is built through initiative.

Behavioral studies suggest that individuals who take initiative significantly increase their odds of success. Stepping into gaps, solving problems quickly, and remaining persistent improve those outcomes. Leadership research, including Jim Collins' five-year study in "Good to Great," found that lasting success comes not from sudden breakthroughs but from consistent, disciplined action over time. Communities function the same way. Success does not come by chance; it comes when someone sees what needs to be done and chooses to do it.

March is also a transitional month. It is not quite winter,

not yet spring. Conditions can be unpredictable, sometimes messy, often demanding patience. Progress during this time cannot wait for perfect conditions. It must begin with movement, with people willing to step forward when circumstances shift.

At the Stockbridge Area Senior Center, we see this principle in action regularly. Progress does not happen by accident. It happens because individuals take initiative.

Which brings us to someone we consider one of our very own lucky charms—Daryl Anderson. That distinction is not about chance. It reflects the way initiative is modeled in action.

While his title may read "Board of Directors Secretary," that hardly captures the scope of his contribution. Daryl has taken on responsibilities that range from member engagement and facility maintenance to event coordination and financial oversight. When something needs attention, waiting is not his approach. He sees the need, makes the call, secures the resources, and follows through. That is what initiative looks like in practice.

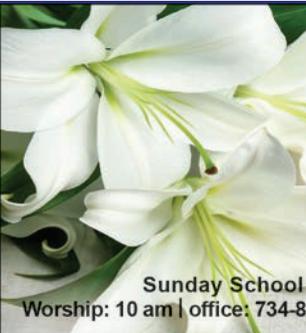
As we step into March, SASC is ready. Ready to take on new projects, embrace fresh ideas, continue building momentum. At its core, this community understands that progress comes from participation. When individuals choose initiative over chance, momentum builds and meaningful work moves forward across the Stockbridge area and the surrounding communities we serve. That is what it means to be more than lucky.

Luck may be a symbol of the season, but success comes from initiative. A spirit reflected in Daryl and in all who quietly uphold those same steady, action-oriented values, keeping our community moving confidently into each new season.

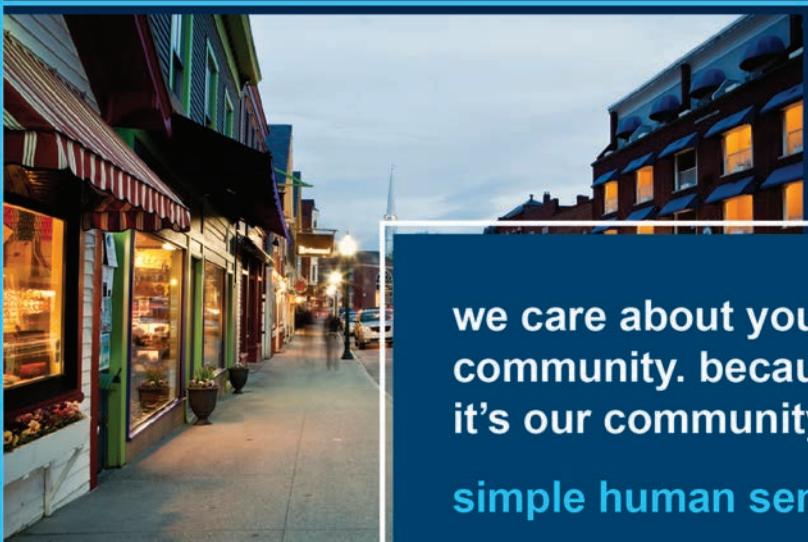
Alexa M. Ten Eyck is the board president of the Stockbridge Area Senior Center (SASC)—a great place to spend time. Experience firsthand a sense of connection and well-being at SASC. Visit stockbridgeareaseniors.org, call 517-480-0353, or stop in at 219 W. Elm Street for information.



Daryl Anderson, SASC board secretary, is the organization's lucky charm who also models initiative in action. Photo credit Rachel Stanley



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STOCKBRIDGE TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES
February 16, 2026

Stockbridge Township Supervisor Cg Lantis called Stockbridge Township Regular Board Meeting to order on February 16, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Stockbridge Township Hall.

Members present at the Stockbridge Township Board Meeting; Supervisor CG Lantis, Clerk Becky Muraf, Treasurer James Wireman, Trustee Ed Wetherell Member absent Trustee Terry Sommer

Pledge of Allegiance
 Moment of Silence

Wireman motion to accept the Stockbridge Township meeting agenda as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Citizens Comments Discussion

Muraf Motion to accept the Stockbridge Township Board meeting minutes from January 19, 2026, as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Muraf motion to approve the Stockbridge Township special meeting minutes from February 12, 2026, Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman Motion to accept the Stockbridge Township Financial report as printed Wetherell Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Stockbridge Police report 159 calls in Stockbridge Township

Lantis will call Spartan Irrigation and get this year's cost for spraying the Square

Wireman moves to authorize Clerk Muraf and Supervisor Lantis to execute the Police Services contract and to negotiate any minor changes that may be requested by the Village with assistance of the Township Attorney Muraf Second Roll

Call Vote Muraf Yes, Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Lantis No. Motion Carried

Wireman motion to adapt the resolution that the Township of Stockbridge in Ingham County Michigan adopts the following guidelines for the Board of Review to follow when granting or denying exemptions

| | |
|----------|------------|
| 1 person | \$15,650 |
| 2 people | \$ 21,1520 |
| 3 people | \$26,650 |
| 4 people | \$32,150 |
| 5 people | \$37,650 |
| 6 people | \$43,150 |
| 7 people | \$48,650 |
| 8 people | \$54,150 |

For each additional person add \$ 5,500

Muraf Second Roll Call Vote Wireman Yes, Wetherell Yes, Muraf Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman motion to approve up to \$2,000.00 for the planning commission to hire Foster Swift and Mckenna to move forward with the Data Center moratorium Wetherell Second Roll Call Vote Wetherell Yes, Muraf Yes, Wetherell Yes, Lantis Yes. All in Favor Motion Carried

Wireman motion to table the Stockbridge Township Hall rental but motions to allow up to \$1,500.00 to complete the kitchen updates Wetherell Second Roll Call Vote Wetherell Yes, Wireman Yes, Muraf Yes, Lantis Yes All in Favor Motion Carried

Wetherell motion to pay the Stockbridge Township monthly bills in the amount of \$52,917.35 Muraf Second All in Favor Motion Carried

Citizen Comments Discussion

Lantis adjourns the Stockbridge Township regular monthly meeting at 8:01 PM
 BM



Kelsey Rasmussen

Positive Parenting Investing in sibling relationships to avoid rivalry

by Kelsey Rasmussen

I could have been great at chess. Maybe. We'll never know because I refused to play chess with my brother. If you always lose at something, you tend not to like it. Being three years younger, I never even had a chance.

Younger siblings—you know what I mean. You may have had the disadvantage of being smaller and less experienced. But older siblings have it tough, too. When younger siblings join the scene, they steal some of what was previously undivided parental attention. They may feel the need to compete to earn it back.

A friend recently noted the universality of sibling rivalry: "You know, it's only the second bad act in the Bible, so you know something's there."

Siblings often differentiate themselves to find a way to shine. If the eldest is a great reader or mathematician, the younger siblings tend to become amazing athletes or musicians.

To paraphrase "Hold On To Your Kids," by Gabor Maté and Gordon Neufeld, the authors explain that bad behavior is never a behavior problem; it is a relationship problem.

So how do we help our children develop lifelong friendships with each other, relationships that are likely to outlast the parent-child relationship? Google's AI Assist helped me summarize tips for investing in sibling relationships:

- Avoid labels, comparison and competition: Refrain from labeling children or comparing them to each other. For example, replace "He's our good reader" with "He enjoys reading and practices every day."
- Recognize individual strengths: Name each child's unique strengths to build their self-esteem. Compare these to his/her previous performance rather than to a sibling. For example, "You've been getting faster and more confident riding on the pump track."
- Spend quality one-on-one time: Spending time with each child individually strengthens parent-child bonds and offers predictability in being the center of attention. For example, make a different routine with each child as simple as getting the mail every day, riding bikes or walking the yard when the weather is nice.
- Teach conflict resolution: Encourage children to express feelings using "I messages" and negotiate solutions together. For example, "I felt surprised to hear

Wellness Coalition page 2

For example, did you know that, since 2012, with the help of funds provided by SHF, SAWC has allocated \$995,000 to projects in Stockbridge, Gregory, Munith and Waterloo Township? And, did you know Stockbridge projects have been able to leverage that funding into more than \$2.5 million in grants from outside of our community for projects like SRSly Stockbridge, Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park and Veterans Park?

SAWC Chair Jo Mayer had this to say about the January gathering, "We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to brave the cold and join us for a fun evening of food and networking. We hope the Meet, Greet and Eat event inspires community members to come up with new projects and ideas that we can consider at our meetings."

Community members with ideas for projects—or who'd like to volunteer on projects—are welcome to attend coalition meetings and discuss those ideas. Meetings are held at 4:30 p.m. at Stockbridge Village Hall, with upcoming meetings scheduled for March 17 and May 19. Zoom options are available for those who can't make the meetings in person. Email Lori@5healthytowns.org if you'd like the zoom link.

SAWC business meeting update.

Before the Meet, Greet and Eat event, SAWC held their business meeting. Congratulations to Rachel Stanley, David Rowse and Emily Stewart on being voted to the SAWC Board at the Jan. 21 meeting. They join Jo Mayer, Debbie Prigge, Cady Bauer, Wendy Walz, Sarah Wilczynski and Molly Howlett as board members. This is a first term on the board for both Stanley and Rowse.

The coalition approved \$1,000 for Stockbridge Community Outreach's 2026 Meal of the Month program. The program will serve 30 clients of the Stockbridge Area Outreach, with a focus on learning basic kitchen skills along with recipes for healthier casseroles. The motion was passed unanimously by the board.

This column is sponsored by the Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition (SAWC). Matt Pegouskie is the community investment manager.



Plant a garden. Select seeds for something each child likes and can be responsible for. Photo credit Kelsey Rasmussen

you speaking like that to each other. We want to help each other in our family, never hurt each other. Were you trying to say you weren't ready to share yet?"

- Avoid taking sides: Instead, guide them to find mutual solutions. For example, "I notice your sister is frowning and hiding under the table. How do you feel about what happened? How might you two make this right?"
- Encourage teamwork: Create opportunities for siblings to work together on projects to foster cooperation. For example, cook/bake, garden, do a puzzle, build something or play collaborative outdoor games together.
- Model positive behavior: Demonstrate healthy repair and communication in your own interactions. For example, take a deep breath and count to 10 when you're frustrated, and give/accept apologies when necessary.

Emily Buelow, a local mother of six, event planner and substitute teacher at Smith Elementary, has had lots of practice navigating sibling rivalry.

"On good days when I am rested and feel like I can 'mom,' I have the siblings who are disputing stop, take a deep breath, and explain their side so the other can hear where they are coming from. Afterward, the other sibling tells their side and we discuss calmly how we can settle the disagreement.

See Positive Parenting on page 19.

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Sophomore choir student Teagan Patterson explained it best: "I'm in choir and I feel like it's not as present. We do concerts but compared to other programs we're not talked about as much."

She also added that "people think choir kids are weird or artsy but most of my friends are from the choir and it's helped me a lot personally."

Theater students face similar assumptions. Theater is often portrayed as "weird" rather than normal, which leads to less representation and support. Junior Haley Warren laments on the fact that theater has slowly faded from view and misses it being a part of school. She believes that theater's disappearance matters.

"I've been involved with it for 12 years, and I've stuck with the same group throughout," Warren said. "I've gotten the chance to work with people who share the same passion and enthusiasm for acting that I do and that brings us together more than any sports team I've ever been on."

What Warren describes, teamwork and commitment are the same values in athletics, band, and choir. Her experience challenges the stereotypes surrounding theater and highlights why its lack of recognition is a loss.

"I really do feel like theater is overlooked and given a bad reputation by people who have no idea what it's like," Warren said.

What all this shows is not that one activity matter more than another, but that different expectations and stereotypes keep us separated. What gets announced, praised and remembered shows students what the school values. When fine arts accomplishments are ignored and athletes are pushed to prioritize sports over academics it creates two different kinds of stress, one from being invisible and one from being overexposed.

School should be a place where hard work matters wherever it happens. Scoring a goal, earning a Division 1 or performing at an exhibition all take dedication. Until Stockbridge recognizes that more evenly students will keep walking the same hallways wearing different uniforms and feeling like being part of the same school doesn't always mean being valued the same way.

Choir teacher Bryan Gilbey said, "Music is for everyone, regardless of other interests or passions." That idea applies to our entire school. Sports, music, and theater all require discipline, teamwork, and dedication. When we only celebrate certain achievements, we unintentionally tell students that some efforts matter more than others. It starts with us going around and celebrating the people around you that you know are in the arts or the sports that do not get seen. WE ARE ONE!

Published as-is from the original page in Uncaged. For more information about Stockbridge's award-winning student newspaper, go to <https://uncagednews.com>. Uncaged articles are sponsored by The Stockbridge Area Educational Foundation. For more information on SAEF, visit www.panthernet.net/our_district.

Positive parenting page 18

But on days when 'mom' has nothing left and I've already taught them the skills, I say, 'I'm not the ref. Figure it out.'"

Activity Highlight: Plan a flower, herb or vegetable garden together. Discuss and select something each person likes that he/she will be responsible for. Plant the seeds this month, fertilize the seedlings in April, and transplant outdoors mid-May. Enjoy the harvest all summer long!

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

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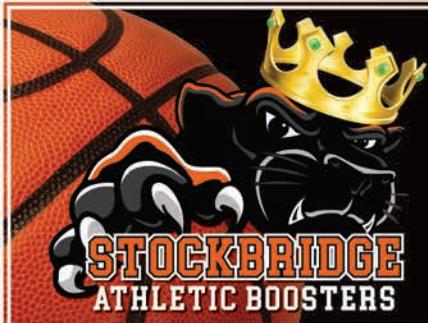


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