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## American PlayWorks invests in Rose City's future



Courtesy photo

The Rose City – Lupton Area Chamber of Commerce members and residents gathered on Wednesday, Jan. 14, to welcome American PlayWorks to Rose City, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

BY LAURA BENDER

The Rose City - Lupton Chamber of Commerce gathered on Wednesday, Jan. 14, to welcome American PlayWorks to Rose City.

According to the Chamber, "This ribbon cutting marks more than a reopening. It's a celebration of community, continuity and what's ahead... The Tarahomi family has purchased the former American Plastics Toys facility to keep jobs in Rose City and

Ogemaw County, while investing in a strong and sustainable future."

Dr. Sassan Tarahomi is excited about bringing industry and jobs to the area. In April 2025, he purchased the contents of a 22,000 square foot plastics plant in Pennsylvania and trucked it north to establish Mid Michigan Plastics and Tooling, 651 Columbus Dr., West Branch. A motivated businessman, the facility opened in May. Currently, he and 11 local

residents are employed there.

Two of those employees had previously worked at American Plastics Toys. When they told Dr. Tarahomi that the facility had closed, he asked his Uncle Larry and Aunt Dorothy Ealy, who live in Wolverine, to check it out for him. When the facility went up for auction, the Tarahomis were ready to buy.

Dr. Tarahomi has worked in plastics engineering for 40 years.

PLAYWORKS continues on page 8 »

## Five years of new ownership, 30 years of service

BY LAURA BENDER

ATC Auto and Truck Center is celebrating dual anniversaries this year. In March 2021, Tony and Jennifer Wiedyk bought the business that Lenny and Carolyn Hicks started in 1996. Therefore 2026 marks not only the Wiedyk's fifth anniversary as owners, but ATC's 30th anniversary.

"You and Tony were the perfect couple to take over the business," Carolyn Hicks said. "You work just like us."

The Hicks established the first ATC store in Au Gres when ATC stood for Au Gres Truck Center. Because Lenny began doing more and more jobs in West Branch out of his Astrovan, the Hicks decided it was time to expand. They built ATC Auto and Truck Center, in its present location of 2354 S. M-76 in West Branch. Now retired, they like to stop in occasionally to see their old business and visit with the Wiedyks, who have become their friends.



TONY AND JENNIFER WIEDYK

Tony Wiedyk has been in the automotive business his whole life. Following his initial training at Averill Career Center in Saginaw, Tony began working at Team Hodges in West Branch. He retired as parts department manager 28 years later.

Jennifer began her working life doing transcription, order taking and dispatch for a mobile medical

SERVICE continues on page 7 »

## January is National Human Trafficking Month

In honor of January being National Human Trafficking Month, the West Branch Business and Professional Women invited Deb Williams, a long-standing member of the Human Trafficking Community Group (HTCG), to address the issue at their regular meeting on Jan. 14. She began by explaining why she chose to get involved in the HTCG by telling of a trip she took to Lansing that put her in the company of a father who lost his child to this crime. Moved by that experience, she began to do some research. Deb discovered that Human Trafficking occurs in every country, including the United States. Nationwide, it is in our cities, suburbs, and rural towns.

"We think that because we live in West Branch it doesn't happen here," she said. "But it does."

Deb gave examples of trafficking that occurred in our area and began to dispel myths associated with Human Trafficking. One myth is that most victims are foreign born. In fact, victims can be

any age, race, gender, or nationality. While traffickers tend to prey on individuals that are vulnerable due to age, or socioeconomic standing, anyone could become a target.

"These criminals are very smart and manipulative, we find they are using the internet to find their victims," she explained.

Most people think of sex trafficking when the topic of Human Trafficking comes up.

However, Deb stated "it is not the only type of human trafficking. Forced labor is another type of human trafficking." She went on to explain that what sex trafficking and labor trafficking have in common is exploitation. "Victims are found all over, in sweatshops, massage parlors,

TRAFFICKING continues on page 7 »

## Celebrating 50 years of OHHS wrestling



Courtesy photo

Fifty years ago, the first wrestling team hit the mats at Ogemaw Heights High School. Last week during a home meet on Wednesday, Jan. 14, a reception was held to honor the first squad, as well as other alumni in attendance. Pictured is the 1976 squad. Back row (l-r) Art Tenant, Dwight Parliament, Jim Reetz, Doug Muetzel, Bill Washburn, Jeff Mitchell, Pete Jackson and Coach Tahfs. Front row (l-r) Dean Nester, Rodney Bragg, Ronnie Wangler, Jim Rourke, Doug Goulette, Charlie Tennant, Nicky Walters and Dan Dunn.





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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) 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.

**Jan 31**

**Texas Hold'em Tournament**, Saturday, Jan. 31, hosted by Max-Well Therapy Center, 2 p.m., West Branch Moose Lodge, 1731 W. State Rd., West Branch. Max-Well's goal is to enhance the lives of kids through the use of animal assisted activities. For more information, visit [www.maxwelltherapycenter.org](http://www.maxwelltherapycenter.org).

**Feb 14**

**St. Joseph Trivia Night**, Saturday, Feb. 14, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall, 601 Columbus Dr., West Branch. \$25 per person, sold by tables of eight. Dinner and two drink tickets included. Tickets are not sold at the door. Contact St. Joseph School, 989-345-0220, for tickets.

**Apr 14**

**Fourth annual 'Nite at the Races'**, hosted by Max-Well Therapy Center, Saturday, April 11, 5:30 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall, 601 Columbus Dr., West Branch. Max-Well's goal is to enhance the lives of kids through the use of animal assisted activities. For more information, visit [www.maxwelltherapycenter.org](http://www.maxwelltherapycenter.org).

*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.

— [www.SermonCentral.com](http://www.SermonCentral.com)

*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](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 Emeritus Tom Teal  
[www.cbcbw.org](http://www.cbcbw.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!*  
 Sunday Worship - 10am; Sunday School - 11am  
 Men, Women, Youth...  
 Sunday School ALL ages~newborn-100!!  
 201 W Main/Esmond, Hale; 989-728-9522  
 FB & IG: Hale Methodist Church

**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.

**MSP West Branch Post releases 2025 statistics**

The Michigan State Police (MSP) West Branch Post is pleased to share its end-of-year statistics with the public, highlighting some of the hard work carried out by its members throughout 2025. The West Branch Post serves Arenac, Gladwin, Iosco, and Ogemaw counties. In 2025, troopers within the West Branch Post area:

- Drove 454,024 miles patrolling the post area's roadways
- Responded to, or initiated, approximately 11,386 calls for service
- Handled approximately 3,095 investigative complaints
- Orchestrated 284 community events or meetings
- Conducted 5,583 traffic stops
- Issued 1,878 traffic citations
- Issued 4,753 traffic verbal warnings

- Investigated 11,012 people
- Arrested 607 people with 774 total charges:
- 51 felony fugitive from justice charges
- 165 misdemeanor fugitive from justice charges
- 182 original or investigative felony charges
- 376 original or investigative misdemeanor charges
- Conducted 5,547 property inspections
- Conducted 5,980 vehicle inspections
- Assisted 150 stranded motorists
- Towed 307 vehicles
- Conducted 639 traffic crash investigations
- "While statistics may provide a basic, high-level overview of the post's activity over the year, they are not inclusive of all of

the troopers' activities and only tell part of the story," said F/Lt. Michael Brown, commander of the West Branch Post. "Each day, the men and women of the post selflessly serve their community, whether it be by providing assistance to a local partner agency, responding to a 911 call that comes into a local dispatch center, by providing a car seat to a family in need, through stopping an intoxicated driver, or by assisting someone who is experiencing a crisis," he stated.

F/Lieutenant Brown added that the MSP is actively recruiting qualified candidates for upcoming trooper recruit schools and encourages anyone who may be interested to contact the West Branch Post at 989-345-0956 to speak with a recruiter or visit [Michigan.gov/mspjobs](http://Michigan.gov/mspjobs).

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# Raising awareness for the problem of human trafficking



Courtesy photo

Staff at the Ogemaw County Prosecuting Attorney's Office wore blue to show solidarity and raise awareness on National Human Trafficking Day, Jan. 1. They are seated behind an informational table located in front of the prosecutor's office in the Ogemaw County Building. Information is free and available all month long to the public. Pictured (l-r) Jesse Burgher, Amanda Pilarski, Assistant Prosecutor Andrew Walker, Jennifer Casselman and Jennifer Denryder.

# Scholarships available for area health care students

The MyMichigan Health Foundation has opened applications for its 2026-2027 scholarship program, offering more than 40 scholarships to students pursuing careers in health care. The program supports learners at all levels, from undergraduate to postgraduate education. In total, more than \$300,000 in scholarship funding will be awarded to eligible applicants across the MyMichigan Health service area.

"We are thrilled to invest in the future of health care by supporting students within our communities," said Denise O'Keefe, executive director of the MyMichigan Health Foundation. "These scholarships help build a strong pipeline of skilled health care professionals who will care for our patients and families for years to come."

Applications are open now through April 1. Scholarship awards may include single or multiple disbursements and will support students during the 2026-2027 academic year.

Notable scholarships available include:

**Dr. David Rayfield Endowed Scholarship:** Established in memory of Dr. Rayfield, this \$2,400 scholarship supports nursing students pursuing a bachelor's degree in Michigan.

**Dr. Peter Aliferis Memorial Scholarship:** A \$1,000 scholarship for students advancing in clinical laboratory sciences or medical school who are living in Alpena, Alcona, Montmorency or Presque Isle County.

**Diane Postler-Slatery Memorial Nursing Scholarship:** Honors the legacy of MyMichigan Health's former CEO by supporting aspiring nurses with a \$2,000 scholarship.

**Bailey Scholarship:** The Bernard F. and Melissa Anne Bailey

Family Fund awards more than \$200,000 annually based on merit to approximately 100 students in a variety of health care fields. Students must live in Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella or Midland County.

**Cinthia and Mauro Gregorio Endowed Scholarship:** A \$1,800 scholarship to support Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Certified Nursing Assistant or Licensed Practice Nurse pursuing a degree in Michigan.

**Philip A. Harris Memorial Scholarship:** Provides \$1,000 scholarship for medical students who are relatives of MyMichigan Health employees or have completed clerkships within the organization.

**June & Gerald Kramer Memorial Education Scholarship:** A \$1,000 scholarship to support individuals living in Alpena, Alcona, Montmorency or Presque Isle County and seeking a nursing degree or other direct patient care occupations.

**MyMichigan Medical Center Clare Volunteer Scholarship:** Two \$500 scholarships for Medical Center Clare employees or their dependents attending Mid-Michigan College and pursuing a health care degree.

**MyMichigan Medical Center Gladwin Volunteer Scholarship:** A \$1,500 scholarship for a high school senior attending Beaverton High School, Gladwin High School or Skeels Christian School who plans to pursue a health care degree.

**MyMichigan Medical Center Midland Volunteer Scholarship:** A \$2,000 scholarship for a Midland County resident pursuing a health care degree.

**MyMichigan Medical Centers in Saginaw, Standish and Tawas Scholarships:** Multiple awards totaling more than \$25,000 for

Medical Center Saginaw, Standish and Tawas employees or their children, including 15 available scholarship opportunities. **SCHOLARSHIPS continues on page 8 »**

# Scrambled Eggs in STEM!



Courtesy photo

The seventh and eighth grade STEM students at St. Joseph School recently scrambled some eggs. The students had the challenge of designing packaging to protect an egg from cracking or worse. The initial test was a three foot drop. The survivors of the three foot drop went next to a 10 foot drop. There was one surviving egg with no blemish and one egg with a minor crack from the 10 foot drop. Great job and great fun for the students. Pictured (r) is student Ella Gale.

# Jameson Memorial Tournament



2006



2026



## 20th Annual 9-pin No Tap Tournament

Remembering Kurt, Leslie & Michael

Hosted by Dennis Jameson, Nathan Rachow, Andrea Gray, Dan & Michelle Rachow, Dennis & Amanda Parks along with Ogemaw Lanes of West Branch.

**Date:** Saturday Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Location:** Ogemaw Lanes West Branch, MI

**Cost:** \$30.00 /person

**Included in cost:**

- 3 games (9-pin No tap)
- Dinner Buffet

**Shift times:** 12:30 p.m.  
4:00 p.m.  
8:00 p.m.

Raffles & 50/50 drawings for prizes.

20 years of supporting youth bowling... and missing you!

Handicap based on 90% of 220

### Tournament Payouts:

The top man & top woman each will receive a Tournament Logo jacket! (\$100 Value)

Cash prizes for the Top 5 men & Top 5 women!

Please Preregister by Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026! To register -Please turn in the lower portion of this paper.

If you need additional information or if you have any questions, please contact Ogemaw Lanes & Lounge at 989-345-2200.

Please fill out and deliver to Ogemaw Lanes & Lounge.

To reserve your spot on a lane, please turn in this form and your fees by February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026. (Late entries are not guaranteed a lane or time slot.)

Name _____ Avg. _____	Name _____ Avg. _____
Name _____ Avg. _____	Name _____ Avg. _____

Please circle Shift time: 12:30 pm 4:00 pm 8:00 pm

# Museum plans for 250th Anniversary of United States of America

BY SALLY A. REA

On July 4, 2026, America will honor the memory and celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Under our president Donald Trump's leadership, the White House Task Force started celebrating this event July 4, 2025.

Our prosecuting attorney, LaDonna Schultz, has asked our Ogemaw County Museum to decorate one of its glass cases on the first floor of the courthouse for the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America. Rose City Historical Society has asked if they could help. We have already met with LaDonna and agreed to do this plus another glass case. We will redo that with

the history of Ogemaw County. Our two groups will meet again on Jan. 28 at the museum. We already have a lot of good ideas from both groups.

Lois Bergquist and Joyce Nelander are working hard on getting the basement Christmas decorations organized. I can't thank them enough. I want to thank Lois's granddaughter, Page and her boyfriend, for putting the sleigh away and moving all the heavy stuff for us. Good help is hard to find. Page also took out all the cardboard in the attic.

Our museum is closed yet until May 21. If you need to get information on history, need RADA Cutlery, or just want to get into the museum call me at 989-343-0177 and we will make arrangements.

Teachers, it is never too late to set up your appointment for your students to tour the museum. Spring isn't that far off. We have so much history to share with them about our county.



SALLY A. REA  
HISTORIAN AND  
CURATOR

## News from the Skidway Lake area

BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON

One of our main complaints in our area is road conditions. We have many roads in our area that have not seen maintenance or upgrades in years and some never. I know public and private roads have very different rules for maintenance. I have a road right across the street from me and watch vehicles in and out all day long. The chatter bumps at the end of the road are awful.

Why are they always awful? Because the drivers of those vehicles can't seem to pull out or turn onto the road at a normal speed. When you pull up to a stop sign, wait for traffic, then accelerate to pull out, you don't need to gas it so the gravel flies. Or when you are turning onto the road you don't coast around the corner, then gas it so the gravel flies. That is why your road is torn up. You see all the huge potholes on the side of the pavement in turning areas as well that is caused by the driver who can't seem to turn and stay on the pavement.

We have residential roads that

are being used for business trucks that are too heavy for the roads and cause ruts and damage. Mills Township is the middleman for road brine in Mills Township. They just collect the money and turn it over to the road commission and the road commission pays the company who does the brine. There is no profit made by the township. The township was collecting \$19,000 for road brine and paying out \$29,000 for it. So doing the math, the Mills Township Board had to raise the assessment for road brine. It was \$10.44 and now will be \$17.66. That is once a year and you get three brine dates. Mills Township is trying hard to have that on the summer tax since the winter tax is always more and comes at a hard time with the holidays.

Other Mills Township news: the website is almost ready to go

live and should be in early February 2026. It will be so exciting to see the township brought into the 20th century. It looks like we will be into the new office in March 2026, if all goes as planned.

Our Skidway Lake library now has an outreach coordinator, Colleen Boyd. She will be the coordinator for the libraries in Prescott, Skidway Lake and Rose City. These libraries are run by the Ogemaw District Library System. They will be having the National Night Out again in the Village of Prescott on Aug. 4. If you want to set up a booth, please contact Colleen Boyd at prescottlibrary200@gmail.com. Vendors that qualify to attend are non-profit, first responders, government or business. No sales are allowed.

The Frozen Fury ice race on



APRIL HARKEY-MASON

NEWS continues on page 5 »

**KIWANIS OF WEST BRANCH**  
Gourmet Nuts are still available for \$25. You can contact Denny at 315-725-1199. 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. 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, text Denny at 315-725-1199. 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 in the planning stages of a Valentine Dance on Feb. 13. This is for any high school aged students. Watch for the flyers we have around town or text Denny at 315-725-1199 for more information. We are planning on a bunch of things this year. On Facebook search for Aktion Club West Branch.

Those with special needs interested in joining our club, you have to be over 18 and completed school. Come on the second Wednesday of the month at noon at the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Fairview and State roads.

**KIWANIS CORNER**

DENNY SHUMWAY

**OGEMAW COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**  
The pantry is looking for donations of food or money to help us with the influx of families. We supported over 267 families in the month of December. You can add to your grocery bill at Meijer Store with cards 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 or text ahead at 315-725-1199 to see if we are open. We are open every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. or until we run out of food. Families can come once a month. We want to thank those individual donors for their generosity at this special time. We also have several businesses to thank: Star Bucks, General Dollar stores of West Branch and St. Helen, and last but not least KFC. 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 West Branch, on Feb. 6. 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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### Optimist Updates

The Optimist Club of West Branch meets every Thursday morning at 7 a.m. Loggers Depot in downtown West Branch hosts our meeting and feeds us a great breakfast with many menu options to choose from. We would love to have you come and join us for breakfast and let us show you what the Optimist Club is working on next to benefit the children of our community and the world.

Yesterday, I spoke to the club regarding asthma and the treatment of hyper reactive airway disease. For most of my life I worked in healthcare at MyMichigan Health in West Branch as a registered respiratory therapist. A big part of my job was educating patients and their

**JOE BELL**  
VICE - PRESIDENT

families about Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, which is a group of diseases that includes asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. I was diagnosed with asthma myself two years ago and understand how difficult it can be to manage. We discussed using Hepa filters in bedrooms and triggers to avoid in our homes and daily lives. Animal dander, especially cat dander, can be very troublesome for asthmatic patients.

Every year in March, the Optimist Club holds a Camel Race fundraiser at the West Branch Knights of Columbus Hall. This year's event will be on Saturday, March 21 and it is the highlight of our year. Thirty-six camels compete on the table top race track and you bet on each race using camel bucks that are purchased at the event. The camels are all decorated by their sponsors who compete to win the best-looking camel prize. It is a great way to support the kids in our community because all of the money raised that night is invested back in our children through scholarships and all of the children-focused events that we put on each year. So, shake off those midwinter blues and come join us for an exciting night of racing.

We close each meeting by reciting the Optimist Creed, part of which states: "Promise yourself to greet every living person you meet with a smile!"

What a great way to approach your life. 'Bye for now.'

# Cardinal Optimist Club seeks new members

BY LADONNA SCHULTZ

It is a new year! And if your new year resolution is to get more involved in your community and volunteer a few hours of your time to a good cause, the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake is a good place to start.

Our club is recruiting new members to help us bring out the best in kids. To learn more about our club, members of the CO-COSL Board of Directors will be hosting a coffee, cookies, and conversation event at 5 p.m. on

Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the Café International Restaurant's back meeting room in Prescott. At this event, you can speak directly to current members who will answer any questions you may have about becoming a member yourself. Our creed is simple:

"Promise Yourself

To be SO STRONG that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the GREATER ACHIEVEMENTS of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance AT ALL TIMES and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have NO TIME to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble."

If this is a mantra

you too would like to espouse, come spend a few minutes at our coffee, cookies, and conversation

event! It is the first step in keeping that new year resolution to get more involved. And what could be better than eating a freshly baked cookie with potentially new friends? Answer: Nothing!



LADONNA SCHULTZ

# MSU Extension supports veterans

BY JULIE DARNTON

Michigan State University Extension is committed to supporting those who have served our country by providing programs that promote health, financial stability, and community connection. Through initiatives like SNAP Outreach, veterans gain access to essential nutrition resources, while health education sessions such as SLEEP and Tai Chi help improve overall well-being.



JULIE DARNTON  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR  
MSU EXTENSION

in civilian life.

MSU Extension has a presence in Michigan communities, including Ogemaw County, and is delivering education, technical assistance and a connection to research that improves people's lives. Veterans understand the value of building strong teams and cultivating communities of mutual support, and MSU Extension is proud to be an available member of those

teams. MSU Extension's outreach to veterans is just one facet of the support that Michigan State University offers the community of servicemembers, veterans and their families. The on-campus Center for Veterans and Military-Affiliated Students (CVMAS) provides resources and support to servicemembers, veterans, and military-affiliated students to learn, develop, and succeed as they navigate their academic path and identify the next steps in their life's journey. For more information about MSU Extension programs and services, visit the website at [www.canr.msu.edu/outreach](http://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach).

SLEEP is an educational program that stands for SLeep Education for Everyone Program, and is focused on helping participants how to improve their sleep quality. Tai Chi is a guided exercise and meditation practice that helps participants improve balance, both mentally and physically, and helps reduce the rates of falls for older adults. Beyond these offerings, MSU Extension connects veterans to tools for managing stress, building healthy habits, and exploring new opportunities in agriculture and leadership, empowering them to thrive

## News

« Continued from page 4

Skidway Lake is Feb. 7 at 1 p.m. Racers must be registered by noon and cost to register is \$10. Trophies will be given for each class. Glenn Stellwag is the organizer; you can contact him on Facebook 989 Raceway or

call Glenn at 989-482-3051. No charge for spectators. It should be a fun day on Skidway Lake.

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

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

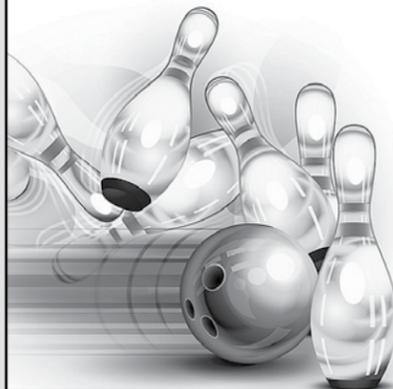
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*To those who have chosen to remain nameless, but are noticed all the same, to our families, devoted friends whom we love and cherish, charitable organizations near and far, those who know us, and those who didn't, but*

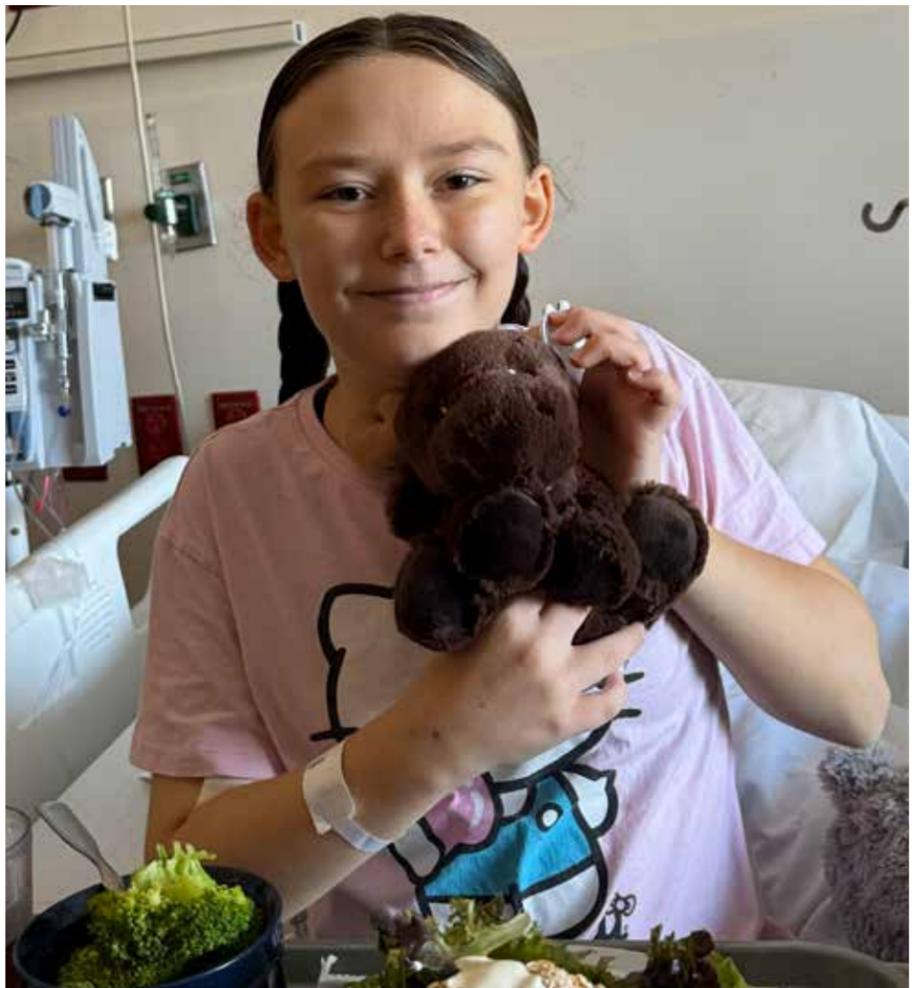
*now do.*

*A special Thank-you to those that took the time to organize each event, set and clean up each event and put every effort into making the event successful.*

*To those that have, are, or did experience the same journey as what we*

*are on, we are indebted for your kindness and support.*

*To all...Thank-you for all that you have done and are doing in every way to walk beside our family as we continue on this path. We are humbled by the kindness and support from each and everyone.*



# Trafficking

« Continued from page 1



Courtesy photo

Deb Williams (l) a member of the Human Trafficking Community Group, spoke at a recent meeting of the West Branch Business and Professional Women.

agriculture, restaurants, hotels and domestic service. It has even been found in places you would never think of like, Mackinac Island.”

Deb explained how people have a hard time believing that these types of crimes occur. Another myth she often hears repeated is “why don’t they just go to the police” or “I saw them in public, they could have said something.” However, a victim may not be free to speak. Often their traffickers are close by keeping watch. Victims feel afraid to come forward for help due to threats of violence.

“The trafficker has all the control,” she said. “Traffickers will take all their identification documents or get them hooked on drugs as a means to keep them

from coming forward.”

Deb’s lecture inspired one BPW member to come forward and share an experience that happened in her own family. This member received a phone call from her niece who had been talking to a male “friend” online. After a period of grooming, this “friend” asked the minor to get a passport so they could meet in Canada. Her niece was calling for the money to purchase the passport. The member told the group “Bells started going off.” She knew this didn’t sound right. She told her niece that she wanted to speak/meet with this guy before she would consider this request. Of course, the male friend refused the meeting and her niece was strongly encouraged to end that

online friendship.

Lastly, Deb encouraged the group to report suspected Human Trafficking to their local police departments. “Do not confront the victim or trafficker yourself as this could be too dangerous. Instead, she recommends reporting a tip in several safer ways like contacting 911, calling local law enforcement directly, or by calling the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Those survivors that escape this kind of life have one thing in common: an advocate. Someone who took the time to care about them and their plight. If you see something, say something. You could be that one person who didn’t turn a blind eye and saved a life.

# Service

« Continued from page 1

business. When the company moved to Ohio, Team Hodges hired Jennifer to work in accounting. She and Tony married four years ago. Together they run the day-to-day business of ATC, each using their compatible skills.

“I know ordering and accounting,” Jennifer said. “At first I wasn’t sure about the various items we sell, but over time I’ve learned.”

“We go above and beyond for

our customers,” Tony said. “We treat every vehicle we work on as our own. Whatever you buy here can be installed here.”

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“We also offer a ten percent parts discount to active military, veterans, police, and fire to show our appreciation and support,” Jen said.

ATC Auto & Truck Center is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/autotruckaddons>, email [atcaccessories@yahoo.com](mailto:atcaccessories@yahoo.com) or call 989-343-9950.

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# Tax Reform impacts virtually everyone this year. Let's see what it means for you.



## Tax Prep Checklist

Bring these items to your tax appointment to help ensure you get every dollar you deserve.

### Personal Information

- SSN or ITIN, full names and birth dates for everyone included on your return
- Amount of alimony paid and ex-spouse's Social Security number
- Childcare records (including the provider's ID number) if applicable

### Income/Investments/Retirement

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

### Education

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

### Itemized Deductions

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

### Healthcare

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

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## PlayWorks

« Continued from page 1

Born in Iran, he immigrated to the United States when he was 16. Following high school graduation in Boston, Mass., he attended Florida Institute of Technology, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. In 1985, Sassan received a Master of Science in CAD/CAM from Eastern Michigan University, where he met his wife. They have been married for 40 years.

The Tarahomis moved to Massachusetts, where in 1995, Sassan received his doctorate in Plastics Engineering from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Shortly after, they returned to Michigan to be near family.

Dr. Tarahomi has exciting plans for his newly acquired American PlayWorks in Rose City. This week he hired two more shifts of

employees, bringing the total to 30. To accommodate the needs of his staff, he has hired a chef and is creating a kitchen where employees may purchase meals at cost. He plans to offer breakfast for \$2, lunch for \$3, and dinner for \$4. He is also creating a daycare center with a separate entrance.

"There are mothers, and even grandmothers who need someone to watch their children and know they are safe," Dr. Tarahomi said. "We can provide that for them."

Among his other plans are the creation of an exercise room employees may use before and after their shifts to keep fit, and an apprenticeship program for high school students.

"I want to help young people develop a skill and have employment, so they don't have to move

away," he said. "I also plan to develop leaders from among our employees so all promotions will be made from within."

Currently, American PlayWorks has contracts to supply toys to Walmart, Target, Menards, Dollar General and similar stores. In the future, Dr. Tarahomi would like to see the business branch out to manufacture household, business and other items which could be finished and shipped directly from the facility.

If you would like to know more, or are interested in employment opportunities, visit <https://midmiplastics.com/>, call 989-335-0060 or stop by American PlayWorks, 3059 Beechwood Rd. in Rose City.

## Scholarships

« Continued from page 3

such as the Allyson Wilson Memorial Scholarship, Children's Free Ward Association Health Care Scholarship, and Doris M. Jacques Volunteer Alliance Health Care Advancement Scholarship.

Thelma Orr Memorial Scholarship: Two \$1,500 scholarships for students living in Alpena, Alcona, Iosco, Montmorency, Oscoda or Presque Isle counties and who are pursuing a health care degree at a Michigan university or college.

Paul A. Poling Memorial Fund Scholarship: Two \$2,500 scholarships for students living in Alger, Au Gres, Gladwin, Hale, Houghton Lake, Mio, Prescott,

Roscommon, Rose City, St. Helen, Tawas, West Branch, or Whittemore who are pursuing a health care degree.

Rick and Jan Reynolds Scholarships: A \$5,000 scholarship for one Medical Center Midland Family Medicine Residency employee and two \$5,000 scholarships for a MyMichigan Health cardiovascular service line employee seeking additional education. Interest may be directed to (989) 839-1620.

Dr. George Schaiberger, Sr., Dr. Howard VanOosten and Dr. Lloyd Wiegerink Memorial Scholarship: A \$800 scholarship to a

West Branch high school senior or Medical Center West Branch employee pursuing a health care degree.

Dr. William Dery Endowed Scholarship: A \$1,500 scholarship for a current faculty member or current resident physician of MyMichigan Midland Family Medicine Residency pursuing additional health care education.

Tolfree Scholarship: A \$500 scholarship for a health care student from Alger, Au Gres, Gladwin, Hale, Houghton Lake, Mio, Prescott, Roscommon, Rose City, St. Helen, Tawas, West Branch or Whittemore.=

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# New national ranking affirms Michigan's Workforce Advantage

A new national ranking reinforces what employers across the state already know: Michigan has all the right components for workforce success.

Site Selection Magazine's newly released Workforce Development rankings place Michigan fourth in the nation - ahead of California, Texas, and Florida - and second in the East North Central region. The Michigan Works! Association said the ranking reflects years of strategic investment in people, skills, and local workforce partnerships that connect Michiganders to good-paying, in-demand jobs while helping employers grow.

"This ranking validates the work happening every day in communities across Michigan," said Ryan Hundt, CEO of the Michigan Works! Association. "Michigan's strength is not just its talent — it's the investments, systems, and partnerships that help workers gain skills and help employers find the people they need. Local Michigan Works! agencies are at the center of that effort."

Site Selection Magazine cited Michigan's strong workforce talent, postsecondary institutions, and skilled trades programs as key factors driving the ranking. Michigan also moved up two spots from the publication's 2025 regional rankings, highlighting continued momentum

in workforce and talent development.

"This recognition demonstrates what Michigan can achieve through coordination, accountability, and local expertise," Hundt said. "With limited resources, Michigan Works! agencies have built a responsive, employer-driven workforce system that delivers results with efficiency and care. Strategic, sustained legislative investment would allow us to scale what's already working and position Michigan even more competitively on the national stage."

The ranking follows other recent national recognitions, including a sixth-place ranking in CNBC's Top States for Business and a Top 10 ranking from Area Development, further underscoring Michigan's growing reputation as a state where businesses can compete and thrive.

Michigan Works! Association leaders noted that the ranking reflects the combined impact of statewide initiatives and local delivery, including registered apprenticeships, employer-driven training programs, career readiness credentials, and expanded access to postsecondary education and skills training.

"Employers don't just need workers — they need workers who are prepared, credentialed, and ready to succeed," Hundt said. "Michigan Works! agencies

partner with businesses, colleges, unions, and community organizations to make that happen, region by region. And as these results show, we're making an enormous impact. What's needed now is for state investment in crucial workforce programs to match the level of ongoing demand that continues to exist in communities across Michigan."

The Michigan Works! Association said the ranking should encourage continued investment in workforce development as competition for talent intensifies nationwide.

"This recognition is something Michigan should be proud of — but it's also a reminder that workforce development is never 'done,'" Hundt said. "Sustained investment in skills, access, and local partnerships will ensure Michigan continues to lead and remains a place where both workers and businesses can make it."

According to Site Selection, the revamped rankings were based on a composite index using data from ACT, the Lumina Foundation, the Strada Education Foundation, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, SkillsUSA, and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Michigan scored particularly well on measures such as career-readiness certificates, degree attainment, and improvements in labor productivity.

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## Barry William McKenna

Jan. 24, 1965 – Jan. 5, 2026

Barry William McKenna, age 60, passed away at his home suddenly and unexpectedly on Monday, Jan. 5, 2026. He was born on Jan. 24, 1965, in West Branch, Mich., in the same town he called home.

Barry graduated from Ogemaw Heights High School in 1983. He dedicated many years of his life to working in the distribution center at the United States post office in North Carolina until his well-deserved retirement. His career was a testament to his strong work ethic and commitment to service.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy serving for four years, he was based in San Diego, Calif., and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. His time in the military built a strong foundation which led to a fulfilling life filled with friendship and community involvement.



He had an easy-going demeanor and a fun-loving spirit, which endeared him to many. Barry enjoyed playing darts and was an active member of a local darts league. He had a keen interest in politics and loved engaging in lively debates about various political topics. Barry also cherished trips to the casino, where he enjoyed the thrill of the game.

Barry is survived by his brother, Brian R. McKenna of West Branch. He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Ellen (Nizer) McKenna.

A Veterans Service was held on Friday, Jan. 16, at Steuermol & McLaren Funeral Homes – West Branch.

Those wishing to make memorial contributions please consider a memorial to the family of Barry W. McKenna.

## Barbara Ann Gibbs Cordova

Aug. 6, 1940 – Jan. 8, 2026

Barbara left this world surrounded by love on Jan. 8, 2026, in Zephyrhills, Fla. She was 85 years old. She was born Aug. 6, 1940, somewhere along M-55 on the way to Tolfree Memorial Hospital. Raised on the Gibbs Farm, an Ogemaw County landmark for almost a century, she continued to call it home until retiring to Florida in 1984.

Her professional career began as an LPN at Tolfree Memorial Hospital. Though later faced with physical challenges most of her adult life, Barbara managed the apple farm with her father, Frank, and single-handedly raised three head-strong children into happy, successful adults. She was a member of Calvary Baptist Church and loved being an AWANA leader for over 14 years.

Travel was Barbara's passion. She traveled extensively throughout North America and Europe. She enjoyed visiting



historic landmarks and seeing iconic works of art. She was also passionate about her family, fancy hats, poodles, and good chocolate.

Barbara will be remembered first and foremost for her strength. She pushed through adversity and never quit. She was always ready for adventure. She was a bit sassy, too.

She is survived by her children, Terry Marie McGuirk (Timothy), William Dale Cordova (Lily), and Christine Ann Manni; her grandson, Christopher Manni (Sharayah), and great-grandchildren, Brooklyn, Maylee, and Chase.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, W. Frank and Helen Gibbs; her brother, Donald Gibbs, and sister-in-law, Josephine Gibbs.

Interment of ashes and a memorial service will be at Brookside Cemetery, West Branch, on Oct. 22.

## Shirley Ann Webb

Dec. 31, 1934 – Jan. 18, 2026

Shirley Ann Webb, age 91, passed away on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026, surrounded by her family at her home in West Branch. She was born on Dec. 31, 1934, in Flint, Mich., to Henry and Valda (Aicher) Ranger.

Shirley worked at the A & P Store in West Branch for many years. She enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her great grandchildren.

Shirley is survived by her husband, Richard Webb; daughters, Deborah Beamish, Mary Jo (Paul Craig) Webb, and Lucinda (Eric) Geiser; grandchildren, Rebecca (Sean) Tousigna, Daniel (Trisha) Beamish, and Ryan Geiser; great-grandchildren, Madison Tousigna, Mason Tousigna, Rylea Beamish, and Taryn Beamish,



who were the light of her life. She is also survived by her siblings, Alice Richardson, Diane Westmark, Marsha (Paul) Schack, and Roxanne (Mark) Ruby; sister-in-law, Kaye Bellville; brother-in-law, William (Sue) Latter; and many nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her parents, brothers Henry, Virgil, Danny, and Wayne, and her sisters, Doris and Betty.

Cremation has taken place, per her request. The family will hold a celebration of her life at a later date.

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

## Patricia Louise Webber

Oct. 17, 1958 – Jan. 9, 2026

Patricia Louise Webber (Timm), 67, of Ogemaw County, passed away on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026. She was born on Oct. 17, 1958, in Saginaw.

Patti was a creative and artistic soul. She found beauty in everything. She loved to paint and create with what nature provided, turning ordinary things into expressions of warmth and meaning. Her plants and garden were her happy place, bringing joy and nourishment to her family. She took great pride sharing her knowledge and passion with others. Big-hearted and fiercely loving, she was a devoted supporter of those she loved and was known

for standing firm in her beliefs.

Patti is survived by her son, John Dombrowski; daughter, Holly Huizar; brother, Larry Timm; sisters, Mary Kay Manyen and Nanette Hruby; nieces and nephews, Steve McCallum, Greg Hardin, Shannon Hardin, and Laura Williams; grandchildren, John Dombrowski II and Abigail Dombrowski, "special Grandma Madre" to Veronyka, Marissa, Reese, and Grayson.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Doris (Funka) Timm and niece, Abby Miller,

passing in 2013.

Patti will be remembered for her creativity, strength, generosity, and unwavering love.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, at 2 p.m. at the Horton Township Hall, 2120 Rau Rd., West Branch., followed by a celebration luncheon for family and friends to continue

to share stories and memories. Arrangements were handled by Steuermol & McLaren Funeral Home in Rose City. [www.steuernolmclaren.com](http://www.steuernolmclaren.com)



## Joyce M. Remilong

Aug. 11, 1943 – Jan. 17, 2026

Joyce M. Remilong, age 82, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, at MyMichigan Medical Center in Saginaw. She had lived in West Branch all her life. Joyce was born on Aug. 11, 1943, in West Branch to Donald and Frances (Druley) Winter. Joyce loved gardening, sewing, crafting, fishing, thrifting, canning, and quilting. In her younger years, she and her late husband, Roger, owned Winter's Grocery on M-30 in the 1970s. She also worked for many years at AWG Cash and Carry and studied real estate. Her family fondly remembers her kindness, giving nature, and love of the

outdoors. During her later years, she spent a lot of time attending garage sales, craft shows where she sold her work, and enjoying the outdoors with her 11 grandchildren.

Joyce is survived by her daughters, Ranae (Marshall) Lynn of North Dakota, Joyce (Keith) Clarke, and Jill Remilong, both of West Branch; her 11 grandchildren, Alyssa (James) Rohrer, Sadie (Daniel) Esparsen, Cassius Remilong, Avia (John) Morley, Alina (Jason) Pennington, Jeremy (Taylor) Schorn,

Daniel Schorn, Christina, John (Jennifer) Leslie, Brittany (Johan) Schurer-Clark, Madison (Eric) McGregor, and her 18 great-grandchildren.

She is survived by her siblings, Roger Winter of Flint and Louis (Crystal) Winter of West Branch.

Preceding in death were her parents, Donald and Frances Winter; her brother, Wayne Winter, and her beloved husband, Roger Remilong.

A celebration of life will be held in summer 2026.



## Matt Repar

Sept. 20, 1929 – Jan. 10, 2026

Matt Repar, a devoted family man and respected businessman, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at his home in West Branch, at the age of 96. He was born on Sept. 20, 1929, in Sveta Jana, Croatia. Matt's early years were spent in his homeland before he made the significant decision to move his family to the United States in 1958, embracing new opportunities and the promise of a brighter future. He graduated from a Jesuit high school in Zagreb, Croatia, and also attended Rets Electronics School in Detroit, Mich. -- he was always learning something throughout his life.

He became a well-known figure in his community, owning and operating Northern Forest and Lumber Products, last located on South M-76 in West Branch. Matt dedicated himself to his work with remarkable passion and tenacity, continuing to contribute to the business until the age of 94. His work ethic and commitment to his craft made a lasting impact

on those who worked alongside him.

Outside of his professional life, Matt had a vibrant personality and enjoyed engaging in discussions about Croatian and United States politics. He sponsored a company softball team, even playing when necessary. He valued the connections he had with family, often cherishing photographs that captured the moments shared with his loved ones. This deep appreciation for family was evident in the love he had for them. Matt could talk to anyone about anything.

He is survived by his children, Mary Repar, Nick (Sharon) Repar, and Sandra Repar, as well as his grandchildren, Megan (Catie Hickey) Repar and Stephen (Gaby) Repar. The bond he shared with them and his great-grandchild, Penny Repar, brought immense joy to his life.

Matt was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Ivka Repar;

his son, Miljenko Repar; and his parents, Nikola and Barbara (Jagunčić) Repar.

His legacy lives on through his devoted family, who will remember him as a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, whose strength and dedication will continue to inspire them.

A memorial mass will be held at St. Joseph Catholic Church in West Branch on May 30, 2026, at 11 a.m. with visitation starting at 10 a.m. Fr. Al Pillarelli will officiate. There will be a luncheon to follow at the Knights of Columbus Hall in West Branch. All will be welcome to attend. Interment will be at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery in West Branch.

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



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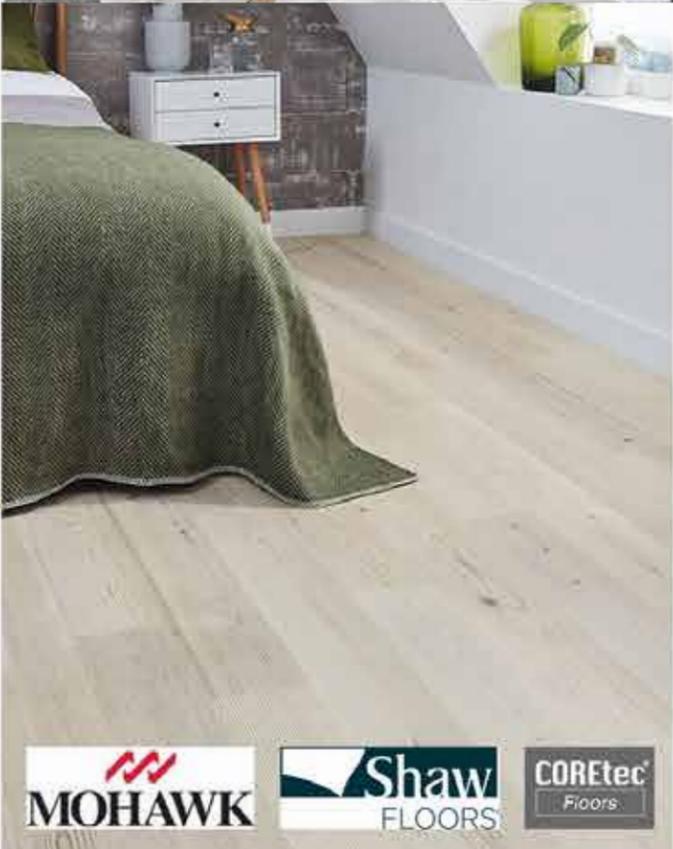
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