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Thursday, March 10, 2022

Saugatuck/Douglas Area, Michigan

Vol. 47 Number 11



On ice

Winter's not over yet, nor officially until March 21, as witness this late-season ice angler pursuing panfish on Ox-Bow Lake in the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area north of the back Oval Beach parking lot. Given seasonal thaws starting last week and likely to become moroso in weeks to come, just be careful and watch your steps. (Photo by Scott Sullivan)

Township eyes seeking \$300K trail grant

BY SCOTT SULLIVAN
EDITOR

The Saugatuck Township Board was scheduled Wednesday, March 9, to consider joining Saugatuck city applying for Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grants of \$300,000 each to help complete the nonmotorized Blue Star Trail through the communities.

A public hearing on the matter was also advised for that night's monthly board meeting, which occurred too late for this week's print deadline.

The city, whose former council and staff opposed completing a short stretch through its borders based on cost and safety concerns, has in recent years changed

course. It recently acted as lead agent for the tri-community's (Douglas included also) application for \$1.275 million in federal Transportation Alternatives (TAP) grants, administered through the Michigan Department of Transportation, for the project.

The city, on advice of MDOT officials, Jan. 24 quintupled its original commitment to \$50,000 in matching funds in hopes of securing such a grant, which would cover close to 70 percent of the now-estimated local work's \$2.2 million cost.

The increase, per city manager Ryan Heise, would allow Saugatuck to address TAP comments related to adding more trees to the project and raising unit prices for boardwalk and grading as extra contingency for potentially-higher bids.

The township has committed \$10,000 and non-profit Friends of the Blue Star Trail — which for 11 years have worked towards the larger vision of a 20-mile recreational path from South Haven north to Laketown Township's existing Beeline Trail, which then links further north through Holland to Grand Haven — \$205,000 worth of TAP matching funds towards what members call the 1.14-mile path's Northern stretch.

The hoped-for combined \$600,000 in MNRTF funds would, with matching municipal, Friends and donor pledges, generate an additional \$1.0784 million for construction and engineering costs.

"The township," operations coordinator Daniel DeFranco told the board

before Wednesday's meeting, "is moving ahead, on schedule, to submit its MNRTF grant application ... gathering information and satisfying requirements of the application, including having Disability Network review the trail extension plan.

"A significant part of that process is hosting a public hearing and considering passing a resolution authorizing the township to submit the grant application. If we continue on this trajectory, we should satisfy

all the requirements of the grant application in time for the April 1 submission deadline," DeFranco said.

The projected local work consists of three segments:

- Washington Street (Douglas) to Lake Street (Saugatuck), 1,600 feet long and including the Kalamazoo River-crossing bridge.
- "This segment," the TAP grant submission notes, "includes approximately 77 feet of a 9-foot-wide, 2-way bicycle track and 7-foot-wide existing

sidewalk (pedestrians). This was the only feasible option the Saugatuck Township Fire District would support because it maintained a continuous left-turn lane to allow for emergency vehicle to get across the only bridge in the community.

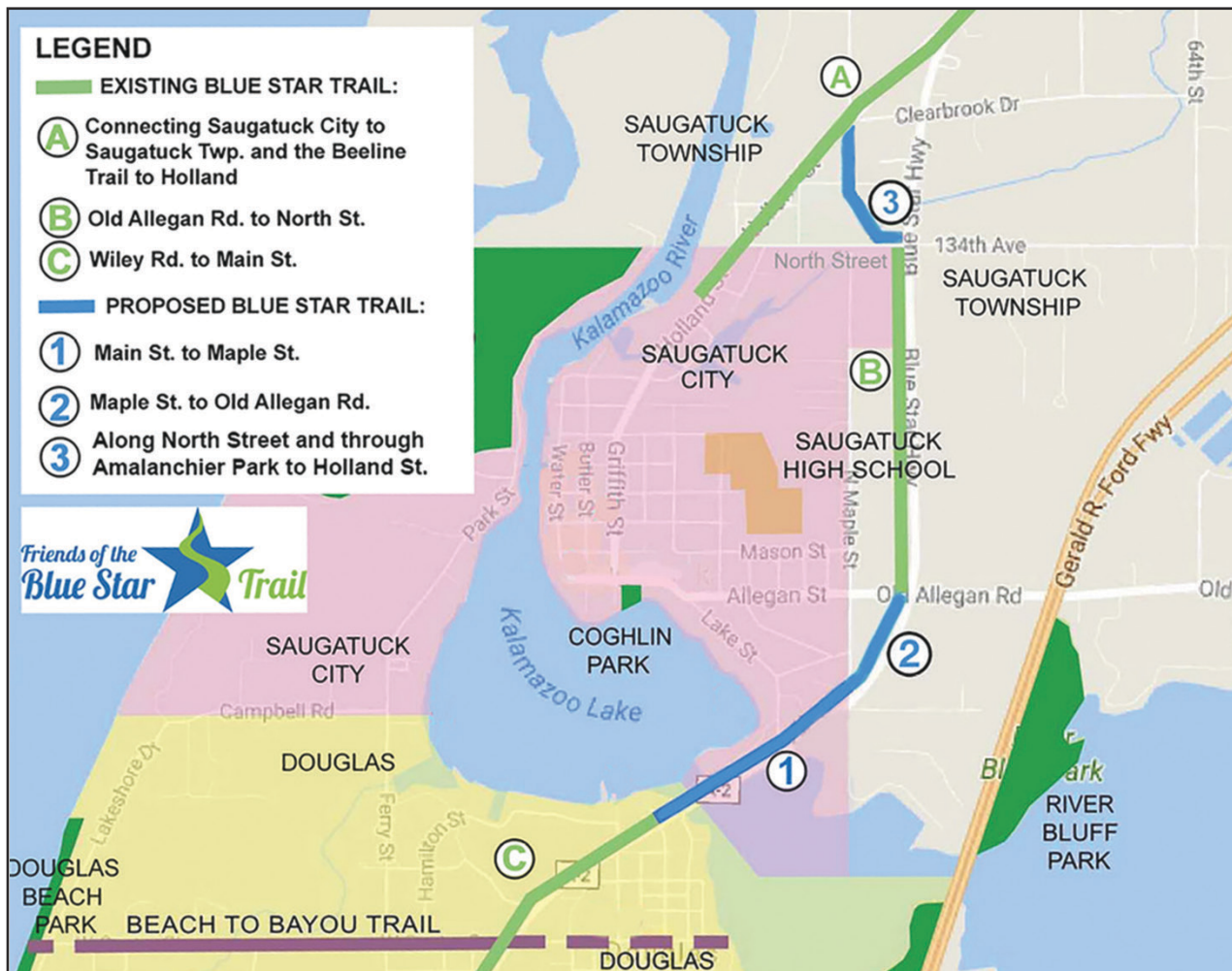
"Once on land, just north of the bridge, the two separate bike and pedestrian facilities merge into a shared use path. This will be done by expanding the existing 825 feet of sidewalk to a 10-foot-wide asphalt sepa-

rated trail to Lake Street. "On the south side of the bridge at Washington Street, the trail will merge directly into the existing BST through Douglas, which is a 2-way cycle track and sidewalk."

• Lake Street to Maple Street (Saugatuck city), 900 feet long with a 10-foot-wide separated pathway.

It will require, says the narrative, "700 feet of an at grade boardwalk (or retaining wall) due to slopes along the roadway as well

■ see Trail, Page A2



Proposed North Section of Blue Star Trail.

Township weighs buying well site for \$1

BY SCOTT SULLIVAN
EDITOR

The Saugatuck Township Board Wednesday, March 9, weighed closing on an Oct. 4, 2017 agreement to buy 5.8 acres owned by North Shores of Saugatuck LLC north of 135th Avenue for \$1 to provide municipal well services to neighbors.

The Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority — which serves Saugatuck and Douglas cities, plus parts of Saugatuck and Laketown townships — has voiced long-term desire to augment its existing well at Riverside Cemetery, a half-mile or so southeast of the new proposed site, noted township officials five years ago.

Supply from that source is sufficient for current needs, but one or more backup sites are desirable in the event things change: contamination there or at neighbor wells, new demands caused by development, officials said.

Since then the proposed site west of 65th Street has been independently identified through the state Well Head Protection Program as ideal for a municipal well as there are no known contamination sites in the area and it is surrounded by critical dunes areas with minimal chance of development that could threaten water quality.

A preliminary engineering report completed in 2018 based on test drills determined that one or more high-capacity municipal wells remain an option for the site. Per the agreement, the township would be able to close on the property as early as September 2022 and no later than September 2023 for the pittance price.

Work remains before closing, township operations coordinator Daniel DeFranco apprised the board. It includes:

- Have the township attorney notify North Shores of its intent to enact the agreement by a specific date, the earliest possible being Sept. 6.

- A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment report to establish environmental impacts that could pose a threat to the environment and/or human health, plus offer the township liability protection.

- Uses of surrounding lands, DeFranco noted, include fruit orchards and soil staging. This report is not required by the agreement but recommended by the township attorney and engineer when purchasing property.

- Obtaining a title commitment and title insurance, again not required by the agreement but “strongly recommended” by the town-



ship attorney.
• Obtain an American Land Title Association (ALTA) survey with

measurements and legal descriptions as required by the agreement 30 days prior to closing.

DeFranco proposed the township budget \$30,000 for professional service fees, title, ESA

and survey in ample time prior to closing to facilitate the close.

Trail from Page A1

as well as relocation of an existing guardrail. The remaining 200 feet will be a 10-foot-wide separated asphalt trail with a modular block retaining wall (opposite slope condition).

- Maple Street to Old Allegan Road (Saugatuck Township), 1,300 feet long. Plans there call for 10-foot-wide separated asphalt pathway including 275 feet of boardwalk to cross a small low area, 425

feet of retaining wall due to grade issues and 600 feet of separated trail.

“The trail on the north end will cross Old Allegan, where it will connect directly to the existing trail segment,” the application says.

- North Street to Holland Street (township), 1,710 feet long including 210 feet of boardwalk to cross Goshorn Creek and the adjacent wetland, and 1,500 feet of as-

phalt separated trail, all being a 10-foot-wide pathway.

“This section of trail is the most unique,” reads the narrative, “as it will turn away from Blue Star Highway through Amalanchier Park and along 66th Street to Holland Street, where it will cross and connect directly to Laketown Township’s Bee-line Trail (10-foot-wide asphalt trail) extending 8 miles to the City of Holland.

“This segment will utilize an old railroad grade, crossing a small creek with a boardwalk through an undeveloped park and along a low traffic road,” the application says.

Once the trail has been built, it continues, each of the three communities has agreed to provide for its maintenance, Saugatuck city and township from their general funds and Douglas from its

major street fund.

Maintenance costs and budget were developed on a \$1,700-per-mile figure, additional costs to maintain boardwalk and street markings; plus \$2,000 per mile for snow removal and \$500 for long-term maintenance, bringing the total to \$4,770 per year, split up within each jurisdiction.

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Dylan Jonker



Heat is on

Why is something called chili hot? We will leave that for theologians. What we do know is Alex and Kathy Winter (shown at left) won the Judges' Choice Trophy at Community Church of Douglas's annual Chili Cook-Off Friday, edging People's Choice Winner Jim Kramer in the final balloting by jurors Tino and Heather Reyes, Pastor Brandon Beebe and Fennville Elementary Principal Albert Lumbar. There were 20 entries and plenty of full tummies afterwards. (Photos by Mike Mora and Scott Sullivan)

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BLUE STAR

BY SCOTT SULLIVAN
EDITOR

Silly Putty

Silly Putty came in a plastic egg you unscrewed. What came out was yolk-size, pink and magic, almost like a baby.

You could press Silly Putty against newsprint — color funnies were best — and it reproduced an exact impression you could stretch — like what funhouse mirrors do — and transfer to other surfaces. Or re-wad it up, throw and bounce it.

Over time Silly Putty acquired so many impressions it darkened and lost resiliency — again, not unlike a baby. In contact with alcohol it dissolved.

When the U.S. rationed rubber during World War II — the Japanese had seized Pacific Rim plantations where it came from — the fed funded research to find a substitute. Chemists came up with a formula of 65-percent dimethylsiloxane (hydroxy-terminated polymers with boric acid), 17-percent silica (crystalline quartz), 9-percent Thixatrol ST (castor oil derivative), 4-percent polydimethylsiloxane, plus 1-percent each of decamethyl cyclopentasiloxane, glycerine and titanium dioxide. If you have these at home you can make your own.

My more-succinct term glop that resulted lacked needed properties to replace rubber, but in 1949 marketer Peter Hodgson borrowed \$147 to buy some, packed it in eggs and tried peddling it as Silly Putty.

Genius works in mysterious ways, its wonders and blunders to perform. Silly Putty sold poorly at first, but after a New Yorker article mentioned it, Hodgson sold more than 250,000 eggs in three days.

He almost went out of business when silicone was rationed during the Korean War, but bounced back literally when rationing — not to be mistaken for thinking rationally — was lifted.

By the time I was growing up, eggs of glop were everyone and Apollo 8 astronauts using it to secure tools in zero gravity during lunar orbit.

Like other physical playthings — Hula Hoops, Super Balls ... from my youth, interest in Silly Putty has waned among children compared to virtual amusements in whose virtues I'm less confident. Nothing taught values like twirling rings around your waist or bouncing Zectron balls over your brother's head and smashing the neighbors' windows.

Has life gone to hell or just me? At least I have coffee klatches I can hobble to and find fellow geezers who agree it can't be the latter.

Then I read The Answer: Frying Pan Island, at the extreme eastern tip of the Upper Peninsula, is for sale. The \$580,000 price for these 3.42 acres off the shore of DeTour is a pittance compared with the op-



portunity to start fresh, like Silly Putty.

I thought of Nick Carraway in "The Great Gatsby" gazing across the sound at what was now the late Gatsby's lawn and reflecting on "the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world ... perhaps the last time in history when humans encountered something expansive enough to match their natural capacity for wonder."

Never mind the green light Gatsby believed in belied an orgasmic future impossible to achieve, nor that East and West Eggs unscrewed into wealthy islands upon which those Dutch sailors made a killing. I could too!

Frying Pan — so named when discoverer Capt. William Thorn found such a utensil left there by Indians — had its lighthouse and out-buildings taken out long ago.

Now it's the kind of nothing I can live with: a few trees, rocks, sand and concrete pier from which the nearby village launches fireworks. If I skate the channel to DeTour I'll never run out of things to do as long they're shovel snow or go somewhere else.

Alas purity has a price. Looking at my bank account, my only hope was to get a loan from Gatsby or hitch a ride on the S.S. Minnow.

"All aboard for a 3-hour tour," cried Gilligan.

"What if we crash on Frying Pan Island?" I suggested. Sure enough, the weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed, if not for the courage of yadda yadda.

"We may be here for a long, long time," advised the Skipper. "Have you met our passengers?"

"The millionaire, his wife and professor?" I asked. "No thanks."

"I mean Ginger and Mary Ann."

"Ginger!" I told the movie star. "Let's get primitive as can be."

WHANG! Who knew the damn pan was still on the island?

"Look," said Gilligan.

"A for-sale sign. What do you say, Mr. Howell? You're a millionaire."

"Thurston!" his wife said. "Can't you see there is nothing here?"

"He did play Mr. Magoo on the cartoon show," said Gilligan.

"I was his voice," said actor Jim Backus, breaking the fourth wall, off which putty balls bounced crazily.

"I'm impressed," I said.



Free books

Free Little Libraries, such as this one outside the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, are such a cool idea -- take one book, put another back -- and prevalent locally it would be a shame to share a map of where they all are. It's better just to explore, be delighted and surprised. (Photo by Scott Sullivan)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Smart adding fuel to fire?

To the editor,
I was pleasantly surprised by Mike Wilcox's column, "Open oil spigot"... He acknowledged climate change being important.

His assessment that we, and much of the world, are overly dependent on imported oil and gas strikes me as especially true. But the quantity that we consume is a significant contributor to that dependency and

higher prices we're paying.

I would have been impressed by his column if there was any hint within of a "what can I do for my country." Instead of expecting the government to solve all our problems, we could do a lot for ourselves by reducing consumption. Look at how the cost of gas plummeted when the pandemic cleared the highways.

So Mike, my suggestion is to demand not what your country should do for you.

If we all step up and reduce our use of oil and gas, we can diminish our dependencies, lower prices, and start chipping away at that important climate change thing.

James Cook
Saugatuck Township

LIFE AS PERFORMANCE ART

BY G.C. STOPPEL

The next time you see photographs of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, you may want to hold your children closer. You are separated by just three degrees from that war.

First degree: we know each other because you invite me into your home each week via this newspaper. Second: Joyce Elferdink, who taught in the western Ukraine city of Kolomyia, and I are longtime friends. Third: Joyce has been in contact with her friends there during the war and passes on their stories of fear, sacrifice and triumph.

The stories she shares are not of dramatic heroism in the midst of combat nor of individual civilians standing up to the invaders. They are quiet ones about people enduring the unimaginable, trying to get on with their lives and hoping for a better future.

As always during wartime, women and children suffer most. Many have watched their husbands or fathers don uniforms and take up weapons to push back the invaders. The women continue to take care of aging relatives, children and do their best to survive.



Many other women and children have tearfully boarded trains, hoping to get to a safer part of the country or find refuge in another nation.

After a successful academic career, Joyce was invited in 2016 to go to Ukraine as a member of the Peace Corps. Ther, she was assigned to the industrial and railroad center of Kolomyia (pop. 61,000) on the western side of the country.

She remained in the city until family circumstances forced her to return to Michigan in 2018. The following two years her hopes of returning to the country were dashed by the pandemic. This year Ukraine

is off the list because of the Russian invasion. Perhaps next year will be better.

Her first assignment was for two weeks in Delatyn to better acclimate her to the country. From there, she moved to Kolomyia, where she stayed with a family for the rest of her time in school.

Joyce was struck by the warmth and compassion of the people. One day when she was on a bus, somewhat turned about and confused, a woman who heard her speaking English offered to help her find her way to her destination. Not only that, but the woman offered to show her around the town of Cherniviski and refused to accept money in return for this private sightseeing tour.

Joyce said this was typical of her interactions with Ukrainians. Friendships, she said, evolved "easily." The people are incredibly generous and sharing."

She recalled being constantly invited by her students to their family homes to share meals as a way of saying "thank you for being our teacher." They welcomed the opportunity to practice their English in an informal setting.

Others vied for the opportunity to accompany

Joyce on weekends when she would go sightseeing through the country.

Part of her work included participating in GoCamp Ukraine for the teenage students at the school. One, Anouta, was in a wheelchair and could not participate in the summer camp activities. Joyce would go to her home for private tutoring, which led to a long-standing friendship.

Anouta is now a graduate of a Polish university but cannot go home. She is terrified about the wellbeing of her friends and family still in Ukraine. Her classmate Maria, now living with the sounds of sirens and bombs, still hopes to come for a visit to the United States later this year.

"It takes little (effort) to make friends in Ukraine," Joyce said. Now she stays in touch via Facebook and Telegram.

Joyce has also stayed in frequent contact with teaching colleagues there. Two have become her best sources of information about the war.

Valentina continues to teach, but the work is now all online because Russians are targeting schools and

■ see Stoppel, Page A5

The Commercial Record

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Catalytic burglars sought

Michigan State Police are seeking two men observed by security cameras operating the off-white Toyota Avalon with no license plate Saturday, March 5, between 1:30 and 2 p.m. stealing catalytic converters from two trucks at the Cottage Homes cabinet shop at 6810 124th Ave. (M-89) in Fennville. Tips regarding Case #52-1069-22 may be phoned to the area state police post at (269) 792-2213.



Is government benefiting from war?

BY MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

I have a healthy distrust towards government and the media. I never believe what they tell us without researching the issue or edit thoroughly.

Covid in my opinion, was one of those issues that didn't add up. The vaccine and mask mandates were ridiculous and as quickly as they were instituted they're now gone.

So now we are being bombarded 24/7 with images of the Russians invading Ukraine. The atrocities have created a degree of empathy for the Ukrainian people that is unparalleled in history. We want so badly to go over there and kick the Russians' a**es.



But wait. Something in my gut tells me there is more to the story than we are being told. My intuition says all the news and heart-

string-pulling images emanating from Ukraine have a two-fold purpose.

The neocons in Washington D.C., and they permeate throughout our establishment, have never been involved in a war they didn't like. They salivate at the opportunity to fire up the war machine as more dollars line their pockets, because after all war costs money and much of that money goes to the neocons.

Despite all the naysaying from our administration and legislature, I can't help but think, particularly after the sympathetic news coverage on behalf of Ukraine, that a no-fly zone is in our future. I hope I'm wrong. Prohibiting Russian planes from flying might result in

an escalated war in which the U.S. would be forced to place "boots on the ground" in Ukraine.

Escalating the war makes no sense. I am as emphatic as the nice guy for the people of Ukraine. I believe we should be sending weaponry and continuing to sanction the hell out of Russia. What Putin has done is inhumane and I pray he is not successful in his attempt to occupy Ukraine. However, I do not believe we should involve ourselves more than we are.

You can bet China is salivating over this war. They see it weakening Russia because of all the manpower and equipment they have had to send to Ukraine. They see the U.S.

sending equipment and money, and if we escalate our involvement it will provide China an opportunity to invade Taiwan. While we are preoccupied with Putin and Ukraine, China is considering their own expansionist agenda.

The second agenda is this war has taken away from the emphasis on this administration's domestic policy, which is not very popular with the majority of citizens.

No more do news outlets devote scores of print or time to Covid. It's all but disappeared. No longer is inflation or crime a big deal. For the last two weeks Putin's invasion of Ukraine has been front and center to the point very

little else is talked or written about.

Focusing on war and not inflation gives the current administration a reprieve from constituent criticism. In this day and age where what happened yesterday is essentially forgotten, war has accomplished what no domestic policy change could do. Inflation and crime are no longer an issue. War has trumped all domestic issues.

I reiterate. I am not absolving Putin of any blame. His act of aggression is despicable and I pray nightly for the Ukrainian people.

But I can't help but wonder if government and mass media has had a hand in perpetuating this mess. The benefits are clear.

Stoppel from Page A4

and other public buildings. "It is very difficult," she said. "Many students have moved, and then there is the bombing."

Valentina wrote further about her husband, who had retired from the army, but was now back in uniform. Their daughter was able to escape from Kyiv and, at least for the time being, in a safer location.

"We pray day and night. The situation is very alert but we do believe Ukraine will win," Valentina said.

Irina, another of Joyce's colleagues, wrote her that their school has been closed and she is no longer teaching. She would like to leave but cannot move her 87-year-old aunt. Nor will her husband leave the city without her.

"Of course I would like our children and grandsons to leave, but my sons should defend the Motherland," Irina said.

In addition to the war itself is the constant uncertainty of what might happen tomorrow, today or in the next few seconds. Living

on edge like that, as the Ukrainians have been forced to do for two weeks now, is exhausting.

Joyce continually asks her Ukrainian friends what she can do to help. The answer seems to always be, "Pray for Ukraine." That is important, of course.

For those who want to do something more tangible, there carefully-vetted and reputable organizations collecting money for victims of this atrocity.

"I am concerned," Joyce concluded, "about the disrupted edu-

cation of Ukrainian students.

"American students have been harmed by the loss of their in-class instruction during the pandemic. What happens to students who must either abandon their homes or learn through the backdrop of sounds and shatterings from war? I suggest we plan some projects, either online or by participating in GoCamp Ukraine when it is possible again," she said.

We Americans are among the most generous people on the

planet. When we see someone hurting our first response is to help.

Once again, when we see people in need, we reach for our billfolds. Be careful. Scam artists will try to take advantage of you. It wouldn't surprise me to learn the Russians are running scams as well, seeing how the West has cut off many of their funds.

Give, but clearly understand who is collecting the money and make sure your resources will be put to good use.

TRIPPING THRU TIME with THE COMMERCIAL

By Jack Sheridan



The Office of Production Management issued an order on Jan. 14, 1942, to "stockpile" all cars shipped after Jan. 15. Cars shipped to dealers could not be sold until specific permission to sell was granted when deemed "in the public interest" but such permission probably wasn't granted earlier than January 1943. Dealers were also required to make the tires and tubes from such vehicles available to any "appropriate agency" at any time so requested.

All manufacturers ended their production of automobiles on February 22, 1942. The January 1942 production quota had been a little over 100,000 automobiles and light trucks. The units manufactured at the beginning of February would bring up the total number of vehicles in a newly established car stockpile to 520,000. These would be available during the duration of the war for rationed sales by auto dealers to purchasers deemed "essential drivers."

The government's Office of Price Administration also imposed rationing of gasoline and tires and set a national speed limit of 35 mph.

During the early part of February 1942 all car owners were required to record the serial numbers of the tires on their cars and report them to the proper authorities. They also had to certify that they had only five tires and tubes for each vehicle they owned.

Jack sez: This "cartoon" appeared on the front page of the February 6, 1942 issue of the Commercial Record. It is a visual reminder of WWII mandates. A little digging by yours truly turned up the interesting details of such mandates ... as outlined in the adjoining text clip.!

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MAGGIE'S PANTRY

By MAGGIE CONKLIN
Bone Broth Barley Soup

Two weeks ago I gave you one of my most intricate recipes, Tortellini soup, with more than a dozen ingredients and taking hours to make. Last week I talked at length about simplicity. This week we are merging the two into a beautifully simple soup.

You know how “they say” that chicken noodle soup can cure anything? I’ve always wondered who “they” were, haven’t you? Well, the reason chicken noodle soup is so good for the body is because it’s cooked with the chicken bones in it, and the bones — especially the marrow — is packed with very specific nutrients that support our immune system.

You may have heard of bone broth. Several companies made a small fortune selling it to people who wanted to eat healthier, but who didn’t want to cook. Bone broth is the easiest thing in the world to make, and those companies charged oodles of money for what was, essentially, bouillon. And that expensive stuff didn’t even taste that good.

So today we are going to make real bone broth, the way your ancestors made it. It takes 10 min-



utes to prepare and hours to slow cook. If you do it in a slow cooker you can start it quickly in the morning before work, put the barley in when you get back home and be eating an hour later.

Ingredients
Beef soup bones
1 medium onion
1 large carrot
1 stalk celery
1 cup pearly barley (not instant!)
1 cup beef bouillon
4 cups water, or more, until the bones are covered
½ teaspoon each of black pepper, rosemary and thyme

Get out your slow cooker or heavy stovetop pot. This is going to slow cook for 5 to 12 hours in an electric

slow cooker or on the slow cook setting on your instant-type electric cooker, or for 2 to 3 hours in that heavy pot on the lowest setting on your stovetop.

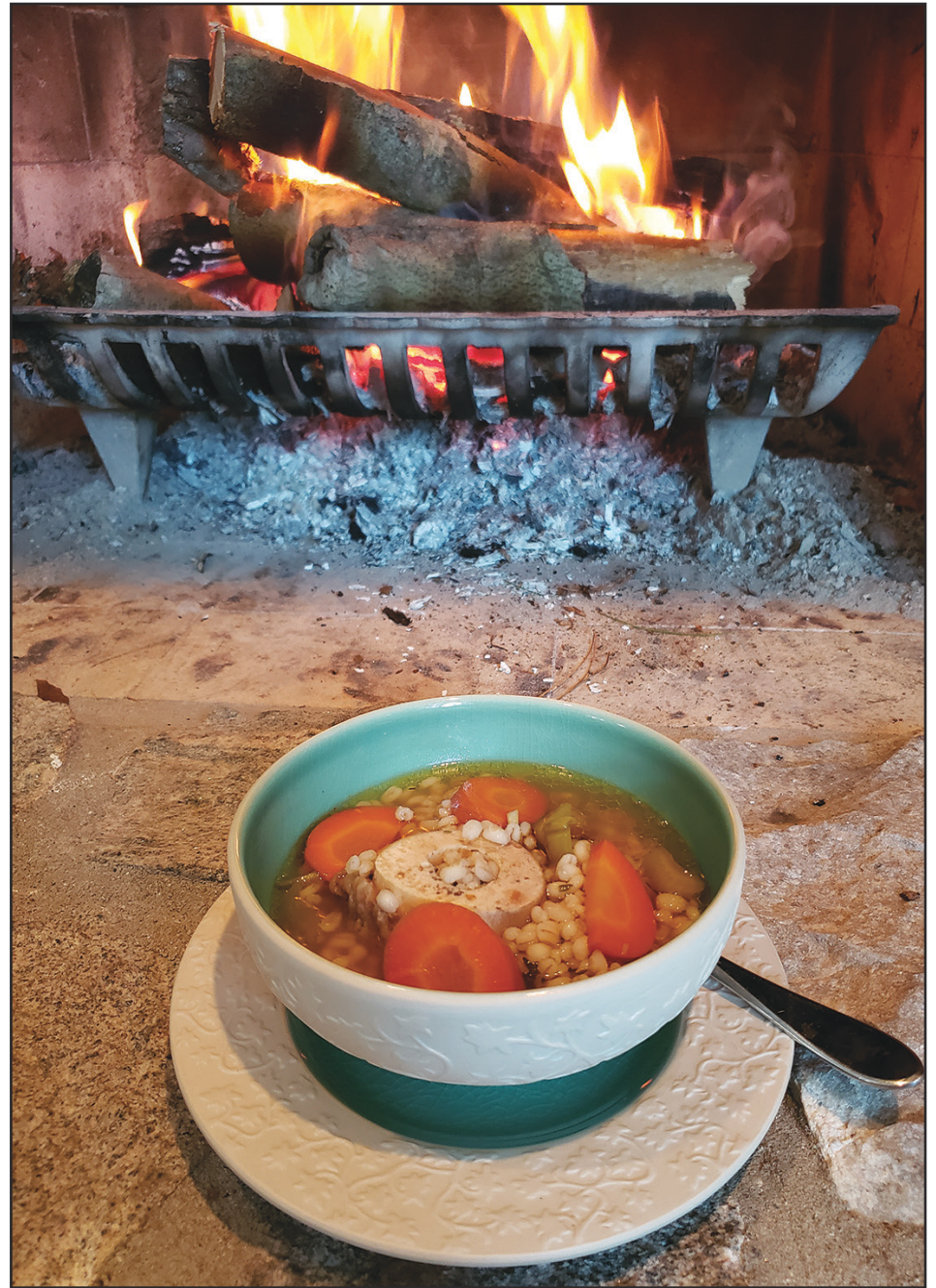
Lake Vista Super-Valu in Douglas has a wonderful butcher and excellent fresh and frozen meat section. They almost always have soup bones for less than \$3 a package.

The packages come with 2 large bones, 3 medium bones, or 4 to 5 small bones. If you have 2 people, get 2 or 4 bones; if you are cooking for 3 people, get 3 bones; or get 4 or 5 bones for a whole family.

Each bone has the fatty tissue marrow in the middle. You might wrinkle your nose at this thought, but this is where the immune system support will come from. The bones are, of course, loaded with healthy minerals like calcium, and it takes hours to leach the calcium out of the bones.

The bone marrow tastes like warm butter, and I’ve had it at Bowdie’s Chophouse in downtown Saugatuck when they have bone marrow as an hors d’oeuvres. I just checked their website and it’s on the menu now!

Here is the easy part: Put all the ingredients except the pearly barley in a pot and cook them on very low for at least 2 but up to 12 hours. One hour before eating put the pearly barley in.



Then eat it. Yes, there is little or no meat, but this is a good light springtime soup that will help get you past

the months of heavy wintertime eating. It’s time to lighten up our menu in preparation for spring, and time to

support our immune system to prevent those springtime sniffles. Enjoy!

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T-boned driver needs extrication

The driver of this Ford Edge (right) required hydraulic tool extrication after being t-boned by the Ford pick-up truck (right) while crossing M-89 at 62nd Street on the Saugatuck-Ganges township line March 2. Both the Saugatuck Township and Ganges fire departments responded to 2:46 p.m. call, reported STFD IT Director Erik Kirchert, and had to pull back the pickup to gain access to the driver's side of the severely-damaged SUV. That driver was removed and transported to Holland Hospital by Life Ambulance. The pickup driver was not injured. Ray's Towing and John's Towing removed the two vehicles and roads were fully reopened at 4:30 p.m., Kirchert said. (Photos by STFD crew)

Douglas slates Union sidewalk work

BY SCOTT SULLIVAN
EDITOR

Douglas will build a sidewalk south of Union Street from Center Street west to Blue Star Highway after city council Monday accepted an \$88,475 low bid from Curt DeJonge Ex-

cavating of Holland to do the work. Its intent is to provide safer pedestrian access to and from downtown.

Construction, which will include 940 linear feet of 5-foot-wide concrete, needed tree removal, grading, sub-

base installation and site restoration, was budgeted for by council during fiscal year 2021-22 at \$150,000 under its Local Street – General Streets and Rights of Way Capital Outlay.

Work, city manager Rich

LaBombard said, will require minimal tree removal and include crosswalks at intersecting sidewalks.

The initial contract provides for construction to start July 1, but the city can request that work start earlier if the

contractor can accommodate it into their schedule.

Higher bidders included Anlaan Corp. of Grand Haven at \$108,695.50; Redline Excavating of Holland, \$97,555; and Weick Brothers Excavating of Hopkins, \$89,049.20.

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SCA Mountainfest fetes films, families

The fifth annual Mountainfilm on Tour: Saugatuck Film Festival — bringing together children’s programming, outdoor adventure, meaningful and creative films, and community collaboration — is underway at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts.

Ongoing through March is a scavenger hunt. On tap: a Children’s Film Festival March 14-31, Family Film Festival March 19 and Community Film Festival March 25 and 26.

Telluride, Colo.-based Mountainfilm is one of America’s longest-running film festivals, part of a nonprofit effort to celebrate stories of collective indomitable spirit and inspire audiences through film, art and ideas.

The SCA is the only Mountainfilm partner in Michigan and one of only two venues in the Great Lakes region.

“We partner with Mountainfilm,” said Center executive director Kristin Armstrong, “in part because of their passion for the environment, which also resonates with our lakeshore region.

“But they also bring stories from around the globe ... expanding our horizons and connecting us to the broader world,” Armstrong said.

Locally, the festival supports the 20th annual Children’s Film Festival March 14-31 in schools throughout West Michigan. This free programming allows students to dig into other cultures, traditions, stories and spirits through the power of film. Throughout the last 20 years, the SCA has served more than 45,000 students with this experience.

“We hope that through film,” said multi-year presenter Kristen Milord, “the students are able to be creative and realize they can tell their story whether it’s through art, photography, film, music, dancing or their writing — that they all have a unique story to tell.”



‘A Mighty Water’ is among films coming to the SCA’s fifth annual Mountainfest this month.

Such programming expands into the Family Film Festival March 19 — designed to get viewers’ imaginations in gear and gather families for a day of adventure, exploration, learning opportunities and fun.

A special set of family-friendly Mountainfilm shorts are shown in the SCA theater, followed by hands-on activities in the art studio and family-focused games led by the local Boys & Girls Club.

The free Children’s Film Festival is made in collaboration with the March 25-26 Community Film Festival, which celebrates

adventure and human spirit with two days of shorts.

It opens Friday, March 25, with a Happy Hour party featuring live music by Michigan Academy of Folk Music, followed by The Medley playlist and after party with live music by Colorado-based indie rock band Wildermis.

Fun continues Saturday with two film playlists; Big Green World at 10 a.m. and Indomitable Spirit at 3 p.m., followed again by Happy Hour. Live music by Michigan Academy of Folk Music, and the feature film “The Ants and the Grasshopper” at 7 p.m.

This celebration carries through into Saugatuck, Douglas and Fennville with special offers and perks for ticket holders from community partners. Among them are:

- Featured \$6 drinks and/or appetizers at select local restaurants/breweries,

- 10 percent off total purchases with retail partners, and complimentary Fenn Valley wine tastings Saturday, March 26, from noon to 5 p.m. at galleries around town

Several lodging partners are also offering exclusive deals and discounts.

A full list of community partners can be found at sc4a.org.

In addition, the March-long scavenger hunt that explores and celebrates local outdoor gems throughout Saugatuck, Douglas, Fennville and Holland. All ages can enjoy quality time with friends and family while taking in local spots with fresh eyes and getting outdoors. All eight locations include a new way to experience that spot and fun facts about that site.

Tickets to the fifth annual Mountainfilm on Tour: Saugatuck Film Festival

are on sale now at sc4a.org, the Center box office or by calling (269) 857-7222. Individual passes for each of the screenings in the Community Film Festival are available or get an All Access Pass.

Activities are made possible by the support from Gold Sponsors John Cannarsa and Tim Straker, Andy Knight and Beau Gratzler, and Experience Grand Rapids; Silver Sponsors Landsharks and Phil’s Bar & Grille; and Bronze Sponsors the Stannis family, Anne and Roger Gamache, Ihle Auto Service and Velo City Cycles.

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Fennville administrator Sleigh resigns

Fennville City Administrator Amanda Sleigh announced her resignation March 2, Commercial Record correspondent Jim Hayden reported in his Bicycle Base Fennville blog. Her last day will March 25. Mayor Dan Rastall has met with the city's personnel committee to get a replacement search underway.

"Serving as the first city administrator for the City of Fennville has been a great honor and the highlight of my career," Sleigh said in her March 1 resignation letter. "It has been amazing to watch the city grow over the last four years and to have been such an integral part of that growth. The community has made such



Amanda Sleigh

great strides with rebuilding the infrastructure I am confident the city is now

set up for the next phase of growth: development." "Amanda has done a stupendous job for the city," said Rastall. "She has taken on increased responsibilities without hesitation and through the years has gone above the call of duty. She leaves big shoes to fill and will be missed." Sleigh was hired in 2017 as the city's first administrator. Under her guidance, Fennville completed multi-million-dollar infrastructure projects including sewer and water repairs, new water meters for all city residents and sidewalk and road repairs. The city recently received

a \$300,000 state grant to begin renovations at Paradise Park. She also led the city commission in annual goal-setting sessions, acquisition of a new city hall and sale of the old building, drafting of marijuana ordinances and she started a master plan update process. She reorganized the department of public works. "The City of Fennville has a lot to be proud of," Sleigh said. "I am proud to say I was able to be a part of that journey for the last four years. "I have met some of the most dedicated and loyal citizens, developed great

friendships and worked with amazing people. "I truly wish the commission, board members, my staff and the entire community all the best," her letter said. With Sleigh's departure, city hall will lack experience. Fennville recently hired a new clerk/treasurer on a 90-day trial basis after the previous clerk/treasurer left in November. The city also recently hired a new part-time office assistant. Sleigh's salary is about \$65,900, according to city records. She is the highest paid staff member.



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Sunday, March 13
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"Eagle with Small Ones," Derek Harper

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Luke 13: 34

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Rite I – 8:00 a.m.
Contemplative Service of Holy Eucharist

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
"Indigenous Ecology - Healing and Renewal"
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Rite 2 – 10:15 a.m.
Holy Eucharist with Music & Hope College Senior & Soprano Emma Clark as the featured soloist

The Rev. Dr. Jay E. Johnson, Presiding
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You may also join us ONLINE at 10:15 a.m. as we livestream this service
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Pages 34-35 of Douglas artist/author John Leben's new book "Amy and the Tortoise - How Animals Saved the Planet."

Leben rolls out kids' fable/book

Douglas LebenArt Gallery owner John Leben's book "Amy and the Tortoise - How Animals Saved the Planet" is due to be released nationwide later this month. The 80-page fable for children about global warming that is illustrated with the digital paintings Leben has been doing for the last 10

years. An unusual feature is a QR code link in its pages to his 15-minute movie of the same name.

Leben is launching "Amy" with a Kickstarter campaign to help finance the book's printing and distribution and to offer friends and neighbors first crack at acquiring it.

Besides being able to pre-order the book on Kickstarter, he is offering rewards for support that includes deep discounts for purchasing his digital paintings.

"It's a great time to buy," laughed Leben, "especially for those who have been putting off pulling the trigger on a purchase." All of

the limited edition prints in Leben's Environmental Series are included in the campaign with a refund of shipping charges for local pickup.


Signed copies of the hard-cover book, a 16x20-inch poster promoting both the book and the movie, jigsaw puzzles of Leben's paintings

and an option to read the fable as an eBook are also included as rewards for supporting Leben's campaign.

Go to kickstarter.com and search John Leben to find the "Amy and the Tortoise" campaign, then, make a pledge should you wish to get the work into hands of children and adults.

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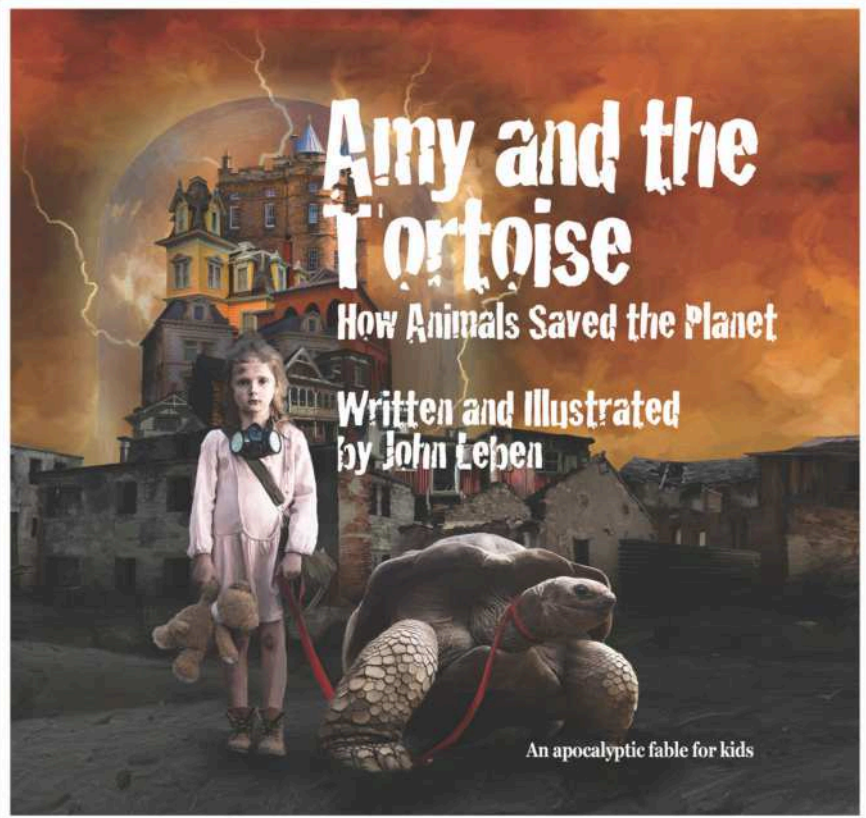
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Saugatuck beats Zion Christian before falling in districts

By JASON WESSELDYK
SPORTS EDITOR

BYRON CENTER—With his team trailing 13-10 at half-time in its non-conference game against Zion Christian on Tuesday, March 1, Saugatuck boys basketball coach Brian Ward had a message for his players.

"I told them every possession matters in a low-scoring game like this," Ward said. "Go make every one of them count."

Apparently, the message got through.

The Trailblazers outscored the Mountaineers 17-0 in the third quarter and never looked back as they prevailed by a final score of 39-24. In the process, Saugatuck collected its fifth win in its past six games.

"The boys responded," Ward said. "We came out swinging in the third quarter. We created numerous turnovers on defense with many of them leading to easy offensive buckets on the other end."

Senior John Roberts led the third-quarter charge, scoring nine of his game-best 12 points during the stanza. Sophomore Russell VandePoel joined him in double figures with 10 points.

Senior John Hartgerink and freshman Carter Miller added six points each.

The Trailblazers hoped to make it three wins in a row and six out of seven when it traveled to Fruitport Calvary Christian on Thursday, March 3. But it wasn't to be, as Saugatuck dropped the 54-48 decision.

"We battled hard until the very end, but unfortunately came up short," Ward said.

Saugatuck started strong, jumping out to a 14-6 lead and forcing the Eagles to call a timeout. Fruitport responded with a 9-0 run, but back came Saugatuck with some defensive stops and 3-pointers from Roberts and Miller as the went up 28-21 at halftime.

Holding Fruitport leading scorer Bradley Rogers with no points played a big role in the first-half success for Saugatuck.

But Rogers went for 16 points in the second half to help lead his team to the comeback victory.

"We had multiple chances towards the end of the game to take the lead, but were unable to hit the big shot when needed," Ward said.

Roberts scored 14 points to lead Saugatuck, followed by VandePoel with nine and Miller with seven.

On Monday, March 7, the Trailblazers opened postseason play with a Division 3 district opener against Wyoming Potter's House.

After a close first quarter—Saugatuck trailed 7-5—Potter's House started to pull away and eventually secured the 56-24 win to bring the Trailblazers' season to an end at 8-13.

Despite being down 21-13 at halftime, the Trailblazers remained within striking distance. But a 22-6 third-quarter run by Potter's House put the game out of reach.

"Potter's House came out swinging in the third quarter, blowing the game wide open and closing the book on our season," Ward said.

Roberts closed out his prep hardwood career with a team-high eight points. VandePoel had seven points.



Sophomore Russell VandePoel scored seven points in Saugatuck's district loss to Potter's House. (Photo by Scott Sullivan)

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Bulletin Board

Trailblazers' season ends with district semi loss

BY JASON WESSELDYK
SPORTS EDITOR

FENNVILLE—The Saugatuck girls basketball team did several things well in its Division 3 district semifinal clash with Wyoming Potter's House on Wednesday, March 2.

For instance, the Trailblazers had more rebounds and more assists than Potter's House.

Unfortunately, Saugatuck also had more turnovers. And that proved to be the determining factor as the Trailblazers fell 44-33 to see their season come to a close a 12-9.

"At the end of the day, turnovers were story of the game," Saugatuck coach Kevin Tringali said. "It's a tough way to go out, but to be completely honest we just didn't play to the best of our capabilities and it cost us."

Despite those turnover issues, Saugatuck managed to have itself in a position to still be in the game with less than four minutes remaining, trailing by just three points.

"To our girls' credit, they just kept battling and battling," Tringali said. "We could have pulled to within one or even tied the game on one shot, but we just couldn't make the big play when we needed to."

Potter's House used an eight-point cushion during the game's final minutes to pull away.

In addition to the turnovers, Tringali thought the defensive job Potter's House did on freshman Kennedy Gustafson and senior Emma DeBoer in the post was a key.

"I need to credit Potter's House," Tringali said. "They did a really good job of shutting down our post players. We felt like we had an advantage there and they did a really nice job of minimizing what Kennedy and Emma could do."

While disappointed with the loss, Tringali had nothing but praise for the effort his team gave this season.

"This loss certainly doesn't define this group," he said. "They were just an amazing group to work with. They motivated and inspired me to be a better coach because they were such coachable kids and I really looked forward to working with them on a daily basis."

Tringali had special words for his four seniors: three-year starter DeBoer, four-year starter McKenzie Pearson, Aryssa Knikelbine and Lauren Miller.

"These seniors have been instrumental in the success of our program," he said. "They're leaving our program in better shape than it was when they got here and I'm really going to miss them moving forward."

"We do return a lot of kids who got a lot of key minutes this year and I'm already looking forward to getting it going this summer and getting back in the season next year."



Senior Emma DeBoer, seen in a recent game, and her Saugatuck teammates fell to Wyoming Potter's House in a Division 3 district semifinal. (Photo by Scott Sullivan)

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