

PIONEER

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WEDNESDAY

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We've been the talk of Big Rapids for 153 years

\$.75/1.50 weekend



VANDALIZED

Wheelchair swing damaged less than 5 days after opening

By ADAM GAC
PIONEER STAFF WRITER

BIG RAPIDS — A Big Rapids child who uses a wheelchair enjoyed swinging near the Muskegon River at Hemlock Park on Saturday. On Sunday, when the family returned to use the new wheelchair swing again, they found it vandalized, with the safety gate which doubles as a ramp unusable.

The wheelchair swing in Hemlock Park is temporarily closed while the designer and builder Travis Bowman, repairs the damage the swing received over the weekend. The swing first opened Sept. 17, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"I figured there would be a few issues, but I didn't think it would be vandalized in the first week," Bowman said. "I just want to see this through."

The destruction of an amenity intended to provide access to recreation for all park users is upsetting, Bowman said.



NERBONNE: "It's sickening to me that someone would break the wheelchair swing."

See **VALDALISM** 5



VANDALISM: (ABOVE) The new wheelchair-accessible swing at Hemlock Park was damaged during the first weekend it was open. The Big Rapids Department of Parks and Recreation has closed the swing while repairs are made. (TOP) Various elements of the swing were damaged or destroyed by vandals who misused the swinging platform. (Pioneer photos/Adam Gac)

Jury selected for Marek trial

Testimony to begin today in court

By EMILY GROVE-DAVIS
PIONEER STAFF WRITER

BIG RAPIDS — A year after being arrested and charged with criminal sexual conduct, a Morley man's trial began Tuesday in Mecosta County's 49th Circuit Court.

Sean Marek, 27, is charged with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct with a person younger than 13. Marek also is charged with fourth offense habitual offender.



MAREK

Proceedings in the trial began with jury selection, which lasted until late afternoon as Marek's attorney Jim Samuels and Mecosta County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Amy Clapp spoke with the potential jurors. Jurors were questioned to see if they knew anyone involved in

See **MAREK** 5

Sewer rates increasing in Reed City

City council OKs bids for Hersey River Dam, water main projects

By KARIN ARMBRUSTER
PIONEER STAFF WRITER

REED CITY — Sewer rates are on the rise for residents living in Reed City, following a motion passed by Reed City Council members at a meeting on Sept. 21.

City Manager Ron Howell said rates must rise to keep up with operating costs, so the city must raise rates from \$4.75 per 1,000 gallons to \$5 per 1,000 gallons. He said the average home uses about 4,000 gallons a month, so the cost increase would add about \$1 a month for residents.

In more business, council members awarded a bid of \$69,900 from Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr, Huber Inc. of Grand Rapids, for the design and construction engineering details of both Todd and West Stimson Street projects. The bid leaves out grant awarded funding.

Howell said a past reliability study estimated the Todd Street project to cost about \$275,000, while the West Stimson Street project is unknown at this time. Stimson will be worked on first, Howell added, but he is unsure when construction will begin.

The Hersey River Dam project also took center stage at the meeting, with

See **SEWER** 5

CCA celebrates homecoming this week

Students, staff prepare for first homecoming parade Friday

By KATLYN VUILLEMOT
PIONEER STAFF WRITER

BIG RAPIDS — Spider-Man ran around the playground, Elsa flew down the slide, Batman quietly did schoolwork and Mickey Mouse watched as the teacher spoke.

On Tuesday, dozens of students dressed up as their favorite cartoon character for spirit week at Crossroads Charter Academy in celebration of homecoming.

"Our school spirit embodies who we are," said Janie Washburn, senior class president. "If we don't have spirit then we are just another school. When you have pride you recognize this is the school you are going to write on all of your college transcripts and the school that will be on all of your hoodies and the place that will be part of your history. To not have spirit is to say none of that is important."

Spirit week continues with a new theme each day, including dress to impress on



SCHOOL SPIRIT: Mason Dorey who dressed up as Spider-Man, and Finley Robinson who dressed up as Elsa, participated in character day on Tuesday at Crossroads Charter Academy. (Pioneer photo/Katlyn Vuillemot)

Wednesday, Western day on Thursday and school spirit day on Friday.

A new addition to homecoming this year at CCA is a parade.

"The parade is the dream child of Jean Robinson, a second-grade teacher, who also happens to be my daughter," said Alice Routley, a high school math teacher. "She wanted our kids to have a homecoming parade. So I

told her to get the approval of administration and then come to the student council meeting, because if the high school leaders don't want this, then it won't fly."

After pitching the idea, Routley and Robinson received support from everyone, including student council members.

See **CCA** 5



TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly sunny sky with light, variable winds. Highs in the upper 70s. Lows in the low 50s.

TUESDAY'S LOTTERIES

Midday Daily 3: 9-1-3 **Fantasy 5:** 1-16-19-26-37
Midday Daily 4: 8-5-2-3 **Keno:** 2-10-25-28-33-40-
Daily 3: 3-5-0 44-46-47-48-49-51-52-54-
Daily 4: 5-7-7-6 56-58-62-64-67-68-72-76

OBITUARIES

Richard Pointer
Keith E. Keggs

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