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Prayers for 'Mighty' Malikai: WB family prepares for the worst – praying for a miracle for son with terminal cancer



Courtesy photo
Malikai Petty, a second grader at Surline Elementary School, is suffering from a rare, aggressive form of cancer and has only been given a few weeks to months to live. He and his family need the community's support now more than ever, both emotionally and financially.

BY DEANNA SURBROOK

A West Branch family is preparing themselves for the unimaginable loss of their young son, Malikai (Kai) Petty, who has been heroically battling cancer for well over a year.

Tragically, he has only been given a few weeks or months to live by his medical team. Family and friends have rallied around Kai and his parents, Travis and Sara, and his older brother and sister, Jax and Kadence, to offer emotional support, as well as monetary donations for his quality of life of the time he has left and for his final expenses.

"Why our baby?" Sara wrote as she shared the news with friends and family in a post on Facebook. "Why did last month we have hope, and now there is no longer hope? How is this all happening so fast? Our hearts are completely shattered..."

In an interview with the Ogemaw County Superior News, she described Kai as the "sweetest boy in the world."

"He is kind, sweet and funny..." she said, admitting that it is hard just to get out of bed these days. "The reason I get up is for my kids. They are my whole world...I have to be strong for

MALIKAI continues on page 10 »

A vision realized: West Branch Township Commons opens



Photo by Laura Bender
Representatives of the West Branch Township Board, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and the contractors who built the West Branch Commons cut the ribbon to officially open the site.

BY LAURA BENDER

One year ago, the West Branch Township Board had a dream to turn a neglected piece of land into a vibrant place for community gatherings. On Tuesday, Oct.14, their vision of the West Branch Commons became a reality.

"I want to acknowledge that today is actually 365 days from the groundbreaking of the site to the project being completed," said West Branch Township Clerk Jeremy Hickmott.

Michigan Economic Development Corporation representative Michelle Wildman said, "Isn't this a great space? It's really exciting, as somebody who has the pleasure of being involved with

COMMONS continues on page 7 »

W-P High School crowns Homecoming king and queen



Courtesy photo
Austin Hickcox and Alivia Sheehan were crowned as Whittemore-Prescott High School's Homecoming king and queen at the big game on Friday, Oct. 3, against Mio.

Cole's Appliance celebrates opening in West Branch

BY LAURA BENDER

Looking to replace your old stove? Is your refrigerator not maintaining a steady temperature? Have your washer and dryer been with you since your married children were in kindergarten?

Cole's Appliance, a family-owned business that has been serving northeast Michigan since 1962, is now open in West Branch to meet your needs.

"My grandfather repaired and sold used appliances as well as propane in Lincoln, Mich.," Alex Cole said. "In 1962, he opened the first Cole's and began selling new appliances. My parents, Brad and Lucy, took over the store in 1992 and still run it. They also sell home furnishings. That building has had nine additions, so it is a bit of a maze inside. In 2019, my sister, Karina, opened an appliance and electronics store in Tawas City. It has a more modern, open layout like this store. I've worked in both since I graduated from Saginaw Valley with a degree in marketing and business, so besides managing the West Branch store, I'll be the general manager for all three."

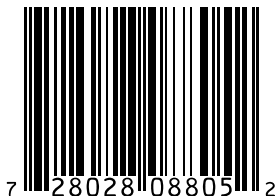
As a third-generation appliance store owner and married father of three small children, Alex Cole is proud of his family's business.

"We are a family-oriented company that takes care of both our customers and the community," Alex said. "So, we are happy to sponsor and support community events. We are also very responsive



Photo by Laura Bender
Alex Cole, owner of Cole's Appliance in West Branch, welcomes you to their grand opening celebration.

COLE'S continues on page 6 »



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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 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 post-vention. Call 989-345-5571.
Monday – (Third of each month, April-Dec.) **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 – (Third of each month) **Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake.** Third Tuesday 5:30 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 for location. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 or text 741741.
Tuesdays – (Fourth of each month) **Ogemaw County Democratic Party** 5pm at China Inn downtown West Branch. Call Ken at (989) 345-1066.
Tuesdays – (Fourth of each month) **Ogemaw County Republican Par-**

ty 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-GriefShare Support Group. 2-4 p.m. Fresh Start Community Church, 690 Campbell Rd., West Branch. March 7 through May 30. \$20 for workbook. Scholarships available. Call Brenda 989-312-0105 for registration or info.
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.

Oct 31
Halloween Spectacular, sponsored by the West Branch Optimist Club and Kiwanis Club, Friday, Oct. 31, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Surline Middle School, 147 State St., West Branch.

Trunk or Treat, Dean Arbour Ford, Friday, Oct. 31, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., 3382 W. M-55, West Branch.

Trunk or Treat, Hyperion Materials & Technologies, 510 Grif-fin Rd., West Branch, Friday, Oct. 31, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Halloween Grab & Go, First

United Methodist Church, Friday, Oct. 31, 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Free hot dog and drink for the kids.

Trunk or Treat, Faith Alive Church, 2945 Hansen Rd., West Branch, Friday, Oct. 31, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake **Trunk or Treat**, Halloween night Oct. 31, at the Skidway Lake Chamber of Commerce, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. No pets allowed.

Nov 1
Craft Show, sponsored by the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake, Saturday, Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Whittemore-Prescott High School, 6001 Mills Rd., Whittemore. For more information, contact April at 989-578-8768.

Nov 6-8
Ogemaw Heights High School presents “Letters to Sala,” Nov. 6, 7, and 8, 7 p.m., located at 960 M-33, West Branch. Tickets can be purchased in advance at ohh-stt.ludus.com, Kit’s in downtown West Branch and at the OHHS office for \$12 each.

To place your event in the Community Happenings, email information to deanna@superior-news.com

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

New Beginnings Lutheran Church
960 S. M-33, next to Ogemaw Heights High School, West Branch, MI
Pastor Daniel Jansen
989-836-6133
Sunday Service - 9 a.m.

Gladwin Cornerstone Baptist Church
3925 Round Lake Road,
Gladwin, MI 48624
989-426-6897
Sunday School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:30
www.gladwincornerstone.com
Pastor Scott Bradstreet

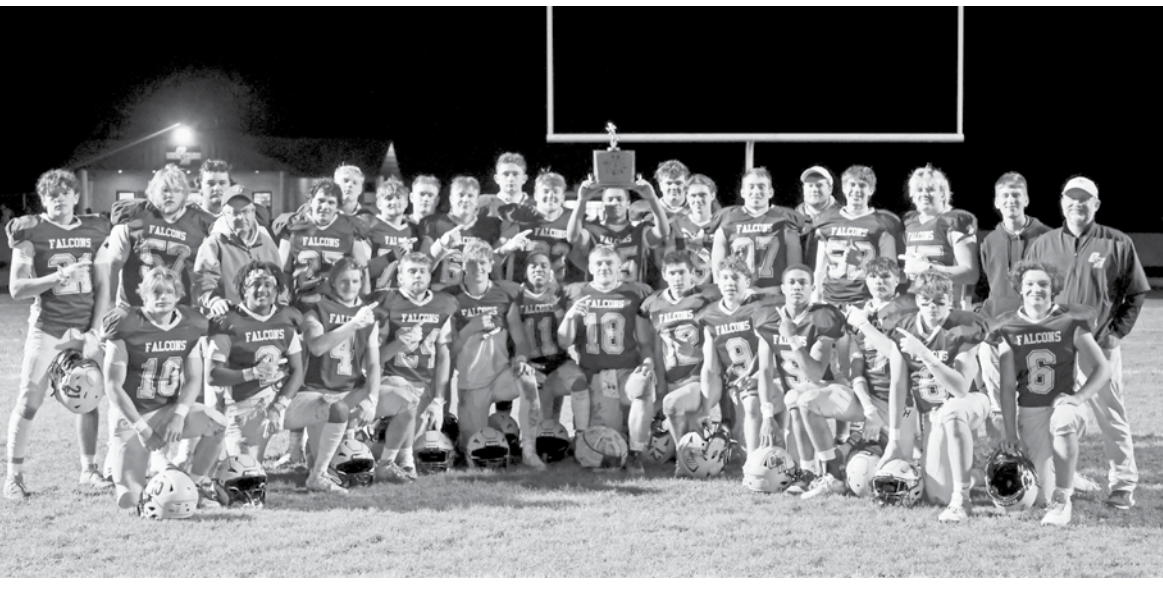
Churchill United Methodist Church
501 E. State Rd.
(corner of State and Morrison roads)
989-685-2350
Worship & Children’s Sunday School: 11:30 a.m.
Rev. Helen Alford

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

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)

Hale Methodist Church
Everyone Welcome! Pastor: Mike Tullis
Sunday Worship - 10am; Sunday School - 11am
**Trick or Trunk or Treat**
Friday, Oct 31
5-7pm at the Church
201 W Main/Esmond, Hale; 989-728-9522
FB & IG: Hale Methodist Church

OHHS Falcons win conference title



Courtesy photo
The Ogemaw Heights High School varsity football team won the Jack Pine Conference, which consists of 12 teams, on Friday, Oct. 17, shutting out Meridian, 34-0, at home. As of that date, it took their overall record to 7-1 for the season. The Falcons will compete in the District Semi-Finals on either Oct. 31 or Nov. 1. The team won’t know who they are taking on until the Sunday Selection Show on Sunday, Oct. 26. The school hopes to host the District Semi-Finals and Finals at Ogemaw Heights Football Stadium. Go, Falcons, go!

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Letters from the past, voices of today:
Ogemaw Heights High School presents 'Letters to Sala'

BY OLIVIA CUMMINGS

The Ogemaw Heights Theatrical Troupe is very excited to present to you "Letters to Sala", by Arlene Hutton, on Nov. 6 to 8. "Letters to Sala" is a true story about a woman named Sala Garmcarz who survived Jewish persecution in World War II and hid over 350 letters and photos which document her's and many others' experiences during the Holocaust.

Sala went to a labor camp in place of her sister, Raizel, on Oct. 20, 1940, when she was just 16 years old. Through the course of the war, she was an inmate at seven different Nazi labor camps until liberation, when she was 21. Sala saved her letters and told no one about them until, in 2005, when she gave them to her daughter, Ann (played by Sadie Syerson), before she underwent cardiac surgery.

The play depicts the young Sala collecting the letters as a teen, as well as the conflict that Ann faces while deciding what to do with Sala's diary, letters, and postcards written by over 80 different people.

This fall's play at OHHS is quite different from what we have been presenting the past few years. Due to the ongoing construction and renovation of the auditorium, we needed to choose a show that was flexible in staging and rehearsal demands - and "Letters to Sala" has been a perfect fit for our needs, as well as giving actors the opportunity to focus on developing as character actors and



Ogemaw Heights High School is presenting 'Letters to Sala' on Nov. 6, 7, and 8, at 7 p.m., at the high school.

Courtesy photo

portraying more serious roles.

In "Letters to Sala" two stories play out at the same time on different sides of the stage; one is based in Sosnowiec, Poland, in the 1940s. In this, we follow young Sala's (Olivia Cummings) perspective through the labor camps as she receives her letters. Meanwhile, the other story follows older Sala (Skylar Smith) and her family based in New

York, in 2005. The staging has another key element: every single real letter was scanned and placed online, and during the show, images of these letters will be projected as well as the photos of the true people the actors have the honor of portraying on the stage.

In addition to the gripping narrative, it is also exciting to be the first performance in the renovated auditorium space, which includes

new seating, updated carpets, fresh lights, and a state-of-the-art sound booth, as well as new stage flooring. This renovation has opened up so many more opportunities for our Ogemaw Heights Theatrical Troupe to flourish, not only now, but also in the future.

With direction by Toni Thomas, sound from Tom Rea, and help from Mark Andersen, our Theatrical Troupe promises that this

show will be one for the books. Tickets can be purchased in advance at ohhst.ludus.com, Kit's in downtown West Branch, and at the OHHS office for \$12 each. The play runs Nov. 6, 7, and 8, and the performance will be at 7 p.m. Don't miss this powerful story of the resilience of humans amid the atrocities of war and the legacy we are left with for years to come.

Nominations sought for
'Wall of Honor'

The Ogemaw County Wall of Honor was first established in 2019 to permanently honor individuals who have been instrumental in county government and/or performed volunteer services deemed to have been of great importance to the improvement of the county.

Commissioner Craig Scott was one of the board members when the wall was first established. He said, "This wall serves as a place for people to learn about our local history and honor the heritage and journey of many of our local families."

Currently there are six persons who have been immortalized on the wall: Clarice Sperry, Adrian Dantzer, Miriam Rosebrugh "Gramma Red", Harold "Bud" Smith, Jr., Scott Colclasure, and Dr. Robert Rea. The induction ceremony occurs at a public board meeting where friends and family have an opportunity to speak about the inductee's life accomplishments and share fond memories.

To have a person selected for the Wall of Honor, each recipient must be nominated by an Ogemaw County resident and be chosen by a majority vote of the Ogemaw County Board of Commissioners. If selected, the honoree will have a plaque dedicated to them with their picture and biography displayed.

The qualifying criteria for

nominees are:

Nominee has had a significant impact on the continuation and/or enhancement of the county.

Nominee was a pioneer in his or her field of service.

Nominee's quality and length of service.

Nominee must be deceased.

Currently, the OCBC are accepting new nominations for the wall of honor. All sponsors must fill out an application and have it submitted by April 1 each year. If their nominee is selected, the sponsor is required to pay \$150 for the cost of the plaque. All nominations are reviewed by the Committee of the Whole by April 30 each year. If you know of an individual deserving of this tribute, applications can be picked up at the Ogemaw County Prosecutor's Office during normal business hours or you can go to the county's website at www.ocmi.us under the prosecuting attorney's tab and fill out an application online.

By choosing to nominate a person for whom you had great respect and admiration, you are insuring that while they may be gone from this earth, they will never be forgotten. And also, by sharing their life example, you can inspire future generations to be selfless and productive citizens.

Telling West Branch's history



Photo by Laura Bender

Want to learn more about West Branch? Check out the eco-friendly information box at the new West Branch Commons. The first of nine to be displayed around town, this device, a project of the West Branch Visitors Bureau, literally tells you stories. Just crank the handle to energize the box, then push the button for the story you want to hear. Box number one offers three choices: the history of West Branch Steel, site information for West Branch Commons, and information about West Branch Township events. Stop by and try it yourself and look for announcements about upcoming locations.

Ogemaw County
SUPERIOR NEWS

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www.superior-news.com

Giving a big thanks to our greeters

BY SALLY A. REA

As curator of the Ogemaw County Museum, I want to give a special thanks to all my members who take the time to be a greeter. No one realizes how important the greeters are who take the time to welcome the visitors who come to see our museum.

I, as the curator, would never be able to get my work done without them. I am constantly working on new collections, researching family history, doing tours, running to the post office, going to the attic to look for items, or to the basement.

The greeters manage the front desk and make sure all visitors sign the guest book and greet each visitor with a friendly smile and welcome. Some days, it's impossible to get a greeter, so I man the

front desk and try to do my job too.

We are looking for more people to help as a greeter. We are only open two days a week, which is Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There are two shifts each day, which is from 10 a.m. to noon and noon to 2 p.m.

You will operate our gift shop, as well. You will meet many interesting people and learn a lot about the history of Ogemaw County. Join our Ogemaw County Historical Society as a greeter.

So, my dear greeters, you know who you are and how much I

appreciate your services. Some of my greeters, if I am tied up in my office, know how to do the tours.

Without your help, the museum wouldn't run smoothly. So, God bless you members for all the hours you have helped me and making sure our visitors are treated well.

Our "Sunshine Lady," Mary Cole, sends out all the cards for birthdays, sympathy, thinking of you, and whatever occasion is necessary.

She goes over and beyond and makes sure that each card is special for each person. Thank you, Mary.



SALLY A. REA
HISTORIAN AND
CURATOR

West Branch - Standing the test of time

BY PETER FABBRI

There's something magical about stepping onto the sidewalks of downtown West Branch. Maybe it's the way the historic brick buildings catch the afternoon sun, or how the scent of fresh-baked garlic bread and sizzling burgers drifts through the air. Whatever it is, our little slice of northern Michigan has become a go-to destination for shopping and dining, and connecting that feels both personal and unforgettable.

Perhaps it's the feeling that this place has "good bones" with structures that tell a story from over 125 years ago when the streets were gravel and the sidewalks wooden. Western in a sense. Rugged but cosmopolitan with new shops and diners and banks. A growing community where all the goods and services were within walking distance. From furniture and food to clothing to grain elevators and funeral

homes. It was all there. And it still is.

West Branch has withstood the test of time when other small rural downtown communities have fallen to ever changing forces with the industrial age, the Great Depression, two World Wars and the fast-paced changes of the 60s, 70s and up to the current time.

In the early 20th Century, it withstood raging, out of control wildfires pressing ever so close to the western edge of town that threatened its very existence. Over the years it has withstood building fires that have leveled some of the original structures, but they were replaced.

It survived and tells a story. A story of grit and determination. Of hard work and risk. Of character and desire. The people of West Branch kept this community together and they still do. It is now newly rebuilt, the streets, sidewalks, and the infrastructure underneath all ready to pursue the continuation of its place in history along with its people, places and things.

I tend to think that West Branch is much more than just its great buildings and structures. It's a blend of rustic charm and modern flair; it offers an experience that's both relaxing and enriching.

It's the moments that linger for each of us as we have memories of time spent here at events or shopping or dining with friends and family.

In a sense, it feels like home. It is home.



PETER FABBRI

News from the Skidway Lake area

BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON

Mills Township is on a roll. It was approved at the Oct. 14 meeting to start a veteran's memorial flag program. The flags will be placed on the light poles on the boardwalk. This program will be like the ones now on display in West Branch. It will be a great way to honor a veteran in your family. The details will be worked out and will be available for Veterans Day 2026.

There are also plans to make a flower bed at Skidway Lake Beach Park. This flower bed will be a memorial for Whittemore Prescott School students who have passed away before they graduate or shortly after. The idea came from Dakota McKuen's mother, Judy Hitsman. She would like to provide flowers for the garden. The Mills Township beautification committee, Sue Boom and Tina Ailport, will plant

the flower bed. Also, Sariah Obst and Melody Broderick's names will be added to the garden.



APRIL
HARKEY-MASON

Mills Township will also be looking for volunteers to serve on a blight advisory committee. This committee will help with cleaning up blighted properties as needed. The

committee will help those who qualify for help. For example, elderly who are not physically able to do the work themselves.

The Mills Township Board voted on a new logo. There were several to choose from, but the photo will be the new logo now. It represents our time of logging. Skidway Lake was a logging skid way for lumbermen to skid logs to the lumber camp, lakes and rivers so the logs could be transported to

the lumber mills.

Reminder, the Skidway Lake Halloween parade will be Oct. 25; line up at Rosati's parking lot 2 p.m. and the parade starts at 3 p.m. rain or shine. No need to register, just get in line. The Cardinal Optimist Trunk or Treat will be Halloween night Oct. 31, at the Skidway Lake Chamber of Commerce starting at 4 p.m. and ending at 6 p.m. sharp. No pets allowed. Register to pass out your candy by calling or texting April at 989-578-8768.



KIWANIS OF WEST BRANCH

The Kiwanis Club will be selling Gourmet Nuts at the end of October. They are still available this year for \$25. If you want to help, come be a part of our team. The Kiwanis Club meets at noon on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at the G's Pizzeria, downtown West Branch. 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 Denny 315 725 1199. We are rebuilding our club. Our president is Todd Spencer, and the secretary/treasurer is Denny Shumway. If you want to help the children of West Branch and around the world, we are here.

AKTION CLUB

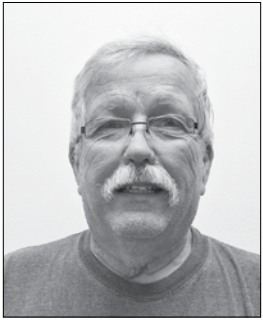
The Aktion Club continues to collect bottles and cans. You can call 315-725-1199 and make arrangements for pick up or drop off locations.

We will be handing out checks at our November meeting. We are in transition from one treasurer to another at this time.

Kiwanis helped at the My-Michigan Halloween walk this past weekend. We will be helping at the Surline School Halloween Party on Oct. 31. Those with special needs



Kiwanis CORNER



DENNY SHUMWAY

interested in joining our club, come on the second Wednesday of the month at noon at the First United Methodist Church located on the corner of Fairview and State streets.

OGE MAW COUNTY FOOD PAN-TRY

We are looking for donations of food or money to help us with the influx of families. You can add to your grocery bill at Meijer Store with a card found at the checkouts or customer service. We will take donations every Wednesday of the month from 8:30 to 11 a.m. We are located in the outreach building 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. We are open every Wednesday from 9-11 a.m. or until we run out of food. Families can come once a month. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

FOOD TRUCK

The monthly food truck will be at the First United Methodist Church, on the corner of Fairview and State streets, on Nov. 11. Line-up at 9 a.m. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Ogemaw County Superior News

The Ogemaw County 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 newsstands for 75 cents per issue or annually for \$50.

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Giving hope to children through foster care

BY CHRISTINA PIERCE

Foster care is a beautiful tapestry woven with stories of hope, love and resilience. It's one of the most compassionate and selfless actions a person can undertake, as it offers a lifeline to children who have faced unimaginable challenges.

For as long as I could remember, even in the midst of my own dysfunctional upbringing, I've wanted to be a foster parent. As a seven-year-old girl, I knew that I wanted to give love, hope and safety to those who longed for it. I might not have known those exact words, but I knew that I wanted to give someone the gift of safety and belonging. I wanted to be a voice to those whose voices went unheard. That longing stayed buried in the deepest parts of my being for many years.

Shortly after my husband and I were married, I discovered that a little girl I had known from church would be leaving her foster home once school ended for the summer. This grieved my heart to know that she would be

moving to yet another home to again start over, all while reunification efforts were still underway. She had only been in care for a little over a year; she would be moving to her second home.

There was also one more thing I knew these children needed, and I could offer. Stability. I wanted to give them the ability to unpack. Unpack their hopes, dreams, and feelings without wondering if they would once again be moved.

I knew from an early age how difficult it was to properly form attachments when a child has to continually start over. Starting over was never easy for anyone, let alone children in these situations.

I had spoken to my husband about this little girl and suggested we apply for our foster license. He wasn't quite as eager as I was. There were a lot of questions, fears, and sacrifices. The journey of foster parenting is not just about providing a roof over a child's head; it's about opening your heart to nurture, guide and love a young person who needs

it the most. This was terrifying to him, but he agreed to think about it. Think about it, he did. In fact, he wrestled with it. It kept him awake, wondering, praying.

Three days later, like Jonah in the belly of the whale, he said, "I'm in."

Foster care is one of the most compassionate and selfless actions a person can undertake.

We both recognized the need for foster care, and we acknowledged the sacrifices we would be making.

We chose to embark on this journey while understanding that these kids didn't make this choice. We embarked on the path with grace and compassion.

What's next, he asked.

The first thing we had to do was contact an agency to begin the application process. While there are several options to choose to apply with, we chose DHHS. There are also private non-profit agencies, however.

We asked our questions, and from there we were assigned a

licensing worker. Our worker asked us at least a 1,000 questions before we even got our application.

Next was our home study. This was a bit of a lengthier process. It required us to answer detailed questions, obtain physicals, background checks, fingerprinting, and a home inspection.

The final step was a two-day training called GROW. This is where we learn how to navigate the world that we will be stepping into. We would learn how to build relationships and communicate with the kids who would be in our care.

After this, our application, home study, and recommendations were then sent to the state for their approval. This can be a lengthy process, averaging approximately four to six months.

Being a foster parent is one

of my greatest joys. As children learn to trust and let you into their world, we have the privilege of watching them grow, heal and bloom.

Unfortunately, in Michigan there is an overwhelming shortage of foster homes. As one licensing worker told me, "Foster homes are closing faster than we can license new ones." Michigan has approximately 10,000 children who enter the system each year. There is a great need for loving, safe, and compassionate homes.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, or perhaps interested in ways that you can help foster parents, one of the first steps would be to contact a foster care navigator at 1-855-MICH-KIDS. There are also local foster care support and informational groups as well.

Becoming a foster parent was indeed our best decision, yes!



CHRISTINA PIERCE

Cardinal Optimist Club hosts Trunk or Treat

BY LADONNA SCHULTZ

On Friday, Oct. 31, members of the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake will gather their cars and trucks at the Skidway Lake Chamber of Commerce parking lot and decorate their open trunks in scary, spooky, and haunting Halloween themes. The decorating is always top notch, and participants take pride in their unique and imaginative displays. There is also a competitive edge to the decorating because awards for first, second and third place trunk set ups will be handed out giving this year's winners "pumpkin" to brag about.

However, the main incentive for creating "gourdous" displays is to allow kids to go from car to car for sweets and treats and other Halloween fun. Many parents prefer Trunk or Treating as a modern-day twist on traditional



LADONNA SCHULTZ

door-to-door begging. One of the reasons for the popularity of Trunk or Treating is that kids can wander at their own pace in a safe area free of moving traffic. But if we are "creepin" it real, the amount of candy one can accumulate in a short period of time is why most kids love to Trunk or Treat.

If you would like to sign up to pass out your candy at this event, register with April by calling or texting to 989-578-8768. You do not have to be a member of the COCOSL to join and there is no charge to reserve your spot. So, come on out for some "skele-fun" and "treat" yourself to the joy of seeing the happy faces of the kids in their costumes as you pass out candy in the "spirit" of Halloween! (I had some vampire puns, but I left them out because they sucked).

Letter to the editor policy

The Ogemaw County 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 deanna@superior-news.com or by traditional mail to P.O. Box 603, West Branch, MI 48661.

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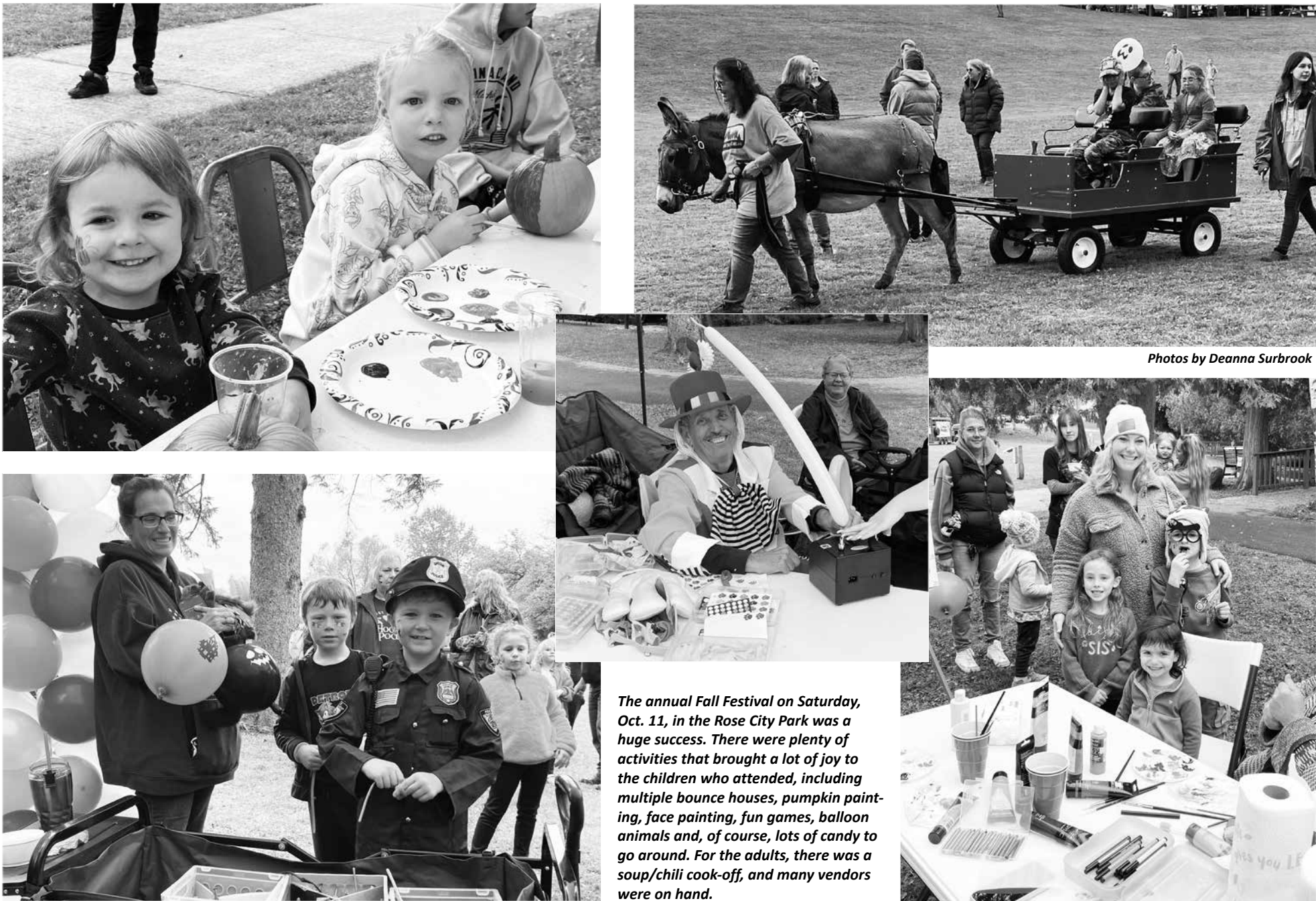
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Fall Festival in Rose City delights children



Photos by Deanna Surbrook

The annual Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 11, in the Rose City Park was a huge success. There were plenty of activities that brought a lot of joy to the children who attended, including multiple bounce houses, pumpkin painting, face painting, fun games, balloon animals and, of course, lots of candy to go around. For the adults, there was a soup/chili cook-off, and many vendors were on hand.

NFL Football Teams

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See answers on page 13

W-P eighth grade volleyball team shines



Courtesy photo

The Whittemore-Prescott eighth grade volleyball team won the Northstar League Championship on Oct. 11 in Tawas. Pictured are Coach Jennifer Burr (l) and her players. Well done, ladies!

Cole's

« Continued from page 1

to the after-sales needs of our customers. If there is a problem, we take care of it. We know appliances break down at the worst possible moment, so we offer zero percent financing for one year to help people get what they need. We also have a lease-to-own option.” Alex offers this pro-tip to help the community as we near the holiday season: “Many people with older, self-cleaning ovens try to clean them before cooking the Thanksgiving turkey. But as stoves age, they aren’t as able to take the high heat generated by the self-cleaning process, and they

quit working. The best thing to do is to clean it after the holiday. Then, if the oven dies, there is not so much panic to replace it.” To introduce Cole’s Appliance to West Branch and surrounding areas, a three-day grand opening is planned. It will begin with the West Branch Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting on Thursday, Oct. 23, and continue during business hours through Sunday at 3 p.m. During the event, there will be appliance giveaways, refreshments and exclusive savings. Cole’s Appliance in West Branch carries every major brand of kitchen and laundry appliance,

including Frigidaire, LG, GE, Maytag, Whirlpool, and Samsung. To learn more about the store, stop in at 2711 I-75 Business Loop in West Branch during the Grand Opening, visit them online at <https://www.colesappliance.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/colesappliance>, call 989-343-5555 or email coles@colesappliance.com. Cole’s Appliance in West Branch is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Evening hours are by appointment only. The store is closed on Sundays.

Ribbon cuttings at ForRest Spa in WB

Three businesses, Spotted Cow Wellness, Annette’s Beautiful Nails and the Beauty Spot Esthetics, recently moved into ForRest Spa, located at 320 W. Houghton Ave., in downtown West Branch. Each of the businesses are now members of the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and celebrated on Friday, Oct. 17, with ribbon cutting ceremonies.



Erin Dvorak, owner of Spotted Cow Wellness, provides several services, including various methods of massage therapy, nutritional counseling, essential oils, herbology and vibrational therapy. A complete list of her services is available on her website at www.vagaro.com/spottedcowwellness or she can be contacted via Facebook or calling 989-387-5683.



Photos courtesy of WBACC

With over 25 years of experience as a licensed nail technician, Annette Gann, owner of Annette’s Beautiful Nails, provides full nail services for hands and feet with a “gentle” touch. Hours are by appointment only. To make an appointment, text her at 989-329-8770 or send her a message through Facebook Messenger by searching Annette’s Beautiful Nails.



Allison Goretcki, owner of the Beauty Spot Esthetics, is a full esthetic salon, provides full body waxing, lash extensions, brow laminations, lash lifts and tints, spray tanning, microblading and more. To make an appointment, call 989-891-7531.

Commons

« Continued from page 1

communities throughout the state, to turn underutilized, blighted properties into assets that can be used to serve residents, support small businesses, and, frankly, attract both tourists and new talent alike. And this is a great example of that. We know that people, places, and projects are instrumental in driving economic prosperity throughout the state, and I want to congratulate all the partners that were involved in making this vision a reality. A one-year timeline, I can say, is pretty impressive.”

“We could not have done that without the contractors: Three Rivers, Finish Concrete, Ace Electric, and Michigan with the parking lot,” Hickmott said.

To give those gathered a view to what it took to achieve so much in so little time, Justin Benjamin from Finish Concrete said, “Here on Oct. 14, with the warm weather, this didn’t start this way when we broke ground last November and into April and March. You’re taking something that could be categorized as blight, then you’re starting in the winter when it’s wet and the water table’s high. The crews that worked here on this job were born and raised in West Branch. Every one of these brick piers was four feet in the ground, half in the water table, half out. We were draining water. It was still snowing in April. And for this all to come together for this area, it has an impact on me, our company, and all the vendors, to reap the benefits from it. It was a lot of

work, but it’s great for our area.” West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Heather Neuhaus said, “This space is awesome. We cannot wait to utilize it and partner with the West Branch Township for this. Thank you so much for bringing this, Jeremy, and everybody that was part of this.”

Following the opening ceremony and ribbon cutting, all in attendance commemorated the day with a community photo in the pavilion, where later the Godfreys gave a well-received musical performance. Thanks to the warm afternoon weather, people lingered for hours around the fire pits, chatting and enjoying a delicious nosh provided by Lumberjack Lodge and coffee provided by Starbucks.

The West Branch Commons, 2460 M-76, is a multi-use facility that includes a stretch of covered spaces designed to house an open-air market, a pavilion for concerts, community gatherings and other events, two large firepits to accommodate cold-weather gatherings, and a building to house an appropriate business. On the corner of M-76 and the I-75 Business Loop, access to the site is off M-76.

All spaces at the West Branch Commons have lighting and electric outlets. To inquire about rentals, visit <https://www.westbranch-township.com>, call 989-345-5450, or stop by the West Branch Township Hall, 1705 S. Fairview Road.

Happy 90th birthday



Courtesy photo

Roland Harkey celebrated a surprise 90th birthday party with family and friends on Saturday, Oct. 18. The celebration was held at the Richland Township Hall in Prescott. Guests came from all over the state. There was special music performed by Roland and his friends playing guitar and singing. The party was hosted by family and friends.

Look out below - incoming pumpkin



Photo by Laura Bender

The Ogemaw County Veterans Alliance and American Legion Post 103 hosted the “Great Pumpkin Push” in Irons Park on Saturday, Oct. 11. Children hoped their pumpkins would land in the bull’s eye at the bottom of the big hill in the park. Kids also enjoyed refreshments and chances to win prizes.



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HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

- 1 Younger children should never be sent to trick-or-treat without an adult. Older children should go in pairs and never be sent out by themselves. There is safety in pairs.
- 2 Make sure your children are wearing glowsticks, holding flashlights, or wearing reflective tape so cars can see them better and teach them road safety when crossing driveways.
- 3 Choose safe places to trick-or-treat such as shopping malls and public centers. They are well lit and off the streets, so children don't have to walk on the streets in the dark.
- 4 If your children will be trick-or-treating outside, teach them proper road safety ahead of time. They should cross only on crosswalks after looking and treat driveways as roads.
- 5 Teach your children to never enter a house and about the dangers of walking away with strangers. Inform them to never approach a vehicle, even if someone is calling them over.
- 6 Make sure your children know emergency procedures. They should know where to meet you if you get separated, what your number is, and how to call 911.
- 7 Drive extra careful on Halloween. Drive slower than usual, take extra time before making a turn to look for children, and anticipate children running into the road unexpectedly.
- 8 Make sure that your child's costume is not too long they trip. If they are wearing a mask, ensure they can see clearly or have them take it off before crossing the road.
- 9 Inform your children never to eat candy until you have looked through their bag and inspected it. Check each piece and throw away open or tampered with wrappers.
- 10 Teach your kids about cavities and brushing their teeth after eating sweets. Prevent a tummy ache by limiting the amount of candy they eat at one sitting.



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Celebrating the fall season in downtown West Branch

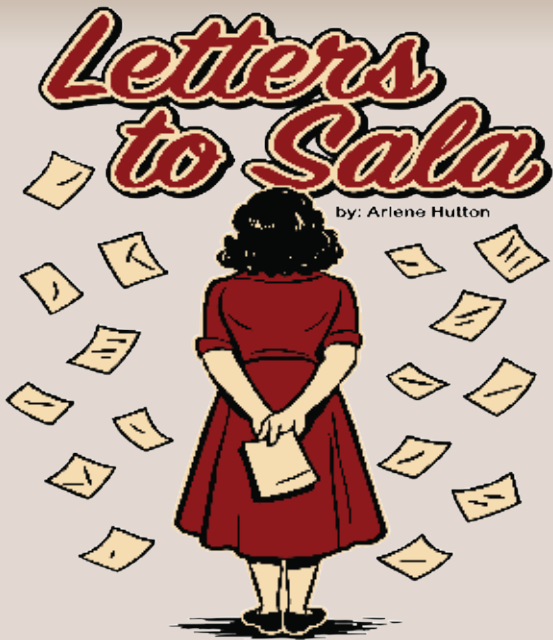
Locals and visitors celebrate fall in downtown West Branch at the Oktoberfest on Oct. 11. Sponsored by the West Branch Visitors Bureau, the event included something for everyone: kids' activities, art and craft vendors, pony rides, Uncle Hans, the farmers' market and a petting zoo. Performances by the Kowalski Brothers Polka Band and Linda Lee and the Golden Aires filled the air with toe-tapping music, while chain-saw carvers John Wesley, Justin Driver, Alonzo Montoya, Matayo Montoya, and Ron Kane fascinated the crowds. People lingered for hours to enjoy the day. That evening, chilling activities were afoot downtown as local "Witches & Warlocks" strutted their stuff. Sponsored by the creative folks of the city of West Branch, the Ogemaw County Genealogical and Historical Society, West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau and the West Branch District Library, this event was a macabre hit.



Photos by Laura Bender



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Mighty Malikai

« Continued from page 1
them.”

In the spring of 2004, Kai’s parents noticed he was limping and was having a hard time bending over. Doctors believed it was just a pinched nerve and referred him for physical therapy, but he just got worse.

An MRI was ordered, and it was determined that he had some form of cancer, but it wasn’t clear of what type they were dealing with.

“He was in the hospital in Grand Rapids for a month, but they didn’t know what type of cancer he had,” Sara said. “Initially, they thought it was leukemia.”

After further testing, he was

ultimately diagnosed with Stage 4 alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma (ARMS), which is a rare and aggressive type of soft tissue cancer that primarily affects children and young adults. It originates in the skeletal muscle cells and ARMS often occurs in the extremities, trunk, and head and neck regions, and can spread to other parts of the body.

Kai underwent chemotherapy once a week for a year at DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids.

“Emotionally, he didn’t do well,” Sara said, adding as they neared the hospital anxiety would take control. “He would throw

up...the anxiety was that bad.”

Just last month, on Sept. 4, after some regular routine scans, the family was overjoyed to learn that there were no more signs of cancer in Kai’s body.

For the first time in over a year, he went back to school at Surline Elementary School, and all was well in the Petty family’s world.

Then it all came crashing down, again. After only a few weeks in school, Kai’s second grade teacher, Elizabeth Moore, noticed that Kai was limping. She notified his parents right away and another MRI was ordered.

“They found a tumor behind his right kneecap,” Sara said. “There is no cure, and he had only a few weeks to months to live.”

On Friday, Oct. 17, the family traveled to Grand Rapids one last time. It would be determined how long Kai had left by running a PET scan to determine if the cancer spread to his organs.

On Monday, Oct. 20, Sara announced on Facebook that it indeed had.

“It is in his lungs, sternum, pelvis, spine, hips, legs and bone marrow,” she wrote. “They have put the referral into hospice care, and they will be here tomorrow to do an assessment and get to know Kai and our family.”

“We agreed to get hospice on board sooner rather than later, so we have another avenue of support for Malikai,” she added. “They are local and will come to our home, so no more driving across the state for appointments. We are all still just trying to process this, as it’s all happening so fast. And seems so surreal. We are enjoying our time together as a family, but our door is also open for healthy visitors. Again, just want to thank everyone for the love and support.”

Before the latest news, the family had made the heart wrenching decision to not continue Kai’s treatment any longer.

“There are some clinical trials,” Sara said. “But the chances are slim to none that it will work, and the side effects would outweigh the benefits.”

“We’ve decided not to prolong



Courtesy photo
Malikai, pictured with his parents, Travis and Sara, along with his siblings, Kadence and Jax.

the inevitable and let him live his life to the fullest of what time he has left and be home,” she added. “He’s very happy going to school and will keep going as long as he can. We will do whatever makes him happy at this point.”

“Kai is happiest when he is home surrounded by loved ones and doing happy, fun things... not in a hospital halfway across the state,” Sara said. “They have brought on a palliative doctor (pain management doctor) to help walk this path with us and keep Kai comfortable. We don’t know how much time we have, only God knows. But we plan to enjoy every second, every minute of every day.”

In his time remaining, the family is staying close to home and allowing Kai to enjoy all his favorite hobbies. They have decided not to tell Kai or his siblings the severity of his condition.

“He loves four-wheelers, and he has a golf cart,” Sara said, adding that they live on a small hobby farm and Kai loves the animals. “He also wants to go hunting with his dad.”

Kai also recently became a

member of the motorcycle group, the Iron Bandogs, and he even got to go for a ride.

The family is bracing themselves for the inevitable and recently visited the funeral home to plan Kai’s final arrangements, which will cost about \$7,500.

To make matters worse, if possible, Travis, who Sara said is “struggling silently,” hurt his back at work recently and has been off work.

“It’s just been a lot,” Sara said. “We’ve drained our accounts.”

“The community has just been amazing,” she added. “We are so grateful for the support system outside of our immediate family.”

The family’s pain is unimaginable, and the last thing they need to worry about is finances in their darkest hour.

If you’d like to help the family, send checks payable to Travis and Sara Petty, to 967 Gallagher Rd., West Branch, MI 48661. There has also been a Go Fund Me account at gofund.me/62d19ccd.

If nothing else, pray for a miraculous healing in this sweet boy’s body and for peace and comfort for his family and friends.



Photo by Deanna Surbrook
Students and staff at Surline Elementary and Middle Schools recently hosted a Hat Day. For \$1, students were able to wear hats to school and all the proceeds went to the Petty family. Pictured is Malikai’s second grade class showing their support with special hats they made to honor their friend.

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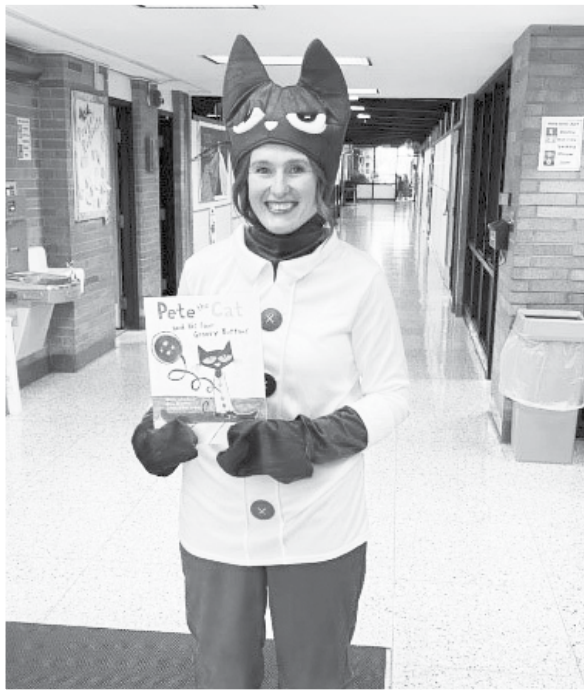
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‘Death before Decaf’ becomes WBACC members



Photo by Deanna Surbrook
Brad and Emily Hyde, pictured with their daughters, Hazel (far left) and Roxy, opened Death before Decaf, a mobile food truck serving specialty coffees and yummy grilled cheese sandwiches, on Memorial Day weekend of this year. On Thursday, Oct. 17, the couple became new members of the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony. To find out their daily location, search Death before Decaf on Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok.

Happenings at St. Joseph School



St. Joseph School in West Branch recently had a special guest visit, Pete the Cat. Pete came to read to the students, “Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons.” Pete is one of the favorites of the students. October is the month of the pumpkin and the pre-school through second graders went to The Howling Pumpkin, in St. Helen, for a field trip. They enjoyed cider and doughnuts, a corn maze, bouncy houses, climbing bales and hayrides across fields of sunflowers.



Courtesy photos

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MyMichigan offers lung cancer screenings

In recognition of National Lung Cancer Screening Day, MyMichigan Medical Centers in Alma, Alpena, Midland, Saginaw, Tawas and West Branch are offering lung cancer screenings on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9 a.m. to noon. The main purpose of National Lung Cancer Screening Day is to rise above the stigma and celebrate individuals who make the decision to get screened for lung cancer regardless of their smoking history or current smoking status.

By extending hours, we are increasing access for this life saving

screening to allow individuals to be screened without taking time off work during the week,” said James Fenton, M.D., board-certified, fellowship-trained thoracic surgeon, MyMichigan Health. “A low dose CT is the single most effective strategy for reducing mortality from lung cancer.”

Lung cancer is one of the deadliest forms of cancer and is estimated to claim the lives of more than 127,000 Americans this year. Even though survival rates can be improved significantly by screening, only a small percentage of

eligible individuals get screened for lung cancer.

“A lung cancer screening is for those who smoke, or have smoked in the past 15 years, but currently don’t have symptoms such as pain, a persistent cough or an unexplained weight loss,” added Dr. Fenton. “This screening is designed to find lung cancer at an early stage when more successful treatments can be offered. Without a screening, most lung cancers are typically discovered at a late stage.”

Those eligible and who could

benefit from lung cancer screening include those age 50 to 80 years old and currently a smoker or have quit within the past 15 years. Also, those who have been exposed to cigarettes that add up to 20 pack years. For example, someone who smoked at least 10 cigarettes per day for 40 years or one pack for 20 years or two packs for 10 years. In addition, those who have met all the requirements and have no acute symptoms or have not had a CT low dose lung screening within

the past year are a good candidate.

Those interested in scheduling a low dose CT at MyMichigan Medical Centers in Alma, Alpena, Midland, Saginaw, Tawas and West Branch may call the MyMichigan Access Center (MAC) at 989-633-5252.

Those interested in more information on the comprehensive lung care program at MyMichigan Health may visit www.mymichigan.org/lung.

Collaboration focuses on maternal and infant care coaching, education

MyMichigan Medical Center Tawas, in collaboration with District Health Department (DHD) #2, recently piloted “Maternal & Infant Care Coaching, Connections and Capacity,” a grant-funded program supported by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. This innovative initiative connects community health workers, nurse navigators, providers, and DHD No. 2 staff to support women and children from pregnancy through a child’s first 18 months.

The program created a simplified referral system to help families access a wide range of DHD No. 2 services. These include support for basic needs such as housing, transportation, and food insecurity, as well as resources to address other social determinants of health. Families also benefit

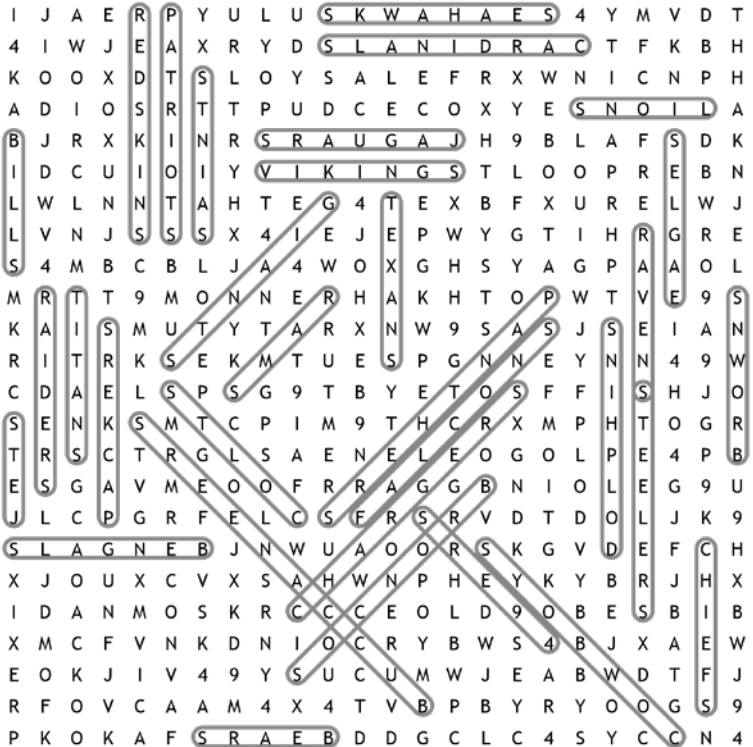
from prenatal classes, educational materials, and hands-on opportunities for both parents. Fathers, for example, can learn skills such as swaddling, holding, and bathing a baby while forming connections with other local dads.

“We are thrilled with the success of this program. MyMichigan Health and DHD No. 2 are committed to continuing this important community education and referral network for local families beyond what was established with the initial grant,” said Alissa Parnicky, former registered nurse navigator for the program. “Parents can take part in eight educational classes—offered virtually or in person, individually or in groups—that help build confidence in caring for newborns and infants in a safe, supportive environment.”

Since launching, the program has led to increased enrollment and referrals for several health and family services, including Michigan’s Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP), the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, Healthy Futures, Healthy Families, Community Connections, and Immunizations.

By identifying needs early, the program promotes healthy pregnancies and helps ensure that families have access to nutritious food, reliable transportation, prenatal care, safe sleep education, and ongoing support to make informed decisions.

Those interested in registering for future sessions of this program may contact Heather Sendo at 989-362-2540.



See puzzle on page 6

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Ogemaw County Clerk	989-345-0215
Probate/Family Court	989-345-0145
Emergency Shelter	989-217-0973
Friend of the Court	989-345-5520
Healthaccess	989-343-3608
Ogemaw Commission on Aging	989-345-3010
Options Resource Clinic	989-345-7398
Ogemaw Public Transit	989-345-5790
Children's Assmt. Center	989-275-7145
Salvation Army	989-345-4690
Community Food Pantry	989-345-0493
MSU Extension/4-H	989-345-0692
Ogemaw County Prosecutor	989-345-5700

Michigan State Police	989-345-0956
Ogemaw County Sheriff	989-345-3111
West Branch Police	989-345-2627
Rose City Police	989-685-3051

National Help Lines

Adult & Child Protective Services	855-444-3911
Domestic Violence	888-554-3169
Food Assistance (WIC)	800-504-2650
Catholic Human Services	800-356-5755
National Suicide Prevention	800-273-8255
American Red Cross	800-691-6059
Poison Control	800-222-1222

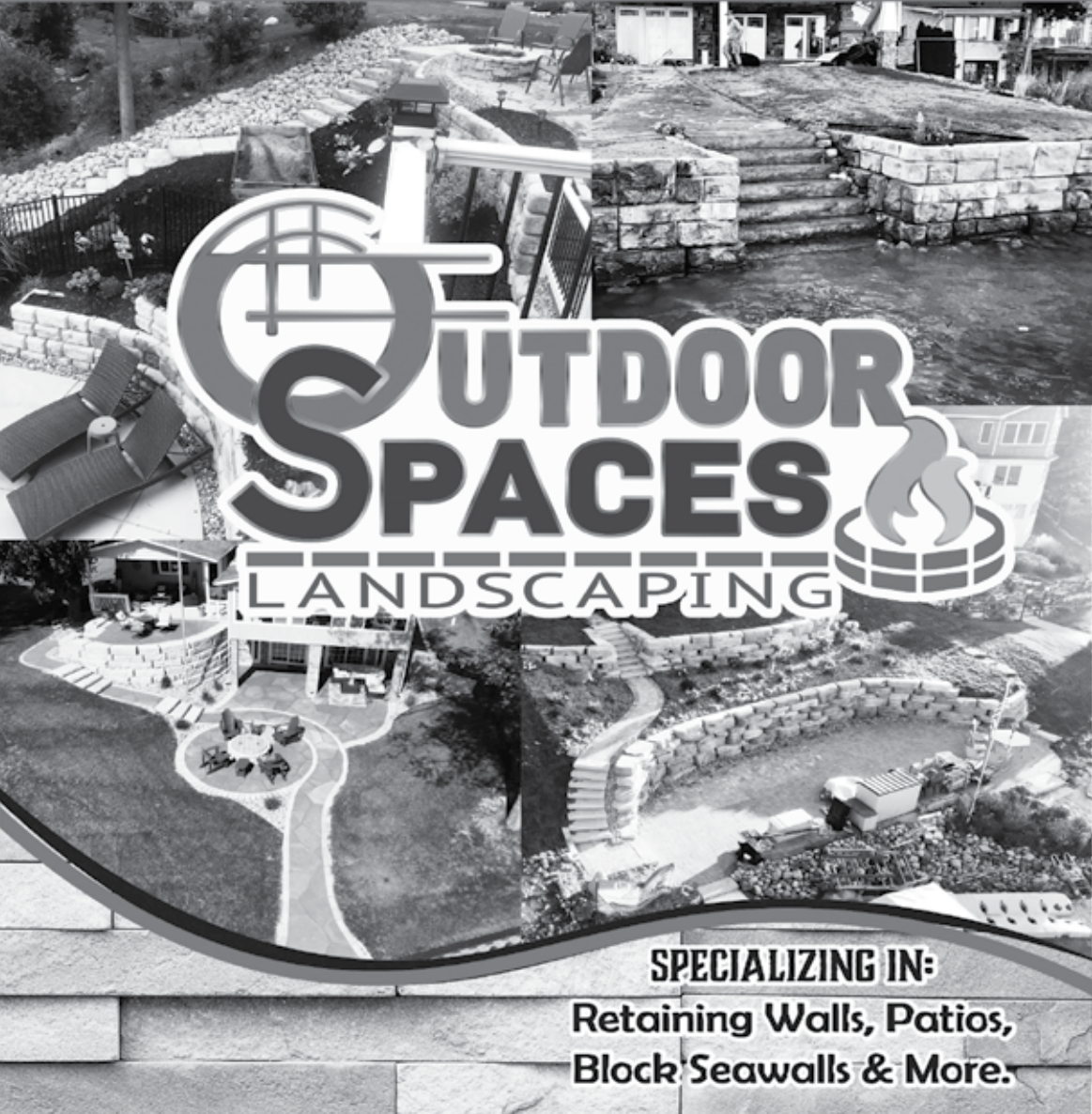
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