

'Making A Difference'

A good year, and a promise of better one yet to come

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ANTRIM COUNTY – Although the year began on a rough note with the area's recovery from a winter storm that caused widespread power outages and tree damage throughout the county, 2016 was a good year overall with one of the best tourism seasons in years, while welcoming more employment, construction, real estate sales, new businesses and residents to the area.

Through it all were the dedicated citizens and organizations who work hard every day to improve and move Antrim County ahead into the future.

As in prior years, there are too many notable individuals and groups to list. However, as we salute all who have given of them-

selves over the last 365 days, we offer our readers The Review's "Six Who Made A (significant) Difference" through their work in 2016:

Laura Stanek

For more than 20 years, Jordan Township's Laura Stanek was a quiet, yet commanding force on Antrim County's Board of Commissioners who worked diligently to improve the lives of those in her rural Antrim County district of Jordan, Echo, Warner and Chestonia townships.

Raised on a farm in Echo Township, Stanek knew how to keep a close eye on the future and a firm hand on Antrim County's budget,



Laura Stanek

which meant that throughout her dedicated service Antrim County remained in the black financially while being able to keep up with the changes in technology to the county's 911 and emergency broadcasting services, as well as fit new services to the county's residents – such as county-wide recycling and one of the finest senior living facilities in the state – into the budget.

With her recent decision to retire, Stanek leaves a county that has benefited greatly from her concern and care about the future of her constituents. She will be missed.

Nancy Ritsema

After the passing of longtime Antrim County historical writer Bud Cowles a number of years ago, there was something missing from the pages of The Review until a kind and caring lady stepped in and began regaling readers on a regular basis with interesting and well-written historical narratives about the

world that was our region 150 or more years ago, writing about everything from Antrim County's early potato harvests in Alba to chemical factories once located in Elk Rapids.



Nancy Ritsema

A teacher in Ellsworth for a number of years, history has always been important to Ritsema, who recently collaborated with Mancelona's Herb Tipton and Eastport's Norton Bretz on a book about the life of well-known Mancelona area photographer Emil Johnson. The book was a fundraiser for the Mancelona Historical Society, which she completed along with her regular writing schedule for The Review, despite
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Difference

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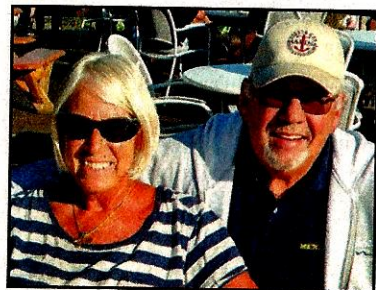
recent health issues.

Over the years, Nancy's popularity with her readers, including those at The Review, has created a fan club of historical devotees hopeful that we will someday be able to read her entertaining articles in a book of her own.

Dan and Ann Steiner

On June 8, 1991, Bellaire teenager Heidi Steiner was killed by a habitual drunk driver. Her parents Dan and Ann Steiner subsequently began a campaign that resulted in a first-class sports track and grandstand that now stands in memory to Heidi, a champion in the world of high school track, as well as a Michigan law now known as Heidi's Law mandating third drunk driving convictions as automatic felonies.

In September 2015, the Steiners



Dan and Ann Steiner

son Todd passed away. For several years Todd worked at Grand Traverse Industries' Adult Work Center in Mancelona, where he had enjoyed shooting baskets outside during breaks. The Steiners went to work again, raising cash and donations in a short amount of time to construct a stunning outdoor sports court for the employees of GTI.

Dedicated last summer, the Todd Steiner Memorial Park and Sports Court Center – like the Heidi Steiner Memorial Track and Field – ensures that the world will be a better place because of Heidi and Todd Steiner, and especially because of their parents.

Alden Men's Club

"We all need a little help now and then – and the Alden Men's Club is a group of community-minded men from Antrim and Kalkaska counties who do what we can to lend a helping hand."

For more than 20 years, that sentence has been the motto of a group of men in Alden who annually offer the best rummage sale in the area, along with a host of other fundraising projects.

Among the groups annually benefiting from the efforts of the Alden Men's Club are six food pantries in

Antrim and Kalkaska counties, and needy individuals and local organizations through grants such as the Alden United Methodist Church, Luv Pacs of Antrim County, the Village Market's Giving Tree program, Boy Scout Troop 23's uniforms and trips to the Jamboree, an Eagle Scout Scholarship through the Sarharrt Memorial Fund, and others as needed.

This year's rummage sale, held on Saturday, July 28 during Alden Days, netted the organization more than \$15,000 which will go a long ways to help those in need throughout the area.

Triston Cole

Unlike many newly elected lawmakers, Rep. Triston Cole (R-Mancelona) took his first term in office representing the citizens of Michigan's 105th District very seriously. When not advocating for northern Michigan in Lansing over the last two years, Cole spent the vast majority of his time meeting with constituents throughout the district.

The young legislator regularly attended a myriad of events almost daily – and sometimes multiple events in one day – while getting to know, answer questions and hear