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## WB Little League hosts season opener



Photo by Laura Bender

The West Branch Little League held their Opening Day ceremonies on Saturday, May 2, under sunny skies. The 11 a.m. event began with the presentation of colors by the Veterans Alliance Honor Guard. Pictured, Donald Card, the 2026 Ogemaw County Veteran of the Year, threw out the first pitch to open the season for the West Branch Little League. Master Sergeant Card retired in 2004 after 28 years 2 months and 17 days in the Army... but who's counting!

## St. Joseph's students celebrate 'Law Day' with hands-on civic learning

BY LAURA BENDER

Peggy Zettle's third and fourth-grade students made their way on foot from St. Joseph School to the Ogemaw County Building on Friday, May 1, to participate in Law Day.

This important day of learning was established by President Eisenhower in 1958 and Congress in 1961 to highlight how the legal system protects freedoms and supports democracy.

According to the American Bar Association, "Law Day, held annually on May 1, is a national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law. Law Day provides an opportunity to understand how law and the legal process protect our liberty, strive to achieve justice, and

LAW DAY continues on page 7 »



Photo by Laura Bender

Students from St. Joseph School placed blue and gray pinwheels on the lawn of the Ogemaw County Building to symbolize the safe, joyful childhoods all children deserve.

## Prepare yourself for 'Something Different'

BY DEANNA SURBROOK

There's a new dining option in West Branch, and the owners, Andrew Templeton and Chelsea Donaldson, promise you won't find anything as unique in the area.

"Everything about us is different," said Andrew, adding the song "Cult My Personality" by Living Color is their jam. "That's how we live our lives... we want to create a vibe that is most welcoming to everyone – a real community hub."

On Friday, May 1, the bar and grill opened to the public. The next day they hosted a Kentucky Derby party that was well attended. They plan on having many more special events that are fun and different, just like them.

Neither Andrew nor Chelsea

is new to the hospitality industry.

Chelsea, a 2003 graduate of Ogemaw Heights High School and 2007 graduate of Michigan State University, initially wanted

DIFFERENT continues on page 12 »



Photo by Deanna Surbrook

Andrew Templeton and Chelsea Donaldson debuted Something Different Bar & Grill, located inside the West Branch Country Club, to the community on Friday, May 1.

## Max-Well Farms receives grant from local United Way



The Ogemaw United Way recently awarded Max-Well Farms, a local organization whose mission is mentoring local youth during difficult times in their lives, a grant to keep up its good work. Pictured is Shelby, the daughter of Founder Julie Hock, with her horse, Max.

@cbeayphoto

The following article spotlights an Ogemaw County United Way Partner. This organization, Max-Well Farms, was chosen for an OCUW grant due to its mission and how it meets a need in our community that is otherwise not being addressed. Please keep reading and look at the good work of the volunteers at Max-Well Farms:

Close to the middle of Ogemaw

County, the pace of life is set by the rhythm of chores and the care of animals, where a unique program is changing the lives of young people facing adversity.

MAX-WELL continues on page 11 »





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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 G's Pizzeria in downtown 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 517-304-6971. We do not meet in the month of December.  
**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 the Ogemaw County Annex Building in 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 - (First and third of each month) Newborn Parent Support Group** 6-7:30 p.m. MyMichigan Health - West Branch in the executive dining room. Call

800-999-3199.  
**Thursdays - Northern Blend Sweet Adelines** meets every week 7 p.m. at Logan Township Hall, 4507 E. M-55, Prescott. Call Ellen 989-345-0978.  
**Thursdays - (Second and fourth) Sit & Knit**, 1 p.m. Knitting, needlework, and friendship. Whatever you craft. Ogemaw Commission on Aging, 1528 S. M-33 in West Branch. Call Alicia 989-345-3010, ext. 201.  
**Jun 10**  
**West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing**, Wednesday, June 10, West Branch Country Club, 1905 Fairview Rd., West Branch. For more information, call 989-345-2821.  
**May 12**  
**Wealth Building webinar** via Zoom, presented by Michigan State University Extension Office, Tuesday, May 12, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., free to attend. Registration deadline is May 11, by 11:59 p.m. Register at [www.canr.msu.edu/events/wealth-building-webinar-may12-2026](http://www.canr.msu.edu/events/wealth-building-webinar-may12-2026). Questions, contact Jinnifer Ortquist at [ortquistj@msu.edu](mailto:ortquistj@msu.edu).  
**May 19**  
**The Informed Renter webinar** via Zoom, presented Michigan State University Extension Office, Tuesday, May 19, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., free to attend. Deadline to register is

May 17, by 11:59 p.m. Register at [www.canr.msu.edu/events/https-events-anr-msu-edu-mmreenter-may26-](http://www.canr.msu.edu/events/https-events-anr-msu-edu-mmreenter-may26-) For more information, contact Carrie Grishaber at [grisabl@msu.edu](mailto:grisabl@msu.edu).  
**May 21**  
**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**, Irons Park, West Branch, Thursday, May 21, 4 p.m. to unveil new playscape, Ft. Austin Inclusive Corner.  
**May 23**  
**Memorial Day Craft Show**, Saturday, May 23, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., located at Rose City Area Community Center, 204 Ward St., Rose City. For more information, call Jody at 989-329-2513.  
**June 14**  
**Flag Retirement Ceremony**, hosted by the Arenac Veterans Club, located at 3221 N. M-76, Sunday, June 14, 6 p.m. Old flags may be brought to the ceremony. For more information, contact Ken Chapman, 989-345-5463.  
**Jun 20**  
**2026 West Branch Community Airport Fly-In**, Saturday, June 20, 8 a.m. to noon, West Branch Community Airport, 1519 Airport Rd., West Branch.  

*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  
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 Pastor Scott Bradstreet

**Churchill United Methodist Church**  
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 (corner of State and Morrison roads)  
 989-685-2350  
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*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 Teall  
[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**  
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 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.**

## Ogemaw County appoints new treasurer

BY LAURA BENDER

On June 1, Nicole Cooper will become the new Ogemaw County Treasurer, filling the unexpired term of office left vacant by current Treasurer Caren Piglowski's early retirement.

"I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity and am looking forward to helping the county move forward," Nicole said.

Nicole comes to this position from within the treasurer's office, which ensures continuity and a shorter time acquiring full proficiency in her new role. Nicole began working in the treasurer's office in April 2022 as the financial clerk. In October, she advanced to accounting clerk. Prior to moving to Ogemaw County, Nicole had worked for Brite Financial in Madison, Mich. She is currently pursuing an associate's degree in accounting, with a graduation date of August 2026.

On her resume, Nicole described herself as a detail-oriented professional with experience in

multiple finance, financial reporting, and public service operations.

"When there is a problem," Nicole said, "I drill down until I find a solution. A few years ago, I found a one-cent discrepancy in records from 2018, and I didn't let it go unaddressed. It is satisfying when everything comes back to zero as it should be."

Nicole and her husband, Christopher, moved to West Branch from Macomb County four years ago. They were looking for a good place to raise their two young children, and they chose West Branch. Christopher is an Army veteran who served in transportation units for 13 years, including three combat tours.

Under Michigan Election Law, when a vacancy in an elected position occurs, a Statutory Appointment Committee is authorized to fill it. The Ogemaw County committee is comprised of Probate Judge Scott Williams, Prosecuting



NICOLE COOPER

Attorney LaDonna Schultz, and County Clerk Breck Gildner. Having been selected by this committee, Nicole is now expected to fill this unexpired term of office through Dec. 31, 2028.

Then, to continue as County Treasurer, she must file as a candidate for the August primary and November general elections in 2028, and if elected, would have the opportunity for a full four-year term of office.

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# A School Reborn

## Rose City area celebrates Community Center grand opening



Photo by Laura Bender

With one snip, Kathy Curtis and the Friends of the Rose City Area Community Center opened the beloved building to the public.

BY LAURA BENDER

If you are looking for a place to play pickleball or need a meeting room with computer access or a well-equipped fitness room where you can work off added pounds and increase your stamina, the answer is the Rose City Area Community Center, housed in the former Rose City Junior High School. It's doors officially opened on April 24.

The well-attended ribbon-cutting and open house offered attendees their first look at this community venture whose vision is "to see a future where our Rose City Area community center's programs and resources contribute to a healthier, more engaged, and more fulfilling life for all individuals within our rural area, from children to seniors."

Following the ceremony, the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation announced, "With a ribbon cutting

and grand opening celebration, community members gathered to welcome a space that feels both familiar and brand new - a place where memories were once made in classrooms, now reimagined for connection, recreation, and community growth. This project is more than just a building renovation - it's a revival. A beautiful structure has been thoughtfully brought back to life and returned to the people it has always belonged to. The result is a vibrant hub designed to serve residents for years to come."

In 2024, Kathy Curtis and a committee of dedicated local citizens petitioned the WBRC Area Schools for permission to purchase the building. When the school board agreed to sell it for a nominal fee, the surrounding townships of Klacking, Cumming, Hill and Rose created a consortium, with each contributing \$10,000 to begin the

renovation project. They signed the purchase agreement on Oct. 14, 2024, and closed on the property on July 10, 2025.

The renovation work, which has three phases of implementation, began immediately. Community members worked tirelessly to repair, paint, clean, and rejuvenate spaces neglected since the school closed in 2013. The official opening of the Center signals the completion of phase one and includes a gym, fitness center, computer room, and classrooms. The plan is to generate revenue from usage fees in these areas to help pay for phase two, which will include opening the kitchen, the cafeteria, additional classrooms, and a music room. The Ogemaw District Library and the Rose City Historical Society also plan to move into the Community Center as soon as possible.

Phase three would require more extensive renovations to the north

COMMUNITY CENTER continues on page 10 »

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## River House Inc. receives 2026 Spotlight Award



Courtesy photo River House, Inc. recently received the 2026 Spotlight Award from Ogemaw County. Pictured are River House Executive Director Kimberly Scott (l) and Ogemaw County Prosecutor LaDonna Schultz.

For 40 years, River House, Inc. has been a steadfast advocate for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence, ensuring that rural communities are not overlooked or underserved.

When asked about the mission of River House, Kimberly Scott, its executive director, stated, "Awareness without action is not enough—survivors deserve safety, accountability, and access to justice. Our commitment is unwavering - to stand against violence, to uphold victims' rights, and to build communities where dignity and safety are non-negotiable."

This pledge can be difficult to achieve in smaller communities where resources for victims are sometimes limited. "In rural communities, like Ogemaw, sexual assault often goes unreported because survivor fear isolation for lack of anonymity. River House exists to ensure that confidential, trauma-informed support is available no matter where someone lives. Our history is rooted in listening to survivors, responding

with compassion, and adapting to meet the evolving needs of our communities. That legacy is something we are incredibly proud of," Scott said.

Because of River House's commitment and service to the COOR counties of Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Roscommon, the Ogemaw County Prosecutor's Office presented River House with the 2026 Spotlight Award on April 23, at the Ogemaw County's Board of Commissioner's meeting. This award is bestowed to an organization that goes above and beyond in the support of victims of crime.

At the presentation ceremony of the Spotlight Award, the OC Prosecutor, LaDonna Schultz, told the board, "Since I first took office, River House has been an enthusiastic and unflinching partner in the fight against domestic and sexual assault. Victims can depend on them to provide safe emergency shelter, a 24-hour crisis line, and legal and general advocacy. Often in small rural communities like

ours, quality survivor services are hard to find. Again, River House has stepped up to meet a need. For the convenience of Ogemaw County victims, they maintain office hours at the courthouse every Tuesday to further aid vulnerable victims in their recovery. And if that is not enough, all services offered by River House are completely free of charge."

By providing victims of abuse and their children/families with an immense range of essential services, River House plays a critical role in helping to end the cycle of violence and gives victims of abuse time to recover and rebuild their lives. Anytime one can live free of physical and psychological abuse, it not only benefits the individual survivor but strengthens the foundation of our entire community. Thank you, River House, for your positive and powerful civic impact. Your acceptance of the Spotlight Award is fitting for a job well done. For more information on River House, Inc. visit [www.riverhouseinc.org](http://www.riverhouseinc.org).

**KIWANIS OF WEST BRANCH**

We are preparing for Memorial Day Weekend, signing stores and residents up for displaying flags in front of their places. The Kiwanis Club meets at noon on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at G's Pizzeria in West Branch. Anyone interested in learning about our organization is welcome to attend. If you would like to be a guest speaker to show us what you do, 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 text 315-725-1199 and make arrangements for pick up or drop off locations.

Our next event is coming fast. We are in the final stages of donating Buddy Benches to three of our local elementary schools. We are planning on many things this year: selling water at Music in the Park starting June 25. On the 4th of July we will be holding a cornhole tournament in Rose City Park starting at about 11 a.m. Look for the notices. Help us support organizations in 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, West Branch.

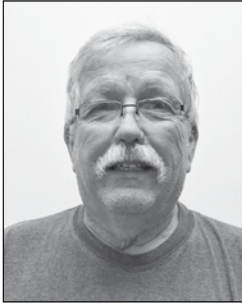
**OGEMAW COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**

We are looking for donations of food or money to help us with the influx of families. We served over 220 families in April. You can add to your grocery bill at Meijer Store with a card found at the checkouts or customer service. It is only \$10 added to your bill to help someone in need. We will take donations every Wednesday 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. Thank you to those that have donated. If bad weather, text ahead to 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. Thank you to those individual donors for their generosity at this special time. There are several businesses to thank, Starbucks, 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 on May 15 and 29. Line-up at 9 a.m. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. See you there.

**KIWANIS CORNER****DENNY SHUMWAY****Art Walk and Wine Tasting draws over 400 visitors to museum****BY SALLY A. REA**

On April 25, 2026, our Ogemaw County Museum opened its doors for the Art Walk and Wine Tasting.

We had 401 people enter our museum and enjoy our local artist, Rose White, who had a wonderful display of her artistic talents. Alan and Marcia Doss once again served our wines and explained to our guests how to taste your wines and how to get the real flavor of it. Sylvia Sobo and I served the refreshments of different kinds of cheeses and crackers. I want to thank our "Greeters," Ann Southward and Pat Scott, and Peter and Samatha Fabbri from The Silver Lining, who took the

time to set up the displays of art.

The Ogemaw County Museum will re-open on Thursday, May 21, at our regular hours 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Friday, May 22. We will be open on May 23 for an "Open House" for the Alumni of West Branch High School, St. Joseph's High School, and Rose City High School. I have put three displays together for all three schools. The museum's doors will open at 11 a.m. and close at 1 p.m.

I am very pleased to announce that under the direction of Shawn

**SALLY A. REA  
HISTORIAN AND  
CURATOR**

Holliday of Hale we will be having a "Civil War Encampment" in Irons Park open to the public. The group will be setting up Friday, July 10, in the morning with a real setting of camp fires, tents and reenactors at the campground, Friday, July 10, Saturday, July 11, and wrap it up on Sunday, July 11, in the morning. For more information call 989-701-2525 at Ogemaw County Museum.

**News from the Skidway Lake area****BY APRIL HARKEY-MASON**

You may have noticed yellow caution tape on the east end of the boardwalk that runs along the edge of Skidway Lake. The winter frost has caused some of the pylons to push up the deck of the boardwalk and made quite an uneven surface.

The Mills Township Board is working on getting repairs done as soon as possible. In the meantime, just the east end of the boardwalk is sectioned off with caution tape, and the rest of the boardwalk is fine to use. So, the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake will be able to host its annual fishing derby on the free DNR free fishing weekend, June 13, starting at 10 a.m. until noon. The kids always have a great time. Bring them out with a pole and worms will be provided. There are lots of prizes for the biggest, and most fish caught. Ages five to 16 can enter.

Progress on blighted properties

is going well, another property on Third Street has been done. It takes a while but one by one we will get there. Our ordinance officer, Steve Yuchasz, is doing a fantastic job. With a township board that is willing to back up what needs to be done, progress is being made.

The Skidway Lake Area yard sale weekend is always the second weekend in June. This year that will be June 13 and 14 and they usually run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., but you can be open whatever is good for you and include more days if you wish. The Skidway Lake Area Chamber of Commerce will have information on that soon.

This year the ticks are bad; please check your pets and

children when they have been out in the yard or woods. Wisdom Lawn Granular or Liquid Insecticide contains 0.2 percent bifenthrin on a sand-based carrier. This pyrethroid insecticide is used in lawn and perimeter applications to control various perimeter pests. Be sure to follow application directions.

**APRIL HARKEY-MASON**

The gypsy moth egg masses are not showing up enough to warrant the aerial spraying for them. So, Mills Township will take the year off from spraying.

Remember, if you have any news or events to share that is happening in our area let me know. Call or text April Mason 989-578-8768. Until next time, God Bless.

**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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**School Staff Appreciation Week****BY GAIL HUGHEY**

This week, schools across the nation pause to celebrate Staff Appreciation Week. We take a moment to honor the incredible professionals who pour their energy, talent, and heart into our school community every single day.

At the West Branch-Rose City Area Schools, our staff members are more than just employees; they are the heartbeat of our halls. From the classroom to the front office, and from the cafeteria to the bus garage, this dedicated team forms a powerful, interconnected network. They don't just teach; they mentor and inspire.

Their commitment is truly a labor of love that extends well beyond the typical workday.

The impact of our staff is felt far beyond the graduation stage. Our students leave the West Branch-Rose City Area Schools prepared to thrive in local careers, Michigan's top universities, and the global economy.

Beyond the textbooks, our staff fosters the essential social and emotional skills, like responsibility

and confidence, which allow our graduates to grow into capable individuals ready to lead and adapt in an ever-changing world.

Providing such a rich, well-rounded educational experience is only possible because of the skilled team at WBRC. This week reminds us that opportunities abound when students are guided by passionate mentors such as the West Branch-Rose City Area School staff.

**GAIL HUGHEY  
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WEST BRANCH-ROSE CITY  
SCHOOLS**

As we move through these final weeks of the school year, please join us in extending your deepest gratitude to the staff members who shape the future of our two communities. Their steadfast dedication is the reason our students can dream big.

Happy Staff Appreciation Week to the best team in Michigan.

**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.

# OHHS Top 10 attend WB Optimist meeting Thank God for our praying mothers



Courtesy photo

The Ogemaw Heights High School 2026 Top 10 students recently attended a West Branch Optimist Club meeting and shared their hopes and dreams for the future.



BY JOE BELL  
VICE - PRESIDENT  
WEST BRANCH OPTIMIST CLUB

Recently, Ogemaw Heights High School proud Principal Trisha Zeigler brought in the Top 10 graduates from the Class of 2026. Each student told the club about their future plans for attending college and discussed their careers that they plan to have after college.

Our local club sponsors several scholarships which will be awarded to Ogemaw Heights graduates. It was very encouraging to see this high achieving students' excitement about their promising future.

The Optimist Club of West

Branch meets every Thursday morning at 7 a.m. at Loggers Depot in downtown West Branch. 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.

We close each meeting by reciting the Optimist Creed, part of which states: "Promise yourself to talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet!" What a great way to approach your life. 'Bye for now.



BY PASTOR JIM BECK

Growing up, my siblings and I were so fortunate to have had a wonderful relationship with our mother. Of course, it wasn't until later in life that we finally realized this and truly appreciated it. And looking back I can now see how her caring for us went above and beyond the physical nurturing and included her pouring out so much of herself into all aspects of our lives.

My mother passed away in 2009, leaving a huge void in my life. As expected, I do feel the loss each and every Mother's Day. But mostly I feel it when the holiday seasons come around. What I remember most is that my mother would pray before dinner whenever we would be gathered together for such occasions. Her prayers were genuine and heartfelt. I heard it said once that, "if you want to find out where someone is in their spiritual walk, just ask them to pray." It was obvious that my mother knew how to pray, and that she had a heart knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I also remember hearing someone say, "Thank God for praying mothers." And then it all came back to me. When my mother prayed, her prayers always made mention of her children and grandchildren. It was very clear that we all were a major priority in her life. When I think about it I realize that each event in our lives, as children and adults, marked a major event in our mother's life. She not only celebrated our wins in life, but our mother selflessly bore our burdens.

My mother raised three boys and one girl. I assure you that this paper doesn't have the room for me to tell all the stories of growing up in our household. I believe many of you get the picture. Mom definitely had a big hand in our survival. I can't imagine us

making it through childhood and into adulthood without our mother being there. One cool thing to mention is that this also carried on into our lives as we moved on after marriage. Our spouses experienced the same love that was poured out on us kids. My mother was not a respecter of persons. She showed love for our spouses the same as she did for us.

And then the grandchildren, they were the jewels in her crown.

I totally believe that there are two sides to, well, let's call it a mother coin. On one side there is the mom, on the other, everyone that she loves and looks after. If you have never experienced the joy of either side of that coin, please don't be discouraged. There is in many ways enough love in our world to go around. We may have to be the one to initiate it, but it is there, nonetheless. God most definitely provides the way through His Son, Jesus Christ. God's word tells us that He so loves the world that He gave His only Son to die for our salvation.

His word also states that, "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for another." This is the sacrificial love that a mother pours out. What a concept, to give of yourself to others. Jesus Himself set the example, and a mother and the love she shows others is a fine illustration of this. I am a believer that it is impossible to love or serve God if you don't love and serve others. So, this week let us take the opportunity and follow the example of our Lord and Savior and show honor to mothers everywhere, past and present, and take a moment to intentionally make someone else more important than ourselves. It doesn't have to be someone you know, it can be a perfect stranger.

Either way the reward in how good it feels will be great. Do something kind or maybe be that person someone can lean on. I know mom would be proud. This can become a great habit and a way to bless others. We could call it "The mother's way." In closing, don't forget to thank God above for the praying mothers He put down here.

Jim Beck is the Care Pastor at Faith Alive Church in West Branch.

## W-P students enter winning essays in Optimist International Essay Contest



BY LADONNA SCHULTZ

The Optimist International Essay Contest continues to inspire young writers to reflect on their communities while sharpening their writing skills and competing for valuable scholarships.

For the 2025-2026 school year, students were asked to explore the topic: "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me." The annual contest encourages participants to express their personal perspectives on the topic by writing about their world around them, whether through individual experiences, national viewpoints, or even historical reflection.

Beyond fostering strong, written communication, the contest offers meaningful opportunities for students to earn college scholarships. Winners at the local level advance to district competition, where they compete for a \$2,500 scholarship funded by the Optimist International Foundations.

Here at the local level, the Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake proudly recognized three outstanding student writers for their thoughtful and inspiring essays.

First Place: Scarlett Smalley - awarded \$300 and an opportunity to advance to the district



Courtesy photo

The Cardinal Optimist Club of Skidway Lake recognized three student writers in the Optimist International Essay Contest. Pictured (l-r) Scarlett Smalley, first place; Dorothy Jarrell, second place, and in third place is Ava Auxier.

competition

Second Place: Dorothy Jarrell - awarded \$200

Third Place: Ava Auxier - awarded \$100

Each of our local winners demonstrated a strong understanding of how service can shape one's connection to their community. Their essays highlighted the importance of giving back and illustrated how even small acts can create meaningful change.

Here is Scarlett's winning essay:

*How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me*

One of my parent's favorite things to tell me is: "All you can do is try and change your own little corner of the world." Which is kind of funny because we discovered the world is a sphere a while ago, but regardless this always gives me comfort in knowing that I'm not useless, even when the world makes me feel small. I've

discovered that a good way to try to better my corner of the world is to participate in community service. And it's changed by view on my community entirely.

The Britannic Dictionary defines community as "a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood)." But to me, community means the people you choose to surround yourself with and the people you choose to help. Community is the man down the street who you bring Christmas cookies. It's the lady that works at the corner store that already knows what you're buying when you walk in the door. It's the guy that plows your driveway, or the teacher who's always at after school tutoring. Maybe community isn't even necessarily where you reside. Your community can be where you work or a place you find yourself often because your community is less of your area

CONTEST continues on page 6 »

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**Obituaries**

## Geneieve Flinn

Jan. 30, 1926 – May 3, 2026

Geneieve Flinn, née Story, a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at her home in West Branch, Mich. Born on Jan. 30, 1926, in Jonesboro, Ark., Geneieve's remarkable life spanned an incredible 100 years filled with love, nurturing, and a deep connection to the natural world.

Geneieve was a woman whose heart belonged to her garden. She found immense joy in tending to flowers and spending time outdoors in her yard. Remarkably, even in her final years, she exhibited her innate love for nature by carefully digging up irises to move them to new places in her garden - an act that reflected both her enduring spirit and her attentive care. Birdwatching was another cherished pastime, and fall was her favorite season, when she delighted in the warm, changing colors of the leaves, a simple pleasure that brought her peace and happiness.

Her love of life extended

beyond her garden. Geneieve was known for her enthusiasm for road trips, exploring new places wherever the open road might lead. She enjoyed collecting and sharing recipes, an activity that highlights her generous and nurturing soul, always eager to connect with others through the pleasures of food and family traditions.

Geneieve's journey was marked by meaningful relationships. She was the loving mother of her daughter, Lisa Flinn (Mark Norgan) and her son, Roger (Jean) Flinn. Her legacy lives on through many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, whose lives she touched with warmth and kindness. She also leaves behind nieces, nephews, and a wide circle of friends who were blessed by her gentle presence. She will be missed by her cat, Gabby.

She is now reunited with those who went before her, her devoted parents, Elige and Ethel (Swann)

Story; her beloved husband, George Flinn; her son, Wayne Flinn; and five siblings. Though their absence is deeply felt, their memory remains treasured within the family she so dearly loved.

Geneieve Flinn's life was a testament to grace, endurance, and love for the simple, beautiful moments that make life meaningful - whether it was a quiet day in the garden, a heartfelt road trip, or sharing a warm meal with loved ones. Her spirit will forever bloom in the hearts of those who knew her, nourished by the memories of a life well-lived and the tender care she extended to all.

Per her wishes, cremation has taken place.

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



## Sherman (Sherm) Louis Kutchin

Jan. 2, 1955 - May 4, 2026

Sherman Louis Kutchin, affectionately known as Sherm, passed away peacefully on Monday, May 4, 2026, at his home in Rose City, Mich., at the age of 71.

He was born on Jan. 2, 1955, in Flint, Mich., to Jack and Vicky (Bottoms) Kutchin. He lived in Rose City since 1980, formerly of New Lothrop, Mich.

A proud graduate of New Lothrop High School, he embodied the values of hard work and loyalty from a young age. His sense of duty called him to serve his country, and Sherm answered by serving in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War, a testament to his bravery and commitment.

After his military service, Sherm worked at AC Sparkplug before fearlessly pursuing his dream of entrepreneurship. For an impressive 40 years, he owned and operated Sherm's Auto Body in Rose City, Michigan. His shop was more than just a business; it was a cornerstone of the community, where Sherm built lasting relationships, earned respect, and proved time and again his masterful expertise and honest character.

Beyond his professional achievements, Sherm was known far and wide as "the fun guy." He radiated warmth, humor, and an infectious joy for life. He poured his heart into his family and friends, always putting them first. Sherm was a man of many

passions - he found joy and freedom in motorcycling and boating, played guitar and sang with soulful delight, and embraced adventure through mountain biking, water skiing, downhill skiing, rollerblading, and off-roading. He was also an avid gardener, a skilled cook, and a dedicated builder of



Jeeps.

For 20 cherished winters, Sherm and his family spent time in Florida, where he delighted in fishing on the Gulf - a pastime that brought him peace and happiness.

Sherm's family was his greatest treasure. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Kutchin; his sons, Zachary (Brittany) Kutchin and Ezekiel Kutchin; his granddaughters, Hayden and Tessa; and his grandson, Isaiah. He is also survived by his sister, Andrea (Don) Maddock, along with many nieces and nephews who cherished his kindness and spirited nature.

He is preceded in death by his parents and daughter Tessa, their memories live on in the hearts of all who loved them.

Sherman "Sherm" Louis Kutchin was a man who lived fully, loved deeply, and left an everlasting imprint on those that knew him.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the summer of 2026.

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

## James "Jim" Brewer

Jan. 14, 1961 – May 2, 2026

James "Jim" Robert Brewer, age 65, from West Branch, Mich., passed away May 2, 2026, at his home, surrounded by family, after a courageous four-year battle with cancer. Born Jan. 14, 1961, to Robert "Bob" and Karen Brewer, Jim dedicated his life to his family, a 30-year career in petroleum engineering, farming, and solving seemingly unsolvable problems.

His entrepreneurial spirit began in the ninth grade when, at his father's encouragement, he started a maple syrup business on the family farm. By his senior year, the operation had grown to more than 1,700 taps, considered a large enterprise in Michigan at the time. In a full-circle moment, Jim fulfilled his retirement dream by returning to syrup production on the family farm in 2024 and 2025.

Throughout his career with Shell Oil Company, Jim traveled extensively and contributed to projects on six continents. He held more than ten patents,

authored numerous publications, and was recognized as a global subject matter expert in his field. Among his many accomplishments, he led a remote Arctic exploration project in north-central British Columbia, Canada.

Jim will be remembered for his unwavering integrity, sharp wit, and deep love of the outdoors. Despite the challenges of his illness, he remained hopeful and resilient, leaving a lasting impression on all who knew him. He will be deeply missed for his animated stories, thoughtful debates, and legendary pancake breakfasts served with his own pure maple syrup.

He is survived by his wife, Lori (Perdew) Brewer; his children, Kari (Khefren) Savannah, Kimberly (Greg) Farrer, Mandy Brewer, and Melanie Brewer; his

grandchildren, Iva and Kaiden Savannah and Evelyn Farrer; his siblings, Debby (Dave) Graham and Dan (Dee) Brewer; and his mother, Karen Brewer.

A memorial service honoring his life and legacy will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at First United Methodist Church, 2490 W. State Rd., West Branch, at 11 a.m. with visitation starting at 10:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to the Brewer Family Endowed Scholarship at Jim's Alma Mater, Montana Tech of the University of Montana. (<https://foundation.mtech.edu/give/index.html>).

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



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## Contest

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and more of the family you find in the people around you.

I've helped volunteer at a food distribution event for a couple years, and I think that small acts like these are so eye opening. I really didn't grasp how many people are in need of food until I saw the line of cars waiting to take bags of fruits and vegetables home. And to think that this is actually just the small number of people in our area compared to all the people in the world. So many people are out there in the world struggling to get by. Not only does this serve as a reminder to always be grateful that I'm fortunate enough to have a plentiful supply of food in my kitchen, but also that community service

is completely overlooked by so many people.

Getting to see, firsthand, the people you're helping makes you start to think. Think about the area you're helping, the people, their families, their jobs, and maybe even the economy. Putting yourself in these people's shoes is something we should normalize. If we all took just a little bit of time to devote to bettering our community the world might be a much cleaner, healthier, and more welcoming place.

Another thing that makes me feel close to my community is helping with functions at my school. The elementary school does family nights, and I think

that hosting these events shows that the school cares for its students and their families within the community. When painting faces, running games, handing out Christmas cookies for kids to decorate, or even just supervising while kids play with Legos helps me feel connected to the people around me. I feel this way because young kids are overjoyed by the smallest activities. It's wonderful to see the families get to share this experience.

It's also important to note that community service helps better you as an individual. Giving special attention to your surroundings is eye opening. It really makes you think about

how everything you do affects the people you come into contact with. Personally, I want to be the kind of person that leaves a positive impact on people. Aside from community service there's so many more ways you can try to better someone's day. And by doing such, it tends to make you feel better about yourself. Maybe smiling at a lady in the grocery store will make you feel more confident. If you compliment your peer's outfit, you might stand a little taller. You noticed someone drop their stuff? Help them pick it up. These little acts of kindness not only reflect on your community as a whole but help your self-esteem. Be a better

person, feel like a better person.

The world can be a frightening place. But we can all make it feel less scary. It can be a couple of hours out of your weekend or just a list of small acts of kindness that you accomplished today that you have in your notes app. I urge everyone to try to better your own little corner of the world.

*Thank you, Scarlett, for taking the time to write such a thoughtful and inspiring essay. The Optimist Essay Contest remains a powerful platform for young people to reflect, write, and make a difference — both on paper and in their communities. Congratulations to our local winners!*

# Ogemaw County 4-H youth complete babysitting and CPR training

Ogemaw County youth recently gained valuable safety and life skills through a 4-H babysitting and CPR training program coordinated by Michigan State University Extension in partnership with MyMichigan Health and Up North Prevention.

The training focused on preparing youth to safely care for younger children while building responsibility, confidence, and leadership skills. Participants learned age-appropriate childcare, basic child development, safety practices, and how to handle common emergency situations. A CPR component introduced youth to life-saving techniques and emphasized the importance of knowing how to respond during emergencies.

The program was designed to help youth prepare for real-world

responsibilities, including babysitting for family members and community residents. In addition to hands-on learning, participants discussed professionalism, communication with parents, and decision-making skills needed when caring for others.

The babysitting and CPR training aligns with 4-H's focus on positive youth development by combining education with real-life application. Youth who complete the program leave with skills that can support future employment opportunities and increase family and community safety.

For more information about 4-H programs in Ogemaw County, contact the MSU Extension Ogemaw County office at 989-345-0692.



Ogemaw County youth recently completed a 4-H babysitting and CPR training.

Courtesy photo

# BPW Michigan hosts 108th Annual Convention in West Branch

On Saturday, May 2, Business and Professional Women Michigan proudly held its 108th Annual Convention in West Branch, welcoming members from across the state for a full day of business, learning, and celebration.

The day began with a productive morning session focused on organizational business. Members worked collaboratively to set the legislative platform, review and approve the annual budget, and hear reports from local organizations highlighting achievements and progress over the past year. These discussions reflected the group's continued commitment to empowering women and strengthening communities throughout Michigan.

In the afternoon, attendees participated in an engaging workshop

on networking led by Greg Peters, known as "The Reluctant Networker." The session offered practical strategies for building meaningful professional connections, fostering relationships, and creating new opportunities - that are essential for both personal and organizational growth.

The convention concluded with an evening banquet that celebrated excellence within the organization. Members gathered to recognize outstanding contributions and honor individuals who have made a significant impact. Among those recognized were four members of the West Branch BPW, Vicki Seltz-Barnes, Pat Hilts, Lynn Card and Sandi Osterland. Each was honored for her dedication, service, and commitment to advancing the mission of BPW in



Courtesy photo

BPW Michigan recently held its 108th Annual Convention in West Branch. Pictured (l-r) are West Branch members Sandi Osterland, Lynn Card, Vicki Seltz-Barnes, LaDonna Schultz, Nancy McLaughlin and Pam Hilts.

their community.

The 108th Annual Convention served as a powerful reminder of

the strength, leadership, and unity of BPW Michigan members. Through collaboration, education,

and recognition, the organization continues to inspire and support women across the state.

# Law Day

« Continued from page 1

contribute to the freedoms that all Americans share."

Trooper Taryn Alley began the day with a discussion on body safety. Then the children headed outside to place blue and gray pinwheels in the lawn to symbolize the safe, joyful childhoods all children deserve. As part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, pinwheel ceremonies are annual, community-led events which advocate for child safety.

Back inside the county building, the students headed to the courtroom to learn about the legal system by participating in a mock trial. Terms like "evidence" and "witness" were explained in age-appropriate ways, although "probation" was immediately understood.

"That's like being grounded," a student said.

"This hands-on courtroom experience helps students understand the importance of our laws as well as their future civic responsibility," said Prosecuting Attorney LaDonna Schultz. "Students learn about the justice system by acting out roles like lawyers, witnesses, and jurors."

Before the mock trial began, each adult participant explained



During the mock trial, students and their mentors listen to the victim's testimony.

Photo by Laura Bender

their role in the courtroom, then mentored a student in that role. In the end, the jury found the defendant guilty of having thrown a rock at a teacher, which everyone agreed is something no one

should ever do.

"They did a great job and impressed the many department heads and elected officials who participated in this exercise," LaDonna Schultz said. "Thanks, St.

Joe's! Hopefully, we sparked an interest in some students to continue academic pursuits in the field of law."

Law Day concluded with delicious ice cream sodas and the

announcement of the winners of the pinwheel coloring contest. The winners were: first place, Maddie Hawley; second place, Camden Szkubiel; third place, Lillian Mahl.

# Welcoming spring with good wine and fine art



Pleasant spring weather brought out the crowds for the West Branch Art Walk and Wine Tasting on Friday, April 24. Locals and visitors wandered throughout the downtown business district, checking out artists' works and enjoying a variety of wines from local wineries and munchies provided by West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce members.



Jim Fales displays his classic images during the event. Photos by Laura Bender



Lois Bergquist displays the commemorative glasses that were sold at the event.



Owen Dellar, artist and second grader, stands beneath (top painting) his rendering of a cat sitting under a sofa. Owen, who loves to paint with his Grammy Elaine Lademan, said, "It's nice being an artist!"



The atmosphere was festive at Olive Rose Boutique as owner Kayla and Casey Swartz entertained guests.



What should you do with your girlfriends before your wedding? Cruise the West Branch Art Walk and Wine Tasting, of course! Congratulations to bride-to-be Katie Bullock and her "Bride's Squad."



Alan and Marcia Doss poured wine at the Ogemaw County Historical Museum and explained to guests how to taste wines and get the real flavor of it.

# OHHS Freedom Classic Baseball Game honors local veterans



Courtesy photos

The Ogemaw Heights High School Varsity Baseball Team hosted its first annual Freedom Classic baseball game to honor all those who have served in the Armed Forces. The out-of-conference game played against the Armada High School Tigers from Macomb County took place between rainstorms on Friday, April 24, with many local veterans in attendance. The OHHS Athletic Department was especially thankful for the coaches and parent volunteers who worked on the field to have it ready by game time after a downpour of rain. The Falcons won the game 11 to 6.



The 2024 Ogemaw County Veteran of the Year Richard Allan Ladd is greeted by a player prior to throwing out the first pitch.



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## Community Center

« Continued from page 3

end of the original building. Until that can be accomplished, that area will remain closed.

Annual memberships for residents of the city of Rose City, Cumming, Hill, Klacking or Rose Townships cost \$25 for a single person, \$40 for two persons in the same household, \$50 for a family residing in the same household,

and \$3 for a day pass. Annual non-resident rates are slightly higher. Currently, the Rose City Area Community Center, 204 Ward St., Rose City, is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Activities include pickleball, walking, and game nights.

Visit [www.rosecityareacommunitycenter.org](http://www.rosecityareacommunitycenter.org) for the current

activity schedule, membership applications, information about room rentals, and the fitness room, which has additional fees and access times. More information is also available on the Friends of the Rose City Area Community Center page on Facebook.



Photos by Laura Bender

A state-of-the-art fitness room, amongst many other amenities, is available for use at the new Rose City Community Center.



## OHHS junior wins WB Optimist Club essay contest



Photo by Laura Bender

Charles Snyder, co-chair of the West Branch Optimists Club, presents Georgee Jax with a certificate and a check for \$100 for her winning essay "How Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me." Georgee is a junior at Ogemaw Heights High School.

## Reading is togetherness at St. Joseph School

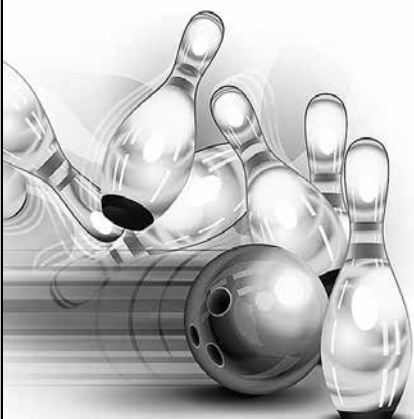


Courtesy Photo

St. Joseph School had a special day recently where they had its older kids reading to the younger kids. It was great to see the cooperation between the bigs and the littles. The littles really enjoyed the time together. Pictured (l-r) Piper James, Allison Greer and Samantha James.

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# WB Little League

« Continued from page 1



During the West Branch Little League season opener, players stood with local veterans as the National Anthem was played.

Photos by Laura Bender



Excited to begin the season, players run to find their teammates.



What's a baseball game without snacks?

## Max-Well

« Continued from page 1

Max-Well Farms, founded on a deeply personal story of loss and resilience, has become a place of healing, growth, and opportunity for at-risk youth. Its origins trace back to 1992, when the founder, Julie Hock, received a horse named Max following the death of her father. That bond became a source of strength through grief — and decades later, inspired a mission to help others find the same sense of grounding and hope.

When Max passed away in 2020 at the age of 32, his legacy lived on through the creation of Max-Well Farms. By 2022, the farm officially opened its gates to young people in need of structure, mentorship, and a safe place to belong.

Today's youth face a wide range of challenges, from trauma and unstable home lives to academic struggles and mental health concerns. Traditional approaches don't always reach those who need help the most. Max-Well Farms takes a different path — one rooted in hands-on experience rather than clinical models.

At the farm, participants are immersed in daily responsibilities: feeding animals, cleaning stalls, tending gardens, and helping with small maintenance tasks. These chores are not optional - they form the foundation of the program.

Through this work, youth learn accountability, teamwork, and

the importance of consistency. As they demonstrate responsibility, they earn opportunities such as horseback riding — reinforcing the connection between effort and reward.

Equally important is the environment itself. Removed from the distractions of screens and overstimulation, participants experience the calming effects of nature and the therapeutic bond between humans and animals.

The impact is both immediate and long-lasting.

Developing stronger communication skills, a solid work ethic, and the ability to make better decisions are the short-term outcomes that are tied to the goals of improving emotional regulation, building up confidence and giving a sense of belonging.

The long-term outcomes are even more significant with the potential of improved school engagement, reduced risky behaviors, healthier relationships with peers and adults, and hope for a better more productive future.

The farm depends on the generosity of donors and sponsors to ensure that all children can participate in its programs free of charge. Supporters are recognized through the "Horseshoe Sponsor" program, which includes tiered giving levels: Platinum (\$200), Gold (\$150), Silver (\$100), and Bronze (\$50). Each sponsor is honored with a personalized horseshoe displayed on the wall

of the indoor arena.

Major Sponsors who contribute \$500 or more receive a banner displayed in the arena. The 2026 Major Sponsors include the Child Protective Council, CF-NEM, Consumers Energy, Miller Feed, MyMichigan Health, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Rose City Dental, SRE Painting, Inc., Tom and Ginger Marx, and the United Way of West Branch.

For many participants, Max-Well Farms becomes far more than just a place to visit — it's a place where they begin to rediscover their sense of purpose and possibility. Through meaningful work, guidance from caring volunteers, and the quiet influence of nature, the program creates opportunities that many of these youth have never experienced before.

You can see it in their smiles — the pride and joy that comes from accomplishing something new, whether it's caring for an animal, completing a task, or simply believing in themselves for the first time. Those moments of confidence and happiness are a powerful reminder that every dollar donated is truly worth it.

As the farm continues to grow, so does its mission — to honor Max's legacy by transforming lives, one young person at a time.

Ogemaw County United Way is proud to help fund Max-Well Farms in its valiant mission.

## Virtual program focuses on life after breast cancer

Survivorship can mean different things to different people. For some, it begins after initial treatments, such as surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or immunotherapy, are completed.

For others, especially depending on the type of cancer, ongoing treatments like hormonal therapy may remain part of the journey. What matters most is not defining the exact moment survivorship begins but focusing on long-term health and overall well-being.

On Tuesday, May 12, at 6 p.m., Melissa Hoag, R.N., O.C.N., C.N.-B.N., breast nurse navigator, MyMichigan Health, will host a virtual, in-depth discussion on breast cancer survivorship with a focus on understanding and managing long-term effects after treatment.

"Our goal is to empower patients with the knowledge and tools necessary to manage their

health and well-being effectively, so they can thrive in the years ahead," said Hoag. "The breast health nurse navigators are here to answer any questions patients may have and to assist them in making the best decisions for their continued health and happiness."

Topics include surveillance guidelines, managing long term effects of treatment, as well as symptoms to report. This program is recommended for participants that have completed breast cancer treatment within the last 18 months or will soon complete their treatment.

Registration for this free program is required to receive the Teams link. Those interested in registration or additional information on the session may visit [www.mymichigan.org/survivorship](http://www.mymichigan.org/survivorship) or call toll-free 800-395-1355.



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## Different

« Continued from page 1

to be a veterinarian, but her plans changed after her first year in college.

"I needed to switch gears," she said, adding jokingly that organic chemistry wasn't her thing. "Seeing what happens to animals, I would have cried every day. I needed something more uplifting."

Chelsea switched her major to Hospitality Business. It really wasn't new to her, as she grew up waiting tables with her grandfather at the Country Café in Rose City. Her parents, Lisa and the late Brian Walsh, owned a restaurant in Clear Lake.

"I felt pulled in that direction," she said. "I'm kind of shy, but my personality always shined behind the bar."

Five days after graduating from MSU, she moved to Destin, Fla., and began her career at a local resort. She immediately excelled and held many management positions within the resort.

"I loved my job," Chelsea said. "It was fun, and I was passionate about it."

Andrew's family, originally from Warren, moved to Skidway Lake when he was younger. He is a 2004 graduate of Whittemore-Prescott High School. He also started young in the business while cooking alongside his

grandmother at a restaurant.

He worked at the country club for several years when it was "Matthew at the Club," and later Sandbaggers. He also worked at the Clear Lake Bar (CLB), and that's where he and Chelsea met. But oddly enough not for the very first time.

In high school, Andrew was invited to a party in Clear Lake, and as it turned out, it was at Chelsea's house. They hit it off immediately and hung out that night, but then they went their separate ways.

In April 2018, Chelsea moved back to Clear Lake while she was pregnant with her son, Maverick, now seven years old. She started working at the CLB again and operated her own shaved ice company and food trailer.

Andrew also has a daughter, Ayris, the same age as Maverick, who are both second graders at Surline Elementary School and have become best friends.

With both Chelsea and Andrew discovered that their dreams were aligned, they opened a food truck just shy of a year ago. But then the opportunity presented itself to open a restaurant, which is very special to Chelsea.

Her dad frequented the country club a lot, so much so that they placed a memorial rock honoring



Photo by Deanna Surbrook

**Surrounded by family and friends, Andrew Templeton and Chelsea Donaldson, owners of Something Different Bar & Grill, recently held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of their new establishment in West Branch.**

him at the 8th hole.

"My dad would be so proud," Chelsea said. "This would have been momentous to him."

One of the most important things for them was to assemble a fun and knowledgeable staff. They gave a special shout to Shelby Hagstrom, the kitchen manager, and Lindsey Schunk, the front of the house manager. Also, Matt Bieri and Jamie Trammell, their creative team.

What also sets them apart is their menu. Not what's on it, but

how it's prepared and the ingredients they use.

"We're twisting things up and elevating it," Andrew said.

Something Different Bar & Grill is located inside the West Branch Country Club at 1905 S. Fairview Rd., West Branch. They also have patio seating, as well as catering special events on or off-site.

In addition, they will feature live music every other Saturday, beginning May 23, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Hours of operation are Sunday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., with the kitchen closing at 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to midnight with the kitchen closing at 11 p.m. Reservations are not required, but they ask you to call ahead if you're bringing a large party by calling 989-345-2175.

Everyone is welcome to experience "Something Different."

## Local insurance agent receives Farm Bureau Director's Award

Jeffrey Erickson of the Erickson Family Agency in West Branch, recently received the Farm Bureau Insurance Directors' Award at the company's annual convention held in Traverse

City.

The award recognizes one Farm Bureau Insurance agent within their first five years with the company who exemplifies a commitment to professional

development, community involvement and fostering a successful office environment.

Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan Statewide Sales Director Nick Hurst recalled comments

from Erickson's Managing Partners when presenting the award stating, "He lives and breathes the Trusted Advisor model. In our humble opinion, it would be hard to find another agent in our company who has done as much as he has in the first five years." Hurst further quoted the partners who quipped, "We've researched, but unfortunately have not found a cloning device to have 50 more Jeff Ericksons."

Citing Erickson's achievements and involvement, Hurst noted that Erickson was the pacesetter for his class, two-time recipient of the North Region Distinguished Sales Award and three-time time Presidents Council member. In addition to sitting on the boards of the Agent Charitable Fund, Whittemore-Prescott Education Foundation, Skidway Area Optimist Club, and the Ogemaw County Economic Development, Erickson is also a member of the West Branch and Whittemore Area Chambers of Commerce, Faith Alive Church, and an agency sponsor of the America & Me Essay Contest and Coaches vs Cancer, and a proud founding sponsor for the Zach Morgan Memorial Fund.

"Whatever small successes I've had in this business and life, is really nothing more than a

combination of the grace of God and learning from other people," Erickson noted as he recalled

observing other Farm Bureau Insurance agents at the outset of his career. "As I've studied successful people in this company, a few things have stood out to me. First, they prioritize helping and serving people and they do so in a very specific and honorable way

They help others with no strings attached. They help the clients for the client's benefit, not their own. They do what is right by the client, and they always put the client first. They bring a passion and a focus on the outcome for their customer. They're not caught up in transactional business, but rather in building lasting relationships. They don't just solve their client's problems, but they strive to make their lives better."

"I want to proudly accept this award on behalf of the entire North region," said Erickson of his Northern Michigan peers, prior to thanking the team at the Erickson Family Agency in West Branch, his managing partners, Farm Bureau Insurance leadership, fellow agents, mentors, and his wife, Sandi, who he credited as, "...my rock, my foundation, my biggest fan, and my greatest cheerleader," prior to calling her up to accept the award with him.



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# OHHS students connect with local employers at hiring event



Courtesy photo

Students visited with West Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Heather Neuhaus (l) and Alli Van-Goethem, her administrative assistant, at the recent Youth Hiring Event at Ogemaw Heights High School.

Students at Ogemaw Heights High School had a valuable opportunity to connect with local employers during the Youth Hiring Event, held recently in the school's gymnasium.

The event brought together a diverse group of businesses and organizations from across the region, many of which are actively hiring for summer positions and beyond. Students were able to meet face-to-face with employers, learn about available opportunities, and begin building connections that could lead to future employment.

Participating organizations included Taylor Entrance Systems, West Branch Chamber of Commerce, NEMCSA, The Villa, Buck's Big Tops, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Bath & Body Works, Northern Bed & Biscuit, and Camp Timbers. Representatives from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corp, U.S. Army and Reserves, and the National Guard were also on hand to discuss career pathways and service opportunities.

Throughout the morning, students had the chance to ask questions, explore different industries, and gain insight into what

employers are looking for in today's workforce. For many, it was a first introduction to professional networking and the variety of career paths available within their own community.

Events like this highlight the strong collaboration between local schools, businesses, and workforce development partners, all working toward a common goal: preparing students for success and strengthening the future workforce in Ogemaw County.

The Youth Hiring Event continues to serve as an important bridge between education and employment, giving students real-world exposure while helping local employers connect with the next generation to build the much-needed talent pipeline.

This event is also a clear example of what economic development looks like in Ogemaw County. It's about connecting people to opportunity, supporting our businesses, and investing in the next generation of our workforce. When students can see a future for themselves right here at home - and businesses can find the talent they need - that's when a community truly grows.



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See answers on page 15

## Spring clean your freezer

**KAREN FIFIELD  
 MSU EXTENSION  
 FOOD SAFETY EDUCATOR**

Spring is the time of year when everything is becoming fresh and new again. So, when spring arrives, we know it is time to deep clean for the coming preservation season. Usually, we think of spring cleaning as cleaning the house and yard. It is also a time when we should clean refrigerators and freezers.

To keep food safe in a freezer, it is important to keep the freezer clean of frost and food particles. Michigan State University Extension recommends defrosting the freezer at least once a year to maintain a clean freezer environment. Defrosting your freezer enables you to wipe out all the food particles that seem to find their way on the shelf. A buildup of frost can also decrease your amount of freezer space, and make your freezer work harder to maintain a constant temperature of 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

To manually defrost the freezer, remove all frozen food items, check dates as well as check for freezer burn on items. If freezer burn is present that doesn't mean it is not food safe; freezer burn is a quality issue. Throw out expired food and any items that appear old and dried out.

If there are signs of crystals on the inside of packages, this may mean that the food item has thawed at one time and may need to be thrown out. If food is thawed and refrozen, it may contain bacteria. Bacteria is not killed by freezing, so it is always safer to throw suspicious food out. Pack the rest of the items you will keep in another freezer or a cooler until they can return to the

freezer. Unplug the freezer and clean as quickly as possible. Read the manufacturer's instructions on how to further clean the defrosting freezer.

After the frost weakens, place towels in the bottom of the freezer and loosen pieces of the frost. Collect in the towels and discard in a sink to melt. Wipe down the freezer with one tablespoon of baking soda in one quart of water. After it has been cleaned, wipe with clean water and dry before turning the freezer back on. Let the freezer cool for about 30 minutes before placing the frozen food back into the freezer.

Strong or foul odors in your freezer may mean foods have thawed. Throw out any food that is questionable. If it has frost on the inside of a package, that is a good indication that it had previously thawed. After initially wiping down the freezer to clean it, wipe it down with one tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water. Then wipe the interior with clear water and let it air dry, leaving the door open.

When placing frozen items back in the freezer, create an inventory list of food that is in your freezer. This way you can easily refer to the list to know what you have. Also take note as to what you and your family eat. If you have an abundant amount of corn, then you may not want to freeze as much next season. Cleaning your freezer in the spring gives you safe food that is easily accessed and provides room for the upcoming preservation season.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>.

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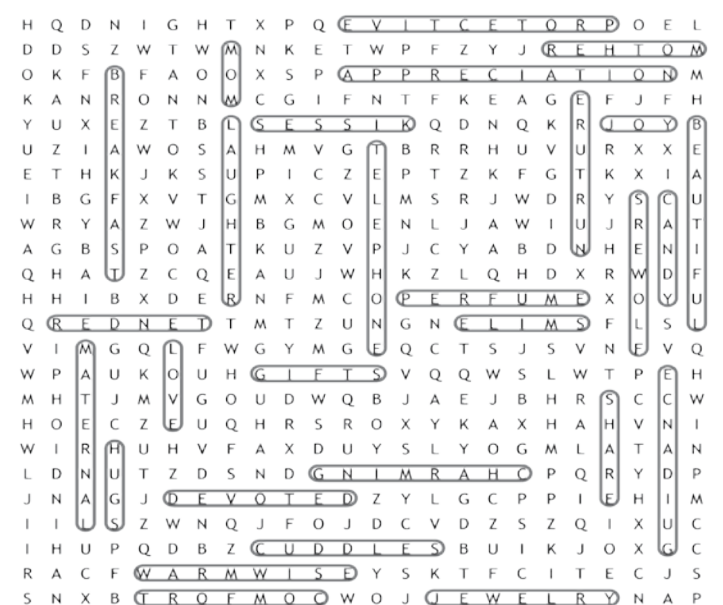
CITY OF ROSE CITY REGULAR MEETING MARCH 17, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Regular Council Meeting of the City of Rose City to order at 6:00 p.m. on March 3, 2026. Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Ashely Herrick, Brent Hinkley Absent: None Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, County Commissioner Roger Mayhew, Brenda Butler, Theresea Erickson and Chuck Faulkner. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel to approve the agenda. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Hamel and seconded by Mr. Freeman to approve the Minutes for the March 3, 2026 Regular Rose City Council Meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mrs. Herrick to pay bills as presented, in the amounts of \$8006.42 from the Common Cash Account and \$1323.17 from the Sewer Account. Ayes: Mr. Freeman, Ms. Micklich, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hinkley. Nays: None. Motion carried. Brent gave a Fireboard report. Theresa gave an EDC report. Claire gave a Library Board report. Roger Mayhew gave the County Commissioners report. Anthony Evans gave a DPW report. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Freeman to purchase air dryer from Napa. Ayes: Mr. Hinkley, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Myers, Ms. Michlich, Mr. Freeman. Nays: Non. Motion carried. Carol Lee Butler gave a Treasurers report. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Freeman to approve and split part of Parcel # 65-051-105-008-00 requested by Charles Faulkner. Ayes: Mr. Freeman, Ms. Micklich, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hinkley. Nays: None. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Hamel and seconded by Mr. Hamel to appoint Jennifer Hurley as City Manager. Ayes: Mr. Hinkley, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Myers, Ms. Michlich, Mr. Freeman. Nays: Non. Motion carried. Roger Mayhew addressed the council for public comment. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mrs. Herrick to adjourn at 6:45 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

CITY OF ROSE CITY REGULAR MEETING MARCH 3, 2026

Mayor Mike Samples called the Regular Council Meeting of the City of Rose City to order at 6:00 p.m. on March 3, 2026. Present: Don Freeman, Robin Micklich, Claire Myers, Scott Hamel, Ashely Herrick, Brent Hinkley Absent: None Others present: Clerk Jennifer Hurley, Treasurer Carol Lee Butler, DPW Co-Supervisor Anthony Evans, Theresa Erickson, Penny Payea, Dr. Sassan Tarahomi, Iman Reksani, Chase Wiltse and Amy Hensel. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel to approve the agenda. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Freeman and seconded by Mrs. Myers to approve the Minutes for the February 17, 2026 Regular Rose City Council Meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mrs. Herrick to pay bills as presented, in the amounts of \$4,660.36 from the Common Cash Account and \$51.01 from the Sewer Account. Ayes: Mr. Freeman, Ms. Micklich, Mrs. Myers, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hinkley. Nays: None. Motion carried. Brent gave a Personnel Committee report. Chase Wiltse gave a DDA/Planning report. Penny Payea gave an EDC report. Dr. Sassan Tarahomi addressed the council. Anthony Evans gave a DPW report. Carol Lee Butler gave a Treasurers report. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mr. Hamel to propose changes to the P & D Agreement. Ayes: Mr. Hinkley, Mrs. Herrick, Mr. Hamel, Mrs. Myers, Ms. Michlich, Mr. Freeman. Nays: Non. Motion carried. A Motion made by Mr. Hinkley and seconded by Mrs. Herrick to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion carried.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



See puzzle on page 13



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Villa Healthcare is proud to celebrate Nurses Week, National Skilled Nursing Care Week, and CNA Week.

To our nurses, CNAs, and care teams: thank you for the compassion, dedication, and service you bring to our residents each day.

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COMMITMENT. THANKING OUR TEAM.**

**NURSES WEEK**  
5/6 - 5/12

**SKILLED  
NURSING CARE  
WEEK**  
5/10 - 5/16

**CNA WEEK**  
6/11 - 6/17



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**Villa at Rose City | 517 W. Page St. | Rose City, MI 48654**