

## Remembering those forgotten

BY DANIELLE PORTEUS  
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TEMPERANCE — Carol Nagy was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic when she was 25.

She had two sons at the time. Soon, she was also diagnosed with depression.

Seven times she was admitted to the Toledo State Hospital for treatment including electro-shock therapy.

"Most of my time was spent on the grounds going around the pond and watching the ducks," she recalled.

Now an advocate for mental health patients, Ms. Nagy shared her story with 30 people during a special presentation Wednesday at the Monroe County Community College's Whitman Center.

Members of the Toledo State Hospital Cemetery Reclamation Committee talked about their work to uncover more than 1,900 unmarked graves at the psychiatric hospital's two cemeteries.

Paul Fletcher, a member of the group, spoke about the history of the hospital, which was located on hundreds of acres along Arlington and Detroit Aves. in Toledo's South End. The cemeteries are on the property owned by the University of Toledo's Medical Center.

Mr. Fletcher said the first cemetery was used from 1888 to 1922. The second was created and used until 1973.

"People thought mental illness was because of demonic possession and therefore there was a lot of blood letting, chaining and restraining," he explained.

The hospital was first called the Toledo Asylum for the Insane. Its name has changed over the years and still exists today in a much smaller capacity as Northwest Ohio Psychiatric Hospital.

"When it first opened, it initially had 32 structures plus 20 cottages that housed up to 50 people in one cottage," Mr. Fletcher explained. "At that time, people were put in the hospital for addictions, epilepsy, autism and even incorrigible behavior in children."

Mr. Fletcher said it was fairly common to see people in their teens and 20s who would stay at



— Evening News photos by DANIELLE PORTEUS

Photographs of the grave stones unearthed as part of the Toledo State Hospital Cemetery Reclamation Project were on display. Members of the group spoke Wednesday at the Whitman Center regarding their work to uncover each of the more than 1,900 graves located within two cemeteries on the land in South Toledo.

the hospital for the rest of their lives.

"It seems such a reversal of the way things are today," he said.

A total of 1,994 people who died at the hospital were buried in graves identified by small concrete blocks marked only with the number of their burial.

Larry Wanucha said members of the group spent as much as every Saturday in the warmer months unearthing the grave markers. However, many of the grave stones have yet to be found, particularly in the older cemetery.

"Our mission is to work with the University of Toledo to build a memorial for the people buried in these cemeteries," he said. "We also want to educate the community that people with

severe mental illness have hopes and dreams just like everyone else."

Jane Weber was a former employee at the center. She said groups like the one in Toledo are found throughout the state of Ohio as well as nationally.

"We've made great strides in finding the markers," she said. "These cemeteries are different from community cemeteries for many reasons, but for one, these people were put away because of their disabilities."

Ms. Weber said the group used burial log books for information as well as medical record cards to gather data about the patients buried in the cemetery.

"People are buried from 27 countries and a lot of them are from Germany," Ms. Weber said.

Included in the graves are seven babies and 14 veterans of the Civil War, World War I or World War II.

"Unfortunately for them, they were living during a time where we put people away if they didn't meet specific standards," Ms. Weber said.

Susan Fortney of Petersburg was among the audience members. A psychiatric clinical nurse, Mrs. Fortney participated in a rotation at the hospital in the 1980s. As a member of the Monroe County Mental Health Board, she was curious to know more about the project.

"We need to support groups like this because there is such a stigma associated with mental illness," Mrs. Fortney said. "We need to educate people."



Paul Fletcher, a member of the Toledo State Hospital Cemetery Reclamation Project, talks with a group of 30 people Wednesday about the efforts to unearth more than 1,900 graves of former patients of the hospital who are buried within two graves on site.

■ For more about the Toledo State Hospital Cemetery Reclamation Project, visit the group's Web site at [www.toledostatehospitalcemetery.org](http://www.toledostatehospitalcemetery.org).

## Huron Schools eyes pool, roof work

BY DEAN COUSINO  
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Huron Schools is studying three proposals on what to do with the swimming pool at the high school that has been closed for 14 months and is in need of major repairs and safety upgrades.

The board of education recently voted to send the proposals to its finance subcommittee for a recommendation.

The panel — consisting of President Colleen Lazere, Secretary Alice Ferguson and Treasurer Mike Gill — will meet next week to review the measures and estimated costs. The date for the meeting has not yet been set, Supt. Richard Naughton said.

The board has already taken a tour of the 25-foot-long pool that was built 36 years ago. Its infrastructure of pumps, ductwork and pipes is antiquated and needs replacement. More significantly, the pool does not meet safety or athletic standards set by the Michigan High School Athletic Association for competition with other schools. The turning lanes are only 3 1/2 feet and the diving well at one end of the pool is only 11 feet. The state requires at least 4 1/2 to 5 feet for turning lanes and a 13-foot depth for diving. Also, the school cannot not

host any district or regional competition.

The girls swimming team currently consists of 15 players who practice at the Flat Rock Community Center.

Mr. Naughton said Option 3 is the one he would like the board to pursue. The proposal would convert the pool into an auxiliary gym that would serve hundreds of students playing basketball and volleyball. Many of the players often practice until 9 or 9:30 at night because of the lack of gym space at the high school and junior high. The conversion would cost an estimated \$598,000, but would have the most benefit in terms of the number of students served, he said.

Option 1 would repair and replace the drains and electrical and mechanical equipment in the pool at a cost of \$433,393. But that would not address the turn lanes or depth of the pool. Option 2 would replace all the mechanical and electrical fixtures plus deepen the diving and turning ends of the pool and add a barrier-free access ramp. Total cost of this option is \$1.47 million. With the second option, the pool would still be 25 feet long and not be suitable for hosting district or regional competition, Mr. Naugh-

ton said.

Common to each proposal is tearing out the flat roof that is rotting and badly in need of replacement. The board has already requested specifications from a consultant to seek bids for replacing the roof.

"That has to happen for it (the building) to be safe," the superintendent said. "They just didn't build it right. The steel tresses were not coated properly for chlorine and the warm humid air. It's lost about 60 percent of its structural integrity."

If the board went with Option 3, it could have a new gym by the fall, he said. The pool would be filled in with sand and a cement floor could be poured with a wooden floor placed on top. Existing bleachers for the pool could be used for the gym.

If the third option is chosen, the school would not do away with the sport of swimming, but continue to lease another facility outside the district, he said. The third option offers the most benefit and return on the cost.

"There is a big need for an auxiliary gym," he said. "It would be used five times as much and provide at least 1,000 hours more use by the students."

## FRENCHTOWN TOWNSHIP

### Spas farewell party set for April 11

BY DEAN COUSINO  
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LARRY SMITH

A farewell reception for James K. Spas, who is retiring as director of the Frenchtown Township Resort District Authority, will be held April 11.

The authority's board of directors and Larry L. Smith, the new director, will host the reception following the board's 3 p.m. meeting that day at the township hall, 2744 Vivian Rd.

Mr. Spas is retiring March 31 after heading the district for the past eight years. He is also one of the founders of the district that started in 1986. He served for years on the resort board and also was township supervisor for a dozen years.

Mr. Smith, appointed by the board in December, is a former

president and treasurer of the Grand Beach Association. He was one of eight people who applied for the part-time job last fall.

Mr. Smith was active in the association for most of the 20 years he lived in Grand Beach, serving as either president or treasurer. He also served as chairman of the resort district's initial recycling committee.

A township resident since 1972, he has lived in Detroit Beach and Grand Beach before moving to just outside the district. He earned a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Purdue University in West LaFayette, Ind.

After graduation, he worked for the Ford Motor Co. in Dearborn, holding various engineering positions. He then worked for Infineum, a lubricants additive company, as its automotive industry liaison adviser in Detroit. He retired from the firm in September.