



**Matthew Brehmer**  
Attorney at Law

**BL**  
**BREHMER**  
LAW LLC

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117 W. Wisconsin Ave  
Neenah, WI  
(920) 502-7100  
www.brehmerlawllc.com

## Missing person questions endure

### Depies disappearance marks three decades

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

“Come on, let’s go, we’ve got lots to see!” Those are the words Mary Wegner remembers her daughter, Laurie Depies, exclaiming as she ran up to her family and joyfully jumped into the air during a trip to Disney World in the 1980s. Depies was 15 years old.

“I can still picture her flying in the air,” Wegner said. “That was Laurie. Just lots of energy and ready to go.”

Five years later, Depies disappeared from Fox Crossing in what is perhaps the most well-known missing person case in Wisconsin.

Happy-go-lucky, funny and always laughing is how Wegner remembers her daughter. Depies’ father, Mark, declined to be interviewed for this story because he said talking about the loss of his daughter puts him in a bad mental state.

Depies attended Appleton East High School where she excelled at art. Her friend, Rhonda Mesko, said Depies loved

listening to music. During a road trip in 1989, Depies brought a cassette player along and played the song “No Sugar Tonight” by The Guess Who so many times that Mesko’s boyfriend threatened to throw the tape out the window.

Mesko remembers spending time with Depies at the mall, cruising the College Avenue strip in Appleton and hanging out watching MTV.

Today marks the 30-year anniversary of Depies’ disappearance. The grief – even after that much time – was evident in Mesko’s voice as she described Depies’ one-of-a-kind personality.

“Laurie was just a joyful, big-hearted person,” she said. “She had a laugh that you could hear across the room and she just lit up any space that she walked into.”

Depies graduated in 1990, after which she worked various jobs while deciding what career path to take.

On Aug. 19, 1992, just a month before her 21st birthday, Depies drove to her boyfriend’s apartment at 310 Wilson Ave. in what was then the Town of Menasha and is now Fox Crossing, after working a shift

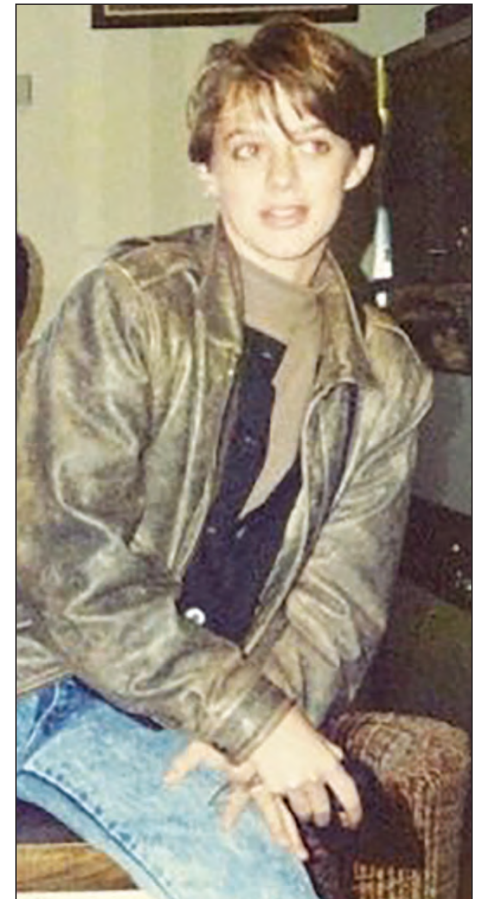


Photo from Mary Wegner

Laurie Depies is shown in this 1989 photo.

SEE **Depies case** ON PAGE 7

## INSIDE



**Senior spotlight**  
Talented Jenkins takes aim at another big year

Page 10

## Beer column

Picking a favorite isn’t always the best choice

Page 6

## Future Neenah names new director

Neenah News

Future Neenah Inc. has selected Brent Bowman as its new executive director.

Bowman will lead the nonprofit organization funded by community donations that focuses on economic development, community partnerships and events in the Neenah area.

Bowman is replacing Sarah Wylie, who resigned in June. Future Neenah president of the board Eric Glassco said that Wylie accomplished a lot in her six months in the position.

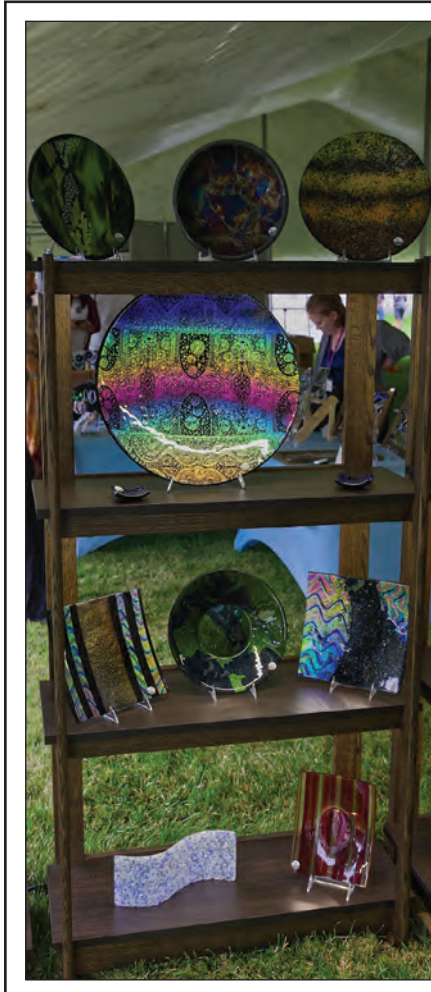
“We’re sorry to see her go and want to thank Sarah for her efforts and wish her the best moving forward,”

he said.

Future Neenah’s executive director is the creative driving force behind the organizational vision as it impacts the community, according to the job listing.

Bowman will be the ninth person to hold the executive director position since the organization was established in 1983. He has 36 years of experience with the nonprofit Boy Scouts of America where he was involved in leadership, fundraising, fiscal management, staff hiring, development

SEE **Future Neenah** ON PAGE 2



Photos by Scott Kruger

## Artists at work

Above: Taylor Moeller-Roy, glass studio manager, and her assistant Tom, a volunteer at the museum, work on a red-hot piece of glass during a presentation at the inaugural Glass Arts Festival on Saturday at Bergstrom-Mahler Museum. The event featured more than 30 nationally recognized glass artists, demonstrations and children’s activities. At left, glass creations by Rebecca Weber of RLW Glass in Neenah were among the vendor offerings at the festival.

## Discussions shine light on substance use

### Early conversations keep families trusting

By Kaitlyn Scoville  
NEENAH NEWS

Ashley lost her fiance to an overdose about a year ago. She said he had struggled for about half his life with substance use, something she hadn’t dealt with herself or with anyone she knew before.

“It was a very private and isolated walk for both of us,” Ashley said. “We figured it out together as best we could. It was challenging

for me not having gone through something like that. I didn’t open up or talk to anyone about it because I wasn’t sure how it was going to be perceived.”

Just a few weeks ago, she struck up a conversation with some new neighbors who then asked if she was married. All she could think about is how she would respond if they asked where her fiance was.

“I didn’t know if I wanted to share that with them,” she said.

After her fiance died, there were only a few people she felt comfortable with sharing that intimate information. In the back of her mind, she worried about encounters with others who may be “close-minded to the fact that this is a disease.”

Ashley actively chooses not to use addictive substances. But when she’s in situations when she has to tell others that she doesn’t – such as gatherings where alcohol is served – she’s met with inquisitive looks.

“It’s something we continuously have to

SEE **Be Courageous** ON PAGE 7



Last in a series

# Neenah News

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**General information/customer service:** Jennifer Grunwald  
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### Publisher

Karen Schneider, 920-858-6407  
karen@oshkoshherald.com

### Editor

Dan Roherty, 920-508-0027  
editor@oshkoshherald.com

### Corrections

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# State 76, Larsen Road intersection review set

Neenah News

The state Department of Transportation will hold a live, online public meeting at 5 p.m. Aug. 23 regarding proposed improvements to the State 76 and Larsen Road intersection that would begin in 2026.

The proposed project is 2.2 miles south of U.S. 10 in the Town of Clayton, a mile west of where the new Neenah High School is being constructed.

DOT officials said the improvements are sought to reduce the number and severity of crashes at the intersection, particularly right-angle type crashes, and to improve the traffic operations of the intersection. The 76/Larsen intersection had 16 crashes from 2016 to 2020, resulting in one fatal crash and nine with injuries. Twelve of those were right-angle crashes.

Among the improvement alternatives

being considered:

**All-way stop control:** Reconstructing the intersection to include left-turn lanes on the northbound and southbound 76 approaches and removing the right-turn lane on the east leg of Larsen. Stop signs would be added to the 76 approaches to create an all-way stop control intersection. The severity of crashes are expected to decrease but will result in higher levels of traffic delays on 76.

**All-way stop alternative roundabout:** A single lane roundabout at the existing intersection. The roundabout would decrease speeds through the intersection and eliminate right angle crashes within the intersection. Traffic operations are expected to be better than the all-way stop alternative.

Among the overall improvements

would be new pavement, markings and signing, culvert and storm sewer installation, and intersection lighting.

Selection of the alternative will be made in September with design work ongoing through 2025. The intersection would be closed during construction and a detour will be posted.

Project staff will review the proposed improvements via Microsoft Teams and offer a comment, question-and-answer period after the project presentation. Access the meeting via computer or mobile device by clicking the "Join the Meeting" link below at the time of the meeting.

Find the link to the meeting at [wisconsindot.gov](http://wisconsindot.gov) under the Projects and Studies link in the Northeast region. For audio-only, call 608-571-2209, with conference ID: 316704601#.

## Future Neenah

FROM PAGE 1

and strategic planning.

In Bowman's most recent position he served as the development and outreach manager for a nonprofit in Appleton, overseeing fundraising efforts, business partnerships and community outreach.

Bowman and his wife relocated to Neenah from out of state in 2011 and he said they found it to be an amazing community to live, work and enjoy.

"I'm honored to join the team at Future Neenah and look forward to serving the community alongside the board of directors, staff, and volunteers," he said.

Glassco expressed his gratitude for the individuals that helped with the search and interview process.

## Open-house dates set across district

Neenah schools will host open houses and opportunities for students to get familiar with the buildings and teachers before the Sept. 1 start of school.

Students and parents may drop off supplies at these schools:

Shattuck: Monday, 3-5 p.m.

Washington: Wednesday, 3-6 p.m.

Clayton: Thursday, 4:30-6 p.m.

Coolidge: Thursday, 4:30-6 p.m.

Hoover: Thursday, 4:30-6 p.m.

Lakeview: Thursday, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Roosevelt/Alliance: Thursday, 5-7 p.m.

Spring Road: Thursday, 4:30-6 p.m.

Tullar: Thursday, 4:30-6 p.m.

Wilson: Thursday, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Taft: Aug. 31, 4-5:30 p.m.

Horace Mann: Aug. 31, 4-5:30 p.m.

## Chamber names new government affairs VP

The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce has named Jon Turke as vice president of government affairs. He will coordinate government affairs activities at the local, state and federal level, serve as an advocate for businesses in the Fox Valley and manage the Chamber's public policy council.

Turke brings advocacy experience to

businesses in the Fox Cities region, including work as chief of staff to the majority leader in the state Assembly and director of government relations for a statewide financial services trade association. He also has served as campaign staff for several congressional and legislative races in northeast Wisconsin.

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Photo from Neenah Historical Society

**Voyageur Canoe**  
The Neenah Landmarks Commission is sponsoring free rides on a Voyageur Canoe that will launch at Shattuck Park from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. The Neenah Historical Society and Neenah Police Department will also be at Shattuck with their History's Mysteries program. Stop during the farmers market to learn about Neenah history.

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# Local grandparent scams bring police warnings

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Police are attempting to identify the scammers who nearly got away with \$10,000 from an elderly Town of Clayton woman and are reminding residents that the number of grandparent scams is on the rise.

A grandparent scam is directed toward the elderly and involves criminals pretending to be an attorney or a panicked loved one. The scammers claim a family member is in custody and attempt to send someone to the victim's house or to a set location to collect bail money, according to the Neenah Police Department.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office said the Clayton woman was contacted by scammers who told her that her granddaughter was in custody after a vehicle crash in Texas. They tried to scam the woman for \$27,600 but negotiated the amount down to \$10,000.

When the scammers arrived to collect payment, they were scared off by a family member who interceded and took photos of their car, which is believed to be a Subaru, the sheriff's office said. The sheriff's office



Submitted photo

The Winnebago County Sheriff's office released a photo of this vehicle that is connected to at least one money scam attempt in the area.

is attempting to identify the vehicle and its occupants. Anyone with information should contact Deputy Burns at 920-236-7300.

Several residents commented on a social media post about the scam, indicating they had relatives who were also contacted.

Neenah resident Julie Rankin said scammers contacted her mother.

"She was almost convinced," she wrote. "Scary, since they are very good at making the elderly believe everything they say."

Menasha resident Dean Curtis said scam-

mers contacted his mother about her grandson.

"She asked which one and what was his name and they hung up on her," he wrote.

Oshkosh resident Chris Kressig said her 85-year-old mother has also been receiving scam calls.

"(She) received one today regarding her grandson," she said. "So sad that people do this to the elderly."

Last week, Oshkosh police reported that a resident lost several thousand dollars to a p.m., Riverside Park

### Wednesday, Aug. 24

Boogie Downtown with Boogie and the Yoyo'z, 6 p.m., downtown Neenah

### Thursday, Aug. 25

Out to Lunch Concerts with Barefoot Americans, 11:30 a.m., Shattuck Park

Pattie Shack Music Series with Burnt Toast & Jam, 6 p.m., Ground Round Grill and Bar

### Sunday, Aug. 28

Sunday Music with Lilie Fouts, 11 a.m.,

grandparent scam. In May, an elderly Neenah victim lost \$18,000 to the scam.

The FBI reports that in 2021, more than 450 victims over the age of 60 reported similar scams, with approximate losses of \$6.5 million.

Oshkosh police reminded residents to be aware of similar scams including romance, Medicare and Social Security. Romance scams involve scammers talking romantically with the victim and then asking for money. Medicare and Social Security scams involve scammers who claim to work for Medicare or Social Security in order to get the victim to provide personal information including date of birth and Social Security number.

Neenah police said Winnebago County has been seeing an increased amount of scam activity directed toward the elderly and reminded residents they will never send anyone to a home to collect bail money. They urge residents to talk with elderly family and friends who may be susceptible.

Residents who have been contacted by a scammer or who have fallen victim to a scam should contact police.

The Plaza and Globe Coffee

### Thursday, Sept. 1

Pattie Shack Music Series with Big & Tall, 6 p.m., Ground Round Grill and Bar

### Saturday, Sept. 3

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

### Monday, Sept. 5

Labor Day Parade, 9 a.m.

Labor-Fest Celebration, 11 a.m., Fox Valley Area Labor Council, 157 S. Green Bay Road

## Calendar of events

### Saturday, Aug. 20

Future Neenah Farmers Market (Kids' Day), 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

History's Mysteries, 10 a.m., Shattuck Park

Art Mercantile, 11 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Music for Memories concert featuring B.D. Greer, 4 p.m., Riverside Park

Fox Valley Open disc golf tournament, O'Hauser Park, Fox Crossing

### Sunday, Aug. 21

Sunday Music with Love, Light & Harmony, 11 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Fox Valley Open disc golf tournament, O'Hauser Park, Fox Crossing

### Tuesday, Aug. 23

Neenah Community Band concert, 7

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# Youth Go hosts its family game show party

## Program's leader has showcased annual fun

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

More than 100 people who attended Youth Go's family night Monday at Riverside Park were treated to dinner and live entertainment in the form of a "Price is Right" show hosted by program supervisor Timothy Chappa.

Chappa has been hosting a replica of the show for Youth Go participants for the past 13 years. He has recreated many of the popular games including Plinko, Hole in One (or Two) and Grocery Game; even a Big Wheel. Chappa steps into the shoes of the host – originally Bob Barker and now Drew Carey – taking participants through an entire episode that includes pricing games, a showcase showdown and the showcase. The winners receive gift cards.

When Chappa started hosting the show in 2009 he made replicas of the games on paper that he would tape on the wall. As time went on, he began building the replicas and in 2016 he started hosting "The Price is Right" during Youth Go's annual family night each year.

"I grew up watching The Price is Right and when I started working at Youth Go we're always encouraged to bring things we enjoy and share it with the kids and it has ballooned into something far more than I've ever thought,"

he said.

In 2018, Chappa's enthusiasm for "The Price is Right" and his desire to share it with the kids at Youth Go resulted in his selection as winner of the show's Superfan Contest. A segment of the show was filmed in Neenah and James O' Halloran, a model on the show, presented Chappa with a new Mini Cooper.

At Monday's event, Tina and Steve Schmidt of 4 Schmidts and Giggles BBQ brought their food truck and treated guests and volunteers to a complimentary meal. The Schmidts have been volunteering for Youth Go for about 15 years and donate their time and services to cook the turkey for Youth Go's Thanksgiving dinner each year.

"I just think that giving back is important and teaching that skill to our children," Tina said.

The food truck added to the carnival-like atmosphere of the event and the enthusiastic crowd mirrored the show's live studio audience as they cheered on the participants.

Monday's "Price is Right" was Chappa's 18th time hosting the event. He credits the Youth Go kids for the success of family night.

"I don't know if kids now are as much into game shows as I know I was at that age, so it's cool to just give them something to experience that they may never experience, ever," he said. "It's cool to share a little part of what makes me 'me' with them."



Neenah News photo by Bethanie Gengler

Timothy Chappa hosts Youth Go's version of "The Price is Right" earlier this week at Riverside Park.

## Diverse small businesses focus of program

New North Inc. has partnered with AFF Research to expand its Diverse Small Business Training Program (DSBTP) designed to increase the business acumen and capabilities of small, women-owned, minority, veteran-owned, LGBTQ and other companies within the New North's 18-county region.

The DSBTP, funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC), is specifically designed for businesses that are ready to advance beyond the start-up stage.

"We believe that this training can be impactful for diverse businesses in rural areas

as they attempt to scale up. AFF Research, with its proven track record of success, is the perfect partner to execute this strategy," stated Barb LaMue, New North president.

A pillar of the program is six training modules designed to increase the owner's knowledge and confidence in key areas: business model, operations, working capital, workforce, risk management and marketing.

Companies seeking additional information or that would like to submit an application should contact Anna Steinfest at aff@affresearch.com.

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# Drink what you don't like . . . once in a while

Wife: Why are you making me do this?

Husband: Well, we write a beer column every month, so we should be as open-minded and well-rounded as possible.

Wife: You know I'm no fan of lagers in general. Bocks are great, but pilsners are boring; like bitter water. Can't you do this by yourself?

Husband: But, the column is "Wife + Husband = Beer," so I need you to complete the equation.

Wife: At least you can throw in some history or facts along the way. I need to get something out of this experience.

Husband: OK, I'll try to include some insights after each tasting.

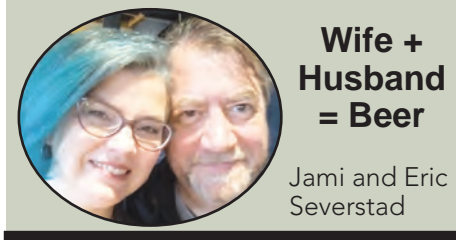
Pilsner #1: Vivo Pils from Eagle Park Brewing Co. in Muskego

Husband: I'm a big fan of Eagle Park, so I'm hopeful right out of the gate. The carbonation is light, seems like smaller bubbles, which makes it so drinkable.

Wife: It's well-balanced and has a soft mouthfeel. It still has that typical pilsner sourness and bitterness, especially in the finish. I couldn't finish an entire can of this; maybe half. So, better than I expected!

Husband (trying to sound smart): According to masterclass.com, there are four varieties of pilsner (Czech, Belgian, German, and American), but Vivo Pils says it's an "Italian Style Pilsner," which must be creative license, perhaps because it uses Italian Eraclea Malt.

Wife (actually being smart): Not so fast, Husband, ratebeer.com doesn't agree with your educational content. They say there's a German Pilsner, a Czech Pilsner (hoppy



**Wife +  
Husband  
= Beer**

Jami and Eric  
Severstad

and bitter), a New Zealand Pilsner (slightly maltier and less crisp), and an Italian Style Pilsner (dry-hopped with old-world German hops, which is true of Eagle Park's version).

Husband: You mean the internet lied?!

Wife: I'm so sorry you had to find out this way.

Pilsner #2: Pin Seeker Pilsner from Humble Forager Brewing Co. in Waunakee

Wife: This one is a whiter shade of pale (thank you, Procol Harum). Ugh, there's an off aroma here; but the smell is far worse than the taste. It's sweeter than #1.

Husband: Agreed. The brewery's tagline is "Think globally. Forage locally. Live humbly. Drink adventurously."

Wife: This is as far from adventuresome as a beer can get. I scanned the "learn more about this beer" QR code, but the website isn't helpful at all; just a 21-second clip of the wind drowning all sound out. C'mon, Humble Forager!

Husband: Pilsners aren't seasonal, obviously, but I would drink them in summer much more than other seasons. I could slam this on a hot day.

Wife: Well, it is like water. I wouldn't pay \$2.58 for a water. Summer beer? Revolution's Sun Crusher, and you can't change my mind.

Husband: A pilsner, also spelled pilsener or called pils (slang), originated in the Czech Republic in the city of Plzeň (Pilsen when anglicized) in the 19th century.

Wife: So, that's who I blame.

Pilsner #3: Champagne Velvet by Upland Brewing in Bloomington, Ind.

Husband: This is the clearest beer I've seen in a long, long time. It smells like Miller Lite with a hint of apple.

Wife: The sweetness is from corn malt along with the standard pilsen malt. Maybe that's where the "champagne" name comes from. But, it's not from France, so maybe call it "sparkling beer?"

Husband: I love taglines, and this one is "The Beer with the Million Dollar Flavor."

Wife: I don't find this to be that, exactly. This tastes like a "small beer" that women and children would drink in the Middle Ages or something.

Husband: As a woman, you're not thrilled. As a child, I'm not either! Standard pilsen malt is typically very light in color and tastes crisper than regular two-row malt. Like all lagers, pilsners are bottom-fermenting beers — called lagering — meaning the lager yeast works near the bottom of a fermenter.

Wife: This one is bottom of the barrel for me.

Pilsner #4: Cold as Rice by 1840 Brewing Co. in Milwaukee

Husband: At 8.3% ABV, this is about

twice as strong as an average pilsner. The label says it's a West Coast style double pilsner with China black rice, and it's dry hopped with Citra, Strata, Sultana, and Vista hops.

Wife: Soooo, a lot of things that push it away from pilsner. The hops make themselves apparent right away, and then the taste fades right off.

Husband: THAT is an easy-drinking beer at over 8%. Outstanding, and likely because it's not really a pilsner; it's so different.

Pilsner #5: Sandal Tan Pilsner by Ope! Brewing Co. in West Allis

Wife: The name screams "summer beer," so the timing is perfect. Unfortunately, there's not a lot going on with this one. Carbonation is minimal; it's flat.

Husband: It is unremarkable and totally forgettable. This brewery's other beers have been nice, and their selection is great at the brewery, but this one is so boring.

Wife: See? Boring! That's what pilsners are. Well, most pilsners, anyway. Now, who wants these extra cans of bitter water?

Full disclosure: Wife and Husband sampled others pilsners, but they were as lackluster as the discussion they inspired. So, they didn't make the cut here.

*Suggest story ideas you think Neenah beer-lovers need to hear about, and we'll cover it. It's a sacrifice we make for you, dear readers. Email: wife.husband.beer@gmail.com*

## ThedaCare adds focus to opioids use program

Neenah News

ThedaCare's 2020-2022 assessment reviews of its seven hospitals identified substance use as one of the top three health concerns in its service area, largely driven by prescription opioids, with 2021 the deadliest for drug overdoses in U.S. history.

Overdose deaths continued to increase in Winnebago County with 41 in 2021, according to the county's Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) team. Fentanyl was listed as the primary cause of death in 28 of those cases with the majority of people between ages 25 and 44.

The medical system and its partners launched the Emergency Department to Recovery Plus (ED2R+) program in December 2020 to help deal with health concerns driven by prescription opioids.

Since the launch, more than 200 people have been offered a recovery coach and the opportunity to begin the recovery journey through the program. Of those who engaged with the program, ThedaCare reports that 45% remained opioid-sober while connected to a recovery coach.

"Substance use disorders continue to increase throughout the country and in our region," said Paula Morgen, director of community health improvement at ThedaCare. "We knew substance abuse was a significant problem pre-COVID, and the pandemic added to the issue.

"According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 107,000 Americans died from opioid or stimulant-related overdoses between December 2020 and December 2021. That was a 15% increase over the previous year."

The ED2R+ program offers patients who come to an emergency department with an opioid or stimulant overdose

the opportunity to engage with recovery coaches. ThedaCare partners with Apricity, a recovery nonprofit organization providing treatment, employment, transitional living and educational opportunities.

ThedaCare and Apricity operate jointly under a grant that uses state opioid dollars funded through Wisconsin Voices for Recovery and supported by the state Department of Health Services. The grant covers the cost of peer support from a recovery coach for up to 18 months.

ThedaCare first introduced the ED2R+ program in Neenah, Berlin and Shawano with plans to add its remaining four hospitals over two to three years. That plan was quickly expanded in the summer of 2021 to include all seven medical centers, Behavioral Health and the inpatient behavioral health unit in Neenah.

The ED2R+ program focuses on patients suffering addiction overdose issues from the use of opioids, synthetic opioids (fentanyl), heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines and other stimulants.

ThedaCare completes a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for each of the seven hospitals every three years.

ThedaCare officials said the success of the ED2R+ and other programs is leading teams to look ahead to future growth.

"There is a push to expand the ED2R+ program to primary care clinics and include other substances, especially alcohol," Morgen said. "In a future state, we are looking at how we might expand into those areas.

"Our goal is to grow in a way that makes the most significant impact to improve the health and well-being of our communities — empowering people to live their unique, best life."

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## Depies case

FROM PAGE 1

at the Graffiti store at the Fox River Mall in Appleton.

Depies' friends heard the loud muffler of her vehicle as she entered the parking lot of her boyfriend's apartment complex. When Depies didn't enter the apartment, her friends looked for her. They found her locked vehicle in the parking lot with a plastic foam soda cup on top of it.

Wegner said that period of time is a blur to her. She remembers receiving a call in the early morning of Aug 20, notifying her that Depies was supposed to go to her boyfriend's house the night before and never showed up. Later that day, Depies' family and friends gathered to try to make sense of the situation.

"We just sat around and talked about where could she possibly be and what could have happened, and people were tossing out ideas, and eventually the police got involved," she said.

Depies' family and friends made thousands of missing-person posters that were distributed throughout the United States. They spoke with the media, including televised appearances where they pleaded for answers. They rented office space on American Drive and established the Laurie Depies Search Center. The volunteer-staffed location was home base for search efforts and included an 800 number for people to call with tips.

"It's something you never expect is going to happen, especially to you or to your family, so you just don't know how to process it," Wegner said. "So, I just kind of got carried along with the group and with the suggestions that they all made."

Over the past 30 years some leads have surfaced, but nothing has materialized.

"You think about it every time there's another missing person or there's some remains found someplace and you think, 'Well, that could be the answer,'" Wegner said.

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh associate professor of anthropology Jordan Karsten brought renewed interest to Depies' disappearance earlier this year when he featured her in a podcast series that he and communications specialist Matt Hiskes co-host called "Cold Case: Frozen Tundra."

The pair started the podcast last year to examine the disappearance of Neenah man, Starkie Swenson, who went missing in 1983 and was presumed murdered. Swenson's remains were found in High Cliff State Park in Sherwood just a few months after the final podcast episode aired. Karsten was called in to help exhume and identify the remains. The success led the pair to publish a second podcast focusing on Depies.

The podcast examines the possibility that Larry DeWayne Hall was involved. He is a suspected serial killer serving a life sentence in a North Carolina prison for kidnapping and killing 15-year-old Jessica Roach from Illinois. Roach was found raped and strangled in a cornfield about 20 miles away in Indiana. During a search of Hall's van, authorities found notes that contained the words "Fox River" and

"Lori."

Hall was a Civil War enthusiast who traveled to reenactments across the country. He is suspected in the disappearance and murder of dozens of victims, some of whom were found near Civil War memorials. He was attending a Civil War reenactment in Kaukauna about 12 miles away at the time Depies went missing.

In 2010, Hall confessed to kidnapping and killing Depies after following her from her job at the Fox River Mall and luring her to his vehicle. Media outlets reported at the time that Hall provided investigators with information about the case that was never released.

No physical evidence tied Hall to Depies and a search of the south-central Wisconsin location where he said he disposed of her body did not uncover anything. He has not been charged in Depies' disappearance. Hall is the subject of the Apple TV+ series "Black Bird" that began airing last month.

Convicted serial killer David Spanbauer also was considered a suspect in the disappearance. He was found guilty of killing 12-year-old Cora Jones of Weyauwega, 10-year-old Ronelle Eichstedt of Ripon and 21-year-old Trudi Jeschke of Appleton, two years after Depies' disappearance. Spanbauer died in prison in 2002.

A third suspect examined in the podcast is an acquaintance of Depies referred to by the pseudonym Tim. Tim also worked at the mall in Grand Chute and reportedly asked Depies on a date the same day she disappeared and was rebuffed. Acquaintances said Tim showed up late to a friend's apartment on the night Depies disappeared and was behaving erratically.

In 2016, the Town of Menasha incorporated into the Village of Fox Crossing. Fox Crossing community liaison officer Daniel Wiechman said that all of the original investigators and law enforcement officers involved in the case have either retired or left the agency years ago.

In 2012, the case was turned over to the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigations. The DOJ did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the status of the case.

Depies would be 50 years old today, about the same age her parents were when she disappeared. Mesko said it feels like an entire lifetime has passed without her.

"We all graduated college, got married, we had children," she said. "Some people are grandparents now that were friends with Laurie and we still don't know what happened to her or where she is."

She and Wegner both encourage anyone with information to come forward and share it with police so that Depies' family and friends can find closure.

Wegner said the saddest part is that Depies never had the chance to grow up, get married and have children. At 75 years old, she acknowledged that she may not live long enough to find out what happened to her daughter.

"I try not to let it weigh too heavily," she said. "I try to focus on the family I have around me and the grandchildren and just to enjoy life and be present and carry Laurie's love and happiness for life into the rest of the world."

## Be Courageous

FROM PAGE 1

explain and it's frustrating that it can't be accepted," she said. "They look at (substance use) as if it doesn't affect them, that they don't need to pay attention to it."

Knowing what she does now, Ashley encourages everybody – regardless of how they may be affected by substance use in the community – to find resources that will help those in recovery and broaden the public's understanding on the effects.

"I think there's a natural reaction to associate it with negative behaviors and choices," she said. "That all leads back to a lack of education and awareness. I feel like when I do talk about it with others, it makes them uncomfortable and I have to assume that's because they're just unaware."

Hannah Wilz started about a year ago as Breakwater's Drug-Free Community coordinator and initiated a conversation with some coalition members on the importance of talking about substance use with young people.

"When we grow up, we don't really talk about the impacts of substance use and it becomes a sheltered, isolated topic," Wilz said. "How can we start building that trust between adults and youths?"

She said while not everyone may be aware of how connected they are to the effects of substance use, starting the conversation at an early age with youths can help create healthy coping mechanisms and allow them to find the right resources and people with whom they trust.

"Substance use has always been seen as an individualized problem. Some people feel shame or isolation in that way," Wilz said. "It's hard for someone to come out and say they've been struggling."

## About the series

Through a partnership between the Neenah News and Breakwater, this six-part series aims to help reduce the reluctance of having difficult conversations surrounding alcohol and substance use.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/bdf2bp8u](http://tinyurl.com/bdf2bp8u)

Ashley also emphasized that even if a source of trust is found, don't stop there.

"There is such a large community of people that are willing to talk about this," she said. "They're willing to listen and be an ear while you're trying to navigate this very difficult situation you're in. If you don't find it right away, keep reaching out."

"We cannot wait until it affects us to the point of what I've had to go through. It's unfortunate that it took the biggest loss of my life to meet these people and have these conversations. I think that sometimes what's frustrating to family members and friends who have lost someone to substance use is that we feel like we're the only ones who care."

Ashley talks to her 13-year-old son about substance use only when the opportunity arises from TV shows or in passing.

But just because this series is over, doesn't mean these conversations should stop.

"I think we have a long way to go before people like myself and others can feel comfortable having these conversations and not having that thought in the back of your mind," Ashley said. "We need to put more effort behind bringing people together who maybe this hasn't affected their life yet, or it isn't something they think about. We need more people to be part of this support."

*If someone has a story they'd like to share anonymously, they can reach out to [info@breakwaterwi.org](mailto:info@breakwaterwi.org) for next steps.*

## CHARLOTTE PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

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## Pulse Young Professionals director named

The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce announced that Jodie Federwitz has been named director of Pulse Young Professionals Network.

Federwitz will be responsible for the creation and implementation of all Pulse and Calumet Connect programming. Pulse Young Professionals Network focuses on the attraction, retention and en-

agement of young talent in the Fox Cities by providing a venue to cultivate professional relationships.

Before joining the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, Federwitz was a teacher at Wrightstown High School and also taught at Boscobel High School. She holds a bachelor of science degree from Viterbo University.

# Neenah girls, boys look to repeat state trips

By Dustin Riese  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Coming off a state appearance in 2021, the Neenah girls cross country program is eager to get out and not only duplicate that performance, but improve on their finish a season ago.

“We haven’t met as a team yet,” head coach Michael Heidke said. “I would imagine the team would put returning to the state cross country meet and possibly improve on our eighth place finish last year as a team goal.”

The Rockets are in a great position to return to state as six of the seven state runners return to the Rockets roster.

Among that group are three runners that finished in the top 10 at the conference meet a year ago to earn first-team all-Fox Valley Association honors in senior Lauren Tears, sophomore Mazie Olkowski and junior Rachel Dietrich, while junior Lexi Domer and sophomore Izabel Schmidt earned honorable mention honors.

Sophomore Brooke Veith will also be a part of group after running at the state meet last year.

While the talent and experience is there for another great season, Heidke knows that it will take a lot more than just talent and experience to achieve the goals they want.

“As with most teams, staying healthy is of utmost importance to the success of our team,” Heidke said. “Our FVA conference has some of the strongest girls’ cross coun-

try teams in the state.”

Neenah, which last won the girls FVA title in 2013, was one of four FVA teams to compete at the state meet last year, finishing two spots behind Kaukauna and one place ahead of Appleton North. Kimberly also qualified as a team and finished 12th.



Heidke



Morgen

The boys also reached the state meet last year, while also claiming the FVA title, their sixth league crown in the last 11 seasons.

Although the Rockets will have to replace three runners from the team that qualified for state – including individual champion Austin Henderson – the team returns the nucleus from that group to make another run at making it to Wisconsin Rapids.

“The first and most important goal for us is to establish a team centric culture that empowers all of our athletes to excel,” head coach John Morgen said. “Committing yourself to some lofty goal is much easier when you have teammates committed to helping you get there. We hope to be competitive in the conference as we will do our best to win our third FVA title in a row and our JV team will try to win its 28th conference title in 32 years.”

Leading this year’s squad for the Rockets will be senior Jack Dorner, who earned first-team all-conference honors by placing

sixth at last year’s FVA meet.

Fellow seniors Ian Cowell and Drew Gentile were second-team all-FVA a year ago, while senior Carson Timm also ran on the state team after winning the junior varsity individual title.

Morgen said that Jaden Leal, Wyatt Armock, Brady Klawikowski, CJ Fredrikson, Carson Verhagen and Nolan Smith will be among those competing for the final varsity spots.

“This team’s depth and overall leadership should help them in their quest to continue to improve over the course of the season,” he said. “Leadership and overall depth are key attributes that should help bring this team success in 2022. If we can stay healthy as a squad and run up to our potential, then we have a chance to win a conference title and qualify as a team for our 38th state meet.”

## Zephyrs hope experience leads to success in 2022

St. Mary Catholic had a roster full of freshmen and sophomores a year ago, which means that head coach Chad McCartney brings an experienced bunch for the 2022 season.

Mix that experience with the talent-level the Zephyrs have and both the boys and girls teams should be contenders in the deep Big East Conference.

“We always look to be in the top three in the conference and attempt to qualify the team for state,” McCartney said. “Those are big goals, but potentially within reach.”

Both the boys and the girls will be led by a runner who earned state meet experience. Sophomore Lauren Ripley finished 15th

at the state meet, while junior AJ Groppe placed 44th and the two will be counted on as leaders for this year’s squads.

Six of the seven girls that competed at the sectional meet last year are expected to return this season for the Zephyrs.

Sophomore Maria Marti was the Zephyrs No. 2 runner last season, while juniors Haley Gustafson and Norah Lee and sophomores Emily Vogel and Katherine Schoeni also ran with the varsity squad at sectionals.

St. Mary Catholic’s group should also get a boost from Addison Dinka, who was a state track meet qualifier at 3,200 meters in the spring.

Just like the girls, the boys have six of their seven runners returning from the sectional meet a year ago.

Along with Groppe, juniors Ben Schoeni, Noah Valentine, Ashton Post and Ian Albino as well as senior Kail Koeper are expected to return to give the Zephyrs a very experienced group.

McCartney knows the conference will be a challenging task in itself, but it is a challenge within reach as long as the kids come to work every day.

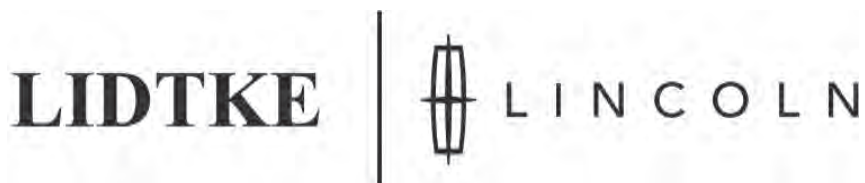
“Our conference is typically very tough for a Division 3 conference,” McCartney said. “It’s very common to have 2-3 teams ranked in the top 10 in the state. A conference title will be a challenge, but not out of reach. We’ll need the entire team to buy into the program and every runner to have a good race. We won’t be able to rely on just two or three runners carrying the team. This will be the same case for state, with the back half of our varsity team having a bigger impact on the results than our top runners.”



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# Rockets ready to make run in rugged FVA

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

With four starters returning to the roster and a strong senior group overall, the Neenah girls volleyball team is once again looking to contend for a top finish in the talent-rich Fox Valley Association.

The Rockets, who last won an FVA title in 2015, finished sixth in the conference a year ago but head coach Emily Bennett believes this crew of Rockets is ready to challenge the best the league has to offer.

"Any team in the conference could be in the top three and I think we definitely have a shot to be in that top three,"

## Girls volleyball PREVIEW

Bennett said. "It's going to be a great season with a lot of great volleyball."

Bennett said she plans to run a 6-2 formation with senior Macey Buksyk and junior Claudia Merizon sharing the setting duties.

Buksyk was a starter on the varsity squad last season until a foot injury cut her year short, while Merizon moves up from the junior varsity level.

"Our setters look to be strong," Bennett said. "Macey played last year but missed the second half of the season. That (experience) and just that drive she has from watching her team play last year and knowing now she gets to play is huge for her."

Another strength for the Rockets will be at the middle hitter position where Carly Stamm and Marissa Korso return after starting roles a year ago.

"Carly is a real bouncy kid with a really

hard swing," Bennett said. "Marissa has good control and is a really good blocker, too. She can play outside or middle, depending on what we need."

Although the middles may be the strength of the Rockets' attack, Bennett said a key for the squad this season will be coming at opponents in an array of ways.



Bennett

"Another focus for us will be to have a variety in our offense because we have so many hitters that we can get the ball to," Bennett said. "Being unpredictable in our offense is something we want to achieve this year."

As talented as the year's team is, Bennett may be more excited about what this year's team brings to the court that can be measured in kills, sets or digs.

"We have a lot of volleyball knowledge but that competitive fire is something they have that I have not seen in this team in a while," Bennett said. "That's real exciting to see."

A talented team with a competitive fire would almost certainly be a shoo-in to win a conference title and in most leagues that would be the case.

But the FVA isn't like most leagues. From top to bottom, it is one of the toughest conferences in Wisconsin. Bennett likes the challenge of the FVA slate as well as the rigorous tournament schedule she puts her team through.

"We are also in some of the toughest

tournaments in the state and when you go to those, with the conference we play in, we are ready," Bennett said. "There are no nights off. You have to bring your A game because you can lose to any team."

No matter what level of success the Rockets experience on the court this season, Bennett wants to make sure that her team is a beacon of sportsmanship.

"We are going to have a heavy focus on being kind and respectful to officials this year," Bennett said. "It's something we've always tried to do but really give it attention this year because the WIAA is down with officials."

## New faces fill up Zephyrs' roster

There are teams that are considered senior-laden and then there is the St. Mary Catholic 2021 squad, which took a senior-led roster to the extreme.

The Zephyrs had a total of 12 seniors on the roster a year ago, all of whom are obviously gone entering this season, leaving head coach Mike Mauritz and his staff to start this season from scratch.

"We've got candidates at all of the positions, it's just sorting through the combinations to see what works," Mauritz said. "(The inexperience) limits us at least initially."

But Mauritz was quick to point out that the season is a process and although the young Zephyr lineup may be learning at the start, it will be a different group when the tournaments begin.

"Generally, the kids will go toward what they are comfortable with so we

have to work in practice to get them out of their comfort zone and challenge them to grow," Mauritz said. "We want to improve. We don't want to take what they are doing today and be playing that way at the end of the season."

The Zephyrs do have some veterans to rely on, too, as the roster isn't totally new.

Junior Lauren Fischer enters her third year on the varsity squad and will be a leader for the Zephyrs. She was one of the top hitters on last year's team as well as finishing among the team leaders in digs while earning honorable mention all-Big East Conference honors.

Fellow junior Audrey Norville also saw varsity action at the outside hitter slot and the duo gives the Zephyrs a base to build on.

"We are going to rely on those two, especially early on," Mauritz said. "We will need them to carry the load until everybody gets more comfortable and more experienced."

Even with the turnover on the roster, St. Mary Catholic looks to be a contender in the Big East Red Conference.

Mauritz said that Manitowoc Lutheran is a perennial force in the league, with the Zephyrs and Hilbert right there as well. But, he quickly added, that doesn't mean that outside of those two opponents the rest of the conference is easy.

"It's always competitive. Manty Lutheran always has a solid group but the rest of it will be competitive," Mauritz said. "Even with the teams that win most of their matches, it's always a competitive match. There's not a lot of separation between the top and bottom."

# Volleyball: Varsity

## Girls Varsity Fall 2022 Schedule

<b>ST. MARY CATHOLIC</b>		<b>NEENAH</b>	
Saturday, Aug 20, 2022	9:00AM Omro, Shiocton	Saturday, Aug 20, 2022	8:30AM Green Bay Southwest, Kaukauna, Xavier High School
Wednesday, Aug 24, 2022	5:00PM Pacelli Catholic, Random Lake, West Bend East	Tuesday, Aug 23, 2022	9:00AM Away vs. Appleton East, Appleton North, Appleton West, Fond du Lac, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Oshkosh North, Oshkosh West
Saturday, Aug 27, 2022	9:00AM Away vs. Omro, New Holstein, Random Lake, Wautoma, Westfield, Wild Rose	Friday, Aug 26, 2022	12:00PM Homestead High School
Thursday, Sep 1, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Manitowoc Lutheran	Saturday, Aug 27, 2022	9:00AM Homestead High School
Thursday, Sep 8, 2022	7:00PM Kohler	Thursday, Sep 1, 2022	7:00PM Fond du Lac
Thursday, Sep 15, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Hilbert	Thursday, Sep 8, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Appleton West
Saturday, Sep 17, 2022	9:00AM Away vs. Clintonville Truckers, Valders, Abbotstord, Gillett, Ripon, Shawano Community, Southern Door	Saturday, Sep 10, 2022	8:30AM Brookfield Central High School
Tuesday, Sep 20, 2022	7:00PM Reedsville	Tuesday, Sep 13, 2022	7:00PM Oshkosh West
Thursday, Sep 22, 2022	7:00PM Elkhart Lake Glenbeulah	Thursday, Sep 15, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Appleton North
Thursday, Sep 29, 2022	7:00PM Iola-Scandinavia	Friday, Sep 16, 2022	4:00PM Milwaukee Sting Center
Saturday, Oct 1, 2022	9:00AM Away vs. Wrightstown, Freedom, Hilbert, Manitowoc Lutheran, Omro, Plymouth, Sheboygan South, Sturgeon Bay, Two Rivers, Winneconne, Houghton	Saturday, Sep 17, 2022	8:00AM Milwaukee Sting Center
Tuesday, Oct 4, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Mishicot	Thursday, Sep 22, 2022	7:00PM Appleton East
Thursday, Oct 6, 2022	7:00PM Laona-Wabeno	Friday, Sep 23, 2022	4:00PM West Bend East High School
Saturday, Oct 8, 2022	8:00AM Away vs. TBA, Cedar Grove-Belgium, Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah, Hilbert, Howards Grove, Kohler, Manitowoc Lutheran, Mishicot, Oostburg, Ozaukee, Random Lake, Reedsville, Sheboygan Area Lutheran, Sheboygan Christian	Saturday, Sep 24, 2022	9:00AM West Bend East High School
Tuesday, Oct 11, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Lourdes Academy	Thursday, Sep 29, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Hortonville
Thursday, Oct 13, 2022	7:00PM Weyauwega-Fremont	Saturday, Oct 1, 2022	9:00AM Neenah High School, 155 - Fieldhouse
Tuesday, Oct 18, 2022	7:00PM TBA	Monday, Oct 3, 2022	7:00PM Kimberly
		Thursday, Oct 6, 2022	7:00PM Away vs. Oshkosh North
		Thursday, Oct 13, 2022	7:00PM Kaukauna
		Thursday, Oct 20, 2022	TBD Away vs. TBA, TBA
		Saturday, Oct 22, 2022	TBD Away vs. TBA, TBA
		Thursday, Oct 27, 2022	TBD Away vs. TBA, TBA
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# Jenkins provides two-way talent for Rockets

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

Jase Jenkins didn't know what to expect. The Neenah High School senior had played the running back position from the time he started in football. But after not playing the spot regularly as a sophomore to focus on defense as an outside linebacker, the time to get back to carrying the ball was upon him.

"Junior year, I was a little bit nervous about doing it because I didn't know how it would be," Jenkins said following a practice earlier this week. "I had never been a running back on varsity, plus I'm smaller than a lot of running backs so I wasn't sure."

It didn't take long to realize he had nothing to worry about.

"At the scrimmage. That's when I realized that I could really do this," Jenkins said. "It worked out pretty well."

Jenkins finished the season as the third-leading rusher in the Fox Valley Association totaling 1,233 yards and eight touchdowns, while averaging nearly six yards per carry. He was one of only three juniors named to the all-Fox Valley Association first-team offense.

He didn't slack on his defensive duties either. Jenkins finished third on the team in tackles and was second in tackles-for-loss, while also registering a sack, a fumble recovery and an interception and was a second team all-FVA selection at outside linebacker.

Jenkins was one of only four players in the league to be recognized on the top two teams on both offense and defense.

And for the record, Jenkins definitely enjoys playing on both sides of the ball. He said that playing running back helps him as a linebacker and vice versa.

"I know where guys are lining up at those positions, what their responsibilities are and where they are trying to go. It definitely helps," Jenkins said. "Honestly, there's nothing better than getting a huge



Neenah News

Jase Jenkins was a first-team all-FVA running back and a second-team all-FVA linebacker last season for the Neenah football team.

hit but a long run is pretty fun, too. I can't decide between the two."

As good as Jenkins' junior year was, he's expecting even better results this season.

Jenkins said he has worked on changing his footwork leading up to this season and

believes he will benefit from a tweaked running game.

"Just pick up where we left off last year, but I think we will be even better in the running game," Jenkins said. "My footwork has changed a little bit and I think

## Senior Spotlight

it's going to be better to be honest."

With his production last year, Jenkins felt he earned the respect of opposing defenses and realizes he will be one of the focal points of opponents each week. Yet, he doesn't think that's going to slow the Rockets down.

He's confident in his teammates to be able to take advantage of teams focusing too much on him, while also knowing that he's going to be attacking teams from all angles.

"I'm going to play all over the place," Jenkins said as he brandished a pretty wide smile. "Jet sweeps, stuff like that, in the passing game; I'll be included in a lot of stuff. I love it. I love it."

No matter how it gets there, once the ball is in his hands, Jenkins can utilize what he feels is his biggest strength as a runner – his vision.

"I think (my success) is a combination of everything, but I feel like I can read the blocks really well," said Jenkins, who already has a scholarship offer from Northern Michigan but is waiting to make a decision for next season. "If you read the blocks well, it's hard for them to tackle you."

A big season from Jenkins will likely translate into success for the Rockets as a whole and that's the senior's main focus as the season kicks off.

Perennial powerhouses Kimberly and Appleton North are likely to be favorites to win the FVA title, but Jenkins sees Neenah right there as well. But he knows, in the talent-rich FVA, the Rockets will have to be ready to play every week if they hope to contend.

"No matter what week it is, there is always competition. You have to earn every win," Jenkins said of playing in the FVA. "Right now, we have a good chance to be with them, we just have to stay healthy. Keep our head down and keep pushing. Every week is a challenge."

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# Neenah wrestlers shine at national tournament

Two members of the Neenah High School wrestling program enjoyed successful runs at the USA Wrestling National 16U and Junior National Championships held in Fargo, N.D., in late July.

Freshman Declan Koch and sophomore Jacob Herm each earned all-American honors in the Greco Roman Tournaments at the annual event, which is the largest amateur wrestling tournament in the U.S.



Herm

Koch finished 6-1 and took second place in the 16U 113-pound weight class. Four of the wins at the tournament came by technical superiority – having at least an 8-point lead, including his semifinal victory of California’s Edwin Sierra.

In the title match, Koch led much of the match but was overtaken in the final 10 seconds and lost to Jaden Raney of Kentucky. Raney also won the USA Wrestling Freestyle National Championship. Koch also competed in the freestyle



Submitted photo

Declan Koch (top) of Neenah earned all-American honors and was the runner-up in the 16U 113-pound division at the Greco-Roman national tournament at Fargo, N.D.

portion of the event and finished with a 4-2 record, but fell short of all-American status.

Herm, who was a WIAA state tournament qualifier as a freshman, finished 5-3 and placed eighth to earn all-American honors in the 16U 120-pound weight class of the Greco-Roman Tournament. One of the biggest wins for Herm came in the quarterfinal round when he pinned Tennessee’s Cooper Hilton, one of the highest ranked wrestlers in the field, while he also scored a 13-1 win over Richie Clemente of

Louisiana to earn all-American status.

Herm finished 2-2 in the freestyle tournament.

The duo joins Tim McCarthy, Sam Engelland and Beau Yineman as the only Neenah high school wrestlers to earn all-American status at the prestigious event.

# Prep roundup

## GOLF

### Anderson, Quella lead Rockets to win in opener

The Neenah High School girls golf team opened their season with a close victory over Appleton North at Ridgeway Country Club on Tuesday.

The Rockets finished with a score of 176, which was three shots better than the Lightning.

Dawson Anderson led Neenah with a round of 40, while Natalie Quella added a 43 and Aubrey Oitzinger added a 44.

Appleton North’s AJ Powell was medalist with a 38.

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