

AREA NEWS

Markesan building burns

By Joy Waterbury

Fire destroyed a building at the Didion Milling plant, located at the intersection of County Road A and S, east of the city of Markesan.

The fire was reported at 7:10 p.m. last Thursday. Firefighters arrived to find the interior of a two story building on fire and filled with smoke. The building was used as an office by the former Chiquita Canning Factory, but was presently housing an employee lunchroom.

Sheriff's deputies had an initial report and description of a vehicle seen leaving the area of the fire at a high rate of speed. That vehicle was later located and it was determined not to have been involved in the fire. The cause of the blaze is under investigation.

The Grand River Fire District employed the new Quint aerial ladder truck at the scene. Although recently used at the scene of an accident and to search for a weapon, this was the big unit's first fire. Working on the south side of the building the Quint's operator lifted firefighters to the roof of the second story where they were able to cut ventilation holes.

"It was a very smoky fire," said Grand River Fire Chief Tom Wilde, "once we were able to reach the seat of the fire it was knocked down fairly quickly."



GREEN LAKE REPORTER PHOTO

FIREFIGHTERS from five area departments worked in rotation to quench a fire at Didion Milling in Markesan. The peaked roof structure (center) sustained extensive damage to the interior.

Wilde said not much of the fire was visible from the outside, but there was heavy fire inside. For a brief period, thick black smoke poured from the building engulfing firefighters and trucks. Wilde attributed the excessive smoke to wall, ceiling and insulation burning inside.

Fire departments responded from Green Lake, Marquette, Kingston and Ripon. Crews rotated over a two hour period to extinguish the blaze.

"Firefighters tire out pretty fast in those conditions so we were grateful for all the extra manpower," Wilde said.

After the blaze was extin-

guished, thermal imaging cameras were used to scan for hot spots.

Didion Milling, a food-grade corn and soy processing operation, is located in the former Chiquita Canning Factory. The company makes products for the snack food and cereal industry and contracts with the government for famine relief and humanitarian efforts.

Wilde says there was nothing that disrupted the operations of the plant other than a brief power outage as electricity was disconnected to the building. The plant resumed normal operations Friday morning.

Group wants to start Berlin Christian youth center

By Frank L. Wertz II

About 30 people attended a meeting called to discuss the viability of a Christian youth center in downtown Berlin.

For much of last week's 90-minute meeting, Steve Doro was preaching to the choir, as he relayed his vision for Berlin — a fixed up Elaine's that would serve as a place for high schoolers and college students to hang out at night and for seniors and community members to have a cup of coffee during the day. Calling it "Our House," he explained the kitchen table philosophy the center would employ while helping to forge a niche for the youth in Berlin to share their talents and feel the love of God.

About half of the people in attendance were children who have been out on the Doro farm and experienced his kitchen table philosophy. About two dozen people — including all the youth — went up after the meeting and pledged to support the endeavor through sweet equity.

"All we got to do is lend a hand," Doro said. "We got P4K. We got the Boys and Girls Club, but when they get to high school, they look to the community. They don't look back to the family."

Doro said he wanted to instill the kitchen-table values his parents instill in him and he was trying to instill in his children. Like his parents did when he was a teen, he opens the farm for sports, safe fun and fellowship.

"We got nothing here" for the youth and young adults to do except drink beer, Doro said, adding that "my family comes back (to Berlin) ... because what we shared at the kitchen table."

Doro said the community could take advantage of the refurbished building, too, with programs like investment speakers and gardening classes. He said the youth could watch movies, have bands, hold dances, host motivational speakers, offer tutoring and "have the walls plastered with what's going on" in school art classes.

While saying the two reasons not to do it are time and money (the property would need to be purchased from Roger Daul), Doro said it could give the downtown a face-lift and help transform the "heart of the city" by getting the youth on the right track as they build good relationships and social groups.

Doro said he could sell a farm and come up with the money himself, but he would rather have the support of the community. While his group of two dozen supporters at the meeting were all for the project, the remainder of the audience was comprised of Berlin Mayor Bobbie Erdmann, a city employee and her family, the press and representatives to the Berlin Boys and Girls Club.

Marc Desog of the Boys and

Girls Club said he wanted to make the community aware of changes afoot at the center.

"What the Boys and Girls Club is trying to do is figure out ways to make that building open for the community," Desog said, adding that they are in the process of fixing up the building and attempting ways to extend the hours.

In extending an olive branch, Desog reminded the group what the center has — a fixed-up gymnasium with stage, a computer lab, game room, a place to do homework ... and a favorable arrangement with the Berlin Area School District whereby it pays for insurance, heat and lights, the janitorial staff and the building. Explaining they are not opposed to what Doro is proposing, he said they are looking for ways to involve the community.

While some in the Doro camp questioned the center's location and its appearance as a school decorated for younger kids, Jan Williams, the club's director, said their location is good — within walking distance of the pool and the downtown — and they have been attempting to address the needs of older children, both on its own and by working with P4K. "We want feedback from you," Williams said, adding that on occasions they have closed their door and opened them later for older kids.

Steve Sondalle, the club's board president, said the main difference between Doro's vision and the Boys and Girls Club is the club is community-based rather than faith-based. He said they have the save vision.

With about 200 children primarily aged six to 11 years old, Sondalle said the club is trying to reach older children. "How do I get them there?" he said. "I'm willing to create the funding to get the kids there."

While some saw the benefit of working with the Boys and Girls Club, most believed in Doro's vision.

Doro said he didn't want to step on what the other groups were doing. He said elementary kids go to the Berlin Boys and Girls Club, middle schoolers go to P4K and high schoolers would come to his group. "The Boys and Girls Club does a wonderful job," he said, "but it's not on my heart."

"I love having them at my house, but that's just a fraction of them. People are learning by TV. It's wrong. It's hard to raise a kid today," Doro said, adding that children are raised from kindergarten to eighth-grade by parents, but it takes a community to help raise a child in high school and college. "There's not many (kids) that don't drink," he said. "The only thing we have to offer is beer."

The youth at the meeting were with Doro, both saying there was a need for a youth center in Berlin and willing partner with him to make it happen.

Barracuda Swim Team divides in two for 'fun meet'

The Berlin Barracuda of all ages were together but were not swimming for the Berlin Barracuda Swim Team. Instead, they were swimming a Barracuda that was on the Muskrat Team coached by Phil Sass or the Otter Team coached by Jay Rozmarynoski. Each team was given a different colored swim hat with the winners keeping their hat.

The Muskrat team with the maroon hats won the meet with a score of 250. The Otters scored 228 points for a close finish. Scoring was not your typical United States Swimming scoring but rather the high school scoring was used.

In addition to events which are the norm at swim meets, there were some fun events added such as the add-on to the noodle relay and the pull/kick relay where one

person was the arms and the other person hung on to their feet to be the legs and do the kicking.

The meet ended with a goggle toss and cannon ball contest. Upon completion, swimmers and their families enjoyed pizza.

Pre-competitive participants joined in the fun and competed in their first home swim meet. New to the team for this fun meet were: Samantha Olson, Payton Parman, Faith Klawitter, Morgan Rohrbaugh, Courtney Gravunder, Alex Blake, and Justin Wagner.

All swimmers who had two or more improved times were awarded an ice cream coupon for Shepherd's compliments of Phil and Beth Sass. All pre-competitive swimmers were automatically awarded coupons for participation in their first competition. Experienced swimmers on the

OTTER Team that earned coupons were: Ashley Hebbe (2 of 3); Siri Smits (2 of 3); Mel Jones (3 of 3); Alex Hinz (3 of 3); Erin Cox (2 of 3); Elizabeth Magdanz (2 of 3); Jennifer Wagner (3 of 3); Jon Gimenez (3 of 3); and Hunter Magdanz (3 of 3).

Members of the MUSKRAT Team earning ice cream certificates were: Vanessa Blake (3 of 3); Emily Cox (3 of 3); Ana Nelson (3 of 3); Sadie Smith (3 of 3); Chantal Fay (2 of 3); Julie Kalupa (3 of 3); Megan Denton (2 of 3); and Andy Collins (3 of 3).

The Saturday morning "fun meet" and picnic was enjoyed by the swimmers as well as their family. Anyone wishing to know more about the Barracudas should call 361-2364. The fall session commences mid-September.

Puckaway Rod & Gun Club hosts picnic

The public is welcome to attend the Puckaway Rod and Gun Club Annual Picnic on Saturday, July 16 beginning with a trap shoot from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with cash prizes. At 11 a.m. it's BBQ Chicken with all the trimmings for just \$7.00. There will be plenty of beer, soda and wine coolers. Stick around for the raffle at 3

p.m., it's your chance to win a \$250.00 first place cash prize, 2nd prize is a Minnkota trolling motor and 3rd prize is a fishing rod/tackle box combo. There will be 40 prizes in all. The gun club is located at the corner of Puckaway and Grand River Roads just 3 miles west of County Road H and the Village of Marquette.



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