

Brodhead Independent Register

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SHOPPING NEWS

917 W. EXCHANGE STREET, BRODHEAD, WI 53520

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2023

Exploring country art through photos

Patty Van Stone puts her heart into a photographic journal of Rock County barn quilts

By Amy Cushing
STAFF WRITER

Ten years ago, Patty Van Stone moved to Clinton and discovered something beautiful on the way: barn quilts.

She spotted the quilts all around the area and decided to learn more about them, driving around the Evansville area by following a listing she found online.

When she realized they were more widespread than she realized, she expanded her barn quilt tour to places like Shawano, growing her love for the folk art even more in the process.

“(I) thought it was so ‘country’ and I’m deep down a county girl, inside and out,” Van Stone said. “But something told me there was more to the story behind the designs and homesteads they were hanging on.

“I mentioned to my lady friends in the Clinton Garden Club that I would like to do a photo book on barn quilts and feature the story behind each one,” she said. “Little did I know that some of the gals had a barn quilt on their property and knew many others that did, too.

Within days, Van Stone was given a list of names and addresses to contact and see if there was any interest in participating in her project.

Rock County has only been on the barn quilt bandwagon within the past 15 years, but it’s something that’s been taking place much longer in other places around the country. It’s a phenomenon that still growing.

Van Stone sent out roughly 65 letters and eventually had 35 families around Clinton, Beloit and Janesville



SUBMITTED PHOTO Brodhead Independent Register

Patty Van Stone is the creative mind behind Barn Quilts Photo Journal that she compiled in 2022. Her love for barn quilts prompted her to explore the area and learn the history of them with the 28 families featured in the photo book.

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By the fall of 2022, she had 28 participants photographed and documented.

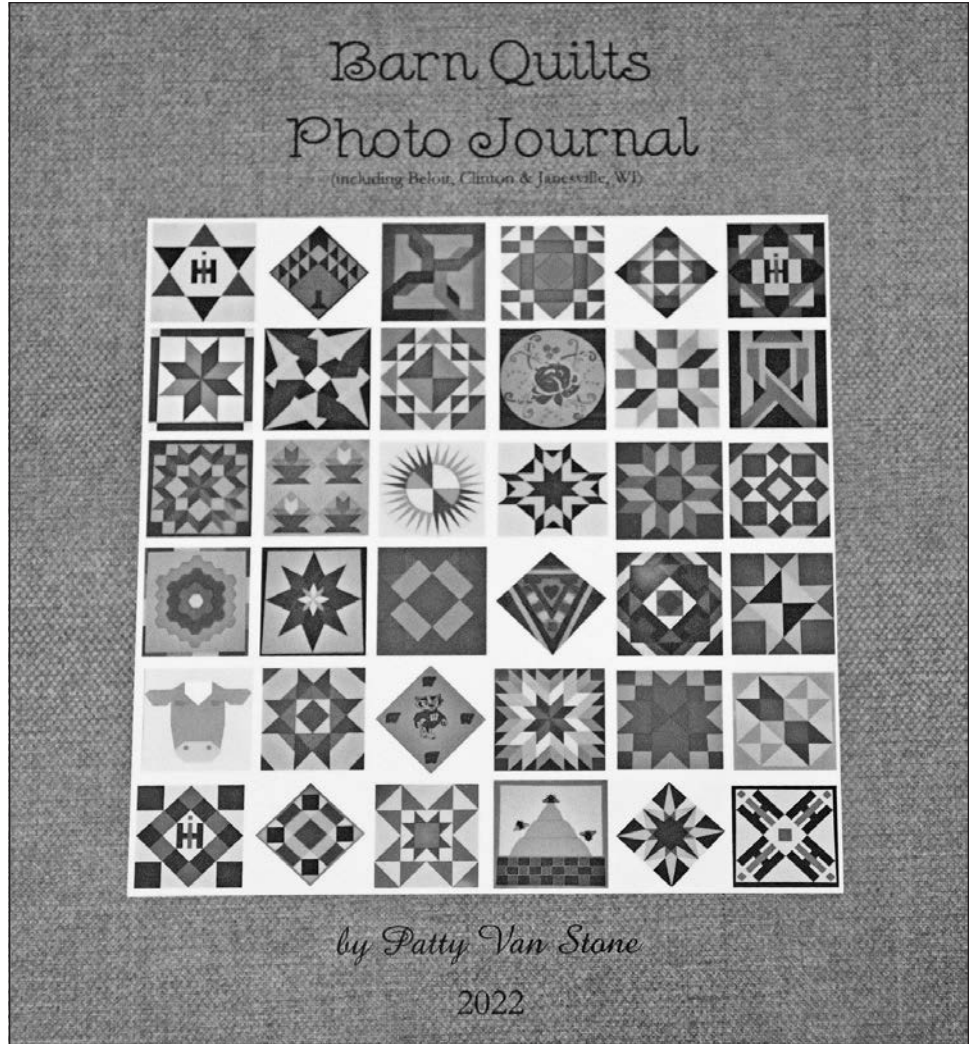
“I had decided the cover of the book was going to be a 36-square quilt and each square would contain a different barn quilt,” Van Stone explained. “I was able to fill all 36 spaces because some of the families had more than one barn quilt on their property. The project came together better than I ever expected.”

By the end of October, she was set to print, self-publish-

ing her book through Shutterfly. Van Stone’s goal was to keep the cost of the book as low as possible, and add in to the cost of the book a donation to the Alzheimer’s Association.

Thanks to Shutterfly’s bulk book printing option, it was easy for her to accomplish.

Once she had about 30 copies, she met with many of the families she had interviewed for the book to see if they were interested in their own copy. But much to her surprise – and delight – many of them wanted multiple copies, to keep and give away.



SUBMITTED IMAGE Brodhead Independent Register

The photo journal covers barn quilts located all over in Clinton, Beloit, and Janesville. It can be purchased directly from Van Stone for those that are interested.

To date, Van Stone has sold more than 80 copies of her barn quilt book, and has raised an impressive \$800 for the Alzheimer’s Association. Every time she gets a chance to show it off, interest in the book continues to grow.

“I wanted to meet the families and learn why they designed their barn quilt. Such as... did it have special

meaning to their family and heritage,” she explained.

But when asked if she could pick a favorite quilt from her book, it wasn’t possible.

“I actually can’t pick a favorite, because the people I met have all become very special to me. They willingly shared their personal story and allowed me to complete this project. I couldn’t have

done it without all of them.”

As a quilter herself, Van Stone stated she would love to expand her project to include more that she hasn’t yet featured in other Wisconsin counties. Many have tourism attractions designed around their barn quilts and she feels that having them compiled into a book like

See BARN QUILTS, Page 3

Thoughts from Scotch Hill

What is a food shed, and why should we gather to talk about it where we live – frequently?

We’re thirsty. We’re hungry. We feel what our bodies need, and we act.

In today’s world, that means we reach out for whatever quenches our thirst and satisfies our hunger. We reach out to either a global or a local food shed.

Geographic boundaries and people who live within our region make that flow of food from fields to plates easy or difficult. Collectively and individually, we do that when our money flows away to enrich someone we cannot see or stays in the local economy.

Most of us don’t think about any of this much.

Mass-produced food spreads out the globe.



By **TONY ENDS**
Correspondent

It provides people – who can afford it – cheap, abundant food, whenever they want or need.

As long as there’s no economic disruption, this global food shed seems to protect consumers from hunger. It also seems to make protecting local watersheds seem a separate matter.

Increasingly and especially in the United States, food sheds have

become global. One-third to half of many types of foods eaten in the United States now come from other countries.

Farmers grow these foods in distant lands. Corporations and businesses transport these foods thousands of miles by sea and air every day.

Almost everyone in our nation has witnessed since March 2020 how vulnerable the global food shed has made us. We saw shortages, delays, and scarcities hit local communities as a pandemic expanded. Economic shock and supply chain disruption subsequently spread everywhere.

Food sheds today rely

heavily on nonrenewable sources of energy for transportation, refrigeration, and just-in-time delivery from warehouses to area store chains.

It wasn’t always like this.

History gives us plenty of examples of people and cultures whose food sheds were local and intertwined with the populations’ watersheds.

Natural boundaries defined food sheds for individual settlements within their distinct watersheds.

A watershed is a mappable region, draining from slopes, natural features and terrain. Its area forms a local supply of water to everything that is alive there – soil life, plants, birds, animals, and people.

The watershed quenches thirst of all life within the local food shed.

Natural features, native vegetative species, and topographical characteristics make up a watershed. They historically have supplied, held, filtered, and protected each place’s water.

Benefits of local food sheds within protected watersheds include availability of fresher foods that keep food dollars circulating in a local economy. This reduces resources used in food packaging and transport. It reduces emissions and combats climate change.

Local consumers can help local producers nurture positive relationships of

food production and water. They can help each other effectively control solid waste disposal issues, too.

Connecting in conversation about these relationships of water and food sheds can make sustainability happen.

It can ensure that when we’re thirsty and hungry, no matter what happens around the global economy, what we need where we live is a shed of safety and security.

Tony Ends has worked variously in newspaper, applied research, rural advocacy, and Community Supported Agriculture since completing a master’s in journalism in 1980. He now writes and edits for a federal agency.

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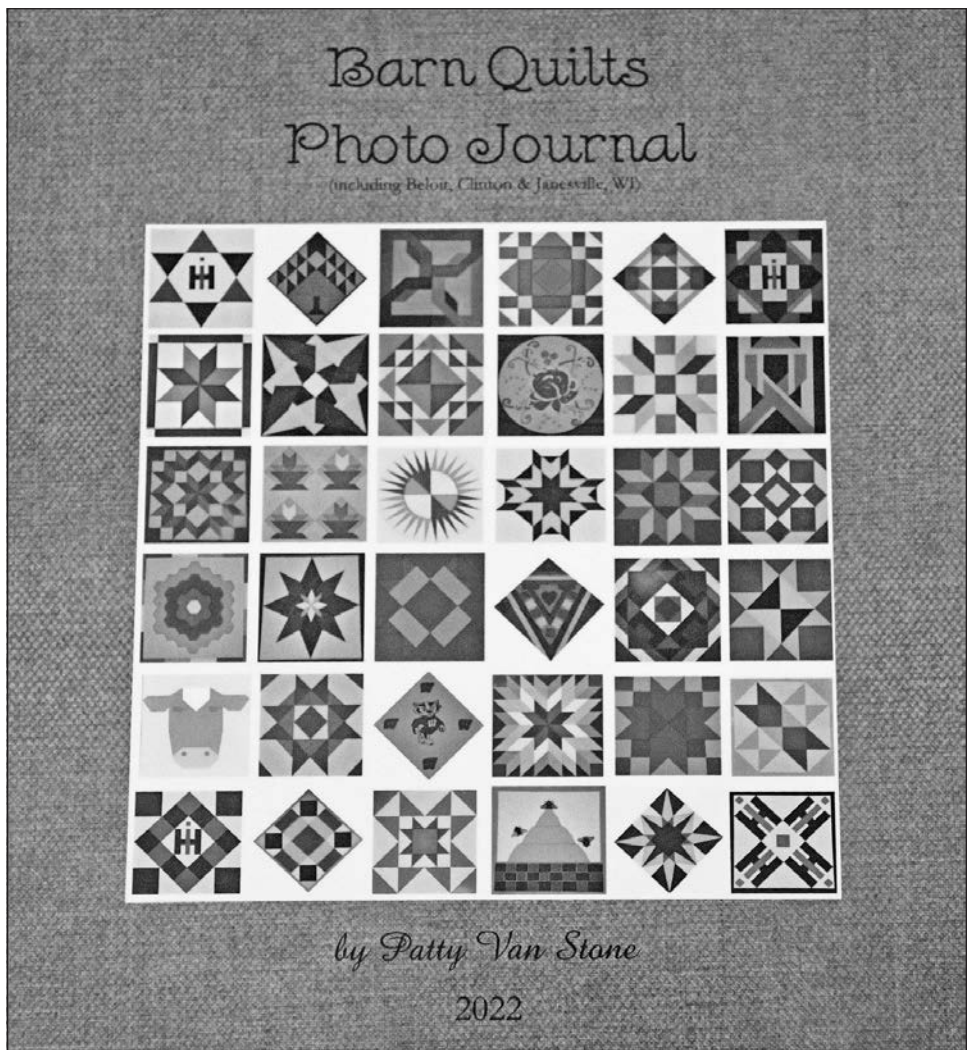
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Obituaries

KATHLEEN HANSON

Kathleen "Kathy" Valerie Hanson, age 87, passed away peacefully on June 26, 2023 surrounded by family.

She was born July 7, 1935 in Janesville to Howard and Pauline Whitmore (Wells). She married David A. Hanson on June 20, 1953 in Footville. David preceded her in death in 2011.

Kathy loved her family and enjoyed every minute spent with them. She enjoyed traveling with her husband Dave and spending over 40 years on their farm. She loved spending time with their many friends and family dancing, playing cards, and dining out.



Besides being a homemaker and a great cook, Kathy worked as a seamstress for much of her life, most recently at Tree Enterprises in Janesville. She treasured her family and friends. She always brought her beautiful smile and positive disposition to every gathering. She especially loved her role as a mother and grandmother to her three children, 12 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren.

Kathy is survived by her sister Mary Thostenson of Beloit; her two sons Randall Hanson of Orfordville, Kevin (Debbie) Hanson of Baraboo, and her daughter Marcy (Larry Skilondz) Hanson of Baraboo; and 12 grandchildren, Nic Hanson, Courtney (John) Sigafus, Lance (Stefanie) Lannoye, Katie (Nick) Novinska, Eric (Michelle) Hanson, Kelly (Derrick) Fiez, Lisa (Matt) Bloomquist, Dan Hanson, Austin Hanson, Shannon Hanson, Nick (Aimee) Steinbrink, and Amanda (Orlando) Bourne.

Kathy was preceded in death by her beloved husband David, her sister Rosie Conaway, and her parents Clifford and Pauline Wells.

Kathy left her family and friends with beautiful memories. As she rises to the heavens above, she gets to look down on the ones she loves as she dances on the clouds with the love of her life Dave.

A celebration of Kathy's life took place on July 1 at DL Newcomer Funeral Home, 1105 E. 9th Ave, Brodhead. Visitation was at 10 until 11:30 a.m. with a funeral service at 11:30 a.m. Burial will be at State Line Cemetery in Rock Grove, Ill. (10 miles south of Brodhead) followed by the reception at Putnam Park in Brodhead where food and beverages will be provided.

MARIBETH STAIR

Maribeth Stair, 81, of Dubuque, Iowa, passed away on June 26, 2023, surrounded by her loving family.

Friends and family may visit from 10 a.m. to noon on Friday, July 7 at Lord of Love Lutheran Church, 219 Summit Street in Galena, Ill. A funeral service will follow immediately after the visitation beginning at noon. Private family burial will be at Greenwood Cemetery in Brodhead at a later date. Leonard Funeral Home and Crematory, Dubuque, Iowa is assisting the family.

Maribeth was born on March 22, 1942, in Janesville, daughter of Clinton C. and Pearl E. (Norman) Erickson. She graduated from Brodhead High School. On Jan. 29, 1966, she was united in marriage to Stephen J. Stair. He preceded her in death in July 2006. She worked at Universal Foods in Brodhead before opening Stair's Food Center in Galena, Ill., operating from 1977 to 1995. She was a member of the VFW Women's Auxillary, Galena Historical Society, Fort Nightly, and Beading Club.

As a member of the Galena Golf Club, Maribeth was an avid golfer and enjoyed playing in the ladies league, with her family and special golf club events. In addition, she also enjoyed, traveling, bowling, playing cards, especially Bridge. She was a loving mother,



grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend and she above all loved spending time with her family and friends.

Maribeth is survived by her two sons Chris (Cindy) Stair of Elburn, Ill., their children Alyssa and Bryce, and Justin (Tina) Stair of Dubuque, Iowa, their children Taylor (fiancé Micaela), Austin (girlfriend Savanna), and Brody Stair, great-granddaughter Thea James and great-grandson Granger Lee, sister Naomi Gourley of Santa Monica, Calif., two sisters-in-law Judy Erickson of Brodhead and Jean Erickson of Midlothian, Texas, as well as many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband Stephen, parents Clinton and Pearl, son Matthew in 1967, and two brothers Curtis Erickson and Terry Erickson.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in Maribeth's name to Hospice of Dubuque.

The family would like to thank Hospice of Dubuque, MercyOne of Dubuque, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, for their caring support through her times of illness and family and friends for all the love and support for mom throughout her life.

EILEEN ZURFLUH

Eileen Zurfluh, age 100, of Albany passed away on Friday, June 23, 2023, at Albany Oaks.

She was born the daughter of Forrest and Gladys (Peabody) Stephenson on March 29, 1923 in Albany. She graduated from Albany High School in 1941. Eileen was united in marriage to John Zurfluh on June 2, 1941 in Dubuque, Iowa.

Eileen farmed with her husband until 1985. She was



a member of the Albany United Methodist Church and when she was younger was active in the Lions Club with her husband. She enjoyed reading, watching TV, listening to old-time music, and time with her grandchildren.

Eileen is survived by her children Colleen (Gary) Brewer of Attica, Diane (Ron) Kubly of Brodhead, Hans (Patti) Zurfluh of Albany, Don Zurfluh of Albany, and Cindy (Jon) Mauerman of Albany; 18 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren with one on the way and five great-great-grandchildren (all boys).

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband John,

and son Lee Zurfluh.

Funeral services were held on June 30, at 11 a.m. at Albany United Methodist Church with Pastor Thomas Moe officiating. Burial followed at Hillcrest Cemetery in Albany. A visitation was held the same day from 10 a.m. until the time of service at the church. Shriner Hager Gohlke Funeral Home is assisting the family. Condolences may be sent to the family at: shriner111.com.

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ADRC offers health and wellness class

Graduates of program starting July 11 have a reduced rate of falls

The ADRC of Rock County, in partnership with SSM Health Systems of Janesville, is pleased to offer Stepping On, their most popular health and wellness class for those ages 60 and older starting July 11.

Stepping On is a seven-week workshop proven to help participants prevent falls. The classes will include strength and balance exercises, home safety check suggestions, expert guest speakers, and a medication review. The workshop is for people who have fallen and for people who fear falling.

A Stepping On workshop will be held on seven Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at SSM Health

in Janesville from July 11 to Aug. 29 (no class on Aug. 15). A suggested donation of \$15 is asked to cover the cost of class materials. Space is limited to 12 to 14 participants.

For questions, or to register by July 7, call the ADRC of Rock County at: 608-757-5309 or email: Lisa.messer@co.rock.wi.us

The program was developed by Dr. Lindy Clemson of Sydney, Australia, to help older adults learn ways to prevent falls. It was brought to the United States by Dr. Jane Mahoney, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, with funding from the CDC and other partners.

Beloit man arrested in Turtle on felony drug charges

On June 28 at 4:09 p.m., a Rock County deputy conducted a traffic stop on a 2015 black Chrysler 200 on East Hart Road near South Clinic Road in Turtle Township. During the traffic stop, another Rock County deputy utilized his canine partner Kamo and obtained probable cause to search the vehicle. A result of the search yielded 170 grams of cocaine.

The driver was Edwin C. Ruiz, 33-years-old from Beloit. He was arrested for possession with intent to deliver cocaine (greater than 40 grams) and maintaining a drug vehicle. Ruiz made his initial court appearance on June 30.

Following the arrest, a search warrant was drafted for Ruiz's residence at 2770 Iva Court #11 in Beloit. A Rock County judge



Edwin C. Ruiz

reviewed and signed the warrant. Two firearms and an additional 96 grams of cocaine were located during the search.

The Rock County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Unit was assisted to the investigation by the Walworth County Drug Task Force and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Pursuant to the directive of the Wisconsin Supreme Court as found in Supreme Court Rule 20:3.6, Trial Publicity, you are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty."

Barn quilts

(Continued from front page)

thers could help promote their tourism even more, as well as providing people in those areas with family heirlooms.

As for fundraising for the Alzheimer's Association, it's a charity that is dear to Van Stone's heart. She has been raising money for them for 15 years now in memory of her mother and grandmother. But her barn quilt book was a way to put a different spin on fundraising and combine it with her love of photography.

"Combining both of these things has really been fun," she said, "and keeps me doing new and creative things with my talent."

Patty's Barn Quilts Photo Journal book can only be purchased directly through her, for those that are interested. Find out more information on Facebook by searching "Barn quilt photo book 2022," or by writing her at 125 Milwaukee Rd., Clinton, WI 53525, calling 608-553-1048 or emailing littledyna-mo333@gmail.com.

Alzheimer's Walks

Van Stone takes part in Alzheimer's Association walks every year, and would like to spread the word about her group's fundraising for it and for the charity in general. Locally, there are both Rock County and Walworth County walks, though her group currently only does the Walworth County event.



SUBMITTED PHOTO *Brodhead Independent Register*

Patty Van Stone decided to also dedicate her photo book to fundraising money for the Alzheimer's Association. The charity is dear to her and she does it to honor her mother (at left) and grandmother (at right).

"I have done this event for the past nine years," she proudly shares, "(and) before that I lived in Viroqua and walked and fundraised for the Coulee Region."

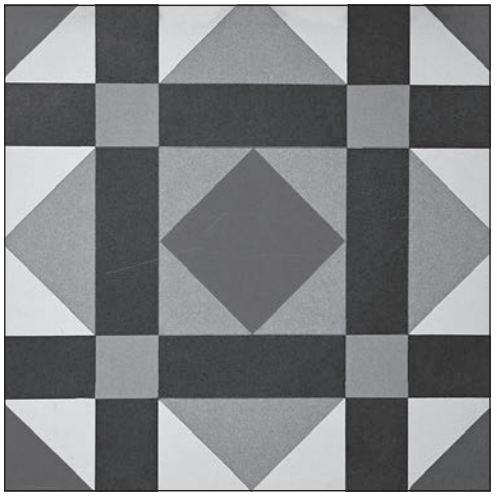
If you would like to donate

to her group for their walk, visit alz.org/wi, click "get involved", participate in an event, walk to end alzheimer's, find a team, enter "Little Dynamo's" as team name, search and then select Van Stone.



The Cobblestone House in Clinton, one of the featured places in Patty's photo book, is home to a barn quilt called "Crossroads" (also pictured at right). The following Clinton Community Historical Society members gathered in attendance for the above photo to show off their quilt: Mary Ann Inman, Linda Smith (sitting on bench), Don Lee (back, from left), Sidley Knutson, Suzanne Dammon, Jeanne Oldenburg, Susan Gunnink, Karen Oldenburg, Cheryl Aarud, Tom Larson, Vaughn Johnson, Joyce Splan, Ron Nortier and Teresa Sommers.

PATTY VAN STONE PHOTOS *Brodhead Independent Register*



Orfordville Fire/EMS fighting for survival

BY THE ORFORDVILLE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

The Orfordville Fire Protection District, which provides fire and EMS services to five municipalities in southwestern Rock County, is at a pivotal crossroads that could ultimately result in the demise of the District.

For more than 50 years, the Orfordville Fire Protection District has served residents of the village of Orfordville, as well as residents of the towns of Avon, Newark, Plymouth and Spring Valley.

The town of Newark has decided to leave the Orfordville District and enter into a service agreement with the town of Beloit. The exodus of Newark will result in a 30% loss of tax base for the Orfordville District, placing a punitive financial burden on the remaining District taxpayers. That financial burden could ultimately cause the collapse of the District.

Failure of the Orfordville Fire Protection District would leave its roughly 5,500 residents in serious jeopardy. Additionally, the tens of thousands of residents being served by neighboring departments could also be jeopardized, as those neighboring departments will inevitably be asked to help fill

the void left by a failed department currently tasked with servicing a 120-square-mile area.

While it is every municipality's right to take the necessary steps to provide the best services for its residents, the circumstances surrounding the proposed Fire/EMS service agreement between the town of Beloit and the town of Newark are puzzling. For example, residents of the town of Beloit would pay roughly three times more for Fire/EMS services than residents of the town of Newark. Furthermore, the amount Newark would be asked to pay would only allow for the hiring of one additional full-time person. Given the call volume the town of Beloit is already tasked with, it's difficult to understand how the hiring of just a single additional employee would allow the town of Beloit to answer all of the roughly 90 calls emanating from Newark.

How did they get here?

In late 2022, in response to a rapid and dangerous erosion of volunteer personnel, the Orfordville Board of Fire Commissioners took fast and decisive action to develop a budget based on a hybrid model of six full-time Fire/EMS profession-

als, supplemented by varying levels of part-time personnel, to ensure a reliably staffed department. This plan required a massive budget increase of roughly 300%. Unfortunately, the voters of one of the District municipalities, the town of Newark, rejected the idea.

For the past several months, thanks to the dedication and hard work of the staff, the Orfordville District has experienced a remarkable turnaround. For example, ambulance out-of-service hours have been reduced by more than 80% to just 5%. However, the current mode of heavily relying on a handful of dedicated part-time staff is not sustainable.

Thus, the Orfordville Fire Protection District continues to work toward a hybrid personnel model of full-time and part-time employees. This model will allow the Orfordville District to provide the reliable, high-quality service that is necessary — necessary for not only the residents of the District, but also the tens of thousands of residents throughout the Western Rock County region. Regardless of whether they are deliberate or inadvertent, any actions that undermine the Orfordville Fire Protection District put the entire region at risk.

College news

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire names Juda student to Dean's List

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire extends congratulations to the 2,528 students named to the spring 2023 dean's list. Their academic performance has been outstanding, and they recognize these students with pride.

Congratulations, Bugolds! The Dean's List eligibility criteria can be found online at: www.uwec.edu/news/news/spring-2023-deans-list2-5791/

A student from the area who was named to the Dean's List is:

Juda
• Celina Mendoza, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Eau Claire

Local students graduate from Carthage College

More than 620 students graduated from Carthage College, completing their degree requirements between February and May 2023. The recent graduates include these from the local area:

- Erin Engle of Footville graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education.
- Lauren Hammes of Orfordville graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music.
- Alex McNall of Janesville graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Exercise and Sport Science.

• Lily Stockheimer of Janesville graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Exercise and Sport Science.

• Rachael Thomas of Milton graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry.

• Gabrielle Tiff of Janesville graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre-Technical Direction.

The Class of 2023 celebrated Commencement at Carthage from May 26 to 28. After the formal degree conferral on Friday evening, individual graduates and their guests took part in an extended procession and

See COLLEGE, Page 5

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WHERE: Library Park, 918 W. Main Street, Lake Geneva
TIME: The event opens at 8:30 a.m., ceremony starts at 9:40 a.m., the walk begins at 10 a.m.
ROUTE LENGTH: 1 mile or 3.2 miles
MORE INFORMATION: For more information, visit alz.org/wi, click "get involved", participate in an event, walk to end alzheimer's, find your walk, enter the zip code 53147 and choose Lake Geneva's event. Donations can also be mailed to:
Alzheimer's Association, Walworth Co.
7900 West 78th Street, Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55439
CONTACT: Coordinator Rachel Skowronski, 414-775-7597, rskowronski@alz.org

Rock County 2023 Walk to End Alzheimer's

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 23
WHERE: Palmer Park, 2501 Palmer Drive, Janesville
TIME: The event opens at 8:30 a.m., opening ceremony starts at 10 a.m., the walk begins at 10:15 a.m.
ROUTE LENGTH: 2 miles
MORE INFORMATION: For more information, visit alz.org/wi, click "get involved", participate in an event, walk to end alzheimer's, find your walk, enter the zip code 53545 and choose Janesville's event. Donations can also be mailed to:
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Stassi reflects on Parkview's 2023 baseball season

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The once mighty Parkview Vikings baseball team has struggled to recreate the success they saw in

the early 2010s. From 2011 through 2013, the Vikings were one of the best teams in the Rock Valley Conference, if not one of the best in all of Southern Wisconsin.

The Vikings haven't reached that same status in the early 2020s.

After Covid wiped out the 2020 season, the Vikings went 4-15 in 2021. In 2022,

the Vikings were just 4-16, and in 2023, Parkview finished with a disappointing record of 2-21. For Parkview baseball and their head coach, Anthony "TJ" Stassi, another reset is coming.

The Vikings graduate six seniors from their 2023 squad, including their only All-Conference award winner in Honorable Mention infielder, Dayne Butzler. "We are losing six seniors who all played three years and were a good group of kids," Stassi shared, before adding that, "All could play multiple positions and loved the sport." The Parkview coach acknowledged how challenging and emotional it is to lose a large group like that, saying "It is always tough losing kids to graduation as you build such a relationship with them."

Stassi also acknowledged that, for Parkview's standards, it was another down year for the squad. "It was a tough year record wise. Not what we were hoping for,"

Stassi shared, explaining that, "We need to improve our consistency in all areas. We need to just play more baseball and get more reps, fielding, hitting, pitching, etcetera."

While it was a tough season in the win's column, the Vikings managed to get some solid experience while building toward the future. "We did have a ton of youth get experience," Stassi said. Throughout the year, three freshmen got playing time at the Varsity level, including Aiden Crane and Corbin Williams. Four sophomores got in on the action as well, in Christian Hobon, Mathias Trienen, Casey Hume, and Easton Hackett. Stassi also added that their two juniors, Gehrig Grenawalt and Jaxon Cronin, were "consistent players."

"We lose a couple of good pitchers to graduation, but we also were able to get some innings for young guys to build for the next couple of years," Stassi said, when

discussing the team's future. "We have a good nucleus coming back and some soon-to-be sophomores who didn't get playing time who will be battling for a starting spot, as well as some upcoming freshman," Parkview's head coach added.

For now, the Vikings are putting in the work in hopes of seeing some results in next year's 2024 season. "We have a couple players playing summer ball and fall ball. We will be having open gyms starting in the fall, with some youth camps," Stassi said. Parkview baseball also has three different strength and conditioning sections that, "We are trying to get everyone to attend," Stassi added. The time slots for the sessions are 6 to 7 a.m., 8 to 9:30 a.m., and 5:30 to 7 p.m., in order to be available to anyone.

Parkview has a long way to go if they want to return to their former stature. It all starts with the work they put in off the field.

Wisconsin estimates how much schools will get for the next school year

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction released on June 30 an estimate of the general school aids each public school district will receive for the 2023-24 school year.

General school aids are the largest form of state support for Wisconsin public schools, offsetting local property taxes under state imposed revenue limits. Wisconsin statutes require the department to publish estimated aid amounts by July 1 each year.

The current estimate is based on the biennial budget as passed by the Wisconsin State Legislature and pupil count data reported by school districts to the DPI. The state 2023-25 biennial budget is not yet final, and estimated amounts are based on budgeted data as opposed to audited data. This means the estimated amounts are subject to change by the time the DPI certifies general school aids for 2023-24 based on audited data by October 15.

Estimated general school aids for 2023-24 total \$5.36 billion, representing an increase of 3 percent from last year. Payments to districts will increase an estimated \$160.5 million because of two factors: 1) an increase of \$154.7 million per the state budget as passed by the Wisconsin State Legislature; and 2) the decrease in the required Milwaukee Public Schools funding for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.

Of the state's 421 school districts, 59.6

percent (251 districts) are estimated to receive more general aids than in 2022-23, while 39 percent of districts (164) are estimated to receive less; six districts are estimated to have no change in aid between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years. Sixty-one districts are estimated to receive the maximum 15 percent decrease under the state's hold harmless aid provision.

A district's general aids can increase or decrease due to changes in any of the three local factors comprising Wisconsin's general equalization aid formula – property valuation, enrollment, and shared costs – as well as a difference in funds available from the state. General school aids are distinct from the recent investment from various federal stimulus efforts intended to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; these federal funds have a spending deadline and will not renew after 2024.

District aid estimates can be found on the department's School Financial Services website in the general aids section. Estimates are available as "Summary by Alphabet" and "Summary by Percent." The department's July 1 aid estimate does not include per pupil categorical aid, which will be based on student membership from the 2023-24, 2022-23, and 2021-22 school years (third Friday in September count). Per pupil aid will be paid in March 2024; under current law, it will be paid at \$742 per pupil.

Green County meetings

Friday, July 7

- Green County Information Technology Committee meeting, Green County Government Services Building – Lower Level Conference Room 1, N3152 Hwy 81, Monroe; 5 p.m.

Monday, July 10

- Green County Zoning and Land Use Committee meeting, Green County Courthouse – County Board Room, 1016 16th Ave., Monroe; 3 p.m.

Tuesday, July 11

- Green County Human Services Board meeting, Government Services Building –

Multi-purpose Rooms 2 and 3, N3152 State Rd. 81, Monroe; 2 p.m.

- Green County Board of Supervisors meeting, Green County Historical Courthouse, 1016 16th Ave., Monroe; 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 13

- Audit sub-committee of the Green County Human Services Board meeting, Government Services Building – Second Floor Conference Room 207, N3152 Hwy 81, Monroe; 7:30 a.m.

- Green County Pleasant View Nursing Home Board meeting, Pleasant View Nursing Home – Administrative Conference Room, N3150 State Road 81, Monroe; 3:30 p.m.

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Albany athletes improving with Comet Elite program

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

This summer, the student-athletes of Albany have been putting in some offseason work thanks to the Comet Elite program.

Albany's Principal, Stuart Ritzert, and their Superintendent, Kurt Soderberg, have set up the offseason training with programming from ONEighty Athletics. With multiple comprehensive systems of strength and conditioning, ONEighty Athletics is a sports performance program geared towards increasing knowledge and successful sports performance strategies. The Albany School District, along with ONEighty Athletics, and a generous donation from Harvey Kopp, have made this offseason program available to their student-athletes throughout the summer.

Ritzert, who helps to run the program, spoke about the offseason schedule and the opportunities it provides to Albany's athletes. "This program is not sport specific; however, it has specific lifts that are followed to assist in overall progress for the students participating," Ritzert shared. Currently, Albany has three training sessions, with the first two geared toward high school students, and the third being middle school students. The program is open to grades seven to twelve and takes place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Tuesdays and Thursdays are optional days where students can come in for an hour and engage in some sort of structured physical activity. One Tuesday, the program played volleyball with a six-pound medicine ball, teams of five, and some modified rules. "It was an incredible amount of fun and an even better workout. The students and the adults had a blast participating in this activity," Ritzert said.

The Comet Elite program has provided some impressive results for Albany's athletes. "The results we have seen are nothing short of amazing," Ritzert shared, adding that, "In the short time we have worked with these students, the form and technique they are demonstrating has improved tremendously."

Ritzert shared that athletes have been able to increase weight along the way, while getting faster and stronger. The expectation is that these athletes will be more agile and compete at a higher level in their respective sports.

The program is much more than hitting the weight room. Ritzert explained, "This program has not just been about heavy lifting. It's about educating our students about how to lift. Seeing seventh graders be able to do a hang clean with proper form and add weight each week has been inspiring. It regularly comes up in conversation with one of our coaches, Brandon Olsen, about how we wish we would have had these same opportunities in middle school. These middle school students will benefit so much by the time they get to high school. We won't be teaching them lifts or exercises, but rather dialing in form and adding weight to get stronger and faster."

It took a group effort to make Comet Elite possible. From the Superintendent to the principal, to Harvey Kopp, and some students who took advantage of the opportunity early in the process. Ritzert spoke about how the dream came to life, with some help along the way. "This process started back in the fall," Ritzert shared, adding "When I started in the district, we had this amazing facility that wasn't being used regularly. Harvey Kopp made an incredibly large and generous donation to get the weight room up to where it is today. Yet, it was essentially not being utilized after school." The donation made by Kopp was \$72,000 and helped Albany build a state-of-the-art facility.

"After some discussion with our Superintendent, Kurt Soderberg, I started opening up the weight room on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday after school for an hour. We started with a handful of students taking advantage of this opportunity and quickly saw numbers increase up to twenty students lifting after school on any given day. We then used this momentum to spring into the summer with the Comet Elite program. We knew we wanted



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAULA SODERBERG *Brodhead Independent-Register*
Above: Athletes participate in bench press workouts. Right: Albany students participate in medicine ball work.



to continue for our students and knew this was something that was going to be an important part of our summer program. We are utilizing a specific training program, broken up by weeks and workouts where students can track their progress along the way."

Thus far, the program has seen a solid turnout. Ritzert shared that there are roughly forty students on the Comet Elite roster, with thirty being in high school and another ten in middle school. "Our students participating are definitely committed to getting better. We have them in groups or paired, so they have begun to rely on their partners to show up consistently," Ritzert says.

As of now, the workout sessions will continue throughout the entire month of July. In August, the plan is to revisit the sessions and likely condense to something they can continue throughout the entire month of August. When school resumes in September, they will go back to the after-school sessions every day after school.

The Comet Elite program wants to thank the coaches of the program. "None of this would be possible without Brandon Olsen, Paula Soderberg, or Rich Waccholz. These adults are just as committed to the students as the students to being Comet Elite!" Ritzert added.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAULA SODERBERG *Brodhead Independent-Register*
A group of Comet Elite athletes from Albany work on dumbbell rows this summer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAULA SODERBERG *Brodhead Independent-Register*
Comet Elite is a program that means working together and learning as a team.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAULA SODERBERG *Brodhead Independent-Register*
Students work out at one of the weightlifting training sessions in Albany.

College (Continued from page 3)

ceremonial stage walk at assigned times on Saturday and Sunday.

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UW-La Crosse announces Spring 2023 Dean's List

The following area students have been named to the Dean's List at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for the spring semester of the 2022-23 academic year, ending May 2023. Qualification for the Dean's

List is limited to students who have attained outstanding academic achievement. To be eligible, students must have earned not less than a 3.5 semester grade point average and carried a minimum of 12 credits.

UW-La Crosse, founded in 1909, is one of the 13 four-year institutions in the University of Wisconsin System. UWL has more than 10,400 full and part-time students enrolled in 101 undergraduate, 28 graduate and two doctoral academic programs.

UW-La Crosse, whose website is www.uwlax.edu, is the state's top-ranked public or private higher education institution by U.S. News and World Reports for master's degree institutions and has been ranked among the top four Midwestern public institutions for more than a decade.

Students on the Dean's List from this area include:

Albany

- Kassie Heins, Exercise and Sport Science Major: Physical,

Adapted, and School Health Education

- Ryan Winder, Statistics Major: Actuarial Science Concentration

Brodhead

- Gage Boegli, Finance Major: Risk, Insurance and Financial Planning Concentration

- Madelynn McIntyre, Exercise and Sport Science Major: Physical, Adapted, and School Health Education

- Liam Simons, Marketing Major

- Catherine Speckman, Exercise and Sport Science Major: Exercise Science, Pre-professional Track

- Amanda Visger, Theatre Arts Major: Performance Emphasis

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- Seth Rieman, Exercise and Sport Science Major: Exercise Science, Pre-professional Track

- Silas Rieman, Exercise and Sport Science Major: Exercise Science, Pre-professional Track

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Wisconsin Air National Guard performs in NATO exercise

128th Air Refueling Wing participates in 'Air Bridge' in Iceland

By Master Sergeant Kellen Kroening
CONTRIBUTOR

The Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing recently played a critical role in facilitating an air bridge leading up to Exercise Air Defender 2023, the German led, multinational live-fly NATO exercise

held June 12 to 23 at the Naval Air Station in Keflavik, Iceland, with a total of 235 aircraft, with 25 nations and more than 10,000 personnel participating throughout the European theater.

The participation of the 128th Air Refueling Wing in this operation showcases the invaluable role they play in

maintaining global security and stability. During an air-bridge operation, the 128th's KC-135 tankers act as a flying gas station – carrying a large quantity of fuel and utilizing a boom system to transfer fuel to the receiving aircraft – maximizing operational efficiency and reducing transit times.

By providing fuel to the transport aircraft, the KC-135 tanker ensures that they can reach their destinations without having to make frequent stops for refueling. This capability is especially valuable when transporting time-sensitive cargo or when operating in areas where fueling infrastructure may be limited or unavailable. "The whole point of this [exercise] is to integrate with our multi-national partners and show that we can seamlessly work as one large coalition force," said Maj. Brandyn Dietman, deputy director of air refueling with 128th Air Refueling Wing.

The air bridge is incredibly important for exercises like Air Defender 2023, which involves multiple participating air forces from NATO member and allied countries coming together to enhance cooperation, interoperability, and readiness. To effectively simulate real-world defense scenarios, it is imperative that forces can rapidly deploy to different locations.

"Moving 100 aircraft over the ocean in the matter of four or five flying days is a monumental feat," Dietman



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. LAUREN KMIEC *Brodhead Independent-Register*

U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan National Guard, fly in formation behind a KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing in June in support of Exercise Air Defender. The international exercise integrates both U.S. and Allied air power to defend shared values while leveraging and strengthening vital partnerships to deter aggression around the world.

said. "Fighter aircraft can't make it over by themselves, so they need the tankers to help them get over."

Air Defender 2023 is the largest air forces redeployment exercise since NATO was founded. As a result, the exercise has been given a high priority – particularly by the U.S. – in terms of exercise participation, budgeting and coordinated strategic

communications.

Engaging in air bridge operations during the AD23 exercise not only highlights the 128th Air Refueling Wing's capabilities but also demonstrates the United States' commitment to its allies.

This critical logistical support ensures the smooth flow of personnel and equipment, reinforcing the alliance's collective defense posture.

"The hard work of ev-

erybody working together, whether it's your unit-level personnel putting together the aircraft, putting the plans together, making sure the funds are full, making sure that everything is going to happen is awesome," Dietman said. "From a year's worth of work that we've put into this, I'm super proud of everyone at the 128th Air Refueling Wing and the hard work they've done."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. LAUREN KMIEC *Brodhead Independent-Register*

U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan National Guard, fly off the wing of a KC-135 Stratotanker with the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing during an air bridge to Exercise Air Defender (AD23).



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. LAUREN KMIEC *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Capt. George Bacik and 1st Lt. Zachary Dickmann, pilots with the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing, conduct the preflight checklist on the KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft in June in support of Exercise Air Defender.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. LAUREN KMIEC *Brodhead Independent-Register*

Master Sgt. Mathew Grzyb, a boom operator with the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing, refuels the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan National Guard during the air bridge on the way to Exercise Air Defender 2023 (AD23).

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