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Plainwell High School
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Letter From The Editor:

Dear Readers,

As we continue to grow as a paper and a class, we at the Trojan Torch want to thank you, the reader, for picking up this issue. This article is packed with creature features, stories and spotlights on members of our school. All stories are written with care and detail from our amazing staff writers who I want to thank for their time and dedication. I also want to thank our advisor Rachael Fuller who puts all of her time and efforts into this paper. We look forward to writing articles and making papers for the rest of this year, and the years after this one.

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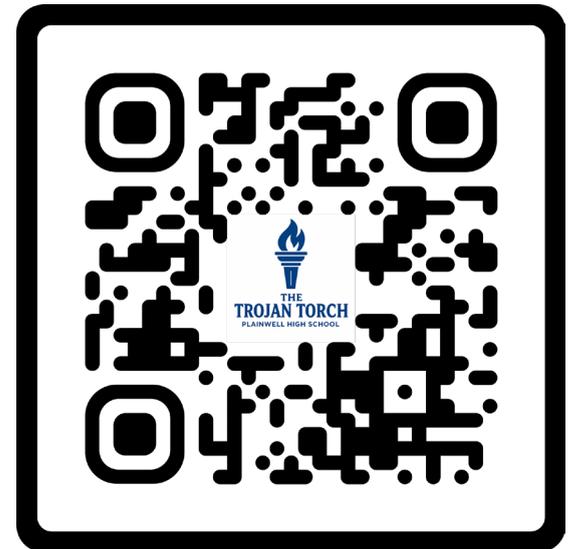
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From the Ashes: Northside Park Fire Update

By Joseph Hoffman | Staff writer

OTSEGO, Mich. A man, later charged, set a fire to part of the play structure at Northside Park. The fire, which happened early in the morning on September 2nd, seen in the photo above, caused extensive damage to the playground.

Vandalism isn't new to Otsego's parks, but Mike Bosch, Otsego Public Work Superintendent said, "Most of the time it is graffiti or something similar. Nothing to this extent." The size of the fire was unprecedented, and it's clear the city is treating it as a serious incident.

On the question of police presence, Bosch explained, "The city of Otsego has 24-h police service and coverage. It is their responsibility to do checks and cover the entire city during each shift." Despite this, the fire still occurred, starting 15 minutes after the last park check.

As for repairs, Bosch said, "I am currently in the process of collecting photos and estimates to repair the structure to something similar that was there. As we approach the fall and other things needing to be accomplished by the city employees, it will probably be rebuilt over the winter and early spring."

Community involvement is still up in the air. "I know that this was a community build back in the mid-90s and many have fond memories of doing so. I would like to have some sort of community involvement but I'm not sure what that will look like yet," Bosch said.

For now, the park's wooden design will remain. "Yes, for now the

park will retain its wooden design. The entire structure is aging and it has been on the city plan to rebuild/replace the structure in the coming years. It is not a difficult thing to do as it is so large, and definitely has a special place in the hearts of our community.

Bosch states, "I have heard many, many stories of grandparents and parents bringing kiddos down to play stating that they used to bring their kid or maybe even played on this themselves when they were little."

As the city looks ahead to rebuilding, Bosch said, "I'm sure we will have some type of a ribbon cutting and re-grand opening." Northside park is not going anywhere and many more memories will be made at the beloved 'castle park'.



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Plainwell Paper Mill Project

By Anthony Shaff | Staff writer

Make way for upcoming construction at the old site of the Plainwell Paper Company. The paper mill has been a landmark piece in the city of Plainwell's history and this location will continue to serve its community in a variety of ways. There have been several proposed ideas with what to do with the property since the city of Plainwell purchased it in 2006. The 2025 Mill Project has come further than any other idea to date.

The plan for the project is to build a new housing development in downtown Plainwell. The plans are still being finalized but the idea is to develop the lot. The project proposal is being presented by Watts Homes & Construction out of Richland, MI. They plan on developing the vacant lot and putting up new homes.

Justin Lakamper, City Manager for the city of Plainwell, shares "There is a nationwide need for housing, including right here in Plainwell. Part of the need is to lower the cost of housing and one of the best ways to lower the cost is to increase the supply of housing. There will be a variety of housing types and price points which will help those looking for housing find a home that is right for them.

While construction is not expected to begin until spring 2026 -The development plan is still in the planning processes and several steps need to be taken before any construction can start. Lakamper shares "the developer has presented the community with some preliminary layouts and housing designs, which was in part what we used to select the developer. Those layouts and design will need to be further developed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council as we go through the zoning process."

The project is going to be separated into two separate phases. Phase one will be the construction of the condominiums and phase two will be the construction of single family homes. The overall project is predicted to be completed in two years.

The condominiums will be put in along the Kalamazoo River north of the Plainwell police station. Prince St. and will be extended north and turn east along the Kalamazoo river. Watts Homes and Construction have published a layout of what the condos will be like. There will be a total of 46 units divided between condos that will be a mix of two units and four units.

Those aren't the only housing going in, there is also a new neighborhood being put in. Just between the police station and the remaining

parts of the Plainwell paper mill. There will be a neighborhood section being put in next to the police station consisting of 40 single family houses. These houses vary in size for single bedroom up to three bedrooms for families.

These new homes will be very beneficial to not only the new residents but also to the community. With the demand in the current housing market the variety in styles and sizes of homes will be good for new homebuyers or people who want to move into the city. The new homes will also benefit the city by providing property tax to help fund city maintenance and services. The new homes should also drive demands for more businesses in downtown Plainwell.

The hope is to sell the remaining parts of the paper mill to businesses to further develop the area. Two potential companies who have made interest in sections of the property were a high end wedding venue and a classic car storage facility.

Another part of the project is to add in green spaces once the construction is completed. These green spaces would be parks for the residents of the new neighborhoods. There is also a proposed plan to extend part of the sidewalks and put in a river trail that would run along the Kalamazoo river for the whole community to enjoy.

CREATURE FEATURE

Michigan Edition

Melon Heads

By Taya Miller | Staff writer

Deep in the woods in southwest Michigan lives the legend of the melon heads. The melon heads are large-headed humanoids characterized by their large craniums, resembling that of a large melon.

The legend stems from children with hydrocephalus. A condition in which cerebrospinal fluid builds up within the brain- causing increased pressure in the skull which if it occurs in babies, this can cause a rapid increase in head size. Said children were kept in Junction Insane Asylum, located near the Felt Mansion in Holland, MI. The legend explains that these children faced severe emotional and physical abuse. After this occurred, the children became feral and were released into the surrounding forests.

An alternative origin story of the melon heads shares that when the mansion became a seminary school, that the "melon heads" were students at the school. These students were called melon heads by local kids because they were smart.

Many claim that melon heads tend to appear on Wisner Rd. in Holland. One account, an anonymous report from someone who lived by the roads on Wisner Rd., states that when they were ten years old, they had an encounter with a melon head. It was evening time when they heard a noise outside their house, and went to see what was going on. When they went outside to see what the noise was, they found their dog bleeding. They saw a small pale creature with a large head lurking in the woods. When the creature saw them, it ran into the woods. They went out the next morning, attempting to track it

down, and failed.

Now it is said that these children hide in the woods near the Felt Mansion and occasionally emerge to attack people. There have been reports of visitors seeing curtains moving in the windows of the vacant old building with strange noises, such as heavy breathing, footsteps, and shadows darting through the darkness.

The Felt Mansion is located in Holland, MI, this is only about an hour and a half from Plainwell, MI. The Felt Mansion was built in 1925. Six weeks after it was built, the wife of the man who built the house, Dorr Felt, died. The wife, Agnes Felt, died from a stroke in the master bedroom of the house. Dorr later sold the mansion in 1949 and was bought by a diocese in Chicago and became the St. Augustine seminary school. Then the mansion was leased to a cloister of Augustine Nuns. Later the property was sold to the state of Michigan and became a correctional facility. The prison closed in 1992. The restoration of the Felt Mansion was started in 2002 by a group of volunteers and the restoration was complete in 2007. Now it is used as a venue for public and private events.

Next time you go to Holland, MI make sure you keep an eye out for the Melonheads.



Drawing of a melon head | Geauga County Maple Leaf

Michigan Dogman

By Brody McKenzie | Staff writer

One of the most overlooked cryptid legends is the Michigan Dogman. Even with the earliest recorded sightings dating back to the 1800s, there is still little actually known about the mysterious Dogman. The majority of sightings describe it as a wolf-like creature that stands on two legs and measures around seven feet tall that resides around Wexford County. The dogman has shaggy long fur, huge canine teeth, and a harrowing human scream. Some say it has more human-like limbs and others say it has more wolf-like limbs and stature. One is for certain though, Dogman is an otherworldly creature.

Dogman's origin and first recorded sighting is a chilling story. In 1887, a few lumberjacks were out in the forest of northwest Michigan later than usual. They spotted a dog-like creature on their path and they decided to scare it and chase it around. Soon after, the creature climbed into a hollow log and the lumberjacks were left alone in the woods with an eerie fog engulfing them. The lumberjacks heard heavy breathing behind them and looked around them to see a silhouette of a feral looking creature that they said was standing on two legs and towering over them. As the creature got closer they realized the creature had a dog's head but a man's body. These lumberjacks were chased by Dogman until they left the forest, where they ran to the nearest town to spread the word of the new-found beast.

The Dogman became a well

known Michigan legend because of an April fools joke. A radio broadcast in 1987 included an April fools segment where Steve Cook, a Michigan based DJ, sang a song describing a huge wolf-like creature as a prank on air. Similar events to that of War of the Worlds, this lighthearted broadcast segment shined a light on the Dogman when subsequent reports were called in that described a similar beast to that of which was in the song. This April fools joke popularized the local legend of the Dogman.

Similar stories about the Dogman arise around every decade. Some stories show Dogman as an aggressive animal attacking cabins in the woods, while others depict dogman as a stalking beast that sticks to the shadows. Every encounter strikes fear into the unfortunate people that have seen the beast.

The lore of Dogman shows that he usually shows up in decade intervals, especially on years that end with a seven such as 1887, 1897, and 1907. Some believe Dogman is a single creature that terrorizes locals of northwest Michigan, while others believe there is a pack of dogmen.

The legend of the Michigan Dogman is a horrifying tale that is clouded in much mystery.



Michigan Dogman Drawing | WWMT

CREATURE FEATURE

This edition of *The Trojan Torch* highlights the myths and mysteries of a variety of well known cryptids. Some of these cryptids are local to Michigan while others lore spread far across our nation. Whether you are local history buff or are curious about the paranormal - one of these cryptids may peak your interest.

These stories are strictly for entertainment purposes and are meant to educate on the history of the legends.



Bigfoot drawing | VistaCreate

SHAPESHIFTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST: THE MYTH OF THE SKINWALKER

By Tessie Kiel | Staff writer

There's nothing more unsettling than someone or something that is uncanny. The myth of the uncanny cryptids, called skinwalkers, come in many shapes and sizes.

The centuries old legend of the skinwalker stems from the center of the Navajo culture, where a skinwalker is a being who uses magic to transform into animals and spread chaos. They shapeshift from people into lanky and uncanny creatures. They often move in strange ways as they 'don't fit into their skin'.

Skinwalkers are malevolent creatures who embody the exact opposite of the Navajo culture. It is common for people in the Navajo culture to not even speak of the skinwalkers because

of their beliefs and the fear of manifesting them.

While the creatures are depicted to not be directly harmful - they often serve as a bad omen for those who see them.

Utah is famous for reports of paranormal activity - much of the activity is reported as skinwalkers. "Skinwalker Ranch" is a 512-acre property where mysterious phenomena have been happening there since the 19th century. Reports have claimed to see things like unexplained lights, cattle mutilations, and sightings of large wolf-like creatures. This ranch plays a role in the movie "The Secrets of Skinwalker Ranch."

TRACING THE HISTORICAL FOOTPRINTS OF BIGFOOT

By Breygan Dunn | Staff writer

Bigfoot has been a controversial character that has boggled the minds of many about whether his existence is real. Many people believe his existence is nothing but a hoax, made up to scare others; however, many would argue that they not only believe in him but have also encountered this creature.

Bigfoot, also known as Sasquatch, is a cryptid creature that appears in various forms in every encounter; however, it is mainly described as a 7-foot or giant gorilla-like creature that stands upright with a hunched-over back and huge, man-like feet. In most encounters, people describe them as being defensive; they become aggressive if they feel threatened. In most cases, they tend to throw large rocks at their targets or try to scare them away with their terrifying and inhuman calls.

The origin of these creatures can be traced back all the way until the indigenous people; however was only brought to light in 1958 when giant footprints were discovered by some loggers in Northern California. There's been many reported encounters after this that eventually led people to believe that these giant footprints weren't made by a human but something else. They decided to call what was making these prints sasquatch after the Halq'emélem word sasq'ets, meaning "hairy man" or "wild man" or, a more popularised name, Bigfoot, after the big human-like footprints.

While the origins for the sasquatch begin in the Pacific Northwest there are many reported encounters coming from the Mitten State. Two hundred and twenty six Michigan Bigfoot sightings have been reported to the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization. The most recent encounter in Michigan was on May 8th, 2025, in Monroe County. A man and his son were fishing when their dog started to bark at something across the river. They look to see a creature as big as a bear covered in fur that looks almost gorilla-like like standing on its two legs and hunched over. They said they only saw him for less than 10 seconds when there's a loud thud and it darted away at high speed. This encounter was later reported and deemed 'Class A Credible' by the BFRO (Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization) because when they were interviewed, their story didn't resemble a bear or any creature that would have been in those woods.

From a scientific standpoint, there's no evidence of Bigfoot being real. Other than photos that don't have any credible sources, there is no undeniable evidence of this creature's existence. The scientific community doesn't believe in the sasquatch due to the disproven Bigfoot samples, such as hair and DNA that are from known animals, such as dogs, deer, or bears. The footprint cast being studied by many, such as anthropologists, Grover Kratz and Jeff Meldrum, was attributed to other sources or deemed a fake.

Bigfoot is still only a myth to many and will likely remain that until there is further research and proof of their existence.

Plainwell Athletics

Celebrating Plainwell Trojans' Senior Athletes

By Emma Bruce | Staff writer

The Plainwell Trojans take pride in their sportsmanship and athletic programs, shining a spotlight on seniors who have actively participated in their sports throughout their high school careers; while we are unable to include all the seniors who have contributed to Plainwell High School Athletics, we still recognize and appreciate their dedication and effort.

Our first high school senior is Mackenzie Meert '26. Meert is deeply involved in two sports: dance and cheer, which, while sharing some similarities, also have significant differences. She has dedicated 15 years to dance and has cheered for 10 years. Mackenzie aspires to attend Grand Valley State University, hoping to either join their Laker dance team or cheer for their spirited cheer squad. To achieve these goals, she has committed herself to hard work, engaging in competitive dance with a local dance company and participating in both competitive and sideline cheer at her school. Additionally, Meert has sought extra support by booking private lessons and attended college clinics and recruitment camps.

From one mat to another - Austin Gyorkos '26, is a dominating force on the Plainwell Men's Wrestling team. Gyorkos has been wrestling for 12 years. Gyorkos is hoping to attend the University of Indianapolis with a D2 wrestling team. Being a wrestler is hard work and determination but to be a college wrestler Gyorkos has put in so much extra work with all the constant training he does. The high school season is not the end of wrestling for Gyorkos - he also trains and participates in club wrestling and competes with Team Michigan. Gyorkos says "to have fun with it". Gyorkos has been awarded on of the most prestigious



titles, a title that only the top wrestlers receive, a Fargo All American. He is also a two time Central Regional Champion claiming first place in his weight class at the high school regional tournament. Gyorkos on top of that is a high school three time state qualifier and a state placer.

While Gyorkos is dominating on the mat, another senior to watch is, Sam Harper '26 take on the pool. Harper plans to attend college to take on collegiate swimming. Harper has been swimming for six+ years. Harper finds joy swimming and has a few schools in mind to swim at like the University of North Carolina that is a D1 swim team and Bakersfield college D1 swim team. Harper spends his time working out in the gym and lifting weights and swimming on his off season with our other school swim teams. Harper has accomplished a lot of great things during his swimming career and won state in the 500 freestyle beating his personal best time. Qualified for junior national, was named all conference three times during high school

Plainwell athletics wouldn't the same without these senior athletes we appreciate everything that they have done for our school.

By Avery Lynch | Staff writer

3x State Champion Madison Nieuwenhuis's '26 intake on the upcoming 2025 - 2026 wrestling season. When talking with Nieuwenhuis about her incoming senior season and her future plans, she mentions how excited she is for this season to begin, with high hopes that the girls' team will continue to grow and have another big season.

Nieuwenhuis started wrestling when she was 4 years old. This upcoming year makes it Nieuwenhuis's 14th year wrestling.

Nieuwenhuis is looking to achieve her 4th consecutive state title, with an undefeated season, and to achieve her 100th career win. Nieuwenhuis has both won and stood as a runner-up at Fargo nationals. She has won WNO, super 32, multiple college opens, including Midlands. Additionally, she is ranked in the top five in the country.

Madison Nieuwenhuis: Aiming for 4th State Title

To prepare for the season ahead, Nieuwenhuis has continued to go to premier club practices every day on top of working out at home. To continue her training throughout the season when she isn't in season Nieuwenhuis does Michigan Premier club wrestling all year round and high school season to stay ready for wrestling in college.

Nieuwenhuis intends to attend college for her academics and her wrestling career. As she says "I'm going to college baby", as she would like to attend a college for her academics and wrestling while pursuing her dream of joining a world team.



Madison Nieuwenhuis after a win | Photo by Isaac Ritchey

Sibling Rivalry Fuels Plainwell's Ramsey Runners

By Blake Herbert | Editor-in-Chief

PLAINWELL, MI - Landin and Wyatt Ramsey, Plainwell sophomore twins, are making a name for themselves in the running world. Despite only recently committing to the sport, the Ramsey's are already proving to be standout runners.

At this year's Ottawa Hills Invitational, both brothers set new PR's, with Wyatt '28 crossing the line at 18:34.35 and Landin '28 not too far behind with a time of 19:05.

When asked why he has the edge over his brother, Wyatt responds, "I think I've been beating Landin simply because of sibling rivalry. My goal every meet is to beat him, and I have that determination to get past him that maybe he doesn't have".

Wyatt does share that he believes Landin will eventually pass him on the course. "His level in practice is much better than mine, and he has not been struggling on long runs as much as me."

Wyatt shares that while he is expecting his brother to eventually pass him he shares that "for now I gotta steal the fame".

Landin also shares, "Yes, I do think I will be faster than Wyatt by the time I'm a senior. We train the same, but when I fix my mentality, I will be far ahead of him."

Whether their motivation stems from intrinsic values or the sibling rivalry is enough, both runners leave a part of themselves on the course and are valuable assets to the Plainwell Men's Cross Country team.

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"Call 911 immediately after giving the first dose of Padagis[®] Naloxone Nasal Spray, this is not a substitute for emergency medical care."

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1

CHECK IF YOU SUSPECT AN OVERDOSE

The person will not wake up or is very sleepy or not breathing well.
• Is not "responsive"
• Is blue or purple lips
• Is the person's not awake, or not here?

1 CHECK



STEP 2

USE 1ST DOSE IN THE NOSE

• Hold spray device vertically. 1 dose.
• **SHAKE** the nasal spray device with your hand on the bottom of the plunger.
• **INSERT** the nozzle into the other NARE.
• **PRESS** the plunger firmly to give the 1ST dose.

2 GIVE



STEP 3

CALL 911

Call 911 immediately after giving the 1ST dose.

3 CALL



STEP 4

WATCH & WAIT

Wait 2-3 minutes after the 1st dose before the medicine time to work.
• If the person wakes up, Give them 2.
• If the person does not wake up, Give them 3.
• If the person does not wake up, Give them 4.
• If the person does not wake up, Give them 5.

4 MONITOR/WAIT



STEP 5

STOP

Do not give the 2nd dose if the person is awake.
• **DO NOT** use substance anymore in the person's life.
• **DO NOT** use the 1st dose device more than once.

5 STOP



WHERE TO FIND IN SCHOOL



WALL MOUNTED

- In the hallway near choir room
- Near elevator in the PAC lobby
- Near staircase at Field House



OTHER LOCATIONS

- Student Services
- Front Office
- Mr. Ewan's room (room 209)