

Bernhardt, Johnny

Johnny Bernhardt, 73, lifelong Oliver Township farmer, died Monday evening, Dec. 3, 2001, at Scheurer Hospital, Pigeon. He was born March 10, 1928, at the home of his parents, the late John and Mary (Essler) Bernhardt, Jr. John grew up south of Elkton and was a 1945 graduate of Elkton High School. On Sept. 15, 1951, he was united in marriage to Doris Shapow at St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church in Pigeon. They moved onto his grandfather's farm south of Elkton where they lived and farmed all of his life. He also drove a school bus for 15 years for the Laker district. He was very active in his church, St. Francis, serving as a Eucharistic minister, was on the cemetery board and was special projects chairman. He was a member of the Pigeon Conservation Club and helped organize the bingo program. John loved to fish with his buddy, Ed, enjoyed high school and Michigan State University sports and never gave up on the Lions. He helped in his community by volunteering his time on the street corner with the Knights of Columbus and Lions, even though he was not a member. He also fed his community by growing a huge garden, then giving it all away. Surviving are his wife, Doris; two daughters, Tina Marie Brill and her husband, Greg, of Murphy, N.C., and Linda Lou Bernhardt and her life partner, John Gingrich, of Belleville; his son, Randy John Bernhardt of El Paso, Texas; two brothers, Joe Bernhardt and his wife, Ruth, of Owendale and Pete Bernhardt and his friend, Inez Fischer, of East Tawas; and three sisters, Elsie Engelhardt, Sue Dinkel and Martha Braschil and her husband, John, all of Sebewaing. He was preceded in death by two daughters, Kathy Anne and Vicki Anne. A funeral mass will be conducted at 4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, 2001, at St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church in Pigeon. Sr. Theresa Fox and Fr. George Serour will officiate with burial in the church cemetery. A parish scripture service will take place at 8 p.m. this evening at the Champagne Funeral Chapel, Elkton. Visitation was 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday evening and will be 2 to 9 p.m. today and 2 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home. Memorials may be made to Special Projects at St. Francis Catholic Church or the Michigan Heart Association.