The Hometown Paper for Coloma-Hartford-Watervliet 463-6397 E-mail record@tricityrecord.com e-edition tricityrecord.com

Tri-City Record

Looking Back As We Move Forward

Est. 1882 Vol. 144 Issue #3 January 15, 2026 Seventy-five Cents

Happy 250th Birthday America... see Page 3

North Berrien Senior Center Celebrates 50th Year... see Page 11

Watervliet Plans for a Time Capsule... see Page 19

Thurs. 1/15	Fri. 1/16	Sat. 1/17	Sun. 1/18	Mon. 1/19	Tues. 1/20	Wed. 1/21
Mostly Cloudy	Snow Showers	Snow	Snow Showers	Snow Showers	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
Hi 25 - Lo 19	Hi 33 - Lo 21	Hi 24 - Lo 11	Hi 16 - Lo 13	Hi 18 - Lo 12	Hi 19 - Lo 16	Hi 25 - Lo 21
24% chance precipitation	64% chance precipitation	63% chance precipitation	43% chance precipitation	37% chance precipitation	24% chance precipitation	12% chance precipitation

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Coloma Junior High Honor Roll

1st Semester 2025-2026

8th Grade

Principal's List: Sullivan Brookshire, Tyler Ditson, Luna Koshar, Itzayana Perez, Nolan Pruiett, Irelynn Reinhardt, Jack Selvidge

Honor Roll: Ryder Baskin, Lana Collins, Emily Garcia-Hernandez, Austin Martin, Alexsander Martinez-Garcia, Ivy Miller, Spencer Olds, Korina Picado, Kian Smith, Gabriel Swan, Jenavieve Tenter, Drake Wilburn

7th Grade

Principal's List: Ember Gonzalez, Lucas Hamilton, Harper Hughes, Weston Karrels, Chase Kiser, Easton Morlock, Indigo Nelson

Honor Roll: Juno Agens, Autumn Anderson, Sariyah Atkins, Alexis Axsom, Caden Cottrell, Josie Cubbage, Kris Garcia Salazar, Emma Gibson, Molly Groendyk, Ethan Hammar, Paisley Hiler, Brooklyn Hutsell, Kacie Lee-Mimes, Emariyon McCoy, Brooklyn Pethick, Hanna Pounders, Paiten Serre, Paige Shelton, Sophia Smith, Mason Stroud, Evangelina Tenter, Lincoln VanFerrari, Caiden Washington

6th Grade

Principal's List: Sofia Barboza, Edith Essmyer, Easton Evett, Elsa Ford, Averie LaFountain, Jacqueline Martinez, Leslie Padilla Gamino, Ayden Platz, Madison Pounders, Thomas Sampsell

Honor Roll: India Baker, Gidean Brenneman, Emmett Brethauer, Jordan Burrell, Andres Delgado Figueroa, Eric Gallegos, Nevaeh Grubb, Payton Hicks, Zoey Jackson, Noah Johnson, Raylon Krugler, Ja'Nyaha Lewis, William Leyva-Martinez, Ethan Oakes, Hudson Olds, Kira Ouert, Aubree Perry, Grayson Rochefort, Destiny Santillanes, Lucas Schmid, Lily Schueneman, Nevia Shaw, River Smith, Dai'en Stanton, Andrew Ulleg, Jessa'Lynne Watkins, Kourtney Webster

2026 Blossomtime Grand Floral Parade accepting applications

It is that time of year once again when preparations for the annual Grand Floral Parade commence. This longstanding tradition in Southwest Michigan invites participation from new units. Any service club or business that would like to gain visibility is encouraged to get involved.

As Michigan's oldest and largest multi-community festival, they take pride in its tradition and are pleased to confirm the event will be televised once again. This occasion provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the diverse community and the outstanding contributions that define Michigan's Great Southwest.

Blossomtime organizers invite everyone to consider joining them for this year's parade, scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2026. The application form, which is fillable, can be found on their website at www.blossomtimefestival.org.

KUTE KIDS



THIS KUTE KID IS… Mko Storm Ledesma, son of Elijah Ledesma and Marissa Rodarte of Hartford. Mko means bear in Potawatomi. His family calls him Koko and they say he is the happiest, cuddliest, most lovable little Koko bear ever.

Mko's proud grandparents are Robert and Misty Ledesma and Paula Brown, all of Hartford. He has a bother named Kehlani.

SHOW US YOUR KUTE KIDS!

Email a photo and info to record@tricityrecord.com OR mail to TCR Kute Kids, PO Box 7, Watervliet, MI 49098. Remember to include name/s, age/s and parents, grandparents and hometown.

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Watervliet Public Schools events

Thursday, January 15
1/2 Day MS & HS; Basketball (Boys JV White & Maroon/ Girls JV) - Fennville (H) 4:00/5:30/7:00 p.m.; Wrestling (Varsity) - Allegan (A) 5:30 p.m.

Friday, January 16
1/2 Day MS & HS; Basketball (JV Girls/ Varsity Girls/Boys) - Fennville (H) 4:30/6:00/7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 17
Wrestling (Varsity Boys) – Russo Invitational Kalamazoo Central HS (A) 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 18
Wrestling (Varsity Girls) - Russo Invitational Kalamazoo Central HS (A) 9:00 a.m.

Monday, January 19
NO SCHOOL - Staff PD Day; Basketball (Girls 7th/8th Maroon) - Bridgman (H - MS Gym) 5:00/6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 20
Basketball (Boys JV White) - New Buffalo (H) 4:00 p.m.; Basketball (Girls JV/Varsity) - Martin (A) 5:30/7:00 p.m.; Basketball (Boys JV Maroon/ Varsity) - Saugatuck (H) 5:30/7:00 p.m.; Basketball (Girls 7th/8th White) - Brandywine (H - MS Gym) 6:00/7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 21
Basketball (Girls 7th/8th Maroon) - Black River (A - HS) 5:00/6:00 p.m.; Basketball (Boys JV Maroon/ Varsity) - Decatur (A) 5:30/7:00 p.m.; Wrestling (Varsity) SAC Quad – South Haven (A) 6:00 p.m.; Basketball (Girls 7th/8th White) - Michigan Lutheran (A - Grace Lutheran School) 6:00/7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 22
Basketball (Boys JV White/ Girls JV/ Boys JV Maroon) - South Haven High School (A) South Haven High School 4:00/5:30/7:00 p.m.; Wrestling (MS) SAC Jamboree (H – HS Gym) 5:30 p.m.

Friday, January 23
Basketball (Girls & Boys Varsity) - South Haven (H) 6:00/7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 24
Wrestling (MS) - Martin Invitational (A) 9:00 a.m.

Coloma Community Schools events

Thursday, January 15
MS Wrestling SAC Jamboree – Allegan (A) 5:30 p.m.; JV/Varsity Boys Basketball - Bridgman (H) 5:30/7:00 p.m.; Varsity Competitive Cheer SAC Jamboree – Allegan (A) 6:00 p.m.

Friday, January 16
Varsity Girls Basketball – Bridgman (A) 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 17
MS Wrestling Portage Northern Invite (A) 8:30 a.m.; Varsity Wrestling – Hopkins (A) 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 18
Varsity Girls Wrestling - Kalamazoo Central (A) 9:00 a.m.

Monday, January 19
NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Varsity Bowling – Saugatuck (H - Strikers Bowl, St. Joseph) 4:00 p.m.; Varsity Competitive Cheer Coloma Invite, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 20
JV/Varsity Boys Basketball - Gobles (H) 5:30/7:00 p.m.; Varsity Girls Basketball - Galesburg Augusta (A) 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 21
Late Start; Varsity Bowling - Gobles (A – Lakeside Lanes, South Haven) 4:00 p.m.; MS Girls Basketball - Saugatuck (H) 5:00 p.m.; Varsity Wrestling - South Haven (A) 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 22
MS Girls Basketball - Fennville (H) 5:00 p.m.; MS Wrestling SAC Jamboree - Watervliet (A) 5:30 p.m.; Varsity Competitive Cheer SAC Jamboree - Delton Kellogg (A) 6:00 p.m.



HARTFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL… Students of the Week for Jan. 9, 2026: (from the left) 6th Grade - Silvi Roblero Gonzalez is always willing to lend a helping hand and puts care and effort into everything she does. Silvi takes pride in doing her very best work, and it shows.

7th Grade - Paola Monroy-Duran is always prepared, and she comes with a "ready to learn" attitude. She goes above and beyond what is expected of her. Paola is a perfect example of a Student of the Week.

8th Grade - Jerardo Arellano comes to class excited and ready to learn and participate. He is a great teammate to his peers, and continues to get better and better. His teachers are all very proud of him, and cannot wait to see how well he continues to do moving forward!

(Contributed photos)

Hartford Public Schools events

Thursday, January 15
Senior Citizen Luncheon (HS/MS Cafeteria) 1:00 p.m.; Varsity Competitive Cheerleading - Allegan (A) 6:00 p.m.; JV/Varsity Girls Basketball - Centreville (H) 6:00/7:30 p.m.

Friday, January 16
JV/Varsity Boys Basketball - Centreville (H) 6:00/7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 17
Varsity Competitive Cheer - Stoney Creek (A) TBA; Boys Varsity Wrestling Ron Russo Classic (A – Kalamazoo Central HS) 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 18
Girls Varsity Wrestling Ron Russo Classic (A – Kalamazoo Central HS) 9:00 a.m.

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6TH - 12TH GRADE "YOUTH GROUP" SUNDAYS AT 6 PM.
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Historical Museum presents History Trivia, January 20

The North Berrien Historical Museum invites the public at large to participate in its History Trivia Showdown on Tuesday, January 20 at 7 p.m. This friendly competition will include categories such as the United States, Michigan, and local history.

Teams shall consist of no more than six people. Guests may arrive in teams. Individual participants are welcome to join existing teams in need of members. The winning team will receive prizes generously provided by local businesses. There will be refreshments available for all participants.

No RSVP is required for this free event! Please contact katie@northberrienhistory.org with any questions. The North Berrien Historical Museum is located at 300 Coloma Ave., Coloma, Michigan.

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A New Year's reflection for America 250:

renewal, heritage, and the road ahead

By Angela Widdis

As the United States enters a new year and looks ahead to its 250th anniversary in 2026, this moment offers a powerful opportunity for reflection and renewal. The start of a new year has long been associated with fresh beginnings, resolve, and hope—but this year, and the years immediately ahead, invite its' citizens to place those traditions within the broader context of America 250, the national commemoration of a quarter-millennium of independence. It is a time not only to consider personal goals, but also to reflect on what it means to belong to a nation with a complex, evolving, and unfinished story.

The New Year is often marked by familiar rituals: setting resolutions, gathering with loved ones, and pausing to reflect on the year just past. At its core, however, the New Year is about taking stock—recognizing where this country has been, what it has endured, and where its' people hope to go next. In much the same way, the upcoming 250th anniversary calls on the people to take an honest look at their shared American journey. Over two and a half centuries, the United States has demonstrated extraordinary courage, creativity, and innovation, while also grappling with deep injustice, conflict, and ongoing challenges. A meaningful America 250 commemoration requires both pride in the progress and clarity about the work that remains.

At the beginning of a new year, it is an especially fitting moment for this dual reflection. Across the country, people pause between what was and what will be, considering values, priorities, and purpose. This reflective pause provides a foundation for the thoughtful and inclusive vision America 250 strives to embody. Reflection encourages humility, and humility creates space for listening — to histories that not all have learned, to experiences different from each others, and to ideas that can help shape a stronger collective future.

One of the guiding principles of America 250 is the commitment to telling a fuller, more honest national story. For generations, the contributions of many groups were minimized or omitted—Indigenous peoples, enslaved individuals, immigrants, laborers, women, and countless others whose efforts helped build the nation. As this new year begins, Americans are reminded that renewal does not mean forgetting the past, but engaging with it more fully. Recognizing difficult truths alongside inspiring achievements does not weaken this nation's identity; it deepens it, grounding pride in understanding and empathy.

At the same time, the approach of America 250 invites celebration of the resilience and imagination that have long defined the American experience. Throughout its history, the nation has made remarkable advances in science, technology, culture, civil rights, and democratic ideals. The New Year is a time when many people look forward—to opportunities they hope to pursue and to futures they want the next generation to inherit. The American experiment has always depended on ordinary individuals striving to improve their communities, whether through civic engagement, service, or simple acts of care and responsibility. In an era often marked by division, the New Year reminds citizens of the quiet but powerful ways people contribute to the nation's progress every day.

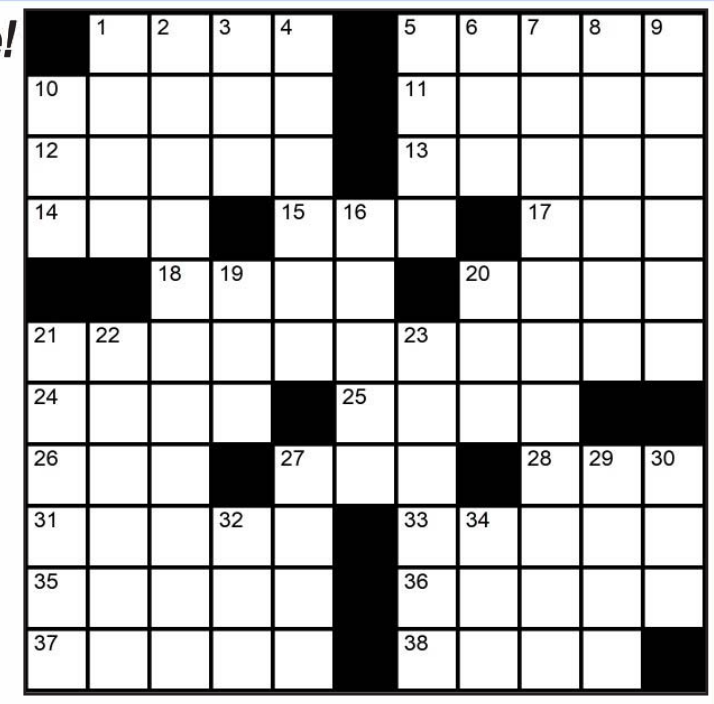
As the world looks toward 2026, an essential question emerges: What kind of nation does its' people want to mark at America's 250th anniversary, and how can each one help shape it? New Year's resolutions offer a familiar framework for this thinking. Reflection paired with intention can become action—whether that action takes the form of volunteering, supporting local organizations, learning history from multiple perspectives, participating thoughtfully in civic life, or teaching young people about both the triumphs and the trials that define the past. Meaningful progress is rarely sudden; it is built gradually through consistent effort, year after year, generation after generation.

New Year traditions vary widely—some celebrate with large gatherings, others with quiet reflection; some focus on goal-setting, others on gratitude or service. Yet a shared truth underlies them all: intentional reflection brings clarity and connection. As America approaches its 250th anniversary, that sense of shared purpose feels especially important. This milestone is best honored by embracing renewal—not only of personal commitments, but of collective dedication to the ideals that continue to shape the nation.

As 2026 begins, the United States should move forward with intention and hope. Let her people reflect on the freedoms they enjoy, the responsibilities they share, the diversity that strengthens them, and the possibilities that lie ahead. In doing so, they enter the story of America 250 mindful of the past, engaged in the present, and ready to help shape the next chapter of the American journey.

Stay Driven to Solve!

with BAKER



Across

1 "House" and "Shooter" actor Omar —-

5 Frat-party wraps

10 Skateboarding jump

11 "Lummox" writer Fannie —-

12 Icon

13 Efface

14 Military go-betweens

15 Devoted follower

17 Anonymous Jane

18 Follow closely

20 Sound of a finely tuned engine

21 Swells

24 It stopped with HST

25 Wise one's call?

26 Kind of PC port

27 Creditor's statement

28 Online connector

31 Barrel bit

33 In unison

35 Old watchmaker

36 Kind of eclipse

37 Start over

38 1/2 fl. oz.

Down

1 Patron saint of sailors

2 Some forms of packaging

3 Iron block

4 Believe it proper

5 At that time

6 Belonging to us

7 Marks on a measuring device

8 Arrange by type

9 Takes the tiller

10 Painting medium

16 Welcome to Hawaii!

19 Seek clarification

20 Paid sportsperson

21 Vituperative one

22 Steal stock

23 Kind of blue

27 Home on the range?

29 Easy task

30 For each

32 Contend

34 Pinch-hitter

YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWERS ON PAGE 7!



Don't let your car trouble be *a puzzle!*

- Martin Jackson, Digital Marketing Manager

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Letters & Commentary

Share your thoughts about what is on this page with a letter to the editor...
Please email to *record@tricityrecord.com* or mail to Tri-City Record, Box 7, Watervliet, MI 49098

Karl's Kolumn

By Karl Bayer
Publisher



MASS MAILING… If you are not usually a Tri-City Record reader and you got this in the mail this week, you can thank our TCR advertisers for making this happen once again. Also, thank Amy and the team Laurie, Josh and Dylan in the office for receiving this FREE edition.

SPECIAL FEATURES… This week's paper has a couple special features written by correspondent, Angela Widdis; one on time capsules in the Tri-City Area and also a story on celebrating our country and the 50th birthday of the Senior Center in Coloma. Thank you to Angie along with our other correspondents for bringing the news each week - Jerrod Birmele with sports, Lauren Lovell, Heather Jarvis and Sheila Schultz covering our local municipalities and schools. Some of our wonderful sports photos come from Micah Jones.

Thank you Dylan Tucker and Heather Whitney for selling ads each week and our latest hire Ed Jacob. Each week of the Tri-City Record is a team effort and new ideas and feature stories make this a paper we can all be proud of.

Most of the newspapers in Michigan today are owned by larger media companies; however, the Tri-City Record is one of the few still remaining privately owned. Michigan has approximately 175 newspaper outlets still active overall with approximately 30 still privately owned. The Tri-City Record newspaper (Watervliet Record) dates back to the 1800s in the same building it is housed in today at 138 North Main Street. Notice on Page 16 we are offering a special subscription price to any new subscriber with said coupon!

HAPPY 250th BIRTHDAY AMERICA… is also the theme behind this special edition, which I have mentioned in a couple previous columns. 2026 marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence - this milestone is officially called the United States Semiquincentennial.

Back on that day, 13 American Colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence which was written mainly by Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence created the foundation for the United States of America. I'm sure we will see celebrations throughout the whole year and especially at the Watervliet Independence Day Celebration.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

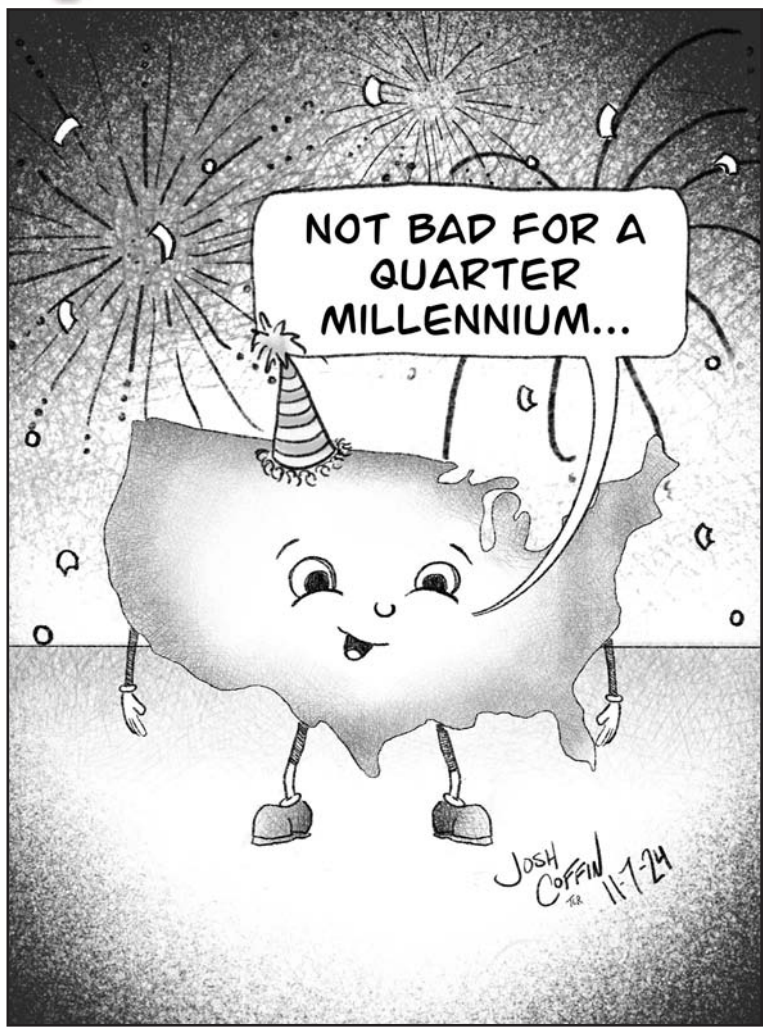
Why attendance matters

To the Coloma Schools community:

As the quiet of winter break fades and the familiar hum of activity returns to our hallways, there is a renewed sense of purpose across Coloma Community Schools. The start of a new calendar year often prompts us to look at the big picture—our goals for student achievement, our commitment to safety and our vision for the future of our graduates. Yet, beneath these high-level objectives is a simple catalyst that determines the success of nearly every initiative we launch: attending school all day, every day.

The importance of attending school isn't purely academic-driven, but socially and emotionally as well. As we move into the second half of the academic year, our goal is not merely to "fill seats," but to ensure that every student has the opportunity to be part of the vibrant, challenging and rewarding experience that happens within our buildings.

When students come to school every day, we see their confidence grow as they learn to speak up, ask questions and provide answers during classroom discussion. They learn how to manage their time better by moving from classroom activities to afterschool and extracurricular opportunities like sports and clubs. And they have the opportunity to build relationship and communication skills by forming lifelong friendships and rapport with teachers.



As we look toward the spring, let's make a collective commitment to prioritize attendance. Let's ensure our students have the best possible chance to grow, learn and succeed.

Superintendent Dave Ehlers

Tri-City Record gift subscription

Hello!

Thank you so much for our kindness. I've already started keeping my eye out for pictures of my court and I in the paper! Without your gift I wouldn't have much to remind myself of this opportunity in the future.

Sincerely,
Miss Coloma 2026,
Cassidy Emrath



Government funding update: delivering wins for SW Michigan

Last week, my colleagues and I in the House passed H.R. 6938, which is a combination of three appropriations bills: Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS), Energy & Water Development, and Interior & Environment. The House has now passed six of the twelve government funding bills, with another two on the House Floor this week.

This most recent legislation is a huge win for Michigan and our Great Lakes. Specifically, this package includes $369 Million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a million-dollar increase over last year. In my role as Co-Chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, I help lead the charge to achieve robust funding for the GLRI each and every year. Additionally, I championed our Task Force's efforts to achieve funding for the following programs in this group of funding bills: The Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, Coastal Zone Management grants, National Sea Grants, The Great Lakes Observatory System, the Great Lakes Science Center, National Cooperative Geological Mapping Program, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan and Sediment Remediation, Great Lakes Tributary Model program, Great Lakes Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Asian Carp Program as well as extensive report language directing the Army Corps of Engineers to implement navigation protocols at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet, Illinois to stop the advance of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes.

Additionally, this package appropriated U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Operation and Maintenance funding for existing Great Lakes harbor infrastructure, including $3,860,000 for Holland Harbor, $29,000 for South Haven Harbor, $4,350,000 for St. Joseph Harbor, and $16,000 for Saugatuck Harbor/Kalamazoo River.

As Michiganders, we understand the deep connection between our state's success and the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes. The region provides drinking water, jobs, recreation, and memories for people across our state and our nation. I am honored to represent Southwest Michigan while advancing bipartisan efforts to protect and preserve this vital ecosystem for future generations.

If you need assistance navigating a federal agency, please contact my office in Holland at (616) 251-6741 or in Portage at (269) 569-8595.



Putting Michigan families first: Our 2026 common-sense agenda

When I talk to neighbors back home or folks at the grocery store, the message is always the same: everything is too expensive. From the checkout lane to your property tax bill, Michigan families are being squeezed by a Lansing bureaucracy that has lost touch with the reality of the kitchen table.

As we kick off 2026, I'm proud of what we've already accomplished. We stood our ground and successfully delivered on a promise to protect your paycheck, ensuring there is no state tax on tips, overtime, or Social Security. This was a massive win for workers and seniors, but while it's a great start, our work to make Michigan affordable is far from finished.

The next pillar of our agenda is permanent, transformative property tax reform. We're championing a "Next Proposal A" to provide the relief homeowners desperately need. It's time government stop punishing people for the simple dream of owning a home.

However, we can't provide real relief without fiscal discipline—something that has been sorely lacking in Lansing. Under Governor Whitmer, state spending has skyrocketed by a staggering 47%. This record-breaking spending spree has left taxpayers wondering where all that money is actually going while their own budgets are stretched to the limit.

While you're forced to make tough choices at home to balance your checkbook, Lansing has refused to live within its means, treating your tax dollars like an unlimited credit card.

Michigan families know what it means to work hard for every dime and to live within a budget. It's time Lansing did the same. The Republican 2026 agenda is about common sense and ensuring every Michigander can actually afford to build their lives right here in our great state.

Serving you is an honor, and I look forward to continuing my work on behalf of SW Michigan residents. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or need help with any state agencies please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 517-373-1799 or at paulinewendzel@house.mi.gov.



Supporting law enforcement

On January 9, 2026, we recognized National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. Law enforcement officers play a critical role in upholding law and order, protecting families, and ensuring that our neighborhoods remain safe places to live, work, and raise a family. These individuals deserve our gratitude—not to be the constant targets of politically motivated attacks or frivolous legal action designed to undermine their work.

I strongly believe in the importance of law enforcement being able to carry out their duties safely, professionally, and within the bounds of the law. That includes ICE agents, who are tasked with enforcing federal immigration laws passed by Congress and signed into law by presidents of both parties.

Our country has immigration laws for a reason, and law enforcement officers deserve the resources and respect they need to enforce them safely and effectively while being accountable to the citizens they are sworn to protect and serve. Simply vilifying those who uphold our laws or demanding that communities refuse to cooperate with federal agencies is not the answer. That kind of approach only creates chaos, weakens public safety, and undermines the rule of law.

I will continue to support legislation that ensures our police can do their jobs without being unfairly targeted, and that our communities remain places of safety and lawfulness.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the legislature or state government, please do not hesitate to contact my office by going to www.SenatorAricNesbitt.com. You may also reach out by calling (517) 373-0793 or by email at SenANesbitt@senate.Michigan.gov. My staff would be happy to assist with issues you may be having with state government agencies, and I look forward to listening and learning about your priorities and concerns for our state.



Practicing contentment

Teddy Roosevelt is credited with coining the phrase "Comparison is the thief of joy." Most people know this to be true. I remember one Christmas my parents got me a GameBoy Pocket, with one game cartridge. It was exactly what I wanted. I played it all morning, and I was so excited about it I later brought it to my cousin's house to show them. But when I got there I saw my cousin's gift: a GameBoy Color, with four game cartridges. And suddenly, my little black-and-white console didn't seem so great.

When we compare, we lose our joy. One might think we grow out of this habit. But, the truth is, it never leaves us. We compare cars, houses, clothing, or how well we keep a new year's resolution. And each time we do - whatever joy we had wanes or disappears.

So how can we just be content with what we have? One option is to stop comparing—but that seems unlikely. So, instead, we should practice contentment. How do we do that? The Bible says, "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have." (Heb. 13:5). To love money is to gain as much of it as possible—a pursuit which never satisfies (Eccl. 5:10).

So, instead, we must acknowledge what we have. And what we have is a lot! God gives us everything we need. Not everything we want, mind you. Everything we need… house and home, food, clothing, shoes, family, friends, etc. As God provides for the birds of the air and beasts of the field, so also He provides for us and so much more! Rather than comparing what we have and thinking of what we do not, we should give thanks for God's gracious provision, for we are blessed far more than we deserve.

Of course, this requires us to have faith in God. Ultimately faith is what helps us practice true contentment. Psalm 23:1 begins, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." If we have faith in God to see Him as our caring shepherd, we want for nothing. He supplies for our needs of food, drink, and protection. And we trust Him to provide. And this frees us from "keeping up with the Joneses" so we may be content with all our blessings.

TRI-CITY RECORD LLC

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Postmaster, send address changes to: P.O. Box 7, Watervliet, MI 49098

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Letters to the editor… **The Tri-City Record welcomes all letters to the editor. Please email to record@tricityrecord.com or mail to address at the top of this notice. Letters are subject to editing for length and content, and will be published at the discretion of the editor. All letters must be signed and must include a phone number and address so that your authorship may be verified. Letter authorship identity may be withheld by request, at the discretion of the editor. The publication deadline for letters is 5 p.m., on Monday for that week's issue.**

Tri-City History

Reminiscing With Pearl Playford



As originally published in the Watervliet Record, 1959-1966
Compiled in book form by Richard Russell and is available at the North Berrien Historical Society Museum 468-3330

Published December 26, 1963

A Merry Christmas to everyone

Time and space will not allow much reminiscing this week, so this will be short. I do have something, however, that so impressed me that I want to share it with readers of this column. I received a few days ago a beautiful little book of verses. It is named "Just For You" and was written by Helen Steiner Rice just this year. The booklet was a Christmas gift to me and one that I have enjoyed and have read through and through. The first poem that I read seems so appropriate at this very time that I am taking the liberty to copy it word for word. This is it:

Flowers Leave Their Fragrance on the Hand That Bestows Them

There's an old Chinese proverb
That if practiced each day,
Would change the whole world
In a wonderful way—
Its truth is so simple,
It's so easy to do
And it works every time
And successfully, too.
For you can't do a kindness
Without a reward,
Not in silver or gold
But in joy for the Lord.
You can't light a candle
To show others the way
Without feeling the warmth
Of that bright little ray.
And you can't pluck a rose
All fragrant with dew,
Without part of its fragrance
Remaining with you.

So long for now. Hope to see you next year, which will be the beginning of my fifth year of doing this column. I have enjoyed it and hope to do better in 1964.

Community Calendar

Sponsored as a community service by
Orchard Hill Sanitary Landfill
Send Community Calendar listings to:
Tri-City Record, Box 7, Watervliet, MI 49098;
Fax to (269) 463-8329;
or e-mail to record@tricityrecord.com
Listings deadline for next week's newspaper is 12:00 noon on Tuesday.

Thu, Jan 15, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford High School/Middle School
Thu, Jan 15, 6:30pm "QUARTER AUCTION" at the DANK13, 2651 Pipestone Rd, BH; $5.00/ticket & paddles available at the door; concessions & open bar; NO outside food or beverages permitted; proceeds benefit DANK #13
Sat, Jan 17, 8am-noon "WINTER BIRDING TOUR" offered by Sarett Nature Center, 2300 Benton Center Rd, BH in Berrien County; call (269) 927-4832 to register; Members/ $10, Non-Members/ $15
Sat, Jan 17, 8:30am-noon "WATERVLIET REC SIGNUP" at Watervliet High School Cafeteria; for more information, visit watervlietrec.com or contact in-fo@watervlietrec.com
Sat, Jan 17, "SNOWMAN MAKING CONTEST" at Revive Church, 6801 Ryno Rd, Coloma; building ends at 12:30pm with judging at 1pm for prizes; call 468-8422 to register; $5/donation to participate
Tue, Jan 20, 7pm "HISTORY TRIVIA SHOWDOWN" free event at North Berrien Historical Museum, 300 Coloma Ave.; teams of 6 (public invited)
Jan 26-30 "WHS WINTERFEST" theme: A Night in Rio
Sat, Jan 31, 3-6pm "WATERVLIET REC SIGNUP" at Watervliet High School Cafeteria; for more information, visit watervlietrec.com or contact in-fo@watervlietrec.com
Thu, Feb 19, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford Redwood Elementary
Fri, Mar 13, 11am-5:30pm "BLOOD DRIVE" at Coloma High School
Thu, Mar 19, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford High School/Middle School
Sat, Mar 21, 11am "BEN HUR PRESENTATION" provided by Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society at Hartford Public Library; no RSVP or admission charge
Mar 27-Apr 3 "SPRING BREAK" for Hartford Public Schools & Watervliet Public Schools
Sun-Mon, Apr 12-13 "MR & MISS BLOSSOMTIME PAGEANTS"
Thu, Apr 16, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford Redwood Elementary
Sat, Apr 18, 11am "GENEALOGY TOOL & WEBSITES" free presentation by Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society at Hartford Public Library; no RSVP required
Apr 24-26 "WRC BASEBALL PRE-SEASON TOURNAMENT" at Hays Park, Watervliet
May 1-3 "WRC SOFTBALL PRE-SEASON TOURNAMENT" at Hays Park, Watervliet
Sat, May 2 "HHS PROM"
Sat, May 2 "WHS PROM"
Sun, May 3, 12-5:30am "WHS AFTER PROM" at Nitro Zone, Dowagiac
Sat, May 9 "BLOSSOMTIME GRAND FLORAL PARADE"
Wed, May 20 "NATIVE PLANT SALE" Berrien County Conservation District
Thu, May 21, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford High School/Middle School
Fri, May 29 "WHS GRADUATION"
June 5-7 "SOFTBALL ALL STARS TOURNAMENT"
Jul 17-19 "BASEBALL ALL STARS TOURNAMENT"
Aug 17-22 "BERRIEN COUNTY YOUTH FAIR"
Thu, Jul 9, 1pm "SENIOR LUNCH" at Hartford Redwood Elementary



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Coloma Public Library news

The Coloma Public Library will be closed on Monday, Jan. 19 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Kids' programs

PreK & Toddler Storytimes: stories, songs, and play with Miss Erica every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. Ages 2-5 recommended.

Tiny Tales: gentle, play-based Storytime featuring songs, rhymes, movement, and sensory fun on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m., for age birth to 18 months. Next meeting is Jan. 22.

Homeschool STEAM Team: calling all curious and creative homeschool kids aged 5-17. See learning come alive through exciting experiments, challenges, and teamwork monthly with the next meeting on Monday, Feb. 9 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Paws To Read: read to certified therapy dog, Koda, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday, 3:30–4:30 p.m. Register for 15-minute session via email (info@colomapubliclibrary.net) or call (269-468-3431). Next date is Jan. 28.

Youth/Adult programs

Dungeons & Dragons: Explore whimsical Obojima in a beginner-friendly 5E campaign inspired by Studio Ghibli. Ages 18+. 1st & 3rd Saturday each month. Next session: Jan. 24 at 11 a.m.

PageTurner's Writing Club: connect, share, and grow your writing craft every 1st and 3rd Tuesday. Next meeting: Jan. 20, 5–6:45 p.m. Email info@colomapubliclibrary.net for Discord access. Ages 16+.

Coloma Library Book Clubs

Not Your Mother's Book Club meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday: "The Right Swipe" by Alisha Rai, on Feb. 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Coloma Library Book Club meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday. "The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife" by Anna Johnston, on Feb. 12 at 4 p.m.

Jane Austen Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss "Persuasion" by Jane Austen.

Program schedules are on the calendar at: colomapubliclibrary.net. Contact staff at 269-468-3431 or readcoloma@gmail.com for more information.

2026 Southwest Michigan Horticultural Days set to run February 4 and 5

Pre-registration deadline is Friday, January 16

The 2026 Southwest Michigan Horticultural Days will be held Feb. 4-5, 2026, at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center in Benton Township. This event is organized each year by Michigan Grape Society and Michigan State University Extension.

These two days of educational sessions will cover general information, Smart Farm/Precision Agriculture, and Pesticide Regulations and Compliance topics on Day 1, and then Day 2 will cover topics on juice and wine grapes, blueberries, strawberries and raspberries, and tree fruit. MSU Extension educators and outside experts will provide informative talks and answer questions in the educational sessions.

Registration and the trade show begin at 8 a.m. and the educational sessions start at 9 a.m. on both days. A wine showcase free for all attendees will be held February 4. Pre-registration for both days is $60 per person, postmarked before January 16. Registrations for both days postmarked after January 16, online and at the door, will be $75 per person. Single-day registrations are available for a $15 discount off the full event registration price.

Anyone with questions regarding registration may contact Renee Tinkey at (269) 944-1477, ext. 201 or by emailing tinkeyre@msu.edu.

Checks should be made payable to Michigan Grape Society. They can be mailed to MSU-SWMREC, 1791 Hillandale Road, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, Attn: Renee Tinkey.

Please visit michigangrapesociety.simpletix.com to register online with credit card payment or to access a registration form to mail in with a check payment.

Glimpses From The Past



A horse is pushing a man kneeling in a little red wagon at Deer Forest… Do you remember attending the stage shows performed at Deer Forest?

Please share stories with North Berrien Historical Museum, contact us at 269-468-3330, info@northberrienhistory.org. North Berrien Historical Museum is open for tours, Tuesday through Friday 10-4.

From the photo collection at the North Berrien Historical Museum
300 Coloma Avenue, Coloma

Rolling Back The Years

Local News and Newsmakers of Days Gone By
As reported in the local newspapers: Coloma Courier, Hartford Day Spring, and Watervliet Record.

NEWS FROM THE COLOMA COURIER

100 years ago – 1926

New directors were elected for the State Bank of Coloma: Oscar E. Waer, C. M. Niles, Charles O. Ball, C. E. Geisler and Fred W. Cochrun. The annual meeting shows the bank is in excellent condition.

The tax rolls are in my possession and taxes are now due and payable. Payment can be made at my barber shop. Orrin J. Long, Coloma Twp. Treasurer

The Good Fellows Dancing Club will have another popular dancing party at Bunker's Opera House - $1.00 per couple; extra ladies free.

60 years ago – 1966

George Vollrath was elected new president of the Chamber of Commerce. Andy Kuckinsky is vice-president and Gordon Noack is treasurer.

Gordon Wooley, the only post office employee that can afford a vacation to Florida explains: He stayed and had his meals free with the many Colomans who spend the winter down south.

Lions Park was the scene for the first run on the sleds by youngsters. All enjoyed the first snow that fell on Coloma.

Latine Collaquamur – let us speak Latin. This series of articles are written by Latin students at CHS. Stay tuned…

30 years ago – 1996

Coloma Charter Township Board approved the appointment of Robert Molter. He will serve the term of former board member Dr. Gary Washington.

Brad Parrigin and Tyler Richardson are DAR American History Essay Contest winners. Dr. Charlotte Groff is Chairman of the DAR's contest committee.

The 1996 meetings will begin for the Glad-Peach Festival, announced President Erica Hensel. Residents interested in joining the festival are encouraged to attend meetings.

Santa's helpers Tom Cottrell, Ebony Thompson, Vicki Vollrath and Amanda Zandarski help decorate boxes for the food drive.

Senior citizens can bowl every Friday afternoon, announced Bob Wooley, Director of the North Berrien Senior Center. Please join us at Coloma Lanes.

Submitted by volunteer Sandi Musick Munchow at Coloma Public Library from the Coloma Courier newspapers donated by the Tri-City Record.

Hours: Mon-Thu 9-7; Fri & Sat 9-2
Phone: 269-468-3431

NEWS FROM THE HARTFORD DAY SPRING

100 years ago - 1926

A pool tournament has been organized at the Burns & Calvert billiard hall at Main and Maple streets, the opposing team to play a series of games on Monday and Friday nights, and the losing team to pay for supper at the conclusion of the series. Sixty-four of Hartford's cue artists are involved in the tournament, each team claiming thirty-two members.

The Blumenthal Auction Company which recently purchased the Frank F. Warren stock of general merchandise and has been conducting a sale to dispose of the goods, closed the store Saturday evening and the remainder of the merchandise has been removed.

80 years ago - 1946

Electric service was cut off in Hartford for more than an hour Saturday afternoon when an out-of-town delivery truck struck and broke a telephone pole at the Maple Street entrance to the alley south of Main Street. The pole stood next to an electric pole, which was not damaged, but a high voltage line that it carried was knocked to the ground. Indiana and Michigan Electric Co. workmen restored service to most of the town, leaving only the downtown section without electricity while the break was repaired. About a dozen telephones were out of service for several days as a result of the accident.

Dr. C. H. Palmer has installed a new ultra-violet ray quartz lamp in his office. Replacing an older, less powerful machine, it is used in treatment of respiratory diseases.

60 years ago - 1966

Sale of the Hartford Greenhouses at 410 Linden by L. E. Davis to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hafer was announced this week. The sale was made Saturday and the transfer will take effect March 1. At present, Hafer is employed at the Watervliet Paper Co. Mrs. Hafer will assist in operation of the greenhouse.

Family Night for the Southwest Hartford Thursday Club members will be held Saturday at the bank community room. In charge of the program are Mrs. Otto Helweg and Miss Thyra Jennings. Everything will be furnished except for hot vegetables, salad and dessert, and for those who were not solicited and in doubt what to bring may contact Mrs. Ivan White, who heads the kitchen committee.

Submitted by Librarian Stephanie Daniels at Hartford Public Library from microfilm copies of the Hartford Day Spring.

Hours: Mon & Wed 10-7; Tue, Thu & Fri 10-5; Sat 10-2
Phone: 269-588-5103

NEWS FROM THE WATERVLIET RECORD

90 years ago - 1936

One reads over the list of big salaried men, ranging all the way from $30,000 to Gordon (Mickey) Cochrane of the Detroit Tigers up to $210,050 that Walter Gifford, president of the ATT draws, and the $500,000 salary that William Randolph Hearst receives from his publications, besides $265,000 that he pays to his editor of the New York Journal, Arthur Brisbane. You wonder why these fellows should begrudge the $12 a week that President Roosevelt has had paid the WPA worker who would have no salary and no income otherwise.

Rev. Fr. R. V. Myrick received his appointment Jan. 17, 1936, as an assistant at St. Theresa's Church in Detroit. Father Myrick has been stationed at Dowagiac as assistant pastor of the church there since his ordination. He is a Watervliet boy, born and bred.

60 years ago - 1966

Pvt. Gary W. Whitney is now taking Basic Training with the U.S. Army at Fort Lewis, Washington. He surprised his family by flying home for Christmas. He arrived home the same day news of his brother Sp/4 Tom Whitney came that he is leaving Vietnam. The private is a 1964 graduate of WHS.

Steven Crocker, 1964 WHS graduate, is a sophomore at Michigan State with a 4.0 GPA. He is concentrating in the Social Sciences and Computer Science. In addition to his excellent academic achievement, Steve served as Scholastic Chairman for his house in South Case Hall. He also worked as a programmer at the Michigan State Computer Center and is a General Motors Scholar.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Downey of Watervliet are the parents of a boy, Arthur Wayne, born on Jan. 14, 1966 and weighed in at 6 lbs., 15 oz.

30 years ago - 1996

Kalamazoo College has announced the winners of its 1995-96 Honors and Competitive Scholarships. The two WHS graduates among those earning Honors scholarships are Renee Loomis and Daniel Pfeffer.

Anthony J. Gray has joined the U.S. Army under the Delayed Enlistment Program at the Army Recruiting Station in St. Joseph. The program gives young men or women the opportunity to delay enlistment into the Army for up to one year before reporting to basic military training.

Submitted by Sally Q. Gonzalez from files at Watervliet District Library of the Watervliet Record newspapers donated by the Tri-City Record.

Hours: Mon & Wed, 10-7; Tue & Thu 10-6; Fri 10-5; Sat 9-3
Phone: 269-463-6382

Tri-City Area Obituaries

ARTHUR "DAN" MCFARLAND III

Arthur Daniel McFarland III (Dan), 66, went to be with our Heavenly Father Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, at Bronson Hospital after a short illness.

Dan was a very much loved husband, father and grandfather. He was a lifelong farmer and all around handyman. Dan was born Jan. 6, 1960, in Benton Harbor, MI, the son of Art and Maxine (Anderson) McFarland. He graduated from Hartford High School in 1978. He worked his entire life on the family's fruit farm in Hartford. He was also a handyman. He loved to help others with home repairs, remodeling and plumbing.



Dan married his loving wife Vicki (Gravenmer) in 1979, where she became a part of the family farm and worked beside him through his lifetime. During that time they were blessed with two sons, Daniel and Adam. He was also a lifelong member at Hartford Bible Church.

Dan always loved being outside; besides farming, he also loved going fishing and deer hunting every fall.

Dan is survived by his wife Vicki, sons Arthur D. McFarland (Daniel) and Adam M. McFarland, and his wife Valerie and their three sons Kameron, Rowan and Mason; sisters Linda Bippus (McFarland) and Joanne McFarland O'Rourke and brother, Michael (Johna) McFarland.

Dan was preceded in passing by his parents and sister, Chris Price.

Services will be held at Hartford Bible Church on Friday, Jan. 16. Visitation is from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., with service to follow.

In lieu of flowers please leave a donation in Dan's name to the American Red Cross online at redcross.org or by giving a blood donation.

Those wishing to leave memorial condolences for the family may do so at http://www.calvin-leonardfh.com.

RUSS MILLER

Russ "Rusty" Miller, 67, of Watervliet, MI entered into eternal rest on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at the West Woods of Bridgman.



A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, at Pathway Global Methodist Church, 2950 Lakeview Ave., St. Joseph, MI 49085. Burial will be held at 1:30 p.m. at Riverside Cemetery in Dowagiac. Friends may visit with the family from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16, 2026 at Starks & Menchinger Chapel and Cremation Service, 2650 Niles Rd., St. Joseph, MI 49085. Memorials may be made to the Humane Society of Southwest Michigan. Those wishing to share a memory of Russ online may do so at www.starks-menchinger.com

Russ was born July 9, 1958, in Watervliet, MI to Manfred and Rosalie (Hiler) Miller. He graduated from Watervliet High School in 1976. Russ worked as a postal carrier and was a true jack of all trades. He enjoyed working on cars, loved animals, and took great pride in coaching youth softball. Russ was also an avid sports fan.

Russ is survived by his daughter Amy (Walter) Olmstead; grandchildren Amberley Olmstead and Judson Olmstead; nieces & nephews Benjamin (Amy) Iliff, Beth (Joseph) Wheeler, Daniel (Amanda) Iliff and Denise (Joseph) Fletcher; many great nieces & nephews; and brother-in-law Patrick Iliff.

Russ was preceded in death by his parents, sister Debra Iliff and lifelong partner and best friend Patti Miller.

PATRICIA J. BERRY

Patricia Joan (Snodgrass) Berry of Coloma, MI, age 90, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, at her residence. A Funeral Service was held on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2026, at Allen Funeral Home, 9136 Davison Road, Davison, MI 48423; Rev. Robert D. Taylor officiating. Burial followed in Flint Memorial Park Cemetery.



Patricia was born in Imboden, VA, on Dec. 4, 1935, daughter of the late William and Wilma (Delp) Snodgrass. She married Maurice Berry on Dec. 7, 1974, and he preceded her in death on May 12, 2001. Pat worked as a social worker and retired from the Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services as an Administrator. After retirement, Pat and Maurey loved to travel together. It was a standing joke that she never stayed in one place too long. She will be remembered by her family as someone who loved life, was very outgoing, extremely energetic and fiercely independent.

Pat is survived by her loving children, Michelle (Mike Duffy) Heron, Jack (Donna) Heron, Scott Heron, Michael (Peg) Berry, John Berry, Denise (Dan) Agius, Marcia Sebert, and Rebecca Roda; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; and many other loving family members and friends.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Pat was preceded in death by a daughter, Kathryne Heron; a brother, William Snodgrass.

Please share your thoughts with the family at www.allenfuneralhome-inc.com.

Death notices

Mary C. Ulrath, 85, of Bangor died Jan. 8, 2026, at home. Hutchins Funeral Home, Watervliet

Joseph M. Young, 62, of St. Joseph died Jan. 7, 2026, at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital, St. Joseph. Starks & Menchinger Chapel, St. Joseph

Robert L. Davis, 93, of Benton Harbor died Jan. 6, 2026. Starks & Menchinger Chapel, St. Joseph

Gerhard Peppel, 80, of Coloma died Jan. 4, 2026, at Royalton Manor, St. Joseph. Duffield & Pastrick Family Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Coloma

Ronald Lambrecht, 86, of Benton Harbor died Dec. 30, 2025. Starks & Menchinger Chapel, St. Joseph

Cammy M. Smith, 66, of Watervliet died Dec. 30, 2025. Calvin Funeral Home, Hartford

Chassidy L. Beshires, 46, of Coloma died Dec. 26, 2025, at home. Duffield & Pastrick Family Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Coloma

Doris J. Florian, 88, of Stevensville died Dec. 28, 2025, at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital, St. Joseph. Starks & Menchinger Chapel, St. Joseph

"Activate Berrien" Volunteer Launch announced

The Berrien County Democratic Party announces its 2026 Volunteer Launch. "Activate Berrien" will showcase volunteer opportunities for all attendees who wish to help make a difference and elect leaders who will fight for equity and democracy. Find out what area of focus best fits your time and talents, speak to party leaders, and more. Focus areas include event volunteers, office volunteers, voter contact, neighborhood outreach, voter protection, fundraising, running for office, and more.

The event takes place on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m. through 12 p.m. EST at the Berrien County Democratic Party office, 2517 Niles Avenue, St. Joseph.

For additional information contact Laura Goos, Volunteer Chair, at volunteers@berriendems.org.

VBRGS encourages local and family history studies at HPL

The Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society at the Hartford Public Library wishes everyone a Happy New Year and extends an open invitation to their Genealogy Room, specifically to those who made a resolution to start a family tree or rekindle a much-enjoyed hobby. The Genealogy Room is a great place to visit and offers a unique local resource with a vast book and photograph collection as well as access to old newspapers and genealogy websites such as Ancestry.com and AmericanAncestors.

The materials in the collection primarily focus on the local and family history of the counties of Southwest Michigan but include other Michigan counties, other states, and other countries. Volunteers are on staff to answer questions and assist where needed. The resources of the Genealogy Room are for in-house use only and the viewing of the materials and the services provided are offered free of charge to the public and a library card is not required.

The VBRGS also offers free programs on various topics throughout the year and begins on Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m. with "Ben Hur: The Story Behind the Book that Became a Movie" and on Saturday, April 18 there will be an informational presentation of "Technology Update: Genealogy Tools and Websites." These programs are held in the Vanderlyn Community Room of the Hartford Public Library and no reservations are needed.

The Genealogy Room is open during all regular business hours of the Hartford Public Library, 12 Church Street and questions about the society, the collection, and future scheduled programs can be directed to the library in-person, by phone at 269-588-5103 or viewed at www.vbrgs.org.

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If you or someone you know has recently experienced a loss, the Tri-City Record offers obituary space to help honor and remember your loved one.
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF WATERVLIET PLANNING COMMISSION

The City of Watervliet Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 7:00 PM at Watervliet City Hall, 158 W. Pleasant St., Watervliet, Michigan 49098, to consider the following proposed amendments to the City of Watervliet Zoning Ordinance (Appendix A of the Code of Ordinances):

1. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 16.03, ARTICLE XVI (AMENDMENTS) Proposed amendment to item #3 to require a conceptual development plan (rather than site plan) prepared in accordance with Section 6.05 of Article VI for rezoning applications that would require a change in the zoning map.

2. ADDITION OF SECTION 6.05, ARTICLE VI (APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS) Proposed addition of new Section 6.05 establishing requirements for conceptual development plans to be submitted with all rezoning requests, including requirements for proposed use, general site layout, building placement and massing, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, general landscaping concepts, and a narrative statement demonstrating consistency with the City of Watervliet Master Plan.

3. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 7.03, ARTICLE VII (R-3 GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT) Proposed addition of new subsection 9 requiring sidewalks and street lights for all new developments in the R-3 district, including specifications for sidewalk width, location, construction standards, ADA compliance, street light spacing and illumination standards, installation timing, and waiver provisions.

4. ADDITION OF SECTION 10.02, ARTICLE X (E DISTRICT) Proposed addition of new Section 10.02 establishing the E district for public and institutional uses including schools, parks, recreational facilities, cemeteries, and public and governmental buildings.

5. REZONING OF PARCEL 78-0023-0079-02-9 Proposed rezoning of parcel 78-0023-0079-02-9 to rezone all portions of the parcel west of Mill Creek from the existing combination of OT-1, B-3, and R-1 to B-2 General Business District, and to rezone all portions of the parcel east of Mill Creek to R-3 General Residence District.

6. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 8.02, ARTICLE VIII (B-2 RETAIL AND SERVICE DISTRICT) Proposed Addition of new subsection 9 requiring natural buffers where B-2 district property abuts or is across a street from residential districts, including a minimum fifty-foot depth of existing natural tree growth or alternative landscaping and screening requirements.

Copies of the proposed amendments are available for public inspection at Watervliet City Hall during regular business hours. Written comments may be submitted to the City Clerk prior to the hearing. Interested parties may appear at the hearing in person or by representative to express their views.
Individuals requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City Clerk at least seven days prior to the hearing.

James Tyler Chairperson
City of Watervliet Planning Commission
158 W. Pleasant St. Watervliet, MI 49098
(269) 463-6711
(01-15-2026 TCR)

Nature Notebook

By Eileen Carlson, Naturalist
& Carolyn Sundquist, Naturalist
927-4832 eileen@sarett.com

Sarett Nature Center is located at
2300 Benton Center Road
near the intersection of
Red Arrow Hwy. and I-196

"Look at the squirrel statues!" is often followed by "Must be a hawk nearby."

Prey animals, such as squirrels, utilize a number of behaviors to avoid becoming a predator's meal. They'll forage at different times, blend in with the background, or maybe hang out in groups. They are also equipped with appropriate senses to detect the presence of a predator. If the warning comes too late for a speedy getaway, most prey uses tonic immobility as a strategy. They freeze.

Hopefully, the predator will lose interest and move on. Just in case, the animal has a species-specific time limit that switches it from motionless to "get the heck out of Dodge" motion. Even microscopic animals utilize tonic immobility to stay alive a little longer.

Join us for winter birding around Berrien County with a Sarett naturalist this Saturday, Jan. 17 from 8 a.m. - noon. We will visit a few of the best winter hot spots to find a variety of birds visiting us for the winter! Members/ $10, Non-Members/ $15.

Do you know any kids that like crafting? Sign up for our Winter Kids Crafts program this Saturday, Jan. 17 from 1 – 2:30 p.m.! Best for ages 5-10. Space is limited; Member/ $3 per child, Non-Member/ $5 per child. Please call (269) 927-4832 to register for either program.

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Crossword Puzzle Answers

	1 E	2 P	3 P	4 S		5 T	6 O	7 G	8 A	9 S
10 O	L	L	I	E		11 H	U	R	S	T
12 I	M	A	G	E		13 E	R	A	S	E
14 L	O	S		15 F	16 A	N		17 D	O	E
		18 T	19 A	I	L		20 P	U	R	R
21 A	22 R	I	S	T	O	23 C	R	A	T	S
24 B	U	C	K		25 H	O	O	T		
26 U	S	B		27 T	A	B		28 I	29 S	30 P
31 S	T	A	32 V	E		33 A	34 S	O	N	E
35 E	L	G	I	N		36 L	U	N	A	R
37 R	E	S	E	T		38 T	B	S	P	

Public Notices and Want Ads

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
BERRIEN COUNTY
Berrien County Courthouse,
811 Port Street,
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 983-7111

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
File No. 2025-1002-DE-R
Estate of Carmen M. Lopez, Deceased
Date of birth: January 23, 1947
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Carmen M. Lopez, who lived in Stevensville, Michigan, died November 5, 2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Juanita Lopez, f/k/a Juanita Grover, named personal representative or proposed personal representative, or to both the probate court at Berrien County Courthouse, Fourth Floor, 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the named/proposed personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
Notice is further given that the estate will be thereafter assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it.
Date: January 7, 2026

Juanita Lopez f/k/a Juanita Grover
5326 S. Roosevelt Road
Stevensville, MI 49127
(269) 326-0421

Jonathan B. Sauer, P19907
Sauer & Sauer, PLC
414 Main Street
St. Joseph Mi 49085
(269) 983-0531
(01-15-2026 TCR)

BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2026
SYNOPSIS

1. Called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Supervisor, Andrew Gardiner.
2. Present: A. Gardiner, S. Droskie, D. Baiers, N. Weber J. Yetzke - Absent: None
3. Approved December 08, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes and Bills/Payroll $22,616.75.
4. Approved Treasurer's Report.
5. Supervisor A. Gardiner presented the Berrien County Sheriffs Report.
6. Received Departmental and Public Safety Reports.
7. Approved Poverty Guidelines & Asset Test Resolution 2026.
8. Approved 2026-27 Meeting Dates.
9. Approved 2026-27 Salaries.
10. Approved Investment & Depository Designation Resolution 2026-27.
11. Approved 2026-27 Wage Expense Form.
12. Approved Township Contracts for 2026-27: Mechanical, Electrical, Enforcement, Building & Zoning, Library, and Fire Departments.
13. Approved 2026-27 Fee Schedule.
14. Meeting Adjourned: 6:41 p.m.
(01-15-2026 TCR)

NOTICE OF SALE OF ABANDONED VEHICLES

By virtue of the authority contained in Section 252, P.A. 300 of 1949 as amended, I hereby give notice of the sales of the described automobile at public auction:

2019 DODGE JOURNEY
VIN#3C4PDCBB8KT863203

Sale to be held at Lakeshore Body Shop/P & R Service and Towing 1751 W. John Beers Road Stevensville, MI 49127. Sale to be held on Thursday JANUARY 22ND 2026 at 9:00am (Michigan Time). Vehicle to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. Auction price will start at the amount due to the custodian at the time of auction.
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Putting your aging parents' wishes first

As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, which may involve difficult conversations.

You'll want to be careful how you approach this. Mention ahead of time that you'd like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

If your parents are agreeable, choose a comfortable location and ask whom to invite (or not invite). Then, think about how to open the conversation, preferably not with what they want to do with their money, as this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broader discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:

Health care – Seek to learn whether your parents have established appropriate health-related legal documents such as a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make decisions about their medical care if they become unable, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.

Independence – As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered options for long-term care, such as an assisted living community, a nursing home or a home health aide? If they plan to receive support from family members, do your par ents' expectations match yours?

Financial goals – Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have they updated their will or other estate documents, such as a living trust? Have they created a durable power of attorney for a trusted family member to make financial decisions for them if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies, retirement plan and bank accounts? If you position these issues around your parents having control over transferring their assets, rather than curiosity over "who will get what," you'll more likely have a productive conversation.

Last wishes – You'll want to learn whether your parents have instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express that you or another close family member should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met in a timely fashion.

Money, independence and aging can be sensitive topics. You don't have to go it alone, though — enlist help from another close family member. Or, if your parents work with an attorney, financial professional or other trusted advisor, consider asking if they're interested in having them participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce your parents to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but if handled correctly can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC



Senior Side

Tips for Tri-City Area senior citizens to navigate aging

By Angela Widdis

Top 10 ways senior citizens lose money each year

As people age, managing finances can become more challenging due to fixed incomes, health concerns, and increased exposure to fraud. Unfortunately, senior citizens are often targeted for financial exploitation, leading to significant losses each year. Understanding the most common ways money is lost can help older adults and their families protect hard-earned savings.

1. Phone and Online Scams: Scammers frequently pose as government agencies, banks, or tech support representatives. These fraudsters use fear and urgency to pressure seniors into sharing personal information or sending money. Common scams include fake Social Security threats, prize winnings, and romance scams.

2. Identity Theft: Stolen personal information can be used to open credit accounts, access bank funds, or commit tax fraud. Seniors may be less likely to monitor credit reports regularly, allowing fraud to go unnoticed for long periods.

3. Unnecessary or Fraudulent Medical Expenses: Medical billing errors, fake health products, and Medicare fraud can cost seniors thousands of dollars. Fraudsters may bill for services never received or sell ineffective medical devices and supplements.

4. Investment and Financial Fraud: High-pressure investment schemes often promise guaranteed or unusually high returns. Seniors are frequently targeted because they may have retirement savings and trust financial "experts" who appear professional but are unlicensed or dishonest.

5. Home Repair and Contractor Scams: Dishonest contractors may overcharge, demand upfront payments, or perform poor-quality work. Seniors are often targeted after storms or emergencies when quick repairs seem necessary.

6. Financial Abuse by Family or Caregivers: Sadly, some financial losses come from trusted individuals. Unauthorized withdrawals, misuse of credit cards, or pressure to change wills or accounts can quietly drain savings.

7. Subscription and Auto-Renewal Charges: Many seniors lose money through forgotten subscriptions or automatic renewals for services they no longer use. Small recurring charges can add up significantly over time.

8. Poor Financial Decisions or Misinformation: Confusing financial products, high-interest loans, or unclear insurance policies can result in unnecessary expenses. Limited access to trustworthy financial advice increases this risk.

9. Sweepstakes and Lottery Scams: Fraudsters may claim a senior has won a prize but must pay fees or taxes upfront. Legitimate lotteries never require payment to claim winnings, but these scams remain common.

10. Lack of Financial Monitoring: Not regularly reviewing bank statements, credit card bills, or insurance policies can allow errors and fraud to persist. Cognitive decline or lack of assistance may make oversight more difficult.

Awareness is the first step in prevention. Seniors can protect themselves by regularly reviewing accounts, avoiding unsolicited financial offers, consulting trusted advisors, and staying connected with family or community support. By understanding these common risks, older adults can take proactive steps to safeguard their finances and maintain peace of mind.

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Views from the Press Box

Please share your sports news, photos, and opinions with the Tri-City Record at record@tricityrecord.com.

Coloma, Hartford, and Watervliet Press Box

By Jerrod Birmele



Coloma boys, Watervliet girls secure victories in basketball rivalry games

Entering last Friday's newest rebirth of the Coloma – Watervliet rivalry basketball games, early indicators from results throughout the season would suggest that these matchups might be lopsided. But one thing that comes from good old-fashioned rivals is that players bring their best.

From the moment the first tip happened to the final horn at the end of the night, fans in the gymnasium were treated to solid streams of good basketball and moments of head-scratching wonderment. In this installment of the Red Arrow battle, the two schools split the games on the court. In the first game of the evening, the Lady Panthers soundly defeated the Lady Comets, 36-19, before the Comets returned the favor in the men's game, taking down the Panthers, 46-23.

In the ladies game, it seemed like it would never end with all the stoppages. Following a steal at the midcourt line, Coloma (1-5, 1-2) would grab an early 3-2 lead, but that would be the final time they'd be in front the rest of the game. Watervliet (6-2, 3-0) would go on to score the following seven points, taking a 9-3 lead. From there, the teams would trade scoring chances, with the Lady Panthers in front after the opening eight minutes, 11-7.

In the second quarter, Watervliet would open up a seven-point lead, 14-7, scoring the first three points of the frame on an uncontested corner three, before the Lady Comets would break through for a basket on a tough shot in the paint. But the Lady Panthers defense locked in from there, as Coloma was stymied over the final five-plus minutes. The ladies in maroon and white would finish the half on a 6-0 run, sending them into the halftime locker room with a 20-9 lead.

In the third quarter, the path to victory widened for Watervliet, as they scored the first eight points, extending their run across the second and third stanzas to fourteen straight points and pushing their lead to 28-9 with under three minutes remaining in the frame. But credit the Lady Comets for their determination, effort, and fight, as they would manage to score the final four points, with the game in the Lady Panthers' favor entering the final eight minutes, 28-13.

In the fourth quarter, if you were a fan of offense, chances are you weren't excited in the first two minutes, as the two squads failed to put points on the scoreboard until Watervliet connected on a pair of free throws. The scoring pace picked up gradually throughout the stanza, with the teams ending the night separated by just two points during the span. But credit goes to both defenses, and if there was a positive ending for Coloma, they scored the final points of the night.

Isabella Bultema was the leading scorer for the Lady Panthers, with 11 points, while Mylee Price scored six points to lead the Lady Comets.

In the men's game, Watervliet (1-8, 0-4) got on the board first with a three-pointer from the top of the key, but that was their lone highlight, as the Panthers went scoreless over the final 7:38 of the opening stanza. Coloma (5-5, 3-1) started slow as well, with just two points on the scoreboard over the first three-plus minutes, but managed to rattle off the final thirteen points unanswered, with the Comets holding a 13-3 lead after the opening eight minutes.

In the second quarter, Coloma added a layup in the opening minute to extend their run to fifteen straight points, before Watervliet was finally able to capitalize on an offensive rebound two minutes later, putting the run to bed. After the Comets pushed their lead to 19-5 with 3:15 remaining in the first half, the Panthers went on a run of their own, scoring five of the final seven points, to cut their deficit at the half to eleven points, 21-10.

In the third quarter, the lid seemed to be on the basket for the first two-plus minutes, with the ice being broken on a three-point bomb from the" 'parking lot" by Watervliet. In fact, the Panthers kept the run going, cutting the Coloma lead to five, 23-18, on a three-pointer (no one heard if he called bank) and a circus-shot layup. After the teams traded baskets, the Comets decided to put their foot down, finishing with an 8-0 run, and leading 33-20 going into the final eight minutes.

In the fourth quarter, the squads continued their sluggish play, with only a single basket on a layup resulting in points over the opening two-plus minutes. Watervliet managed to make a layup, with 5:16 left in the game, to trim the margin to 35-23, but the wheels would fall off, as they were silenced on the scoreboard the rest of the way. The score skewed heavily in favor of Coloma late, as the men in green and gold finished with eleven unanswered points.

Xavier Pompey was the leading scorer for the Comets, with 20 points, and was joined in double figures by AJ Moore, with 13 points. Brayden Harasewicz led the Panthers with 13 points.



MAVERICK MAKES HIS MOVE… January 9th rivalry showdown on the "west side" of Red Arrow Highway has Coloma's Maverick Kraemer (14) looking for an outlet in the passing lane, while being under siege by Watervliet defenders Kyle Domingo-Sturgeon (5) and Caleb Jewell (10). After a sluggish start, the Comets awoke from their slumber, dominating the game and doubling up the Panthers, 46-23.
(Contributed photo)

HARTFORD

Hartford Boys Basketball

The Hartford varsity boys basketball team traveled to Bloomingdale on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a conference game, looking to return from their extended winter vacation by pulling off an upset against one of the top early teams in the league. Those hopes were dashed early in a loss, 60-42.

The Huskies (2-5, 2-4) didn't get off to a strong start and never recovered, putting them in a significant deficit they couldn't overcome. The Cardinals led after the opening eight minutes, 22-6, before adding to the margin in the second quarter, 15-6, and taking a 37-12 lead at the half. A switch must have clicked on for Hartford in the second half, as they showed heart and work ethic by taking the final two quarters, 13-10 (third) and 17-13 (fourth), ending on a positive note.

Kameron Kuehnle was the leading scorer for the Huskies, netting 12 points.

The boys basketball team traveled to Bangor on Thursday, Jan. 8, for another conference game, looking to conclude their recent four-game losing streak and defeat their rivals from the north. This game was hard-fought from start to finish but ended in a tough loss, 52-47.

The Huskies' (2-6, 2-5) fate was decided by their first-quarter margin, which held up despite strong play from both teams. The Vikings took the lead after the opening eight minutes, 11-6, before Hartford responded with a one-point edge in the second quarter, 11-10, to trail at halftime, 21-17. Bangor regained that point in the third quarter, taking a 38-33 lead into the fourth quarter, where both squads matched each other on the scoreboard, 14-14, to put a bow on this evening.

Mason Mireles was the leading scorer for the Huskies, netting 22 points.

Hartford Girls Basketball

The Hartford varsity girls basketball team hosted Bloomingdale on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a conference game, hoping that a nearly three-week break from the court would recharge the batteries and lead to victory against a winless team. Despite a slow start, the ladies won, 34-24.

The Lady Huskies (3-2, 2-2) were in a tight battle with the opposition in the first half, but a strong start to the second half led to a comfortable win. The ladies in green and white led after the opening eight minutes, 9-5, before the Lady Cardinals won the second quarter scoring battle, 9-8, trimming their deficit at halftime to 17-14. Hartford's solid play on both ends of the floor catapulted their lead to 24-16 after three quarters, before the ladies took the fourth quarter, 10-8.

Linda Banda was the leading scorer for the Lady Huskies, tallying 12 points.

The girls traveled to Bangor on Friday, Jan. 9, for a conference game, hoping to grab bragging rights over their rivals to the north and sweep their games for the week. The highlights were few and far between for the ladies, who lost, 39-18.

The Lady Huskies (3-3, 2-3) scored the first two points of the night, but would never be in front on the scoreboard again, leading to their demise. The Lady Vikings led after the opening eight minutes, 8-5, before using a 9-2 run in the second quarter to take a 17-7 lead into halftime. Bangor continued their strong play in the third quarter, leading 28-10 with eight minutes remaining, where Hartford put up a fight in the fourth quarter but lost the scoring battle, 11-8.

Rebecca Johnson was the leading scorer for the Lady Huskies, tallying 11 points.

Hartford Wrestling

The Hartford varsity wrestling team traveled to Comstock on Wednesday, Jan. 7, competing in a conference

See PRESS BOX continued on Page 9

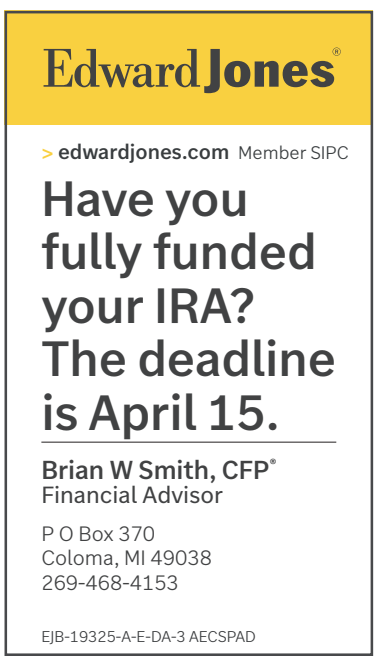


FULL SPEED AHEAD… In last Thursday's conference game at Bangor, Hartford's Mason Mireles (33) uses his non-shooting hand to control the basketball and drive towards the basket, shaking off the defensive hand-check from the opposition. Mireles has been a bright spot for his team in the early going, and it continued in this game, scoring a team-high 22 points, but the Huskies were defeated, 52-47.
(TCR photo by Micah Jones)









ARMCHAIR Q-BACKS PICK PIGSKIN GAME WINNERS



Rodney Lynch	RoxAnn	Bill Whitney	Mike Banic	Greg Krell	Maureen Ovington
Loma	Rodney-Isbrecht	Watervliet	Hartford	WHS Athletic	Flowers Early
Theatre	City of Hartford	Fire Department	School Board	Hall of Fame	Learning
(132-66)	(128-70)	(125-73)	(125-73)	(124-74)	(124-74)
Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana	Indiana
Denver	Buffalo	Buffalo	Buffalo	Denver	Buffalo
Seattle	Seattle	Seattle	Seattle	Seattle	Seattle
New England	New England	New England	New England	Houston	New England
Los Angeles Rams	Chicago	Chicago	Los Angeles Rams	Los Angeles Rams	Los Angeles Rams
49 Total Points	49 Total Points	48 Total Points	52 Total Points	59 Total Points	47 Total Points

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Maureen Ovington grabs Week 20 Armchair QB win; overall race heating up

By Jerrod Birmele

The twentieth week of action in the Tri-City Record's Armchair Quarterback contest has been played. Still, we continued our tradition of challenging our "superfans" over some daunting choices on the gridiron, as our knowledgeable diehards attempted to pick the winners in two collegiate playoff semifinals and six professional wild card games that appeared on our week twenty calendar. Regarding the final records from our contest last week, five of our accomplished scholars passed their weekly examination, with seven wins in eight games being the best performance. The quizzes from this educator are starting to have fewer questions, indicating the end of the football season is approaching in the classroom!

Looking back at games from week twenty and just one of our local professional teams is still taking the field. It was a tale of two games for the loyal Chicago fan base, who must have been throwing disgust and obscenities at the television set when they trailed Green Bay, 21-3, at halftime. Trailing 21-6 entering the fourth quarter, Soldier Field was full of excitement when the Bears completed the comeback, scoring 25 points over the final fifteen minutes to knock out the Packers, 31-27, and advance to the divisional round of the playoffs this weekend.

When the final seconds counted down and the scores were verified, the race for top honors in the weekly standings was settled without a tiebreaker, as Maureen Ovington was the lone AQB that went 7-1 during the eight-game slate, thus placing her on the top step of the podium. She has proclaimed before that she is a bigger fan of college football versus the professional game, but you couldn't tell by the results this week, as she was only a mere five or so points away from an unblemished record.

While this week's "glory hog" has been decided, the race for the final two places on the podium will need to be broken by the tiebreaker, as RoxAnn Rodney-Isbrecht, Bill Whitney, and Mike Banic all came away with matching 6-2 records. Despite one blowout and one tight collegiate game, all three panelists picked the winning teams (Indiana, Miami), and they also kept their heads above water by winning four of six professional games on a competitive weekend.

Because we had a tie in the weekly standings, we had to rely on the dreaded tiebreaker scenario which was the total points scored in the Peach Bowl between Indiana and Oregon. It concluded with a total of 78 points. Based on their highly educated guesses, only one panelist came within twenty points of the actual number. Mike, with his projection of 59 points, brought home runner-up honors, followed by Bill (who projected 52 points) in third place and RoxAnn (who projected 45 points) will have to settle for fourth place.

The remainder of the finishing order featured Rodney Lynch in fifth place, with a record of 5-3, and Greg Krell in sixth place, with a record of 4-4.

In case you are new to our newspaper, or need a refresher on how this contest works, let's take a moment to bring you up to speed. Each fall our newspaper enlists the help of six local football fanatics, who really should be deemed "superfans." Each week, our six-person panel is given a list of pre-selected games from the local high school, collegiate, and professional scenes and is given the daunting task of trying to select the winners of every game.

Weekly records are kept from week one of the football season through Super Bowl Sunday, with each week's edition of the newspaper reporting on the progress of each panelist. After the season concludes, the panelist who has the best overall record will earn the right to wear the 2025-26 Tri-City Record Armchair Quarterback hat, claiming bragging rights until next season comes around.

If there are multiple panelists with the same record for the week, their place in the standings will be determined by a tiebreaker game. In addition to trying to pick the winners of each week's slate of games, they will also predict a total score from a specially selected game, which typically stands out on a local or national level. The panelist who predicts closest to the actual number of points scored by both teams will receive the higher position in the standings.

Our season continues this week, as week twenty-one of our contest is in the queue. This week's game schedule includes the College Football Playoff National Championship game and four National Football League divisional games, as the race for postseason glory continues with exciting action on the docket from Saturday through Monday. While the overall classification features eight games between first and sixth place, four of our panelists are in a dogfight, separated by just a single game. Who will stake their claim as our top picker this time around? Guess you'll have to read about it next week!

Be sure to check back each week, as our panel of ardent, loyal pigskin pickers weave their way through the football season in pursuit of their own "one shining moment." Now, here are your week twenty-one games that our panel was tasked with picking:

Indiana vs. Miami (FL) *
(Mon 1/19)
(CFP National Championship)
Buffalo Bills at
Denver Broncos (Sat.)
San Francisco 49ers at
Seattle Seahawks (Sat.)
Houston Texans at
New England Patriots (Sun.)
Los Angeles Rams at
Chicago Bears (Sun.)

* tiebreaker

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SATURDAYS Chef's Choice
SUNDAYS Ribs & Chicken



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CAREER-HIGH FOR KYLE… In their game at Dowagiac on Jan. 6, 2026, Watervliet's Kyle Domingo-Sturgeon (5) uses his height and inside presence to get a shot up over the defender and bring his team closer to making a comeback. A junior starter, Domingo-Sturgeon had a night to remember, leading his team with a career-high 21 points, but the Panthers would suffer defeat, 51-49.

(TCR photo by Micah Jones)

PRESS BOX

continued from Page 8

quad that also featured Bangor and Bloomingdale. Grappling was tough in both duals, with Hartford coming away with one win and one loss, finally getting in the victory column in league action.

The Huskies (4-7, 1-3) took part in duals against both the Vikings (Bangor) and Cardinals (Bloomingdale), putting together solid performances. In their dual against Bangor, the wrestlers split the matches, winning seven of the fourteen weight classes, but bonus points would prove pivotal in a loss, 42-36. In their dual against Bloomingdale, things were much rosier, as victories in ten of the fourteen weight classes led to a lopsided win, 60-6.

Winning matches against Bangor were Dulce Arzipe (106), Daniel Ortiz (113), Mason Whitman (120), Brady Rice (126), Oscar Quintana (132), Linken Birkhead (165), and David Castro-Garcia (215).

Winning matches against Bloomingdale were Arzipe (106), Ortiz (113), Whitman (120), Jasmin Delarosa (126), Haley Arrieta (132), Taliyah Mendoza (144), Birkhead (165), Byron Rosses (190), Castro-Garcia (215), and Hugo Delarosa (285).

Hartford Competitive Cheerleading

The Hartford varsity competitive cheerleading squad traveled to Schoolcraft on Thursday, Jan. 8, for the first conference jamboree of the season, making their initial league appearance against ten other schools in Division 4. Despite falling short of top honors, there was reason to celebrate.

The Lady Huskies finished the competition with a three-round total of 491.6 points, finishing in seventh place and showing significant improvement, adding 55 points to their score from their last performance. In round one, the squad earned 171 points, with no penalty deductions. In round two, the squad earned 130.1 points, with no penalty points issued. In round three, the squad earned 190.5 points, also with no penalty points incurred.

For upcoming athletic schedules, go to https://www.hpsathletics.org and click on the Calendar link.

As always, GO GREEN! GO WHITE!

COLOMA

Coloma Boys Basketball

The Coloma varsity boys basketball team hosted Berrien Springs on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a non-conference game, looking to earn its first victory of the calendar year in this matchup of teams with similar records coming in. It was a rough night on the court, resulting in a loss, 69-21.

The Comets (4-5) couldn't muster a single quarter of double-digit scoring, which cost them against a squad with four losses, but a strong strength of schedule. The Shamrocks jumped out to a 16-8 lead after the opening eight minutes, before a 14-5 run in the second quarter grew their halftime lead to 30-13. The rout continued for Berrien Springs in the third quarter, as they led 51-19 entering the fourth quarter, where Coloma mustered two points in the closing stretch.

Xavier Pompey was the leading scorer for the Comets, netting seven points.

Coloma Girls Basketball

The Coloma varsity girls basketball team traveled to Berrien Springs on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a non-conference game, hoping to start a brand-new calendar year with a victory against a team with only one loss by four points. It was a tough one from the tip for the ladies, who fell, 60-18.

The Lady Comets (1-4) got off to a rough start, failing to score in the first quarter, and things never improved. The Lady Shamrocks were in control after the opening eight minutes, 22-0, before using a 13-6 run in the second quarter to build their halftime lead to 35-6. Berrien Springs continued to roll in the third quarter, as a 19-5 scoring burst would give them a 54-11 lead going into the fourth quarter, where Coloma showed grit and tenacity by grabbing the final stanza, 7-6.

Lila Groendyk was the leading scorer for the Lady Comets, tallying five points.

Coloma Competitive Cheerleading

The Coloma varsity competitive cheerleading squad traveled to Schoolcraft on Thursday, Jan. 8, for the first conference jamboree of the season, making their league debut as they competed against ten other teams in their division. The ladies would begin their title defense with a bang.

The Lady Comets finished the competition with a three-round total of 661.42 points, winning the meet by nearly forty points over their closest contender, Delton Kellogg. In round

See PRESS BOX continued on Page 10

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PRESS BOX

continued to Page 10

one, the squad earned 207.1 points, with no penalty deductions. In round two, the squad earned 194.02 points, also with no penalty points issued. In round three, the squad earned 260.3 points, again with no penalty points incurred.

Coloma Wrestling

The Coloma varsity wrestling team hosted Constantine, Lawton, and Watervliet on Wednesday, Jan. 7, competing in a conference quad in their home gymnasium. Despite some quality matches on the mat, it was a tough night for the green and gold, losing both duals.

The Comets (6-15, 1-5) first wrestled against the Blue Devils (Lawton), who have had a solid team for many years, but have issues with forfeits of their own. The wrestlers won just five of the fourteen weight classes, dropping the dual, 51-29. The team would finish the night with a second dual against the Falcons (Constantine), who won a district championship last year and made it to the state finals two years ago. Coloma won just three matches on their way to a loss, 57-18.

Winning matches against Lawton were Bryce Cartwright (113), Brody Ashley (120), Drake Goldner (126), Joe Clayton (215), and Hayden Kiser (285).

Winning matches against Constantine were Cartwright (113), Ashley (120), and Cain Fonseca (132).

The wrestlers traveled to Decatur on Saturday, Jan. 10, to compete in its team tournament, joining five other area schools seeking wins to add to their budding resumes. Unfortunately, a barrage of voids was their undoing, but there were individual efforts to praise.

The Comets (6-20) were held out of the win column during their five duals, falling to Cassopolis (42-36), Decatur (56-24), Gobles (54-29), Hamilton (64-18), and Niles (60-24).

Individuals who stood out on a tough day were Brody Ashley (5-0), Bryce Cartwright (4-1), and Joe Clayton (4-1).

For upcoming athletic schedules, go to https://colomahighschool.bigteams.com and click on the Calendar link.

As always, GO GREEN! GO GOLD!

WATERVLIET

Watervliet Boys Basketball

The Watervliet varsity boys basketball team traveled to Dowagiac on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a non-conference game, looking to end a six-game losing streak against a winless opponent. Despite trailing most of the game and tying the contest late, they fell in a heartbreaker, 51-49.

The Panthers (1-7) trailed by as many as ten points in the second half, but chipped away to tie the game three times late, only for a shot to win come up short in the dying seconds. The Chieftains led after the opening eight minutes, 11-9, before a 16-13 run in the second quarter built their halftime lead to 27-22. Watervliet won the third quarter by a single point, cutting their deficit to 40-36 entering the fourth quarter, where a 13-11 scoring burst wouldn't be enough.

Kyle Domingo-Sturgeon was the leading scorer for the Panthers, netting 21 points in the losing effort, and was joined in double figures by Tyler Jarvis, with 10 points. These were career-highs in scoring for both players.

Watervliet Girls Basketball

The Watervliet varsity girls basketball team traveled to Dowagiac on Tuesday, Jan. 6, for a non-conference game, hoping to return home with their sixth victory in their first seven games. Perhaps it was just some fatigue on the court, but the ladies were overmatched and lost, 57-27.

The Lady Panthers (5-2) struggled offensively throughout the game, posting their fewest points of the season. The Lady Chieftains marched out of the gate strong, putting together a 20-8 lead after the opening eight minutes, before using an 11-4 run in the second quarter to extend their lead to 31-12 at the half. Watervliet's woes continued into the second half, as they were outscored in the third quarter, 8-5, and fourth quarter, 18-10, completing a disappointing night.

Leila Liberto-Taylor was the leading scorer for the Lady Panthers, tallying seven points.

Watervliet Wrestling

The Watervliet varsity wrestling team traveled to Coloma on Wednesday, Jan. 7, competing in a conference quad that also featured Constantine and Lawton. On a night when the wrestlers suffered a pair of losses, the team still managed to succeed and celebrate individual efforts.

The Panthers (3-8, 0-6) may have fallen to the Falcons (Constantine) and the Blue Devils (Lawton), but the wrestlers got pins from Felipe Garcia, Madalein Myers, Nahduleigh Robart, and Brooklyn Woollett.

For upcoming athletic schedules, go to https://www.wpspanthers.com and click on the Events link.

As always, GO MAROON! GO WHITE!



BOUND FOR THE BASKET… Watervliet's Caleb Jewell (10) shakes off the tough Dowagiac defense by taking the ball to the rack and hoping to put two points on the scoreboard. Every point mattered in this showdown with the Chieftains on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, which came down to the final possession. But a shot to tie or win came up empty, as the Panthers lost the heartbreaker, 51-49.

(TCR photo by Micah Jones)



NICE WORK… The Watervliet boys wrestling team was in Battle Creek on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, participating in the All City team tournament at BC Central. As a team the Panthers went 1-4, defeating Benton Harbor but falling to Comstock, Bangor, BC Central, and BC Lakeview. Panther Donald Milham earned his first victory of the season, pinning his Comstock opponent in the 2nd period.

(Contributed photo)

Chalk Talk

Updates from Watervliet Public Schools

Watervliet Seniors Shine During College Application Month

Watervliet High School's Class of 2026 made a strong showing during Michigan's College Application Month this past October, submitting applications across an impressive range of colleges, universities, and technical programs. With 90 seniors participating, the month highlighted both the ambition and the preparedness of this year's graduating class.

Regional institutions led the way. Grand Valley State University topped the list with 37 applicants (41.1%), followed closely by Southwestern Michigan College (36 applicants, 40%), Lake Michigan College (34 applicants, 37.8%), and Western Michigan University (29 applicants, 32.2%). These numbers reflect students' preference for strong, affordable options close to home, along with the growing influence of dual-enrollment and early college partnerships.

Interest extended across Michigan and the Midwest. Ferris State University drew 21 applicants, Michigan State University 20, and Central Michigan University 17, while competitive schools such as Purdue University, the University of Michigan, and Notre Dame each received 7 applications. Community colleges and skilled-trades pathways—including KVCC and Ferris programs—also remain important choices for many students.

What the Trends Show

Local + Affordable Options Matter: Students are strategically selecting schools that offer strong programs at manageable costs.

Dual-Enrollment Works: SMC and LMC's high numbers mirror the success of Watervliet's college credit partnerships.

Trades & Technical Programs Are Strong: Interest in hands-on and career-focused pathways continues to grow.

Balanced Application Portfolios: Many seniors paired "reach" schools with practical match and safety options.

Regional Comfort Zones: Most applications stayed within Michigan or nearby states, reflecting students' desire to remain connected to home.

Most applications were completed during the school's structured College Application Month events, where staff, counselors, and college partners supported students with workshops, essays, recommendations, and on-site admissions help.

As the class transitions toward FAFSA season and scholarship opportunities, Watervliet's seniors are well-positioned for their next steps—whether pursuing a 2-year degree, a 4-year university, skilled trades, or other career paths.

The Class of 2026 has demonstrated confidence, preparedness, and true Panther Pride as they plan for their futures.

Flowers Early Learning launches tuition-based infant and toddler pilot program in Millburg

For the first time in 54 years, Flowers Early Learning is expanding access to care by launching a tuition-based pilot program for infants and toddlers in the Benton Harbor area. This pilot program will serve children from birth to age three. Children must be three years old or younger as of September 1, 2025. A limited number of tuition-based slots will be available at the Millburg location, allowing Flowers Early Learning to respond to the growing need for high-quality infant and toddler care in the community.

This new option reflects Flowers Early Learning's ongoing commitment to meeting families where they are and strengthening early childhood education across Southwest Michigan. Families enrolled in the pilot program will receive the same nurturing, relationship-based care and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that define Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

Flowers Early Learning accepts CDC scholarships, helping make this opportunity more accessible for eligible families.

Families interested in this tuition-based infant and toddler pilot program are encouraged to submit an interest form online. Enrollment is limited. For questions or additional information, families can call 269-657-2581.

Flowers Early Learning provides high-quality early childhood education and wrap-around family support services across Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. Through their Early Head Start and Head Start programs, they serve infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families, focusing on school readiness, health, and family well-being. Flowers Early Learning's mission is to build a future where children, families, and communities thrive.

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Celebrating 50 years of community, care, and connection: The North Berrien Senior Center at half a century

By Angela Widdis

For fifty years, the North Berrien Senior Center has stood as far more than a building. It has been a gathering place, a lifeline, a source of laughter, learning, and compassion, and a testament to what a community can accomplish when it commits to caring for its older adults. As the Center marks its 50th anniversary, it is an ideal moment to reflect on its humble beginnings, its evolution over the decades, and the countless lives it has touched along the way.

A vision rooted in community need

When the North Berrien Senior Center first opened its doors at 140 E. Logan St. in downtown Coloma, half a century ago, the needs of senior citizens in the area were becoming increasingly clear. Many older adults were living independently, often on fixed incomes, and faced challenges ranging from social isolation to limited access to nutritious meals, transportation, and health-related resources. Community leaders, volunteers, and residents recognized that seniors deserved not only assistance, but dignity, companionship, and opportunities to remain active and engaged.

The Center was founded on a simple but powerful idea: aging should not mean being forgotten. Instead, it should be supported, respected, and celebrated.

Helen Kucinsky of Coloma Township was asked by the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to spearhead the project of a new senior center because the northern part of the county was the only area that did not have one. What began as a modest effort in a relocatable classroom from Coloma Community Schools was grown with a $2,000 grant, and the sheer determination of Kucinsky, who served as the President, and her team which consisted of; Larry Smith as Vice-President, who at the time was Bainbridge Township Supervisor, Mrs. Eleanor Kendall serving as the treasurer, and the Bainbridge Township Supervisor at that time was Edward Broderick and he served as the board's secretary. Other representatives were: Ewald Echblom, Arvid Frazier, Glenn Randall, Lyle Woodworth, and Elsie Woolley. The only paid staff at that time was Harriet King, who was operating the nutrition programs from the kitchens of the Coloma American Legion, Coloma Congregational Church, and Salem Lutheran Church.

Often staffed by a small group of dedicated volunteers — quickly grew into a trusted community hub.

Growing services to meet changing times

Over the decades, the North Berrien Senior Center has continually adapted to meet the evolving needs of area seniors. Early programming focused on social gatherings, basic meal services, and recreational activities. These offerings provided something invaluable: a place to belong.

As the years passed, the Center expanded its services to reflect changes in healthcare, technology, and demographics. Meal programs became more robust, addressing nutrition and food security. Wellness activities, educational workshops, and fitness classes were introduced to support both physical and mental health. Transportation services helped seniors maintain independence by ensuring access to medical appointments, shopping, and community events.

The Center also became a vital source of information and advocacy, helping seniors navigate complex systems related to healthcare, benefits, taxes, and aging-related resources. Through partnerships with local agencies and organizations, it ensured that no one had to face these challenges alone.

A place where friendships flourish

Ask any longtime participant what the North Berrien Senior Center means to them and you are likely to hear stories of friendship. For many seniors, the Center has been where new chapters of life began—where grief was eased by companionship, where retirement found new purpose, and where laughter filled rooms once quiet at home.

Card games, craft classes, group outings, and holiday celebrations, and bingo, have created memories that span generations. Birthdays have been celebrated, milestones honored, and difficult times faced together. For countless individuals, the Center has been a second family.

This sense of belonging is perhaps the Center's greatest achievement. While programs and services are essential, it is the human connection—the warm greetings, shared meals, and familiar faces—that truly define its impact.

The heart of the Center: staff and volunteers

Behind every successful program and welcoming space are the people who make it possible. Over the past 50 years, the North Berrien Senior Center has been shaped by dedicated staff members and volunteers who brought compassion, creativity, and commitment to their work.

From meal preparation and activity coordination to transportation and administrative support, these individuals have given their time and talents to ensure seniors feel valued and cared for. Many volunteers have served for years, even decades, forming deep bonds with participants and becoming integral threads in the Center's fabric.

Their dedication reflects a shared belief that serving seniors is not just a task, but a calling—one rooted in respect for those who have spent a lifetime contributing to their families, workplaces, and communities.

Responding to challenges with resilience

Like any organization with a long history, the North Berrien Senior Center has faced its share of challenges. Economic downturns, funding uncertainties, and societal changes have tested its resilience. More recently, the COVID-19 public health crises required rapid adaptation to ensure seniors remained safe while still connected and supported.



6648 Ryno Road, Coloma MI

Through each challenge, the Center demonstrated flexibility and determination. Programs were modified, new methods of outreach were developed, and the commitment to serving seniors never wavered. These moments underscored the importance of the Center—not just as a place to gather, but as a cornerstone of community stability.

Honoring the past, embracing the future

As the North Berrien Senior Center celebrates its 50th anniversary, it does so with deep gratitude for the past and a clear vision for the future. Today's seniors are more diverse, more active, and living longer than ever before. Their needs continue to evolve, and the Center remains committed to evolving alongside them.

Looking ahead, the focus remains on promoting healthy aging, lifelong learning, social engagement, and independence. By embracing innovation while preserving its core values, the Center is well-positioned to serve future generations of seniors with the same compassion that defined its first fifty years.

A legacy of care and community

Fifty years of service represents tens of thousands of meals served, countless rides provided, innumerable friendships formed, and immeasurable moments of kindness shared. But numbers alone cannot capture the true legacy of the North Berrien Senior Center.

That legacy lives in the senior who found confidence through a fitness class, the widower who rediscovered joy through community, the volunteer who found purpose in service, and the family members who gained peace of mind knowing their loved ones were supported.

The Center's story is, at its heart, the story of North Berrien itself—a community that values its elders and understands that how they care for their seniors reflects who they are.

Celebrating 50 years—and counting

As the Center honors this milestone anniversary, they celebrate everyone who has been part of the North Berrien Senior Center's journey: the founders who envisioned it, the staff and volunteers who sustained it, the partners who supported it, and, most importantly, the seniors who gave it life.

Here's to 50 years of service, connection, and compassion—and to many more years of enriching the lives of North Berrien's senior citizens. The doors remain open, the coffee is warm, and the welcome is as heartfelt as ever.

Watervliet Recreation Council announces expanded 2026 season with new programming

The Watervliet Baseball/Softball Recreational Council (WRC) is excited to announce its 2026 season, featuring expanded programming designed to bring more young athletes onto the field and extend the playing season into the fall. This year marks the introduction of a new Fall Ball League and the lowering of the T-Ball age to include four-year-olds, reflecting the council's continued commitment to youth athletic development in Watervliet.

The Baseball Pre-Season Tournament will take place from April 24 to 26, followed by the Softball Pre-Season Tournament from May 1 to 3 at Hays Park. The Softball All Stars Tournament is scheduled for June 5 to 7, with the Baseball All Stars Tournament running July 17 to 19.

WRC President Jim Tyler expressed his excitement about the changes ahead. "We've been listening to our families, and the message has been clear. They want more opportunities for their kids to play," Tyler said. "Lowering the T-Ball age to four gives us a chance to introduce the game to kids earlier, and the Fall Ball League means families don't have to say goodbye to baseball and softball when summer ends."

The new Fall Ball League will run for five Sundays beginning September 13, culminating in a tournament bracket on October 18 seeded by regular league performance. The program represents the council's first venture into extended season play.

Vice President Brier Smithley highlighted the value of the expanded season. "Fall Ball is something we've talked about for a while now," Smithley said. "It gives players a chance to keep developing their skills and stay active heading into winter. We think families are really going to appreciate having that option."

The WRC continues to maintain strong partnerships with local officials and organizations. City Manager Tim Sutherland has worked closely with the council on facility access and park operations, and the organization coordinates regularly with the Department of Public Works on field maintenance, trash disposal, and restroom facilities at Hays Park.

Watervliet Public Schools has also been a valued partner, providing space at Watervliet High School for player registration, coach meetings, and team pictures. Athletic Director John Guillean has supported collaboration between the council and school athletic programs to benefit young athletes in the community. Varsity Baseball Coach Josh Tremblay and Varsity Softball Coach Tom Golden have also been integral to setting up youth camps in the spring.

Tyler noted that the progress made by the council is the result of dedicated volunteers working together. The 2026 leadership team includes Vice President Brier Smithley, Treasurer Austin Brigham, Secretary Rachel Zyla, Baseball/Softball Director Zack Spear, Equipment Manager Chad Palmer, and Concession Manager Rachel Zyla. Trustees serving this year include Tina Eberly, Johanna Mazur, Matt Zyla, Alissa Rodriguez, Kyle Duncombe, Steve Wooley and Beth Wooley.

Registration for the spring season is open now through January 31 at watervlietrec.com. In person registration is available at the Watervliet High School cafeteria on Saturday, January 17 from 8:30 a.m. to noon and Saturday, January 31 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

For more information, visit watervlietrec.com or contact info@watervlietrec.com.



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Coloma Freemasons install 2026 officers;

Ross L. Streu honored for community service

Representatives from the Grand Lodge of Michigan recently installed the 2026 officers for the Coloma Masonic Center located at 262 N. Paw Paw Street in downtown Coloma. Bryce M. Schadler will serve as Master of the lodge, leading its membership in various charitable and community activities.

Coloma Lodge also honored the service of Ross L. Streu of Coloma, presenting him with the Edgar A. Guest Award for Community Service. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Michigan established the Edgar A. Guest Award for Lodges to present to non-Masons within the community who have demonstrated distinguished service to the community and their fellow citizens.

In presenting the award to Streu, Coloma Lodge Past-Master Phil Staub noted that Streu had been a member of the Coloma Lions Club for over 35 years and served as treasurer of the club for most of those years.

"Ross also served on many community organizations, planning events within the Coloma community, such as the Glad-Peach Festival, Halloween Trunk-or-Treat, and St. Patrick's Day Lighted Parade. He is an active member at Salem Lutheran Church in Coloma. He is a previous recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award and the Helen Keller Fellowship Award, two prestigious awards of the Lions International," said Staub. "Several years ago, Ross came up with the idea of running a Super Bowl Raffle, which has become the premier annual fund-raising event for the Coloma Lions Club, and he is active in the Lions' White Cane fund drive for hearing and vision support programs."

Edgar A. Guest, for whom the award is named, was a Freemason and writer. Guest was a British-born American poet who became known as the People's Poet. His poems often had an inspirational and optimistic view of everyday life. From his first published work in the Detroit Free Press until his death in 1959, Guest penned some 11,000 poems which were syndicated in some 300 newspapers and collected in more than 20 books, including A Heap o' Livin' (1916) and Just Folks (1923–1957).

In 1952, Guest was made Poet Laureate of Michigan, the only poet to have been awarded the title until 2023, when the position was revived.

Coloma Lodge #162, Free and Accepted Masons, was chartered on Jan. 12, 1865, by the Grand Lodge of Michigan. Freemasonry is America's largest and oldest fraternity and one that continues to be an important part of the personal growth and development of men from all walks of life. The Grand Lodge of Michigan is celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2026. More information about Coloma Lodge is available at Colomasons.org.



2026 OFFICERS… Coloma Masonic Lodge #162 has named its officers for 2026. Pictured are: (from the left) Back - Mark Manning, Ernie Walker, Don Baugher, Bob Conley, Walter Wheeler, Scott Tavernier; Middle - Frank Krynicky, Bill Weeden Jr., Brandon Schadler, Blair Schadler, Blake Schadler, Matthew Moser, Gerald Millar, John Hubbard; Front - Kurt Shepard, Blane Schadler, Phil Staub, Ron Price, Bryce Schadler, Matthew Haynes, David Mayne.

(Contributed photo)



COMMUNITY-MINDED… Coloma Lodge Past-Master Phil Staub presents the Edgar A. Guest Award to Ross Streu of Coloma, for many years of community service. This award is given annually to a non-Mason, recognizing the individual for distinguished service to the community and fellow citizens.

(Contributed photo)

Bainbridge Township approves annual contracts, meeting dates for the year 2026

By Lauren Lovell

The Bainbridge Township meeting on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026, was called to order by Supervisor Andrew Gardiner at 5:59 p.m. All board members were in attendance for their first meeting of the new year.

Under new business, the board approved the meeting dates for fiscal year 2026 to 2027. The township board also renewed contracts for mechanical, electrical, plumbing, building and zoning inspector, Benton Township Fire, Sister Lakes Fire and the Coloma Library Service Agreement.

At the last meeting of 2025, the board went over the 2025 budget amendments which were approved. In this meeting the 2026-27 budget worksheet was given to the board members.

Treasurer Nancy Weber reported total expenses for November of $29,287.31 and interest of $3,618.30. For the month of December, expenses were $22,616.75 and interest amounted to $3,698.67.

A report was given for police activity for the month of November. It reflected a total of thirty-seven complaints in the township, ten tickets issued and two arrests in Bainbridge Township.

For the month of November, Medic 1 ambulance service reported three Priority I calls in Bainbridge Township with an average response time of nineteen minutes and ten Priority II calls with an average response time of fifteen minutes.

Clerk Samantha Droskie reported the 2026 election dates; May 5 being a special election with bond proposals from Coloma Community Schools and Eau Claire Public Schools, August 4 for State Primary and November 3 for State General Election.

The Bainbridge board adjourned their meeting at 6:24 p.m. The next meeting will be held Monday, Feb. 9, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Coloma School Board meeting highlights current and future events for the district in the new year

By Sheila Schultz

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Coloma Community School Board was held on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026. Board President Heidi Ishmael called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Board officers and committee appointments for 2026

Board President Ishmael announced the school board officers for the upcoming year: President - Heidi Ishmael, Vice-President - Tandy Ulleg, Secretary - Nicole Hickmon, and Treasurer - Steve Groendyk.

Committee appointments for 2026 are: Berrien/Cass School Board Association Representative and MASB (Michigan Association of School Boards) Legislative Liaison - Heidi Ishmael; Building & Grounds - Doug Kraemer, Gordie Cartwright, and Steve Groendyk; School Improvement - Tandy Ulleg and Heidi Ishmael; Finance & Personnel - Nicole Hickmon, Tandy Ulleg, and Bill Stowers; Policy - Heidi Ishmael, Steve Groendyk, and Gordie Cartwright.

Board meetings will continue to be held on the second Monday of the month in Room 46 at the Junior High School.

Coloma Elementary involved in assessment testing

In Principal Kelly Jo Severin's absence, Heidi Ishmael reported: students are involved in DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills), NWEA testing; changes in the WIN (What I Need) program have been successful in utilizing available resources and reaching more students; staff members are developing ideas for the "Reading Month" this spring.

Testing and screening at Coloma Intermediate

Principal Winnie Staffen explained that students at the Intermediate School will be involved in NWEA testing on January 29 and February 3; Delta Math screeners are in progress; Students of the Month awards will take place on January 14.

Junior High students start 2026 by reviewing expectations

Principal Wendy Tremblay reported that the staff reinforced all of the behavior expectations at the Junior High when the new semester started after break; Honor Roll students will receive awards on January 14; NWEA testing will take place on January 28 and February 3.

High School English students' writings compiled into a book

High School Principal Craig Fisher shared that Mr. Van Peteghem and Mrs. Ickes' tenth grade English classes recently read The Freedom Writers, a collection of diary entries that a class in California wrote about their life experiences and their time spent in their English class and how it changed them. Van Peteghem and Ickes' classes wrote their "reader responses" as they read the book in class. Students chose one journal entry that was anonymously included in a Coloma version of "Freedom Writers."

The high school choir performed the National Anthem prior to the girls' basketball game and the high school pep band played at the home basketball game against Watervliet on January 9. The pep band will be playing at future Friday night home games.

First semester grades were finalized and report cards are available for parents through PowerSchool.

High school winter sports and activities off to a good start

Student high school representative Lylah Hyska shared that school spirit has been great as the boys and girls basketball teams, cheering squad, bowling teams, and boys' wrestling teams are doing well. The National Honor Society's role in supervising students on late start mornings continues to be a great fit for all students involved. NHS students will be making a visit to the Woodland Terrace facility in February.

Maintenance/custodial updates

Superintendent Dave Ehlers reported that winter break provided the opportunity for many maintenance issues to be addressed. The fire system was inspected and changes made where needed. The project to replace the sensors in the high school gym was completed. A leak in the boiler room pump was fixed. The old high school choir room currently used for storage was cleaned out so that it can be used to host future music events. Plans for improvements on the baseball field should be finalized in the next couple of weeks.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ehlers shared that preliminary plans are underway to establish a Coloma Community Schools Hall of Fame by the winter of 2027. Ehlers reported that the Board of Education and members of the CEA (Coloma Education Association) will be attending a training session on March 21, 2026, to better prepare both parties for negotiations.

Bond Resolution explained

The proposed bond is a ZERO MIL increase. It is a continuation of the existing tax rate of 20 years that will generate $8.7 million for repairs. This is not a new tax or an increase. Property owners would continue to pay their current rate.

This bond would provide funds to: replace the 1974 steam boiler at Coloma Elementary; remodel 20 classrooms at CES, add LED lighting and energy-efficient windows; replace a few exterior doors and windows in the Intermediate School; new sidewalks in front of the Junior High; upgrade heating controls, remodel twenty classrooms, add LED lighting, and install energy-efficient windows at the high school.

Board action

Ehlers recommended that the board approve: the resolution calling for a May 5, 2026 election; the cost of $4,914.52 to CertaSite for upgrading the gym fire system to be paid out of the sinking fund; TowerPinkster be paid $5,062.50 out of the sinking fund for the baseball field design.

The Board of Education unanimously approved the recommendations as stated above.

President Ishmael adjourned the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. and then the board met in closed session to consider periodic personnel evaluations.

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Berrien Community Foundation awarded $150,000 to help area partners improve access to healthy, local food

Through its Rapid Response Fund, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund awarded a $150,000 grant to Berrien Community Foundation to support families, seniors and community partners across Berrien County in accessing healthy, affordable food.

Berrien Community Foundation (BCF) leads the Southwest Michigan Food is Health Collaborative, which is a group of local partners from healthcare, hunger relief, agriculture and community organizations working together to improve access to locally grown, healthy food across the county to support health, dignity and opportunity for generations to come.

"The SNAP food benefit pause at the end of last year really underscored the need for a coordinated, local and nimble food-health ecosystem," said BCF President Lisa Cripps-Downey. "The challenge of filling bare food pantry shelves was met with help from the community, food pantries and food distribution organizations. However, it also showed us things we can do to strengthen partnerships and build needed infrastructure. This grant is instrumental in building upon and expanding the local food systems. We are so grateful to the Michigan Health Endowment for supporting this work."

The funding comes at a time when many households are facing higher food costs, changes in public benefits and fewer nearby options for fresh food. In Berrien County, more than 4,500 households access one of the county's 30+ food pantries every month; over 23,000 Berrien County residents are eligible for SNAP benefits; food insecurity affects 21.8% of children, 40% of Black residents and 20% of Hispanic residents. There are 16 federally designated food deserts where affordable, healthy food is hard to access.

While local food pantries, senior centers and meal programs continue to see higher demand for services, they also face new challenges getting food where it is needed. Higher transportation costs, fewer nearby distribution options and limited access to fresh foods make it harder for organizations to consistently offer fruits, vegetables and proteins that support good health.

While BCF is the grant recipient, all funds will be distributed to other local partners to support this work.

"Our responsibility is to build structures that hold up over time," said Cripps-Downey. "This investment helps us do that in a way that reflects the needs and strengths of our community."

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School Board Recognition Month



Watervliet Public Schools Honors School Board Members for Annual Recognition Month

January 12th, 2026

January is School Board Recognition Month. This is a time to recognize the individuals who approach their volunteer work like it is a full-time job and with extraordinary dedication to public schools. They are citizens whose decisions affect our children and build our community.

School boards are charged with making decisions that can sometimes be quite difficult or require sifting through a great deal of information. They contribute hundreds of hours each year leading Watervliet Public Schools.

Collectively, school board members across the state spend more than 7,500 hours on professional development to keep well-informed of the latest trends in educational leadership, are deeply involved in community activities and spend many hours at extracurricular events.

Through their dedication, collaboration with other school district staff, their governance and advocacy, they are building the future of education in Michigan.

This month, we encourage all members of the community to thank a board member. Take this opportunity to show our year-round appreciation for these servant leaders and begin to better understand how local trustees work together to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders.

The individuals serving Watervliet Public Schools and their years of service are:
Bill Spaulding – 24th year, **John Oliphant** - 8th year, **Amanda Morlock-Fisher** – 7th year, **Kim Adams** – 6th year, **Jim Tyler**-2nd year, **Gina Grear**-2nd year, and **Carrie Wilder** 1st year

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Watervliet plans time capsule for America's Semiquincentennial

celebrated at the Independence Day Celebration

By Angela Widdis

As the year 2026 gets underway, communities across the nation are preparing to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence — America's Semiquincentennial. In Michigan, this milestone is being marked through the America250MI statewide initiative, which encourages local towns and cities to plan events, educational projects, and legacy activities tied to the nation's history.

In keeping with this spirit, the Watervliet Downtown Development Authority is moving forward with a plan to create a community time capsule to be sealed during the upcoming Independence Day celebration and opened by future generations. This time capsule is intended to capture a snapshot of life in Watervliet in 2026—preserving local memories, artifacts, and reflections as part of the nation's 250-year celebration. The time capsule will be integrated into the city's annual July 4th festivities, which already include parades, fireworks, duck race, and other community traditions.

Officials say the goal is to involve residents of all ages. Schools, civic organizations, families, and individuals are invited to contribute items that reflect daily life, community values, and hopes for the future. Once sealed, the capsule will stand as enduring symbols of Watervliet's place in American history — linking past, present, and future generations.

This effort aligns with broader America250MI guidance, which encourages communities throughout Michigan to celebrate the semiquincentennial with meaningful programming that reflects local history and civic pride.

A brief history of time capsules

Time capsules are containers of objects and information intentionally preserved to communicate aspects of a specific era to people in the future. While the idea dates back hundreds of years, the term "time capsule" itself didn't become popular until the 20th Century. Some early American examples include ceremonial cornerstone boxes placed in public buildings and monuments.

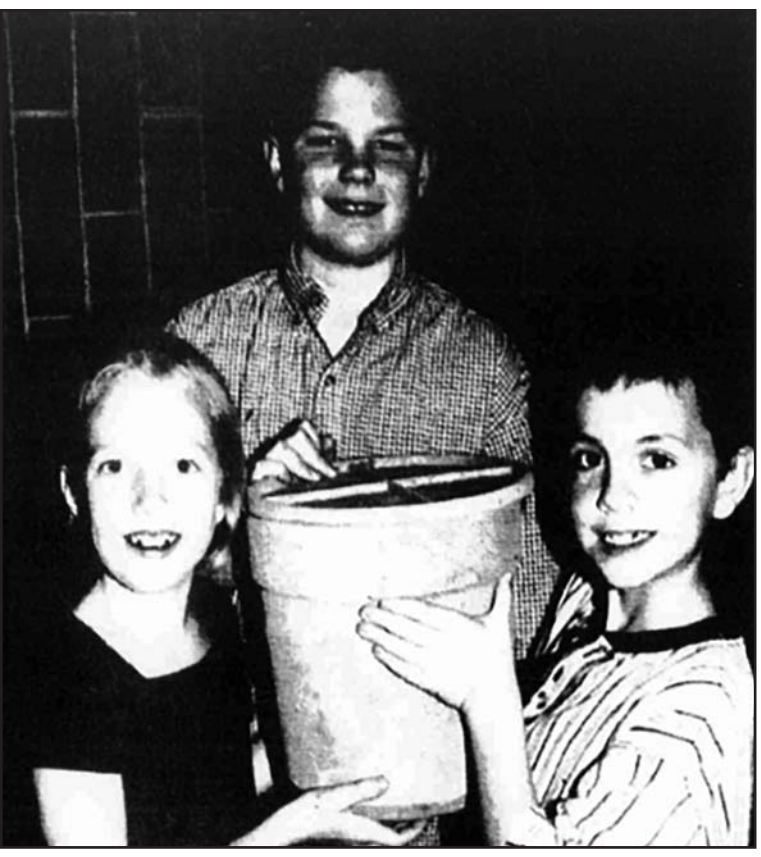
Perhaps one of the most famous historical examples is the Detroit Century Box, created in 1900 and opened on January 1, 2000. Buried by Detroit's mayor at the turn of the century, it contained photos, letters, and reflections on the city's life and predictions for the future — offering a unique view from a bygone era.

Time capsules range widely in intent and scale, from school and neighborhood projects to major municipal or national initiatives. Some are meant to be opened after decades (often 25, 50, or 100 years), while others (such as Osaka's 1970 Expo capsule) are intended for centuries of preservation.



THE OPENING... (from the left) Cub Scouts Zachary Yenchus, Cody Reese, Cameron Needham, and Tony Woods watch as former Cub Scouts Tom Wolfram and Eric Kreitner open the time capsule they had a part in making as 10-year-olds in 1980. The time capsule was part of celebrating the 50th year of Cub Scouting. This photo was originally printed in the May 14, 2010 issue of the Tri-City Record.

(TCR photo by Christina Gelder)



LOOK BACK IN TIME... Alyssa Kent, Ryan Kent, and Luke Golas show off the time capsule which was opened at Woodside's Open House event on September 19, 2000. This photo was originally printed in the September 27, 2000 issue of the Tri-City Record.

(TCR photo by Carole Kiernan)

Time capsule history in Coloma, Hartford & Watervliet

Coloma is known to have had a few time capsules over the years. On April 9, 1990, a time capsule was placed in the base of the Vietnam Memorial in Baker Park. The memorial honors the eight men who gave their lives in the Vietnam War who were from Coloma. The time capsule containing a POW/MIA flag, a list of the names of all who donated to the funding of the memorial, letters from the committee members and from some of the mothers whose son's names appear on the memorial, books about the Vietnam War and POW/MIA bracelets was sealed in the cement. Other information about the memorial was also added to the capsule along with the poems written by a member of the committee.

In 2010, three former Cub Scouts from the original Pack #610 that put together a capsule in 1980 was present when the current Pack opened a time capsule that was made to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Cub Scouting in America. Tom Wolfram, Eric Kreitner, and Todd Hammond were just 10 years old when their Pack constructed the time capsule. They filled a box with mementos of the era they were in, trinkets, pictures and papers pertaining to the City of Coloma. The most telling of all the items, though, was probably an old copy of The Herald-Palladium that had a headline proclaiming "Gasoline for $1.50." The cardboard box was tightly wrapped and stored in a closet at First Congregational Church in Coloma.

The next one was found in 2013 when there was buzz at the Coloma City Commission meeting on Monday, August 12 where it was told that while removing the water tower for replacement, town crews found two time capsules that city officials did not know were there. The capsules contained mostly newspapers, which included a Chicago newspaper from April of 1958.

In 2018, former classmates and teachers from Coloma Junior High attempted to locate a time capsule they buried around 1988 outside the school. Despite efforts — and memories of items like a cassette tape and a homemade flag — they were unable to locate it, possibly due to construction or lost records.

On October 16, 2003, the Tri-City Record headline read, "Time capsule comes up missing at Hartford FD." The brass box was nowhere to be found after a hole was cut in both sides of the wall making sure it was not missed. Over 100 people came to see the contents during fire prevention week, only to be told that the box was not found.

Again in Hartford, back on Sept. 19, 2000, there was an unveiling of a time capsule opened from twenty-five years prior when students helped to bury one during dedication at the Woodside Elementary School in 1975. When it was discovered, the capsule had originally contained class pictures - one of each of the 20 classes at Woodside; staff picture of the Woodside personnel; dedication invitation, brochure, and program; floor plan of Woodside; 1974-1975 Hartford School District Directory for K-12; a Shoppers Guide, Watervliet Record, and Harding's ad; pictures of a new car, the Pacer, by AMC; and names of the students who raised the flag and served as ushers at the original dedication.

During the ceremony, a new time capsule was loaded with items of 2000: a Tri-City Record, photos of every teacher and class at the school, the DVD of "Toy Story II," a 2000 bug, Pokémon cards, a pencil from Woodside Elementary School, and a 2000 penny. The new time capsule was scheduled to be unearthed in 2025; however, there is no news that this has happened yet.

Watervliet, the third town of the Tri-City Area, has probably one of the oldest time capsules to have been opened in recent times. A time capsule was removed at the demolition of the former Catholic church building on Friday, Dec. 27, 2024, at 204 Crescent Street in Watervliet. Behind the cornerstone was housed a time capsule that contained a copy of a Watervliet Record newspaper from 1896.

However, with the America250 celebration gaining momentum across Michigan, the current plan to create time capsules tied to the 250th anniversary will stand as one of the most ambitious historical legacy projects in the city's modern history.

Why time capsules matter

Time capsules are more than buried boxes. They are bridges through time. They become tools that help future generations understand the everyday lives, hopes, and values of their predecessors. Whether they contain letters, newspapers, photographs, or personal notes, these capsules preserve human stories that might otherwise be lost to history.

For communities like Watervliet, embarking on a semiquincentennial time capsule project offers a chance to reflect on both local identity and shared national heritage. As America approaches its 250th birthday, such projects provide a tangible way for residents to participate in this momentous occasion—ensuring that what we value today can be discovered and appreciated tomorrow.



TIME CAPSULE CONTENTS... A 30-year time capsule was opened at Coloma High School in December of 2021. The capsule contained many old treasures, complete with a copy of the Tri-City Record from April 29, 1992. Parts of two different videos were played during the opening that included student life, sporting events and graduation from the year 1992. This photo was originally printed in the December 23, 2021 issue of the Tri-City Record.

(Contributed photo)



Coloma Lanes Youth Bowling

High scores for 1/10/26

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Preps: Kourtney Webster 391, Zoey Jackson 352, Ava Basave 281, Maven Simmons 530, Andrew Ulleg 484, Holden Gage 361

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Presented by the North Berrien Community Development & Coloma - Watervliet Area Chamber of Commerce

The North Berrien Community Development and the Coloma Watervliet Area Chamber of Commerce recently celebrated the 19th annual Business Recognition event at the Friendly Tavern. All our chamber members are deserving of recognition, but this year these wonderful individuals and businesses were the award recipients. We congratulate these dedicated individuals and businesses that work so hard and are committed to their community and their customers. Each business is unique and fills an important role in Coloma and Watervliet.



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If you would like to join the Chamber reach out to Community Development Coordinator Chana Kniebes at 269-757-2457. Or plan to sit in on a monthly meeting the second Tuesday of each month in various locations. We wish everyone a Happy New Year and much success in the coming year!