



OCTOBER 31, 2019

The RECORDER

Death Notices: (see page 3)
MAXINE HELEN MARZIC

AREA SPORTS IN THIS WEEK'S RECORDER

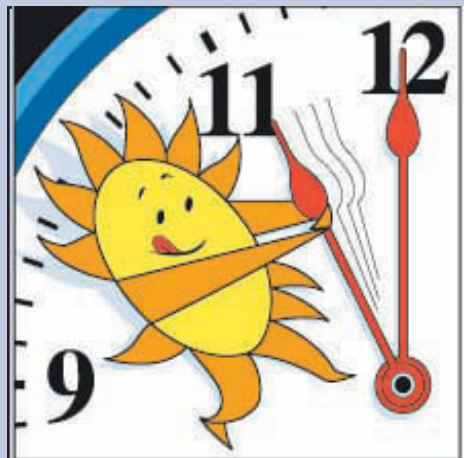
Concord High School
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Marshall High School
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Springport High School
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Albion College plays MSU in exhibition game
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Daylight Saving Time Ends November 3
Set your clocks back one hour. Don't forget to check your smoke detector batteries too!



Marshall fourth at HC swimming event
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New regional venue friendly to Concord runners
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Valarie Cunningham encourages breaking the stigma on African-American mental health

By MICHELLE MUELLER
Contributing Writer

Valarie Cunningham, MSW, LMSW, raised in Albion by her parents Larry and Bettie Edmonds, recently traveled here from Kalamazoo where she now resides to give a bit back to her hometown.

Cunningham is the CEO of GFM The Synergy Center, which offers help to African-American clients with mental health and substance abuse issues and works tirelessly to break the stigma on people of color seeking help to address them. Her Oct. 17 lecture in Norris Hall on the Albion College campus addressed that double standard.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health reports that African-American adults are 20% more likely to report serious psychological

distress than adult whites, and that percentage increases with African Americans living in poverty. That higher incidence, Cunningham explained, was due to post-traumatic stress on our African-American population caused by such things as slavery, Reconstruction, Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws and segregation.

Cunningham addressed the fact that mental health misconceptions and stereotypes abound as a result of America's black history, ranging from "Why are you depressed? If our people can make it through slavery, we can make it through everything," and "Seeking professional help shows a lack of faith in God," to "Mental illness doesn't affect black folks," and gender

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Valarie Cunningham encourages breaking the stigma on African-American mental health
Photo by Michelle Mueller

Students celebrate UNITY Day



Courtesy photo

By ANN DWYER
Contributing Writer

If you saw kids running around in orange, it was their way of celebrating kindness, acceptance, inclusion and ending bullying. The Marshall school district helped celebrate Unity Day, the national event held Wednesday, Oct. 23.

Schools got involved by decorating their lockers and other fun activities designed to bring them together.

Students at Harrington Elementary created a Unity Chain to display in the main hallway of the school. Each student wrote on a link what they would like to see more unified

in their schools and communities. Teachers also read Peter Reynolds' "Say Something" in their classrooms.

Marshall High School students were encouraged to share pictures of themselves in their orange gear on social media.

The color orange not only fits the theme of the month, but it is also a color associated with safety and visibility.

More than one out of every five students report being bullied, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics. Unity Day was started by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center as a way to emphasize that bullying is never acceptable. The first Unity Day was held in 2011.

Marshall School Board



By ANN DWYER
Contributing Writer

The Marshall Public Schools Board of Education agreed to raise superintendent Dr. Randy Davis's salary by 4.8 percent at their regular Monday meeting. The raise is in line with other districts in the area, according to board member Shawna Gamble who serves on the Personnel Committee.

Davis has continued to be rated highly-effective on his evaluations.

"He was not only rated highly-effective this year, he's been rated highly-effective each year he's been here," said board president Bill DeSmet. Davis has been with the district since 2009.

Davis has seen the district through a number of changes, including the Albion schools' annexation.

His current salary is listed at \$139,337.

Also at the meeting, Davis updated the board on the progress of the Building Needs Assessment committee. He said that committee members have toured all eight of the district buildings. He stated that he would like to keep the progress slow at this juncture.

"I think doing it slower is doing it better for us all to understand where we're going...and for people to better understand our facilities," Davis said.

Davis said they will also attempt to make updates available to the public.

The next Marshall Public Schools Board of Education meeting will be held Nov. 11 at the Middle School Community Room, 100 E. Green St., Marshall, 7 p.m.

"Pride" author Ibi Zoboi joins in the Big Read Closing Celebration at the Bohm Theater

By SYLVIA BENAVIDEZ
Contributing Writer

"One of the greatest skills you can have is to lead a discussion and have people think about something more deeply," said Ibi Zoboi, author of "Pride" the Albion's Big Read book for 2019. Zoboi brought laughter and encouragement to the audience at the Bohm Theater as everyone honored the Big Read participants for their month-long effort leading discussions about her book. "I think it is more amazing when you challenge each other's ideas," she added.

The audience of Big Read participants, family, and community members intently listened as Zoboi talked of her journey as a writer. "Even when times were hard financially, I still really knew that someday it would happen," she said. Some students nodded when she added "Writing is a lot of practice and a lot of time." Zoboi pointed out to the teenagers that there are many ways to tell a story using social media as one example and then said, "You read other people's stories, and you find a way to tell your own story about here, about now in your own way."

Before Zoboi spoke, there was a screening of the celebratory video of 2019's Big Read,

which Big Read Director Jess Roberts said would be online shortly. According to Roberts an important part of the event at the Bohm happened when all the students were on stage with the program's leaders. "We celebrated 22 Big Read students and said specific things about the students and the beautiful gifts they have." She continued, "This year, I was thrilled by how thrilled they were about the book and how excited the community at large was about this book."

"You gave me so much to think about in terms of community and how people come together and engage with an idea," said Zoboi.

Members of the audience also were moved by the enthusiasm in the audience.

"It's really awesome to see the kids interact and to see so many people out under the cause of literacy. I think this is really something good," said Tramaine Williams of Albion.

Big Read participant Amelia Kotas shared what she gleaned from listening to Zoboi, "We all can make a difference no matter how small or young we are." What she enjoyed most about participating in Big Read was companionship and the challenges. "I got to celebrate all the people around me and the wonderful town I live in. I got to do something I have never done be-



Photos by Sylvia Benavidez

Left, Tyland Martins said about Ibi Zoboi, "She really tried to inspire us. I really appreciate her coming." Right, Ivan Green. Both young men showing their Big Read participant plaques.

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