

Canoeing in E.L., area waters is a splash this time of year

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The State News

the great, the tragic, the extreme

Family looks to make ABC TV show makeover house their home



PHOTOS BY KATIE BAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

Arlene Nickless eats dinner with her sons, from left, Aaron, 12; Andrew, 8; and Noah, 9, at the family's new home in Holt. After the death of Arlene's husband, Tim, in Jan. 2008, the Nickless family was left to cope with an old house in severe disrepair. Arlene applied for "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" and was featured on the show. The family's previous home was demolished and their new home was built on the spot. "I'm not unappreciative of what we received, but we lost a lot," Arlene said. "We have this beautiful home to make new memories in, but that takes time and we have to let a lot of it go."

By Jacob Carpenter
THE STATE NEWS

Holt — From the kitchen to the family room to the basement, Tim Nickless' mark is all over his family's home. There's the dark, hardwood floor running throughout the main level, grooved to feel as if Tim, a craftsman with wood, had carved and laid down the panels himself. The columns of stone and earth-toned walls, a homage to his passion for the outdoors. Framed pictures of him, both painted and photographed, scattered around the house.

"I look at this place and think, 'what would Tim think of this place?'" Arlene Nickless said of her Holt home, which was bulldozed and rebuilt as part of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" last October. "He would be in total awe." Tim Nickless never saw the house that has

changed his family's lives, the one covered with remembrances of his life and loves. He died Jan. 19, 2008, after a seven-year fight with Hepatitis C, which he contracted while working as a critical care nurse at Lansing's Sparrow Hospital. Nickless was 48. He left behind three young children, his wife of 18 years and a nearly 150-year-old farmhouse that had fallen on hard times during his illness.

Nine months later, the family received a knock on the door from Ty Pennington and ABC's makeover team, which revitalizes houses for families in need. Within a week, hundreds of construction work-

ers and volunteers had erected a beautiful, sprawling four-bedroom home for the Nickless family. But while the family still can't believe their good fortune today, six months after the construction, they are finding it harder than expected to make their new house feel like home.

The great

Arlene Nickless classifies the past 20 years in three categories — the great, the tragic and the extreme.

"The great" starts with a love story. She was a small-town factory worker in Warsaw, Ind., a city of about 12,500 people in north-

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UNIVERSITY

STUDY ABROAD IN MEXICO CANCELLED DUE TO SWINE FLU

By Ian Johnson
THE STATE NEWS

Lansing — Four students studying abroad in Mexico are returning home due to the swine flu that health officials Wednesday confirmed reached the east side of Michigan.

University spokesman Jason Cody said Wednesday the university canceled its programs in Mexico due to the swine flu scare. One of the four students already is in the U.S., and the university is making arrangements to bring the other three home, Cody said.

A risk-assessment meeting has been scheduled for Monday with members of the Office of Study Abroad to determine if MSU will cancel its summer program in Mexico, in which 46 students are enrolled, Cody said.

Ingham County health officials said Tuesday that five cases of flu-like illnesses within the county could possibly be swine flu incidents. However, no reports of possible swine flu cases on campus were reported as of Wednesday evening, Cody said.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm and state officials addressed concerns Wednesday evening during a press conference at the State Emergency Operations Center, 4000 Collins Road, in Lansing. Granholm confirmed

a Livingston County woman was diagnosed with the virus and said there is another probable case in Ottawa County, although no official diagnosis has been made.

"It's important that citizens know at this point in Michigan there is no reason for panic," Granholm said. "We are obviously concerned, but there is no reason to panic. All we are going to be right now is cautious, aware and certainly implementing our response activities."

The virus is similar to seasonal flu that account for 200,000 hospitalizations and 35,000 deaths in the U.S. every year, said Greg Holzman, the chief medical executive for the Michigan Department of Community Health.

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SAFETY

Students, security on watch in library during finals week

By Brittany Shammass
THE STATE NEWS

With final exams just a few days away, students across campus are flocking to the Main Library, raising concerns about safety and the potential for increased theft.

A precaution, the state has access to a million doses of anti-

time to do it because people are preoccupied with other stuff," history junior Steve Boland said.

Faye Backie, associate director for public services for MSU libraries, said the extent of security — which consists of monitoring by library staff and community police — does not change during finals week.

But Backie said one positive of finals week is the increased number of people in the building.

"We were walking around last night at 9:30 and almost every seat was occupied," she said. "When there's that density, less things happen because there are people observing others."

Pennington sophomore Patricia Kelly, one of hundreds of students studying in the library Wednesday afternoon, said some students don't seem to worry about theft.

"I just noticed a sign about theft yesterday at a table with stuff where no one was sitting, so I guess they didn't pay attention," she said.

Kelly said she studies with a group and leaves her possessions in the company of friends — measures both Backie and McGloth-

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For an interactive tour of the Nickless family's home, visit statenews.com/multi-media



Arlene Nickless kisses her 4-month-old granddaughter Eva at her home in Holt. Nickless said she loves to entertain family in the more spacious home built on ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition."

Weather
Rain
High 60° | Low 56°
Three-day forecast, Page 2A

AT PLAY
Two renditions of abstract plays put on by students continue through Saturday
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