inside



FOR WILLIAMSPORT'S WEST PEOPLE'S PAPER



insideNewberry

To honor the past...inform the present...envision the future, insideNewberry is published quarterly by Newberry Community Partnership (NCP) as a service to the neighborhood to promote community pride and facilitate communication between residents. schools, civic organizations and businesses. NCP is a non-profit community-based organization established in 2006. Please support our sponsors who made this issue possible!

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Submit your stories and photos to: insideNewberry@yahoo.com All submissions subject to editina.

Martial Arts Gym Is New Hit In Newberry

If you take a peek in the windows of the former Mark's Sales and Leasing building at Diamond and 4th street, you may see some punching and kicking going on. Of course, most of the time, the fighters are shadow boxing or hitting a punching bag, getting their workout in at the Williamsport School of Self Defense (WSSD). Under the tutelage of John Powell, Josh Aarons, and their coaches, youth and adults alike are getting fit, learning life disciplines, and building skills in the martial arts of boxing, karate, kickboxing, wrestling, or

MMA fighting.

Powell and Aarons moved their training operations into the Diamond Street location early in the summer, setting up two boxing rings, several fighting/ wrestling mats, and an army of punching bags and equipment.



Josh Aarons and John Powell teaming up to train fighters at new Diamond St. location.

They take students from ages 8 to 75 and offer a range of classes and training sessions, and they hold periodic exhibition fights, the most recent one on September 23rd.

Powell, a 6th degree Black Belt in Shotokan Karate and inductee of the World Karate Hall of Fame, got into karate in the 1980s with his daughter in Philadelphia, learning under the late Grand Master Anthoney Dew, Jr. He opened his first school in 1997 on the double side of his own house and has been training people in martial arts ever since. Aarons started working under Powell as a fighter in 2007, fighting as a wrestler and in MMA as an amateur, turning pro in MMA in 2010.

Aarons does speed and agility training through his business Cardio4Dayz Fitness, LLC, as well as training in fighting and wrestling. He and his former coach Powell are working together now in their new space in Newberry.

Martial Arts Gym Is New Hit... (Continued from page 1)

Both Aarons and Powell worked as Children and Youth Services advocates in the public school system, helping kids in the schools during the day and helping kids in a different way at the gym in the evenings. In Powell and Aaron's agency work trying to connect youth with resources, they are continually reminded of the need youth have for discipline, love, and achievable goals that can build their self-confidence.

"There's been talk recently about crime in the area, and that comes of kids not being in good company," Powell says, "but if we can steer them in here and

get them into good habits and good company, we help the kids and we help the community." Though recently retired, Powell continues his work with youth through the WSSD gym.

At WSSD, Aarons runs classes in fitness, kickboxing, and wrestling, and he also does personal training along with partnering with area

coaches and trainers to run speed and agility camps. Alize Johnson, the NBA player from Williamsport, is the most famous of Aarons's trainees, but the others who put in the work have also gained the edge they needed. Aarons has also worked with Loniqua Howell's nonprofit in the WECCC, Boy Mom Marathon, to make athletic training accessible to youth in the Newberry area.

Powell and Aarons are joined by a number of other coaches. Pompey Suggs was pulled right out of a street fight into a boxing gym in Philadelphia, amassing an amateur boxing record of 97-12, and now he



Fighters can start young, here shadowboxing to warm up.

wisdom to his boxing students.
Lewis Rumsey, like Aarons, is an alumnus of the WSSD who went pro, fighting MMA and now bare-knuckle boxing in events such as Bellator, and he trains students in MMA grappling, including Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Mike Erb also works with the MMA program, and with his own fused back and other physical constraints, he likes to encourage his adult classes that "if I can do it, you can do it, too!"

WSSD not only offers

passed on that discipline and

WSSD not only offers top-notch trainers and a proud list of alumni but they also have a claim to fame in Pennsylvania's

proud history of martial arts. They participated in the very first sanctioned MMA fight in Pennsylvania, the Central Pennsylvania Warrior Challenge in April 2009, in which both Rumsey and Aarons fought and Aarons was named fighter of the night. Closer to home, Powell and company have organized several exhibition fights in the

Williamsport area, some indoor and some outdoor. Amateur fighters come from Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Lancaster, Detroit, and other points on the map and compete in Williamsport. WSSD's own promotion brand, Team Vicious, normally features 5-6 of their own fighters in the mix.

When asked why move his gym from its former location on 4th Street to Newberry, Powell talks about the better opportunities here. First, the building on Diamond Street has enough open space that he can run two boxing rings and see all the training going on at the same time, but the other opportunity is with the



Pompey Suggs leads striking practice in one of the WSSD's two boxing rings.

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Martial Arts Gym Is New Hit... (Continued from page 2)

youth of the area. Martial arts gyms, he says, are "not a get-rich model," but by being closer to the schools, Powell hopes to not only keep enough students to pay the bills but also to keep doing good for the kids who need it.

"After several years doing this, you sometimes start to lose the compassion, the drive," Powell says, "but always some students come in who light your fire again." Powell and Aarons describe the training atmosphere of the school as a "community," and they work with parents, parole officers, and school officials to give youth a path for turning their lives around. Not all students stay once they realize the discipline and physical work that the

Come welcome the Holiday season at the NCP Christmas Tree Lighting on December 6th at corner of 3rd & Arch. Refreshments provided!





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1 Year interest-free financing. 10% Veteran and Senior (55+) discount. Mauseloum Crypts only \$700 (Regularly \$3400). Laser engraved Niche Columbariums starting at \$1400. classes require – Powell estimates about 1 in 3 stay the course – but the ones who do stay gain personal improvement and a supportive community.

WSSD offers a range of programs differing by marital art and by frequency, with some pricing broken down by age group. Schedules for different classes can be found at http://www.thewilliams-portschoolofselfdefense.com/home.html, and they can also be contacted through Facebook.

We welcome your tax deductible donations to support the continued efforts of the Newberry Community Partnership to bring quality of life improvements and community events to our neighborhood. Send contributions to Newberry Community Partnership (NCP) 913 Diamond Street • Williamsport, PA 17701 For information, message us on Facebook.







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Newberry Land Development In Dispute At Zoning Meeting

Hutchinson Development Company tried unsuccessfully on May 18 to get the city Zoning Board to pass a variance that would allow them to develop over 100 townhomes in the green space between Arch Street and Highway 15 just north of Triple A Motors. Hutchinson called the area "blighted," argued that building residential was the only option for those areas currently zoned for light industrial and commercial, and wanted to defer most questions of traffic and feasibility to future studies.

It is important that Newberry residents know what is being proposed for that area because it may affect everyone here, one way or another. Three of the five zoning board members and several community members voiced opposition to the plan. They were not convinced by Hutchinson's "residential or nothing" argument, and they pointed out the problems of access and traffic that would come with the proposed residential density.

Alan Feist, the owner of Triple A Auto and other properties affected by the proposal, voiced "concern . . . about . . . the density of the whole project. . . . [D]ensity has got to be almost number one of your list" of challenges to consider with any development there.

Hutchinson's original zoning of the area is broken into three parts, one parcel zoned residential, one light industrial, and one commercial. However, they would like to use all three parts of the property for residential development, claiming that they need more housing units to make the project economically viable.

Hutchinson has been interested in developing that area for quite some time. They had been working on a deal with Giant food stores in 2008-2009 that was promising, but the real estate problems of the recession forced Giant, like many businesses, to pull back. Hutchinson sold the land, but recently repurchased it with the plan to develop this townhome project.

Hutchinson had started clearing many of the trees from the green space in April and May, preparing the way for construction before securing any zoning variances. Many residents got their first news of the work being done through local wildlife as pairs and groups of white-tailed deer high-tailed it out of the work area and pranced through

surrounding neighborhoods in broad daylight. That move to clear the property may have hurt Hutchinson's case at the zoning board meeting. While the clear-cutting showed Hutchinson's investment in the project, it also upset many of their neighbors who have now lost their buffer zone to guiet the

highway noises. Though Hutchinson stated that the woods were a blight, one neighbor stated that she had just moved to that area because of the quiet green space it provided. Within a few weeks of moving in, she said, the reason for her home purchase was cut down.

"I wouldn't have considered the area 'blighted' before," said Zoning Board member Michele Frey, "but it looks a lot more blighted now that they cut down all the trees."

One of the main questions about development in that area is its access to outlet streets and the impact it might have on area traffic. Its exit to 4th street would be out Moore Ave. right by the busy right turn onto the Highway 15 access ramp, and its exit to Arch Street would be through Glynn Ave. Going south, its only street exit would be Hall Street or the southern leg of Moore Ave. that serves The Laundry Basket and Triple A Motors. All of those options exit quite close to the busy intersection of Arch and 3rd Streets, the two 3rd Street exits into a section obscured by a bend in the road.

Another access problem pointed out at the zoning board meeting is that the development plan would take out the loop that serves Lycoming Beverage and Meier Supply, businesses currently operating in the area.

While Hutchinson's plan proposes creating a dedicated entrance to those parcels on westbound 3rd Street right after the Highway 15 overpass, Feist points out that such a plan has two strikes against it — details he is familiar with because he developed part of that land for Triple A Motors. "First, there's a safety issue. PennDOT isn't going to allow an entrance that close to the overpass," Feist says. "And second, there's the grade for the drainage. There's no room there to build a road and maintain the stormwater drainage they need."

Other Newberry neighbors at the zoning meeting

Newberry Land Development In Dispute... (Continued from page 5)

also commented on the traffic that 104 housing units, totaling about 200 more cars, would bring to streets that are already quite busy at certain times of day. Hutchinson noted that, if given zoning permission for the project, they would be doing a traffic study, along with all other required studies and permits. Some of the people present, though, noted that the problem seems obvious enough before a formal study.

Another question about developing the area as housing units is whether Newberry or Williamsport has a market for that many new units. The population of Williamsport has shrunk by 9.8% since the year 2000 and, in the most recent public data, shrank by half a percent between 2019 and 2020. The city overall has a rental vacancy rate of 13%, which means that more than one in ten rental units are unoccupied.

On the other hand, the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce provided a letter in support of Hutchinson's proposal, arguing that there has been a "steady decline of [housing] inventory in the market" and that this development would help ease the housing shortage.

If more housing units are added in Newberry while demand actually stays the same, the result would be a flooding of the market for rentals,

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which generally lowers the value of all of the units.

To add to this question of facts about the housing market is the question of whether the townhome project would hit the right price point for the location. William Garren, one of the long-term Newberry residents giving feedback at the zoning meeting, pointed out that the townhomes' location would not be ideal. "You're going to be looking out your backyard at Brodart, big parking lot, the beltway, you know."

Garren asked about the price point that Hutchinson was using for their townhome project financial calculations, but Hutchinson couldn't say. "How can you develop property," Garren asked, "if you don't know what you're going to sell it for?" Most participants in the meeting agreed that something could be developed in that area, but most found Hutchinson's argument unconvincing that it must be their residential plan "or nothing." Hutchinson did not to respond to questions for this article.

Zoning board meetings happen every 3rd Thursday of the month and are open to the public; the transcript of this May 18 meeting, along with maps, can be found at https://civilportal.lyco.org/civil.public/(S(s3vj5q1qm3kxt0kjvzm4rnhz))/Handlers/DocumentHandler.ashx?vid=516250.







Oldest Church in Lycoming Facing Uncertain Future



Lycoming Presbyterian is the oldest church in Lycoming County, first meeting in 1786.

Many studies show U.S. church membership is falling, and Lycoming Presbyterian on Arch Street is no exception to this trend. After serving the community for over 231 years, the church is facing difficult choices that will affect not only the congregation but also Newberry and the larger Williamsport area. Looking at the long history of this staple of the Newberry skyline will put into context the difficult decisions the congregation is facing.

Lycoming Presbyterian stands just south of the Newberry Light of Liberty statue, the church standing tall as a large brick structure with a metal capped steeple, crenelated tower, and stained-glass windows. The oldest congregation in Lycoming County, by 1786 their first church was already situated in a heavily wooded area near trails that would one day become West 4th and Arch Streets. That first building was made with rough logs, had uncomfortable pews, and had no provisions for heat. There was also a large area near the church that had been used for burials since the 1760s and would soon house the remains of about 125 Revolutionary War soldiers and area residents.

The log church was soon replaced by a large stone edifice with 16 windows, a choir loft, and, reportedly, still uncomfortable pews. The burial area was still being used, but now had carved slate headstones instead of wooden markers. The church grew, and soon the stone church was dismantled and the brick church we see today constructed. The stones from the dismantled church were used to build four grand entry pillars (still standing) and a stone wall around the burial area. The wall was eventually removed, its stones likely used in some Millionaires' Row historic building foundations. A news article from 1905 described the newest church in glowing terms and stated the "seats are comfortably cushioned, which helps increase church attendance."

As membership grew, a Fellowship Hall, Chapel, and Manse (residence for clergy family) were added. Names of some of the early church members are commemorated by many well-known Newberry street names, such as Reighard Avenue, Clark Street, Cummings Street, and Mosser Avenue.

The burial area did not fare as well, and in the early 1900s, it became overgrown and subject to

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Oldest Church... (Continued from page 7)

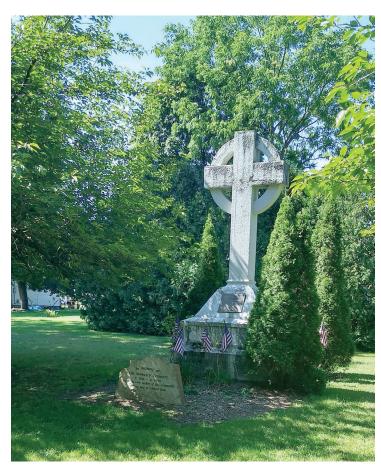
vandalism. In 1917, the burial ground was officially vested in the church, and in 1924, a Petition of the Court to disinter the remains was granted. An early article from the Sun Gazette suggests some of the remains may have been removed, but no specific records seem to exist and removal has not been verified, so some Revolutionary War soldiers may still be resting there. Many of the marble headstones were salvaged and can still be found in the landscaping of what is now Colonial Park.

The Park today is beautiful and peaceful, with grass, benches, and well-tended trees. There are two monuments in Colonial Park: one, a Celtic Cross with a Daughters of the American Revolution plaque dedicating it to Revolutionary War participants. The second marker is a large stone inscribed "Old Newberry Cemetery –c.1760-c.1900 ... To the early settlers of this community who rest here in Colonial Park." This site, including church, buildings, monuments, and park, are listed in the 2007 and 2015 Lycoming County Historic Surveys and are included in the "City of Williamsport, List of Significant Historic Buildings and Sites."

Now for hard decisions. Reverend Gwen Bernstine, current Pastor of Lycoming Presbyterian, is proud of the church and its history and hopes for the best, but she has stated the congregation realizes they are unable to maintain the facility any longer. Even now, they are working with the Northumberland Presbytery to sell it.

"For a congregation with a 231-year history," Bernstine says, "there are many memories entwined in this location. From those early years, as we reached out to Native Americans living here, with open hands rather than closed fists, to our donations this year of flood recovery buckets, food for our West End Christian Community Center Pantry and Lunches for Habitat work crews, we have sought to build a beloved community." Over the years, several groups, including the Lycoming Nursery School and a Food Co-Op, have found a home within their facility.

Bernstine reports that the congregation is trying to decide what their worship will "look like in the future." She says they could find a new space, disperse to other congregations, or "merge with another like-minded congregation." "Whatever



This Celtic cross was once central to the Revolutionary War cemetery, now Colonial Park.

happens," she states, "we trust in God's steadfast love and faithfulness. We are trying to do our best, acknowledging that none of us at any time or place have been perfect. And we ask for the community to join us in prayer and praise as we see what God has in store for us each new day."

Until the final decision is approved or circumstances somehow change, Sunday worship will continue to be held at 10:45 am. You are welcome to attend the service and the coffee hour afterward. Unlike 200 years ago, the chairs are comfortable. The Fellowship Hall is also available for rummage sales, bake sales, or other events, and the facility still hosts Karate lessons three times a week. Colonial Park is, for now, still green, shady and a peaceful haven, so feel free to stop by and enjoy the serenity. We all hope the church finds some way to carry on, but should a final dissolution be required, we can hope they are inspired to find the "best use" that will somehow continue to reflect the last 231 years of faithful service to our community. ~ Mary Rucinski, with thanks to Rev. Gwen Bernstine and Church Secretary Marianne G. **Tupper**

★ ★ SPECIAL VOTER SECTION ★ ★ ★ 2023 PRIMARY ELECTION • Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Neither the NCP nor insideNewberry endorses any political party or candidate

All 81 precincts will be open for in-person voting on Election Day from 7:00 am until 8:00 pm. Judicial, county, School Director, city, borough, and township offices will appear on the ballot. In addition, two judicial retention questions will appear on the ballot.

The statewide judicial offices that will appear on the ballot are Justice of the Supreme Court (1 seat); Judge of the Superior Court (2 seats); and Judge of the Commonwealth Court (1 seat).

The local judicial offices that will appear on the ballot are Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (2 seats); and Magisterial District Judge 29-3-03. The county offices that will appear on the ballot are Commissioner, Controller, Coroner, District Attorney, Prothonotary, Register and Recorder, and Treasurer. The city offices that will appear on the ballot are City Mayor, City Council (4 seats), City Treasurer, and City Controller. School Director offices will appear on the ballot in every school district in the county. The offices and terms will vary by school district. In Williamsport Area School District, four School Directors are to be elected to 4-year terms.

Borough, township constable, and poll worker offices (Mayor, Council, Supervisor, Auditor, Tax Collector) will appear on the ballot across the county. The offices and terms will vary by municipality.

Friday, October 6 – sample ballots for all precincts will be available at the Office of Voter Services and on the Voter Services website at **www.lyco.org/vote.**

Monday, October 23 – last day to register to vote or make changes to your registration before election.

Tuesday, October 31 – last day to apply to vote by mail. Applications must be received by Voter Services before 5:00pm. Faxed or emailed applications cannot be accepted. Postmarks do not count. Voters who will be out of their municipality for work or school or have an illness or disability must apply for an absentee ballot. Voters who are not eligible for an absentee ballot but still wish to vote by mail must apply for a mail-in ballot.

Tuesday, November 7 at 8:00 pm – deadline for Voter Services to receive voted absentee and mail-in ballots. Ballots received after 8:00 pm cannot be counted.

Polls are open Election Day continuously 7 AM until 8 PM

A voter who receives an absentee or mail-in ballot and appears at a polling place to vote in person on Election Day may only vote by provisional ballot, unless the voter surrenders the official ballot and official return envelope to the Judge of Elections at the polling place to be spoiled in order to vote a regular ballot.

Voters who experience an emergency after 5:00 pm on Tuesday, October 31 may be eligible to apply for an emergency absentee ballot.

Contact Voter Services for more information.

Uniformed military and their dependents and overseas civilians apply for and submit absentee ballots in accordance with different requirements and deadlines. Contact Voter Services for more info.

If you are uncertain of where to vote on Election Day, contact Voter Services.

You may register to vote or apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot by the following methods:

- Register to vote online or apply online to vote by mail at http://votespa.com.
- Download an application from the Voter Services website at www.lyco.org/vote.
- Visit Voter Services on the first floor of Third Street Plaza, 33 West 3rd St, Williamsport.
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- ~ Submitted by Forrest K. Lehman, Director of Elections and Registration





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Newberry Wrestler Takes Out the Trash

"To be the man, you gotta beat the man," said multi-world wrestling champion Ric Flair. Many experts in the pro-wrestling world consider Flair – the "stylin', profilin', limousine riding, jet flying, kiss-stealing, wheelin' n' dealin' son of a gun" – to be the greatest athlete this particular sport has ever seen.

However, Newberry has its own squared-circle hero that could draw audiences and wrestle with the famed Nature Boy. This local titan is Joey P., a local garbage man ready to take out the trash inside and outside the ring.

This refuse-can-carrying gladiator took a few minutes to talk to us about being a wrestler, what wrestling means to him, and his love for the Newberry community.

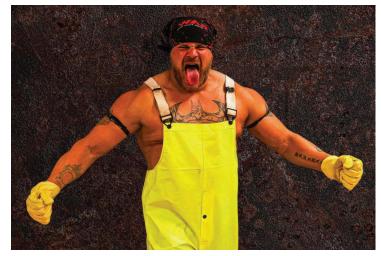
Smith: First, let's talk about the Newberry area, what brought you here?

JOEY P: I love Newberry! I grew up here, for a short time living in the village, Newberry Estates specifically. Then my family and I moved to Dewey Avenue. We left the area and we bounced around for a couple of years, but we moved back here. I live close to the Minit Mart, and one of the great things about Newberry was we were able to find a house in our price range.

Smith: How long have you been interested in professional wrestling?

JOEY P.: I've been a fan almost all my life! I did backyard wrestling as a teen and entered the business about eight and a half years ago.

Smith: What wrestlers did you enjoy watching? The Nature Boy Ric Flair was mentioned earlier, but did you like Hulk Hogan, Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson, Stone Cold Steve Austin, or John Cena?



Joey P. demonstrates the flair and character of professional wrestling.

JOEY P.: Mostly it was "Macho Man" Randy Savage! Ooooohhhh-yeah! [LAUGHS] And a lot of Hot Rod, aka "Rowdy" Roddy Piper. However, in the later years, I was a huge fan of Bret "the Hitman" Hart – the excellence of execution!

Smith: Is that what drew you into wrestling?

JOEY P.: Oh yeah! I had been watching the larger-than-life characters, the storylines and the action! Everything about it is great!

Smith: Isn't that true for most wrestling fans? Don't most audiences want those basic things in a program?

JOEY P.: That depends directly on where the program is located. Different places have fans who like different things. For example, some fans like a lot of high-flying action, while others like storytelling. In fact, some like just good old fashioned slobberknockers! Our job is to decide what that is and give it to them.

(Continued on page 11)

Newberry Wrestler...

(Continued from page 10)

Smith: It's been said that training to be a wrestler is like training to be a football player. For example, football players are conditioned to take hits from other players. Are wrestlers conditioned to take bumps and thumps from their opponents?

JOEY P.: Oh yeah! Pro wrestling is its own beast. You gotta get in the ring and feel it for yourself because everything hurts! Actually, football training has definitely helped wrestlers. But it's not just that. To be a good wrestler, it's a good idea to practice improv, and learning public speaking is great, too!

Smith: People who follow the Joey P. page on Facebook (Facebook.com/theprinceofpurchase) see you regularly at the gym and working out.

JOEY P.: I think it's hugely important to work out. Lifting weights helps me stay strong enough to toss people around. Besides weightlifting, cardio is key in pro wrestling. If you can't breathe, you can't wrestle!

Smith: What does your family think of your wrestling?

JOEY P.: It's rare that someone I know doesn't support it. Most of my family are 110 percent behind it.

Smith: Besides family, you need fans at these indie shows that are done in smaller venues, right?

JOEY P.: Yes, it's very important for fans to come out. Without fans we don't have a show! Most wrestling shows are expensive to put on, and without ticket sales, only a really wealthy person could afford to run them. The smaller shows are more affordable, and those fans make the shows! What we do hurts, but the fans cheering gives us the strength to carry on and continue to do what we do!

Smith: Joey P., thanks for speaking with us. You stay safe! The world needs good champions like you!

JOEY P.: Thank you! But it's my opponents in the ring that better stay safe. I am good at taking out the trash!

~ By Don Everett Smith Jr.

Regular Meetings of Civic & Other Groups in Newberry

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UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 2023

WEDNESDAY, 10/4 - Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Christian)

FRIDAY, 10/6 – Last Day of Sukkot (Jewish)

SATURDAY, 10/7 – Shmini Atzeret (Jewish)

SUNDAY, 10/8 – Simchat Torah (Jewish)

MONDAY, 10/9 - Columbus Day (Federal & State Holiday - Banks Closed)

SUNDAY, 10/15 – White Cane Day (Observance) TUESDAY, 10/31 – Halloween (Observance)

NOVEMBER 2023

WEDNESDAY, 11/1 - All Saints' Day (Christain)

THURSDAY, 11/2 – All Souls' Day (Christian) SUNDAY, 11/5 - Daylight Savings Time Ends

(Set Clocks BACK One Hour)

TUESDAY, 11/7 – Election Day (Observance)

FRIDAY, 11/10 - Veteran's Day Observed

(Federal & State Holiday - Banks Closed)

SATURDAY, 11/11 – Veteran's Day (Federal) THURSDAY, 11/23 - Thanksgiving Day (Federal

& State Holiday - Banks Closed)

FRIDAY, 11/24 – Black Friday (Observance)

MONDAY, 11/27 – Cyber Monday (Observance)

DECEMBER 2023

WEDNESDAY, 12/6 - St. Nicholas Day (Observance)

WEDNESDAY, 12/6 – NCP Tree Lighting (Pg. 3)

THURSDAY, 12/7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (Observance)

FRIDAY, 12/8 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Christian)

FRIDAY, 12/8 – First Day of Chanukah/Hanukkan (Jewish)

THURSDAY, 12/21 - December Solstice

SUNDAY, 12/24 – Christmas Eve (Christian)

MONDAY, 12/25 – Christmas Day (Christian) (Federal & State Holiday - Banks Closed)

TUEDAY, 12/26 - First Day of Kwanzaa

(Observance)

SUNDAY, **12/31 –** New Year's Eve (Observance)