

Lakeview Area News

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Spring begins next week, March 20. As this week's lead article illustrates, beware of outdoor burning. Grass is very dry this time of year.

Don't forget the Alpha Family Services fundraiser this Saturday. See the announcement on page 10. Bethel will have a report next week.

Winter Forecast

Thu Mostly sunny, with a high near 57. East wind 3 to 6 mph.

Thu Night Mostly cloudy, with a low around 38.

Fri Partly sunny, with a high near 68.

Fri Night Showers likely after 2am. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Sat Showers likely. Partly sunny, with a high near 65. Breezy.

Sat Night A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34.

Sun A chance of rain and snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 41.

Sun Night Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26.

Mon Mostly sunny, with a high near 43.



Firefighters Summoned to Winfield Township Fire on March 9



Fire trucks were a welcome sight on Sunday as a brush fire crept closer to homes on Cutler Road.

By Bethel Larsen

A family birthday celebration on Cutler Road took a dramatic turn on the afternoon of Sunday, March 9 when a rapidly spreading grass and brush fire was spotted just to the north, requiring volunteer firefighters from several area departments to quell the blaze. As winds shifted back and forth across the line of encroaching flames, family members and guests wondered at times whether the water-filled Weatherby Drain bordering their property would be enough to keep sparks from igniting brush on their side and advancing toward houses. Neighbors along Cutler Road also watched through a line of trees as water trucks and other vehicles crisscrossed the field on the other side and flames

would die down only to pop up again nearby. Despite tension felt by on-lookers, the firefighters did their work efficiently and thoroughly and soon put out the last of the embers.

Unbeknownst to our group at the time, Trufant firefighters were already battling a structure fire near Middle Lake, the result of embers left from a morning fire in a burn barrel placed too close to the homeowner's garage. Unfortunately, that blaze claimed vehicles and other expensive items inside the garage as well as a nearby camper and melted a portion of the house siding. In the process, a power line was downed, resulting in another challenge to the firefighters. When the call came from Cutler Road, the Trufant crew was split to send some firefighters

there.

According to Lakeview District Fire Department Chief Patrick Carr, the department was called at 3:25 p.m. to the spreading blaze, which had started when the new owner of a nearby home was burning a quantity of cardboard before the fire spread beyond his capacity to manage it. As the flames spread to the perimeter of the field, it required the manpower of the Howard City Fire Department as well as the LDFD (Lakeview and Trufant) to extinguish it. Thanks to their help, the stark images we have recently seen from southern California and South Carolina had no counterparts here.

In both of these cases, the homeowners thought they had taken sufficient safety precautions, espe-

cially since it had snowed the day before. It is easy to misjudge how quickly vegetation dries into tinder once that snow has melted! At the same time, as Chief Carr mentioned, homeowners are eager to clean up their properties from refuse left over the winter. He pointed out that, in the townships in question, it is actually illegal to burn trash, processed lumber, cardboard, etc. in the open where the fire can easily spread. A burn barrel or other container should have ventilation holes no larger than 3/4 inch to prevent embers from escaping and certainly should be located a safe distance from any structure. An outdoor fire on a breezy day is never a good idea. The practice of burning off fields and grassy areas deserves second thoughts; in-

tentional burning of fields and brush destroys humus in the soil and has negative effects on the environment even if the burn remains confined. If the fire spreads out of control, the property owner who saw it as a quick way to clean up winter debris may receive a bill for firefighters' services, not to mention the risks of property loss or personal injury. Though our area firefighters are well trained and good at what they do, at best they are called away from their families and other activities and, at worst, they are at risk of injury or death. Please exercise the greatest possible caution when burning trash or debris; keep the fire confined and have a water source nearby. Watching a fire creep closer to one's property is the kind of excitement nobody needs!

Lakeview Varsity Girls Basketball

The Lady Wildcats won their game against Holton Monday, March 3 with a score of 47 to 38. On Wednesday they played Kent City and lost 58 to 41. Lakeview High School senior Braden Salladay has been following the team around and taking pictures. We thank him for sending this and other pictures. He also posts a lot of his pictures on Instagram, @bradens_shootz07.



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