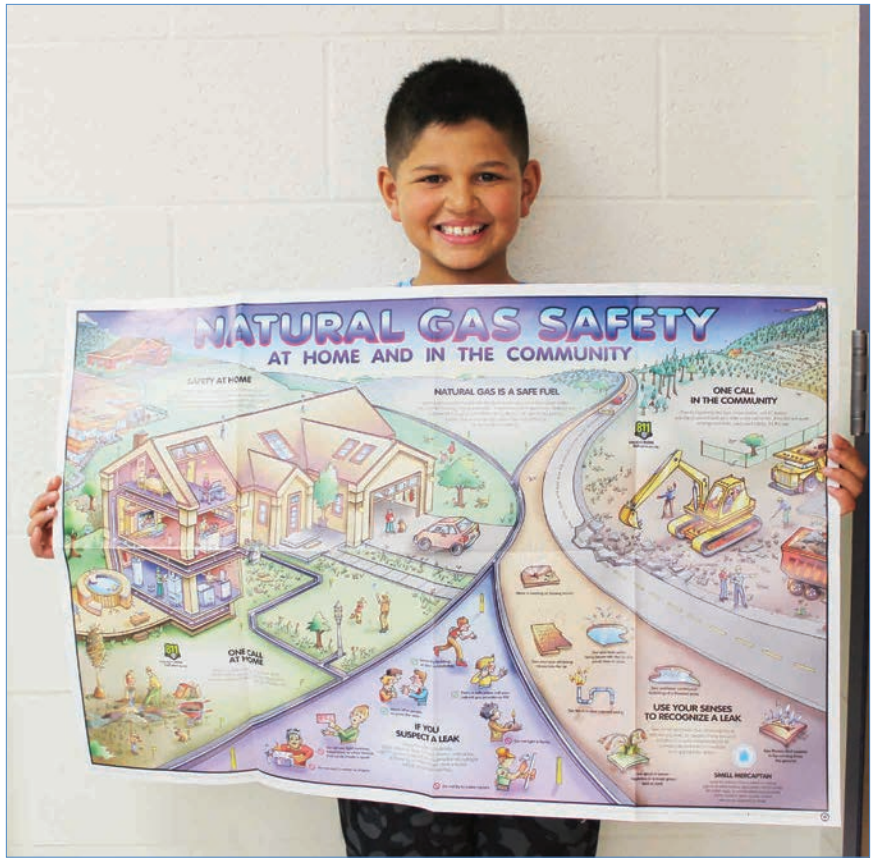




Three Rivers COMMERCIAL-NEWS



'You saved the church'

Andrews Elementary School fourth-grade student Carter Langston smelled a gas leak in his local church after receiving a natural gas safety presentation from Semco Energy and Gas Company at school.

Commercial-News/Samantha May

Andrews' fourth-grader discovers gas leak at local church

By Samantha May
Staff Writer

THREE RIVERS — Following a natural gas safety presentation from Semco Energy and Gas company, Andrews Elementary School fourth-grader Carter Langston used the information he gleaned from the presentation to discover a gas leak at his local church on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

Fourth-grade teacher Joyce Gyllstrom said once a year students at Andrews receive a presentation on natural gas sponsored by the Natural Energy Foundation. The students learn the type of gas their household is using, how to detect a gas leak, and what to do if a gas leak is suspected.

This year Gyllstrom said it was "very interactive," and each student took home a kit which included a five-minute timer to save water by

shortening the length of showers, a "scratch and sniff" sample of Mercaptan, "which is added to gas as a safety feature" and smells like rotten eggs, and more.

Almost a month later, Carter and his parents, along with about 15 other church members, volunteered to help ReCAST Church of Mattawan move locations. As Carter was carrying trash to and from the receptor outside, he began to smell that rotten eggs stench.

Carter's mother Emily Langston said once Carter returned from his trash trip outside, he shared the news. At first, the adults didn't quite believe him, but Carter did not give up.

"At first, I mean he's a kid, so we all just kind of brushed him off, but he was very insistent. He knew what natural gas smelled like because the gas company had come to the school, and they had showed him what natural gas smelled like. We still brushed him

off but he kept saying it, and he said 'if you smell natural gas, you are suppose to call the gas company,' Emily said.

Eventually, the adults picked up the smell themselves and called the gas company. The experts identified that there was indeed a gas leak, and turned the gas off for safety reasons. Emily said church members began giving Carter high fives and said, "You saved the church."

"It was pretty awesome. It was really neat that the gas company was just in the school and explained that to him, and the importance of it, so that he knew what it smelled like," Emily said.

Gyllstrom was also very proud of Carter and said, "It is very cool how persistent he was and that he didn't just quit and say it was nothing."

Samantha May can be reached at 279-7488 ext. 23 or samantha@threeriversnews.com.

Rep. Miller: State recommends grants for three recreational projects

State Rep. Aaron Miller today announced a state agency has recommended funding for three projects to enhance local recreational opportunities.

Miller, of Sturgis, said the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board has suggested funding for a land acquisition and two improvement projects at local parks. Funding for the projects is comprised of revenue from the lease of state land and is designated on an annual basis in partnership with local governments.

"I always get excited when we hear our communities are recommended for grants to enhance access to our amazing natural resources," Miller said. "These projects are a perfect example of how the state and local governments can work together to achieve something that benefits people living in the area and visitors as well."

Projects recommended by the board are:

- The \$293,700 development of a canoe and kayak launch site north of the bridge at Memory Isle Park in Three Rivers. The development will also convert lights at the park to LED and create a universally accessible

picnic area. Also included is renovation of the pedestrian bridge at the park, allowing for safe access to an island in the Rocky River.

- A project in Cass County's city of Dowagiac to develop the Cass Avenue Trailhead. The \$175,300 will be used to create parking and pathways, install playground equipment and build a universally accessible fishing platform. Future development will include pavilions, restrooms and a trail along the creek, linking the park to more than eight miles of trails.

- Acquisition of 54 acres that includes frontage on the St. Joseph River at a cost of \$166,500. The land purchase will provide access to the river between Three Rivers and Constantine, and involves preserving critical habitats in the area, further developing St. Joseph County's canoe and kayak river trail network.

Miller said it is rewarding to see money from land leases come back to the local communities in the form of recreational grants, improving the quality of life for families throughout the region.

The Legislature will consider the recommendations in 2018.

Community elves help Firefighters for Santa prepare



A smooth cut

Scott Elder of Three Rivers cuts wrapping paper during the annual Firefighters for Santa wrapping party.

Photo provided by Elena Meadows

Annual gift wrapping party held Saturday

By Elena Meadows

Santa will trade his sleigh in for a fire truck this coming Saturday afternoon, visiting 78 local families to bring Christmas cheer through the Firefighters for Santa program.

In preparation, his elves — representatives of Station 2 (Three Rivers Fire Department), Station 3 (Fabius-Park Fire Department), Constantine Fire Department as well as the community — were on hand at Station 3 this past Saturday, wrapping hundreds of gifts for distribution.

"It is a fantastic program to serve the children of Three Rivers," Three Rivers fire chief Carl Holcomb said. "I'm so glad stations 2 and 3 teamed up to pull it off again."

The 11-year-old program — originally an effort of the Three Rivers Fire Department, but now its own entity — just keeps growing. Last year they served just under 70 families. And this year they have three families in Constantine, an area into which they hope to expand in the future.

"The main reason I do it is just to see the smile on the kids' faces — they just light right up," said Three Rivers firefighter/EMT Brad Spears, Firefighters for Santa treasurer.

Each child gets four or five gifts, thanks to a generous community. Eighteen boxes of toys were collected through the schools, plus there was a huge response to boxes located at local businesses. For everything else, there was a Meijer shopping trip by members of the committee Friday evening.

Melissa Elder of Three Rivers joined the committee representing the community, after her daughter was a gift recipient last year.

"I cried for her," said Melissa, who along with family members was at the station helping wrap presents. "We were really down and out, and they went over and beyond for her. It was amazing."

Elena Meadows is a former Commercial-News managing editor who still enjoys contributing to the paper.

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OBITUARY



SANDRA JOYCE DUNNINGTON RODIO

The Hosts of Heaven are rejoicing over a brand new arrival. Sandra Joyce Dunnington Rodio, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017, at Rose Arbor in Kalamazoo after a long illness, with support from her loving family. Sandy was born June 21, 1939, the delightful daughter of Fred and Eleanor (Land) Dunnington in Kalamazoo.

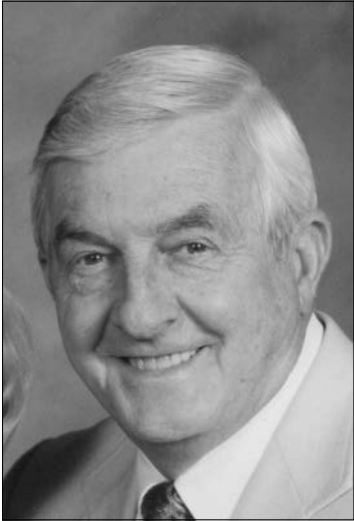
She graduated from Three Rivers High School in 1957 and moved to Kalamazoo. She worked at WKZO, Kalamazoo Gazette and Jim Gilmores. After a couple of years, she moved to McAllen, Texas. While in Texas she married Butch Rodio in November 1977. She and her husband Butch opened up an art store where she sold paintings and art supplies. She then worked as an office manager for De. James Miller, D.D.S., for 28 years. She met a lot of good friends in Texas. She would always talk about the great Mexican food and how much she enjoyed it.

Upon retirement, she returned to Kalamazoo. She was a devoted Christian and led a Bible Study in her apartment building. She loved giving and doing for others. She was full of laughter and lots of fun. She was very talented and did beautiful cross-stitch. She was a great cook and baker, with her chocolate cake being a favorite of the family.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Butch Rodio; her dad, Frederick George Dunnington; sister, Jo Ann Fortaw; and niece Julie Fortaw.

Sandy is survived by her loving mother, Eleanor Dunnington; brother, Gene (Joanie) Dunnington; four nephews, Edie Fortaw, Dallas Texas, Rob Dunnington, Coloma, MI, John Dunnington, Berrien Center, MI and his daughter, Amanda Dunnington, Payson, AZ and Joshua (Saa) Dunnington, Grand Rapids and their children Benjamin and Josephine; one niece, Elie (Eric) Gustafson, Owosso, MI and their twins, Jackson and Lincoln Gustafson; and step-children Landon and Ava Gustafson; her cousins, a lifelong friend, Elaine (Peterson) Breseman, along with many loving friends.

Sandy will be deeply missed for her loving, compassionate nature. Cremation has been conducted by Avink Funeral Home. A memorial will be held at Hearthside Apartments Community Building, 7566 Currier Drive, Portage, on Saturday, January 6, 2018 at 11 a.m. Memorials can be given to Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan, Rose Arbor, Kalamazoo or a memorial of your choice.



GEORGE FREDERICK BURKE

George Frederick Burke, honored husband, father and grandfather went to be with the Lord on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017. The cause was a sudden heart attack that occurred while he was sleeping.

He was born in South Bend, Ind. on March 5, 1934. He graduated from South Bend Central High School in 1952, and began college at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind. George immediately joined the Phi Psi Fraternity, where his natural skills as a leader, organizer and general charmer of people landed him as president of his pledge class. After his freshman year, he decided his attention and focus were being diverted by a preoccupation with activities and fun, so his incredible sense of self-discipline kicked in. He

returned to South Bend where he studied accounting and math.

World War II was over, but a grave conflict in Korea was underway. Before George was drafted, he elected to join the Marines, to serve the country he loved with the best of the best. He was sent to Parris Island for boot camp, then appointed to the prestigious Honor Guard in Washington DC, where he served on the Silent Drill Platoon. As a member of this elite precision drill team, George provided funeral honors for fallen comrades at Arlington National Cemetery and guarded President Eisenhower at Camp David.

George left the military in 1956 to finish his education at Indiana University in Bloomington, graduating with a BS in Accounting in 1959. In 1961, George married Sylvia Donovan of Elkhart and raised a family. George spent his career working in the banking industry. He started out as Executive Vice President for the First National Bank of Elkhart, then moved to the suburbs of Chicago where he was President of Deerfield Federal, and then Tower Federal in South Bend. After retiring, George and Sylvia moved west, enjoying many homes and adventures in Arizona and Montana.

He leaves behind his beloved wife of 56 years, Sylvia, his six children and their spouses: Julie, George Jeffrey (m. Kerry Cawthray), Jodie,

Janie (m. Eric Miller), Jonathan (m. Laurie Lee) and Jennifer, and 11 grandchildren: Matthew, Lindsay, Natalie, Eric, Madelynne, Aubrey, Hannah, Victoria, Ryan, Collin and Daniel. He is also survived by his brother Ronald of South Bend. His sister Bette preceded him in death as did his mother Effie and his father Fred.

Services will be held as follows: Visitation on Thursday, Dec. 21 from 5-7 p.m. at Hohner Funeral Home, 1004 Arnold Street, Three Rivers, Mich. 49093. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 22 at First Presbyterian Church of Three Rivers, 320 N. Main Street, Three Rivers. A lunch reception will immediately follow. George will be laid to rest at Riverside Cemetery in Three Rivers directly after, with an Honor Guard and his loved ones present.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be given in his name to the Pastor's Fund for the Poor and Homeless at the First Presbyterian Church of Three Rivers.

JAMES 'JIM' MICHAEL BOGGIO

James "Jim" Michael Boggio, age 83, passed away on Friday, Dec. 15, 2017 at Borgess Medical Center following a brief illness. Jim was born on March 17, 1934 in Three Rivers, Mich., the son of the late

Michael and Mary (Zellak) Boggio.

James served his country in the U.S. Air Force and following his honorable service began work as a Supervisor at Continental Can Company. Jim was a faithful member of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. He also belonged to the Three Rivers Elks B.P.O.E. #1248, the American Legion Post #170, and the Three Rivers Eagles #2303. Jim loved to be outdoors and especially loved fishing with close friends and family during winter or summer.

Mr. Boggio was preceded in death by his parents, two children, Michael and Christina Boggio; two sisters, Jane Swartwoyt and Marilyn Balch; and one nephew Jack Balch.

He leaves to cherish his loving memory, his wife, Tressa (Rogalien) Boggio; two brothers-in-law, Jack and Jon Rogalien; sister-in-law, Judy Zuck; a very special friend and caregiver Douglas Steffey; many nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews and many close friends.

The family will receive friends from 2 p.m. until the time of Scripture Service at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017 at the Hohner Funeral Home with Deacon Bart Connelly officiating.

Interment will be held at Riverside Cemetery at a later date. Online condolences may be left at www.hohnerfh.com.

Leave it to the geeks



Web design, phone, and laptop repair at Geek Genius

By Samantha May
Staff Writer

THREE RIVERS — With kind, trustworthy service, Geek Genius repairs laptops and cell phones, offers personalized tech classes and unique web design services to anyone from a business on the rise to a personal online portfolio for an aspiring writer.

In 2005, partners Knutt Judsen and Chad Ely stumbled upon each other at a spotlight in downtown Three Rivers. Both being U.S. veterans, Judsen served as a Marine while Ely served in the Army, the two caught up and decided the future of their company, Geek Genius.

Originally, Ely said Geek Genius began in "a tiny little basement" on Jefferson Street, solely supplying local businesses with unique website designs. As their customer base began to grow and with the new age of technology creeping around the corner, Geek Genius expanded to

a space above L.A.'s Coffee Café.

"We thought a coffee shop would be the perfect spot. People stop by there daily, so what can be a better place for people to stop by, drop off their computer, grab a cup of coffee and the next day, pick their computer up while they are grabbing their other cup of coffee," Ely said.

As the technology world continued to advance, Ely said Geek Genius added services to please customers, including customers within the "dropping phones" market. Now, a smartphone with a cracked screen can take less than an hour to repair.

Ely said Geek Genius employees are in love with technology and are "hungry for new tech," as the ever-changing tech world continues to surprise.

"We are just hungry for new tech knowledge and everything that is new and fresh, we want to stay on top of it. The people we have working for us are the same. When we are done with work, our hobbies are things that are kind of the same. You have to do what you love and that definitely shines through," he said.

"All of our employees have that

love for tech and what is coming out and how that stuff works. It is pretty exciting to see that first new iPhone come in and breaking it down to its frame. (...) There isn't a day that goes by where we are not learning something new. It is an exciting world to be in right now."

Ely said the majority of Geek Genius customers tend to be local businesses trying to flourish online with a unique website design. Compared to templates and other online website creators available, Ely said Geek Genius offers professional assistance to those who are looking for an unique design, having trouble with the other online options, or for those who simply don't have the time to create a website from scratch.

"You need a designer's eye. Just like anything, why do we go out to eat? Because there is a chef that knows what he's doing. Everybody can make spaghetti, but if you really want that great Italian meal, for the most part you'd have to go out and purchase that from a chef that knows what he's doing. It is kind of the same way, anyone can make a website, but the quality of the website

really comes down to what you know and what you are trained in," Ely said.

The local tech repair shop commits in providing customers with trustworthy, reliable service at affordable prices. Ely said if a cell phone is in need of a little repair, instead of pushing a purchase that is not necessarily needed, employees at Geek Genius clearly explain the problem and provide that repair for a reasonable price.

"We realized that we are not in Portage, we are in (our) hometown. This is where we grew up, we understand our hometown and therefore our prices reflect that," Ely said.

In addition to Geek Genius' Three Rivers location, they also have a shop at 103 W. Prairie St. in Vicksburg. The Three Rivers location is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, and is closed on Sunday. The Vicksburg location is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, and is closed on Sunday.

Samantha May can be reached at 279-7488 ext. 23 or samantha@threeriversnews.com.

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A trusted repair

Repair technician Evan Roberts takes a look inside a customer's laptop to analyze the extent of the repair at the Three Rivers location of Geek Genius on Monday, Nov. 6.

Commercial-News/Samantha May

OPINION

VIEWPOINT

Let's move past prevailing wage

From The Detroit News (AP)

Along with the descent of winter, it's definitely petition drive season in Michigan. Case in point: Two separate initiatives are warring over the future of the prevailing wage law. As we've argued for years, residents (and lawmakers) should throw their support behind repealing it.

Prevailing wage, which has been Michigan law since 1965, requires workers be paid union-rate wages and benefits on state-financed construction projects, even if they aren't in a union. This drives up costs for these projects, thus negatively impacting taxpayers who pick up the inflated check.

The Protecting Michigan Taxpayers ballot committee, funded largely by the Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan, has submitted more than 380,000 signatures for a repeal of the plan. The measure will head to the Legislature if approved by the Board of State Canvassers.

The counter-petition effort, the Construction Workers Fair Wage Act, seeks to preserve prevailing wage for state-funded construction projects. And several other groups are trying to convince lawmakers not to take up the repeal. The organizers want lawmakers to sign off on the competing measures going before voters next year, and let state residents decide the measure's fate.

Gov. Rick Snyder has maintained his opposition to repealing prevailing wage, arguing that it could discourage interest in the skilled trades, which he has promoted, given the thousands of jobs going unfilled in Michigan.

Yet many of his Republican counterparts in the Legislature, including leadership, have voiced their support for repeal to ease

the taxpayer burden and higher price tag for government projects. Legislators could do away with the law without Snyder's signature by approving the repeal initiative when it reaches them, which would take only a simple majority.

If they don't act within the 40-day window, the measure would go to the general election ballot in November 2018.

Jeff Wiggins, state director for ABC and head of the repeal committee, is pleased with the progress to toss prevailing wage.

"I'm glad to see the other side has as much confidence in us getting the votes as we do," he said.

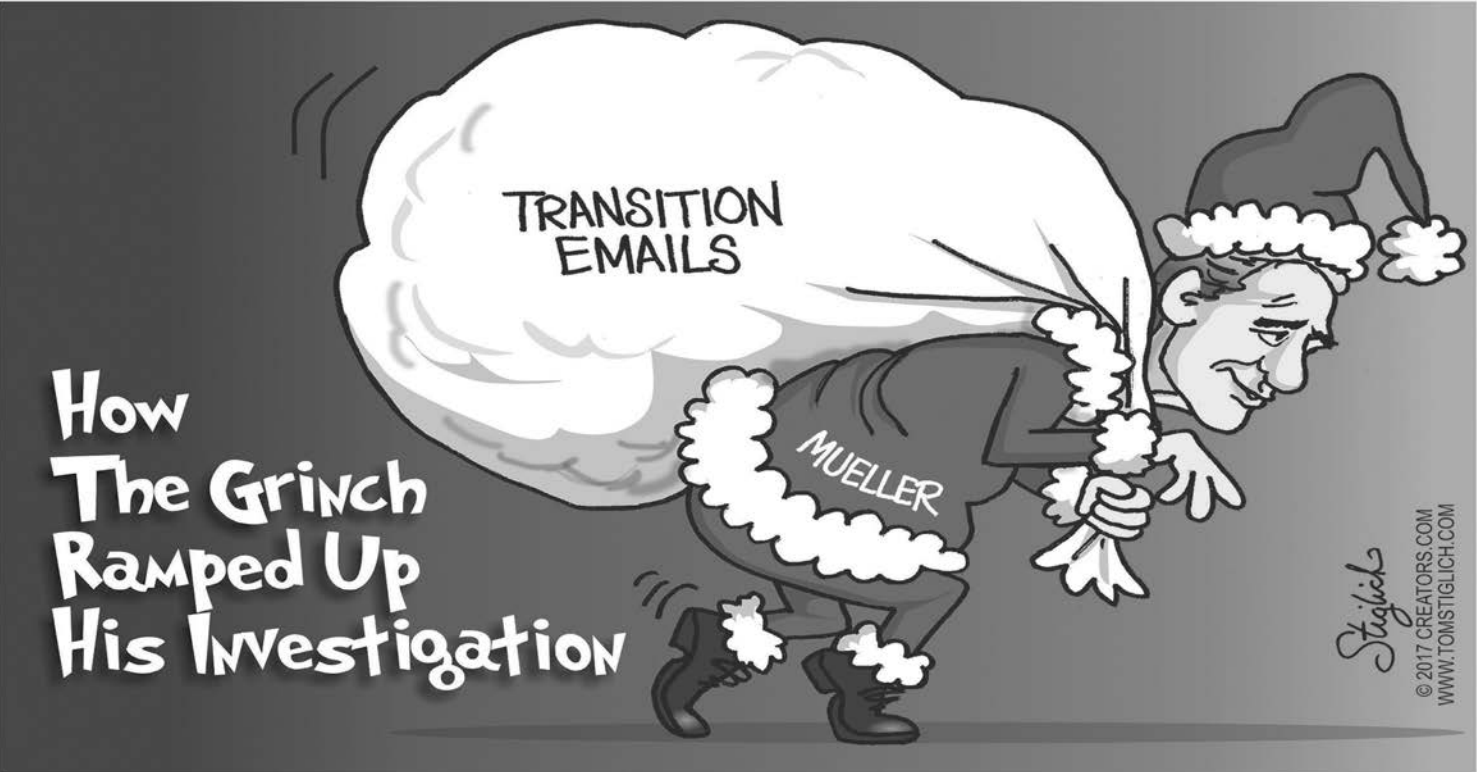
Union-supported contractor groups and other organizers for the counter petition have 180 days to collect more than 250,000 signatures.

Mike Jackson, executive secretary-treasurer of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, argues prevailing wage is basically a minimum wage for construction workers and that "lowering wages leads to lower-skilled workers and more mistakes."

But Jarrett Skorup, policy analyst with the Mackinac Center, recently observed in our pages, "Michigan's (prevailing wage) law is the most stringent in the nation, setting arbitrary — and often absurd — prices for schools, roads, parks, libraries, and other public construction projects."

A study by the Anderson Economic Group found that from 2002 to 2012 the prevailing wage law cost taxpayers an average \$224 million per year on construction projects for K-12 districts, community colleges and public universities.

That's a lot of money that could go toward other schools and projects. The Legislature should repeal prevailing wage.



‘A week from today, Christmas will be but a memory’

This week's "Myth Buster": Computers are more reliable, and they last longer when they're left on all the time. FALSE.

The theory was that thermal cycling, from powering computers up and down, stressed and broke the components. The fact is that thermal problems are usually from heat buildup and/or poor ventilation. In any case, it's always better to shut the machine down for energy, security, and operational reasons. Experts agree — shut it off when you leave for the day. See: Energy Star.

I try to stay away from two topics when writing this column. They are politics and religion. I do this because both are very personal and nobody else's business. Besides you're never going to convince another to change their beliefs on either subject. I would, however, like to mention briefly the subject of "Faith". We all have a little faith in something. Here's one example:

Once, in a small village, all the villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all people

gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That's faith!

A week from today, Christmas will be but a memory. The excitement of opening gifts and watching others open the gifts that you provided, will still be on the minds of many. It will be time to fine-tune those plans for New Year's Eve. Next week might be confusing for many, because Monday is a holiday. This always messes my mind up, because Monday won't feel like any other day of the week. There won't be any mail delivery, the banks will be closed, and, of course, your friendly garbage man will be stopping by a day later than usual. The same holds true for the following week, because of New Year's Day.

Speaking of mail delivery, there are, I'm sure, some folks who have procrastinated too long. They still have packages of gifts that need to get to loved ones in time for Christmas. Sorry folks, but I'm afraid you're a little late. Be prepared to pay a little extra for "Next Day" delivery.



“OUT AND ABOUT” Norm Stutesman

We've already experienced a snowstorm or two, so you'd think we should know by now that, when driving with less than desirable visibility, it might be smart to have your headlights on. I mention this several times every winter, yet there are drivers who don't heed the advice. I always have my headlights on, whether it's daylight or dead of night. I've seen too many cars coming at me in inclement weather and at eleven at night. I think that there's even a state law where, if you are using your windshield wipers, your headlights must also be on. Just makes sense to me.

I've owned more than a few cars in my lifetime. The one thing that puzzles me, but is not a deciding factor when it comes to purchasing a vehicle, is why some vehicles come with the fueling port on the driver's side and some on the passenger's side. In my mind, the fuel port should be on the driver's side just for the convenience. It also makes it easier to tell when you're closest to the fuel pump. This is just another thing you

might think about when you have nothing better to do with your time. If you're an automotive engineer, perhaps you might be able to satisfy my curiosity.

If travel plans are in your near future, I hope you're prepared to spend extra time at your friendly airport. Every big holiday, the news media has staff stationed at all major airports prepared to interview stranded passengers with questions like, "Did you think you'd be sleeping on the floor of an airport on Christmas Eve?" When traveling by air, be prepared for untimely delays. Plan accordingly.

A man's dreams are an index to his greatness.

There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: "abstemious" and "facetious".

A very Merry Christmas to all, and I'll be seeing you Out and About!

Norm Stutesman resides in Three Rivers with his wife and cat. He receives mail at P.O. Box 103 in Three Rivers.

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YESTERDAY

10 Years Ago December 19, 2007

THREE RIVERS — A newly renovated Three Rivers Inn will open under the Best Western banner possibly as early as January, according to Tim Crouch, who is construction manager for Hiran "Ken" Patel, owner of the motel. "All the rooms are being remodeled," Crouch said. "All the furniture's here." The completion of the project comes about two years after the motel was closed for a makeover. Crouch said a lot of improvements will be evident in the building.

THREE RIVERS — Andrea Battin, zoo-keeper at Scidmore Park Petting Zoo since March 2006, has resigned to take a full-time position at an aquarium in Virginia Beach, Va. "We hate to see her go," said Jim Rozeboom, director of the city's Department of Public Services. "She's done a lot for the park, for the zoo there. We wish her the best of luck." City manager Joe Bippus said that Battin was excited about the new position. "We're not excited," he added.

25 Years Ago December 19, 1992

THREE RIVERS — The Three Rivers Planning Commission failed to meet because of a lack of members. Since a quorum was not present, the meeting was never called to order. On the agenda was a public hearing on a request from Robert John Wagner Sr. for a special use permit for a proposed home occupation at his home, 415 East Street. According to the planning commission report of the special use permit, the proposed use involves the catalog sale of firearms. Wagner's home is located between Bennett and Armitage streets across from Hoppin School.

CONSTANTINE — A new three-year contract between the Constantine Board of Education and the Constantine Education Association was unanimously ratified. According to a news release from the two parties, the contract calls for an increase of 2 percent for the first year in the base salaries of instructors carrying a bachelor of arts degree and a master of arts degree and 3 percent in each of the next two years. In addition to the wage increases, there were also several language items addressed. The last significant item to be settled dealt with the board of education's desire to institute a campus-wide smoke free environment. Final agreement was reached and this policy will take effect Aug. 1, 1993.

50 Years Ago December 19, 1967

THREE RIVERS — The rubble dam across the Rocky River near the police station broke Saturday morning. City Manager George Shaw said, "an area of water probably was impounded and broke loose" causing a surge of water, which broke the dam. The water went around the side of the dam and eroded one end, which pulled away from the bank. The purpose of the dam is to control the amount of water in the pond around Goat Island. About one-fourth of the dam is gone.

THREE RIVERS — Three businessmen have joined together into a part-time business known as Y-Not Sports Sales. Owners of the new business are Robert Canning and Chuck Peters of Three Rivers and Joe Truckey of Mendon. Canning is owner of Bell Engineering and Supply Co., Three Rivers; Peters is owner of Chuck's Body Shop here; and Truckey is a Mendon contractor. The three men are now peddling their first item — a small six-wheeled vehicle that "will go anywhere." The vehicle — A Jiger — is manufactured by Jiger Corporation of Toronto. At a demonstration in the swampy area off of Coon Hollow Road, the men took the vehicle up and down steep hillsides, through bogs and streams and over small trees.



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'Dear Annie'

Annie Lane

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Dear Annie: I am asking you to reprint your column with the letter from "Neil," who lost his wife to cancer and was having a difficult time coping with his grief. I am giving my copy to my brother-in-law, as he lost his wife, my sister, to glioblastoma, a type of brain cancer, Nov. 1. Now I would like to have another copy. -- *Kansas Karol*

Dear Kansas Karol: I'm so sorry for your loss. Many were touched by Neil's letter. Here it is.

Dear Annie: I am a 69-year-old man who, until now, only read your column periodically. Each time I read your advice to someone, I would say to myself, "Hmm, that's really good advice." I never ever thought that I would need to write to you. Well, now I am eating those words.

In late August, I lost the most important person in my life to inoperable pancreatic cancer. My wife was diagnosed in June 2014, and despite the fact that the cancer spread to three additional organs, she fought back. This amazing woman refused to let the cancer win. She went on with her life, and even though she received chemo

and radiation therapy on a regular basis, as well as numerous medications, she refused to give in.

I drove her to every doctor's appointment and every radiation and chemotherapy appointment, as well as all over the country as we searched for clinical trials. However, after two-plus years, her fragile body could fight no longer, and she died in my arms.

The reason I am writing to you is that I am a total mess. Friends and family are calling me to come to dinner. I don't want to be around people as I grieve; I prefer to be alone all of the time. Our house is just as it was on the day she died because I simply can't part with her things at this time. Yet seeing these things sends me into pain and sobbing sessions that may last for hours. I have completely lost faith in everything, and I don't trust professionals. I have joined several grief support groups, but I do not find solace in them yet.

My wife and I spent 50 years of our lives together. She was my best friend, my soul mate and my only love. Without her, I feel empty and incom-

plete. Although people keep telling me that things eventually will get better, I have my doubts. I am trying to take care of myself and to do the things I believe she would want me to do if she were still alive. The only thing I really have difficulty doing is sleeping. I would appreciate any advice you can offer. -- *Neil*

Dear Neil: I know that nothing I say can reduce the enormity of your loss -- that my response may come across as clichéd or maybe even a little hollow -- because in the face of such grief, words look ridiculous and small. Still, I must say, with all of my heart, that I am so sorry for your loss.

In these times of deep grief, turn to the memories you and your wife shared. Let them warm you through the night like a blanket. They are eternal. No one can ever take those away from you. Your wife lives on in your heart. Let her strength help you through this.

Be patient with yourself and permit yourself to grieve as long and as deeply as you need. But it sounds as if your wife was an amazing fighter, and she would want you to fight -- to be strong, to wring as much joy and happiness out of life as you possibly can, every single glorious day on this earth.

You are blessed to have friends and family who want to lift you up. When you are ready, you will let them. One day, someone close to you will find himself in this same unfathomable situation, and your friendship will be his saving grace. Think how proud your wife would be to see you spread that love.



'Horoscopes by Holiday'

Holiday Mathis

www.creators.com

Part of being confident is knowing that you are protected if things don't go the way you anticipate or desire. The Saturn change prompts a spirit of readiness. Keep in mind that there are many means of protection that do not require strength. Distance is a defense. So is friendliness. So is cuteness. Think outside the box on the matter.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It's all temporary -- the mood, the circumstance, the things you want out of this... and yet, it matters. You'll feel as though you're defining yourself with the action you take.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be looking for ways to do more and need less and you'll find them. There's magic in this pursuit. It will also be quite addicting, especially in the case of doing things for others.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You've often had the impression that the game is rigged. Today that suspicion comes sneaking around again, although this time it seems to be rigged in your favor... so is that going to be a problem?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Whether it's emotional or actual baggage, you'll be

less effective trying to dead lift it on your own. You can handle much more weight with a little strategy. Can it be leveraged? Can it be rolled?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). An ordeal can be an adventure and an adventure can be an ordeal, and today they'll be one and the same, depending on how you look at this. It's easier to approach it brightly when there's someone to impress.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Trial and error is the only way to learn this complex thing you've taken on. Sure, the theoretical knowledge will help, but it can only take you so far. You'll advance through your mistakes. Mastery will be eventual and inevitable.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're great at slipping into the mindset that will serve the moment best. This is a talent in and of itself -- a sign of emotional genius really -- and you'll be able to trade on it for some nice dividends today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's not important that they know everything you mean. In fact, it's better that they don't. As people fill in the blanks with their own story, they connect with you. Mysteries are opportunities. Voids are

invitations.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What stands alone? Nothing and no one. Life here is about groups. Organisms, tribes, cultures... from bacteria to trees to animals and people, it's all working together. As much as you'd like that not to be true today, it still is.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's not one bad thing on your to-do list today. You could potentially take pleasure in every single activity. The thing is, there are so many of them, and most of them rather pressing. You can do this!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your day-to-day is slowly morphing into a different pattern. Your style is changing, too. But your values will stay the same. Like a developing child, you will fulfill the potential of what you always were.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Kindness and self-respect are at the center of your decision to step up and own your actions when they're great and when they're not. We're all just learning and in need of both encouragement and correction.

Answer to previous puzzle												
P	A	R	I	S	F	O	L	K	S	T	A	B
A	L	E	R	T	E	R	I	E	C	O	L	A
N	O	S	I	R	D	E	E	R	I	N	I	T
G	E	T	S	O	M	E	S	U	N	F	I	S
S	I	P	P	E	R	V	E	X	E	D	I	C
A	R	I	A	I	D	L	E	L	I	N	G	O
W	A	T	C	H	E	T	E	L	E	V	I	S
S	N	A	K	E	N	O	R	I	E	T	A	L
S	A	I	S	S	O	M	A	T	T	S	T	E
T	R	A	P	R	E	A	D	A	N	O	V	E
R	I	L	E	T	A	L	E	A	B	I	D	E
A	S	I	A	A	S	A	P	N	O	S	E	S
P	E	E	K	S	E	N	T	E	E	N	S	

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- Boxing venue
 - Quite pleased
 - Baby's bed
 - Of the moon
 - Shoestring
 - Make over
 - Early afternoon hr.
 - Author unknown: Abbr.
 - "Once ___ a time . . ."
 - People with deeds to dwellings
 - Castaway's home
 - ___ day now (pretty soon)
 - Camcorder button
 - Current events
 - Computer storage measures
 - Spanish party
 - Pottery material
 - Actor Matt
 - Heavy weight
 - Group that runs an inn
 - Solid ___ rock
 - Short golf strokes
 - Is indebted to
 - Puts a new price on
 - "All kidding ___ . . ."
 - Flying mammals
 - Before, in poetry
 - Resort with hot springs
 - Walks away
 - Magician's word
 - Anger

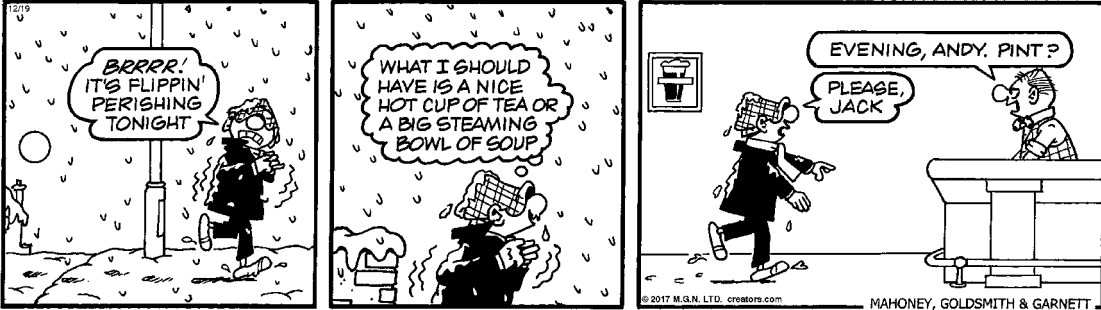
- "Sorry to hear that"
 - Plain to see
 - Laundry appliance
 - Bouquet holder
 - Sight or hearing
 - Soft "Hey, you!"
 - Historical periods
 - Walk inside
- DOWN**
- Honolulu greeting
 - Talk too much
 - Foe
 - Back of the neck
 - National Guard outpost
 - Examined quickly
 - Narrow street
 - Squirrel snack

- Major visibility problem for drivers
- Ocean liner vacation
- Salespeople, for short
- Revered star
- Dog biscuit shape, often
- Moisten
- Champagne or Chablis
- Parting word
- Speaker of the cheer in question
- Soup's thicker relative
- Voicemail sound
- Bugs in colonies
- Burn a bit
- Come in second

- Rat-___ (knocking sound)
- Some rubdown experts
- Women's links org.
- Requires
- "Miner" follower
- Not in class
- Taxing org.
- Oust from power
- Sun-powered
- Bloodhound's trail
- Handbag
- Autumn flower
- Hold firmly
- Rowboat propellers
- Swellled heads
- Hernando's home
- Baking appliance

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
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63					64				65			
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69					70				71			

ANDY CAPP



B.C.



DOG EAT DOG



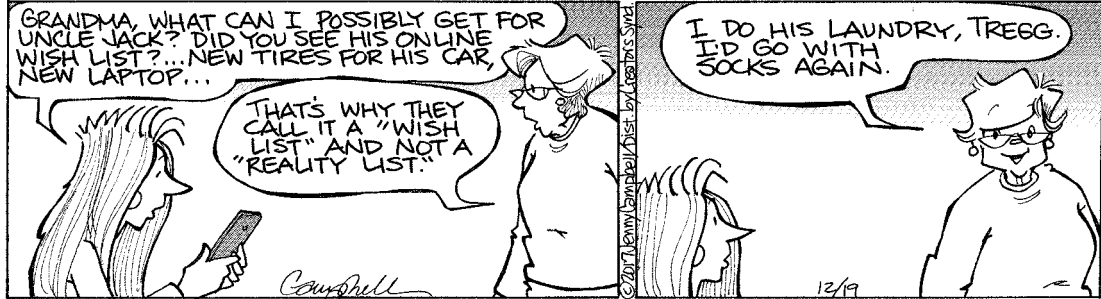
NEST HEADS



RUGRATS



FLO & FRIENDS



THE OTHER COAST



THE WIZARD OF ID



7	5	8			9
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					6
				8	9
3	1	7			1
6	5		7	3	9
		8			
2				8	5

YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWER TO TODAY'S SUDOKU PUZZLE ON TODAY'S CLASSIFIEDS PAGE!

HEATHCLIFF



Classifieds

Legal Notice

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
45th CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING
FILE NO. 17-949 NC
In the matter of Connor Gabriel Lamere-Bleything
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including:*
Sarah Metzger & Joshua Lamere whose
address(es) are unknown and whose interest in
the matter may be barred or affected by the
following:
TAKE NOTICE; A hearing will be held on January
16, 2018 at 10:30 am at Centreville Courthouse,
Courtroom B before Judge David Tomlinson for
the following purpose:
On a petition to change the name of Connor
Gabriel Lamere-Bleything to
Connor Gabriel Metzger.
December 14, 2017
Sarah Metzger
1104 Sophie St. Apt 9
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(574) 584-5288
12/19/17

Notice

DIVORCE AGREEMENT - Uncontested divorce with
or without children. divorceagreement.org. 269-
345-1173.
IN NEED OF WINTER ITEMS - Looking for gently
used CHILDREN items. Will pick up. Boys boots:
Size 11, 6, 10, Girls boots: Size 6, 8, Boys snow
pants: size 4t, could go 5 if needed. Girl snow
pants and coat: size 18-24 mo. Waterproof mittens:
Boys (3) 3T-4T, (2) 2T, Girls (1) 3t (2) 2t. Please
call: 269-467-5309.
ST. PETER'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH - 1200 Arnold
St., Three Rivers (US. 131 and Arnold St.) *Christ-
mas Eve Candlelight Service ~ Dec. 24th, at 7
p.m. & *Christmas Day Service ~ Dec. 25th, at
10 a.m. 278-845.
THREE RIVERS EAGLES 2303 - Nominations for Vice
President will be held on Dec. 19th, 2017 at 8 P.M.

Personals

FRIEND, HAVING TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF
GOD to an athiest is like having to prove the
existence of the sun, at noon on a clear day.
Please don't die without knowing Jesus. Please go
to; 1-800-NEED-HIM OR NEEDHIM.ORG or FULLY-
FREEFILMS.ORG as soon as possible. ETERNITY IS
A LONG TIME.

Pets

DREAMING OF A CAT CHRISTMAS! We have two
batches of kittens, one batch born 8 weeks ago
(two available) and the other batch, 16 weeks ago.
Also some young adults 14 months old. Most are
very people friendly, various colors, patterns and
personalities, each one beautiful in its own way!
Some have been exposed to the litter box. For
pics and personality profiles, Email fredsatomic-
dustbin@gmail.com. Currently living outdoors but
well cared for, free to good homes!

Free

CHRISTMAS WRAPPING PAPER - Storage bin full
of Holiday wrapping paper. Call: 269-273-3408 -
leaving a message. Three Rivers

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CUSTOM RUBBER STAMPS available locally. Stop in
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mercial-News, 124 N. Main Street. 269-279-7488.
MTD SNOW BLOWER - Self propelled w/tire chains,
runs good. \$275/OBO. Call 269-435-7775. Please
leave name and number.

Bargain Basement

LADIES COAT - Gray suede, fur collar, w/cuffs, size
small. In good condition. \$5. Call: 269-279-2821.
NO CHARGE FOR BARGAIN BASEMENT ADS! Visit
www.threeriversnews.com to place an ad in this
category. Items must be priced under \$100 and
other restrictions apply.

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miles. Too much to list. 3200/OBO. Call: 269-435-
7775, if no answer leave name & number.

Help Wanted

BANDEEN ORTHODONTICS AND CENTER FOR DEN-
TAL SLEEP MEDICINE - is looking for a Registered
Polysomnographic Technologist (RPSGT) for our
Three Rivers and Kalamazoo Locations. The job is
paid hourly, and has the possibility for commis-
sions after the first six months. Office hours are
M-Th 8-5 with occasional Fridays. Employees av-
erage 32-36 hours weekly. Please send resume' to
information@bandeenorthodontics.com or mail to
4602 Beckley Road, Battle Creek, MI 49015.

DESIGNER NEEDED: The Three Rivers Commer-
cial-News is looking for a Graphic Designer/Pag-
inator with graphic/advertising design experience
for their Design Dept. This candidate must be
flexible, a self-starter with the ability to work
on their own and troubleshoot situations as they
arise. Must also work well in a team environ-
ment. Experience with Adobe InDesign, Photoshop,
CS and/or similar applications is a must. Duties
include the layout of daily news, classified and
comics pages and the update, design and compo-
sition of advertising, and maintaining our website
by updating daily. With some experience we can
train the right person. The hours are approx. 30-
35 hours per week may be up to 40 if needed.
Flexibility is a plus. Please send resume to jobs@
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Rivers, MI 49093, Attn: General Manager. No phone
calls please.

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enthusiastic, motivated kitchen staff, great at mul-
titasking and can adapt to a fast paced work
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valid driver's license and need to supplement your
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124 North Main Street, Three Rivers to fill out
an application. Motor carriers must be licensed,
insured and have reliable transportation. No phone
calls, please!

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apply visit www.threeriversmi.org or call 269-273-
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Centreville and Kalamazoo offices. For more in-
formation call: 269-467-6357 or 269-568-6270.

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sizes. Store anything from furniture to automobiles.
269-279-9265.

Sudoku Answers

7	3	5	8	6	1	2	4	9
1	6	9	2	4	7	3	8	5
8	2	4	3	9	5	1	6	7
5	4	2	6	7	3	8	9	1
9	8	6	1	5	4	7	3	2
3	1	7	9	8	2	6	5	4
6	5	1	7	3	9	4	2	8
4	7	8	5	2	6	9	1	3
2	9	3	4	1	8	5	7	6



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Three Rivers City Commission
Notice of Public Hearing


A Public hearing will be held at the regular Commission meeting on December 19, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at Three Rivers City Hall, 333 West Michigan Avenue, Three Rivers, Michigan. The purpose is to receive public comment on the Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act.

Any interested person may attend and participate or submit written comments to the City Clerk at the above address.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The City will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) day notice to the City of Three Rivers. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City of Three Rivers at the above address.

December 19, 2017

Ad line - 279-7488



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2017
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THE VOTE

Let the
people speak!

Use this form to pick your favorites and get it back to us by the
date listed below. Who knows? This year - it could be YOU!

When selecting a specific person, please note their name, (first & last name if known), place of work and a phone number. **FORMS MUST NOT BE PHOTOCOPIED.**
FORMS CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN THE COMMERCIAL-NEWS. Bring or mail entry forms to 124 N. Main St., Three Rivers, by NOON, THURS., December 31st.
Readers' Choice awards will be announced January 30th in the Readers' Choice section of the Commercial-News and on our website at www.threeriversnews.com.

The Best...

1. Waitress/Waiter

2. Cook

3. Auto mechanic

4. Attorney

5. Gift store

6. Boss

7. Dentist (doctor's name)

8. Vision Center

9. Pharmacy

10. Massage Therapist

11. Nail salon

12. Hair salon

13. Dental hygienist

14. Grocery cashier

15. Realtor (person)

16. Realty office (company)

17. Auto body shop

18. Optometrist (doctor's name)

19. Bartender

20. Hairstylist

21. Electrician

22. Book Store

23. Steak

24. Ribs

25. Desserts

26. Nursing home

27. Travel agency

28. Bank teller

29. Retail clerk

30. Home Improvement/Construction Co.

31. Pizza

32. Cup of coffee

33. Cold beer

34. Breakfast

35. Heating & A/C

36. Tax Preparer/Accountant

37. Pharmacist

38. Golf course

39. Hamburger

40. Place for bargains

41. Preschool/Daycare

42. Retail store

43. Building supplies/lumber

44. Place to buy furniture

45. French fries

46. Fast food restaurant

47. Insurance agent

48. Jewelry Store

49. Physician

50. Chicken

51. Ice cream

52. Restaurant for friendly service

53. Restaurant for fast service

54. Donuts

55. Grocery store

56. Place to buy tires

57. Oil change

58. Kennel

59. Place to work

60. Newsstand

61. Vet Clinic

62. Financial institution

63. Bait store

64. Tanning salon

65. Convenience store

66. Place to buy fruit

67. Business w/friendly employees

68. Pastor/Priest

69. Gym

70. Flowers

71. Dry cleaners

72. Place to buy meat

73. Painter

74. Vehicle salesperson

75. Used cars

76. New cars

77. Auto service

78. Computer Tech

79. Tap Selection


80. Local Produce

81. Tattoo Parlor

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SPORTS

Trubisky praises Fox as Bears wind down rough season

By Andrew Seligman

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — For all the criticism thrown his way, Chicago Bears coach John Fox has at least one important fan.

That would be quarterback Mitchell Trubisky.

The prized rookie said Monday they have a “great relationship” and praised the coach and his staff for showing the patience he needs as he adjusts to playing in the NFL.

“They just allow me to be who I am as a person, as a player,” said Trubisky, the No. 2 overall draft pick. “They’ve been patient with me, allowed me to develop. And I think they just truly believe in me and what I can do for this football team moving forward.”

“Sometimes, it’s tough having a rookie quarterback because you know there’s gonna be mistakes and there’s gonna be bumps in the road. But they’ve stuck by me and they know it’s a learning process and they’ve taught me a lot throughout this whole year.”

Fox said he has seen enough to believe Trubisky will be a successful NFL player, though they might not be working together much longer. With a 13-33 record over three seasons, there’s a good chance Fox’s time in Chicago is winding down.

The Bears (4-10) host winless Cleveland this week in their final home game, and even beating the Browns hardly seems like a certainty.

Chicago has dropped six of

seven. An ugly loss to Detroit secured the Bears’ fourth straight season with double-digit losses and wiped out the good feelings they generated with a lopsided win over Cincinnati the previous week.

The Bears committed 13 penalties and got little from their run game on Saturday. For Trubisky, it was a mixed performance at best.

His 31 completions, 46 attempts and 314 yards passing were all career highs. So were his three interceptions, and a 66.8 rating was a big drop from the 112.4 he posted the previous week.

“There was really a lot of good that Mitch did,” Fox said. “You know I don’t know that fans and everyday people that don’t get a chance to study the tape and kind of know what he’s been taught and told (think). Everybody looks at the box score they see the three picks. But it was probably, arguably, his best game.”

The Bears turned to Trubisky after Mike Glennon struggled to hang onto the ball in the first four games.

Signed to replace Jay Cutler, the veteran threw more interceptions (five) than touchdowns (four) and lost three fumbles.

That forced the Bears to make the switch and abandon their plan to have their highly touted rookie watch from the sideline this season. There have been promising signs and more than a few growing pains for Trubisky, and the Detroit game summed

up his season.

Yet along with the mistakes, Fox insisted he saw growth in areas that might not stand out to fans.

He mentioned Trubisky’s mechanics and decision-making as well as the fact that he recognized when teammates were out of place — and got them into proper position. Fox said that might not have happened a few weeks ago.

Not that there weren’t rough spots.

Trubisky rolling to his left on a play action and overthrowing Kendall Wright stood out. So did his attempt to hit Dontrelle Inman in double coverage in the end zone. Both passes got intercepted.

Even so, Trubisky said he sees progress in certain situations. And in others, room to improve.

“You could definitely see it in my footwork when I’m drifting when I don’t need to or when my feet are calm and I’m moving through my progressions very smoothly,” he said.

“You can tell which plays it’s slower and which plays it’s not. I’m definitely progressing and you want to see the games continue to get slower for me.”

Fox predicts big things for Trubisky. He just might not be around what that happens.

“I get to see it every day, not just game days like some people,” Fox said. “(I) get to watch him, how he works, how he studies, the demeanor he has with his teammates. I think he’s got a bright future ahead of him.”



Canada women’s hockey

Team Canada goalie Shannon Szabados (1) makes a save on Team USA’s Brianna Decker (14) during third period National Women’s Team series hockey action in Edmonton, Alberta, on Sunday Dec. 17, 2017.

Jason Franson/The Canadian Press via AP

Szabados backstops Canada’s women to 2-1 OT win vs US

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP) — Goaltender Shannon Szabados says the 2-1 overtime win Sunday against the United States ranks high on her list.

The 31-year-old made 34 saves in her hometown for the national women’s hockey team. Jennifer Wakefield scored the winner on a loose puck in the crease with 27 seconds remaining in overtime.

Canadian captain Marie-Philip Poulin scored a power-play goal with 2:45 remaining in the first period. Hilary Knight tied it for the U.S. with 5:58 left in the second on an assist from Kendall Coyne.

Szabados was the goalie for Olympic gold-medal victories against the U.S. in 2010 and 2014. She held Canada in the game on Sunday when her team was outshot 25-10 over the second and third periods.

“This is probably for sure in my top five,” said Szabados, who estimated she had about 300

friends and family in the stands. “I feel like I’ve played in some pretty big games. This was pretty incredible.”

Maddie Rooney had 24 saves in the loss at the Rogers Place, home of the Edmonton Oilers, where the announced attendance was just short of a sellout at 17,468. It’s also shy of the record for a women’s hockey game set in Ottawa at 18,023 in 2013.

“We’re a highly skilled team and we need to make sure that we go out and play fast,” said U.S. coach Robb Stauber, whose team was outshot 5-2 in the first period. “The goal for us is to be hitting on all cylinders in February.”

Canada wrapped up their six-game exhibition series with a 5-1 record against the Americans. The rivals won’t meet again until their pool game Feb. 15 at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

“These are great games for us

to tune up against each other,” U.S. captain Meghan Duggan said. “Obviously, it’s the best competition playing against them, we feel.”

How much the results in the pre-Olympic series will matter in February is debatable. Canada lost four in a row to the U.S. in exhibitions before earning gold in overtime at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Canada opens defense of its gold on Feb. 11 against Russia, which recently had six players banned by the International Olympic Committee for doping violations and had its sixth-place result in 2014 stripped.

The Americans won the inaugural women’s hockey event at the 1998 Nagano Olympics. The Canadians have won four straight gold medals since then, with the U.S. teams finishing with three silver and a bronze.

The 23-player U.S. roster will be announced on Jan. 1.



Bears Lions Football

Detroit Lions defensive tackle Akeem Spence (97) sacks Chicago Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky (10) during the second half of an NFL football game, Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017, in Detroit.

AP Photo/Rey Del Rio

Today’s Schedule

Boys Basketball

Berrien Springs at Three Rivers freshmen, 4:15 p.m.
Berrien Springs at Three Rivers JV, 5:45 p.m.
Berrien Springs at Three Rivers varsity, 7:15 p.m.
Howardsville at Covert, 7:30 p.m.
Lawton at Constantine, 7 p.m.
Marcellus at Bloomingdale, 7:30 p.m.
Centreville at Bangor, 7:30 p.m.
Mendon at White Pigeon, 7:30 p.m.
Kalamazoo Christian at Schoolcraft, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Three Rivers JV at Berrien Springs, 5:45 p.m.
Three Rivers varsity at Berrien Springs, 7:15 p.m.
Schoolcraft at Kalamazoo Christian, 7:30 p.m.
Constantine at Lawton, 7 p.m.
Bangor at Centreville, 7:30 p.m.
White Pigeon at Mendon, 7:30 p.m.
Bloomingdale at Marcellus, 7:30 p.m.
College Basketball
Glen Oaks women at Macomb CC, 5:30 p.m.
Glen Oaks men at Macomb CC, 7:30 p.m.

Bowling

Allegan at Three Rivers, 5 p.m.



Patriots Steelers Football

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Juju Smith-Schuster (19) runs on a 69-yard pass play during the second half of an NFL football game against the New England Patriots in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017.

AP Photo/Don Wright



Jets Wilkerson benched

In this Nov. 26, 2017, file photo, New York Jets defensive end Muhammad Wilkerson reacts while sitting on the bench during the second half of an NFL football game against the Carolina Panthers, in East Rutherford, N.J. Wilkerson has been benched for the team's game at New Orleans on Sunday. Coach Todd Bowles said Friday, Dec. 15, 2017, that Wilkerson will not travel with the team, saying repeatedly that it was a coach's decision and he's only worried about the players who will go up against the Saints.

AP Photo/Bill Kostroun, File

Wilkerson's status with Jets still uncertain after benching

By Dennis Waszak, Jr.

NEW YORK (AP) — Muhammad Wilkerson might have played his final snap for the New York Jets.

The star defensive end's status with the team remained uncertain Monday after he was benched for the Jets' game at New Orleans on Sunday .

Coach Todd Bowles acknowledged that Wilkerson was at the Jets' facility in Florham Park, New Jersey, but would not say whether the 2011 first-round draft pick would practice or play this week.

"He's in the building today," Bowles said during a conference call. "We're still working through things."

Bowles added that it's "an internal thing" that is still being discussed by several people, which likely includes the team's front office.

"We haven't worked through everything yet," Bowles said, "but we'll work through them and you guys will know when we make a decision."

According to several published reports, Wilkerson was benched for being late to a team meeting on Friday. Bowles has refused to elaborate on the details of his decision to not have him travel to New Orleans.

Wilkerson has a history of tardiness and has faced previous discipline, including fines and

benchings in games for one quarter.

"There will be a lot of people involved in this," Bowles said.

The 28-year-old Wilkerson is the Jets' highest-paid player and is in the middle of a five-year deal worth \$86 million, which he signed in July 2016. His \$16.75 million salary for next season would become fully guaranteed if he remains on New York's roster by the third day of the league's new year in March. So, it's a near-certainty that the Jets will cut ties with Wilkerson at some point in the offseason, at the latest.

That money is also fully guaranteed against a serious injury — meaning, something that could sideline him all of next season.

So, that is very likely also a consideration being made by the Jets as they decide whether Wilkerson should play in the final two games of this season.

Bowles declined comment when asked how frustrating it is to him that things have reached this point with someone who had been one of the team's top players.

"I'm kind of through talking about Mo," the coach said. "If you guys got anything else, I'll answer, but I've said all I have to say about that situation."

Wilkerson has 59 overall tackles and ranks second on the team with 37 sacks. He has battled injuries the past few seasons, and has not been the

explosive playmaker he was earlier in his career when he made the Pro Bowl after the 2015 season. Wilkerson has just eight sacks in his past 28 games.

Xavier Cooper saw increased action in Wilkerson's absence Sunday against the Saints, playing 39 defensive snaps (57 percent). He also created a turnover when he pressured and hit Drew Brees, whose pass was intercepted by Leonard Williams in the second quarter and led to a field goal.

NOTES: Bowles said Williams is "doing fine so far" after suffering a concussion Sunday, but the defensive end is in the league's protocol for head injuries. ... Bowles on Bryce Petty's first start of the season: "He was a little anxious on some throws, but he was confident. He just has to get his footwork down a little bit, but I thought he played with confidence." ... Bowles said the Jets are not considering playing second-year QB Christian Hackenberg right now. "Petty only played one game," Bowles said. "We need him to get some reps. He was the backup, so he needs some experience." ... With the Jets eliminated from playoff contention Sunday, LT Kelvin Beachum was asked what there is for the team to play for. "Pride," he said. "At this point in the season, you're playing for the love of the game and for pride."

Steelers trying to recover from near miss against Patriots

By Will Graves

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Maybe Mike Tomlin called it.

Maybe it was Todd Haley.

Maybe Ben Roethlisberger and Eli Rogers went rogue.

The chaos surrounding Pittsburgh's decision to go for the win instead of force overtime late in a 27-24 loss to the New England Patriots on Sunday doesn't lead to easy answers.

Roethlisberger initially said he was told to run a play rather than spike the ball to set up an easy field goal.

Roethlisberger later backed off, offering "maybe I should have clocked it" regardless of what was going on.

"We're not going to look back and second guess anything or anybody," Roethlisberger said.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter.

Pinning a fifth straight loss to the Patriots on everything that wrong for the AFC North champions in the final 35 seconds — from Jesse James' lunging touchdown grab that was overturned on review to Roethlisberger's fake spike that turned into a game-ending pick — the Steelers are aware they had plenty of chances in the first 59 minutes to end years of frustration at the hands of Tom Brady, Rob Gronkowski and company.

"They're beatable," safety Sean Davis said. "It's a tough game. We had some bad calls, but I ain't going to put it on the refs. But we can't leave the game in the ref's hands. We was up big. We've got to bury them next time."

Covering Gronkowski effectively would help. Davis got an up-close

look at the seemingly unsolvable matchup problem the 6-foot-6 Gronkowski offers when the 6-foot-1 Davis spent Pittsburgh's final drive fruitlessly chasing Gronkowski downfield.

Gronkowski caught three passes for 69 yards as well as the 2-point conversion that put the Patriots up three, a sequence Pittsburgh (11-3) could have avoided if Davis had held onto a tipped Tom Brady pass that smacked off Davis' hands on the first play of New England's penultimate possession.

"Brady was throwing it right in there, man," Davis said. "He just made more plays than us. They made more plays than us."

But did they really?

The Steelers outgained New England 413-360, picked off Brady for the first time in 12 years, held the ball for 35 minutes and did it all without much from wide receiver Antonio Brown.

The only player to have five consecutive 100-catch seasons left in the second quarter with a left calf injury and didn't return.

Pittsburgh offered no update on Brown's status Monday, though he hardly seemed despondent in a Twitter post.

"This is a minor setback for me but not this team," Brown tweeted. "The goal is still the same & I'm confident that we can & will achieve it. We may not have won the game yesterday but this TEAM made a statement."

Yet hanging with the Patriots is one thing. Beating them is another matter.

The Steelers let several chances to put the game away disappear, from Davis' near pick to a three-and-out

late in the fourth quarter while clinging to a five-point lead.

Pittsburgh needed 4 yards on third down and instead got just 3 when rookie Juju Smith-Schuster was dragged to the ground a yard short.

Pittsburgh punted and the Patriots went right down the field.

The missed opportunities, however, began almost from the outset. On New England's first drive of the game, the Steelers appeared to get off the field after stopping the Patriots on third down.

Defensive end Cam Heyward was flagged for holding. Three plays later, New England was in the end zone.

"We had a lot of chances to close the door in that game, we didn't," Heyward said. "We learned (and) we lived."

Pittsburgh has an extra day to recover emotionally before going to Houston to face the Texans on Christmas Day.

A victory and another over Cleveland on New Year's Eve would secure a first-round playoff bye and maybe home-field advantage if the Patriots stub their toe at home against Buffalo or the Jets.

It's possible. It's just not likely. Heyward knows this, but he's not going to let it define what has been a special season.

There may be a rematch against the Patriots in January.

If it has to be in New England, so be it.

"I don't look at it anything crazy but five games, I mean, four to the Super Bowl," Heyward said. "I'm looking forward to all of it. We can be dejected about this, but I like where we are at."

Moreland remains with Red Sox, agrees to \$13M, 2-year deal

By Jimmy Golen

BOSTON (AP) — First baseman Mitch Moreland has agreed to a \$13 million, two-year contract to return to the Boston Red Sox and play for former teammate Alex Cora.

"He's a great baseball guy," said Moreland, who was on the Texas Rangers when Cora made a brief appearance there in 2010. "He was a great teammate then, and I don't expect anything different from him as a manager."

Moreland, 32, spent the first seven seasons of his career with the Rangers. The 32-year-old left-handed batter hit .246 with 22 homers 79 RBIs in his first season with the team last year. His home run total was just behind Mookie Betts (24) and Hanley Ramirez (23) on the Red Sox, who hit an AL-low 168 for the season.

"I love playing here, love the guys, everything about it," Moreland said in a conference call with reporters. "Looking forward to being back and maybe taking care of some unfinished business."

Moreland broke his toe last year, but never went on the disabled list, playing in a career-high 149 games.

"I don't like to point fingers at things. I know it didn't feel good," he said. "That's who I am, I'm trying to go out there and play. ... I'm not planning to break my toe this year, so hopefully we can stay out of that."

Moreland gets \$6.5 million in each of the next two seasons as part of the deal announced Monday. He can earn \$500,000 annually in performance bonuses: \$250,000 each for 500 and 550 plate appearances.

Red Sox baseball boss Dave Dombrowski said the team wanted to look around before bringing Moreland back. When Carlos Santana signed with the Philadelphia Phillies, that removed one of the big options.

"We jumped in at that point," Dombrowski said. "We figured we would move forward at that time."

Moreland's return could reduce playing time for Ramirez, who could be traded. Ramirez's contract includes a \$22 million


option for 2019 that would become guaranteed if he has 1,050 plate appearances in 2017 and '18 combined and passes a physical at the end of next season. Ramirez had 553 plate appearances last season.

Ramirez started 108 games at designated hitter and 17 at first base last season, when he was slowed by a left shoulder injury that required surgery in October. Bryce Brentz and Blake Swihart are DH options against left-handed pitchers.

"Hanley will be capable of playing first base this year," Dombrowski said. "If we open the season as we are right now with no other additions, I'm really not sure how that would split."

Moreland won a Gold Glove in 2016 and was a finalist for the award last season. Dombrowski said his defense makes him more valuable than he may appear.

"There are a couple of guys that hit more home runs, that from an offensive perspective might be more appealing," Dombrowski said.



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