

# What's Up?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Sunday, Aug. 16

- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 7 p.m., George Washington Carver Center, 436 Jefferson St., Three Rivers.

### Monday, Aug. 17

- St. Joseph County Intermediate School District Board, 11 a.m., ISD office, 62445 Shimel Road, Centreville.
- Three Rivers Historic District Commission, 4 p.m., Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce, 57 N. Main St.
- Constantine Community Soup Kitchen, 4:30-6 p.m., Constantine United Methodist Church.
- Mendon School Board, 6 p.m., Middle/High School Library.
- Centreville Village Council, 6 p.m., village hall, 221 W. Main St.
- Three Rivers School Board, 6 p.m., District Training Room, 851 Sixth Ave.
- Constantine/White Pigeon Great Start Parent Coalition (GSPC), 6:30 p.m., Lilliput Learning Center, 140 Meadow Lane, Constantine.
- Constantine Village Council, 7 p.m., village hall, 115 White Pigeon St.

### Tuesday, Aug. 18

- Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA), 8:30 a.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 321 N. Main St., Three Rivers.
- Three Rivers Food Site open, 9 a.m. — noon, 18 Railroad Drive.
- Three Rivers Community Kitchen, 4-5:30 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 321 N. Main St., Three Rivers.
- St. Joseph County Commission, 4 p.m., third floor of the county courthouse in Centreville.
- Three Rivers City Commission, 6 p.m., city hall, 333 W. Michigan Ave.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 7 p.m., George Washington Carver Center, 436 Jefferson St., Three Rivers.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 8 p.m., St. Clare's Catholic Church, 229 N. Dean St., Centreville.

### Wednesday, Aug. 19

- Three Rivers/Mendon Great Start Parent Coalition (GSPC), noon, Riverside Church, 207 E. Michigan Ave., Three Rivers.
- Community Corrections Advisory Board, noon, Lake Room of the New Courts Building in Centreville.
- Commission on Aging Board, 1:30 p.m., Three Rivers Community Center, 103 S. Douglas Ave.
- St. Joseph County Road Commission, 5 p.m., Road Commission building one mile west of Centreville on M-86.
- St. Joseph County Conservation District board, 5 p.m., Conservation District office, 693 E. Main St., Centreville.
- St. Joseph County Animal Control Advisory Board, 7 p.m., St. Joseph County Parks building.
- White Pigeon Village Council, 7 p.m., village office, 118 S. Kalamazoo St.
- Al-Anon meeting, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 320 N. Main St., Three Rivers.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 8 p.m., West Mendon United Methodist Church, 52952 S. Portage Lake Road.

### Thursday, Aug. 20

- Three Rivers Food Site open, 9 a.m. — noon, 18 Railroad Drive.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 10:30 a.m., George Washington Carver Center, 436 Jefferson St., Three Rivers.
- Three Rivers Community Kitchen, 4-5:30 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 321 N. Main St., Three Rivers.
- Mendon's 4:4 Food and More community kitchen, 4:30-6 p.m., Mendon United Methodist Church, 320 W. Main St.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 8 p.m., St. Clare's Catholic Church, 229 N. Dean St., Centreville.



## Three Rivers Library News

THREE RIVERS — Library HOURS are 9 a.m. — 8 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. Saturday, noon — 4 p.m. Sunday.

Make your life BETTER by spending LESS MONEY! Join us for a laugh-out-loud evening with Jeff Yeager, the "Ultimate Cheap skate," who will give an entertaining and enlightening presentation of practical tips and tricks for "Finding Wholesale Happiness in a Retail World." His fresh perspective on living with less stuff while helping others and improving the health of the planet will have you nodding your head with a smile. Come to the Three

Rivers Community Center (located behind the library) on Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. More info can be found at [www.threeriverslibrary.org/ultimatecheapskate](http://www.threeriverslibrary.org/ultimatecheapskate).

The Children's Summer Reading Program ends on Sunday, Aug. 16, and that is the LAST DAY to turn in completed reading logs for prizes!

Wednesday Book Club resumes on Sept. 9 (4:45-5:45 p.m.). Two Rivers by T. Greenwood is the September book selection, but the club will also be reading and discussing A School for My Village by Twesigye Jackson Kaguri, in preparation for the One Book, One

County author presentation on Sept. 29. Copies are available at the circulation desk for check-out.

PRESCHOOL STORY HOUR is over for the summer, but resumes on Sept. 15 at 10:30 a.m. NEW on Sept. 15 at 10 a.m. will be LITTLE WIGGLERS, a short session for babies and toddlers (0-24 months) and caregivers, which will include songs, rhymes, use of rhythm instruments and scarves, and easy board book stories.

ESCAPE THE ORDINARY is for a summer reading program for adults 18-118! Stop in today to register, enter contests, and win prizes all summer long.

The MICHIGAN ACTIVITY PASS offers free and discounted access for library cardholders to Michigan's parks, attractions, and more! Go to [www.michiganactivitypass.info](http://www.michiganactivitypass.info) to print off passes for your next adventure. Passes can be printed from home or at the library. Call the library



### Super Joel

Joel Tacey, a performer known as "Michigan's Family Funny Man" performed his "Super Caper Comedy Show" at the Three Rivers Public Library on Wednesday, Aug. 12. People of all ages attended the show.

Commercial-News/Jessica Smith

with any questions!

eReader sessions are on Mondays 6-7 p.m. and Thursdays 10:30-

11:30 a.m. Registration is required, and be sure to let us know what type of eReader you have.

## World War II ended 70 years ago

Local residents recall that 'unforgettable day'

By William Allen Baltz  
Special to the  
Commercial-News

On Aug. 14, 1945 a massive crowd filled Times Square in New York City. At 7:05 p.m., all eyes focused on the square's news ticker as the following words streamed across: "Official Truman Announces Japanese Surrender." The celebration that erupted has never been seen before or since.

And for good reason. The United States had — after almost four years of brutal fighting on land, air and sea spanning the globe — decisively crushed two powerful foes that directly threatened its very existence: Nazi Germany, whose military forces under the ruthless dictatorship of Adolf Hitler had conquered most of Europe; and Imperial Japan, commanded by a fanatical military leadership that mercilessly imposed its will on a huge swath of Southeast Asia and China.

"They were frightful times," recalls Louise Haitcock of Three Rivers, who moved from a small Indiana town to work in a munitions factory in Bremerton, Wash. "But we pulled together as a nation and prevailed."

This was total war on a scale and scope the world had never known. It would end with tens of millions dead, Europe in ruins and two of Japan's major cities obliterated by nuclear bombs dropped by U.S. B-29s.

News of the war's end rapidly spread across America. Joy and relief was mixed with sorrow, however, as virtually every town in the country knew first hand the grief of losing a loved one, friend or neighbor in that horrendous

conflict that ended 70 years ago today.

"It was an unforgettable day," says Dick Jacobs of Three Rivers who was aboard a troop ship stationed in Boston harbor when the news was broadcast over the ship's address system that the Japanese had surrendered and the war was over. Jacobs served in the Navy transporting U.S. troops returning from Europe. "I can only imagine how my mother felt when she knew that her sons would be coming home," he adds with heartfelt emotion. Jacobs was one of seven brothers who served in the military during the war.

Elva Palmer remembers the day the war ended and jubilation that followed in downtown Three Rivers. "People in cars honked their horns and hugged each other on the streets."

Her husband, Jack, was a top

war and gave birth to their daughter in Robert's absence. "I always knew he would come home," she says.

Many were not so fortunate. In Riverside Cemetery are headstones for veterans who lost their lives fighting in the war including Benjamin Shively who perished on Dec. 7, 1941 when Japanese warplanes sunk the USS Arizona stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where he was serving aboard during Japan's surprise attack on the American naval base catapulting the country into the war; Howard Shutes who died as an infantryman fighting Germans in the epic Battle of the Bulge; and his brother Frederick killed on the blood-soaked Pacific island of Iwo Jima battling Japanese as a U.S. Marine.

Like thousands of other Americans killed in the war, Shively and the Shutes brothers never truly came home — their families would not find solace in a returned body to bid farewell. American cemeteries from the Philippines to Africa, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and other countries

**"Every generation must do its duty to defend America. We did ours."**  
— Robert Thompson

turret gunner in a B-17. He flew a total of 21 missions, surviving a harrowing near-miss collision with another B-17 and fending off German fighter planes in skies riddled with deadly flak. Statistically, he was not supposed to live past his fourteenth combat mission.

Also in the Army Air Force was Robert Thompson of Three Rivers, a bombardier when his B-17 was shot down over Germany during his 13th mission. He bailed out, was captured and wound up a POW. His time away and as a prisoner of Hitler's Third Reich, in which he endured forced marches in bitter cold, extreme hunger and appalling conditions, was a worrisome one for his wife, Pat, who anxiously followed news of the

bear silent testimony to the enormous sacrifice made by U.S. forces in World War II. More than 400,000 American soldiers, naval personnel and airmen were killed; 300,000 severely wounded and 100,000 missing in action.

Worldwide, the death toll was staggering. It is estimated that some 60 million people were killed in the war, and millions more died of disease, starvation and wounds as a result. It remains the deadliest military conflict in history.

Nazi crimes against humanity were nothing short of mind boggling. Ervin Haitcock of Three Rivers, who battled his way across Germany with the 47th Infantry Regiment, will never forget what he saw when he entered a Nazi death camp after its liberation by U.S.



forces. "There was a big building and inside there were dead bodies stacked one on top of the other, just skin and bones with no clothes. There was a furnace. What they did was put dead bodies in that furnace."

Thankfully, due to the courage and tenacity of the nation's armed forces and the determination of its citizens to create the "arsenal of democracy" as President Franklin D. Roosevelt called it, America and its allies ultimately prevailed.

Indeed, civilians at home like Louise Haitcock produced an astonishing amount of military supplies and equipment including more than 120,000 ships, 300,000

aircraft and 2.4 million vehicles. The United States also ushered in the nuclear era with the atomic bomb.

According to the Veterans Administration, 16 million Americans served during World War II. Less than 900,000 are alive and they are dying at the rate of around 500 each day.

Perhaps the words of Robert Thompson best summarize the sentiments, expressed with a mixture of humility and pride, of those interviewed for this story who fought in World War II or supported them on the home front: "Every generation must do its duty to defend America. We did ours."

## 5 GENERATIONS



Five generations gathered to celebrate the 89th birthday of family matriarch, Vergene Smith Gettings on July 12, 2015. Pictured are great, great grandmother, Vergene Smith Gettings of Carmi, Ill., holding the newest family member, Kenyon Anding, seven months. Also in the photo are great grandmother, Betty Jamerson Cousins, 68, of Three Rivers, grandmother, Lisa Cousins Pou, 47, of Plainwell, and mother, Clautia Pou, 21, of Three Rivers.

**Happy Birthday**  
Aug. 15  
**Laura Bradford**  
**Mary Miller,**  
**89 years**  
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[www.threeriversnews.com](http://www.threeriversnews.com)  
To submit a birthday or anniversary greeting go to [threeriversnews.com](http://threeriversnews.com) and click on the birthday cake.

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