



**GRIFF &  
VICKI'S CHILD  
CARE CENTER**



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**EVERLASTING  
STITCHES**

OURTOWN AT A GLANCE >>



## Bridging the centuries

### Bach Ornamental Steel preserves history



"As people realize we're throwing away our history, more people are stepping up and saying 'we don't want to do that.'"

So says Nels Raynor, owner of Bach Steel, a fabricating company that specializes in historic bridge restoration and relocation, hot metal riveting, and repair and restoration of riveted structures. Bach also fabricates and erects structural steel and creates hand-forged (wrought) iron and steel, ornamental art and furniture, stairs, rails and more. But it's the bridge restoration that has really taken off in recent years—a little bit to Nels' surprise.

"We're kind of swamped and in demand, which is kind of mind-boggling to me," he says. "It used to be we'd work on one bridge every five years." But with the renewed interest in preservation and restoration, Bach occupies a special niche: "We're the only ones in the country doing it."

And Bach Steel does indeed save bridges all over the country. Just back from Texas at the time he spoke

with *Our Town*, Nels' next stop was Pennsylvania to meet with Preservation Pennsylvania.

Restoring bridges makes a lot of sense, Nels believes. While a new bridge may be guaranteed for 50 years, he says, "the one it's replacing may have been standing since 1894." Nels and his team can restore a bridge to like-new condition—and preserve a piece of history.

Bach Steel has evolved considerably since the '90s, when its bread and butter was producing structural beams for the housing industry. Then the housing market dried up—and a business that had previously employed eight or nine people was suddenly down to two or three.

But Nels, whose late father was a professor in the MSU art department, seems to have inherited an artist's eye for looking at things in different ways—and diversifying his company's capabilities. That's one of the reasons the company that specializes in keeping things standing is still standing today.

***Bach Steel is at 4140 Keller Road, Holt,  
517.581.6243 or 517.455.4443,  
[www.bachsteel.com](http://www.bachsteel.com)***



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# Down the road: DDA to develop Cedar Street property; Holt Auto Clinic will remain open through 2016



While it's true the DDA has purchased the property that is home to Holt Auto Clinic and to the former car wash next door, it is *not* true that the auto clinic is going away anytime soon.

"Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated," said Dave Rothermel of Holt Auto Clinic, who confirms the business will be in operation through December 2016.

In the meantime, the DDA is discussing potential uses for the property with a number of highly successful developers, said DDA Executive Director Howard Haas. "We feel this is a very desirable property, with proximity to nearly 28,000 residents, fiber optics and other desirable features in place for developers." He added that the DDA is still dealing with cleanup of some petroleum-contaminated areas on the south end of the property.

Howard says that anyone with thoughts on possible development of the property is welcome to share their ideas with the DDA. "This project is obviously in the very early stages," he said. "We are considering a variety of options."

*The Delhi Downtown Development Authority is at 2045 North Cedar Street, Holt, 699-3866, [www.delhidda.com](http://www.delhidda.com), or email [Howard.Haas@delhitownship.com](mailto:Howard.Haas@delhitownship.com).*

## Jackson Hewitt Tax Service

As you would expect, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service is at the ready to do your taxes. But Holt franchise owner Jim Back emphasizes that his office is a bit different than the typical perception of income tax preparation services.

"I'm not a believer in 'just get 'em in,'" says Jim. "We offer good quality service and knowledge because we want people to come back."

And, by all appearances, people do. Jim says the Holt office boasts a customer retention rate that is "way above average." For this he credits his staff, all of whom are seasoned professionals and knowledgeable in accounting. "Our staff is comparable to anyone in the city" when it comes to tax expertise, Jim says.

A CPA by training, Jim's résumé also includes history as a corporate CFO, college accounting instructor, food franchise owner and more. But the common denominator is Jim's passion for business. "I'm a business guy," he says. "I just happened to get there via accounting." Thus one of his favorite parts of the job is working with business clients. He operates Business Management Resources—a business-within-a-business at his Jackson Hewitt office—that specializes in working with the particular needs of the franchise community. "I love consulting businesses," Jim says. "How to structure them, the buying and selling, all of it."

By early October, the Jackson Hewitt office will likely have completed its move to its new location on Willoughby Road (address below). New clients are always welcome—and Jim is betting that once you work with him and his staff, you'll want to come back.

*Jackson Hewitt is at 4625 Willoughby Road, Holt, 694.8058, [www.jacksonhewitt.com](http://www.jacksonhewitt.com).*





# Spicer Group: Engineers, surveyors, planners



Nicol Parker, Dennis Louney, Tim Inman, Brandon Smith & Larry Protasiewicz

## *“Stronger. Safer. Smarter. Spicer.”*

Condensing what Spicer Group does into a single article is almost a feat of engineering in itself.

Spicer Group, Inc., provides an extensive list of civil engineering, land surveying and community planning services—or, more simply, just about everything it takes to plan, design and build structures, infrastructures and communities.

James Ensign, manager of the Holt office, says the firm works on governmental, municipal and private projects of almost every type. Based in Saginaw but with offices throughout lower Michigan, Spicer Group works extensively in Lansing and Delhi Township, including projects for the Ingham County Drain Commission and working on Delhi's non-motorized trails.

As a project manager, James says he is involved with every phase of a job from the initial discussion “until the grass is coming up and everyone's happy.” Spicer Group believes constant communication

with all stakeholders—clients, contractors, permitting officials and the community—is key to a successful project.

James notes that Spicer Group's surveying services are in great demand. Using laser equipment and GPS, the company can obtain “a whole lot of information really fast” and can mobilize up to 10 survey crews at a time. Spicer also boasts the first Leica Pegasus mobile mapping system in North America.

Spicer Group has served Michigan for 70 years, and employs 120-150 people across all its locations. The Holt office currently has four employees on-site, with others working from the local facility as needed.

***Spicer Group is at 4488 Holt Road, Holt,  
325.9977, [www.spicergroup.com](http://www.spicergroup.com).***





# Griff & Vicki's Child Care Center

It's a family-owned business that has created quite an extended family.

For 20 years, Griff & Vicki's Child Care Center has provided "home away from home" care and early learning experiences for children from infancy through school age. The center is licensed to care for up to 69 children, and has occupied the same location since the day owner Victoria Griffin first opened its doors.

Although she is now less involved in the day-to-day operations, Vicki is still very much a part of the place, said her son, John Weaver. John has worked in the family business for 18 of its 20 years, and described his role as "Human resources to plumber to bus driver." But his favorite part of the job? "Definitely the kids," he said.

Although the kids inevitably grow up and move on, John is grateful to all the loyal employees who have been indispensable in making Griff & Vicki's the successful and happy place it is. "One employee has been here since the day it opened," John said. Two others have each been there for more than 10 years. And two have come full circle: one employee attended the center when she was a child, and another—currently an intern who will soon join the staff—is also a Griff & Vicki's alum.

Griff & Vicki's "helmet gold" bus—the color in honor of the Holt Rams, of course—is a familiar sight around town, dropping kids off at their schools in the morning and picking them up at the end of the school day.

*Griff & Vicki's Child Care Center is at 2111 Aurelius Road, Holt, 694.5627.*







## Everlasting Stitches

It may be a relatively small shop, but every square foot of Everlasting Stitches is filled with creative possibilities. In its 12 years in business, Pam Henrys' store has sold miles of fabric, delighted its customers and been the inspiration for countless artful creations.



The past summer was “huge” for the store, said Pam, thanks to its participation in the “Row by Row Experience” national quilt competition (<https://www.facebook.com/MIRowbyRowExperience>). Participating stores offer a free pattern for a quilt row that fits the theme of the competition; quilters “shop hop” all over the state—and the country—to collect different patterns, combine them to create a finished quilt and compete for prizes.

As a result, a lot of new folks have discovered Everlasting Stitches this summer. “We’ve had tons of people from all over the United States and Canada,” Pam said.

But whether it’s your first visit or just your first visit this week, Everlasting Stitches is a welcoming place. Pam offers open sewing times when you can drop in and stitch in the company of other quilters. And, should you run into a problem with your project, Pam said she is always willing to help.

*Pam Henrys of Everlasting Stitches designed this row pattern for the “Row by Row Experience” competition. This year’s competition theme is “Seasons.”*



*Everlasting Stitches is at 2040 Aurelius Road, Holt, 699.1120, [www.everlastingstitches.com](http://www.everlastingstitches.com).*

## More tips to protect yourself from fraud

In this issue, we continue our discussion on scams that target American citizens, particularly the senior population. Remember, this is just a small sample of the types of fraud out there. There are many websites that cover this topic in depth; an Internet search using a simple phrase such as “top scams targeting seniors” will bring you a broad range of helpful information.

### Internet Fraud

While using the Internet is a great skill at any age, the slower speed of adoption among some older people makes them easier targets for automated Internet scams that are ubiquitous on the web and email programs.

Pop-up browser windows simulating virus-scanning software will fool victims into either downloading a fake anti-virus program (at a substantial cost) or an actual virus that will open up whatever information is on the user's computer to scammers.

Their unfamiliarity with the less visible aspects of browsing the web (firewalls and built-in virus protection, for example) make seniors especially susceptible to such traps.

One example is email/phishing scams. A senior may receive email messages that appear to be from a legitimate company or institution, asking them to “update” or “verify” their personal information. Or, a senior may receive emails that appear to be from the IRS about a tax refund.

### Investment Schemes

Because many seniors find themselves planning for retirement and managing their savings once they've finished working, a number of investment schemes have targeted seniors looking to safeguard their cash for their later years. From pyramid schemes like Bernie Madoff's (which counted a number of senior citizens among its victims) to fables of a Nigerian prince looking for a partner to claim inheritance money to complex financial products that many economists don't even understand, investment schemes have long been a successful way to take advantage of older people.

### Homeowner/Reverse Mortgage Scams

Scammers like to take advantage of the fact that many people above a certain age own their homes, a valuable asset that increases the potential dollar value of this type of scam.

A particularly elaborate property tax scam in San Diego saw fraudsters sending personalized letters to different properties, seemingly on behalf of the county assessor's office. The letter, made to look official but displaying only public information, would identify the property's assessed value and offer the homeowner, for a fee of course, to arrange for a reassessment of the property's value and therefore the tax burden associated with it.

Closely related, the reverse mortgage scam has mushroomed in recent years. With legitimate reverse mortgages increasing in frequency more than 1,300 percent between 1999 and 2008, scammers are taking advantage of this new popularity.

As opposed to official refinancing schemes, however, unsecured reverse mortgages can lead property owners to lose their homes when the perpetrators offer money or a free house somewhere else in exchange for the title to the property.

### Sweepstakes & Lottery Scams

Many are familiar with this simple scam that capitalizes on the notion that “there's no such thing as a free lunch.”

Here, scammers inform their mark that they have won a lottery or sweepstakes of some kind and need to make some sort of payment to unlock the supposed prize. Often, seniors will be sent a check that they can deposit in their bank account. Scammers know that, while the money shows up in the victim's account immediately, it will take a few days before the (fake) check is rejected. During that time, the criminals will quickly collect money for supposed fees or taxes on the prize, which they pocket while the victim has the “prize money” removed from his or her account as soon as the check bounces.

### The Grandparent Scam

The Grandparent Scam is so simple and so devious because it preys on one of older adults' most reliable assets, their hearts.

Scammers will place a call to an older person. When the mark picks up, the caller will say something along the lines of, “Hi, Grandma, do you know who this is?” When the unsuspecting grandparent guesses the name of the grandchild the scammer most sounds like, the scammer has established a fake identity without having done a lick of background research.

Once “in,” the fake grandchild will usually ask for money to solve some unexpected financial problem (overdue rent, payment for car repairs, etc.), to be paid via Western Union or MoneyGram, which don't always require identification to collect.

At the same time, the scam artist will beg the grandparent, “please don't tell my parents, they would kill me.”

In the next issue, we will conclude this series with tips on protecting yourself from con artists.

As always, if you have questions or concerns you can reach the Delhi officers at 517-694-0045. Suspicious persons or activities can be reported by dialing 911.

*Stay safe out there.*



Deputy Kelly Bowden





From left: Genny Allen, Director of Finance and Administration; Gail Madziar, MLA Executive Director; Laura Covey, Director of Membership, Communications and Marketing; Kristy Doak, Director of Professional Development and Meeting Planning; Lisa McMahon, Administrative Assistant



# Michigan Library Association

## The voice of Michigan libraries

Libraries have evolved.

No longer just quiet spaces housing stacks of books, today's libraries are community gathering spaces that educate our children and provide access to vital information and services, said Gail Madziar, executive director of Michigan Library Association (MLA).

Operating on the belief that free access to information is the cornerstone of a free society, MLA has advocated for Michigan's libraries for more than 100 years. Today it serves approximately 300 public, academic and specialty libraries and more than 1,000 individual and student members.

One of MLA's two primary functions is advocacy, Gail explained. This includes keeping elected officials informed about the crucial role of libraries in our communities and working on critical issues such as library funding. "Like everyone, libraries have struggled" in recent years, Gail said. Because public libraries are funded by local communities, libraries often suffer when community budgets are cut.

MLA's other main role is helping library professionals succeed. The association provides librarians access to professional development, networking and leadership opportunities, as well as training in best practices.

Today's libraries are attracting a different audience, Gail said. This is due in part to electronic media—"Some libraries have more e-books than hardcovers!"—and providing free public Internet. "There is so much you have to do online now," said Gail—from high school homework to applying for jobs to accessing health insurance information. And many people may not realize that libraries also provide vital community services such as early childhood literacy programs. "Lots of libraries have waiting lists for their early childhood programs," she said.

*Michigan Library Association is at 3410 Belle Chase Way, Suite 100, Lansing, 394.2774, [www.milibraries.org](http://www.milibraries.org).*





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## THE DDA – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) promotes economic development through business attraction/retention programs and works to foster investment within the DDA district. It strives to increase the township's tax base and strengthen the local economy while maintaining those qualities that make Delhi Township a desirable place to live and work. For more information, visit us at [www.DelhiDDA.com](http://www.DelhiDDA.com).

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