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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rhonda Ihm
Tony McDowell
Barbara Menear
Sam Olson
Fredricka Savage
Tricia Wright

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

David Combs

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

David Combs
Tim Sweeney

FEATURE ARTICLE

Michigan Supreme Court
Press Release

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

David Combs
Sam Olson
Michelle Orvis
Barbara Menear
Fredricka Savage
Jennifer Strauel

CHIEF JUDGE

Duncan M. Beagle



MICHIGAN REUNIFICATION DAY CELEBRATION RETURNS TO THE HALL OF JUSTICE

LANSING, MI, June 17, 2022 – The Michigan Supreme Court today hosted its first in-person Michigan Reunification Day celebration in Lansing since before the pandemic to spotlight the efforts of judges, court staff, child welfare professionals, and especially moms and dads who are working toward family reunification. The Court was joined by representatives of the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS), the Michigan Federation for Children & Families, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Tribal Court, and Van Buren County Circuit Court. Reunification

Day is about recognizing parents whose rights have been terminated and have worked with the court system and local agencies to have their rights restored so they can be reunited with their children.

“The beauty of reunification lies in the courage to recognize the power of second chances, and every year, at our Reunification Day celebration, we hear heartwarming stories of successful second chances,” said Justice Elizabeth T. Clement, MSC co-liaison on child welfare issues. “This is why courts are invested in helping families, and reunification is the ultimate form of court-community engagement because courts are helping to make families—our

friends and neighbors who are struggling—whole again, which makes communities stronger.”

According to MDHHS, in 2021 more than 5,500 children left foster care. Almost half of all foster children reunite with their



Justice Elizabeth T. Clement and Justice Megan K. Cavanagh, Co-Liaisons for the Michigan Supreme Court on child welfare issues

families, almost a third attain permanence through adoption, and less than a quarter exit foster care in other ways, such as by reaching the age of majority, entering adult foster care, or living with relatives.

Demetrius Starling, executive director of the MDHHS Children’s Services Agency, said, “Our goal is to keep families together and for those families who experience a removal, to reunite those families as quickly and safely as possible.”

Special guests included Van Buren County Judge Jeffrey Dufon, who brought several local families to share their own inspiring

stories. Justices Clement and Cavanagh presented Judge Dufon with a Court resolution honoring the work of Van Buren County Courts in family reunification.

“Families who continue to persevere in the face of extreme hardship to bring their children home are to be commended for their hard work and ‘never-give-up’ attitude,” said Justice Megan K. Cavanagh, the Court’s co-liaison on child welfare issues. “When courts and social service professionals work together to help children, we can do amazing things, including rebuilding families and supporting them so they can stay together forever.”

Michigan is one of 32 states that typically hold festivities as part of the American Bar Association’s observance of National Reunification Month held annually in June.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and Reunification Day event coverage.

-Michigan Supreme Court
Press Release

THE CHIEF SPEAKS

Every year, the State Court Administrative Office compiles court data and sends it back to judges and administrative staff for review.

It helps chief judges and court administrators make decisions about judicial assignments in the various divisions of the court and plan for future court operations.

I thought that the *Hearsay* readership might be interested in the new filing comparison

for circuit courts that are referred to as being in the “big counties” in Michigan.



The new filing trends data is from 2017-2021, with specific case count information supplied for 2020 and 2021.

COVID-19 certainly has had an impact on new filings. We are seeing a gradual return to normalcy in some case types.

Take a look, you might find it interesting. Have a great 4th of July holiday with family and friends.

A special thank you to Attorney Referee (emeritus) Mike Krellwitz who has been providing docket assistance.

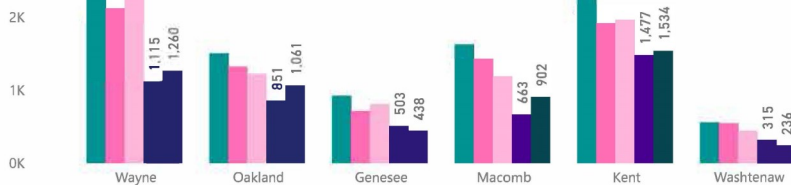
The reports are that he is enjoying himself and has not forgotten how to suit up and make good decisions! /cjdmb



New Filing Trends

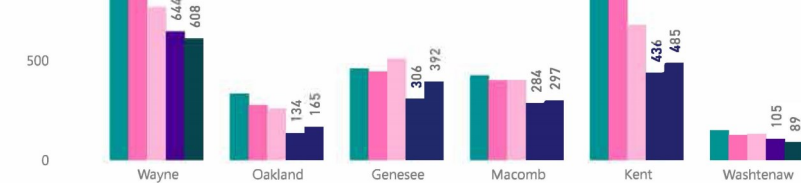
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Delinquency Juvenile



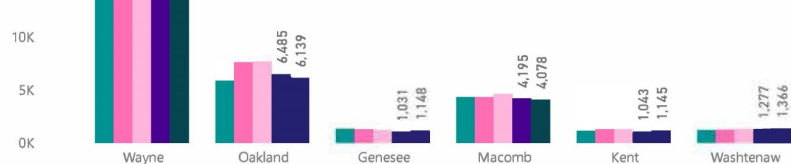
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Child Protective in Placement



2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Civil



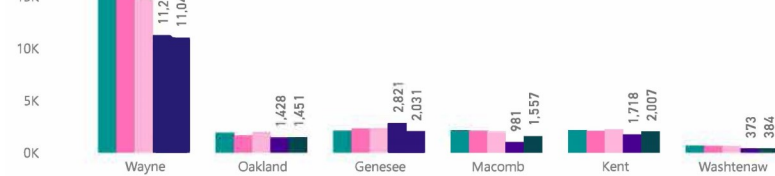
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Divorce with Minor Children



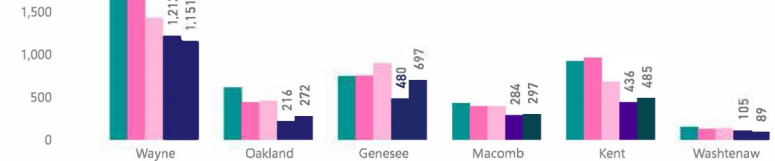
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Paternity and Support



2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Child Protective not in Placement



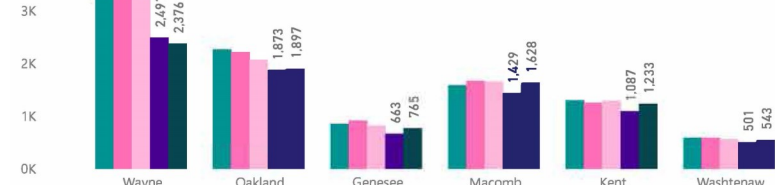
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Criminal



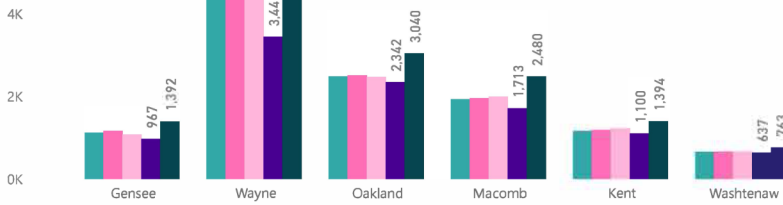
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Divorce without Minor Children



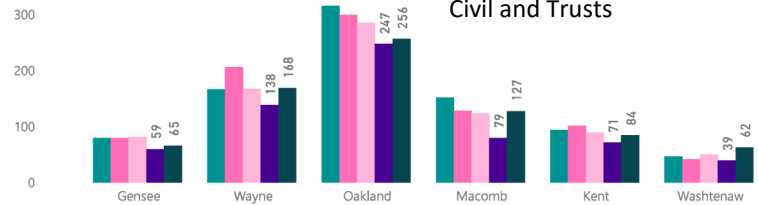
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Estates



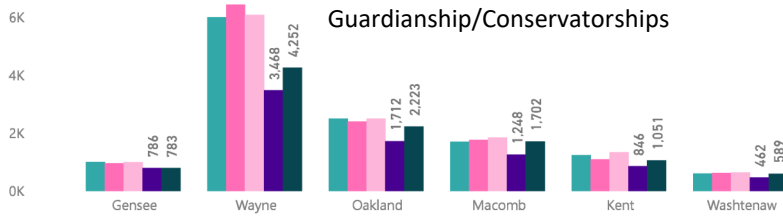
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Civil and Trusts



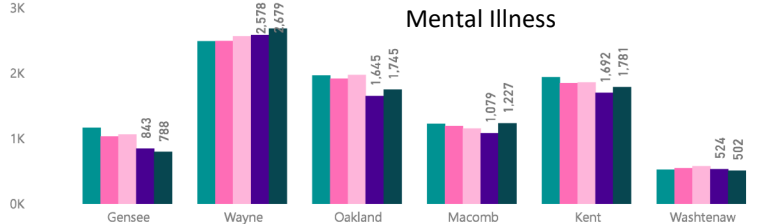
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Guardianship/Conservatorships



2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Mental Illness



COURT ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

In August 2022, a new case management system, Trial Court System (“TCS”), will be rolled out for the circuit court. TCS will effectively replace the ancient “blue screen” version of JIS court users have known for decades. The move is part of a large-scale update among JIS courts in anticipation of statewide e-filing for Michigan courts.

In preparation for the transition, circuit court users attended a video introduction of the new system and have been provided access to a testing environment to become familiar



with the new platform. The testing environment allows users to navigate a carbon copy of the system with fictitious cases and data. Self-help videos are also available in the testing environment.

Due to the voluminous data transfers involved in the rollout, the circuit and probate courts will be closed to the public on August 11, 2022, per Local Administrative Order 2022-02J.

Barb Menear, Dave Combs, James Terry, Sam Olson, and Tricia Wright meet weekly to plan for the transition, which demands extensive preparation on the technology side. County IT have also been integral in assisting the courts with local updates.

Further information on TCS and other technology updates for court users can be found in Dave Combs’ article on page 5. —so



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Left to Right: Darianne Macciomei, Andrea Seiter

Probate Court

Darianne Macciomei is a deputy register for the Probate Court. Darianne was formerly the problem-solving clerk for the Mental Health Court and Veterans Treatment Court programs.

Lisa Struck (not pictured) is a deputy register for the Probate Court. Lisa formerly worked in the County Clerk's Office-legal division.

Circuit Court

Family Division

Andrea "Andi" Seiter is a family court clerk in the Juvenile Records Department. Andi was formerly a manager at a business in Grand Blanc.

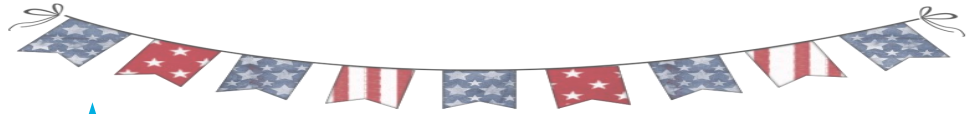
Friend of the Court

Melissa Wareham (not pictured) is a staff attorney for the Friend of the Court. Melissa formerly worked for Legal Services of Eastern Michigan and Bay County Friend of the Court.



Astrind Turner

Astrind Turner is a program clerk for the Friend of the Court. Astrind formerly worked in the field of behavioral health. -js



- Thanks to Ray Zanke, Bruce Rich and the entire team at Building and Grounds for their support when called upon for a variety of operational issues at the Courthouse. An access pad does not work, the gate to the adjacent parking lot is not closing, a power source is needed for a new piece of equipment, a bulky item needs to be moved, are but a few of the types of requests that are forwarded to Buildings and Grounds to get placed on their "to do" list. It is very much appreciated.



- There are significant upgrades coming that are important to court operations:
 1. All district, probate, circuit courtrooms and referee hearing rooms will have their digital recording systems upgraded. The Genesee County Board of Commissioners permitted the Court to tap into ARPA funds to ensure continuity of courtroom and hearing room operations. The installations will take place over the next 90 days and will take multiple days per courtroom or hearing room to complete.

2. Other articles in *Hearsay* provide information about a migration to new case management software for circuit court. This is an exciting step and challenging at the same time. The transition team is confident that the new system will be a

major step for future court operations. Thanks to all for working with administrative and court IT staff. A big thank you to County IT for assistance.

3. In the future, we hope to upgrade the building directory signs that appear next to each of the elevator entrances on all floors. Our existing directories have been in service for over 20 years and must get changed frequently to accommodate facility movement. The original vendor retired, and the signs are at a functional end of life. Digital building directories are being evaluated and a beta test location identified. This would allow names and locations to be changed by the court IT staff and eliminate the ongoing cost associated with changes. It also promises to be a better presentation that complies with ADA standards for signs. Watch for the new look.

4. Funding is also being sought to upgrade the criminal courtrooms and the probate courtroom with evidence display systems, like the one currently in the double jury courtroom. This will be important in trials where hard copy exhibits or photos are involved. The en-

tire courtroom can see the exhibit at one time in large screen format, providing a better presentation and not requiring a trial to pause until all have physically handled an exhibit. We have come to learn that multiple handlers of exhibits may also not be the most health conscience method of publishing.

5. The Information Desk on the first floor will once again have a helpful ambassador from 8-10 each morning. Jennifer Strauel, Holly Ostrom and Rebecca Gillette comprise the team of court staff who will share their expertise in responding to public inquiries at the Information Desk. Thanks to Dave Combs who made it possible for each of them to access their desktop, along with routing phone calls to the location.



- The jury kiosk is now fully operational and jurors are able to get paid in cash for their service. There is complete audit and tracking capability in the jury management software to establish dates of service and fees owed to individual jurors. It has been met with approval from jurors, some of whom related prior service and the delay in receiving a hard copy check. If jurors prefer to receive a check instead of cash, it remains an option.



TWO GENERATIONS OF JUDGES PRESIDE IN THE SAME COURTROOM, ONCE AGAIN!

On April 5, 2022, Retired U.S. District Court Judge, Stewart A. Newblatt returned to a courtroom he once called his own and found a familial face to greet him, Judge David J. Newblatt, who is assigned to the courtroom his father once occupied.

To add to the trip down memory lane, the judges had the pleasure of presiding over a swearing in ceremony for

Attorney Nicole Lamay. Attorney Lamay once worked for Judge Stewart Newblatt as a court reporter.

It was her turn to take the oath and join the State Bar of Michigan. It was also a chance to reconnect and begin her own legal career. -bam



WHAT JIS VERSION WILL I USE?

TCS, MiCOURT, JIS, these acronyms can be confusing, but they share one commonality. They are software that provides access to court records. Which one you will use depends on your level of interaction with those court records.

Throughout May and June TCS training videos and a live demo environment were made available to court staff.

TCS is a cloud-based version of JIS accessible through your web browser. It is replacing CCS (circuit court system) only.

TCS users directly edit Circuit records. They create cases, update register of

actions, generate notices, etc. TCS users will mostly be comprised of judicial staff and the legal division clerk's office.

If you don't edit Circuit records TCS is not for you. Juvenile, Probate, and District are not being converted to the cloud and will continue to use the JIS emulator at this time.

MiCOURT is an online search tool that will replace many user's JIS accounts. MiCOURT users don't need to edit court records. They need read only, inquiry, access.

MiCOURT has a couple different access levels. First, there is the public case

search. Everyone connected to the internet has public case access.

There is also an enhanced version of MiCOURT. In this version users will be given individual logins. Those accounts will be set-up prior to the August 12th go live date.

The enhanced version shows important information from the ROA, including bond information. It also allows access to non-public cases to authorized accounts. A full video demonstration highlighting key features will be distributed very soon.

If you don't fit into a TCS or MiCOURT user role, you

will continue to operate in JIS aka the "blue screen".

Most of these users will be District, Probate, and Juvenile staff. Not much will change in terms of your day-to-day interaction with court records. You will continue to access JIS and process court records as you have always done. -dc



PROTECTING A DEFENDANT'S RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL



67th District Court Judge Mark C. McCabe writes "Ask the Judge" for the *Tri-County Times*.

Protecting a Defendant's Right to a Fair Trial appeared in the April 26th, 2022 edition.

Whenever there is a criminal jury trial, the judge has a number of obligations to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in accordance with the law.

These include conducting the trial in an orderly and procedurally correct manner, ruling on the admissibility of evidence, instructing the jury and, if there is a

conviction, sentencing the defendant.

This is all required because a defendant has certain constitutional rights including the right to a fair trial.

Additionally, the judge may be required to address other special issues involving a defendant's fair trial rights.

The following are some examples.

At a criminal jury trial, an in custody defendant has the right to be brought before the court with the appearance, dignity, and self-respect of a free and innocent man and, except as the necessary safety and decorum of the court may otherwise require, is entitled to wear civilian clothes rather

than prison clothes. It is improper for the jury to see him clothed as a convict.

Therefore, a judge must allow an incarcerated defendant to wear civilian clothes upon request. If this isn't allowed, any convictions are subject to reversal.

Another important fair trial right that a defendant has is not to be handcuffed or shackled at the start of or during the trial.

The exceptions are in extraordinary circumstances, supported by the record, to prevent escape, injury to persons in the courtroom, or to maintain order.

If a defendant is unruly or obstreperous, the United States Supreme Court has

held that there are at least three constitutionally permissible ways to handle it: (1) bind and gag the defendant and keep him present in court; (2) cite him for contempt; (3) take him out of the courtroom until he promises to behave himself. The first way should always be the last choice.

As to shackling, case law provides that if a jury sees a shackled defendant, it is then the burden of the prosecutor to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that it did not affect the verdict.

The importance of a fair trial cannot be overstated. It dates back hundreds of years and our system of justice demands it.

Fortunately, our system of justice has rules and procedures in place to protect this vital right.



geneseeLIVING

Fredricka Savage is the columnist for geneseeLIVING.

Here in Genesee County, July means you can look to the sky for several fireworks displays. Use this list below to find festivals and fireworks to enjoy.

Bay City Fireworks Festival

• June 30th through July 2nd, 2022 at 10:15 pm - Wenona Park at 111 Center Avenue in Bay City

Fenton Freedom Festival

• Monday, July 4th, 2022 - Silver Lake Park in Fenton

Frankenmuth Fireworks Festival

• Sunday, July 3rd, 2022 around 9:30 pm - Heritage Park in Frankenmuth (show viewable throughout the city)

Lake Ponemah Fireworks

• Sunday, July 3rd, 2022 Fireworks launched from an island on Lake Ponemah (Ponemah Lakeside Lodge is a great place to watch this display)

Holly Fireworks Display

• Monday, July 4th, 2022 - Lakeside Memorial Cemetery at 860 Thomas Street in Holly

City of Flint

• July 1-4: Carnival @ City Hall Friday: 3-9 p.m.; Saturday-Monday 12-10 p.m.

• July 1 at 7 p.m.: Movies Under the Stars at City Hall

• July 4 from 2-6 p.m.: Beats X Brunch at City Hall

• July 4 at 7 p.m.: Water x Soul Symphony at City Hall

• July 4 from 8-10 p.m. – FWF Artist Showcase

• July 4 at 9 m.: Circus @ City Hall Dome

Our Lady of Lebanon Mid-East Festival

• July 22 and 23, 2022 at 9:50pm - Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church 4133 Calkins Road in Flint, Michigan 48532

More opportunities for summer events can be found [HERE](#).

CIRCUIT JUDGES COME OF AGE!



There were two recent birthday parties at the circuit court, welcome events at least for the attendees. Actually, both Judge Latchana and Judge Christenson seemed to enjoy the festivities and the milestone that they both achieved. You will know the milestone age

from the photos above. A good time was had by all and then back to the business of the day.

Judge Latchana's event was planned and ably hosted by Lynn Beldin, administrative judicial secretary to his Honor, Deanna Haw-

kins, senior court clerk to Judge Latchana, and Attorney Elizabeth Latchana, spouse and co-conspirator with Lynn and Deanna.

Judge Christenson had some event planners as well. They consisted of Bridget Ondocsin, judicial adminis-

trative secretary for Judge Christenson, Alexis Atkins, judicial advisory assistant, Heather Davis adoptions caseworker and Jennifer Miller, senior court clerk. —bam

THE 4TH OF JULY

-LESSER KNOWN AND RELATED FACTS-



Congress made Independence Day an official unpaid holiday for federal employees in 1870. It was not until 1938 that it was changed by Congress to a paid federal holiday.



The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 men from 13 colonies. Ben Franklin was the oldest the age of 70. Thomas Jefferson, the lead drafter, was 33.



The only two signers to later serve as President were John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.



The stars in the original flag were in a circle so that all of the colonies would appear equal.



The first Independence Day celebration was in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. This was the first day that the Declaration of Independence was read in public and the Liberty Bell rung.



John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on July 4th in 1826, within hours of each other.



Ben Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national bird. Adams and Jefferson overruled him and recommended the bald eagle.



Every 4th of July, the Liberty Bell is tapped (not rung) 13 times in honor of the original colonies.



Yankee Doodle was a pre-revolutionary song originally sung by British military officers to mock the disheveled "Yankees" with whom they served during the French and Indian War.

The Yankee department was not up to the British standards. "Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni" was a mocking comment about the lack of uniforms, wigs and style. —bam



FLAT STANLEY



On April 1st, 2022 “Flat Stanley” visited the Genesee County Courthouse. Local attorney Melissa Pode contacted Judge Pickell’s office to assist her first-grader Isaac in a school project by participating in the story about Flat Stanley.

Judge Pickell and his staff all had their “Flat Stanley” cardboard figures in hand to meet Isaac’s Flat Stanley.

If you are unfamiliar with “Flat Stanley,” it is a children’s book by Jeff Brown that is about the adventures of Stanley Lambchop after he is squashed flat by a bulletin board while sleeping.

Because of being flat, it is easier for him to travel and can see different people and cultures.

In addition to sending Flat Stanley different places, Isaac’s class was encouraged to bring Flat Stanley on adventures. During the spring break they were encouraged to seek out locations that embodied the mission statement of their school, which is character, truth, and wisdom.

Attorney Pode felt that there was no better place than a courthouse to represent both community and country as well as character, truth, and wisdom.

The Genesee County Courthouse was selected. Attorney Pode believes that the Genesee County legal community is one of the strongest in the state.

Isaac’s “Flat Stanley” journeyed through the entire courthouse, meeting deputies and visiting with a number of the judges. Of course, Isaac’s favorite spot in any of the courtrooms was behind the bench and holding the “hammer.”

After Isaac completed his day at the courthouse, he prepared a photo album with the places he visited and what he learned.

Isaac’s notes about the Genesee County Court were as follows:

“They have candy if you ask nice. (Judge Latchana’s chambers)
My mom argues, but it’s fine as it is her job. (Judge Pickell’s courtroom)
A judge can tell [mom] no and slam his hammer. (All the judges’ courtrooms)
Law is important.
I want to be a judge so my kids can be judges too.”

Isaac was a delight to have at the courthouse. –mo



SUMMER WORD SEARCH

W	D	S	S	T	A	O	B	E	L	D	D	A	P	J
A	L	I	P	S	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	U	H
T	I	S	V	L	E	A	J	N	U	W	R	M	C	D
E	F	G	E	E	A	R	T	I	C	K	P	A	B	R
R	E	N	F	B	U	S	T	M	V	C	E	A	T	E
S	J	I	S	Z	U	O	H	T	Y	B	T	A	C	L
K	A	W	R	J	A	T	L	R	A	H	F	P	H	K
I	C	R	G	Y	D	E	E	S	I	M	P	J	T	N
I	K	E	I	N	T	V	A	N	V	T	R	W	N	I
N	E	T	U	I	I	I	G	S	M	K	A	I	V	R
G	T	A	F	R	L	S	J	P	W	N	E	O	A	P
K	F	W	P	B	U	E	U	V	L	A	B	K	L	S
A	T	O	O	I	W	A	T	E	R	G	U	N	A	F
S	O	A	T	L	O	O	P	G	N	I	D	A	W	L
L	T	G	A	R	D	E	N	H	O	S	E	E	H	B

AIR MATTRESS
BATHING SUIT
BEACH
DIVE
FLOAT
GARDEN HOSE
JUMP

LAKE
LIFE JACKET
PADDLE BOAT
POOL
RIVER
SAILBOAT
SPLASH

SPRINKLER
SWIMMING
TUBE
WADING POOL
WATER GUN
WATER SKIING
WATER WINGS



Read All About It



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We want to hear from you! Send us an email letting us know what you would like to see in the newsletter and feedback on the current edition. You can also submit ideas and information about activity in your department. hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com