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Ogemaw County

# SUPERIOR NEWS

**50¢**

Hale Area  
SUPERIOR NEWS  
Page 9

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Vol. 1, Issue 1      Your source for positive community news!      Jan. 1 - Jan. 20, 2024

## 'Superior News' debut: Same faces with the same positive news

**BY JAMIE STOUT-SHIRKEY**  
OGEMAW Co. – Your source for positive community news may have changed names but the faces and the legacy of the *Ogemaw County Voice* newspaper continue with the debut of the *Ogemaw County & Hale Area Superior News*.

With the recent passing of the *Ogemaw County Voice* newspaper owner/publisher, Grange Bell, this past November, his business associates were uncertain of how they wanted to proceed with providing superior news to the community.

Bell's partner and long-time colleague, Kathy Collins, along with another long-time business associate, Nikki Szymkowski, wanted to continue to provide positive news while keeping the *Ogemaw County Voice's* legacy alive.

"They want us around – there has been an outpouring of support



**NIKKI SZYMKOWSKI**



**KATHY COLLINS**

from the community to keep it going," Collins said.

Since the inception of the *Ogemaw County Voice* newspaper in March of 2011, they have been known for being a great source of positive news, but also remained very active and involved in the community as well.

Originally, Bell and a former business partner and Collins entered into business together and started the *Ogemaw County Voice* because they wanted to produce a publication which focused on all

the good things happening in their community.

"There is just so much negativity out there, yet so many positive things and unsung heroes – we wanted a way to highlight those things and those people," Collins said.

The *Ogemaw County Voice* received praise and recognition for their work in spreading the good news of the community as they were four-time West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business award-winners.

"We have worked so hard for the past 13 years that we just didn't want to let it all go," said Nikki Szymkowski.

With the amount of experience Collins and Szymkowski have not only with the *Ogemaw County Voice*, but in the newspaper industry in general, they felt joining forces and becoming

*SUPERIOR continues on page 3 »*

## Consumers Energy teams up with Kimmie's after winter storm

**BY MICHAEL BUSCH**

A winter storm on Jan. 12 knocked out power for thousands of residents in Ogemaw County. Hardest hit was the Prescott area with 15 inches of snow. To show its support, Consumers Energy teamed up with Kimmie's Pub N Grub of Skidway Lake to offer a free breakfast to local customers on Jan. 15.

Among those attending the breakfast was 39-year veteran firefighter, Dan Johnson. "We lost power for about 26 hours," he said. Fire crews in the county continued to answer calls during the storm, including a tree that had fallen on a house. When asked if he was tired, he replied humbly, "No, I'm rested. It (the storm) taxed our department, but as a team we came together."



*Photo Michael Busch*

**Dan Johnson of Skidway Lake, Mills Township Fire Department stopped in for breakfast.**

Restaurant owner Kimmie Bluemlein said the restaurant lost power, but it was restored before losing inventory. On Jan. 13, the day after the storm, Consumers Energy contacted her about offering a free breakfast to the community. She estimated about 50 people came when the

*CONSUMERS continues on page 10 »*



*Birdseye view of Rich Heavlin, of West Branch plowing through the "snowpocolypse" of Jan. 2024 where some areas got up to 20 inches of snow in a 24-hour period.*

*Courtesy photo*

## Odds and Ends Resale



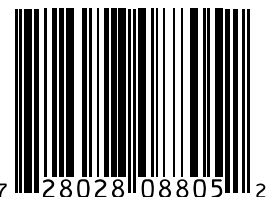
*Photo by Laura Bender*

**Store manager, Johnna Fox says, "Every time you visit you will find something new."**

**BY LAURA BENDER**

A leather couch. A Mickey Mouse phone. Jewelry, purses, a milk can. An octagonal painting of an extra-terrestrial. The aptly

*ODDS AND ENDS continues on page 10 »*



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*With everything changing daily, if not hourly, we would advise that you call ahead to be sure the event is still scheduled.*

**Ongoing**

**Mondays – Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary meet** the third Monday, 5 p.m. at the VFW/American Legion Post 496 E. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call 989-473-3416.

**Mondays – Rose City Lions Club meets** the second and fourth Monday, 6:30 p.m. at the Log Cabin in the Rose City Park. Call Ed 989-387-0609.

**Mondays – (Second of each month) Coalition of Hope** 9 a.m. Meeting virtually. Suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. Call 989-345-5571.

**Monday – (Third of each month) Ogemaw County Genealogical and Historical Society** 12:30 p.m. at the Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 E. Houghton Ave., West Branch. Call 989-701-2525.

**Tuesdays – Kiwanis Club of West Branch meets** at noon at China Inn, 601 W. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call 989-345-0978.

**Tuesdays – Rose City Area Historical Society meets** the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., April through November, except August. Meet at the Rose City Lions Club Cabin. Call Cathy 989-345-5659.

**Tuesdays – T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) weigh in** at 1-1:30 p.m., meeting starts at

1:30-2 p.m. Ogemaw Hills Free Clinic, 2106 S. Gray Rd. in West Branch. Call Robin 989-343-0592.

**Tuesdays – (First of each month) West Branch Creative Arts Association meeting**, 7 p.m. located at 124 N. Fourth St. in West Branch. Call 989-345-1451.

**Tuesdays – (First of each month) West Branch Area Retail Merchants Association meeting**, 6 p.m. Held at the West Branch City Police Department. Call 989-345-5226.

**Tuesdays – (Second of each month) Christian Motorcycle Association** 6 p.m. for food and fellowship, 7 p.m. business meeting at G's Pizzeria, 200 W. Houghton Ave. in West Branch. Call Gary 989-343-9876.

**Tuesdays – (Fourth of each month) Rifle River Quilt Guild** 9:30 a.m. at the K of C Hall, 601 Columbus Dr. in West Branch. The meeting will be followed by a Show and Tell, mini-classes, quilting tips, demos and time to sew. Bring your sewing machine, a project and your lunch. Any level of quilter is welcome. Call Diane 989-345-7206.

**Tuesdays – (First and third of each month) Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake.** First Tuesday 6 p.m. at the St. Stephens Catholic Church Hall,

2811 E. Greenwood Rd. in Skidway Lake. Third Tuesday 6 p.m. at Café International, 4761 Sage Lake Rd. in Prescott. Call Janet 989-387-2640.

**Tuesdays – (Second of each month) Survivors of Suicide Support Group** 6:30 p.m. Call Vicki 989-510-0911 or [info@coalitionofhope.net](mailto:info@coalitionofhope.net) for location. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 or text 741741.

**Tuesdays – (Fourth of each month) Ogemaw County Democratic Party meeting** 5 p.m. at Buccilli's Pizza in downtown West Branch. Call Ken 989-345-1066.

**Tuesdays – (Fourth of each month) Ogemaw County Republican Party meeting** 5:30 p.m. at G's Pizzeria in downtown West Branch. Call Kristine 989-343-5120.

**Tuesday – (Last of each month) Diabetes Support Group** 1-2 p.m. Medical Arts Center, diabetes education conference room. Call 989-343-3276.

**Wednesdays – West Branch Area Business and Professional Women's Organization** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Different locations each month. Call 989-745-4067 for information.

**Wednesdays – (First of each**

month) **Veterans coffee hour** 9-10 a.m. Held at the Ogemaw County Commission on Aging, 1528 S. M-33 in West Branch. Call 989-345-3010.

**Wednesdays – (First and third) Grief Support Group** 6:30 p.m. Faith Alive Church, 2945 Hansen Rd. in West Branch. Open to the entire community. Call 989-345-5440.

**Thursdays – (First and third of each month) Newborn Parent Support Group** 6-7:30 p.m. MyMichigan Health - West Branch in the executive dining room. Call 800-999-3199.

**Thursdays – Northern Blend Sweet Adelines meets** every week 7 p.m. at Logan Township Hall, 4507 E. M-55, Prescott. Call Ellen 989-345-0978.

**Thursdays – (Second and fourth) Sit & Knit**, 1 p.m. Knitting, needlework, and friendship. Whatever you craft. Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 1528 S. M-33 in West Branch. Call Alicia 989-345-3010, ext. 201.

**Thursdays – (Third of each month) Rose City/Lupton Chamber of Commerce meets** at 6:30 p.m. at the Rose City Council Chambers. Call Carl 989-473-3268.

**Thursdays – Optimist Club of West Branch** meets at 7 a.m. at the Loggers Depot in West

Branch. Call 989-942-6608.

**Thursdays - The Ogemaw County Fair board** meets the first Thursday of each month in the main building at the fairgrounds. Call 989-345-5393.

**February**

**1 - First United Methodist Church Dinner and silent auction** at 6 p.m. 2490 W. State Road, West Branch. Proceeds to benefit GAP Kids Camp.

**4 - Rose City Snow Box Derby** at Cleveland Park. Registration is Noon to 1 p.m. Racing starts at 1 p.m. For more information contact Richard Dooley, 989-685-3083.

**March**

**16 - West Branch Optimist 15th Annual Camel Races.** Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Post time 6:30 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, desserts and set-ups - BYOB. For more information contact Chuck at 989-942-6608.

**April**

**20 - West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Winter Ball** at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Networking 5:30 Dinner 7 p.m. For more information contact Heather at 989-2821.

*To place your event in the Community Happenings, email information to [kathy@superior-news.com](mailto:kathy@superior-news.com)*

**Meet Your Superior News Family**



Nikki Szymkowski



Kathy Collins



Mercy Opp



Laura Bender



Michael Busch



DeeDee Brinkman



Sally Rea



Nancy McLaughlin



Deanna Surbrook



Jamie Stout-Shirkey



Lois Bergquist

**FAITH & WORSHIP**

**God is love**

*"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*  
—Romans 8:37-39 NIV

God is love. And He loves us all no matter where we are in life. God's love is unconditional. God's love is without limit. God loves us so much and his love is so deep that nothing can change his love or stop him from loving us.

God loves us in all seasons of life. God loves us every second of everyday. God loves us. God's love is permanent. God's love can never fade away.

God loves us and because of his love he cares for us. God Himself his love. God is full of love.

When I am waking up it's God loving me, God loves me in every situation and his love is always present in our lives. Even when I am not feeling well, his love is still there and yes I am not feeling well but that does not stop God from loving me, God does not want me to be in pain but his love is present to heal me of the pain. When I feel disappointed God loves me.

When I have failed God loves me. We need to start believing and accepting that God is love and he loves us deeply.

— www.SermonCentral.com

**First United Methodist Church**  
2490 W. State Rd., West Branch, MI 48661  
**989-345-0210**  
Rev. Michelle Forsyth  
[reverendmichelleforsyth@gmail.com](mailto:reverendmichelleforsyth@gmail.com)  
Organist: Carol Lockhart  
[www.westbranchfumc.org](http://www.westbranchfumc.org)  
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.  
Adult Sunday School: 8:30 a.m.

**Churchill United Methodist Church**  
501 E. State Rd.  
(corner of State and Morrison roads)  
989-685-2350  
Worship & Children's  
Sunday School: 11:30 a.m.  
Rev. Helen Alford

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
235 Minzer Ct. • West Branch  
989-345-1651  
Sunday School - 9:45 a.m. all ages  
Sunday Worship 11 a.m. • Youth Group - 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday Evening Service - 6 p.m.  
**WEDNESDAY**  
Youth Group - 6:30 p.m. • Awana - 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 7 p.m.  
Pastor Tom Teall • Youth Pastor Josh Pierce  
[www.cbcwb.org](http://www.cbcwb.org)

**Edward's Community Church**  
4520 Greenwood Rd., West Branch  
**989-345-4227**  
Pastor Jon Scott  
Sunday School 10 a.m.  
Worship Service 11 a.m.  
(Greenwood Rd. west of S. M-30)

Superior

« Continued from page 1

business partners was the way to keep the positive news flowing.

Szymkowski began her career in the graphics arts industry in 1986 and had been working behind the scenes of the *Ogemaw County Voice* since 2011 with building advertisements and pagination, she said.

Collins began working in the industry in 1995 in marketing and advertisement sales.

For the *Ogemaw County Voice*, Collins expanded her repertoire and dabbled in editorial while also managing the sales and marketing for the publication.

“Nikki and I have always worked well together, and we both really wanted to keep this going,” Collins said.

“We know what we are doing – we definitely have the experience in the newspaper industry,” Szymkowski said.

The final issue of the *Ogemaw County Voice* hit the newsstands on Dec. 22 and was a record publication at 72 pages, which included a 44-page special section for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce.

It was very bittersweet for Collins as she and Bell had been working on the section for several months prior to his passing.

“Grange would be so proud of us for starting this and finishing off the way we did,” Collins said.

While the *Ogemaw County Voice* name was laid to rest with former publisher Grange Bell, the *Ogemaw County & Hale Area*

Ogemaw County & Hale Area  
**SUPERIOR NEWS**  
Your source for positive community news

*Superior News* will continue the legacy as your source for positive community news.

The new publication name and logo has two separate, but very special meanings.

“Everyone always said we were the “good news” paper – and we are – we are superior, but also Grange and I had a strong connection with Lake Superior – so it was meant to be this,” Collins said.

While some things may change a little, there are many elements to the positive newspaper that will remain the same, said Szymkowski.

The *Ogemaw County & Hale Area Superior News* will continue the historical special section, but now refer to it as “Yesteryears” as well as the former Healthy, Wealthy & Wise section will continue as “Lifestyles.” Each of these special sections will be published with the *Ogemaw County & Hale Area Superior News* every other month, opposite of each other, Collins said.

Also, the *Ogemaw County Voice* team is on-board with the change and will remain working with the publication, she said.

In the future, they are also planning to add more special sections and pages as well as be more active with social media,

Szymkowski said.

For the time being, the newspaper and business will be operated remotely with the possibility of having an office space in the future.

Collins will operate the publishing, sales and marketing, while Szymkowski will take care of the administrative, billing, ad design and web design.

*Ogemaw County & Hale Area Superior News* will be published the second and fourth Saturday of each month just as the *Ogemaw County Voice* was previously.

Please check out the new Facebook page by searching ‘Superior News’ and/or the website at [www.Superior-News.com](http://www.Superior-News.com).

For more information about marketing/sales, feature ideas, circulation, and new subscriptions, contact Kathy Collins at 989-450-6163 or [kathy@superior-news.com](mailto:kathy@superior-news.com). For information regarding any administrative or billing related issues please contact Nikki Szymkowski at 989-745-2421 or [nikki@superior-news.com](mailto:nikki@superior-news.com).

It is the goal of the *Ogemaw County & Hale Area Superior News* to remain your source for positive community news.

“I just know that Grange is so happy that we are continuing on with this,” Collins said.

Kiwanis – Salvation Army

BY LAURA BENDER

“We are so proud of our community,” said Mike Pugh. “Because of their giving hearts, we are making a record donation to the Salvation Army.”

For 24 years, the Kiwanis Club of West Branch has coordinated the volunteers who man the red kettles in front of Walmart. This year, 415 volunteers, representing 35 community groups, rang the bell for a total of 264 hours over 22 days. The result? On Tuesday, Jan. 16, the Kiwanis Club of West Branch presented a check to the Salvation Army for \$47,200.

As Ellen Pugh, who coordinated this year’s drive, handed the check to Salvation Army Service Extension Director Matthew Rowland, she said, “This was our biggest fundraiser ever. So many people wanted to get on the bell ringing schedule, including some of the clients Salvation Army assisted during the year. I even had a few folks from neighboring counties who volunteered.”

All money raised stays in Ogemaw County to help folks in need keep heat and light in their homes, afford transportation to medical appointments and work, and get emergency shelter. Last year, Salvation Army volunteer caseworkers in West Branch and Rose City provided 285 low-income households, or a total of 571 individuals, with \$96,591



MATTHEW ROWLAND AND ELLEN PUGH

in essential help. Additional funding came from state sources and Consumers Energy. In 2024, Consumers will not be providing funds, so donations are always welcome to help bridge the gap.

Salvation Army representatives in attendance at the Kiwanis Club luncheon included Program Director Laura Augenstein and Regional Field Representative Christine Jacobs, a West Branch resident. Service Extension Director Matthew Rowland, who received the check, oversees their work in 17 counties, including Ogemaw, where there is no physical Salvation Army presence. He and Laura are based in Flint.

Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time. Kiwanis Club of West Branch currently has 37 active members. If you would like to be part of their positive influence in our community, visit <https://k02026.site.kiwanis.org/join-kiwanis/> or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1415835202050122/>

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- Amount of alimony paid and ex-spouse's Social Security number
- Childcare records (including the provider's ID number) if applicable

**Income/ Investments/ Retirement**

- All forms that say W-2, 1098, 1099, or Schedule K-1
- Purchase date and total investment in any stocks sold
- Closing statements for any real estate purchased or sold
- Expenses related to your investments
- Records of any contributions made to IRAs, other retirement plans, 529 plans or education savings accounts
- Records of other income and expenses (jury duty, gambling, alimony, etc.)
- Records of business income and expenses if you are an independent contractor, self-employed, or own rental real estate

**Education**

- Education scholarships and fellowships
- Records of tuition and other higher education expenses, and Form 1098-T
- Student loan interest paid (Form 1098-E)

**Itemized Deductions**

- Form 1098
- Mortgage interest, real estate tax (if not reported on a 1098) and personal property tax records
- Prior year state/local income tax paid (see [hrblock.com](http://hrblock.com) if you have sales tax records for large purchases)
- Records of cash amounts donated to houses of worship, schools and other charitable organizations
- Records of non-cash charitable donations
- Records of miles driven for charitable purposes
- Records of any property lost or damaged due to natural disaster or theft

**Healthcare**

- Form 1095-A, if you enrolled in an insured plan through the Marketplace (Exchange)
- Marketplace exemption certificate if you applied for and received an exemption from the Marketplace (Exchange)
- Form 1095-B or Form 1095-C, if you have insurance through a private plan or employer plan
- HSA information (Forms 5498, 1099-SA) and receipts for medical expenses



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# Ogemaw County Historical Society holds annual Christmas party

BY SALLY A. REA

On Dec. 12, 2023, from 5-7 p.m. held its Annual Christmas Party the museum and each member was to bring a guest. It was well attended.

As you entered the museum's porch you saw the wonderful old sleigh donated by Vern Mier all decorated with greenery and lights.

Just inside the door were our greeters for our event, Perry and Lynne Goldy.

Jan Wilkinson was our hostess for this party and Jan and her crew did a sensational job of food preparations, three soups, snacks and desserts.

In the Music Room Debbie Williams was playing Christmas Carols on her keyboard. The members and their guests

all joined in singing and one of our guests, Randy Lynn, had a beautiful voice which none of us knew about.

Jan had a pleasant surprise for all of us as Santa came bouncing down the stairs laughing ho ho ho and proceeded to tell all of us "The True Meaning of Christmas." He told the story of Mary and Joseph and their journey to Bethlehem was made and how Jesus was born in a stable. Jesus is the Reason for

the season of Christmas. Jesus is why we celebrate his birthday on Christmas Eve and has been carried on for many years. Santa did a great job and thank you Jan for getting him.

The museum is now closed and will reopen on April 6, 2024; however, if you need anything from the museum such as research, books, Rada knives, Mystic Michigan books, Driving Tour books or things from our gift shop, call me, Sally Rea, at 989-343-0177 and I will try to help you.



SALLY REA



Amy Winter was the winner of the quilt giveaway which was donated by Kam Hutchins.

## From the desk of Gail Hughey Superintendent West Branch-Rose City Schools Thank you School Board Members!

The key to a brighter future for Michigan's children is a strong public education system. Every day, students count on public schools to help prepare them for a successful future. Whether they understand it or not, they count on adults across the state ensuring they have access to resources to help them learn, keep their buildings safe and have qualified teachers to guide them. It takes a pure, unwavering commitment to a community to make this all possible.

Yet, at the end of the day, the true superheroes contributing to the success of our students are just ordinary citizens with

extraordinary dedication to public schools—our school board members. These individuals approach their volunteer work

like it is a full-time job and, for some, they value their work on the board as more important than their chosen profession.

Their job is to establish a vision for the education program, design a structure to achieve that vision, ensure schools are accountable to the community and strongly advocate for continuous improvement in student learning. The job of a school board member is tough, the hours long and the thanks few and far between. Too often we're quick to criticize

school board members without really understanding the complex nature of their decisions. We have to remember to take time to thank them for their untiring efforts.

The month of January marks the observance of School Board Recognition Month. This is an opportunity to show our year-round appreciation for these servant leaders and begin to better understand how local trustees work together to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders. We encourage you to join with others throughout our community, state and nation to salute the individuals who provide grassroots governance of public schools.



GAIL HUGHEY

### Superior News

The *Superior News* is published the second and fourth Saturdays of the month and distributed in West Branch, Rose City, Prescott, Lupton, Alger, Skidway Lake and Hale. It is available at news-stands for 50 cents per issue or annually for \$35.

<p><b>Owner, Ad/Web Design &amp; Accounting</b> Nikki Szymkowski nikki@superior-news.com 989-745-2421</p>		<p><b>Publishing and Sales Director</b> Kathryn Collins kathy@superior-news.com 989-450-6163</p>
<p><b>Circulation</b> Lois Bergquist Rich Heavlin</p>	<p><b>Newspaper Pagination</b> Mercy Opp</p>	<p><b>Copy Editor</b> Nancy McLaughlin</p>
<p><b>Writer</b> Dee Dee Brinkman deedee@superior-news.com</p>	<p><b>Writer</b> Laura Bender laura@superior-news.com</p>	<p><b>Writer</b> Michael Busch michael@superior-news.com</p>
<p><b>Special Contributor</b> Deanna Surbrook</p>	<p><b>Special Contributor</b> Jamie Stout-Shirkey</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b> Denny Shumway, Julie Darton, Fred Lewis, Gail Hughey, Peter Fabbri and Peggy Zettle</p>
<p><b>Historical Writer</b> Sally Rea sallyrea2184@gmail.com</p>	<p><b>Accounting</b> P.O. Box 610523 Port Huron, MI 48061 Ph. 989-745-2421</p>	
<p><b>Editorial and Publications</b> P.O. Box 603 West Branch, MI 48661 Ph. 989-450-6163</p>		

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## Downtown West Branch remodel

BY PETER FABBRI

This year downtown West Branch will get a makeover. A major reconstruction is planned that includes underground work to replace aging utilities and surface work that will create a new roadway, sidewalks, and beautification to the entire corridor starting at Fairview Street and extending west past M-30.

Major improvements to the core downtown include expanding the sidewalks, allowing outside food service at some of the restaurants, new lighting, trees, benches and more. Pretty much everything will be brand new.

It's an exciting endeavor and the end result will be a more walkable, pleasant inviting downtown. The work is slated to begin in April and go into the fall. The Michigan Department of Transportation has had several public meetings to share, discuss and obtain input on the project. The road through downtown will be open to traffic throughout the project and alternate detour routes established.

Of course, with major work

being done, there will be some inconveniences but everything possible is being done to mitigate anything major. Access to the business is being planned to ensure the customers can get into their favorite shops and restaurants. Public parking lots will not be impacted.



PETER FABBRI

The West Branch Area Merchants Association has been meeting to discuss things that they can do to ensure customers have easy access into the businesses. Many rural communities suffer major business loss during projects so the merchants are developing novel strategies, marketing and advertising to get the word out that "We are Open for Business!"

Merchant events may be modified this summer but others are being planned with ideas of having an "Orange Barrel Polka" as an example. The Art Walk and Wine Tasting event will go on as planned in April and other events are in the works.

When the dust settles West Branch will be shiny and new. Join us throughout the process and continue to support your favorite businesses. This is an exciting time in West Branch.

## KIWANIS CORNER

BY DENNY SHUMWAY

**KIWANIS OF WEST BRANCH**

We want to thank everyone that bought Gourmet Nuts this year. The nuts sold fast. We also thank all those that were involved with football mania as well. It was a great season again this year with the Lions in Playoffs for the Super Bowl.

The Kiwanis Club meets at noon on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at the China Inn. Anyone interested in learning about our organization is welcome to attend. If you would like to be a guest speaker to show us what you do, call Jolin at 989-873-4532.

**AKTION CLUB OF WEST BRANCH**

The Aktion Club continues to collect bottles and cans. You can call 315-725-1199 and make arrangements for pick up or drop off locations.

We are in the process of making greeting cards, which we will be selling at our bake

sale in February.

We support numerous organizations in Ogemaw County. Those with special needs interested in joining our club, come on the second Wednesday of the month at noon to the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Fairview and State Streets.

We are looking forward to continuing to help others in 2024.

**OGEMAW COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**

Looking for donations of food or money to help us with the influx of families. We had over 115 families last month, which continues to take a toll on our finances. We will take donations every Wednesday of the month from 8:30 to 11 am. Thank you for your assistance. We are located in the garage behind the Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 E. Houghton Ave., PO Box 543, West Branch. We want to thank those that have donated. If bad weather, call ahead at 315-725-1199 to see if we are open.

**FOOD TRUCK OF WEST BRANCH**

The monthly Food Truck held once a month also needs your help. Our next truck is coming on Jan. 19, 2024. They need to raise money now to keep the trucks coming. Please sponsor a truck, Contact Lisa Curnow at 989-345-0381.

## Letter to the editor policy

The *Superior News* encourages all readers to submit letters to the editor for possible publication. Please limit letters to 200 words or less.

The author must include a daytime phone number as they will be contacted prior to publication. Unsigned letters will not be published. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject any letter.

Letters can be submitted via email to [news@superior-news.com](mailto:news@superior-news.com) or by traditional mail to P.O. Box 603, West Branch, MI 48661.



# Local team weight loss contest draws hundreds of participants

BY MICHAEL BUSCH

A contest in Ogemaw County usually calls to mind a local high school sports team, but a local contest of a different kind with far more people is the 17th Annual "Battle of the Bulge."

The weight loss contest, which typically draws 300-500 people each year, is sponsored by Pinnacle Rehabilitation and Personal Training in West Branch and Rose City. It involves teams of four people who try to lose weight over four months. The object of the contest is for the total percentage of weight loss of the team to be higher compared to other teams. Participants with only 10 or so pounds to lose will still be a factor in the team score. Participants are weighed each month.

Alan Withers, licensed physical therapist and owner of Pinnacle Rehab, explained the motivation behind organizing the contest. "When we started 17 years ago, we saw a major health issue in the community and we wanted to be leaders with a group of other people. We wanted to make it a game that would be fun and involve everyone together."

"The reason we do this every year is there are four or five people who make significant lifestyle changes and then lose 30 or 40 pounds. Those are the ones who come back and say 'I lost weight during the Battle of

the Bulge and then I kept it up. I ended up losing 60 pounds over the next two years and now I'm no longer diabetic. I'm no longer on high blood pressure medication and now I'm able to do all these things."

"Every year there's four or five of those stories and that's the kicker for us. We just love that," said Withers.

The guidelines for the contest are easy to understand. First, teams are composed of four people, either mixed sex or all male or female. Registration costs \$10 for each team member. The team is asked to create an identifying name and designate a leader as contact for the group. Team packets are available for pick up at Pinnacle, either at 621 Court St. in West Branch or 120 E. Main St., Rose City.

Winners receive cash prizes of \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place, and \$250 for third place. The male and female participants who lose the highest percentage of body fat of all participants will receive \$250.

All monthly weigh-ins must take place at Pinnacle on their scales. Participants are required to



weigh in each month throughout the competition. If a member of your team misses a weigh-in, the team will be disqualified from the competition immediately.

Withers said, "If you can't find a team of four, you can call the Pinnacle office and we can put you on a team. There are often times when people can find a team of three, but not four, so we can help add people to teams."

Participants are welcome to use Pinnacle's facility, but Withers says, "We encourage people to work out where they go. Go to that gym. If you are already walking at the high school, keep doing that."

Withers is proud of organizing the contest, which has been ongoing for several years. "It's good for communities. If every community in America did this, we'd be healthier."

For more information, contact Pinnacle at 989-343-3000.

# Ogemaw County Business and Community Expo and Job Fair

BY LAURA BENDER

Looking to showcase your business? Curious about local organizations? Job hunting? Head to Ogemaw Heights High School on Tuesday, March 26, for the Ogemaw County Business and Community Expo and Job Fair.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Heather Neuhaus said, "The Expo provides a place for the community to see all local businesses and organizations in one area. For vendors it provides opportunity to connect and for the community it provides opportunity to stay local."

The Expo is free for the public. Organization and business

representatives will be available for one-on-one conversations. If you are looking for employment, bring your resume. Some businesses will do on-the-spot hiring.

The Community Expo and Job Fair is designed to showcase Ogemaw County and what it offers to individuals, families and businesses. Stop in from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to learn more about your community.

To register your business or organization, or for more information, visit the Chamber of Commerce website at [www.wbacc.com](http://www.wbacc.com). All local businesses, organizations and food trucks are welcome.



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Ogemaw County Business & Community Expo and Job Fair  
Tuesday, March 26th  
OHHS



**Chamber Ball**  
Saturday, April 20th  
KOC Hall

Putt Putt Golf Tournament  
May 20th-24th



Chamber Golf Outing  
Wednesday, June 5th  
West Branch Country Club

Chamber Connections is the 2nd Friday from 7-8 a.m. Breakfast networking and Business After Hours is the 3rd Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.. Hosting locations can be found on the [wbacc.com](http://wbacc.com) website.

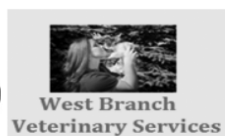
Welcome New Chamber Members:  
Arrow Power, Music in the Park and Cafe International (New Ownership)

Happy New Year 2024!. Starting February 1st you can stop by the newly preserved and remodeled Chamber of Commerce building which also houses the West Branch Visitors Bureau. Located at 422 W. Houghton Ave in the old train depot. Members please bring updated business cards, brochures or rack cards.

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## Premier Sponsors





# Snowstorm 2024 pictures from our readers



Lois Bergquist



Jeanie Deckert



Carrie Jackson



Pam Hilts



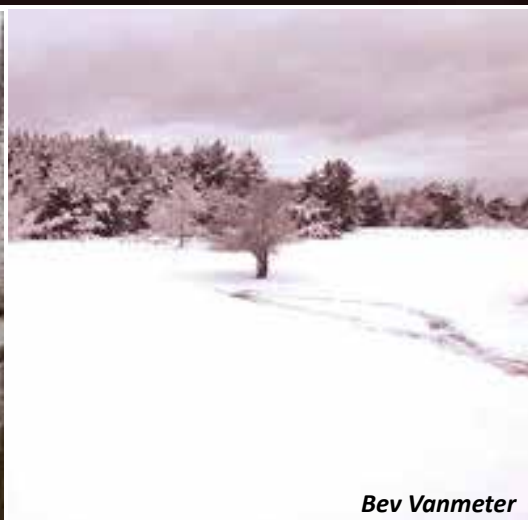
Jennifer Wiedyk



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Deanna Bennett



Bev Vanmeter



Deanna Surbrook



Sandi Bell

# Can you find the butterflies?



Courtesy photos

The St. Joseph School seventh and eighth grade science class were on a predator/prey hunt recently. The predators were the students; the prey were camouflaged paper butterflies. The activity was part of the ecosystems unit. There are two butterflies between Gracie Engelhardt and Keira Drensky, one is white and the other is black. There is one gray butterfly in the picture with Audrey Moeggenborg.

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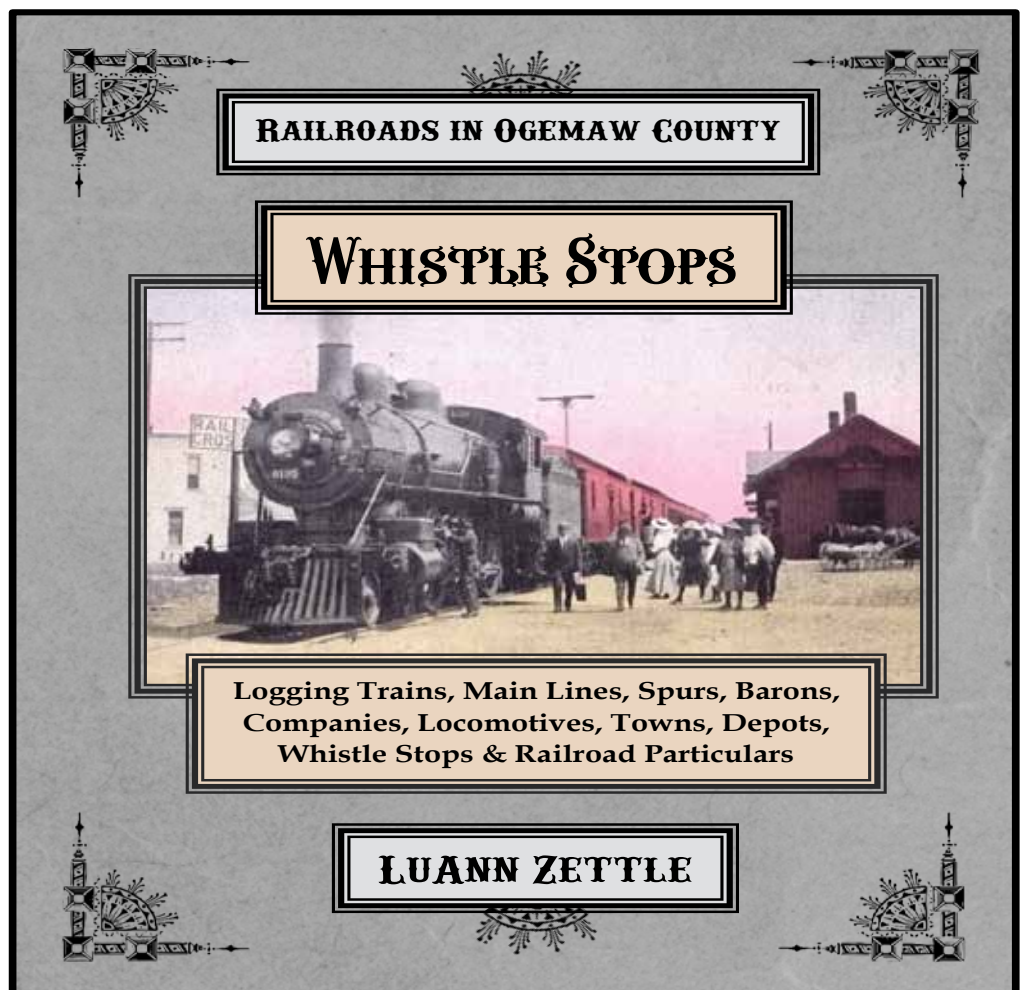
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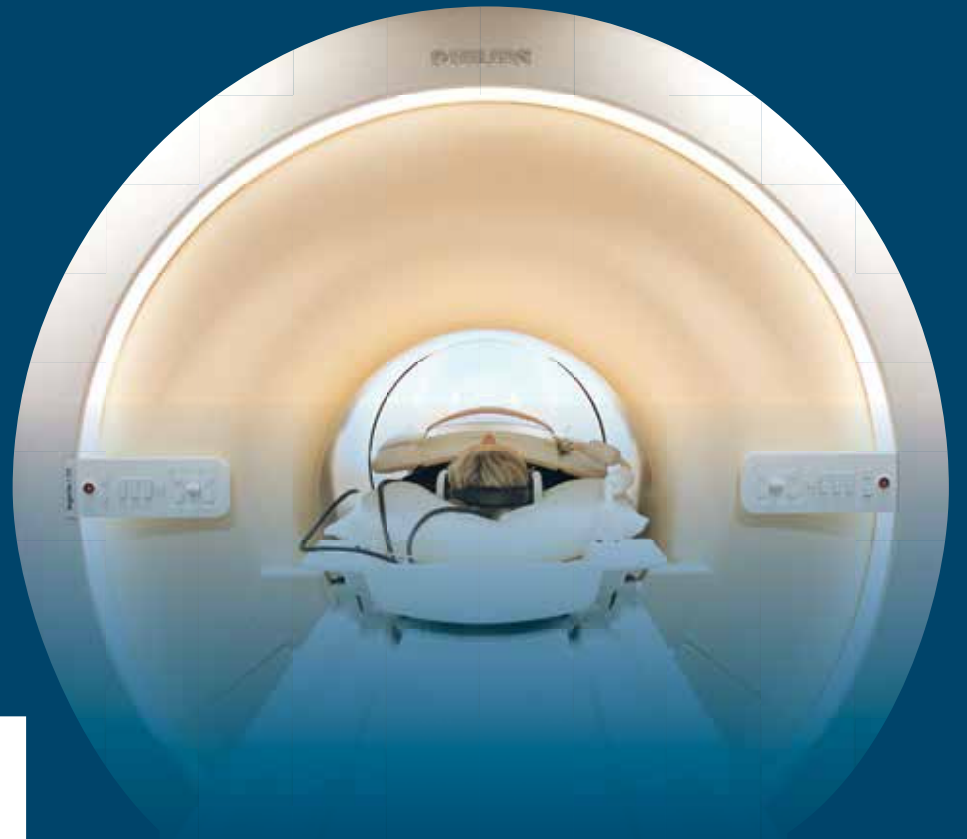
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**DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2024**  
**LOCATION: OGEMAW LANES**  
2357 S. M-76, WEST BRANCH, MI  
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**SHIFTS AVAILABLE -**  
12:30 PM, 4:30 PM & 8 PM

*Remembering Leslie*  
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Please fill out this form to register for the Kurk Jameson Memorial Tournament & return it to Ogemaw Lanes.  
Late entries are NOT guaranteed a lane or a time slot.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Avg \_\_\_\_\_

Please Circle what shift time you are registering:    12:30    4:30    8:00

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Jan. 1 - Jan. 20, 2024

Your source for positive community news!

PAGE 9

## SUPERVISORS CORNER

**BY FRED LEWIS  
 SUPERVISOR,  
 PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP**

Happy New Year and welcome to 2024. I hope the year brings good times and happy memories for all of us. As we enter into this new year please remember where we have been and what we have accomplished. Sometimes we only see and hear the bad things that happen and that clouds our view of what is actually in front of us. Too little of the good things that have occurred gets talked about and too much of the bad seems to steal the limelight. So if we can do anything to lighten our load this year, let's try and see one good thing each day and pass it off to an acquaintance as a way of making a small difference each day.

Along that line, we were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Iosco County Parks and Recreation Commission from the millage revenue, which we intend

to use to construct a pavilion at the playground between the old hall and the fire hall in front of the playground. We are getting the paperwork prepared and intend to send out an IFB in early February, and if we are lucky, hope to be starting this spring. This will allow gatherings at the playground/park for community members and relatives with a place under roof in the event of bad weather, or just to get out of the sun. For whatever reason, it provides another benefit for our residents, at no additional costs.

We are also continuing to replace the boardwalk at Loon Lake Park and will be working as time and weather permit. This is a long term project that started last spring and will continue through most of this year. We have applied for a boat cleaning equipment grant from EGLE for four different lake launches around the township. We won't know until late February if we

are successful and will keep you informed as to our progress. We have also applied for a scrap tire grant which reimburses us for the tires we collect at the waste site. We should get word on that grant by March.

One change we will have this year is at our Farmers Market. We are looking for a new market manager for our Saturday morning market at the resource center. If you or someone you know is interested in being the market manager please contact me.

Technology is always changing. It allows us to do things that we only dreamed about as children. I remember Dick Tracey watches, in comic strips, that allowed the wearer to talk like a walkie talkie (now I am dating myself) and now we have watches that not only are a phone but a computer as well. This is a case where reality outpaced fantasy. When this fast advancement occurs, many

times our society's rules do not keep pace and we find ourselves without any guidelines on the use of the new technology. One area in which this has become an issue in our community is the use of security cameras both inside and outside the homes. Much of our community has access to digital broadband which allows us to stream video to where ever we are. Even though we are a pretty safe and secure community, many people feel safer being able to keep watch on their property.

For the most part that is fine, the cameras show their property and allow the owners peace of mind. It's when the camera placement extends beyond their property into the neighbors that creates issues. When does this become intrusive and what is the purpose of seeing what goes on at the neighbors? As this issue becomes more prevalent, it is only a matter of time before legislation is created to restrict this use. We

can control this by just working within our own property and paying attention to how we locate our cameras. Every unit is adjustable and can be posed to show just what we intend to see. So be kind and consider your neighbors privacy as well as your own.

Starting Jan. 1 the waste site hours were changed. We now open at 9 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and close at 4 p.m. on these days. We maintained our current Sunday hours of 9 – 2. We are open on Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup> and Labor Day.

As always if you ever have any questions, comments or concerns regarding our community please contact me. I am in the office Monday – Friday 7:30 – 4:00 at 989-728-2811 or my cell at 989-984-7073 or by email [supervisor@plainfieldtwpmi.com](mailto:supervisor@plainfieldtwpmi.com).

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Pastor Todd Vossen

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### January

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22 – Baked Ziti, Capri vegetable blend, breadstick, peach fluff.

23 – Sheppard's pie, beets, mixed fruit.

24 – Hamburger, homemade fries, coleslaw, tropical fruit cup.

25 – Breakfast casserole, cottage cheese with fruit, grapes.

26 – Roast beef sandwich, mashed potatoes, winter blend vegetables, apple.

29 – Baked ham, baked sweet potato, cauliflower, apricots.

30 – Cook's choice. Come and enjoy a surprise meal with us.

31 – Chicken taco salad, tortilla chips, coleslaw, tropical fruit cup.

All meals include coffee, tea or milk and, served at noon. Suggested donation, 60 plus is \$3, under 60 is \$7.50. Call before 10:30 a.m. to make reservations. Hale 989-728-4251 or Sand Lake 989-469-9361.

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Consumers

« Continued from page 1

restaurant opened at 8 a.m. Two Consumers Energy employees assisted with serving customers.

During and after the storm, Consumers Energy lineworkers and contractors came from as far away as New Brunswick, Canada, to battle high winds, lake effect snow and treacherous road conditions to restore power. The hazardous winter weather downed tree limbs and more than 2,500 power lines across several regions of Michigan.

More than 500 crews, including out-of-state contractors, worked around the clock to reduce the number of customers from over 170,000 without power to about 25,000, despite constant, widespread wind gusts that made line work challenging and caused more outages.

Crews were supported by a team of over 150 dedicated storm restoration staff and volunteers across the state who are committed to enabling crews to restore heat and light.

The storm caused damage and outages throughout Michigan. Communities in the northeastern Lower Peninsula were hit hardest, including Ogemaw, Midland, Bay, Iosco, and Alcona counties.

Consumers Energy urges the public to keep important safety tips in mind:

- Be alert to crews working along



Photo by Michael Busch

(L-R) Desiray Hensley of Prescott and Dawnette and Jamie Bluemlein of Skidway eat breakfast sponsored by Consumers Energy.

slick roads. Drivers should slow down or stop and wait for oncoming traffic to clear so they can go safely past workers on roadsides.

- Stay at least 25 feet away from downed power lines, and to report unguarded downed lines by calling 9-1-1 and Consumers Energy at 800-477-5050.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, basement, enclosed patio or near any air intakes. Doing so could cause a generator to produce hazardous levels of carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless and deadly

gas. Consumers Energy will trim or remove trees interfering with electric restoration activities.

Once safe to do so, clean up of debris from tree trimming or removal during a storm emergency is the responsibility of individual property owners.

In some cases, the mast that holds the electric service wires to a home or business may have been damaged or torn away. Crews will reconnect the wires to a home, but only a licensed electrician can repair or replace a mast or a cable.

Stillwagon retires after 42 years

BY KATHY COLLINS

After 42 years as an x-ray technologist, Joni Stillwagon of West Branch, has decided to retire from her profession to spend more time with her grandchildren, three-year-old twins, tend to her yard and delve in some hobbies.

A luncheon was held in her honor by the radiology department on Fri., Jan. 12, with many others from nearby departments stopping by to wish her well. Her supervisor, Tom Oesch, said “she will be greatly missed by me and her co-workers.”

Stillwagon has always been in the radiology department performing mammograms and during that time has seen many technical changes in equipment and procedures. “We entered into digital imaging in 2012 and the 3D imaging in 2020. It has been a tremendous difference in clarity and being able to diagnose any suspect of an abnormality in the breast tissue,” she said.



Photo By Nancy McLaughlin

Joni Stillwagon, x-ray technologist, says goodbye to her supervisor, Tom Oesch, as she retires from the mammography department at MyMichigan West Branch on Jan. 12. Joni says with a smile, “My mom knows that when we go someplace together that we’ll get recognized by a lot of ladies who stop and say, ‘Oh, there’s my ‘you-know-what lady,’ and she’ll blush and walk away.”

At the start of her career she worked at the old Tolfree Hospital, 17 years at Tawas St. Joseph Hospital and again at the Medical Arts Center on Houghton Avenue in West Branch, and then to the West Branch Regional

Medical Center in 2001, now known as MyMichigan West Branch.

Joni is a graduate of Ogemaw Heights High School and Ferris State University.

Odds and Ends

« Continued from page 1

named Odds and Ends Resale store at 2799 Refinery Rd. in West Branch is dedicated to helping second hand treasures find new life.

Owner Chantelle Hardy said, “We believe every item has a story to tell, and our carefully curated collection reflects the unique character and style of our community.”

Odds and Ends Resale opened in mid-June 2023 in the building where Chantelle’s former art gallery and hair salon, Enchanté, was located. Her new store is

the place to go when you are searching for a unique gift, an antique to grace a room or an original painting. A feast for the eyes, the large shop offers many options, including clothing, décor, kitchenware and seasonal items, many on consignment.

Store manager and U.S. Army veteran, Johnna Fox, said, “Our inventory changes often. Every time you visit, you will find something new.”

“Whether you’re hunting for a vintage gem, searching for unique gifts, or simply enjoying the thrill

of finding great deals, our thrift store is the place to discover hidden treasures,” said Chantelle.

During the winter, Odds & Ends Resale is open Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hours expand during the warmer months. Refinery Road intersects with Cook Road next to the railroad tracks south of town. For more information, call 989-836-3120 or visit <https://resaleshopwestbranch.com/>. You can also find them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092932841794>.

Employee Christmas Craft Contest



Each year, Griffin Beverage of West Branch holds an employee Christmas Craft Contest. Participants needed to fashion their holiday decoration out of supplied items, including bottle caps and wine corks. All employees were invited to vote for the winners. This year’s “Best in Show,” created by Brenda Laskowski, featured a joyful snowman flanked by panels declaring “Let It Snow!”

OBITUARIES

Willis Eugene Brewer

July 11, 1933 - Dec. 21, 2023

Willis Eugene Brewer, age 90, passed away peacefully on Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023, at his home in West Branch, surrounded by his family. He was born on July 11, 1933, in West Branch, to Lester and Evelyn (Hanks) Brewer. Willis proudly served in the United States Army from 1953 to 1955.



WILLIS EUGENE BREWER

On Oct. 26, 1957, he married Sylvia Jenkins in St. Helen.

Known for his voracious reading and exceptional intelligence, Willis had a remarkable memory and could recall everything he read. He enjoyed driving around town, pointing out the buildings and churches where he had laid brick. In fact, he even built his own home in West Branch.

Throughout his life, Willis worked for Morse Clark Furniture for over 30 years, dedicating his time and skills to the company. In his free time, he indulged in various hobbies, including golfing, bowling, archery, deer

hunting, woodworking, fishing, and cross-country skiing.

Willis is survived by his beloved wife, Sylvia Brewer. He is also survived by his daughters, Diane Brewer, Faye (Dave) Butler, and Laura (William) Knudson; grandchildren, Lauren (Ben) Pucket, Tyler (Alexa) Butler, and Ken Knudson; three great-grandchildren; and siblings, Robert

(Karen) Brewer, Raymond (Sandy) Brewer, Douglas (Myrna) Brewer, Gregory (Vicky) Brewer, Andy (Elaine) Brewer, and Clara (Joseph) Clark.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lester and Evelyn Brewer; his brother, Arnold (Barbara) Brewer; and his sister, Joyce Drabek.

The funeral service took place at the funeral home on Thursday, Dec. 28, burial followed at Edwards Township Cemetery. Priest Mary Jane Shortt officiated.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Homes, Inc. in West Branch.

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## Public Notices and Meetings

**CITY OF ROSE CITY REGULAR MEETING December 19, 2023**

Mayor Jeremy Card called the Regular Council Meeting of the City of Rose City to order at 6:17 p.m. on December 19, 2023.

Present: Daniel McQuarrie, Kristina Danforth, Scott Hamel, Christopher Hebert,

Absent: Jenny Bentley- excused, Brent Hinkley- excused

Others present: Clerk Cindy Rosebrugh, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Hurley, DPW Supervisor Chase Wiltse, County Commissioner Roger Mayhew, Brandi Coleman, Claudia Miller, Chuck Faulkner, Amy Hensel

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. Hamel to approve the Agenda. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made Mr. Hamel and seconded by Ms. Danforth to approve the Minutes for the December 5, 2023 Regular Rose City Council Meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded Mr. Hamel to pay bills as presented, in the amounts of \$15,995.83 from the Common Cash Account, and \$2,935.35 from the Sewer Account. Ayes: Daniel McQuarrie, Kristina Danforth, Scott Hamel, Chris Hebert. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Kristina Danforth gave a Library Report.

Roger Mayhew gave a County Commissioner's Report.

Claudia gave an Audit Report.

Chase Wiltse gave a DPW Report.

Carol gave a Treasurer's Report.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. McQuarrie to pay up to \$1341 to Great Lakes Technology for Wifi internet connection. Ayes: Chris Hebert, Scott Hamel, Kristina Danforth, Daniel McQuarrie. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. Hamel to approve the purchase and installation of a camera for the ballot box. Ayes: Chris Hebert, Scott Hamel, Kristina Danforth, Daniel McQuarrie. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. Hamel to accept Cindy Rosebrugh's letter of resignation as City Clerk. Ayes: Daniel McQuarrie, Kristina Danforth, Scott Hamel, Chris Hebert. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. Hebert to appoint Jennifer Hurley as City Clerk beginning January 2, 2024. Ayes: Chris Hebert, Scott Hamel, Kristina Danforth, Daniel McQuarrie. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hamel and seconded by Mr. Hebert to remove Jeramie Brookins and Cindy Rosebrugh and add Kristina Danforth and Jennifer Hurley as signors on the accounts at Huron Community Bank beginning January 2, 2024. Ayes Daniel McQuarrie, Kristina Danforth, Scott Hamel, Chris Hebert. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hamel and seconded by Mr. Hebert to remove Jeramie Brookins and Cindy Rosebrugh and add Kristina Danforth and Jennifer Hurley as signors on the accounts at Mercantile Bank beginning January 2, 2024. Ayes: Chris Hebert, Scott Hamel, Kristina Danforth, Daniel McQuarrie. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The Mayor gave his comments.

The Council discussed the budget amendment.

A Motion made by Ms. Danforth and seconded by Mr. Hebert to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

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