



This week I would like to introduce you to Jim Czarkowski. Jim has a passion for learning! Whether it be the history of the Farm Bureau or current medical theories, Jim is a research bug with a vast knowledge of many things past and present. Having grown up in Gaylord, Jim left at age 18 to move to Chicago and join the seminary. After 10 years of spiritual discovery and growth, Jim joined the navy, where, upon his discharge, he went to nursing school on the GI Bill. The military knew they had found a dedicated soul and soon after graduating, Jim found himself enlisted in the Air Guard for another 16 years. Upon retirement, Jim returned to Gaylord and the family farm, where he continues to help his sister on the homestead and to care for his elderly mother. Jim's dogs are his pride and joy and he is quick with a story about his love for his 4-legged friends!

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Jim is very active in the Farm Bureau, spending time there several days a week. Not only does he help with current projects, he is also very instrumental in researching the history of the Farm Bureau in Otsego County which was founded in 1918 by farmers who wanted an insurance company that worked as hard as they did. He is also a very active member of his church.

However, Jim's volunteer efforts are not limited to the Gaylord area. With his interest in agriculture, Jim became involved in a Garden Project in the Philippines. Today, he continues to support the efforts of several families in their day to day lives.

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While in Grand Rapids and serving under President Jimmy Carter, Jim had the honor of meeting the Commander in Chief and his wife. After introducing himself and having a brief conversation, Jim tells of some memorable advice that Jimmy Carter gave him that afternoon: "Try the sweet potato pie," he said. "You won't regret it."

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As a history detective, Jim is interested in learning more about Polish Heritage, Agriculture, and the Pioneers and Founders of Otsego County. When asked what motivated him to join the History Matters team, he replied "I've always been a history bug and I taught history from 1972-75."

We look forward to Jim sharing his vast knowledge and interests in so many topics as we discover and learn more about Otsego County.

