

Krakow townships. There's an island available that hits the auction block, Oct. 30 at 8 a.m. It is Grand Lake's second-largest island, Brown Island, with a mile of shoreline.

It's owned by Steve and the Rev. Renee Perkins, who have owned it since the mid 1990s and
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dreamed of owning and living on an island at Grand Lake.
(Photos courtesy of Leist Auctioneers)

Chestnut farming could offer new crop for area growers

by Peter Jakey
Managing Editor

About 20 people attended the chestnut field day at Ox Heights in Moltke Township. It's the family chestnut farm of Nick and Abby Johnson where hundreds of trees are being put to the test to see if a specialty crop can be sustained in the rolling hills, five miles from the big lake.

The couple received a grant

more than a year ago and planted hundreds of chestnut trees, and it has already been reported, they have been receiving fruits of their labor. Trees are sporting several spiny burrs that cover the fruit. Some burrs can carry as many as three chestnuts.

When the time is right, the burrs will open and the nuts will start falling. It could be a week or
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NICK JOHNSON, farm owner, and James DeDecker, Michigan State University Extension educator, spent much of their Saturday planting chestnut trees in Moltke Township. (Photo by Peter Jakey)



ONAWAY SENIOR high school students Jesus Galvez (second from right, back) took part in a leadership program with students f

Onaway High School seniors re-visit Harvard University

by Peter Jakey
Managing Editor

Onaway High School seniors Hope Faith and Jesus Galvez joined students from around the globe for the 2018 Youth Ambassador Leadership Program last summer at Harvard University and the city of Boston. It was a trip made possible from scholarships, fundraising and a supportive community.

"We were able to learn valuable leadership skills and establish lifelong friendships," said Hope. "Working with students like our-

selves we completed service projects through the United Way."

"The way we worked so together, even though we were different," said Jesus. Students came from the Middle East, Europe, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. There were 12 in the group.

Ambassador leaders are student leaders who are recognized by their teachers, parents and peers as someone who possesses leadership potential and cares about the community.

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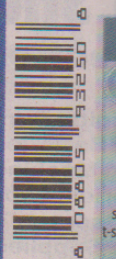
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Chestnut farming

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two in Moltke. Downstate, they are already falling. Examples from south of Lansing were on display for the presentation.

"I think the event came out very well," said Nick Johnson. "From the people who commented, they said they were impressed with the details of how the orchard was laid out and how much data we are collecting and reporting on."

"(Participants) also felt like they gained a lot of knowledge in regards to what an eatable chestnut is, and what it takes to grow," said Abby. "I am optimistic it is going to keep moving forward. As long as we don't get any red flags."

Part of the day was planting more than 100 additional chestnut trees that were purchased from a Missouri nursery. They were planted near one of the highest points on the Johnson's property. The only other places in the north attempting to produce chestnuts are near Traverse City and an orchard that is starting up in Petoskey.

"There have been a couple of orchards by Millersburg that have been planted," said Nick. "Survival there has not been as good."

Millersburg's weather may not be conducive because it gets too cold.

The hills of Moltke

seem to provide enough of a breeze where it does not get as cold.

"The coldest temps are when it is really calm and the air does not move," said Nick. "Here, even on a calm day like today, there is a breeze on the hill. I think the hill and Lake Huron interact to always keep the wind moving."

The tree with the most burrs had 20. At \$6 a pound retail, that tree could net \$18.

"Most orchards don't yield nut production until year five," said Nick. "But, from the people

we have talked to, our trees have burrs and they are already producing nuts, so that is a good sign."

There are 575 trees in the Johnson's orchard.

"It is exciting to think about the opportunities for a new crop in our county," said James DeDecker, Michigan State University Extension educator. "We often talk about our limitations in this part of the state, but this is a potential bright spot where you have the right intersection of location and climate and soils, as well as demand for the crop."

"It's a small area geographically, that would be suitable, but for those people that have the right property it could be the right opportunity."

Additionally, DeDecker said it is an investment that could last 200 years.

"Here, even on a calm day like today, there is a breeze on the hill. I think the hill and Lake Huron interact to always keep the wind moving."



Prevention

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home.

"Not too many months ago, there was a neighbor boy, still in high school that committed suicide in the Onaway area," said Curtis.

"There have been a half-dozen or so the last few years," added Bieri. "Just kids."

"I think the campaign is a good place to start, and starting is what we need to do. I don't know where it is going to go. I am hoping it will grow and that we can get the word out about some warning signs of suicide, pre-suicide, and get some people some help."

"Our campaign is for everyone," Curtis continued.

There is a veterans' crisis line that connects individuals, families and friends with qualified, caring members of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The number to call is 1-800-273-8255.

Since its launch in 2007, the veterans' crisis line has answered more than 1.25 million calls and made more than 39,000 lifesaving rescues.

A recent report found that those receiving care from the VA had a 16 percent decrease in suicide.

Students at Harvard

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cent. Hope believes she may apply to Harvard just to see what would happen.

"They provided us with a lot of information about applying to college, especially for the international students," said Faith. "They also told us about financial assistance. They also told me I would get a full ride if I was accepted there."

"It was kind of like a



THELMA CURTIS (left) and Jan Bieri hold teardrop pins that were created by the George C. Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 5857 secret LeVigne calling attention to suicide awareness veterans.

Learning and watching for signs of concerning behavior can help.

Some signs of concerning behavior include: hopelessness, feeling no way out; agitation, sleeplessness; swings; feeling is no reason to



ST. JOHN Lutheran School opened its school year with