



charter township

oshtemo NEWSLETTER

est. 1839

December 2012

As a result of the November General Election your Township Board members are:

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell

Clerk Deb Everett

Treasurer Nancy Culp

Trustee Nancy Carr

Trustee Dusty Farmer

Trustee Lee Larson

Trustee Coleman Lutz



BLOOD DRIVE NEWS!!

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Come in for chili **and** a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to LaPinata.

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Come in for a hot bowl of homemade soup **and** a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant.

October winners were Alan Coleman & Tonya Gibbard
Door prizes provided by donations from some Oshtemo Township Employees. *Winners are typically drawn and notified the day after the blood drive.*

Blood Drives are held at
Oshtemo Township Hall
7275 West Main

FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE - Winter Tax Information

Winter tax notices were mailed November 30th. If you received a tax bill but your mortgage company is responsible for paying it, remind them they must request the tax bill each tax season; forward your bill to your mortgage company. If you did not receive a tax bill, your mortgage company requested it; we will send you a copy upon request. You may verify your tax bill has been paid by calling the Treasurer's Office or at www.oshtemo.org

Taxes can be paid with a credit card online or by phone through Official Payments Corporation. Visit our website or call 1-800-272-9829 and enter jurisdiction code 7009. You will be charged a 3% fee. At this time credit and debit cards are not accepted at the counter; the Treasurer's Office is exploring this option.

As a reminder if your tax bill has a notice that says "**SUMMER TAX BILL DUE**" contact the office for the current amount due as interest accrues monthly.

2012 Tax Dates

February 14th—winter taxes due. Postmark of February 14th will be accepted but **MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 20, 2013 WITH NO EXCEPTIONS.**

February 15th to March 1st— winter taxes will be assessed a 3% late penalty.

March 1st—delinquent summer and winter taxes are turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer's Office and must be paid there.

Township Office Hours

Monday thru Friday 8 am to 5 pm
(1st Thurs each month open at 9 am after staff meeting)

Seasons Greetings to All!

Oshtemo Township will be CLOSED

Dec 24—Christmas Eve

Dec 25—Christmas Day

Dec 31—New Years Eve

Jan 1—New Years Day

Jan 21—Martin Luther King Day

Feb 18—President's Day

OUR NEW WEB SITE IS HERE!!

www.oshtemo.org



If you have any questions, concerns or requests for the new site, please contact the Clerk's Office at 215.5224 or deverett@oshtemo.org

It's easy to report a streetlight problem online at www.consumersenergy.com
Search "streetlight repair"

How to contact your Oshtemo Township Officials

General Information 375-4260

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220

Clerk Deb Everett 216-5224

Treasurer Nancy Culp 216-5221

Ordinance Enforcement Officer Rick Suwarsky 216-5227

Assessor Cathy Harrell 216-5225

Planning Director Greg Milliken 216-5223

Fire Chief Mark Barnes 375-0487

Kalamazoo Area Building Authority 216-9643



KALAMAZOO AREA BUILDING AUTHORITY—As of October 1st, the Kalamazoo Area Building Authority is conducting all business related to building permits and inspections for Oshtemo, Kalamazoo, Comstock & Cooper Townships. The west side office of KABA is located at the Oshtemo Township Hall meaning residents of the Township can still conduct all building related business at this location. As noted above there is a new phone number—216-9643.

FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Engineering services in Oshtemo Township have traditionally been provided by outside, private consulting firms and agencies. These services included major public infrastructure projects and studies as well as day-to-day support services to Township staff providing technical data on the utility systems, roads, capital improvements, and site plan reviews. In an effort to both improve the efficiency of Township services to residents and businesses and reduce the overall cost, the Township has created a part-time Municipal Engineer position to provide the day-to-day support services described above. The Township will continue to maintain a relationship with its Engineering Consultant to provide the full range of design services that our growing community needs. Prein & Newhof is the designated firm for 2013.



In early November, Marc Elliott, P.E. was hired as the Municipal Engineer and has been working 20 hours a week. His name may be familiar to many in the Township. Prior to joining the Township, Marc worked at the Oshtemo offices of Prein & Newhof from 2000 to 2012 and for the past six years, served as the principal engineer for Oshtemo Township.

Marc's focus for his 34 year career has been on municipal engineering, including utilities, roads, and infrastructure. He has also spent time during his career as a regional planner and environmental compliance professional. He and his wife, Laurie Russell, are owners of the Nature Connection store in downtown Kalamazoo and live in the Vicksburg area.

Marc will be working in the Planning Department and will continue to assist all Township Staff and Boards on infrastructure and engineering related issues. His expertise will be called upon immediately with sewer and water issues, road improvements, and site plan reviews. If you have questions about these issues, please feel free to contact Marc at: melliott@oshtemo.org or 269.375.4260.



FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE....

Principal Residence Exemption. When you receive your December tax bill, please take a moment to check the **Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)** status. If you are claiming your property as your legal principal residence you are entitled to a **tax exemption of up to 18 mills** of school operating taxes. Your bill will show 100% PRE. You will also notice that School Operating billing will show a 0.00 amount. If you believe there is an error, please let us know as soon as possible.

Leaving For the Winter? Good for you! But don't forget to let us know! We will be putting things in the mail for you and want you to receive mailings in a timely fashion. Please call us at 216-5225 or stop in and ask for a temporary change of address.

Assessment Notices will be mailed in mid-February. Please take the time to read through this; it is important! You have 2 opportunities to question your assessment. First, you can call me to discuss the matter between the time you receive your new assessment and March 1st. Second, you can appeal your assessment to the March Board of Review. These will be the only opportunities you have, so take advantage of them.

2012 Parks News

Township Park—the transformation of the park behind the Township Hall was completed with the assistance of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant and we saw a large increase in the use of the park with the addition of basketball courts, tennis and pickleball courts, new playground, new picnic pavilion and restroom facilities. The large picnic pavilion can be reserved, check the website for more information. New trails will offer winter activities for cross country skiing or snowshoeing; take a break at the new overlook deck.



Flesher Field—we are awaiting word on a MNRTF grant application for Flesher Field which would allow us to reconfigure the driveway for safer parking, construct new restroom facilities and a walking path. We expect to hear by mid-December if we have been awarded this grant. A pergola was constructed through an Eagle Scout project and Friends of the Parks provided plantings for it.

Grange Hall—we continue to seek opportunities to fund a renovation of this historical treasure. Preliminary design was completed for a small playground which will be funded with donations specifically contributed for this purpose. This project will be pursued in the spring.

Drake House—the Oshtemo Historical Society continues to make wonderful progress on its restoration efforts of this property. This site has been placed on the State Register of Historical Places and application for National status is pending.

THANK YOU—To Bill & Karla Sams for planting and maintaining flowers at the Township Hall driveway and Township Park entrance. Your contributions added a colorful touch and are much appreciated!



Friends of the Parks 2012 in Review

As the year comes to a close, this was a year for the Friends to organize the non-profit group necessary for a successful organization. We have been able to create our logo, a trifold brochure available at the Township Hall and a web site www.oshtemofriends.org where we are able to accept donations and post our current activities or events. Also during the past year we were able to organize and sponsor the newly renovated park dedication in May. The Friends were also able to donate \$1500.00 towards the construction of the renovation of this Township project. In the spring we held a successful tree seedling sale in conjunction with the Conservation District.

Some of the board members took on park weeding at Flesher Field and plantings were placed to enhance the new pergola (an Eagle Scout Project). The Friends also volunteered for the 3rd annual Consumers Sunburst Run. Moving forward, we still have a few dedication benches for purchase and donors of \$200.00 or more receive a complimentary FOP tee shirt. Look for our logo around the Township to see your opportunity to volunteer or donate to our organization. Friends of the Parks is here to serve our community. Please take the opportunity to contact any board member for additional information as we are always in need of additional help in our mission.

Grace Borgfjord, Chair 375.6058 or gborgfjord@yahoo.com



SAVE THE DATE!!

The 4th Annual Consumers Sunburst Run will take place on

Saturday, April 20, 2013

Kick start your run season and join us to welcome back warmer temperatures and celebrate Earth Day.

There will be a one-mile Family Fun Run following the 5K Run/Walk. Children 12 and under run FREE.

To learn more about these exciting changes or for sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.ConsumersSunburst.org or follow us on Facebook @ www.facebook.com/Sunburst5K
Early registration specials will be posted on the website in December....be sure to check it out!

Winter Fire Safety Tips

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary.

Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.

Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening.

Do not use excessive amounts of paper to build a fire.

Before you go to sleep ensure a fire in the fireplace is out.

Other Tips

Kerosene heaters are not recommended for supplemental in-home heating.

Never use an oven/stove as a supplemental heating device.

Be careful not to overload electrical circuits if using electric portable heaters.

Consider carbon monoxide detectors for every level of your home.

Ensure smoke detectors are in working order and have fresh batteries.

If you have a fire hydrant in your front yard keep the hydrant clear of snow.



FROM Clerk Deb Everett.....2012 ELECTION WRAP UP

2012 was a very busy election year—4 elections in all. We saw just under 70% of the 16,882 registered voters turn out for the November General Election.

I want to thank our dedicated election inspectors who attend training and work a very long election day for the voters of Oshtemo Township. I am also very grateful to the locations who host our polling places. Their contribution to the election process is a vital and much appreciated service to our community:

Peoples Church
Fourth Reformed Church
West Kalamazoo Christian Church
Summer Ridge Apartments
Oshtemo Branch Library
Oshtemo United Methodist Church

If you have questions regarding voter registration, absentee ballots or the election process, please contact the Clerk's Office at 216.5224 or e-mail deverett@oshtemo.org



The next scheduled election is
May 7, 2013.



OSHTEMO RESIDENT HONORED

Oshtemo resident Harold VanHeuvelen, age 93, was recently honored in Washington D.C. with a performance by the U.S. Army Orchestra of a symphony he wrote in 1945 at the end of World War II, but had never been played. The more than 200 pages of music, titled Opus 7, tell the story of the sadness of war to the frenzy of combat to victory. Now a retired colonel in the Army Reserve, Mr. VanHeuvelen was stationed in New Orleans during World War II as an instructor for recruits. Prior to entering the armed forces, he studied music in college and after the war, taught music in public schools. Mr. VanHeuvelen's story was recently featured on several major news outlets including CNN and NPR. Mr. VanHeuvelen moved to Oshtemo when he married his wife Alma with whom he had attended Hope College in the 1930's. They each had lost their respective spouses in 2003 and 2004. While on a visit to the area, he reconnected with Alma; they were married in 2006.

In response to requests from the public who have seen and heard his story, Mr. VanHeuvelen is in the process of obtaining a recording contract. You can see his story and hear a portion of his symphony on line—search for Harold VanHeuvelen.

We congratulate our fellow Oshtemo resident on this wonderful accomplishment!

OSHTEMO RESIDENT WINS GOLD MEDAL

Oshtemo resident and Special Olympian Tim Dillenbeck, age 26, won a gold medal at the International Powerlifting Federation world championship, in Puerto Rico. He was one of only two athletes from Michigan to participate in the competition. To win the gold, Tim, who weighs 140 pounds, squatted 187.5 pounds, benched 143.25 pounds and pulled 347 pounds on the dead-lift, for a total of 677.25 pounds.

An event to celebrate Tim's win was held at Harding's Marketplace at West Main and Drake Road, where Dillenbeck has worked for the last nine years.

CONGRATULATIONS

TIM!!



Township Government 101!

With seven elected officials in Oshtemo, do you know what their legal responsibilities are for your Township? A few excerpts from the book, "Authorities and Responsibilities of Michigan Township Officials, Boards, and Commissions" (MTA 2008), by local Attorney John Bauckham, can help with understanding--

Supervisor--- sees that all laws and ordinances are enforced, is responsible to the Township Board for the efficient administration of all departments, is personnel director of all Township employees, is an ex-officio member of all committees of the Township Board, manages and supervises all public improvements, works, and undertakings of the Township, and prepares and administers the annual township budget.

Clerk--- has final custody of all records, books, contracts, and papers of the Township, runs the elections, prepares synopsis of minutes within 8 days of the meeting, posts special meeting notices, maintains zoning ordinance and general ordinance books, maintains the general ledger and processes payroll and accounts payable.

Treasurer—receives all funds belonging to the Township, including taxes and ordinance fines, responsible to stay within Township budget, as adopted and amended, and, since 2007, required to make quarterly written reports to the Township Board concerning the status of all township fund investments.

Trustees—have a "fiduciary responsibility to manage the affairs of the township for the best interests of the public". They do this by having an equal vote on legislative and administrative decisions within the purview of the Township Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve Oshtemo Charter Township.

Don't hesitate to call or e-mail 216.5220 or libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Supervisor

INFORMATION FROM THE KALAMAZOO COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION REGARDING WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

As part of their on-going winter maintenance assessment for the 2012-2013 winter seasons, KCRC has incorporated a 3 shift program; **4:00 pm, 12:00 am, 7:30 am** (also available at 4:00 am if necessary) These changes incorporate limited staffing and equipment for optimal coverage during winter storms. The priorities within these shifts will be:

- Designated snow route roads**
- Balance of primary roads**
- Through local roads**
- Subdivision or plat streets**
- Dead-end and cul-de-sac roads**



REMINDERS FOR MOTORISTS

- ◆ **Snowplows have limited visibility and drivers cannot see directly behind their trucks.**
- ◆ **Snowplows often throw up snow clouds, reducing visibility on all sides of the truck.**
- ◆ **Motorists should never attempt to pass a moving snowplow on the right. With new wing-plow technology the blade can clear the shoulder and the lane of travel simultaneously. Motorists attempting an illegal pass through a snow cloud on the right and/or shoulder of the road most likely won't see the plow blade and run the risk of a serious crash.**

REMINDER:

State Law, MCL 257.677a prohibits pushing snow and ice onto, or across, roadways and requires that people do not obstruct the safety vision of motorists.

**If you have questions about road maintenance, please contact the
Kalamazoo County Road Commission at 381.3171 or info@krcr-roads.com**

OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

2012 was an active year for the Oshtemo Historical Society. The year was highlighted by Pioneer Days in July, where we honored 34 early Oshtemo families and the completion of the restoration of the imposing entrance to the Drake House. There were also many interesting speakers at our monthly meetings.

We look forward to the following speakers in the next three months. Please mark your calendars and join us. Meetings are held at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main Street, starting at 7:00 p.m.

JANUARY 17TH – Keith Howard, Web coordinator for the Kalamazoo Public Library, will share his knowledge about the old **Woods Lake Amusement Park**.

FEBRUARY 21ST – Jim Jackson will share the history of the **Native American Shooters – Company K : a Civil War unit**.

MARCH 21ST – Andrew Young – former WMU Archivist, will talk about the **Upjohn Collection** of personal documents that he cataloged.

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, Please visit our website at:

www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

Postal Customer

ECRWSS

Fx375-7180

Ph375-4260

Kalamazoo, MI 49009

7275 West Main Street



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