## Punches, Neil L.



Muskegon - Neil Levear Punches was born in Muskegon on February 16, 1927 to Lloyd Punches and Dorthea (Nielsen) Punches. In his early years, he and his mother moved around Michigan following his father to various CC Camps. They eventually settled in Muskegon where he attended Muskegon Heights schools. Shortly after graduating, he joined the Air Force with dreams of becoming a pilot. In the middle of his training the war ended and he was sent home. He eventually achieved his dream and obtained a pilot's license and flew for pleasure.

After several years, he joined the Army and was sent to Berlin, Germany. This is where he met Rita Gerstner, a farmer's daughter from Kansas. She was working as a civilian

secretary for one of the Generals. They were married on July 30, 1949, and a year later they welcomed their daughter, Linda.

In 1953, he returned to Muskegon with his family to help Neil's parents run Punches General Store, working seventy hours a week. Neil and Rita's sons, Brian and Greg, completed their family and helped continue the legacy of Punches, which went on to become Punches Thrifty and then Orchard Market.

Neil and Rita were blessed to have many wonderful adventures together. They enjoyed hunting, camping, boating, snowmobiling, and visited over 25 different countries.

Neil's survivors include his wife of 73 years, Rita; children, Linda (Bob) Mills, Brian (Marla) Punches and Greg (Lynn Brown) Punches; grandchildren: Tim (Lauren) Mills, Maren (Mike) Pearson, Heidi (Travis) Bolles, Heather (Craig) Claussen, Holly (Dan) Hazekamp, Rachel Punches and Josh Punches; and 14 great-grandchildren. Neil was preceded in death by his granddaughter, Taya Marie Mills, in 1977.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to his caregivers Julia, Pam H., Denise, Pam C., and Penny. They would help Neil maintain his "independent" spirit, while at the same time keeping him safe, which wasn't always easy. They also want to thank the Fruitport Fire Department, Trinity Health, and Harbor Hospice.

Neil would be pleased to share his trophy room with family and friends, as they share their special memories with one another. Family and friends gathered Sunday, June 11 at his home. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Harbor Hospice Foundation would be appreciated. Arrangements by the Sytsema Chapel of Sytsema Funeral and Cremation Services. Share memories with the family at www.sytsemafh.com.

# New board for Fruitport Lions 75th Anniversary year 2023-2024

by Heidi Tice

The Fruitport Lions Club installed their new board at their Banquet on June 28, 2023. Ready and willing to serve their community for 2023-2024 the new board members are as follows:

Lion Nancy Cook – Club President

Lion Angie LaNore – 1st Vice President

Lion Tom Piper – 2nd Vice President

Lion Dennis Cook – 3rd Vice President

Lion Ivan Ivanov & Lion Clayton Kemmerling – 2 year Directors

Lion Rick Tice & Lion Kevin Nelund – 1 year Directors

Lion Pat Stressman – Club Secretary

Lion Glen Selle – Club Treasurer

Lion Fred Yonkers – Lion Tamer (in charge of club assets)

Lion Bob Jados – Tail Twister (in charge of club morale)

Lion Pat Stressman – Past President

Lion Heidi Tice – Membership Chairman

Fruitport Lions club are always looking for new members with a heart for their community. If you would like to join the Fruitport Lions please contact any of the above Lions or just come and attend a meeting. The club meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at Whitlows Forerunner Restaurant on Airline rd. 6:30 p.m.



**New Board of Directors** 





New President, Nancy Cook & Outgoing President, Pat Stressman

Lion of the Year, Bob Jados President, Pat Struitport Area News • November 2023 • Page 25



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Ages 21+ please

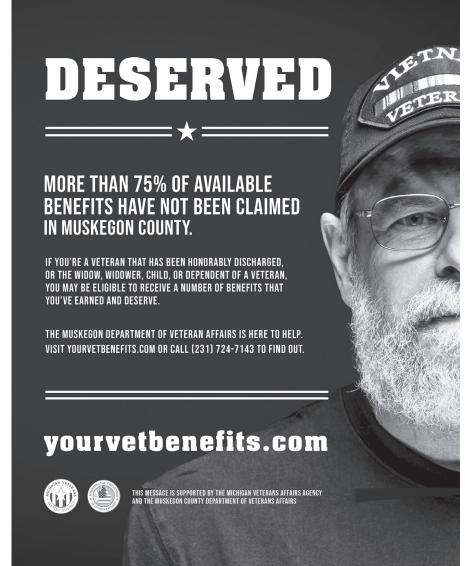
#### **PRIVATE PARTIES & GROUP EVENTS**

Our unique barside bowling set up is a great venue for parties and corporate events, call us for details and availability!

#### LIVE MUSIC EVERY WEEKEND

Stop in or visit our Facebook page to check out our schedule of events.

FULL BAR ● DRAFTS ● FOOD ● MUSIC ● BOWLING ● DARTS
At the corner of Airline and Pontaluna | 231-865-3215



# FRUITPORT LIONS PANCAKE SUPPER Community Event

Friday, February 2, 2024 5:00pm - 8:00pm Fruitport High School Cafeteria Prior to the Fruitport vs Spring Lake Basketball Game



VS



(All-you-can-eat Pancakes)

Cost: Adults - \$5.00 / Children 10 years & under - \$3.00

(Includes all-you-can-eat Pancakes, 2 Sausage Links, Orange Juice, Milk or Coffee, Dessert) (Gluten-Free pancakes upon request)

### **PLUS BAKE SALE**

Sponsored by the Fruitport Lioness Club

Come early before it sells out!

Tickets may be purchased from Fruitport Lions Club members, Leo Club, or at the door. **Proceeds will go to the Fruitport Lions LEO Club.**