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# City likely to seek a public safety millage

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**CITY OF GROSSE POINTE** — “The tricks we’re using are becoming less and less and the reality of a problem is becoming more and more,” City Manager Joe Valentine said, as city council on Monday discussed the likely potential of approaching voters this year with a millage proposal to cover a portion of public safety operations.

The city has narrowly avoided a budget deficit the last several years — deferring capital needs and retiree healthcare

contributions just to balance the budget — and currently is anticipating a \$545,000 deficit as it looks to fiscal year 2026-27.

The city is in this position because the gap between its expenses and revenues continues to grow — exacerbated by the polarizing challenges of inflation and limitations on revenue growth, which is capped by factors such as the state’s Headlee override rollbacks on property tax growth and declining state shared revenue.

“We have a structural

See **MILLAGE**, page 8A

PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

## Giant felled

Wind gusts of more than 60 mph tore through southeast Michigan last Friday, then again earlier this week, sending debris throughout the Pointes and knocking out power. Among the casualties was this monstrous tree, which was downed in the 600 block of Lakeshore.

## Parks system is pricey

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — Think of this account of the Grosse Pointe Park Recreation Commission’s first consideration of estimated costs to maintain and refurbish park system assets as a sideline report a few plays into the opening quarter of a football game.

“It’s all preliminary,”

said Michael Hindelang, commission chairman.

Commissioners were surprised this month to learn it would cost \$6,030,000 to bring park system assets and amenities up to snuff.

The swimming pool at Windmill Pointe Park totaled \$1,655,000 — nearly 30 percent of the whole package — to make things shipshape. Needs range from pumps and plumbing to

decking and diving boards.

“Pool mechanical issues scare me,” Hindelang said. “We are one failure away from not having a choice on that. The pool can be broken into bite-sized pieces.”

An evaluation of the recreation system’s assets by the city’s consulting engineers also took shine off the ice-skating rink at Patterson

Park, the focus of mainly online criticism this winter when its artificial freezing system was shut down due to operating costs.

Engineers determined outlays of \$200,000 to \$300,000 are needed to refurbish the cooling system. If that’s not good enough, \$800,000 could be spent to replace it with a new one.

Either way — Band-Aided or substituted — operating costs are

See **PARKS**, page 4A

## All Pointes Tree Sale is back; tree collaborative launches

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**THE GROSSE POINTES** — The annual All Pointes Tree Sale, championed for its third year by Friends of GP Trees, currently is live.

Since the inaugural sale in spring 2024, the Grosse Pointes have gained around 400 additional trees, which are sold to residents at wholesale prices.

“We’re trying to lower the bar for access and make it really easy for people to get affordable trees and get them

planted,” said Dr. Seth Krupp, member of Friends of GP Trees and City of Grosse Pointe councilman. “A lot of times people focus a lot on, and rightfully so, the street trees between the road and the sidewalk, but we need people to continue to plant trees in their yards as well to maintain the canopy.”

“So the more we can really help encourage and lower the bars of entry for people to actually engage in planting even a small tree, we’ll

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUZY BERSCHBACK

A magnolia on Ridgemont and Piche planted in loving memory of the homeowners’ daughter.

See **TREES**, page 2A

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## Ticket amnesty through March 31

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — The municipal court’s ticket amnesty program has two weeks to go.

Offenders have through Tuesday, March 31, to get off the hook for late fees and extra fines.

“If they’re in default to have warrants, we drop late penalties and warrants,” said Jamie Ferszt, court administrator.

The program is for parking tickets, civil infractions and adjudicated misdemeanors only, according to a court posting.

Offenders are obligated for nothing beyond their original fine.

“We get a good response,” Ferszt said.

Amnesty is scheduled this time of year when many people receive money owed from state

See **TICKET**, page 2A

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Pointer of  
INTEREST

See story, page 4A

**Michael Marks**

Home: City of Grosse Pointe  
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PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUZY BERSCHBACK

This approximately 100-year-old sycamore at Charlevoix and Touraine is set to be included in the Notable Trees of Grosse Pointe booklet.

TICKET:

Continued from page 1A

and federal governments. “We usually advertise it around tax time because people get their tax returns back,” Ferszt said.

Park Municipal Court — Brad Lindberg

is located on the top floor of city hall, 15115 E. Jefferson, between Maryland and Lakepointe. Court hours are 8 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. Questions? Call the court at (313) 822-3535.

TREES:

Continued from page 1A

really have big long-term impacts on the community.”

Trees available for order as part of the current sale are:

- ◆ red maple (Acer rubrum ‘franksred’), \$60, colorful with crimson/orange foliage in fall;
- ◆ tulip poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera), \$100, named for bright green leaves resembling tulips, alongside tulip-shaped flower blooms in summer and yellow hues in fall;
- ◆ black gum (Nyssa ‘red splyndor’), \$100, a medium-sized, slow-growing tree with red leaves in fall;
- ◆ London planetree (Platanus ‘exclamation’), \$40, known for peeling black bark that exposes green, gray and cream hues;
- ◆ white oak (Quercus alba), \$100, supports a variety of biodiversity, can live up to 600 years and is known for strong wood and storm resistance;
- ◆ red oak (Quercus rubra), \$100, native to the Midwest as a faster-growing oak, is tolerant of salt and air pollution and supports biodiversity;
- ◆ red bud (Cercis canadensis), \$75, known for magenta-pink flowers lining its branches and works especially well among evergreens that shelter it from intense sunlight; and
- ◆ white pine (Pinus strobus), \$75, the state tree of Michigan, which grows fast and has a long lifespan with feathery, soft needles and an open canopy.

Orders must be placed by 5 p.m. Thursday, April 16, after which free home delivery will take place around Arbor Day Friday, April 24. Planting services also are available for \$50, with the proceeds going toward the Grosse Pointe Foundation Releaf Fund to plant additional trees in the City of Grosse Pointe.

An order form may be found online at forms.gle/RjHKL6RgXh22Y3Yw8 or by using the QR code (below right).

For additional questions regarding the tree sale, contact Krupp at gptrees1@gmail.com.

Community collaboration

Launching at the same time as the tree sale is the Grosse Pointe Learning Collaborative’s tree learning platform — gplearns.uls.org/trees — which was designed as an online space to gather and connect the various tree conservation and appreciation efforts taking place throughout the five Pointes.

Created as another arm to the Grosse Pointe History Day learning collaborative — a grant-funded initiative by teachers at University Liggett School — the tree collaborative is intended to educate, engage and empower Grosse Pointe residents to take an active role in preserving and restoring the local tree canopy.

“There’s other people out there who want to see us remain with a strong canopy and we need to collaborate on that effort,” co-creator Suzy Berschback said. “It’s hard to do as one person, but if we all came together under this collaborative, there’s a movement.”

Via the collaborative, residents can nominate

trees of interest in the community for factors such as size, age, historical significance, unique characteristics or memorable stories. Experts including arborists, historians and environmental scientists can then sign up to participate by verifying and documenting the selected trees’ significance — all of which will be compiled into a planned Notable Trees of Grosse Pointe booklet.

“We have a first draft currently,” Berschback said, “and I think it’s a matter of just refining it to be where we want it to be.”

Through the interactive online platform, residents additionally can:

- ◆ get involved as an artist or writer to craft creative works inspired by trees to be displayed on the website or at community events,
- ◆ learn about the benefits of trees in urban communities,
- ◆ understand current canopy challenges in the Grosse Pointes,
- ◆ explore practical steps to protect and plant trees,
- ◆ access educational resources for families and children,
- ◆ volunteer to help with a tree survey
- ◆ and discover other ways to volunteer and become a local tree steward.

ard. “It’s for all ages, because it’s important to bring in the next generations and show them what we had, show them what we have and have them think about what we will need,” Berschback said. “So I think it’s good to bring it into schools too and I’m hoping to do that.”

The necessity of trees as an integral part of life in Grosse Pointe surpasses solely the beauty and sense of place they provide. Trees also are considered essential public health infrastructure: cooling neighborhoods, reducing flooding, improving air quality, strengthening mental well-being and increasing property values.

“Trees are one of the most powerful and accessible climate solutions we have at the neighborhood level,” Berschback said. “This initiative gives residents the knowledge and tools to take meaningful action right where they live.”



A 100-year-old weeping willow at the Ford House.

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# Marshmallow drop almost sold out

## Easter activities planned throughout the Pointes

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**THE GROSSE POINTES** — When Chance Buehrer drops marshmallows from his helicopter, he’s particular about where they land.

“We never drop over people,” he said. “We drop into a clear area around the crowd, never actually on top of anybody.”

Buehrer is the one and only helicopter pilot for Max Flight Experiences, a sightseeing company based at Grosse Ile Airport.

He’ll be busy this month with marshmallow missions during Easter celebrations of the type the Grosse Pointe Park Department of Parks and Recreation hosts Saturday morning, March 28, on the sledding hill at Patterson Park.



STOCK PHOTO

All five Pointes have Easter activities planned in the coming weeks.

Two drops are scheduled: 10 a.m. for children ages 1 to 5; and 11 a.m. for ages 6 to 10.

Tickets cost \$15 per child.

Register online at [secure.rec1.com/MI/grosse-pointe-park-mi/](https://secure.rec1.com/MI/grosse-pointe-park-mi/)

catalog. For help, call the recreation department office at (313) 822-2812, Ext. 300.

“We’ll have a petting zoo, pony rides, pictures with the famous Easter Bunny, goodies bags and thousands of marshmal-

lows falling from the sky,” said Chad Craig, recreation director.

“If a family has children in both age groups and only want to participate in one of the time slots, younger children will only be able to move

up to the older age group time slot,” according to a city notice. “Older children will not be allowed to move down to the younger age group.”

The annual drop is popular. Despite increasing ticket availability this year by 25 spots to a maximum 175 per drop, sales are sold out for the 5-and-younger crowd.

“There are about 20 or so left for ages 6 to 10,” Craig said.

Registration is limited by two factors that a non-recreation director might not think of.

“We start to hit capacity in the parking lot,” Craig said. “We can look at extending it longer, but it adds to the expense of the helicopter and other vendors. Typically, when the helicopter drops, he’s flying to the next location to do the next drop.”

Buehrer said he typically precedes a marshmallow drop with a flyby

as low as 300 feet.

“When we come back around, we hover at 100 to 150 feet,” he said. “Our helper partially leans out and pours. We usually take two 55-gallon trash bags. They’ll just start pouring.”

The helicopter’s downward propellor wash has little impact on the speed at which marshmallows hit the ground.

“For the first 20 feet, they might go down a little bit quicker,” Buehrer said. “But because they’re not that heavy, wind resistance slows them to their terminal velocity and they’ll continue to fall at that pace.”

### Elsewhere in the Pointes

#### City

The Spring Egg Hunt at Neff Park returns at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 29, for children of all ages, featuring eggs scattered

See EASTER, page 9A

# Farms issues \$30 million in bonds, sets timeline for sewer separation

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE FARMS** — Farms residents will see the city’s ongoing major stormwater separation project reflected on tax bills in the form of approximately 2 mills annually for the next 25 years.

The city last March issued \$11,875,000 in bonds to cover the first phase of the work, which is 95 percent complete and saw disruptive construction along Tonanncour over the past year, as a force main and gravity sewer were installed to carry water from the inland district to Lake St. Clair.

Last Monday, city council further approved the issuance of an additional up to \$33,380,000 in general obligation unlimited tax bonds to pave the way for phases two and three of the proj-

ect.

“The first year we anticipate the millage to be approximately 1.8 mills,” Finance Director Tim Rowland said. “And over the length of the bond, we expect it to be approximately 2 mills per year on average.”

Phases two — construction of a new stormwater pump station at the corner of Moross and Chalfonte — and three — sewer separation within the inland district and installation of new storm sewer mains along Mt. Vernon, McMillan and McKinley — will culminate in the completion of the project.

“We are at the point after many, many years to award contracts to the final two phases of our sewer separation program that we’ve been working on with the goal of really reducing the amount of stormwater inflow into the combined

system,” City Manager Shane Reeside said. “Ultimately, when this project is completed, we expect about one-third of the wet weather flow that enters our combined system to be separated and diverted, which obviously will have an impact on the overall system with the goal of reducing the likelihood and severity of basement flooding as the main objective.”

Construction of the Moross/Chalfonte pump station was awarded to the lowest of eight bidders, Sorensen Gross Company Inc., of Flint, for \$18,733,000.

The work is planned to commence this summer and take two years, with final completion expected in summer 2028.

Construction of the inland district sewer separation and water main replacements was awarded to the lowest of

seven bidders, DiPonio Contracting LLC, for \$15,926,949.75.

An approximate construction timeline is as follows:

◆ Chalfonte work to begin spring/summer 2026, including repurposing the current combined sewer into a storm sewer, building a new sanitary sewer and rerouting connections from homes;

◆ Lexington, Barclay and Shelbourne road and court to see separation of storm sewers in summer/fall 2026;

◆ Provencal and work at the Country Club of Detroit in fall/winter 2026;

◆ Bournemouth, Allard, Champine, Maison and Roland road and court construction in late winter 2026/spring 2027;

◆ Mt. Vernon, McMillan and McKinley work in spring/fall 2027;

◆ and phase three completion in December 2027.

Tying into the sewer separation work and taking advantage of the fact

the streets already will be torn up, the city at the same time will replace water mains on Barclay,

See BONDS, page 9A

## The Week Ahead

### MONDAY, MARCH 23

◆ Grosse Pointe Public School System Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 24

◆ Grosse Pointe Woods Planning Commission meeting, 7 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 24

◆ Grosse Pointe Shores Planning Commission meeting, 9 a.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

◆ Grosse Pointe Park Downtown Development Authority meeting, 7 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 26

◆ Grosse Pointe Library Board of Trustees meeting, 5:30 p.m. at Central Library, 10 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe Farms.

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4A | POINTER OF INTEREST

Pointer leaves public institutions better than he found them

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

It was the coveted college internship program at Walt Disney World Resort that solidified the past three decades of career trajectory for lifelong Pointer Michael Marks.

“I actually got connected with one of their Imagineers and I had a couple long conversations with him about what he was doing developing rides and attractions at Disney and how that would translate into what I was thinking about doing,” said Marks, who at the time was pondering whether he should change his major to construction management or civil engineering. “He had some really good advice about how you can always do construction management with a civil engineering degree, but you can’t necessarily vice versa.”

He graduated college, took a gap year building townhouses with Habitat for Humanity in Washington, D.C., and settled into a civil engineering gig at Detroit-based Giffels Webster, where he’s spent his entire 26-year career and now is partner and trea-

surer.

It’s a job he views more as a privilege — one that enables him to drive through downtown witnessing his own marks of ingenuity on public spaces around many a corner; provides him the rare joy of waking up in the morning and actually wanting to race into work; and inspires him to describe it at career fairs as an opportunity to make a contribution to the greater good.

“It’s so much fun to be able to walk around downtown or go to a Pistons game and walk up to the Little Caesars Arena and know we raised this part of the road three feet so that the whole grade all the way around the building is flush and anybody with mobility issues can walk in on every level, on all four sides of the building, and come into the main concourse level,” Marks said. “There’s no stairs, there’s no ramps; it’s completely flush and it was kind of a Herculean effort to do.

“It’s one of those things where you can feel really great that anybody can access this building and have the exact same experience as anybody else.”



Michael Marks, right, with his children, Charlie, Henry and Patricia, and his wife, Caroline.

cisterns that take the stormwater that runs off the garage and stores it to be able to use it for irrigation,” Marks described. “And on the Southwest Greenway, which is part of the Riverfront Conservancy, you’ll see these three towers adjacent to the garage with artwork on them and you can see on the side how much water is in the tanks. That does all the irrigation for the park.

“That’s where you start to kind of pinch yourself that we get to be able to work on something like this.”

Locally, Marks and his team partnered with architectural firm Quinn Evans for the Grosse Pointe Public Library Central Branch remodel in 2022, which featured a drive-up window, two-story addition and new plaza area along its frontage.

The project was close to home, as the civil engineer has lived in the City of Grosse Pointe since 2014, but was raised in the Woods and spent his early career living in the Park.

Growing up in a community so rooted in history, architecture and

COURTESY PHOTO

See POINTER, page 5A

PARKS:

Continued from page 1A

forecast at \$55,000 per season for electricity service alone.

The biggest big-ticket item in the analysis was the Patterson boardwalk, a gift to the city many years ago. Although a short-term,

five-year maintenance regimen was forecast regarding routine work such as washing the surface and replacing hardware, a more than 10-year prescription culminates with updated design standards and reconstruction estimated at \$2 million.

“Our goal is to under-

stand what’s going on in Grosse Pointe Park, assess all existing (recreation system) assets that are aging (and) identify the community’s priorities moving forward,” said Eric Dryer, a planner presenting the assessment to commissioners March 11, on behalf of OHM Advisors.

Municipal representatives — commissioners, administrators and council members — will use the assessment, a current public survey and comments submit-

ted during public forums, to rank the order in which the condition of assets should be addressed or not at all.

“This is a huge step toward what I was hoping for,” Hindelang said. “We want to do this through informed decision making,” Dryer said. “We want to understand the preferences of the community.”

“That’s what this process is,” Mayor Michele Hodges said. “We identify priorities and then order them. Leaders fig-

ure out how to get it done. Is it grant money, user fees, cost sharing, procurement solutions? Once we know what the community wants, we’ll go back and figure it out.”

Prior to OHM completing its report, which the city specified when contracting the company to help draft a five-year recreation system plan, commissioners and others had no real idea what it costs to maintain amenities at the city’s two lakeside parks.

Dryer’s presentation was a reality check.

“The ice rink surprised me,” Commissioner Paul Spratt said. “We’ve a hard decision to make. The options are not good.”

“I’m of the school of thought of, if you build it, they will come,” Commissioner Terry Ayrault said. “I believe we put things in our parks over the years that potentially brought people to (become residents of) the Park.”

He cited movie the-

aters among others.

Then there’s the 35-year-old Patterson playscape, another gift to the city.

An offer by a charitable group to replace it a couple years ago triggered even more dramatic opposition from online warriors than turning off the ice rink coolers.

An army of playscape preservationists mustered online with pledges to refurbish the facility. Less than a handful followed through.

Commissioners and volunteers from a local construction company wound up doing most of the work.

OHM’s assessment of the playscape came up with it needing \$150,000 in minor repairs, \$210,000 for major renovation or replacement costing \$650,000 to \$800,000.

“It’s a hard decision,” Ayrault said of ranking the budgetary value of amenities. “If you keep the playscape maintained, you may not have to rebuild it.”

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City of Grosse Pointe

No ‘I’ in team

An ex-employee, while cleaning out personal belongings from a local hospital in late February, took a hospital-wide award and refused to return it. He was reported for larceny.

Up in smoke

An approximately 20-year-old woman attempted to pass a counterfeit \$100 bill for a vape product at a gas station on Mack at 5:05 p.m. Monday, March 9.

Once advised the bill was not genuine, she took it and left.

Unhealthy spending habits

A home healthcare worker is suspected of having used an elderly Grosse Pointe resident’s credit card multiple times. An investigation is ongoing.

Fessed up

Two of three suspects — 19- and 20-year-old Detroit women — turned themselves in last week

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS

for stealing \$1,700 worth of goods from Lululemon in early March. An investigation is ongoing.

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

Grosse Pointe Farms

Wrong way

After turning the wrong way onto northbound McMillan at 8:20 a.m. Monday, March 9, a 57-year-old Detroit man was pulled over and arrested for an improper license plate and no insurance.

Breaking parole

Officers responded to a report of a 35-year-old Detroit woman passed out on the sidewalk at Mack and Kerby at 10:49 a.m. Monday, March 9.

The woman was conscious when officers

reached her and voluntarily stated she had a warrant and was a parole absconder.

A crack pipe and heroin were found in her pockets, for which she was arrested.

Tempting fate

Along Mack near Shelbourne at 9:03 p.m. Sunday, March 15, a 26-year-old Detroit man was pulled over and cited for speeding and driving while license suspended.

He then was turned over to Grosse Pointe Park officers on a warrant out of the neighboring Pointe.

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

Grosse Pointe Park

Wake up

Upon investigating the report of a vehicle idling curbside on Bedford at Charlevoix at 12:25 a.m. Tuesday, March 10, an officer found a woman passed out behind the steering wheel and a bottle of tequila on the floorboards.

“(She) was woken and given field sobriety tests,”

an officer said about the 35-year-old Harper Woods suspect. “(She) failed the tests and was arrested for (drunken driving).”

Got away

Police pulled out the stops and put them back in again during a traffic stop from which the suspect got away.

At an unspecified time Sunday, March 15, an officer tried to pull over the driver of a silver Jeep Cherokee with a paper license plate for speeding 15 mph over the 30 mph limit on Mack at Cadieux.

“(The) vehicle fled northbound (on) Cadieux where pursuit was terminated,” according to police.

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

Grosse Pointe Shores

No license

A 48-year-old Roseville woman was ticketed for not having a driver’s license and no insurance following a traffic stop on Vernier near Morningside

about 8:15 p.m. Sunday, March 15.

She told officers she has lived in Michigan four years and never applied for a license. The 2005 Chrysler Town & County she was driving was impounded.

Expired plate

A 51-year-old Woods woman was ticketed for no insurance after being pulled over with an expired license plate on Lakeshore near Oxford around 9:30 p.m. Sunday, March 15.

She told officers she had just left the hospital after being treated for high blood pressure and was feeling dizzy. She was transported back to the hospital via ambulance and her 2021 Chevy Traverse was impounded.

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

Grosse Pointe Woods

Attempted extortion

A resident in the 90 block of Crescent Lane filed a report around 1:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9,

indicating someone hacked his company’s email and sent invoices to clients.

After he changed his password, he received an email stating a suspect had his bank information, credit card details and Social Security number and he could buy them back for \$600 in crypto currency. He contacted his bank and locked online access to his account.

Attempted vehicle theft

An unlocked vehicle parked on the street in the 2000 block of Stanhope had steering wheel damage and a destroyed ignition after someone tried to steal it overnight into Tuesday, March 10.

Stolen vehicle

A vehicle was stolen around 2 a.m. Monday, March 16, in the 2100 block of Hunt Club Drive. The owner told officers it was locked and she had both key fobs. Three bracelets worth \$800 were in the vehicle.

—Ted O’Neil  
Report information about these and other crimes to Grosse Pointe Woods Public Safety, (313) 343-2400.

POINTER:

Continued from page 4A

walkability most certainly has played a role in his career, Marks said, just as having a father who spent his career as an engineer for General Motors did.

What you see is what you know — and often what you end up doing.

“It’s funny because my son sees what I do and how excited I am about it and I think he wants to follow,” Marks said. “I just want to make sure he’s looking at everything. There’s a lot of opportunities and just because that’s something you see every day doesn’t necessarily mean that’s the only thing you can do.”

As for Marks, following in his father’s footsteps hasn’t turned out so terribly.

“Civil engineering is one of those careers where I think we do a terrible job of promoting it,” he said. “You ask the average person on the street, ‘What does a civil engineer do?’ and they say, ‘I don’t know, build bridges?’

“Actually, every day you’re experiencing what a civil engineer does: the roads, the

streets; you turn your water on, water comes out of the faucet; you flush your toilet; you take a shower; you drive your car out of the driveway or you walk down the street.”

ANNUAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Helm at the Boll Life Center | 2025 in Review

Our mission is to inspire and enable residents of the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods to enjoy the gift of longevity, living healthy and meaningful lives as they age.



A place to call and connect • a place to learn & grow • a place to go • a place to make a difference

62,098 The number of times the community relied on The Helm in 2025.

3,183 people  
Older adults served

Unique individuals served through programs and services

33,000 meals  
Meals delivered/served

Nutrition + social connection check in

4,204 hours  
Programs for the community

Health and wellness, languages, card games, trips, events and more

1,903 calls &  
home visits  
Care-navigation touches

Guidance, reassurance, next steps and resources

1,984  
Medical equipment loans

No-cost safety and mobility support

9,000 hours  
Volunteer hours

Neighbors helping neighbors  
A VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY OF \$312,216

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

What your support made possible

In 2025, The Helm helped older adults stay independent, safe and connected – so they can continue living in the homes and community they love.

Highlights

- Nutrition that sustains health and reduces isolation (meals + warm human connection).
- Health, wellness, and lifelong learning strengthens body, mind and purpose. Increasing health outcomes and client satisfaction.
- Information, assistance and benefits guidance that turns confusion into clear next steps.
- Equipment and home-support resources that prevent falls and keep everyday life safer.



“The exercising and stretches we do in chair yoga helps me be active . . . The Helm has given me my independence.”

- Ray M. after two years of exercise to alleviate foot drop and neuropathy.

Grosse Pointe News

USPS 230-400

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POINTES OF VIEW

GROSSE POINTE WOODS / GROSSE POINTE SHORES / GROSSE POINTE PARK / GROSSE POINTE FARMS / GROSSE POINTE

Grosse Pointe News

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OUR VIEW

Delivery debacles

Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor ... meh, forget it. We are referring, of course, to the unofficial motto of the United States Postal Service. The full text is, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

The words are engraved on the front of the James A. Farley Post Office in New York City, put there by the architectural firm that built it. The phrase is taken from a book by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, referring to messengers of the Persian Empire during wars between the Greeks and Persians around 500 to 449 B.C.

The USPS website says that is not its motto, but goes on to add, “But we appreciate the sentiment.” The gall.

There is a persistent and worsening problem around the country with weekly newspapers, such as the Grosse Pointe News, not being delivered to subscribers on a consistent basis by the postal service.

Most papers like this one, particularly those in more rural areas, rely on the USPS instead of route carriers for delivery.

Our circulation department routinely gets dozens of phone calls and emails a week from subscribers not receiving their paper. Staff typically splits these up, delivering five or six at a time each, depending on where they are headed on a particular day or which area of town they live in.

Do not get us wrong. This is a minor inconvenience and it can be enjoyable meeting subscribers and thanking them for their business, but that is not the point.

“We’re doing all we can,” Publisher Anne Gryzenia said. “For as much as we pay for postage, we expect better service.”

Lisa McGraw, public affairs manager for the Michigan Press Association and public policy manager for the National Newspaper Association, said it’s an issue that extends far beyond the Pointes.

“It’s fair to say it’s incredibly widespread,” she said. “It’s a problem all over the country.”

McGraw said a big part of it is the USPS’s Delivering for America plan, introduced in 2021 by former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. DeJoy, who resigned last March after five years in the position, said the plan would slow some delivery but generate savings.

The Postal Regulatory Commission, however, disagreed.

“The commission urges the Postal Service to reconsider whether the speculative, meager gains from this proposal outweigh the certain downgrade in service for a significant portion of the nation,” it wrote in a January 2025 advisory.

According to a recent story in Editor & Publisher, USPS internal measurements showed 20 percent of periodicals were delivered late nationally in the third quarter last year, up from 15 percent during the same period in 2024.

While this issue is not exclusive to newspapers, it is especially harmful to us when it comes to timeliness.

A manager at the Fox Creek Post Office on Jefferson, who said she could only identify herself as “Ms. Paul,” said the Grosse Pointe News is a priority for them.

“We know how valued it is in the community,” she said. “Customers want their paper on Thursdays.”

Ms. Paul also said they sometimes receive papers

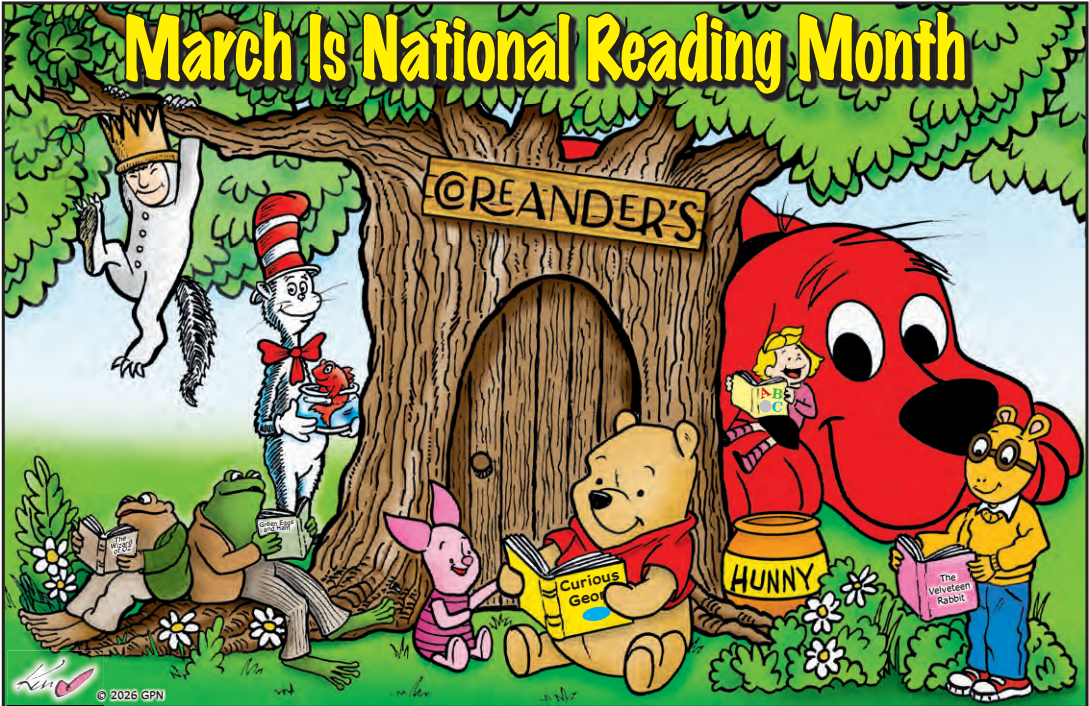


ILLUSTRATION BY KEN SCHOP

GUEST VIEW By Kevin Nugent

The numbers behind a PreK–5 and Trombly plan

In a recent piece, we proposed the Grosse Pointe Public School System move to a PreK to fifth grade, sixth to eighth grade and ninth to 12th grade configuration, reopen Trombly Elementary School and use our middle schools as innovation hubs instead of closing more buildings. This follow-up looks at the numbers behind that vision and makes one point clear: Enrollment decline is now our central challenge.

In 2019, the district voted to close Trombly and Poupard elementary schools. Since then, enrollment losses have been concentrated in the areas that once fed those schools. Between 2018–19 and 2020–21, GPPSS enrollment fell by about 9.3 percent, while peer districts like Novi, Northville, Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills saw COVID-era declines in the low single digits. Grosse Pointe’s steeper drop lines up with local choices about closures and reconfiguration.

We present an option that includes “using our buildings wisely” to expand access and opportunity, especially for students and neighborhoods most affected by past clo-

tures, and giving every neighborhood a stable school where students can stay.

An independent audit by Plante Moran shows GPPSS is no longer in immediate crisis, but we are operating on a thinner, more fragile platform than many of our peers. In 2024–25, the district posted a surplus of about \$3.8 million and our fund balance climbed to 14.7 percent of annual operating costs. That came from tightening costs rather than increasing revenue. At the same time, the report confirms that we have a relatively high average teacher salary while remaining in the middle of the pack for revenue and total cost per pupil. Most significantly, our enrollment has fallen from roughly 8,400 to about 6,400 students since 2012, a decline of about 24 percent and the largest percentage drop in our peer group.

Declining enrollment should not be used to justify consolidation, because our risk is not “too many buildings” or “too many teachers.” Our risk is a district with a relatively high average salary and thin reserves

See GUEST, page 7A



LETTERS

The Grosse Pointe News welcomes letters to the editor. All letters should be typed and signed with the writer’s full name and local address, as well as a daytime telephone number for verification or questions. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited for length. All letters may be edited for content. We reserve the right to refuse any letter. The deadline for letters is 3 p.m. Monday. Letters may be submitted via email to editor@grossepointenews.com or by filling out the letters form on our website, grossepointenews.com.

The cost of unrestricted schools of choice

To the Editor:

Schools of choice sounds appealing. Who wouldn’t want more options for their child’s education? However, a mandatory requirement that would force the GPPSS to accept students from any jurisdiction can create significant challenges.

**Increased demand:** The GPPSS could see a surge of applications from students outside of the district. This can create waiting lists or lotteries if there are more applicants than available seats.

**Larger class sizes:** If many students transfer into the GPPSS, teachers, transportation and facilities may be stretched beyond their capacities.

**Strained resources:** An increase in students can overburden school resources if funding and staffing do not grow at the same pace.

**Budget effects on both districts:** Because funding typically follows the stu-

See LETTER, page 7A

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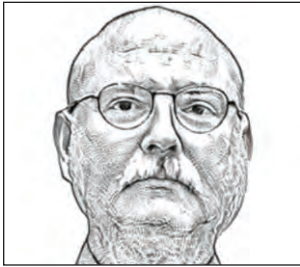
Ellie Carter

| GROSSE POINTE 7-DAY WEATHER FORECAST |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| March 19 – 25                        |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| THU                                  | FRI             | SAT             | SUN             | MON             | TUE             | WED             |
|                                      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| 50°<br>33°                           | 53°<br>37°      | 55°<br>34°      | 49°<br>28°      | 38°<br>28°      | 43°<br>32°      | 47°<br>27°      |
| Chance Rain/Snow                     | Mostly Cloudy   | Mostly Cloudy   | Mostly Cloudy   | Cloudy          | Cloudy          | Cloudy          |
| 40%                                  | 20%             | 10%             | 10%             | 0%              | 10%             | 10%             |
| SUNRISE 7:37 am                      | SUNRISE 7:35 am | SUNRISE 7:33 am | SUNRISE 7:31 am | SUNRISE 7:30 am | SUNRISE 7:28 am | SUNRISE 7:27 am |
| SUNSET 7:43 pm                       | SUNSET 7:44 pm  | SUNSET 7:45 pm  | SUNSET 7:46 pm  | SUNSET 7:47 pm  | SUNSET 7:49 pm  | SUNSET 7:50 pm  |

Weather data courtesy of Channel 4, WDIV Detroit • ClickOnDetroit.com



I SAY By Ted O’Neil



# Happy (belated) St. Patrick’s Day

With a name like O’Neil, it is safe to assume that I have Irish ancestry. Add a middle name of Patrick and it really gets obvious. But that’s only half the story. The other half is Italian. My legal first name is Theodore, after my maternal great-grandfather, Theodoro Soriano. He came over from Italy

around 1900 with his wife and two small children, one of them my maternal grandmother. He actually came over earlier, by himself — and illegally — and was sent back to Italy to legally return, the way it should be done. If some of these timelines sound odd, they are. My parents were born in the early 1920s and had me late in life. Dad actually fought during World War II in China with Gen. Chenault and his famed Flying Tigers. Back on the paternal side, Cornelius O’Neil came over from County

Cork around 1845 at the age of 15. It was at the height of the Great Potato Famine, which saw 1 million people leave Ireland and another million die. He settled in Houghton, in the Upper Peninsula, and worked in the copper mines. Family stories also say he and his wife had 11 children — good Catholics! — names that have been lost to history with no real interest in serious genealogy over the years. One of those children, however, grew up, got married and had Patrick Joseph O’Neil, my paternal grandfather, in 1887.

He and his wife, the former Mary Slattery whose family also was from County Cork, in turn had four children. Obviously one of which was my dad. Patrick Joseph eventually moved to Detroit, where he became an ironworker and helped build Detroit Edison power plants. Ironically, my brother became an ironworker for Edison, working in some of those very same plants. He even found a photo in a book about the history of the company of our grandfather and coworkers sitting on a steel beam, reminiscent of the

famous “Lunch atop a Skyscraper” photo. No one on either side of my family, however, was ever particularly immersed in the whole heritage thing. I’m not aware of anyone who ever joined the Gaelic League or the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America. I don’t recall growing up with corned beef and cabbage being a must for St. Paddy’s Day and personally, cold is more important than green when it comes to beer. My dad did, however, pass down to me a lifelong love of Notre Dame football. As they say, we

Irish-Catholics are ND fans from conception. The “Subway Alumni” — fans who never went to ND — enjoyed the team’s success in the early 20th century that gave Irish immigrants something to be proud of at a time they were treated poorly and businesses posted signs in their windows reading, “Irish need not apply.” We have a similar phenomenon here in Michigan, known as “Walmart Wolverines.” Since today is, however, March 19, Happy Feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of fathers and workers.

## GUEST:

Continued from page 6A

trying to spread its costs over fewer students. Our margins are more volatile and our room for error smaller than better-funded districts. In that environment, closing more buildings does not fix the drivers of enrollment and, as we have already seen, can make them much worse by pushing more families to leave. That picture shows up clearly in our building data. Under a PreK–5 model without Trombly, Defer Elementary School is over capacity, serving 532 students in a 525-seat building, while other schools have room and Trombly sits empty at 0 percent use. When we model a PreK–5 system with Trombly open and one PreK classroom in every elementary, the pattern changes: Defer’s total PreK–5 enrollment falls to about 338 students (roughly 64 percent of capacity), Trombly serves around 318 students (about 71 percent) and all eight elementaries fall into a healthier band, roughly between the low-70s and mid-80s percent utilization. This is what “right-sizing” looks like in Grosse Pointe. Closing more schools is a far worse option to using the buildings we already own to balance students across the system. With Trombly back online and boundaries adjusted, no elementary school is over capacity; high-demand schools like Defer and Monteith elementary schools can hold class sizes in the mid-20s instead of creeping toward 30, and every neighborhood has a school that feels full and alive rather than overcrowded or half-empty. We also gain the ability to place one PreK classroom in each building, bringing early-childhood access into every neighborhood without constructing new space to strengthen the pipeline of families who start in GPPSS and stay. Our grade-by-grade enrollment data tells a consistent story. We tend to keep most students through third grade, then lose more between grades four and five and again when children are

moved in and out of new buildings. Those transition points match the concerns of families who say they are most likely to consider private, parochial or neighboring public options. When we closed neighborhood schools and shifted to the current K-to-fourth-grade/fifth-to-eighth grade structure, we added another transition with longer drives or bus rides. Instead of stabilizing enrollment, we saw steeper losses in upper elementary grades. A PreK–5 structure with a reopened Trombly is designed to reverse that pattern. It lets children stay in one neighborhood school for up to seven years, gives families a predictable home base and uses existing capacity to keep class sizes reasonable instead of overcrowding a few buildings while others sit underused. In a district where finances depend on enrollment, keeping more students through fifth grade by reducing disruption and strengthening neighborhood schools is the most reliable way to stabilize our budget. The middle school piece of the plan follows the same logic. The audit shows that our student-to-teacher ratio is near the middle of the cohort, so we are not structurally overstaffed. The pressure comes from declining enrollment layered on top of our existing cost structure. Rather than treating lower use at Pierce, Brownell and Parcels middle schools as a problem to be solved with closures, we can treat it as a strategic advantage by turning surplus rooms into makerspaces, labs, wellness centers, intervention hubs and smaller learning communities that make sixth through eighth grades a reason families stay. All of this shapes how we use space to support the people who work in it. Our finances are more sensitive to enrollment swings than in many peer districts. The sustainable path is not cutting pay, but investing in working conditions, manageable class sizes, collaboration space and strong student supports so teaching in GPPSS is a job people seek out and want to remain in. Kevin Nugent is executive director of Pointers for Academic Excellence.

## YESTERDAY’S HEADLINES

1951  
75 years ago this week

**PAY HIKE PLEAS POSE PROBLEMS:** Many Pointe police and firemen are reported to be bombarding lawmakers in Lansing with pleas for the support of a bill whose passage might have very far reaching results. Local municipal officials are frankly worried and anxious for local residents to understand the problems which must be addressed. The uniformed employ-

ees want a law passed that would give them shorter work hours, a 63-hour work week for the firemen with one more Kelly Day, and a 40-hour week for the policemen. **F L U O R I N E TREATMENT MADE AVAILABLE IN POINTE’S SCHOOLS:** Mrs. Byron Chambers, president of the Mother’s Health Education Council, has announced that plans are now complete to begin fluorine treatment for school chil-

See HEADLINES, page 8A

## LETTER:

Continued from page 6A

dent, the GPPSS may receive more funding, while the district they left may lose revenue but still have fixed costs like buildings and staff.

Schools of choice may give some students access to schools they prefer, but it can place pressure on capacity and shift funding in ways that affect both the school’s students enter and the ones they leave.

No community should be mandated to accept schools of choice. Before a decision is final, it should be subject to careful community scrutiny, evaluation from parents, school district residents and school board members.

Without transparent and public input, the potential harm may outweigh the advantages of expanded choice for parents. **LYNNE PIERCE** President, League of Women Voters Grosse Pointe

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**RAYMOND JAMES**







# Suspect charged in hospital shooting

**GROSSE POINTE WOODS** — A 17-year-old Detroit male is facing several felony charges stemming from an incident in the parking lot at Henry Ford St. John Hospital two weeks ago.

According to a press release from Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Trejion Sanders is charged with assault with intent to murder, assault with intent to do great bodily harm, carrying a concealed weapon, felonious assault and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. He is being charged as an adult.

Officers responded to a report of shots fired shortly before midnight Thursday, March 5, in the parking lot along Mack at the hospital. They found a 17-year-old male from Detroit had been shot by a security guard as he and three other suspects were attempting to steal a vehicle. The suspect who was shot was taken inside the hospital and underwent surgery.

Worthy said the guard first tried to deploy his TASER but it did not take effect. The release also said Sanders fired a handgun at the security officer, a 31-year-old Eastpointe man, but missed. The officer returned fire, striking the defendant in the leg. Sanders underwent surgery at the hospital and was moved to the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Center.

He was arraigned by Woods Municipal Judge Theodore Metry Friday, March 13, and given a \$250,000 cash/surety bond. Sanders was scheduled for a probable cause conference before Metry at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 18, after press time, and faces a preliminary examination at 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 25.

—Ted O'Neil

# City's \$21.6 million sewer grant slips further away

**CITY OF GROSSE POINTE** — The \$21.6 million federal grant for sewer separation, which two years ago was all but assured to the city, is becoming less and less of a likely reality.

A scheduled meeting last month with FEMA, the granting agency, was canceled due to the government shutdown.

This comes after the news late last year that the overall project cost has skyrocketed from \$29 million to \$52.6 million, due to price surges in the construction industry and a better grasp of what the project actually would require.

The city also has been effectively at a stalemate, waiting to see if FEMA would approve a second one-year extension to the grant timeline, because there is no way it can complete construction prior to late 2027 as the current contract requires.

FEMA, however, will not meet with the city until the government shutdown is over.

"There's been so much slippage in the timeline that in order to complete this within the time frame they've allotted, we're going to need not only the second year of the two-year extension that we're entitled to under the grant, but an additional year on top of that," City Manager Joe Valentine said this week.

"Unfortunately, we're not able to have those conversations until they reopen the government and FEMA is back in action.

"So at this point, it's not looking promising, but we are planning to have those conversations at our earliest opportunity."

—Laurel Kraus

# BONDS:

*Continued from page 3A*

Bournemouthe and McKinley — though that cost will be borne by the city's water and sewer fund as part of its standard water main replacement program.

Farms city council approved the bond issuance and construction contracts in three separate votes Monday, March 9. Each passed 6-0, with Councilwoman Beth Konrad Wilberding absent.



# Stunning sunrise

Grosse Pointe Park resident Jack Glover took this photo around 7:15 a.m. last month, along Lakeshore, on his way to a paddle tournament. "I like how the sunrise is illuminating the sky and spreading color onto the water with a mound of ice in the foreground," he said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK GLOVER

# EASTER:

*Continued from page 3A*

throughout the park which can be redeemed for a candy bag and the chance to win a prize.

"In each goodie bag there'll be a raffle ticket and then the five winning numbers that are drawn will receive a gift card," Parks and Recreation Coordinator Chad Murphy said.

Residents are invited to additionally enjoy a photo opportunity and chocolate sucker with Peter Cottontail, mobile petting zoo and strolling magician entertaining with sleight-of-hand tricks.

Similar to past years, unique golden eggs will be hidden throughout the park, redeemable for a special prize.

The event is open to City residents, though there is a \$10 charge per child, which can be paid in advance on the city's parks and recreation website or via cash at the gate.

Park passes are required for entry and no outside baskets will be allowed.

**Farms**

The Farms is switching up its annual Easter Egg Hunt this year from a Saturday morning to 6 p.m. Thursday, March 26, at Pier Park. Attendees should arrive by 5:45 p.m.

"With the schools' spring break beginning March 30, we felt we might not get a good turnout the weekend prior with people leaving town early," Parks and Recreation Director Chris Galatis said. "Thus we are going to try and do it on Thursday."

The hunt takes place rain, shine or snow and is intended for children ages 2 to 12. Participants should bring their own bags or Easter baskets and also can look forward to an opportunity to visit and take photos with the Easter Bunny directly following the egg hunt.

The spring fun is set to

take place about a week following the construction kick-off for the major Pier Park pool complex renovation, which will be separated by fencing.

"People (will) get the idea of what the summer is going to look like, as far as where construction is versus where the picnic area is, that kind of thing," added Lynn Roose, with the parks and recreation department. "So they'll get the visual."

No registration is required for the hunt, which is open to Farms residents and their guests.

**Woods**

The annual Egg Stroll will be held at Ghesquiere Park 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 28, rain or shine. Cost is \$8 for resident children ages 11 and younger.

Participants must pre-register for a specific stroll time, held in 15-minute increments between 10 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

Each child will be given a collection bag before they start the Bunny Trail.

At the end they'll be given a treat bag and can visit and take pictures with Mr. E. Bunny. A small petting zoo will be available.

A limited number of tickets for non-resident children will be available for \$10 and must be purchased by a Woods resident at the community center.

Call (313) 343-2408 for more information.

**Shores**

The Hop on Down Easter Egg Hunt runs 10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, March 28, at Osius Park, having been pushed back from the previous Saturday in hopes of warmer weather. Cost is \$5a for residents 10 and younger and includes snacks, drinks, gift bags, a visit from the Easter Bunny, face painting, games, pony rides and a petting zoo.

Call (313) 881-6565 for more information.

Laurel Kraus and Ted O'Neil contributed to this report.

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# Touraine, Moran, Hall up for reconstruction

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE FARMS** — The Farms will spend approximately \$2 million on its road rehabilitation program this year, as it tackles Touraine Boulevard from Grosse Pointe Boulevard to Ridge Road; Moran from Chalfonte to Charlevoix; and Hall Place from Kercheval to Grosse Pointe Boulevard.

The work was awarded to low bidder Nagle Paving Co., at a cost not to exceed \$2,352,912 during last Monday’s city council meeting.

“We have a couple long stretches of Touraine, which is probably one of your highest priorities as far as condition right now on your residential streets,” said Eddie Zmich, civil engineer with Hubbell, Roth and Clark. “... We also wanted to stay away from the streets where we’re doing all the sewer work this year, so we wanted

to stay away from the northwest quadrant — Provencal, that area.”

Residents in addition can expect construction along Merriweather between Charlevoix and Grosse Pointe Boulevard, which was part of last year’s road program and not completed.

“That is Pro-Line’s project they couldn’t finish last year, that they will finish this year,” Zmich said. “We did some concrete work last year, but now we actually have to do the milling and overlay. They plan on starting in early to mid-April.”

The city further hopes to tackle the stretch of Lakeshore between Fisher and Warner later this year, as it was successful in its most recent attempt to gain grant funding.

It is set to receive FAC road funds in fiscal year 2027, but is attempting to get approval to facilitate advanced construction, where the city would pay

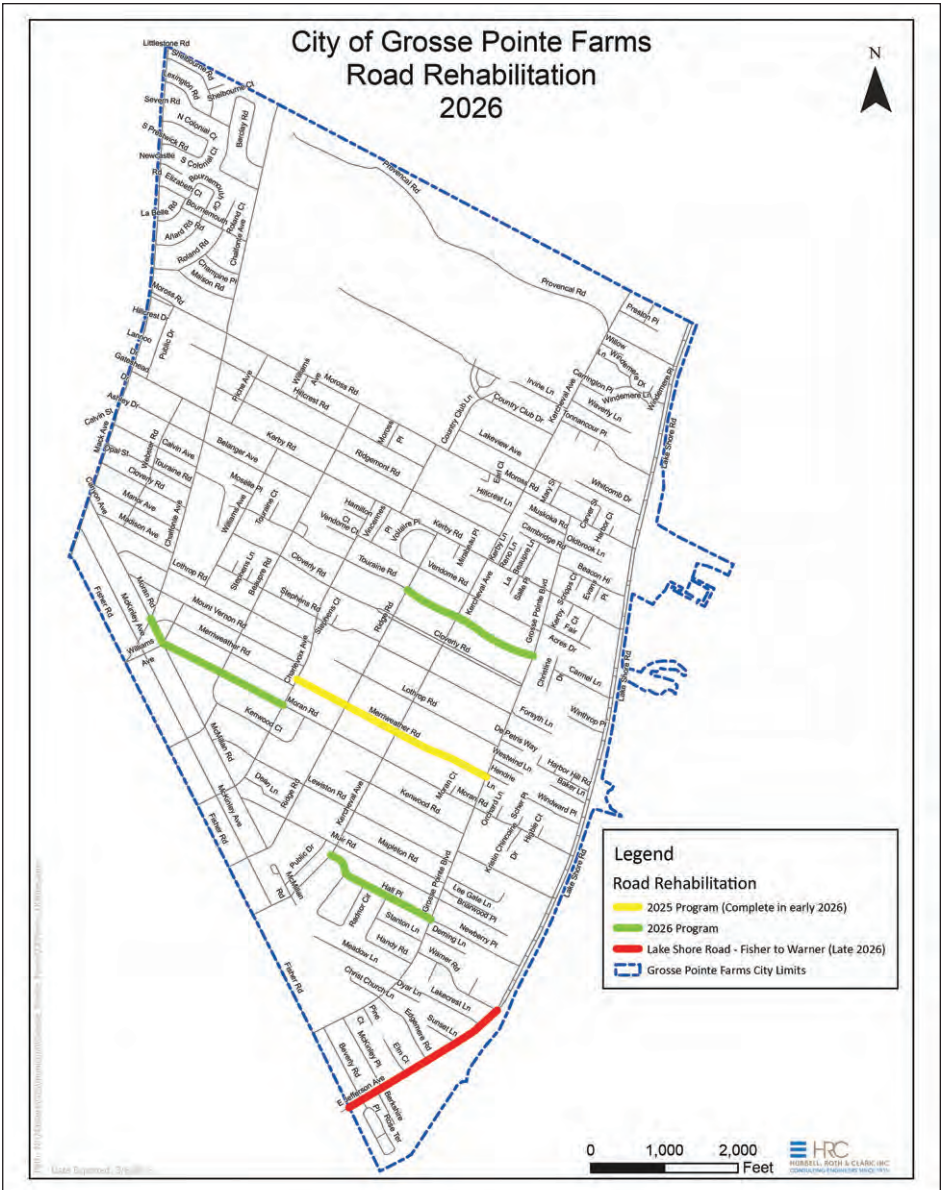
the full cost upfront to get it done sooner and then be reimbursed when the funding becomes available in 2027.

“If not, it’ll be a spring project next year, but we’re still trying everything we can do,” Zmich said.

Mayor John Gillooly emphasized the importance of fixing that stretch of road as soon as possible.

“It is a major gateway to our city,” he said last week. “Hundreds, if not thousands of cars passed yesterday on a beautiful Sunday. The road is in horrible condition right now. There are potholes everywhere. So I’d implore us to do what it takes to get that project done in 2026.”

“And if we can’t, (let’s facilitate) some temporary fix to get DPW out there and get the potholes repaired. Something this spring. We owe it to those who pass through our great city.”



MAP COURTESY OF GROSSE POINTE FARMS

Road reconstruction in the Farms this year will include Touraine, Moran, Hall Place and Merriweather, with the potential late addition of Lakeshore.

## Resuming garden activities

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — Winter didn’t cut it for Lisa Kyle and likeminded members of the Grosse Pointe Park Beautification Commission.

They’re eager to get outside and help the city’s gardens grow.

“After a polar vortex winter, we are excited for

the spring season and eager to work on our volunteer garden program beds,” said Kyle, chairperson.

The kick-off volunteer event of the year is 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 11, at Patterson Park. Volunteers meet once per month at the

park during the growing season to tend flower beds and do light maintenance.

May begins and ends with two big plant-oriented events.

“We hope to see community members and guests at our Spring Plant Exchange and the Michiganense Native

Plant Sale,” Kyle said.

The Plant Exchange is 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, May 2, at the Tompkins Center, Windmill Pointe Park.

Next comes another volunteer workday at Patterson 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 9.

The month wraps up 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, May 30, with the Michiganense Native Plant Sale on the lawn of city hall on Jefferson between Maryland and Lakepointe. Michiganense Natives, a native plant nursery from Plymouth, supplies native plants for sale. Beautification commissioners staff the sale and earn a portion of proceeds on behalf of the group.

Commissioners are active throughout the year. Previews and coverage of commission meetings, gardening get-togethers, plant sales, the Arbor Week poster contest among grade school students, residential and commercial beautification awards and more appear as warranted.

— Brad Lindberg

## Farms issues \$11m in bonds for Pier Park pool project

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE FARMS** — In the same March meeting it approved nearly 2 mills worth of tax bonds for its sewer separation project, city council also authorized up to \$11,195,000 in capital improvement bonds to cover the Pier Park pool and bathhouse renovation project, which kicked off over the weekend.

“These are different from the other bonds in that these are capital improvement bonds,” Finance Director Tim Rowland clarified. “There will be no millage associated with it. They’re paid for from general fund dollars saved from paying off previous debts.”

The total project budget is anticipated to be north of \$14 million; however, the Grosse Pointe Farms Foundation has pledged to contrib-

ute \$4 million through several years of fundraising pushes.

Council in February awarded a \$3.4 million contract for construction of the bathhouse, mechanical building and lifeguard building, as well as a \$5.2 million contract for construction of the three pools and splash pad.

“Based upon our projections at the last meeting, we feel that the total (bond) amount will be

See POOL, page 11A

## Woods man facing Oakland Co. burglary charges

A 54-year-old Grosse Pointe Woods man is facing two counts of home invasion for a pair of break-ins in Bloomfield Township.

According to a report from the township’s police department, Theodore Goolsby was arrested the afternoon of Wednesday, March 11, after a homeowner returned to her residence and found a man inside, causing him to flee.

Goolsby was arrested a short time later by Troy police officers and was found with multiple articles of jewelry in his vehicle that were taken from the house.

He also is suspected of stealing jewelry from another Bloomfield Township home in December and is a suspect in several other home invasions in Oakland County.

He was arraigned in 48th District Court and given a \$1 million cash bond.

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Public Safety Employee of the Year, Lt. Veronica Cashion, with Mayor John Gillooly and Deputy Director Andy Rogers in the background.



PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

# Farms names 2025 PS Employee of the Year

By Laurel Kraus  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE FARMS** — It’s been a good year so far for Grosse Pointe Farms Lt. Veronica Cashion.

She was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in January, and last week was honored as the 2025 Public Safety Employee of the Year.

“We’ve seen a lot of this particular officer in the last few years, deserving so, for various reasons,” Public Safety Director John Hutchins said, referencing previous accolades in the line of duty. “Lt. Veronica Cashion is recognized for her outstanding dedication, leadership and perseverance in service to the Grosse Pointe Farms Department of Public Safety.”

Cashion first served the Farms as an officer

from 2012 until 2017, when she was hit by a car while off duty and had to undergo surgery and rehabilitation. She returned to the department as a dispatcher in 2019, and resumed her role as an officer in 2021, before being promoted to sergeant in 2024, and to lieutenant this year.

“I’m speechless,” she said, after having no forewarning that she would receive the honor last Monday. “I work with a lot of talented and committed people. My officers that I work with probably deserve it more than I do, so I’m very just overwhelmed with getting nominated for it. I’m very honored and grateful.”

As dispatch supervisor and head of the field training division, Cashion oversees critical operations and is responsible for the training and

development of all new officers.

She also commands her own platoon and plays a key role in recruitment and hiring.

“Always willing to take on difficult assignments and consistently available to support her department, Lt. Cashion sets the standard of professionalism and commitment that exemplifies the mission of public safety,” Hutchins said. “For her tireless work ethic, leadership and service to the community, Lt. Veronica Cashion is a most deserving recipient of the Employee of the Year award.”

This is the third year the Farms has recognized a public safety employee of the year.

Past recipients were Officer Charity Vanover and Grosse Pointe South School Resource Officer Jim LaBeau.

# On the lookout for SLF

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — Spring’s verdant tide has a skanky undertow in the form of spotted lanternfly.

At one end, the invasive insects feed on sap of at least 70 species of plants. At the other, they spew sticky honeydew on which grows black mold.

The migration of spotted lanternfly into Michigan has the city’s gardening stewards pushing back.

“We are encouraging residents to look for egg masses now that the snow is gone,” said Lisa Kyle, chairwoman of the

beautification commission. “It is a nuisance insect that can multiply and infest rapidly, coating plants with sticky honeydew and the resultant sooty mold.”

Egg masses are covered by a cement-gray substance that weathers, typically exposing 25 to 35 eggs, according to bulletins authored by a Michigan State University entomology professor.

“We are on alert to help prevent their spread,” Kyle said.

She recommended registering sightings of the bug with:

◆ Grosse Pointe Park Forester Michael Gilmore

at GilmoreM@grossepointepark.org, ◆ the beautification commission at Beautification@grossepointepark.org, or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, at michigan.gov/invasives, for multi-regional reporting options.

Although spotted lanternfly rarely kill plants, it weakens them.

Environmentalists have no mercy for the invaders.

“Destroy the eggs by putting them in a plastic bag with hand sanitizer,” according to “Stopping

See SLF, page 12A



# No diving

A clever homeowner in the 100 block of Moross put up a “No Diving Shallow Water” sign near a large puddle that formed at the end of their driveway after heavy rains last week.

PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

# POOL:

Continued from page 10A

under \$11 million, but we are still waiting for some of the items that we bid out to come back,” City Manager Shane Reeside said. “Those bids have been extended to entice more bidders, which we now have that interest.”

City administrators anticipate bring-

ing those final bids — for work such as hardscape walkways, pool decks, softscape landscaping, etc. — to council for approval during the April council meeting.

The bonds come with a maximum interest rate of 6 percent, with their final maturity not to exceed 21 years.

Council approved their issuance 6-0, with Councilwoman Beth Konrad Wilberding absent, Monday, March 9.



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# Crime way down

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — The police could file a missing persons report for criminals.

Crime dropped in the city last year by double digits.

Auto thefts went down 28 percent during 2025 compared with the prior year. Property crime down 47 percent. Larceny down 21 percent. Overall crime down 22 percent.

“These numbers directly reflect the efforts of your public safety department along with our residents’ effort to do their part,” Chief Jim Bostock said when presenting the Department of Public Safety 2025 annual report to city council last month.

“This public safety report is all about good news,” Mayor Michele

Hodges said.

“I had to do the numbers a second time to make sure they were right,” Bostock said.

He’s not resting on the findings.

“I am mindful that there is still plenty of work yet to be done and improvements to be made,” Bostock said. “The challenges of modern policing present unique challenges that demand flexibility and a commitment to improving how we handle these challenges.”

Still, what a year.

“Overall, 2025 was fantastic from the public safety side,” Bostock said. “Hopefully, we’ll do the same in 2026.”

The department’s 27 officers, including Bostock, responded to 8,153 calls for service during the year, an increase of 4 percent

from the year before and a steady rise each year from less than 6,900 calls for service during 2022.

Calls for service is a collective category. Qualifications for inclusion are incidents initiated by patrol officers, including traffic stops, to assist residents or investigate suspicious persons.

“Proactive patrol is our prime function,” Bostock said. “The patrol division is the backbone of what we do.”

“Dispatch answered 4,400 emergency 911 calls in 2025,” according to the report.

“Boots on the ground did a fantastic job,” Bostock said.

Arrests remained about the same during 2025, 188 compared with 185 in 2024.

“A majority of arrests are misdemeanor traffic

offenses,” Bostock said.

## Crime categories

Except for one property break-in, the crimes of burglary and home invasion didn’t exist during the year.

Bostock hardly believed it.

“Historically, I don’t think that’s ever happened,” he said.

The single break-in was the lowest in at least five years, down from 11 in 2024, eight in 2023, 21 in 2022 and 9 in 2021.

Motor vehicle thefts, a big problem two years ago when the department formed special units to battle organized gangs that entered the city targeting Kia products, maintained the downward trend experienced thereafter.

Some 34 thefts during 2025 compared favorably with 47 thefts during 2024 and the recent peak of 51 in 2023.

Among a total of 131 offenses cataloged within the Uniform Crime Index

Offenses, also called Part 1 crimes tracked by the FBI and including major violent and property crimes, the Park experienced a 22 percent decline from the year before, a 27 percent decline from the year before that and 18 percent less than the average number of total cases reported annually from 2021 through 2024.

In summary, there were no murders, three forcible sexual offenses (up from one in 2024), one armed robbery, no unarmed robberies, no arson and eight aggravated assaults. The latter represented a four-fold increase from the prior period and the highest number since at least 2021, when there were none.

Among the FBI’s array of Part 2 Non-index Crimes, reports in the Park also went down to 65 total cases, eight cases less than last year and 7 percent less than the prior combined four-year

average.

Part 2 crimes are considered in the law enforcement community as less serious instances of criminality.

Offenses consist of such things as drunkenness (of which there were none in the Park), obstructing police or justice (20 last year), disorderly conduct-vagrancy (four) and malicious destruction of property (16), almost half compared with 2024 and less than one-third from 2023.

## Driving

Also within the Part 2 tally is drunken driving.

Officers charged 19 motorists last year with operating while intoxicated. The figure is a slight drop from last year, but is 34 percent less than the average number of annual arrests from 2021 through 2024.

Police said alcohol was involved in six car crashes and 10 hit-and-

See CRIME, page 13A

## SLF:

Continued from page 11A

the spotted lanternfly in its tracks,” posted on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service website, fws.gov. “(The pest) poses a major threat to the ecosystem health and to important regional agricultural economies, especially apple orchards and vineyards.”

The Brits are even more bloodthirsty.

“Live spotted lanternflies within quarantine areas should be destroyed,” according to “What’s so bad about the spotted lanternfly,”

posted on England’s Natural History Museum website, nhm.ac.uk. “The U.S. Department of Agriculture advises that spotted lanternfly egg masses should be smashed and scraped off surfaces before they can hatch.”

Last year, a beautification commission member reported the first official sighting of a spotted lanternfly in the Pointes, an administrator of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development said at the time.

Spotted lanternflies hatch in June as black, wingless nymphs with

white spots. By mid-summer, they transition into adults with black-spotted wings resembling 1950s polka-dot sock-hop skirts. September is the time to lay eggs.

“We will adjust our campaign information as we go through the lifecycle stages, providing targeted information for the exact time of year,” Kyle said.

Spotted lanternfly is native to China and has spread to at least 17 states.

“Spotted lanternfly was pretty bad in some area of Ohio last year, so we are trying to get ahead of it,” Kyle said.

# Asphalt or cement; it depends

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — Here’s the rub for road builders: Concrete roads last longer; asphalt roads are less expensive.

Concrete is more durable, but is more likely to crack during winter. Asphalt is easier to maintain, but needs more attention.

“When we replace our roads, do we weigh the cost of asphalt versus cement?” Councilman Marty McMillan, the newest mayoral appointee to the infrastructure committee, asked the public works director. “Yes,” said Tom Jenny,

head of the department.

“Because asphalt got really expensive for a time,” McMillan said.

“We’re looking to go back to a mill-and-fill for a couple (road projects),” Jenny said. “Ones we’ve done lately, like Charlevoix, had to be done like that; almost a major reconstruct. Even though the price of concrete went up, asphalt is miles above.”

There are places where, almost regardless of cost, one material is more economical than another. Durability is the deciding factor.

“I want to do alleys in cement because of the heavy trucks going down

them constantly,” Jenny said.

## Road quality

Municipal officials soon will receive an updated evaluation of city roadways called a PASER rating, for Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating.

“Since 2003 (Michigan’s) Transportation Asset Management Council has required road agencies to collect and submit roadway condition information based on PASER,” according to a posting on the state website, michigan.gov. “Many agencies

See ROADS, page 13A

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# DPW upgrades fleet

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — A bucket truck is no longer on the public works department’s bucket list.

City officials last month approved the purchase of a new bucket truck to replace one that wore out a while ago.

“We’re replacing a vehicle from 1995 that gets inspected every year, but its on its last life,” said Tom Jenny, director of public works. “The existing truck reached the end of its useful life and requires frequent maintenance, resulting in increased downtime and reliability concerns.”

The \$154,450 acquisition from Versalift Manufacturing was made in two parts, \$139,450 for a customized 2025 Chevy 4500 4-by-2 truck and \$14,000 for the bucket, plus an accessory to break holes in roadways or comparable surfaces to access underground infrastructure.

“We added a breaker for water main breaks,” Jenny said. “(At present), we have to take another machine out to break the concrete.”

Doing that kind of work in-house is quicker, leading to problems being fixed sooner than otherwise, he said.

Three companies vied for the sale. Rejected bids were up to \$34,337 more than Versalift’s.

“Versalift submitted the lowest responsible and responsive bid,” Jenny said.

The purchase was no surprise. It was part of the capital improvement plan.

The same with a Department of Public Works Bobcat utility vehicle.

“The purchase of a Bobcat will enhance DPW’s operational capabilities to perform additional maintenance and construction tasks in-house,” Jenny said. “The Bobcat would be for garbage pickup and leaf pickup.

And snow removal.

“It can do sidewalks and that kind of thing,” Jenny said.

Due to the existing vehicle’s condition, some work had to be contracted to outside sources.

With attachments, standard 12-month engine warranty and deluxe road package, including backup alarm and flashers, the new one cost \$72,00.

“Attachments on the Bobcat will improve efficiency, reduce the need for rented equipment or contracted services and support timely completion of DPW projects,” Jenny said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE RICH

# What a view!

Grosse Pointer Joe Rich recently shared this photo with us, noting, “Thought your readers might enjoy this view of the new Hudson building in downtown Detroit, taken a few weeks ago from the seventh floor of the Detroit Athletic Club.” Yes, Mr. Rich, we think our readers will enjoy this view, too. We certainly do!

## ROADS:

Continued from page 12A

use PASER data to help manage their road systems.”

The evaluation rates roads from one to 10, from failed to excellent.

“It’s rating of worst to best, so we know what to tackle,” Jenny said.

PASER was developed by

the University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center.

According to the school’s PASER manual, “Experience has shown that there are three especially useful steps in managing local roads: 1. Inventory all local roads and streets. 2. Periodically evaluate the condition of all pavements. 3. Use the condition evaluations to set priorities

for projects and select alternative treatments.”

The Park’s engineering consultants, OHM Advisors, are contracted to, among other things, track the condition of road surfaces.

“We’ve been using OHM for the last six years,” City Manager Nick Sizeland said. “We’ve had engineering records on every one of our streets.”

## CRIME:

Continued from page 12A

runs, all part of 73 motor vehicle accidents reported during the period.

### Firefighting

On the firefighting side of operations, officers doused four single-dwell-

ing fires during the year, put out two burning vehicles and lent mutual aid eight times to neighboring communities.

Of 610 total responses attributed to the fire corps, most were ambulance runs. Some 399 runs represented 35 percent of all responses. Next came 108 investigations triggered by fire

alarms and 60 smoke investigations.

### Training

Practice makes perfect in life and public safety, or at least increases the odds.

“When we’re not patrolling, we’re training,” Bostock said.

Of 4,162 total training hours during 2025, the

most (1,310) were for newly hired officers attending the police academy.

Monthly fire training added up to 828 hours.

“Officers practiced drivers training pump operations, relay pump-operations, relay pump-operations,” according to the report. “All officers

participated in the annual firefighting skills challenge. This included the crucial skills of pump operations, ladder operations and donning full turnout gear with a running timer and time cap.”

### Drone unit

The Unmanned Aviation Unit, known less formally as the

drone unit, comprises four pilots. Their training last year totaled 24 hours, including 108 training missions, including 16 hours flight time.

Organization of the unit benefitted in January 2024 from a nearly \$25,794 donation by the Grosse Pointe Park Public Safety Foundation.

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# Business acumen

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16A PRIDE OF THE POINTES | 18-21A CAMPS FOR KIDS

## Coming full circle

By Ted O’Neil  
Associate Editor

As a senior at Grosse Pointe High School in 1948, Mary Briggs (maiden name Gratzner) wasn’t sure if she would be able to attend college. A scholarship from the Mothers’ Club changed all that. Now, Briggs wants to return the favor.

“At the time, it was just accepted that my younger brother would go to college, but we didn’t have enough money for both of us,” she said recently during a telephone interview from her retirement community in Ypsilanti. “I had summer jobs doing clerical work and it was expected that was the course I’d take after high school. I was not interested in taking it.”

Briggs, 95, ended up getting a \$300 scholarship from the Mothers’ Club that served as a catalyst for other financial support, enabling her to attend the University of Michigan, from which she graduated in 1952 with a bachelor’s degree in speech pathology.

“It changed the rest of my life,” she said. “I wanted to assert myself and that scholarship gave me that avenue.”

Briggs has now gifted the Mothers’ Club \$10,000, which will be one of many scholarships the group hands out at its awards night, scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, in

the school auditorium. Briggs said she plans to be there.

“This is one of the largest gifts we’ve ever received and will be one of the largest awards we’ve ever given out,” said Meg Leonard, this year’s scholarship chair. “It would be an absolute delight to have her there.”

The Briggs family has named the scholarship “Hail to the High” (a nod to Briggs attending U of M and a line in the high school’s alma mater) and plans to give it to a graduating senior with demonstrated scholastic achievement who needs the financial support and

1953. They moved to Illinois in 1954, when Don became a dentist in the U.S. Navy, and had their two sons there, Donald Jr. in 1955 and Joseph in 1956.

The family moved back to the Detroit area in 1958, with Don opening a dental practice on Cadieux near Kercheval Place, and to Grosse Pointe Park in 1964. They bought a house on Lakepointe, where Mary and Don both became highly involved with the PTA at Trombly Elementary School, as well as with Little League baseball.

The boys attended Trombly and Pierce Junior High School, as it was called then, both of which their mother also attended, before heading off to

South. Briggs remembered one teacher at Trombly, Frank Welcenbach, who had a big impact on her life-long interest in learning. By the time Don Jr. and Joe were at Trombly, he was principal there.

“He was an amazing person,” Don Jr. said. “A real pillar in the community.”

Briggs also served as a volunteer for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Junior Women’s Association, including a stint as president, in the late 1960s, and played tennis regularly with a group of close friends at the tennis house near where Austin Catholic High School was origi-

plans to attend a four-year school. They prefer the student have some sort of legacy at the school and be involved in student government.

Briggs was secretary of the high school student association her senior year and was a member of the National Honor Society. She also was on the senior prom planning committee and a member of the The Tower Pulse newspaper staff.

After leaving Ann Arbor, Briggs taught elementary school in Grand Rapids and Belleville before marrying Don Briggs, a dental student she met while at Michigan, in September



COURTESY PHOTOS

Mary (nee Gratzner) Briggs’ 1948 high school year book senior photo. (Editor’s note: Because of the age of the photo, this version has been digitally enhanced.)

nally located. She first learned to play tennis growing up in the Park, her family having moved onto Beaconsfield when she was in fourth grade.

“I used to like hanging out with friends,” she recalled. “I also remember taking the streetcar downtown by myself for guitar lessons and art lessons. My parents really promoted that

stimulus to learn an appreciation for the arts.”

As the boys got older, Briggs returned to teaching, serving as the speech therapist at Maire Elementary School and giving private lessons out of her home.

As their sons moved on to college, the Briggses began to travel extensively, visiting Egypt, Austria, Russia and China, among others.

“Don also taught me flyfishing, which I really got caught up in,” Briggs said. “We took several fishing trips to Montana and Wyoming.”

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she returned to college, getting a master’s degree in audiology from Wayne State University.

“We were so proud of her going back to school,” Don Jr. said. “It’s remarkable she did that.”

After retiring from their respective careers, the couple moved to the Ann Arbor area to be close to Joe and his family.

To complete the circle even more, Briggs was scholarship fundraising chair for the Mothers’ Club in the early 1970s.

“Grosse Pointe has always been important to me and I have fond memories of my high school years,” she said. “I’m pleased to be in the position now to be able to give back a little.”

The Mothers’ Club was formed in 1928, the year the school opened, and has been awarding scholarships for 80 years. Last year, 66 students were recognized with nearly \$60,000 in financial assistance.

Those interested in donating to the Mothers’ Club scholarship fund can email Leonard at scholarship@mothersclubgps.com or scan the Venmo QR code (location). Donors should add “scholarship” in the comment line.

Additionally, checks may be mailed to:

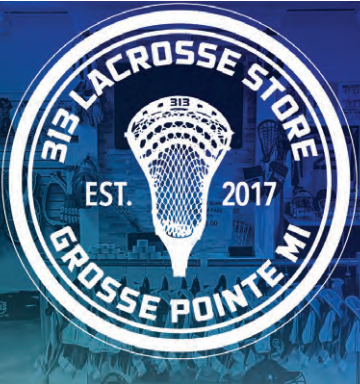
Mothers’ Club of Grosse Pointe South High School, 11 Grosse Pointe Blvd., Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236; ATTN: 2026 Scholarship



Mary and Don Briggs at a family event, date unknown.

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# Sticking up for Trombly

By Brad Lindberg  
Staff Writer

**GROSSE POINTE PARK** — Municipal stakeholders continue seeking a place in life for their forsaken Trombly Elementary School.

The school, the only one south of Jefferson, was built in 1927 and added vitality to the family-oriented suburb for nearly 100 years.

District officials ordered it closed in 2019, with claims of insufferably low attendance. Yet, so far, Trombly has been spared demolition unlike the district’s sister elementary, Poupard School in Harper Woods.

“We’re having ongoing communication with the school board,” said Park Councilman Tom Caulfield, liaison to the city’s ad hoc Trombly committee and its case to reopen the school as a place of neighborhood-centered learning.

Ad hoc members also started making the rounds recently of other Pointe councils to pitch districtwide benefits of Trombly’s resurrection for pre-K instruction among other things.



FILE PHOTO

Trombly Elementary School was closed in 2019, due to low attendance.

“The pressure’s still on,” Caulfield said. “At this point, it’s keeping the gas pedal down and properly communicating. There are some good ideas; it’s just a matter of if the school board’s going to listen and take action.”

“The ideas Caulfield is referring to is the vision and the values in creating that vision,” Mayor

Michele Hodges said. “Primary decision-making factors were a systemwide benefit. We did not want anyone at any point to think we were so blind in our love and concern for Trombly that we weren’t thinking in a responsible fashion or in a districtwide fashion.”

She said time remains for Trombly to receive meaningful consider-

ation in the school board’s strategic plan due for passage this spring.

“We are in an important time frame,” Hodges said. “It will be important to make sure Trombly is seen as a critical need and prioritized accordingly.”

“I encourage people to continue to be engaged,” Councilman Max Wiener

said. “Now is when the school board is going to set the direction and narrative of the overall plan.”

“It was important to us to present it in a budget-neutral fashion and in a way that not only opens Trombly, but solves the Defer (Elementary School) overcrowding problem, as well as serving as a pipeline for enrollment over the long term,” Hodges said.

Wiener urged Trombly supporters to do more than cheer from the sidelines.

“This is the time to maximize engagement,” he said. “It’s important. Now’s an important time to do it.”

Hodges said key claims for closing Trombly have proven unjustified.

“Many original decision-making factors for closing schools did not play out as expected, whether that was a cost-saving measure or to stem enrollment loss,” Hodges said. “Both of those things have happened in the reverse.”

Park officials hope comments they squeezed this month into a school system facilities meeting, chaired by Colleen Worden, were taken seriously.

“We asked to be on that agenda,” Hodges

said. “We were officially declined. We did, however, speak during a public comment portion of that meeting. Points made were: it’s important that the board of education empower the administration to bring forth the best solution and not have them bound by unnecessary constraints.”

Advocates also attended a district strategic planning session in February.

“At that time, we learned that not only Trombly, but pre-K initiatives and other components of the vision that we presented achieved top-billing by those present,” Hodges said. “It was very heartening. We asked that the new chief financial officer be given the opportunity to analyze the budget neutrality of this vision. If for some reason it’s not found to be budget neutral, we believe it can get to that point.”

“What was striking to me at the strategic planning session was (the) overwhelmingly positive support behind pre-K at all the elementary schools,” Councilman Brent Dreaver said. “This is something everybody cares about. It’s bigger than just Grosse Pointe Park.”

## PRIDE OF THE POINTES

**Nolan Allaer** of Grosse Pointe Woods recently earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering

from Miami University. ♦♦♦ **Emma Hall** of the City of Grosse Pointe, **Ann Sullivan** of Grosse

Pointe Farms, **Alex Cline** of Grosse Pointe Park and **Rebecca Moin** of Grosse Pointe Woods were named to the

Dean’s List at the University of Alabama. ♦♦♦

**Rachel Rybicki** of Grosse Pointe Park was named to the President’s List at the University of Alabama. ♦♦♦

Grosse Pointe Woods resident **Kaitlyn Barr**, a member of the class of 2027, majoring in aerospace engineering, was named to the Dean’s List for the fall 2025 semester at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. ♦♦♦

Grosse Pointe Park student **Julia Kado** was honored as a new Albion College Fellow. Kado is majoring in English education with a concentration in secondary education. She is a member of the Prentiss M Brown Honors Program. ♦♦♦

Grosse Pointe Park student **Sevi Vogt** was named to Albion College’s Dean’s List. Vogt is majoring in biology and Spanish with a minor in history. ♦♦♦

**Keaton Hamilton** of Grosse Pointe Park was named to the fall Dean’s List at Michigan State University. He is studying mechanical engineering. ♦♦♦

**Emma O’Donnell** of Grosse Pointe Park was named to the Dean’s List for the fall semester at Fairfield University. ♦♦♦

**Griffin Klautky** of Grosse Pointe Farms was named to the fall 2025 Chancellor’s List at the University of Arkansas. ♦♦♦

**Curtis Cameron** of Grosse Pointe Woods was named to the University of Mississippi’s fall 2025 Dean’s Honor Roll. ♦♦♦

**Jackson Rybicki** of Grosse Pointe Park and **Isabella Kuras** and **Carmella Crane** of the City of Grosse Pointe were named to the Chancellor’s Honor Roll for the fall 2025 semester at the University of Mississippi. ♦♦♦

**Aliya Abraham** of Grosse Pointe Woods earned Dean’s List honors at the University of Tampa for the fall 2025 semester. Abraham is a freshman majoring in biology. ♦♦♦

**Immanuel Michael Johnson** of Grosse Pointe Park earned a Master of Science degree in cybersecurity technology from the University of Maryland Global Campus in fall 2025. ♦♦♦

**Bode Neumeister** of Grosse Pointe Farms was named to the Dean’s List at Tufts University for the fall 2025 semester. ♦♦♦

**Audrey Smihal** of the City of Grosse Pointe graduated summa cum laude from the College of Arts & Sciences at Northern Michigan University. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychological studies, with a concentration in social/personality psychology, and completed two minors in criminal justice and substance use. ♦♦♦

**Edmund Shall** and **William Shall** of the City of Grosse Pointe, **Aias Danier** of Grosse Pointe Shores and



Keaton Hamilton



Audrey Smihal

**Benjamin Ameye** and **Aidan Briggs** of Grosse Pointe Woods were named to the Dean’s List for the fall 2025 semester at Lawrence Technological University. ♦♦♦

**Caroline Miller** of the City of Grosse Pointe earned a Bachelor of Music degree in music performance and graduated with distinction from the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. ♦♦♦

**Charlie Janovsky** of Grosse Pointe Farms and **Amelia Fly** of Grosse Pointe Woods were named to the Dean’s List at Marquette University for the fall 2025 semester.

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# GPPSS exploring virtual school

By Ted O’Neil  
*Associate Editor*

**THE GROSSE POINTES** — The Grosse Pointe Public School System is considering adding a virtual school component to both retain current students and potentially attract new ones.

“We wanted to explore possible pathways to expand opportunities for students while also looking at ways to generate additional revenue for the district,” Moussa Hamka, assistant superintendent of human resources, told the board at its meeting March 9. “The purpose is to maintain our high-quality instruction while expanding access.”

The plan calls for implementation in four stages — each needing board approval — over the next four academic years.

The first, starting this fall, would be to partner with Michigan Virtual.

“We use them for summer school for high schoolers who need credit recovery,” Dan Hyliard, assistant principal at Grosse Pointe South High School, told the board. “Their courses align most with our curriculum.”

In Phase 1, the district is looking for 20 to 30 high school students who live within GPPSS boundaries but are taking virtual classes through a private entity

elsewhere. They would be required to take six classes and would be given a Chromebook, but families need to commit to the entire school year.

Hamka said the district has identified 500 resident students in K-12 who were enrolled in public schools outside GPPSS during the 2024-25 school year. That equates to about \$6 million in state per-pupil funding the district did not receive.

Projections for Phase 1 show costs of \$112,400, including Chromebooks and paying Michigan Virtual, revenue of \$232,700 and income of \$120,320.

If Phase 2 were

approved for the 2027-28 school year, the program would be open to 40 to 60 students who live in the district in grades six through 12.

Phase 3 in 2028-29 would open the program to all students who live in the district with fewer Michigan Virtual courses and more developed by GPPSS.

Phase 4 in 2029-30 would be a full GPPSS curriculum and be open to any student in the state. District teachers who sign up to mentor the online students would receive a stipend.

Hamka added the board could choose to allow online students to participate in-person in things like music, the-

ater and athletics as an incentive.

“There are a variety of reasons families choose virtual schooling,” he added. “There are medical considerations, anxiety issues, credit recovery or elite athletes who need to devote a lot of time to training.”

Board members noted they would not want to see a virtual program drain students from in-person learning.

“We would not target students who are enrolled and thriving in our traditional buildings,” Hamka said. “This is for those who are enrolled in other virtual programs and students who are disengaged or at risk of leaving. We

know we have families asking for flexibility and if we don’t provide it, they’ll seek it elsewhere.”

Hamka stressed the virtual school would maintain the same rigorous standards as in-person learning.

“This is not easier, just different,” he said. “Students would need to complete full coursework, assessments and mastery requirements along with our existing graduation requirements.”

He also noted it would be far different from 2020, when schools were forced into online learning due to the pandemic with no plan, because of its structured approach.



PHOTOS BY RENEE LANDUYT

Bridget Doyle and Ben Kapp with the Wienermobile they are driving throughout the Midwest. Here, they are parked in Doyle’s parents’ driveway in the City of Grosse Pointe.

## Hot dog! Wienermobile makes an impression on the Pointes

By Renee Landuyt  
*Special Writer*

Residents of the Pointes may have done a few double takes last month upon spotting the iconic Oscar Mayer Wienermobile rolling through the neighborhood. The giant hotdog on wheels was driven home by Bridget Doyle, who grew up in the City of Grosse Pointe and currently is a Hotdogger for Oscar Mayer.

Doyle graduated from Grosse Pointe South High School in 2021, then attended the University of Wisconsin—Madison. On her way to class one day, she bumped into a pair of Hotdoggers from Class 37 who were recruiting for Class 38.

“They were two of the friendliest people I’ve ever met,” she said.

Doyle had seen the Wienermobile before, but didn’t know what being a Hotdogger entailed until she attended an information session and learned how much joy Wienermobiles create.

There are six Wienermobiles on the road at all times, each of them piloted by two Hotdoggers. Thousands apply for the position each year and those who are accepted have to attend Hot Dog High for two weeks to learn the ins and outs of the

Wienermobile, including how to drive it, how to run events smoothly and how to talk to the media.

After Hot Dog High graduation, each Hotdogger travels to their assigned region. Halfway through their assignments, Hotdoggers switch regions and copilots.

Doyle became one of 12 Hotdoggers after graduating UWM in May 2025.

“If you would have told me a year ago that I would be a Hotdogger, I would be completely shocked and thrilled,” she said.

Already halfway through her assignment — she spent the first half out west traveling through 15 states — Doyle currently is partnered with Ben Kapp, a friend from UWM. The pair are tasked with touring the Midwest. After that, she said, they’re considered “expired meat.”

“After our year is up, we can no longer sit in the driver’s seat,” Doyle said, “so it’s important to relish every moment.”

Doyle and Kapp not only share a birthday with each other, but also with the Wienermobile, which was created by Oscar Mayer’s nephew, Carl Mayer, in 1936.

Additionally, they both are fluent in Hotdogger: “frank you” instead of “thank you,” “bunderful”

instead of “wonderful,” “ketchup soon” instead of “goodbye,” “franktastic” instead of “fantastic” and so on.

The Wienermobile they drive comes equipped with similar punny names. The passenger seat is the “shotbun” and each seat is equipped with a “meatbelt.” It also

has a “bunbox,” similar to a glovebox, and a “bunroof,” like a sunroof.

Other features of the Wienermobile include six ketchup- and mustard-colored seats that fit 12 buns. The ceiling inside features a blue sky with white puffy clouds.

Each Wienermobile is 27 feet long, 11 feet high



The license plate on Doyle and Kapp’s Wienermobile. The plate on each Wienermobile is unique.

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Ben Kapp and Bridget Doyle sit in the driver and passenger seats of the Wienermobile.

and eight feet wide — or 60 hot dogs long, 24 hot dogs high and 18 hot dogs wide.

Doyle said her favorite event so far was in Amarillo, Texas, where she and Kapp brought a Wienermobile onto the concourse of the Amarillo Wranglers hockey stadium. They were invited to drop the puck before the game and talked to fans from the ice.

“We were able to ‘ketchup’ with friends we

had made earlier in the week and made hundreds of new friends that day,” Doyle said.

After a brief stop in the City, Doyle and Kapp were off to Illinois, where they’ll participate in a St. Patrick’s Day celebration just outside of Chicago.

Though she’s not sure what will come after her Hotdogger days are over, Doyle said she is keeping her options open and eventually wants to move to Chicago.

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18A | CAMPS FOR KIDS



# CAMPS FOR KIDS

## So many choices! Check out these fun options and make your reservations now

By Grosse Pointe News Staff

You won't believe all the amazing and creative summer camp offerings in Grosse Pointe and beyond there are to choose from. But the great ones reach capacity quickly — so don't wait too long to register your little campers.

Each unique camp is designed to build kids' strengths — all while they are having an absolute blast. From science to sports, music to horsemanship, there is something for every child. Here are a few camp options to consider:

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To enrich and inspire participating youngsters, there are sports clinics, STEM experiences, pottery and art workshops, music, live animal visits and exciting guest speakers — just to name some of the amazing highlights. Sun-sational Summer Camp will be sure to spark creative inspiration and

fun regardless of what the kids choose to do. Perhaps the next Edison or Picasso will get their ideas from this engaging camp.

Register placements for your children now. Call (586) 772-4477 or visit [assumptionnursery.org](http://assumptionnursery.org) for more information.

### BLACK RIVER FARM AND RANCH

Giddyup and get registered! Saddle up for adventure this summer at Black River Farm and Ranch, an equestrian-focused overnight camp for girls ages 6 to 15. The mission at Black River Farm is to inspire leadership, self-confidence and independence through horsemanship. Girls will enjoy a variety of camp activities, including riding lessons, vaulting, trail rides, crafts, swimming, archery, boating, small animals and more. With a herd of over 70 horses and miles of trails, Black River Farm and Ranch is the ultimate camp experience.

From first-timers to experienced riders, the program has something for everyone. The camp offers a Starter Camp, One-Week Camp, Two-Week Camp, Mother-Daughter Retreats, Friends & Family Retreats and private events.

Visit the website to learn more and get registered for what is sure to be an incredible summer of horses, campfires and friendship.

Email Black River Farm and Ranch at [info@blackriverfarmandranch.com](mailto:info@blackriverfarmandranch.com) for information, then follow them on Instagram @brsummercamp62, and find them on Facebook.





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CAMPS FOR KIDS | 19A



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To learn more about individual camp options and availability, visit the GPPSS website at [gpschools.org/summer](http://gpschools.org/summer). There, you'll find detailed descriptions, scheduled dates, and pricing for each camp.

Don't wait—these popular programs fill up fast! To register, click on "Programs" and secure your child's place in one of Grosse Pointe's most memorable summer camp experiences.

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Kids On The Go proudly serves local families by providing free therapeutic, recreational and enrichment programs for children and teens ages 3–17 with special needs. This July kicks off the 27th year of summer camp, continuing a tradition of inclusive fun, growth, and friendship. From speech, occupational, and physical therapy to social skills groups, music and art enrichment and adaptive sports, every program is offered at no cost — ensuring that financial barriers never stand in the way of a child's progress.

In 2026, Kids On The Go was honored to receive the Grosse Pointe Chamber of Commerce Small Business Grant in recognition of our impact and commitment to serving local families. This pediatric nonprofit program offers amazing opportunities for kids to learn and grow skills for a bright future while they bond with other kids and build happy summer memories.

Camper can choose from programs like Multidisciplinary Camp, Robotics, Adaptive Dance or Theater, Boxing, All Star Hoops, Flag Football, Better Readers and Better Letters, Teens to Work and Cooking Adventures, Kids on the Go has positively impacted the lives of nearly 5,000 children in Southeastern Michigan since 1999. For more information, visit their website at [kidsonthegocamp.com](http://kidsonthegocamp.com).

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**Athletic Youth Summer Camps**

- Academy Football
- Youth Football
- Youth Basketball
- Hockey
- Iron Cubs
- Youth Lacrosse
- Youth Soccer

**Summer Enrichment Programs**

- Chess
- Quiz Bowl

**Incoming Academy Students**

- Academy Boot Camp

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[www.uofdetjhsuit.org](http://www.uofdetjhsuit.org)

**SUMMER PROGRAMMING**



20A | CAMPS FOR KIDS

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT JESUIT

U of D Jesuit offers youth athletic programs for football, basketball, hockey, Iron Cubs, lacrosse and soccer. Iron Cubs is the official summer off-season strength and speed development program. Each workout is uniquely designed with an age-specific total athlete focus in mind. This program was nationally recognized in the Nike Coach of the Year Manual.

Iron Cubs is a great way to meet new friends and build bonds with future classmates before the start of the school year. The fee includes 15 speed, strength and agility workouts, supervised by a trained staff of dedicated U of D Jesuit coaches.

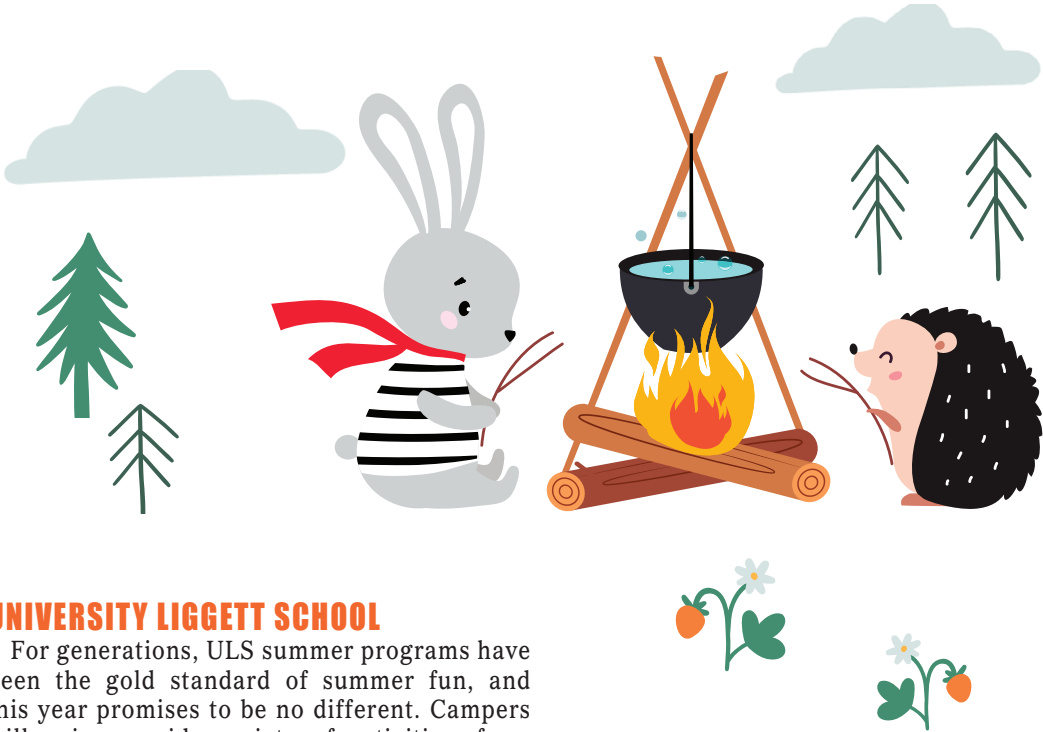
For the older boys there are specific athletic high school camps and training for football (for current U of D football players), lacrosse, soccer, hockey, Iron Cubs and tennis.

Each sports camp provides young athletes with the opportunity to become better players in a positive and fun atmosphere. U of D Jesuit promotes a safe and healthy environment both on and off the field.

All programs practice teamwork through leadership opportunities that lead to on-field lessons of integrity, honesty and mutual encouragement.

Summer enrichment programs at U of D include chess and Quiz Bowl. Quiz Bowl camp helps students ring in before their opponent and answer in-depth questions ranging from literature to pop culture to sports. This experience is meant to hone your child's Quiz Bowl skills and prepare them to compete.

You can find out more about any of these camps and programs at [uofdjesuit.org](http://uofdjesuit.org).



UNIVERSITY LIGGETT SCHOOL

For generations, ULS summer programs have been the gold standard of summer fun, and this year promises to be no different. Campers will enjoy a wide variety of activities, from archery and swimming to sports, performing arts, science and nature — all designed to keep kids active, engaged and outdoors all day long. Whether they're perfecting their athletic skills with experienced ULS coaches or exploring their creative side in one of our specialty camps, every child will find something they love.

Sports camps focus on skill development, teamwork and strategy, allowing young athletes to improve through fun drills, games and friendly competitions. For those interested in hands-on learning, specialty camps offer opportunities for aspiring scientists, engineers, artists and gamers to dive deep into their passions. Kids can experiment in Mad Scientists at Work Camp, explore the digital world in Minecraft Camp or refine their artistic talents in one of our arts camps.

Specialized sports camps are available too, like the DeKeyser Training Institute Hockey Camp and the Detroit Tigers Baseball/Softball Camp, where young players can learn from the pros. This summer, give your child the gift of discovery, friendship and unforgettable camp memories. Register today at [uls.org/summerprograms](http://uls.org/summerprograms).

YMCA CAMP NISSOKONE

YMCA Camp Nissokone, located near Lake Huron in Oscoda, is northern Michigan's premier destination for overnight camping or kids and teens. Camp Nissokone celebrates its 112th year in 2026 — experienced in providing day and overnight camps for children ages 5 to 18 from Michigan and beyond.

Summer camp is a great way to introduce youngsters to enjoying and understanding the outdoors. It helps kids develop new friendships as well as confidence and independence. The camp's core values of honesty, caring, respect, responsibility and inclusion are a focus of all they do, helping campers build positive skills that will benefit them for a lifetime.

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To find out more about Camp Nissokone summer camps, visit [ymcadetroit.org/nissokone](http://ymcadetroit.org/nissokone) or call (248) 887-4533.

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<https://assumptionnursery.org>

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**Nature's Palette** - Build a bug house, a bird feeder, and go on a nature scavenger hunt.

**Galactic Blast Off** - Create a solar system, chart the galaxy, or race balloon rocket ships!

**Culinary Creations** - Learn kitchen safety, make a personal pizza, and decorate cookies with sweet creativity.

**Outside the Lines** - Experience art media, collaborative work, and creative techniques.

**Superhero Training** - What is your superpower? Design a cape and build an obstacle course to test your skills!

**Beach Bash** - Learn about Michigan's Great Lakes and its beautiful beaches. Play volleyball and enjoy a picnic lunch.

**Wonder Lab** - Using the scientific method, create cola fountains, gooey slime, and even some yummy ice cream!

**Party in the USA** - Celebrate America's 250 years of Independence with a school-wide parade!

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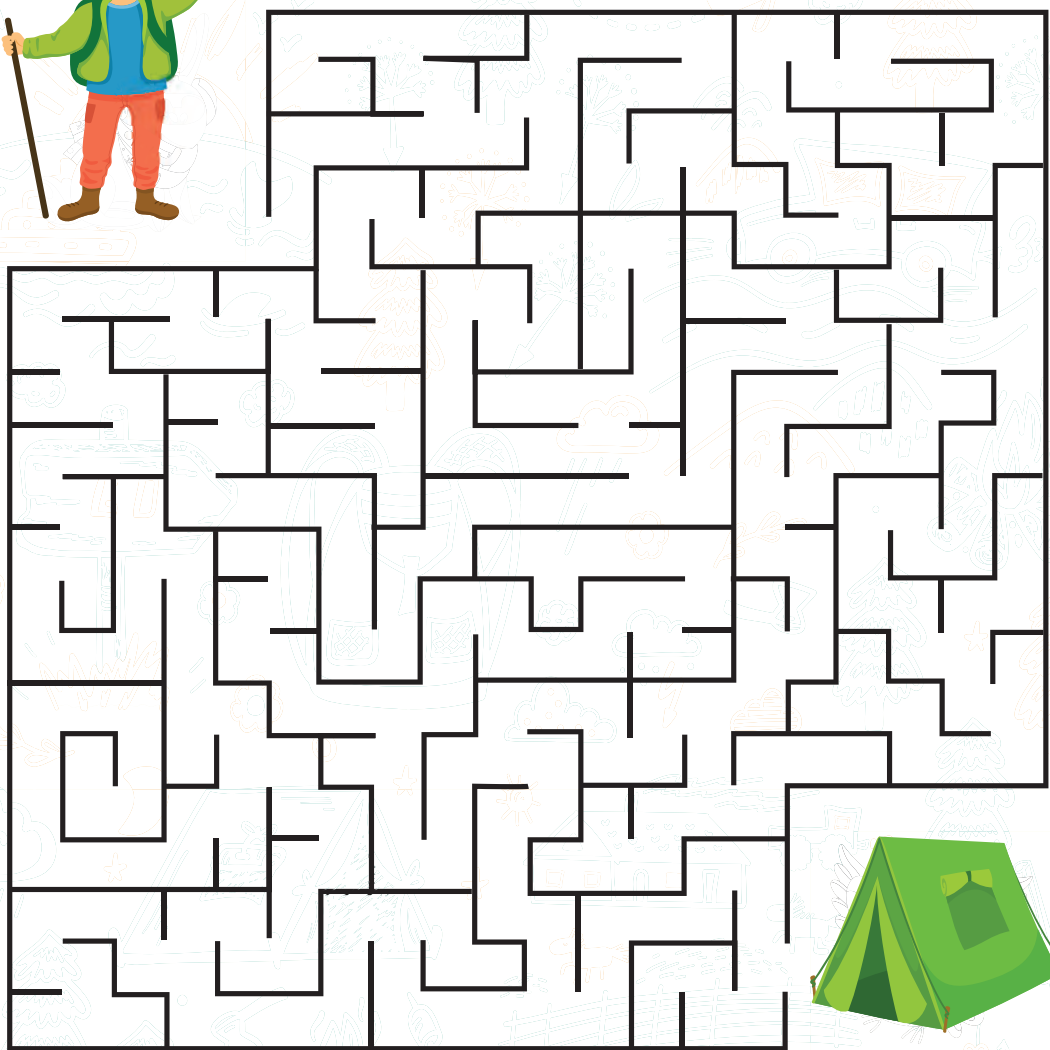
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# CAMPER PUZZLERS



Emma has gone on a hike with some friends. Now she is ready to head back to camp to play games. Can you help her find her way back to her tent?



What should you put in your backpack for a hike? Unscramble the words for these important things to pack. (Answers below.)



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- ULS Hockey Camp w/ DeKeyser Training Institute



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[uls.org/summerprograms](https://uls.org/summerprograms)

- Mad Scientists at Work
- Minecraft®
- eSports Camp
- Lego® Camp
- Introduction to 3D Printing
- Wonder Workshop: A Mixed Media Art Studio
- The Creative Lab: A Mixed Media Art Studio





22A | SCHOOLS

# Dance the night away

On Friday, Jan. 30, the Grosse Pointe South Class of 2026, along with its senators and student council, welcomed more than 400 little dancers and their guests to the community-wide Daddy Daughter Dance, which took place in South's main gym.

Attendees enjoyed an evening of dancing with DJ Walt, a DIY floral bouquet station by Curated Events GP, custom cookie decorating and various crafts such as bracelet making, crowns and glitter tattoos.

More than 30 South student volunteers helped make the event memorable for all attendees. South's Class of 2026 officers are President Heidi Bryan, Vice President Ava Fedirko, Treasurer Betsy Ropke and Secretary Lily Frey. Nicole Westfall is the adviser for the Class of '26.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JESSICA BRYAN

Above, dads and their daughters dance the night away at Grosse Pointe South High School. Right, from left, sophomores Natalie Warnick and Avery Stevenson, and juniors Lydia Prysak and Stella Meyers volunteer at the dance.



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Got a story to share?  
Detroit Historical Society wants to hear it

By Jody McVeigh  
Editor

The Detroit Historical Society, in partnership with the Wayne County Executive’s Office, is gathering residents’ personal stories as part of the Wayne County History Project, a series of rotating history exhibitions featuring each of the county’s 43 communities.

The Pointes and Harper Woods will be featured in the exhibition this summer and curators are gathering personal stories to share.

“Between now and June 6, we want people to know about the Wayne County History Project, so they can share their stories,” said Taylor Claybrook, who not only serves as curator for the Detroit Historical Museum, but also graduated from Grosse Pointe North High School in 2016, and lives in Grosse Pointe Woods. “We’re very excited for people to tell us what life was like when they were growing up in Grosse Pointe.”

In addition to seeking stories from the commu-



Guests visit the Guardian Building on opening day of Exhibit 1.

nity, the Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods exhibition likely will include items contributed by the Grosse Pointe Historical Society.

“We’re working with community partners to curate, to borrow artifacts and gather oral histories,” Claybrook said. “At our open houses, our community partners are there, as well as other businesses supporting

the project. The open house is free. There will be food and entertainment. It’s a fun event and people are excited to be there.”

The open house for Exhibit 5 takes place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, June 6, at the Guardian Building, 500 Griswold, Detroit.

“We usually start with the history of what the community was before,”

Claybrook said. “We’ve done indigenous people, European settlers, how it became what it is, with artifacts to accompany it, like varsity jackets and yearbooks.”

The Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods exhibition is the fifth in the series, which first opened last June, after Wayne County Executive Warren Evans reached out to the Detroit



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAYLOR CLAYBROOK

From left, Detroit Historical Museum curator Taylor Claybrook, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans and Wayne County history researcher Eden Mitchell.

Historical Museum’s president.

“He grew up in Wayne County, in several communities,” Claybrook said. “He wanted to do something that would share the histories of the communities. It’s been in the works since 2024. It was all his idea and Detroit Historical was more than happy to help with that.”

Each three-month exhibition focused on a different area of the county. Exhibit 1 centered on Redford, Westland, Livonia, Garden City, Inkster and Wayne. Last fall, Plymouth, Canton, Northville, Van Buren, Sumpter, Huron Township and Belleville were the subjects of

Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 3 opened in December featuring Romulus, Taylor, Ecorse, Brownstown, Allen Park, Lincoln Park, Flat Rock and Southgate. Beginning in March, Exhibit 4 highlighted Woodhaven, Gibraltar, Wyandotte, Grosse Ile, Riverview, Trenton and Rockwood.

“It’s focused on Downriver right now,” Claybrook said, “and ends with Exhibit 6: Detroit, Highland Park, River Rouge, Hamtramck, Melvindale, Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.”

To complement the full series, as well as provide continuous information

See STORY, page 6B

GPAAS, Ford House team up for Tails in Motion  
Volunteer support sought for first-year event

By Jody McVeigh  
Editor

The Grosse Pointe Animal Adoption Society and Ford House are partnering to offer the first Tails in Motion at Ford House, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, May 16, rain or shine, on the grounds of the historic estate.

The new event invites families, dog lovers and the community to “leash up the whole family” for a day of guided dog walks; dog-related activities, including demonstrations by Grosse Pointe Woods K-9 Arcos; raffles and prizes; and opportunities to connect with other pet owners and learn about responsible pet ownership.

“We’ll have something for kids — face painting and henna tattoos — and we’ll have pet photography,” said Corinne Martin, executive director of GPAAS. “This is not just walking the dog, but other fun activities, too.”

Sponsors will host booths throughout the grounds and so far

include Harper Woods Veterinary Hospital, Camp Bow Wow, Lou’s Pet Shop and Hollywood Feed.

Three registration sessions will be scheduled throughout the day, so the grounds don’t become overcrowded, Martin said. Details still are being planned, so more may be in store, she added.

The partnership, organizers said, grew organically after Michigan Humane decided to move its annual Mutt March elsewhere.

“We had a partnership with Michigan Humane for 37 years,” Ford House CEO Mark Heppner said. “They made the tough decision to move Mutt March to Michigan Central, where they’ll get more people, more awareness and frankly, more money. It’s sad, because we had a long history.”

However, he continued, with the date already on the calendar, Heppner took the opportunity to create something new and with more local impact.



“I wasn’t even thinking about an animal rescue or adoption,” he said. “I was thinking, ‘What is something we can do to support the community?’”

The answer came after meeting with Martin and Lynn Schneider, who sits on the GPAAS executive committee.

“I knew this is the group that should be here,” Heppner said. “It’s a great group that does great work.”

The partnership continued to snowball, especially after Martin presented about GPAAS

to the Grosse Pointe Sunrise Rotary Club, for which Heppner serves as president.

“We encourage people to share their passion projects and one of our members is a big supporter of GPAAS,” he said. “Corinne came in to talk and we had already been talking about this partnership.”

Both GPAAS and Ford House are making sure Tails in Motion at Ford House is a true collaboration. Through the partnership, Heppner added, the two organizations will work

together to promote, organize and execute the event.

“With Michigan Humane, we were more of a host site,” Heppner said. “This is a chance to start fresh and call it a partnership. It fits with our core values. Josephine Ford was a dog lover and many of our board members are too. It ties in with who we are.”

Added Martin, “This is not just to bring people in to walk their dogs and visit, but it’s also to expose Ford House to people who maybe will want to have lunch there or have dinner there or become a member.”

Admission to the event is a donation to GPAAS, which relies solely on public donations to continue its mission of rescuing, caring for and finding homes for thousands of animals. Attendees may make donations via cash, check or Venmo.

“We’re not doing per-person or per-family admission,” Martin said. “It’s just a donation to us to support us.”

Additionally, volunteers are needed to help further plan the event to

ensure a smooth experience.

“We’re very excited,” Martin said. “This is a big undertaking. We’re seeking sponsors, gifts and prizes for the raffle. And we’ll need lots of volunteers. We’re seeking volunteers who maybe don’t want to work at the shelter or walk the dogs. This is another opportunity for them to help.”

More information may be found online at gpaas.org/news.

“This is a great opportunity,” Martin said of the event. “A lot of local people love to go out and walk their dogs. ... Hopefully we’ll grow it and get support.”

Heppner agreed.

“The idea is to be something we can build upon and grow — whatever helps (GPAAS),” he said. “We’re going to have great support; a lot of people value it. We’ll see how it grows into what we want it to be and what they need it to be.”

Those interested in being a sponsor, donating a raffle prize or volunteering at the event should email gpaas@wowway.com or call (313) 884-1551.

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# Longtime IT guru says goodbye to Neighborhood Club

By Jody McVeigh  
Editor

After 36 years of working at The Neighborhood Club, George Guo will miss absolutely everything — except his commute.

The Ann Arbor resident spent his last day battling bumper-to-bumper backups Thursday, Feb. 26.

“I will not miss the traffic,” he said. “Everything else has been wonderful.”

Guo’s tenure with the 115-year-old club “came along with the internet.”

“When The Neighborhood Club started with computer technology, it was introduced by (former executive director) John Bruce,” he said. “He was a tech enthusiast. He always enjoyed trying new things around the organization.”

Guo, who with his wife immigrated to the United States from Taiwan in 1986, moved to Ann Arbor and was working as a landscape architect while studying data programming at the University of Michigan. Around the time he graduated, he posted his resume on the CompuServe network.

“My name was picked up because John Bruce was looking to give a shot



PHOTO BY JODY MCVEIGH

George Guo stands in his workspace, surrounded by computers, monitors and other tech equipment — his specialty — the day before he retired after 36 years with The Neighborhood Club.

at computerizing and running a computer lab,” he said. “It was funded by a donation by Marie Bodman. Her husband, Henry Bodman, was a longterm manager at National Bank of Detroit. In memory of her husband, she donated funds.

“My time came around that moment when the lab was established,” he continued. “I was a computer instructor and gave tech support to the computers at The Neighborhood Club. It was so new, no one knew

if it was going to fly.”

Guo recalled a secretary using longhand to take minutes during his first board meeting, then rushing to a typewriter to type them up. Back then, in 1990, registration for all Neighborhood Club activities was taken by hand.

“I developed a registration system, because we could not continue to rely on paper,” he said. “We needed to computerize quickly. My first assignment was to write a program tailor-made to take

the registration and come out with all the reports needed.”

Bruce raved about the way Guo helped adapt the organization to technology.

“George is extraordinary,” Bruce said. “The Neighborhood Club had one person develop all the software for the last 36 years, go through all the changes, a new building, facial recognition for members. There’s no price that could be paid for all he’s done.

“He grew with us,” he

continued. “To be able to take registration and divide up rosters and the financial parts and the communication parts — it kept growing. He’s an extraordinary human being and a very proud citizen of the United States of America.”

Guo revised his system twice over the years, moving from an original standalone database to where it currently sits in the cloud.

“Now we’re looking at the next big move — to get involved with AI,” he added.

His retirement largely was prompted by the growth in artificial intelligence, he said.

“The first release of ChatGPT in 2022 was a wake-up call, an eye-opener,” he said.

His retirement, he added, is creating “place for something newer and smarter and younger to come into play.

“... We’re looking for the next chapter to unfold,” he added, “new opportunities to open up with new and young talents. The organization can usher in new, younger, more talented people. It’s a big endeavor. It needs lots of dedication and energy.”

Guo, too, devoted energy to The Neighborhood Club during his tenure, which

largely involved offering support.

“Over the years, my role shifted,” he said. “In the early days there was a big role to play for the community, for computer education. The computer lab was open to the public. There were lots of needs from local organizations, including hospitals, who would send employees to train.”

For a time, the Bodman Computer Center was the only place in the community offering computer training. Guo helped familiarize clients of all ages with word processors, spreadsheets and databases. Even the computer lab’s benefactor took advantage of lessons.

“Mrs. Bodman, she learned the Lotus spreadsheet at age 78,” he said. “She was such a person with vision and a hands-on approach. She single-handedly brought The Neighborhood Club into its next chapter.”

During his tenure, Guo also extended his tech services to the community by offering house calls.

“I have a list of all clients around the community — close to 1,000 from over the years,” he said.

Though excited for

See GEORGE, page 6B

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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.

### Judith Cooper

Judith “Judy” Cooper, a beacon of love, creativity and organization, passed away peacefully Monday, March 9, 2026, in Grosse Pointe, surrounded by her family.

Born Oct. 23, 1942, in Wyandotte, to Virginia and Joseph Amorello, both now deceased, Judy’s journey was marked by her loving nature and countless moments of joy she brought to others.

Judy’s life was one of active service and dedicated love. She volunteered throughout her children’s school years as a grade school teacher’s aide, a member of countless committees and in celebrations of their graduating classes. Judy also was active in her community, most notably with Saratoga and Cottage hospitals. She helped Cottage Hospital’s Auxiliary and Gift Shop Guild fundraising efforts through several events such as “An Evening with the Phantom,” “A Night on Broadway,” a fashion show and, most significantly, three kitchen tours and the associated preview nights for beneficiaries.

She also coordinated theme basket fairs, gold sales and annual raffles. She loved volunteering on her brother-in-law’s many Wayne County and Macomb County commissioner and Michigan Senate campaigns. Among her many roles, Judy shone brightly as treasurer of the Michigan Liquor Vendors Association and publisher of the SCCA North East Michigan Region Fifth Wheel Magazine.

The same passion and commitment Judy brought to her professional and volunteer pursuits were evident in her lifelong love of her husband, J. Lewis Cooper Jr. Their endless devotion began in 1958, when she asked him to dance at a Notre Dame High School event. He liked her beautiful smile and cute ponytail. Judy and J. Lewis built a life full of beauty, tradition and shared experiences that spanned the remarkable duration of 68 years.

Judy had a special touch for selecting the perfect gifts. Her “\$pecial Book\$,” lov-

ingly crafted for her grandchildren, were filled with hidden “\$ bills,” demonstrating her unique blend of creativity and thoughtfulness.

Her passions were extensive and diverse. A collector of books, she instilled the love of reading in her children and grandchildren, creating precious memories along the way. Judy reveled in the art of celebration, whether decking the halls for holidays, crafting custom costumes, holding family summer camps at their Harsens Island cottage or hosting magnificent gatherings, her attention to detail ensured everyone, from adults to the youngest guests, felt included and cherished. Judy also was a very talented calligrapher and had beautiful penmanship. She shared this gift generously through lovely invitations, Christmas cards and thoughtful notes of encouragement.

Her best friends in life were her twin sister, Janine, and younger sister, Janice. Together they enjoyed many adventures, including shopping, dining and trying their luck at the slots. In addition to Las Vegas and California, they traveled the world together and visited places such as England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Malta and even the Monaco Grand Prix. The “triplets” were real globetrotters, but it was the journey through their ancestral roots in Sicily and Romania that stood out as a heartfelt highlight, threading together family history in a vivid tapestry of lineage and love.

Even as Parkinson’s disease presented profound challenges, Judy faced them with unwavering dignity, grace and poise. Her resilience was a testament to her inner strength and the depth of character that guided her throughout her life.

Judy’s legacy is lovingly cherished by her devoted husband, J. Lewis Cooper Jr.; proud children, J. Lewis Cooper III (Susie) and Elizabeth Allaer (Rob); treasured grandchildren, Ashley, Jay, Cameron (Aimee), Nolan, Austin, Danny and Will; dear sisters,

Janine Scensny (Fred) and Janice Hertel (John); caring sisters-in-law, Kathy Cooper, Mary Cooper (Tom Janzito), Joyce Quinlan (Bryon) and the late Gretta Stricker (Dick); as well as a host of nieces, nephews and friends who found inspiration in her life.

Judy’s indelible spirit of kindness, creativity and thoughtfulness will continue to resonate through the many lives she touched. An exemplary member of her community, a guiding light in her family and a true friend to many, Judy’s love and generosity will not be forgotten.

A funeral Mass took place Saturday, March 14, at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Grosse Pointe Woods.

Gifts in Judy’s memory, made to the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, are greatly appreciated to parkinsonsmi.org/

### Frederick Stephen Lewins

Frederick “Fred” Stephen Lewins, 67, passed away peacefully and surrounded by his loving family Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026.

Fred was born in 1958, in Detroit, the third of five children of Frederick Anthony and Lily Helena (nee Mellon) Lewins. He was raised in Harper Woods and joined the U.S. Army Reserve while attending Bishop Gallagher High School. After graduating in 1975, Fred enlisted in the U.S. Army and served his country with great honor and distinction. He remained a deeply proud veteran throughout his entire life.

After settling in Paris, Mich., Fred met and married the love of his life, Cindy Holcom. They raised four beautiful children together.

Fred was a thoughtful, generous and joyful individual with a great sense of humor and spontaneous nature. An avid camper, fisherman, mushroom hunter and traveler, he was always ready to head out on a new adventure at the drop of a hat. He had a way of making friends wherever he went and he will be sorely missed by all those who knew



Judith Cooper

him.

Fred is survived by his wife of 26 years, Cindy; devoted children, Heidi Winegardner (James), Amy Cote, Elizabeth “E b y” R e n n e (Christopher) and Frederick III “Freddy”; and many grandchildren. Fred also is survived by his siblings, Loretta Lewins-Peck (Thomas Peck), Thomas Lewins, John Lewins and Marguerite Younger (Andrew); as well as several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Fred’s life will be held at 1:30 p.m. Friday, April 24, at Great Lakes National Military Cemetery in Holly.

A r r a n g e m e n t s entrusted to Pruitt-Livingston Funeral Home in Reed City.

### Eileen Louise Buck

Eileen Louise Buck (nee Riordan), 93, passed away Friday, Feb. 20, 2026, surrounded by her devoted family. She is survived by the loves of her life: her three children, Kathy Buck (Darryl), Michael Emmert-Buck (Leslie) and Gregory Buck (Melinda); and her three grandchildren, Nathan, Emily and Alicia Emmert-Buck.

Eileen was born in 1932, in Detroit, grew up in the city and attended Mercy High School and Mercy College. She received a bachelor’s degree in nursing and worked as a registered nurse for several years before moving to Grosse Pointe Park in the 1960s to raise her family.

As a woman born in the 1930s, she experienced and witnessed a great deal of American history. Growing up, her family had only a radio until she was 13, when they bought their first black and white television. The family car was a Hudson; they had a washing machine but no dryer; and they owned one bulky black dial-up phone, which was shared among five girls — no small challenge when they were teenagers. In high school Eileen was said to be ahead of her time with modern clothes and she loved soft waltz music.

In the 1990s, Eileen moved to her condominium on Square Lake in Bloomfield Hills, where she lived for more than 30 years. She loved having her morning cup of coffee in her favorite chair overlooking the lake, especially if her kids or grandkids were visiting. And she especially loved sitting in her favorite chair and watching her beloved Detroit Tigers and Detroit Lions.

Eileen will be greatly missed by her family and those who knew her. Memorial donations may be made to the Children’s Inn at NIH in Bethesda, Md., childrensinn.org.



Frederick S. Lewins



Kenneth Paul Zosel Jr.

### Kenneth Paul Zosel Jr.

K. Paul Zosel Jr., 83, of Grosse Pointe Park, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, with his son and siblings at his bedside.

Paul was born Oct. 2, 1942, as the oldest child of Kenneth P. and Kathleen Dunlevy Zosel, both now deceased. He was a loving father to his son, Paul III, and was in every way a great big brother to his three siblings, Fred, Kate and Anne.

Two generations later, he rarely missed a Saturday morning breakfast with his three granddaughters, Rae, Sydney and Alexis.

Paul was a father, son, brother, grandfather, lawyer, entrepreneur and golfer. He loved his family, friends and life. He also loved golf.

One of Paul’s golfing highlights was the 1994 U.S.G.A. Senior Open Championship at Pinehurst No 2. With his son on the bag, “Z” qualified, competed and came home with stories of Lee Trevino, Tom Weiskopf, Dave Stockton and other legends.

Paul lived out his passion for golf when he joined with partner Dallas Carrier in purchasing Woodlands Golf Course in Brighton in 1988. After lots of business birdies and pars, they sold the property in 1999. Meanwhile, Paul opened Dunlevy River Place in Detroit with a partner. He was a big fan and the tavern became a mecca for the Detroit Red Wings and their followers during the team’s success in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Paul was a reader, poet and crossword puzzle maven. He entertained people on special occasions with his doggerels. Family, friends and golfing buddies may recall such rhymes as, “So raise your glass to the men on both sides of you/And each to one another/And always remember that each of us/Is the other’s brother,” as well as, “Now for some observations of my teammates from the East/They claimed they tried their very best/That’s something, at least.”

Paul also was an athlete. He attended Austin Catholic Preparatory School in Detroit and lettered eight times in athletics while serving in student government. After finding the road to priesthood unsuitable, he enrolled at Saint Louis University, where



Eileen Louise Buck



Carl Tacke

he played freshman basketball. He transferred to the University of Michigan his sophomore year and pitched for the baseball team until an injury cut his diamond dreams short. After Ann Arbor, he found himself at Saint Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Ind., where he joined the football team as a punter. He later claimed he led the team in minutes played, as the team went 0-8. He found greater success on the basketball squad, which compiled an 18-8 record.

Paul earned his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Detroit Law School in 1969. Later in his career, he concentrated on criminal law. In court, he enjoyed reporting his bar number, which made judges and other attorneys smile because it always was among the lowest still active. Paul also was active in supporting several charities over the years, including the Grosse Pointe Lions Club.

Paul is survived by his son, Paul III; granddaughters, Isabella (Rae), Sydney and Alexis; former wife, Chris Jagger; and siblings, Fred, Kate Apple and Anne McGill.

A celebration of life will be held this summer.

### Carl Tacke

Carl Tacke, 92, passed away peacefully Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026.

Carl was born April 24, 1933, in Big Bend, Wis., to Ewald and Florence (nee Hermann) Tacke, both now deceased. He graduated from Art Center College of Design in California and worked at Pontiac Motor Division of General Motors.

Carl is survived by his daughter, Lisa Tacke-Pucylowski (Mark); son, Paul Tacke (Susan); and grandchildren, Olivia Pucylowski and Trent Tacke. He was predeceased by his wife, Eleanor Tacke (nee Atherton).

Visitation takes place 3 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, at Wysocki & Wilk Funeral Home, 29440 Ryan, Warren. He will lie in state at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 26, until the 10 a.m. memorial service at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 30003 Ryan, Warren.

Share a message for the family and view Carl’s full obituary at [wysockiandwilkfuneralhome.com](http://wysockiandwilkfuneralhome.com).

See OBITS, page 5B



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OBITS:

Continued from page 5B

Robert Joseph Palmer

Robert Joseph Palmer, 66, of the City of Grosse Pointe, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 11, 2026. He was born Aug. 22, 1959, to Thomas and Marguerite (nee Slevin) Palmer, and grew up in Grosse Pointe, where he graduated from Grosse Pointe South High School.

Rob was a talented house painter who took genuine pride in transforming spaces into something beautiful and uniquely his own. He spent the majority of his career working alongside his brother, Jim — a partnership that was as much about family as it was about work.

Music was one of Rob's greatest loves. He had an insatiable appetite for all genres and a near-legendary ability to recall one-hit wonders in all their glory. Some of Rob's best hours were spent gathered around the dining room table with family,



Robert Joseph Palmer

singing along to favorite playlists, a tradition that made him the heart of any room he was in.

Rob had a rare and natural gift for connection. He could strike up a conversation with anyone and people found themselves opening up to him with ease. He was extraordinarily kindhearted and generous to his core, the kind of person who would give someone the shirt off his back without a second thought. Even in his final days, the nursing staff remarked that he was the kindest patient they had ever cared for. That was Rob.

He loved cats dearly, a passion he shared with his lifelong friend, Rose, whose companionship meant the world

to him. Rob faced significant health challenges with quiet courage and resilience over the last decade of his life. He met every obstacle with grace and never stopped rising.

Rob was a man of faith and his family takes comfort knowing he has been welcomed home by his beloved parents, Tom and Peg. He finally is free of his suffering and at peace.

He is survived by his siblings, David (Kris), Diane (Karl), Jim (Denise) and Kath (Ed); and his cherished nieces and nephews, Sarah (David), Michaela, Elizabeth (Elton), Jimmy (Tori), Kay, Tyler (Morgan), Teddy (Kaylee), Tommy and Maggie.

He was predeceased by his loving parents, Thomas and Marguerite Palmer.

A funeral Mass took place March 16, at St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic Church, Grosse Pointe Park.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Rob's memory may be made to Gleaners Community Food Bank, [gcfb.org](http://gcfb.org).

Share a memory at [verheyden.org](http://verheyden.org).

EVENTS:

Continued from page 3B

per couple is \$140 for members, \$165 for guests. Reservations are required by Monday, March 30. For more information or to register, visit [thevillagersgp.com/next-dance/](http://thevillagersgp.com/next-dance/).

Garage Resale

St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, 21201 13 Mile, St. Clair Shores, hosts its Spring Garage Resale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, April 17, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 18. Early-bird admission for \$1 is Friday from 8 to 9 a.m. Proceeds

benefit the McWarm Program and the church.

**Sunrise on Vernier**

Sunrise on Vernier, 1850 Vernier, Grosse Pointe Woods, hosts a support group at 4 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month. For more information, call (313) 642-2000.

GEORGE:

Continued from page 2B

retirement, Guo will continue delving into the world of tech.

"I'd really like to locate a big chunk of my free time to dig deeper into the new AI development," he said. "It's going to be a big thing, like when the internet was coming."

He noted how overwhelming new and changing technology can feel, as well as how older generations may feel abandoned as a result.

"With phone, with email, with social media — they feel they are abandoned, technically abandoned, by technology," he said. "But also emotionally abandoned by younger family."

"The younger family stop sending greeting cards, never write letters, don't make phone calls,"

he continued. "They exist only in the virtual world of the internet. If you don't come to them, they won't come to you. With AI coming, it's almost as vulnerable as the internet was to us."

After years of providing instruction, Guo will take on the role of student as he plans to return to the classroom, this time to gain a few handyman skills.

"I want to learn piping and electricity and woodcrafting," he said. "It's less mind-boggling and more focused. Computers are always racing your mind."

"And with my landscape architecture background, I'm already good at doing yard work."

Guo won't completely slip away from his Neighborhood Club roots. He still plans to visit, but not in an official capacity.

"I will not totally break

away," he said. "... It's a family here. We come together and support each other, just like this community."

"George has been a staple at the Neighborhood Club for 36 years," Neighborhood Club Executive Director Stu Alderman said. "... His sincere dedication to The Neighborhood Club and the support he provided to the community are remarkable. George had keen knowledge of IT and guided us through a huge transition throughout the years. We all wish him the best in his retirement years; he will be missed!"

Guo has been working with Proactive Technology Management during his transition to retirement. The Neighborhood Club hopes to roll out a new recreational software management program later this year.

Alkyone to perform March 19 at DIA

Singer/songwriter Alkyone, who hails from the mountains of northern Greece, will perform live at the Detroit Institute of Arts theater at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 19.

The program is presented by the Hellenic Museum of Michigan, in partnership with the DIA. The concert is free to the community.

A pre-show reception featuring Alkyone and her bandmates begins at 5 p.m. at the Hellenic Museum.

Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be available to those attending the pre-show benefit, during which seven contemporary artworks created by internationally renowned artist Ramona Pintea will be on display. Tickets to the pre-show benefit are \$50. All proceeds benefit the HMM.

For more information, email HMM Executive Director Harry Gaggos at [h.gaggos@hellenicmi.org](mailto:h.gaggos@hellenicmi.org), or call Joan De Ronne at (313) 530-0639.



Wayne County history researcher Eden Mitchell and Detroit Historical Museum curator Taylor Claybrook at the Exhibit 1 open house last June.



A showcase display of artifacts that were loaned from community partners, including historical museums and societies.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAYLOR CLAYBROOK

STORY:

Continued from page 1B

for ardent researchers and curious minds alike, a database is being created to house details from each exhibition.

"We're getting it up and running," Claybrook said of the database. "We'll be launching it in the next couple of weeks and then it will be a work in progress. ... When the exhibit comes down, information will still be available on database."

Right now, she added, is the gathering phase in which stories are being collected. Those who wish to contribute are

invited to scan the QR code below and share their stories about what it was like growing up in the Pointes.

Claybrook pointed out, however, that while stories may be included in the database, they won't

necessarily be a part of the physical exhibition. Regardless, the more stories, the better to make a well-rounded exhibit.

For more information, email Claybrook at [taylorc@detroithistorical.org](mailto:taylorc@detroithistorical.org).



To share an oral history about growing up in the Pointes, scan the QR code or visit [detroithistorical.org/projects/wayne-county-history-project](http://detroithistorical.org/projects/wayne-county-history-project)

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# HEALTH

## Advice for living life beyond a diagnosis

By Jody McVeigh  
Editor

Anyone living with a chronic illness knows the challenges it can pose, even on a good day. While doctors, therapists and other professionals are available on the medical side of a diagnosis, the day-to-day living side can pose a greater challenge.

Enter Zach Voytowich and his mother, Terri Voytowich, who have launched OH VOY!, a lived-experience coaching and support initiative created to help individuals and families navigate life beyond the diagnosis of a chronic illness.

“I’ve got hydrocephalus, which I’ve had since birth,” Zach Voytowich said. “I had my first surgery when I was 12 hours old.”

Hydrocephalus is the buildup of cerebrospinal fluid within the brain. In Zach Voytowich’s case, his ventricles are blocked, so fluid builds up and creates pressure on his brain.

“Throughout my journey, I’ve had 38 brain surgeries and I have chronic migraines every day,” the 22-year-old said.

Those years of surgeries, setbacks and “moments that made him feel like life was passing

him by” sparked a desire to find a way to help others facing similar challenges.

“I wanted to do something that would help people beyond the medical side of things,” he said. “Doctors handle the medical side, but they don’t give a clear path forward for life past that.”

“This is life coaching to get help to people out there who need it,” he continued, “whether it’s helping them through IEPs (Individualized Education Programs), helping people live their life, with work, surgeries, health issues — it’s a constant battle. I’d like to believe I’m an expert on this subject matter.”

OH VOY! offers one-on-one life coaching to young people living with chronic medical conditions and their families, offering them a chance to thrive beyond the diagnosis, Terri Voytowich added.

“It’s a tremendous amount of work that doctors and specialists and therapists do to take care of chronic illness,” she said. “Our experience is that nobody is helping figure out how to live lives knowing there are still medical issues cropping up. You cannot let the illness consume you.”

After 22 years, the Voytowiches have learned to manage myriad situations and experiences, from early education to the working world. As an adult, Zach Voytowich has a career, manages his own healthcare, coordinates his medical teams, navigates insurance and other responsibilities.

Its that management and guidance they hope to impart on others — and not just those with chronic illness.

“We help parents, caregivers and teachers get back on their feet; we help young adults get back to young adulting,” Terri Voytowich said. “... It’s not just about the patient. It’s also about what a sibling experiences. As a parent, you don’t want anyone to feel slighted, but when you have a child with a chronic illness, you give more attention to that person. We’re coaching single parents, grandparents, offering group sessions, coaching patients about what life looks like.”

Their program offers a practical, compassionate approach for the emotional, social and everyday challenges that don’t come with instructions. That help is offered through one-on-one virtual or local coaching sessions; custom toolkits based on clients’ individual goals; family strategy calls to help parents support their child’s needs while also showing up for other children; and community building through workshops, social outreach and support groups.

“We offer an active Facebook page,” Zach Voytowich said. “I try to document my daily life, give pointers, talk about how I’m feeling. There’s a group chat.”

“... The biggest thing I love is the connection I make with other people,” he added. “It’s nice to have people relate to you and understand the situa-

tion more than the average person. It’s nice to have someone in your corner.”

Support is offered to anyone with an invisible or chronic diagnosis.

“Zach has hydrocephalus, but chronic illness is chronic illness,” his mother said. “The way I raised Zach was not just to live with his illness, but to live his life.”

Living life means many things to Zach Voytowich — from spending time on the family boat to playing baseball, which he did while attending Grosse Pointe South High School.

“I can do everything as much as the average person, besides contact sports,” he said, adding that less than week after one of his multiple brain surgeries, he hit the slopes with his family.

His struggles today include occasionally missing work and interacting with people who don’t understand what he’s experiencing, as his symptoms cannot be seen by the naked eye.

“Last year alone he had three brain surgeries,” Terri Voytowich said. “This year, he’s had two months of chronic migraines, which last one or two weeks at a time.”

“It’s really about advocating for yourself,” Zach Voytowich said. “Nothing will get done if people don’t know what you need. Nobody is going to figure it out for you. It comes down to voicing what you need.”

Oftentimes, that occurs through trial and error — figuring out what will work, what won’t work and coming up with a game plan, he added.

What that looked like for him was graduating from Grosse Pointe South and going into the trades, which evolved into a career. He currently serves as a commercial salesman whose clients include Comerica Park, Little Caesars Arena,



**Zach Voytowich hosts a virtual group counseling session.**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERRI VOYTOWICH

**Terri and Zach Voytowich take in a Red Wings game.**



**Zach through various stages of life, from left, at age 4; at age 7, during a hospital stay; and at age 10, thriving during Little League.**



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# Growing Smiles brings modern, family-focused dental care to St. Clair Shores

Families in the St. Clair Shores area have a new reason to smile. Growing Smiles Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics, known as the “Home of Every Smile Approved,” is helping local families access orthodontic and pediatric dental care with a focus on convenience, modern technology and community involvement.

Growing Smiles makes orthodontic care more accessible by offering free consultations, no credit checks and zero-down financing options. These flexible options help families begin orthodontic treatment without the financial barriers that can often delay care.

“We just started the ‘every smile approved’ program because we feel strongly that every child deserves orthodontic care regardless of the family’s financial situation,” said Jared Slanec, DDS, dentist and owner.

Early orthodontic care plays an important role in long-term oral health. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends children receive their first orthodontic evaluation by age 8. When orthodontic concerns are addressed earlier, treatment often is easier because a child’s teeth and jaw are still developing.

The St. Clair Shores office also features all new dental equipment and advanced digital technology, including iTero scanning technology, which creates precise digital impressions for treatment planning. This modern technology improves patient comfort and helps the dental team deliver highly accurate orthodontic care.

What makes the location especially unique is its collaborative care model. A pediatric dentist works hand in hand with the orthodontic team, allowing cases to be discussed between professionals in the same office. This approach ensures that children receive coordinated care tailored to their specific dental and orthodontic needs.

The office also shares its location with its sister company, PGS Dentistry,



Doctors, staff and patients are all smiles at Growing Smiles.

allowing the entire family to receive dental care in one place. With pediatric dentistry, orthodontics and general family dentistry available under one roof, the practice has created what they call a “one-stop dental shop.”

More information about PGS Dentistry can be found at PGSDentistry.com and families can book appointments online for both practices.

Beyond the office, Growing Smiles is deeply committed to supporting the local community and promoting dental education. The team regularly visits local schools free of charge to host 30-minute dental education programs that teach children about healthy brushing habits, cavity prevention and the importance of regular dental visits. Each child also goes home with a toothbrush kit to help reinforce good habits at home.

The program already is making a strong impact. Last month alone, the Growing Smiles team helped more than 1,000 local children through these educational visits.

Families interested in learning more or scheduling a free orthodontic consultation may call (586) 800-GROW or visit GrowingSmilesPD.com.

# A higher standard of urgent care

Dr. Daniel LaLonde, MD, FACEP

Grosse Pointe resident Dr. Daniel LaLonde, MD, FACEP is a board-certified physician with IEP Urgent care, as well as the Chair of Emergency Medicine at Henry Ford St. John Hospital, where he also completed his residency. Dr. LaLonde earned his medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine and is certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine. His commitment to compassionate, efficient care ensures patients receive trusted medical expertise when they need it most.



Dr. Daniel LaLonde

Dr. Steve McGraw, DO, FACEP

With three decades of experience in emergency and family medicine, Grosse Pointe resident Dr. Steve McGraw, DO, FACEP’s is dedicated to high quality patient care, making him one of the most trusted physicians at IEP Urgent care. A board-certified physician and physician owner with IEP, he is also the Chair of Emergency Medicine at Henry Ford Providence Southfield & Novi Hospitals. Dr. McGraw received his medical degree at Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine and is also certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine.



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# Corewell Health welcomes breast surgeon and first surgical oncologist

Patients are being diagnosed with breast cancer at increasingly younger ages, according to Dr. Sarwat Ahmad, who is the newest breast surgeon at the Corewell Health Beaumont Grosse Pointe Hospital Breast Care Center.

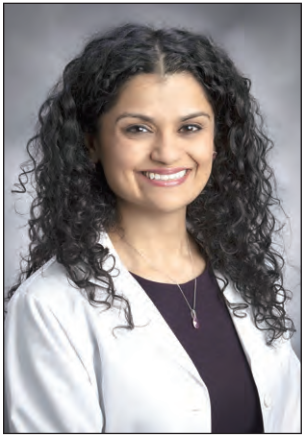
It is now recommended that most women be evaluated by their primary care physician by age 25 to determine if they are at higher risk for breast cancer, which may mean they need earlier or enhanced screening and/or genetic testing.

Factors that can increase a woman's risk include a strong family history of cancer, especially pre-menopausal breast or ovarian cancer, certain hereditary genetic mutations, prior radiation to the chest or dense breast tissue usually in combination with one of the above.

"In general, somebody who is high-risk may benefit from a different surveillance schedule," Ahmad said. "So one of the things I do is I see patients who are considered high-risk for breast cancer and we come up with individualized plans for their surveillance, so we can catch cancerous changes early or even prevent them."

Ahmad, who is fellowship trained in Complex General Surgical Oncology, is filling a gap in local care as the first surgical oncologist at Corewell Health's Grosse Pointe location, as well as the first melanoma surgeon for Corewell Health in southeast Michigan.

"This is a new program and, hopefully, a more convenient option for patients in Grosse Pointe," she said. "A surgical oncologist specializes in the multidisciplinary care of a patient who has cancer. We're trained to consider all aspects of cancer management —



Dr. Sarwat Ahmad

pathology, surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation therapy — and then manage the patient throughout all of that, because it might impact their surgical plan and overall prognosis."

Patients with melanoma who benefit from seeing a surgical oncologist are those who have high-risk or advanced disease. Being seen by a surgical oncologist early on is important so they can be staged appropriately, which impacts what type of therapies they may be a candidate for, specifically in regard to immunotherapy, which has shown great success in the management of melanoma.

"The sequence of immunotherapy and surgery is an important consideration," Ahmad said. "It's more and more critical to get that right. We're trying to provide the best chance at being cured for the long term, which often means combining surgical and medical therapies to prolong survival, prevent relapse, optimize quality of life and making sure the patient has access to the care they need. Those are all goals of any surgical oncologist."

Ahmad started at Corewell Health Beaumont Grosse Pointe Hospital Breast Care Center in late January. Having grown up in southeast Michigan, she's grateful for the opportunity to return to the area.

"I'm super excited to get to know the Grosse Pointe community," she said. "That's something I'm really looking forward to doing — meeting all the people here, including the other physicians and providers so we can work together and make sure the community has access to really evidence-based, caring, high-quality care. That's always been the goal."

# Spring into better skin: The laser treatment worth the wait

Spring is the perfect time of year to take advantage of a cutting-edge laser procedure offered by the board-certified dermatologists at The Skin & Laser Center at Ferrara Dermatology.

UltraClear by Acclaro is a first-of-its-kind erbium cold-fiber laser with an ablative capacity.

"The beauty of this laser is it can be customized to treat many different skin conditions and it has different modalities, so it can target everything including pigmentation in the skin, deep lines and wrinkles, acne scars and surgical scars," Dr. Katie Caretti explained. "The versatility of the laser is what truly sets it apart."

The targeted way the energy is delivered into the skin makes the procedure a much more comfortable experience for the patient compared to past generations of lasers. This can make for less downtime as well as low pain.

"We can do everything from a lunchtime superficial 3D miracle treatment that heals in a couple of days to a deeper, more comprehensive treatments for those looking for big results that might take seven to 10 days to heal," Dr. Richard Ferrara said. "The customization factor means everyone needs a thorough consultation to understand expectations, and once we have that, we tailor a treat-

ment plan to match those expectations."

Unique to the device is the laser coring aspect, which gives it the ability to create laser tunnels, which, once healed, allow for optimal collagen stimulation.

"By doing so, we can really target some of the deeper wrinkles and acne scars," Ferrara said. "And this is more observational — it's not part of its FDA statement — but we are empirically noticing some lifting and improvement of laxity, which is really quite unique and interesting for a laser to be able to achieve."

The UltraClear laser can be used on the face, as well as the neck, which is a key area where many people would like to see improvement.

The laser is also suitable for most skin types, which is notable as options for darker skin tones historically have been limited.

"We used to carry CO2 technology and we got rid of it a while back," Ferrara

noted. "It's still a great device, but we favor UltraClear because it offers comfort and faster healing alongside the same benefits as some of the old-school technology."

Ferrara Dermatology Clinic is located at 20043 Mack, Grosse Pointe Woods. For more information, call (313) 884-5100 or visit ferraraderm.com.



Dr. Richard Ferrara



Dr. Katie Caretti



## Looking for a Physician?

The primary care physicians listed below are currently accepting new patients and have availability within 7 days.

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21400 East 11 Mile Rd.  
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Abbey McKee-Boyes, DO  
James Blumline, MD

**Corewell Health Family Medicine - 22646 9 Mile Rd**  
22646 East 9 Mile Rd.  
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080  
**586.498.4800**  
Sarah Koslaskiewicz, MD  
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**Corewell Health Internal Medicine - 18325 E 10 Mile Rd**  
18325 East 10 Mile Rd.  
Suite 300, Roseville, MI 48066  
**586.447.4000**  
John Geddes, MD  
Oneil Doha, MD  
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[Internal Medicine - Adult Care Only]

**Corewell Health Family Medicine - 30695 Little Mack**  
30695 Little Mack Ave.  
Suite 200, Roseville, MI 48066  
**586.294.9600**  
Andreise Laurian Nazzaria  
Rosa de Souza, MD

**Corewell Health Primary Care - 17000 Kercheval Ave**  
17000 Kercheval Ave.  
Suite 205, Grosse Pointe, MI 48230  
**313.640.2424**  
Olga Caruso, DO  
Michael Dionne, MD

**Corewell Health Primary Care - 15200 Kercheval Ave**  
15200 Kercheval Ave.  
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# Dr. Sean Cassleman at Mission Metabolic Health offers more than traditional primary care

After more than a decade of practicing internal medicine, Dr. Sean Cassleman has seen the strong connection between metabolic disease, obesity, muscle loss and chronic illness that cuts lives short and disrupts quality of life.

“The new paradigm for medicine is not waiting for disease to appear and then prescribing medication. It’s about being proactive,” Cassleman said.

At Mission Metabolic Health, 21444 Harper, St. Clair Shores, the focus is on reversing metabolic dysfunction through diet, exercise and tailored medical care — services often missing in traditional primary care.

The office features an in-house gym along with fitness and nutrition coaches, ensuring patients have hands-on support to put their health plans into action.

Mission Metabolic Health emphasizes longer appointments and genuine conversations to understand each patient’s goals. Cassleman brings expertise in lifestyle medicine, hormone therapy and obesity medicine, with a passion for preventative care.

Rooted in the Grosse Pointe community, Cassleman grew up in the City of Grosse Pointe, attended Grosse Pointe Public Schools



Dr. Sean Cassleman

and University of Detroit Jesuit High School and now lives in Grosse Pointe Park.

He went to John Carroll University and earned his medical degree at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Board-certified in internal medicine, he also has advanced training in obesity medicine.

The practice offers

services such as concierge primary care, weight management, hormone and menopausal therapy, osteoporosis care and supplement guidance.

“It’s transformative to see patients work with our coaches and bring exam-room strategies to life,” Cassleman said.

For more information, call (586) 200-4265 or email [info@missionmetabolichealth.com](mailto:info@missionmetabolichealth.com).

## KNOW YOUR SKIN

by Lisa A. Manz-Dulac, M.D.

Do you regularly check your skin?



Everyone should do a skin exam at least every 4-8 weeks. And if you or family members have a history of skin cancer, it is especially important to do regular self skin examinations of your entire body, from your scalp down to the soles of the feet. But what do you look for?

A good tool to use is the ABCDE’s. Benign lesions are typically round (symmetrical); an Asymmetric shape (the “A”) is often a sign that a mole could be cancerous. Also, the Borders (the “B”) of suspicious lesions are often uneven with jagged or notched edges. Color (the “C”) is another important characteristic. Lesions that have multiple shades of colors or are very dark in color should be brought to your physician’s attention. Large moles with a Diameter larger than the eraser on a pencil (the “D”) may also indicate malignancy. Watch for lesions that are starting to evolve or change (the “E”) in one of these areas. Most benign lesions do not change over time.

Once you bring a lesion to the attention of your doctor, she/he may recommend biopsy, destruction, excision or other complete removal, or you may be advised to continue to watch the lesion, depending on the diagnosis.

If you have a suspicious lesion, or to learn more about skin exams, contact your dermatologist, or call us at Eastside Dermatology, Dr. Lisa A. Manz-Dulac and Associates.

Eastside Dermatology has offices in Grosse Pointe Woods, New Baltimore, Hartland and Milford.

You can reach them at (313) 884-3380 or (586) 716-1291.



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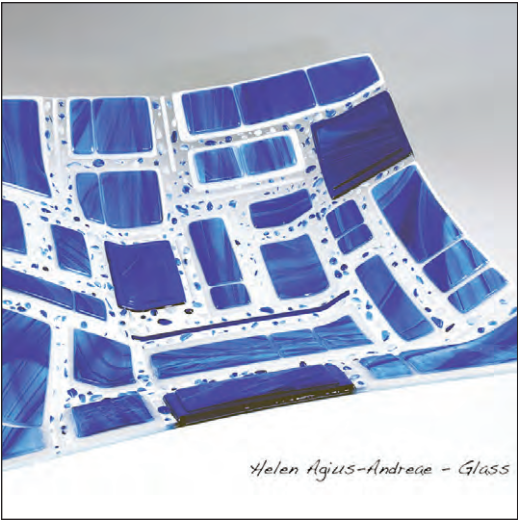
A painting by Taylor Mouroufas.



A leather handbag designed by Jennifer Krcic.



Jewelry by Irene Dimitry will be featured.



Glasswork from Helen Agius-Andreae.



Ceramics by Lina Beydoun will be showcased.

A sample of Curtis Cullen’s printmaking.



## Grosse Pointe Fine Art Fair is March 21-22

Art lovers, collectors and community members are invited to experience a vibrant weekend of creativity at the Grosse Pointe Fine Art Fair, taking place 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 21 and 22, in the ballroom and community room at The War Memorial, 32 Lakeshore, Grosse Pointe Farms.

Presented by the Art as Healing Foundation, a Michigan-based 501(c)3 nonprofit, the indoor event will showcase finely crafted, original artwork from nearly 60 juried artists, many of whom are recognized and award-winning professionals.

Unlike traditional outdoor art fairs, the Grosse Pointe Fine Art Fair delivers a carefully curated experience highlighting exceptional craftsmanship and artistic excellence. Guests will discover a diverse selection of handmade works, including:

- ◆ fine jewelry
- ◆ paintings
- ◆ ceramics and pottery
- ◆ glass art
- ◆ woodworking
- ◆ fiber art
- ◆ sculpture and more

All artwork will be available for purchase, making the fair an ideal destination for finding one-of-a-kind gifts, statement pieces for the home or timeless heirlooms.

“This fair is about more than art; it’s about bringing the community together to celebrate creativity, beauty and human connection,” said Karyn Stetz, founder of the Art as Healing Foundation. “We’re proud to present artists whose work truly inspires.”

Enhancing the experience, live acoustic music will be performed during fair hours, creating a welcoming and enjoyable environment for attendees.

Admission to the fair is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 13 to 17 and free for children 12 and younger. Discounted advance tickets are available online at [grossepointeartfair.com](http://grossepointeartfair.com) with the coupon code “2-for-1.” Tickets also may be purchased at the door.

Founded in 2015, the Art as Healing Foundation is dedicated to promoting inclusion, diversity and the transformative power of visual arts. The organization hosts art exhibitions, fairs, cultural festivals and educational workshops throughout the year, using art as a tool for healing and connection.

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Compromise is key when planning spring break

**Dear Gabby:** Spring break is causing a marital standoff. I want to ski. My spouse wants a beach. I say fresh air and après-ski. He says sand and umbrella drinks. Is there a solution that doesn't involve one of us sulking the entire trip? — Frozen in the Farms

**Dear Frozen:** Try this:

First, do both options fit the budget? If yes, I suggest one of the following options:

1. Alternate years: Mountains this year, beach next. Flip a coin to see who wins this year to kick it off.

2. Split the week: Start slopes, end shores. (Yes, it's ambitious. So are you.) Hear me out — this could work with some careful planning and budgeting (and maybe Spirit Air).

Also consider flying from Toronto; there are some amazing deals to be had. What if you could ski at Blue Mountain and then hop a plane to Florida after a few days on the slopes?

3. The hybrid compromise: Choose somewhere warm with adventure like Phoenix or the the national parks out West — hiking, biking, adventure and beauty, etc. Think active mornings, lazy afternoons.

— Gabby

*We love problem-solving and giving advice! Please send us your questions & problems to [advice@grossepointe-news.com](mailto:advice@grossepointe-news.com).*



When your child becomes the landlord

**DEAR ANNIE:** I live with my almost-30-year-old daughter. She acquired our place through a lawsuit settlement.

She talks to and treats me like I'm a child and tries to control my life. She often reminds me: "This is my place. I run things." I could go on and on, but the bottom line is that she constantly makes me feel uneasy in what's supposed to be my home.

Now she's planning to move to Texas. I don't want to leave where we live now, but I also don't want to move with her. I can't handle her demands anymore, yet I can't afford to live on my own. Rent is too high.

What should I do? — Living on Eggshells?

**DEAR LIVING ON EGGSHELLS:** Your daughter may own the home, but that doesn't give her free rein to dictate your choices or disrespect you.

Before making any decisions, have an honest discussion about what her move to Texas would mean for you. What would she expect if you went with her, and on what timeline? Clarity here will help you make the most informed decision.

At the same time, research your other options — senior housing, income-based apartments, shared living situations or even renting a room in someone else's home. It may be hard to afford a place of your own, but the ability to live freely and comfortably in your space is priceless.



## Dear Annie

by Annie Lane

him less often. Hospitality is a gift, not a given.

**DEAR ANNIE:** I need your advice before I lose my mind.

My husband and I moved into what we thought was our dream home last spring. The street is lovely, the neighbors are friendly, and the yard is just big enough for my tomato plants and a little peace and quiet. The problem is the man next door is a drummer. Not a "taps lightly on a practice pad" drummer. A full-on, cymbal-crashing, bass-thumping, living-room-concert drummer.

At first, we tried to be understanding. Everyone needs a hobby. I even told myself it was "kind of nice" that someone still had a passion. That was before the daily solos started. He practices after work, on weekends and sometimes at odd hours that seem designed to coincide with dinner, phone calls and the exact moment I finally sit down with a cup of tea.

The walls rattle. My dog hides under the bed. My husband now narrates our evenings like a war correspondent: "And at 7:14 p.m., the snare has returned."

We have spoken to him twice, very politely. He smiles, apologizes and says he is "working on a set." Then the next day it starts all over again. I do not want to be the cranky neighbor, but I also did not realize homeownership came with a front-row seat to a drum solo.

How do we handle this without starting a neighborhood feud? — Beaten Down by the Beat

**DEAR BEATEN DOWN:** You are not asking for the moon. You are asking for a little peace and quiet in your own living room, which is still legal in most states.

You have already done the neighborly thing twice. Since his apology seems to have a shorter shelf life than milk, try one more conversation. Give him the hours that are hardest on you, and ask for set practice times. "Please stop" is easy to forget. "No drumming during dinner and after 8 p.m." is harder to miss.

If he keeps auditioning for the neighborhood against your will, check your local noise rules or HOA policy. That is not being petty. That is using the grown-up version of drumsticks.

A good neighbor can keep a beat without beating down the neighbors.

*Send your questions for Annie Lane to [annie@creators.com](mailto:annie@creators.com).*

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## Your Neighborhood

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# We Tried It!

by Anna Lizer



I decided it was time to upgrade my daughter’s lunchbox situation. Her old bento box had served its purpose, but was clearly made for younger kids. The compartments were so small they could barely fit a sandwich, let alone a normal portion of food, and the whole thing felt more toy-like than practical. It also wasn’t dishwasher safe, which made packing lunches feel more tedious than it should.

This larger, EASYFUN Adult Bento Box from Amazon solved those issues almost immedi-

ately. The size alone makes a difference. Each of the four compartments actually fits a realistic amount of food, so I can pack a full sandwich, fruit and a snack without overthinking it. Everything stays separated and easy to see, which makes mornings run a little smoother.

It’s also a good-looking lunchbox. The design feels clean and simple and it comes in several great colors that feel fun without being childish. My daughter liked it right away, which always helps. The included fork is surprisingly useful, especially for

pasta, cut fruit or leftovers.

From a practical standpoint, it works well. It feels sturdy without being bulky and slides easily into her backpack. The seal holds up, so I am not dealing with leaks by lunchtime. The removable tray goes straight into the dishwasher, which makes cleanup easy.

After a few weeks of daily use, it feels like a small upgrade that actually makes a difference. Lunches are easier to pack, portions make more sense and everything comes home intact. For anyone ready to move on

from smaller, kid-focused bento boxes, this one feels like a solid step up. This product sells for \$12.99 and can be purchased here <https://amzn.to/4bLfp2a>.

It gets five out of five alligators.

*We LOVE testing out new things! Tell us about your favorite item or something you want us to try for you! Drop us a line at [media@grossepointe-news.com](mailto:media@grossepointe-news.com).*

5 Out Of 5



## Spring braised lamb with herbs, peas and asparagus

### Courtesy of Mombeau’s Table

Spring truly begins for me when the Lily of the valley pushes through the edges of the lawn and the tennis nets go back up at Elworthy.

Like the start of any new season, my food inspiration runs wild. The greens and yellows of spring replace the grays and browns that lingered throughout winter. We have a bit of time to go, as I have yet to notice many buds on the trees, but a few days of warm weather is enough to get me excited. Spring will stop teasing us and commit soon. It has to.

Lately I’ve been craving meals from the grill and less time in front of the oven. But with the temperature still swinging between warm sunshine, freezing mornings and winds strong enough to blow you over, braising felt like the better option this past Sunday. Plus, a Sunday slow cook is always a good idea.

This dish captures the feeling of spring while still offering the comfort we need during these in-between days.

Tender lamb is slowly braised until rich and flavorful, then brightened with fresh herbs and lemon. Peas and asparagus bring those vibrant spring colors and flavors to the dish.

I used rosemary because it pairs so well with lamb. I added it early on to really infuse the broth. Once the stew came out of the oven, I stirred in lots of parsley, basil and tarragon, which freshens everything up.

The peas and asparagus are added at the end so they keep crisp. You can make this ahead and keep it in the fridge overnight. But leave out the ingredients that are added after the braise to keep them fresh and green.

It’s warm and comforting, but with a clear nod to the season ahead. Forgo the ham this year and serve this perfect Easter centerpiece.

Cheers, Mombeau

#### Spring Lamb Stew

- 3.5 lbs lamb shoulder steaks
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 leeks, washed and sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups baby potatoes, halved
- 1 tbsp each rosemary,

- tarragon, basil, parsley
- 2 cups white wine
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 12-14 asparagus spears, cut into half inch pieces
- Zest of one lemon
- Juice of half lemon
- Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat and add two tablespoons of olive oil. Season the lamb generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Sear the lamb until browned and caramelized, about two to three minutes per side, working in batches if necessary. Transfer the lamb to a plate and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the leeks and carrots to the pot. Season with a pinch of salt and sauté for about four minutes, until they begin to soften. Add the garlic and cook for another minute, stirring frequently.

Pour in the wine, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the



PHOTO BY KAREN FERGUSON

pan. Let the wine simmer and reduce for about one minute. Stir in the chicken broth, potatoes and fresh herbs, then bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Add the lamb back, cover the pot and transfer it to the oven.

Cook for one and a half to two hours, or until the lamb is very tender.

Remove the pot from the oven and place it back on the stove. Using tongs, transfer the lamb to a plate. Shred the meat, discarding the bones, and

return the shredded lamb to the pot. Add the peas, asparagus, lemon zest and lemon juice and let everything simmer for a few minutes until the vegetables are tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.



## EAT WELL, FEEL WELL, LIVE WELL

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## Merlot resurrected

Nine Sonoma County wine lovers gathered at a table in a Petaluma restaurant on a recent Thursday evening to pull corks on 16 different classic bottles of wine.

Included in the lineup was a bottle from 1924, another from 1961, an iconic Napa Valley cabernet, two other red wines from Bordeaux, a 40-year-old barbaresco and a 1997 German auslese for dessert.

One of the best wines in the room was an old “right bank” red made primarily from merlot. Everyone liked it. And no one brought up the movie “Sideways.” In fact, almost everyone praised the wine as absolutely superior.

Today, 22 years after the film debuted, per-

haps its odious and incorrect message has finally been put to rest.

For those who may have forgotten, “Sideways” was a popular film that caused many in the wine industry to convulse because of a single line of dialogue.

The film was essentially an homage to pinot noir. The main character in the film, Miles Raymond, was a disreputable vaunter who arrogantly trashes merlot.

His passion for pinot and his misguided anger toward merlot leads to his diatribe before entering a restaurant. He tells a friend, “ ... if anyone orders merlot, I’m leaving. I am NOT drinking any %\$#@ merlot!”

Although the movie

stimulated sales of pinot noir, it had an astoundingly negative reaction toward merlot. U.S. sales of this stellar grape and its wine began to slide. For the next 20 years, the variety languished.

In fact, for most of that two-decade period, if anyone who had seen the movie learned they were drinking a wine made with merlot, they would shudder and blame the movie.

Merlot is a superb grape variety, and the wine it produces can be reliably more interesting in many ways than cabernet sauvignon, to which it is related. They are part of the same “Bordeaux” grape family.

It was quite a decline for a grape that was so popular with consumers in the early 1990s, soon

after “60 Minutes” aired a 1991 segment called “The French Paradox,” which discussed the health benefits of red wine consumption among the French.

Merlot sales here blossomed. One of the industry leaders with the grape was a Napa Valley producer by the name of Dan Duckhorn, whose eponymous winery did as much as anyone to establish the variety’s star-spangled image.

Dan Duckhorn passed away recently at age 87 of heart failure. I remember him fondly for his always-ready smile and his lighthearted attitude toward the film.

Dan well knew that merlot was the star grape in Bordeaux’s “right bank” wines that could last nearly as long as did Bordeaux’s “left



by Dan Berger

bank” cabernet blends.

With merlot as his primary calling card, Duckhorn eventually built one of the largest, most successful and prestigious wine companies in California. Today it includes properties in various locations.

And so it is with a bit of irony, perhaps, that Dan Duckhorn and I once joked that one of his favorite projects is a beautiful property in the cool Anderson Valley of Mendocino County called Goldeneye.

The merlot master with the grand sense of humor and an ever-pres-

ent twinkle in his eye developed Goldeneye specifically to specialize in pinot noir. I suggested to him that maybe he should plant a little bit of merlot on that ranch.

I suspect he didn’t take my suggestion seriously.

No wine of the week.

To find out more about Sonoma County resident Dan Berger, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF AI-3DOT PRODUCTIONS AND BIG CREEK PROJECTS.  
Left, Naomi Watts as Iris and Bill Murray as Walter in the 2024 movie “The Friend,” written by Scott McGehee, David Siegel and Sigrid Nunez. Directed by Scott McGehee and David Siegel.

MOVIE REVIEW  
“The Friend”  
2024 - Rated R  
1 hr 59 min  
★★★★☆

I generally avoid books and movies about academia. Mainly because it seems like half the college professors on the planet feel a need to write about their rather mundane exploits in the workplace. As a result, about 90 percent of their tales are a retelling of the same old topics — young literary stars, infidelity, messy relationships, book tours and of course, alcohol and drug abuse. So I was reluctant to put this one in my queue. The movie poster also indicated that

it was a story focused on a dog. While I don’t dislike dogs, I’m a self-avowed cat person. On the other hand, it happens to star the legendary Bill Murray (“Lost in Translation,” “Rushmore,” “Moonrise Kingdom” and just a ton of other fantastic movies) and Naomi Watts (“Mulholland Drive” “Penguin Bloom”), so it had to be worth a watch. The film is from the talented writing/directing team of Scott McGehee and David Siegel, known for titles like “The Deep End” and “What Maisie Knew.” It’s a heart-warming adaptation of the best-selling novel by Sigrid Nunez. Don’t

expect one of your typical light-hearted tales full of amusing capers. It’s a quiet, nuanced study of friendship, loss and healing without being sappy. Just an honest telling of a poignant story. One that slowly pulls you in before you know it, and simply won’t let go. Naomi Watts plays Iris, a teacher and writer who’s suffering writer’s block. She’s at an impasse with her latest novel, aptly titled “Eastern Block.” She’s also reeling from the loss of her close friend and fellow writer/teacher Walter, played to perfection by Bill Murray. He’s a charismatic, lively character who was a significant mentor to Iris.



Blocking the entranceway.



Iris walking with Apollo and her friend Marjorie (Ann Dowd).



# Movie Junkie Mark

by Mark Domin

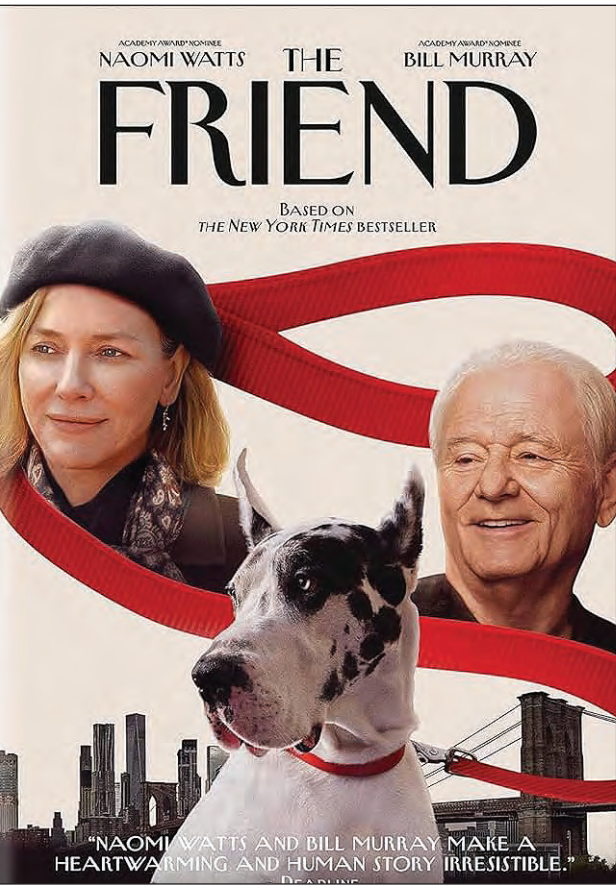
“Life is too short to watch mediocre movies”



We learn over the course of the movie that he took his life, which naturally has a devastating impact on Iris. Their special relationship is revealed through a series of flashbacks. There are also a couple scenes where Iris has some deeply moving conversations with his spirit, presented in a realistic manner. Just when you think things can’t get much worse for Iris, a wrench is thrown into the works. Walter decided to give his beloved dog “Apollo” to her after his passing. Now this isn’t just your run of the mill canine, mind you. It’s a 150-pound Great Dane that he found one day while out jogging. I’ve read that the production team spent six months searching for the perfect dog. They eventually found “Bing” in Iowa and what a find! He was not only a formidable presence in the film, but his sad facial expressions were priceless. If a dog were eligible for an Oscar, this fellow would have gotten a trophy for sure. Talk about an upheaval. Iris lives in a tiny, rent-controlled New York City apartment. She freely

admits that she’s a cat person and has no intention of keeping the dog for long. When Apollo first enters his temporary home, he quickly jumps on the bed and growls at Iris when she attempts to sleep there. This is now his turf. She resigns herself to nights sleeping on the floor. It’s apparent that he’s also grieving for the loss of Walter. It’s something the two will have to work through together. Apollo doesn’t make things easy for Iris. He refuses to eat or drink, and lays around in a deep funk. Then one day, she returns to her apartment after her teaching gig to discover her new pal decided to make a statement by trashing the place. A further complication is when the building’s handyman discovers the dog. He’s been told by management that there’s a strict no pets policy, and tells Iris she has to get rid of the dog ASAP. So she needs to find someone to adopt the dog. Searching a number of adoptions/rescue agencies proves futile. So now what? As the film progresses, Iris and Apollo

slowly begin the process of healing. There’s a scene where when she reads some writing of Walter’s out loud, Apollo snaps to attention and hangs onto her every word. He apparently recognized the work of his late master. Cinematographer Giles Nuttgens does a brilliant job of capturing what a vibrant and bustling city New York is. It’s almost comical seeing this huge dog walking the crowded streets led by a petite blonde like Ms. Watts. There’s one bustling street scene that’s a tip of the hat to the iconic film “Midnight Cowboy” with the song “Everybody’s Talking” sung by none other than Detroit’s own Iggy Pop. I wasn’t sure what to expect with this film but I must say I was pleasantly surprised. I think the acting was exceptional. It’s probably the best performance I’ve seen from Ms. Watts. And even though Bill Murray doesn’t have a great deal of screen time, his presence is definitely felt. Also, I can’t say enough about Bing’s performance — and that’s coming from a diehard cat lover. If you’re looking for a couple more similar films about animal/owner relationships, I can recommend two that I’ve reviewed in this column. You might enjoy “The Penguin Lessons” and “My Penguin Friend.” Both are guaranteed to put a smile on your face. And like with this movie, you’ll need to have some tissues handy when watching them. They’re quite moving. Currently streaming for free on Kanopy (with your library card) and to rent on Prime. Note to parents: I really don’t know why this film was rated “R”. Perhaps because Bill Murray’s character took his life? I’d be inclined to rate it “PG-13”.



Movie poster for “The Friend.”



Iris (Watts) and Apollo strolling the streets of New York.



Walter (Bill Murray) with his new friend Apollo (Bing).

My rating system:

★ A real stinker. A movie that is so bad, you’re embarrassed to admit you’ve seen it, but you have to rate it nonetheless.

★★ So-so. Not a total waste of time, but you would have been better off reading a good book.

★★★ Pretty good. In fact, if there weren’t any other movies in your queue, you might watch it again.

★★★★ One you’d recommend to friends.

★★★★★ So good you’d actually buy it!

If you have any movie suggestions, feel free to email me at: dominmark@yahoo.com. Also, if you’re looking for more recommendations, be sure to check out my blog: moviejunkie mark.blogspot.com.



# Weekly Challenge

## UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |   |   |   | 2 | 6 |   | 9 |   |
|   | 5 |   | 4 | 1 |   |   | 8 | 3 |
|   |   |   |   | 5 |   | 6 |   |   |
|   | 7 |   |   |   |   | 9 |   | 6 |
| 3 |   |   | 6 |   | 1 |   |   | 7 |
| 2 |   | 9 |   |   |   |   | 3 |   |
|   |   | 5 |   | 3 |   |   |   |   |
| 7 | 1 |   |   | 6 | 8 |   | 5 |   |
|   | 3 |   | 1 | 4 |   |   |   | 9 |

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

### Previous puzzle solution

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| 8 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 1 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 7 |
| 2 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 9 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 8 |

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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3/12 Solution

## Pointe Word Search

Find the words on the left in the puzzle below.

BASKET  
BUNNY  
CHOCOLATE  
CROSS  
DUCK  
EASTER  
EGG  
MORNING  
RABBIT  
STONE  
SUNRISE

M B A S K E T O C A  
E U I R K C U D E D  
Q N U E A R Z T A T  
R N R A T S A S S G  
I Y G V Z L J U W N  
X G F T O Z T N P I  
E Z H E S T O R U N  
O I O R A B B I T R  
H H S T O N E S O O  
C R O S S A R E G M

## Contract Bridge

YOU CAN WIN 'EM ALL

West dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ A J 9 5  
♥ 7 5 4  
♦ K Q 8 6 2  
♣ 9

WEST

♠ K 4  
♥ A K 10 8 3 2  
♦ 10 7 5 4  
♣ 6

EAST

♠ 8 7 6 3  
♥ Q J 9 6  
♦ J 9 3  
♣ 10 4

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 2  
♥ —  
♦ A  
♣ A K Q J 8 7 5 3 2

The bidding:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 ♥  | Pass  | 1 NT | Pass  |
| 2 ♥  | Pass  | Pass | 3 ♥   |
| Pass | 4 ♥   | Pass | 6 ♣   |
| Pass | 6 ♦   | Pass | 7 ♣   |
| Dble |       |      |       |

Opening lead — ace of hearts.

The 1974 Spingold Teams was won by the then relatively unknown four-some of Steve Goldberg, Lou Bluhm, Richard Shepherd and Larry Gould, all of Georgia.

This deal proved decisive in one of their matches. Shepherd (North) and Gould (South) bid and made a doubled grand slam after West

had opened one heart and East had responded one notrump. Gould's pass of one notrump might seem peculiar, but he knew the bidding would not die at this point because his opponents (Bobby Goldman and Mark Blumenthal of the Dallas Aces) were playing the notrump response as a forcing bid.

When Goldman rebid two hearts and the next two players passed, Gould began to make up for lost time by cuebidding hearts. This pleased Shepherd greatly, since he had an exceptionally good hand considering his previous silence, and he indicated this by responding four hearts — a cuebid of his own.

Gould was delighted by this development and jumped to six clubs. Shepherd, who assumed his partner had a two-suited hand rather than a one-suiter, then corrected six clubs to six diamonds, expecting to locate either a diamond or spade fit.

But when South persisted with seven clubs, West, under the impression that his opponents had had some kind of accident, doubled and led the heart ace. Gould ruffed, drew trump, cashed the ace of diamonds and claimed 13 tricks for a score of 2,330 points. And that's how championships are won!

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by Steve Becker

## Universal Crossword

Edited by Taylor Johnson March 19, 2026

### ACROSS

- 1 Thai currency  
5 Obliterates, in gamer-speak  
9 \_\_\_ and sweet  
14 Medicinal succulent  
15 Underground part of a tree  
16 Grinding tooth  
17 \*Lounge lazily (In this clue's answer, note letters 1-5)  
19 Friendliness  
20 Increase sevenfold  
21 Hordes  
22 "Painting to Be Stepped On" artist  
23 Chat room overseer  
24 Colonial housing unit?  
25 \*Chilled (... letters 4-7)  
28 Fast-track program at the airport, briefly  
30 Feel unwell  
31 Air kiss sound  
35 Greek I  
36 Fill up again, as a dishwasher  
39 Be in debt  
40 Combines, as resources  
42 \*Ryan Reynolds or Rob McElhenney, to Wrexham's pro footballers (... letters 4-6)  
44 Design deed  
46 Some heirs  
47 \_\_\_ on the back  
50 Bumbling  
53 High-pitched barks  
56 Reunion participants  
58 \*Part of the Constitution that establishes the legislative branch (letters 6-8)  
61 Given false hope ... or a hint to this puzzle's theme  
63 Pet doc  
64 Bicycles built for two  
65 Yank  
66 First lady?  
67 Museum display  
68 Knock loudly  
69 Messy space  
70 Hi-\_\_\_ image

### DOWN

- 1 Low opera voice  
2 Extraterrestrial  
3 Kids' vegetable-passing game  
4 Udder part  
5 Field in which raises happen often?  
6 "\_\_\_ ever lie to you?"  
7 Zero  
8 The "S" of PST: Abbr.

### ACROSS

- 9 Know-how  
10 "Blue," for "blew"  
11 Martini garnish  
12 Evaluates  
13 Lovers' rendezvous  
18 Bit of gossip  
21 Genetic testing facilities  
24 Vowel quintet  
26 October gems  
27 Brontosaurus descriptor  
28 Gratuity  
29 Phillipa of "Hamilton"  
32 Took second, say  
33 Fill with wonder  
34 That lady  
37 Behold, in Latin  
38 Follower of "Scooby-," or "Ski-"  
41 Fidget (toy)  
43 "Radiolab" producer  
45 Mystery  
47 Ziti or penne  
48 Where to exchange vows  
49 Intoxicated, informally  
51 Chum  
52 Moderate gaits  
54 Annoy  
55 Locations  
57 Coffee, slangily  
59 Letter-shaped fastener  
60 Rapper  
62 Egyptian viper

### PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | N | O | W | S | H | A | H |   | P | S | P |
| L | O | C | O | P | O | C | O |   | A | S | H |
| A | D | U | L | T | A | N | I | M | A | T | I |
| B | E | L | F | R | Y | D | E | L | L | U | G |
| S | A | U | C | Y | T | T | Y | L | B | L | U |
| L | S | U | A | H | A |   | A | U | D | I | O |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | B | O | D | Y | B | U |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | R | A | M | L | S | D |
| B | R | I | N | G | M | E | T | O | L | I | F |
| L | A | C | E | S |   | R | C | A |   | L | A |
| I | M | E | D |   | P | E | A | K |   | M | I |
| P | A | T |   | B | L | O | C |   | G | E | N |
|   |   |   |   | D | R | F | R | A | N | K | E |
|   |   |   |   | A | R | O | N |   | E | M | U |
| N | Y | Y |   |   |   | R | O | S | Y |   | N |

3/12 Solution

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3/19

Duped by Jonathan Raksin

|    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 |    | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  |    | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 |    |    |   |    | 15 |    |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |    |    |
| 17 |    |    |   |    | 18 |    |    |    |    | 19 |    |    |    |    |
| 20 |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 21 |    |    |    |    |
| 22 |    |    |   |    | 23 |    |    |    |    | 24 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   | 25 | 26 |    |    |    | 27 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 28 | 29 |    |   |    |    |    |    | 30 |    |    |    | 31 | 32 | 33 |
| 35 |    |    |   |    |    | 36 | 37 |    |    |    | 38 |    | 39 |    |
| 40 |    |    |   |    | 41 |    | 42 |    |    |    |    | 43 |    |    |
|    |    |    |   | 44 |    | 45 |    |    |    | 46 |    |    |    |    |
| 47 | 48 | 49 |   | 50 |    |    | 51 | 52 |    |    | 53 |    | 54 | 55 |
| 56 |    |    |   | 57 |    |    | 58 |    |    | 59 | 60 |    |    |    |
| 61 |    |    |   |    |    |    | 62 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 64 |    |    |   |    |    |    |    | 65 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 67 |    |    |   |    | 68 |    |    |    |    | 69 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## Royal Stars Weekly Horoscopes

**Moon Alert:** There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions. The Moon is in ARIES.

**Happy Birthday for Thursday, March 19, 2026:** You're imaginative, fanciful and blunt. You're an original thinker with radical solutions. Exciting changes will bring you increased personal freedom this year. Stay flexible. Let go of whatever holds you back. Seek out new opportunities and be ready to act fast on them. Expect to travel.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)  
It's OK to second-guess yourself today. You might be genuinely confused or discouraged. You might feel disappointed. You might feel overwhelmed by domestic problems. Yet, ironically, you have the energy to make improvements. Tonight: You're in charge.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)  
Cut yourself some slack today. Communications with others are subject to confusion and disappointment. You might feel cautious and want to pull in a little — even hide. That's OK. It is what it is. (Just for today.) Tonight: Solitude.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)  
This is a tricky time for friendships. You might feel disappointed in a friend. Ironically, you want to take action and make things better. But are you sure you know what you want? Do nothing until you have more clarity. Tonight: Friendships.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)  
Authority figures, bosses and parents might be confusing today. You might feel diminished or criticized, and yet you might misinterpret things as well. Take time to process this. Tonight: You're admired.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)  
When it comes to politics, social issues and religion, you might feel disappointed or confused today. You might even feel misled. In turn, this could make you want to bring about change or improvement. Organize your thoughts and be ready to act on them later. Tonight: Study and learn.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)  
You might be disappointed in your fair share of something — perhaps an inheritance or anything to do with shared property. Maybe your expectations weren't realistic? Before you react, take a beat and sort things out. Tonight: Check your finances.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)  
Even though you want to make some changes, especially to a relationship or a friendship. Because things are fuzzy, don't do anything you might later regret. Tonight: Cooperate.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)  
Look for ways to improve your job or your health today. Be aware that this discouragement might not be based on solid facts, but rather on disappointed hopes and wishes. Wait until tomorrow when clarity dawns. Tonight: Work.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)  
Issues related to romance, social outings and children are subject to misinterpretation, disappointment and disillusionment today. And yet, part of you wants to make changes to "fix" things. Best to wait a day or two to get your true bearings. Tonight: Socialize!

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)  
Someone older might say or do something that makes you feel diminished or discouraged. This means that your desire to whip things in shape at home or with a family member might be ill-timed. Wait until tomorrow, at least. Tonight: Cocoon at home.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)  
There's an element of confusion and discouragement today, which is also mixed with a sense of determination. This can be a dangerous combination. Wait this one out. Tonight: A discussion.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)  
Financial matters might disappoint you today. Perhaps you are expecting more. You also might feel deceived, or you might be personally confused. Resist your urge to fix things until you know what you're doing. Tonight: Check your money.

**BORN TODAY**  
Actor Bruce Willis (1955), baseball pitcher Clayton Kershaw (1988), actress Glenn Close (1947).



I WOULDN'T, BUT  
SOMEBODY MIGHT...



## Reg Smythe



## Johnny Hart and Mason Mastroianni



Greg, Brian, Neal and Mort Walker



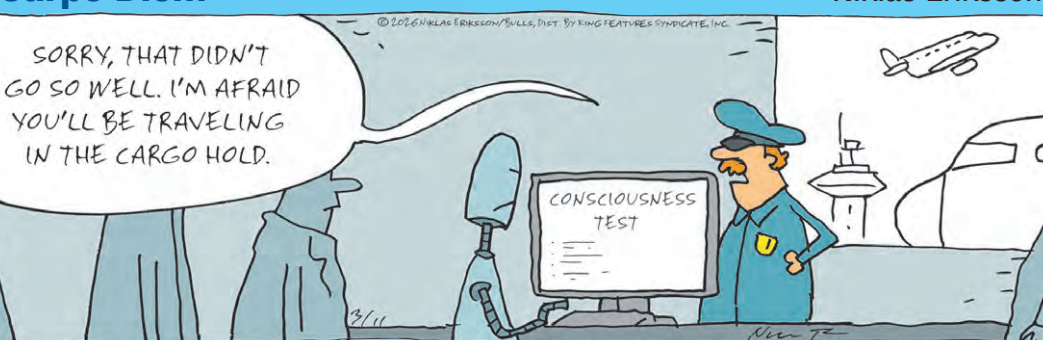
## Mike Peters



Tom Batiuk and Dan Davis



Niklas Eriksson



Mikael Wulff and Anders Morgenthaler



"HE MUST BE THE 'BEAR MINIMUM.'"





# Grosse Pointe News



# THURSDAY



# COMICS

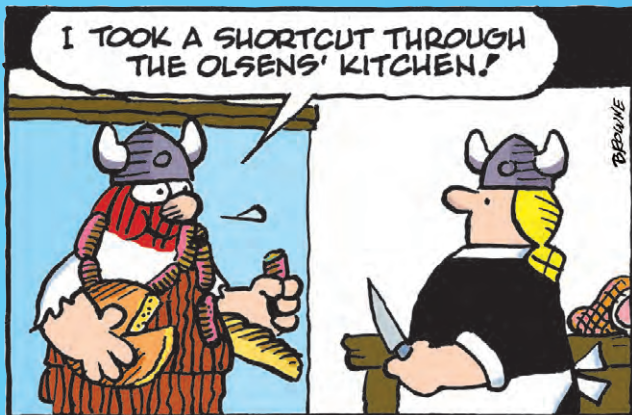
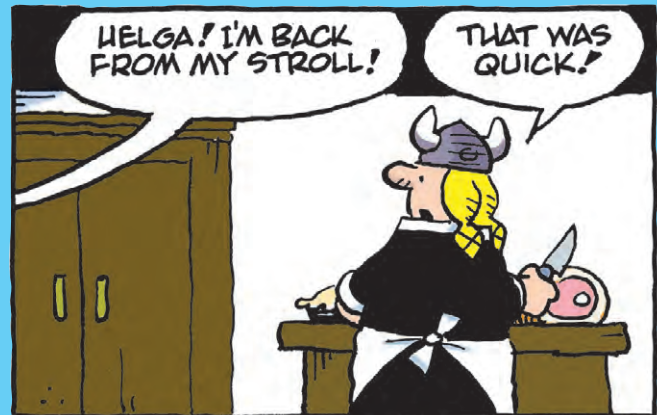
Garfield

Jim Davis



Hagar The Horrible

(Dik Browne & Chris Browne Original Creators) Bob Webber Jr. and Gary Hallgren



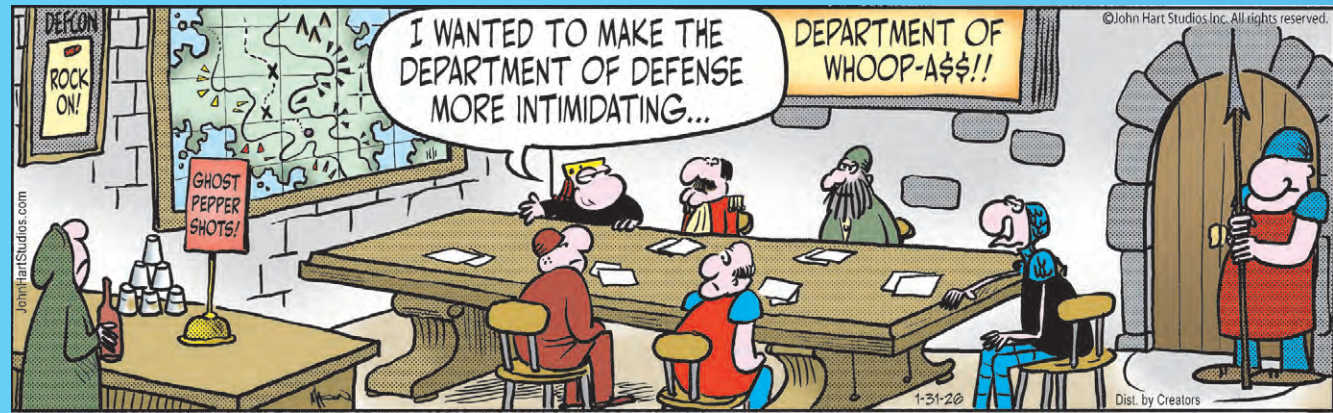
Close To Home

John McPherson



Wizard of Id

Created by Brant Parker and Johnny Hart. Currently by Mason Mastroianni



Mr. Thurgford was famous for his unique chemistry labs.

Ziggy

Tom Wilson



Blondie

Chris and Dean Young



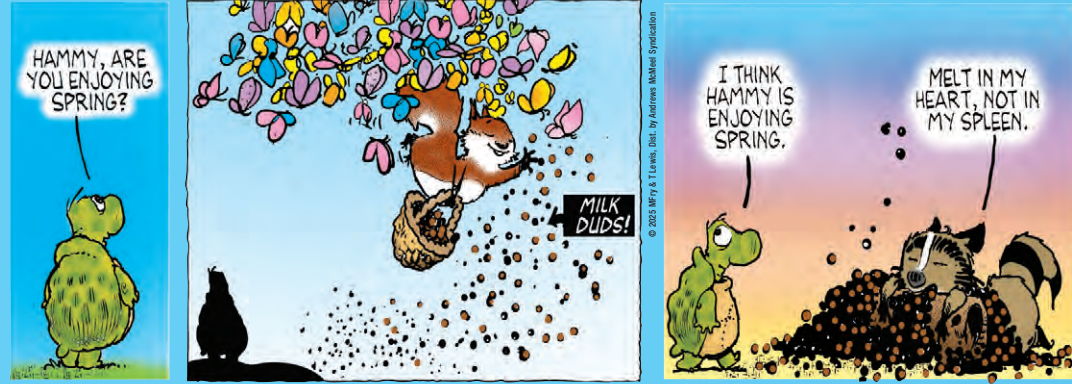
Marmaduke

Paul & Brad Anderson



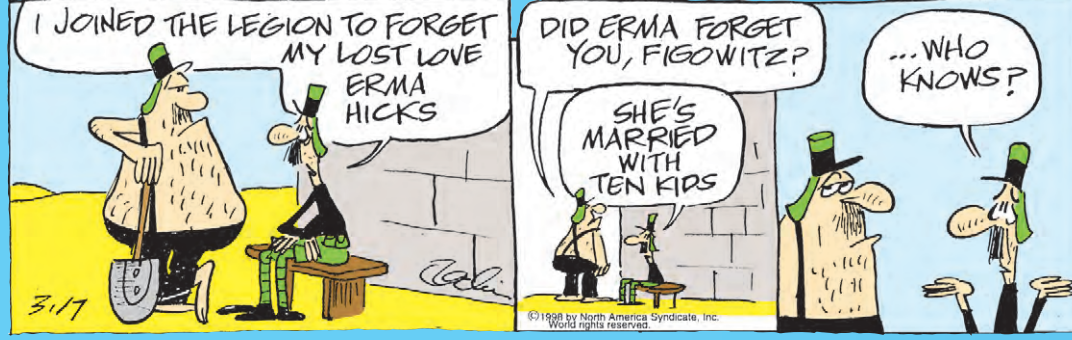
Over The Hedge

Michael Fry and T. Lewis



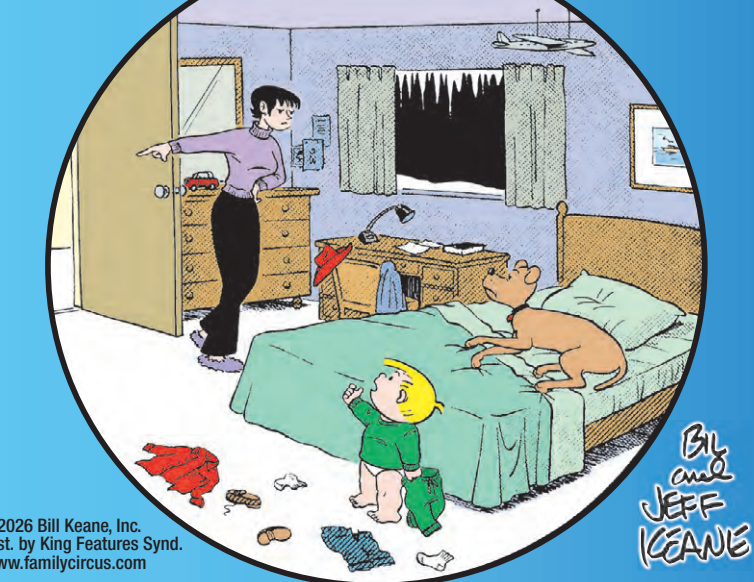
Crock

Created by Bill Rechin and Brant Parker



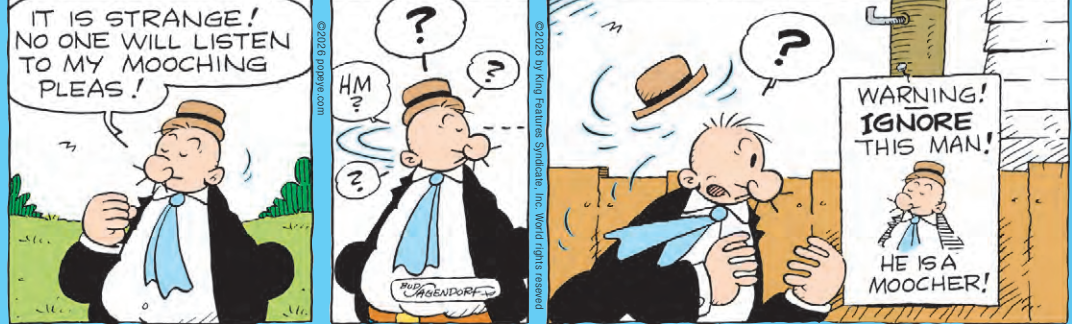
Family Circus

Bill and Jeff Keane



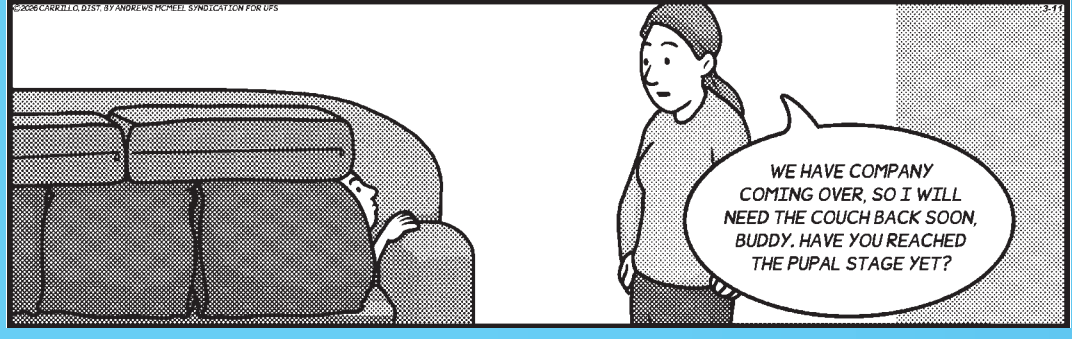
Popeye

Bud Sagendorf



F Minus

Tony Carrillo





# WORLD'S LARGEST RODENT

## CAPYBARA ANSWERS KIDS' QUESTIONS!

There are more than 2,000 species of rodents around the world.

When you think of rodents, you might picture mice or rats. But the **capybara** is also a rodent, and it's the largest one on Earth!

### What does a capybara eat?

Capybaras are **herbivores**, which means we only eat plants. And we can eat a lot of grass every day! Circle every other letter to find out how much:

S B I L X J T V O S E W I Y G S H P T L P  
V O X U L N Y D Z S F A C D H A P Y C  
S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

During dry seasons, we may also eat reeds, grains, melons and squashes.

### How are capybaras like hippos?

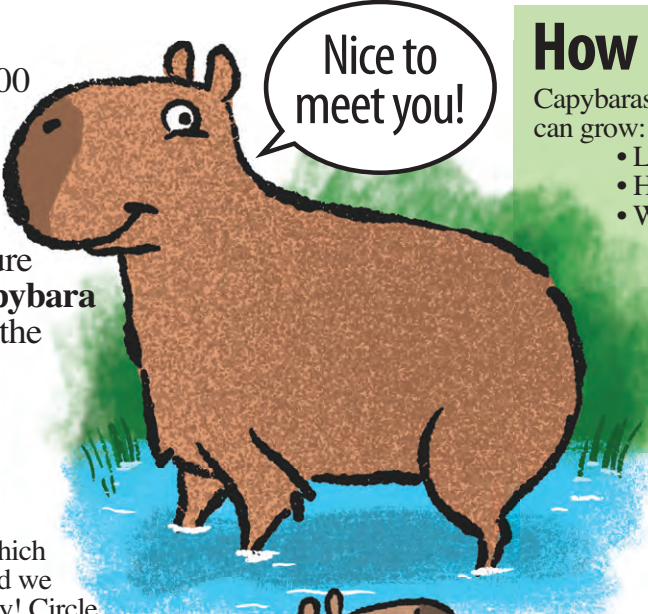
We capybaras share a clever feature with hippos. Our eyes, ears and nostrils sit high on our heads, so we can keep our bodies mostly underwater while still seeing, hearing and breathing. Pretty sneaky, right?

### How do capybaras stay cool?

On hot days, capybaras relax in shallow water or mud to keep our bodies cool. We usually eat when temperatures are cooler, like early morning or evening. But if we feel threatened, we wait until nighttime to find food.



**Standards Link:** Life Science: Animals have physical features and adaptations that aid in survival.



### How big is a capybara?

Capybaras are surprisingly big. Here's how much we can grow:

- Length: 3.2 to 4.2 feet (100–130 cm)
- Height at shoulder: about 1.6 feet (50 cm)
- Weight: 60 to 174 pounds (27–79 kg)

Some people say we look like a barrel with legs! We have long, light-brown hair and no tail. Our feet are slightly webbed, with four toes on each front foot and three on each back foot.

### Try This!

Measure your height and weight and compare yourself to a capybara. Who is taller? Who weighs more?

MY HEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_

MY WEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_



Capybara teeth never stop growing!



### Why do capybaras have webbed feet?

Capybaras live near rivers, lakes, and wetlands in Central and South America. Water is important because the plants that capybaras eat grow nearby, and it also helps keep them safe from predators.

Capybaras are strong swimmers and can stay underwater for up to five minutes to hide. Their webbed feet help them paddle through water.

**Standards Link:** Life Science: Animals have physical features and adaptations that aid in survival.

### Why do birds sit on capybaras?

You might see birds perched on capybaras' backs. The birds search for insects in the grass and sometimes pick bugs from a capybara's fur.

Both of us benefit—the birds get food, and we capybaras get a little grooming!



### Extra! Extra! Capybara Facts and Opinions

Look through the newspaper and find six adjectives that describe a capybara. Can you find three that are opinions and three that are facts?

**Standards Link:** Reading Comprehension: Understand the difference between facts and opinions.

### Kid Scoop® Puzzler

#### Capybara Fun Facts

Use the code to learn more about these cool creatures.

| CAPYBARA CODE |        |
|---------------|--------|
| A = 26        | N = 13 |
| B = 25        | O = 12 |
| C = 24        | P = 11 |
| D = 23        | Q = 10 |
| E = 22        | R = 9  |
| F = 21        | S = 8  |
| G = 20        | T = 7  |
| H = 19        | U = 6  |
| I = 18        | V = 5  |
| J = 17        | W = 4  |
| K = 16        | X = 3  |
| L = 15        | Y = 2  |
| M = 14        | Z = 1  |

What is a group of capybaras called?

26 19 22 9 23

Because of their calm, social behavior, many people consider capybaras to be this.

21 9 18 22 13 23 15 2

### FROM THE Kid Scoop® LESSON LIBRARY

#### Friendliness Award

The capybara is known for being friendly. Think about someone who shows kindness or teamwork. Write a letter to the editor explaining why that person deserves a "Capybara Award" for friendliness.

**Standards Link:** Language Arts: Write in letter format.

### Double Double Word Search

BIRDS  
CAPYBARA  
CLEVER  
COOL  
DAYS  
DRY  
EARS  
EAT  
FOOT  
GROW  
HOT  
LAKES  
MUD  
STRONG  
WATER

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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**Standards Link:** Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

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# SPORTS



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## Swimmers finish winter strong at state finals

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

The boys varsity swim and dive season culminated last weekend in the state finals and the Pointes were well-represented in some of the final leaderboards. Grosse Pointe South, Grosse Pointe North and University Liggett School each had swimmers earn All-State honors to end the season on a high note among the best in the state.

### Grosse Pointe North/Liggett

Grosse Pointe North's boys swim and dive team had a solid showing at the Division 3 state finals Friday, March 13, and Saturday, March 14. The Norsemen finished 12th overall as a team, but had several swimmers earn All-State recognition for their results at the finals.

"We had seven who went and seven who came out with some hardware," North boys swim and dive head coach Carl Scozzari said. "... A lot of those guys pushed each other. They just kind of gave each other that friendly competition in a good, team atmosphere and I couldn't be prouder. ...

For some of those guys to graduate and go out on top was a real joy."

North had three individual swimmers who swam their way to All-State times on Saturday. Junior Tyler Collins finished eighth in the 100-yard butterfly with his time of 53.80 to achieve All-State status. Fellow junior Brady Winbigler got All-State recognition for his eighth-place finish in the 500 freestyle, finishing at 4:52.54, and was an honorable mention for All-State by finishing 13th in the 200 IM.

Senior James Gusmano was All-State in the 100 breaststroke, finishing seventh with a time of 1:00.29. He also finished ninth in the 50 freestyle, with his time of 21.94 good enough for an All-State honorable mention.

Gusmano and fellow senior Paul Stephens, along with Collins and Thomas Kezhaya, finished eighth with All-State honors in the 200 freestyle relay, coming in at 1:30.07. The veteran leadership of Stephens and Gumasno showed in their finishes at the state finals last weekend and helped solidify their legacy within the program, not only in the pool, but



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANE WINBIGLER

Swimmers representing Grosse Pointe North made the trip to Holland for the Division 3 boys swim and dive state finals, where the Norsemen had seven swimmers finish with All-State times. From left; coach Carl Scozzari, James Jewell, Thomas Kezhaya, Brady Winbigler, Paul Stephens, Tyler Collins, James Gusmano, Alejandro Delgado and coach Ian Donahue.

also in their attitude as teammates.

"Paul was one of our workhorses," Scozzari said. "... He was like the captain of the ship and really held the team down together and led our cheers. James (Gusmano) helped keep things light and friendly, so their legacy will be

felt when they leave."

Representing University Liggett School at the Division 3 finals was senior Brendan Beland. The Knight finished with two All-State times, coming in fourth in the 50 freestyle with his time of 21.46. He also finished fourth in the 100 butter-

fly with a time of 51.24.

**Grosse Pointe South**  
The Blue Devils raced in the Division 2 state finals last weekend. Coming out of states with some of the best results was sophomore swimmer Brady Bond, who took home two All-State finishes.

Bond finished fourth in the 50-yard freestyle final with his time of 21.27. He also took fourth in the 100 freestyle, coming in at 46.56. Bond, Oliver Ellefson, Everett Wood and Nadeem Haurani finished 16th in the final standings for the 200 medley relay.

### ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

## Bond solidifies rising star status for South swim

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

There has been no shortage of standout swimmers to come out

of the Pointes over the years and Grosse Pointe South sophomore Brady Bond is making his case as another rising star in the pool. He has swum

his way through the ranks with Pointe Aquatics and Grosse Pointe Gators, along with his team at South, and looks to make his mark in the storied legacy of Grosse Pointe's swimming community.

Bond had a strong freshman campaign in 2024-25, but truly burst onto the scene this winter as a sophomore. He became an All-State swimmer and MAC champion this season and found himself growing into a leader. As one of the most prominent young swimmers on a relatively young South team, Bond started to find his voice as a leader and feels set up for more success thanks to the upperclassmen who still are mentors to him. "I feel like I'm becoming more of a leader on the team," Bond said. "The seniors and upperclassmen are still really the leaders, but I'm preparing well for next year and the year after that to have a bigger role."

Bond had a pair of top-five finishes at the MHSAA Division 2 boys swim and dive state finals Saturday, March 14. He finished fourth in

the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 21.27, and his time of 46.56 in the 100 freestyle also put him in fourth place as he earned All-State honors in both events. Bond also took home the MAC Red championship in the 50 freestyle at the league championship meet Feb. 28.

Big meets are nothing new for Bond. In fact, he has gone right from the high school state finals to Orlando, Fla., for the NCSA Spring National Championships. Bond is going from competing against the best in the state to the best in the country, but no matter what, his mindset in a big race always stays the same.

"I swim better when I don't think as much," Bond said. "When I think about my races too much, I get stuck in my head and don't swim as well. I try to keep my head quiet and just swim fast."

Grosse Pointe News

ATHLETE

OF THE WEEK

Brady Bond

School: Grosse Pointe South  
Sport: Swim and dive

Sponsored by Pointe Capital Management

Bond may not have reached the level of an All-State swimmer or qualified for national championship meets on his own. He has had plenty of mentors along the way, one of the most influential being his Gators and Blue Devils coach, John Fodell. Practically any swim-

mer around Grosse Pointe could say Fodell has helped them one way or another. Bond is no different, knowing his coach is there for him whenever he needs guidance both in and out of the pool. "I feel like I can ask him about anything and he'll help," Bond said. "I remember one time, during the summer, I asked him to help me and I wasn't even really swimming for him at the time. It was before my

See ATHLETE, page 6D



COURTESY PHOTO

Grosse Pointe South sophomore Brady Bond earned All-State honors twice with top-five finishes in the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyles at the Division 2 boys swim and dive state finals March 14.

Brady's Best

- Earned All-State times in 50 & 100-yard freestyle at Div. 2 state finals March 14
- 2026 50-yard freestyle MAC Red League champion



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# 2026 Spring Sports Previews▶▶

## South girls soccer hopes new leaders step up this spring

By Mike Adzima  
*Sports Reporter*

The recent track record for the Grosse Pointe South varsity girls soccer program has been pretty solid with back-to-back district championships the last two seasons. However, much of the group that built the foundation for that success is gone and the Blue Devils are faced with the task of trying to maintain a winning standard while building up a new leadership core this spring.

The change in leadership begins at the top, with Joe Cada taking over as head coach of the Blue Devils. Cada coached South’s boys varsity team in the fall and has been a longtime assistant with both the boys and girls teams at the school. He may be a familiar face on the sidelines for many Blue Devils fans, but some of the big names making an impact on the field this spring could be new,



PHOTO BY MIKE ADZIMA

**South junior Brooke Hepner, pictured during last year’s district championship game, is expected to be a key player on the attack for the Blue Devils this spring.**

emerging stars.

“There’s going to be a lot of new faces this year,” Cada said. “We graduated six or seven of our starters from last

year. ... We lost a big piece of the roster. We have seven seniors this year, but not many actually started last year. ... A lot of girls are going to

have big shoes to fill.”

One of the players Cada believes is capable of stepping up and filling those big shoes successfully is junior Brooke

Hepner. A strong sophomore season last spring has Hepner poised to be one of South’s biggest leaders this year. She will do so at a position the Blue Devils see as a key to success.

“Our biggest strength could be our wing play on the outside,” Cada said. “Brooke (Hepner) and Hadley (Eszes) will both be playing the wing and we’ll be looking to attack a lot through our wing play on the outside of the field and limit our touches in the center to play more direct soccer.”

South’s attack also could be boosted by the presence of freshman forward Freya Austin, whom the team hopes can have an immediate impact during her first high school season. Another standout freshman from whom the Blue Devils are expecting big things on the defensive side is Maryann Rillema.

The Blue Devils may not have a solid starting lineup set as the season

begins and know there may be plenty of unanswered questions to start, but have faith their effort and attitude will lead to more success this season. South will face tough tests in the MAC White Division and against non-league foes on their schedule such as Anchor Bay, Dakota and Salem. However, the team wants its work ethic to do the talking in any matchup it has.

“I expect us to be the hardest-working team on the field,” Cada said. “... Everything is going to be very team-centric. We all have to be on the same page and communicate and move as one unit to play good, fundamental soccer. ... The girls are very similar in skill this year, so I expect every girl to give 100 percent for whatever minutes they get on the field.”

South begins the season Friday, March 20, at home against Port Huron Northern starting at 7 p.m.

## Chemistry, experience are key for South girls lacrosse in 2026

By Mike Adzima  
*Sports Reporter*

It never hurts to enter a new season with a solid core of veteran players who already have plenty of chemistry on the field. That is what the Grosse Pointe South varsity girls

lacrosse team gets to benefit from to start the 2026 season, with hopes that its group of experienced leaders can help bring good results.

One of the areas where that experience could really be seen this year for South is on the attack.

The Blue Devils return four starting attack players from last season, highlighted by senior captain Lyla Hampton. Depth and experience on the attack is one major key for South, as the rest of the team’s core can follow their lead.

“We have a plethora of attackers who have skills and know what they’re doing and have been part of the program for years,” South girls lacrosse head coach Shaun Hampton said. “... We’re in pretty good shape and I feel like we have a good opportunity to be pretty darn good this year.”

While the returning experience on the attack is strong, the Blue Devils feel like they have veteran leaders all over the field. Stella Fry, another senior captain, will be expected to run the mid-field, while senior Elizabeth Petz and junior Alissa Mourad can help anchor the defense. To round it out, the team is confident that sophomore goalie Jordan LeBlanc can continue her path as a rising star in net.

“I’ve seen a lot of girls lacrosse games and she’s the best sophomore goalie in Michigan in my opinion,” Hampton said about LeBlanc. “... Other goalies have more experience, but I’ll take Jordan all day long for us.”

LeBlanc and the rest of the Blue Devils will have their leadership and skill tested plenty of times this season. South’s schedule this spring includes matchups against formidable foes like Marian, Cranbrook-Kingswood, Troy Athens and defending Division 1 state champion South Lyon.

Despite how tough their opponents may seem on paper, South is coming into the season confident it can compete with anyone. The experience and leadership the Blue Devils believe they

have could be their biggest strength. If the team is clicking and South’s experienced core is firing on all cylinders, then South believes it can get good results against the best competition out there.

“I think their real strength is how well they play together,” Hampton said. “Their chemistry, even in our first practice after tryouts, you could see they like playing together. They have their heads up and their eyes up for each other. They have really nice chemistry and I think some of the newer kids on the team and girls who didn’t necessarily start last year can be valuable additions to that chemistry.”

The Blue Devils begin the season Thursday, March 19, hosting Marian at 6 p.m.



PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

**Senior Lyla Hampton, pictured in a game against Grosse Pointe North last season, is one of several veteran attack players returning to the lineup for South girls lacrosse this spring.**

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- Removal of existing copper-clad wood railing, copper-clad newel and end posts, wood blocking, etc.
- Preparation of existing steel framework at newel and end post locations.
- Paint existing steel with galvanizing paint.
- Installation of new decorative railing as indicated on the drawings, including wood blocking, sheathing, etc..
- Roofing pitch pockets / flashing at structural supports as indicated on the drawings.

Specifications and Bid Forms will be available to General Contractors beginning **Tuesday, March 17, 2026** by contacting the office of the Architect, Ehresman Architects, via email at [architects@ehresmanarchitects.com](mailto:architects@ehresmanarchitects.com). The Architect will issue the requesting company(s) electronic (.pdf) files of the Contract Documents including drawings and specifications. The cost of document reproduction will be the responsibility of the requesting party.

Bid documents will also be available for examination (no purchase) at the following locations:

- Ehresman Architects
- Construction Association of Michigan (CAM)
- Dodge Data & Analytics
- Construction Market Data (CMD)
- Construction Data Company (CDC)

A **Pre-Bid** meeting will not be conducted for this project. It is the contractor’s responsibility to review and become familiar with the job site, conditions, etc. prior to submitting its bid to the district. Contact the Chief Engineer, Mr. Andrew Praedel @ 313-283-0243 to arrange any site visit(s) to review the project conditions prior to the bid due date.

Sealed bids will be due **Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. (local time)** at the Administration Building of the Grosse Pointe Public School System, 20601 Morningside Drive, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236, at which time and place the bids will be opened and publicly read aloud.

The School Board will not consider, accept, or open a bid received after the date and time specified for bid submission in this advertisement for bid.

The bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of a Bid Bond valued at five percent (5%) of the proposer’s maximum bid amount.

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The bids shall be accompanied by a sworn and notarized Affidavit of Compliance - Iran Economic Sanctions Act representing and warranting that the Contractor (including its officers, directors and employees) is not an “Iran linked business” within the meaning of the Iran Economic Sanctions Act, Michigan Public Act No. 517 of 2012.

Grosse Pointe Public School System’s Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any and all Bid Proposals, either in whole or in part, to waive any informalities or irregularities therein, or to award the contract to other than the contractor(s) submitting the best financial Bid Proposal (low bidder), in its sole and absolute discretion.

This project will not be funded by federal or state monies.

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# 2026 Spring Sports Previews▶▶

## South boys lacrosse looks for leadership from the front

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

The Grosse Pointe South varsity boys lacrosse team is not selling itself short coming into the 2026 season. The Blue Devils may have some question marks in certain areas on the field, but also are confident the experienced players returning at key positions will be able to lead this spring's squad to strong results.

"We're setting ourselves up for a pretty good season," South boys lacrosse head coach Justin Macksoud said. "... Pretty much all of the goals we scored last year are coming back. This is a huge year."

Having dependable offensive firepower returning to the lineup this year could be a huge key for South. The team brings back its core on the attack, highlighted by seniors Jack Smith, Eugene Agnone and Jack Cotton. It is a group that is more than familiar with each other on the field, especially if they are firing on all cylinders, South believes it has the chance to compete with anyone.



PHOTO BY MIKE ADZIMA

Senior Jack Smith returns to help lead the attack for South boys lacrosse this spring.

"They've been starting since they were sophomores and they're all back this year," Macksoud said about his attack group. "They are kind of the heart of the team and the ones who we're really going to count on for offense a lot."

Another major goal-scoring presence for South comes outside of the attack. Junior midfielder Jackson Kean returns to the lineup this season coming off of a breakout campaign in 2025, when he finished with 36 goals for the year. Junior Colin

Cotton is also back to give South an advantage in the faceoff circle. On the defensive side, South has reliable veterans like AJ Zieleniewski, Throop Linnell and Adam Ezop. However, the Blue Devils also have a young crop of defenders, including sopho-

mores Weston Jerabek and Nick Ferguson, along with freshman Charlie Harber, who could form into anchors on the back end. Rounding things out defensively is goalie Luke Parent, a senior who takes over for long-time starter Lucas

Valice. Even with some new starters in certain positions, South seems confident in the talent it has this season. The team also knows that individual talent alone is not enough to always win, but the chemistry among veterans that is spreading to newer faces in the lineup is helping bring everyone together as a unit for what they hope to be a big spring.

"There's such a familiarity with each other," Macksoud said. "... I can't tell you if there's resilience in this group. They seem hungry, but it's still early. What I've noticed so far is the support they give each other. If one of them has a question, the others aren't afraid to get in there and help them out. ... They're just such a good group of kids and even if they aren't hanging out with each other all the time, you can tell there's a lot of respect."

South opened the season after press time Wednesday, March 18, at home against Orchard Lake St. Mary's. The Blue Devils are at home again Saturday, March 21, hosting De La Salle Collegiate at 1 p.m.

# North boys lacrosse focused on steady improvement in 2026

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

Last year, the Grosse Pointe North varsity boys lacrosse team had to navigate the season while knowing part of its roster was new to the sport. That might have made it a rough spring last year for the Norsemen, but it allowed for a large portion of North's roster to gain valuable experience.

North hopes that experience can pay off in 2026. The Norsemen have plenty of players returning from last year's team with what it sees as a strong mix of veteran leadership and

young talent. North hopes to see better results than the single win it was able to tally last year. The key to more positive results could be related to the experience gained by much of the lineup last spring.

"Having some experience and some confidence," North boys lacrosse head coach Mark Seppala said. "When you go into a season and you've played the game and seen the competition before, they're not going to be surprised. They're not going to have to figure stuff out on the fly. They know what they need to do."

While some of the newer players on the team hope to come out more acclimated to the game this season, North does have its share of veterans who know the game well. One of them is senior Aiden Selenica, a team captain who is expected to be the heart of North's defense.

The team also believes it has a strong core in the midfield coming into the season. Senior J.R. Smarch is going to be a focal point of the offense from the midfield position, while junior Brennan Short can help as a more defensive-minded midfielder. Veteran seniors Stephen Listman and

Emerson Hiliker also return this year to lead North's attack. North will be relying on those veteran leaders in different parts of the field to keep the rest of the lineup up to speed. The Norsemen will find themselves tested throughout the season, with games against tough opponents like Troy Athens and cross-

town rivalry games against Grosse Pointe South and University Liggett School on the schedule.

There may be some tough tests ahead, but North wants to remain focused on the day-to-day improvements to build up to success throughout the spring.

"We preach about getting better every day,"

Seppala said. "Each individual can work to get better on their own and that should increase the skill overall of the team and we hope that makes for positive results. ... You want to be better than you were yesterday."

North begins the season Thursday, March 19, hosting Troy Athens at 5 p.m.



PHOTO BY MIKE ADZIMA

Senior midfielder J.R. Smarch will be a key figure in the Norsemen's offense this season.

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# 2026 Spring Sports Previews▶▶

## Returning core wants to continue winning ways for ULS girls lax

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

Despite an early exit in the playoffs, the 2025 season was a strong campaign for the University Liggett School girls lacrosse team. The Knights won 12 games, including a 10-game winning streak, and were Catholic League champions.

The good news for the Knights is that a good amount of the core that helped win so many games last year will be back on the field for Liggett in 2026. Liggett believes it can be one of the most talented teams in the state and it has the athletes to compete with anyone this spring.

“Our biggest strength going into this season is our athleticism,” Liggett girls lacrosse head coach Amanda Amine said. “All 18 girls on the team are multi-sport



PHOTO BY MIKE ADZIMA

Liggett senior Olivia Marcero earned first team All-State honors last spring and returns to the lineup for the Knights in 2026.

athletes and they are incredibly hard workers. Our senior leadership will also prove to be very important, especially in key games.”

The Knights return

key players like former First Team All-State senior Olivia Marcero and senior, four-year starting goaltender Madeline Unkel. Senior defender Reese Macek

and junior forward Ally Orlick also return to the lineup for Liggett this spring.

Those are just some of the players Liggett will be relying on for leader-

ship throughout the season. The Knights will need strong leadership if they plan to compete at the same level as last season against some of the state’s top teams. Liggett will find itself with another challenging route through the Catholic League and some tough non-league tests as well this spring.

“Our Catholic League schedule always proves to be very competitive,” Amine said. “We need to be ready to play each game and just take one game at a time. We purposely increased our non-conference strength of schedule this season to help better prepare us for playoffs. An early-season matchup with one of the state championship contenders, Detroit Country Day, will only help us to grow and help us to learn more about our team.”

The Knights may have

their work cut out for them, but it is not stopping the team from setting the same kind of goals with the standard of success it likes to keep. Liggett wants to remain at the top of the league and compete for a championship, but wants to keep building for the future.

“Our main goal of the season is to repeat as Catholic League Champions,” Amine said. “The girls are incredibly hungry for this, especially the seniors who want to go out on top. I continue to push for development for our newer players and want them to feel more confident out on the field. It is an awesome group of girls this season and I know we are going to have a lot of fun together.”

Liggett begins the season Wednesday, April 1, hosting Toledo Central Catholic.

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Street Numbers honored Friday at 8:30 a.m. Check out featured items at [marciawilkestatesales.com](http://marciawilkestatesales.com) and [Estatesales.net](http://Estatesales.net) on Wednesday evening. We accept cash, checks, VISA, MasterCard, Discover, AMEX and Apple Pay



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## Grosse Pointe News Yard & Estate Sale Map

THIS WEEK: 1. 551 Renaud, GPW | 2. 20558 Fairway, GPW

See Classifieds for more details

● = ESTATE SALE  
○ = YARD SALE

# DIRECTORY OF SERVICES

Some classifications are not required by law to be licensed. Please check with the proper state agency to verify license.

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Grosse Pointe Woods



2026 Spring Sports Previews▶▶

New leadership looks to put North girls soccer back on course

By Mike Adzima  
Sports Reporter

The 2025 season is one the Grosse Pointe North varsity girls soccer team wants to put behind it as quickly as possible. The Norsemen went winless last spring, but know a new season brings new hope and opportunities for more success. The program will be looking for that in 2026 under new leadership. George Nicholls takes over as the coach of the Norsemen this spring. Nicholls has coached the game at multiple levels, from youth soccer to high school and beyond. He knows North is a program capable of great things as it is just three years removed from winning a state championship, and that solid defense and fundamentals can bring the Norsemen back to suc-

cess. “I’ve had the luxury of coaching at literally every level from 3-year-olds to players who are trying to make it to the professional level,” Nicholls said. “I played my whole life. ... I always put a focus on solid defense because I was a defender. With teams I’ve coached in the past, I want the heart of my team to be on the back line, to set the tone from back to front, of how we can dictate the game.” Nicholls inherits a roster that includes plenty of players who know what it takes to win. Many of the seniors and veteran leaders on this spring’s team were on the squad that won a state championship in 2023. One of them is Leah Burney. The senior captain missed a majority of last season due to injury, but will be back on the

field for North this spring as an impactful leader in the game and in the locker room. “She sets the tone for the team in a lot of ways,” Nicholls said about Burney. “... Girls look up to her and she treats everyone well. On the field, she’s rock solid.” While Burney looks to lead things on the defensive side, look for fellow senior Meredith Dodenhoff to help lead North offensively. One of

the Norsemen’s biggest struggles during last year’s difficult season was generating offense and scoring opportunities. The team has faith it can correct those issues this spring and Dodenhoff could be at the forefront. “She gets the ball and you know something big

is going to happen,” Nicholls said. “... When she’s playing, everyone around her wants to be better. She’s the kind of person who brings the talent of her teammates up.” The Norsemen also get to compete in a new division this year, moving to the MAC Blue Division. North’s league foes this year include Fraser, Warren Cousino, Lake Shore, Lamphere, Marysville and Port Huron Northern. The team also has set itself up with what it believes are strong, challenging non-league games, including hosting cross-town rival Grosse Pointe South May 1. Coming off a winless season, the only way to go is up. A return to greatness might not come immediately, but Nicholls knows one of the most important steps

to getting there is not only having talented players capable of leading, but also getting the right kind of attitude and effort out of them. “Our skilled players are as skilled as any players I’ve seen at the high school level,” Nicholls said. “There’s no reason that we can’t connect three or four passes in a row any time we get the ball and create a dangerous opportunity. You’re not going to see this team get down and out of games because of a bad attitude. ... Even if we have a game where we’re down, our girls are going to be into that game because they have the right attitude and the right leaders in front of them.” North begins the 2026 season at home Friday, March 20, hosting L’Anse Creuse starting at 5 p.m.



ATHLETE:  
Continued from page 1D  
Lochmoor Club finals. I asked him to help me

with my pullout for breaststroke and I came in after a Gators practice and he helped me. I know I can go to him whenever.” Ending the high school season with two All-State honors, Bond will continue to train and compete on his own throughout the offsea-

son. He knows he has opportunities ahead of him in the remaining two years of his high school career to do things like win state championships and set school records for the Blue Devils. Not much will change for Bond with the high school season ending. He wants to keep his head down and stay focused on working hard to compete among the best swimmers in the country and the state next year, when the Blue Devils’ season starts up again. He already has a good idea

of where he wants to see himself a year from now. “I’m just going to work hard in practice and during the summer,” he said. “I really want to break the 45-second mark in the 100 freestyle. That’s my next big goal.”



Brady Bond swims freestyle at the Division 2 boys swim and dive state championships last week.



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**NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS AND ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF HARPER WOODS AND TO USERS OF THE CITY'S WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM OF INTENT TO ISSUE REVENUE BONDS AND THE RIGHT OF REFERENDUM RELATING THERETO**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the City Council of the City of Harper Woods, County of Wayne, Michigan, intends to issue and sell revenue bonds pursuant to Act 94, Public Acts of Michigan, 1933, as amended, in one or more series in a total amount not to exceed Five Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$5,500,000), for the purpose of paying the cost to acquire, construct, furnish and equip improvements to the Water and Sewer System of the City (the "System"), including sanitary sewer rehabilitation and collection system improvements, together with all related site improvements, equipment, appurtenances and attachments.

**SOURCE OF PAYMENT OF REVENUE BONDS**

THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE REVENUE BONDS SHALL BE PAYABLE from the revenues received by the City from the operations of the System except as provided below in the case of bonds sold to the Michigan Finance Authority in connection with the State of Michigan's Clean Water State Revolving Fund program. The revenues will consist of rates and charges billed to the users of the System, a schedule of which is presently on file in the office of the City Clerk. The rates and charges may from time to time be revised to provide sufficient revenues to provide for the expenses of operating and maintaining the system, to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds and to pay other obligations of the System.

**BOND DETAILS**

Each series of the revenue bonds will be payable in annual installments not to exceed thirty (30) in number and will bear interest at the rate or rates to be determined at public or private sale but in no event to exceed such rates as may be permitted by law on the unpaid balance from time to time remaining outstanding on the bonds.

**ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF PAYMENTS FOR BONDS SOLD TO MICHIGAN FINANCE AUTHORITY**

IN THE EVENT THAT THE REVENUE BONDS ARE SOLD TO THE MICHIGAN FINANCE AUTHORITY, THE CITY MAY PLEDGE FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE BONDS MONEY RECEIVED OR TO BE RECEIVED BY THE CITY DERIVED FROM IMPOSITION OF TAXES BY THE STATE AND RETURNED OR TO BE RETURNED TO THE CITY AS PROVIDED BY LAW, except for money the use of which is prohibited for such purposes by the State Constitution. The City may enter into an agreement providing for the payment of taxes, which taxes are collected by the State and returned to the City as provided by law, to the Michigan Finance Authority or a trustee, and such funds may be pledged for the payment of the revenue bonds.

IN THE EVENT THAT THE REVENUE BONDS ARE SOLD TO THE MICHIGAN FINANCE AUTHORITY, THE CITY MAY PLEDGE ITS LIMITED TAX FULL FAITH AND CREDIT AS SECURITY FOR THE REVENUE BONDS, IN WHICH EVENT DEBT SERVICE ON THE BONDS SHALL BE PAYABLE EITHER FROM REVENUES OF THE SYSTEM OR FROM AD VALOREM TAXES THAT MAY BE LEVIED ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY IN THE CITY, SUBJECT HOWEVER, TO CONSTITUTIONAL, STATUTORY AND CHARTER TAX RATE LIMITATIONS.

**RIGHT OF REFERENDUM**

THE REVENUE BONDS WILL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A VOTE OF THE ELECTORS UNLESS A PETITION REQUESTING SUCH A VOTE SIGNED BY NOT LESS THAN 10% OF THE REGISTERED ELECTORS OF THE CITY IS FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK WITHIN FORTY-FIVE (45) DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. IF SUCH PETITION IS FILED, THE BONDS MAY NOT BE ISSUED WITHOUT AN APPROVING VOTE OF A MAJORITY OF THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE CITY VOTING THEREON.

THIS NOTICE is given pursuant to the requirements of Section 33, Act 94, Public Acts of Michigan, 1933, as amended.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION will be furnished at the office of the City Clerk upon request.

**Leslie M. Frank**, City Clerk  
City of Harper Woods

Published: GPN, March 19, 2026