



A preview of the upcoming playoff games for Columbia Central and Napoleon can be seen in the Overtime insertion inside.

Fall back Sunday



Residents get an extra hour to enjoy this weekend before they have to be back to work next Monday. Clocks are to be set back one hour on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2026, at 2 a.m., marking the end of Daylight Saving Time and the return to standard time according to the Time and Date Daylight Saving Schedule.

Halloween happenings



Nicole Shook from Romulus painted faces at Norvell's Trunk or Treat event last week. The annual Halloween event has become a favorite for residents. For a list of upcoming events, see inside. Photo by Paul Snyder.



Inside: Dennis Neely continues his series on how the gazebo and downtown have evolved through the years, as village officials seek to raise funds for a new gazebo and brick project.



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EXPONENT

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Police: Man intentionally rammed vehicle in village

Chelsea man arrested, charged with domestic assault, OWI

By John Hummer Editor

Michael Viger, 36, of Chelsea, was arrested Friday morning in the Village of Brooklyn on charges of domestic violence and operating while intoxicated (OWI).

On Saturday, charges were filed by Columbia Charter Township Police for both crimes.

On Friday, Oct. 23 at 2:12 a.m., Columbia Charter Township Police was dispatched to the area of W. Lowry in the Village of Brooklyn for a domestic situation investigation. Police



Viger

reported the victim of the alleged assault fled the residence and sought help with a neighbor to call 911.

While officers were en route, police say the suspect fled the scene in a vehicle. As the 911 call continued, the caller further shared that the suspect vehicle had returned to the residence.

Once back, the suspect allegedly intentionally crashed the car he was operating into a car that was parked and unattended in the same driveway. The intentional collision moved

the target vehicle several feet creating significant damage to both the suspect vehicle as well as the unattended parked vehicle.

As the investigation progressed, police say the suspect was identified as 36-year-old Michael A. Viger of Chelsea. Officers established probable cause that the suspect assaulted the victim, as well as a roommate of the victim, among other criminal acts.

Columbia Charter Township Police Chief Jay Niles said that a countywide broadcast was made to law enforcement providing suspect information and a sus-

See *Vehicle rammed* page 2

Police report: business owner allegedly struck contractor in altercation

By John Hummer

A Village of Brooklyn business owner awaits a decision from the county prosecutor's review of a police report stemming from an Oct. 13 alleged assault on whether or not he will face formal charges.

On Tuesday, Oct. 13 at approximately 10:20 a.m. Columbia Charter Township Police were called to the intersection of Monroe and Main Streets in the Village of Brooklyn for an assault report. Police say there was an allegation that Chad Fires, 53, of Norvell Township, co-owner of Callaghan's Coffee Café, had unwantingly touched the victim.

The allegation was investigated and included statements from both parties, police said, as well as an area canvass for witnesses



Fires

and potential video of the incident. The investigation revealed that there had been a mutual exchange of words between the victim and Fires.

Police said that at the conclusion of the exchange of words, Fires contacted the victim at the victim's vehicle. They reported that Fires attempted to reach into the car and swat the hat the victim was wearing off his head. During this action, Fires struck the scalp of the victim while removing the hat. There were no injuries to either participant of this altercation.

The allegations stem from an altercation Fires had with an employee of Kincaid Building Group, a contractor of the 101 Monroe Street building, just to the north of Callaghan's,

that has been under renovation.

"This individual, RJ, has made several attempts to try to instigate interactions between us," stated Fires in a telephone conversation on October 26. "I have text messages that he sent me out of the blue accusing me of lying about the water situation that's happening between Bea's property and mine. ("Bea" is Bea Nestor, owner of the newly-refurbished 101 Monroe building.)

"I called him out on that and told him months before they ever finished their project that they were going to have to figure out a way to solve the water issue."

The water issue, Fires says, is regarding water runoff from the construction project that is "about to erode the foundation of my

See *Confrontation* page 2

Brooklyn Village race to be decided by write-in voting

Compiled by John Hummer Editor

Four candidates – one incumbent running for reelection – and three write-in candidates face off to see which three will be elected to the Brooklyn Village Council come Nov. 3. Incumbent Gabriella Bach's name will appear on the ballot. Three officially-registered write-in candidates – Johnathan Taylor Aue, Robert Davis, and Philip Krauss – will not have their names printed on the ballot. A voter must write them in on their ballot in the write-in spaces provided to cast a vote for them. Note that Robert (Bob) Davis is currently an appointed candidate on the council who is completing the term of former village trustee Bob Jensen who passed away mid-term.

Candidate whose name will appear on the ballot

Incumbent candidate: Gabriella Bach

Describe your qualifications and experience for this office.

I have served as a trustee since 2020, gaining valuable experience in local government and the responsibilities of the office. My service has strengthened my understanding of how village decisions affect residents, businesses, and our community's future. I believe serving our community requires listening, asking thoughtful questions, and making informed decisions. I bring experience, a lifelong connection to this area, and a commitment to representing residents.



Bach

Explain your reasons for running for office.

I am running to continue serving the community I have called home my entire life. I care about Brooklyn and want it to remain a welcoming place to live, raise a family, and own a business. I want residents to feel heard and know their concerns matter. My goal is to remain approachable and help Brooklyn move forward while preserving the small-town character that makes it special.

What are the most important challenges you wish to address, and how do you propose to address them?

My priorities include maintaining infrastructure, supporting local businesses, and improving communication between residents and village government. I support prioritizing projects based on need and pursuing grants when available. I also support thoughtful de-

See *Brooklyn election* page 3

Norvell event a hit!



Kathy Sutherland, right, coordinator of Norvell Township's Trunk or Treat, stands with husband Bill Sutherland, who handcrafted the special "candy casket" in front of them. Bill also served as the "best dressed parking attendant" you may ever see. Photo by John Hummer.

HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS!

Village of Brooklyn trick-or-treating is planned for Saturday, October 31, starting at 6 p.m.

Village of Addison has trick-or-treating starting at 6 p.m. and ending 8 p.m. on October 31.

Village of Onsted trick-or-treating starts at 5:30 and runs until 8:30 p.m. on Halloween.

The **Columbia Township Fire Department** will host its annual Halloween Open House on Saturday, October 31, 2026, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The **Napoleon Township Fire Department** hosts its annual Halloween Open House on Halloween night, October 31, from 6 to 9 p.m. The community event takes place at the main fire station and provides a safe environment for families to celebrate the holiday.

The **Addison Fire Department** station 1 is hosting (in the village of Addison) is hosting a community Halloween party October 31 from 5-8 p.m.

The **Lost Railway Museum** and the **Grass Lake Lions Club** are hosting a community Halloween night at the Lost Railway Museum on Saturday, October 31, from 6 to 8 p.m. Enjoy hot chocolate at the museum, hot dogs at the Grass Lake Depot, and a spooky scene at the Avenue Studio.

Hidden Lake Gardens is holding Pumpkin Carving Dissection on Saturday, October 31 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 6214 W. Monroe Road (M-50), Tipton, Mich.49287. Join them to learn about bats, pumpkins, owls, and take home a fun themed craft. Go to hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu for more information.

Mystery Hill presents Horror at the Hill on October 31 at 7611 US-12, Onsted Mich. Join Nathan for the Darkside of Circus Sideshow, Haunted Tours, and Halloween at the hill. Find more information on Facebook.

Haunted Hayrides at **Silence Family Farms**, 6161 Lansing Avenue, Jackson, Mich. 49201 on Saturday, October 31, from 2 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Rides depart approximately every 30 minutes. Come support your local family farms! Tickets are \$5 and kids under three get in free. For more information visit experiencejackson.com or call 517-262-2690.

Come have a little pre-Halloween fun with **Cascades Fellowship Church** 2390 West High Street, Jackson. on Friday,



Cutest baby cow ever! Little Sullivan Wireman, 7 months old, has a “baby smile” as Amanda Desnoyer-Regnier, Napoleon Township Police sergeant, got lucky enough to hold her at Norvell Township’s Trunk or Treat. Photo by John Hummer.

October 30, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Enjoy Trunk or Treat, a bonfire, hot chocolate, and a few other surprises. Bring the whole family!

Addison Youth Center is having a Halloween Party on Friday, October 30, starting at 3 p.m. Teens the ages of 13 to 18 can enjoy free food, games, and sweet treats all at the Addison Youth Center, at 329 East Main Street, Addison.

Jackson County Parks is having a Halloween Town Trunk or Treat at Keeley Park on Wednesday, October 28 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Bring your family and friends for a night of tricks, treats, and community fun. A free event for all at 128 West Ganson Street, Jackson.

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Confrontation . . . continued from page 1

building.

“He is now claiming that I never told him that, but I did – right in the alley we talked about it,” Fires continued. “The previous supervisor for that contractor company, Brandon, was very well aware of it as well. I talked to him and he apparently even acknowledged that the company didn’t have a water management program in place.”

Regarding the October 13 incident, Fires said that the man was standing in front of Sweet Caroline’s and started yelling at Fires as he was pulling out of his parking lot. They began arguing about the work (or lack thereof) being done.

“As I was pulling away, he started yelling that my wife is a b****,” Fires continued. “He started verbally attacking my

wife because he didn’t get the reaction out of me that he wanted.”

Fires then said he drove around the block and pulled back behind the man’s vehicle parked in front of the haircut business across the street on Monroe. He said he then walked up to the vehicle and said, “You can attack me, you can attack my business, but you will not attack my wife. There is absolutely no reason for that.

“I did not swing at him; I did not make contact with him in any fashion,” Fires continued. “I reached into the car and I flipped the bill of his hat back because he started running his mouth about my wife again. Immediately, as soon as I did that, I backed away from the car and I said, ‘you are not worth this’ and I got in my car and left.”

Fires said he is considering suing the company “because they never completed any of the work that they promised on his parking lot. “They were going to restore my parking lot back to the original condition it was in before they started using it, or better.”

Fires said there is a signed agreement (which he said his attorney has) for the company to use Callaghan’s parking lot. “It also states they will return the parking lot to ‘as is or better condition’ when they leave – which they have not done. They have not done what they promised to do. They are refusing to send anybody out.

“All of this is stemming from me try to get them to fix what they damaged – and they won’t – and now their contractor is trying to instigate me into altercations every

single chance he gets,” Fires continued.

This is what this company has done to us over the last year. This company has turned us to the point where we feel like we’re going crazy. Nobody is wanting to listen to how much damage they’ve done to our property and how much damage they’ve done to our business.”

The owner of the 101 Monroe Street building, Bea Nestor, declined to comment on the story.

The same day of the incident a police report was completed and forwarded to the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. As of press time, a decision from the county prosecutor has not been forwarded to Columbia Charter Township Police as the case is still pending.

Vehicle rammed . . . continued from page 1

pect vehicle description. A short time following the broadcast, the suspect vehicle was located unattended on the shoulder of the 6000 block of S. Meridian Road.

Further investigation discovered that the suspect made his way to Johnny’s Market on McDevitt at U.S. 127. The suspect was found

inside the store and was taken into custody without incident. Following the arrest, the suspect was provided medical care and lodged at the Jackson County Jail.

On Saturday, Oct. 24, a police report was forwarded to the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney Office for review. Upon the prosecutor’s

review of the report, Viger was charged with Operating While Intoxicated 3rd offense, a felony punishable by up to five years’ incarceration and \$5,000 fine; and Domestic Violence 2nd offense, a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year incarceration and \$1,000 fine.

Viger is currently being

held at the Jackson County Jail on a \$15,000 dollar cash/surety bond.

Assisting Columbia Charter Township Police were the Michigan State Police, Jackson County Office of the Sheriff, and the Napoleon Township Police.

Doing business as...

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County Clerk, reports the following recent recorded business registrations:

Taylored Bookkeeping Service: 628 Island, Grass Lake (Bookkeeping) Karen S. Taylor, Owner;
Segue Orchards: 10653 Antcliff Road, Brooklyn (Fruit Farm) David Edward Slusher, owner;
L.M. Cleaning: 725 Fairyland Avenue, Jackson (Cleaning Services for Business) Lyndsie Maree Cummings, owner;
Well, Look at That!: 1105 Williams Street, Jackson (Online Retail Sales, New and Used Merchandise) Ginger Marie Gibbs, owner;
Matthew Headley, 170 Maple Road, Michigan Center (Painting Contractor), Matthew Headley, owner;
Losey Farms: 15437 Clinton Road, Springport (Farm), Christopher D. Losey, owner;
Lena Pearlz Accessories: 2567 Dorvin Drive, Jackson (Crafters- create purses of various sizes) Dorothy Johnson, owner.

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Brooklyn election . . . continued from page 1

velopment that complements Brooklyn’s character. Clear communication and opportunities for public input can help ensure decisions reflect our community’s needs.

Tell us about your family.

My family includes my husband, Dr. Jordan Bach; our son, Lincoln; and another little one on the way.

What are your hobbies and/or interests in your spare time?

Candidate chose not to answer this optional question.

Write-in candidates whose names will NOT appear on the ballot

Write-in candidate: J Taylor Aue

Describe your qualifications and experience for this office.

Chairperson of Brooklyn Planning Commission Member of Columbia Township Planning Commission Local business owner



Aue

Explain your reasons for running for office.

Since moving here in 2020 my wife and I have made it our mission to invest our time, energy, and resources into Brooklyn’s continued positive growth. Whether by renovating vintage buildings, building new business, or contributing our time and efforts to the various municipal boards and committees. I noticed that there were two vacancies on the ballot for village trustees this fall so I registered as a write-in candidate.

What are the most important challenges you wish to address, and how do you propose to address them?

Effective communication is the number one challenge in any organization or relationship of any kind. Without it we struggle to meet even our most basic needs. With it, we can accomplish more than we ever imagined.

As with any growing community, there are always going to be questions to answer and problems to solve. We’ve just completed a wonderful Master Plan which lays out an exciting vision for the next 20 years of how our community will continue to grow and define itself. Throughout the process of developing this plan we spent a lot of time talking with the community. We heard so much positivity and enthusiasm for our wonderful village, both from within, and from our neighbors in the township

and surrounding areas. We have something truly special here in Brooklyn.

I’d like to continue to build on our efforts to connect and collaborate with people throughout the community. To make people aware of all the positive things happening here, to help the community and its leadership hear and understand each other, and to see us continue to grow in a positive way that centers on the small town charm we all know and love. We’re stronger when we work together.

Tell us about your family.

I grew up in Royal Oak. My wife, Abie, was born and raised here in Brooklyn. We met in our early 20s while both of us were living in Chicago and we just celebrated 20 years of marriage last week. We moved back to Brooklyn in 2020 with our two daughters and this has been home ever since.

What are your hobbies and/or interests in your spare time?

Abie and I are both kind of “project junkies,” so we tend to fill our plates with things we are passionate about and enjoy doing, but that don’t necessarily qualify as hobbies. She’s a lot better about the hobby stuff than me though. I am still learning.

But I’ve always been a big music person. I even briefly declared jazz guitar performance as a major in college, before eventually dropping out once and for all to join the “restaurant circus.” It’s been a full 20-plus years since then and music has been more of an appreciation than an active pursuit, but I am starting to find my way back these days and looking forward to devoting more time to practice and finding opportunities to lean into music with others.

Write-in candidate: Robert Davis

Describe your qualifications and experience for this office.

As an engineer I am very detail oriented. In my career I had to be very aware of safety issues. I was also responsible for the procurement of millions of dollars of vendor supplied material.

I have, for a few years now, been very active in the village as far as attending meetings and watching out for the public’s best interests. I am currently on the planning commission and I am serving as trustee on the village council as an appointed

member after the passing of Bob Jenson. I believe I bring a dose of common sense and an engineer’s attention to detail to the position, along with the ability to see things from many angles.

Explain your reasons for running for office.

I feel there are not enough voices being heard at the meetings. Also, I think spending is not being done in the best interests of the majority of the village. When we take \$200,000 dollars we got from cell tower lease buyout (on water tower) to use as our down payment to do a million dollar plus project at the park instead of using that money for sidewalks around town, I have to question its wisdom. Sure, the park will be nice, but how many people realize we are going to tear down the bathroom only to build another one at a different location? Meanwhile, we aren’t going to gain any parking spots. Focus always seems to be on the wants, not the needs.

Also, transparency for me is an issue we need to do better. The people are not being informed of what goes on. Especially at the council meetings. Look at the minutes of the latest meeting. Members’ comments are not being recorded completely and the people should know what their trustees think.

People are also not being treated the same and that should not be tolerated. Working to help one business but not another shouldn’t happen. Same goes for homeowners – ordinances need to be applied the same to all.

What are the most important challenges you wish to address, and how do you propose to address them?

Spending is first. Currently a financial policy is being worked on at my insistence. That should help, but the last draft I got a look at still left a lot to be desired. It needs more work.

I will continue to work to get the word to the people as to what’s going and what is being looked into, along with cost, if any. The people need to be able to see these things, so if they have ideas or issues they can make them known.

I also will be pushing so code enforcement is evenhanded regardless of parties involved. Ordinances or laws should serve all people the same. If the ordinance needs to be amended or modified for a legitimate reason, so be it. But not for the benefit of one person or piece of property.

Tell us about your family.

Married with two children and two grandchildren.

What are your hobbies and/or interests in your spare time?

I enjoy working on cars and spending time with my grandchildren.

Write-in candidate: Philip Krauss

Describe your qualifications and experience for this office.

Spent eight years previously as a village trustee. Owned a business for 28 years: DuBois Flower Shop. Spent 34 years in the Navy; serving active for two years, the remaining in the Reserves. Worked 47 years with Ford Motor Company. Attended Henry Ford College for two years in related trades. Member of Brooklyn American Legion for 43 years, as well as a member of the Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Eagles, and Friends of Walker Tavern.



Krauss

Explain your reasons for running for office.

To help better the Village of Brooklyn and to help better the future.

What are the most important challenges you wish to address, and how do you propose to address them?

Would like sidewalks on every street and sidewalks throughout the village. We have to compete with other small villages for business and manufacturing so that we can continue to grow. Doing this will bring the village together and bring these goals to life.

Tell us about your family.

I was born in Ohio. My family moved to Brooklyn when I was six years old and I attended the old Brooklyn School. Lived on the south shore of Wampplers Lake from 1943 until I moved to Brooklyn in 2013. Widower with six grown children. Life member of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church.

What are your hobbies and/or interests in your spare time?

Belong to the Miniature Railroad Club in Jackson. Love to do puzzles, love to be outdoors working in my yard, and also help take care of and mow my neighbors’ lawns.

Correction

In our Oct. 13 voter guide issue, under “Onsted village trustee candidates” on page 5, we inadvertently labeled one of the candidates with the wrong first name. We listed him as Mike Robotham when, in fact, his correct full name should have been written as Mark Robotham.

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Petting zoo



Jessica Mammel, owner of Rockin M Ranch, watches Mila Wyant, 8 “Chucky” (note the knife going through her head!) pet Sugar, a 30-year-old pony. Rockin M Ranch, of Grass Lake, had a petting zoo at the Norvell Trunk or Treat event this past Saturday. Photo by John Hummer.

WRITE IN
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Our history: Second in a series

The Brooklyn Public Square: 1918



Main Street Brooklyn Looking Southeast,” a 1900 Archie Brooks photo from *Old-Time Brooklyn...* showing horses, wagons and surreys hitched on the open public square. Photo credit: OTB, Paul H. Totten, pg. 105

Editor’s note: With recent news that Brooklyn officials are in the process of raising funds for a new and improved gazebo, we are pleased to present a series of writings by Dennis Neely detailing the history of how the gazebo, originally a full-fledged bandstand, came to be, as well as how it evolved over time. Neely, whose family ran the lumber yard for generations, is an award-winning outdoors writer whose attention to detail makes the look back on this portion of Brooklyn’s history a delightful and informative read. We hope you enjoy!



Brooklyn’s public square was the center for social gatherings, festivals and the American Legion Carnival in 1924. Photo credit: OTB, Paul H. Totten, pg. 13



By Dennis Neely
Ralph P. Bartlett’s ink pen scrawled brief sentences on a faint-lined page. On May 21, 1918, Brooklyn’s village clerk recorded the essence of that special meeting “...to consider the proposition of erecting a band stand on the public square.” The brevity of the minutes leaves the reader with “a ho-hum feeling” of a town council meeting its civic obligation.
Nine days later, Decoration Day 1918, someone photographed Brooklyn’s bandstand and turned the image into a postcard. Chas. L. Greene mailed the postcard to Paul Totten at Camp Custer, Michigan with a handwritten message:
“New Band Stand on Dec-

oration Day. We were playing the Star-Spangled Banner and the flag was going up when this was taken. I thought of you, Paul...” (James Neely Collection).
Solemn reverence for Old Glory is missing, so perhaps Greene took poetic license with his message to Totten as to the exact moment. Yet the public square bubbles with vitality. The band stand was not painted, the base was not enclosed and a ladder was the only means of access. Eight rag-topped vintage autos are parked helter-skelter. Town folk mingled about, chatting or listening to the band. A few men stood in front of D. W. Houser’s Rexall Drug Store.
The centerpiece of the Brooklyn band stand saga is

hidden in Bartlett’s minutes: “...on the public square.” The flavor of the times is lost to the casual 21st-century observer. And to be fair, few town folks of that day grasped the legacy that they were passing on to future generations.
Looking back, Hervey Parke’s survey crew marked off the Old Northwest Territory’s wilderness lands into mile-square sections for pension payments to American War for Independence veterans in 1815 (Dean R. Gutekunst, Jackson County Surveyor, November 4, 2005 interview).
Using a Detroit land office map of Parke’s survey, Elder Calvin Harlow Swain filed a land claim to 40 acres of

“government land” (section 24 & 19) in the Michigan Territory near the River Raisin on June 16, 1832 (*Round The Square: A Story of the Brooklyn Area in Prose and Photo*, Guilford H. Rothfuss, et.al., The Exponent Press, Brooklyn, MI, Dec. 1981, pg. 13).
Swain and his sons, Consider and Aurora, traveled from New York state. Consider plowed the land, built a lean-to shelter, a log cabin and sawmill near what is now Mill Street and Case Road. With a team of oxen, Aurora created the water impoundment to raise the water level to power the mill. The Swains also erected a sixteen-by-twenty-four-foot cabin on what is now the west side of Main Street (RTS, 13 & 14).
Other New York families who knew Calvin Swain arrived, and by 1834 the settlement included a blacksmith shop, school building (which served as the church on Sunday), a store, more cabins and a cemetery. On July 28,

See Brooklyn square next page



Today Brooklyn’s public square is still the center of community activities, like the recent Halloween costume judging at Pumpkin Quest. Photo credit: Wild Rivertree

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ACCREDITED BUSINESS

‘Brick the Square’ campaign underway

Brooklyn launches campaign to fund new Village Square gazebo



This is a rendering of the proposed new gazebo and bricking of the Village Square around it.

By John Hummer
Editor

The Village of Brooklyn is looking to continue a long-standing tradition of having a gazebo, or in its early years, a bandstand (see Oct. 20 Exponent historic feature by Dennis Neely), as a central hub of entertainment and other activities in the median of M-50, the center of the Village Square.

The Village Square's early bandstand structure dates back over 100 years. The current gazebo was built in 1982, making it 44-years-old. It is in a deteriorating condition and is not accessible to people with disabilities.

To fund the new gazebo, village officials have decided that money should not come out of the village budget for the structure and have launched a fundraising campaign titled "Brick the Square." The fundraiser kicked off Oct. 14 and will continue through Jan. 15, 2027.

Brick the Square is being organized by the Village of Brooklyn Parks Board. The Parks Board is working with



Roberts

Fundraising Brick of Indianapolis, Ind. for the fundraiser. Bricks are ordered through an online portal that's linked to the homepage of the village website, villageofbrooklyn.com.

Purchasers select a brick size and write a custom message that will be engraved on the brick. A limited selection of clip art is also available. The bricks will be installed in the walkways around the gazebo and adjacent Veterans Memorial. All funds raised will go to the construction of the new gazebo and walkways in the Village Square. Any remaining funds from the campaign will go to future maintenance of the new gazebo.

Aaron Dimick, Brooklyn's community and economic development director and staff coordinator of the project, says the new gazebo will be built with durable materials to stand the test of time and will feature an accessibility ramp, new stairs, and brick walkways that connect the gazebo to the Veterans Memorial in the Square and downtown sidewalks. There

are currently no walkways to the gazebo and memorial, making them difficult to reach.

Parks Board Chair Bob Spiess says he's excited to have the community participate in this project. "The gazebo is an important gathering place for Brooklyn, so it's wonderful that the community can help support the construction of a new gazebo and leave their legacy with a brick," he said. "We want to make sure people of all abilities are able to enjoy the gazebo, so I am especially looking forward to the accessibility ramp that's coming with the gazebo."

Officials say the gazebo is the centerpiece of Downtown Brooklyn and a community icon. It's proudly displayed on the village logo and is an important gathering place for parades, events, photo opportunities, and celebrations.

"I am excited to see the Gazebo project move forward," stated Village Manager Matt Swartzlander. "This iconic piece to our downtown and community has been around for over 100 years and to add the next chapter to it by creating an accessible

and usable space for the community will be another great enhancement to our growing and thriving downtown."

Village President Stella Roberts, who also serves on the Parks Board, says the fundraiser is needed so funds are not diverted from village services. "We thank brick purchasers for helping make our dream of a new gazebo into a reality," she said. "You do not need to be a Brooklyn resident to participate. Everyone is welcome to purchase a brick to show their support for the project."

Brick orders are accepted through Friday, Jan. 15, 2027. A link to the online order portal is posted on the homepage of the village website, villageofbrooklyn.com. Plans call for new gazebo construction to begin in spring 2027, with completion expected in summer 2027.

For more information, contact Aaron Dimick, community and economic development director, at 517-592-2591, aarond@villageofbrooklyn.com.

Brooklyn public square from page 4

1834 the tiny hamlet became known as "Swainsville" when Calvin Swain was appointed the first postmaster (RTS, 15).

Anson DeLamater was one of those early settlers. He

surveyed the town, drew a map and filed the necessary documents in the Jackson County territorial office along with a plat of Swainsville, which included a change of name. In part the filing reads: "...the premises described in the within village plat as town lots, public grounds; and as therein set forth—constituting a village to be known as the town of Brooklyn, August 5, 1836" (RTS, 16).

The significance of this filing is that what is now called the "village square" is dedicated to the people of Brooklyn, a simple act with a profound legal impact that continues on today. It appears that DeLamater and those responsible for shaping the newly-formed village foresaw the importance of shared community space.

Most village streets were more grass than gravel. Main Street (called Adrian Street on DeLamater's map) was not paved until 1925. Hitching posts tethered horses, wagons and surreys, which later

gave way to Henry Ford's Model T and the inevitable car dealers on Main Street.

In those early years, there was no boulevard; the town square was simply an open space, which along with the school building/church became Brooklyn's social hub—thus the need to get approval for a fixed structure, like the band stand. The public square hosted Decoration and Independence Day celebrations, numerous social gatherings, festivals, carnivals and the itinerant circus.

After WWI, American Legion Post No. 63 (now No. 315) sponsored a town carnival with tents, rides and vendors, all arranged around the town square with the band stand and flagpole prominent in the center (RTS, 277).

Townpeople gathered on the village square on Friday and Saturday nights to socialize, discuss local concerns and hash over state and national politics ("Going to Town"). From time to time, local musical groups entertained, and the band stand

afforded a prime location for filling the public square with joyous music...

Delve into your town's history, be safe and may God bless you.

To be continued...

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UNIT #A26 MARIAH DAVIS
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UNIT #A29 TIMOTHY ORTBING
Old dressers, fishing poles, heater, ladder, dvd movies, etc.

UNIT #B39 BRAD BIBBINS
Some electronics, boxes, some furniture, kid toys, cooler, etc.

UNIT #C37 ANTHONY HART
Generator, couch, globe, boxes,

UNIT #D18 HEATHER SMITH
Dolly, totes, some furniture, boxes, etc.

UNIT #D38 RHONDA MAXSON
Furniture, cabinets, grandfather clock, clothes, misc. household items

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The fine art of caning kept alive



At the encouragement of his Grandmother Pawson, Scott Holtz taught himself how to cane chairs when he was 16.

Story and photos
By Michelle McLemore
Staff writer

Some grandparents teach their grandkids how to play “Heart & Soul” on the piano and how to lose at checkers. Scott Holtz, resident of Adrian and Brooklyn village treasurer, was encouraged by his to learn to cane chairs. It grew into a lifelong hobby and contract service.

Chair caning is the traditional craft of weaving furniture seats and backs using the glossy outer bark of the rattan palm vine (*Calamus rotang*).

Holtz recalls it started with a direct question. Grandma Marian Howard Pawson, of Rome Township asked, “Are you interested in doing a project with me?” Pawson proposed that she would refinish her four dining room chairs if he would learn how to cane them. It was 1991 and Holtz was 16. With his assent, “Her exact words were, ‘Go get a library book.’” Holtz promptly visited the Lenawee County Public Library to borrow a book and begin his new studies.

He bought his first weaving material from a craft shop on U.S. 223 on the west side of Adrian. “My first attempt, I had the wrong size cane,” he said. “I ripped it out and tried again. The second time, I used a narrower cane and focused on the pattern.”

At present, Holtz is working his way through re-caning his grandmother’s four chairs again and demonstrated the craft on one of them at the recent Wooden Old Stone Schoolhouse fall festival. Over the years he has demonstrated the heritage craft at various fairs and while teaching classes.

Several aspects have kept his interest over the years. Early on, Holtz recalled, “I

think encouragement, learning technique, and availability of chairs played a huge role in keeping me interested.” The tools and mechanics were just the beginning. “Understanding the pattern and how to weave it is a small percentage of the process. Cane hydration, tension and rattan direction are all factors in making a good seat.” But then after confidence of skill was achieved, something else arose: challenge.

“From the shape of the seat to the symmetry of the drilled holes, each chair presents a new challenge and new ideas,” Holtz noted. “Each chair is like a familiar yet brand-new puzzle developed by its original creator.”

Holtz smiled, weaving as we talked in his home parlor. “I have made jokes about someone being on the drill press after two bottles of wine for lunch. Spacing of the holes are key, but you have to play the cards you’re dealt. Now when I start a project, I take bits of cane and look at the layout. I evaluate how the pattern looks. How do the edges look? What challenges do I need to work around? But above all, I learn from each chair and I’m not afraid to cut something out and try it again.”

As a historian, Holtz is also driven to learn some of the story behind any chair brought to him to restore. “I want to know if this is your great grandma’s rocking chair that has been in your family for 130 years...Is it part of a set?” If not, he canes each chair differently while conscious of fit for its historical time and his drive to restore the chair’s beauty and usefulness.

“Sit in it, use it, love it. If the seat breaks, I’ll fix it. Most of my friends view my projects as art. Yet, chairs were meant

“Serious conversations about conservation versus restoration and repair – rather than replace – has focused my beliefs about projects.”

Scott Holtz
chair caner

to be sat in; rocking chairs were meant to be rocked,” Holtz mused.

However, the art of caning has “elbowed its way to the front” of what keeps Holtz in the craft these days. He studied the caning work of his great-great uncle, Carl Teachout, of Rome Center – admiring its extreme symmetry. Joyfully, he shared, “This year, I re-caned one of his chairs for Chris Schultz [of Onsted]. I followed the pattern in one of the other family chairs.” When personal generational heritage and artistry come together, it surely makes the project extra special.

In the mid-2000s, Holtz was loaned “Ideas for the Experienced Caner” written by John and Lillian Peterka. The book had been part of his husband Greg Schira’s Grandpa Leo Osinski’s library. “From this book I learned the Star Pattern,” he recalled. “Since then, I’m trying new patterns that I come across with directions or examples. The latest one is the Spider Web.” A rocking chair in his home shows the beautiful success he had learning the pattern.

Along the caning journey Holtz shared he has met “the most interesting people” and enjoyed many great conversations. “Talks about ‘breaking the seat out’ is always a good laugh. But serious conversations about conservation versus restoration and repair rather than replace has focused my beliefs about projects.”

He admitted, “I struggle with putting a more elaborate pattern in a rocking chair back then what was originally there. Fancier patterns outside of the Standard Six had a very finite time and place; these types of projects are few and far between. While we might look at it as extraordinary today, the rocking chair would look out of fashion in the day it was made.”

For those interested in learning the craft, Holtz recommends the 1958 “Craft How to Re-Cane a Chair Seat” by Dorothy Lambert Brightbill. (Copies can be ordered online for \$5.50.) Once someone has the basics down, John and Lillian Peterka’s “Ideas for the Experience Caner” books 1 and 2 are also recommended.

Then of course, there is the

in-person mentoring. “I tell people, if you tried YouTube or a library book and you get stuck, give me a call. Let’s have lunch and talk. I want to pass that support I received along to the next person. I want to make sure the craft continues, especially locally.”

Additionally, Holtz teaches caning at Sam Beauford Woodworking Institute in Adrian. He is teaching the Standard Six pattern on Feb 13, 2027. (The Standard Six pattern is only six strands: two vertical, two horizontal, and a diagonal each way.) He is also hosting a three-day chair workshop, June 28-30, 2027.” To register go to sbwi.edu.

For those who have a chair that needs caning but not the ambition or interest of how-to, Holtz is open to work. He noted, “I’m at the point where it’s more than occasional projects, but less than a business. It’s more like a contract service. After an initial conversation about projects, I recommend clients take a look at my Facebook page to evaluate if they would like to be placed on my caning schedule.” To talk with Holtz about a possible project or the art of caning, email sa-holtz@yahoo.com.

From King Tutankhamun’s daybed around 1325 BC to a bustling 19th century worldwide industry, caned chairs were popularized because of their resistance to vermin, moths, and dust. Lightweight, they could be moved from front porch to living room easily while maintaining longevity in warm, humid climates.

Today, when it seems manufacturing companies create for short-term and return customers, for caners like Scott Holtz, a caned chair holds more than the promise of a momentary rest: it holds respect for the past, ingenuity and artistry skills today, and a hands-on commitment to do his best for the future.



Holtz shared, “Understanding the pattern and how to weave it is a small percentage of the process. Cane hydration, tension and rattan direction are all factors in making a good seat. The chair itself is another challenge.



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Obituary

Gilbert Joseph Gaitan



Gilbert Joseph Gaitan, of Battle Creek, Michigan., passed away on October 5, 2026, at the age of 87. He was born on February 26, 1939, in Jackson, Mich., and lived a life marked by hard work, devotion to family, and a deep appreciation for music, animals, and the simple joys of everyday kindness. Gilbert was a proud U.S. Army veteran. In his working years, he spent many years with Clark Equipment in Jackson and later retired from EDSCHA of Jackson as a tool and die maker. He was also a lifetime member of the

Cement City Masonic Lodge, a reflection of his lasting ties to his community and the values he carried throughout his life. Outside of work, Gilbert found happiness in the things he loved most. He had a special affection for dogs and animals of every kind, and he could often be found feeding the birds, squirrels, deer, cranes, and even a feral cat named Tommy. Music was another enduring part of his life. He could play the drums, mandolin, trumpet, and clarinet, and for many years he and his brothers played together in a band.

He especially loved spending time with his family, with a particular joy in being with his grandsons and great-grandchildren. Those who knew him will also remember the tenderness of his words and the love behind them, especially when he would say to "give my boys a hug and kiss from me." Gilbert is survived by his daughters, Jenina Fletcher and Robin Gaitan; grandchildren, Corey and Evan (Kimberly); and great-grandchildren Mason, Grayson, Weston and Jace. He is also survived by his bonus family, Donna (John) Christian along with their children, Ashley, and Andy (Kate), and their children, Madalyn, Ryland, Briella, Flo-

rence, and Gloria. He took great pride in his family and treasured the time they shared together across the generations. He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Simon and Emilia Gaitan; his first wife, Renatta; his second wife, Judy Corning; his infant son, Eric; his brothers, Guadalupe, Celestino, and Richard; and by his sister, Lucy. Gilbert will be remembered for his steady presence, his love of family, his musical spirit, and the care he showed to the world around him. His memory will remain a blessing to those who knew and loved him.

HOTLWEEN this Sunday

Join Heart O' The Lakes Church in Brooklyn for HOTLWEEN this Sunday, Oct. 25, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. There will be candy, games, prizes, free food (hot dogs, popcorn, etc.) and beverages, and a bounce house available for kids to play in. There is no admission fee. Heart O' The Lakes Church is located at 7031 Jefferson Road, Brooklyn.

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Death notices

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County Clerk, reports the following recent recorded deaths:

Jane D. Parson, 86, Jackson; Betsy Sue Puhr, 76, Jackson; Daniel Richard Gautz, 76, Jackson; Charles Wesley Hamilton Jr., 65, Jackson; Terry Lee Hobus, 68, Blackman Township; Barbara J. Meehan-Newton, 80, Somerset Township; Clayton Ray Tilford, 88, Blackman Township; Stanley Lee Keeler, 76, Springport Township; Andrea Jean Barbara Rumpsza, 84, Jackson; Esta Eleine Fish, 78, Spring Arbor Township; Esther Elaine Shoemaker, 91, Jackson; Peter Tsoukalas, 73, Blackman Township; Sharon L. Decker, 83, Moscow Township; Matthew Paul Weston, 71, Jackson; Charles Richard Carne, 71, Grass Lake Township; George Robert Lembke, 97, Blackman Township; Corrine Susan Hawley, 86, Sandstone Township; Mildred C. Howell, 100, Summit Township; Robert David Williams, 82, Summit Township; David Todd Wilson, 79, Leoni Township; Helen Ann Arend, 92, Blackman Township; James Jay Cole, 84, Reading Township; Barbara Ann George, 77, Leoni Township; Margot Harris Magee, 74, Leoni Township; Ray Lee Hendricks, 77, Michigan Center; John David Cadavid, 53, Jackson; Deborah Ann Bennett, 66, Jackson; Phillip James Lanaville, 59, Blackman Township; Andre Levelle Ollie, 56, Blackman Township;

Rita June Few, 70, Jackson; Sandra Ann McAllister, 82, Henrietta Township; Karen Lucille Escott, 85, Blackman Township; Janet Marie VanBuren, 82, Sandstone Township; Erick Tracy Doke Sr., 64, Blackman Township; Thomas Guy Golding, 91, Summit Township; Jean Wray Cooke, 96, Summit Township; Sally Anne Hawes, 79, Blackman Township; Sandra Kaye Brown, 77, Blackman Township; Scott Russell Tiffany, 59, Blackman Township; Mary Carol Ashbrook, 66, Parma Township; Jeanne Marilyn Banks, 79, Hanover Township; John William Branigan, 36, Jackson; Janet Elizabeth Kalahar, 86, Summit Township; Frank Theodore Muscarella Jr., 76, Grass Lake Township; Dolores Mae Drew, 83, Henrietta Township; Leland Wallace Pelham, 91, Spring Arbor Township; Scott Alson Whitney, 70, Henrietta Township; Bernadine Lucille Grinnell, 92, Napoleon Township; Carol Ann Anderson, 79, Summit Township; Carolyn Rose Burkholder, 84, Blackman Township; Denise Louise Kiebler, 65, Napoleon Township; Daniel Elbert Dart, 44, Blackman Township; Lillian Marie Sosinski, 81, Sandstone Township; Doris Jean Cambric, 82, Summit Township; Dale Dalbert Kemp, 94, Summit Township; Robert Harry Richard, 90, Blackman Township.

Columbia Charter Township police report

October 15	October 17	October 15
Found Property: Jefferson Road; General Non-Criminal: Hewitt Road; North Main Street; Motorist assist: Jefferson Road/Hyde Road; Suspicious Situation: Eagle Point Drive; Parking: Monroe Street/Water Street; Personal Welfare: Kelley Road; Property Security: Hyde Road; Disorderly: North Main Street; Domestic: East Mill Pond Drive;	General Non-Criminal: Wesch Road; Wamplers Lake Road; Monroe Pike/Wamplers Lake Road; Monroe Pike; Parking: North Main Street; Property Security: Hyde Road; Loud Music: Purvis Lane;	Stony Lake Road, Napoleon Township;
October 16	October 18	October 20
Overdose: Marshall Street; General Non-Criminal: Monroe Pike; School Street; Hewitt Road; Sherman Street; Domestic: Ernest Street; Assist other agency: Wamplers Lake Road, Norvell Township; Larceny: Jefferson Road; Civil Dispute: North Grand Pointe Drive; Personal Welfare: South Main Street; Suspicious Situation: Claremont Circle; Malicious Destruction of Prop: Archwood Circle; Property Security: Hyde Road;	Field Contact: Jefferson Road; General Non-Criminal: Constitution Avenue; Q Lane; Peace Officer: Somerset Drive; Parking: Hyde Road; Sherman Street; Assist other agency: Edgewood Court, Napoleon Township; Property Security: Hyde Road;	General Non-Criminal: South Main Street; School Street; Hewitt Road; Personal Welfare: South Main Street; Marshall Street; Property Security: Hyde Road; Accident: Jefferson Road/Ocean Beach Road;
	October 19	October 21
	General Non-Criminal: Hyde Road; Malicious Destruction of Prop: Utopia Drive; Property Security: Hawthorne Drive; Brooklyn Road; Hyde Road; Suspicious Situation: Water Street; Accident: South Main Steet/Constitution Avenue; Assist other agency:	Personal Welfare: South Main Street; General Non-Criminal: School Street; Hewitt Road; Garrison Drive; Civil Dispute: Chicago Street; Disorderly: Case Road; Property Security: Hyde Road; Suspicious Situation: Vicary Road;
		Columbia Charter Township Fire Department
		Columbia Charter Township Fire Department
		October 15
		Rescue: Kelley Road; North Main Street; East Mill Pond

Marriage licenses

Cierra Sowle, Jackson County Clerk, reports the following recent recorded marriage license:

Roberto Antonio-Elio Silvestri, Jackson, and Bridget Marie Avery, Augusta; Tenasha Rachelle Neely, Jackson, and Robert Davelle Hoskins, Lansing; Alisha Jo Tedder, Jackson, and Danny Michael Smith, Jackson; Kayla Renee Williams, Jackson, and Kurtis Edward Creger, Jackson; Charles Steven Hightower, Brooklyn, and Courtney Jean Braun, Brooklyn; Kacie Marcelle Buck, Horton, and Randall Scott McDowl, Jackson; Jennifer Ann Miller, Brooklyn, and William Landen Estopp, Brooklyn; Warren Allen Barrett, Jackson, and Tammy Lynn Henley, Jackson; Jeremy Gordon Harrington, Jackson, and Aimee Rosemarie Morgan, Jackson; Logan Michael Page, Grass Lake, and Allison Elizabeth Denman, Grass Lake; Blaney Belle Suliman, Grass Lake, and Isaac Klintworth, Jackson; Jay Edward Sherman Jr., Jackson, and Amanda Gale Hamlin, Jackson; Brittany Ann Moyer, Albion, and Michael Matthew Beatty, Ionia; Romeo T-Tyrone Patterson, Jackson, and Karessa Charnisa James, Jackson; Korena Elizabeth Vetitoe, Manchester, and Hunter Robert Carson, Cement City; Hannah Elaine Decorte, Jackson, and Joshua Scott Kraeuter, Jackson;

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Closet Explosion has clothing, accessories for any budget



Shelley Freiberger of Onsted, right, shows off a shirt she was proud to purchase at Closet Explosion. Owner Sherry Center is on the left. The business is located at 105 N. Main Street at the corner of Monroe (former location of Weatherwax Pharmacy) in downtown Brooklyn.

**Story and photos
By John Hummer
Editor**

Sherry Center of Clarklake spent many of her working years in the medical profession – first as a CENA (nursing assistant) and then as a licensed practical nurse (LPN). However, her years in that field ended recently when she retired to take care of her dad. But she still needed something to do for herself.

“I wanted to do something that I could build on – that was going to be mine – and not work for somebody else,” she shared. “I wanted to be able to help families and the community and give back. A lot of people can’t afford prices on [new] clothing – especially name-brand. I wanted to do something that I enjoy, that I like to do, and be my own boss.”

Sherry chose retail with a focus on clothing. “I’ve always loved clothing – it’s something that I know, I really love and enjoy.”

Then she found the perfect location in downtown Brooklyn at the corner of Main and Monroe streets and started a consignment store in early August. As closets often get filled up and are bursting at the seams, she named her business Closet Explosion.

The store primarily has women’s clothing, though there are a couple racks of men’s clothing as well. Sherry noted that she plans to get more men’s clothing. She also has a nice supply of kids’ clothing and baby and infant attire.

“We’ve got plus sizes and junior sizes – something for the whole family – that’s what it’s all about,” she said.

Customers can also find a myriad of accessories at Closet Explosion – including purses, handbags, wallets, phone cases, hats, boots, and more. Sherry’s niece, Karissa, carries a supply of soaps, candles, wax melts, and air fresheners under the brand-name of Dolly’s Scents in the store.

There are plenty of seasonal items in the store as well, including wreaths and fall décor, which will change as the seasons change.

Those who bring in items for Sherry to sell – consigners – will need to sign an agreement with her. She currently has approximately 20 consigners. “I try to make it very convenient for them,” she says. I try to make it very, very simple and not time consuming for them – and they seem to enjoy it and like it – that’s the feedback I get.”

So, how does the system for consigners work at Closet Explosion? “Because I [recently] opened, I do 60-40 – meaning I get 60% and they get 40% of the selling price of their item,” she explained. “At the end of the month, whatever items of theirs sell, they’ll get 40%. Hopefully, when I get a lot more customers coming in, I’ll be able to do 50-50.”

Sherry noted that she is very selective about items she will accept from consigners. “I don’t think that you should walk into a consignment store and see something that looks like it’s been worn [many] times,” she said. “If I don’t like it, I’m not going to put it in my store.”

Sherry added that she also gets new items in the store from various online sources and boutiques she frequents. Another nice feature of Closet Explosion is that there is a customer fitting room.

“Hopefully, we’ll be able to grow bigger and be able to give back and help families, because our prices aren’t bad here,” Sherry says. “I don’t want our prices to be sky-high where it breaks people’s banks or wallets. That’s not what we’re about. I don’t look at my customers as a dollar sign. I look at them as people to get to know and build a relationship with based on trust and communication.”

Sherry grew up on Evans Lake in Tipton and graduated from Clinton High School. Following high school, she birthed her daughter and then went to college for training as a CENA (nursing assistant). She then met her husband, Steven, and around 2001 went back to school to become a licensed practical nurse. It was around that time when she and her husband moved to a place on Vineyard Lake. She worked as an LPN at a skilled nursing facility in Jackson from around 2005 until recently when she retired to take care of her dad. They later moved to Clark Lake where the couple currently resides.

Sherry gave a shout-out for the help she has gotten from Steven. “He helps in the background a lot,” she noted. “Whatever I need, he’s out there building it, delivering it, or doing what I need him to do. He’s been very, very wonderful, and very supportive.”

Closet Explosion is located at 105 N. Main Street in downtown Brooklyn and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 517-250-9143 or find Closet Explosion on Facebook or TikTok.



Sherry Center proudly shows her display of purses and handbags at Closet Explosion.

Local blood drives

The American Red Cross is in need of blood to help those whose lives depend on a blood transfusion. Every blood donation can save up to three lives. There are several blood drives coming up in the Exponent readership area for donors to consider giving at:

- Thursday, Oct. 29 at Napoleon High School, 201 West Avenue, Napoleon, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3 at Onsted High School, 10109 Slee Road, Onsted, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 12 at St. Joseph Shrine Church, 8956 U.S. 12, Brooklyn, 12 noon to 6 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 13 at Grass Lake High School, 11500 Warrior Trail, Grass Lake, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 17 at Grass Lake United Methodist Church, 449 E. Michigan Avenue, Grass Lake, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 20 at Addison High School, 219 Comstock Street, Addison, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 25 at Brooklyn American Legion, 211 Chicago Street, Brooklyn, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

To register to give blood, visit redcross-blood.org or call 800-733-2767.