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WHOM TO CALL: TO DISCUSS LOCAL NEWS... Shawn Starkey, city editor... Dan Hockensmith, River District... Deanna Wittig, St. Clair... Fred Woodhams, Sanilac County...

LOCAL & STATE

IN BRIEF CITY & REGION

WHOM TO CALL: TO DISCUSS LOCAL NEWS

Shawn Starkey, city editor 989-6257 Dan Hockensmith, River District 989-6275 Deanna Wittig, St. Clair 206-1223 Fred Woodhams, Sanilac County 989-6503

Council to consider 2 tax abatements The Port Huron City Council will have a public hearing on tax abatements for two local businesses at 7:30 p.m. March 25. Black River Plastics and Mueller Brass Co. applied for industrial facilities exemption certificates that allow 50% five-year tax breaks on personal property, which includes equipment inside a plant. City Clerk Pauline Repp said Black River is adding \$400,000 in machinery, and Mueller Brass is installing \$1.7 million in equipment. The taxes that normally would be paid on those figures would be cut in half. The rate of taxes paid is unclear.

Health awareness classes scheduled

Health awareness classes will be 1 to 3 p.m. March 27 and April 10 in the Primary Care & Etc. offices at 201 Huron Ave., Port Huron. Topics discussed will be "Cholesterol: Killing You Softly," "The Transition Kitchen," "New Food Groups" and "Food Additions." Cost is \$45, which includes handouts and recipes. Advance registration is required. Call 966-2900 for details.

YMCA pencils in Easter Bunny visit

The YMCA of the Blue Water Area is having its annual Easter Bunny Brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Children can have lunch with the Easter Bunny, take part in an egg hunt and swim in the YMCA's pool. For details or to register, call 987-6400 or visit the YMCA at 700 St. Port Huron.

City firefighters tally week's runs

The Port Huron Fire Department went on 63 runs for the week ending March 9, fire officials said. The runs include two structure fires, 30 medical emergency calls, three hazardous materials calls, 24 service calls and four false alarms.

New scholarship benefits seniors

Thumbs' Up for Kids officials have announced it will offer a scholarship of \$1,000 to help further the education of a student who has overcome adversity in his or her schooling. The award could be a learning disability or a difficult background. Presenting Jim Merriman said. Graduating seniors in Sanilac County are eligible for the scholarship and can apply through their school. High school counselors and principals also can nominate students. Deadline for submitting applications is May 1. The award will be announced May 15. Thumbs' Up for Kids also grants wishes to ill children in St. Clair, Sanilac and Lapeer counties.

Hospice to train daytime volunteers

Blue Water Hospice is offering volunteer training beginning April 9. Participants will teach families how to support and care for people in the last stages of an incurable illness. Volunteers are needed during the daytime hours. Training will be 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. To register, call 982-8899.

Easter Bunny hits downtown stretch

The Easter Bunny is making the rounds in Port Huron for MainStreet Port Huron Inc.'s Wabbit Walk. The bunny will be hopping around downtown from noon to 3 p.m. March 30. He will have special treats. For details, call 988-8843.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Times Herald strives for fair and accurate reporting, and we regret if any time an error is made. It is the policy of this newspaper to correct substantial errors in fact that appear in its news columns. Please bring errors to the attention of Deanna Starkey at 989-6257.

Algonac sewer work flowing along smoothly

February have spot-cleaned and repaired several of the worst sections of pipe on nearly all city streets, said Mike Harrington of Johnson and Anderson Inc. of Port Huron Township. "Everything is positive," he said. "We don't dig a hole." Instead, workers use a remote-controlled camera lowered into manholes to watch as they blast 40 years' worth of grime from the pipes with high-pressure water, then coat the pipes' insides with an epoxy sealant, he said. A complete rehabilitation of the sewer system — estimated at about \$1 million — may take years to complete, because of the need to find funding, Mayor Ray Martin said. The latest project, which officials expect to be finished in mid-April, will cost the city about \$200,000. The City Council approved the project in 2001, after earlier underground video surveys by Inland Waters Inc. of Detroit showed cracks developing throughout the sewer system. In the long term, the repairs will reduce the amount of sewer water flowing from the city to the waste-water treatment plant it shares with Clay and Ionia townships, Martin said. "We're paying for water that has to be treated," he said. "If (the city's) demand is reduced, our cost is reduced."

Harrington said the method used to repair sewers requires only one truck and a few workers. Several residents in areas affected by the project said they had not paid much attention to it. "I didn't even know they were there," said Darlene Dreyer, Director of Edgewater Drive.

A CLOSER LOOK SEWER PROJECT

MIWA: Cleaning and spot repairs of cracked underground pipes. WHERE: Repairs will affect nearly every city street. WHEN: Initial repairs to worst-hit areas will wrap up in April; future work depends on available funding. COST: Project \$279,700; total sewer system, about \$1 million.

Coin-club meet draws hundreds to swap, show

By ANGELA MULLINS Times Herald Staff Writer MARYSVILLE — Whether it was the history or hopes of finding something rare, one sure thing brought nearly 1,000 people to the Marysville American Legion Hall on Sunday.

"I just like to touch them and feel them in my hand," said Tim Fitzpatrick, 55, of Yassar. "I carry this Morgan dollar (coin) around in my pocket. I like the feel of the silver."

The Marysville Coin Club's silver anniversary Coin and Collecting Show drew coin enthusiasts and dealers from across eastern Michigan.

Sunday's show featured coins of ancient and international origin, as well as the well-known standards such as Susan B. Anthony dollars. Coins were on display for sale, trade and appraisal.

Members of the Marysville coin club also unveiled their 25th anniversary coin featuring the freighter Alpena. The commemorative coins are available to buy in both antique stores and coin shops.

Jack Lavis, a founder of the group, which members said is the only organized coin club in the Blue Water Area, said the goal is to educate and keep the hobby alive. "We promote the hobby to the public and have fun doing it," he said. Just as the coin club has changed since 1977, growing from four to 91 members, the hobby has changed dramatically. With the advent of the new state quarters in 1999 and the changing face of American paper money, members of the club said interest has skyrocketed.

"With all the new mint programs, it's a good time to get into the hobby," club President Dick Taggart said. "There are a lot of people saving coins now that have never done it before."



SPECIAL MINT: The Marysville Coin Club's special coin bearing the Alpena marks the group's 25th anniversary.



CLOSE INSPECTION: Mick Varwig of Now Imports nickels Sunday at the 25th anniversary coin show.

Among the newest of collectors is Fitzpatrick. He, like many, began collecting coins when the new state quarters first were unveiled. Since then, his interest slowly has grown and has become more specialized. The coins are something he hopes to keep in his family for years, 1990s, because that's when my father was born. Then I have a coin dated on my wife's birthday," he said. "I'm saving these for my grand-children. I've already got one that is pretty interesting."

Lobby group takes aim at education

Charter schools main goal of DeVos-run PAC

The Associated Press LANSING — A new education lobbying group plans to make itself a player in this fall's elections, but it isn't made up of teachers or school administrators.

The Great Lakes Education Project political action committee is the brainchild of Betsy DeVos, who said she's trying to get lawmakers elected who care about children first, not protecting the status quo in public education.

A savvy, well-connected, well-liked political insider, DeVos plans to have the PAC recruit and assist candidates in a fair number of House and Senate races this fall.

Not everyone is happy with the new PAC's plans to run candidates who agree with its philosophy against Republican activists said. GOP insiders are especially disappointed the primary challenges would be orchestrated by DeVos, a former chairwoman of the Michigan Republican Party.

"In the event that she goes after (Republican) Senate Majority Leader Dan DeLoach over DeVos over several education issues, including a 2000 school voucher proposal DeVos promoted and DeLoach opposed."



Betsy DeVos Dan DeLoach

ONLINE A CLOSER LOOK

Great Lakes Education Project: www.glep.org

House Speaker Rick Johnson, R-Ionia, isn't sure how much effect the PAC will have on the 2002 House races. He said he won't try to influence its decisions. But he added, "I support all my incumbents." Republicans are trying to hold on or broaden their seven-vote majority in the House this fall.

DeVos said her group will focus most of its efforts on open seats. There will be plenty, with 27 of 38 senators and 21 of 10 House members moving out because of term limits.

The group's main goal is to elect lawmakers who agree with increasing the number of charter schools that can be overseen by universities. The number now is capped at 150.

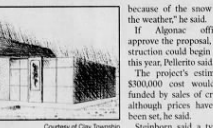
The group also wants to consolidate school elections and stop any tinkering with the current system under which the state collects taxes and divides money among public schools. Some school officials and politicians have called for allowing local taxes to again be levied to increase operating money for schools, a move DeVos opposes.

Clay wants to build new mausoleum

By DAN HOCKENSMTTH Times Herald

CLAY TWP. — Township officials are ready to go into the mausoleum business. First, though, they have to win approval for the building from nearby Algonac.

A proposal approved last week by the township board would add a 20-by-34-foot granite mausoleum to the northeast corner of the township's Elmore Daley Cemetery, on two acres of land inside the city limits. The mausoleum would have 64 indoor and 64 outdoor crypts for above-ground burials, said designer John Steinborn, owner of Jones Monument Co. in



Courtesy of Clay Township

BEING PLANNED: Clay Township wants to build a \$300,000 mausoleum in Oaklawn Cemetery, as seen in this drawing. Clerk Michael Pelletto said the board wanted a chapel for the convenience of families attending burials. "A lot of times, we're running into a situation where the elderly at funerals are having a hard time

because of the snow and the weather," he said. If Algonac officials approve the proposal, construction could begin later this year, Pelletto said. The project's estimated \$300,000 cost would be funded by sales of crypts, although prices have not been set, he said. Steinborn said a typical mausoleum crypt in the Blue Water Area costs about \$2,500, less than a traditional burial. City residents living near the mausoleum site had not heard about the proposal. "I don't know how I feel about that," said Katie Cassidy, 65, of Smith Street.

Farmers tout 'safe' fertilizer from soybeans

The Associated Press ANN ARBOR — A soybean-based fertilizer is environmentally friendly, said Washtenaw County farmers who created it. Clean Green's accomplishments two goals, said its makers, wash into streams and rivers, where they feed algae and weeds that choke out fish and native plants. Sales also could fuel the demand for soybeans. Phosphorus is abundant in Michigan soil, so excess phosphates from fertilizers

soybean farmers. Tests at Michigan State University found Clean Green "equal to or better than all the chemical fertilizers," said Mike Score, Washtenaw County agricultural extension agent.



By PAUL WARNER, The Associated Press

Pampered pooch

Hummer, a 5-year-old Alghan hound, wears a shield while being groomed Sunday by his owner, Betsy Moravetz of Macomb Township, at the Detroit Kennel Club Dog Show. A shield is a hair net for dogs that protects their hair and ears.