

Independent Register

SHOPPING NEWS

FREE! TAKE ONE

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**GOWNS Postal Paid The Independent Register

917 W. EXCHANGE STREET, BRODHEAD, WI 53520

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19, 2025

608-897-2193

Exhibit highlights historic wedding gowns and firearms



Fans of fashion, firearms and history won't want to miss an exclusive exhibit of historic wedding gowns and guns at the Rock County Historical Society (RCHS) in Janesville. This first-ever exhibit of its kind will showcase more than 40 wedding gowns throughout the beautiful Lincoln-Tallman Museum, and 50 firearms in RCHS' Museum and Visitor Center. All items on display are from the RCHS collection. The *Gowns & Guns* exhibit grand opening

RCHS will open their new "Guns & Gowns" exhibit with a grand opening on Thursday, Feb. 20. One of the highlighted gowns is this ivory satin wedding dress from the later 1800s.

is Thursday, Feb. 20, and will run Thursdays through Sundays until March 16.

The gowns display will showcase a kaleidoscope of colors, styles, and cultural influences, with wedding gowns and accessories that span nearly a century, from 1838 to 1927. Each custom-made gown has a story; many belonged to families with deep ties to Rock County. Just a few highlights include a dark purple bustled and ruffled gown worn by Helen Green Sayre in 1880, and a stunning ivory satin wedding dress, and blue velvet cape of Harriet Bostwick Carle from 1893.

"The volunteers working on the gowns committee spent hundreds of hours researching and assessing (and admiring) the beautiful and

historic gowns in the RCHS collection that are 100 years old or more," said committee member Linda Viney. "These dresses were expertly constructed, and we were surprised by the variety of unique designs. Anyone who treasures fashion, fabrics, and sewing won't want to miss this fascinating display."

The guns exhibit invites visitors to view a remarkable collection of over 50 firearms from the 1800s, many of which have not been seen for more than 30 years. From flintlocks and blunderbusses to pepperboxes and percussion revolvers, this display illustrates the rapid evolution of gun technology during the 19th century.

See EXHIBIT, Page 3

Maple Sugar Fest brings the sweetness to winter

The early signs of spring are showing at Big Hill Park, and the maple sap is starting to flow. Welty is hosting its 17th Maple Sugar Fest on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 8 a.m. to noon at Big Hill Center, located at 1201 Big Hill Court in Beloit.

The morning will be filled with maple sugar-themed activities, such as hikes to the sugar bush, a condenser boiling sap down to make syrup, children's story time, basket weaving, wood carving, and take-home crafts. There will

also be a delicious pancake breakfast featuring real maple syrup, sausage, apple sauce, and hot drinks. The cost is \$10 for adults (\$7 for Welty members), \$5 for kids 3 to 12, and children 2 and under eat for free. Tickets will be available at the door and visitors are encouraged to bring their own utensils and mugs to cut down on waste generated by the event.

"It's a great morning to celebrate Wisconsin traditions," said Brenda Plakans, Welty's executive director. "You can

taste sap as it comes out of the tree and warm yourself by a bonfire, where the sap is condensed into syrup. Visitors can watch basket weaving and wood carving, learn how to attract more pollinators to their gardens, get information on starting a compost bin, and try an ecology activity like I.D.-ing paw prints and experimenting with water tension!"

This is Welty's 17th Maple Sugar Fest, and the event emphasizes the maple sugaring tradition in Wisconsin. This process of using the early run of sap to create maple sugar was introduced by Native Americans to European settlers as a strategy for getting through the last months of winter before spring food resources became available. Maple sugar was used as a seasoning, as well as a treat, and was at the center of early spring celebrations. The morning will feature much of this history, as well as a delicious breakfast.

"Come enjoy the early signs of spring, rain or shine (or snow!) at Welty," encouraged Plakans. "There's something for everyone - including real maple syrup for sale - and it's a fun, and tasty, way to learn more about Wisconsin history!"

For more information visit www.weltycenter.org; email info@weltycenter.org; or call 608-361-1377.



PHOTO SUBMITTED Rock Valley Publishing

Visitors practice drilling holes for a spile that allows sap to be collected from a Sugar Maple tree at Welty's 2020 Maple Sugar Fest.



PHOTO COURTESY FULL SPECTRUM PHOTOGRAPHY Rock Valley Publishing

Downtown Janesville Flannelfest is returning for a sixth year on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Flannelfest Beer Festival returns to Janesville

Downtown Janesville Flannelfest presented by Blain's Farm and Fleet returns for the sixth year on Saturday, Feb. 22, from noon to 5 p.m. Tickets are available now at www.janesvilleflannelfest.com. Taste over 100 beers from craft brewers all over Wisconsin and vote for a favorite beer at the homebrew competition sponsored by The Looking Glass and Sauk Valley Bank. Participate in a day filled with fun and unlimited games including the Lazy Man Run, cornhole tournament, axe throwing, giant pong, hammerschlagen, derby race, and jousting sponsored by Whiskey Ranch. Live entertainment will be featured throughout the event including chainsaw artists sponsored by Educator's Credit Union. Food and merchandise vendors will be available for purchase.

A limited number of VIP tickets are available which includes access to The Venue, lunch catered by drafthouse, exclusive beer tastings from Duesterbeck's Brewing Company, live music by Lazlo Weed inside The Venue, commemorative Flannelfest souvenir, pretzel necklace making station, complimentary chair massages by Thrive Massage, unlimited games, Flannelfest beer mug and lanyard. The VIP area is sponsored by TDS Fiber and Harris Ace Hardware. General admission tickets include beer tastings, unlimited games, live entertainment, Flannelfest beer mug and lanyard. VIP tickets are \$110 and General Admission are \$55.

There will be additional events happening downtown throughout the weekend at participating downtown

businesses, along with special room block rates at hotels for those coming from out of town. Visit the Flannelfest website for weekend schedule updates and hotel information.

"Flannelfest is a great way to get out of the house during the winter and participate in Wisconsin themed activities with friends. We've seen a significant increase in attendance from outside of Janesville for this event, and look forward to welcoming people back for a fun-filled weekend in downtown Janesville" Elaina Szyjewski, Managing Director.

Flannelfest is brought to you by Downtown Janesville, Inc. and is one of the largest fundraisers for the non-profit organization. For more information, email info@downtownjanesville.com.



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MEAT RAFFLE

Saturday, Feb. 22 - Bar opens at 5 p.m.

Meat Raffle: 6 to 9 p.m.	Karaoke: 9 to 11 p.m.
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Proceeds go towards replacing the chairs in the banquet room.

3913 S. State Road 213, Orfordville, WI 53576

Ag community resource looks at climate outlook

By Deilee Calvert

UW-MADISON EXTENSION

During the 2025 growing season, members of the agriculture community in Wisconsin will once again have access to a weekly climate outlook. The Wisconsin Ag Climate Outlook (WACO) includes things like historical and current weather patterns, soil moisture, precipitation, and crop progress. Combining data from national and local sources, including the National Weather Service, regional climate centers, Wisconet, USDA, and the U.S. Drought Monitor, WACO provides Wisconsin-specific climate information tailored to the agricultural community. The report helps farmers be more prepared and adapt their plans to accommodate anticipated changes.

WACO, which debuted during the 2024 growing season, is partly a result of 2023 drought conditions. During that year, Natasha



A Wisconsin corn field during drought conditions in 2023.

PHOTO COURTESY UW-MADISON Rock Valley Publishing

Paris, a UW-Madison Extension regional crops educator who works in Adams,

Green Lake, Marquette, and Waushara counties, received a lot of questions

from farmers about growing conditions. "Because of that, I started posting cli-

mate maps here and there," said Paris. She quickly realized there was interest in the information.

Paris tapped into a larger network of people with similar goals, each having pieces of the overall picture. "We had a lot of meetings last year to bring everybody in the climate space together to have conversations," said Paris. Now, the group works together to provide information in a way that is most helpful to farmers.

Josh Bendorf, an ag climatologist with the USDA Midwest Climate Hub, was part of the planning team. He says the weekly report provides ag advisors, conservation staff, and farmers with relevant, up-to-date Wisconsin climate information and links that information to impacts on Wisconsin agriculture. "The goal is to help farmers make well-informed decisions based on the current and forecasted conditions in their area," said Bendorf.

State Climatologist Steve Vavrus describes the outlook as an assessment of current and recent weather and crop conditions combined with a weather forecast for the next week and a look at the entire season. Bringing together that information helps those with agricultural interests better prepare. "Farmers have long been able to access a lot of weather and crop information, but the major benefit of WACO is that it provides 'one-stop shopping' for farmers, so they can quickly digest pertinent information for their operations without having to dig around for it," said Vavrus.

This past growing season, Paris and her Extension colleagues added an essential piece to the report by taking all of the data and providing weekly agronomic recommendations. "Taking the data that one step further is really helpful and makes the information much more usable and actionable for farmers," said Bendorf. The group hopes that WACO can provide weekly guidance for on-farm decisions such as the timing of planting and harvest, in-season management decisions (i.e., pests, nutrients, water, etc.), and upcoming weather hazards to be aware of.

In addition to posting the report online, WACO contributors joined the Badger Crop Connect webinar series to give a weekly

overview to about 100 attendees. "Being part of the Badger Crop Connect webinars has been a great way to get the information to the ag community and be available to discuss the information," said Bendorf.

You can find the Wisconsin Ag Climate Outlook online. Visit the Badger Crop Connect website to view past or register for upcoming webinars.

The Badger Crop Connect webinar series is hosted by the Extension Crops and Soils Program. This bi-weekly series runs during the growing season, offering farmers, agronomists, and crop consultants timely updates on crop and soil conditions, agronomic considerations related to weather and climate, research-backed resources, and expert advice. The program aims to keep growers informed about the numerous factors impacting their crop season.

The mission of the Midwest Climate Hub is to develop science-based, region-specific information and technologies alongside USDA agencies and partners to deliver these products to agricultural and natural resource managers that enable climate-informed decision-making. The Hub aims to provide information that will help producers cope with climate change through linkages of research, education, and extension partnerships. Encompassing Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois, this region represents one of the most intense areas of agricultural production in the world with a wide array of products.

The Wisconsin State Climatology Office is housed within the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies Center for Climatic Research, the Division of Extension, and the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at UW-Madison. It collects, analyzes, and shares climate information with our communities while leading the way in climate science education and research. Funding has been provided by the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute, which is part of the Institute for Rural Partnerships and supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Wisconet is a growing statewide network of weather and soil monitoring stations designed to provide the public with high quality data at high spatial and temporal resolutions. Wisconet plans to deploy 80 stations, with at least one in every Wisconsin county. Each station provides more than one dozen measurements every five minutes, including air and soil temperature, soil moisture, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction, liquid precipitation, solar radiation, and leaf wetness.

The Wisconet team is affiliated with the UW-Madison Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences and the Wisconsin Energy Institute (WEI). Funding has been provided by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute.

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Talking all about trucks



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA ROTH Rock Valley Publishing

Story time at Albertson Memorial Library was all about trucks last week. They read *I'm a Monster Truck* and *Puppy Truck*. There were truck puzzles to put together and a paper-folded truck – a simple origami project – that runs on a marble. Preschool story time meets every Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. at the Albertson Memorial Library.

Exercise hope by joining CROP Hunger Walk

“Exercising Hope” is the theme for the 48th annual Janesville Area CROP Hunger Walk, which will take place on Sunday, April 27. Those two words – exercising and hope – are fundamental to the mission of the CROP Walk. Everyone can benefit from moving their bodies, and the CROP Walk offers the opportunity to do just that. More importantly, everyone has hope that one day people in the community, country, and across the world will have enough food to nourish their bodies. Organizers hope to raise \$50,000, and ECHO again will receive 25 percent of the total amount donated.

The remaining funds will help the efforts of Church World Service (CWS), a faith-based organization that fights hunger and poverty in communities around the globe. Last year’s Janesville area walk raised about \$49,000 with more than \$12,000 going to ECHO, a Janesville-based organization that helps provide temporary housing, food, and transportation to people in need. Through the years, the Janesville area walk has raised more than \$1.36 million. Interested walkers can sign up online individually or as a team at www.crophungerwalk.org/janesville-wi. Just click on “Register,” fill in details, and then one will find lots of tools to help them get started. There is no registration fee to participate, but walkers are encouraged to collect donations to support the cause. Twelve teams participated in the 2024 walk, and organizers hope that number will increase this year. Kathy Holcombe, event coordinator, encourages congregations, businesses, and other groups in the Janesville area to get involved in the fight to end hunger. For more information, contact Holcombe at 608-752-8117 or crophungerwalk.org/janesville@charter.net.

A breakfast meeting for team captains is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 1, at St. John Lutheran Church at 302 N. Parker Drive in Janesville. Team captains will receive materials and ideas to help them encourage people to join the walk and collect donations. Refreshments will be available from 8 to 8:30 a.m. If not available to walk on April 27, please consider making a tax-deductible online contribution at www.crophungerwalk.org/janesville-wi. Regardless of its size, the gift will help people in local neighborhoods and around the world.

Residence for Drug Trafficking; 2 Counts – Neglecting a Child; 1 Count-Possession with Intent to Deliver THC. Richardson’s initial appearance was on Feb. 14 at 3 p.m. “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.”

Police news

Beloit man arrested on drug charges

On Feb. 12, at approximately 8:50 a.m., the Rock County Sheriff’s Office SWAT Team executed a search warrant in the 2000 block of Linway Drive, Beloit. The search warrant was the result of a narcotics investigation conducted by the Rock County Sheriff’s Office Special Investigations Unit (SIU). The search warrant was executed with the assistance of the Beloit Police Department and the Town of Beloit Fire Department. As a result of the investigation, the following individual was arrested: Dentrez E. Richardson, 33, 1 Count-Prohibited Acts B – Maintain



Dentrez Richardson

Exhibit (Continued from front page)

Highlights include two locally-made shotguns and cased sets of ornately embellished pistols, which were most often used at sporting events. This collection offers a unique glimpse into the tools that were essential to early settlers and soldiers, and misused by outlaws. “This is truly a one-of-a-kind collection that includes some extremely rare pieces that can’t be seen anywhere

else in the state,” noted David Stavlo, owner of Lodgewood Manufacturing, a full-service antique gun shop located in Whitewater. Tickets to view both collections are \$15 for adults and no charge for children age 12 and under. The grand opening event planned for Feb. 20 runs from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Lincoln-Tallman Museum. Regular exhibit hours are Thursdays through Sundays, Feb.

21 through March 16 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Special tours are also available by calling RCHS at 608-756-4509. For tickets and more information, please visit rchs.us/event/gowns-and-guns-exhibit. Tickets purchased online may be used on any tour. Exhibit sponsors include the Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and Lamar Outdoor Advertising. Sponsors for the gowns exhibit are: Linda Stillmank Pierson and Robert Pierson, in honor of James and Vera Stillmank, founders of Vera’s House of Bridals; Jennifer

Eager Ehle; and Jax Custom Printing. Home to six uniquely different historic sites on a 3.5-acre campus in the historic Look West Neighborhood, the Rock County Historical Society’s mission is to bridge past and present through capturing and sharing stories about Rock County. Its sites include the award-winning Lincoln-Tallman Museum, Helen Jeffris Wood Museum Center, RCHS Archives and Preservation Facility, Tallman Carriage House, Wilson-King Stone House, and the Frances Willard Schoolhouse.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

On the firearms side of the exhibit, one of the highlights are these ornately embellished sporting pistols.



A cased set of ornately embellished pistols, which were most often used at sporting events, is among many at the “Guns & Gowns” exhibit.

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UWW reveals 2024 winter graduates

More than 800 students graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater at winter commencement, held Dec. 14, 2024, at Kachel Fieldhouse in the Williams Center.

The following students from the local area earned degrees from the UW-Whitewater at winter commencement:

Albany

- Olivia Roth graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: English – BA.

Beloit

- Carlos Alcalá-Rosales graduated with the following degree: Supply Chain Management – BBA.
- Rachel Barry graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Early Childhood Education – BSE.
- Noemi Batista graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Teylor Carter graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Kathryn Clark graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Liberal Studies – BA.
- Marissa Clark graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Social Studies –

BSE.

- Haley Cottrill graduated with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Erin Damrose graduated with the following degree: Special Education – MSE.
- Gabrielle Dever graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Adrian Estrada graduated with the following degree: Marketing – BBA.
- Hannah Franks graduated with the following degree: Applied Arts and Sciences – BAAS.
- Shelvin Garrett graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Physical Education – BSE.
- Baltazar Giles graduated with the following degree: Mathematics – BS.
- John Grey graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Madelyn Houck graduated with the following degree: Political Science – BA.
- Courtney Karich graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Yasmin Martinez graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Dayshauna Mitchell graduated with the following

- degree: Business Analytics – BBA.
- Angelica Monat graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Brooke Najdowski graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Porscha Nalan graduated with the following degree: Communication – BA.
- Gabrielle Otto graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Management – BBA.
- Mitchel Pham graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Biology – BS.
- Aurora Renteria graduated with the following degree: Applied Arts and Sciences – BAAS.
- Maribel Rodriguez graduated with the following degree: Marketing – BBA.
- Mandi Shallenberger graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Communication Sciences and Disorders – BS.
- Ghost Stoner graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Jacob Thies graduated with the following degree: Social Studies – BSE.
- Ariana Tinder graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science

- Collaborative – AAS.
- Ismael Torres graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Jon Muraki graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.

Brodhead

- Brooke Gierhart graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Middle Education – BSE.

Clinton

- Luz Espinoza graduated with the following degree: Early Childhood Education – BSE.
- Kassie Kneuppel graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Brayden Selk graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: English – BSE.
- Kelly Vanderkooi graduated with the following degree: Special Education – BSE.

Edgerton

- Jason Brewer graduated with the following degree: School Business Management – MSE.
- Alea Cleveland graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.

- Cassidy Danks graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Reed Farrington graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Management – BBA.
- Danielle Kronau graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: English – BSE.
- Grace Newcomb graduated with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Ben Wileman graduated with the following degree: Journalism – BA.

Janesville

- William Anthony graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Computer Science – BS.
- Joshua Autry graduated with the following degree: Management – BBA.
- Gustav Baltes graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Spanish – BSE.
- Zach Besaw graduated with the following degree: Business Administration – MBA.
- Shea Burke graduated with the following degree: History – BSE.
- Adilene Cabrera graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Samuel Callan graduated with the following degree: Business Administration – MBA.
- Gwendolyn Carroll graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Colton Connell graduated with the following degree: Finance – BBA.
- Matthew Drew graduated with the following degree: Applied Arts and Sciences – BAAS.
- Rileigh Elgas graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Jennae Fairman graduated with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Cullen Field graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Special Education – BSE.
- Tracy Goethe graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Communication – BA.
- Isaac Goodmanson graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Ean Graff graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Special Education – BSE.
- Bleron Grajcevi graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Rhiannon Hacker graduated with the following degree: Psychology – BA.
- Lucero Haecker graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Psychology – BA.
- Heather Hayes graduated with the following degree: Liberal Studies Without a Minor – BA.
- Amber Jacobson graduated with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.
- Jared Keeter graduated with the following degree: Human Performance – BS.
- Sean Kranenburg graduated with the following degree: Marketing – BBA.
- Besnik Mecollari graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Austin Miller graduated Magna Cum Laude with the

- following degree: Computer Science – BS.
- Kentarian Myles graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Malachi Payne graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Parker Peabody graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Alex Peterson graduated with the following degree: Media Arts and Game Development – BA.
- Bekah Ragan graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Sciences Collaborative – AAS.
- Sebastian Richardt graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Sciences Collaborative – AAS.
- Reece Rutkowsky graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Information Technology – BBA.
- Benjamin Skaleski graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Biology – BS.
- Colin Sladek graduated with the following degree: Business Administration – MBA.
- Theresa Spicer graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Early Childhood Education – BSE.
- Nate Staddler graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Computer Science – BS.
- Jon Taylor graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Management – BBA.
- Annah Tearman graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Human Resource Management – BBA.
- Jason Upham graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Emily Welch graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Journalism – BA.
- Matthew Wentzlaff graduated with the following degree: History – BA.

Milton

- Allison Cotgrave graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Sciences Collaborative – AAS.
- Michael Everhart graduated with the following degree: Business Administration – MBA.
- Liam Griffin graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Japanese Studies – BA.
- Timothy Hoffman graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Management – BBA.
- Kaleb Johnson graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Computer Science – BS.
- Tyler Leith graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Physical Education – BSE.
- Hailey Meyer graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: English – BA.
- Alycia Olson graduated with the following degree: General Business – BBA.
- Jacob Schumacher graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Biology – BS.
- Sherif Sherif graduated with the following degree: Associate of Arts and Science – AAS.
- Liberty Tidberg graduated with the following degree: Art



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Team 2x4 makes it four victories in a row

Waukesha North High School was the site of this year's FIRST LEGO League Wisconsin State Championship. Team 2x4, a local FIRST LEGO League robotics team with students from Clinton and Beloit as well as Loves Park and Durand, Ill., arrived for the day well prepared, but down a team member due to the flu. They were excited to have proven themselves to be one of the top 28 teams (out of 400) in Wisconsin, but they had a bigger goal.

"At the beginning of the season we set a goal to earn another trip to an international tournament, our fourth in a row, which no team has done before," shared Evan Schneider, of Clinton. The competition in Wisconsin is strong, so everything from judging to the way the robot performs has to go well in order to finish at the top of the state.

All FIRST LEGO League teams are judged in a 30-minute judging session, which includes prepared presentations on the Innovation Project and the Robot Design. The team then answers a lot of questions from the judges. While the technical skills are important, FLL is also about developing confidence in young people. Halee Williams, of Beloit, said, "I have overcome my fear of talking in front of judges."

Team 2x4 took on the problem of retrieving ghost nets from the ocean for their Innovation Project. They did a lot of research and met with many experts throughout the year. "Meeting with Katie McWilliams of GhostNetUSA.org was a great moment," Mason Williams, of Beloit, shared.

The team is currently improving their Ghost Grappler prototype with the help of the GhostNet divers and with the hope that it could be useful to divers in the future. Contacting experts and preparing the presentation for judging takes a lot of work. Isaac Bentley of Loves Park commented, "I'm really proud of my emails, my work on the scripts, and the animation I did to show judges how the Ghost Grappler works."

In Robot Design judging, the team explained all the physics and forces they used to design an effective robot that could autonomously solve 12 LEGO missions in 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Team 2x4 developed a quick-change attachment system that allows

them to spend less than 2 seconds changing the attachment, allowing their robot more time to solve missions on the board. Their coach, Kent Walton, challenged the team to step up their programming by learning a new language between sectionals and state. Tim Walton says, "I've learned how to code in Python, which is good for me to learn now because it will open up more job opportunities in the real world."

The judges were impressed that the entire team started learning a new coding language mid-season.

The robot had an up and down day on the competition mat. The best score they had was 315, just short of their season high 320, placing 11th in that portion of the competition. The team also competed in a fun alliance-style match, pairing with the Webster Wolverines. As the alliance matches ended, everyone took their places for the awards ceremony.

The team was thrilled during the awards ceremony when their coach, Heather Schneider, was awarded one of two Coach of the Year trophies. Team 2x4 and her family surprised her with LEGO flowers to celebrate her seven years of coaching. The team was even more excited a few minutes later when they won the first place Core Values Award. This award is given to a team that does everything in the program to a high level, and does so well expressing the FIRST Core Values such as teamwork, innovation, impact, and fun.

When advancement rankings were announced Team 2x4 was hopeful they would be on the list and they were not disappointed! They finished

for fourth place. They are now going to be Wisconsin's first team to ever attend the Florida Sunshine Invitational (FSI) in Daytona Beach, Fla., in late June. This tournament will feature 96 teams from 24 different countries and 44 states. Bethany Walton, of Durand, said, "I'm excited to go to Florida to meet new friends from around the world."

Team 2x4 has commenced fundraising for their trip to FSI. The team is looking to raise \$9,000 to cover expenses including registration, event costs, transportation, and lodging during the five-day tournament. They are currently selling Decatur Dairy Cheese for \$8 per block or bag of curds. Contact any team member or call 608-676-7329 to or-



Team 2x4 starts their day at the Wisconsin State Championship. From left: Mason Williams, Bethany Walton, Isaac Bentley (in the photo being held), Tim Walton, Evan Schneider, and Halee Williams.

der; delivery is early March. You can make donations to their team through PayPal, or checks can be mailed to Staline Homeschool Robotics, PO Box 126, Clinton, WI 53525. Anyone donating \$100 or more will have their name printed on the team banner and company logos can be put on the banner (in different sizes) for donations of \$250-\$1,000 or more.

Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology" (FIRST) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, New Hampshire, FIRST designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering.

With support from over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$80 million in

college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the FIRST Robotics Competition for students in grades 9-12; FIRST Tech Challenge for grades 7-12; and FIRST LEGO League for pre-K through eighth grade (ages 4-16; ages vary by country). "Gracious Professionalism" is their way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

To learn more about FIRST, go to www.firstinspires.org.



Team 2x4 a successful robot run. From left: Mason Williams, Tim Walton, Bethany Walton, Coach Kent Walton, Evan Schneider, Halee Williams, Coach Heather Schneider, Isaac Bentley (picture), and student mentor Kelby Schneider celebrate.

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded "For

About FIRST

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded "For

With support from over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$80 million in

The referee tallies the team's score after a robot match. Tim (far left) and Bethany Walton (right) verify the score at the conclusion of their robot match while Halee Williams looks on in the background.

• Graduates

(Continued from page 4)

Education – BSE.

Monroe

• Jake Brower graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Accounting – BBA.

• Heather Burkhalter graduated with the following degree: Early Childhood Education – BSE.

• Brielle Hayden graduated with the following degree: Biology – BS.

• Kelli Polnow graduated Summa Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.

• Madisen Van Acker graduated with the following degree: General Business – BBA.

Monticello

• Laura Gillaspie graduated Magna Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.

New Glarus

• Max Bourquin graduated

with the following degree: Supply Chain Management – BBA.

Orfordville

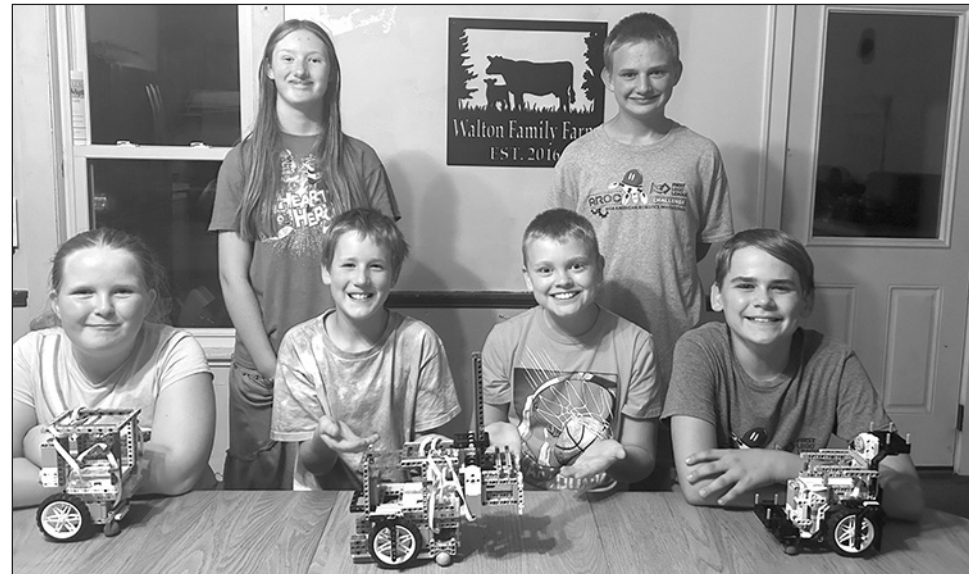
• Sydney Troy graduated Cum Laude with the following degree: Elementary Education – BSE.

Approximately 633 students crossed the stage to receive their degrees at the ceremony, held at Kachel Fieldhouse in the Williams Center.

The 815-member graduating class included three inter-

national students, 58 military veterans and 138 nontraditional students, defined as undergraduate students who are 25 years of age or older. In addition, 80 self-identified students with disabilities received degrees.

A total of 47 students participated in the university's Hired Before Graduation campaign, which celebrates students who landed a job, earned a job promotion, were accepted to graduate school, or started their own business before commencement.



Team 2x4 started the season evaluating robot design ideas. These three prototypes ended up turning into one highly successful robot. Front, from left: Bethany Walton, Mason Williams, Isaac Bentley, and Evan Schneider. Back: Halee Williams and Tim Walton.

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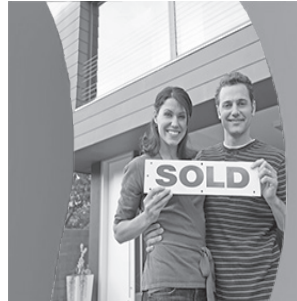
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Women voters hold local meetings



PHOTOS SUBMITTED Rock Valley Publishing

On Jan. 9, the Whitewater League of Women Voters held a Whitewater State of the Community event, where attendees heard from government, school, and university officials about the accomplishments and focus of the community. Whitewater City Manager John Weidl, Whitewater Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Caroline Pate-Hefty, and UW-Whitewater Chancellor Dr. Corey King were in attendance.



On Jan. 11, the Beloit League of Women Voters held a meeting at which they heard from Kole Torres, DEI Manager for the LWV of Wisconsin, and Vanessa Beckham, Rock County Equity and Engagement Strategist.

UWW Symphonic Wind Ensemble to perform at Carnegie Hall in March

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater's Symphonic Wind Ensemble is slated to perform at Carnegie Hall, the world-famous venue in New York City, on Tuesday, March 11, at 8 p.m.

The following students from the local area are part of the ensemble:

Beloit

- Carter Ward, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

Edgerton

- Hailey Baumann, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

Janesville

- David Aguilar Hernandez, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

- Ryan Cleaver, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

- Dawson France, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

- Abigail Young, who is majoring in Music and plays for the group.

The concert is part of the 2025 New York Wind Band Festival, presented by World Projects Corporation. Other groups of musicians scheduled to perform include the Las Ve-

gas Academy of the Arts String Orchestra and the Santa Rosa High School Symphonic Band.

The Symphonic Wind Ensemble previously played at Carnegie Hall in 2013 and 2020.

The group is raising funds to cover costs associated with travel. Donations can be made online.

The ensemble, under the direction of longtime professor of music Glenn Hayes, is a select wind band performing a variety of concert band repertoire. All students are required to audition for the group.

Students at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater have

performed at other famous venues around the world. The Warhawk Marching Band, also directed by Hayes, has performed 12 times at Lambeau Field – most recently in 2023. The Symphonic Wind Ensemble played at the Symphony Center for the 2014 Chicago International Music Festival. UW-Whitewater groups have also performed at venues in Germany, Poland, and England.

Tickets are available for purchase at carnegiehall.org.

UW-Whitewater's Department of Music is housed in the College of Arts and Communication. To learn more, visit uww.edu/music.

College news

Milton student of UWW recognized at state convention

Cassidy Laue, a Communication Sciences and Disorders major from Milton, Wis., was recognized on Feb. 6 to 7 at the 2025 Wisconsin Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association (WSHA) annual convention in Pewaukee.

Laue won the WSHA Student Leadership Award and the 2025 WSHA Foundation Nancy McKinley Scholarship.

The convention is a gathering of speech-language pathologists, audiologists and speech, language and hearing scientists in Wisconsin.

A total of 11 students from UW-Whitewater's communication sciences and disorders undergraduate and graduate programs won awards and/or presented at the convention.

Professor Lynn Gilbertson, associate professor Michael Hammer, and assistant professor Cody Busch served as mentors to the students on their presentations.

UW-Whitewater's communication sciences and disorders program, housed in the College of Education and Professional Studies, includes undergraduate and graduate programs. The department also operates the UW-Whitewater Center for Communicative Disorders. For more information, visit uww.edu/coeps/comdis.

Local students named to Fall 2024 Champlain College Dean's List

The following students have been named to the Champlain College Dean's List for achieving a grade point average of 3.5 or higher in the Fall 2024 semester.

- Quinn Moorman of Monroe, Wis., majoring in Social Work.

- Bryce Priebe of Monroe, Wis., majoring in Business Management.

Founded in 1878, Champlain College is a small, not-for-profit, private college in Burlington, Vermont, with additional campuses in Montreal, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Champlain offers a residential undergraduate experience from its beautiful campus overlooking Lake Champlain. Additionally, Champlain College Online provides an expansive portfolio of online degrees and certificates, reaching stu-

dents across all 50 states and U.S. territories, while fostering strategic partnerships with forward-thinking workforce organizations. The College is known for its distinctive and innovative approach to career-focused education and its Upside-Down Curriculum, which helps students be ready for work, ready for life, and ready to make a difference. Champlain is ranked as one of the "Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report for 2025, and was named one of the "Best 390 Colleges" by The Princeton Review for 2025, including among its "Best Northeastern colleges." For more information, visit www.champlain.edu.

Janesville student named to Salve Regina University's Dean's List

Lillian Fitzgerald of Janesville was named to the Dean's List during the Fall 2024 academic semester at Salve Regina University. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a semester grade point average of 3.6 for full-time students completing at least 12 graded credits, or a semester grade point average of 3.8 for part-time students completing at least six credits.

Salve Regina University is a Catholic, coeducational institution of higher education founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1947. For more than 75 years, Salve has offered rigorous, innovative academic programming in the liberal arts tradition that prepares students to be global citizens and lifelong learners. More than 2,700 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world are enrolled at Salve in 48 undergraduate majors, nine master's degree programs, combined bachelor's/master's programs, and doctoral programs.

Every undergraduate student engages in Salve Compass, a four-year transformational program through which they develop the experience, skills, and wisdom required for a fulfilling career and to make a positive difference in the world. The University is also home to the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, a multi-disciplinary research center focused on the intersection of politics, policy, and ideas. For more information visit salve.edu.

UWW students part of university production

A total of 39 students at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater are part of the university's production of "The Maid Turned Mistress/Dido and Aeneas," which is scheduled to be performed starting Friday, Feb. 21.

The following students from your coverage area are part of the production:

- Jt White, of Beloit, whose major is Music and is a part of Dido and Aeneas as a member of the Cast in the role of Sorcerer.

- Jacquelyn Cortes, of Beloit, whose major is Music and is a part of The Maid Turned Mistress/Dido and Aeneas as a member of the Cast in the role of Serpina Understudy, Third Witch, and Second Woman Understudy.

- Cora Schutte, of Footville, whose major is Music and is a part of Dido and Aeneas as a member of the Cast in the role of Spirit and First Sailor Understudy.

- Michael Miller, of Janesville, whose major is Theatre and is a part of Dido and Aeneas as a member of the Cast in the role of Chorus and Sorcerer Understudy.

All performances will take place at Barnett Theatre, located on the UW-Whitewater campus, on the following dates and times:

- Friday, Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 23, 2 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, March 1, 2 p.m.

Tickets are available for advance purchase at tickets.uww.edu.

Department of Theatre/Dance, housed in the College of Arts and Communication, offers a hands-on approach to learning, educating students from the front of the house to behind the scenes. For more information on the university's theatre/dance program, visit uww.edu/theatre.

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's "The Maid Turned Mistress" puts us in the life of Uberto, an old rich bachelor living with his servant, Serpina, who has become the dictator of the house. Annoyed with Serpina, Uberto begins to search for a suitable woman to marry and finally take revenge on Serpina's increasingly dominating character.

Follow as Serpina, eager to become the mistress of the house, will stop at nothing to become Uberto's chosen wife. You won't want to miss the whirlwind of jealousy, love, and sneaky plots.

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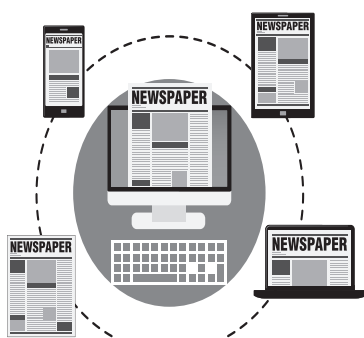
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