

# CASCADE CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from Cascade Charter Township • Summer 2020

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- + Summer Taxes
  - + Annual Residential Reviews
  - + Poetry from the Past

# NEWS FROM THE SUPERVISOR

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Normally, this newsletter would be filled with the schedule of events for Cascade's annual July Fourth celebration that we have held for so many years.

Unfortunately, this summer event and others have had to be canceled or postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We can still celebrate our national holiday, we'll just have to do it a bit differently – without the parades, large social gatherings and public fireworks.

Earlier this year, Gov. Whitmer's executive orders encouraged us to close Township Hall to the public and limit our contact, but operations continued thanks to the dedication of the Township staff. It may have taken a bit longer to contact the right person or to get a response due to everyone mostly working from home, but thanks to Zoom and other similar meeting apps, work continues throughout Stay Home.

Our Fire Department didn't have the option of closing. Operating 24/7 out of two stations, our firefighters continued responding to calls. It required added effort on their part because of the personal protection equipment required for certain calls, but they never hesitated to respond and continue to do so.

Buildings and Grounds Department staff continued their duties, especially in the parks and pathways, sanitizing and cleaning areas open to the

public. Our Township parks have never been busier, especially Burton and Peace parks, with residents wanting to get outdoors and take advantage of the paths and scenery.

Stopping by Township Hall will be different, too, when it's time to reopen to the public safely. New sanitation protocols and practices will be in place for everyone's safety. We encourage you to contact us by phone or email so we can make sure the right person is available before you come to Township Hall.

We are experiencing new and challenging times – in the way we live, do business, socialize and go about our daily lives. Fortunately, we have a very strong and stable Township. While it's almost impossible to plan for something like what we are going through now, the current Board and previous Boards, with their sound financial decisions, have ensured Cascade will weather this turn of events.

Our existing open spaces and the additional pathways and expansions coming this summer will be used more than ever. We appreciate the support of local businesses in Cascade and will continue to work with them to help speed their recovery. Please continue to shop local as much as possible – and to order takeout as we wait for our restaurants to begin in-person service.

Challenging times are the norm now, and we need to make sure everyone takes care of their neighbors, families and themselves. There isn't any township better prepared to meet these challenges than our Cascade.

*Robert S. Barkow*



# Township Contacts

## Township Hall Office Hours

Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Supervisor

Rob Beahan; 949-1500  
rbeahan@cascadetwp.com

## Clerk

Sue Slater; 949-1508  
sslater@cascadetwp.com

## Treasurer

Ken Peirce; 949-6944  
kpeirce@cascadetwp.com

## Trustees

Jim Koessel  
jkoessel@cascadetwp.com  
Jack Lewis  
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Tom McDonald  
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John Shipley  
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## Manager

Ben Swayze; 949-1500  
bswayze@cascadetwp.com

## Assistant Manager

Stephanie Fast; 285-2327  
sfast@cascadetwp.com

## Assessing

Jennifer Genter; 949-6176  
jgenter@cascadetwp.com

## Building Inspections

Brian Wilson; 949-3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com  
Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Friday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## Community Development

Steve Peterson; 949-0224  
speterson@cascadetwp.com

## Fire

Adam Magers; 949-1320  
amagers@cascadetwp.com

## Sheriff/Non-Emergency Dispatch

336-3113

## Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa; 632-6435  
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov



## From the **CLERK**

*Sue Slater*

We are getting ready for the very busy elections ahead! On Aug. 4, the primary will be held. This election will be for local and state offices prior to the Nov. 3 general election, including convention delegates.

Remember, you may register to vote by filling out the voter registration application form available online at [cascadetwp.com/Services-Departments/Clerk-s-Office/Election-Information](http://cascadetwp.com/Services-Departments/Clerk-s-Office/Election-Information). The deadline for receipt in the clerk's office is 15 days prior to the election or July 20. After July 20, you may register in-person through Election Day at the clerk's office. You must provide proof of residency.

If you have already indicated your desire to be on our permanent absentee voter list, you do not need to submit another application. You can also review the interactive map on our website to check your polling location!

View the Cascade Township precinct map to determine your precinct location – or use the interactive voting precinct/polling location map to search by your address. Once the map appears, click on the 'Parcel Search Feature' (right side of screen) to search by your address.

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## **BUILDING DEPARTMENT NOW OFFERING VIRTUAL PROGRAMS**

The Cascade Building Department is now operating to help with permitting and inspections for your project. Although offices remain closed to the public due to the governor's Stay Home, we are working remotely to keep your project moving!

For the safety of residents and staff, we have implemented new procedures to reduce the potential spread of the coronavirus. Inspectors are following CDC and local health guidelines and will always wear a mask when entering your home.

We offer online permitting, so the entire process can be done without leaving your home. Simply follow the steps on the online portal, upload required documents and obtain your permit.

We are also offering a new virtual inspection program that allows us to inspect simple replacements, such as water heaters or furnaces, from a video your contractor submits. Also, for minor interior work, such as a kitchen or bath remodel, a live video inspection can be performed. These enhanced offerings can limit our contact on your job and help slow the spread of the new virus while still ensuring the construction meets all code requirements.

To view current policies and office hours, please visit [cascadetwp.com/Services-Departments/Building-Inspections.aspx](http://cascadetwp.com/Services-Departments/Building-Inspections.aspx). Stay safe.



# Cascade Community Foundation Grantmaking Climbs to Record High

This spring, seven organizations received funding from the Cascade Community Foundation, each making a compelling case in the wake of COVID-19, according to CEO Justin Swan.

The result was a distribution higher than any previous grant cycle, including the entire \$10,000 increase approved by the foundation's board of directors in March.

"We were prepared for more requests and welcomed the opportunity to expand our giving," Swan said. "In the end, it's never enough, but it's more than we've ever awarded, and now was the time to step up."

Newly funded programs include Meals on Wheels (\$5,000), Children's Healing Center (\$5,000) and Disability Advocates of Kent County (\$2,500). Each offered new or increased services to Cascade residents or offered services associated with COVID-19.

CCF also continued funding for popular programs, including Junior Achievement, Sunday Afternoon Live concert series, Cascade Metro Cruise Warm Up and Fourth of July. The total allocation for Spring 2020 was \$22,700.

For more information about CCF grants, visit [cascadecommunityfoundation.com](http://cascadecommunityfoundation.com).

## ensuring fair and equitable **ASSESSMENTS FOR ALL**



It's time again for our annual residential review, and some Cascade homeowners may have already received notification.

If your area has been selected for the 2020 residential review, we are requesting you verify data about your property characteristics. Our residential appraiser will review your information, along with the current property record card and recent aerial photography, and prepare the record card for the following year's market study and estimated valuation.

Additionally, a picture may be taken of the exterior of your property by an appraiser. Photos of the front of your home are generally taken from the street to update our records. Should there be an obstruction from the street, we do request permissions to take the photo from the property. Our vehicles are marked with Cascade logos and Cascade

Township assessing field staff always carry a photo identification to present when requested.

Residential reviews must include an entire geographic neighborhood. Each property is reviewed whether or not the resident responds to the survey. Here is a list of the 2020 neighborhoods we will review as part of this year's neighborhood residential study:

- Manchester Hills
- Stoneshire
- Apple Hills
- Whispering Brook
- Cimarron
- Park Place Condos
- 28th Street/Bolt
- Apple Hills East/Hunters Way
- Cascade Place Condos
- Villas of Cascade
- Artisan Woods/Riverview/Hawthorn Ridge

Please note: Conducting a reappraisal in the Township is not only a requirement of the state of Michigan, but also an excellent way to update our property records. Correct information on file is essential to fair and equitable assessments for all.

For more information, please contact the Assessing Department at 616.949.6167.



## Tips to Celebrate Our Nation's Independence from Home

Taken 2019

After discussing options with Township leaders and considering direction from our local, state and national health experts, we have reluctantly decided to cancel this year's July Fourth celebration.

In these uncertain times, we must continue to promote physical distancing and other steps to protect the safety and health of our residents, employees, first responders and businesses. Even though we anticipate the Stay Home order will be lifted before July, there's a lot of work and preparation that would need to be done now to ensure a successful event. So, out of an abundance of caution, we have followed the advice of health experts and joined other communities in canceling this year's festivities.

Even though we aren't able to gather and take part in our traditional activities, there are ways you can still celebrate our nation's independence from home, including:

- **Watch an Online Fireworks Show:** There are dozens of fireworks shows on YouTube. Find your favorite, sit back and enjoy the show!
- **Cook Red, White and Blue Snacks:** Find creative ways to make snacks that match our nation's colors. Cook up some patriotic cupcakes, popsicles, rice crispy treats and cakes.
- **Set Up Yard Games:** Recreate some of your favorite July Fourth festivities in your back yard. Set up inflatable pools, cornhole, ladder golf and other outdoor games.
- **Create a Patriotic Playlist:** Choose your favorite songs to play while you are enjoying time with your family.
- **Make Arts and Crafts:** Search the internet for DIY recipes for red, white and blue wreaths, flags, door decorations and necklaces.

We hope everyone has a safe and healthy July Fourth.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT SUMMER TAXES

Summer 2020 tax bills and informational notices will be mailed on July 1. Summer taxes are due and payable on July 1 and may be paid without any penalty or interest charged as late as Sept. 14. If you do not receive a tax statement during July, check the Township's website or call the treasurer's office at 616.949.6944.

Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statement. Payments are recorded on the same business day they are received. We recommend you allow seven days to ensure timely delivery, especially for the bank bill pay generated payments. We want to remind you that Cascade Township does not accept postmarks as proof of timeliness. All payments must be received in our office by 5 p.m. on the date the payments are due.

The summer tax deferment allows qualifying taxpayers to pay summer taxes after they receive a property tax credit refund from the state of Michigan. To qualify for this deferment, your household income must not exceed \$40,000, and you must be either 62 or older, totally disabled, blind, paraplegic, quadriplegic, a serviceperson, veteran or widow or widower of a veteran. Deferment application forms are available in the treasurer's office through Sept. 16. The deferment period covers only one year, so you must reapply each year.

Attention travelers! If you will be away this summer, please call our office with your email, fax or temporary address. We will forward the tax statement to you if it is returned to our office by the U.S. Postal Service. The treasurer's office is not responsible for postal deliveries, and taxes are due whether a statement is received by the taxpayer or not.

An online tax payment option is available for residents. Residents may pay their bill right from their checking or savings account. Unlike credit card payments, which charge a convenience fee, this option is free to taxpayers.

Please follow the link on our website to make a payment.

Your tax bill information is available 24/7 at [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com):

- Click on 'Quick Links' (left side of the screen)
- Click on 'Property/Parcel Lookup'
- Enter parcel number, address or name in the search bar
- Click on the parcel number and the tax information tab

For more information, please call 616.949.6944. Have a safe summer.



Greetings from your community police officer,

First off, I hope everyone is staying healthy and sane during this pandemic. Fortunately, many criminals have heeded the Stay Home directive, as we are seeing crime rates drop. As most are, the Kent County Sheriff's Office has implemented some changes during this time, which I want to share with you.

We have been extremely fortunate at Kent County and were immediately provided the appropriate personal protective equipment. With that said, when responding to a call, you may see deputies wearing a face mask, gloves and glasses if we are going to have direct contact with someone or enter an enclosed space.

If the circumstance permits, you may be asked if you are willing to speak with a deputy over the phone rather than having one dispatched to your location, limiting potential exposures. We ask that any documents or photos needed for the report be sent via email. Deputies are required to sanitize their equipment. We have a full decontamination station for uniforms, equipment and vehicles if a known or possible exposure occurs.

Reminders: First, while there are fewer vehicles on the roadway, this does not give you permission to drive faster. Whether or not deputies are encouraged to make traffic stops, we still have the ability to do so. Second, be sure to lock your vehicles and remove contents you are not willing to allow someone to have. Simply locking your vehicle and removing/hiding valuables may prevent someone from committing an opportunistic crime. Lastly, despite many closures, the jail is still open. Please make smart choices and, above all, be safe!

Deputy Omar Dieppa

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY PREPARE TO RESTART OPERATIONS WHEN PERMISSIBLE AND ADVISABLE

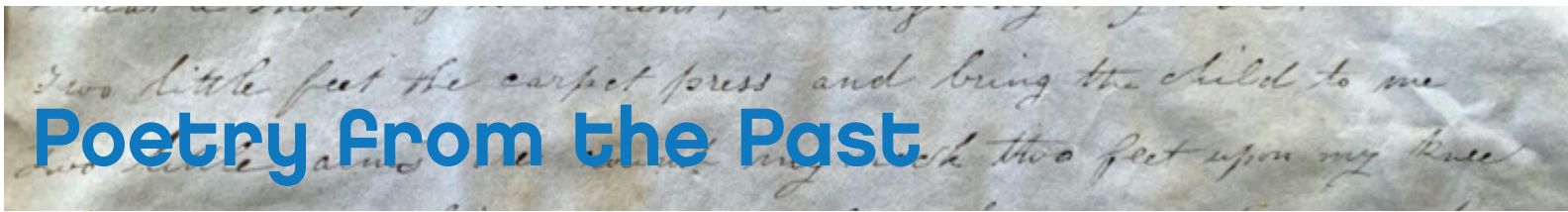
Even though Gov. Whitmer has eased stay-at-home restrictions, the Cascade branch of the Kent District Library remains closed for now. That means the Friends of the Cascade Library still don't have a definitive date for when we can resume operations.

But one thing is for certain: Things are going to be very different for a while, even when we do get back into action. For example:

- **Group Book Sales:** KDL has mandated no group book sales through the summer. Because Cascade Township's July Fourth festivities are canceled, our annual July Fourth book sale is, too.
- **Book Donations:** We are currently not accepting donated books because we can't get into the library to process and store them. We hope to reopen donations soon.
- **Book Discussions:** Book discussions are normally suspended in the summer. Hopefully, we will be able to resume our regular schedule in the fall, but if gatherings are still unwise, we will consider a Zoom call alternative.
- **Flix @ the Library:** Unfortunately, both Flix for Families and Flix for Grown-Ups are suspended until further notice. Even if allowable, it is unlikely many people will want to gather in a confined space to watch a movie with strangers.
- **Booked-for-Lunch:** We have postponed two scheduled events with authors and hope to resume later this year or early 2021.
- **Online Sales on eBay:** This will likely be the first thing we reopen as soon as volunteers can gain access to the library. We are hopeful this will be in June.
- **Volunteers:** The vast majority of our volunteers are over the age of 60, which puts them in a high-risk group for COVID-19. So we are working on new processes and safety precautions that will limit the number of volunteers in enclosed spaces at one time, frequently disinfect all surfaces and quarantine donated books for a "decontamination period."

The Friends of the Cascade Library are as anxious as everyone to have things return to normal. But that will likely take some time and patience. In the meantime, we are exploring new ways of delivering services to the library and its patrons. We welcome your suggestions.

To stay up to date on the latest happenings at KDL, please visit [kdl.org/locations/cascade](http://kdl.org/locations/cascade).



# Poetry from the Past

**W**hile rifling through an old farm account ledger belonging to Henry Holt of Cascade Township, I came across a two-part poem handwritten in a graceful cursive style with black ink, signed “Mary Holt.”

If the subject of the poem had been a repetitive ditty about nature, I might not have been as captivated as I was, but after reading the poem, included below, I found myself yearning to know more about the author and the poem’s inspiration.

**Part one, dated 1849-50:**  
*I hear a shout of merriment,  
a laughing boy I see,  
Two little feet the carpet press  
and bring the child to me  
Two little arms are ‘round my  
neck two feet upon my knee  
How fall the kisses on my cheek,  
how sweet they are to me.”*

**Part two, dated 1851-52:**  
*That merry shout no more I  
hear, no laughing child I see,  
No little arms are ‘round my  
neck, nor feet upon my knee  
No kisses slop upon my cheek  
those lips are sealed to me  
Dear Lord, how could I give him/  
them up to any but to thee.”*

My heart broke reading Mary’s lines. Using the Cascade Historical

Society’s online research tool, yourhistoryonline.com, I discovered the poem’s author was Henry Holt’s second wife, Mary DeWitt Holt, also of Cascade Township, and that they were married in 1837.

The answers to the mystery behind the poem’s inspiration were found in a copy of an old faded Holt family genealogy record. From this record, I learned that Henry Holt and Mary DeWitt had seven children together. In 1848, Mary gave birth to her sixth child, a son named Edward D. Holt. It is this son who I believe Mary was referencing in the first part of her poem from 1849-50.

The joy Mary found in her son was tragically cut short on Aug. 6, 1850, when 2-year-old Edward passed away. Although the boy’s cause of death is unknown, it was likely a contagious illness, because Mary’s fifth child, a 3-year-old daughter named Sarah H. Holt, passed away just days before Edward on Aug. 1, 1850.

The loss of multiple young children in a short span of time was quite common in the 1850s – a reality we cannot relate to today. Young children in the United States, babies especially, regularly did not reach adulthood due to highly contagious diseases, such as cholera,

scarlet fever, smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, pneumonia and even dysentery in unsanitary conditions.

The sudden loss of Mary’s two children is undoubtedly the inspiration for the second part of her poem. Mary decided to finish the poem she wrote in the years before and included the addition of “him/them” to note that while the first part of the poem had been written for Edward, the second was written for both Edward and Sarah. While the deaths of their two youngest children must have been devastating, Henry and Mary Holt were blessed with another child, their last, a few years later in 1854, a daughter named Helen G. Holt.

Mary Holt’s poem was written 170 years ago, and yet her elegant words still hold the power to captivate and move readers today. While the mystery concerning Mary Holt’s poetry from the past is solved, for me, and I hope for all who read her work, its literary and historical beauty remains.

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Katie Bates is our Cascade Historical Society intern from Calvin University. Read the whole story and find more information at yourhistoryonline.com. Also visit the Cascade Now and Then Facebook page for ongoing discussions.

## SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

We greatly appreciate everyone in the community doing their part over these last few months to stay home and stay safe. While some of our local businesses remained open, many had to close to adhere to the governor’s executive orders. We know things have been difficult, but we thank those of you who had to serve and protect during this time. Grocery store employees, restaurant employees, financial institutions, medical and frontline workers, police and fire – we appreciate you.

As we enter this new normal, we know things will look different, but we also know fun times are in our future. As business doors begin to open, please remember to support your local business community. Also, as you visit your favorite restaurants and stores, please be patient and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Thank you again for helping support your community. Stay safe.



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## Cascade Charter Township

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cascadetwp.com

# DOCUMENTING THE CORONAVIRUS' IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

With operations not continuing as normal, we at the Cascade Historical Society got to thinking about how Cascade handled a similar situation 102 years ago. Unfortunately, there is little record of that time in our community. There is, however, a wealth of information about that experience across the state, particularly in larger Michigan cities, that allows us to extrapolate the general atmosphere at the time.

There is evidence one or more Cascade soldiers returned from World War I and died from the Spanish flu, also referred to as the Spanish Lady, despite there being no evidence the flu started in Spain. The similarities between then and now are remarkable. Gov. Sleeper, Michigan's governor at the time, imposed almost identical sanctions as those imposed by the current governor.

A Grand Rapids official was publicly chastised for not securing face masks in a timely manner. Masks in 1918 were everywhere. Everyone wore a mask of some sort, and enforcement was strict for those not wearing one.

The point of this is that what is happening now is a major historic event. As such, we would like to assemble information about the current situation and how it affects Cascade residents. We hope to assemble a cache of stories, accounts and photographs so future generations have a more detailed account of these life-changing events.



College football game, circa 1918

Images can include people standing on taped sidewalk markings outside of local restaurants to ensure appropriate physical distancing, fabricating face masks from old tee shirts, receiving in-home haircuts and purchasing curbside food service.

Tell us your stories and share your photographs via email. We want to capture the impact of the pandemic in its entirety, including those who have lost their lives or livelihoods, businesses that are ending operations and other significant changes to the community we call home. We also hope to document everyday life with all its ups, downs and unexpected moments, along with the challenges of coping. We are aware what happens here is a microcosm of what's happening in the wider world, but these accounts will be uniquely Cascade.

Please direct these accounts, stories and photographs to [cascadehistory@yahoo.com](mailto:cascadehistory@yahoo.com).