

COVID-19 CASES UPDATE - 8/18

	Cases	Deaths
All Pointes	599 (+36)	35 (+0)
Harper Woods	317 (+6)	35 (+0)

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Complete news coverage of all the Pointes



PHOTO BY LAUREL KRAUS

Dale Scrace, center, was honored by city council with the resolution renaming the marina in October.

Naming ceremony set for city marina

By Laurel Kraus
Staff Writer

CITY OF GROSSE POINTE — In honor of Dale N. Scrace's 28 years as councilman and mayor, and in recognition of his work to renovate and rehabilitate the Neff Park Marina in 2004, the City will unveil a sign at the marina entrance officially indicating its new name: The Dale N. Scrace Marina.

The ceremony takes place at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, followed with a celebration hosted by the Grosse Pointe Boat Club near its clubhouse and including a food truck, ice cream, beverages and snacks.

"It's a time for the community to just recognize all the good work that former Mayor Scrace did on behalf of the community while he was a longtime public official," City Manager Pete Dame said.

City council approved the resolution naming the marina after Scrace in October.

"There is no doubt that we needed to mark in a special way the 28 years of service Dale

Scrace provided to the City of Grosse Pointe," Mayor Sheila Tomkowiak said via email. "Several ideas on how to honor him were discussed. Naming our marina for him was a natural. He was mayor when the marina was renovated, he is an avid sailor and an active member and past commodore of the Grosse Pointe Boat Club, which operates out of Neff Park."

Throughout his time of service, Scrace helped the City achieve many milestones, including the reconstruction of the Neff Park pool and bathhouse, closing down the incinerator and switching to the landfill agreement through his position as Grosse Pointe Solid Waste Authority chairman and turning the former Jacobson's back into a mixed-use building for co-use.

As mayor, Scrace also formed and was a member of the facilities committee, which led to the construction of the new public safety and public works buildings that

See SCRACE, page 5A

Bob Bashara dies in hospital

By Kathy Ryan
Special Writer

ANN ARBOR — Bob Bashara is dead. He was 62.

The former Grosse Pointe Park resident was serving two life sentences related to the death in 2012 of his wife, Jane Bashara, when his death was confirmed on Tuesday,

Aug. 18. The cause of death had not been released at press time. He had been reported to be in ill health and was serving his sentence at a prison in Whitmore Lake.

Jane Bashara, a marketing executive and well-known community volunteer, was reported missing by her husband on Jan. 24, 2012. Her

body was found the next morning in the backseat of her SUV in an alley near Seven Mile and Hoover in Detroit. She had been strangled.

In December 2014, a jury found Bashara guilty on five counts, including murder in the first degree, conspiracy to commit murder, solicitation to murder, witness intimidation and

obstruction of justice. Former Wayne County Circuit Judge Vonda Evans, who presided over the three-month trial, sentenced Bashara to two terms of mandatory life in prison without parole for the murder charges and up to 40 more years on the other charges.

See BASHARA, page 3A



RENDERING COURTESY OF THE WAR MEMORIAL

Walkways up the historic drive and an addition in front of the ballroom on the street side are incorporated into the design plans.

War Memorial receives final plan approval

By Laurel Kraus
Staff Writer

GROSSE POINTE FARMS — After first announcing its large-scale improvement plans in January, The War Memorial unanimously received final site plan approval from city council during the virtual meeting Monday, Aug. 10.

The project designs, created in partnership

with the Alger family and currently led by architecture firm ROSSETTI, include a terrace off the side of the ballroom, overlooking the Alger House and water; recreated Ellen Biddle Shipman gardens; improved accessibility throughout the campus, such as additional parking spaces, walkways up the historic drive and sidewalks to the gardens and along lakefront

grounds; a new memorial and pre-function space for personal reflection; and a new addition.

The new addition to the facility in front of the ballroom on the street side will be comprised of an art gallery, community room, reflection room, glass-walled colonnade providing views of the restored gardens, improved entryway for guests arriving via car, space for back-of-house

work and restrooms.

"Our goal from the beginning of the project, which began late last year, has been to increase the quality of the patron experience and community experience; to address deferred maintenance issues and long-term design deficiencies in our facility; (and) to maintain and preserve the historic structure by

See APPROVAL, page 3A

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Shores finance officer/treasurer next in string of resignations

By Laurel Kraus
Staff Writer

GROSSE POINTE SHORES — Less than two months since 33-year Director of Public Works Brett Smith announced his resignation, the Shores' longtime Finance Officer/Treasurer Rhonda Ricketts is following suit.

The city still has not replaced

its last city manager, Mark Wollenweber, who retired in early October. Building Department Administrator Tom Krolczyk has been in place as interim city manager since November, with other city heads, including Ricketts and even the public safety director, expected to help fulfill the role on top of their own duties.

While the staff shortages and

continuous delays by city council to bring in new hires played a part in her decision, Ricketts said, the highly protested changes to retiree healthcare were the final straw.

"This last year we've been very short staffed and I've been tired of just working, working, working," she said. "I'm salary.

See RESIGN, page 2A



Rhonda Ricketts

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Pointer of INTEREST

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Ken Van Dellen

Home: Grosse Pointe Park
Retired professor devotes his life to volunteering, charity



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Tot Lot to gain ADA parking and ramps

By Laurel Kraus
Staff Writer

CITY OF GROSSE POINTE — Adding to ongoing Rotary Tot Lot improvements at Elworthy Park, the area soon will have three ADA-accessible parking spots and two ramps, as well as tactile surfaces for those with visual disabilities, following a unanimous vote by city council during the virtual meeting Monday, Aug. 17.

“Part of the greatness of the new Tot Lot is that it’s compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act,” City Manager Pete Dame said. “What is not compliant is the parking around it.”

With one handicap space on St. Clair and two on Waterloo, incorporated will be a van-



FILE PHOTO

The newly opened Rotary Tot Lot soon will gain ADA-compliant parking and ramps.

accessible space with a concrete landing platform in the right-of-way to allow for wheelchair loading and unloading.

Of the two handicap ramps, one is planned for Waterloo between the Tot Lot and pavilion and the other for St. Clair

where the Tot Lot meets the tennis courts.

The total cost of the project is \$24,986, with \$20,000 covered by fiscal

year 2019 Community Development Block Grant program funds. The City has used these funds to construct acces-

sible ramps at the intersections of sidewalks the past 15 years, but this project will mark the fundings’ last allocation of this type.

Prevented by recently changed county rules, the City in turn joined the other Pointes and Harper Woods in allocating its 2020 CDBG funds to The Helm at the Boll Life Center and the Pointe Area Assisted Transportation Service.

“I think it’s a good thing that we can allocate it to The Helm,” Dame had said. “They definitely do need the money.”

The remaining balance of \$4,986 will be taken from the capital projects fund.

Construction likely will take place in October, Dame said, and last around two weeks.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SGT. JOSEPH ADAMS

Sworn in

Left, City of Grosse Pointe Public Safety Officer Jacob Gentile was sworn in Tuesday, Aug. 11, in front of the new Mack Avenue public safety building. Gentile grew up in the Woods and graduated from Grosse Pointe North High School. Right, the Gentile family, from left, Clare, Carl, Jacob, Linda and Emma.



BASHARA:

Continued from page 1A

The story captivated the Grosse Pointes, as Bashara, the son of a prominent local family and a well-known community volunteer, first denied any involvement in his wife’s death. But his story quickly started unraveling when a Bashara employee, Joe Gentz, admitted to police that Bashara had promised him a used Cadillac and \$2,000 to kill his wife. Gentz admitted he killed Jane Bashara in the garage of the Bashara family home on Middlesex in Grosse Pointe Park, but said Bashara was with him at the time of the murder. He also said Bashara had held a gun on him and forced him to kill Jane.

Bashara was arrested in June, 2012 after he attempted to hire a hitman to kill Gentz who was already in prison after pleading guilty to killing Jane Bashara. He is currently serving 17

years on a charge of second degree murder.

The motive for the murder was almost a bigger story than the murder itself when it was revealed that Bashara, church volunteer and a past president of the Grosse Pointe Rotary, was involved in an alternative sexual lifestyle and had multiple mistresses involved in a sado masochistic lifestyle. He had intended to buy a house on Kensington for his mistresses and needed Jane Bashara dead in order to use her retirement money for the closing on the house, scheduled for just two days after Jane Bashara’s death.

Several of the women, who described themselves as “submissives” testified against Bashara at trial and spoke of time spent with Bashara in a “sex dungeon” he had created in the basement of a building he owned on Mack. The building was destroyed by fire in 2015.

Several of Jane



PHOTO BY KATHY RYAN

Bob Bashara at his sentencing hearing in January 2015 in Wayne County Circuit Court with his attorney.

Bashara’s friends also testified, citing instances of Bashara lying to Jane Bashara about his whereabouts, as well as his drug use.

Bashara had filed several appeals of his conviction, but all had been denied by Michigan courts.

Bashara grew up in

Grosse Pointe Woods, the son of a prominent judge. He attended Grosse Pointe North High School, Howe Military Academy and Albion College. He is survived by two children, his mother, an aunt and several cousins. An earlier marriage ended in divorce.

APPROVAL:

Continued from page 1A

reducing operational pressure on the facility,” President and CEO Charles Burke said.

Throughout consideration of the plans, protecting against bird-window strikes remained a main focus of the discussion and community’s interest. The War Memorial invested tens of thousands of dollars, Burke reported, into incorporating the solutions to various community concerns into the designs.

“I’d like to speak directly and clearly

regarding our commitment to doing what is right,” he said. “We are committed to following best practices in industry with regard to environmental sustainability, water stewardship and wildlife preservation.”

Most emphasized were the plans to use Guardian Sunguard Glass with BIRD1st Protection Coating on all four sides of the new addition. A misconception had existed that the specialized glass only would be on the waterside, which Burke informed is not the case.

Glass already on the historic house and current media wing will not

be replaced, he added, but all new construction will use Guardian Sunguard Glass.

Further efforts to prevent bird strikes include adding stone columns and visible glass seams, lowering the height of the promenade structure to match the servant’s quarters and reducing the overall volume of glass.

It also was noted the addition will be protected by trees, the Alger House, Grosse Pointe Memorial Church’s carillon tower and the cell tower.

“More than a million birds die estimated every year because of bird-win-

dow strikes and building strikes and everything that we can do to help eliminate or lessen that number is good for the bird population,” said Bill Rapai, president of Grosse Pointe Audubon. “We’ve lost more than a third of the bird population in North America over the last 30 years. I’m pleased ... to know that The War Memorial has listened to our concerns and has taken them into consideration.”

The 12- to 14-month construction process is planned to begin in the fall, Burke said, as soon as the organization’s architects complete the construction documents.

The Week Ahead

SATURDAY, AUG. 22

◆ Grosse Pointe Artists Association free Plein Air Workshop with Donald Cronkhite, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Paul on the Lake Catholic Church, 157 Lakeshore, Grosse Pointe Farms. Visit grossepointeartcenter.org.

MONDAY, AUG. 24

◆ Grosse Pointe Park City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUG. 25

◆ Grosse Pointe Woods Planning Commission meeting, 7 p.m. via Zoom.
◆ CARE’s Lounge & Learn webinar, “Marijuana & Teens,” 7 p.m. via Zoom. Visit careofsem.com.

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Serving others keeps geologist on solid ground

By Eddie B. Allen Jr.
Staff Writer

Along with Sunday School lessons, it was a country doctor who taught Ken Van Dellen, by example, to love his neighbor.

Jerrian Van Dellen — also known as “Jerry” or “Doc” — was known for making house calls around the Ellsworth-East Jordan area of northern Michigan from the late 1930s to 1973. Before he moved his office to the front of his home in Ellsworth, population 350, located an hour north of Traverse City, his son remembers the phone ringing to get his dad up in the middle of the night.

“He would make house calls on Sundays and holidays, too, and whenever people needed him,” Ken Van Dellen said. “Sometimes he would walk in with his bag, a mile or more from a plowed road, or someone would meet the car with a farm tractor or team of horses.”

At 83, Van Dellen still treats his father’s service as a model. Retired from Macomb Community College since 1999, Van Dellen has supported church, volunteer and charity initiatives throughout his life.

Catering to Ellsworth’s low-income

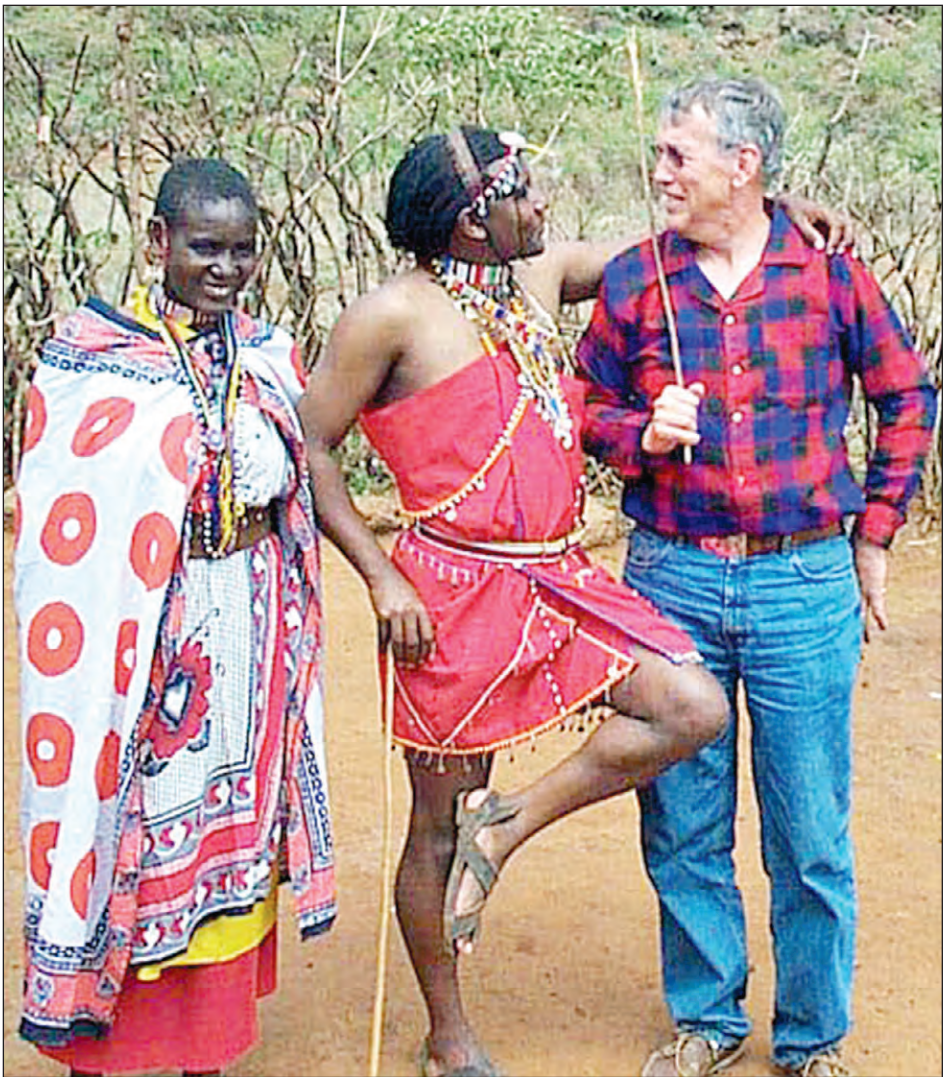


Ken Van Dellen

farmers wasn’t as lucrative as practicing medicine in nearby Charlevoix, but it laid a foundation for Dr. Van Dellen’s son, who kept the lessons in mind.

“Although he was probably the wealthiest man in town, he wasn’t wealthy,” Van Dellen recalled. “But he was generous.”

After he left northern Michigan, Van Dellen and his wife, Pearl, spent most of 10 years in St. Clair Shores before moving to the Park. When what he describes as a “do-it-yourself plan” for starting a family didn’t pan out, the Van Dellen’s adopted daughters in 1966 and 1968. Van Dellen taught various science courses at Fitzgerald Junior and Fitzgerald Senior High schools. He credits a conversation at Fitzgerald with helping him be more sensitive



COURTESY PHOTOS

Ken Van Dellen, right, visited the east African nation of Kenya in 2000.

to people of much different backgrounds than many of those he’d known in Ellsworth. Using a common expression he hadn’t recognized as derogatory, he told teachers during lunch about a purchase he contemplated.

“Maybe I could Jew

him down,” Van Dellen said.

“Well maybe you could gentile him down,” a colleague replied, eliciting laughter from the other teachers.

“It turns out the guy was Jewish,” Van Dellen remembered. “Sometimes, we’re just ignorant, but not intentionally mean or rude.”

His dad’s service to people of different backgrounds, like the migrant Latino families in Ellsworth, influences

Van Dellen’s views about diversity today.

“I thought it was very cool to meet somebody from Mexico or any other country,” he said. “They talked differently and they looked different, but they were just kids, like my brother and me.”

Van Dellen left Fitzgerald to teach geology at the newly opened Macomb Community College South Campus in 1965. After retiring, he traveled to Kenya where he

spent four months at his own expense as a volunteer visiting lecturer. Daystar’s campus, where he taught biology and environmental science, was the largest Christian university in Africa at the time.

His connection to the continent, where he’d longed to visit since childhood, grew more personal in 1991, when he rallied support for Kabba Jalloh, a student from Sierra Leone, to attend college, partly by sharing Jalloh’s story with Grosse Pointe News readers.

Van Dellen’s many other charitable efforts include ongoing support of Native American mission schools in New Mexico and donating 110 units of blood. He also was a volunteer counselor at Crossroads East crisis center and taught English to immigrants at the Arab American Friendship Center in Dearborn. While he doesn’t mean to come across as a bragger about his good deeds, he said he wants to set an example similar to the one his father provided.

“I believe that we’re on earth to be of service to other people,” he said, “and it can be enjoyable and satisfying.”

Between occasional trips back to the Ellsworth area where he and Pearl have a second home, Van Dellen works toward completing a book about Michigan geology. Though his life is filled with fascinating encounters and interesting acquaintances, from astronauts to fellow scientists, he is particularly proud of Drew Bremer, a mildly hemiplegic grandson with cerebral palsy, who is a member of the U.S. Paralympic Soccer Team.

Along with living into his 80s, Van Dellen said a generally positive outlook on life is connected to his “exciting experiences.”

“I think a big problem today is too many people are saying, ‘What did you mean by that?’” Van Dellen said with a chuckle. “Too many people assume the other person is being nasty.”

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Grosse Pointe Farms

Carrying without permit

A Detroit resident in his late 20s was found to have no license and fraudulent insurance when he was pulled over for tinted front windows at Mack Avenue and Kerby Road at 9:17 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12.

Before the vehicle was towed, a search turned up a handgun, for which the man was arrested.

Dog bite victim

When a 12-year-old McMillan Road boy went to pet a puppy being walked by a Farms couple at 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, the couple's older dog lunged and bit him in the thigh.

No stitches were needed and the dog was up to date on shots.

Consequences to fit the crime

A resident in the 280 block of Kercheval Avenue reported a group of middle schoolers have vandalized his Joe Biden sign approximately 25 times.

The man is seeking for the boys to pay the \$45 in damages to the Biden campaign.

Stolen flag

Between 9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, and 8:30 a.m. Friday, Aug. 14, an unknown person stole a Blue Lives Matter flag from a house in the 280 block of Beaupre Avenue, damaging the brick siding when the pole was yanked out.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS

Stolen political sign

A Trump-for-President sign was stolen from a yard in the 30 block of Fair Acres Drive at 1:30 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 16.

— Laurel Kraus

Report information about these and other crimes to Grosse Pointe Farms Public Safety, (313) 885-2100.

Grosse Pointe Shores

No insurance

After being pulled over for a broken brake light and found to have a suspended license, expired plate and no insurance, a 26-year-old Detroit woman was arrested at Lakeshore Road and Woodland Shore at 9:22 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11.

Driving while license suspended

A 22-year-old Shores man pulled over for disobeying a traffic signal at Lakeshore Road and Edgewood Drive North at 9:18 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, was arrested for driving with a suspended license and then turned over to Eastpointe for a misdemeanor warrant.

Unruly boater

After a highly intoxicated 38-year-old St. Clair Shores man exited a boat in Lake St. Clair

and began rolling around in the backyard of a Lakeshore Road home at 5:38 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, public safety arrested him for disorderly conduct.

Identity theft

An unknown person used the name and information of a 50-year-old Shores man to secure a DTE Energy service account in Detroit.

Amenable boater

Officers were called by a Lakeshore Road resident when a boat in Ford Cove was playing excessively loud music at 8:36 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16. After speaking with officers, the owners complied with lowering the music and, shortly after, left the area.

— Laurel Kraus

Report information about these and other crimes to Grosse Pointe Shores Public Safety, (313) 881-5500.

Grosse Pointe Woods

Stolen saddle bags

A dad watching his son play baseball at Ghesquiere Park parked his motorcycle near Grosse Pointe Woods City Hall around 5:10 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, and returned to find his saddle bags, valued at \$750, missing around 6:45 p.m. An additional

\$1,500 in personal belongings were contained in the saddle bags. The suspect is unknown.

— Eddie B. Allen Jr.

Report information about this and other crimes to Grosse Pointe Woods Public Safety, (313) 343-2400.

City of Grosse Pointe

Repeat vehicle vandalism

A Park resident discovered flat tires and damaged valve stems when he returned to his vehicle after parking it overnight on Village Lane Monday, Aug. 10.

Similar incidents have occurred in the same area in the past and the investigation is ongoing.

Ongoing identity theft

An unknown person opened a PayPal account in the name of a 36-year-old Grosse Pointe woman and charged \$514 to the Chase account. She also received a letter stating she rented a car in Massachusetts and has not returned it.

Four times the legal limit

After being reported for stumbling around a business in the 16000 block of Kercheval Avenue at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, a 30-year-old Park woman was stopped by officers

as she drove out of the parking lot.

A preliminary breath test found her blood alcohol content was .287 percent, for which she was arrested.

— Laurel Kraus

Report information about these and other crimes to the City of Grosse Pointe Public Safety, (313) 886-3200.

Grosse Pointe Park

Trailer hitch heist

A 29-year-old Grosse Pointe Park resident was caught on surveillance stealing a trailer hitch from a pickup in the 15000 block of Kercheval Monday, Aug. 3. The suspect was later located and arrested at his home, where the hitch was recovered.

Stolen equipment

A recent transplant from Los Angeles reported \$1,625 in computer and tool equipment missing from her belongings at 3:20 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, in the 1400 block of Somerset. The equipment appeared to have been taken during her relocation to the Park.

— Eddie B. Allen Jr.

Report information about these and other crimes to Grosse Pointe Park Public Safety, (313) 822-7400.

SCRACE:

Continued from page 1A

soon will be complete.

“As mayor, he made a tough job seem effortless,” Tomkowiak said. “I have always appreciated his gracious manner and quiet competence. He never called attention to himself or his achievements, so I am very pleased that we are able to recognize his contributions in a permanent and public way.”

The event, which is open to the public, will require attendees to wear masks and practice social distancing.



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OUR VIEW

Schools, sports fall prey to COVID-19

To say schools are in turmoil would be an understatement. And that’s before they even open. Just one example: Practice for fall sports had barely begun when COVID-19 outbreaks also showed up among a few teams. Then the Michigan High School Athletic Association postponed the football season in to the spring.

In making the announcement Aug. 14, the association’s executive director, Mark Uyl, noted that the status of other fall sports also could change but “none of those carry the same close, consistent and face-to-face contact as football.”

Unfortunately, this may be just one disappointment among many for high schoolers — and perhaps for every student who’d like to be back in school with fellow classmates. And Grosse Pointe teams were not immune from outbreaks, including one among field hockey teammates, another among a cross-country team.

The rising number of cases among Michigan teenagers has become obvious enough to generate news stories, including an Aug. 11 report at bridgemi.com. It noted that in just the preceding week, the number of cases among those ages 10-19 had grown by 15 percent. Statewide, illness among those younger than 20 had averaged about 3 percent of all COVID-19 cases before June 1; since then, they’ve jumped to 16 percent of all cases.

The abrupt surge among young people can presumably be traced to the loosening of state restrictions just before Memorial Day, which led to graduation parties in June — and gatherings of teens and young adults where mask-wearing and distancing rules were not well observed.

The urge for get-togethers is understandable. But it appears to have led to disease outbreaks that prompted many districts in Michigan, including the Grosse Pointe Public School System, to delay any in-person teaching. Now the hope is to bring students in gradually as the school year progresses.

And, under at least one model, high schoolers may be the last to return.

That model, from the Harvard Global Health Institute and reported in the New York Times, ranked every county in the United States for its potential to reopen safely. There were four potential paths for schools: open with remote learning for all grades, open lower grades in-person but keep high school classes remote, open lower grades in-person and hold some in-person high school classes and, finally, open with in-person classes at all grade levels.

Wayne and Macomb counties both fell into the recommended category of full remote learning — that is, case numbers remain too great to risk bringing children of any age into classrooms. That affirms the Aug. 10 vote by the Board of Education to open school Sept. 8 with remote instruction only. (Most Michigan counties fell into the third category, where elementary and middle schools could open while high schools offer a mix of remote and in-person instruction.)

Locally, case counts also support the need for remote learning — and perhaps even for canceling all team sports. Grosse Pointe Farms sent out a safety notice earlier this week reminding residents about protective measures; the city’s Department of Public Safety noted that the Pointes had registered more than 100 new cases since Aug. 1.

Numbers from the COVID-19 dashboard maintained by Wayne County suggest that illness spread in the Pointes starting in late June and burgeoned as August got underway. It’s particularly unsettling as a summer phenomenon, well ahead of indoor activities that resume post-Labor Day and often kick off various illnesses.

There’s no denying this is hard — for teenagers, and for older residents who are isolating from their own children and grandchildren.

Sadly, though, the turmoil for schools is particularly obvious — and likely to continue. Without a serious effort by everyone of every age to keep their masks on, very few children will be returning to their classrooms anytime soon.



PHOTO BY SCOTT MATTHEWS

Officials attended a “courtesy” ribbon-cutting for the Rotary Tot Lot in advance of its actual opening Aug. 8 so Mayor Sheila Tomkowiak, center, could attend.

OUR VIEW

Rotary Tot Lot a job well done

The Rotary Tot Lot, chock full of improvements, got its official ribbon-cutting Aug. 8 — and playground denizens were quick to notice. Passersby can always see children there, swinging or sliding or climbing or moving from play spot to play spot.

The community was quick to support the Rotary project after it was announced in July 2019. The Tot Lot, which dates back to 1973, hadn’t been upgraded in more than two decades — and much has changed since the 1997-98 work.

The installation now complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, is ADHD friendly, has two play structures with multiple activities for 2- to 5-year-olds and adds a mix of other new equipment while also refurbishing some of the most popular existing pieces.

It is a job well done by the Rotary Club of Grosse Pointe; the depth of community support was exceptional, too. First, the club raised the \$250,000 needed for the project within its campaign deadline last fall. Second, multiple local business people lent equipment and workers, and donated substantial amounts of materials and time. The City of Grosse Pointe and the Grosse Pointe Public School System also pitched in.

The lot, at the corner of St. Clair and Waterloo streets in Grosse Pointe, remains a rare local destination — a playground designed specifically for the preschool set. The Rotary Club vision set back in the early 1970s has held up well; with the dedication of current members and support from the community, new generations of tots will enjoy that vision for years to come.

OUR VIEW

Time is right for Schaap center

Barring some late development, it is time for Grosse Pointe Park to get behind the combination performing arts center and art gallery that would serve as a remarkable attraction along the city’s border.

The proposed Paul A. and Carol C. Schaap Center for the Performing Arts and the Richard and Jane Manoogian Art Gallery has come under continuous scrutiny — and criticism — from some Park council members and residents. But as the approval process has become more open, it seems clearer yet that the project is an asset. The Park would be foolish to turn its back on the proposal.

The open land being made available for the center already has passed from the city to the nonprofit Urban Renewal Initiative Foundation. Online question-and-answer sessions have been held. The city planning commission gave its approval Aug. 12 with a 6-2 vote.

Yes, any project of this scope has risks. Fund-raising is not complete and the city needs to insist that the project include an endowment to ensure the center can cover its operating costs if shortfalls should occur. Community engagement needs to

keep improving.

But the overall plan — a place for the Grosse Pointe Theatre and Grosse Pointe Symphony to call home, among other events — is far and away a more exciting concept than almost anything else that could be proposed for that site. Ideas that came along at other times included a chain restaurant, but what would that add to the local ambience? And the property tax paid by a restaurant may pale in comparison to neighborhood upgrades spurred by a new cultural asset.

Potential improvements reach along both sides of the Grosse Pointe Park-Detroit border. The adjacent Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood is among areas designated for help via Detroit’s Strategic Neighborhood Fund. With its plan for upgrades to buildings and businesses along East Jefferson, an improved and exciting transition into the Park would develop.

It is increasingly possible to imagine the erasure of abrupt border differences, to everyone’s benefit, with the performing arts center and gallery as a linchpin. Grosse Pointe Park should embrace the vision.

LETTERS

The Grosse Pointe News welcomes your letters to the editor. All letters should be typed, double-spaced and signed. Letters longer than 250 words may be edited for length. All letters may be edited for content. We reserve the right to refuse any letter. Include daytime phone number for verification or questions. The deadline for letters is 3 p.m. Monday. Letters to the editor may be emailed to editor@grossepointenews.com.

It’s not just about the arts

To the Editor:

The debate over the proposed performing arts facility in the Park continues to gather steam. By now, residents should understand where the issues lie.

◆ Zoning requirements being overridden (this building clearly doesn’t fall under the “office use” category).

◆ An incomplete Master Plan that doesn’t define the city’s future

development needs.

◆ Lack of resident engagement (two forums just before the planning commission meeting did not allow for any adjustments based on resident input).

◆ Very specific use that doesn’t extend to broad, diverse programming.

◆ Parking that will inevitably spread to already crowded residential streets.

◆ And after asking for months, we still have no business plan that indicates whether an endow-

ment and ticket sales will actually cover operating expenses and ensure this facility will pay its own way and continue to be utilized in years to come.

Proponents say “the arts are good for communities” and “Grosse Pointe Theatre has been around for decades and needs a new home.” These statements are true, but they speak to wants without addressing the need for due diligence on behalf of city taxpayers.

Those who live in the Grosse Pointes (but not in the Park) vocally support the venture, but Park city government’s only responsibility is to city residents. All the project’s risks, costs and benefits must be weighed.

It’s implied that those who question the project are somehow anti-art, which couldn’t be further from the truth. There are practical issues decision makers must consider.

It is not and never has been a debate about the intrinsic value of the arts.

AIMEE FLUITT
Grosse Pointe Park
Editor’s note: Ms. Fluitt sits on the Grosse Pointe Park City Council.

Schaap center is ‘the best use’

To the Editor:

I am a member of the Grosse Pointe Park Planning Commission which approved the site plan for the performing arts and art gallery in the meeting Aug. 12. The site plan was approved by a majority of 6-2. I speak only for myself — not the commission.

I served as a member of the Grosse Pointe Park City Council for eight years from 1983 to 1991. I have been a member of the planning commission since 1991. I have seen and participated in the vision of

See LETTERS, page 6A

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I SAY By Bob St. John

What now?



High school student-athletes have been practicing for a football season complete with expectations of winning games.

The fans might have not been allowed to watch the games, but the players would enjoy the game they love.

In the blink of an eye, the Michigan High School Athletic Association canceled the fall football season and said it would be played in the spring, citing the players might get COVID-19 playing a sport with such a high level of contact.

It's all about keeping them safe, right?

The MHSAA is going to continue to play the other fall sports.

University Liggett

School football head coach Tarif Kumasi said, "My hope is that we can continue to practice and keep our team intact. I feel as though the travel teams will pounce on this and kids might flee. Ohio is playing football and that poses another risk. Kids may leave just to play knowing they can transfer back with no penalty and play again in the spring.

"We are fragile in numbers. Five athletes leaving could be the difference in us even being able to play. Eight-man football is something we've discussed going forward, but I'd like to stay 11-man. As with a lot of things, COVID is havoc on our norms and it could severely hurt football for decades. Football as a whole was declining in numbers and this is another blow to interest.

"My staff and I are staying optimistic. We have a very talented team this year."

Grosse Pointe North

football head coach Joe Drouin said, "We had a week with a slice of normalcy. We had some powerful energy this past week. We put together five great practices and were looking forward to putting the pads on next week.

"I expected a decision to be made next week, but it is best that it was made at the time it was. If we were able to practice with full pads then find out the season was moved, it would have been a more devastating blow. We have to look at the things we can control, our attitude and our effort. Now we have more time to polish up our offense. More time to refine our defense. More time to work out.

"We have a strong group of senior leaders. They are already asking what they can do to improve themselves and prepare for the spring. We burn the boats, move on from the past and learn from it. Our guys learned the work ethic it

takes to prepare; now they will be able to work and prepare more. In the spring we will be ready to compete."

Grosse Pointe South football head coach Tim Brandon said, "I'm heartbroken for all of our players and coaches, but especially the seniors that won't get the true 'Friday night lights' experience. I truly don't believe that this needed to be the outcome. It's sad that politics plays this much of a role in these types of decisions.

"These kids (and coaches) worked too hard preparing themselves for the season and also conforming to the guidelines and restrictions placed on us by the district and state. I'm not sure what will happen going forward, but I pray the MHSAA comes up with a plan that will give

our players a true high school football experience while not making them choose between football and a spring sport."

What does this do for college recruiting for the high school players? The players with scholarships are OK and may not play in the spring. If they can, they might enroll in college early to start their careers.

You can't play the season in January, February or March. It looks like April and May, and instead of playing nine games, the season might be limited to fewer than nine. Who knows at this point? Decisions will be made in a few months.

What about the football players who participated in spring sports like baseball or track and field? Coaches can't put pressure on a student-athlete

to play the sport they coach. If they did that, I would fire them. It's up to each student-athlete and their family to pick what sport they prefer to play in the spring.

It would be embarrassing to have a coach of one particular sport put undue pressure on a student-athlete. I'm sure it will happen. It will be unfortunate if it is allowed.

Who knows if winter sports will begin on time or even play at all? Hockey and wrestling look like candidates to not play due to the high level of contact, like football.

The spring of 2020 was messed up for high school athletics and so is the fall of 2020. What will 2021 bring? I'm expecting a lot of chaos, but should be safe when we get a vaccine.

YESTERDAY'S HEADLINES

1945

75 years ago this week

CITY TO ENLARGE POLICE QUARTERS:

The Grosse Pointe City Council has authorized the preparation of plans for the addition to the fire and police station building on Maumee, as urged by Public Safety Commissioner Clarence Blessed some time ago. The intention is to enlarge the quarters for the police, giving larger office room for the chief and providing for a court room. It is possible that provision will also be made for a locker space in an additional room in the rear.

1970

50 years ago this week

TANK TEAM TAKES TWO TITLES:

The Grosse Pointe Woods Swimming Team won its fifth consecutive dual

meet of the 1970 summer season, registering victories over St. Clair Victor and Grosse Pointe Farms, City, Park and Shores. The second title came in the Inter-City Championship meet against the four other Pointes.

Obituaries: Mary Jane Mullins, Margaret I. Osius, Leona Plaen, Virginia Hoffhines, William Mortimer, Herbert J. Smith

1995

25 years ago this week

RECOUNT SCHEDULED:

Grosse Pointe Park city clerk Jane Blahut announced the date for the recount in the recent judicial primary. Candidate Dean Valente asked for the recount after learning he

had missed being placed on the November ballot by one vote in the Aug. 8 judicial primary. Current Park municipal judge Carl Jarboe received 799 votes, automatically placing him on the ballot. Candidate Don Berschback received 467 votes, Valente received 466 votes and John Simon received 162 votes.

Obituaries: Bonnie Sue Oliver, Sheila MacLean Schollenberger, William S. Fiscus, Mary E. Simon, Daniel J. Clifford, John H. "Mike" Wardwell

2010

10 years ago this week

Obituaries: Assad Amine, Evan Stuart Eatherly, William Lesley Hughes, Robert E. Lee, Elizabeth S. Owen, Lois Batten Pickard

LETTERS:

Continued from page 6A

Grosse Pointe Park, including the development of Jefferson Avenue. There was much to be done to remove blighted buildings and to develop the area to the extent that it is presently developed.

We were, and are, fortunate to have visionary, courageous leadership at the manager, mayor and city council levels. We have been blessed with generous philanthropic gifts which have benefited our parks and other facilities.

Our function as a planning commission was to review the site plan as presented by the professionals involved in the design of this project, which will be owned and operated by a 501(c)3 charitable organization with its own board of directors. It is NOT a "city project." We were to determine whether or not this project met the building codes in Grosse Pointe Park.

I and other members of the commission had the opportunity to review the site plans before the meeting. I think it is fair to state that I am a stickler for requiring that building code be met. If I felt that code was not met following questions at the meeting, I would have had no hesitation in stating that a zoning variance was needed. I found no need for any variances.

I questioned the city of Grosse Pointe Park chief building official and the spokesperson for the Smith Group (formerly Smith Hinchman), the architects. I questioned very carefully whether the building, which is 58 feet tall, met zoning requirements and was advised both orally and in writing on the plans that the height restriction in this area was 75 feet. It was further noted that the neighboring buildings are at least 60 feet or more, which include St. Ambrose, the city hall and the condominiums

nearby.

I questioned whether a performing arts center was appropriate for an OS District. I was assured by the city building official, the architects and the city attorney for Grosse Pointe Park that it met OS requirement.

The site met all setback requirements.

I questioned whether the parking requirements were met. They are.

The project, itself, provides parking; there is an agreement with St. Ambrose to use its parking lot for parking (not to interfere with St. Ambrose functions); there is parking at city hall. There is no contemplated parking on the side streets included in the count. There is land in front of the library which the city owns but is not currently a parking lot and is NOT included in the count. When the foregoing available spaces are totaled, they substantially exceed the parking requirements of the code.

All of the parcels of land included in the project are already owned by the project or are under agreement to be purchased by it.

In my opinion, there was no reason or basis to deny approval and it would have been improper to do so.

Speaking now solely as a Park resident since

1964, I believe this project will be a wonderful benefit to all of the Pointes and the residents of the city of Detroit.

What a wonderful space to gather; for children to sit and see a live performance or experience fine art — perhaps attending a class or lecture.

This is "the best use" of this space from any standpoint. I have never heard a better alternative voiced. I sincerely thank those who have made it possible.

DAVID M. GASKIN
Member, Grosse Pointe Park City Planning Commission

Correction: Last week's letter, "No Hidden Agenda," should have said the authors, Joe and Sue Tompkins, live in the City of Grosse Pointe.

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State adds requirements to district’s return-to-school plan

By Mary Anne Brush
Staff Writer

A bi-partisan agreement between Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Republican-led legislative leadership adds a few new requirements, but doesn’t impact the Grosse Pointe Public School System’s plans for a fully remote opening to school Sept. 8.

While the House passed a “Return to Learn” plan requiring in-person learning for kindergarten to grade 5, a compromise was reached among lawmakers Aug. 14, in which getting students in these grades back into the buildings for face-to-face instruction is a priority rather than a mandate. The Senate approved the plan at a special session Saturday and the House followed suit Monday, with the governor expected to sign the bills shortly thereafter.

Like other school districts across the state, GPPSS prepared a COVID-19 Preparedness

and Response Plan, which includes pathways for in-person, remote and hybrid learning. This plan, approved by the Board of Education Aug. 10, and due to Wayne Regional Educational Service Agencies Aug. 17, will remain largely unchanged as a result of the agreement, according to GPPSS Superintendent Gary Niehaus.

For example, one requirement of the agreement is for each school district to review its community’s COVID-19 data with local health departments before making a decision on face-to-face or remote learning. GPPSS already works with the Wayne County Health Department to monitor cases in the region, Niehaus said, paying close attention to local spikes.

“I don’t think (the agreement has) really changed anything we’re planning to do next year at this point in time,” he said. “We’re always looking for more guidance on what

the metrics are going to be for us to open back up. We’re going to go with the governor’s phase-in plan at this point in time.”

That phase-in plan, as stated at the Aug. 10 regular meeting of the GPPSS Board of Education, is to focus first on getting the youngest and most vulnerable learners, including those with special needs and individualized education plans, back into the classroom for face-to-face learning as soon as deemed safe to do so.

“We know our special ed kids need more face to face than other students and we want to try to honor that as soon as we can,” Niehaus said, adding they also are “some of our most vulnerable kids,” so having the right safety protocols in place is a must.

The best news from the legislation, in his view, was the pupil counts used to steer state funding to local districts will be based 75 percent on last year’s count and 25 percent on the coming year’s

count, mitigating any decline in enrollment this year.

While 100 percent of last year’s count, as recommended by State Superintendent Mike Rice, would have been preferred, 75 percent “is actually a very good deal for our district,” Niehaus said. “Obviously it puts a lot of pressure on us to do everything right.”

The agreement also waives, for the 2020-21 school year only, the minimum of 180 days and 1,098 hours of pupil instruction requirement as long as the same educational or course content is delivered leading to course completion.

Niehaus was less pleased about the requirement to test students within the first nine weeks of school to gauge their academic progress, taking time away from instruction.

Benchmark results must be sent to the Michigan Department of Education and the Center for Educational

Performance and Information and reported on the district’s website. A report on state-level performance will be submitted to the governor and legislature.

The agreement also requires each district superintendent to submit and certify to the CEPI and intermediate superintendent the number of pupils engaged in pandemic learning for fall 2020 and spring 2021, according to the House bills.

For schools providing remote instruction, teachers must engage in at least two two-way interactions per week for at least 75 percent of pupils, with the onus on school districts to track and demonstrate these interactions or risk a reduction in state aid funding.

The amount of that state aid remains uncertain, Niehaus noted.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services Jon Dean, GPPSS “is prepared and will comply with all

state pupil accounting guidelines to receive full funding for our students.”

“This legislation did not provide any clarity to school districts that wasn’t already there,” Niehaus said. “School districts already could do online, blended and face-to-face programming for students. This is a blatant misrepresentation. The clarity needed was only with the days and hours requirement which, if not done by the legislature, could have been done by (the Michigan Department of Education).”

Moreover, the blended student count adjustment “could have also been addressed in a budget bill we are still waiting for,” he added, concluding, “The new requirements in the bill will actually make it more difficult for local school teachers, administrators and board members to get the school year started in these unprecedented times, taking away time from addressing the most pressing needs of students.”

O’Brien heading to Lawrence Tech

By Bob St. John
Sports Editor

Hitting and throwing whiffle balls since he was a child, 18-year-old Terence O’Brien has been on the top of his game.

He played machine pitch at age 5 for Lac St. Clair Little League, then improved his skill set so much he was able to turn it into an opportunity to play at the college level.

O’Brien will play for head coach Stan Eldridge at Lawrence Technological University.

He has played third and first base, plus pitched. His favorite is pitching.

“When visiting Lawrence Tech in the summer for a tour, I was impressed with both the programs and facilities that they had to offer,” O’Brien said. “After the tour, I was encouraged by one of my Liggett teammates, Drew Zelenak, to reach out to the coach at LTU because he was already committed to go there in the fall.

“Drew mentioned that he really liked the coaches and the baseball program at Lawrence Tech, so I decided to reach out myself. After a couple messages, Coach Eldridge invited me to come practice with the team. I attended an LTU baseball practice and was impressed with the culture they have established there.”

“I chose Lawrence Tech for a multitude of reasons; the facilities, the education, their positive reputation and finally the opportunity to play collegiate baseball.”

O’Brien’s parents have always supported his love of the game; whether playing catch or taking him to the batting cages, O’Brien was happy.

When he played travel baseball, his parents drove him around the country so he could improve.

The University Liggett School graduate, who finished with a 3.3 grade-point average, is going to

major in mechanical engineering.

He missed his senior year of baseball at ULS due to COVID-19.

“I miss being with all the guys,” O’Brien said. “At Liggett, everyone buys into the winning atmosphere, which has resulted in us being so successful in years past. With how our season ended last year it’s disappointing that we won’t get the chance to change that this year.”

“We were filled with both talent and potential coming into this season. We all had high expectations for ourselves, especially us as seniors, because we know what it felt like to end the season the way we did last year.”

The Knights lost 4-0 to Homer in the 2019 Division 3 state championship game and were No. 2 in the 2020 pre-season rankings before play was halted.

In 2019, O’Brien hit .316 with five doubles, 10 RBIs and was 4-1 on the

mound, including a big win over state-ranked Detroit Country Day.

He had the opportunity to play for one of the top high school coaches in the state, ULS varsity baseball head coach Dan Cimini.

“Terence threw the ball very well in 2019, and was going to be one of our horses going into 2020,” Cimini said. “He will pitch at Lawrence Tech next season. I am so proud of how hard he worked and developed into a frontline starting pitcher for us.”

“Playing for Coach Cimini has taught me a lot,” O’Brien said. “I have had him as both a high school coach at Liggett and a summer ball coach for Little Caesars. He expects the best out of us at all times and will let you know if he feels you’re not meeting your own potential.”

“He has helped me to push myself and expect to win at all times. I am thankful for his help and



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERENCE O'BRIEN

University Liggett School graduate Terence O’Brien takes his baseball talent to Lawrence Technological University.

guidance these last four years, because they helped me to achieve my goal of making it to the next level and playing collegiate baseball.”

O’Brien has been working out during the stay-at-

home order, preparing for his freshman year at LTU.

He will play a couple of weekends in the fall, then officially start the 2020-21 college baseball season Feb. 27.

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North grad supports remote learning with training program

By Mary Anne Brush
Staff Writer

On Aug. 15, a comprehensive online professional development program went live that offers hope for parents worried remote learning may not meet their children's academic, social and emotional needs.

Founder Sarah Kurtz McKinnon, a 2004 Grosse Pointe North High School graduate, created Pod School Prep to capitalize on a new concept growing in popularity in the changing education landscape due to the new coronavirus. Many parents, rather than have their children learn in isolation, have created small groups of learners in a home setting known as learning pods.

The difficulty parents face, Kurtz McKinnon realized, is finding someone to manage the children's learning. A stay-at-home parent, nanny or grandparent might not be equipped with the appropriate skills.

Pod School Prep trains pod leaders on how to guide a child's instruction while using the curriculum provided by the school district.

Kurtz McKinnon came up with the idea while watching the news and reading posts on Mom Swap Facebook pages, in particular from single and dual working parents who oversaw their children's online learning last spring when schools closed, but realized this model wasn't sustainable.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RODERICK COONEY

Sarah Kurtz McKinnon

"Then I saw that people were getting together with friends and creating these pods where three families with seven kids total would match up and hire a tutor — kind of like a nanny share — to help their kids during the day," Kurtz McKinnon said.

She drew on her experience as a longtime summer camp director and consultant to create a way to train pod leaders virtually in essential skills. She has recruited a team of youth development and education experts to create a comprehensive, self-paced virtual training program for pod leaders covering topics such as working with parents, group dynamics, pedagogical techniques, mental health, bullying and child abuse prevention.

The ultimate goal, she said, is to make virtual learning a positive experience for students.

"The training aspect is the first piece of our program," Kurtz McKinnon said. "The other things

that we're developing are ongoing professional development and support options because this is uncharted territory. It's kind of a new job in the world. We know people are going to need troubleshooting and support, so we're providing personalized support."

This one-on-one coaching may include giving pod leaders new ideas to keep students engaged or manage a bullying issue within a group.

Pod School Prep also is focusing its efforts on equity and access. Kurtz McKinnon and her team are pursuing partnerships with nonprofits and school districts to help launch the program and give students and working parents more viable options in the fall.

Regardless of economic circumstances, Kurtz McKinnon urges parents to use trained pod leaders in conjunction with the school district's online curriculum.

“What we are doing for school districts right

now is really advocating for people to remain enrolled in public schools,” she said. “We don’t want you to leave your public school and take your funding with you. We want you to stay enrolled and provide an environment where your child’s social and emotional needs are met.”

Pods range from two to three children to 10 or 12. The pod leader acts “as an assistant teacher because the main teacher is still providing the curriculum and grading and providing feedback,” Kurtz McKinnon said. “The pod leader is there as a mentor and guide. I believe many pod leaders will form an emotional connection with kids. I think many kids

are searching for an adult connection that's not their parent as well.

"There are so many ways to assemble a pod and so much of it has to do with your own comfort level and how risk averse you are," she added. "I wouldn't want to be in a pod with families if I didn't know how serious they were about precautions."

Sometimes it's best to keep siblings together in a pod, she added, even though they're working at different grade levels.

"From a safety standpoint, if families separate, you're creating a tangled web of pods," she said. "The point with your pod is to create a bubble. I would want to make sure my child was with as few families as

possible to reduce her risk of exposure."

Kurtz McKinnon's ultimate goal is to make pod learning so fun, children are "a little sad when schools open again that their pod is over," she said.

The best way to achieve this outcome is to begin with a positive attitude, she advised parents.

"Tell (your children), 'We're going to do school differently this year,'" she said. "'You're going to love your pod leader. It's going to be awesome.'"

Go to podschoolprep.com to register a participant. The cost of a training course is \$199 for an individual, with group pricing and discounts available.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT ARIZALA

Pictured in the learning pod are Griffin Arizala, 6, Desmond Arizala, 8, pod leader Josh McDaniel and Linnea Arizala, 11.

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Board approves teacher contracts

By Mary Anne Brush
Staff Writer

While the Board of Education approved contracts for office personnel, paraprofessionals, plant workers and administrators in agreement with their respective associations in May, it took until August for the Grosse Pointe Public School System and Grosse Pointe Education Association to reach an agreement for teachers.

At its regular meeting Aug. 10, the board approved a tentative one-year agreement for the 2020-21 school year. Ratified by the GPEA on Aug. 7, the agreement went into effect as an approved contract Aug. 15, according to GPEA President Christopher Pratt.

“This is the result of approximately five, six months of collective bargaining between the parties,” Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services Jon Dean said at the meeting. “Both parties worked really hard at this and collaborated and worked through the things they needed to work through.

“A couple highlights for the community,” he continued. “This does include the calendar

for the 2020-21 school year” posted on the district website. “... It includes compensation for this group, which is similar to the compensation for the other groups that the board reached agreements with back in June, meaning they received their steps and their lane changes, but there is no new money on schedule except for that piece. It also clarifies and puts in place the middle school advisory program that we’ve discussed in terms of timing. Administration strongly recommends the board approves this. It passed by our teachers and we’re ready to move forward. It’s a one-year agreement.”

While a multi-year contract would have been “in everyone’s best interest,” Pratt said, “a one-year agreement is certainly reflective of the times that we live in.”

Terms of the agreement changed, he noted, from mid-February when contract negotiations began, to the present reality under COVID-19.

“In February and March, we were living a different life,” Pratt said. “... We didn’t know this pandemic was going to kick in for public education purposes

until March 13,” when schools closed for teachers to begin planning for remote learning through the spring.

The “realities of the pandemic” required significant changes to the proposal, he added. “I feel like the association went out of its way to give a proposal that was reflective of the times.”

This included streamlining the process by limiting the amount of language changed, rolling over a calendar from previous years to give parents continuity and providing clarity on the parameters of the middle school advisory.

While last year there were step increases and a small increase for veteran teachers on top of their pay scale, this year there were only step increases for eligible teachers. For teachers who earned any sort of graduate credits, there were lane increases as well, Pratt said.

The agreement included a letter of understanding regarding the movement of fifth graders to middle school. Both parties agreed on a six-period day, with flexibility for varied content within periods, and a 30-minute lunch period.

Another letter of understanding summarized the agreement between GPPSS and the GPEA regarding the middle school advisory.

The advisory — which Pratt noted is only a one-year agreement — is in place for grades 6-8 only and will be no longer than 30 minutes per day. The Monday teacher schedule consists of five teaching segments and one individual preparation segment. One day each week consists of five teaching segments, one individual preparation segment and one additional preparation segment, with the additional preparation segment the same duration as the advisory segment.

If GPPSS, pursuant to the governor’s order, local, state or federal law, is operating in Phases 1-4, there will be no advisory segment and the school day will be a six-period day, Tuesday through Friday, according to the letter of understanding. Only classroom teachers are assigned to advisory segments.

The concern among middle school teachers was that the advisory, created to allow time for social and emotional learn-

ing, would take time away from core academic subjects, Pratt said. The GPEA raised this issue at the March 9 board meeting.

“The minutes in the day are the same,” Pratt said. “If you try to carve out additional time, you’re taking time away from your core classes. ... We have a great deal of relearning to do with the loss of 12 weeks last year. The entire teaching staff knows that. We need to be able to recognize the fact that we need that time in those classes. This is not the year, in my opinion, we should be implementing new programs. We need to focus on what students need. We’re talking about hard choices here.”

Bargaining for the right teaching conditions is important because “these are kids’ learning conditions,” Pratt added. “It’s important that we get this as right as we possibly can given the fact that (in a global pandemic) we don’t really have anything to judge it against. We need time. And we know that we need that interface with kids, but that interface needs to be about delivering the content that we can to keep students on track.”

Dominick Procopio of Grosse Pointe Shores was named to the Dean’s List at the University of Massachusetts Lowell for the spring 2020 semester.

◆◆◆

Sophia Kopicki, a senior at Siena Heights University studying communications and marketing, was named to the Dean’s List for the winter 2020 semester. She is the daughter of Bill and Nicole Kopicki and graduated from University Liggett School in 2017.

Lily Patterson of Grosse Pointe Shores was named to the Dean’s List for the winter semester ending April 2020 at Bates College and graduated cum laude in the spring. The daughter of William and Kate Patterson, she graduated from Grosse Pointe South

High School in 2016.

◆◆◆

Madeline Schebil of Grosse Pointe Farms received a Bachelor of Science degree in education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May.

◆◆◆

Lindsey Clark of Grosse Pointe Park grad-

uated from Marquette University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in social welfare and justice.

◆◆◆

Allyson Hartz of the City of Grosse Pointe graduated cum laude from Michigan Technological University with a Bachelor of

Science degree in geological engineering in May. She is the daughter of Andrew and Anne Marie Hartz and a 2016 graduate of Grosse Pointe South High School.

◆◆◆

Meredith Bruni of Grosse Pointe Farms and **Brittany Rizzo** and **Jackson Walkowiak** of Grosse Pointe Woods were named to the Dean’s Honor Roll for the summer 2020 semester at Lawrence Technological University.

◆◆◆

Tiffany Furicchia of Grosse Pointe Farms and **Maya Petropoulos** of Grosse Pointe Park were named to the spring 2020 Dean’s List at Montclair State University.


◆◆◆

Sylvia Hodges of Grosse Pointe Park was named to the Dean’s List for the fall 2019 and spring 2020 terms at Michigan State University. She is the daughter of Michele and Matt Hodges.

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Storm damage, pandemic put Haunted Garage on hiatus

By Jody McVeigh
Editor

It was a decision over which Glen Williams agonized for months. He waited and wished and hoped that despite a string of setbacks he'd still be able to offer Grosse Pointe families the Halloween tradition he established 13 years ago — Haunted Garage Productions.

To make the show a success, he would already have had to start assembling the various witch, vampire, monster and spider scenes that have become fan favorites.

But following a disastrous summer storm that caused severe damage to his property, much of which has yet to be repaired, coupled with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Williams reluctantly pulled the plug on this year's Haunted Garage.

"There's no way we can do it," he said. "We've exhaustively done everything in our power to attempt to have a season for the charities. We're passionate about Halloween; this is what we do. This is not lack of commitment. We were just hit with an endless series of obstacles."

One could surmise the obstacles began late last October when a storm brought down a wire in Williams' yard, causing the loss of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment. Then began the pandemic, followed swiftly by a burst pipe



FILE PHOTO

Glen Williams won't be welcoming patrons to his haunt this year.

that flooded his basement in March. The June 10 storm that knocked down five trees on his property — puncturing 12 holes in the roof of his house — was the last straw.

"Besides everything else that's gone on this year, there's this," he said in late June. "It took down five trees; the biggest one, which ripped everything down with it, was well over 100 years old. When it came down, it ripped in half a huge pine that was 100 feet tall. A magnolia tree was pulverized, too; there

was nothing left of it.

"The window in the kitchen, I'm still picking up glass in every room from that window," he added. "A branch went through the dining room window, too. Every room's got cracks that are surfacing."

Haunted Garage for years has spanned the acre of property between Williams' house and the house next door, owned by his parents, Ray and Joan. Their house was untouched, but they, too, lost trees.

Right after the storm — which occurred when Williams and his parents were out of town — friends and neighbors consistently checked on the property, providing Williams with photos and updates until he returned home. His builder, Bruce Kaselitz, even monitored the house overnight.

"The kindness of friends, of the community, of neighbors has been amazing," Williams said.

One Haunted Garage fan started a Go Fund Me for the attraction, but Williams asked her to

disable it.

"I don't feel comfortable accepting money from the community," he said. "We're here raising money for charities."

Since its inception, Haunted Garage has contributed a portion of funds raised to PTOs in the Grosse Pointes. The attraction, which takes place three weekends in October, hosts a different school group each night, giving proceeds from that night to the designated school.

"The community's always been so supportive coming here every year," he said. "You pick a night to support the charity you want to support. We're a different kind of haunt — not blood and gore, not in your face. We've been a socially distant haunt for all these years and we're successful because of that. It's exactly how I've ever wanted to build a show."

A positive attitude helped Williams get through June and plans were explored for a safe opening amid the pandemic. Williams and his crew of volunteers planned for social distancing, hand sanitizing stations, mask requirements; he even considered having guests sign waivers and taking their temperatures.

"We've been talking

about it since March," he said. "Where we have things that people have to touch, we'll eliminate them. If a customer can stay socially distant in the haunt — and we'll require masks — I believe we can put on the haunt and help charities this year."

However, Williams considered his worst-case scenario: if the haunt opened and someone says they got infected there.

"The worst would be if we open and something like that happens," he said, "not that we don't open. That's the easiest, but I'm not in favor of that. ... I hate to take a year off, but I don't want to be insensitive to what's going on now."

In early July, Williams still remained hopeful, but his hopes were dashed in late July when a broken water main caused more damage to his property.

"It looks like a war zone," he said last month. "I'm so sick of this. Everything just adds to it. We're still going to try; this is not for lack of effort. There's just overall damage to the yards; we've got to be safe. And then there's the COVID thing to deal with."

"It would be easier not to do it, but that's never been my life," he added. "I've always taken the

tougher road, taken the challenge. My heart wants to do it for the families and the charities, but my gut feeling is going to have to overrule everything. It would be way easier to take the year off, but it bothers me — not helping the charities."

When it came time to make the final call in mid-August, Williams again assessed the situation.

Though a new roof was completed, there still are damaged rooms in the house and several windows still are boarded up. A brick paver approach is in need of repair and another tree likely will need to be removed. Additionally, a repair to his father's lawn, where a 5,000-pound stump was removed, caused flooding issues that need to be addressed.

On top of everything is COVID-19.

The Grosse Pointe Public School System's vote to approve a virtual start this fall sealed Williams' decision.

"We're going to have to wait to 2021," he said. "There are multiple facets going on. The builders are doing their best, but I don't know what will be done and what won't be done."

See HIATUS, page 2B



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLEN WILLIAMS

Trees punctured 12 holes in Williams' roof in June.



A new roof was installed on Williams' house after fallen trees caused severe damage after a storm.

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Racing For Kids to the Hill goes virtual in 2020

Racing For Kids to the Hill — one of the most widely anticipated and well-attended events in Grosse Pointe — had to be canceled this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual end-of-summer festival has been a fixture on the social calendar for the last 14 years and enjoyed great support from sponsors and the community at large.

Racing For Kids is a locally-based national children's charity that uses the popularity of motorsports to focus public attention and funding on the health-care needs of children. Racing For Kids to the Hill is the charity's largest fundraiser and proceeds from past events have benefited pediatric programs at Ascension St. John Hospital, Beaumont Grosse Pointe, Henry Ford Health System and the Children's Hospital of

Michigan Foundation.

"Our mission to help sick kids through motorsports has continued in spite of the pandemic," said J. Patrick Wright, CEO of Racing For Kids, "so while we can't make our regular bedside visits to hospitalized children right now, we continue to work with the Child Life Departments of the hospitals we would normally be visiting and have come up with creative ways to interact with our young patients. All our IndyCar visits this year have been virtual, so the kids are still getting to interact with their racing heroes and they are still getting our popular Racing For Kids hats and special racing gifts. We've also contributed with funding for COVID-19 programs at some of our partner hospitals to address all the special needs this pandemic has created."

To help raise funds for



COURTESY PHOTO

A 2021 Indy 500 VIP package for two will be offered in the Racing For Kids online "Buy it Now" sale as part of the Racing For Kids – Shifting Gears 2020 virtual event.

the hospital outreach program, Racing For Kids to the Hill is shifting gears this year with a two-part program. First is the Donate & Dine program, which helps both Racing For Kids and the restaurant partners who

have supported the annual Hill event for many years. For a \$150 gift, donors receive a \$50 restaurant voucher redeemable at Jumps, Café Nini, Dirty Dog Jazz Café, The Hill Seafood & Chop House, Luxe Bar &

Grill, City Kitchen and Fresh Farms Market.

"Racing For Kids will reimburse the restaurants for all the vouchers that are used at their establishments," said Tom Buhl, event co-chairman. "It's a win-win

situation."

Donate & Dine tickets may be purchased on the Racing For Kids website.

The second part of the virtual event is a luxury "Buy-It-Now" sale.

"We will have some unique items and experiences available for sale on our website," said Linda Finger, Racing For Kids event director. "Trips like our Key West deep sea fishing adventure, our Indy 500 package and much more will be offered."

The luxury sale items may be viewed and purchased online beginning Aug. 19, and the sale runs until Sept. 2.

Also on Sept. 2 — which was the original date of the event — there will be a mini car show on Kercheval near Hall Place, with Racing For Kids gear and Donate & Dine tickets for sale.

For information about Racing For Kids, visit racingforkids.org.

Safe at Home: Pandemic solutions for older adults

Staying home. It's what everyone was asked to do to protect themselves and the community since the arrival of COVID-19 in mid-March. Now, as some restrictions begin to ease, many people are beginning to venture out. But for older community members, home is still the safest place to be.

In addition to being at the highest risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, older adults also are faced with unprecedented challenges navigating the healthcare system and fighting prolonged isolation from their families, friends and communities.

Seniors have never been more at risk.

Local experts in caregiving, aging and in-home senior care are urging those with senior loved ones to keep this vulnerable population top of mind. To make this easier, they are sharing free informational resources to help local families navigate the many challenges impacting older adults in this pandemic.

"For many seniors, home is the foundation to both physical and mental wellness," said Bert Copple, owner of Home Instead Senior Care, serving Birmingham and southeast Oakland County. "But whether

seniors are trying to return home, stay home or simply stay healthy, it can be daunting in the midst of a pandemic without support."

Getting home

For families working to bring a loved one home from a hospital or a facility, Home Instead recommends beginning discharge plans early and exploring all options, including what services may be available at home vs. inpatient.

"Many seniors have not explored what their aftercare options are if they were to be hospitalized," said Lakelyn

Hogan, gerontologist and caregiver advocate with Home Instead. "We know that, more than ever, home is not only the preferred but the safest place for older adults to recover from a recent hospital stay or heal from a health issue."

Staying home

In a time when the number of available hospital beds is at a premium, keeping seniors safe and healthy at home is critical. Home Instead recommends reviewing home safety checklists to remove potential home hazards, such as addressing fall risks, and simple, inexpensive home

improvements like grab bars and improved lighting.

Staying well

No matter the location, staying healthy for seniors means paying attention to both physical and mental wellness.

"Families must remain vigilant with infection control practices, but also with regular communications to address seniors' emotional well-being," Hogan said. "While we all have experienced isolation during this health crisis, the implications are most severe in older adults."

See SOLUTIONS, page 4B

DONATE:

Continued from page 2B

spring may be eligible to help again.

Donation appointments may be made for the coming days and weeks by downloading the free Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org, calling 1-800-733-2767 or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

As a thank-you for helping ensure a stable blood supply, those who come to give blood, platelets or plasma, including convalescent plasma, through Sept. 3 will

receive a \$5 Amazon.com gift card via email, courtesy of Amazon. Plus, those who come to give by Aug. 31 are automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for four to Cedar Point or Knott's Berry Farm, redeemable through the 2021 season.

To protect the health and safety of Red Cross staff and donors, individuals who do not feel well or who believe they may be ill with COVID-19 should postpone their donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and

infection control and additional precautions — including temperature checks, social distancing and face coverings for donors and staff — have been implemented to help protect

the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask while at the drive, in

alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

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OBITUARIES

Obituary notices are purchased and often prewritten by family or friends. While we try to run obituaries as submitted, we nevertheless reserve the right to edit for accuracy, style and length.

Stanley Richard Remus

Stanley Richard Remus, 91, of Caro, and a former resident of Grosse Pointe Woods, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020, at Heritage Hill Assisted Living, in Caro. He was born Jan. 30, 1929, in Depew, N.Y., to Stanley E. and Stella Remus (nee Breister), both now deceased.

A 1947 graduate of Pershing High School, Stanley earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Detroit. He was retired from his 60-year career as a CPA.

Stanley and his first wife, Sallie G. Carus, were married in 1952. He was predeceased by Sallie in 1982. Stanley and his second wife, Beverly E. MacConnachie, were married in 1987. He was predeceased by Beverly in 2007.

Stanley enjoyed preparing taxes, gardening and spending time with family and friends.

He is survived by his children, Glenn Remus (Martha) of Harbor Springs, Todd Remus (Janice) of Grosse Pointe Woods and Kimberly Buckmaster (Bruce) of Mayville; grandchildren, Kathryn (Jake), Lauren (Andrew), Kevin (Torrie), Andrew (Caroline), Melinda (Jon), Bethany (Josh), Blake (Theresa) and Rachel (Christian); and great-grandchildren,

Evan, Emma, Zoey, Jaxon, Hudson, Elijah, Grace, Griffin, Emerson and Harden. He was predeceased by his grandson, Grant R. Remus, in 1987.

A service of remembrance will be held at a later date. Private burial at Battle Creek Memorial Park also will take place at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to Kiwanis Children's Fund, www2.kiwanis.org/childrensfund.

Share an online condolence at avramfuneralhome.com.

Arrangements were entrusted to Avram Funeral Home, 6028 Lincoln St., P.O. Box 130, Mayville, MI 48744; (989) 843-5441.

Stephen Alan Horn

Former Grosse Pointe resident Stephen Alan Horn, of Harbor Springs, died peacefully Monday, Aug. 3, 2020, at his home on Lake Michigan, surrounded by family. The son of Clarence and Edith Horn, he was born May 23, 1939, in Detroit.

A graduate of Grosse Pointe High School, Steve was a member of the school's 1954 championship football team. After a post-graduate year at The Kiski School, Steve attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., continued to play football

and baseball and earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1961. Employed in a sales training program at Ingersoll Rand Inc., Steve then studied at the Ross Business School at the University of Michigan and earned an MBA in 1964.

Steve's professional career began at Arthur Andersen & Co., in Detroit, where he was named a partner in 1974. He became president and CEO at Fred Sanders Co., the Detroit confectionery manufacturer, in 1979. A consultant for two years after he left Sanders, Steve advised Detroit-area businesses on strategy and finance matters. He later acquired an interest in Xact Products, a precision-formed metal parts supplier to the automotive industry, through his own investment firm, Private Equity Group. In 1984, he was recruited by Rubloff Co., a Chicago-based real estate development and property management firm, as CEO of Renaissance Center Venture, where he managed day-to-day operations of Detroit's iconic Renaissance Center. At the helm of the RenCen, Steve often said he had the best job on earth. He retired from Renaissance Center Venture in 1994.

Steve is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Jane Pierce Horn; chil-



Stanley R. Remus

dren, Pamela J. VanTol of Harbor Springs, Anne H. Askew (Peter) of Ruxton, Md., and Stephen A. Horn Jr. (Annette) of Windermere, Fla.; grandchildren, Caroline, Audrey and Jane Askew, Zoey and Quinn VanTol and Sarah, Riley and heir apparent, Stephen A. Horn III.

Steve was an avid squash player; he competed nationally and internationally. A lifelong member of the Detroit Athletic Club, Steve was ranked in the top 10 nationally for men over 40. He also was a lifetime member of The Jesters, an international squash association. He was a passionate boater, golfer and downhill skier. An instrument-rated pilot, Steve flew his own plane throughout the country to visit family and friends.

A stalwart Detroit supporter, Steve was a director of the Central Business District Association and vice president and treasurer of the Economic Club of Detroit. He also served as a trustee at Walsh College.

Steve loved all animals and staunchly supported animal rescue organizations across the country. His love of animals began in the early 1970s when



Stephen Allen Horn

his wife, Jane, came home with Gamble, the first of their many Vizslas. Steve's beloved pal, Hinckley, laid beside him at his passing.

Memorial donations may be made in Steve's honor to First Coast No More Homeless Pets, 6817 Norwood Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32208; or an animal welfare organization of the donor's choice.

Patricia J. Gardella

Grosse Pointe Woods resident Patricia J. Gardella passed away peacefully in her sleep Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020, at her home.

Born in 1934, in Canton, Ohio, to Mabel J. Lawler and Norman "Shad" Lawler, Patti grew up in Grosse Pointe. She attended public schools and graduated from Grosse Pointe High School in 1952.

She married George A. Gardella, a lifelong Grosse Pointe resident, in 1954. Patti and George were married 60 years.

Patti's family described her as one of a kind and a true original — witty, charming, stylish and occasionally outrageous. Loved by everyone for her sense of humor, willingness to do almost anything to get a laugh and lighthearted good nature, Patti also was incredibly brave and strong-willed in the face of adversity. Although she suffered from multiple sclerosis most of her adult life, people never knew unless they saw her walking with a cane or using a wheelchair. She cared little for complaining and always made the best of the situation, even when treatments she received through the years were grueling.

A talented artist, Patti took up painting later in life. It gave her joy to create paintings and she loved the camaraderie of her art class friends.

Patti will be greatly missed by all who knew her, especially her children, Julie Gardella of Grosse Pointe Woods, Katie Gardella (Peter Straus) of Peterborough, N.H., and Pete Gardella of Lake Orion; beloved grandsons, George of Lake Orion and Tommy of Royal Oak; and sister, Sandra Espedal of Stockton, Calif. She was predeceased by her husband, George; parents,



Patricia J. Gardella



Barbara L. Usndek

Mabel and Shad Lawler; stepmother, Flora Lawler; and brothers, Dean "Chubs" Lawler and Richard Lawler.

In lieu of flowers, a gift in Patti's honor may be made to the Grosse Pointe Artists Association, 32 Lakeshore Rd., Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236; grossepointeartcenter.org.

Barbara L. Usndek

Former Grosse Pointe Farms resident Barbara Lyndrup Usndek, 97, passed away Monday, Aug. 10, 2020. She was born April 17, 1923.

Barbara met the love of her life, Dr. Harold E. Usndek, during her medical studies at Wayne State University. The couple eventually settled in Grosse Pointe Farms, where Harold practiced dermatology, and together raised their four children. In retirement, Barbara and Harold spent time in Michigan and Tucson, Ariz. Barbara settled near her eldest daughter, in Delray Beach, Fla., in her final years.

A loving person with a sharp intellect, Barbara was highly respected by her friends, family and peers. Her passions included nature and travel. Together with Harold, Barbara also was a passionate donor to the couple's alma mater. Barbara continued her travels after Harold's death in 2009.

Barbara is survived by her children, Susan (James Kaler), Cathy (Richard Magreta), Christopher and Dr. David (Dr. John Carney) Usndek; and granddaughter, Veronica Viorica Magreta, who called her Nana. Dearly missed, Barbara and her legacy will live on to those she guided along life's paths.

See OBITS, page 5B

Dr. John Hyde Williams

Dr. John (Jack) Hyde Williams died on Friday, August 7, 2020, at the age of 93, following a brief illness. His family, friends and patients affectionately identified him as "Jack" or "Dr. Jack". He will be remembered for his long years of service in both family and internal medicine to residents of Grosse Pointe and the greater east side of Detroit.

In both his professional and personal life, Jack Williams was known to be caring and attentive. Those who remembered Jack best regarded him as charming and thoughtful, with a healthy sense of humor.

The son of Clarence and Laura (nee Hyde) Williams, John was born in 1927 in Grosse Pointe. He was a graduate of Grosse Pointe High School and chose to follow the examples of his father, grandfather and great grandfather by pursuing a career in medicine.

In 1947, after two years of service in the U.S. Army Air Corps, Jack fully embarked on his studies at the University of Michigan, where he received a bachelor's degree in Science in 1950. He went on to earn a medical degree at the U of M School of Medicine in 1954. Later in 1954, he began his internship and residency in New Hampshire at the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, in association with Dartmouth Medical School. He completed his medical fellowship in Rhode Island at the Providence Lying-in Hospital. Dr. Williams joined his father's practice in 1957, providing care to patients in metropolitan Detroit. After the death of his father in 1964, Jack continued in private practice. In 1988, he joined the Henry Ford Medical Group and became one of the founding members of Pierson Clinic in Grosse Pointe Farms.



1927 -2020

During his long and distinguished career in medicine, Dr. Williams served as President of Medical Staff at Cottage Hospital and Senior Physician at Henry Ford Hospital. He also served as a trustee on the boards of Cottage Hospital and the Eastern Region of Henry Ford Health System.

Jack Williams first met his future wife Elizabeth (Betty) Adams during a social function at the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. They dated while attending the University of Michigan. Married in 1953, they raised daughters Susan, Martha and Elizabeth in their Grosse Pointe Woods home. The family became active members of Christ Church of Grosse Pointe, with Jack serving for a period on the board of the Vestry. Sadly, Betty Williams died in the winter of 1982. Following a long period of mourning, Jack Williams found solace in the company of Norah Moncrieff Martin, a fellow parishioner at Christ Church, who had been previously married to Darwin D. Martin Jr. (deceased). In 1985, Jack and Norah married. After more than four decades of service in the medical profession, Dr. Williams chose to retire in 1999.

Jack was an avid reader with a deep enthusiasm for technology and photography. His cultural interests included the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Grosse Pointe Theater. He was a member in good standing at the Grosse Pointe Seniors Men Club and Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. As an alumni member, Jack took an active interest in the University of Michigan and its football team, often attending home games in Ann Arbor. With various members of his expanded family, Jack traveled extensively in the United States, along with faraway destinations like Great Britain, Europe, and China. He and his second wife Norah were particularly fond of vacations in the Caribbean during Michigan winters.

Beloved husband of Elizabeth (nee Adams) (deceased). Beloved brother of James (Anne) Williams. Beloved father of Susan (David) Chaklos, Martha Williams, Elizabeth (Mark) Lewis. Beloved grandfather of Kenneth Chaklos, Elizabeth "Betsy" Chaklos, Christine (Nick) Penhale, Laura (Chris) Craft, Michelle (Brian) Craft, Sgt. Ian McConnell, USMC (deceased), Margaret "Meg" (T.C.) Schellinger. Beloved great grandfather of Elizabeth "Lily" Penhale, Lucas Penhale, Joshua Craft, Kaitlyn Craft, Maya Schellinger. Beloved husband of Norah (nee Moncrieff Martin). Beloved stepfather of Darwin (Lori) Martin III, Christopher Martin, Dr. Michael (Meipo) Martin. Beloved grandfather of Bryan Martin, Dr. Kyle (Dr. Chelsea) Martin. Beloved great grandfather of Brandon Martin, Jaden Martin, Jessa Martin, Blake Martin, Imogen Martin, Peter Martin, Charlotte Martin.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, memorial services for Jack Williams will be determined at a future date. The committal of his ashes will be conducted by immediate family members in a private ceremony.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Dr. Williams can be made to the following:

University of Michigan, Office of University Development,
3003 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109 - Attn: Medical school class of 1954 scholarship fund.

All Saints Fund of Christ Church of Grosse Pointe, 61 Grosse Pointe Blvd.,
Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236.

OBITS:

Continued from page 4B

Frank J. Kropschot

Former Grosse Pointe resident Frank J. Kropschot, of Hilton Head Island, passed away Friday, Aug. 7, 2020. He was 87.

Born June 18, 1933, in Marshall, Frank grew up in East Lansing.

A graduate of Michigan State University and member of Psi Upsilon fraternity, he earned a degree in economics. Frank served in the U.S. Army two years during the Korean conflict.

Frank held various positions in his 35-year career at National Bank of Detroit and retired as a first vice president in 1992. He was involved in many civic efforts in Detroit. A graduate of Leadership Detroit, he also served many years as a Big Brother.

In retirement, Frank and his wife, Kathie, moved to Hilton Head Island. Ten years later, the couple moved to The Cliffs Valley community



Frank J. Kropschot

in South Carolina. They returned to Hilton Head Island in 2016, and resided in the community of Tidepointe.

Frank was a devoted husband, avid golfer, skilled woodworker and ardent dog lover.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Kathie; daughter, Tracey Tiffany; stepdaughters, Linda Cooke, Laura Baumann and Jennie Shannon; and eight grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Humane Society of the United States, humane.society.org.

Online condolences may be expressed at keithfuneral.com.

Spreading a message of faith amid the pandemic

By Jody McVeigh
Editor

For five years the congregations of First English Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church and Christ Church Grosse Pointe have hosted a joint Vacation Bible School open to all children.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizers to restructure this summer's weeklong program, which was embraced by participants and their families.

"It was quite the challenge," said Renata Conger, the parish education and youth ministry coordinator at First English. "The past five years, we've had 80 to 120 kids. This year we didn't want to cancel it. Our goal was to send the message that God is not dead because of the pandemic and church is not confined to a building."

When representatives from each church figured out how to share their message, they purchased a VBS curriculum and adapted it to a largely virtual format. It opened Sunday, Aug. 2, with a drive-thru event during which registered participants and their parents were given supplies and goodies to take home.

"We prayed for each family, gave them ice cream and then they drove off," Conger said.

Monday through Friday, participants were



An example of a daily post, a window banner that says "Jesus' power helps us do hard things," created by participants Eleanor and Madeline.

asked to accomplish three tasks, the first of which was to participate in a Zoom session that included a daily Bible verse following the theme of this year's program that "Jesus' power pulls us through, even when things get tough," Conger said.

Next, participants were asked to watch a video the churches produced.

"Some of it we recorded ourselves," Conger said. "Some of it was part of the curriculum we purchased."

The 30-minute video was interactive, she explained, asking families to pause and discuss what they'd watched or pause and do an activity. Their total involvement was around 90 minutes, Conger said, "about the amount time of a Disney movie, but it's growing their faith instead."

The third facet of each day involved the children responding in some way to the message they'd learned that day. Responses could range

from drawing a picture to performing an act of kindness. The object was to capture a photo of the response and post it on a private Facebook page exclusive to registered participants.

"We got to see kids doing these things and everything reinforced the day's point," Conger said, noting though the Facebook community was private, many of the posts received likes and positive comments. "Then, if they completed all three things at the end of the day, we did a random drawing of who did all three and the next day, we'd do a flash mob. Our volunteers wore masks and showed up at a child's house. The parents knew we were coming and told us the best time to come, but the children were surprised. We did two or three every day."

The "mini surprise party" flash mobs included confetti and streamers, games, songs, popsicles, a Bible reading

and prayer. Everyone wore masks, spread out, stayed outside and used hand sanitizer, Conger noted.

"At the end of the week, if you did all three things all five days, you were entered into another drawing for a \$50 gift card to Whistle Stop," she said. "We're happy that we were able to support a local business. And it kept them motivated. They came for the prizes, but they stayed for Jesus."

Conger said she was pleased the "complicated, weird program" not only worked, but involved participants from age 2 through kids going into sixth grade, as well as middle school and high school volunteers who helped things run smoothly. Their efforts formed a great community spanning from toddler to adult.

"I think we all needed it," she said.

In addition to daily activities, the VBS program served to help others. Half of the registration fee was used for supplies, while the other half was used to buy diapers for the Metropolitan Detroit Diaper Bank. Participating churches also collected additional diapers and wipes for the organization, bringing the total collected to 3,944 wipes and 2,083 diapers to support local families.

The drive was the idea of St. Paul's Audrey Cox. "She organized it," Conger said. "It was good because it was encouraging kids to show Jesus' love by doing things for



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RENATA CONGER

Natty, a member of Christ Church Grosse Pointe, holds his personalized water bottle — a prize given at the end of a flash mob.



Pastor Justin, of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Grosse Pointe Farms, led a flash mob of volunteers for participants, front and center, Grace, Nate and Kate.

See FAITH, page 6B

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Grosse Pointe Congregational Church
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6B | FEATURES



PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

A dinosaur in hand, Isaac Campbell sits next to his Dino Century Hide & Seek.

Dino-mite!

Five-year-old Isaac Campbell decided to create a dinosaur curbside attraction after spotting a dinosaur in front of a house a few blocks over. So, in front of his house in the 1000 block of Maryland in Grosse Pointe Park, Campbell assembled more than 20 dif-

ferent dinosaurs — and a shark in a water-filled Tupperware bowl. Dino Century Hide & Seek is hidden among the landscaping and some are easier to find than others. Campbell hopes passersby try to see how many creatures they can find, inviting them with a sign that reads, “Find it or not, even if they give a squeak, it still may be fun, even if they wiggle.”

FAITH:

Continued from page 5B

others.”

Also helping fund the program — and its prizes — were a grant from Thrivent Financial and a donation from the Shorewood Kiwanis Club.

“This couldn’t have happened without help from them,” Conger said, noting the additional funds were used to purchase prizes. Older children received sturdy water bottles personalized with their names, while younger children received smaller water bottles and goodie bags.

“But having the flash mobs — those were the best prizes,” she said. “Having groups of people randomly showing up, the parents would email us the next day and say, ‘The kids are still glowing.’”

The number of VBS programs offered this year was down considerably from last year, from around 20 in the Grosse Pointe area to two. Conger said she and other organizers made sure to take every precaution to make VBS a safe and spiritual activity for those involved.

“We had a really long FAQ page,” she said. “We made videos of what it would be like, why we’re doing it this way. We wanted parents to know, yes, it will be weird and different, but we care about them. And God is still here.”

“Even if they only did something on one day, it’s better than not doing any-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RENATA CONGER

At week’s end, Renata Conger, background, presented the grand prize to Sam, right, who participated in VBS with his sister, Maggie.

thing the entire summer,” she added. “Most families stuck with it through the week. We got great feedback and the kids loved it; a lot of the volunteers were saying this was the highlight of their summer. I think everybody really needed it.”

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Park Little League players donate \$1,000

A group of Grosse Pointe Park 12-year-old Little League players who were in their last season of eligibility donated \$1,000 to the Grosse Pointe Park Little League.

The players, who were the All-Stars of the teams in the local league, comprised the group of players selected to represent the GPPLL through the years for an All-Star Tournament Team, playing for the chance to participate in the district, state and national Little League tournaments.

This was the year these players would have had the opportunity to play for a berth in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa.

Unfortunately, due to the circumstances around COVID-19, Little League Baseball canceled all

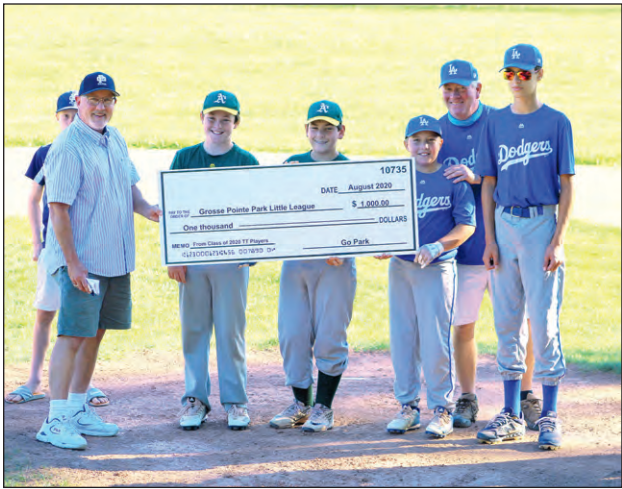


PHOTO BY HOLLY RUTHERFORD

From left, Grosse Pointe Park Little League President Marty McMillan receives a check from players Henry Chesterton, Phillip Loch, Brendan Stafford, tournament team manager Craig Stafford and player Julian Lancaster.

tournaments, citing concern for the travel and large group activities. This donation represents the funds raised through

the years to help offset training, tournament costs and expenses.

Craig Stafford of Grosse Pointe Park, who

has managed the team and led the development of this group of players since the season they played as 10-year-olds, said, "We were all disappointed to not have the opportunity to play for a chance at the Little League World Series this year, but I am so proud of the hard work, dedication and improvement these kids have shown. It has been my pleasure to coach them and it is no surprise to me that they chose to give back to the organization. This is who these kids are, it is who their families are and it is who Grosse Pointe Park is."

Marty McMillan, president of Grosse Pointe Park Little League, in accepting the donation, said, "On behalf of Grosse Pointe Park Little League,

I want to thank you kids, coaches and families for representing us all so well over the years. Your generosity today reminds us what makes community baseball such a great organization. Coming together with your neighbors, classmates and families in our community, in many cases since you all were just old enough to hold a bat, is what builds the relationships, friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. Go Park."

Henry Chesterton is a 12-year-old player on the tournament team and a seventh-grade student at Pierce Middle School. As a member of the tournament team since 2016, he offered this comment: "We were bummed to not be able to go out and play in the Little League tour-

naments this year, because we are a really good team. I think we would have done really well, but if we can't play, I hope our donation helps Grosse Pointe Park Little League players next season. I am going to miss playing baseball here."

The donation was made in the names of the following players: Griff Collins, Brendan Stafford, Bella Dodson, Anthony Kaminski, Alex Foote, Henry Chesterton, Julian Lancaster, Lance Lynch, Liam O'Donoghue, Liam Omara, Liam Taylor, Liam Wilson, Luke Parent, Nick Ogden, Phillip Loch, Sam Rouleau, Simon Justtin, Will Bishop, Will Karolak and Will Scott, as well as manager Craig Stafford and coaches Gerard Lancaster, Patrick Chesterton, Patrick O'Donoghue and Ron Loch.

Football moved to spring

By Geoff Kimmerly
Guest Writer

The Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association recently announced it will move the 2020 fall football season to spring 2021, due to football's higher risk for spreading COVID-19, with the rest of fall sports proceeding as scheduled.

The football season switch was made based on consultation with state health department officials and after surveying MHSAA member high schools on their progress and preferences

after the first four days of practice. Football is considered a high-risk sport for potential spread of the COVID-19 virus because of its level of player-to-player contact.

A total of 34,219 student-athletes played football at MHSAA member schools during the 2019 season. A total of 520 11-player teams and 83 eight-player teams were anticipated during late summer to play football this fall season.

"At the end of the day, we did everything we could to find a path forward for football this fall," MHSAA Executive

Director Mark Uyl said. "But while continuing to connect with the governor's office, state health department officials, our member schools' personnel and the council, there is just too much uncertainty and too many unknowns to play football this fall.

"No one is willing to take the risk of COVID being passed on because of a high-risk sport. Decisions have to be made on our other sports as well, but none of those carry the same close, consistent and face-to-face contact as football."

The MHSAA

announced July 17 it would proceed this school year with its traditional calendar beginning with fall sports, but with enhanced precautions to help limit the spread of COVID-19. At that time, the MHSAA also stated it would move football, and other fall sports seasons, to spring 2021 if they were deemed unsafe to proceed when originally scheduled. Football was allowed to begin practice, with helmets but no other padding, on Aug. 10.

Volleyball and soccer are considered moderate-risk for virus spread, while cross country, golf, tennis and swimming and diving are considered low-risk. Cross

country, Lower Peninsula girls golf and boys tennis and Upper Peninsula girls tennis began practicing Aug. 12; golf and tennis teams began competing Aug. 19, and cross country teams may begin competing Aug. 21.

Volleyball, boys soccer and Lower Peninsula girls swimming and diving also began practice Aug. 12, and competition guidelines for those sports will be announced Aug. 19. Schools in regions under Phase 4 of the MI Safe Start Plan remain unable to play volleyball or swim/dive indoors due to governmental restrictions. Further guidance from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's office is expected in the

near future regarding these indoor facilities.

Details for the spring football season, including a specific schedule and format, will be announced over the next few months. The MHSAA will be working to limit overlap of spring football and the traditional spring sport seasons.

"While this is tremendously disappointing, we will do everything possible to provide the best possible experience in the spring while adding football into the calendar," Uyl said.

Geoff Kimmerly is the media and content coordinator for the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

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