

# FRUITPORT Area News

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**The purpose of this paper is to be beneficial to the community it serves in every way possible.**



## A celebration in honor of Dr. Pierce

by Letizia Charleston

One cold day in February as I was checking out of Dr. Pierce's office, I simply asked, "So, what are you guys doing for Doc's birthday on April 20?" and "How old is he going to be?"

The response was, "He is going to be 70 years old. You know Doc, he doesn't like that kind of attention. And even if we wanted to, we could never get him out of this office day or night to celebrate. You know, he has been practicing for 40 years, and we would like to do something, but he just would be so upset if he knew we were up to something. How in the world could we even manage? Who would or wouldn't be invited? We certainly would not want to offend any of his patients or friends. He is here all hours of the night. I don't think we could pull it off."

Thus began the "How to pull off Dr. Pierce's 70th birthday celebration and 40th year of practicing family medicine without getting his staff and family in trouble."

Having known Doc for 30 years as a patient, friend, and co-worker at North Ottawa Community Hospital, I was determined to do something.

I phoned some of his close pals with ideas and they joined in the conspiracy. We all agreed that Doc's dedication, passion for medicine, and generosity over the years was more than remarkable. With help from Gene Young, Don Wood and Dr. Lucie, we began planning Doc's birthday celebration.

Doc's staff (in accordance with privacy laws) sent out 1,000 post cards requesting a simple shared story, memory, or warm greeting. In two weeks' time, we were inundated. (Any top-notch marketing firm would have been green with envy.)

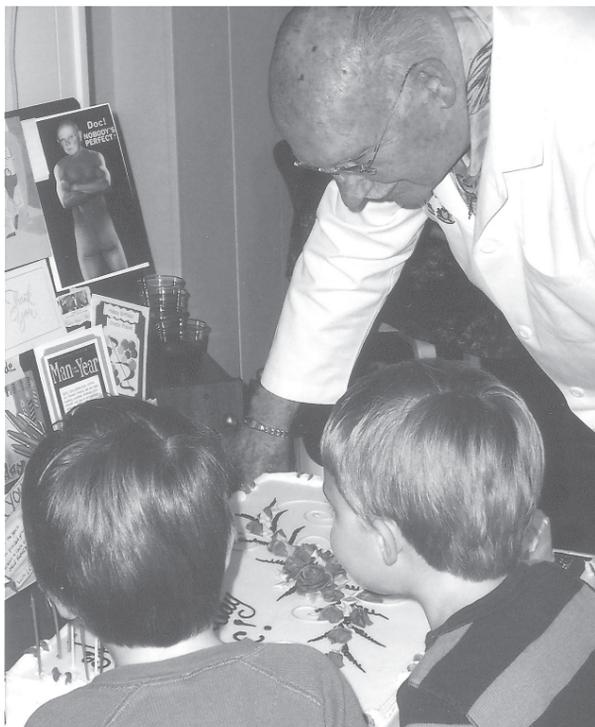


Hundreds of cards, funny letters, stories and more poured into a post office box at the Fruitport Post Office. Each piece, though different, told the same story.

All were expressions of gratitude for Doc. Time and time again, they descriptively wrote about how he saved their lives, or how he helped their entire family. He received turkey feathers, frogs, and t-shirts. He received letters with multiple pages, hand-written letters, enormous cards, and hand-painted pictures and photos. There were treasured mementos from 30 years ago, funny pictures, and special keepsakes. Some of his colleagues wrote wonderful letters, and contributed to the Todd Pierce Memorial Fund, Fruitport Schools' foundation in memory of Doc's son.

So on the evening of April 20th, we invited some of Doc's relatives, colleagues and close friends to be in his lobby at 7 p.m. to surprise him with a cake and all of these treasured warm-wishing pieces. As expected, he did not come out in a timely manner because he was too busy with a patient. I finally knocked on the door and brought him out to all of his guests. He was very appreciative and unassuming, as always.

I am not quite sure if I have been forgiven for all of the attention. However, it was just a little celebration to honor one extraordinary man, and I accept full responsibility!•



**Dr. Pierce with his grandchildren.**

## Bill Cooper exploring a run for Congress

(Submitted by Don Sheff)

Businessman Bill Cooper has filed exploratory paperwork as a Republican for the Congressional seat Pete Hoekstra has held since 1992 and will be vacating in Michigan's 2nd Congressional District.

Cooper is a Fruitport resident who has been a successful entrepreneur for more than two decades. He has owned businesses in Holland, Grand Haven, Fruitport and Muskegon. He believes now is a critical time for us to become more involved in our government.

"Over the past 24 years, I have created hundreds of jobs in West Michigan," said Cooper. "In all those years I have never had to lay off a single employee. West Michigan needs more jobs creators and less government creators."

"My prospective opponents have presided over the most poorly run state economy in the country," he said. "Their tax-and-spend policies have been driving both citizens and businesses out of our state while the small business owners who remain continue fighting just to survive. These career politicians' fingerprints are all over Michigan's horrible economy." Cooper added.

Cooper believes that it is time we employ the same principles of running successful small businesses to our government, like truly caring for our employees, our customers and our communities.

"I believe it is time that someone like us represents us," he said. "I feel an obligation to run because of what has been allowed to take place in our state and our economy."

"We need to reduce the size, scope, cost, and power of our government, and it is obvious that simply electing and promoting career politicians to other elected offices isn't going to be the answer." Cooper said.

Cooper is humbled by the enormous amount of support he's receiving and has filed the paperwork that enables him to begin the necessary step of raising financial support.

Cooper is married to Wendi (Lisman). They have three children, Annie, Maggie and Grace. •



## Stressman reunion concert scheduled

(Submitted by the Stressman Family)

On August 2, 2009, the Stressman Family, with the help of some friends, will be conducting a concert.

Some 30 years ago the Stressmans, ages ranging from nine years to 40 years, would sing in cantatas, special music at church worship services, and even weddings. Besides the occasional solo or duet, they haven't performed at large gatherings for quite some time now.

The talent started with the matriarch, Maudie Stressman. There are still people living in Fruitport who can remember her musical talents. Maudie and her husband, Cedric, had six boys, all with various talents; they married talented women, so now, 70 years later, the boys' children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren make up a large population in the Muskegon area.

On August 2, 2009, at the Fruitport band shell, the Stressmans will again unite and perform. Large numbers have brought forth greater talent. In addition to singing, they will also have a band. If you like gospel music, band music, men's close harmony, or just want to take the family to free entertainment, come and see the families of Cedric (Bud), Douglas, Russell, Michael and Stephen Stressman and their friends at 7 p.m. •



**Michael Stevens, Crystal and James Thomas stand in Fruitport's Veteran's Park, having placed their flags around the perimeter.**



**Sheila Stevens displays the Medal of Excellence from the Commanding General of the Army.**

## Former Marine honors the fallen

by Mary Weimer

What began as a tribute to a fallen cousin has become a project in support of soldiers killed in action throughout the state.

In 2005, former Marine Michael Stevens lost a cousin, Randy Stevens, in the Iraq war. He decided he should do something to honor his cousin, so he placed flags around the edges of the lawn where the funeral was to be held in Flint, Michigan.

Then, in 2007, when local soldier Jason Lee was killed in action, the flag placement continued as he, his daughter and

son in law placed flags around the lawn at Calvary Church where the funeral was held.

Now the tradition continues and Michael and his family recently placed 800 flags here in Fruitport, exactly three steps apart, in honor of Memorial Day. Wherever there are funerals held for soldiers killed in action, Michael, his wife Sheila, and daughter and son-in-law Crystal and James Thomas, place the flags around the lawn where the funeral is to be held.

In recognition of the project, the Commanding General of the Army has awarded Michael a Medal of Excellence.

Michael says, "The flag is the greatest thing in the world. Make sure you're taking care of the flag and flying it right. •

## Tentative Newspaper Delivery Schedule

**Sept. 26, 2009**

4-H Youth Fair wrap-up/memories  
(Deadline Sept. 14, 2009)