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Animal shelters work to educate

More solutions sought for surrendered pets

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

When a Neenah Animal Shelter (NAS) employee exited the building on a chilly day late last month, she discovered a blanket on the ground. Inside was a kitten.

As she began searching the area, she found two more in the wheel well of a vehicle. They were believed to have been left at the shelter unrestrained in the blanket about 25 minutes earlier by an unknown

person. It's the second time this year that cats were abandoned outside NAS.

At Oshkosh Area Humane Society (OAHS), staff arrived one morning earlier this year and discovered a dog that had been lifted over the fence and abandoned while no one was on site.

The incidents illustrate a growing problem statewide and nationally. With many shelters overcrowded or at capacity, pet owners turned away may feel their only option is to abandon their pets.

Neenah and Oshkosh are seeing an increase in stray animals that aren't reclaimed, overwhelming staff and limiting

the number of animals that can be accepted as owner surrenders.

Rising costs, a shortage of affordable housing and a booming population of pets following pandemic lockdowns are contributing to the challenges.

As of last week, NAS was caring for 132 animals, when the normal capacity is 100 or fewer. Eighty-five of those were cats, with roughly half available for adoption and half in the pre-adoption process. Thirty-five animals are in foster homes.

OAHS is also regularly at or over capacity.

SEE **Animal shelters** ON PAGE 10

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Neenah News

Holiday music cheer

Neenah Community Band director Matthew Thiel (right) led Sunday's holiday concert at Neenah High School. Story on Page 9.

Fox Valley passenger rail service gets study funding

By Jonathan Richie
NEENAH NEWS

The federal government has decided state officials should look into and study expanding passenger rail service from Milwaukee to Green Bay that would include stops in Appleton, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac and upgrade that rail corridor beyond its current freight capacity.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin announced five rail service corridors across Wisconsin will receive federal funding to look at how those routes would be developed as part of a larger plan to increase rail service across the Midwest.

Each selected corridor will be granted \$500,000 for eligible activities related to the initiation of a grantee's corridor development efforts, including development of a scope, schedule and cost estimate for preparing a service development plan.

The Milwaukee-to-Green Bay corridor would connect the existing Hiawatha service between Chicago and Milwaukee with an extension up to Green Bay through Fond du Lac, Oshkosh and Appleton. All four cities would need new passenger stations, according to Amtrak's vision of the Green Bay-Milwaukee-Chicago plan.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development program, also known as the Corridor ID program, is funding the new route studies in Wisconsin with \$500,000 each for a total of \$2.5 million.

Other routes receiving funding are Milwaukee to Chicago, Milwaukee to Madison to Eau Claire, Eau Claire to St. Paul, Minn., and Chicago via La Crosse to St. Paul.

"Passenger rail helps people get to work and school safely, boosts tourism and recreation, and grows our local economies, and I am proud to deliver funding to help expand it in Wisconsin," Baldwin said. "I voted for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to move our economy forward and

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SEE **Passenger rail** ON PAGE 7



Baldwin



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Local officers engage in holiday help

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The holiday season is considered a time for giving and Neenah Police Department officers are giving out more than speeding tickets.

This time of year, police hand out gift cards, teddy bears, blankets and hats to those in need. The gift cards come from the Police Lights of Christmas program.

Police Lights of Christmas was started by Q90FM out of Green Bay in 2016. Throughout the year, police agencies participate in fundraisers culminating in an annual event at Lambeau Field where each department receives gift cards and backpacks to hand out in their community.

This year's event was held Nov. 27 and hosted by the Green Bay Packers. One thousand backpacks and \$187,000 in gift cards were handed off to 70 participating law enforcement agencies across the state during the event.

Neenah community policing coordinator Joe Benoit said each shift is allocated a certain amount of cards to hand out while on patrol. They include prepaid Visas and Walmart, Kwik Trip and Culver's gift cards, among others.

"It's just another tool on the tool belt for that officer if they're on a call, if they come across somebody that's fallen upon hard times or are having a really tough situation," he said.

Residents without food and those who can't afford to purchase Christmas presents for their children are examples of some in the community to whom police give the cards.

"Somebody put tires on their vehicle one time because they couldn't get back



Photo from Neenah Police Department
Packers quarterback Jordan Love meets with Neenah Police Chief Aaron Olson (from left), community policing coordinator Joe Benoit and Assistant Police Chief Jeff Bernice at Lambeau Field during the annual Police Lights of Christmas program.

and forth to work because their tires were so bald, you know, things like that," Benoit explained.

Police also give away teddy bears, blankets and hats that were donated by Shirley and Albert Schmidt of Kaukauna.

Benoit said for years the Schmidts donated to the Kaukauna and Fox Valley Metro Police and in recent years began donating to other departments, including Neenah, Menasha, Fox Crossing and Appleton.

"We're given these boxes and boxes of winter hats and blankets and teddy bears and it's just for the betterment of the community," Benoit said. "They recognize

law enforcement as being out there in the community dealing with all different types of situations, different dynamics within families and all that."

Benoit said he brings some of the hats and bears to the crossing guards he supervises.

"I say, 'When you see a kid without a hat, here's a stack of hats, keep them in your vehicle and you can hand out a hat or a teddy bear,'" he said. "We have the ability to really get those out and these things help build up that trust within the communities and between the kids and the police, which is a very important thing."

Call center, land information funding awarded

The state Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) announced 19 grant projects last week totaling \$5,611,235 in state funding to local public safety answering points (PSAPs) across Wisconsin, including \$25,692 for the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.

PSAP funding will be used for projects related to equipment upgrades, advanced training necessary for Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) implementation and PSAP consolidation. A PSAP is a type of call center where public telephone calls for first responders are received and handled.

The 2024 PSAP Grant Program state grant was authorized with funds allocated to the state Department of Military Affairs from the Wisconsin Police and Fire Protection Fund.


The OEC also awarded 28 grant projects totaling \$1,458,838 to local county land information offices, including \$65,204 for Winnebago County.

Funding will be used for various projects related to geographic information systems (GIS) data creation, preparation, and remediation activities necessary for enabling NG9-1-1.

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Retail theft ring case includes drug charges

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The girlfriend and mother of a Neenah man identified as part of a statewide retail theft ring are now facing drug charges stemming from a search warrant executed at a Marathon Avenue duplex in October.

Brandon Reilly, 30, is facing 12 felonies in five counties for theft, fleeing and eluding and bail jumping. His girlfriend, Jade Sprang, 30, of Neenah, and Alan Ritchie, 28, of Menasha, are also facing felony charges in three counties as part of a retail theft ring targeting Walmart locations across the state.



Reilly

Reilly is accused of stealing a \$100 bottle of alcohol from a Neenah business on Aug. 11. On Aug. 15, Reilly was involved in a pursuit with Oshkosh and Grand Chute police, and Winnebago County sheriff's deputies. Three days later he was involved in a pursuit with Neenah police where he reached speeds of 75 miles per hour in a 25 mph zone.



Sprang

Reilly and Sprang were on bail for charges of theft by false representation in Adams County from last year when they were accused of retail theft from a Fond du Lac Walmart location Sept. 20. Four days later, Reilly, Sprang and Ritchie are accused of stealing about \$2,000 worth of merchandise from a Manitowoc Walmart and fleeing the scene. On Sept. 27, the trio targeted a Dane County location.

All three parties were arrested in Neenah by the U.S. Marshals Service-Great Lakes Fugitive Task Force on Sept. 28. On Oct. 3, police executed a search warrant in the 1900 block of Marathon Ave at a side-by-side duplex occupied on one side by Reilly and on the other by his mother, Julie Pupp.

During the search, a black bag was

New leadership program offered

The Fox Cities Chamber will be the first in Wisconsin to offer Leader Lab: Linking Organizational Culture and Leadership.

The program will be facilitated by Amy Schanke, director of Leadership Fox Cities, and designed to impact leaders at all levels and across all industries. It comprises a combination of seven in-person sessions and a series of short video modules. Videos will be watched in class as well as in between classes then discussed at the in-person sessions.

Topics will include mission, culture and excellence; growth; high standards; dealing with duds; decision making; dealing with conflict and fun in the workplace.

Classes will be held at the Fox Cities Chamber in Appleton from 8 to 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays: Feb. 8 and 22, March 14 and 28, April 11 and 25, and May 9. The program is being offered at an introductory cost of \$350, and registration is limited. More information is at foxcitieschamber.com/leader-lab and registration deadline is Jan. 8.

found in Reilly's residence that contained 17 grams of cocaine, \$7,900 cash and wallets with credit cards, drivers licenses and insurance cards with Pupp's name on them.

Pupp allegedly admitted to police that the cocaine belonged to her and her husband. She said she keeps the cocaine and money at Reilly's house so that her husband will not use it all. She was charged with a felony count of possession with intent to deliver cocaine.

At some point Sprang exited the home and was taken into custody. Found in her pocket was three grams of meth. She is facing a felony possession of methamphetamine charge stemming from that incident, party to the crime of theft by false representation in Adams County, retail theft as party to the crime in Dane County, and in Manitowoc County she's been charged with retail theft and bail jumping.

Ritchie has been charged in Dane County with retail theft as party to the crime, two counts of retail theft and bail jumping in Fond du Lac County, and retail theft and bail jumping in Manitowoc County.

Reilly is facing two felony retail theft and two felony bail jumping charges in Fond du Lac; one felony retail theft charge in Dane; one felony fleeing and eluding, felony bail jumping and misdemeanor retail theft charge in Winnebago; one felony bail jumping and felony retail theft charge in Manitowoc; one felony theft by false representation and two felony bail jumping charges in Adams County.



Submitted photo

Tree teamwork

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 33, including (from left) Char Kiesling, Patti Julius and Toni Schinke, assembled and decorated the Christmas tree at Neenah City Hall last week with the help of Mayor Jane Lang.

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State loans available for housing in commercial spaces

By Dan Roherty
NEENAH NEWS

Two new state loan programs announced last week will be drawing the interest of developers and municipalities interested in creating more residential housing options in commercial building spaces.

Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) unveiled two new loan programs – Restore Main Street and Vacancy-to-Vitality – now available and expected to spur the development of affordable housing units.

The approved 2023-25 biennial budget provides one of the largest state investments in workforce housing – \$525 million – in state history, including measures to fund the Main Street Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund and Loan Program, now called Restore Main Street, and Commercial-to-Housing Conversion Revolving Loan Fund and Loan Program, now called Vacancy-to-Vitality. Both programs were created this year as part of a bipartisan package of bills Evers signed.

Jennifer Sunstrom of the region's Housing Now Coalition said her group advocated strongly for the programs that will require quick coordination between business owners and local governments to clear any hurdles the projects may face while seeking the loans.

"There's not a silver bullet here, but they are definitely going to be helpful," said Sunstrom, who is also government affairs direc-

tor for the Realtors Association of Northeast Wisconsin. "One of the things that our organization is going to be doing is making sure that local units of government are aware that the grants are available."

The Restore Main Street Loan Program provides loan funding for building owners to cover costs to improve housing on the second or third floors of an existing building with commercial space on the ground level. Borrowers can apply for up to \$20,000 per housing unit, or 25 percent of the total rehabilitation cost, at a low-interest rate of 3% or 1% in municipalities with a population of fewer than 10,000.

The Vacancy-to-Vitality Loan Program allows a developer to apply for a loan to cover the costs of converting a vacant commercial building to workforce or senior housing. Developers can apply for up to \$1 million (20%) of the total project cost, including land at a low-interest rate of 3% or 1% in municipalities with a population below 10,000 or senior housing.

"Together, these new programs give us even more opportunities to add much-needed affordable housing in both urban and rural areas of our state that are desperate for safe, stable homes for working individuals, families and seniors," said WHEDA executive director Elmer Moore Jr.

Municipalities are required to take steps to reduce the cost of the eligible project by voluntarily revising ordinances or regulations that affect the project on or after Jan. 1, 2023. Municipalities are also required to have updated the housing element of their comprehensive plans within five years.

Neenah's director of community development Chris Haese said the city was excited to learn of the two new programs as housing

– especially affordable housing – is an ongoing challenge in the city as with most other communities.

"Neenah and our development partners are closely reviewing both programs to better understand the opportunities they provide and how the community can leverage their potential to help with the housing needs of our city," Haese said.

Sunstrom said it's a revolving loan so not everyone is going to get one the first time around but applicants will be able to show the demand is there and can help keep the program going beyond the two-year budget approval.

"This is open across the entire state so we have a lot of communities with their downtown main streets with these residential properties above commercial areas that are really in need of some TLC, and will be applying for these grants," she said. "(Applicants) are going to have to really be almost ready right now in filling out those grant applications and getting them in."

The Vacancy-to-Vitality program promoting commercial space conversions will be the more challenging of the two programs that will need some "capital stack-

ing" with other federal or local grants, Sunstrom expects, with higher development costs along with zoning and location considerations.

"It's going to take everybody working together to be aware of the grants and what the possibilities are," she said. "It's going to take people who have some knowledge base on how the grant works to help people get those filled out and submitted."

The Housing Now Coalition is composed of stakeholders from real estate, builder associations, chambers of commerce and other development interests trying to raise awareness of the housing crisis and advocate for solutions. It recently launched a 12-week public education campaign called Say Yes to Housing.

Sunstrom said the coalition will be focusing on millennials who are struggling to achieve home ownership.

"More than anything we're trying to get information out there to make people aware of issues and problems, but also make them aware of resources – try to do some match-making."

Additional information about the loan programs is on the WHEDA website.

Hot meal, shared activity offered weekly

First Presbyterian Church at 200 Church St. in downtown Neenah hosts Wednesday Evening Boost (WEB) every Wednesday from 5:30 to 7 p.m. that is open to all "who are seeking to be fed physically or spiritually, or both," according to the Rev. Laurie Lyter Bright.

WEB events begin with a hot meal followed by a group activity, then a 15-minute worship service in the church's chapel. Activities for each week may include mak-

ing a recipe, crafting an art project or writing cards of gratitude.

WEB guests enter the main doors under the entrance at Church Street and West Doty Street, then left down the hall to Fellowship Hall. Nursery care services are provided.

There is no cost to participate in WEB but reservations are appreciated to help with meal planning. Call 920-725-4391 or email firstpresneenah@firstpresneenah.org.

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N-M Fire Rescue among tops in Wisconsin for safety rating

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue recently achieved the highest fire-protection rating nationally, joining nine other departments in Wisconsin that have achieved the ISO Class 1 designation.

ISO stands for Insurance Services Office, the agency that reviews and rates the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of communities across the United States. The agency uses a classification rating from 1 to 10, with Class 1 the highest attainable level.

Fire Chief Kevin Kloehn, who has led the department since 2016 and is retiring, told the Common Council last week that achieving the prestigious ranking has always been a goal and is one of his top accomplishments.

"I just remember moving up the ranks and when you got to be in a community that had a Class 1 fire department, it was just something about that department that you knew had their stuff together," he said.

Audits are conducted every five years or upon request of the department. Kloehn said he requested audits frequently, with three conducted in his seven years there. At each audit Kloehn said the department would gain a few points and improve, most recently achieving a Class 2 rating and about seven points away from the top rating.

"When our auditor came through back in, I think it was February or March ... we asked him to sit down with us and literally go line by line, like what do we need to do? What can we improve?" he said.

Water Utility directors Anthony Mach and Adam Smith of Neenah and Menasha, respectively, joined in the discussions.

"Both Tony and Adam went right to work," Kloehn said. "I mean, they were exchanging figures and numbers and tower capacities and all that water lingo and did testing."

Kloehn said the water directors' work was just part of the process, with half the rating based directly on the department.

"And that's staffing, it's equipment, it's response times, it's training, it's public education and all those sectors are broken down into like 10 categories," he said.

Receiving the letter informing him that the department achieved the Class 1 ranking, which goes into effect March 1, was an early Christmas present.

"It was just the teamwork," he said. "It was incredible how everybody kind of rallied together like this is, you know, this is our chance to do this."

About 1% of the 800 fire departments in Wisconsin are Class 1, and about 500 departments have achieved the ranking nationwide.

So what does it mean?

"Well, for me, it means pride in what we do and why we do it for the community," Kloehn said.

But even more, it means residents and businesses in Neenah and Menasha may be eligible for improved insurance rates starting next spring. The ISO ranking is also considered attractive for economic development.

"Communities with Class 1 rating are often viewed favorably by businesses, insurers and investors, as creating a positive environment for economic growth," Kloehn wrote in a press release.

He said the rating means the city has provided the community with the best equipment and the best training and it can help with recruiting firefighters.



Neenah News

Outgoing Fire Chief Kevin Kloehn helped earn Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue a top insurance rating.

Mayor Jane Lang noted Kloehn was recently recognized by the Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association as fire chief of the year.

"I just am incredibly proud of him for what he has contributed to this community," she said. "His leadership, his dedication and commitment is exemplary, so I just wanted to thank him for all that he's done."

Kloehn retires in early January and will be succeeded by Travis Teesch. Last week's meeting was his final opportunity to speak to the council in his official position.

"I just want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your chief and I loved every minute of it," he said. "I've learned so much being a chief."



Neenah Police Department photo

Police personnel were sworn in and promoted in a ceremony last week at Neenah City Hall.

Officers join force, others promoted

Neenah News

The Neenah Police Department swore in five new officers and promoted seven other law enforcement personnel at a swearing-in ceremony held Dec. 6 at the regular Common Council meeting.

New police officers joining the force are Trevor Jensen, Brent Wittman, Travis Koponen, Jennifer Priessnitz and Bryce Moeller.

Officer Austin Riska was promoted to crime analyst/investigator, Officer Adam Streblow to patrol sergeant, Sgt. Sam Santiago to patrol lieutenant, investigative Sgt. Jeremy Bauman to patrol lieutenant, patrol Lt. Jason Goetz to professional standards lieutenant, Officer Josh Peterson to behavioral health officer and Officer Erica Geschrei to school resource officer.

"I commend each of you for taking the challenge whether it's police officer, police patrol investigator, sergeant and lieutenant," Police Chief Aaron Olson told

the group at the ceremony. "You will face doubters. Put in the work and prove them wrong. You will make mistakes and that's OK. Learn from them, grow from them and be an all-around better person."

Neenah Mayor Jane Lang added that "this is always one of the most pride inspiring things that happens within these walls."

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Neenah News

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue's Santa Float closes out its holiday tour tonight in Neenah.

Santa Float completing its annual visits

Neenah News

The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue's Santa Float will make its final rounds for the holiday season in Neenah this evening.

Santa and his helpers will visit homes in the area of Mulberry Lane, Breezewood Lane and Tullar Road before returning to the North Pole.

The Santa Float has a long history of bringing holiday cheer to Neenah and Menasha neighborhoods since the 1950s. Operated by off-duty firefighters from Local 275 who volunteer their time to help Santa make his rounds, all costs associated with the float are covered by donations to the Neenah-Menasha Firefighter's Local

275 Charitable Foundation.

This year the foundation raised \$85,000 to complete a new Santa float that features a screen display, realistic reindeer, music synchronized with lights, snow floating through the air and houses with smoke billowing from the chimneys.

The float began its rounds Dec. 4 in Menasha, making a visit to the tree lighting in that city Dec. 7 before moving to neighborhoods in the Neenah area from Dec. 8-15. Families camped out in front of homes to watch for Santa, listening for the holiday music signifying his arrival.

A list of spots to see Santa tonight and a map to track the float in real time are available at nmfire.org/santa-float.

Chamber names Lifetime Achievement Award winners

Neenah News

The Fox Cities Chamber has announced the recipients of its 2023 Lifetime Achievement Awards that recognize individuals who embrace principled leadership, strategic thinking, balanced workplace values and a pursuit of excellence.

David G. Voss Jr., president and CEO of Miron Construction, was named the winner of the Gus A. Zuehlke Distinguished Service Award. Voss has co-lead Miron Construction since 1977 and plays a significant role in Miron's family-focused culture for its 1,700 employees. He also assists organizations that support the health and wellbeing of children in the community, such as Rawhide Youth Services, United Way and St. Mary Catholic Schools.



Voss

Mary Beth Nienhaus, philanthropist and retired physical education teacher and coach, will receive the Joyce Bytof Exceptional Mentor Award. During her career, Nienhaus coached 50 high school varsity golf, basketball and volleyball teams. Outside of school, she spent more than 50 years as a LPGA professional. Nienhaus has served on the board of directors and in leadership positions for many nonprofit groups.



Nienhaus

Maiyoua Khang Thao, entrepreneur and small business owner, was named winner of the Athena Leadership Award. Thao, along with her husband, is co-owner of Thao Enterprises, Thao Management Group, Long Cheng Senior Center, Long Cheng Marketplace and ABC Staffing. She is also the president of the Long Cheng Community Center. She was the first Hmong American woman to win a city council seat for Appleton, and she stayed on the council for two consecutive terms. Other community involvement includes work with the Wisconsin Hmong Chamber of Commerce, 9to5 Wisconsin, Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual



Thao

Assistance Association, New North, Kiwanis Kids and Cops Reading Program.

The Business Hall of Fame Award is presented to a retired individual or individuals who have demonstrated personal and business success and are role models for future generations. This year's winners are Bob DeKoch.

Bob DeKoch, past president of The Boldt Co.; and Mike Weller, chief executive of Mike Weller & Associates; are receiving the Business Leader Hall of Fame Award.

DeKoch has mentored hundreds of aspiring leaders and has more than four decades of experience across major market sectors including the construction services and real estate development business, the pulp and paper industry, the beverage industry, and the chemical industry. Other community involvement includes work with the Building for Kids, and Lawrence University's President's Advisory Council.



DeKoch

Weller was employed for 34 years at Miller Electric, 20 of those years as president. After his retirement in 2015, he launched Mike Weller & Associates to share his executive experience and improve talent strategies and organizational performance. He has been involved in the Boys & Girls Club, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center as board chair, Green Bay Packers board of directors, ThedaCare board of directors, Habitat for Humanity, Fox Valley Technical College and Riverview Gardens. He also served on the Ariens and Amerequip board, and currently serves on the Great Northern & CK boards.



Weller

The individuals will be honored at Celebrate: A Toast to 150 set for Jan. 16 at Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel in Neenah.

Highlights include a cocktail hour with music by saxophonist Michael Prusinsky, a new dinner show about the history of the Fox Cities performed by Let Me Be Frank, a toast to the 150th anniversary and a silent auction.

General admission is \$150 for Fox Cities Chamber members and \$175 for non-members.



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Passenger rail

FROM PAGE 1

get Wisconsinites where they need to go efficiently and safely, and I am excited to see these plans for passenger rail move forward.”

Amtrak currently operates a bus line between Green Bay and Milwaukee. When speaking about that route for rail service, Baldwin said, “(it) will extend the popular Hiawatha Service along one of the most densely populated transportation corridors in the state and will build

upon successful intercity bus service that currently operates two round trips per day between Milwaukee and Green Bay.”

Paul Rueff, municipal and legislative liaison for NEW Rails, a passenger train advocacy group in Northeast Wisconsin, said the funding approval partially stems from the mayors of Neenah, Menasha, Oshkosh, Appleton, Fond du Lac and Green Bay signing a letter last December asking the Federal Railroad Administration to be a part of the Corridor ID program.

“These funds will help plan for the trains coming through the Fox Valley,”

Rueff said, adding there are tracks that Amtrak can use that already link Green Bay and Milwaukee.

The state Department of Transportation will use the federal funds to study where train stops will be placed, how frequently the trains will be in service and a time schedule.

Laura Wiegert, executive vice president of marketing and events for the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, said adding rail service to Green Bay through the Fox Cities will help grow the local economy.

“With this new Green Bay route, the Fox Cities (and Oshkosh) could be a stop along the corridor and connect us to other hubs around the state. Being on this new travel route not only provides a convenient, economical and environmentally friendly alternative to driving, it offers

another tool in our toolchest for attracting and retaining talent, connecting businesses, promoting tourism and adding resiliency to our transportation system,” Wiegert said.

Rueff said this is the first phase of the project that will continue for all of 2024. There will be a public comment period hosted by the DOT when people can have their voice heard on the expanding rail service plan.

The second phase would be about funding when the DOT will submit the final submissions to the Federal Railroad Administration. This will include potential sites for the new train stations in Green Bay, Appleton, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac.

“Now is the time to do this for the region and the state,” Rueff said.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Jolly old visit

Santa visits with children during the Bergstrom Paper Co. Christmas party in 1957.

Business news roundup

Volatus Infrastructure & Energy Solutions has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ResilienX to collaborate on their electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) vertiport project at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh. Neenah-based VI&E Solutions will engage ResilienX in providing their Fraihmwork solution as its in-time avia-

tion safety management system and has developed a platform around fault tolerance, safety assurance and maintenance of complex systems of systems. As vertiports move toward becoming more like a standard airport, that will include battery charging, surveillance, comms, weather sensors, networking equipment and digital infrastructure.

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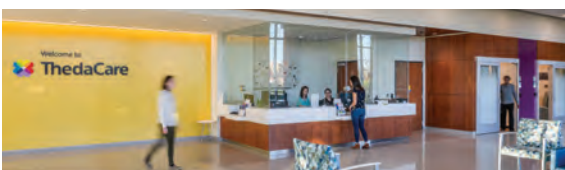
Improved emergency efficiency with updates to the area’s only Level II Trauma Center.

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What you're serving your beer in makes a difference

Sad note before we begin: Barrel 41 Brewing Company announced that they're closing. An impressive five-year run by this Neenah brewery will end Dec. 31. Please stop in for a final brew (or two) and let them know that they'll be missed. Thank you, Barrel 41, for all you've done for our beer-loving community.

Husband: I used to think that all the fancy beer glassware I've seen is just silly. Why all of those different glasses? Beer drinkers aren't hoity-toity wine connoisseurs.

Wife: I drank wine and cocktails before I found good beer, so I've always appreciated glassware.

H: After decades of beer enjoyment, you and I have collected nearly every beer glass you can imagine.

W: I like that we can come close to replicating great beer drinking at home and have some merch from our favorite places.

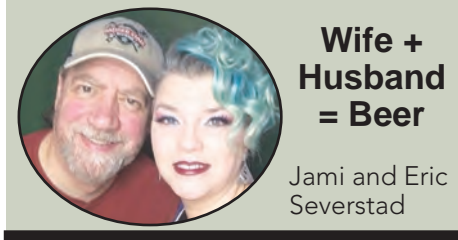
H: Speaking of favorite places, during Badger State Brewing's 10th anniversary last weekend, I had a great discussion with Andrew, one of the founders. He shared that during a recent multicourse dinner, each course featured a different beer to match that food item, and each was served in a different glass.

W: That's dedication. It showcases the beer as much as the food.

H: Interesting point. So, how much of glassware is for show, and how much does glassware affect the drinker's experience?

W: Well, before tasting a beer, the aroma sets you up. A glass that lets you inhale deeply primes you for a first taste.

H: Some beers naturally have more complexity, both in aroma and taste. You want to accentuate that complexity, if possible.



Wife + Husband = Beer

Jami and Eric Severstad

W: The same goes for the temperature of the beer. With some glasses, it's natural to hold it so your hand is warming it up, others intentionally keep your hand away from the liquid.

H: Okay, temperature ... iced mug or no?

W: No way! I tend to like my beers warmer than they're usually served. So, an iced mug makes the beer take even longer to warm up and let the flavors open up.

H: I appreciate the value of a cold glass of beer, but the ice crystals take the taste away from what the brewer intended. Plus, super cold beer numbs your taste buds.

W: Yep, it's like putting an ice cube in a beer. Maybe some subpar beers are best consumed that way; to hide off flavors.

H: Then, why bother? Life's too short, so drink something good.

W: Letting a beer warm up does help flavors come out, especially strong and bold beers.

H: Some glasses help make that happen. Snifters and goblets are made for that. A wide base and short stem make it easy to hold the glass and swirl the beer. Barley-wines, stouts, Belgian ales ... and your favorite: porter.

W: Earlier, you mentioned last weekend at Badger State. I ordered two beers when we got there; one I drank right away and the other — a stout — I let sit and warm



Breweries and taverns select beer glassware based on many factors: drinker experience, beer style, convenience, durability and more.

up. So, why are there so many glassware styles?

H: You have to go back to where beer began. The cultures of many European countries take pride in having distinguishing glassware to set themselves apart.

W: Pint glasses are classic in British pubs, and German beer culture is known for steins.

H: The pint glass is America's go-to glassware. Also called mixing glasses or shakers, these became popular because of their utility: they're stackable, easy to clean, and durable. Plus, many different beers taste great from a pint glass.

W: They're inexpensive to make, and there's plenty of room for a big logo. All practical reasons.

H: Some tall glasses, such as a pilsner glass, allow you to see the carbonation in action, with bubbles rising to the top.

W: So, not only do they look elegant, if that's what you're going for, the gradual taper adds to a smooth drinking experience.

H: Mugs and steins are similar to each other, although steins often have a cover. These are heavy and tough; good ones to crash together when offering a toast.

W: This reminds me: we should mention the alternatives to glass. Terracotta is the oldest perhaps, and there's wood and metal. Although the party-favorite red cup

is so ubiquitous in the U.S., plastic would be my last choice.

H: Nearly 10 years ago, New Glarus Brewing designed their own signature beer glass. It's designed for you to hold it near the bottom, so your hand doesn't warm the beer, and inside the glass at the bottom, it has a laser engraving of the state of Wisconsin.

W: Oooo, fancy lasers!

H: It's not just for show, though. The dissolved carbon dioxide collects at that point and forms bubbles that stream up. It's nucleation, and it increases aroma and emphasizes the flavor profile.

W: When breweries offer flights — small (4- to 5-ounce) samples of several beers on a tray or wooden plane — the glassware is kept simple and the same for all beer styles, mostly for ease of cleaning and replacement.

H: You also see smaller tasting glasses at festivals and brewery special events like beer schools. Collect those for home tastings that you host. It's more about convenience than matching to specific beer styles.

W: It feels like a lifetime ago, but the social aspect of a "boot" of beer was completely acceptable. Pre-COVID, we'd pass

SEE **Beer glassware** ON PAGE 9

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Calendar of events

Ongoing

Gingerbread Scavenger Hunt, downtown Neenah, through Dec. 17

Friday, Dec. 15

Live nativity scene, 5 p.m., Congregational United Church of Christ, 1511 Nicolet Blvd.

Saturday, Dec. 16

Lunch with the Grinch & Buddy the Elf, 11 a.m., Batley's Grill & Bar, 1010 Cameron Way

Sunday, Dec. 17

Encore! Handbell Ensemble, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Blue Christmas Service, 3 p.m., Congregational United Church of Christ, 1511 Nicolet Blvd.

Saturday, Dec. 23

Horace Greene and Traveling Suitcase, 8 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.



Photo courtesy of New Glarus Brewing

Some breweries design a unique glass to enhance the drinking experience of their beers while also selling more collectible swag.

Beer glassware

FROM PAGE 8

it around, all drink out of the same boot, and make a game out of it. The next to the last one to finish the boot must buy the next round.

H: I rarely see a yard of ale anymore, too. It had its own wooden stand because of the bulb at the bottom, and you rotate it as you drink to avoid splashing right?

W: Any drinking vessel that requires a

trick to enjoy beer, that's not for me. As much as beer is a social lubricant, people seem to want their own glassware these days.

H: Now that you have ideas for beer glassware, give a special gift to the beer drinker you love.

W: Happy holidays to you, however you celebrate. We'll see you at Barrel 41 before the end of the year. Cheers!

What beer-related topic should we cover in W+H=B? Email us: wife.husband.beer@gmail.com.



Neenah News

Neenah Community Band director Matthew Thiel speaks to the Neenah High School audience during the group's holiday concert Sunday.

Community Band plays into holiday season

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Booming horns, the clash of percussion and the sweet trill of flutes filled the Neenah High School auditorium during the Neenah Community Band's festive holiday concert last Sunday.

Directed by Matthew Thiel, about 65 community instrumentalists of all skill levels performed holiday classics such as "Sleigh Ride," "Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and "Silent Night," and some special pieces including "Caccia and Chorale," "Ayo" and "One Life Beautiful."

"It means the world to have you all here," Thiel told the audience. "This is what we work for."

Partway through the concert, the play-

ers and director donned holiday headpieces, adding to the Christmas ambiance. Those in attendance were encouraged to sing along during parts of one song.

The band is composed of volunteers from ages 16 to 89 and supported by the Neenah Parks and Recreation Department and Neenah Joint School District.

The band collected free-will donations during the event, which cover expenses and go toward the band's scholarship fund.

"One hundred percent of your donation goes to support music and arts, but half gets invested right back into students here in the community," Thiel said.

The next chance to hear the band play is at the March 24 spring concert in the high school auditorium.

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Animal shelters

FROM PAGE 1

ity, with 203 animals in its care as of Tuesday. Of that number, 159 are cats with 50 available for adoption, 50 in the pre-adoption process and 59 in foster homes.

Unforgettable Underdogs operates a local foster-based rescue with a capacity of 25 dogs. President Erika Berge said the organization would need hundreds of families to foster to keep up with the number of dogs being surrendered.

Both NAS and OAHS have a waiting list for owners to surrender animals. NAS executive director Cindy Flauger said it's possible the owner of the kittens abandoned last month may have called to surrender them and was turned away.

"We've gotten calls from the Madison area, the Milwaukee area; people are trying but right now we can't even manage the population we have," she said.

OAHS president Ieva Engel said the organization works to try to keep pets and owners together.

"We work with them on different solutions," she said. "They may think surrender is the only option when in reality it isn't."

But when people are insistent on surrendering, she said OAHS tries its best not to turn people away.

NAS is telling people to try to self-rehome animals, suggesting websites homehome.org and rehome.adoptpet.com.

Berge said those who self-rehome should evaluate prospective owners by

completing a background check, calling their veterinary office, checking with references and doing a meet-and-greet with them and their family.

Abandoning an animal comes with risks. Flauger said unsecured animals may run away and in winter it's common for cats to seek shelter under vehicles, which can harm or kill them.

"If we don't find them quickly enough their temperatures can drop very quickly, especially kittens, and that becomes deadly for them," she said.

That's what happened at OAHS last year when seven cats were left in carriers in freezing conditions in an adjacent parking lot. By the time staff found them, all had perished.

"It was very sad for the staff, I mean, they are there to help the animals and take care of the animals and not being able to help, it was quite traumatizing," Engel said.

In situations where a person feels compelled to abandon a pet, Engel said it's important not to shame them.

"In reality, none of the folks want to leave their animal outside and just abandon it," she said. "I would imagine that they're feeling very desperate that they may not be thinking of all the different options, that they may not have utilized all of the different options, but I definitely think it's an act of desperation."

Flauger shared that sentiment.

"We don't know what their circumstances were," she said. But she noted there isn't an easy solution.

Both directors said expanding access to community resources such as spay and



Neenah Animal Shelter photo
Three kittens were found abandoned outside of the Neenah Animal Shelter recently.

neuter services would help reduce the pet population. OAHS occasionally offers its parking lot for a mobile spay and neuter clinic operated by Underdog Pet Rescue. Pet owners interested in the low-cost spay, neuter or other vet services can inquire at mobilevetcare@underdogpets.org.

OAHS has had success with a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program, where feral cats are spayed or neutered and returned to an outdoor environment. The organization provided spay and neuter services to 200 cats through the program this year.

Engel said there is evidence that TNR programs reduce the overpopulation of cats. However, Neenah ordinance prohibits allowing animals to run at large in the city, eliminating the possibility of a TNR program.

Both NAS and OAHS offer a working cat program where spayed and neutered cats are placed in an outdoor setting such as a barn, horse stable, warehouse, garage or garden shed.

Both shelters also offer a foster program, which helps free up some space. Flauger said implementing a short-term

foster program to provide temporary care for pets owned by people experiencing a medical or other emergency could be beneficial.

Engel added that microchipping helps reunite lost pets with owners, which also helps reduce the number of homeless pets.

NAS is moving to a new larger location next summer and hopes to be able to accommodate more cats, but Flauger said there just aren't enough homes to keep up with all the animals in need.

While both NAS and OAHS are no-kill shelters, meaning healthy, treatable animals are not euthanized for any reason including length of stay or capacity, the unfortunate side effect is that people rehoming pets may be turned away.

Residents can help by opening their homes to an adoptable pet, fostering an animal, volunteering and donating. Both shelters have a wish list on their respective websites for items they're in need of.

If someone feels their only option is to abandon an animal, Flauger suggested they talk to shelter staff.

"We have long conversations with people and ask them what they have tried, are there family members who can take them, can we give them resources for self-rehoming," she said.

While hearing about an abandoned pet can elicit strong emotions, Flauger believes compassion is the best response.

"We all say, 'How can you surrender a family member?' but sometimes people are making tough choices," she said.

Engel said OAHS will continue to help in any way it can.

"In the end, we're hoping that all these animals, that they do make their way to us and that we're helping as much as we can, just to avoid situations where animals are just set loose," she said.

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Photo by Dustin Riese

St. Mary Catholic's Emily Vogel brings the ball upcourt against pressure during Tuesday's game against Mishicot.

Zephyrs remain unbeaten with win over rival Mishicot

By Dustin Riese
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

St. Mary Catholic's girls basketball team remained undefeated and got a little bit of payback in the process Tuesday night.

Facing the team that beat them in the sectional finals last season, the Zephyrs came in focused and rolled up a 63-47 victory over Mishicot in a Big East North contest at home.

"I thought we played pretty well for the most part," Emily Vogel said. "Defensively, we could've been better at times, but we did pick things up as the game went on. Offensively, we did a great job of creating opportunities for outside shots and we were knocking them down all night."

Three straight 3-pointers from Sienna Anderson, Vogel and Lauren Ripley staked the Zephyrs to a 20-12 lead midway through the first half.

Mishicot answered by pounding the ball inside and rattled off a 6-0 run to cut the Zephyrs lead to two.

"A win is a win, but we can play better," St. Mary Catholic head coach Jeff Chew said. "We are a great defensive team when we can pressure the ball and at times we get away from that. We still did a lot of positive things out there and that is all you can ask for from one game to the next."

Leading 25-20 at the half, it was the second half when the action picked up as both teams continued to exchange buckets in the early going with Mishicot pulled within a point.



Photo by Dustin Riese

St. Mary Catholic's Audrey Norville looks to score around a Mishicot defender on Tuesday.

That's when the Zephyrs started cranking things up.

"We know the players we have on this team, and we try to create as much balanced scoring as possible," Chew said. "Emily and Audrey (Norville) are great players, but we need others who we can count on. Seeing more players step up and being able to play more off the bench is

SEE **Zephyrs win** ON PAGE 15

Prep sports roundup

BOYS WRESTLING

Fast start sparks Rockets to dual meet triumph

Neenah scored points in the first five weight classes and never trailed in collecting a 51-31 win in a Fox Valley Association dual meet last Thursday.

Declan Koch started the match with a pin at 144 pounds, followed by Jacob Herm's forfeit win. Jaden Reay added a pin at 157 pounds before Jaden Roth (165) and Miguel Mora (175) earned decision wins to give the Rockets a 24-0 lead.

Ligan Tessier (126), Dane Granditzke (132) and Landen Sheppard (138) ended the match with three straight pins for the Rockets.

Jaxon Ennis added a pin at 106 pounds, while Garrett Nedens added a decision win at 113 pounds.

SWIMMING

Rockets swim past Appleton North/East

Julian Kuehn and Joshua Youngwerth finished 1-2 in a pair of events and Neenah collected an easy 127-53 win in a Fox Valley Association dual meet Tuesday night.

Kuehn won both the 100-yard freestyle and 200-yard freestyle, while Youngwerth took second in both events.

Neenah also grabbed the top three places in the 200-yard individual medley with Tanner Trustem, Gideon Benner and Marc Lefebber scoring for the Rockets.

Drew Gaerthofner picked up a pair of wins in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard butterfly, while Trustem added a second win for the Rockets in the 100-yard breaststroke. Other event winners for Neenah were Kyle Joneson in diving, Burke Wendell in the 500-yard freestyle and Ryker Zarda in the 100-yard backstroke.

Neenah also finished first in all three relay races.

Over the weekend, the Rockets finished second at the Terror Relays hosted by Ap-

pleton West.

Neenah posted wins in three different events on the day.

Gaerthofner, Trustem, Loudon and Lefebber won the 200-meter medley relay, while Gaerthofner, Wendell, Benner and Youngwerth took first place in the 400-meter freestyle relay. The Rockets also won the 200-meter breast/fly relay with a team of Gaerthofner, Zarda, Wendell and Loudon.

The Rockets added a second place in the 400-meter relay.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Two Rockets collect titles at Waunakee Invitational

Ashlynn Scheidermayer and Kyle Kurszewski each claimed individual titles to lead Neenah at the Waunakee Invitational on Saturday.

Scheidermayer went 4-1 to claim the 114-pound title. Scheidermayer registered four pins for her four wins and beat Mia Bilau of Fort Atkinson in 38 seconds in the championship match.

Kurszewski finished first at 120 pounds, registering three pins en route to the title. She beat Zoe Licht of Lodi in 59 seconds for her title.

Amari Richard picked up a second-place finish at 126 pounds, posting a 4-1 record with three pins, while Ava Armati finished 2-2 to take second at 138 pounds.

BOYS HOCKEY

Rockets score shutout win over Appleton United

Aaron Jacoby needed to make just 11 saves to secure the shutout for the Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha co-op hockey team in a 6-0 win over Appleton United on Tuesday night.

Ty Laabs scored a pair of goals about three minutes apart to open the scoring

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 15

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Rockets scratch out victory over pesky Fond du Lac

By Dustin Riese
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Being the top-ranked team in the state has its perks, but also comes with a ton of pressure as you will get everyone's best shot.

Neenah certainly saw that last Friday as the 1-5 Fond du Lac Cardinals gave them everything they could handle and more before the Rockets claimed a 52-45 win.

"Although I am happy with the win, we were not the crispest with our execution tonight," head coach Andy Braunel said. "Their record doesn't tell the whole story as they are not a 1-6 team. We knew that coming into this game and knew they had the potential to be a scary matchup for us."

Neenah wasn't able to get much of anything going offensively and trailed 5-0 early before a pair of Rowan Klesmit buckets made things 7-6.

Klesmit was crucial to the Rockets success throughout the game, but especially in the first half as she came away with 11 of the Rockets 23 points in that half as Neenah led by five at intermission..

"As a team, we know everyone is going to give us their best game so we just need to be prepared and ready to go," Klesmit said. "We are not going to have our best game all of the time and that was evident throughout the first half. The best part about this team is that we are a battle tested group and I feel we did a great job bat-

ting and grinding for 36 minutes."

The Cardinals pulled to within a point early in the second half but the Rockets were able to get things going after Rae Schultz and Kayla White managed to pick up a pair of baskets.

Klesmit and Allie Ziebell then combined for the next eight points as the Rockets opened their biggest lead of the night at 39-29.

A lot of those buckets came from an increase in defensive pressure, which is something Braunel and his staff pride themselves on.

"We are a pressure defense-oriented team, and we weren't getting through screens as well as we needed to be early on," Braunel said. "Once we managed to make a few adjustments, we got back to playing our style of defense, which led to some easy transition baskets to stretch the lead out a bit."

Fond du Lac got the deficit back down to 39-34 but that was as close as the Cardinals would get the rest of the way as the Rockets picked the perfect time to step up defensively and put together a nice little run.

Klesmit and her team-high 19 points played a part in that but her ability to play pressure defense to put the Cardinals in a tough position was equally as important as her offensive game. That led to an 8-0 run to stretch the Rockets' lead to 47-34 with White and Ellie Buss chipping in during that run.

"Knowing what Allie brings to the table, we also know there will be times when she doesn't have her best game," Klesmit said. "Recognizing that early on, you have to know your role as a player and need to step



Photo by Dustin Riese

Neenah's Ellie Buss (3) plays defense against a Fond du Lac player Friday.



Photo by Dustin Riese

Neenah's Rowan Klesmit looks to make a move around a Fond du Lac defender last Friday night.

up in situations like that. Allie didn't have her best game tonight, but finding ways to contribute on both ends of the floor is what I expect from myself as a player."

Ziebell was held without a point for the first nine minutes of the game and finished with a season-low 17 points. White chipped in eight points in the win.

"The best part about this team is having the number of kids that can step up and score," he said. "Allie is going to be Allie, but Fond du Lac did a great job keying in on her defensively. They made things difficult on her and Rowan and others did a great job taking advantage of that."

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Defense delivers as Rockets take down Cardinals

By Dustin Riese
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

The Neenah boys basketball team relied on its defense to set the tone and they did so with flying colors.

Even with leading scorer Brady Corso not having his best night when it comes to shooting the ball, it was the Rockets who did what they needed to do to pick up the 47-37 victory.

"Tonight had one of those old school, 1990s FVA feel to it," head coach Lee Rabas said. "I thought the kids did well overall and found ways to battle back. Fond du Lac is a very difficult team to guard as they have a ton of length and are extremely quick on the floor. They challenge you offensively, but we need to do a better job of execution on the offensive end."

Things got off to a slow start for both teams, and with Fond du Lac leading 8-2 in the early going the Rockets were searching for answers.

Those answers came late in the first half as the Rockets finally started to get things going offensively and took a narrow 20-19 lead into the locker room.

It was in the second half when the Rockets started to step up on both ends of the floor and were showing signs of snapping out of their early season offensive struggles.

Corso registered a pair of steals to begin the second half as he converted on the first one before finding Charlie Wunderlich on the second to extend the lead to 24-19. Another costly mistake by Fond du Lac resulted in another bucket by Justin Janssen on the inside as the Rockets extended their lead to 26-19.

"Corso didn't have his best night offensively, but he played great on defense," Rabas said. "Those steals to start the second half changed the momentum of the game and got us going. We found ways to get the lead up to multiple possessions, but couldn't seem to keep it that way until late. That is all part of the early season process



Photo by Dustin Riese

Senior Charlie Wunderlich brings the ball up the court against Fond du Lac last Friday. Wunderlich finished with a season-high 18 points in the Rockets win over the Cardinals.

and we will get to where we want to be. It just takes a bit of time."

The thing that stood out most about this game was seeing other guys step up in place of Corso.

One of those guys was Wunderlich, who led the way for Neenah. His ability to

move without the ball, to get into the lane and doing all of the little things was a huge factor for the Rockets and it was one of the reasons why their offense was much more consistent during the second half.

"We know Corso is going to get a ton of attention and will not always have his best game," Wunderlich said. "When that happens, I am ready to step up when the time is needed. Tonight was one of those nights where not only myself, but several guys needed to step up and we did."

Whenever it looked like the Rockets were about to pull away, the Cardinals found ways to battle back.

But when Corso hit a 3-pointer to put the Rockets up 37-34, Neenah was able to stay in front the rest of the way.

The Rockets defense stepped up at the perfect time and Neenah used that to outscore the Cardinals 13-3 down the stretch. Corso was responsible for four of those points, but Janssen, Wunderlich and Grant Dean all came away with points during that run that broke the game open and had the Rockets leading 45-34.

Still a work in progress offensively, Neenah is happy to get back to .500 and now it becomes a case of just chipping away at things one game at a time.

"We haven't started the way we wanted to this season, but there are several reasons for that," Wunderlich said. "Some guys are beat up from football, a lot of us are first-time varsity starters, and we just haven't been playing the best thus far. We can't use that as an excuse. We just need to come out and be ready to play. This makes two wins in a row for us and now it is about just chipping away and getting more wins."



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Mackenzie brings passion, talent to court, diamond

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

It's easy to see the passion that St. Mary Catholic's Fisher Mackenzie brings to the court.

The fist pumps and screams when he or a teammate hits a big shot or makes a big play. The energetic hand clapping for a key defensive stop and even the reaction when something doesn't go the Zephyrs way.

Mackenzie displays it all.

"Playing with passion is one of my biggest traits," Mackenzie said.

But passion doesn't necessarily put the ball in the basket and Mackenzie is awfully good at that, too.

Since arriving at St. Mary Catholic as a sophomore, Mackenzie

jumped right into the mix in the Zephyr program and played a key role in the team's run to the WIAA

State Tournament last season. The honorable mention all-Big East North selection averaged 12 points and a team-high seven rebounds per game last year and finished second on the team in 3-pointers made.

This year, Mackenzie has taken on an even bigger role for the Zephyrs this season and is aiming to lead the squad right back to the Kohl Center again.

"Fisher has got strong leadership qualities so we are looking for him to be a leader on the court," St. Mary Catholic head coach Paul Bradshaw said. "He carries that defense/rebounding/toughness factor for us and we need that. Fisher is a great leader and brings his toughness every day."

Mackenzie said that he learned a lot about leadership from watching last year's senior group and has tried to incorporate that into his approach this year.

"It's different for sure, stepping into a new role with the leadership. It's exciting. I think this team has a lot of potential and we can get right back to where we were last year," Mackenzie said. "(Last year's seniors) were definitely great role models for me. Just being leaders on and off the court, whether it was in the locker room or on the bus, they were always picking everybody up."

The new role for Mackenzie also comes with a new look.



Neenah News

St. Mary Catholic senior Fisher Mackenzie is a two-sport standout in basketball and baseball for the Zephyrs and played a key role in the team's run to the state tournament last winter.

Spurred by his commitment to play college baseball next year at Luther College, Mackenzie hit the weight room over the summer to add some noticeable muscle to his 6-foot-3 frame.

"I went on a little bit of a grind in the summer," Mackenzie said. "I'm playing college baseball and I wanted to start to get ready for that."

It should pay dividends on the basketball court as well.

"I talked with the coaches last year and obviously it was

a completely different role for me than last year. I will have a lot more opportunities to go inside and I needed to get stronger to do that," Mackenzie said. "So it was key for me to get bigger, more muscle."

Although capable of scoring inside, Mackenzie prefers to hang around the perimeter and knock down 3-pointers. He shot almost 35 percent from behind the arc last year, including a career-best seven treys in a win over Newman Catholic.

"I am a little more comfortable shooting the 3 but it's always good to get in the post, get a body on someone and get an and-one," Mackenzie said. "It electrifies the gym."

Being a two-sport standout at St. Mary Catholic has had many benefits for Mackenzie and it started with his transfer to the school.

Although he had reached out to some of the basketball players he would be teaming with during the summer, he had already shared the baseball field with a number of them and that helped what turned out to be an easy transition.

"I didn't play summer (basketball) league with them but I talked to the coaches that summer and a bunch of the players and I already had a bunch of friends here from baseball in the summer, so (the transition) was actually really easy. Everybody accepted me right away," said Mackenzie, who spent his freshman year at Lourdes Academy in Oshkosh. "There were some nerves, I guess. But it helped that I had the fall of the school year to get comfortable with the school and know the teachers before basketball."

Mackenzie also said that each sport carries something over into the other that helps him. He credits the strength and conditioning of basketball for bolstering his stamina on the mound and during games, while the mental focus it takes to play baseball is something that has benefitted him on the basketball court.

"You have to be really mentally strong to play baseball so coming into basketball it helps me not get down when I miss shots and being focused on the plays we run," Mackenzie said.

He also likens the feeling that shooters have when they are "in the zone" to being locked in as a pitcher on the mound.

"It's definitely the same feeling," Mackenzie said. "Whether you're dialed in pitching or shooting, you just go with it and you don't really look back."

SEE **Senior standout** ON PAGE 15

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Hockey!

How many silly things can you find in this hockey scene?



How many hockey pucks can you find on this page?

Standards Link: Physical Education: Understand the role of sport in a diverse world (e.g., the influence of professional sport in society).

European settlers in Canada developed the game of hockey as we know it today. The first rules of the game were published in a

PENSEWARP
Unscramble the answer!

Swish, click, swoosh. Swish, click. Click! Click! CLACK! "GOAL!"

These are the lively sounds of a hockey game!

Who were the first people to play hockey? No one knows for

sure. But for hundreds of years, kids have been sliding stones and other objects across ice with sticks and tree branches. Over the years, in different parts of Europe, a variety of games played on ice with sticks and sliding objects were created.

WHACK!

A hockey puck slammed into the article about pucks, scattering the letters a, b and c. Can you put them all back where they belong?

Ho_key pu_ks weren't _lw_ys m_de of _l_k ru__er like they _re tod_y. The e_rly pu_ks were pro__ly __lls, _ut other obje_ts, su_h_s stones, lumps of _o_l, or frozen _ow or horse poop were _lso used. Wooden pu_ks were used for m_ny ye_rs. Mothers sometimes put hot __ked pot_toes into their _hildren's sk_etes so th_t the sk_etes would _e_ozy _nd w_rm when the _hildren re__hed the rink or pond. The pot_toes were not thrown _w_y. They eventu_lly froze and were used _s pu_ks. Although ru__er w_s invented in 1939, it w_sn't until the l_te 1880s th_t someone thought of m_king ru__er pu_ks.

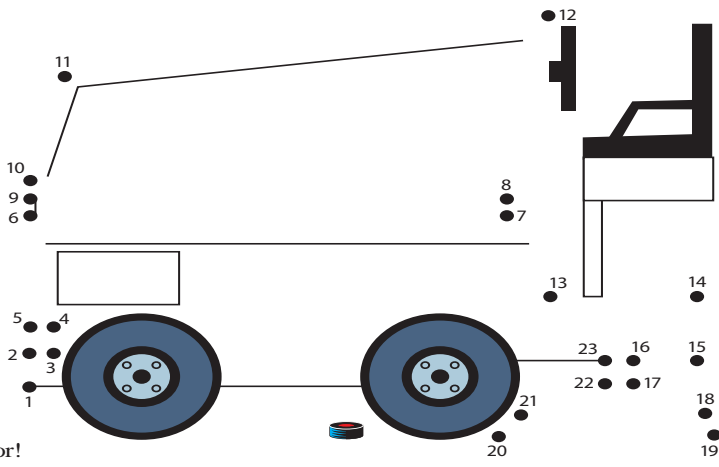
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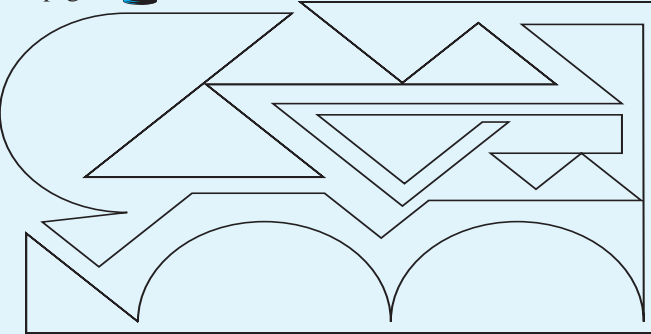
Extra! Extra! Hockey Words

Look through today's newspaper for words that go with the game of hockey. The words can be nouns, verbs or adjectives. Put the words in ABC order.

Standards Link: Grammar: Identify nouns, verbs and adjectives in writing. Spelling: Put words in alphabetical order.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Icy Art Can you redraw the pattern a skater left on the ice without crossing over any lines or removing your pencil from the page?



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Double Double Word Search

- HOCKEY
- STICKS
- PUCKS
- ZAMBONI
- PENCIL
- INVENTOR
- POTATOES
- COZY
- SKATES
- GAME
- RINK
- THIN
- FROZE
- POND
- COAL

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

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

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

Kid Scoop Together: Proof It!

Are you an eagle-eyed reader? Read the article below and circle the eight errors you find. Then rewrite it correctly on the lines below the article.

A Long Overtime

A hookey game is usually plays in three 20-minute periods.

But in the 1936 Stanley Cup between the montreal Maroons and the detroit Red Wings, the scorre was tied at the end of the three periods. The game goed into overtime.

The teams battled for 116 minute and 30 seconds before Detroit's Modere "Mud" Bruneteau scored the won goal in a 1-0 victory.

Handwritten lines for proofreading corrections.

Standards Link: Writing: Use strategies to edit written work.

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Write On! Hockey Happiness
Write an alliteration about ice hockey. Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words. Example: *Awesome ants always agitate!*

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