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# Next stop - The North Pole All aboard the ‘Santa Train’



Photo by Deanna Surbrook  
 It was a little chilly, but a festive time was had by all at the Lake State Railway 2025 Santa Train on Saturday, Dec. 6, in downtown West Branch. After disembarking the train, Santa and Mrs. Claus gathered in the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Depot to meet the children. After sharing their wish list with Santa, the children each received a candy cane and a stuffed animal. Alli Storer’s, 2, of West Branch, eyes were all aglow while meeting Santa and Mrs. Claus. See more photos from the event on page 18.

# A legacy of grit: Father and son earn Golden Helmet honors 28 years apart

**BY LAURA BENDER**  
 “Success is not as hard as you might think. One or two good choices each day can make all the difference,” Klint Marshall said.  
 For Klint, and his son Calvin, those good choices have led not only to success on the football field, but to significant public recognition for their achievements.  
 Two weeks ago, Ogemaw Heights High School senior Calvin Marshall earned the Golden Helmet Player of the Year for Class B award, the same honor his father Klint received in 1997. That was the year the Falcons won the Class B State Championship in a shocking upset against Marshall High School.  
 “It (the award) kind of came as a shock,” Calvin said. “My coach,  
**GOLDEN continues on page 21 »**



Courtesy photo  
 Like father – like son. Ogemaw Heights High School Senior Calvin Marshall was recently honored with the Golden Helmet Player of the Year Award, which his father, Klint, also won 28 years before.

# G’s Pizzeria hosts annual free Christmas dinner

**BY LAURA BENDER**  
 Christmas is a day for joy, laughter, stories told around the table and delicious food. But not everyone can be with those they love or prepare a meal. To help folks have a joyous celebration, G’s Pizzeria is again hosting a free Christmas dinner on Christmas Day.  
 “This is our way of giving back to a community that’s been good to us,” Chris Galea said. “We’ve been making this Christmas dinner for as long as I can remember, at least 30 years.”  
 The delicious meal includes all the traditional dishes: turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, rolls, etc. Those who want to find fellowship around the table may have their meal served at G’s. Those who need to eat at home may schedule a delivery.  
 It all started in the summer of 1981 when a friend of an employee at G’s Pizzeria lost a niece in an auto accident. As the holidays approached, she was grief stricken. The employees spoke with Chris looking for help and guidance.  
 “Let everyone come here,” he

responded without hesitation.  
 All these years later, the need is still there.  
 “There are different levels of need,” Chris said. “Some people need company, others need food, and there are others who enjoy being of service.”  
 If you would like to volunteer, show up at G’s Pizza at 10 a.m. Help is needed to set up, serve and clean up. Chris also needs volunteer drivers to make deliveries.  
 “Meals on Wheels doesn’t deliver on Christmas, so we get a lot of requests from homebound adults,” Chris said.  
 Christmas dinner will be served on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, from noon to 3 p.m. at G’s Pizzeria, 200 W. Houghton Ave., in West Branch. If you would like to eat at the restaurant or have meals delivered, you must make a reservation by calling 989-345-3008. Please call soon.  
 Most years the Galea family feeds over 300 people, and that requires a lot of preparation.  
 Thanks to Chris Galea, his family, staff and volunteers for helping others to know the blessings and joy of Christmas.

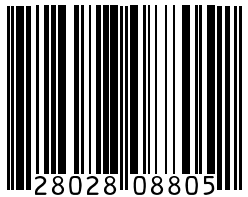
# Lupton man pens science fiction thriller

**BY LAURA BENDER**  
 Are you a fan of science fiction? “Project Earth,” by Lupton author Jay Fiondella, should be your next read.  
 This compelling novel introduces the reader to an extra-terrestrial race that offers humanity advancements capable of ending hunger, curing disease, extending longevity, and creating limitless renewable energy. However, acceptance of these advancements would severely alter socio-economic systems built on power, medical needs, energy resources and the divide between the haves and have-nots. The novel’s tension builds in response to the question: will humanity unite to

embrace this unearthly race and their profound offering, or will pride, prejudice, greed, and ignorance stand in the way of Project Earth?  
 Available from Amazon in paperback, Kindle version and most recently in audiobook, “Project Earth” is Jay Fiondella’s third published work. The first, entitled “But Dad,” is a personal narrative of fatherhood, written with honesty, a unique sense of humor and unquestionable love.  
**FIONDELLA continues on page 9 »**



JAY FIONDELLA



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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](mailto:info@coalitionofhope.net).

*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 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-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. My-Michigan 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.

**Dec 13**

**Ugly Christmas Sweater 5K run**, sponsored by West Branch Candy Cane Lane, Saturday, Dec. 13, downtown West Branch on Houghton Avenue. Pre-register by messaging West Branch Candy Cane Lane.

**2025 Christmas Light Parade**, hosted by the West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce, Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m., downtown West Branch. The theme is Home for the Holidays. For parade entry sign-up, stop into the WBACC office or visit [www.wbacc.com](http://www.wbacc.com).

**Candy Cane Lane Christmas Market and Festival**, Saturday, Dec. 13, all-day event, downtown West Branch. For more information and complete list of events, visit their Facebook page.

**Blow-Up Costume Fashion Show**, sponsored by West Branch Candy Cane Lane, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2 p.m., downtown West Branch on Houghton Avenue.

*To place your event in the Community Happenings, email information to [deanna@superior-news.com](mailto: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.  
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Morning Worship 10:30  
[www.gladwincornerstone.com](http://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](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)

**Hale Methodist Church**  
*Everyone Welcome! Pastor: Mike Tullis*  
Sunday Worship - 10am; Sunday School - 11am

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201 W Main/Esmond, Hale; 989-728-9522  
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Remembering Pearl Harbor 84 years later



Members of the Veterans Alliance of Ogemaw County gather in Irons Park to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**BY LAURA BENDER**  
Early Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1941, two waves of Japanese fighters, bombers and torpedo planes attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The first wave hit the fleet at anchor, sinking four battleships, including the USS Arizona. Many other ships were sunk or damaged. The second wave struck the naval base and airfields, destroying 169 planes. In less than two hours, 2,403 Americans had been killed and 1,143 wounded.

The next day, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed Congress and, via radio, the nation: “Yesterday, Dec. 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.” He ended the speech with these words, “I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan... a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.” Both the House

and Senate then voted in support and at 4 p.m., Dec. 8, 1941, President Roosevelt signed the declaration of war. On the 84th anniversary of the “date which will live in infamy,” the Ogemaw County Veterans Alliance held a ceremony in Irons Park to remember. As the snow fell, they said a prayer, offered a gun salute and placed a wreath in Ogemaw Creek. It was a fitting tribute remembering one of the darkest days in the history of the United States.

Photo by Gail Card

St. Joseph School families ring the bell



Courtesy photo

St. Joseph School would like to thank the school families that were out recently ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. They were able to help raise over \$1,600. “We have been so blessed; it is awesome to be able to bless others that are in need,” said Principal Greg Meiser. “We are so grateful to be able to serve the community by sharing Christ, educating students and supporting others in the community.” Pictured are Abby Coleman and her daughter, Henzi.

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**KIWANIS OF  
WEST BRANCH**

Gourmet Nuts are still available this year for \$25. You can buy yours at Mercantile Bank, Bucks Country Cookin', West Branch City Hall. 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 G's

Pizzeria. 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. 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 are handing out donations at our December meeting. The treasurer switch has been made.

We provided hot chocolate at the Santa Train on Dec. 6 for donations.

Those with special needs interested in joining our club, come on the second



DENNY SHUMWAY

Wednesday of the month at noon at the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Fairview and State roads.

**OGE MAW  
COUNTY FOOD  
PANTRY**

We are looking for donations of food or money to help us with the influx of families. We supported over 270 families in the month of November. 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 roads on Dec. 12. Line-up at 9 a.m. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Amy Gildner Fransee shares artifacts and an update on the Forest Home Farm

BY SALLY A. REA

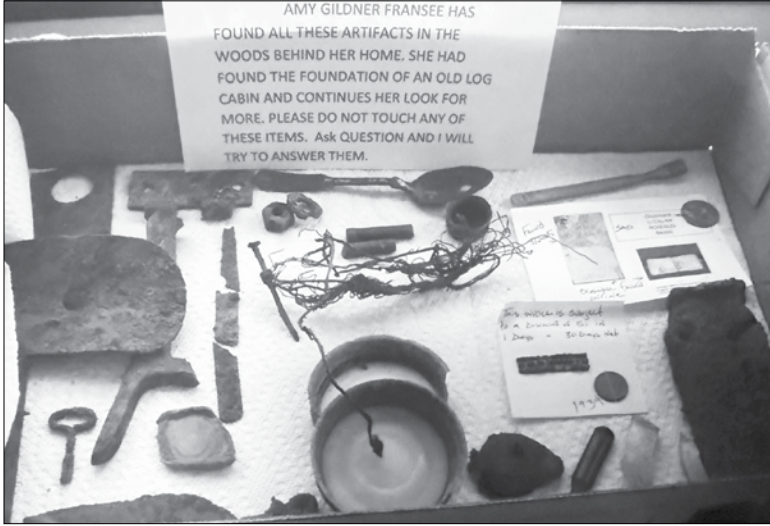
I am really proud of my niece, Amy Gildner Fransee, and what a find she found in 2020 in the woods behind her house. I am so pleased that she is interested in "preserving her heritage." Her grandparents, Clifford and Doris Gildner, owned this property at one time. I did a story in 2020 about "Mystery in the Woods," but she has found and dug up so much more. It started out with the foundation of an old cabin with many pieces of wood from the cabin lying in this area.

Alan Cascadden came out with his metal detector the first visit and found small artifacts. She brought boxes to the museum to share with our school students from the Surline Middle School and homeschooled students. There was a flat iron used for ironing in perfect shape and a steel lid for a wood stove, cracked but it was all there. A glass dish with old buttons, beads and marbles. Two small clear glass bottles, Indian pottery, token from a Lewis Smaltz, old canning jar lids, wire, nails, pieces of rubber from a ball, black material, opera glasses, and a penny from 1937.

Amy has another interest in the property as they built their first home on the properties where she found the old cabin foundation and artifacts. She is now in charge of renting out the old bunkhouse for her grandparents, Roger and Linda Gildner. She rents it out for weddings, class reunions, showers, and other parties. Amy asked me if I could update her on the history of the Forest Home Farm and how it came to be.

So here is the history of the Forest Home Farm. One day I will update what happened to the next owners. I believe George Diebold owned the farm next and he was my great uncle.

In the 1860s Alfred Wright and R.H. Weidman, composed of the firm Wright and Weidman, took



up a large tract of land in Ogemaw County. In the year 1871 they stopped lumbering operations and made some clearing which they called the Forest Home Farm. It was the headquarters for their lumbering business until Mr. Wright's death in 1873. Mr. Weidman was in Norway, his native land at this time, and remained there for about six years, which during that time little progress was made at the farm. In 1880 D. Wright & Co. bought the half interest of the heirs of Alfred Wright and then the firm was known as R.H. Weidman & Co. Four hundred acres was cleared, and the large roomy, commodious buildings and other improvements were the results of his determination to make it one of the finest farms in the state.

The Forest Home Farms was part in West Branch and part in West Branch Township. The buildings were situated one mile from the village limits. The land was clay loam, and large crops were grown every year. The farm buildings consisted of the

farmhouse, three barns, a horse barn, carriage barn, granary, hog barn, tool shed, and a hennery, all large and were conveniently arranged.



SALLY A. REA  
CURATOR & HISTORIAN  
OGE MAW COUNTY  
MUSEUM

A spring of the purest water was piped into the farmhouse and throughout the farm buildings. No expense was spared to make sure everything was perfect. An orchard of about 1,000 trees contained all the various kinds of fruit suited to the climate, including apples, plums, pears, cherries, crabapples and grapes. It was already making a good annual revenue after a few years.

About 100 head of cattle and 25-50 hogs were kept on the farm, besides the camp and farm horses belonging to the firm. The farm had the best creamery appliances in the cellar of the old bunkhouse and the highest grade of butter was produced in huge quantities. The plans were that after a few more years of cultivation, when the old stumps had been removed and the land brought under the plow, the Forest Home Farm would be one of the few farms in Michigan that was so grand!

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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News from the Skidway Lake area

BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON

The Skidway Lake Thanksgiving free community dinner was wonderful. We served approximately 80 to 90 people. Tom Angel did a wonderful job organizing it. There were a lot of good helpers involved in donating their time cooking, serving and cleaning up. The Chamber of Commerce donated the use of the hall. We hope to have more attending next year.

The Mills Township parks and rec guys finished the canoe shoot and steps at the Greenwood Road launch. They have done a terrific job replacing all the old and making it safe and very nice. Thank you, guys. They worked hard to get it done before the weather got too bad.

The turkey is gobbled, and snow hit the ground leaving a white blanket to usher Santa in

for our next holiday. We have our beautiful Christmas decorations up on the poles all through town looking so festive. Every year I love driving through at night and picking out my favorite one. We thank our parks and rec guys for braving the weather to put them all up for us to enjoy.

The Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake held its annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 6. Santa was there with toys for every girl and boy. The elves made a pancake and sausage breakfast for everyone. Photos were taken with Santa

and posted on the club's Facebook page for all to download and save. There were lots of kids there to enjoy the day. We thank the Optimist Club for all they do for our area. Thank you to the Mills Township firemen for delivering Santa to the hall safely.

With the new year being nearly here, this is the year to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday. I am looking for clever ideas on how to hold different celebrations throughout the year. If you have any neat ideas, please let me know.

Remember if you have any news to share with me, call or text 989-578-8768. Until next time, God bless.



APRIL HARKEY-MASON



# Whittemore-Prescott students take over the Ogemaw County building

**BY LADONNA SCHULTZ**  
On Thursday, Dec. 11, Ogemaw County had a new governmental administration thanks in part to the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake. Our club provided funds for a bus to take 20 sixth grade Whittemore-Prescott students to the county building so they could attend “Kids Day in County Government.” This special educational program invites students to step into the shoes of the county’s top leaders by providing kids a behind-the-scenes look of how local government works and how our



BY LADONNA SCHULTZ

leaders handle day-to-day operations. Selected students were invited to job shadow county officials as they attend meetings, court hearings, and perform their other daily responsibilities. In addition, each student visited all the various offices in the county building to hear the department head’s explanation of what and how their office provides services to local residents. This innovative program provides students with hands-on experience, encourages civic awareness, and hopefully will inspire future participation in

politics and community service. Students were chosen by the school based on academic improvement, class participation, as well as good behavior and attitude towards teachers and fellow classmates. This year the following students made the grade:

- Ogemaw County Clerk - Addison Raushi
- Ogemaw County Sheriff - Colton Frye
- Ogemaw County Treasurer - Kaeleigh Kennedy
- Ogemaw County Register of Deeds - Abby Wice
- Ogemaw County Equalization Director - Alaina Brown
- Ogemaw County Housing Director - Quorra Brown
- Ogemaw County Administrator - Brantley Douglass
- Ogemaw County

Commissioner District 1- Lena Wilson

- Ogemaw County Commissioner District 2 - Hudson Harsen
- Ogemaw County Commissioner District 3 - Selina Conner
- Ogemaw County Commissioner District 4 - Christian Gawne
- Ogemaw County Commissioner District 5 - MaryJayne McArdle
- Ogemaw County Information Technology Specialist - Dale Cunningham
- 34th Circuit Court Judicial Secretary – Mackenzie Roesner
- 82nd District Court Judge - Reed Hall
- 82nd District Court Recorder - Josie Elowsky
- 82nd District Court Bailiff - Wayne Harris

- Ogemaw County Prosecuting Attorney - Makenzie McLaren
- Ogemaw County Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney - Peyton Portice
- Ogemaw County Victim Advocate - Lillianna Link

Before the students re-boarded the bus and returned to school, they were treated to a pizza and cupcake lunch provided by the participating county officials. The COCOSL is proud to partner with the county elected officials, department heads, and employees who, by giving of their time and energy to this program, are helping young people feel connected to their county government and consequently inspire the next generation of Ogemaw County leaders to stand up and make a difference.

## Happy Holidays from West Branch - Rose City Area Schools

**BY GAIL HUGHEY**  
The holiday season is always a busy time meeting with family and friends, attending holiday events, and preparing for celebrations. It is also an opportunity for reflection and setting goals for the new year. As a school district, we have a lot to be thankful for. We appreciate our students, staff, and families, and the partnerships we have developed over the years. The team at the West Branch-Rose City Area Schools takes great pride in providing excellent education and cares deeply about our students and communities. Our mission is to prepare our students for the next step in their education and life journeys,



BY GAIL HUGHEY  
SUPERINTENDENT, WEST BRANCH-ROSE CITY AREA SCHOOLS

whether in our close-knit communities or venture farther beyond. Through careful planning, we strive to stay current with educational and employment trends. Work continues at Ogemaw Heights High School, where finishing touches are being put on remodeled and newly constructed spaces. We are strengthening our Career and Technical Education programs with expanded facilities and updated equipment. Visitors may notice the new greenhouse and livestock laboratory on the south side of the main building. Inside the school, the original kitchen space is being transformed into the future home of our culinary arts program, beginning in the fall

of 2026. Our fall sports program was outstanding, with two regional championships. The winter season is now underway, with basketball, bowling, hockey, swimming, and wrestling all in action. Event schedules are available on our website. Attending games and matches is a wonderful way to get involved and support our students. Reduced-rate event passes can be purchased through our athletic office. If your holiday goal setting includes becoming more active, we invite you to take advantage of our community lap swim on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 5:30-6:30 a.m. and 5:45-6:45 p.m. Cost is \$4. On Saturday, open swim is 5-9 p.m. Please check the Ogemaw Swim Facebook page for updated information. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

## Holiday meals require planning and food safety

**BY JULIA DARNTON**  
Preparing a large holiday meal takes more than a shopping list! MSU Extension encourages you to include planning for safe food storage and handling. Before buying perishable items, check your refrigerator and freezer space. Avoid overloading your fridge; air must circulate to keep temperatures at or below 40°F. Use an appliance thermometer to verify the temperature, and limit frequent door openings, which can cause it to rise. When cooking, proper hand-washing is essential. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds before handling food and remind helpers to do the same. Leftovers are inevitable, so store them safely: Refrigerate or freeze leftovers

in shallow containers for quick cooling. Eat refrigerated leftovers within 3-4 days; longer storage can lead to foodborne illness. Frozen foods last much longer, though quality may decline over time. Discard perishable foods left at room temperature for more than two hours. Exceptions include cookies, crackers, bread, and whole fruits. Remember: When in doubt, throw it out. For all the effort you put into holiday meals, food safety matters just as much. If you have questions, call the MSU Extension Food Safety Hotline at 877-643-9882 for expert guidance and to get research-based answers to your food safety questions.



JULIA DARNTON  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR  
MSU EXTENSION

## Strengthening our workforce through business partnerships

**BY PENNY PAYEA**  
This fall, the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has been busy strengthening our local talent pipeline through hands-on, practical training opportunities. In partnership with Michigan Works! Region 7B and Kirtland Community College, we hosted two Excel training sessions - one designed for beginners building foundational skills, and a second for participants ready to take the next step with more advanced functions and tools. The response from Ogemaw County businesses, agencies, and community partners was overwhelmingly positive. Participants shared how valuable it was to gain skills they can take directly back to their workplaces - improving efficiency, accuracy, and confidence on the job.



PENNY PAYEA  
DIRECTOR OF  
BUSINESS SERVICES &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A special thank you goes out to our amazing facilitator, Carey Jansen, for delivering high-quality, engaging instruction, and to Erine Wescoat, Business & Industry Relations, for bringing everyone together and ensuring these sessions were a success. Their dedication and professionalism truly elevated the experience for all who attended. These sessions are more than just classes; they reflect our long-term commitment to supporting workforce readiness and helping local employers retain and grow strong, capable teams.

With this momentum, the Ogemaw EDC is already looking ahead to expanded training opportunities in 2026. We’re excited to continue offering resources that empower both our residents and our business community. Together, we grow Ogemaw.



Courtesy photo

In partnership with Michigan Works! Region 7B and Kirtland Community College, two Excel training courses were recently held.

## Letter to the editor

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](mailto:deanna@superior-news.com) or by traditional mail to P.O. Box 603, West Branch, MI 48661.



# Letters to Santa



Dear Santa,  
My name is Baylor and I'm three years old. This year, I would really love an excavator, Chase from Paw Patrol, and a John Deere Tractor just like my daddy's.  
I've been very busy helping decorate the house for your visit. I can't wait for you to see it!!  
I'll leave cookies for you and the reindeer!  
Love,  
Baylor Johnson, 3 Years Old  
West Branch



Dear Santa,  
If I don't get coal for Christmas, I want a Harry Potter wand, a X-Box with one controller, Heeleys, a TV, a pet owl, Harry Potter outfit, magic broomstick and that's all.  
I hope I don't get coal.  
The end.  
Love,  
Brian Surbrook, age 8  
West Branch

Dear Santa,  
My name is Kinsley and I am 6 years old. I have been doing my best to be kind and helpful all year. For Christmas, I would love to have some new games to play, a Peppa Pig House, and—if it is possible—my two front teeth, which I am very excited to have again.  
I wish you, Mrs. Claus, your elves, and your reindeer a joyful and peaceful holiday season. Please travel safely on Christmas Eve and thank you for all the happiness that you bring.  
Love,  
Kinsley Buck, age 6  
Rose City



Dear Santa Claus,  
If I don't get coal, I would like a toybox shaped like a treasure box, Curkle water bottle, Heelys, LED light up shoes, a bracelet you look into to see my papa, a TV and an Xbox with two controllers.  
Make sure to eat the cookies and milk we leave out.  
Merry Christmas!  
Love,  
Thalia Surbrook, age 10  
West Branch



Dear Santa  
I have been good this year. For Christmas I would really like a vanity and skin care products. We will leave cookies for your and carrots for the reindeer. Thank you, Santa.  
Love,  
Raelee Salgat  
Age 7



Dear Santa  
I have been mostly good this year. Please just trust me and don't ask anyone. For Christmas I really really want a soccer ball and net and a desk for my bedroom like my sister has. We are making you cookies for Christmas Eve and carrots for the reindeer. Thanks Santa.  
Love,  
Kinsley Salgat  
Age 4

Dear Santa  
I have been a good girl this year. For Christmas I would really like a semi-truck, a Mini Mouse stuffy, slime, make up, a princess dress and a crown.  
Thank you, Santa.  
Love,  
Eliana Reed  
Age 2



Dear Santa,  
We have been trying our very best this year to stay on the Nice List. Even though we all have our moments, we work hard to grow and learn each day.  
For Christmas, Nash is wishing for new dinosaurs, LankyBox toys, and a pickle Squishmallow. Gracie hopes for a new vanity, some makeup, and a Pet Alive turtle. Collins would love a new baby doll, a banana Squishmallow, and a baby crib to take care of her baby dolls.  
But more than toys, what we really want this year is for our family to be happy, healthy, and safe. We ask that you watch over our first responders and all our service family and friends. And please send extra love to our angels in Heaven — we hope they're celebrating Christmas with Jesus and feeling how much we miss them.  
We'll be sure to leave you lots of goodies when you come to visit... especially a cold can of Coca-Cola, just like our GG loved.  
Love, Nash Linsenman, age 6, Gracie Linsenman, age 5, Collins Linsenman, age 3  
West Branch





Cardinal Optimist Club hosts ‘Breakfast with Santa’



Photos by Jamie Stout-Shirkey  
The Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake welcomed children 14 and under to their “Breakfast with Santa” event held on Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Skidway Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. Each child received a hat and mittens, a take-home Christmas craft, picture with Santa, free breakfast and were able to choose a toy as well. Sophia Siebert, 7, of Prescott, was the first in the photo line to visit with Santa Claus.



Marty Elkins, Cardinal Optimist Club treasurer, helped the children choose a hat and mitten set.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Pictured: left to right Cody Nahs, Brett Hughey, Corbin-Robert Mitchell, Brad Hyde, Aiden Danitz, Tanner Hughey, Brian Hughey and Gary Hughey.

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All the children at the event were able to choose their own toy to take home and enjoy.



Cardinal Optimist Club Board Member, LaDonna Schultz (l), and Board President, Janet Smith, welcomed children and their parents to the breakfast.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From all of us at the Ogemaw County Superior News Deanna, Kathy, Laura, Nancy, Nikki, Sally, Emily, Lois and Rich.

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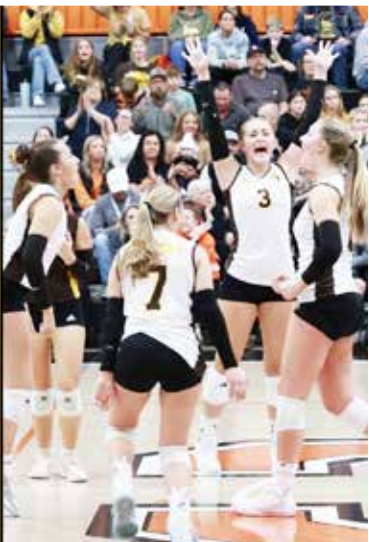
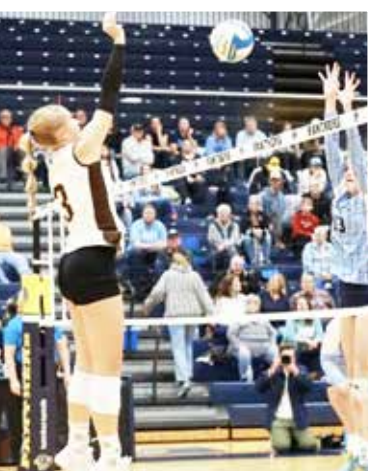
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# Ogemaw Heights High School GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL Regional Champions



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Fiondella

« Continued from page 1

Published in 2013, Steve Harvey featured it on his show in January 2015.

Jay’s second book, “The Quirky Bathroom Book for Men Over 60,” is sarcastically lighthearted, yet it addresses some hard truths facing men as they age.

“That book may inspire guys to laugh,” Jay said. “But hopefully they will find solace in being reminded we are not alone in this strange reality we suddenly find ourselves.”

Writing has always interested Jay, who moved to Detroit from his hometown in Connecticut in the 1980s, but it is only in retirement that he can pursue it with intention.

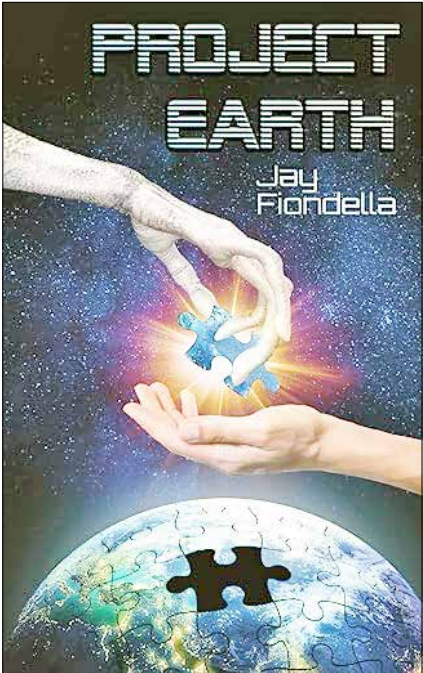
“My first dream was to become a successful rock drummer,” Jay said. “I started out with rock, then fusion, then country. Our band, Redhill, played Motown-influenced country, opening for Kenny Chesney, Gretchen Wilson, Carrie Underwood, Clint Black, and Dwight Yoakam, and others. In 2007, we received the Detroit Music Award for Outstanding Country Album. But my kids were selfish. They wanted to eat.”

A good dad, Jay became a union electrician, who played music when he could. Today he still fits in some gigs, mostly in and around Detroit with Crossing Woodward, a cover band that

plays music from the 1970s to today, as well as some original pieces. In addition, he writes.

“I love creating a world and characters that didn’t exist before I poured my soul into them,” Jay said. “And writing is a creative endeavor I can pursue alone. I don’t have to drive to a gig or wait on other band members to get going. I just depend on myself.”

To learn more about Project Earth or Jay Fiondella, visit <https://jayfiondella.com>. To hear Jay drumming with Crossing Woodward, visit <https://www.facebook.com/crossingwoodward>. For comments or questions, email [jayfiondella@yahoo.com](mailto:jayfiondella@yahoo.com).



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Obituaries

Christine Marie (Miller) Neubecker

Dec. 28, 1952 – Dec. 4, 2025

Christine Marie (Miller) Neubecker, age 72, of West Branch, passed away on Dec. 4, 2025. Born in West Branch on Dec. 28, 1952, Chris grew up in Prescott, Mich., where she graduated from Whittemore-Prescott High School in 1971. She spent her early working years caring for others, both in a nursing home and later as an aide in a school. Her gentle heart, steady patience, and warm spirit shone through everything she did.

Chris married the love of her life, Charles “Chuck” Neubecker, and together they built a family grounded in love, loyalty, and laughter. She was a devoted

mother to Joel (Kristy) Neubecker of West Branch and Jared (Patty) Neubecker of Thompsonville, Mich., and the proud grandmother of Tatum (Isaac) Devine, Kirsten Neubecker, Hunter Neubecker, and Rylie Neubecker — each of whom brought her immense joy.

She is survived by her siblings, Brad Miller of Prescott and Julie (Joe) Weber of Hale; her sisters-in-law, Helen (Leonard) Bragg, Wanda Neubecker, and Bernice Drensky; and many beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

Chris was preceded in death by her parents, Joe and Pat (Dority) Miller; her father- and

mother-in-law, Raymond and Frances Neubecker; her brother, Butch Miller; sister-in-law Joyce (Phil) Fultz; brothers-in-law George Drensky and Patrick (Jean) Neubecker, and her god-daughter, Rayanne Drensky.

Anyone who knew Chris knew her passions well — she loved finding the good deals, thrift shopping, and was an avid fan of Coca-Cola and the Detroit Red Wings. She had a soft spot for animals and a big heart for people, especially her family and friends. Her favorite holiday was Christmas, which she embraced wholeheartedly. She loved giving gifts and seeing the happiness they

brought to others. Generosity was simply part of who she was.

Chris’s warmth, humor, and kindness made her easy to love and impossible to forget. She

leaves behind a legacy of compassion, joy, and the simple, meaningful moments that come from loving others well.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the compassionate staff at the Villa of Rose City and Compassus for the exceptional care, kindness, and support they provided.

A private gathering of immediate family will be held to honor her life.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. Online condolences can be shared at [www.steuernolmclaren.com](http://www.steuernolmclaren.com)



Mary Ellen Houston

Aug. 31, 1932 – Dec. 6, 2025

Mary Ellen Houston, born on Aug. 31, 1932, in Mt. Morris, Mich., gracefully departed this world on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at The Brook of Standish at Eden Fields in Standish, Mich., at the age of 93. She lived in Rose City, Mich., since 1987, formerly of St. Clair Shores, Mich.

Mary Ellen was a treasured member of the Holy Family Catholic Church in West Branch and actively participated in the Catholic Council of Women, reflecting her deep faith and commitment to her community.

Mary Ellen was not only a devoted parishioner but also a remarkable woman whose heart overflowed with love for her family and friends. She found joy in simple yet fulfilling pursuits; sewing, gardening, and music were her passions, and she cherished the laughter and companionship found in ladies’ outings, creating memories that would last a lifetime.

She is survived by her loving children, Mary Ann (Terry) Lynch, Frank (Leslie) Houston Jr., and Linda (Mike) Gladd, who carry on her legacy with pride. Mary Ellen was blessed with the joy of eight grandchildren and

nine great-grandchildren, each of whom brought her immense happiness and laughter. Her family extends to many nieces and nephews, who will remember her warmth, wisdom, and the light she brought into their lives.

She was preceded in death by her cherished husband, Frank Houston, and her beloved son, Jeffrey. The hearts of her parents, Thomas and Agnes (Phillip) Mason, and her brothers, Max, Bob, Chuck, and Thomas Mason, remain with her in spirit, bound by the everlasting ties of family.

She will be deeply missed but lovingly remembered by all who were fortunate enough to know her.

The funeral service will be held at Holy Family Catholic Church in West Branch on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 11 a.m. with visitation starting at 10 a.m. Father Al Pillarelli will officiate. Burial will follow at Holy Family Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to the American Cancer Society and Holy Family Catholic Church.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in Rose City, Mich. [www.steuernolmclaren.com](http://www.steuernolmclaren.com)



Mary Kay Bell

Oct. 6, 1956 – Nov. 27, 2025

Mary Kay Bell passed away on Thursday, Nov. 27, 2025, after a prolonged battle with cancer. She was surrounded by her family and friends at her home in West Branch, Mich., her favorite place to be. Mary Kay was born on Oct. 6, 1956, to Walter and Mildred VanBuhler in Detroit, Mich. She spent most of her school years in Royal Oak, Mich., with her eight siblings. She graduated from Bishop Foley High School in Royal Oak in 1974. Mary Kay maintained many of her high school friendships to this day, thoroughly enjoying her class reunions with her high school classmates.

Mary Kay moved to West Branch in 1975 and had two children, Heather Marie Rourke and Brian Walter Rourke. She has lived in West Branch the rest of her life having a number of different careers during that time. At the Tolfree Memorial Hospital Mary Kay helped register patients and do payroll. Upon leaving the hospital she worked a number of years for the Evergreen Clinic as a receptionist. Mary Kay was very proud of and happy to be a Jazzercise instructor and business owner. Many people in the area knew her well from those days. She also had a successful hair salon known as Ultra Images in West Branch.

In 2002 she embarked on a business venture with her sister, Janice DeLuca, as proud owners of four different Curves for Women fitness centers. She truly enjoyed being partners with her sister Jan. Throughout her work career Mary Kay worked in numerous businesses as a waitress, a job she thoroughly enjoyed and took great pride in. These businesses include Lost Arrow Resort, Willow Tree Restaurant and most recently a server at G’s Pizzeria in downtown West Branch. Mary Kay’s work family at G’s were tremendously supportive of her during her illness, even hosting a wonderful fundraiser to help support her through her treatment for cancer.

Of the many titles Mary Kay had in her life, her absolute favorite was to be called Mimi. She treasured her 17 grandchildren

and four great-grandchildren and took great delight in spending time with them. Some of her favorite activities with them were reading, playing games, and attending their sporting and school events. Her trips to Splash Village Waterpark in Frankenmuth and the Ogemaw County Fair were annual events they all looked forward to. She also enjoyed taking them to see and interact with all the animals at her neighbor’s farm.

Mary Kay married her husband, Joe Bell, in 1997 and added three more children to her family, Jessica, Sarah and Nick Bell. Joe and Mary Kay bought a house on the old Dill Farm near Clear Lake, and settled into a home life there, raising their children and grandchildren as they came along.

Mary Kay was very hard working, usually working multiple jobs along with babysitting grandchildren, which was never a job but a joy. Her grandchildren truly enjoyed visits to Mimi’s house and even though she is no longer living there, that home will always be known as Mimi’s house.

Mary Kay’s vibrant personality and outgoing nature drew people to her as they recognized how special she was. Her genuine warmth and her ability to lead with love and kindness as she moved through life were amazing to see. As a Christian woman she believed that this was how Jesus wanted her to treat others and we believed that’s why so many people adored her. She used her wonderful sense of humor to lighten many people’s day, often stating that she missed her calling as a stand-up comedian.

Throughout the course of her long illness, Mary Kay was constantly amazed at all of the support she received from her friends, family, and our community. She received hundreds of cards and saved each and every one, having them on display in her home to remind her how much she was truly loved and supported. She

would look at them every day picking them up to read them, which helped sustain her energy and will during her battle with cancer.

Mary Kay also had a great passion for dogs. At one point she had four of her favorite breeds, shih-tzus. One of the things that she loved to do with her dogs was to make them sing, which greatly entertained everyone around them as they all howled together. Ronnie and Riley already miss her very much.

Mary Kay is survived by her loving husband Joe; children Heather (Todd) Morris, Brian Rourke, Jessica (Matt) Payne, Sarah Bell, and Nick (Kristen) Bell; siblings Linda (Brian) Taylor, Tom (Cindy) VanBuhler, Donna (Kim) Hilstrom, Ann (George) Fischer, Connie (Mike) Lilley, Theresa (Jim) Kraft, and Paul VanBuhler; grandchildren Jordyn Wilkerson, Cameron (Cheyenne) Payne, Hailey McKinnon, James Rourke, Travis Rourke, Dawson Dack, McKenzie Bell, Tucker Dack, Mya Bell, Adalyn Payne, Mason Bell, Micah Bell, Merrick Bell, and Madelyn Bell; great-grandchildren Stella Payne, Remington Vallance, Stiles Payne, and Sterling Payne. She is also survived by her BFF, Ann Hodges. She was preceded in death by parents, Walter and Mildred VanBuhler; sister Janice Maudlin; grandchildren Ky Rourke, Ty Rourke, and Nathaniel Payne.

Visitation in memory of Mary Kay was held on Sunday, Nov. 30, at the Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. Her funeral service was at the Faith Alive Church, West Branch, on Monday, Dec. 1, at 11 a.m.

Donations in her memory can be made to Claws & Paws Rescue, 114 S. Valley St., West Branch, MI, 48661 or to American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, 411 Second St., Rochester, MN, 55901. Online condolences can be shared at [www.steuernolmclaren.com](http://www.steuernolmclaren.com).



For Advertising information  
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[kathy@superior-news.com](mailto:kathy@superior-news.com)





Obituaries

Dorral James Goforth  
Feb. 4, 1958 – Nov. 26, 2025

Dorral James Goforth, born on Feb. 4, 1958, in Detroit, Mich., to Alex and Luella (Larsen) Lapere, passed away on Nov. 26, 2025, in Grayling, Mich. He was raised alongside his five siblings in Royal Oak, and they attended St. Paul’s Lutheran Elementary School. In 1970, Dorral and four siblings were formally adopted by Duane Goforth. Soon after, the family relocated to Ogemaw County where Dorral continued his education at Rose City Elementary School before graduating from Ogemaw Heights High School (OHHS) in 1976.

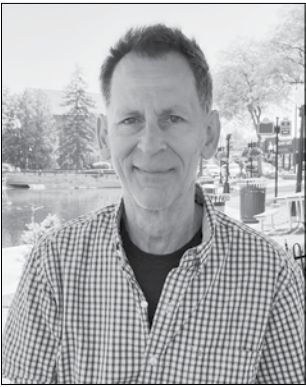
During his high school years, Dorral was widely known as “the guy behind the camera,” capturing countless moments through his photography of OHHS activities and fellow students. His quirky sense of humor and innate

ability to make people laugh were hallmarks of his personality, endearing him to many. From a young age, Dorral nurtured his love for working with his hands, engaging in numerous hobbies that showcased his curious mind. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, canoeing, refurbishing motorcycles, and taking on home renovation projects. These various interests illustrated his zest for life and commitment to embracing every moment. The friendships he forged during this time lasted throughout his life, creating a rich tapestry of connections that spanned decades.

Dorral lived most of his adult life in Lansing, where he worked in the printing industry before proudly founding his own business, Structured Wire Systems. He dedicated himself to providing

exceptional service to his customers, earning significant contracts with distinguished clients, including Pratt & Whitney. Through his career, Dorral embraced his passion for traveling, embarking on adventures that took him from the serene landscapes of Northern Michigan to the bustling oil fields of Texas.

Dorral’s personality shone brightly in every interaction. He was well-known for his willingness to lend a helping hand, his kindness, outgoing nature, and sense of humor. His ability to reach out to those in need made a profound impact on his community. He devoted significant time to Alcoholics Anonymous, helping others who struggled with addiction. Dorral’s positive attitude was unwavering; no matter the challenges he faced, he



consistently sought silver linings and encouraged those around him to do the same.

His battle with Alzheimer’s revealed the depths of his character, as he bravely faced its trials while still striving to uplift those around him. Even when grappling with his own struggles, he managed to bring comfort and laughter to others.

Dorral leaves behind his

beloved son and best friend, Adam Goforth; siblings Cherie (Ron) McCormick, Debra (Lindsay) Abraham, Steven Larsen, LuAnn (Mike) Loy, and Kevin (Diane) Goforth; along with several nieces, nephews, and many friends who cherished his presence in their lives. He joins his parents, Duane and Luella (Larsen) Goforth, in the welcoming arms of Christ.

Memorial contributions may be made to Alano Club West, 2909 W. Genesee St., Lansing, MI 48917.

A memorial service will be held in the early summer of 2026 which will include a canoe trip — one of Dorral’s favorite pastimes.

Arrangements were handled by Steuernol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. [www.steuernolmclaren.com](http://www.steuernolmclaren.com)

‘Turkeys Not Tickets’ for unsuspecting motorists



Photo by Kathy Collins

On Thursday, Nov. 20, Ogemaw County law enforcement officials gathered at the West Branch Walmart to pick up 40 turkeys and 20 hams to hand out to unsuspecting motorists throughout the day. The annual Turkeys Not Tickets was a big hit with the lucky recipients.



Courtesy Photo  
Rose City Police Chief Allen Muma doesn’t usually get smiles when he makes a traffic stop.

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Judge Mary Beebe & her husband, Dennis



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Craig Scott  
Ogemaw County Commissioner  
District 5

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# 'Operation Good Cheer' gets off the ground



Courtesy photos  
On, Saturday Dec. 6, pilots from around the region flew in from Pontiac to the West Branch Community Airport to support Operation Good Cheer. The pilots delivered presents for foster children and other kids in need. Heather Gillespie, child welfare program manager, and Carrie Thorson, quality assurance analyst, were on hand to help unload the gifts from the airplanes. Pilots and volunteers were served lunch by the local Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1253.



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## Skidway Lake hosts Thanksgiving dinner



Courtesy photos  
In the spirit of the season, Skidway Lake residents were able to enjoy a free Thanksgiving dinner together at the Skidway Lake Area Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, Nov. 27. About 80 to 90 people were served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, complete with turkey and all the trimmings. The event was organized by resident Tom Angel and even Santa Claus joined the fun.

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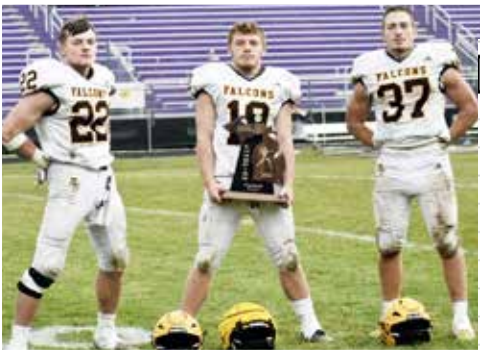
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#	Name	Grade
2	Elijah Smith	11
3	Archer Thorson	12
4	Tyler Sutherland	11
5	Colton Kanitz	10
6	Damion Smith	11
7	Thomas Gillette	11
8	Logan Raymond	11
9	Brenson Keith	10
10	Trenton Sutherland	11
11	Corie Kanitz	12
12	Peter Hennard	12
18	Eion Jones	12
19	Shaun Sikorski	12
21	Jackson Ziegler	11
22	Conner Lambert	12
24	Zander Benjamin	12
25	Corbin Kanitz	11
26	Lane Winter	12
27	Matthew Gates	11
33	Josh Kinney	9
37	Calvin Marshall	12
41	Collin Maleski	9
50	Denny Fernelius	9
52	Landon Vaughn	12
53	Jacob Fernelius	11
55	Marcellous Rogers	11
57	Ethan Hock	12
58	Tanner Brindley	9
60	Karson Keith	12
63	Demian Kuhn	10
65	Tony Curtis	11
66	Josh David	10
67	Jax Fernelius	9
68	Mason Chudy	11
70	Braden Rhine	11
73	Garret Guoan	12
75	Aydan Johnson	9
79	Wyatt Lucynski	11
88	Logan Tierney	9
Man.	Wyatt Vaughn	12
Head Coach: Chad Miller		
Assistant Coaches: Cody VanGoethem		
James Smith, Eric Queener		
Jack Vliet, Brent Mikkola		
STATS: Greg Morris, Jeff Benjamin		
Cody Benjamin, Rod Awrey		
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# Rose City celebrates the Christmas season




Photos by Laura Bender

*Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived in Rose City on Thursday, Dec. 4, amid cheers from children, young and old. People barely noticed the frigid, eight-degree weather as they enjoyed the glowing floats gliding toward Rose City Park. After a stop to light the Christmas tree, Santa made his way into the pavilion where a long line of youngsters waited to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. Hot chocolate, hot dogs and heat lamps took the edge off the cold, as children excitedly opened their gift bags, then ran outside to pet the reindeer. Thanks to all the volunteers who made the 7th Annual Christmas Parade, with the theme "Christmas in Toyland," a festive event for everyone!*



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Santa Train

« Continued from page 1



Santa and Mrs. Claus with Mayor Paul Frechette looking on.



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Photos by Deanna Surbrook  
Anyssa Madore, 3, of West Branch, palled around with Donald Duck himself.



The Grinch even made an appearance, but he was on his best behavior while hanging out with Pablo and Catalina Delatorre, of West Branch.

We wish you a very  
Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year!





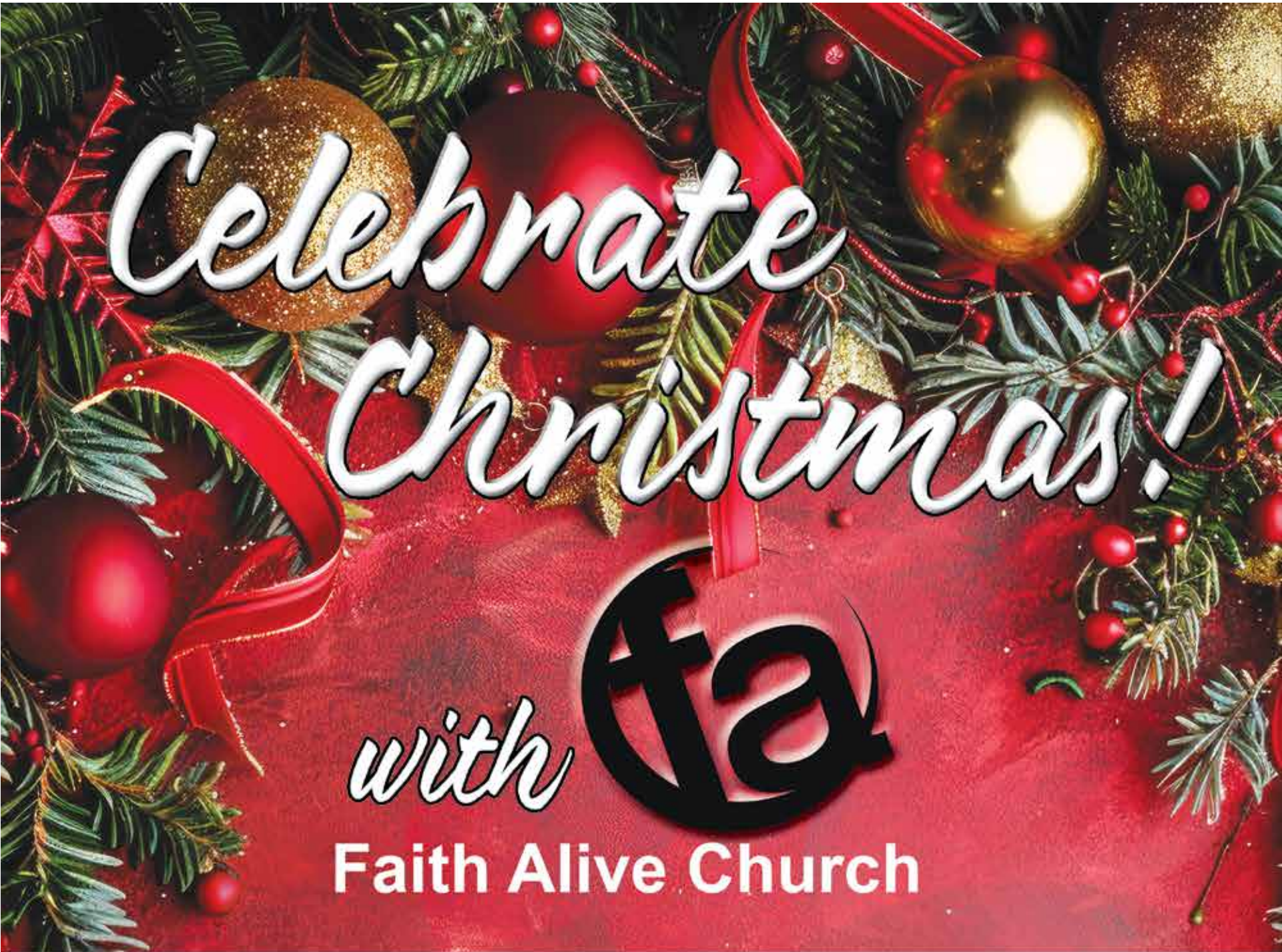
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Frosty the Snowman and one of his elves greeted the families.





*Christmas Eve Candlelight Services:*  
4:30 pm & 6:00pm

*Sunday, December 28th Services:*  
8:30 am & 10:00am **\*\*no 11:30 am service\*\***



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Photos by Samantha B Photography

"Ogemaw Heights High School Junior Oryana Dings put an exclamation point at the end of her season with her performance at the Division 3 Swimming and Diving Championships at the Holland Aquatic Center. Oryana qualified in both the 50 and 100 Freestyle sprint events for the first time in her high school career. That is an accomplishment in and of itself, and a goal she set for herself back in August. Facing a challenging season with lots of travel and inconsistent pool time, Oryana met her goal and then some.

On Friday, Nov. 21, amidst a very competitive field, Oryana competed in the 50 Freestyle, clocking a 25.38 for 22nd place out of 48 swimmers, and the 100 Freestyle, clocking a 56.03 and finishing in 17th place out of 41 swimmers.

I could not be prouder of Oryana. She is an incredibly hard worker, first in the water at practice, very coachable, and willing to stick her neck out and do the difficult things to reach her goals. We are already looking forward to, and setting goals for, next year."

~ OHHS Swim  
Coach Louise Hofer



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Golden

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Chad Miller, told me before the list was released. It's so rare and such a great feeling."

For 61 years, the Bay City Times and Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling of Bay City have teamed up to honor the area's top performers each week during the high school football season. Then, at the end of the season, they select the Golden Helmet Players of the Year, one for each of four classes based on school enrollment size.

"I liked the camaraderie and the bond with the other players," Calvin said. "I really enjoyed the hard work and taking a leadership role."

"This award speaks volumes about Calvin's performance and his ability to be consistent," Klint said. "I'm a pretty proud dad. I wanted my son to have the best season, and the team had an outstanding year. They set their eyes on and worked toward the play-offs. There were a lot of great parents around to support them, and we enjoyed watching the team succeed. Support is so important."

"My best advice for next year's team is to always trust their coaches and teammates," Calvin said. "And always play for the guy next to them. You get out of the game what you put into it." As fullback and defensive tackle for the Falcons, Calvin's 2025

football season was certainly an embodiment of that advice.

"In several games, but especially against Swan Valley, I could see the sheer determination and will not to be denied," Klint said. "You can't coach that. That's a character thing; the desire to fight for your team is either inside a player or it's not. And this season it was present in my son, and in several OHHS players."

Calvin has already shown himself, his teammates, and the community what can be achieved through hard work, willpower, leadership and a focus on teamwork on and off the field. The Golden Helmet award attests to that.

"I plan to hang on to the plaque for a few years," Calvin said. Then it can go in the case at the high school. A lot more eyes will see it there."

When Calvin graduates next spring, he plans to work with his dad on the Marshall family's dairy farm, where one of their mottos is "Hard work grows good people." That is certainly true of Calvin and his dad Klint.

We wish both the 2025 and the 1997 Golden Helmet Player of the Year for Class B winners continued success in their future work together. Go Falcons!


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CITY OF ROSE CITY  
REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 18, 2025

Mayor Mike Samples called the Regular Council Meeting of the City of Rose City to order at 6:00 p.m. on November 18, 2025.  
Present: Mayor Mike Samples, Anthony Evans, Don Freeman, Claire Myers  
Scott Hamel, Brent Hinkley  
Absent: Ashley Herrick (excused)  
Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Interim Supervisor Matt Lawrence, County Commissioner Roger Mayhew, Deputy Clerk Nicole Pennell, Chase Wiltse, Theresa Erickson, Brian Randall and Karyn Randall.

A Motion made by Mr. Hamel and seconded by Mr. Hinkley to approve the agenda. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mrs. Myers and seconded by Mr. Freeman to approve the Minutes for the November 4, 2025 Regular Rose City Council Meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mrs. Myers and seconded by Mr. Freeman to approve the Minutes for the November 4, 2025 Closed Session Rose City Meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel to pay bills as presented, in the amounts of \$6,618.68 from the Common Cash Account and \$585.50 from the Sewer Account. Ayes: Mr. Evans, Mr. Freeman, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Hamel, Mr. Hinkley. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Brent Hinkley gave a Personnel Committee report.

Claire Myers gave a Library Board report.

Brent Hinkley gave a Fire Board report.

Matt Lawrence gave a DPW report.

Carol Lee Butler gave a Treasurer's report.

A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel sell the White Truck for the price of \$4,500.00 Ayes: Mr. Hinkley, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Evans. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley seconded by Mrs. Myers to accept the resignation of Councilman Evans. Ayes: Mr. Freeman, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Hinkley. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mrs. Myers to appoint Anthony Evans as the Co-Supervisor. Ayes: Mr. Hinkley, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Freeman. Nays: Abstained: Mr. Hamel. None. Motion carried.

A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel to adjourn at 6:47 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

988  
SUICIDE  
& CRISIS  
LIFELINE





# Shop Downtown West Branch

*Where Small Town Charm Meets Fresh Modern Style*

*Shop through*

*a vibrant collection of  
locally owned shops offering  
one-of-a-kind gifts,*

*handcrafted*

*goods, boutique fashion,  
decor, specialty items and  
treasures*

*you will love to give.*

*Dine-in*

*restaurants*

*with flavors for every craving  
and enjoy a winery  
and brewery*

*experience*  
*as you shop!*

*Enjoy the newly updated walkable downtown  
streetscape adorned with Christmas decor & music*

*Merry Christmas!*

*From the DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS*

