

# THE WAYNE Dispatch

NOVEMBER 2020

WAYNE

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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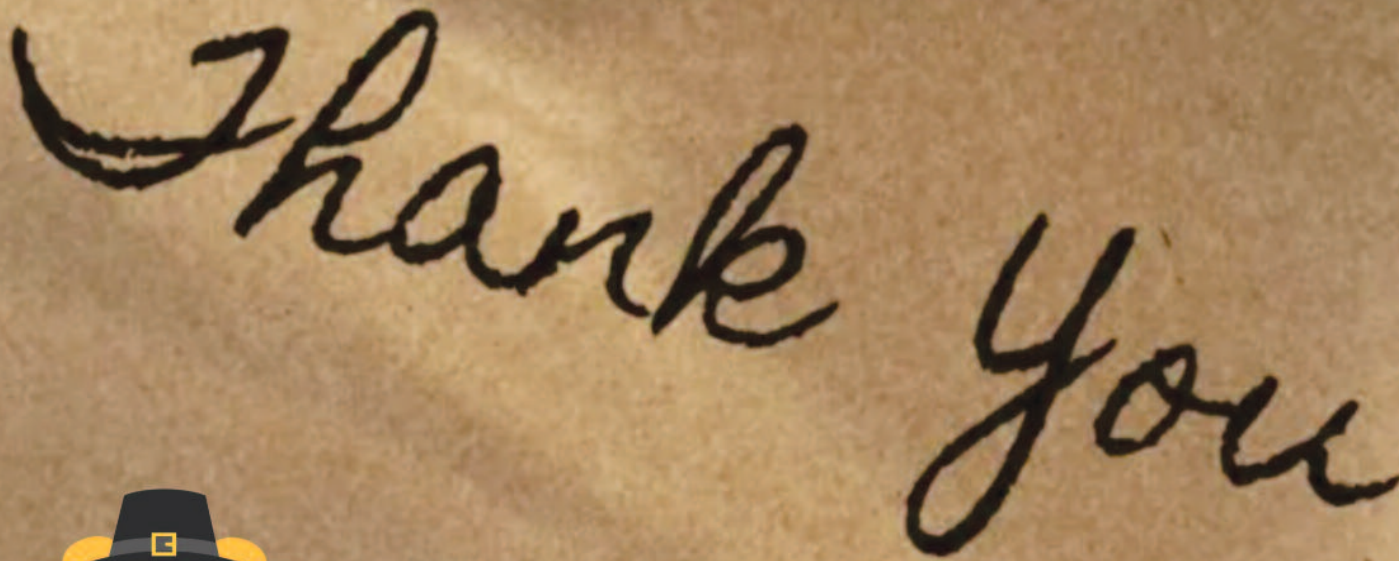
New Superintendent Faces Challenges Amid Pandemic

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# New superintendent faces challenges in the COVID-19 era of education

By Carolyn Marnon

Wayne-Westland Community Schools got a new superintendent in July, taking over from Jill Simmons who had been Acting Superintendent after the resignation of former superintendent Dr. Shelley Holt.

Dr. John Dignan grew up in Ypsilanti. His father had friends who taught in the Wayne-Westland district, so Dr. Dignan knew that the people here were hardworking, blue-collar people. This is what drew him to apply for the superintendent position more than anything else. There is so much potential in the school district he says. The challenge will be getting everyone working in the same direction.

Since starting, Dr. Dignan's days have been fast-paced. Much of what he has done has been dictated by COVID-19 and the transfer of education from in-person classrooms to virtual learning. "It's been a whirlwind, to say the least." He speaks highly of the people who have helped with the transition saying "they wear their heart on their sleeve." He's been working with the various departments, collaborating with others, and relying on district employees to help get through the adversity thrown their way. He has found that everyone has rolled up their sleeves and come closer together because of this.

These educational times are unique. When the schools closed March 13, everyone thought it would last a couple weeks, maybe through Easter. The district was forced to go virtual at the time, something no one was prepared for. Dr. Dignan calls it "emergency learning." He goes on to say, "You can't compare anything to it." He does foresee virtual education more mainstream five years or so down the line. COVID-19 has just sped everything up.

Virtual learning is intentional now. It will become another tool the district can draw on when students come back to in-person learning. He sees the current situation as one where they are creating 21st century learners through an online platform where they are now having to work out the kinks.



Wayne-Westland Superintendent Dr. John Dignan helps out during the district distribution of Chromebooks to students.

Teachers are working off the Google platform. He credits Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Jennifer Curry and her assistants with running a summer camp for the teachers. Dr. Dignan made sure she had everything she needed, including the support of the tech department, to get everyone up and running on the platform.

"I think teachers are going to amaze themselves," he says. Teach-

ers amaze him. He says they find the best ways to serve the needs of their students.

In the opening days of school, Dr. Dignan had praise for the success of the food distribution program set up at all buildings for students to receive breakfasts and lunches. He praised Communications Director Jenny Johnson for creating messages consistently that keep families in the loop on what is happening in the district. He was pleased that the

technology and special education forums held online were well-attended. The district also has a Return to Learn area on the website that answers questions parents might have. He's also pleased how everyone has come together to do what is best for the staff.

The first challenge that Dr. Dignan has had in his new position is getting to know the community. "I like to meet with groups of people," he says. He's not able to do that at this time. When he interviewed for the job, he mentioned getting out into the community to meet parents, business owners and other stakeholders in the community by attending various events. Many of those events have not taken place due to social distancing mandates.

The second major challenge for Dr. Dignan has been the sped-up learning curve for virtual education. He has had to learn much more more quickly than he would have with a "normal" school year start.

As each day passes, he learns that you have to depend on other people and trust them as professionals to do their job and to know that it's okay if there are failures. "People are scared to fail," he says, "but that's how we learn." It's okay to make mistakes. Just own your mistake and move on.

As the first term came to an end on October 24, Dr. Dignan was analyzing the COVID-19 situation and how it would be affecting the health and safety of students and staff. "When we return in person, it will have strengthened the whole process."

He would like for students to learn in-person as soon as possible, but with the pandemic, the safety and well-being of staff and children is the number one priority.

Be patient and flexible, Dr. Dignan asks of the community. Provide honest feedback, but please be positive or provide constructive criticism.

No one knows what the future will hold for our community, but if we all work together for our students and staff, we will overcome what will eventually become a temporary blip on the field of education.



Voters were lined up out the doors to vote at Hoover Elementary School on election day.

# City election results

By Carolyn Marnon

Mayor John Rhaesa was elected to serve a second term as Mayor of Wayne, in a tight race with current city councilman Anthony Miller. Although Miller did not win the mayoral race, he does retain his city council seat.

Mayor Rhaesa shared on his facebook page his gratitude. "I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who supported my re-election as Wayne's Mayor. I am truly honored to have been chosen to serve another term. I had the incredible opportunity to talk to the citizens of Wayne throughout the day yesterday (election day) and while I was happy to see everyone out exercising their right to vote, it was also an opportunity to learn more about your concerns, to share the city's accomplishments and connect with the community. Thank you to those who took the time to get to know me and to learn more about our city. As I have always said, I do not take the role of Mayor lightly. I will continue to work hard on behalf of every citizen for the betterment of our community and I will work with my colleagues on council and with the city administration to make sure that we are moving your community, our community, in the right direction. Again, thank you for putting your trust in me."

City councilmen Tom Porter and Kevin Dowd were both elected to retain their council positions. Alfred Brock was elected to serve his first term as a Wayne councilman; he will fill the seat previously occupied by Jeremiah Webster whose term has

come to an end.

There were two proposals in Wayne relating to how council persons were elected in the City. Both proposals were passed by the voters. The one with the higher number of votes is the procedure that will be implemented.

With a vote of 3957 to 3935, the majority voted to eliminate the sixward system and return the City to a single voting district for the election of council members. This will take effect in 2024.

The Wayne-Westland Community School Board will welcome two new trustees, Kimberly May and John Albrecht along with returning board trustee Melandie Hines. Each will serve a six-year term.

May wrote on her election facebook page "I am beyond grateful for each and every vote I received!!!! I am excited and ready to work for our children! I am appreciative of each candidate and look forward to joining the Board of Education with Melandie Hines and John Albrecht. Congratulations to each candidate! It takes great commitment and heart to run a campaign. Thank you, Wayne-Westland community for believing and trusting in me!!!"

Albrecht commented on his facebook page, "When I cast my vote, my first consideration was for the children for whom we are all responsible... Why our children before anyone or anything else? Because as our children grow and learn, we can be assured that their knowledge and experience will help to grow and make our communities better places to live. This matters above all else.



## YOU CAN HELP THE CHILDREN OF WAYNE HAVE A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS!

Every year the City of **Wayne Goodfellows** provide support to less fortunate families and children. The Goodfellows provide assistance for residences of Wayne during the Christmas holiday.

With your help, the **Wayne Goodfellows** assist nearly 300 families throughout the year and support various local organizations who provide support for others in the community.

Normally the **Wayne Goodfellows** have a huge fundraiser in December that nearly sells out every year and raises close to \$20,000 to help provide for families in need. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, we are unable to have the fundraiser this year.

The **Wayne Goodfellows** still plan on giving to the families of Wayne however, we may have to cut back on how much we can give and or how many families we can help.

The community has always been huge supporters of the **Wayne Goodfellows** and we know that the businesses and residents of the community have taken a loss this year as well but we plan to do our part to help bring Christmas to the children of Wayne this year.

### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP!

If you would like to make a monetary donation, we have a few ways for you to do that. You can mail a check made out to the "**City of Wayne Goodfellows**" to P.O. Box 472, Wayne, MI 48184.

You can donate at the Wayne Westland Federal Credit Union just let the teller know you would like to donate to the "**City of Wayne Goodfellows**" and they will deposit it right into our account.

We also have a **GoFundMe** set up  
[gofundme.com/1/city-of-wayne-goodfellows](https://gofundme.com/1/city-of-wayne-goodfellows)

Also, if you are shopping via Amazon at no cost to you if you choose the "**City of Wayne Goodfellows**" through Amazon Smiles they will send us a donation.



**PLEASE DONATE TO  
Wayne Goodfellows**

# Is the pandemic changing how we celebrate

By Carolyn Marnon

Thanksgiving is a time to count your blessings and give thanks for all you have. We wanted to find out what local community members were thankful for this year and whether the COVID-19 pandemic had changed how they planned to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Leslie Holland, a Wayne resident, has already told her family she will not be doing Thanksgiving this year. In the past, it has been a big family event at her house. "My mother is 99 years old...not taking chances, and everyone seems alright with it." Leslie plans to get a small turkey and have her mom over for dinner.

Tim Butler plans to do everything the same this year as he has done in previous years. He has 6 children and a grandson. Those children who don't celebrate at their in-laws will come to his home in Wayne. "That puts the count at a dozen if everyone shows up," he says. "Our menu is traditional - a turkey (around 25 pounds), stuffing (my wife's family recipe that everyone looks forward



to), homemade dinner rolls, corn, green beans, and cranberry sauce. Sometimes we will have sweet potatoes or a squash. Dessert is a cheesecake, which is my big contribution to the meal, as well as pumpkin pie." Tim does online Christmas shopping while watching the parade. "After the parade, it's the official start of the Christmas season as carols are allowed in the house for the first time.

I'd listen to them all year long if my wife didn't put her foot down." Dinner is usually served around 3-4:00 p.m. "Traditionally, we have not allowed football at Thanksgiving as we aren't huge sports fans. However, my son-in-law broke that tradition. He's a football fanatic, and we now enjoy watching the games together. It's the start of a big weekend for us as we kick off Christmas. On Friday or Saturday, we go to a Christmas tree farm near Monroe to cut down our trees."

Mary Blaxton, a long-time Wayne resident, plans to do something to "pay it forward." "For three years, I worked with a few other women helping the homeless in Wayne. My husband and I like to pick a family in a restaurant and pay their bill. I have always paid it forward. I love this city!"

Cyndi Jones-White grew up in Westland. She is now battling lung and brain cancer while also caring for her grandbaby several days a week who also had a lot of health issues. "Thanksgiving at our house

will consist of my husband, my sons, grandbaby, my daughter, son-in-law and myself." Cyndi will only be with her family members that she is with everyday because she doesn't want to take any chances with the virus.

Eric Pohl will most likely go to his aunt's in Plymouth for the traditional turkey dinner. "Might be 8-15 of us there, depends on who shows up. I'll most likely make my famous baked beans. Trick is to only use the Sweet Baby Ray's BBQ sauce; anything else is wrong."

Mallory Mack has family that lives in Wayne. "I am just cooking a small turkey dinner for my husband and dogs. Some of my family is getting together for a bigger celebration, but I am not comfortable with large gatherings without masks or social distancing, and cooler weather makes outside parties impossible. I have high-risk family members I have to think about." She plans to share some turkey with her dogs and cats. "I am not sure if there is any pa-

See **Celebrate**, page 12

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## NEWS BRIEFS

**The Wayne Historical Society has announced a number of programs coming up later this year.** Add these to your calendar now and watch this column for further information. Masks are required at the events. Hand sanitizer will be available. The museum is sanitizing door-knobs and surfaces.

**Nov. 12, 7:00 p.m. Blacksmithing: The Bert Green Story**

Learn about Bert Green and what life was like as one of Wayne's last blacksmiths. You will also learn how the company continues today. This event will be inside. Masks are required. Chairs will be socially distanced. The museum will try to record the event for those who wish to stay at home.

**Dec. 5, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Holiday Night at the Museum**

Come out and see Santa, get cookies and hot chocolate, and join in the Christmas cheer as the town Christmas tree is lit. All activities will be held outside. There will not be events inside the Wayne Historical Museum nor at First United

Methodist Church.

**Wayne County will be providing free drive-thru COVID-19 testing in the City of Wayne November 21 and 22 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

The location has not yet been determined. Mark your calendar now if you wish to get tested. No preregistration is needed. Insurance is not needed. A doctor's order is not required. Testing is for ages 5 and up; minors must be accompanied by guardian.

**The Knights of Columbus at Notre Dame Hall, 3144 N. Wayne Rd., is hosting several events for the holiday season.**

**Holiday Market-Saturday, November 14, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.** There will be crafts and baked goods in addition to artists selling their creations. It's the perfect place to find that perfect gift. The hall will also have food, pop, and adult beverages available for purchase.

**Santa's Workshop-Saturday, November 28, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**Kids of all ages are welcome to come make Christmas gifts in Santa's Workshop for mom, dad, sisters and brothers.** Small Business Saturday events will also be happening in Downtown Wayne.

**It's a Wonderful Life-Saturday, December 5, with doors opening at 5:30 p.m.** Garden Theatre Productions presents "It's A Wonderful Life," one of the most beloved stories. Tickets are \$25 and includes dinner and the show.

**DJ Justin-Friday, December 18, doors open at 6:00 p.m. There will be Christmas karaoke and a Christmas Trivia Contest.** There will be door prizes and an Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest. All are welcome!

**Christmas Celebration-Saturday, December 19, doors open at 6:00 p.m.** This Christmas Celebration includes buffet dinner, one free drink, cash bar and door prizes. Tickets are \$20.

**New Year's Eve Party-Thursdays, December 31, doors open at 6:00 p.m.** The party features the sounds of Dawn-Marie Mio, dancing, dinner,

hors d'oeuvres, champagne, raffles, door prizes, 50/50, cash bar and a best-dressed 1920s contest. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$45 per person. Hors d'oeuvres will be waiting for you at your table.

**Euchre Night-select Thursday nights -Doors open at 6:00 p.m.** Arrive early for dinner and drinks. Drop in players are welcome. Come to one or come to all. Dates are November 12, December 10, January 7 and January 21.

**The Atwood Park playground is temporarily closed.** A new play structure will replace the current structure. Due to safety concerns and the need to prep the area for the new playground, the existing play structure is closed. Construction of the new playground will begin soon. Signs will be posted at the location about the closure and plans for the new playground. The demolition and new playground are being paid for through a grant from Wayne County.

See **Briefs**, page 12

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## THE CAPUCHIN MISSION:

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## MARK CHEVROLET will be collecting donations for The Capuchin Soup Kitchen

### WHY ARE WE COLLECTING CLEANING SUPPLIES:

In meeting with the Capuchin Organization, they expressed a large need for shower supplies and household staples. The Capuchin Shower Program offers free showers to the homeless. The Shower Program not only cleans the physical bodies of homeless but also launders their clothing. This calls out for a great need of shower supplies, towels and anything that would make someone "feel human again." Household supplies are also in high demand and short supply. *Over the past three years of supporting the Capuchins with this program, the Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers LMA has helped over 350,000 people.*

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- 6:30 - 8:00** Kids will be able to meet Santa at Santa's Workshop. Kids can stop by and see Santa and his display.
- 6:30 - 8:00** Chamberlain Family
- 6:30 - 8:00** FREE Cookies and drinks at the museum (pre-packaged)
- 6:30 - 8:00** Warming Fire Place at Kurt's Caps

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# Night MUSEUM



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# “Unclaimed” starring local celebrity and movie star Antoine McKay

## Virtual VIP Movie Screening

TW Miller has spent 20 years around Hollywood, writing, producing and directing. He is now featuring his own screen play that he produced and directed “Unclaimed”. The story of a crusty old black guy. A lonely young white kid. And a reluctant friendship built on cremating dead people nobody wants. The film stars Wayne’s own Antoine McKay who has appeared on television shows such as ER (NBC), Prison Break and Empire (FOX).

Champions of Wayne will hold a Free Virtual VIP Movie Screening of the short film at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, November 14th. Join us for an evening of special guests’ appearances from Westland native and MC for the evening Gregory Jbara. Who is currently starring as “DCPI Garrett Moore” on CBS’ hit police drama, Blue Bloods. Also, appearing Willie Horton and Dave Coulier.

Visit [championsofwayne.org/movie2020](http://championsofwayne.org/movie2020) for additional details, updates and to register.

Please contact Deborah Vigliarolo at [deborah@championsofwayne.org](mailto:deborah@championsofwayne.org) for more information.

## About Champions of Wayne

The innovative academic program for Wayne Memorial High School (WMHS) students has repeatedly produced head-turning results in Wayne and has caught the attention of educators far and wide as a wonderfully successful program.

Champions of Wayne has com-



bined mentoring, incentives, and goal-setting to bolster culture and achievement at WMHS for nearly a decade. Beginning as a grassroots program in 2009 with a trophy and a #2 pencil, Champions of Wayne has grown to a robust 501c3 non-profit and serves as a beacon to other schools in the state.

Once measured as a below average high school, Wayne Memorial has now been recognized by U.S. News and World Report as one of America’s best high schools two years in a row and has recent graduates attending the likes of Stanford, Harvard, Georgetown as well as record admissions to Michigan State University and the University of Michigan.

“Champions of Wayne has been an integral part of the changes to Wayne Memorial,” said James Anderson, school principal. “The program has been a cornerstone in shaping the student-oriented culture at Wayne Memorial.”

For complete information on Champions of Wayne, how to help, visit: [www.championsofwayne.org](http://www.championsofwayne.org).

Supporting Sponsors Beaumont Hospital and Jack Demmer Ford.

Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>  
 Livestream Begins at 7:00 pm  
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[visionsource-westland.com](http://visionsource-westland.com)

# Moving ahead one step at a time

By Carolyn Marnon

Virtual learning will continue through the end of the first semester in the Wayne Westland Community School District. That decision was unanimously approved at the October 29 School Board meeting held online via Zoom after listening to comments from the online audience for almost 90 minutes.

The school board was presented with two options. The first option was to have students return to school under the Hybrid plan where they would attend school 2 days per week and do online learning on the other days. Half the students would attend school in-person on Tuesday and Thursday while the other half would attend in-person on Wednesday and Friday. The second option had all students continuing to learn virtually through the end of the first semester. The second semester will start January 19.

Members of the community, parents, students and staff were able to comment before the board made their decision. All students who

spoke declared their preference for staying virtual. One student said that students have gotten used to the schedule and have been able to work their other activities around online learning.

Several parents are frontline or essential workers who are in environments everyday where they see what is happening with the COVID-19 virus. These parents want to keep their children out of harm's way. Another parent was concerned about the ventilation system and air quality at her child's school while also mentioning that daily COVID-19 cases are higher now than when students started attending school virtually in August. Several parents spoke about how no cases have been reported in Canton or Livonia schools where students attend in person. No cases through the afterschool program - Champions - were said to be reported either. Parents send their children to daycare where there seem to be no problem. Why not return students to in-person learning? they ask.

There were pleas by multiple parents of children with learning problems to allow students back in the schools. Several comments were made about children being depressed and having anxiety by not being in school with friends. Other comments revolved around students being distracted and not able to concentrate at the computer.

Lisa Marie Bailey, whose 3 year old autistic child is in a program at Stottlemeyer made the plea "Bright futures start here. Please don't let COVID dim her light" while rallying for an in-person return to education.

For now, students will continue learning via their virtual classroom.

For anyone who wants to sign up for the district's online program, Edgenuity, sign-ups will begin November 2 and run through December 2. Under this learning program, students would have to stay with the program the entire semester until the end of the school year in June. This is a special online learning program that was created before the pandemic for students who would

learn better in an online over a classroom setting. It is a completely separate program from the current virtual learning. To learn more, visit <https://www.wwcsd.net/>.

In the month of October, starting October 10, there have been 3 positive COVID cases (two at Schweitzer Elementary and one at Stevenson Middle School). Twelve people have been quarantined in that period - students or staff. Previous to that, since school started, 3 positive cases had been reported along with 37 quarantines. You can stay up-to-date with these figures at the COVID-19 Dashboard on the district's website.

"We're trying to base every single decision on what's best for our kids," said WWCS D Superintendent John Dignan during a Return to Learn presentation online. "Great futures start right here, and we're going to start another chapter of that here in the next few weeks." In his final comments at the board meeting, Supt. Dignan said, "We're going to move forward as one school system and one heartbeat."



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**Celebrate,** Continued from page 5

rades going on, but we usually watch them on TV and then the game, even though neither of us is a big football fan; it's just tradition watching the Lions." She and her husband, Dan, will also probably Zoom with his family in North Carolina.

Pamela Conley will be spending Thanksgiving at her Wayne home, the one she was raised in. "Since becoming a widow seven years ago, I have only eaten the Thanksgiving meal with others twice. So no, it really will not be different this year. I will still prepare a small turkey breast with all the trimmings." Pamela is thankful "that God is the one unchanging constant in all of our lives."

Betty Spaw has lived in Wayne for 29 years while her husband was born and raised here. She'll be preparing "the regular fixins, potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes, green bean casserole, Waldorf salad and pumpkin pie," to go along with the turkey. She and her husband will host a small group-her two daughters, son-in-law, her brother and his wife, and her sister coming from Lansing. "I'm thankful for my family and good health."

Marie Shannon, a retired USPS letter carrier in Wayne with the same route for 21 years, will be cooking at home with no company this year. "We're doing a turkey in our new air fryer as we normally fry our turkeys outside." She also plans on a small Dearborn ham along with mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, gravy, corn, rolls and maybe a green bean casserole with pumpkin pie for dessert. "The last few years, we went to our oldest son's and his family, but with COVID, we chose to cook at home,

and I'll make plates and deliver to both my local siblings. I love leftover turkey sandwiches, and pumpkin pie is always a favorite." Marie is thankful that she will finally get leftovers!

Jean Knight lives in Westland, but she works for the Wayne-Westland school district and has many friends in Wayne. She and her husband usually travel to Monroe to spend Thanksgiving with his family. "We will not be leaving our home this year, and I will cook a dinner for just my family. I am thankful that no one I love and care for has passed away due to COVID."

Several additional comments were shared.

Andrew Edwards said his family is getting together as they always have. Their parents have passed on, so there were no worries in being together. Linda Cook is thankful for the 46 years she had with her husband before he passed away in September. "This year will be just 8 of us celebrating Thanksgiving. It will be extremely bittersweet."

Megan McDonald doesn't know what they will be doing for Thanksgiving this year.

Christopher Cato is looking forward to the "same crappy turkey lol."

Tammy Gagnon is thankful for her family and friends, especially the support and help they gave her while she was going through her own health issues.

Brian Fodell expressed his thoughts with this: "Six allowed at Thanksgiving, but 30 for a funeral. I will be holding a funeral for my pet turkey that will pass away on Nov. 26th. Refreshments provided."

However you celebrate it, we hope your day is a happy one. Happy Thanksgiving!

## NEWS BRIEFS

**BRIEFS,** Continued from page 6

**The Wayne Public Library is open to the public.** You will need to enter through the doors by the Veterans Plaza. Browsing is limited to 30 minutes.

Please do not visit if you are sick. The plaza pick-up service is still available if you wish to do no-contact pick up of materials.

**Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation approved the Wayne Police Department's grant request for \$11,523.15.** The grant will allow the department to purchase three portable radios that will be used by officers to communicate with each other and dispatch while they are outside of their vehicles.

**US-12 Bar and Grill is helping to raise funds for Wayne Memorial High School's Champions of Wayne program.** The program

raises funds that help support the students at the high school when they meet semester goals. Come check out the new menu at US-12 Bar and Grill. From now until November 13, let the staff know you are there to support the Champions of Wayne program. 50% of the food sales on your bill will be donated to Champions.

**The City of Wayne Goodfellows is currently accepting applications for their No Child Without a Christmas program.**

You can find the application online at [www.wayne-goodfellows.org](http://www.wayne-goodfellows.org) You must live in the City of Wayne to receive services. Completed applications can be returned to Hype Athletics Western Wayne, 4635 Howe Rd on Nov. 4, 11, 18 and 25 between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If approved, you will be able to pick up donations on December 2 between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

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# Veterans continue to serve in our city

By Carolyn Marnon

November 11 is Veteran's Day in the U.S. It is a time to honor all who have served our country. We are lucky that we have several military veterans who are currently serving the City of Wayne. These highlighted veterans are all employees of the Wayne Police Department. The WPD highlighted their achievements last May on the department's Facebook page. This month, we are honoring them for their part in protecting our freedoms.

**Officer Joshua Priebe** has been with the Wayne Police Department for a year. He works road patrol as a valued member of the police department team. Priebe attended the United States Naval Academy, majoring in History and wrestling on the varsity team. He graduated from the Academy as a Surface Warfare Officer. He has served on the USS Harpers Ferry (LSD-49) out of Sasebo, Japan and on the USS Reuben James (FFG 57) in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He was transferred to the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut where he served as the Assistant Port Operations Officer. Priebe served in the Navy for eleven years and in the Navy Reserves for two years.

**Officer Jordan Arndt** has been with police department since 2015.



He is the School Resource Officer at Wayne Memorial High School. Arndt served in the Army National Guard for six years in the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry. He spent one year in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Matthew Mann** is a Maintenance Specialist with the police department making sure the patrol vehicles are properly maintained and safe to operate. He also helps with various other maintenance needs around the building. Mann served in the US Army from 1984-1988. He was a 63 Bravo Light-Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic and was an expert with the M16A2 rifle.



**Bruce Wright** has been a Maintenance Specialist at the police department since 2007. Wright has kept the police department clean and sanitary, especially since COVID-19 began. He served in



the US Air Force from 1980-1984 where he worked in Supply and Procurement.

**Matthew Andro** is a Police Service Aide who answers non-emergency calls for the police department. He also assists command officers and patrol officers with important miscellaneous tasks. He joined the department in 2019. In 2015, Andro joined the Marine Wing Support Squadron 471-B of the US Marine Corps Forces Reserves. He is currently a Sergeant and serves as a survey drafter designing blueprints for runways, and he also detonates explosives and does minesweeping.



**Harold Bennett** is a Crossing Guard and has been with the program since 2017. The police department operates the school crossing guard program. Bennett makes sure the children are able to safely cross the street on their way to and from school (when there is school to attend.)



Harold served in the US Army

from 1967-1969. He was a mechanic in Vietnam, working on everything from earthmovers to Jeeps to fire trucks.



**Leonard Theisen** is a Substitute Crossing Guard. He fills in when the regular crossing guards are ill. Theisen served in the

US Air Force from 1975-1981 as a Jet Engine Mechanic. He went on to serve in the US Army from 1986-2000 during the first Gulf War as an Armor Crewman, often working on tanks. He was also the Unit Armorer, taking care of the weapons room and training new officers.



**Vern Amos** is the Crossing Guard Supervisor. He ensures that crossing guards are at their posts, handles any problems related to the crossing guard program and helps protect the safety of the crossing guards and the children. He has worked in the program since 2016. Amos served in the US Army from 1970-1973 as an Aircraft Mechanic.

Amos served in the US Army from 1970-1973 as an Aircraft Mechanic.

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# A tale of two city parks

By Carolyn Marnon

Two city parks, Kiwanis Park and Jaycee Park, were sold to Shafer Development in early 2019 with the prospect of 42 new homes being built between the two pieces of land. Unfortunately for the City of Wayne, that deal fell through after Shafer brought in representatives from Pulte Homes, the 3rd largest home construction company in the US, who did not feel it was advantageous to them to invest in building homes in Wayne.

Wayne Community Development Director Lori Gouin and Mike Buiten, Director of Building and Engineering, were able to get Infinity Homes, one of Michigan's top privately held home builders, to look at the Kiwanis Park property. After inspecting the site, Infinity agreed to enter a purchase agreement for the approximately 3-acre property for the sum of \$1 to build 22 new single-family homes. The agreement also provides Infinity the option to purchase a 22-acre piece of land made up of Sue Winn Park, Angela Demario Park and the former Vandenberg

Elementary School property for \$50,000.

Councilman Phil Wagner was concerned about the \$50,000 purchase amount and asked if Gouin and Buiten had counteroffered. While understanding Wagner's viewpoint, Gouin told the city council "You had one of the biggest home builders (Pulte) in the state of Michigan walk away. To get \$50,000 is amazing. It's also not very responsible if we don't take advantage of opportunities to create new tax revenue in the city."

Buiten said it has been hard to get development interest. The City has the opportunity for Infinity to have success with developing Kiwanis Park. With that success, Infinity has the opportunity to get additional property in the City for development.

The larger property will not be available until the City does a land swap with the Wayne Westland School District.

The plan is for the City to trade Taft-Galloway Park to the district in return for the Vandenberg school site. This sales opportunity cannot move forward until the school board



A sample of a current Infinity home called the Catalin.

agrees to the swap.

Once the land swap is done, an agreement can be made. Once that agreement is made, an 18-month time-frame begins for Infinity to have the right of first refusal to the larger property.

The planned new homes that Infinity Homes would construct will have full basements underneath them. The Shafer Development homes would have been built on slabs. Infinity will be spending \$20,000 extra per home. For the builder to break even, the \$1 purchase price was proposed. Infinity will be building the sewer system infrastructure, another benefit for the City as it won't have to do that.

By selling the property, the City would no longer need to maintain in-

surance on it. It would no longer need to be maintained by the City and the City needs the tax revenue that would be generated from the new home development.

What is happening with Jaycee Park now? When the park was being considered for sale last year, residents who lived near the park vehemently opposed the new home development. Many had purchased their homes because there was a park across the street. Because of this dissent, it was decided not to put this particular park back on the market again.

If you are interested in seeing the home plans Infinity is presenting, you will find renderings in the City Council Agenda packet for October 6, 2020.

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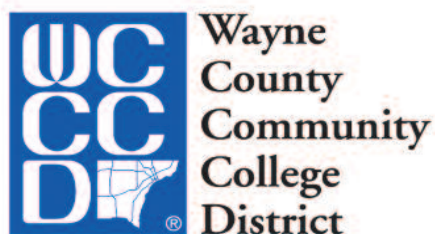
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