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TODAY'S SPOTLIGHT

For Bob Zebell, of Three Oaks, the recent volunteer Community Days hosted by River Valley School District was a rare chance for him to tell his decade-older brother, Joe, what to do and when to do it. Bob's a 1984 River Valley graduate and is now a custodian in the district.

MY TURN Life lesson learned covering sports

By MARK BRADFORD

In the end, 32 years of my life in sportswriting came down to an old friend named Robin Pflugshaupt.

And though readers may see my byline as an occasional "filler-inner," my days as a beat writer are pretty much over for The Tribune.

But, wow, what a trip it's been.

I was a fresh-faced 23-year-old kid the first time I stepped into a press box.

It was at Foreman Field in Goshen. If my memory serves me correctly, a kid named Pete Buchanan from Plymouth ran roughshod over the Redskins.

For me, it was the first in a career of long, late-night drives, hours away from my family and always knowing I had a home away from home, even if it was just a cramped seat at a high school swim meet.

I developed a reputation for saying "yes" to any chance to write any story about any sport.

Doing so put me in such places as the back of a pickup truck covering a mini-marathon in St. Joseph, Mich., where the winner barely spoke English.

It put me at the front edge of the Red Bud motorcycle races, where 40 or so hopped-up motorcycles were aimed right at me, only to make a last-second left-hand turn that would test the bowels of normal men.

It put me at the Rose Bowl, the NCAA women's championship soccer match, the women's soccer World Cup.

But it also put me at high school events where the emphasis often was more on development than success.

Success belongs to the very few, the very committed. Most athletes I've watched likely never played another organized sport for the rest of their lives after high school.

As a college professor, I usually can pick out the young men and women who played high school student sports from the moment they walk through the door.

Most are more confident and focused. If they've stood at the free-throw line in the final seconds of a close game, it really does carry through to the classroom.

I've learned that some parents just don't get it.

Some feel that, somehow, they can coerce coaches, officials, athletic directors and even sportswriters into making their kid something he or she is not.

They're shocked when their kids go off to college and never play a sport again.

I've learned other things, too. I've seen the value of teamwork, of empathy, of facing reality, of handling crushing defeat.

This brings me back to Robin Pflugshaupt.

I have known this man since we both worked for a farm lending company back in the 1980s.

Both of us grew up on farms, played basketball in barns and understand the traditional Indiana values evident in the movie "Hoosiers."

Robin stands 6-foot-6, weighs about 275, and is about as strong and mean-looking as anyone I have ever known.

His son, Adam, was a member of Oregon-Davis' 2007 state championship team.

I was assigned to cover that team in the regionals and through the semistate.

See SPORTS/E2

Good things going on

Today

Yoga classes are available at the Cass Council on Aging site at Michigan 60 and Decatur Road from 6 to 7 p.m. The fee is \$8 per session.

Thursday

The first Artemis Fowl book by Eoin Colfer will be discussed in a book club meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Niles District Library.

Saturday

The Niles District Library's chess club will meet at 9:30 a.m. All skill levels are welcome.



Tribune Photos/SHARON DETTMER

The Rolling Prairie post office murals show how the town began and how it grew.

It's all up there on the wall



Painter Michael Zieve focuses on the natural and sustainable side of life through his art and craft.

Mural painter Michael Zieve shows how communities grow

BY SHARON DETTMER
Tribune Correspondent

THREE OAKS
Painter Michael Zieve listens closely to writers and artists who are inclined to live simply and close to the earth.

One of his favorites is Wendell Berry, a Southern-born nonfiction writer who is a firm believer in sustainable agriculture and healthy rural communities.

Why?
"It is becoming apparent to most people now that the predominant consumer-based industrial society will not be sustainable in the long term," Zieve says.

He brings home similar ideas in his murals at the Rolling Prairie post office.

The historically themed murals depict farm crops of corn, wheat, soybeans and hay.

In one scene, farm settlers stand around a well. Behind the cabin near a large oak tree are the rich, deep forests of Rolling Prairie.

Covered wagons travel along a wind-

ing trail. Orchards fleck the breathtaking scene, along with cornfields tilled by a settler with a hand plow and horse — a physical task, to be sure.

On another wall, a mural depicts the history of Rolling Prairie in great detail, including a settlement of four cabins.

The settlement remained tiny until the mid-1850s, when the New York Central Railroad came to the area, thus, improving trade and commerce.

On yet another wall, the progress is captured — there are cars, trucks and all of the fruits of small town progress, including a bank.

It signifies changing times and focus from agriculture to industrialization.

"In the pre-industrial era, everything was made by hand," Zieve says. "Within farm communities, eventually there was a transition to corporate farming. Everything became industrialized."

Zieve recently attended a seminar presented by the Center for Sustainable Community, held at Nisse Farm in Manteno, Ill., south of Chicago.

See WALL/E2

CASS COUNTY FAIR RESULTS

Here are some of the results from the dairy judging at the recent Cass County Fair in Cassopolis.

Dairy Senior Showmanship: Chelsey Preston, Dowagiac; Alexandra Dean, Dowagiac

Intermediate Showmanship: Rachel Kidman, Dowagiac

Junior Showmanship: Brett Bowman, Niles

Beginner Showmanship: Christina Preston, Dowagiac

Champion Dairy Showmanship: Brett Bowman, Niles

Reserve Champion Dairy Showmanship: Rachel Kidman, Dowagiac

Holstein Junior Champion Female: Rachel Kidman, Dowagiac

Reserve Junior Champion Female: Brett Bowman, Niles

Senior Champion Female: Brett Bowman, Niles

Reserve Senior Champion Female: Brett Bowman, Niles

Grand Champion Female: Brett Bowman, Niles

Reserve Grand Champion Female: Brett Bowman, Niles

Any Other Purebred Breed

Junior Champion Female: Christina Preston, Dowagiac

Reserve Junior Champion Female: Christina Preston, Dowagiac

Grand Champion Female: Christina Preston, Dowagiac

Reserve Grand Champion Female: Christina Preston, Dowagiac

Combine Classes, All Breeds

Best 3 Females, 1 exhibitor: Brett Bowman, Niles

Dam and Daughter, 1 exhibitor: Brett Bowman, Niles

Best Individual Udder: Brett Bowman, Niles

Dairy Feeder Steer

Senior Showmanship: Jordon Carlson, Lawton, Mich.; Kelsey McKenzie, Marcellus; Wren Doyle, Cassopolis; David Sparks, Cassopolis; Brendan Green, Cassopolis; Devan Shugars, Marcellus

Intermediate Showmanship: John Davis, Dowagiac; Micheala Lee, Edwardsburg; Rachael Kidman, Dowagiac; Samantha Tharp, Niles; Kaye Swartz, Dowagiac; Timothy Fair, Marcellus

Junior Showmanship: Sarah Wright, Cassopolis; Victoria Wright, Cassopolis; Brett Bowman, Niles; Amanda Hassle,



Tribune Photo/BARBARA ALLISON

Utah, a 7-year-old gelding shown by Hilary VanOverberghe, 12, of Edwardsburg, gets put through his paces before competition at the Cass County Fair in Cassopolis.

Dowagiac; Caitlon Pauley, Dowagiac; Tyler Ward, Cassopolis

Beginning Showmanship: Matthew Locke, Cassopolis; William Seem, Cassopolis; Collin Hassle, Dowagiac;

Michelle Green, Cassopolis; Daniel Deubner, Vandalia; Garrett Green, Cassopolis

See RESULTS/E2