

Obituaries

JAMES W. HILL, 78, of Attica died Friday, April 27, 2012. Mr. Hill was born November 16, 1933, in Lapeer, son to John H. and Bernice (Porritt) Hill. Jim married Joyce A. Livingston on May 25, 1953, at the Immaculate Conception Church, in Lapeer.

Mr. Hill retired from the United States Postal Service, serving as a mail carrier in Flint and Burton. After retiring, he worked part time for Ross Automotive in Lapeer. Jim enjoyed golfing and bowling.

Mr. Hill is survived by his wife, Joyce Hill of Attica; daughters, Marie (Charles) Neumeyer of Allenton, Carol (Mike) Neumeyer of Lapeer; grandchildren, Amber (Frank) Kuron, Heather (Richard) Rapp, Brian (Kelly) Neumeyer, Christen (Greg) Kopp, Ashley Neumeyer; great-grandchildren, Aubrey, Jaclyn, Jacob and Michael; siblings, Shirley (Joe) Gleason of Beaverton, Norm (Jackalyn) Hill of North Branch, Joyce Relitz of Beaverton; and several nieces and nephews.

Jim was preceded in death by his son, Brian Hill; parents, John and Bernice Hill; brother, Roy Hill; and infant sister, Marie.

Memorial contributions may be made to the family. Mr. Hill's funeral service was held Monday, April 30, 2012 at the Muir Brothers Funeral Home, Rev. Marvin Ramthun officiated. Burial was at Mt. Loretto Cemetery, Lapeer.

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ALICE E. SMITH, 63, of Metamora passed away Sunday, April 29, 2012 at Mercy Hospital in Port Huron after a long and courageous fight.

She is survived by her mother: Evelyn Henderson; sons: Edward Jr., Wayne (Teresa), and Michael (Vanessa); grandchildren: Rebecca, Nick, Sara, Austin, Christopher,

Michael Jr., Garrett, Ian, and Nathan; great-grandchild: Christopher; her partner: Mike Bovee and daughter: Alexis Rae; brother: Robert (Elisabeth) Chriscinske; sisters: Janet (Lynn) Marker and Rose Glassford; and many nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband: Edward; father: Maurice Chriscinske; and step-father: Marvin Henderson.

Alice was a life-long resident of Imlay City and Attica. She was a graduate of Imlay City High School, class of 1966; and a 2005 graduate of Davenport University. She had been employed by H&R Block Services, General Motors, and Cambridge.

Alice enjoyed the outdoors and spent much time outside with her parents while growing up and with her husband and children. She loved and is loved by her grandchildren and provided continuous love and support as they grew.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, May 2, 2012 at Muir Brothers Funeral Home of Imlay City, Pastor Carl Meier officiated. Burial followed at Imlay Township Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Karmanos. Funeral arrangements were made by Muir Brothers Funeral Home of Imlay City. Visit our online guestbook at muirbrothersfh.com.

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DONALD WALKER, 73, of Imlay City, passed away Sunday, April 29, 2012 at Hurley Medical Center. Donald Lawrence Walker was born July 26, 1938, in Imlay City, the son of Alvin and Doris Walker. He grew up in the Imlay City area and was a graduate of Dryden High School.

Donald married Thelma Dunstan on April 22, 1966, in Flint. He worked for Michigan Bell (which became AT&T) for 42 years as a system technician. He was on the Attica Fire Department and the Elba Fire Department for a combined total of 34 years.

He is survived by his wife, Thelma Walker of Imlay City; son, Don Walker, Jr. of Imlay City; daughter, Debbie Lutze of Birmingham; grandsons, Farron (Heather) Ezakovich of Oakland, CA, Daniel (Kristen) Ezakovich of Denver, CO, Michael Ezakovich of Birmingham; great-grandchildren, Jonathon of Denver, CO, Kapri of Denver, CO, Wyatt of Oakland, CA, Teagan of Oakland, CA; and sisters, Mary Weemaes of Imlay City and Ruth (Lee) Delanoy of Imlay City.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Alvin and Doris Walker; son, John Jay Walker; and brother-in-law, Larry Weemaes.

Memorial may be made to your favorite charity in Donald's name.

A funeral service was held Friday, May 4, 2012 at Muir Brothers Funeral Home of Imlay City. Burial followed at Crestwood Memorial Cemetery in Grand Blanc.

Funeral arrangements by Muir Brothers Funeral Home of Imlay City. Please visit our online guestbook at muirbrothersfh.com.

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LEROY "LEE" WARREN, 84, a lifetime Attica resident, died Monday, April 30, 2012. Lee was born September 21, 1927, in Attica, son to Lyle and Ethel (Burgess) Warren. Lee married Joan West on March 18, 1950, at the Hunters Creek Methodist Church.

He proudly served his country as a staff sergeant in the United States Army during WWII. Lee worked 30 years at Pontiac Motors, retiring in 1976. He was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church for over 50 years. He loved to tinker with small engines and his tractors. Lee loved to fish.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Warren of Attica; daughter, Roxann (Ty) Leffler of Red Lion, PA; son, Dan (Linda) Warren of Barnes Lake; four grandchildren, Lisa (Kevin) Knight, Chad (Vicki) Warren, Stacy (Dan) Thompson, Mindy (Justin) Schultz; and nine great grandchildren. Lee is also survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Lee was preceded in death by four sisters; four brothers; and his parents.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association or the American Diabetes Association.

Funeral services were held Friday, May 4, 2012 at the Trinity United Methodist Church, Pastor Ralph H. Pieper, II officiated. Burial followed at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Lapeer with military honors under the auspices of the American Legion Post 16 Honor Guard.

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SHELLEY CHRISTINE WILSON, 43, of Fairmont, West Virginia died Thursday, April 26, 2012. Shelley was born September 24, 1968, in Port Huron, the daughter of Roger and Sally (Snyder) Wilson. She was a graduate of Dayton Christian High School in Dayton, Ohio.

Shelley enjoyed playing the flute and singing in musicals while in high school. She attended Gallian Baptist Church and sang in the choir and played flute there as well.

Shelley is survived by her parents, Roger and Sally Wilson of Fairmont, West Virginia; brother, Bradley Wilson of Englewood, Ohio; and her grandmother, Phyllis Wilson of Silverwood, Michigan.

She was preceded in death by her grandmother, Christine Snyder; and grandfathers, Leslie Snyder and Horace "Dean" Wilson.

Funeral services will be held at the Carpenter and Ford Funeral Home in Fairmont, West Virginia, (304)366-4671.

A graveside service was held Wednesday, May 2, 2012 at Stiles Cemetery in Lapeer. Rev. Arnold Bracy officiated.

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ALEX HUMMEL, 32, of Imlay City, passed away Thursday, April 26, 2012 at home. Alex Matthew Hummel was born May 4, 1979, in Yale, the son of Earl and Beverly Hummel. He spent all of his life in Imlay City. He graduated from Imlay City High School, class of 1997. He continued on to receive his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Michigan in 2001. He was a member of the fraternity "Sigma Nu". He owned Clear Lake Sand of Imlay City and worked at the Michigan Proving Ground in Romeo as a Test Driver for seven years.

Alex is survived by his parents, Beverly Hummel of Sandusky, Earl and Cindy Hummel of Imlay City; sisters, Gwen (Joseph) Lindsay of Davison, Rebecca Hummel of Imlay City; and brothers, Kris Patterson of Grand Rapids, Jason Patterson of Royal Oak, Patrick Patterson of Clarkston, and Justin Hummel of Des Moines, Iowa.

A funeral service was held Monday, April 30, 2012 at the Imlay City Christian Reformed Church. Pastor Joseph Lindsay officiated.

Arrangements by Muir Brothers Funeral Home - Imlay City. For more information please visit our online guestbook at muirbrothersfh.com

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FRANCES L. PLAGENS, 86, of Lapeer, formerly of St. Clair Shores, died Friday, May 4, 2012. She was born May 10, 1925, in Olathia, KS, daughter to Crantrell and Isadora (Farber) Snodgrass. She married Joseph Raymond Plagens, on May 2, 1952, in Detroit.

She was a member of the Scarab Club, Society of Women Painters, Michigan Water Color Society, Lakeside Palette and a Sustaining Member of the American Water Color Society. Frances was an accomplished and prolific artist, she spent her life enjoying and perfecting her craft. It was her passion, her life's work. She was a painter, illustrator, and sculpture and enjoyed a twenty year career as an illustrator and advertising artist with the Detroit Free Press. Frances was a winner of numerous local, regional and national awards, her paintings are held in many private and corporate collections. She will be remembered for her talent, but even more so for the way she affected others with her engaging personality, her loyal friendship and her love.

Frances is survived by her loving children, Michael (Zahra) Plagens of Phoenix, AZ, Joanne Froh of Oakland Township, Daniel Plagens of Madison, SD; loving grandchildren, Eric, Brian and Heather; and dear sister, Dorothy (Wallace) Agren of Grosse Pointe Woods.

Mrs. Plagens was preceded in death by her dear husband, Joseph; son, James; and parents, Crantrell and Isadora.

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CHRISTOPHER BRUCE, 50, of Attica, passed away suddenly Wednesday, May 2, 2012 at McLaren Hospital - Lapeer Region. Christopher Amil Bruce was born on December 19, 1961, in Pontiac, the son of Roger and Mary Bruce. He lived most all of his life in the Imlay City area. He was married to



Mindy Lee Elling, on October 19, 1985, in Imlay City.

Chris served in the U. S. Air Force in early 1980's. He worked with the Accounting and PayRoll Division of the Western Command. He had been employed by General Motors Orion Plant for 17 years. He retired from General Motors as an Assembly Group Leader. He was a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church. He loved going to Notre Dame Football Games with his family and spending time in Caseville at the family cabin.

He is survived by his wife, Mindy Bruce of Attica; a son, Christopher Amil Bruce II of Grand Rapids; daughters, Amy (Anthony) Touchette of Bossier, Louisiana and Rebecca Lee Bruce of Attica; his parents, Roger and Mary Bruce of Imlay City; his parents-in-law, Tom and Connie Elling of Imlay City; brothers, Roger Bruce of Imlay City, James (Donna) Bruce of Imlay City, William Bruce of Grand Blanc, and John (Gayle) Bruce of Hilo, Hawaii; and sisters, Michelle Bruce of Imlay City and Jan (Doug) Thompson of Imlay City.

Those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider memorials to the Bruce Family.

Funeral services will be held 11:00 am Monday, May 7, 2012 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Imlay City. The Rev. Alan Casillas, pastor of the St. Paul Lutheran Church, will officiate.

Friends may call at the Muir Brothers Funeral Home, 225 Main Street, Imlay City, MI, where the family will be available for visiting 2-5 & 6-8 pm Sunday. A special Veterans Salute service will be held 7:15 pm Sunday.

Funeral arrangements were made by Muir Brothers Funeral Home of Imlay City. Visit our online guestbook at muirbrothersfh.com.

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'Mr. Peace' brings anti-bullying message to Lapeer County students

BY ABIGAIL WISE

Contributing Writer

LAPEER — Kindness and respect are like an orange. At least, that's what 26-year-old Kevin Szawala, a motivational speaker known as Mr. Peace, said during an assembly at Chatfield School on Wednesday. Mr. Peace explained how, when one eats an orange, the fruit's scent spreads to one's fingers, then slowly begins to permeate the air surrounding the person, spreading out farther and farther until the smell can fill a whole room.

Kindness and respect for others spreads the same way, said Mr. Peace — starting with one person, kind acts can spread throughout an entire school, changing it into a kinder, more respectful place. To illustrate his point, he ended his metaphor by taking a big bite out of an orange.

His message struck a chord with many of the students at Chatfield. "It really got me right here," said seventh grade student Claire Fricke while pointing to her heart. Kindergartner Zach McCallum said, "I learned about kindness, respect and being friends." Co-director of Chatfield Bill Kraly was happy with the message presented by Mr. Peace and the students' reception of that message. "I think his message was really beneficial and helped to reinforce all of the work we've been doing on treating each other with kindness and putting an end to bullying," said Kraly.

As a hip-hop artist, peace activist and poet, Mr. Peace uses his many talents to keep children engaged at his assemblies, trying to inspire them to be who they want to be — to kindle "an internal fire that gives us the sense of freedom and confidence needed to start each day with a purpose." Each of Mr. Peace's speeches are tailored, both in content and delivery, to fit the needs of the group he will be speaking to. At Chatfield, he taught and performed rap songs with positive lyrics to the students. Kraly said the kids enjoyed the music. "He (Mr. Peace) was very entertaining ... he definitely kept their attention."

For Mr. Peace, speaking to children is a dream come true. "It's always been my passion — to speak," said Mr. Peace, a University of Michigan — Ann Arbor graduate. Szawala's journey to



Kevin Szawala, also known as Mr. Peace, poses next to a peace pole at Saint Joseph Parish in South Lyon.

become Mr. Peace began in 2006 when he visited his high school sister's South Lyon classroom as a guest speaker. Other teachers from the school asked him to speak to their classes, then teachers from other schools began making requests, and Being Who I Want 2 Be, LLC was born. In 2010, motivational speaking became Mr. Peace's full-time gig; in the last six years, his speeches and presentations have reached more than 50,000 people throughout Michigan.

By "connecting to people through (his) heart and through humor," Mr. Peace has found that he is able to share his message successfully. I have a "burning kind of in my heart to give back," said Mr. Peace.

Kraly first heard about Mr. Peace from Oregon Township's Camp Lael. Mr. Peace was a success at the camp, and Kraly said he lived up to expectations. "It was a good experience and he definitely has a great message to share," said Kraly. Annette Young, an eighth grade teacher at Chatfield, said "His message was pretty awesome and powerful, and the kids seemed to really enjoy it."

Chatfield is always looking for energetic speakers to help motivate students, according to Kraly. Before Mr. Peace's Wednesday assemblies, Kraly said we "need to remind them (students) of, you know, here's what's really important ... that's why he's (Mr. Peace) coming." Having Mr. Peace speak so near the end of the school

year was intended to benefit Chatfield's graduating eighth graders especially. "We wanted to send our eighth graders off on a real positive note," said Kraly.

After finishing his assemblies, Mr. Peace stayed to eat lunch with the Chatfield student leadership group. "Their goal is to try to keep his message going" beyond the assemblies, explained Kraly, pointing out that the stresses, challenges and temptations young people face today are stronger than many people outside the teaching profession may imagine.

To help keep Mr. Peace's message alive at Chatfield, Kraly said the school is considering participating in a return program that Mr. Peace began last November. In the program, Mr. Peace said he revisits groups he has spoken to for several months after the initial visit, interacting with the kids during lunch or recess as "a way to sustain that spark that was created during (his) first visit."

Kraly said having Mr. Peace speak at Chatfield was an excellent opportunity to remind students of the importance of character. Before the Wednesday assemblies, Kraly said he was most looking forward students learning to "revitalize their commitment to treating each other with respect." It is "important for our kids to be able to have and show respect."

To find out more about Mr. Peace or to book him for an event, visit www.beingwhoiwant2be.org or call 856-MR-PEACE 856-677-3223.

Donation helps kids with autism



Photo by Jacob Hunsanger

North Branch track coach Jason Castle (center) presents a check for \$930 to Jeremy LaValley (right) from Corner Pieces, a non-profit organization that helps children with autism. The funds were raised through T-shirt sales by the track team, and the money was donated last week at the Lapeer County Track Meet.

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