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School border updates get airing

Potential boundaries move with population

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

More than 100 people attended informational meetings last week on the Neenah Joint School District's plans to revise elementary school boundaries, possibly closing Hoover Elementary and impacting some students who would attend a different school next year.

The school district operates eight 4K through sixth-grade elementary schools and one charter school. The purpose of

changing the boundaries is to deal with population shifts, with Horace Mann only using about 60% of its capacity this year, Coolidge seeing decreases to about 83% of capacity and Lakeview currently over capacity by about 6%.

Students who may be affected by boundary changes include those attending Lakeview, Horace Mann and Coolidge, while students at Tullar and Hoover may also see changes.

The district is also considering changes to the number of sections in schools to make them all three or four sections, meaning three or four respective classes for each grade level. Clayton, Hoover and Taft currently operate as two-section schools, while Horace Mann operates as a three-section school.

Chad Buboltz, assistant district administrator of leadership and engagement, presented four boundary options at the meetings.

Under Option A, all schools would remain open in the 2024-25 school year. The



Buboltz

SEE **School maps** ON PAGE 7

INSIDE



Senior Standout

Rockets wrestler works way to success
Page 10

New leader

United Way Fox Cities names president
Page 3

Medical merger

ThedaCare, Froedtert finalize agreement
Page 8



Neenah News

Live nativity experience

Congregational United Church of Christ Neenah/Menasha on Doty Island hosted a live nativity scene recently where participants dressed in festive garb while displaying an account of Jesus' birth in the company of live animals.

Chemical Society builds STEAM for northeast Wisconsin

Corporate scientists devote time to youth

By Patti Lee
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Georgia Pacific R&D director Mary Glesner and Kimberly Clark lead scientist Kara Nell are the chair and chair-elect of the Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Local Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS). They are also passionately involved in a network of scientists, librarians, educators and volunteers dedicating time, creativity and brain power to mak-

ing chemistry exciting and accessible to young people.

Chemists refer to their field of study as The Central Science. According to Glesner, "Everything around us is made up of the 118 elements on the periodic table. That's all we have to work with." She is passionate about making science approachable and bringing "the transforming power of chemistry" to the community.

"As a chemist, I look around and see chemistry everywhere," Glesner said. "Our goal is to help people see how chemistry relates to everyday life. It's so important, but folks often find science in gen-

eral to be intimidating. Our events bring chemistry to the community in a way that connects with their everyday experiences.



Glesner

tion. Let's skip to summer and you're out at Memorial Park playing soccer. You just

skinned your knee and need a cold pack. You pull it out, break it and shake it up and why does it get cold? It's a chemical reaction. People use chemistry every day whether they know it or not."

The ACS is one of the largest scientific organizations in the world and Nell is quick to emphasize the uncommon nature of the NEW section.

"We're a unique section because we don't have a major research university," she said. "There are universities in northeast Wisconsin like UW Oshkosh, Green

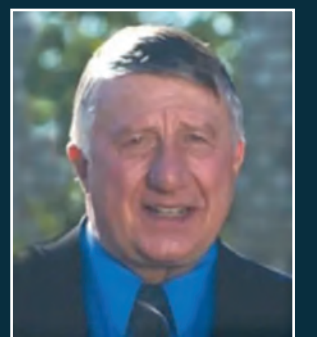
SEE **Chemistry** ON PAGE 4

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Fox Locks grant will improve portages

Neenah News

A matching grant challenge from the David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region could launch construction work to improve portages on the Fox River locks system.

Once the \$150,000 match is raised, the grant will be used to help the Fox River Navigation System Authority (FRNSA) build improved portages along the system that was reopened in 2015.

Nonmotorized boaters have been portaging around the lock and dam system through temporary or makeshift portages often created by the boaters for each season that can be muddy with rugged paths

that are unsafe.

“We have seen steady growth in people exploring the Fox River through the locks on kayaks and canoes,” said Phil Ramlet, FRNSA executive director. “Improving the portages is the best thing we can do to make the river accessible to a broad range of users and this grant will help us do that.”

Portages will be designed for safety and convenience at improved access points along the lock system while helping stabilize the shoreline along the locks.

“Most people are not aware of how the swift current of the Fox River erodes and destabilizes the shoreline along the lock system,” Ramlet said. “The grant will help us support our mission of repairing and

maintaining the lock system for all boaters.”

Because the locks operate primarily on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day, paddlers often use the portages to navigate the elevation change on the Fox River when the locks are not operating.

The organization is still seeking additional donations to complete the portage construction, which is estimated at \$495,000 and will be phased in over three to five years.

Of the 17 locks, 16 have been restored to full working order. All of them are on the National Register of Historic Places and are the only restored, hand-operated, functional lock system in the nation.

Local man charged in Waupaca County vehicle fatalities

Neenah News

Four people are dead and a 47-year-old Neenah man is facing charges for fifth-offense operating while intoxicated after driving the wrong way and causing a vehicle accident Saturday night in Waupaca County.

The victims have been identified as Daniel Gonzalez, 25; Fabian Gonzalez, 23; Lilian Gonzalez, 14; and Daniela Gonzalez, 9.

According to the criminal complaint, police were called just after 9 p.m. for a report of a wrong-way driver on County X in the Town of Weyauwega. About a minute after receiving the initial call, another call came



Farmer

in that the vehicle driven by Scott Farmer had struck the other vehicle head on.

Three passengers were beyond lifesaving measures and were pronounced dead at the scene. The driver, Daniel, was transported to the hospital with serious injuries and died the next day.

Farmer told an officer he thought he was driving about 75 mph when the crash occurred. An open bottle of vodka was in the center console area. He was extricated from the vehicle and transported to the hospital.

Farmer has four previous OWI convictions and his driver's license is revoked for life. He is charged with four felony counts of homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle, OWI fifth offense and operating while revoked causing death. He made an initial appearance Monday from the Waupaca County Jail where a judge set a \$750,000 cash bond. He is due back in court Tuesday.

A fundraiser for the family of the victims notes they are siblings who are originally from Saragur, Ecuador. Donations to support the family can be made at gofund.me/930e81fe.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Holiday tradition

Merry Christmas! The Santa Float heads north on Commercial Street in 1953 with the Neenah Theater marquee visible in the background.

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United Way Fox Cities names new president

Neenah News

United Way Fox Cities has named Lisa Kogan-Praska as president and chief executive officer of the organization by its board of directors, which separately announced a reduction in staff.

Kogan-Praska, who had most recently served as the chief executive of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Bay & Lakes Region, will assume her new duties Jan. 16.

"This is an outstanding opportunity for United Way to have a professional with Lisa's record of leadership join our team," said United Way Fox Cities board president Kim Bassett. "Her experience in strategic planning, financial sustainability and team stewardship will be indispensable to our organization and the nonprofits in our community."



Kogan-Praska

The board of directors also announced it is eliminating 12 positions, four of them part time, out of its 26 listed staff positions as the organization undergoes a restructuring while citing increasing needs, a decrease in funding and reduction in investment returns. Displaced staff members are eligible for severance and outplacement services.

"I loved my work with the clubs, but the opportunity to lead and shape the important work of the United Way in my home community was one I could not pass up,"

said Kogan-Praska, who led the integration of clubs in the Door County, Green Bay and Shawano regions. "I look forward to impacting nonprofits in our region and positioning the organization for continued growth and sustainability well into the future."

She helped the Boys & Girls clubs shift service delivery models during the pandemic with the goal of keeping kids safe and engaged in school. Her work history also includes serving as first CEO of Catalpa Health in 2012 and previously worked with Affinity Occupational Health where she served as director of occupational health and urgent care.

"Lisa is all about collaboration and shared success," Bassett said. "She is a true champion for the community and believes we all flourish when there is shared opportunity."

Contributions to United Way's Community Fund and focus areas of health, education and financial stability are invested into more than 100 programs, grants and initiatives.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Bay & Lakes Region board of directors named Johanna Wicklund, its chief operating officer, as acting CEO.

"Johanna's experience and commitment to the club is unparalleled. She has been with our organization for over 23 years," said Paul Belschner, board chair. "We are confident in her leadership and know that our club is in very good hands."



Neenah News

Holiday horns

Neenah resident Don Krause (from left), Appleton North graduate Rebecca Schruender and concert horn soloist Robert Fant take part in the Horns A Plenty Christmas concert Saturday at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, where Krause led about 30 horn players of all ages for the annual performance.

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Calendar of events

Saturday, Dec. 23

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

Friday, Dec. 29

Starfire, 6 p.m., Winncrest Banquet Hall, 2788 Towne Court, Neenah

Sunday, Dec. 31

New Year's Eve party, 6 p.m., Batley's Grill & Bar, 1010 Cameron Way, Neenah

Saturday, Jan. 6

Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Monday, Jan. 8

Monday Matinee: "Barbie," 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library

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Chemistry

FROM PAGE 1

Bay and Sheboygan, but most sections revolve around a major research institution and tend to cater to academic lectures and presentations. The makeup of our section is more industry professionals.”

NEW has been actively leaning into the idea of chemistry professionals making a positive impact on area communities. ACS holds regular events in the spring for Earth Week and in the fall for National Chemistry Week, which takes place around “Mole Day.”

Despite the name, Mole Day does not celebrate the furry pest that tortures your back yard but rather commemorates Avogadro’s Number, (6.02×10^{23}) a basic measuring unit in chemistry. It is celebrated annually from 6:02 a.m. to 6:02 p.m. Oct. 23 and created to foster interest in chemistry. Schools around the world celebrate the day with activities related to chemistry and moles.

The themes are set by the National ACS, which publishes a yearly magazine called Celebrating Chemistry. The section has found that the best way to distribute this free resource to students is through the libraries.

“The libraries are a great place because parents come in with their kids,” Glesner said. “They take these home where they can do chemistry projects as a family.”

ACS has had an ongoing relationship with the Oshkosh Public Library since 2005. Marie Boleman is the Oshkosh children’s librarian working with Pat Hallquist, ACS member and volunteer. Together with ACS, they create and produce STEM events.

LoriAnn Snow is the youth assistant li-



Submitted photo

Mary Glesner (center) works with students at the Atlas Science Center during National Chemistry Week in 2022.

brarian at Neenah Public Library working with Hannah Shraufnagel, Glesner and Nell to create ongoing events and “Dare to Dream” kits for in-house science programming.

An enthusiastic Snow explains that “the Dare to Dream kits are a science-based kit that is STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) related.” “We recently added an ‘A’ between the ‘E’ and the ‘M’ to include art,” she said. “We added some STEAM!”

Everything is assembled by Snow at the library and the kits are taken home. Age appropriate for 6 years and older, the pro-

gram encourages the engagement of adult caregivers with children of all ages.

“We want them all to discover, engage and get the knowledge behind the science experiment,” Snow said. “Kits are alternated about every three weeks.”

Dozens of professionals and volunteers are involved in the Earth Week and Chemistry Week programs. Earth Week 2023 featured a “hands-on, in-person” science event.

“It’s amazing to see how many students come through with their families. I think we had close to 100 people participating in the “Curious Chemistry of Amazing Algae,” related an enthusiastic Snow.

There was a simultaneous hands-on, in-person event at the Oshkosh Public Library and after engaging with the fine folks in Neenah the group packed up their cars and drove to Appleton for an afternoon event at the Atlas Science Center – formerly the Discovery Center – where they engaged with another 50 participants.

“On a single day during Earth Week we reached about 200 people in the area with around 20 volunteers at three locations. It was really exciting,” Glesner said. “It was a chaotic day, but it was worth it.”

Atlas became a participating partner with NEW during Earth Week 2022 with “The Buzz about Bugs.” Students were asked to assemble a recycled bug creation where they could take throwaway items such as bottles, lids, caps and such, turning them into bug creations. All those bugs were displayed at Atlas.

It takes a lot of people power to pull off outreach on this scale. The participation of Atlas has enabled NEW to coordinate with the expertise of Atlas lead educator Claudia Damiani, and volunteers Ashley Rossmessl and Jennifer Freese.

One of the ways Atlas is trying to impact the community is in bridging the gap in STEM programming and content. Their target is upper elementary through middle and high school. That tends to be the age where students – girls in particular – start to opt out of science, thinking “this isn’t for me. I’m not smart enough.”

Atlas has geared their programming toward that gap range to offer different types of engaging science. The class you take in school can’t begin to touch upon all the interesting areas of science. If that class isn’t exciting or interesting, the disconnect follows. That’s where the program diversity comes in.

“When I first started here at the library I noticed that there was a certain group that

was not being hit by in-person programming and it was that middle school to high school range,” Snow said. “So for the last couple of years, the goal has been to get them in the door – engage them, get them here and keep them wanting to be here.”

“I am always encouraged by the diversity of our facilitators,” Nell said. “We have so many people working in different careers... teachers and professors, people in divergent types of industry, varying ages, different genders, and people of different ethnicities and backgrounds.

“It is really important for students to see such diversity so they can picture themselves in that future career. When we go to recruit volunteers, we’re looking for anyone and everyone who wants to help because it showcases to the students how so many different people can become scientists. It breaks down the barrier of what they think a scientist might look like.”

Nell recently represented NEW at the Midwest Great Lakes Regional Meeting, where she accepted the P3 Award – a nomination submitted by the late Martin Rudd, counselor for the section, who passed away unexpectedly Oct. 14.



Nell

P3 stands for Partners for Progress and Prosperity and their award category is for STEM education. The award included a grant and the partners are already in planning for 2024 bonus events made possible by the award.

The regional meeting included a tribute to Rudd, who received the E. Ann Nalley award for volunteer service recognizing exemplary leadership in the region. Glesner and Nell deeply acknowledged the leadership and mentoring they received from Rudd. Speaking at the tribute, Lydia Hines, ACS regional board representative, articulated that “Martin developed an amazing skill for someone at his level of academic responsibility – that of giving undivided attention to anyone with whom he was communicating at the moment.”

“I can confidently say that every opportunity I’ve had in the last two years with ACS was due to Martin’s encouragement and support,” Glesner said. “He was an incredible mentor and valued member of our leadership team.”

In the wake of Rudd’s passing, everyone involved believes the best way to honor him is to carry on the mission of STEAM. One relatively new offering is the Teen Createspace. Together with Snow, they have created such things as macrame keychains, miniature pumpkin catapults, balloon-powered cars and liquid notebooks.

“I’ve started a teen advisory board,” Snow said. “I’m not a teen anymore, as much as I would love to be. So the teens need to teach me. They are helping me do amazing things like creating a jewelry workshop but out of something like rubber, things that are different from what the younger kids would do.”

Meanwhile the planning, creating and dreaming goes on. As Glesner reflects on the program, awards and recent events, she sees the mark that Rudd has left.

“Martin’s legacy will absolutely live on throughout the many individuals he impacted as well as the successful programs, grants and outreach that continues in northeast Wisconsin,” she said. “All these ongoing impacts and the people behind the activities will be a testament to Martin.”

The awards are on display at both Atlas Science Center and the Neenah Public Library, along with information on the ACS programs, past, present and future.



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Alliant Energy generating station to upgrade

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Wisconsin Power and Light Co. (WPL), under the trade name Alliant Energy, is planning to invest \$120 million into upgrading the Neenah generating station on County CB.

The project will include an advanced gas-path upgrade of the turbines at the facility, which will increase their generation capacity and improve efficiency.

The Neenah Generating Facility currently has two combustion turbines with a combined generation capacity of 300 megawatts (MW). The proposed investment will add 136 MW of capacity for a total of 436 MW once complete.

The project will not require expanding the existing geographic footprint nor disturb the surrounding physical environment. The upgraded facilities would continue to use a closed-loop cooling system,

requiring no new well or supporting utility infrastructure and will not generate steam.

In a letter to residents, environmental affairs coordinator Adam Ingwell said air emissions from the upgraded facility would still include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds and greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide. The project is required to meet air permitting requirements from the Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“The power plant would include several technologies and design features to reduce emissions of air pollutants,” Ingwell wrote.

Alliant Energy senior communications partner Tony Palese said improvements will take place at both the Neenah and Sheboygan Falls plants as part of a Clean

Energy Blueprint strategy to accelerate the transition to cleaner, more cost-effective energy generation for customers.

“The proposed investments will increase efficiency and capacity at both facilities, while improving reliability and availability in a cost-effective manner,” he said.

The project leverages newer technology and equipment to upgrade the current combustion turbines. Additional turbines will not be added.

“Completing these upgrades is critical to preparing our existing facilities to meet the needs of our customers and is a great complement to our growing renewable generation portfolio,” Palese said. “In addition, it also ensures continued grid stability and reliability – a must for our customers and the communities we proudly serve.”

Bolt seal patent issued to J. J. Keller

Neenah News

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has granted J. J. Keller & Associates a new patent for a bolt seal that can be stored with minimum void space and arranged in sequential order with no plastic waste or twisting motion needed to break the barrel and pin apart.

Portfolio leader Kevin Kucksdorf, one of the two inventors, said the invention will improve truck drivers’ experience by making the task of handling security seals easier while reducing waste.

“We have the opportunity and obliga-

tion to pay close attention to how products are used by fleets and motor carriers and seek ways to improve their performance and usefulness,” he said.

Most bolt seals in the market include a plastic tie or to keep the two like-numbered parts together in storage so that unlike-numbered parts aren’t accidentally locked together. J. J. Keller’s keyway bolt seal parts are temporarily attached to each other in packaging and then separated and locked when securing equipment.

With the patent just issued, the bolt seals are not yet commercially available.



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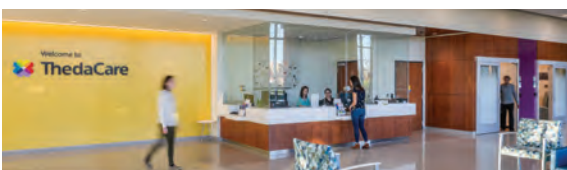
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Career training program advances another class

Career EXCErate Wisconsin celebrated its second cohort of students earning educational certificates through the collaborative program with Goodwill North Central Wisconsin (NCW), Fox Valley Technical College and Rawhide Youth Services.

Students completed certificates in nursing assistant, early childhood teacher aide, professional truck driving, welding fundamentals, woodworking technician and diesel technician.

“Career EXCErate is creating life-changing opportunities for people to overcome challenges and pursue in-demand careers,” said Chris Hess, Goodwill NCW president. “We are proud to partner with Rawhide Youth Services and Fox Valley Technical College to ensure that participants have personalized support as they navigate earning their certificates and launch into new career pathways.”

Career EXCErate was created in summer 2022 with support from a Workforce Innovation Grant from the state, offered at no cost to individuals wanting to launch a lasting career but are struggling and would benefit from individualized support.

The program supports individuals as they seek in-demand careers in specific areas of study and create a pipeline of job seekers.

As of Dec. 1, 89% of students who completed Career EXCErate have either obtained employment or continued with additional education in their field of study within a year of completion.

Those who have completed the program and attained employment are ben-



Trevor Wiegert shows his professional truck driving certificate earned through the Career EXCErate Wisconsin program

Photo from Goodwill North Central Wisconsin

efiting from improved financial stability, as they have seen an average increase of about \$8.85 per hour in wages from intake to their current job.

Trevor Wiegert, who earned his professional truck driving certificate through the program, reflected on his experience.

“You see everybody in here, they all accomplished something that they couldn’t do without this grant, without the help from everybody. We all get to start our next career, and it’s a great feeling,” he

said.

The program focuses on providing tracks that have career development options. Enrollment takes place on an ongoing basis for all educational certificate programs.

Those interested in earning a certificate can complete the application form at CareerEXCErateWI.org.

Local employers can partner to recruit qualified candidates by contacting careerexceleratewi@goodwillncw.org.

Business news roundup

JG Custom Cabinetry & Design has relocated from Rosendale to Neenah at 2320 Industrial Drive. The company, which has been in business for almost 20 years, specializes in custom cabinets for kitchens, bathrooms, closets and offices. Owner John Gruszynske said they work with clients to match their style, budget and needs using high-quality materials and craftsmanship. The company website jgcustomcabinetry.com can be contacted for a free consultation and estimate.

Amy Yang has joined the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region as the new people and culture specialist. She provides human resources duties but will also improve coaching and development opportunities and support the foundation’s culture improvement. Yang has a degree in communication from Lakeland University and is pursuing her master’s in leadership and organizational development with an emphasis on human resources management. Her work experience includes several years in higher education in admissions and recruitment.

Neenah Parks and Recreation is in the process of hiring for 2024 summer job opportunities. Positions include youth sports and playground assistants and leaders; pool lifeguards, concessions and admissions clerks; and parks and cemetery maintenance. Go to government-jobs.com/careers/neenahwi or contact parkrec@neenahwi.gov for more information.

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School maps

FROM PAGE 1

plan would reduce the overall enrollment at Lakeview and increase enrollment at Horace Mann. All the schools would remain within capacity ranges.

“This does increase the student population at Horace Mann, although it does not get us to a full four-section capacity at Horace Mann,” Buboltz said.

Option B involves closing Hoover and transferring the students to Horace Mann, Tullar and Lakeview. Horace Mann would become four sections. The plan would reduce enrollment at Lakeview and Coolidge.

“Horace Mann does become increasingly disproportionate even more so than Option A, as we think about the student demographics and the resources that a revised Horace Mann might require,” Buboltz said.

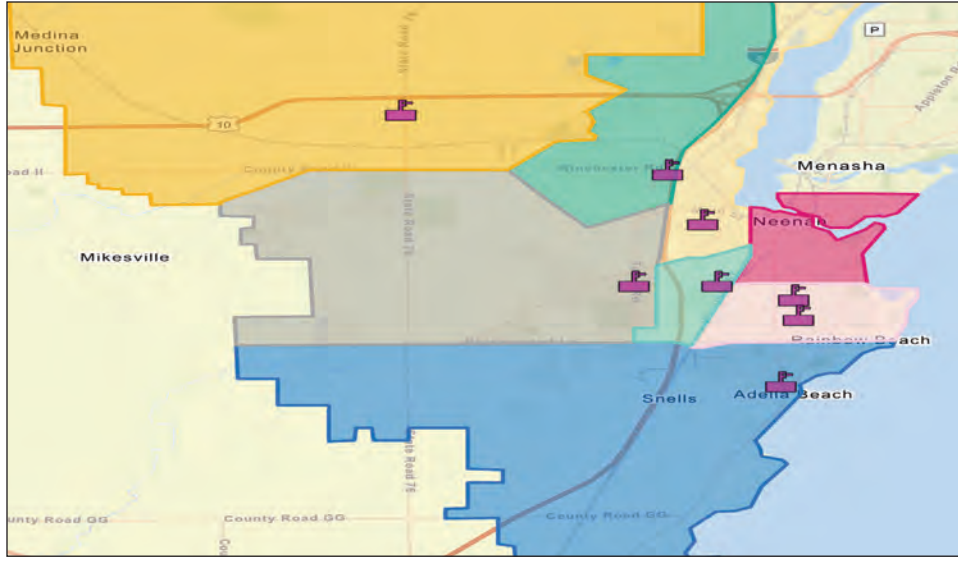
Option C would involve closing Hoover and transitioning the students primarily to Tullar but also to other schools based on where their neighborhoods are situated. Horace Mann would become four sections and enrollment at Lakeview and Coolidge would be reduced.

Buboltz said the option would fill Tullar nearly to capacity and may even require the district to add a fourth section.

“This would mean Tullar is not available for future growth but does make Lakeview available for some future growth given the enrollment reduction we would see there,” he said.

Option D would extend the Horace Mann and Coolidge boundary significantly. Horace Mann would become a four-section school and all schools would remain open.

Buboltz said Kobussen Buses indicated Option D would be the easiest to accommodate within its current staffing allocation and wouldn't require an extra route.



A map of the current Neenah Joint School District boundaries.

One parent questioned the increase in busing and how that would be paid for. Buboltz said the district met with Kobussen and its biggest concern was any shift occurring in Clayton due to the amount of coverage in busing required.

“Kobussen was confident that they could consume shifts within their current allocation and in the worst-case scenario maybe adding one bus route,” Buboltz said.

Another issue raised by a parent was whether the boundary adjustments were to make schools more diverse.

“We shouldn't punish them and send them out of the school they're used to just so you can say things are more diverse,” a parent said. “We shouldn't be forcing diversity.”

Buboltz explained that the boundaries aren't being redrawn for diversity.

“This is not a racial desegregation effort ... this is a desire on our part to make sure all of our kids have access to the resources in a way that's equitable ...” he said.

Some parents questioned what the school district was doing about an increase in property taxes.

“Are you working with the city to make

sure that we're no longer paying disproportionate property taxes if we're no longer attending Lakeview, since they're readjusting that?” a parent asked.

Buboltz said the school district doesn't have taxing authority.

“Though we do procure a portion of our funding from taxes within the district, those assessments are not initiated by us,” he said.

A feedback form for parents of students attending elementary schools is available at neenah.k12.wi.us/boundaries.cfm.

The next step in the boundary revision process is for staff to present a recommendation to the Board of Education, share the board recommendation with the public and begin implementation, which starts with informing families of school assignments in February and March.

Buboltz said he's confident that staff in all the elementary buildings “are ready to receive our kids exactly how they are and that regardless of where your child attends school in our district, we put a lot of work and time and energy into all of our schools knowing that we feel good about our staff that's serving our kids at all of those schools.”



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TheaCare, Froedtert merger OK'd

Neenah News

Froedtert Health and TheaCare have finalized their merger agreement with the combined health system officially launching Monday at the start of the new year.

The combined organization expects to name its board in January with the initial chair and vice chair roles of the board and committees equally shared between the parties. The first board chair will be Jud Snyder, Froedtert Health's current board chair, and the initial vice chair will be Jim Kotek, TheaCare's current board chair.

Froedtert Health president and chief

executive Cathy Jacobson will initially assume the role of CEO, and TheaCare president and chief executive Dr. Imran A. Andrabi will serve as president. After a six-month transition period, Jacobson will retire from the organization and Andrabi will assume the role with more than 30 years of medical, operational and strategic expertise and leadership.

The brand names of each organization will continue and patients can continue seeing their providers and accessing services. WicareWIroots.com is an informational site that provides updates on the combination.

Neenah stabbing suspect faces charges

Neenah News

Police are investigating an attempted homicide in Neenah after a person was stabbed 17 times Monday night.

According to the Neenah Police Department, officers were dispatched to a weapons complaint at around 11 p.m. in the 2100 block of Marathon Avenue. A person was found stabbed 17 times and

was transported to the hospital where they remained as of Tuesday.

Neenah police were assisted by the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office and Wisconsin State Patrol. The suspect was taken into custody and police noted there is no further risk to the public. The investigation is ongoing and criminal charges are pending.



Neenah News

Lighting the way

Downtown Neenah streets had a holiday glow with luminaries lining the front of businesses last Thursday for Christmas shoppers and diners. Those with a cookie passport were also downtown to collect and taste holiday treats from businesses.

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Prep sports roundup

WRESTLING

Herm stays unbeaten, claims title at invite

Jacob Herm improved to 16-0 on the season as he claimed the 144-pound title at the Rex Whitlatch Invitational held at Hinsdale Central High School in Illinois.

Herm breezed through his four matches at the tournament, posting a pair of pins and a technical fall to making the finals. In the title match, he beat Nolan Vogel of Joliet Catholic Academy, 10-2.

Declan Koch added a second place at 138 pounds, losing a tough 4-2 decision in his title match to finish 3-1 on the day.

Nate Cleveland added a fifth place at heavyweight and Landen Sheppard was seventh at 132 pounds to round out the Rocket placewinners.

The Rockets, the only non-Illinois school at the tournament, finished 12th among the 25 teams.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Neenah takes sixth at Badger State Invitational

Four wrestlers placed in the top eight as Neenah finished sixth out of 48 teams at the Badger State Invitational last weekend.

Kylee Kurszewski was the top finisher for the Rockets, placing second in the 120-pound division. Kurszewski pinned her first three opponents before losing in the championship match to Milton's Devlynn Albrecht.

Ashlynn Scheidermayer (114) and Amari Richard (126) each placed fifth on the day, while Ava Armatti (138) finished in

eight place.

Seven of the eight wrestlers who competed for the Rockets won at least one match at the tournament.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Hot-shooting Neenah erupts in win over Patriots

Neenah definitely had its shooting shoes on last Friday night.

The Rockets trio of Allie Ziebell, Ellie Buss and Rowan Klesmit combined to go 16-of-23 from 3-point range and Neenah rolled past Appleton East 93-70 in a Fox Valley Association contest.

It was Neenah's highest offensive output since the Rockets scored 95 points in a win over Fond du Lac in 2019.

Ziebell led the way with seven 3-pointers and 29 points, while Buss knocked down six 3-pointers and finished with a career-high 26 points. Klesmit added 21 points with three 3-pointers to her credit. Ziebell also added nine rebounds and six assists with Klesmit also posting six assists.

Neenah led 48-20 at halftime.

Zephyrs stay perfect with win over Cedarburg

Emily Vogel had a huge double-double and the Zephyrs put together an impressive first half to knock off Cedarburg, 66-40, in a nonconference game Saturday.

St. Mary Catholic improved to 7-0 overall.

Vogel led the charge for the Zephyrs, posting 29 points and 10 rebounds – both career highs – in the win.

Nolie Anderson added 13 points and 10

boards and Audrey Norville chipped in 12 points.

On Tuesday, the Zephyrs knocked off Sheboygan Lutheran, 56-38 in Big East Conference play.

Norville finished with 20 points to lead St. Mary Catholic, which bolted to a 26-19 halftime lead and rolled to the win in the second half.

Vogel added 12 points and a team-best seven rebounds in the win.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Rockets post pair of victories

Neenah pulled away with a strong second half to beat Appleton East, 63-53, in a

conference matchup last Friday, before following it up with an easy 58-31 nonconference win over Marshfield on Saturday.

Brady Corso led the way for Neenah, pouring in 29 points, while also netting a game-high six rebounds.

The Rockets led by just two points at halftime before outscoring the Patriots 37-29 in the second half.

Nick Schultz and Cal Juckem each chipped in seven points.

Against Marshfield, Charlie Wunderlich scored a season-high 22 points to lead the Rockets, who led 32-13 at halftime.

Justin Janssen added eight points and Mason Flees had seven in the win.

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 11

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Rockets' Armatti setting high goals for senior season

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Some athletes are just naturals for their chosen sport.

The first time they handle a ball or bat or walk on to a field or court, they simply feel at home right away and it is just a matter of polishing those ingrained – if yet undiscovered – skills.

Neenah wrestler Eli Armatti is just about the polar opposite of that. But the first time he walked out on the mat as a heavy-set sixth-grader, it definitely made an immediate impression on him.

"I hated it. No, I didn't like it right away," said Armatti, who joined the sport after encouragement from some of his friends. "I was a little fat kid and I did not want to do anything. The first practices I was sweating like crazy and huffing and puffing."

Yet, as hard and as awful as it was, Armatti didn't just walk away.

"I just knew that if I stuck with it, I would get it and look at me now," Armatti said. "This is my senior year and I want to make it a good one."

Armatti is one of the few seniors in the Rockets' varsity lineup, holding down the 120-pound slot for the Rockets. Last year, in his first full season on varsity, Armatti posted 20 wins and qualified for the WIAA Division 1 sectional.

This season hasn't gone quite as well yet but Neenah head coach Kyle Kleuskens believes that Armatti has yet to scratch the surface of what he can do this season.

"Being a senior, it's the opportunity for him to step up," Kleuskens said. "This year hasn't gotten off to the start he was hoping for, but he's staying in the fight, working hard every day and I think the best is yet to come for him."

Armatti wrestled last season at 113 pounds, which was a sizable drop from his out-of-season weight.



Neenah News

Eli Armatti reached the sectional tournament last season for the Rockets and is aiming to make it even farther in the postseason this year.

But with a plethora of standouts in the lower weights for the Rockets, that slot was the only one where he could make the varsity lineup.

"That was his way into our lineup and he knew that going into the season," Kleuskens said. "It was challenging, but I thought he did a really nice job with it. He stayed incredibly disciplined and never let

his weight get out of control."

Armatti said keeping his weight down wasn't always easy and there were some days where he was ready to find the nearest all-you-can-eat buffet and go to town.

"There were some rough days where I didn't want to be here anymore and thought about just walking out," Armatti said. "But I have a great coaching staff,

Senior Standout



they kept me in (the room), kept me mentally OK and kept me going."

With last year's season ending at sectionals, Armatti has some added motivation entering his senior season.

He was disappointed with his performance in the quarterfinal loss that ended his season and is hoping to not only return to sectionals but wrestle the following weekend as well.

"This year I am looking to make it to state," Armatti said. "I feel like I underperformed at sectionals so that did motivate me. This year I think I can make it there again and then to state."

Kleuskens believes those goals are within Armatti's reach.

"We're in a hotbed of wrestling. In our area, there are a lot of talented kids, but Eli is a really dangerous wrestler. He's been able to put a lot of good kids on their backs and put them in danger," Kleuskens said. "The good thing is, he hasn't wrestled his best yet this year and I really believe in him and that his best is yet to come."

Armatti does bring a bit of unique skillset to the mat, too.

With a background in judo growing up, he doesn't have to just focus on snagging an opponent's legs. He's just as comfortable going up high and using his hips to throw another wrestler to his back.

"Everyone knows me for hitting some pretty good throws. If I can hit a single (leg takedown), I'll do that and get behind them and dump, but throws are my main

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 11

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Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 9

Zephyrs fall on road to Sheboygan Lutheran

A rough first half was too much for St. Mary Catholic to overcome Tuesday night as the Zephyrs fell to Sheboygan Lutheran, 90-67.

Sheboygan Lutheran led 50-24 at half-time.

Fisher Mackenzie scored 23 points to lead the Zephyrs, while Braeden Brenn added 21 points. The duo combined for 22 of the team's 24 points in the first half.

The Zephyrs were coming off an 82-79 overtime win against Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah last week.

St. Mary Catholic had four players in double figures led by a career-high 33 points from Brenn, who also led the team with 14 rebounds.

Preston Fields added 14 points and 11 rebounds, while Mackenzie also scored 14 points and Noah Czarneski chipped in 10.

SWIMMING

Rockets dominate FVA meet against Cardinals

Neenah won every event and posted 1-2 finishes in more than half of them as the Rockets rolled to a win over Fond du Lac.

The highlight of the meet for the Rockets came in the 100-yard breaststroke where Julian Kuehn, Burke Wendell and Leo Wilhem finished first, second and third, respectively.

Kuehn was one of three multi-event individual winners for Neenah, also placing first in the 200-yard individual medley. Gideon Benner in the 200-yard freestyle and 500-yard freestyle and Drew Gaer-

thofner in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle also posted a pair of wins.

Kyle Joneson in diving, Braden Loudon in the 100-yard butterfly and Ryker Zarda in the 100-yard backstroke also earned wins for the Rockets in the meet.

Runner-up finishes for Neenah were Zarda in the 200-yard freestyle; Loudon in the 50-yard freestyle; Wendell in the 200-yard individual medley; and Crawford Pfeifle in the 500-yard freestyle.

Neenah also won all three relays, placing first and second in both the 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard freestyle relay.

BOYS HOCKEY

Third-period goal lifts Rockets to victory

Ben Carey scored about five minutes into the third period to break a tie game and lift Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha to a 4-3 win over Ashwaubenon on Tuesday night.

It was Carey's second goal of the game and came off an assist from Calvin Zinda.

Brady Rozmarynowski and Ryan Johnson also scored in the game for the Rockets, while Evan Hans and Chase Collins also picked up assists.

The Rockets also split a pair of games over the weekend, beating Eau Claire North, 9-0, while falling to Eau Claire Memorial, 4-1.

Cartyr Simonson registered a hat trick in the win over the Huskies, while Zinda chipped in two goals and two assists. Zach Verhagen and Owen Grotenhuis also scored in the game for the Rockets, while Verhagen added two assists.

John Horneck made 17 saves in goal to earn the shutout.

Simonson had the lone goal against the Old Abes, with Zinda and Collins picking up the assists.

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 10

go-to," Armatti said. "When I was kid, I used to do judo and stuff like that so I'm used to using my hips and that, so I think that's where it comes into play."

That skill can also help against one certain member of the Neenah wrestling program.

Armatti's younger sister, Ava, is a member of the Neenah girls program. Some older brothers might take it a bit easy on a fellow sibling but Eli is set on making Ava earn any success against him. According to Eli, so far she hasn't.

"The first practice, me and my sis-

ter wrestled. She was ready to take me down but I wasn't going to let it happen. I think that's the hardest I will see her try to get a takedown," Eli said with a laugh. "She's tough, though. At first I didn't want her to wrestle at first - I thought this is my sport - but I knew she would be good."

Regardless of how his senior season plays out, Armatti has certainly left an imprint on the Neenah wrestling program.

And he's certainly been proud to don that red singlet the past four years.

"We are a great program, that's for sure. I couldn't ask for a better team, coaching staff and my teammates," Armatti said. "The whole wrestling community at Neenah, they are there for everyone."

Obituaries



Archie Paulson

Archie Paulson, 97, passed away on December 12, 2023. He was born on October 26, 1926.

Fox Cities

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Kid Scoop

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SANTA ANSWERS ALL!

Imagine you had a chance to interview Santa Claus! What would you ask? What would Santa say? Here are some ideas from some Kid Scoop readers, who came up with the questions and the answers for today's page.

Q: How did you become Santa and how did you get your magic?

Santa: I was a smart, cheerful child. When my parents died, I was heartbroken. I cried, not out of self-pity, but out of true love. One of my tears dropped into the snow and froze to make an ice marble. When I held it, it glowed and took me to the North Pole. I met the elves and they needed my help. After I grew up with them I took on the greatest task of all—delivering presents. The ice marble gave me powers I have today.
 — By Chris

How many ice marbles can you find on today's page?



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow one-step written directions.



Help Santa find his way through the magic maze back to the North Pole.



Q: What kind of milk do you like?

Santa: I like whole milk best, but Mrs. Claus put me on a diet so I have to drink non-fat.
 — By Nick

Q: How can you visit all of the children of the world in one night?

Santa: I fly at super speed; that's why you can't see me.
 — By Adrian

Extra! Extra!

Santa Comes to YOUR Town!

Pretend Santa has to buy all of his Christmas presents from the stores advertising in your newspaper. Help him by selecting a gift for everyone in your class using ads in the paper. Don't spend more than \$500.

Standards Link: Math/Number Sense: Solve addition problems using money amounts.

Q: Where do you buy your groceries?

Santa: I don't buy them; Mrs. Claus grows them. On Christmas Eve I come back with a sleigh full of soil instead of an empty sleigh. We grow food in our greenhouse and eat fresh veggies and fruit everyday.
 — By Laurena



Find the two identical fruit trees.

Find at least 10 differences between Santa and his reflection.



Standards Link: Investigation: Identify similarities and differences in common objects.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Q: Do you think you'll want to be Santa forever?

Santa: As long as my heart is _____ and my belly is _____, I reckon I'll want to be!
 — By Maya

Q: Has there ever been a year when you gave out more _____ than presents?

Santa: No, and I _____ that never _____.
 — By Michael



Where does each of these words belong?

- JIGGLING
- COAL
- HAPPENS
- HOPE
- POUNING

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Double Double Word Search

- INTERVIEW
- MARBLE
- SANTA
- ANSWERS
- POUNING
- FRUIT
- REFLECTION
- CLASS
- POLE
- MILK
- CLAUS
- CHEERFUL
- SNOW
- BELLY
- DIET

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

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

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

Create an Interview!

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter. What question would you ask a Christmas tree and a snowman? Write your question, then write what you think the answer might be.

Q: _____

A: _____



Q: _____

A: _____



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Write On!

Interview Santa

Imagine that you could interview Santa Claus. What would you ask him? What do you think his answer would be? Write one question and make up an answer for the question as if Santa had answered it.

Have A Wonderful, Safe Holiday Break!



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Look for next week's Neenah News to complete the activity page at home.

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