

Lakeview Area News

Northern Montcalm and Southern Mecosta Counties' News Source

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The 37th annual three-day Montcalm Heritage Festival will be Aug. 1-3, on Montcalm Community College's Sidney campus.

Primary elections are coming up August 6. The Montcalm County website has information on the ballot proposals.

Stanton Old Fashioned Days will be August 8-11.

Please see Dr. Andris Kazmers' farewell to Kelsey Hospital on page 8.

Summer Forecast

Thu Sunny, with a high near 79. North wind 6 to 8 mph.

Thu Night Mostly clear, with a low around 55.

Fri Sunny, with a high near 81.

Fri Night Mostly clear, with a low around 56.

Sat Sunny, with a high near 84.

Sat Night Mostly clear, with a low around 60.

Sun Mostly sunny, with a high near 86.

Sun Night Partly cloudy, with a low around 67.

Mon A chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87.



Vestaburg Celebrates 150 Years with Community Days



Vestaburg Victorian Vogues - contestants and organizers of the fun! Photo by Toni Alexander

By Bethel Larsen

Among the many festivals that add excitement to summer weekends, those that celebrate major milestones of local history are rare. This past weekend, tiny Vestaburg on the eastern edge of Montcalm County had the distinction of celebrating 150 years with a very special Community Days festival. The many and varied events listed in the festival brochure begged for a closer look. When one considers all the planning and effort necessary to offer a weekend of family fun to the public—the many who contribute time, money, and effort in small and larger ways, and the few who work nonstop for weeks to bring everything together—their efforts de-

serve recognition. Moreover, the diligent organizers of Vestaburg Community Days gave the public a truly memorable celebration of the Vestaburg Sesquicentennial. My visit on Saturday afternoon, enjoyable though it was, could barely scratch the surface.

Beginning at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, a Quilt Show in the Vestaburg Elementary Media Center extended through Saturday. Friday's lineup also offered a horseshoe contest, a free SHOUT Beatles Tribute in the VHS Gym, and 5K Glow Run/Walk on the track at dusk—truly something for every age and interest.

Saturday's festivities began with a pancake breakfast in the Church of

Christ Fellowship Hall for a \$5.00 donation to Vestaburg Community Days. Sand Volleyball players or fans could then proceed to the Practice Football Field for a tournament or the Ken Bigelow Bicycle Ride for Alzheimer's Disease starting from the High School Football Field parking lot. Two Old-Fashioned Baseball Games would pair the Rockford Rogues against the Portland Blue Sox on the high school athletic field. Military activities for kids were held south of Peasley's Home Center, an anchor business in downtown Vestaburg for generations. Also located there were food trucks, a dunk tank, inflatables and games, and face painting.

I arrived in town just

as the parade was ending and the Richland Township Fire Department was serving a Firemen's Dinner of a pulled pork sandwich or hot dog with sides. There was a charge for lunch, but the Fire Hall would also be the scene of a free picnic meal at suppertime. As I walked through town, much friendly rivalry was evident at the bean bag (corn hole) tournament. Horse-drawn wagon rides carried guests around town to the leisurely clip-clop rhythm of yesteryear. I made my way to the Vestaburg Community Schools complex hoping to see the art show. Sadly, the artists had already left. Several craft booths lined the perimeter of the school commons: beautiful, practical items of turned and

laminated wood with butter-smooth finishes; wooden toys; original jewelry designs in wire and beads; and more.

A quilt show filled the Media Center aisles with color. A sampler of intricately pieced blocks unified in rosy tints and a small wall quilt in browns and grays mimicking machine gears presented a study in contrasts. Classic squares arranged on the diagonal adorned a large bed quilt; nearby, a crib-size quilt featured embroidered figures of little girls in gardens and little boys with fishing poles. One of my favorites was a Pennsylvania-Dutch inspired applique quilt rendered in batik cotton fabrics, surely the product of many hours of work!

Music in the Park: Steel and Wood and a Recognition of Kelsey Memorial Hospital



Steel and Wood playing "The Orange Blossom Special"

By Steve Charnley, MIP Team Leader

On Wednesday night, July 17th, we saluted the health care heroes and legacy of Kelsey Memorial Hospital during our flag raising at Music in the Park. Two beloved nurses, Grace Black and Elaine Rossman, who offered love

and care to so many patients over decades of service, joined me at the flagpole and helped hoist the Stars and Stripes, while Dean Gilbert and Jackie Carpenter played our national anthem as a piano duet. It was a moving moment for all present, particularly for the Kazmer family who were in atten-

dance. Dr. Andris Kazmer shared with me as he returned to his seat that it helped with the healing after the loss of our hospital.

(His parents, Nicholas and Elga Kazmer, who were both trained doctors in Latvia, came to America as WWII refugees and settled in Lakeview

with their two young sons.)

To further celebrate the more than a century long contribution of Kelsey Memorial Hospital, you can visit our local museum and see its fabulous exhibit in tribute to that history. Stop in any Saturday this summer between 11 and 3, and while there you can also view their plans for an historic expansion of the museum and support their capital campaign to do so.

The sponsor for this evening's music was Mercantile Bank. Kim Davila, branch manager for both Lakeview and Howard City, greeted the crowd of nearly 300 as members of her team circulated with water and packaged treats. Zack was back, this time with another creole specialty - Shrimp Po'Boy.

I then offered special thanks to Mark Swanson and Ramon Holcomb for setting up and providing our sound. Besides his expertise as a sound tech, Mark is a multi-talented luthier and band leader. You may recall we hosted the Mark Swanson Trio last summer for MIP.

"All aboard!" were my first words as I introduced "Steel and Wood," the bluegrass band from Petosky. The invitation was appropriate as several of their songs had a railroad theme. When Irene Kazmer (wife of Andris) played the "Orange Blossom Special" on the fiddle, you could almost see the train speeding along the track with her bow and fingers flying. Then as John Neiswander sang Johnny Cash's famous "Folsom Prison Blues," you could feel the pathos of the prisoners hearing the whistle of the freely traveling train beyond their prison walls.

From the marvelous summer weather in the verdant park setting to the community fellowship saluting all those who made Kelsey such a beloved institution, we all left this memorable Music in the Park with a warm glow and deep gratitude for the blessings we enjoy here in the town with the "Lake View."

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