

the Cannon Communicator

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From the Desk of the Supervisor

Steve Grimm,

Cannon Township Supervisor

As the state attempts to balance its budget and restore fiscal sanity to state government, it should look to Cannon Township for guidance in how to accomplish this. For example, the employees of Cannon Township have not received a salary increase in three years. They already contribute the proposed 20% for state employee contribution to health premiums. We have balanced our budget without sacrificing services or the quality of life in the Township. This year, we will more than balance our budget, achieving a fund balance that will ensure the long-term stability of the Township. We are looking at alternatives to many of

the services we take for granted, including law enforcement, operation and maintenance of our sewer system, and road maintenance and improvement. By being smarter in analyzing these services, without sacrificing quality, we will continue to improve the Township's financial position into the future. Many townships are not so lucky. The most recent budget proposals from Lansing severely cut back statutory shared revenue to the townships that have long relied on that money to exist. This proposal will not affect Cannon because we do not and have not relied on statutory funding from the state.

As we enter the fiscal year, we find our sewer fund significantly underfunded. The reality is that there is not enough money to pay for repairs in the event of a significant failure. Our system is aging and we must proactively maintain the system by identifying the most likely areas that need attention before they fail. In order to do this most effectively, we are analyzing how we use our consultants and vendors, with the intent to introduce more competition among them, thereby lowering the costs. These are all necessary because the economic reality is that the economic slow-down has meant far less development and thus far fewer new connections than anticipated. This means that there are fewer homeowners and businesses among which to spread the burden. The end result requires a realistic examination of sewer rates. A small quarterly increase may be necessary, but only as a last resort. Even in that event, our rates will be lower than many of those communities around us.

The good news is that this year we will aggressively pursue the development of the Town Center (corner of Myers Lake and M44), which will add commercial and residential units that will

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Cannon Township

Spring 2011

A Historic Rural Community

Cannon Township



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not only spread the burden of the costs of sewer; it will also make that area of the Township more vibrant and successful.

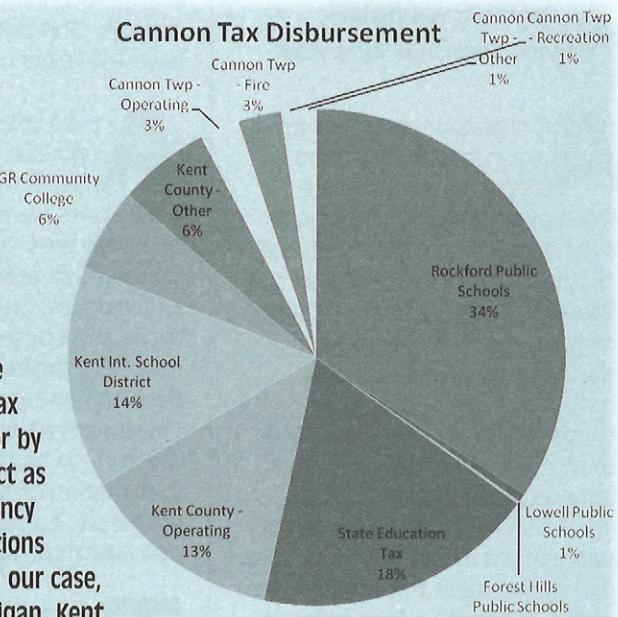
The time is coming when the state will seek more money from the counties which will in turn seek it from the cities and townships. Because we know this, Cannon

Township will be ready. By making intelligent, but difficult, choices now, Cannon Township will be financially ready when that time comes. If Lansing would follow our example of how things should be done in government, Michigan's fiscal recovery would much less painful.

"Where did Our 2010 Property Taxes go?"

Jim LaPeer, Treasurer

The Township Treasurer's Office has just completed our 2010 Tax Year Collections. As provided for by State law, the Township may act as the collecting & disbursing agency for property tax millage collections that are approved by voters. In our case, this includes the State of Michigan, Kent County, Public Schools of Rockford, Lowell, and Forest Hills, and Cannon Township. The collection & disbursement breakdown looks like this:



Taxing Authority	Taxes collected & disbursed	Percent of Total
Local Public Schools	\$6,216,533	35%
State Education	\$3,262,291	18%
Kent County	\$6,922,344	39%
Cannon Township	\$1,369,327	8%

Important Information

Restaurants and other certain businesses are required to have grease traps in kitchens so that grease does not enter the public sewer system. They are required to have these traps cleaned periodically.

The number one cause for problems in the sewer system is grease that residents have poured down the sink drain or toilet. Once the grease hardens, it clings to the bottom and sides of the pipe line and, consequently, prevents "flow". This causes sewer back-ups. The Department of Public Works routinely televises within the sewer pipes to see where problems are occurring. The workers then "vacuum" the lines and haul the sludge to a landfill. This type of maintenance is expensive and time consuming. We are asking everyone whose homes are connected to the public sewer to not pour grease down the drains.

Glad To Be Back...

My name is Diane Jones and I was appointed January 24, 2011 to fill the open Trustee position. I was a Trustee from 2004 to 2008 and was a member of the Cannon Township Zoning Board of Appeals as well as a resident member of the cemetery committee. I have previous board experience serving on committees such as professional oversight and facilities.

I am excited to serve the residents of Cannon Township as a Trustee. I welcome your input and will deliver a prompt response to your inquiries.

*Sincerely,
Diane Jones*

HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPDATE

Beginning in May, the Historical Museum is open every **Sunday from 2PM to 4PM**.

Check the Cannon Township website for more information or contact Margaret Janose at **874-6865**.

Don't forget that there will be a baked goods sale at the Bear Creek Waterfest at Townsend Park on **May 7th** from 8 am until everything is sold. Get there early because these goodies sell fast!



Cannon Township



Clerk's Corner...

By Bonnie Blackledge

Change in Board Dynamics

By now you're probably aware that your Township Board has shuffled around its members due to Peter MacGregor's election as your State Representative. Steve Grimm has moved from Trustee to Supervisor, and Diane Jones was selected from a talented pool to be your newest Trustee (see related article). This change has triggered others, such as a change in membership on the Board Committees. For a current list of members of each committee, please check our website—www.cannontwp.org and see the various committees listed there.

Cemetery Update

The big news is the Eagle Scout project that will be constructed this year at the Old Bostwick Lake Cemetery. I have been collecting donations for Nate Finneran, the scout who is heading up this project. As of today's date, donations have reached \$1470. Thank you to all who have donated! If you would like to make a donation, there is still time and they are



tax deductible. See web page or call me (884-2204) for more details.

Recreation Update

The Recreation Committee has agreed to work on two major projects this year. We will be putting together the first phase of the Township Center Park project that involves constructing a picnic shelter, refining walking trails, adding a short mountain bike trail geared for beginners and kids, and creating an open play area. The other major project is a trail extension from the existing trail head in Townsend Park to the village of Cannonsburg.



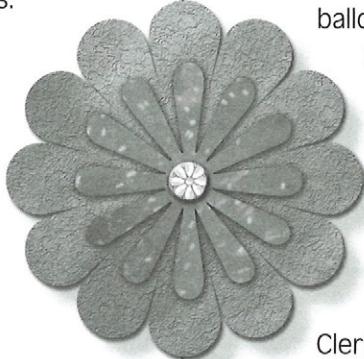
In addition to these major projects, one subcommittee is working on getting neighboring communities together to discuss trail connections. Another will continue to work on amenities such as signage at the trail heads and interpretive signs near the wetlands.

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May 3 Election

The only election that is anticipated this year is the election on May 3rd when voters will elect members of school boards in Rockford, Lowell, and Forest Hills. These three school districts are all represented in Cannon Township, but the majority of our citizens live in the Rockford district. There is no competition for any of these boards – all candidates are running unopposed. In fact, there are two positions open for Lowell Schools, but only one candidate – a good opportunity for a write-in! Grand Rapids Community College Board of Trustees will also be elected – four candidates for two positions.

Please contact our office at 874-6966 if you wish to obtain an absentee ballot. You can also email your request to Deputy Clerk Nancy



Popma at nancyp@cannontwp.org. If you are on our regular absentee list, you have already been mailed an application.

By the way, I've heard people are questioning why they have to fill out applications for absentee ballots for every election. The only answer I have is that is what the law requires. We can't send you a ballot unless we have an application on file, and we need one for each election.

Clerk's Page on Facebook

For those of you who are into social media, I have created a Facebook Page for the Cannon Township Clerk's Office. I use this to post information about anything that I'm involved in such as elections, watershed, recreation, cemeteries, budget, etc. If you'd like to be a fan, you can connect from the Clerk's page on our website or just search for us on Facebook. I'd love to hear some of your comments about Board decisions or suggestions about what we can do for the community.

facebook

Find us and "like" us to get up-to-date information.

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Cannon-Township-Clerks-Office/135763236465301>

Cannon Township

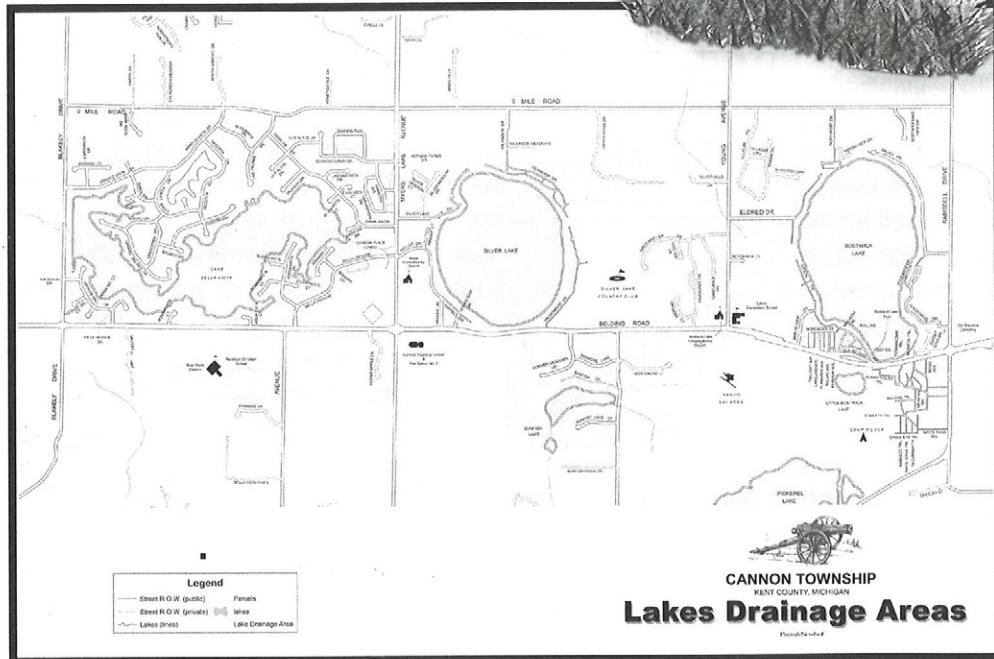


As you may know, there is an ordinance prohibiting the use of phosphate fertilizer in the Lakes Drainage District. It can be found on our website at: http://www.cannontwp.org/egov/docs/1205434162_906066.pdf

The map below shows the Lakes District where the ordinance applies.

The Men's Club at the Bostwick Lake Congregational Church is hosting their annual fertilizer sale that features Phosphate Free Fertilizer. The sale will be held in the church parking lot from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm each Saturday during April and May. The proceeds from this sale go toward property upkeep at the church. For more information, contact Vince Majewski at 874-6135.

Phosphate free fertilizer can also be purchased at area stores.
Call for availability.



April 2011

- April 1Quarterly Sewer Bills Mailed to Residents
- April 4Last Day to Register for the May 3, 2011 Election
- April 11Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
- April 12Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
- April 19Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 6:00 pm
- April 22**Office Closes at Noon**
- April 25Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
- April 30Office Open for Absentee Voting 8:00 am – 2:00 pm
Quarterly Sewer Bills Due (use drop box)

Remember
to check for
any cancellations
or changes
on the Township
web site.

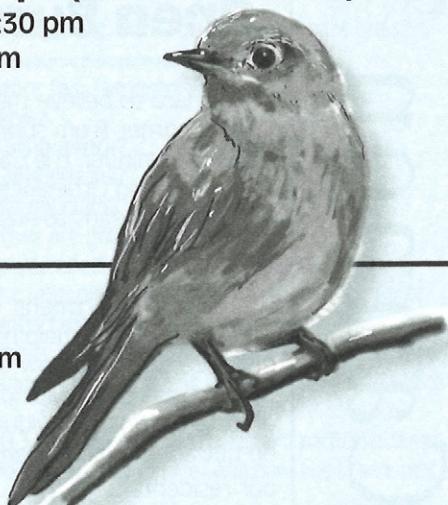
www.cannontwp.org

May 2011

- May 1Principal Residence Exemption Due
- May 2Absentee Voting in Office from 8:00 am to 4 pm
- May 3School Election – Polls Open 7:00 am – 8:00 pm
- May 7**18th ANNUAL BEAR CREEK WATERFEST – TOWNSEND PARK 8:00 am - Noon**
- May 9Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
- May 10Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
- May 14**Electronics Recycling – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (see related article)**
- May 16Recreation Committee Meeting – 4:00 – 5:30 pm
- May 17Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 6:00 pm
- May 23Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
- May 30**MEMORIAL DAY – OFFICE CLOSED**

June 2011

- June 13Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
- June 14Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
- June 21Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 6:00 pm
- June 27Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm



Cannon Township



Proud To Announce



The Cannon Township Fire Department is proud to announce that construction on our newly renovated and expanded fire station is nearing completion. Fire Station #2 located adjacent to the Township offices, has undergone significant changes that will finally give much needed space to the Township equipment and personnel. A few of the highlighted features include:

- ✓ the construction of new apparatus bays which offers longer and wider bays to accommodate larger apparatus (trucks) and personnel access to the equipment
- ✓ the addition of one full apparatus bay to enhance access to our front line engines, rescue and medic vehicles
- ✓ the conversion of the old bays to offices, training rooms, reception area and crew quarters.

This project has been woefully overdue as we continually expand our personnel and equipment inventory to meet the needs of our growing Township population. Part of our on-going commitment to safety for our residents is the staffing of our station from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., seven days a week. Please stay tuned for further information on our upcoming open house where we will invite the public in to see and experience this wonderful addition to our Township.

Open Burning Ordinance Reminder...

It's hard to believe that we are just around the corner from spring clean-up projects. As a reminder, the Cannon Township Open Burning Ordinance was developed as a necessary means to ensure the safety of our residents.

We, on the department, feel strongly that this ordinance will also help reduce the amount of nuisance calls and allow the Township to recover the expense of providing fire suppression efforts to those individuals and businesses that do not adhere to the same rules as the rest of our residents.

A copy of this ordinance, may be reached by clicking on the hyper link:
http://www.cannontwp.org/egov/docs/1236703320_725616.pdf

To obtain a permit, call **874-9725 during normal business hours.**

**Until next time,
stay safe!**

Free Electronics Recycling at Cannon Township

6878 Belding Road NE • Rockford, Michigan 49341

May 14th, 2011 • 9am - 1 pm

The Following Items Will Be Accepted

- Televisions • CRT Monitors • LCD Monitors • Speakers
- Computers • Laptops • Printers • Fax Machines
- Copiers • Copiers • Keyboards & Mice • DVD Players/VCR's
- Microwaves • Miscellaneous Items (cables, lights, etc.)
- Computer Parts • Telephones • Cell Phones • Game Consoles
- Handheld Electronic Devices • Stereos and Portable Devices

No White Goods - Heavy Consumer Durables such as:

Air Conditioners, Refrigerators, Stoves, Etc.

This event is sponsored by Cannon Township and Vintage Tech Recyclers Inc.

Selecting a camp for your child

By Doug Vanderwell, Camp Roger,
www.camproger.org • 616-874-7286

A week at camp can be a great experience for a child, but did you know there are about 50 different camps in West Michigan? How do you choose the right camp for you and your child? It can be a bit overwhelming trying to narrow down the options. In this article, I'm going to focus mainly on resident camps, but the same principles apply to choosing a day camp. Working through this list may help you narrow down the field and eventually choose a camp that is best for you and your child.

1. **Narrowing the field (Camp Theme/Type)** - Start by narrowing down the type of camp that you are looking for.

2. **Interviewing the camp** - Once you have some names of camps, go to the website or call and request a brochure. Learn all you can about the camp. Here's a list of questions that I might ask:

- Tell me about your camp. Describe how you compare to other camps.
- What activities are available? What choices will my child have?
- What do you do to make children feel comfortable on the first day?
- How do you hire your counselors?
- What are the important things you are looking for when you hire counselors?
- How do you screen your staff to make sure you are hiring safe ones?
- What does your camp cost?
- Are there any other costs (store fees, program fees, etc.)?
- Is financial assistance available?
- What do you do if my child is homesick?
- What do you do if my child misbehaves?
- What contact can I have with my child?
- Will I be able to know how they are doing?
- What do you feel your camp does better than other camps?
- If I were not to choose your camp, please recommend another camp or two that you would feel comfortable recommending.

3. **Visiting the camp** - I cannot stress this one enough. Take the top name (or two or three) on your list and make an appointment with the director to take a tour of the camp.

4. **Asking for references** - If you don't have a personal reference for a particular camp, don't hesitate to ask them for the names of a few families who have been there that you may call.

Watershed Pages



Watershed News

By Bonnie Blackledge

The big news is that Kim Sapkowski, Watershed Assistant for the past five years, resigned in February to pursue a full time position at Kendall School of Design. We wish her well and will certainly miss her.

I am currently in the process of selecting a replacement and should be doing interviews by the time you read this article. I hope to find someone who can fill that position as effectively as Kim did, but that won't be easy.

When Kim was finishing up, we sat down to review what she was currently doing and what she had going in each area of her responsibility so that I could follow through on what needs to be done. I was overwhelmed with how much she was able to accomplish in a twelve hour workweek!

One of the most important things that Kim did was to coordinate the volunteer efforts in Cannon Township – trail cleanup, Master Gardeners, rain garden, the Bear Creek Watershed Council and stream surveyors. She also planned Waterfest. If you are reading this and have previously been one of these volunteers, please be patient as I'm trying to keep these efforts going on top of my other responsibilities until I hire a replacement. Please contact me at bonnies@cannontwp.org or 884-2204 if you have any questions or would like to help.

Waterfest

Ever since I've been the Clerk – 18 years now – Waterfest has been held on the last Saturday of April. However, due to someone making reservations for the lodge at Townsend Park before we did, this year we had to move Waterfest to May 7th. I'm anxious to see how this will affect our attendance. See related information on page 11.

I was able to arrange Bruce Ling's "Hawks and Owls" as musical entertainment for Waterfest. They have been there in the past and we've been very pleased with their performances. Their music brings a festive atmosphere to the event.

MiCorps Grant

Before Kim left, she and I applied for another MiCorps grant. We were recipients of a start up grant for this current year. This grant helped us explore the feasibility of creating volunteer stream monitoring groups in Cannon Township along Bear Creek. The response of the public was quite favorable and we were able to hold a training session last fall.

If we receive the grant award, this will provide funding for two years to actually implement the

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volunteer stream monitoring program. This will allow us to monitor the stream on a regular, ongoing basis for benthic macroinvertebrates (bugs) and stream habitat. MiCorps staff will provide training and support to me and my assistant, and then we are expected to use the information to train our own volunteers who will do the majority of collection work. The resultant data will be entered into a publically available database and used by the DNRE as a monitoring screening tool.

Amazing how something like this can appeal to someone with a BA in French, right? I guess I'm a biology major wannabe. However, if this also sounds appealing to you, I encourage you to contact me to sign up to be a volunteer. I'll be working with these little bugs at Waterfest again this year, so stop by my table and get a sample of what you'll be doing.

Please consider stopping by Townsend Park between 8 am and noon on Saturday, May 7th. In addition to great activities and good food, there are some wonderful door prizes you can win. I hope to see you there.

18th Annual Bear Creek Waterfest

Saturday, May 7th

from 8 AM - 12 Noon at Townsend Park

Corner of Ramsdell Dr. and 6 Mile Road

Family Activities Include:

- Creeky Critters
- Make A Bird Feeder
- Container Gardening
- Make A Rain Stick
- Microscope Magic
- Bee Keeper
- Watershed Maps and much more!

Prizes for kids and adults!

And don't forget the Rubber Ducky Races!

Pancake Breakfast 8—10 a.m.

\$5 adults, \$3 kids 12 & under
or \$15.00 For Families

Bake Sale by Cannon Historical Society

and

Live Music by Hawks and Owls String Band

Blood Drive with Michigan Blood

All activities are **FREE!**

The Bear Creek Waterfest is sponsored by Cannon Township



Clip and Save E-mail Addresses

Supervisor, Steve Grimm: sgrimm@cannontwp.org
Clerk, Bonnie Blackledge: bonnies@cannontwp.org
Treasurer, Jim LaPeer: jlapeer@cannontwp.org
Trustee Deb Diepenhorst: ddiepenhorst@cannontwp.org
Trustee Dick Davies: ddavies@cannontwp.org
Trustee Diane Jones: djones@cannontwp.org
Trustee Rob McBrien: rmcbrien@cannontwp.org
Deputy Clerk, Nancy Popma: nancyp@cannontwp.org
Deputy Treasurer, Milissa Soderstrom: milissas@cannontwp.org
Zoning Administrator, Christine James: christinej@cannontwp.org
Administrative Assistant Sue Clarin: suec@cannontwp.org
Fire Chief, Jim Morris: Chief@cannontwp.org
State Representative, Pete MacGregor: PeterMacGregor@house.mi.gov
Phone: 1-855-DIST073 (347-8073)
State Senator, Mark Jansen: senmjansen@senate.michigan.gov
Phone: 1-866-305-2128
Cannon Township Web Site: www.cannontwp.org
Kent County Web Site: www.accesskent.com
State of Michigan Web Site: www.michigan.gov

Township Board

Supervisor Steve Grimm
Clerk Bonnie Blackledge
Treasurer Jim LaPeer
Trustees Deb Diepenhorst
Dick Davies
Diane Jones
Rob McBrien

Township Offices 874-6966
(Hours 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Mon – Fri)
Fax 874-8940
Fire Department 874-9725
Emergency 911

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROCKFORD, MI 49341
PERMIT NO.1


Cannon Township
Spring 2011
Township Board Meetings • 2nd & 4th Monday, Monthly • 7:00 p.m., Township Hall
A Historic Rural Community
6878 Belding Road, NE • Rockford, MI 49341