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Outdoor drinking space established

Downtown area will have special designation

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Locals still can't purchase beer or liquor at gas stations, but they'll now be able to openly consume alcohol during approved events after the Neenah Common Council passed an ordinance amendment identifying the downtown as a temporary designated outdoor refreshment area (TDORA).

The TDORA will commence at 210 Main St. near Gord's Pub, continuing along West Wisconsin Avenue and ending at Copperstill Bourbon Bar at 211 E. Wisconsin.

The TDORA will also start at Lion's Tail Brewing Co. at 116 S. Commercial St. and conclude at the intersection of N. Commercial Street and Wisconsin Avenue.

During approved events, attendees can purchase alcohol from any bar or restaurant in downtown Neenah and carry and consume drinks in public streets, sidewalks and parking lots in the TDORA,

with the streets closed to traffic and barricaded during events.

Historically, Neenah keeps a tight lid on the sale and use of alcohol compared to neighboring communities. Aside from prohibiting alcohol sales at gas stations, the city also prohibits alcohol consumption in parks, public property, streets, alleys, sidewalks or parking lots. Drive-up and walk-up alcohol sales are also banned.

The ordinance change to establish TDORA comes as Future Neenah re-

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Man charged after trying to help ill ferret
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UW Oshkosh Today

Skylar is shown with Winnebago County patrol deputy Bob Zill (left) and UW Oshkosh Police Chief Chris Tarmann.

County K9 busy with new duties

Skylar had been with UW Oshkosh for four years

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

An explosives detection dog that the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office recently obtained from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh has been used five times countywide in the past three months, Sheriff John Matz told the County Board's Judiciary and Public Safety Committee last week.

K9 Skylar is a 5-year-old black Labrador retriever and the only explosives detection dog in Winnebago County. The sheriff's office obtained Skylar from UWO late last year after her handler left law enforcement.

Matz said Skylar was used in March during a homicide investigation in the Town of Wolf River to locate a firearm and ammunition. In that case, Erik Metzger, 26, is accused of killing his parents, Union Star Dairy owners David and Jan Metzger.

Skylar has also been assisting the

Neenah, Appleton and Oshkosh police departments and was recently used at Oshkosh Arena and the UWO graduation ceremony.

"There was a suspicious bag left at the graduation ceremony with 4,000 people, so we were able to deem it safe," Matz said.

A canine's sense of smell is considered 40 times greater than a human's. Explosives detection dogs are trained through a process called scent work.

SEE **Skylar** ON PAGE 7

Three students chosen as Badger Girls representatives

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Three local students have been chosen to represent Neenah at the American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh next week.

The Neenah Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 33 is sponsoring Neenah High School students Lauren Contreres and Sienna LaTonzia and St. Mary Central High School student Haley Gustafson. The junior girls will stay at Gruenhagen Conference Center during the weeklong event.

Badger Girls State is an annual con-

ference designed to develop leadership skills and help train future stateswomen in the science of government. Started in 1941 with 138 participants, the program has since grown to include more than 800 students from across the state.

Char Kiesling has been the Badger Girls State chairman of the Neenah-Menasha unit for more than 20 years and spent seven years attending the conference as the



Contreres



Gustafson



LaTonzia

sponsors five students, but attendance is down.

"This year, there just doesn't seem to be enough interest," Kiesling said. "The young girls nowadays are so involved; they have jobs, they have camps, they have sports going on all summer, it's really hard to devote a whole week going here."

The Legion gives each student a \$400 scholarship to cover the cost of the conference. Local contributors to the program include Whirlwind Fencing & Hole Drilling, Neenah Rotary Club, Larsen/Win-

SEE **Badger State** ON PAGE 8

head nurse. Each year she contacts school counselors to recruit junior girls interested in civics and government, who volunteer to attend. The local legion typically

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Kitchen fires cause injuries, damage

Neenah News

A Neenah man suffered severe burns as a result of a cooking oil fire last Friday evening at his residence on Hunt Avenue, the first of three kitchen fires that Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue responded to within four days.

Fire officials said they responded to the 8:30 p.m. report of a house fire at 1064 Hunt Ave. and upon arriving on the scene confronted black smoke from the rear of the residence.

Additional fire department response was called in as firefighters found the man still in the residence. He was treated and transported by Gold Cross Ambulance to a local hospital as fire crews continued to extinguish the blaze.

The man told authorities he was attempting to put out a stove fire and spilled burning oil on himself, which caused burns to more than 75% of his body. He was later transferred to a burn treatment facility in Milwaukee.

The fire was contained to the stove area

in the kitchen and where the resident had attempted to take the cooking receptacle outside.

Another residential fire that also started in the kitchen early Saturday in Neenah caused an estimated \$180,000 in damages.

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue responded to the house fire at 2423 Maple Grove Drive that was called in at 12:15 a.m. and were able to quickly extinguish it while confirming there were no occupants in the home that was filled with high heat and smoke.

There was significant smoke damage throughout the residence, which had working smoke detectors but not a fire

sprinkler.

Fire officials said it appears to be accidental while it is under investigation.

A third kitchen fire Monday in Menasha injured a man who was burned while attempting to remove a burning pan and suffered burns on his hands, arms and feet, along with a head laceration. The residence at 855 Milwaukee St. did not sustain any structure damage and officials said the fire appeared to be accidental.

Residents were reminded by firefighters to stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food, and keep anything that can catch fire away from stove-tops.

City water quality report available

Neenah News

The Neenah Water Utility's water quality report for 2022 has been made available by the city at www.neenahwi.gov/WaterQualityReport.

The report, which meets Federal Safe Drinking Water Act requirements, includes information on the quality of the public water, identification of contaminants in the water, a discussion of the possible sources and other related information.

The Neenah Water Treatment Plant is supplied by surface water from Lake Winnebago with an emergency intake in the Fox River near Riverside Park.

The sources of drinking water, both tap water and bottled water, include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells.

The U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA) and state Department of Natural Resources require this annual Consumer Confidence Report, also known as the Water Quality Report, in which Neenah met state and federal standards.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which provide the same protection for public health.

Those without direct access to the Internet can call 920-886-6180 and a printed copy will be mailed. Those with question on the report can call 920-886-6196.

To obtain a summary of the source water assessment, contact Gary Gorges at 920-886-6196.

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Share road with motorcycles as summer arrives

As Wisconsin's summer weather settles in, motorcycle season is in full gear, which means drivers will be sharing the road with smaller vehicles through fall. The Wisconsin State Patrol's June Law of the Month reminds vehicle drivers and motorcyclists to share the road to keep all travelers safe.

There are roughly 2,000 motorcycle crashes every year in Wisconsin, involving hundreds of injuries and dozens of fatalities.

"When we share the road, we also share the responsibility to make every trip as safe as possible for all road users," State Patrol superintendent Tim Carnahan said. "Vehicle drivers and motorcyclists need to be aware of each other on the roads and look twice before changing lanes or making turns."

Motorcyclists are 27 times more likely to die in a crash than other motorists, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Drivers are encouraged to look twice for motorcycles with many crashes occurring when drivers pull out from a stop sign, turn left or change lanes; and keep a safe following distance from a motorcycle as they have a shorter stopping distance.

Motorcyclists need to do their part to be visible and follow the same rules of the road as other vehicles. Protective, high-visibility clothing and safety gear is recommended and helmets are strongly encouraged to prevent serious injury in a crash. Helmets are required by state law for riders under 18.

A motorcycle license is required to ride in Wisconsin.

City will re-examine its protest petition process

Rezoning challenges prompt new review

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The Neenah Common Council approved a directive last week authorizing the city attorney and community development director to examine the city's protest petition ordinance that was used for the first time in more than a decade to try to prevent the Shattuck Middle School site from being rezoned.

Late last year, council president Todd Stevenson's brother, Judd, led a group of residents opposed to allowing a developer to turn the vacant Shattuck Middle School into moderate-income apartments and construct single-family homes at the site. Judd submitted a petition against the rezoning in December, with 846 signatures.

Under current ordinance, a rezoning requires a supermajority vote of three-fourths of council members if at least 20% of the owners of the properties in the vicinity of the rezoning submit signatures in a protest petition.

To pass the council after the protest petition was submitted, the Shattuck rezoning needed seven of the nine council members to vote in favor of it. Five council members voted against the rezoning and four voted in support of it. The failed rezoning resulted in the developer backing out of the sale.

Several residents who opposed the Shattuck rezoning are now speaking in favor of it to allow a different developer to demolish the Shattuck building and construct 98 duplexes, single-family and townhomes.

Wisconsin Act 243 repealed the protest petition process at the state level in 2017 but allowed municipalities to create an

ordinance outlining a similar process. Several municipalities have made changes to their ordinances to remove the protest petition provision in recent years.

Other than the Shattuck petition, the last time a protest petition was submitted in Neenah was in 2010 for the rezoning of what is now the Western Avenue Townhomes.

The council directive discussed at last week's meeting was to examine the protest petition ordinance and come up with a recommendation. It follows a measure in March for the city's Plan Commission to consider eliminating residents' ability to submit protest petitions, which was removed from the agenda several days later.

Judd spoke about the council directive at the meeting, questioning what the process is for evaluating the protest petition.

"Is there going to be a public meeting where, perhaps, the public can provide some alternative ideas for this ordinance change?" he said. "I know that Oshkosh and Appleton have changed this ordinance but I know there are other things going on in this that may not be presented to you."

Judd was joined by Alexander Collins, who has been outspoken against preserving the historic 95-year-old Shattuck building, urging officials to raze the site. Collins told the council not to repeal the protest petition ordinance, but to clean up the wording, adding that two initial protest petitions submitted by residents were rejected by the city with no explanation.

"Obviously this sounds very similar to the outright repeal that had been placed

on the Plan Commission agenda a few months ago but subsequently withdrawn," he said. "However, when I inquired of this directive I was told that repeal is not the only possibility. Cleaning up the verbiage would and should be looked at as part of the directive as well. And I hope that would be the case because, yes, the language could be simplified."

Alderman Stevenson repeatedly questioned the timeliness and process of the council directive.

"I don't know that I would want to support putting that kind of pressure on staff," he said. "I'm all for doing the work but why do we have to have it by the end of June?"

Mayor Jane Lang responded that some of the work examining the protest petition was completed in advance of the March Plan Commission meeting.

Stevenson said he had concerns related to the staff workload.

"The fact that we have a pending rezoning request that has once been denied just doesn't give the presence of total transparency," he said.

Community development director Chris Haese said there is no pending rezoning request. The Neenah Joint School District has been in negotiations with Mequon-based Lakeside Development regarding a potential sale of the Shattuck site, which would require rezoning, but no offer has been accepted.

The council voted 6-2 to approve the protest petition council directive, with Stevenson and Kathie Boyette voting against. Haese and city attorney David Rashid are expected to present their findings and recommendations on the ordinance by the end of the month.



Stevenson

TDORA

FROM PAGE 1

questioned to be able to allow event attendees to have open alcohol on the sidewalk and street in the closed off events sections of Wisconsin Avenue during its Summer Kick Off Concert, held earlier this week, and its Boogie Downtown event Aug. 23.

The ability to consume open intoxicants in TDORA will only be allowed during specific events that must obtain a special event permit. Each establishment serving alcohol in TDORA must obtain a temporary extension of their licensed premises.

"The TDORA was designed to promote downtown businesses during the summer event season," according to a memo.

The memo states that establishing a TDORA gives each downtown business the equal opportunity to participate and capitalize on downtown events and aides in enforcement of alcohol laws "that are currently not being imposed due to the ratio of violations and staffing."

At last week's Common Council meeting, Alderman Kathie Boyette said allowing open consumption of alcohol in downtown Neenah during events may be confusing, when residents cannot purchase it at gas stations.

"We have such an issue with allowing convenience stores to sell alcohol and gasoline but we don't have an issue with people walking and crossing the streets with open intoxicants," she said. "Even if it is for a two-hour event, I just think we need to be a little more diligent with how we present what we expect from the public when it comes to alcohol. I feel like this has us at yes and no. Yes for this and no for that; but it's really hard for people to wrap

their head around what Neenah wants."

Alderman Cari Lendrum said the Summer Kick Off Concert is a highly controlled event.

"The cups are distinctive; they have a sticker and a QR code that people will be able to access the mapped area and the rules, so this is very controlled; this is not a free-for-all," she said.

Future Neenah assistant executive director Sara Hanneman told the Public Safety Committee last month that all drinks sold and taken out of the establishments will have a TDORA identifying sticker to show they were bought at a licensed establishment, were served by a licensed bartender and all proper measures were taken to verify ID. Drinks will only be served in a can or plastic cup and no glass or carry-ins are allowed.

Assistant Police Chief Jeffrey Bernice told the committee that the Neenah Police Department supports the initiative.

Alderman Dan Steiner said he's in favor of establishing TDORA because it gives Neenah the opportunity to test it out and see how it works.

"Nationwide, there are hundreds, maybe even thousands, of communities that hold events like this and have a similar type of setup without issue," he said.

Alderman John Skeyrms said he spoke with a bar owner in Oshkosh about their feelings regarding open alcohol consumption.

"If this was forever, always and whenever, no, I don't want to do that," he said. "But if it is for an event that is defined from here to here, I think I'm okay with that and I think the police chief is OK with that. It's easier to manage, keep track of, control, so I will be voting in favor of it."

The council voted 7-1 to approve TDORA, with Boyette voting against.



NEENAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Neenah Historical Society photo

Father's Day

Pictured is Lawrence Malouf and his twin daughters Jeanne and Janice in about 1946. Malouf was a member of the Neenah Police Department for more than 30 years and retired as chief in 1973.



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Neenah graduate moves on to enduring special mission

Honduras orphanage becomes summer focus

By Robert Barthell
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

When Neenah High School Principal Brian Wunderlich introduced Noah Harmon as one of two commencement speakers for the class of 2023 graduation ceremony, he made a point of emphasizing the uniqueness of his plans for the immediate future.

Known among the student body as a star volleyball player who made the Fox Valley Association All-Conference first team this year, Harmon is taking an unconventional route – a gap year in which he will be serving at an orphanage more than 2,000 miles away.

His mother, Loriann, is a geometry teacher who often yearned for something to do during the summer that was beneficial to society. In 2008, after trying many other options, she decided to travel to Guaimaca, Honduras, to serve as a volunteer.

Naturally, Harmon joined in.

“At 10 years old, we are given the option of going to Disney World or Honduras. At age 11, we go to Honduras no matter what,” he said.

Since then, Harmon has spent every summer vacation at that orphanage. During the day, the kids he helps are in school, which allows him to do apprentice work with a local electrician. But when the kids get out of school, he has the chance to do many things with them.

“When I’m with the kids I could be doing anything ranging from work, soccer and movies,” he said. “I’ve shared many special memories with the kids like playing on trampolines and having water balloon battles together. When I’m with the kids my main goal is to teach them responsibility and respect.”

Harmon cites a deep personal connection to the orphanage in his decision to embark on this journey; he had not con-



Harmon

sidered taking a gap year until an emotional episode at the end of his service last summer.

“The day before we had to leave, I went to a devotion session in the gymnasium. They were singing songs that I’d heard throughout my seven years of going down there,” he said. “It was very nostalgic and by the end of the devotion, I was crying, and when the kids that were singing were released from their seats, every single one of them circled around me to give me a hug. Knowing that it would be my last year down there I had to make a change.”

By choosing this path, however, Harmon also faces challenges. The journey begins with a month of adjustment and familiarity, as his family accompanies him as they usually do. But after that first month, his family returns to the United States, leaving Harmon at the orphanage for a period of seven months. Thankfully, he considers the staff and children there a close substitute for family.

“I am very close to many people down there and I’m sure they will give me their hospitality,” he noted.

Furthermore, he said that by leaving for Honduras, he will be leaving his girlfriend and others behind. He fears that the eight months of separation will cause some of those relationships to fall apart. But that alone does not stop Harmon from taking the initiative.

“The main objective is to leave the orphanage in a better state than when I came. But another thing is I want to use this opportunity to better myself and my personality.”

Additionally, Harmon notes the impact he has left on his younger peers as another reason to carry on.

“I see many of my friends over and over every year. However, after they finish schooling in the orphanage, they are given a scholarship to the university in the capital city of Tegucigalpa,” he said. “The kids that I impact love to see me and take after me in many ways. But when I’m not with them, they act like the other elders around them. So really, their entire personalities depend on the influences they receive.”

“Helping others find their happiness ultimately helps you find your own.”

St. Mary Catholic student earns Kohl scholarship

Catherine Genke, a senior at St. Mary Catholic High School, was awarded a \$10,000 Herb Kohl Student Excellence Scholarship, one of 190 students across Wisconsin selected.

The scholarship is based on leadership, citizenship, and school and community involvement,



Genke

and can be used toward tuition, housing and books.

“Catherine Genke is a student that tries her very best in every learning opportunity. She is a leader in our building and inspires her classmates to strive for excellence,” stated St. Mary Principal Patti Fouts.

Genke will be attending St. Norbert College in De Pere in the fall.

The list of award recipients can be found at www.kohleducation.org.



St. Mary Catholic Schools photo

Staff members honored at St. Mary Catholic Schools this year included (from left) Daana Stuber, Andy Dahlberg, Jennifer Giombetti and Patti Donaldson.

St. Mary Catholic honors teachers, staff

St. Mary Catholic Schools honored faculty and staff at its year-end celebration June 7 that included an awards ceremony recognizing retirements, career milestones and four annual SMCS awards. Teachers and staff are nominated by fellow employees, parents or students.

The St. John Baptist de la Salle Outstanding Teacher Award was awarded to Daana Stuber, a fifth-grade teacher at St. Margaret Mary Elementary. This award recognizes excellence in teaching, with a focus on creativity, rapport with students, positive attitude and high-quality instruction.

The St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Award for Positive Influence was bestowed on St. Gabriel Elementary associate principal

Jennifer Giombetti. This award is given to a current SMCS staff member who makes an exceptional difference in the lives of students and their families.

The St. Anne Award for SMCS Spirit was awarded to Andy Dahlberg, dean of students at St. Mary Catholic Middle School. This award is presented to a staff member who consistently represents all SMCS schools in a positive and enthusiastic manner.

The St. Isidore of Seville Award for Innovation was given to Patti Donaldson, a learning support specialist at St. Mary Catholic Middle School. This award is presented to a current SMCS staff member who shows distinction in innovation.

Lions clubs create medical equipment locker

Neenah News

A medical equipment loan locker offering access to walkers, wheelchairs and related supplies without charge to residents of Fox Valley communities, including Neenah, is being established with donation support.

Appleton Noon Lions Club president Carol Jansen said that in the past six months, 10 area Lions clubs worked together to establish the Fox Valley Lions Medical Equipment MJ Tassoul Memorial Loan Locker. The group is holding a medical equipment donation day from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 312 W. Northland Ave. in Appleton to help stock the

locker ahead of its opening.

Jansen said the locker effort is patterned after the Larsen-Winchester Lions Club loan locker, which has been operating in some form since 1984.

Gently used and clean medical equipment will be loaned to area residents from the Appleton location from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays and 9 to 11 a.m. Saturdays.

When the equipment is no longer needed they should be returned to the locker.

Donations are also welcomed to help replace worn equipment and fund operations and community projects. For more information, contact 920-585-7072 or foxvalleylions@gmail.com.

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Neenah-Menasha Meals on Wheels is a community collaboration of
Valley VNA Senior Care, the Neenah-Menasha Emergency Society, and
ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah.

Guitarist builds career on range of opportunities

Kaspar keeps his music schedule flexible

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

When Kelvin Kaspar was in eighth grade, he picked up a guitar and started a band.

What began as a fun way to spend time with friends after school and on weekends has since become a full-time career with shows all over the United States.

Kaspar, who is from Neenah, became interested in music the same way many students do: by playing trumpet in elementary and middle school. In seventh grade, he quit the trumpet.



Kaspar

“But all my friends wanted to start a band and a few of them had played, so I figured I would just get a guitar and we started a band in eighth grade,” he said. “They’re some of my best buddies still to this day.”

In ninth grade, Kaspar enrolled in band at Neenah High School, taught by David Dunning, which really piqued his interest. He met an upperclassman during study hall and apprenticed under him.

“He was a senior there and he basically gave me lessons – 70 minutes every day, for the whole year – on guitar,” he said.

After high school, Kaspar attended the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where he graduated with a jazz performance degree on guitar.

“And then I got to work, which is just doing what I’ve been doing; just trying to



Neenah News photo by Jenny Grunwald

Kelvin Kaspar plays at last Saturday’s Oshkosh Farmers Market.

play music and be involved with it everywhere I can around here,” he said.

Kaspar is an associate lecturer of guitar at UW-Stevens Point and a career musician. He has been credited as a performer and arranger on NBC’s “The Masked Singer,” Janet Planet’s “Just Like a Woman,” and “Saturday Night Live.”

He has also performed alongside touring musicians Wayne Newton, Typhanie Monique, Raquel Rodriguez, The Yellowjackets, B3 organist Ben Paterson and trombonist Natalie Cressman.

Kaspar plays all types of music and especially loves jazz and funk. Locally, he

can be seen performing with The Pocket Kings, Tae and the Neighborly, Stephen Cooper and Nobody Famous, The Celebration Church Worship Team and other small ensembles. Last weekend he was at the Oshkosh Farmers Market performing with Stuck on Blue.

Kaspar, 38, lives in Larsen with wife Danielle and sons Kase, 5, and Quinn, 2. Although making a career out of playing music is challenging, Kaspar credits his family for his success.

“I basically have to accept that I’m not going to really make tons of money,” he said. “But my parents have always been

super supportive with college and just encouraging me to play. And my wife, who I’ve known since high school, has always known that I loved music. So, she’s always been supportive of being gone on weekends or at night and sacrificing time.”

Kaspar said he’s learned that saying yes to new opportunities can open even more musical possibilities.

“I’ve made all sorts of connections that led me to recording and jingles and things like that, that I never would have gotten if I didn’t just say yes to everything I could possibly do.”

As a musician without a “real job,” Kaspar said his days are likely numbered, but he couldn’t ask for a better area to perform in than the Fox Valley.

“So, I’m probably just going to ride it until I need to do something else,” he said. “But I love it so much that, you know, I just keep going for it, I guess.”

Live music took a hit during the pandemic, with many venues closed. Kaspar wasn’t immune to its effects.

“It was just (that) an outlet to express myself was gone,” he said. “It was something I always had taken for granted before, so I’m really grateful to be able to do it.”

As pandemic restrictions began to lift, Kaspar said there was a surge in attendance at live shows, which he said has begun to slow down.

Locals who want to catch one of his shows can find them at www.kelvinkaspar.com.

“I’m real grateful to be able to do what I do, even though it’s kind of a challenge at times,” he said. “But I just love music. And man, it means everything to me.”

Riverside Players’ ‘Fireflies’ canceled

Riverside Players’ “Fireflies” shows that were set for Theater in the Park June 21-25 have been canceled due to unforeseen cast medical circumstances, the Neenah Parks & Recreation Department announced this week.

Those who have already purchased tickets to “Fireflies” and wish to donate the ticket fees to Riverside Players may do so by taking no action.

Ticket purchasers may also receive a full refund starting June 19 by bringing the ticket receipt to the Parks & Rec Department on the second floor of City Hall,

mailing the receipt to Parks & Rec at 211 Walnut Street, or emailing the receipt to parkrec@neenahwi.gov. A refund check will either be mailed or a credit card refund will be issued.

Performances of “All Shook Up” scheduled for July 20-23 and July 26-30 will continue as planned. Tickets for “Fireflies” may be exchanged for “All Shook Up” tickets by following the aforementioned refund options.

The Parks & Rec Department apologized for the inconvenience and thanked the community for its support.

Neenah schools cited for student outcome efforts

Nine Neenah Joint School District schools have been rewarded by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center (RtI) for their work toward a system that leads to improved student outcomes in behavior, math and reading.

The equitable system helps increase consistency of instruction, enhances staff skills, proactively provides support for all learners and builds stronger relationships.

Seven schools received honors for work in developing positive behaviors. Hoover and Lakeview elementary schools were honored for the seventh time and received Silver level distinction.

Shattuck Middle School, Taft Elementary and Tullar Elementary were chosen for the sixth time with Shattuck receiving bronze and Taft and Tullar earning silver.

Horace Mann Middle School and Spring Road Elementary were selected for the fifth straight time with Horace Mann earning a Silver level award and

Spring Road honored at the Bronze level.

The schools received recognition for their work through implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The Wisconsin RtI Center is funded by the Department of Public Instruction to provide statewide training and technical assistance to help create equitable and responsive schools and districts.

Seven elementary schools received bronze awards for their work in math: Clayton, Coolidge, Hoover, Lakeview, Spring Road, Taft and Tullar. Coolidge was also awarded a bronze award for reading.

Silver level schools had fully implemented programs for at least two years, while Bronze level schools have had programs implemented for at least one year.

PBIS is a systemwide framework that enables schools to be more effective and responsive to student social-emotional needs by implementing a multi-level system of support for their behavior.



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Theft related to ferret care leads to conviction

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

A man who told police he robbed a Neenah gas station for money to care for his dying ferret was convicted Monday of theft.

Darnell Wilson, 27, entered a no contest plea before Judge Scott Woldt and was found guilty of felony theft. A possession of narcotic drugs charge was dismissed but read into the record.

Wilson was initially charged with felony armed robbery for the March 10 incident that occurred at a gas station on South Commercial Street. According to the criminal complaint, he entered the gas station, set a soda on the counter and placed his hand under his jacket as if he had a weapon.

Wilson stated something to the effect of, "I'm sorry I have to do this" and then asked the clerk for all the money in the cash register. Wilson told the clerk he was going through a hard time in his life or he wouldn't be doing this. The clerk asked if he was kidding and he replied "no."

The clerk told Wilson not to hurt her and then gave him all the money in the register, which was determined to be about \$300. Wilson grabbed the cash and soda, said he was sorry and left.

Wilson lived at a nearby apartment and was a regular customer at the gas station. Police reviewed surveillance footage and determined Wilson was the same man involved with law enforcement a week prior and was wearing the same clothes as when he previously had police contact.

On April 3, police were dispatched to an apartment on a report that a man was passed out and found Wilson unconscious on the floor of the living room. The officer

woke him up by yelling at him and rubbing his chest.

Wilson told the officer he took a Percocet. A tinfoil found in his sweatshirt pocket contained powdery residue that tested positive for fentanyl.

Wilson was arrested and brought in for questioning related to the gas station robbery. Wilson told police he "just walked in there and asked her for money and she gave it to me."

Wilson said he offered to leave but he needed the money for his ferret who was dying at the time. He said during the incident all he could think was that he couldn't let his "little buddy" die.

Wilson said he used the money for his ferret and it did initially help but the ferret ended up having more issues after that.

Wilson denied pretending to conceal a weapon and said he put his hand in his shirt for comfort because he was nervous.

A gas station representative wrote in an impact statement that the incident sparked fear and uncertainty in employees.

Wilson has been incarcerated at the Winnebago County Jail since April 4, unable to make a cash bond, which was lowered to \$500 later that month. Woldt denied a request last month to lower the cash bond or release Wilson on a signature bond.

While incarcerated, Wilson has engaged in AODA services and applied for a sober living residence.

Woldt sentenced Wilson to six months in jail and three years of probation. Woldt also sentenced Wilson to three years in prison and three years of extended supervision, imposed and stayed, meaning he will only serve that sentence if his probation is revoked.

Aurora first to offer free naloxone for opioids

Aurora Health Care is now providing free opioid overdose medication in all its emergency departments.

All patients presenting with opioid use disorder or overdose will have access to naloxone, a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The two-pack nasal spray quickly reverses the respiratory depression from the opioids and gives more time for lifesaving medical treatment.

When a patient presents to an Aurora emergency department with opioid overdose or related issues, they are first stabilized and then the patient or their family is offered free naloxone to take home.

Nationally, 2021 was the deadliest year on record with 108,000 deaths caused by overdose. During that year, there were about 1,600 opioid overdose deaths in Wisconsin. Synthetic opioids like fentanyl are the leading cause of opioid deaths.

Calendar of events

Saturday, June 17

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

Udderly Euro Car Show, 2 p.m., Shattuck Park

Sunday, June 18

Neenah Summer Fun Run, 6 p.m., Memorial Park

Monday, June 19

Storytime, 10 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Tuesday, June 20

Neenah Community Band Concert, 7 p.m., Shattuck Park

Wednesday, June 21

Salsa Manzana, 6 p.m., Shattuck Park

Thursday, June 22

Out to Lunch Concert with Mr. Crowe (kids concert), 11:30 a.m., Shattuck Park

Ground Round Live Music Series: Tommy Winch, 6 p.m., 1010 Cameron Way

Art After Dark, 6 p.m., Berg-

strom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Friday, June 23

"Fireflies" staged by Riverside Players, 7:30 p.m., Riverside Park Pavilion

Saturday, June 24

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

Sunday, June 25

Central Wisconsin Auto Collectors 41st annual benefit car show and swap/flea market, 8 a.m., Brennand Airport, 3282 Breezewood Lane

Monday, June 26

Storytime, 10 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Tuesday, June 27

Movie Talks: "Knives Out," 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Wednesday, June 28

Spicy Tie Band, 6 p.m., Shattuck Park

Thursday, June 29

Out to Lunch Concert with Birdman, Rhino & Unicorn, 11:30 a.m., Shattuck Park

Ground Round Live Music Series: Red Fish Remix, 6 p.m., 1010 Cameron Way

Saturday, July 1

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

County issues warning on fake oxycodone pills

Neenah News

The Winnebago County Medical Examiner's Office and Sheriff's Department issued an emergency public announcement last week after a spike in overdoses where counterfeit pills have been associated with the deaths.

County officials are reporting fake M-30s, which are 30-milligram oxycodone pills, that are testing positive for fentanyl and are lethal.

The Medical Examiner's Office confirmed that 12 of the 15 overdose deaths thus far in 2023 are attributed to fentanyl, with another seven pending that are suspected to be fentanyl overdoses.

Sheriff John Matz told the County Board's Judiciary and Public Safety meeting last week that the TruNarc narcotics analyzer obtained this year has helped identify some of the drugs getting into the jail.

"We've used (TruNarc) three times since we've received it. Two fentanyl positives and one cocaine positive, all

three in the jail – people trying to bring it in and that continues to be a huge problem for us," he said. "One instance it got into the block, but it was not used, but certainly that could be extremely fatal for people that are in our cell blocks."

Counterfeit pills have different ingredients than the actual medication they are resembling. They may contain no active ingredient, the wrong ingredient or the right ingredient in an incorrect quantity.

The counterfeits may contain lethal amounts of fentanyl or methamphetamine and are dangerous because they often appear identical to legitimate prescription pills, with the user likely unaware of how lethal they can be.

The wide availability of opioid antagonists such as Narcan has been attributed to preventing many overdoses that could have been deaths associated with the pills.

Find out more information at dea.gov/factsheets/fake-prescription-pills.

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*APY = Annual Percentage Yield



Fox Cities Chamber photo

Fox Cities Chamber president Becky Bartoszek (center) presents the Gold Employee Friendly Workplace Award to Miron Construction. Shown with her are (from left) Tim Kippenhan, vice president and chief operating officer; Jen Bauer, senior vice president for marketing and culture; David G. Voss Jr., president and chief executive; and David Voss III, executive vice president of field operations.

Business news roundup

Miron Construction Co. has been certified as a gold-level **Employee Friendly Workplace** by the Fox Cities Chamber. This certification recognizes employers who demonstrate a significant commitment to promoting work/life integration by creating a positive work environment and experience for all employees. The mission of the initiative is to encourage the adoption of more employee-friendly workplace practices and policies to enhance work/life balance and successfully attract and retain the best employees to the region. To date the chamber has certified 16 other Fox Cities companies as being employee friendly.

Image Studios has been named a **PULSE Champion of Young Professionals (YPs)** by the Fox Cities Chamber. This designation recognizes employers who pledge to provide support and a positive work environment for YPs within their company. Image Studios is a media production company helping businesses and brands with commercial photography video and CGI. Any Fox Cities company can apply to be classified as a PULSE Champion of Young Professionals and pledge to provide support and a positive work environment for YPs within their company.

Send business bits

Our readers are looking for information on what businesses are doing in Neenah. Help us share the news by emailing submit@neenahnewsnow.com or calling 920-486-1616.

Kimberly-Clark Professional was recently named a winner of this year's iF Design Award in the bath category for its Icon dispenser collection, which includes paper towel, toilet paper, soap and sanitizer dispenser options that bring technology advancements and interchangeable faceplates. Hannover-based iF International Design Forum GmbH is the world's oldest independent design organization. The judging panel was composed of 133 independent experts and the competition consisted of nearly 11,000 entries from 56 countries.

Volatus Infrastructure LLC has signed a multifaceted agreement with Aeroauto, a Florida-based urban air mobility showroom and electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) dealership. Volatus will provide global vertiport and charging station solutions for Aeroauto's eVTOL sales and services centers. Neenah-based Volatus offers three main eVTOL infrastructure designs, a vehicle agnostic charging station, and app and maintenance programs.

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DHS awards funds to nonprofit dental clinic

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has awarded \$5.1 million in grants to 14 nonprofit dental clinics, including Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, to increase access to dental care statewide.

Grant awards range from \$59,000 to \$150,000 per clinic over three years and will enable the selected clinics to serve more children and families in need, including Medicaid members, people who have low income, people with disabilities, and people who are uninsured.

Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, working with Fox Valley Technical College and Marquette University School of

Dentistry, serves residents in Winnebago, Outagamie and Calumet counties at its 9 Tri-Park Way offices in Appleton and with its mobile clinic. It is open for scheduled appointments from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to noon Friday.

"This funding creates more access to important oral health services," said Dr. Russell Dunkel, Wisconsin state dental director. "In 2021, only one in three Wisconsin Medicaid members ages 3 to 20 received a preventive dental service and, in that same year, seven out of 10 Medicaid members didn't receive dental care."

Skylar

FROM PAGE 1

During scent work training, items are scented and placed in boxes. When the canine alerts on the desired scent, the handler gives the dog a reward such as a toy or treat. The dogs learn to only alert on the desired scents, in this case explosives odors.

When Skylar alerts, she sits down and focuses on the source of the odor. She and her previous handler put in 240 hours of training before she arrived at UWO in late 2018. Her \$30,000 cost was funded by donations.

During her four years with UWO police, Skylar was deployed hundreds of times, with about 50 official deployments, UWO reported. She was primarily called on to perform sweeps before sporting events, political events and throughout the county. She also came

along on UWO's mental health checks. Skylar is trained in explosives detection, tracking and search and rescue, and can detect 35 different types of explosives odors. UWO said Skylar continues to do sweeps before major university events and at the Oshkosh Arena before Wisconsin Herd games.

Skylar's newest handler is Winnebago County patrol deputy Bob Zill, who traveled with her to New Mexico last year for updated training and certification in explosive detection and subject tracking.

Skylar joined three other dogs in the Winnebago Sheriff's K9 Unit: German Shepherds Haimo, Athos and Tim. The four dogs make up the largest K9 Unit Winnebago County has ever had. The canines were deployed more than 150 times last year, according to the sheriff's 2022 annual report.

Skylar is expected to stay with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office until her retirement.



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ADVOCAP honors community service, volunteers

ADVOCAP Inc. awarded Community Service Awards at its recent board of directors meeting to organizations and businesses who positively impact the counties they serve.

Dr. Kristine Nehring was honored for assisting ADVOCAP's teaching and coaching staff by providing behavioral health guidance, Second Time Around Shop for its work with the low-income

community and Lakeside Packaging Plus for supporting ADVOCAP's Home Delivered Meals program.

Volunteer Services Awards were presented to Lucille Wuest, who is celebrating her 20th year as a volunteer foster grandparent, Mike Griffin for his work at the Berlin Food Pantry and volunteer Beverly Quella with ADVOCAP's Senior Friend Program.

Badger State

FROM PAGE 1

chester Lions Club, Richbar Enterprises and Bergstrom Automotive.

Kiesling said Badger Girls State helps students become interested in politics and civics.

"History shows that so many of the graduates from Badger Girls have become congresswomen and senators," Kiesling said. "Tammy Baldwin was a Badger Girls State (attendee)."

The students, referred to as citizens, learn by doing. They create a mock city, county and state government and elect officials in the same manner as a regular election process.

"They form the imaginary state of Badger," Kiesling said. "So, they form their own government. They go through a process of election until they finally elect the governor of Girls State."

The citizens are divided into political parties, the Federalists and Nationalists, where they develop party platforms and formulate issues.

By the end of the week, several positions will be elected, including governor, county coroner, alderman, circuit court judge, vice president and Supreme Court judge.

During past conferences Kiesling attended, the late Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson performed the installation of the elected officers.

"She would take her robe off and put it on the newly elected girl who was a Supreme Court judge," Kiesling said. "It gives me goosebumps every time I say that. It is really awesome."

Although the conference is a lot of work, Kiesling said it's also a lot of fun, with guest speakers and a state fair. At the end of the conference, the students have a banquet that is attended by the state governor.

"It's really a tearjerker, because the girls have worked so hard all week, and they can finally let loose and they have a banquet and they have fun," she said. "And the governor comes and sits with them in their county, and they'll get pictures with the governor."

Each year, two girls that attend Badger State are selected to attend Girls Nation, which is held annually in Washington, D.C.

Kiesling said the program instills a sense of pride and patriotism as American citizens.

"We just encourage more junior girls to become interested and to actually attend Badger Girls State, because it's a once in a lifetime experience," she said.

Agricultural youth program resumes at fair

The Farmer for a Day youth mentorship program connects local youth to agriculture, the Winnebago County Fair and other activities relating to STEM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) programming each fall.

Youth ages 7 to 16 must submit an application by July 1 to be chosen. After selection, the youth are scheduled for a one-hour personalized tour with a 4-H or FFA fair exhibitor.

The program will be held Aug. 2-6 during the fair at the Sunnyview Expo Center grounds. During the tour, youth will learn more about livestock, plants, cultural arts, mechanical science and foods/nutrition. Participants receive a fair pass, take-home bag and certificate.

Last year, youth participation doubled from the previous year and is expected to increase again this year. For more information, contact program coordinator Jodie Weyland at 920-216-3844 or winnebago-countyfairprograms@gmail.com.



Winnebago County Fair photo

Area youth can take part in a farm mentorship program at the Winnebago County Fair.

Final Five Voting initiative to be discussed

An election reform initiative called Final Five Voting will be explained in a meeting open to the public at 9:30 a.m. June 24 in the public room of the Solaris On Main apartments, 215 Main St., Neenah.

PrincipleFirst, a group described as being composed of conservatives, liberals and independents who want to see election reform, endorses Final Five Voting that keys on open primaries to advance the top five candidates, regardless of political affiliation, to an instant runoff general election.

The process requires a primary candidate to find support among a wide group of voters, as opposed to appealing exclusively to a party's base, to get through an election primary.

A bipartisan bill to adopt Final Five Voting statewide has been introduced in the state Legislature, and a similar system is being used in Alaska for all elections and in other states for some elections.

For more information on the meeting, go to meetup.com/PrinciplesFirst or call 920-558-6741.

Equine therapy program added at Beaming

Beaming Inc. has launched a new equine-assisted learning program called Pony Power Academy, a children's literacy program that helps children ages 4-12 with diverse learning abilities or who have struggled learning to read and write.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 4 million children younger than 18 have learning disabilities in the U.S.; they account for 47% of children receiving special education.

Beaming's certified instructors, qualified staff and trained volunteers will guide children through learning activities and adventures that make reading fun, using curriculum that was developed based

on Wisconsin Literacy Standards. These skills help children build confidence and enhance their learning aptitude. Learning opportunities about horses are also integrated into the programming, along with arts, crafts and barn activities.

The next sessions of Pony Power Academy will be at the Beaming Barn, 2692 County GG in Neenah, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 10 and Aug. 14, with additional sessions set later this year. A \$15 donation is requested for a child to participate and \$5 for each additional child in the same family. Contact Wendy Stabler at wendy.beaming@gmail.com for more information.

Art After Dark to mark city anniversary

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the City of Neenah at Art After Dark: Happy Birthday, Neenah! from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

Visitors can bring lawn chairs or pic-

nic blankets and enjoy a lakeside evening with live music from The Brigade and Got Wisco, vintage games with the Neenah Historical Society, crafts and refreshments with food trucks on-site. The museum galleries and shop will be open late.

Commemorating Neenah High School Alumni!

Celebrate yourself or a loved one in this special Neenah High School keepsake "Senior Yearbook" feature that will publish in a special Neenah High School section on August 25, 2023.

Enjoy being part of a visit through the decades of community members near and far who are members of the NHS history.

All senior photos will be published chronologically with Favorite Teacher and Favorite Memory (see example below).

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Students with disabilities often denied public options

Rejected applications for transfers legally upheld

By Mario Koran
WISCONSIN WATCH

After a long and frustrating search, Beth Wisniewski found a haven for her son in Penfield Montessori Academy — a Near West Side Milwaukee charter school that serves children with and without disabilities.

Wisniewski's son, Henry, was born with Down syndrome. As he approached school age, Wisniewski and her husband toured private schools, traditional public schools and charter schools — independently operated schools drawing public funds. But the Milwaukee couple walked away with the same message after each visit: Henry was not wanted.

"Every place we went we had to explain that our son was worthy, as if we had to sell the school on our son," Wisniewski said. "You feel less than, like there was no place that welcomed him the way he is."

The family finally found Penfield, which centered its vision on students with disabilities when launching in 2016.

"(At Penfield) we've never had to apologize for where my child is at, developmentally. He's truly welcomed by everyone," Wisniewski said.

But that support may vanish. Penfield's board in April abruptly announced the school would shutter at year's end, citing long-term financial pressures and surprise building repair bills.

Absent a long-shot plan to save Penfield, the closure means families must return to their home district public school or try to navigate a state school choice system with few options for students with disabilities.

Public schools must serve all students living within their boundaries, including those needing special accommodations. But not all neighborhood schools are equally staffed or resourced to meet the needs of students with disabilities, as state funding for special education has declined precipitously in recent decades.

In theory, the families of children with special needs have many choices. But not in practice.

Such students could apply to attend a private school with the help of a taxpayer-subsidized voucher, a program that enrolls 52,000 Wisconsin students. But such private schools also are allowed to expel students with disabilities if officials determine they cannot meet that child's needs.

Charter schools elsewhere have been accused of denying entrance to students

with disabilities — due to the cost of accommodations or for fear of lowering test score averages.

Less talked about, however, is how the state's biggest choice program, open enrollment, excludes students with disabilities. Roughly 70,000 Wisconsin students attend public schools outside their home districts through the program. It allows students to apply to better-resourced public schools outside of district boundaries. But those schools can limit or deny slots for out-of-district students with disabilities.

Wisconsin districts in 2021-22 received 41,554 open enrollment applications, about 14% of which represented students with disabilities, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction data show. Schools rejected about 40% of applications in that category, with lack of special education space as the most common reason for the denials. By comparison, school districts rejected only 14% of applications from students without disabilities.

"This policy in Wisconsin may not be illegal, but it's absolutely inequitable," said Jennifer Coco, senior director of strategy and impact at the Center for Learner Equity, a national nonprofit.

"If we pride ourselves on advancing equity for kids in the state of Wisconsin, this isn't it — for a multitude of reasons. It's discrimination with a lowercase d."

Milwaukee Public Schools saw about 3,400 more students transfer out than in last year, more than any other district, as many families headed to nearby suburban schools. The movement flows in both directions, and open enrollment helps some districts make up for shrinking in-district enrollment by attracting outside students and their attendance dollars.

The open enrollment process begins each January, when school boards determine how many outside students they'll accommodate the following year. Seats are specifically reserved for students who have disabilities and those who don't.

Families can apply to attend out-of-district schools between early February and April. Parents learn of the decision by early June.

While the process allows districts to avoid overcrowding classrooms by capping the number of incoming students, it can also shut doors to students who have disabilities, with districts citing a lack of space to serve them.

In 2022, Verona Area School District, southwest of Madison, announced it would welcome 115 open enrollment stu-

dents, the most in a decade. But the district reserved zero spots for students with disabilities, citing cost concerns.

"This is nothing but discrimination against students with special needs and students with disabilities," disability rights attorney Jeff Spitzer-Resnick told Isthmus at the time.

Spitzer-Resnick's chief concern, he later told Wisconsin Watch: that the district claimed to lack space for students with disabilities before analyzing applicants' individual learning needs.

While some children have medically sensitive disabilities that are expensive or complicated to accommodate, most students with disabilities are taught in regular classrooms alongside their peers, said Spitzer-Resnick. And many of their

needed accommodations cost little to implement.

"If a student needs extra time on a test because they have ADHD, that's literally a zero-cost item," he said.

School districts aren't required to offer evidence of a lack of space for students with disabilities unless a parent appeals a denial. Parents rarely see the analysis behind a school district's decision.

State data do not capture the untold number of parents who abandon the application process, assuming their child will be rejected due to a disability.

"We saw they weren't offering seats for students with disabilities, so we didn't even bother submitting an application,"

SEE **Finding schools** ON PAGE 10

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Finding schools

FROM PAGE 9

Wisniewski said of one school district the family considered before finding Penfield.

Disabilities aren't the only reason students are rejected from open enrollment. A smaller number of students were rejected because they were considered habitually truant or faced previous expulsions — categories that can disproportionately exclude students from low-income families, who are more likely to struggle with transportation; or students of color who are overrepresented in discipline data.

Black students with disabilities in Wisconsin, for instance, are roughly 6.7 times more likely than white students to be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons, according to a state analysis.

Author Tim DeRoche details in his book, *A Fine Line*, how school attendance boundaries often correlate to income and race. He says Wisconsin's open enrollment law allows a public school to categorically deny open enrollment to a child who has a disability, no matter how minimal the services that child requires.

"Kids with disabilities are really at the mercy of one district, and that district may or may not have the ability — or desire — to meet the child's needs," DeRoche said. "The best or most coveted public schools are often only available to families that can afford a home in the most expensive part of town."

Courts have upheld Wisconsin's open enrollment system in response to a lawsuit on behalf of students with disabilities who faced rejections.

"Differential treatment of special-needs students doesn't make the program unlawful," the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in 2019.

Still, the Legislature could change the open enrollment process, said Libby Sobic of the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, which filed the lawsuit.

She pointed to Minnesota as a model for a more inclusive system. It prohibits school districts from considering a student's disability when weighing a transfer.

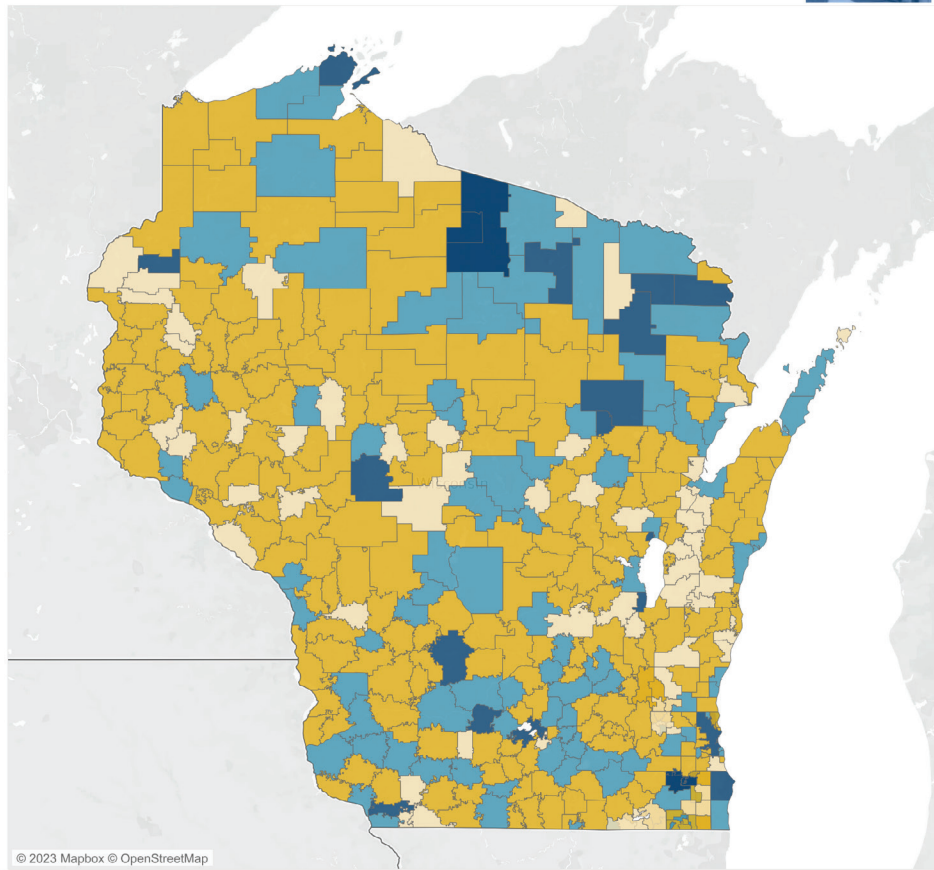
Wisconsin must revamp the way it

Wisconsin's Special Education Funding Crunch

This map shows the amount of unfunded special education per pupil costs in Wisconsin school districts after accounting for state and federal funding. Hovering over a district displays demographic and special education funding information.

Unfunded special education costs per pupil

- Under \$1,000
- \$1,000 - <1,500
- \$1,500 - <2,000
- \$2,000 or more



funds special education more broadly, said Joanne Juhnke, an advocacy specialist for Disability Rights Wisconsin.

"Any solution or improvement to the open enrollment program has to reckon with the overall state funding challenges for education for students with disabilities," she said.

Wisconsin reimburses school districts only 30% of special education costs — one of the lowest rates in the nation. The gap forces districts — which must abide by revenue caps set by the state — to take money from the regular education budget to pay for special educational services.

Abigail Swetz, communications director for the state's Department of Public

Instruction, said Wisconsin's "abysmal" funding for special education could impact open enrollment decisions.

"I would be shocked if budgetary concerns did not impact open enrollment decisions. Districts need to pay their bills," said Swetz.

Gov. Tony Evers wants to increase state special education reimbursement from about 30% to 60% of a district's costs. Republican leaders have questioned the size of that increase and called to expand the state's private school voucher program.

Voucher-subsidized private schools that accept students with disabilities can currently receive up to 90% of special education costs through a special reimburse-

ment program.

Swetz said her agency hopes the proposed funding increase will land in the final budget, considering the proposal's historic bipartisan support. In 2019, the bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding established under then-Gov. Scott Walker recommended increasing special education reimbursement to 60%.

Sen. Howard Marklein, R-Spring Green, co-chair of the Republican-led budget-writing Joint Finance Committee, declined to comment.

Penfield parent Amy Scales said news of that school's closing unleashed chaos at her home, where her children cried and threw toys. Students volunteered to sell prized possessions to keep the school afloat, Scales said.

"As a parent it makes you feel like you've failed them," said Amy's husband, Martice.

But parents are still fighting to save their school.

Leaders from Adeline Montessori, a similar charter school in Oconomowoc, in April announced they were exploring a plan to operate Penfield as a satellite campus.

Parents hope to raise \$1 million this summer to move forward with the plan, Scales said. But they must first find a building and retain enough students and staff for the plan to be viable.

Still, they must confront the possibility of losing Penfield.

Milwaukee Public Schools officials are helping some families search for a new school within the district. But others don't see that as an option.

"If the new school doesn't happen for us, we'll likely homeschool, at least for the next year," Penfield parent Cassie Johnson said. She worries less for her own family, and more for the students who need even more support.

"People should be able to make choices that are best for their kids — not made to leave schools or to homeschool instead or be forced into situations that don't work," she said.

The nonprofit Wisconsin Watch (www.Wisconsin-Watch.org) collaborates with WPR, PBS Wisconsin, other news media and the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

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Neenah Legion suffers loss in return to diamond

By Dustin Riese
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

It has been a few years since American Legion Baseball was played in Neenah, but this summer it has returned.

Neenah kicked off its 2023 campaign on Monday night, falling to De Pere, 6-3, in a game head coach Matthew Waite proves to be one the team can build on moving forward.

“I thought for our first game, the kids played very well,” Waite said. “This is certainly a game to build on and hopefully that will lead to more success in the future.”

Although the final score was not the result Neenah wanted, there were some positives to take from the game.

Starting pitcher Blake Griesbach gave Neenah five solid innings on the mound, striking out five.

The offense backed Griesbach with three first-inning runs as Neenah was able to grab the early lead.

A leadoff walk to Trevor Stichman opened the inning before Beckett Davidson doubled to put a pair on base.

Another walk loaded the bases with two outs with a De Pere error on a Griesbach at-bat allowing Neenah to push two

runs across the plate. The third run of the inning scored on a passed ball.

De Pere struck back with a run in the second inning and then surged into the lead with a three-run fourth frame.

De Pere added two more runs in the fifth to close the book on Griesbach who allowed six runs in his five innings of work before handing things over to Corban Ducommun for the final two innings.

“I thought we had enough opportunities on offense, but we couldn’t string enough hits together to put more runs on the board,” Waite said. “That happens in baseball and it is up to us to learn from our mistakes tonight and improve as a team.”

Neenah made some noise in the sev-

enth trying to draw even with De Pere as Stichman singled and Logan VanZimmerman reached on an error but neither runner was able to come around to score and narrow the deficit

“Defensively, we made enough plays to limit the damage, but we struggled on offense apart from that first inning,” Waite said. “We know this year may be a struggle as this is a young group of guys who are learning how to play together. However, this is also a group that has some good talent and I expect us to compete all season long.”

Neenah will be back on the diamond this afternoon, when they welcome De Pere back to Neenah before taking part in a tournament this weekend.

Rockets ousted at Team State tourney

Neenah News

Neenah’s hopes of pulling an upset at the WIAA Division 1 Team State Tennis Tournament last weekend came up a bit short as the Rockets fell to Brookfield Central, 5-2, in a quarterfinal round match.

The Lancers, who lost to eventual state champion Marquette in the semifinals, were the No. 3 seed, while the Rockets were seeded sixth. All four of the better-seeded teams won in the quarterfinals.

One of the highlights of the meet for the Rockets came at No. 1 doubles where the Neenah tandem of Satchel Moss and Ben Kotchen earned a 7-5, 6-2 win over the Lancers’ Gabe Weitzer and Aadiya Tiwari. Moss and Kotchen had lost to that duo the week before in the individual state tournament.

The Rockets other win in the match came from Brady Lawatsch, who breezed

past Diogo Trevizan, 6-2, 6-2 at No. 4 singles. The win capped a strong postseason for Lawatsch, who won the No. 4 singles title at sectionals without dropping a game.

Neenah, which was participating in its 20th team state tournament, also lost tight matches at No. 2 and No. 3 doubles on the day.

Brady Hildreth and Andrew Werner rebounded from a 6-0 loss in the first set to challenge Sridhar Thiru and Michael Li at No. 2 doubles in the second set before falling 6-4.

At No. 3 doubles, the Rockets’ Drew Kearny and Zack Bitter lost a hard-fought 7-5, 6-4 decision to Pavan Yilayavilli and Mahit Rajesh.

David Murphy, Carl Hein and Tristin Yun lost at the top three singles flights, respectively, for Neenah.

Second-seeded Marquette edged Middleton, 4-3, for the state title.



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Obituaries

Joan Golomski

Joan Ellen Golomski of Algoma, WI passed away peacefully in her home surrounded by family on Monday morning, June 12th, 2023. Joan was born on July 21st, 1931, in Neenah, WI to Oscar and Frances (McNulty) Hagen. She attended Neenah High School,

and as a teenager she and her brother Kurt were accomplished sailors with the Neenah Nodaway Yacht Club. After graduating she went on to earn her BA degree in Psychology from the University of Colorado-Boulder. She worked briefly for Carnation Milk and Kimberly Clark and as a teacher before marrying William A. “Bill” Golomski in 1960 in Milwaukee. They moved to Wilmette, Illinois and had two children, Gretchen and William. In later years, they moved to Algoma, WI where Joan found great joy in St. Agnes by-the-Lake Episcopal Church, the Peninsula Planters Garden

Club, and the Algoma Library Friends, where she was recognized for outstanding service. Her passion was gardening, and she spent many hours happily tending her extensive flower garden. She loved reading cozy mysteries and volunteered at the Algoma Book Corner. Joan was preceded in death by her husband, Bill. Joan is survived by her daughter, Gretchen O’Connell and son, William A. Golomski, Jr., 4 grandchildren, William Z. Wilson, Robert T. Wilson, Eagan Golomski, Daisy Golomski and brother, Kurt Hagen. The family will maintain the residence in Algoma. Schinderle Funeral Home in Algoma is assisting the family. A Visitation will be held at St. Agnes by-the-Lake Episcopal Church, 806 Fourth Street, Algoma, WI on Saturday, June 24th at 11:00 AM, followed by a Funeral Service at 1:00 PM. Donations in Joan’s memory may be made to St. Agnes by-the-Lake Episcopal Church or the Algoma Library Friends. Express your sympathy, memories and pictures on Joan’s tribute page at www.schinderlefuneralhome.com.



Principles First

If you are fed up with the scorched earth politics that is becoming more common in our country, join us on Saturday, June 24th from 9am-1pm to explore Final Five Voting.

We will be meeting in the public room of the Solaris apartments located at 215 Main Street, Neenah. Coffee and donuts will be provided. (We do NOT endorse any candidate or party.)

For more information and to RSVP, go to [Meetup.com/PrinciplesFirst](https://www.meetup.com/PrinciplesFirst) or call 920-558-6741.

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Kid Scoop

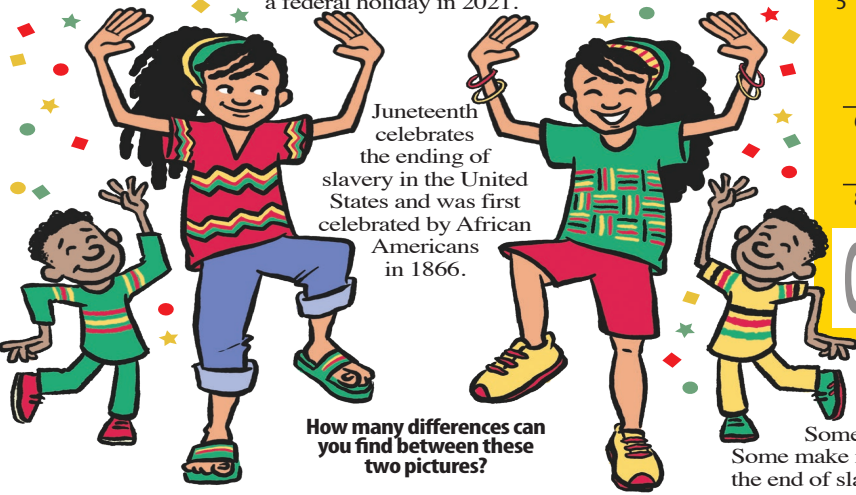
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America's Newest National Holiday Juneteenth!

Juneteenth is the newest federal holiday in the United States. President Biden signed the legislation that officially made Juneteenth a federal holiday in 2021.



Juneteenth celebrates the ending of slavery in the United States and was first celebrated by African Americans in 1866.

How many differences can you find between these two pictures?

A Holiday with Many Names

Use the code to reveal some of the other names for Juneteenth.

M	C	N
5	10	1
11	3	7
13	1	15
7	12	11
Y		
4 1		
D	Y	Y
6	14	5
5	4	12
10	4	1
Y		
U	L	Y
8	16	2
7	9	5
5	4	1

1 = A	5 = E	9 = L	13 = P
2 = B	6 = F	10 = M	14 = R
3 = C	7 = I	11 = N	15 = T
4 = D	8 = J	12 = O	16 = U

Juneteenth Celebrations

People celebrate Juneteenth in many ways. Some people have parties and there are parades. Some make memorials thanking the people who fought for the end of slavery.

While Juneteenth celebrates the freedom, or **emancipation**, of enslaved African Americans in the United States, it's a great day for everyone to celebrate their freedoms.

Why is it called Juneteenth?

Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19th. Juneteenth combines the word **June** and the word **nineteenth**.

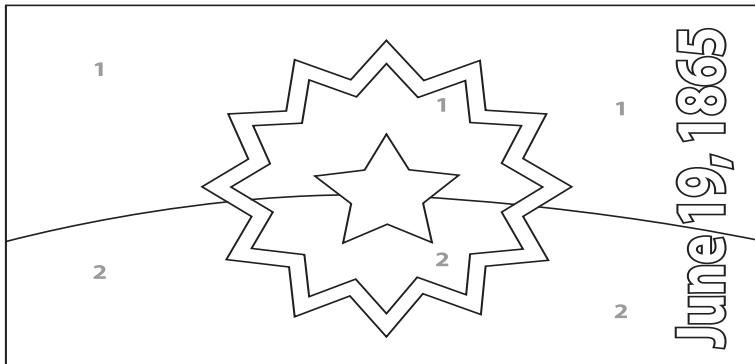
The Juneteenth Flag

The Juneteenth flag was created to celebrate the end of slavery and a hopeful future. Color by numbers to complete the flag.

BLUE = 1 RED = 2

Each year, the Juneteenth flag is raised in a special ceremony in this city in Texas. Circle every other letter to discover the name of this city.

B G H A F L T V R E W S V T J O L N
G



The Fight for Freedom

Replace the missing words.

PEOPLE **BEFORE** **CONTROL** **SIGNED** **OFFICIAL** **YEARS** **UNFAIR**
TRAVEL
Long ago, _____ your great-grandparents were born, some Americans could legally own other people. They called the _____ they owned **slaves**.

wanted. They could not work where they wanted. Slavery was cruel and _____.

Even though President Abraham Lincoln _____ the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 freeing all slaves, it took three _____ and a Civil War to finally make it _____.

Slaves did not have freedoms that people enjoy today. They could not _____ where they wanted. They could not live where they _____.

Juneteenth marks the day in 1865 that U.S. soldiers took _____ in Galveston, Texas and the last slaves were finally freed.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Juneteenth Scavenger Hunt

Look through the newspaper and find the letters that spell Juneteenth. Cut out the letters and glue them onto a piece of paper and decorate! Post your Juneteenth picture in a window so people outside can see it.

Standards Link: Use the newspaper to locate information.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Celebration!

How many balloons can you find?



Double Double Word Search

- BORN
- END
- FEDERAL
- FLAG
- FREEDOM
- GREAT
- HOLIDAY
- HOPEFUL
- JUNETEENTH
- LINCOLN
- PEOPLE
- POST
- STATES
- TEXAS
- WHO

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

S	T	A	T	E	S	J	Y	G	H
E	N	D	J	B	A	U	F	A	O
L	I	N	C	O	L	N	E	L	P
P	F	N	L	P	H	E	D	F	E
O	S	F	O	T	O	T	E	R	F
E	A	S	E	Q	L	E	R	E	U
P	T	X	H	W	I	E	A	E	L
E	A	Q	O	K	D	N	L	D	O
S	A	G	R	E	A	T	S	O	H
N	R	O	B	Z	Y	H	K	M	W

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Kid Scoop Together Freedom Finder

Work with a family member to write about why each of the freedoms below is important to you.

The freedom to travel where we want is important because:

The freedom to read what we want is important because:

The freedom to live where we want is important because:

The freedom to be friends with who we wish is important because:

The freedom to share our opinions with others is important because:

Write On!

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