



Cadillac News

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Building Rainbow vacuums — from start to finish

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Bannon found guilty of contempt

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Traverse City, Pit Spitters to host All-Star game in 2023

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TWO-DAY FORECAST

Sunday 77 | 56 Monday 72 | 52

Thunderstorm

Deaths

Michael J. Bengelink, 73, of Cadillac
Glenna Jean Tidey, 64
Benjamin H. Wilkins, 76, of Lansing

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Cadillac News

The little brown bag that can change lives

Mesick couple has fostered hundreds of kids and adopted 13

BY MARDI SUHS
CADILLAC NEWS

MESICK — Their property near Mesick is sprawling with multiple outbuildings, including a small log cabin near a huge garden. One cow and chickens add to the scenery. Their ranch-style home sits nearby.

Tim and Rhonda Simerson just celebrated 40 years of marriage. Inside their home, photos of their 18 children cover an entire wall. Five are biological and 13 were adopted from the hundreds they fostered over four decades.

“There are all kinds of opportunities if you are interested in helping children,” Tim explained from their dining table.



MARDI SUHS | CADILLAC NEWS

SEE BROWN BAG ON A2
Tim and Rhonda Simerson of Mesick have fostered hundreds of children and adopted 13 of them to join their family of five biological children. Their joy in life their purpose, is to help care for children in need.

‘Stranger Things’ have happened



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACOB SENGEAUB

Sengelaub said he purchased his old Ford truck (left) for about \$900. Its uses were mostly for carrying kayaks and doing yard work, but it’s now been featured in season four of “Stranger Things.”

Reed City graduate lands role as ‘Stranger Things’ extra

BY RILEY CONNELL
CADILLAC NEWS

ATLANTA, GA. — He’s seen film

crews blocking the streets of his neighborhood before. Jacob Sengelaub never thought he’d be a part of the action, but “Stranger Things” have happened.

The Reed City High School alumnus relocated to the Atlanta area just a few years after graduating in 2001. He said the city, and its outskirts,

are a hotspot for filming movies and TV shows, like “Footloose” and “Ozark.”

As a result, Sengelaub said there are dozens of casting and prop calls floating around on social media. When a post popped up looking for ‘80s trucks to include on set, he decided to give it a shot and see if he could get his old, tan Ford on screen. He quickly realized that the listing was actually for one of his favorite shows.

“There was one where they were just looking for ‘80s trucks,” he said. “I don’t know if they actually said what it was for: I was just like, ‘Okay, I’ll try it out,’ and it turned out to be for ‘Stranger Things.’”



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACOB SENGEAUB

While being featured on set, Sengelaub’s car was outfitted with a vintage-style license plate to match the shows setting of a fictional town called Hawkins, Indiana.

SEE STRANGER THINGS ON A2



CADILLAC NEWS FILE PHOTO

Whether or not MSU Extension and 4H services continue in Osceola County will now be up to its residents. A millage for the program has been added to the August Primary ballot.

New MSU Extension millage added to Osceola Co. primary ballot

BY RILEY CONNELL
CADILLAC NEWS

REED CITY — Whether Osceola County’s Michigan State University Extension program will continue is now up to county residents.

For the first time, an MSU Extension millage has been added to the ballot for the county’s August Primary election. County Coordinator Tim Ladd said the millage will levy up to 0.25 mills, which would cost about \$12.50 per year for a home with a \$50,000 taxable value.

In years past, Extension services have been funded through the county, but Ladd said the decision to add a millage to the ballot came after budget considerations for the 2023 fiscal year. He said the board has always aimed to keep a balanced budget, but it takes some creativity, and often results in having to dip into the reserves.

“MSU Extension services has been one of those departments that we have just supported out of the general fund,” he said.

SEE MSU EXTENSION ON A3

Brown Bag Campaign

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

"We've lost track of all the kids we fostered. Some years we took in multiples, sibling groups for three months or as long as needed."

The Simerson family is well known in the Mesick area. They have worked at the school for years. Tim, 59, as a bus driver and Rhonda, 57, does janitorial work. But for years she coached girls' varsity basketball. A former assistant coach at Northwood University for women's basketball, she was 32 when they offered her a full scholarship, NCAA approved.

But family came first. "We raised our own five kids alongside the foster kids and it's been really good," she said. "It gives them compassion for others."

"Adopting kids has added to our lives," Tim said. "We have to keep busy. It keeps us healthy and keeps us moving."

Their most recent adoption was finalized just before Christmas. They adopted a sibling to their three adopted school-age children.

"They now start their day with their dad on the bus," Tim smiled. "Sometimes it's with hugs, and sometimes pouting."

They freely speak of the faith that brings them comfort through the stress of raising children, many who arrive with hurts that need to be healed. With unconditional love, the couple offers up all they have to better their lives.

"In your life you have the humbling experience of realizing what we are here on this earth for," Rhonda said. "We want to serve. And our way of serving is by helping children."

They make it sound easy. But challenges have included fostering children with disabilities and cancer and some that get into trouble.

"We've never met a bad kid," Tim said. "They act out because of their situation. It isn't that hard if you give them a structure."

Most of their grown children have careers as teachers and pastors or in law enforcement and the military. They have 21 grandchildren.

Their strength comes from a deep faith. Their church, Minar Bible

Church, is just down the road. And their agency, Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan, provides help with counseling services and anything they might need.

The Brown Bag Campaign The Simersons' story is part of Child and Family Services annual Brown Bag Campaign. The small brown bag inserted in today's Cadillac News is a reminder that when children are removed from their homes they have been traumatized. They often arrive in foster care with only the clothes

they are wearing.

Donations will help provide these kids with some extras, like school supplies, winter boots and music or dance lessons, even summer camps.

It's also a reminder that foster parents, volunteers and donors are needed. To donate online or to learn more, visit cfsnwm.org

For information on becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call (231) 946-8975 or visit cfsnwm.org/foster-care.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF RHONDA SIMERSON

Three of Tim and Rhonda Simerson's adopted sons visited their parents recently to celebrate their 40th anniversary. From left, Joshua, 27, who works at the Interlochen Arts Academy; Jeremiah, a Marine Corps veteran who drives school bus and attends Bible college; and Frankie, 20, a Navy enlistee now in boot camp.

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