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Ogemaw County always lends a helping hand

Community members rally around the Aikens family

BY LAURA BENDER

Jason and Amy Aikens are long-time residents of Ogemaw County. Both attended Ogemaw Heights High School. For many years, they were the caretakers of the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds. They raised their three adult sons here, two of whom serve in the Air Force. A generous and gracious couple, Jason and Amy have always been among the first to lend support when someone in the community has an extraordinary or emergency need. Last spring, Jason, a contractor, and Amy, a secretary for Ogemaw County’s Alternative Educational Academy, were looking forward to summer activities and a chance to see their grandchildren.

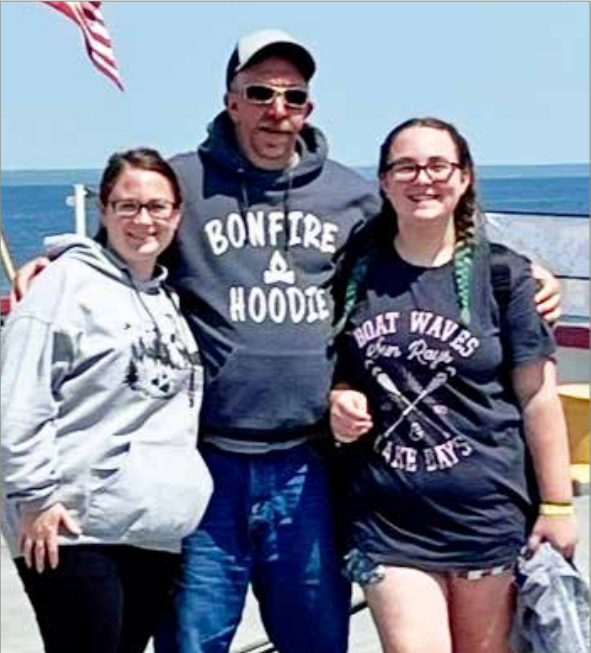
Then, at the end of May, Amy had a stroke. After a few tests and a night in the hospital, doctors

AIKENS continues on page 6 »



Courtesy photo
A fundraiser for Jason and Amy Aikens, who are each facing their own health challenges, is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 19, at 4 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall in West Branch.

Hill Rose Fire Department hosts fundraisers for the Wend family



Courtesy photo
A spaghetti dinner is scheduled to help support Nicole and David Wend as they take care of their daughter, Abigail, who is seriously ill with two autoimmune diseases, on Saturday, Sept 26, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., at the Rose Township Hall, 3380 Lupton Road, Lupton.

BY LAURA BENDER

Abigail Wend loves school. A student at Ogemaw Heights High School, she is a member of the Honor Society and a straight-A student. At the end of her sophomore year, she was looking forward to a fun summer.

Then, one morning at the beginning of July, she began to vomit blood. Her mom, Nicole, took her to the emergency room. They both thought it might have been caused by an ulcer. So did the doctor until Abigail’s test came back.

Nicole immediately called her husband, David, to tell him to cancel plans for the 4th of July party they were preparing to host. Then, as a family, they headed to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor. They have been there most days since.

WEND continues on page 5 »

Ogemaw Heights honors inaugural Athletic Hall of Fame class



Courtesy Photo
Front (l-r) Pam Czach, Barbie Ehinger, Maureen Schick, Pat Thompson, Walt Roy, Jim Tuttle and Doug Jameson. Back (l-r) Stan Kartes, Dirk VanOosten (Ty), Jon VanOosten, Pete Jennings, Roger Fritz. Not pictured: Sue Pauley and John Wangler.

BY LAURA BENDER

At a ceremony held on Thursday, Aug. 27, Ogemaw Heights High School welcomed the first members into its new Athletic Hall of Fame. Alumni from classes that graduated from OHHS in the 1970s and 1980s,

a beloved coach, and a 1954 graduate of the former West Branch High School were among the inductees. The creation of the new Athletic Hall of Fame was spearheaded by 1978 graduate Pete Jennings.

The first 14 inductees are:

Stan Kartes (1971) Football. Stan was named All-Conference on offense during his last three seasons; Offensive Player of the Year, Most Improved Offensive Back, and led the team in most tackles his last two seasons. Stan

HALL OF FAME continues on page 10 »

Honoring the Ogemaw District Library’s 50 years of service

BY LAURA BENDER

“For 50 years, Ogemaw District Library has been more than a place to borrow books. It has been a gathering place, a learning center, and a trusted source of connection for our communities.” — a library patron.

The Ogemaw District Library is proud to celebrate 50 years of service to readers, families, students, and lifelong learners throughout the rural communities of Ogemaw County. To commemorate this milestone, the public is invited to a 50th Anniversary Party on Wednesday, Sept. 23, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Rose City Branch, 107 W. Main Street, Rose City. The celebration will honor the library’s history, recognize the patrons and community members who have supported its mission, and look ahead to the next chapter of library service in Ogemaw County.

Established in 1976, the library system has grown into a

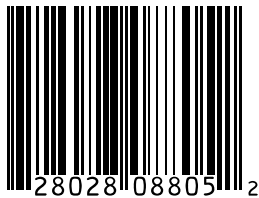
full-service community resource with branches in Rose City and Skidway Lake, along with the Ogemaw East Branch in Prescott, which is temporarily closed following a fire. Today, Ogemaw District Library provides access to books, new releases, public computers, the Michigan eLibrary, Libby for e-books and audiobooks, Kanopy streaming, online catalog services, and community programs for patrons of all ages.

September programs include:

Chair Tai Chi on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Sept. 1 through Oct. 29. Classes are held in conjunction with Michigan State University from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Skidway Lake Branch.

Making Flowers Out of Old

LIBRARY continues on page 5 »



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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** from 9:40 a.m. to 10:20 a.m., meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.. Oge-

maw 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 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

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. 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.

September 26
Oktoberfest, Saturday, Sept. 26, noon to 6 p.m., downtown West Branch. "Where Lederhosen Meets Laughter?"
October 5
Potato Drop, Monday, Oct. 5. In partnership with Oscoda United Methodist Church's Society of St. Andrew thousands of pounds of fresh potatoes will be delivered to the First United Methodist Church's parking lot, corner of Fairview and State roads, West Branch. It is a large-scale food rescue and hunger relief event. Once potatoes arrive volunteers are needed to help unload them and volunteer trucks to help deliver them to surrounding food pantries. More details to follow.
October 7
First United Methodist Church Rummage Sale. Wednesday, Oct. 7, 9 a.m., - 7 p.m.; Thursday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 9, BAG DAY. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. One paper grocery bag \$1 or 3 paper grocery bags for \$2. Proceeds go to missions.
To place your event in the Community Happenings, email information to deanna@superior-news.com

FAITH & WORSHIP

God is love

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calvary Baptist Church
235 Minzer Ct. • West Branch
989-345-1651
Sunday School - 9:45 a.m. all ages
Sunday Worship 11 a.m. • Youth Group - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Evening Service - 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Youth Group - 6:30 p.m. • Awana - 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 7 p.m.
Pastor Emeritus Tom Teall
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
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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.

Army veteran receives Quilt of Valor



Photo by Laura Bender

Veteran John Bennett (l) and George Barry Wilkinson display John's quilt in front of the Veterans Museum at the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds.

BY LAURA BENDER
In recognition of John Bennett's military service and all he has done for fellow veterans in the years that followed, during the Ogemaw County Fair, George Barry Wilkinson, our local Quilts of Valor Foundation representative, presented John with a beautiful handmade quilt.
The Quilts of Valor Foundation began in 2003 with a literal dream. Founder Catherine

Roberts' son Nat was deployed in Iraq. According to Catherine, the dream was as vivid as real life. "I saw a young man sitting on the side of his bed in the middle of the night, hunched over. The permeating feeling was one of utter despair. I could see his war demons clustered around, dragging him down into an emotional gutter. Then, as if viewing a movie, I saw him in the next scene wrapped in a quilt. His

whole demeanor changed from one of despair to one of hope and well-being. The quilt had made this dramatic change. The message of my dream was: Quilts = Healing."
The mission of Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. The first quilt was awarded to a wounded
VETERAN continues on page 10»

Become part of Ogemaw County Veterans Memorial Park history

The vision for the Ogemaw County Veterans Memorial Park is continuing to take shape, and now community members have an opportunity to become a permanent part of that history.

The Ogemaw County Veterans Memorial Park has officially launched its brick sale campaign, with all proceeds going directly toward the park's building fund. The commemorative bricks will become a permanent feature of the park and will be incorporated into the main focal wall, creating a lasting tribute for generations to come.

The campaign offers two options for those wishing to purchase a brick. Grey granite bricks are available for \$100 without an image or \$125 with an image. Bricks can be purchased in honor or memory of a veteran, family member, friend, organization, business or anyone who has special meaning to the donor.

Each brick will become a

permanent part of the Veterans Memorial Park, helping tell the story of the community and the individuals who have supported the creation of this special place. As visitors walk through the park in years to come, these bricks will serve as lasting reminders of the veterans honored whose sacrifices and service built this country as well as of the people, families and organizations that helped make the park possible.

There are two ways to order a commemorative brick.

Bricks can be ordered online at: <http://www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/vetpark>

Or for those who prefer to order by mail can find the brick order form on the Ogemaw County Veterans Memorial Park Facebook page. Completed forms and payment can be mailed to:

Ogemaw County Treasurer
806 W. Houghton Ave., Room 103
West Branch, MI 48661

Checks should be made payable to Ogemaw County Treasurer and

“Veteran's Park” should be written in the memo section.

Organizers encourage residents, veterans, families, businesses, civic organizations and friends of veterans to consider purchasing a brick. Whether honoring someone who served, remembering a loved one, recognizing an organization or simply showing support for the project, each brick represents a contribution to the future of the park.

The brick campaign is more than a fundraiser. It is an opportunity for members of the community to leave their own mark on a project designed to honor those who have given so much.

With every brick purchased, the community moves one step closer to making the Ogemaw County Veterans Memorial Park a reality.

Purchase a brick. Honor a veteran. Remember a loved one. Become part of Ogemaw County history.

Celebrate creativity: Open Mic with Mid-Michigan writers



BY LAURA BENDER
Read an original story. Share your poem. Sing a song. Show

and tell a photograph, a visual art piece or a craft item. Play an instrument.

Come celebrate creativity with Mid-Michigan Writers, Inc. Whether you want to listen or step up to the microphone, you are invited to join your friends and neighbors for the Open Mic Event at the West Branch District Library on Thursday, Sept. 24, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

This is a free, family-friendly event which welcomes participants of all ages, especially

homeschoolers. If you plan to present, please keep your content free of graphic or potentially offensive material. You do not need to pre-register. Just show up ready to perform.

The Open-Mic Event will be held downstairs at the West Branch District Library, 119 West 4th Street, West Branch. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/midmichwritersinc/> or call the library at 989-345-2235.

The faces behind the mission: West Branch Meijer employees give back to Ogemaw County



When people think about charitable giving, they often picture large donations or major fundraising events. But some of the most meaningful support for local organizations comes in a much simpler form—individual employees choosing to give a little from each paycheck to help their neighbors.

At West Branch Meijer, employees are making that choice, and their generosity is helping make a difference throughout Ogemaw County. Behind the scenes, West Branch Meijer employees are helping their neighbors through their payroll contributions to Ogemaw County United Way. By employee giving, these local workers are joining together to

support charities and nonprofit organizations that are working every day to make a difference in the lives of Ogemaw County residents.

It is a simple idea with a powerful result.

An employee chooses to contribute a small amount from their paycheck. It could be one-dollar. Another employee does the same. Then another. Individually, those gifts may seem modest. Together, they become a source of support for local organizations serving people who need a helping hand. OCUW recently granted \$10,000 to local charities, in part with individual \$1 donations. Most importantly, their gifts stay local and help local people.

The generosity of Meijer employees is a reminder that community support doesn't always come in the form of huge donations or elaborate

fundraisers. Sometimes, it looks like an employee quietly checking a box to contribute a few dollars from each paycheck.

Ogemaw County United Way works to connect local contributions with local needs. Donations help support programs and organizations addressing issues such as basic needs,

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How to get a Personal Protection Order: What Ogemaw County residents need to know

BY LADONNA SCHULTZ

For someone experiencing threats, stalking, harassment, domestic violence or sexual assault, knowing where to turn for help can be critical. In Michigan, one legal option available to people who need protection is a Personal Protection Order, commonly called a PPO.

A PPO is a court order that can prohibit another person from contacting, approaching, following, threatening or otherwise interfering with the person seeking protection. Depending on the circumstances, a PPO may also restrict a person's access to firearms.

Michigan has several types of Personal Protection Orders. A Domestic Relationship PPO may apply when the person seeking protection has a qualifying relationship with the respondent, such as a current or former spouse, someone with whom they share a child, someone they live with or previously lived with, or someone they are dating or previously dated.

A Non-Domestic Stalking PPO may be appropriate when stalking is involved but there is no qualifying domestic relationship. Michigan also provides for Non-Domestic Sexual Assault PPOs.

A PPO can order the respondent not to contact or approach the protected person, follow or stalk them, enter certain locations, threaten them, interfere with their employment or education, or contact them by telephone, email or social media.

There is no fee to file a PPO petition.

For Ogemaw County residents, the process begins in the 34th Circuit Court and the Ogemaw County Clerk's Office in West Branch. The law requires a PPO petition to be filed with a Michigan Circuit Court. If the respondent is an adult, Michigan court rules allow the petitioner to file in any county in Michigan, regardless of where the petitioner lives.

For residents who choose to file locally, the Ogemaw County Clerk's Office serves as the clerk for the 34th Circuit Court.

The office is located at:
Ogemaw County Clerk's Office
806 W. Houghton Avenue, Suite 101, West Branch, MI 48661
Phone: 989-345-0215

The clerk's regular office hours are Monday through Friday, with hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30

p.m. The courthouse is closed on weekends and recognized holidays.

If you need a PPO on a holiday or a weekend, citizens are asked to go to the Ogemaw County Sheriff's Office at 912 W. Houghton Ave., West Branch, Michigan, and make a complaint.

According to Breck Gildner, Ogemaw County Clerk, "When you come to file a PPO, petitioners are encouraged to come prepared with all relevant documentation and information already organized and written out. Having this information prepared in advance allows us to submit the petition to a judge for review and determination as quickly as possible."

In the petition, a person requesting a PPO should describe the conduct that led them to seek protection, including relevant dates, threats, incidents of violence, stalking, unwanted contact or harassment. Supporting information such as police reports, text messages, emails, photographs, voicemails or other documentation may also be useful.

The goal is to give the court clear information about what happened and why protection is needed.

Unfortunately, since a PPO is considered a civil matter and not criminal, my office is not allowed to give any assistance in the drafting and filing of the petition. However, we recognize that filing for a PPO can be intimidating, particularly for someone who is already dealing with fear or an unsafe situation. You do not have to navigate the process alone. Domestic violence and sexual assault service organizations and civil attorneys can provide information about the process. In Ogemaw County, River House, a domestic violence shelter servicing our area, comes to the courthouse every Tuesday to render aid in filing the proper documents. Appointments can be made to see a representative from River House by calling my office at 989-345-6222.

After the petition is filed, a judge will review it to decide if the PPO should take effect. A PPO becomes effective and enforceable in Michigan when it is signed by a judge. The court clerk will then provide copies of the order to the designated law enforcement agency for entry into the Law Enforcement Information

Network, commonly known as LEIN. This puts every law enforcement agency in the state on notice of the judge's mandates. The judge's order will then be enforced throughout our state.

Next, the respondent (person for whom the PPO is against) must generally be served with the PPO order. This informs them of the existence of the judge's orders and the legal effects it has on their person. The person requesting the PPO cannot personally serve the respondent. Service may be completed through law enforcement, a process server, an eligible adult or certain types of registered or certified mail.

After service, proof of service should be filed with the court clerk.

A PPO is a court order, and violating it can have serious consequences. If a person believes the respondent has violated the order, they should contact law enforcement. If there is an immediate danger, call 911.

Michigan law allows law enforcement to arrest someone for violating a PPO under certain circumstances. A violation can also result in a contempt proceeding in Circuit Court. A person found guilty of violating a PPO may face up to 93 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$500. This is where my office comes in. We will assist the petitioner in filing a violation of the PPO in the proper court. The respondent is entitled to a hearing on the violation. The Ogemaw County Prosecutor's Office will represent the petitioner at that hearing, subpoena needed witnesses, and advocate for the enforcement of the PPO's terms.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence or threats, remember that a Personal Protection Order (PPO) can be an important step toward safety. However, while a PPO can be an important legal tool, it should never be viewed as a substitute for emergency assistance. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

Your safety is important to us, and we want you to know that help and resources are available when you need them. I encourage you to seek help and learn about the protections available to you.

This article is for general informational purposes and is not legal advice. Michigan laws and court procedures can change. Individuals with questions about their specific circumstances should contact the clerk's office, an attorney or a qualified victim-services organization.

County. Come join the celebration at the Rose City Branch on Sept. 23 to mark this milestone anniversary and explore ways your library can enrich your life.

For more information or to register for an upcoming program, call 989-873-5086.



Obituaries

Kurt Eldon VonSteenburg

March 23, 1967 ~ Aug. 29, 2026

Kurt Eldon VonSteenburg, a lifelong resident of West Branch, Mich., passed away on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026, in Midland after a brief illness. He was 59.

He was born March 23, 1967, in Lapeer, the youngest child of Gordon and Myrna (Hulliberger) VonSteenburg.

Kurt attended public schools in West Branch, graduating from Ogemaw Heights High School in 1985.

An avid local athlete, he began in West Branch Little League and later became a three-sport athlete at OHHS, in baseball, basketball and as quarterback in football.

After graduation he embarked on a decades-long career, working in sales throughout Ogemaw and surrounding counties. Kurt was also a lifelong hunter and fisherman.

He is survived by sons, Kellen and Griffin, both of West Branch; his father, Gordon of West Branch; a brother, Michael of Florida; three sisters, Kathy Lubelan of Gaylord, Mich.,

Laura Wooley of Edgewater Fla., Bethy Petteway of New Smyrna, Fla.; a niece, four nephews, and numerous others.

He was preceded in death in 2002 by his mother, Myrna; in 1979 by his brother David, and in 2025 by his brother-in-law, John Wooley.

There will not be a service at this time.

Arrangements were handled by Steurnol & McLaren Funeral Home in West Branch. www.steurnolmclaren.com



Wend

« Continued from page 1

Just before Abigail Wend turned 16, she was diagnosed with two autoimmune diseases: Anti-Neutrophil Cytoplasmic Antibodies (ANCA) and Anti-Glomerular Basement Membrane (anti-GBM). Each of these diseases has a one-in-a-million rate of occurrence, which makes their appearing together extremely rare.

According to her doctors, having both issues manifest in an adolescent female is so rare that Abigail's case is now part of a research study.

These autoimmune diseases cause kidney and lung dysfunction, requiring a variety of harsh medical interventions, including periodic plasma transfusions and dialysis three times each week.

For the last two months, Nicole, who works for ABA Pathways, and David, owner of 911 Auto Repair in Lupton, have taken turns being in Ann Arbor with Abigail.

Each day, one drives down and the other back north to continue working at least part-time. Bearing the expense of travel and eating meals on the go while reducing their income has been difficult for the family, so Nicole's work colleague, Tari Dane, and the Hill Rose Fire Department Auxiliary in Lupton, where the Wends volunteer, are working together to raise funds to assist them.

Together, they are hosting a gift card drive to help with the Wend family's extra expenses and medical bills. The most needed gift cards are for gas at Shell, Speedway, BP, or Marathon; local grocery stores; local or chain restaurants; CVS or Walgreens; and Amazon or Visa cards for flexibility. Gift cards can be dropped off at the Hill-Rose Fire Department, c/o Fire Auxiliary, 3185 Lupton Road, Lupton, MI 48635.

“Nicole and David have missed

a lot of work to be with their daughter,” Tari Dane said. “They are traveling between home and the hospital and needing to eat out while there. Any small amount would help them.”

The Hill Rose Fire Department Auxiliary in Lupton will also be hosting a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser to benefit the Wend family.

“Chief Wend and his family have always been there for our community,” the Auxiliary announced. “Now it's our turn to stand beside them. Every donated basket, gift card, item, or dollar makes a meaningful difference. Whether you're a local business, organization, or community member, your generosity will help us create a successful event and provide much-needed financial relief to this amazing family. If you'd like to donate a silent auction basket, event supplies, or make a monetary contribution, donations can be dropped off at the fire hall, or arrangements can be made by emailing hillroseauxiliary@gmail.com. Together, we can remind the Wend family that they are not facing this journey alone. Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and continued support.”

The Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Rose Township Hall, 3380 Lupton Road, Lupton.

Last week, Abigail began her junior year of high school. As a homebound student, she will have online classes as well as two weekly home visits from her teacher.

“Abigail's illness has totally changed our lives,” Nicole said. “It's our hope that she stays in remission and will be able to return to school for her senior year. Until then, we keep our suitcases packed so we can be there for our daughter.”

Library

« Continued from page 1

Books craft class on Sept. 1 at 1 p.m. in Skidway and Sept. 9 at 11 a.m. in Rose City.

Rock Painting on Sept. 2 and 16 in Rose City.

Library Craft Show: Saturday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Skidway Lake Branch.

Two-night Fall Craft Workshop

on Sept. 15 and 22 at 6:30 p.m. at the Skidway Lake Branch. The cost for two nights is \$25, which includes three to five completed crafts.

For 50 years, the Ogemaw District Library has supported curiosity, literacy, creativity, and access to information across Ogemaw

WBRC Schools starts new year with energy and purpose

BY LAURA BENDER

Transforming people who muttered, “I can’t believe summer is over already,” as they entered the building into eager professionals proved an easy task for a team of trainers from Texas.

On Monday, Aug. 24, more than 300 administrators, and support staff from the West Branch-Rose City Area School District gathered in the auditorium at Ogemaw Heights High School for an event called “Capturing Kids’ Hearts.”

In an atmosphere that could only be described as festive, trainers Chris Owor and Christine Ramsey had people on their feet, engaged in conversation and motivated to begin a new school year. Using high-energy, interactive, game-show-like exercises, participants were introduced to new ways to help students excel in the classroom, foster healthy relationships, communicate effectively, and develop the consistency of effort needed to create their best life.

Among those gathered were three educators whose longevity in the profession exceeded all others. Steve Goff, who now teaches eighth-grade history in the district, has been teaching for 44 years. Mary Vervoort, who began teaching 49 years ago at Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools, now works at Surline Elementary School.

Diane Gillette, whose T-shirt said “1 and Done” because she plans to retire at the end of the school year, has completed all 39 of her years in education in the West Branch-Rose City Area School District. For the first 22 years, Diane taught at Surline Middle School. When she retires, she will have been the school counselor at Surline Elementary for an additional 18 years.

“My motto is whatever you do, make sure you are a good one,” Diane said. “I hope I have lived up to the task. I have truly loved what I do.”

Carrie Jameson, a paraeducator who had attended Surline Elementary as a student, has been teaching there for three years. This year, she will graduate with a teaching certificate in elementary and special education.

“Diane Gillette was my sixth-grade teacher,” Carrie said. “It is a privilege to be mentored by my own teacher.”

As the new school year begins, students in the West Branch-Rose

City Area School District are fortunate to have highly motivated individuals ready to receive them. Some have been lifelong educators who bring years of experience and excellence to their work. Others, who are new to the teaching profession, bring the latest techniques and the enthusiasm of those who can’t wait to use all they have learned. Add in the efficient and caring support staff and administrators, and our community has a team prepared to motivate our students to excellence.



Mary Vervoort, who has been teaching for 49 years, attended the training event.



West Branch-Rose City Area Schools Superintendent Gail Hughey welcomes everyone to the “Capturing Kids’ Hearts” training event.

Photos by Laura Bender



West Branch/Rose City Area School District staff and teachers received a HEARTY welcome on their first day back to work!



Steve Goff, an eighth-grade history teacher, has been an educator for 44 years.



Diane Gillette prepares for her 40th and final year as an educator.

Aikens

« Continued from page 1

determined that she had a hole in her heart and would need surgery to close it.

Three days later, Jason developed a severe headache, coupled with confusion and facial drooping. Thinking he, too, may have had a stroke, they rushed to the emergency room. A CT scan revealed two brain masses, requiring emergency transfer to MyMichigan Medical Center Saginaw (formerly St. Mary’s), where a neurosurgeon removed the two tumors. Follow-up tests confirmed Jason had cancerous

glioblastomas, aggressive, fast-growing primary brain tumors. Recently, a new tumor showing significant growth was also found.

Following his surgery, Jason received radiation and chemotherapy, which ended in August. Today, he is continuing to be treated with other state-of-the-art therapies. In October, Amy, whose medical issue is still being monitored, is scheduled for heart surgery to close the hole that precipitated her stroke.

Because Jason’s medical concerns have curtailed his ability

to work, Howie Hanft is planning a benefit dinner at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Saturday, Sept. 19, starting at 4 p.m. and lasting, as Howie said, “until we are done!”

In addition to the delicious Mexican dinner served up by Sharon David, there will be raffles and other opportunities to support the Aikens family. Two items currently ready for raffle are a beef half donated by Bob Eastman and Scott Nelson, and a lion hunt in Wyoming, donated by Tommy Searfoss. If you would

like to volunteer or donate an item to raffle, call Howie Hanft at 989-312-0973.

“Jason and Amy are facing a challenging time, and our community is coming together to help,” Howie said. “Your support will make a difference as they focus on healing and recovery.”

“It’s never easy being on the receiving end of support, but with Jason having to temporarily close his construction business, we know we can’t do this alone,” Amy said. “Thank you to everyone who has reached out,

dropped off food, sent cards/packages/financial donations, offered help, or kept us in your thoughts and prayers. Dealing with health issues at the same time has been overwhelming, but feeling the strength and love of this community has made all the difference. We are so truly grateful for all the blessings we do have. To be surrounded by such incredible people is the biggest blessing of all. Overly grateful for our community.”

Sewn in peace, given in love:
A ministry of quilts and compassion

BY LAURA BENDER

Every Thursday from noon until 3 p.m., the Peace Together Quilters meet in the old school building at the Ogemaw Hills Free Methodist Church to stitch love into colorful fabric. The quilts they create vary in design, and sometimes in size, but each is meant to warm the heart of its recipient.

When the group first began meeting, they focused their efforts on making lap quilts for veterans at the VA Hospital in Saginaw.

Over time, their mission grew to include other places in need of their talents.

“We make a dozen quilts a year for each of our area shelters,” Debbie Meir said. “We send them to Lydia’s Gate in Mio, Oasis of Hope in Houghton Lake, New Dawn in Gladwin, and River House Shelter in Grayling. The quilts are a gift for the people who receive them. They don’t stay with the shelter. We also make a few to give to families who lose their homes to fire.”

Another of the Peace Together Quilters' annual projects is to make quilts for local veterans. On Thursday of Fair Week, Debbie Meir, Izetta Reed, and Jeanann Voss arrived at the Veterans Museum with 18 patriotically themed quilts ready to present.

Honored to be remembered and humbled by the kindness of these women, veterans came forward one at a time to receive a uniquely designed, handmade quilt. Attached to each was a small tag that said, "This quilt was made by the Peace Together Quilters with love and compassion for your service to our country in its time of need. May you be blessed for your courage. *"I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."* Psalm 4:8 (NIV).

If you know how to sew and would like to be part of this outreach ministry, the Peace Together Quilters invite you to join them on Thursdays and some Mondays. For more information, or to donate any color cotton fabric, call Ogemaw Hills Free Methodist Church at 989-345-2260 or visit the church at 3480 W. M-76, West Branch.

Pictured (l-r) Izetta Reed, Jeanann Voss, and Debbie Meir arrive at the Veterans Museum at the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds ready to present quilts to local veterans.



Army veteran Norma Andrews, (I), enjoys her Red, White, and Bloom quilt.



Photos by Laura Bender

Marine veteran Ron Vittitow joyously displays his quilt.





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Scan for Schedule

West Branch Moose Lodge hosts annual car show



The West Branch Moose Lodge #2051 held its third annual car show Aug. 23, featuring 36 entries ranging from Studebakers and Camaros to Chevrolet vehicles and a Dodge Power Wagon. Winners included Gary Hughey, People's Choice; Michael Willet, Oldest Vehicle; and Garry Illig, Best of Show. The Moose Lodge also honored veterans with engraved pocketknives. Organizer Greg Sancrant called the event a success, noting the strong community turnout and thanking the Ogemaw Heights High School wrestling team for grilling during the event. The Moose Lodge honored veterans with engraved pocketknives. "It was a successful event, and it was great to see how many people came out and look forward to the fourth annual," said Greg Sancrant, organizer of the event. "We would like to give special thanks to the Ogemaw Heights High School wrestling team for doing the grilling."

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Osborne family celebrates 62nd reunion



Courtesy photo

The families of Erastus and Sarah (Ingels) Osborne gathered at Irons Park on Aug. 15 for the 62nd Osborne Family Reunion. Seventy-seven family members attended, traveling from across the state. Jim Dunn was the oldest attendee, Donna Cushman was the oldest Osborne descendant present, and the youngest attendee was only a few weeks old. As always, everyone enjoyed great food, shared stories and a wonderful time together. The annual horseshoe tournament, a tradition since 1981, was also held. This year's winners were Cody Zimmer (I) and William Latter. Next year's reunion will be on Aug. 28, with the gathering beginning at noon at Irons Park.

Give

« Continued from page 3

children's services, health and wellness, transportation, education, and assistance for individuals and families facing difficult circumstances.

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Ogemaw County United Way extends its sincere appreciation to the employees of West Branch Meijer for choosing to invest in their community and support local charities.

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New pediatrician joins MyMichigan Health in West Branch



MEAGAN NGUYEN, M.D.

Hall of Fame

« Continued from page 1

was named All-State and received the prestigious Golden Helmet Award.

Pat Thompson (1973) Football, basketball, baseball. In all three sports, Pat was a starter, a captain, and earned All-Conference recognition. In 1982 and 1983, Pat coached OHHS Girls' Basketball. In his first season as coach, the Falcons won both the conference championship and the district championship.

Maureen Schick (1983) Basketball, volleyball, softball. As a senior, Maureen helped lead Ogemaw Heights to conference championships in all three sports, with the basketball and softball teams also capturing district championships. In 1983, Maureen was named the Outstanding Female Athlete of her graduating class.

MyMichigan Health is pleased to welcome pediatrician Meagan Nguyen, M.D., to MyMichigan Pediatrics in West Branch. Dr. Nguyen provides comprehensive care for infants, children and adolescents, with a focus on preventive health, developmental milestones, acute illnesses and supporting families throughout every stage of childhood.

“I chose pediatrics because I am passionate about advocating for children and ensuring they receive compassionate, high-quality

care during the most critical stages of development,” said Dr. Nguyen.

Dr. Nguyen believes strong relationships are a foundation of health care and takes a family-centered approach to caring for her young patients.

“When caring for a child, I believe one of the most important things is listening first, partnering with families and providing compassionate, evidence-based care that recognizes each child as an individual,” she said.

Her clinical interests include child advocacy, developmental and behavioral health, infant care, adolescent medicine and preventive pediatric care. She is especially interested in helping families navigate the physical, emotional and developmental changes that occur throughout childhood and adolescence.

Dr. Nguyen earned her medical degree from Michigan State University College of Human Medicine in East Lansing and completed her pediatric residency at

Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine in Kalamazoo. She is board eligible and is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and its Michigan chapter.

Dr. Nguyen is accepting pediatric patients at MyMichigan Health Park West Branch, located at 335 E. Houghton Avenue. Those interested in scheduling an appointment may call 989-345-8120, or to learn more about Dr. Nguyen, may visit www.mymichigan.org/meagan-nguyen.

Roger Fritz (197...) Basketball, football, baseball. On the basketball court, Roger earned four varsity letters, along with two team awards and All-Conference recognition. On the football field, he was a three-year varsity letter winner, earned two team awards, and was named First Team All-Conference twice. For baseball, Roger earned an impressive four varsity letters, three team awards, and was named First Team All-Conference three times. He was also recognized as an All-State baseball player.

Dirk VanOosten (1970) Football, track, basketball. Dirk was a four-year letter winner in track. In his last season, he was a regional champion in the mile and runner-up in the mile at the state meet, and finished his high

school career as an All-State track athlete. On the basketball court, Dirk was a two-year varsity letter winner and, during his senior year, was named First Team All-Conference in the extremely competitive Northern B Conference. A quarterback and punter for the football team, Dirk was a two-year varsity letter winner. In 1970, he was again recognized as First Team All-Conference.

Jon VanOosten (1978) Basketball, golf, track. A three-year starter and letter winner, Jon was a co-captain of the Falcons’ undefeated conference championship teams during his junior and senior basketball seasons and was named First Team All-Conference and All-State. He also received Honorable Mention as a McDonald’s All-American—a national honor. During his senior year, the Falcons won the district championship. After graduation, Jon served as the head basketball coach at Ogemaw Heights for seven years, leading the Falcons to four conference championships and two district championships.

Barbie Ehinger (1983) Cheerleading, cross country, track. Barbie was a four-year track and field athlete who also competed in cross country. She became the school record holder in the 880-yard run, with a time of 2 minutes and 28 seconds. During both her sophomore and senior years, Barbie was named the Most Valuable Track and Field Athlete. During her senior season, Barb competed at the State Track Meet, finishing sixth in the 440-yard dash—what we now know as the 400 meters.

Doug Jameson (1954 - West Branch High School) Football, baseball. Doug was a four-year varsity football and baseball player. His fast-pitch softball talent earned him a spot on the Air Force All-Star fast-pitch softball team. That team advanced to the All-Services Tournament, where they played for a championship

against the Navy. In 1994, his accomplishments were recognized with his induction into the Michigan Softball Hall of Fame. Doug even competed in the Michigan Senior Olympics in Frankenmuth, winning gold medals in both the over-55 and over-60 divisions.

Pam Czach (1982) Softball. A premier softball pitcher, in 1981 and 1982, Pam was named First Team All-Conference in the NEMC, First Team All-District, and First Team All-Regional. During her senior year, Pam was named First Team All-State, helping lead the OHHS softball team to the State Championships, where the Falcons finished State Runner-Up.

Sue Pauley (1982) A standout catcher for the Falcons during one of the most successful periods in OHHS softball history, Sue was named First Team All-Conference, First Team All-District, and First Team All-Regional in both 1981 and 1982. As a senior, Sue earned the highest individual honor of her high school career when she was selected to the First Team All-State. Sue and her teammates ultimately finished as the runner-up in the State Championship game.

Jim Tuttle (1980s and 1990s) Baseball and Football Coach. Jim was named District Baseball Coach of the Year seven times, Regional Coach of the Year three times, and in 1990, received one of the highest honors for a high school baseball coach in Michigan when he was named Class B Coach of the Year. Jim’s peers selected him to serve as the head coach of the East squad in the 1990 High School All-Star Game, played at one of the most iconic venues in all of baseball—Tiger Stadium. In 1998, Jim was inducted into the Michigan Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame. In 2005, he was inducted into the Michigan Football Coaches Hall of Fame. And now, the beloved coach has the honor of being

the first coach inducted into the Ogemaw Heights Athletic Hall of Fame.

Walt Roy (1983) Baseball. In 1981, Walt was recognized as All-Conference and All-Region at shortstop, but as his career progressed, he found his greatest success on the mound. In 1982, Walt was named Second Team All-State as a pitcher. In 1983, he was named First Team All-State and selected to the All-Star Team as a pitcher. Major League Baseball scouts took notice of Walt’s ability and rated him the number one right-handed high school pitcher in the state of Michigan. Walt signed a professional baseball contract with the Atlanta Braves.

John Wangler (1983) Baseball. John was named All-Conference in three consecutive seasons—1981, 1982, and 1983. He was then recognized as First Team All-State in both 1982 and 1983. In 1982, John was selected to the Dream Team, placing him among the very best high school baseball players in the state. In 1983, John hit 9 home runs. Major League Baseball scouts considered John the best hitter in the state of Michigan.

Pete Jennings (1978) Basketball, golf. Pete earned ten varsity letters during his high school career. Part of two undefeated league basketball championship teams, in 1978, he captained the team to a district championship and to the regional finals. A tremendous golfer, Pete helped lead the golf team to three conference championships and a regional championship in 1977. During his junior and senior years, Pete was named All-Conference in both basketball and golf, and as a senior, earned Honorable Mention All-State recognition in basketball.

“It is an honor to welcome these fine athletes and coaches into the inaugural class of the Ogemaw Heights Athletic Hall of Fame,” OHHS athletic director Korey Kripli said.

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Veteran

« Continued from page 2

soldier at Walter Reed Army Hospital in November 2003. As of July 1, 2026, Quilts of Valor has presented 450,000 quilts handmade by over 11,000 registered volunteers across the United States. Today there are also chapters in Canada and Australia who create quilts to honor their country’s veterans.

In addition to the quilt, Barry Wilkinson presented John Bennett with a citation signed by

Lynn Lebeck, the foundation’s Michigan coordinator, that said, “The Quilts of Valor Foundation wishes to recognize you for your service to our nation. We consider it a privilege to do so. Though we may never know the extent of your sacrifice to protect and defend the United States of America, we award you this Quilt of Valor as an expression of gratitude from a grateful nation.”

In presenting the quilt to John,

Barry said, “Your quilt is not meant to be saved for a special occasion. It is meant to go on your favorite recliner or easy chair, so on especially tough days, you can wrap yourself up in it and feel the thanks and gratitude of all of us involved in Quilts of Valor.

If you would like to know more about the Quilts of Valor Foundation, visit <https://www.govf.org/>.

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Ogemaw County
SUPERIOR NEWS

www.superior-news.com

CLASSIFIEDS

\$5 and it runs for a maximum of 3 months!

The Ogemaw County Superior News offers \$5 private party, 20 word classified ads and we will run the ad for a maximum of 3 months.

For help wanted, homes for sale/rent, commercial property for sale/rent or any other business type ad, we charge \$5 for 20 words for a one time run.

If you want to add a photo to the ad, it is an additional, one time charge of \$5.

You can submit your ad via email at [kathy@superior-](mailto:kathy@superior-news.com)

or-news.com or U.S. mail at: P.O. Box 603, West Branch, MI 48661. If you have questions call (989) 450-6163.

Help Wanted

Help wanted, Active 86 year old female looking for friendly Homecare assistant 2 to 3 days a week for about 4 hours 11-3 p.m. Near Melita and Maple Ridge Roads. 989-836-2657

Ogemaw County Help Lines

District Health Dept. No. 2	989-345-5020
AuSable Valley CMH	989-345-5571
Caring Pregnancy Center	989-345-3909
Dept. Health and Human Services	989-345-5135
Ogemaw County Clerk	989-345-0215
Probate/Family Court.....	989-345-0145
Emergency Shelter	989-217-0973
Friend of the Court.....	989-345-5520
Healthaccess.....	989-343-3608
Ogemaw Commission on Aging	989-345-3010
Options Resource Clinic	989-345-7398
Ogemaw Public Transit.....	989-345-5790
Children's Assmt. Center	989-275-7145
Salvation Army	989-345-4690
Community Food Pantry.....	989-345-0493
MSU Extension/4-H.....	989-345-0692
Ogemaw County Prosecutor	989-345-5700
Michigan State Police	989-345-0955
Ogemaw County Sheriff	989-345-0956
West Branch Police	989-345-2627
Rose City Police.....	989-685-3051

National Help Lines

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

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