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## Lakeshore Ave. trail upheld in court

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Residents in the neighborhood of Lakeshore Avenue have lost their appeal to a judge's ruling that the Lakeshore Trail is a sidewalk and affirming the city's authorization to build it.

In early 2020, the Neenah Common Council voted to reconstruct Lakeshore Avenue and install a pedestrian trail with it. Some neighboring residents opposed the trail, stating at a council meeting that they were worried about runoff and that trees would need to be removed to install the pathway. The residents wanted the trail reconstructed within the existing street.

Twenty-one property owners filed a lawsuit against the city in March 2020 to prevent the trail from being built. Construction was delayed during litigation. In August 2020, Winnebago County Judge Karen Seifert ruled in favor of the city, green-lighting the project. The residents appealed the ruling.

The residents continued legal actions against the city and in April 2021 filed a motion for relief and a temporary injunction to halt construction and block further construction while their appeal was under review. Winnebago County Judge LaKeisha Haase denied both requests.



Neenah News

A paved trail along Lakeshore Avenue was put in amid objections from neighboring residents.

The city altered their plans to appease the resident's concerns and only removed three trees to install the trail. Construction of the trail was completed in June 2021, while the resident's appeal was under review.

At issue was whether the trail constituted a sidewalk. The residents argued that the trail is not anchored to Lakeshore Avenue and is unrelated to the street, therefore the trail is not a sidewalk. If a judge were to rule that the trail is not a sidewalk, the city could be ordered to remove it.

Last month, the appeals court affirmed the lower court's ruling.

"In brief, if it is a sidewalk authorized by Wisconsin statute ... the city prevails," documents say. "We conclude that it is a sidewalk."

The determination that the trail is a sidewalk affirms that the city council was authorized to build it.

"The trail provides a safer means – safer than using the road itself – for pedestrians, bicyclists and others to get to Kimberly Point Park," the court wrote in their opinion. "No doubt the trail also improves safety for motorists as well, as they no longer need to share Lakeshore Avenue with nonmotorists."

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## Community Band ushers in new season, director

By Cheryl Hentz  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

The weather finally feels somewhat like summer – and with it comes the summer season for the Neenah Community Band.

The band finished its winter concert schedule in March, taking a couple of weeks off before starting rehearsals in early April for its Summer Concert Series – six concerts, the first of which will be Tuesday at Riverside Park.

When the band's first note is played, it will be under the direction of 29-year-old Jacob Martin, who was handed the baton as its 11th director in December. Marty O'Donnell had directed the musicians since 2010, but with he and his wife having added a second child to their family, he resigned his position and took paternity leave from his regular job.

Martin hopes O'Donnell will play with the band in the future, but for now he is focusing on family.

Before Martin joined as director, the Kaukauna High School teacher in his sev-



The Plaza at Gateway Park has become a recognizable downtown feature and has smoothly transitioned to a summer hot spot where sisters Nomie (left) and Rosie Whitlinger are shown playing pickleball recently.



Photos by Bethanie Gengler

## Plaza glides from ice to summer

Downtown facility has taken seasonal approach

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Seven months after its grand opening, The Plaza at Gateway Park Neenah has been warmly received by the community, and facility director Lizzy Bergstrom Auth said it has now shifted gears to accommodate new summer activities and events.

The Plaza is a community gathering place at 229 W. Wisconsin Ave. that opened in October featuring an outdoor patio and a Globe Coffee shop open year-round – and sports an ice skating rink

during winter months. It is the brainchild of Bergstrom Auth's father, John Bergstrom, who designed the facility and led fundraising efforts for construction.

"About five years ago when my dad said, 'I think this would be so cool for the city of Neenah and the kids of Neenah to have an ice rink,' and I was jumping up and down saying I think this would be so cool and I think kids would love it; families would love it and I said I would help in any way," Bergstrom Auth said.

The Plaza cost \$7 million to build. Its rustic design includes Douglas fir beams, hanging chandeliers and cozy seating. The Plaza also has several statues honoring Native Americans.

Bergstrom Auth described the atmosphere as welcoming.

"A lot of people have said, 'I feel like I'm on vacation,'" she said. "I love that it's the log cabin or Swiss Alps kind of feel. It's warm and cozy and inviting inside."

The ice rink is the same size as the one in Rockefeller Center in New York City, and open from November through March. This past winter, The Plaza ice rink saw more than 30,000 skaters.

"I don't know if we realized how many people were going to come," Bergstrom Auth said. "I don't think we realized how much staff we would need to make it suc-

# Neenah News

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# Downtown makes the scene for film crew



Neenah News

One of the film crew oversees a scene being shot in downtown Neenah last week for an independent movie production.

## Neenah News

A film crew working last Thursday in front of The Marketplace downtown drew the attention of coffee drinkers at Lawless Coffee.

Director Chandler Wild and executive director Scott Delacruz, partners in All the Way Around Productions, were filming the "Hairy Ape." The partners are self-producing the movie based off the 1922 play by American playwright Eugene O'Neill.



Wild

Although the play was written 100 years ago, Wild said the workforce plot is still relevant today. The film's protagonist works in a factory that is becoming more automated and the workers are voting on unionizing. The lead finds himself out sick the day of the vote, which is deadlocked, and he is the deciding vote.

Wild, a Wisconsin Rapids native, was invited to downtown Neenah by Lincoln High School friend Mark G. Schroeder, an Outagamie County Circuit judge and Neenah resident, after describing the location he was hunting for.

This isn't the first time some of the crew members have filmed in Neenah as art director Kurt Krauss was here in 2016 to film "From the Furnace," a film directed by Isaac Stitt of Neenah and released in 2019.

Krauss and Wild both agreed that the city has been welcoming and "film friendly" to their work.

# Woman dies during police transport

## Neenah News

Two Outagamie County deputies are on administrative leave after the death of a 43-year-old woman they were transporting Monday. The Appleton woman died of her injuries when she exited the moving minivan on State 441 in Fox Crossing.

Outagamie sheriff's officials said the vehicle was traveling near the Racine Street exit on 441 about 5:40 p.m. when the woman, who was being taken to Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh, was able to open the door of the moving

vehicle.

The incident shut down the highway near Menasha for several hours. The woman, who had not been identified as of Wednesday, was transported by ambulance to a local hospital where she died of her injuries.

"We would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of the deceased," Outagamie County officials said, in a news release.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office is leading the investigation of the incident.

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# Valley Christian School expands into Neenah area

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Valley Christian School (VCS) in Oshkosh is opening a second campus in Neenah this fall, expanding its capacity to more than 700 full-time students.

VCS is expanding to the Calvary Bible Church facility, offering classes for preschool through eighth grade. VCS is renting the building where Fox Valley Christian Academy (FVCA) operated for nearly 50 years before closing last month.

Head of VCS Brad Dunn said the departing school has a long history of providing Christian education in the Fox Valley.

“Their school and our school are extremely similar in our approach and who we are and what we’re all about so it should be a pretty seamless handoff with them closing and us opening,” he said.

About 70% of FVCA’s students have enrolled at VCS for the fall semester. VCS has also hired many of the FVCA staff members.

VCS is a private independent school that’s been around since 1974. About 50 different churches from the Fox Valley are represented in the school. The VCS Oshkosh campus sees students from preschool through high school. Over the last several years, the school has experienced a 97% student retention rate.

Dunn said in the nine years he has been at the school, enrollment has steadily increased by about 5-10% each year. Last school year, enrollment jumped by 25% and VCS anticipated having to put about 100 students on a waitlist for fall enrollment.

“I think one of the reasons that we’re growing is that our messaging is that every single student that comes to Valley Christian, they’re going to discover their God-given design,” he said. “Then we’re going to do our best to equip them so they can reach their full potential so they can boldly impact their world for Christ.”

Dunn said the school has made numerous changes to keep up with the demand.

They’ve doubled all of their classes and added a new middle school wing with six classrooms in Oshkosh. Expanding to Neenah will allow VCS to offer three classes for each grade level through 8th grade.

Even with the expansion, Dunn said several classes will still have waiting lists. Enrollment at the Neenah location is already nearing capacity.

VCS is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International, an organization of more than 5,000 schools serving about 1.2 million students.

“To be willing to be accredited, it’s a pretty strenuous process,” Dunn said. “You have to have curriculum mapping done. All of your standards have to be in place, so we’re pretty well versed in that.”

The curriculum is made up of Christian textbook publishers as well as non-Christian textbook publishers, he added, and the school’s core values are family, academic rigor, service and discipleship.

Dunn said VCS nurtures students’ long-term goals, whatever they may be.

“Not every single student is wired to go to receive a four-year higher education,” he said. “God has wired some kids to work with their hands and go into the trades and so we help steer the students where we feel that their gifts are and then we do things very intentionally to help equip them so they’re ready for that college degree if that’s where they’re headed or they’re ready for the trades if they’re going into a tech college or we have some that head right into the workforce.”

The VCS Oshkosh campus started the school year with 509 full-time students. The Neenah campus will be able to hold 230 students.

Dunn said the school offers a caring, close-knit family environment.

“Our students are happy; our teachers, they don’t look at it as a job; it’s a ministry, and for us we would invite anyone who would like to see who we are to come visit us.”



Neenah News photos

The Calvary Bible Church facility will open next fall as a preschool through eighth-grade school that will be run by Oshkosh-based Valley Christian School.



## Memorial Stair Climb registration open

Registration is open for the 10th annual 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, co-sponsored by Pierce Manufacturing and the Green Bay Metro Fire Department, set for Sept. 10.

The event honors and recognizes the 343 firefighters lost on Sept. 11, 2001. All funds raised will directly benefit the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). Participants can see additional details and preregister at piercemfg.com/climb.

Last year’s climb marked the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, and attendance exceeded 2,800 members of the fire service, their families, friends and community members who helped raise more than \$180,000 for the NFFF.

Participants can climb the equivalent of 110 stories – the height of the fallen World Trade Center towers. Each climber receives a badge with the name and photograph of one of the fallen firefighters to symbolically make the climb they were unable to finish.

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# Honoring the fallen on Memorial Day



Neenah News

Neenah-Menasha Veterans Honor Guard members prepare for Memorial Day services Monday at Oak Hill Cemetery that were held after the annual procession from Menasha to downtown Neenah. The waterfront services, parade and cemetery service are organized by veterans organizations of the Twin Cities. An American Legion Post 33 cookout was held at Lucky Dog's.

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Photos by Scott Kruger

ABOVE: Children line up along the Memorial Day procession route through downtown Neenah on Monday. BELOW: The Shattuck Middle School band plays a song while marching in the holiday procession.





Photo by Rob Zimmer

American white pelicans have found a permanent home in the region for the last two decades.

## Pelicans find water region to their liking

By Rob Zimmer  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Each day, shortly after sunrise, they appear in seemingly greater numbers every morning. The American white pelicans are back for another summer of fishing and enthralling the humans who watch them with wonder along the waterways of Neenah.

On Little Lake Butte des Morts, as well as the Fox River and open waters of Lake Winnebago, the pelicans sail on the open blue, occasionally resting on rocky islands and remote shores.

One of the best places to observe pelicans in action is below the dam near the Neenah Public Library and Theda Care. From the shore, or from above on the bridge, the pelicans put on quite a spectacular show each day.

“I love to come and watch them fish and sit in the current below the dam,” said Andrea Lau, who comes to enjoy these amazing birds regularly. “We are so lucky to have them so close.”

Indeed, we are. And, to think that just 25 years ago, the pelicans were not even here is even more amazing.

Pelicans began arriving in the Neenah area in the late 1990s and early 2000s when massive flooding out west along the Missouri River kept their breeding grounds in the Dakotas underwater for months.

Since then, nesting colonies have expanded greatly here along the waters of the Fox River, as well as other inland wetlands, and we are fortunate to enjoy their beauty and quiet grace regularly.

“This is my favorite place to come on my lunch break,” said Diane Bushman. “I can walk here and enjoy all these beautiful birds and the fish, as well, in just a few minutes from my job.”

American white pelicans nest on remote islands in Lake Butte des Morts, Winnebago, as well as inland marshes in Winnebago, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Brown and Outagamie counties. Pelicans are colonial nesters, meaning they nest close together on the ground for protection from predators.

Each morning, flocks of pelicans depart from their nesting colonies to fish, bringing food back to the colony. When one parent arrives, the other leaves to feed the family.

Many of the pelicans we see along the river are immature birds from last year. American white pelicans do not breed until their third year or so, so younger birds hang out in groups all summer long until they reach breeding age.

American white pelicans of breeding age can be identified in spring by the large, orange crest or “sail” on top of their huge, foot-long bill.

Pelicans will remain in our area until late October or early November. Enjoy their incredible gatherings all summer long.



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# AmeriCorps program gains funding

The Be Well Fox Valley AmeriCorps Program is one of four organizations in Wisconsin to receive federal Public Health AmeriCorps funding for health-oriented organizations, such as public health departments, health systems, health clinics, schools, early care centers and nonprofit organizations.

The new grant, a partnership between AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will provide \$259,200 in the first year, with the oppor-

tunity to receive up to \$1.3 million over five years to expand the Be Well Fox Valley AmeriCorps Program's presence and impact throughout northeast Wisconsin.

"It's a huge honor to receive this funding," said Amanda Ross, Be Well Fox Valley AmeriCorps program manager. "We have already seen the incredible impact of our current AmeriCorps members as they work to improve the physical, mental, and social health and well-being of our communities."



Photo from Neenah Historical Society



## Popular pool

This undated photo of the Neenah Recreation Park pool shows swimmers enjoying a hot day. The original pool was opened in 1940 and more than 70,000 people went for a swim the first year. The pool was remodeled in 1997.



Neenah News

Two people who were soliciting money outside the Neenah Pick 'n Save last weekend are shown.

# Panhandling pair target music lovers

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

A nationwide scam involving violin panhandlers hit Neenah and the area last weekend as a pair set up shop next to the Fox Point Plaza Pick 'n Save.

The scam works like this: The panhandlers stand outside a business and play music on an electric violin amplified by a speaker while soliciting tips from the public. The panhandlers often hold a sign with a sad message, "I have three kids and need to pay rent and food."

The catch? The violin performance is usually a sham. The performer pretends to play the music while the actual violin music comes from a recording played over the speaker. The sob story behind the sign? Most of the time that's a scam too.

Similar scams have been reported by news sources across the country. Several media outlets reported the violin panhandlers are believed to be part of an organized group traveling across the U.S., going city to city to hustle well-meaning folks for donations.

Fake violin-playing panhandlers have been spotted in Merrill, Rib Mountain and Oshkosh in the past two weeks, according to social media posts.

Two violin panhandlers were spotted at the Festival Foods on Northland Avenue in Appleton last Saturday. On Sunday, the pair set up in front of Bethesda Thrift Shop's Neenah location, which was closed. They were targeting shoppers at the Pick 'n Save next door.

When questioned, the two men said they do not speak English. When asked their name, the younger of the two men responded with "Elvis." The men left in a minivan with a Texas license plate around 5:30 p.m. after running their hustle for several hours.

A social media post in a Neenah Facebook group praising the panhandlers for their violin-playing skills was later deleted after commenters pointed out the scam. One commenter said the men were recently asked to leave the Neenah Festival Foods after running their hustle there.

Bethesda Thrift Shop manager Tina Seegers said she was not aware the violin panhandlers were in front of the store last Sunday because it was closed. She said the pair was previously panhandling in front of the store while it was open and they were asked to leave.

"Mainly because the volume was so loud that we can't conduct business," she said. "I did ask them to relocate themselves and they very kindly did."

Neenah Community Policing Coordinator Joe Benoit said panhandling is legal in public places as long as the panhandlers are not threatening or aggressive. Doorways and building entrances are considered public places, according to the city's panhandling ordinance. Panhandling is also legal on private property as long as the property owner is OK with the panhandlers being there, Benoit said.

The city ordinance indicates that performing or playing an instrument for tips is also legal.

Both the Neenah and Oshkosh police departments said they have not received any complaints about the panhandlers.

While the fake violin playing hustle may be legal, Benoit agreed that targeting locals for tips and donations under false pretenses is a bit unethical.

"I think ultimately it comes down to the cost of our freedom and liberty is that some people are just allowed to do things that are generally unethical because we can't take their rights away either," he said.

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# Calendar of events

**June 4**  
Neenah Pool opening day  
Art Activity Day at Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, 10 a.m.

**June 5**  
Neenah Summer Fun Run Series at Memorial Park, 7 p.m., George Scherck Shelter  
Love, Light & Harmony, 11 a.m., The

Plaza and Globe Coffee

**June 7**  
An Evening of Stargazing Concert, Neenah Community Band, 7 p.m., Riverside Park

**June 10**  
Friday Family Fun, 6 p.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

**June 11**  
Farmers market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park  
Doty Island Annual Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.  
Sailing Open House, 10 a.m., Riverside Park

**June 12**  
Backdraft Bike Tour, 7 a.m.

# Think twice before using mosquito-killing yard treatments

By Merrie Schamberger  
FOR THE NEENAH NEWS

While communities have good intentions, many existing policies and programs may be dangerous to children, adults and wildlife and inadequate by relying too heavily on spraying pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes.

Adulticides (pesticides designed to kill adult mosquitos) kill beneficial insects and natural mosquito predators, such as dragonflies, damselflies and beetles – potentially increasing local populations of mosquitoes.

“To fully protect honey bees and native pollinators from mosquito control pesticides, the pesticide should only be applied when it is dark, the sun has set and the street lights are lit. Dark is dark, not twilight, not sunset: dark.” – Pollinator Stewardship Council

There are 175 different species of mosquitoes in the U.S. and only a handful of those are vectors for disease. Only adult female mosquitoes bite and require blood meals; males feed on flower nectar.

Mosquitoes go through four stages in their life cycles – egg, larva, pupa and adult. The complete cycle can take as little as four days or as long as one month, depending on the temperature.

Many of the companies that offer treatment for mosquitos outdoors scare people into thinking they all carry West Nile virus. Other diseases these companies are scaring you about:

**Dengue fever:** It occurs in tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Any cases reported in Wisconsin since 2010 were travel related.

**Zika virus:** According to the CDC there is no current local transmission in the continental United States. The last cases of local Zika transmission by mosquitoes in the continental U.S. were in Florida and Texas in 2016-17.

**Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE):** The virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Only a few cases are reported in the United States each year. You can reduce the risk of infection by using insect repel-

lent, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and taking steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors.

**Chikungunya virus:** Also cited as a disease spread from mosquitos, any cases reported were acquired from traveling to Asia, Africa or the Indian Ocean.

Most mosquito sprays only kill adults; that leaves the larva to hatch and continue annoying us. For a more long-lasting treatment of mosquitos follow this guidance:

**Personal protection and source reduction.** Use natural-based repellents and wear long sleeves and pants if outside during dawn and dusk to avoid getting bitten.

**Remove all potential breeding areas** – any place with standing or slow-moving water.

**Remove, puncture or regularly drain all water-retaining objects** such as tin cans, buckets, holes in trees, clogged gutters and down spouts, old tires, birdbaths, trash can lids and shallow fishless ponds. Fix dripping outside

water faucets and sprinklers. Monitor ponds and sources of water regularly for signs of mosquito larvae.

Maintain window and door screens, and keep closed around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Stock permanent water pools or ponds with fish that eat mosquito larvae and pupae, like *Gambusia holbrooki*.

Least-toxic larvacides (killing mosquitoes in larval stage) allow control measures to be targeted and kill mosquitoes before they become active, biting adults.

*Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis* (Bti) is one of most effective and least hazardous biological larval controls. It is a bacterial strain that, when sprayed or dropped into larval pools, is ingested by feeding larvae and kills them.

Mosquito Dunks can be bought at local garden stores or online. They are safer for birdbaths, ditches, tree holes, roof gutters – anywhere water collects.

Go to [beyondpesticides.org](http://beyondpesticides.org) for more information.

## Community Band

FROM PAGE 1

enth year hadn't directed outside of his school's student band and played with a couple of local bands. But he jumped at the chance to make music with the Neenah Community Band.

“Knowing how to conduct and run a rehearsal are certainly important but being the right fit for the band is what the concentration was on when I was hired,” he said. “The players really run the band. I'm just the guy in the front waving the baton.”

“It's a wonderful group of people, including high schoolers who have played for two or three years to people who have music degrees and have been playing instruments for decades.”

It can be challenging, Martin said, finding music that can be played by those with only a few years' experience, as well as by those who have been playing for several decades.

“Finding that good balance of music is the key. Some pieces are way too easy for people who have their doctoral in music ed, and some of the pieces are extremely hard for those who are picking up their instrument again for the first time in a while,” Martin said. “Finding a balance between the pieces and music, and rewriting things as needed, and making sure I'm setting up everyone for success is really important.”

There are about 65 active band members, ranging in age from 15 to 95-year-old Phil Abendschein, a French horn player who is one of the band's charter members when it started in 1966.

Part of Martin's job is trying to learn about each of the band members.

“It's definitely a learning curve – of learning people and learning what the traditions are. This group is a very tradition-heavy band that I really respect. They have some amazing things that they do and I'm just happy to be a part of it,” he said, adding he is only making small changes for now, mostly regarding rehearsals and day-to-day things and some minor changes in the music.

“I'm not really changing anything as far as concerts they've historically done and so forth,” he said. Obviously, the music is a little bit different than it has been in the past. Change is something I want to take slow because this band has been around long before me, and I hope that it contin-



Photo from Jacob Martin

Jacob Martin, who is also the Kaukauna High School band director, is now leading the Neenah Community Band.

ues long after me.”

Every director has his own personality and that can come through in musical selections.

“There are pieces I feel are going to be really good for this band; and there are pieces of music I get really excited about and I want to share those with the band,” Martin said. “It's one of those things where every time someone else comes in to direct, it's going to be a little bit different. My music selections for this group have certainly been that way.”

One tradition is playing certain songs in concerts from year-to-year, which will continue along with the venues at which they've historically performed, including the Veterans Home in King. All summer concerts are at Riverside Park, except for the June 21 Children's Concert in Shattuck Park. They recently played at Menasha's Isle of Valor on Armed Forces Day.

In keeping with the military and patriotic theme, Martin said “the Armed Salute from our veterans as we play the 1812th Overture at the Fourth of July concert has always been a huge success. Things like that have a deep meaning for the band members and for the community.”

Patty Britzke has been playing clarinet in the band since 1970, and said she likes the music Martin has selected.

“I think the audience will enjoy our concerts this summer. We also have some special themes for the summer concerts and I think people will enjoy those, too,” Britzke said.

Martin is also excited about the Evening of Stargazing Concert in Riverside Park

on June 7, which celebrates the park's sesquicentennial.

“It's crazy to think that that park has been there for 150 years, and we'll be celebrating Neenah's 150th birthday next year,” he said. “It just helps to show the cool priorities this community has had.”

The band's main purpose is providing opportunities for volunteer musicians 15 and older to contribute their talents to a variety of music that serves the community at large and enjoy the rewards of performing with others. The band also raises

scholarships for deserving students.

Practices are held at Horace Mann Middle School on Tuesday evenings, where new players are encouraged to attend with a tuned and working instrument.

“We welcome with open arms, anyone, no matter their ability. We're like a big family and there's always a spot,” Britzke said. “We'd love to have somebody who's a professional, but even if you haven't played in 30 years, you can come join us and get back into the swing of things again and have fun.”

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**Don't forget to RSVP by Wednesday, June 1st!**



Submitted photo

## County fair support

Compeer Financial's Fund for Rural America, the Farm Credit cooperative's giving program, awards county fair groups in the Upper Midwest with grants to improve facilities and experiences offered to rural communities. Winnebago County Fair Association members are shown with a \$4,000 check as one of 64 groups to receive a grant, which will be used to replace barn water lines, level ground with additional gravel screenings, add electrical services and replace pins in sheep pen gates.

## Volunteer needs

**Boys & Girls Club of the Fox Valley** is seeking mentors to provide positive, caring and trusted role models for youth, for a minimum of one hourlong session a week. In a mentoring relationship, mentors provide 1:1 guidance and support to help young people build self-confidence, learn positive behaviors, stay in school and avoid potential pitfalls like drugs and gangs.

Contact Sam at [spackard@bgclubfoxvalley.org](mailto:spackard@bgclubfoxvalley.org) for more details and to enroll.

**St. Vincent de Paul Neenah/Menasha** is seeking friendly cashier volunteers, at least age 18, with some experience, to volunteer in 4-hour shifts. Staff members are available at all times for backup. Training is provided.

After 30 days, volunteers receive a 50 percent discount on everything in the store priced \$15 or less.

For details, contact Toni at [volunteercoordinator@svdpneenah.com](mailto:volunteercoordinator@svdpneenah.com) or 920-727-1766, ext. 3.

## Popular plaza

FROM PAGE 1

cessful and a good experience for everyone."

The Plaza employed 50 staff members over the winter, including ice skating attendants, coffee shop workers and cleaners.

"We were buying more espresso machines and trying to figure out how to make hot cocoa faster and we kept having to rethink how to serve as many people as were coming," Bergstrom Auth said.

For summer, The Plaza has shifted gears to offer an outdoor patio with three fire pits, two pickleball courts and backyard games such as Jenga, bean bag toss and ladder golf.

"When we were building it, the whole time we were planning for an ice rink and then we ran an ice rink for four months and now we're like, 'We have this awesome space, let's brainstorm what we can do,'" Bergstrom Auth said.

Events planned for this summer include an art mercantile on select Saturdays with local artists, some outdoor movie nights on Fridays and live music every Sunday in June, July and August.

Globe Coffee operates year-round at The Plaza, offering a breakfast and lunch menu, smoothies, tea and coffee made with coffee beans roasted in-house. Over the winter Globe Coffee offered hot cocoa flights. Starting in June hot cocoa flights will be replaced with lemonade flights. They also offer s'mores for roasting over the gas fire pits.

The Plaza has a private room to rent for meetings, study groups and birthday parties. Bergstrom Auth said over the winter, ice skating birthday parties were so popular that this summer they're offering roller skating birthday parties. Roller skating patrons will need to bring their own skates.

The Plaza's entire space can be rented for class reunions, graduation parties, company picnics or any sort of event that ends by 10 p.m., Bergstrom Auth added.

No carry-ins are allowed and alcohol is not served. If The Plaza is rented for a private event, they use four caterers – Cannova's Pizzeria, Solea Mexican Grill, Bridgewood Premier Catering and Zuppa's Cafe – who can serve alcoholic drinks.

Bergstrom Auth said a common public misconception is that The Plaza is similar to Neenah's public parks, which are maintained by the taxpayer-funded Parks and Recreation Department. She said The Plaza is leased from the city by Bergstrom Automotive and receives no public funding. As a privately run business, The Plaza has to charge for certain events in order to cover expenses.

Visitors may have noticed a construction project underway next door, which is an unrelated condominium development that is expected to be complete in January. Bergstrom Auth is working with a local

## County health officer gets state honor

Doug Gieryn, Winnebago County Health Department director, has been named the 2022 Health Officer of the Year by the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards.

"Doug has been a leader during the COVID response for the state through his participation in the morning COVID Response Team for over two years," one of the many nominators for this award shared. "He has stepped forward during a pandemic to create positive change and forge forward in stronger partnerships. Doug consistently sees opportunities for growth to address health disparities. He has given his time and leadership to

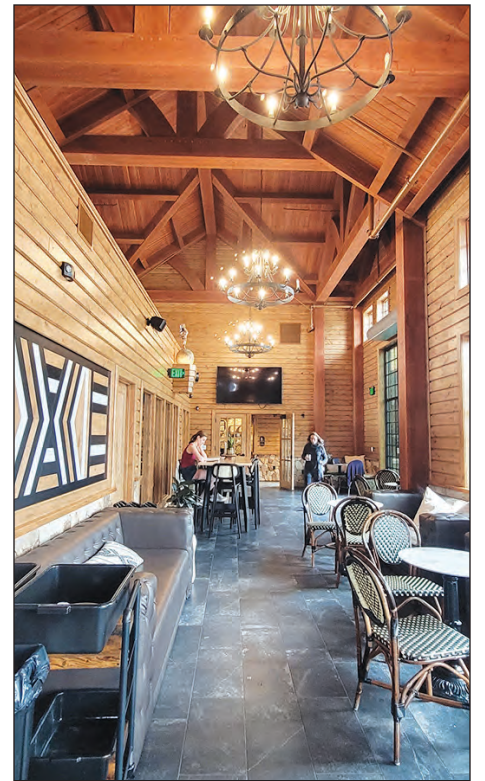


Photo by Bethanie Gengler

The rustic style interior of The Plaza includes Douglas fir beams and hanging chandeliers.

artist to have a mural painted on the wall of the condo facing The Plaza.

Bergstrom Auth is a former high school teacher, photographer and the mother of three. She said her first season as Plaza director has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I feel like I'm meant to be there because I love it every day and we're learning so much and I get to work with awesome people," she said. "We're trying really hard to provide a service that people want to come be a part of and use and meet up and play pickleball and come to our concerts and come to our movie nights and make it a family-friendly safe space."

Future Neenah Executive Director Sarah Wylie said the community has been very receptive to The Plaza.

"People are loving it," she said. "It's such a commodity and very great programming in the summer and we're just very thankful and in appreciation for it."

Neenah resident Ruth Whitlinger was at The Plaza recently with her family. After finishing lunch at Globe Coffee, she and her husband watched their son and granddaughters play pickleball.

"I feel we are very blessed in Neenah to have (The Plaza)," Whitlinger said. "It offers so many things, from in the winter ice skating, to now they've been roller skating, and then they have all the different games for kids to play."

Neenah resident Cheri McDowell was visiting Globe Coffee with a friend last weekend. She said The Plaza is a beautiful addition to the community.

"The next generation has stepped up to support us and bring this to us and I am just in awe and feel so lucky," she said. "I look at the two blocks of this little downtown that are packed with new business, thousands of people that support it and love it here and it draws business to this little place and it's amazing."

statewide conversations to benefit public health."

County Executive Jon Doemel added in the announcement, "Above and beyond countless hours focused on the pandemic, he and his team found capacity to help our county write and win a \$10.35 million grant to address housing instability through multiple projects and partners throughout the community. Director Gieryn has also fought our opioid crisis head on by implementing innovative methods to prevent overdose deaths in our county."

The award was celebrated during a Public Health Awards Ceremony held last week.

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Photo by Dustin Riese

Neenah's Brady Corso has his eyes on home plate as he scores a run during Tuesday's WIAA tournament win over Oshkosh West. Corso scored a team-high three runs in the Rockets' 9-2 win.

## Thomas' strong start propels Rockets

By Dustin Riese  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

After struggling to find consistency most of the season, things are starting to come together at the perfect time for the Neenah baseball team as the Rockets rolled to a 9-2 win over Oshkosh West in a WIAA Division 1 regional baseball game on Tuesday.

The win marks the Rockets fifth win in their last six games.

"I thought the kids played extremely hard today," Rockets head coach Jack Taschner said. "West has a lot of good hitters and they beat us once this year so we knew they were going to be ready."

The victory was backed by a strong performance from starting pitcher Carter Thomas, who allowed just two runs and three hits in six innings. The senior hurler struck out seven and did not walk a batter.

"Carter (Thomas) tossed a great game for us and we did what we needed to do to win," Taschner said. "The beautiful thing about having a senior on the mound who has been there and done that, is that no moment is too big for them. He might struggle at times, but he always competes and never loses his confidence. He is one of those guys that can make those in-game adjustments and it was great to see him lead the way for us."

West scored both of its runs – one of which was unearned – in the second inning, but Thomas blanked the Wildcats over his next four innings allowing the Rockets' to take charge.

"I knew I was getting a little out of sync



Photo by Dustin Riese

Carter Thomas allowed just one earned run in six innings to lead Neenah to a win on Tuesday against Oshkosh West.

in that second inning, but I tried to not let that faze me," Thomas said. "Once I was able to regroup, I started to make better pitches and was able to finish off the game strong which was a nice thing."

Neenah's first two runs were scored off the bat of Eli Schmidt, who lifted a sacrifice fly in the first inning to score Brady Corso and repeated that effort in the third inning to tie the game at 2.

"Another thing we have done well with lately which we displayed tonight was getting rid of the selfish at bats," Taschner said. "Schmidt came away with a pair of sacrifice flies which is something we were not doing in the early part of the season.

We are playing well right now, but we have to keep it going."

Corso, who finished with a pair of hits and scored three runs, drove in the go-ahead run with a single in the fourth inning before Neenah took a 4-2 lead on an RBI-double by Andrew Carlson in the fifth inning.

The Rockets then erupted for five runs in the sixth inning to break the game open.

Singles by Will Sorenson and Evan Paque followed by an Oshkosh West error loaded the bases with Max Medrano plating a run with a sacrifice fly to center field. Schmidt then followed with a two-run single before Wildcat errors allowed two more runs to score and all but secure the win.

"As a team, I thought we did a great job of playing for each other," Thomas said. "Whether it was at the plate, in the field or on the bases, we all picked each other up tonight and made sure we came away with the win."

Payton Miller came on to pitch a scoreless seventh in relief of Thomas and worked out of a bases-loaded jam to close out the win.

Paque and Gradin Taschner joined Corso with tallying two hits in the game for the Rockets

"We had that rough patch toward the middle of the season, but that was a long time ago," Thomas said. "Recently we have been playing a lot better and I think we are starting to hit our stride as a team. Hopefully it can continue as we are a good team when everything is clicking."

## Zephyrs fall to Falcons in regional tilt

By Dustin Riese  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

AMHERST – St. Mary Catholic fell behind 6-0 after two innings and couldn't rally against top-seeded Amherst, as the Zephyrs had their season end in an 8-2 loss in a WIAA Division 3 baseball regional final Tuesday.

"Tough loss tonight to a talented Amherst team," head coach Jeff Hogenson said. "It's easy to see why they are ranked the top Division 3 team in the state with the depth up and down their lineup. They will be a tough out for anyone this year."

The unbeaten Falcons scored five runs in the first inning and added another in the second to seize control of the game before the Zephyrs got on the board in the top of the third.

Alex Rice, who was courtesy running for Noah Decker, dashed home with St. Mary Catholic's first run on the back end of a double steal with Aidan Birling. Fisher MacKenzie then delivered an RBI-groundout to slice the Falcons' lead to 6-2.

St. Mary Catholic then had two runners on with one out in the fourth but failed to score and the Falcons added a run in the bottom of the inning and tacked on an insurance run in the fifth for the final margin.

Despite the loss, Hogenson was pleased with the way his team finished in his first season as head coach and with only four seniors on the roster believes the future is bright for the program.

The Zephyrs started the season 0-4 but finished with a 10-8 record and credited the efforts of the players and coaches for the turnaround.

"Their buy-in to what we are trying to build was well beyond what I could have hoped for in our first season," Hogenson said. "I'm proud of how our Zephyr team performed this season. Although I'm disappointed the season is over, I'm very excited for the future of our program."

The Zephyrs managed just four hits off of Amherst starter Tyler Soulshy, with Noah Decker, Birling, MacKenzie and George Albers tallying the offense.

Owen Ripley took the loss on the mound for St. Mary Catholic, despite striking out six batters in 3 2/3 innings. He allowed seven runs, six earned, and walked six. MacKenzie closed out the game, allowing just one run on one hit in 2 2/3 innings.

## Prep sports roundup

### TRACK AND FIELD

#### Rockets' relays bank state meet berths

The Neenah High School track and field team will have four relays and three individuals competing at the WIAA Division 1 State Track and Field meet this weekend in La Crosse.

The boys will be sending three of their relays to state, including the 800-meter relay that won a sectional title last Thursday at West Bend East. The four runners on that squad were Dayne Newman, Gage Ramos, Ethan Snider and Jase Jenkins.

The 1,600-meter relay team of Ramos, Snider, Charles Fredrickson and Jack Mon-

son also won a sectional title and are seeded eighth out of 24 teams at the state meet.

Newman and Jenkins will join Cayden Retzki and Grant Dean on the 400-meter relay team to round out the boys relays.

Isiah Lassiter also qualified in the 800 meters for Neenah and will run in the fast heat.

For the girls, Lauren Tears advanced to state in the 1,600 meters, while Mazie Olkowski will run in the 3,200 meters.

The Rockets also qualified its 3,200-meter relay team of Hadly Hackinson, Rebecca Marsh, Lexi Dorner and Tears.

#### St. Mary Catholic sending two to state

Nolie Anderson and Alexander Gropel will be representing St. Mary Catholic

at the WIAA Division 3 State Track and Field meet in La Crosse.

Anderson will compete in the discus where she finished fourth at the sectional meet, while Gropel will run in the 800 meters after placing third at sectionals last week in Rosholt.

The state meet runs Friday and Saturday at UW-La Crosse's Veterans Memorial Stadium.

### TENNIS

#### Neenah advances four flights at state tourney

The powerhouse Neenah tennis will be well represented at the WIAA Division 1 state tennis meet as the Rockets boast two

qualifiers in both the singles and doubles brackets.

Leading the singles qualifiers was sophomore Solomon Dunsirn, who is seeded second in the field and entered the state tournament with a 31-1 record. He dropped only four games in three matches in winning the title at last week's sectional tournament.

He will be joined in the state singles bracket by junior David Murphy, who won the No. 2 singles title at sectionals to automatically qualify for the state meet.

In doubles, Neenah's top pairing of seniors Nolan Kubiak and Khaled Saleh are the No. 2 seed in the state tournament

# Neenah golfer Callahan driven by challenge of the game

By Tim Froberg  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Golf is a challenging, often frustrating sport that requires quick fixes on the fly.

It's John Callahan's type of game.

Callahan is the No.1 golfer on a rock-solid Neenah boys' team and one of the area's better performers. He was a sectional qualifier along with the entire Rockets' squad after placing third individually at last week's Oshkosh West Division regional with a 79. The Rockets qualified their entire team with a second-place finish.

Callahan tuned up for sectionals by shooting the same score a week earlier for a top-10 finish at the Fox Valley Association meet where Neenah finished fourth.

Callahan is a fourth-year varsity player and a team captain who was a first-team all-FVA selection last season. He was also a WIAA state qualifier in 2021, winning a sectional playoff to claim the last of three individual state berths.

"John has been an integral part of our program the last four years," said Neenah coach Isaac Quella. "His work ethic, dedication, savviness and love of the game make him stand out on the course. He has a competitive drive that pushes him to work harder than most to be the best player he can possibly be.

"John has been an honor to coach. I'm excited to see what he and the rest of the team can accomplish in the postseason."



Submitted photo

John Callahan leads his Neenah High School golf team as a senior captain.

Golf is the lone sport that Callahan plays at Neenah. It appeals to the problem-solving skills he's been blessed with.

"I just love the creativity of golf," Callahan said. "I played almost every sport when I was younger, but chose to focus on golf when I got to high school. It's a sport that allows you to troubleshoot, which I enjoy. I like being taxed with a problem and you get more than enough of them on the golf course."

Callahan has the experience and calm, cool demeanor to deal with most of the issues commonly experienced on the links.

"I do like that challenge," Callahan said. "It can get you angry at times, but at other times it's so rewarding. I get a lot of enjoyment out of that (the challenges of golf)

and I'm always trying to get better. That's what keeps me coming back."

Callahan has been golfing since a young age.

"My dad has a picture of me when I was two on the front lawn holding a golf club," Callahan said. "I was 8 when I started taking swing lessons."

The Neenah senior – he's a fourth-generation John Callahan – learned the game from his father, John Callahan III. John isn't the only Callahan representing Neenah on the links. His younger sister, Carly, was a freshman member of the Neenah girls' golf team last fall.

"My dad originally taught me how to play and honestly, he's probably been the best teacher I've had with the game," Callahan said. "He's guided me and helped me along with way. Without him, I probably wouldn't have fallen in love with the game."

"We still play a lot together and it's a lot of fun. My sister is kind of a beginner, so we've taken her out and she's learned from myself and my dad."

Callahan can't get enough of the game. He's a junior member of Ridgeway Country Club and also works there as an outside assistant, cleaning carts and clubs and gathering golf balls.

"Between golfing and work, I'm out on the course during the summer seven days a week," Callahan said. "I'm always around

## Senior Spotlight

the game, learning and meeting new people. It's really fun."

As a golfer, Callahan's short game is considered to be his strength.

"I feel my iron play is what I do best," he said. "There are other areas where I need work, but I've become pretty proficient with my iron play. One of my strong suits is that I'm a level-headed guy. I don't let things get to me and that's pretty important on the golf course. You need a level mind and you need to keep things simple."

Callahan is also proficient in the classroom. He's a high-honors student with a 3.7 grade-point-average. He will attend the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in the fall where he's considering a computer science major. He's also interested in golfing for the Blugolds.

"I don't know yet if it will involve a try-out, or if I'll be able to walk on, but playing golf at Eau Claire is the goal," Callahan said.

Regardless of what happens in college, Callahan figures to be swinging the clubs for decades to come.

"I just love the sport and I'm going to keep playing as long as I can," Callahan said. "When I get old, I want to retire, move somewhere warm and golf all the time. That would be the ultimate goal."

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# Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 9

field. The duo lost only two games in three matches in winning the sectional title last week, improving their record to 31-0 on the season. Saleh finished fourth at the state meet last year with partner Cooper Moss.

The other doubles team to qualify for state for the Rockets is senior Henry Werner and junior Satchel Moss. That pair is seeded 11th in the bracket and sported a 25-1 record entering the state tournament.

Neenah will also be competing at the team state tournament next weekend in Madison after winning the sectional title.

The Rockets got singles titles from Dunsirn, Murphy and Ben Kotchen at No. 4 singles, while all three doubles teams – Leyton Daharsh and Jaxon King at the No. 3 flight – joined the two state qualifiers claimed sectional titles. The Rockets scored a whopping 54 points, to easily outdistance second-place Oshkosh West, which had 29.

Neenah is seeded third in the eight-team field and will face Eau Claire Memorial in a first-round match.

## Zephyrs' Auth, top doubles team make state

St. Mary Catholic will be represented by a pair of flights at the WIAA Division 2 state tennis tournament going on in Madison this weekend.

Wesley Auth earned an automatic bid by winning the No. 1 singles title at the Kohler sectional last week, beating Plymouth's Owen Plate in straight sets in the final. Auth, a freshman, is seeded fifth in the singles bracket and entered the tournament with a 20-0 record.

The Zephyrs' No. 1 doubles pairing of sophomore Grant Bergstrom and freshman Felipe Gaztelu will also be competing at state after earning an automatic bid by placing second at sectionals. The duo entered the state tournament with an 18-2 record.

The individual state meet began Thursday and will conclude on Saturday at the Nielsen Tennis Center in Madison.

## GOLF

### Neenah's Callahan headed to state meet

Neenah senior John Callahan will be heading to Blackwolf Run and the WIAA Division 1 state tournament after firing a 79 to tie for sixth place at the sectional tournament held at Washington County Golf Course on Tuesday.

Callahan tied with Hartford's Matthew Zagar, one shot behind a pair of golfers who tied for fifth. Sheboygan North's Mason Schmidtke was medalist with a 75.

Neenah fell just short of qualifying as a team as the Rockets finished in third place in the team standings with a score of 335,

## Drain Campaign targets area boaters

The Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance is teaming up with the state Department of Natural Resources for the annual Drain Campaign from Saturday through Monday.

Anglers are asked to remember to drain their livewells and fish buckets before leaving boat launches this fishing season. Draining all water helps prevent the spread of numerous invasive species that can't be easily seen. These include disease such as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) and microscopic larvae of zebra mussels.

When it comes to moving a catch, ice

just four shots behind Fond du Lac. Sheboygan North claimed the team title with a 318.

Payton Kramer tied for eighth for the Rockets with an 82 to also finish in the top 10. Eli Oitzinger with an 85 and Julian Gallmeier with an 89 rounded out Neenah's scoring golfers.

## Lynch leads St. Mary Catholic golfers

Junior Spencer Lynch shot an even par 71 at The Oaks in Cottage Grove in a WIAA Division 3 sectional golf meet on Wednesday.

Lynch had the lowest round of the golfers who had posted scores by deadline. He was four shots better than the next lowest round.

Lynch was on pace to advance to the state golf meet as an individual, however, the official list of state qualifiers would not be released until all of the scores were posted from the meet.

Dane Anderson and Evan Bengel each added 94s for the Zephyrs.

St. Mary Catholic shot a 361 as a team and had been eliminated from contention for one of the two team qualifying spots at state.

## SOFTBALL

### Rockets blank Goslings in sectional semifinal

Morgan Harwood struck out 19 batters in throwing a one-hit shutout to lead seventh-seeded Neenah past Watertown, 2-0, in a WIAA Division 1 sectional semifinal on Tuesday.

Harwood did have baserunners to deal with in five of the seven innings, but did not allow a Gosling past second base the entire game. She struck out every Watertown batter at least once and fanned the bottom three hitters in the Watertown lineup a combined nine times.

Harwood also played a key role in the Rockets' run production, delivering an RBI-single in the top of the first inning to score Bella Coulman. Harwood later scored on a two-out single by Piper Alberg to account for Neenah's runs.

Coulman finished 3-for-4 to lead the Rocket offense, which totaled eight hits in the game.

## SOCCER

### Neenah tops Sheboygan North in regional

Leah Forget and Ella Rice each tallied goals as 10th-seeded Neenah went on the road to upend seventh-seeded Sheboygan North in a WIAA Division 1 regional soccer match on Tuesday.

It was the sixth straight win for the Rockets with all of the victories coming by shutout.

The Rockets will play at second-seeded Beaver Dam on Saturday at 5 p.m.

will keep fish fresher than water as they are moved.

Draining and rinsing the engine, especially if the boat isn't used frequently, reduces the chance of mussel's larvae plugging the engine intake.

Joining in the effort across the state, the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance's Clean Boats Clean Waters, boat inspectors will be at launches around the Winnebago System reminding anglers and all boaters about the water draining law in Wisconsin.

They will have free towels on hand to give out.



Neenah Joint School District photo

## Cruising to success

Members of Neenah High School's Class of 2022 found a fitting watercraft to ride amid rain showers in a parade last Wednesday morning around the school grounds. Graduation ceremonies were held that evening in the Ron Einerson Fieldhouse.

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**Rummage Sale, 1851 Indian Point RD, Oshkosh and neighborhood, June 3 and 4, 9 to 5.** Teacher materials, books, toys, clothes, bird stands, and aquarium.

"Rummage Sale" 1327 Grand St, Oshkosh WI 54901. Saturday, June 4th - 8:00 - 4:00, Sunday, June 5th - 8:00 - 3:00. Furniture - Clothes - Collectibles - Figurines - Misc.

### 1384 N Oakwood Road, Oshkosh. Friday 9-4 & Saturday 9-3.

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### Miscellaneous

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