

# Neenah News

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Photo by Michael Cooney

## Keeping up with winter

One of Winnebago County's 40 snowplow crews take on a rural road last weekend after a major snowstorm and trailing cold front created problems for travelers statewide. Highway commissioner Bob Doemel said state roads get priority from county crews who work at all hours while also serving towns and municipalities to get secondary roads salted and cleared.

## ARPA funds OK'd for nonprofits

### Sober living, housing projects get county help

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors approved the use of \$1.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for nonprofit organizations Tuesday and sent one application back to committee over transparency concerns.

Government organizations, nonprofits and businesses seeking ARPA funding submitted applications last year that were evaluated by the county's ARPA Commission. Applications that meet the county's criteria for the funds are advanced to the board for a final vote.

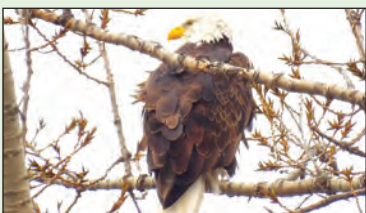
Tuesday's allocations follow \$3.4 million earmarked for nonprofits and county departments last month, as the board moves forward on dispersing \$33 million in federal dollars, which must be appropriated by the end of this year and spent by the end of 2026. An additional \$3 million in ARPA dollars are being dispersed equally among each of the 21 municipalities or towns primarily located within Winnebago County.

Last March, the board approved creation of a "Spirit Fund" for the ARPA dollars, with the funding divided into county government projects and government identified projects.

Although initial plans for the ARPA funds included allocating about \$8 million to nonprofit organizations, that proposal was voted down by the board. The non-

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# Health officials warn respiratory illnesses in full swing

By Jonathan Richie  
NEENAH NEWS

Cases of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses have been rising with health professionals and officials advising people to stay up to date on vaccinations to keep themselves and those around them healthy during this high illness season.

Respiratory illness season usually lasts from October to March. Most years this involves colds, influenza and RSV but recently has included an uptick in COVID. Winnebago County public health officials have noted a spike in COVID cases since October.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is also encouraging pregnant women to get the RSV vaccine if available to them. Last week DHS officials said the RSV vaccine can help protect babies from the illness up to six months after they are born.

Health director Doug Gieryn said the county uses hospitalization data along with wastewater monitoring to gauge the level of the COVID



Smolcich

virus in the community. COVID can be detected in feces and health officials monitor wastewater treatment facilities to get a grasp on the levels present. The department can also track outbreaks of the virus in long-term care facilities.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported during late fall and early winter that RSV cases were continuing to rise. The CDC recommended people get vaccines for COVID-19, RSV and influenza around the holiday season but reported vaccination numbers have remained low.

As cases of COVID rise in Winnebago County, RSV and influenza have also

risen. ThedaCare pediatrician Dr. Abby Smolcich said the best way to avoid getting sick is to stay up to date on vaccines.

"Getting the vaccines is a great way to protect yourself and protect the people around you," Smolcich said. "It also helps protect the people around you who may not be able to get the vaccine, like those with those that are immunocompromised."

She said that since respiratory illness season will last a few more months, there is time to get the vaccines.

SEE **Respiratory cases** ON PAGE 4

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Phone: 920-486-1616  
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### Publisher

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

### Editor

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

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# Drug safety vending machines denied

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Medication and test strips with the potential to save lives won't be available in vending machines in Winnebago County after a proposal to accept an \$80,000 grant to fund them failed to pass the Board of Supervisors by the majority required.

About 60 harm-reduction vending machines have been placed throughout the state using Wisconsin Department of Health Services grant funding, but none in Winnebago County. The machines are stocked with naloxone (brand name Narcan), which reverses opioid overdoses.

They also carry fentanyl test strips, Detera drug deactivation systems and educational materials such as treatment and recovery information. The machines are climate controlled, monitored with an internet connection and require a user to obtain a code for access.

The health department, human services and district attorney's office applied for funding for the machines last year. The process stalled after county medical examiner Cheryl Brehmer spoke at the August meeting, stating she's concerned about the health department providing drug users with supplies that facilitate use and the county should be focusing on providing access to treatment resources.

Health director Doug Gieryn noted that having clean materials prevents the spread of disease from one drug user to another when sharing supplies. The resolution was subsequently altered to take up Brehmer's concerns and note that hypodermic syringes, needles and other objects used for injecting substances are prohibited from the inventories of the vending machines.

The resolution was also updated to note that other public health materials such as CPR masks, hats, gloves, water and food may be included in the vending machine with the approval of the county executive.

Brehmer clarified at Tuesday's meeting that she spoke in support of Narcan or naloxone and fentanyl test strips but against the county's public harm reduction program providing users with intravenous supplies with concern that those supplies would be placed in the machines.

"Today I stand in support of the vending machines with the stipulation that supplies are limited to opioid antagonists, substance testing strips, substance de-

activation materials such as Detera kits and that the machines continue to carry a strong message of available recovery resources," she said.

Brehmer confirmed that 44 people fatally overdosed in the county in 2023, with the final total expected to sit at 48 deaths after four pending toxicology reports are completed. That exceeds Winnebago County's greatest number of overdose fatalities on record in 2021 with 41 deaths.

The resolution to accept the funds narrowly passed the Personnel and Finance Committee earlier this month 3-2; with District 7 Supervisor Betsy Ellenberger and District 9 Supervisor Donald Nussbaum voting against.

Ellenberger said she won't support the machines because of the proposed locations, with one about a block from the Neenah-Menasha YMCA; and the other about a half-mile from the Oshkosh Community YMCA. She said the grant funds should be used elsewhere.

Gieryn noted the funds are specific for the vending machines and if the county doesn't use the funds for that purpose the state will allocate the money elsewhere.

"Vending machines are one of many strategies that are being employed to help reduce overdoses and address substance use altogether, so it's part of a comprehensive package of interventions that we hope will help reduce deaths in our community," he said.

Nussbaum said he's against the ma-

chines because Narcan "also enables people to feel like drug use is safe."

Gieryn has repeatedly tried to dispel myths about Narcan, which isn't self-administered. He said the prevalence of fentanyl-laced drugs is increasing and Narcan is a lifesaving measure.

"There really is no evidence to support that people attempt to overdose because they have Narcan present," he said. "Most people die because they're alone and Narcan isn't present."

Gieryn has stated that friends, family, business owners and others in high-risk areas are the ones who need the access and administer the medication. The health department encourages calling emergency medical services after Narcan is administered.

The board deliberated on accepting the grant funds for more than an hour during Tuesday's meeting that stretched five hours. The proposal failed to pass by the two-thirds majority required. Ellenberger, Nussbaum, Rachael Dowling, Paul Eisen, David Albrecht, Maribeth Gabert, Thomas Swan, Conley Hanson, George Bureau, Shanah Zastera and Howard Miller voted against accepting the grant.

Gieryn said the health department is disappointed the grant wasn't accepted and improving access to Narcan saves lives.

"We are currently looking into other options and working with partners to support our community and those in need," he said.

## Snowmobile safety emphasized as trails open

As Wisconsin receives measurable snowfall and many trails are anticipated to open for the first time this season, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is reminding snowmobilers to operate within their limits, stay sober and ride only on designated trails.

In the early months of 2023, there were 16 fatal snowmobile crashes, with 10 in-

volving alcohol. Alcohol affects risk perception and reaction time.

In addition to following ice safety rules, the DNR reminds riders to check trail conditions ahead of time by contacting the Winnebago County Parks Department, local snowmobile clubs or viewing Travel Wisconsin's Snow Re-



Neenah Historical Society photo

## 19th century skating

A local group ice skates on the frozen lake in this photo circa 1898.

## Edward Jones

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# Bird bankruptcy won't affect area e-scooter system

## Neenah will consider its yearlong contract

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Two years after Neenah entered into annual agreements with Bird to place e-scooters throughout the community, the company filed for bankruptcy last month, although the city's service may not be impacted.

As of Dec. 20, Bird entered into a financial restructuring process by filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The company's second-lien lenders are providing \$25 million in financing through the process.

According to Bird, the restructuring is aimed at strengthening its balance sheet, attracting potential new investors and better positioning for sustainable growth.

Bird e-scooters are expected to continue operating during the bankruptcy proceedings, which are projected to be complete in 90-120 days.

Electric scooters offer a low-carbon alternative to personal cars for short distance trips. Bird is the largest micro-mobility operator in North America.

"Bird riders have traveled over 300 million miles globally, offsetting an estimated 90 million pounds of carbon emissions from avoided car trips, and playing a pivotal role in hundreds of cities' sustainability goals while making alternative transportation convenient, efficient and fun," according to the Bird website.

Bird was valued at \$2.5 billion two years after being founded in 2017. The



Neenah News

Bird e-scooters landed in Neenah in 2022 and will continue operating despite the company's bankruptcy filing.

company reports that since the end of 2021 it has lost \$430 million.

The company lists between \$100 and \$500 million in debt, with its largest creditor being Amazon with a claim of \$4.8 million. More than 300 municipalities, including Neenah and Menasha, are listed as creditors.

Bird landed in Neenah in 2022, with 25 scooters initially placed, then expanded to 75 last year. Menasha and Fox Crossing also approved the scooters at least through 2023.

Users find and ride the two-wheeled vehicles using the Bird app on a smart-

phone. Riders must be 18 or older, cannot ride on sidewalks in downtown Neenah and are prohibited in the parking ramp and skate park. The app designates preferred parking areas where riders can stop and receive a discount on their next ride.

Bird uses geofencing to control the maximum speed of the scooters at 18 mph and a maximum of 12 mph on the Loop the Little Lake Trail. The scooters are maintained by a fleet manager who is also responsible for collecting scooters discarded outside of the nesting areas.

Bird reported there were 8,853 to-

tal rides with 20,554 miles traveled in Neenah in 2023. That's a decrease in rides of about 20% from 2022.

Community development specialist Samantha Jefferson said between now and the early part of spring the city will be reviewing e-scooter complaint data both from Bird and complaints submitted to the city. Few complaints were reported in 2022 and Jefferson said Bird was quick to remedy them.

The city's memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Bird expired Dec. 31, with officials considering whether to approve another year.

"We will also bring together the team who originally worked on this project to confirm that city staff and external partners would still propose another year-long extension of this MOU," Jefferson said.

Bird emailed the city regarding its bankruptcy proceedings and noted the e-scooters will continue operations in Neenah as usual, "with the same levels of service and safety, without interruption."

## Auxiliary seeks donations for Badger Girls State

Neenah News

Neenah American Legion Auxiliary Unit 33 is seeking donations from the community to sponsor local students' participation in Badger Girls State at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh taking place June 16-21.

Badger Girls State is an annual conference to develop leadership skills and help train future stateswomen in the science of government.

The Neenah Auxiliary typically sends four students to Badger Girls each year and will soon begin reaching out to local high schools to find girls interested in attending this year's conference as a delegate.

Auxiliary president Kathie Boyette said the students, referred to as citizens, stay in dorms and are elected or appointed to positions. They create a mock city, county and state government and elect officials in the same manner as a regular election process.

"All levels of government are discussed and they campaign and everything," Boyette said. "It's not affiliated with any political party, but rather the basis and fun way to show the principles and process of government."

The cost to attend is \$400 per delegate, with the Auxiliary seeking donations from businesses and community members through Jan. 31 to sponsor the students. Donations can be made to ALA Unit 33 by mail to Boyette at 807 Nicolet Blvd., Neenah, WI 54956.



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Neenah Parks & Recreation photo

## Fun at the park

Washington Park's annual Winter Festival last Saturday landed in-between a snow-storm and a cold snap for nice outdoor conditions for families to enjoy activities both indoors and outdoors. Fox Communities Credit Union sponsored the event with Neenah's Parks & Recreation Department.

# Literacy Council expands with second office space

Neenah News

The Winnebago Area Literacy Council (WALC) opened a second office this week – the Winnebago Area Literacy Council Learning Center – on the second floor of the US Bank Building at 111 N. Main St.

Since its inception in 1989 by the local Altrusa International Club, the WALC has been at the center of adult literacy services in the Oshkosh community. The demand for its free services has experienced a surge that has required WALC to double its staff and expand program offerings.

The added office provides more space for existing staff, allows for future growth, and includes two dedicated classroom spaces and multiple small group areas.

Events and communications manager Wanda Tracy noted the general increase in the needs of WALC services in the community.

"A significant factor is certainly that World Relief has seen a sizable increase in the number of refugees being resettled in our area over the past two years, and we are expecting even more in 2024," she said. "As affordable housing options ran low in Appleton, they have been resettling more people here in Oshkosh and in Menasha than ever before.

Tracy said getting the organization's ser-

vices better known in the general community has led to an increase in requests for GED assistance and tutors, as well as referrals from other nonprofits and employers.

The council's Vocational Department and tutoring offices will continue to operate on the third floor of the Oshkosh Public Library.

"The Oshkosh Public Library has been an incredible partner for over 30 years and we are so grateful to continue the opportunity to deliver services to learners both there and now in our expanded space right across the street from the Downtown Transit Center," said Judi Long, executive board president.

Tracy said they had so many regular attendees early last year that they had to split the Beginning English Class into two sections, with room for only one of them at the library.

"This expansion allows us to bring both classes back into our own space, and even allows extra room for a third breakout section we're planning with more advanced learners," Tracy said.

WALC executive director Tom Perry added, "We are thrilled about the possibilities that our second location brings. It not only allows us to meet the current demand but also positions us for future growth and innovation in adult literacy services."

## Respiratory cases

FROM PAGE 1

"We have yet to reach the peak of the season, but we could be there soon," Smolcich said, noting that cases of RSV and influenza are continuing to rise in the region.

Gieryn said there has been an increase in COVID cases in Winnebago County since October. He said about 20% of county residents have the most recent vaccine designed to protect people from the latest strains of the virus. About one in three people over age 65 have been vaccinated, according to Gieryn.

He said there are fewer residents who are receiving the flu vaccine this year than in recent years.

"We're seeing lower numbers for the flu vaccine that in years past. There is still time to get the flu vaccine," Gieryn said.

Jaci Grignon, communicable disease supervisor with Winnebago County Public Health, said most cases of RSV have been reported among infants and children under 2 years old.

According to the CDC, children under

age 5 and people over age 60 are most at risk of becoming seriously ill if they get RSV. Some have a severe reaction to RSV and others present coldlike symptoms.

Smolcich said people can also do simple things – getting plenty of rest, eating well and exercising – that can help a lot.

"These are things you can do to be healthy, but they're also important this time of year to stay healthy," Smolcich said. "It all helps stave off illness."

Gieryn and Smolcich are reminding people that washing hands is also critical in stopping germs.

"Washing your hands is still very important. Wiping down surfaces at home and at work can stop also help stop the spread of germs," Gieryn said.

The DHS reports hospitalizations linked to COVID-19 have been growing in the Fox Valley and statewide. Between Dec. 24 and Jan. 6, COVID patient hospitalizations grew by 13% in the region.

The DHS continues to encourage people to get the RSV vaccine if they can as Influenza, RSV and COVID-19 continue to circulate at moderate to high levels across Wisconsin, according to the weekly respiratory virus surveillance report.

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# A confluence of eagles draws notice near the water

By Rob Zimmer  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

They've been congregating in larger and larger numbers for the past month. However, with the arrival of the true winter cold this week, bald eagles have begun putting on quite a show throughout the area.

The Loop the Lake Trail and Friendship Trail, where the old trestle crosses Little Lake Butte des Morts, has been a great place for eagle watching in recent days.

The arrival of the cold weather concentrates the eagles along the edge of open water areas. Eagles from the northern part of the state have begun to move in as waterways to our north begin to freeze solid.

Bald eagles are largely scavengers, feasting upon winter kill fish, roadkill white-tails and other food sources. They concentrate along open water areas where they can snag fish floating by, as well as easily hunt ducks and geese weakened by weather or injured by hunters, yet still able to fly.

It wasn't long ago – only 30 to 40 years – that bald eagles were on the verge of becoming extinct. Due to man-made pesticides, such as DDT, and other factors affecting both eggs and adult birds, these magnificent birds of prey, our national symbol, nearly disappeared from the planet.

Today, it is almost a daily occurrence to spot bald eagles soaring in the skies over Neenah and the waters of Lake Winnebago and the Fox River.

Riverside Park and Kimberly Point Park are also great places to see bald eagles as they soar over the icy waters and perch among shoreline trees, on keen lookout for a meal.

Eagles may also be seen in various areas



Photos by Rob Zimmer

Eagles congregate in a tree near the Loop the Lake and Friendship trails.

along the water, including the northwest shoreline of Little Lake Butte des Morts, Fresh Air Camp, Wilderness Park, as well as right in the heart of downtown Neenah.

Neighborhoods on Doty Island are often treated to the sight of bald eagles perched in mature trees along the shore.

The eagles will remain for the next month or so before returning to their breeding grounds to prepare for the nesting season.

Bald eagles are among the earliest of nesting birds and by late February and early March, nest repair and nest building will be well underway.

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# Should Wisconsinites rethink their relationships with beer?

For nearly two years, this column — Wife + Husband = Beer — has shared the joys of drinking beer. It can be so much fun. The styles. The creativity. The glassware. The social lubrication. The buzz. Regular readers know that we're big fans.

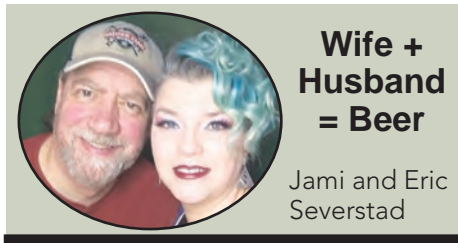
Yet, there are some serious aspects that come with imbibing beer, too. Today, we're tackling a few. Not because we want to start the New Year with doom and gloom, it's just that we're feeling a bit introspective as we enter 2024. It's okay to address some tough stuff.

Let's start with news that we covered last month: the closing of one of Neenah's two breweries. After a five-year run, Barrel 41 Brewing Co. closed its doors at the end of business Dec. 31.

Why? Because the beer business is tough! Operating costs are high, profit margins are thin, supply chains are unpredictable and competition is intense. To stay relevant, breweries need to make standout brews, have a strong social media presence and constantly introduce new beers.

To attract and keep customers coming back, many breweries have large gathering spaces, both indoor and outdoor, for special events such as bands and family gatherings. Yet, not all spaces are designed for that. Barrel 41 did the best they could hosting trivia and standup comedy nights, as well as regularly having food trucks outside.

In the end, Barrel 41 had to make a tough call. They will be missed but, unfortunately, they're not alone. Even an established 15-year-old regional brewer, Chicago's Metropolitan Brewing, closed its doors recently. These closings are part of a nationwide movement.



In 2023, beer consumption in the U.S. dropped to its lowest levels in 25 years, according to Beer Marketer's Insight. Yes, Bud Light was hit with a boycott over its marketing, but the long-term decline runs deeper than that throughout the industry.

As just mentioned, the cost of doing business is constantly rising — ingredients, packaging, shipping, marketing, staff — which drives prices of craft beer higher and higher. Compared to other forms of alcohol, beer isn't the cheaper alternative it used to be.

Craft beer prices are an issue for many people. Some four-packs of 16-ounce beers cost \$30, which is ridiculous. Yes, most beers cost less than that, but many are in the \$20 range, so five bucks for a single beer consumed at home (not a brewery, tavern or restaurant). That's simply not affordable for some of us.

Many Americans now have options that weren't available before, marijuana being a big one (not yet legal in Wisconsin, but we're surrounded by states that allow recreational marijuana use). Currently, 24 states and Washington D.C. agree, which no doubt cuts into U.S. beer consumption. Even THC-infused drinks are becoming popular (no burning cannabis odor, sweet flavors and their "happy buzz.")

For those who still enjoy alcohol, there are hard seltzers, canned wine, premade



Image courtesy of DALL-E

cocktails and hard liquor. Even major soft drink companies and energy drink companies are entering the world of alcoholic drinks. Hard Mountain Dew (5% ABV), anyone? All of these may feel more affordable than a six-pack of craft beer.

Other downsides of drinking beer are the social consequences involved. While responsible drinking has always been priority No. 1 with Wife + Husband, many Wisconsinites have been notorious drunk drivers and alcohol abusers. It's in our culture's DNA, and we need to shift that.

"Wisconsin is the only member of the 50 states which does not criminally punish first-time drunk driving offenders," according to the Marquette Law Review (Jan. 1, 2023). That means a civil infraction rather than a misdemeanor, possibly involving a \$150-\$300 fine, driver's license revocation from six to nine months, a sobriety program and a court-ordered ignition interlock device, depending on the driver's blood alcohol content.

Wisconsin has nearly 28,000 arrests for OWI (operating while intoxicated) in a single year. That's more than 76 every single day, and that only includes those getting caught. Scary, huh?

All these factors likely affect people's decision to participate in "Dry January," something that seems to have caught fire this year. Perhaps it just feels that way to us because Husband is participating in Dry January for the first time.

Wife: So, why are you participating in Dry January this year?

Husband: It's a combination of things. The holiday season was loaded with plenty of drinking. The beers I had were fantastic, but there were many. Maybe I can save a couple bucks and drop a couple pounds. Plus, I thought taking a month off would be an adventure.

W: Is it?

H: Kind of. It's not easy, for sure. It's been two weeks (as of this writing), and I do crave a stout after work or an IPA during the Packers game. I'm not feeling incredibly different physically though, at least not yet.

W: What has been the hardest part?

H: Well, it's amazing how much of my social media content revolves around beer. I'm constantly reminded how much good beer is being released or consumed by friends.

W: Yeah, you haven't offered me any new beers, like you often do. So, my consump-

tion is down, too.

H: I didn't know what to expect from this experiment, so I watched some YouTube videos on Dry January. Now, the algorithm has loaded my feed with support videos for alcoholics and encouraging videos about how life-changing sobriety can be.

W: For some people, that's a big help. But that's not exactly where you're at. This is just temporary for this month. So, how are you feeling?

H: The only kind of withdrawal symptom I have are headaches, but some good things are supposed to happen: better sleep, more energy, weight loss ... but I haven't noticed anything like that yet.

W: I've noticed you're using my SodaS-tream fizzer a lot.

H: In the back of my mind, I know that Dry January will be done Jan. 26, when we head to Central Waters Brewing for its anniversary party.

W: We used to really look forward to that event. Does that feel different this year?

H: Well, that event has felt different for a while. We used to participate in an epic beer sharing with other craft beer geeks. Those days are long gone; no beer sharing allowed now.

W: Okay, back to Dry January. Are you experimenting with nonalcoholic beer?

H: I hear that the quality of those has improved, so I may try one or two. Guinness, Athletic Brewing and Samuel Adams all have NA options. Locally, I've heard on social channels that Wisconsin-based Untitled Art makes a great NA Italian pilsner.

W: The last two weeks, I've seen you enjoying specialty sodas, sparkling waters and hot cocoa, especially during the blizzard.

H: They're treats at the end of a workday, taking the place of a tasty, well-earned beer.

W: What about hop waters?

H: Yes, many breweries are making those now, including Lagunitas Hoppy Refresher. My favorite local hop water is from Badger State Brewing.

W: Dry January is such a cultural phenomenon now.

H: Yep. I saw that Miller Lite is on the bandwagon, offering a chewy non-alcoholic mint that unlocks the taste of Miller Lite as you chew it.

W: (Gag) Why? WHY?

H: I won't lie; I am looking forward to having a beer in a couple of weeks.

W: With the beer industry challenged the way it is, the most valuable thing we faithful craft beer drinkers can do is to introduce beer to people who now enjoy wine and spirits. In an upcoming issue of Wife + Husband = Beer, we'll share advice for new craft beer drinkers on how to navigate and enjoy this industry.

H: Plus, in spring we'll focus on Neenah and offer some local beer-crawl options for when the weather gets better.

W: It will get better, right?

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

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With our new health system launched, we will begin the thoughtful, deliberate process to shape how our new organization looks and feels, all intended to make things even better for the people we serve. As we create something new, you can continue seeing your trusted providers and accessing health care services as you always have.

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# Common Council approves updates for Menasha's Jefferson Park

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Jefferson Park in Menasha will soon undergo a facelift with approval of a design concept that includes a new pavilion and renovation of an existing pavilion.

The renovations approved at Monday's Common Council meeting are part of a \$5 million makeover taking place this year that also includes a new playground, enhancing the softball diamonds and boat launch, and adding a social space with fire pits.

Future phases will include pool renovation and shoreline enhancement.

Situated on 29 acres along Lake Win-

nebago, Jefferson Park is considered one of the primary rentable facilities in the city's park system. It includes a boat launch, boat slips, public swimming pool, playground, volleyball courts, softball diamonds and a picnic area.

The Jefferson Park Vision Plan unanimously approved includes a renovation of the existing large pavilion on the west side of the park and an additional smaller pavilion to be added to the east side.

Renovations on the existing pavilion include a family restroom; upgraded heating and lighting; updates to the kitchen; fresh paint; new siding; the addition of two is-

lands with concrete countertops; a seating area with round pub-style tables; a counter-style seating area along the southern wall and the addition of a metal art piece.

The estimated cost of renovating the existing pavilion is \$325,000 to \$450,000. Menasha city staff is instead going to complete the majority of the renovations, which is estimated to save more than \$200,000.

A new pavilion on the east side of the park will be similar in design and color to the existing pavilion. It will have a shelter area with a capacity of about 75 people; an attached kitchen with serving windows to offer access to the shelter and serve as a con-

cession window for the softball diamond; a storage room and restroom facilities.

The \$750,000 playground will include a dual track zip line with inclusive swing; an artificial turf hill with slides and a climber; musical equipment; a spinning netclimber; Rock'N Ship Glider; climbing tower; adult and child swings, and a wheelchair-accessible ramp into the play structure.

Park construction will continue throughout the year. The west portion of the park is expected to be complete by the Fourth of July, which includes the new playground, renovating the existing plaza and installing a social space.

## ARPA funding

FROM PAGE 1

profits approved for county ARPA funds in December and January are being considered under the government identified projects category.

In advance of the vote, Human Services Director Bill Topel submitted a memo expressing support for funding the Boys & Girls Club, Nova Counseling and Solutions Recovery.

"Each of these services work in collaboration with our department and take referrals from our staff," he wrote. "They play a vital role in servicing persons in our community that we, as a department, do not perform. They help to keep families together and prevent crises that would require our intervention."

The board voted to send a request for \$500,000 for Nova Counseling Services back to committee at the request of District 4 Supervisor Paul Eisen, who expressed

concerns over the nonprofit's transparency.

"The organization does not make its governing documents or financial statements available to the public," he said. "The organization does not have a conflict-of-interest policy."

Nova is a 50-bed facility in Oshkosh that serves an all-male population and treats substance use issues. It includes a 28-day residential program, 90-day transitional program (Terra program), family program and outpatient aftercare. The nonprofit is seeking funding to create a separate living space for its Terra program transitional clients, with a total project cost of \$2 million.

While the county board held off on funding Nova, it approved awarding \$500,000 to three respective nonprofits. Here's where the latest batch of ARPA dollars are going:

### Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity

Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity will receive \$500,000 to build or rehabilitate 10 homes in northern Win-

nebago County, with a total project cost estimated at just under \$2.4 million.

Fox Cities Habitat, which has a central office in Menasha, works with low-income families to build or rehab their home and purchase it at a no-interest loan. According to Habitat, the program improves and increases housing stock in the county and encourages economic development.

Fox Cities Habitat began serving families through new home construction in 1993 and to date has built 141 homes and repaired 292 homes, which includes lead-abatement work in 35 homes. The homes are in Neenah, Menasha, Fox Crossing, Town of Clayton, and the Winnebago portion of Appleton.

### Boys & Girls Club Oshkosh

The county board approved \$500,000 for the Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh to expand and create the Hyde Family Community Center, with a total project cost of \$18 million. The club serves youth ages 6-18 Monday through Friday after school and during the summer.

The center will provide the county with a centralized services center to help residents with economic and basic needs, according to the club application.

### Solutions Recovery

Solutions Recovery will receive \$500,000 to acquire a building at 206 Algoma Blvd. in Oshkosh to expand its recovery housing. The building is the current location of Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, which was awarded \$500,000 in ARPA dollars by the board last month to partially fund its upcoming move to 240 Algoma.

Solutions began operating in 2007 and in 2015 opened its first sober living home for women, which remains the only women's sober living facility in Oshkosh. It has since expanded to offer 38 beds to men, women and family units. The organization boasts a success rate of 85% of its graduates becoming gainfully employed.

The total cost of the project is \$1.1 million. The location will offer expanded programming and transitional living while also potentially being used as emergency housing.



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## Calendar of events

**Saturday, Jan. 20**  
Stompin' at the Savoy Jazz Event, 7 p.m., Neenah High School atrium  
Stuffed Animal Clinic, 10:30 a.m., Neenah Public Library

**Monday, Jan. 22**  
Monday Morning Book Klatch: "The Measure," 10 a.m., Neenah Public Library

**Tuesday, Jan. 23**  
"Dormant Season" with photographer Erinn Springer, 7 p.m., Neenah Public Library

**Saturday, Jan. 28**  
Friends of Library Magazine Sale, 10:30 a.m., Neenah Public Library

**Monday, Jan. 30**  
Movie Talks: "Insomnia," 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

**Saturday, Feb. 3**  
Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

**Sunday, Feb. 4**  
Our Saviors Lutheran Church meat raffle, 1 p.m., The Dome, 1338 S. Commercial St.

**Thursday, Feb. 8**  
Local candidates forums, 6 a.m., Neenah City Hall

**Friday, Feb. 9**  
Uncorked & Uncapped, 7 p.m., Best Western Bridgewood Premier Resort

**Saturday, Feb. 10**  
Warm Your Heart, 11 a.m., downtown Neenah



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# Carey delivering plenty of points in first skate for Rockets

Lifelong hockey player also excels in lacrosse

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

Ben Carey has been a hockey player his whole life.

Put on skates before he could walk by a father who played professionally, being on the ice with a stick in his hand and a puck at his feet has felt as natural as anything else in his life.

"I've been around it for as long as I can remember," the Neenah High School senior said. "It's been woven into my DNA."

The lifetime of playing hockey has translated into plenty of success on the ice.

Carey played with the Triple A Junior Hockey Madison Capitals last season after playing his first two high school hockey seasons at Green Bay Notre Dame.

In his first season with the Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha co-op program, Carey is the leading goal scorer for the Rockets with 15 tallies through 17 games and his 30 points is at least double the total of any other player on the team.

"I think for me it's just trusting who I am playing with. Obviously, I haven't played with any of these guys before so it's a little different playing with a whole new group of guys," Carey said. "I'm with a really good group of guys which helps a lot. I just need to stick to what I've been doing since I was young which is trusting



my ability to score goals and make passes and create opportunities for other people. Just do what I can to help our team be successful."

Most players of Carey's ability and longtime connection to the sport, would be gearing up to play junior hockey in the near future or possibly jumping right on to a collegiate roster.

And for much of his life, that was the path Carey figured to follow.

"I was always going to play juniors. That was my plan," Carey said. "Then last year, I went first-team all-conference in lacrosse and ultimately I ended up committing to play at Division 1 lacrosse at the University of Albany."

Not that turning his back on the sport is going to be easy.

"I'm definitely going to miss hockey a lot. It's been the biggest part of my life for a long time," said Carey, whose dad Matt graduated from Neenah in 1991 and played with the Quad City Mallards. "I've loved hockey my whole life. It has been my No. 1 sport my whole life, but I think all good things have to come to

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 11



Submitted photo

Neenah High School senior Ben Carey currently leads the Rockets' hockey team with 15 goals and 30 points so far on the season. It is his first year playing with the program.

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# Ziebell nets 32 as Neenah topples Beaver Dam

By Dustin Riese  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

A pair of state-ranked girls basketball teams squared off at Neenah High School on Tuesday night.

The host Rockets, ranked sixth in Division 1, welcomed perennial powerhouse Beaver Dam, ranked fourth in Division 2, for a massive nonconference showdown.

The Rockets had to shake off the rust from a nearly two-week layoff between games but managed to come away with an impressive 59-53 victory.

"After not playing for 10 days, we are happy with our performance tonight," head coach Andy Braunel said. "To hold a team as talented as Beaver Dam to around 50 points is impressive and that

alone is something we hope to build on as the season goes on. Offensively, we never seemed to get into a groove, but that is expected when you have some extended time off."

Rust was clearly a factor in the early stages of the game for Neenah, however it didn't take the Rockets' Allie Ziebell long to find her groove.

The senior was responsible for 12 of the Rockets first 14 points in the game and finished with a game-high 32. Her night included a 10-for-10 performance at the free-throw line, while



Ziebell

also finishing with a team-best 12 rebounds.

Even with Ziebell's effort, the Golden Beavers were up to the task, taking an early three-point lead, while extending it to 18-14 midway through the first half.

Ellie Buss, who chipped in 10 points in the game, flipped the momentum for the Rockets. On back-to-back possessions, the sophomore drained 3-pointers to put Neenah ahead 20-18.

"Ellie is a great shooter and she came through with some massive shots for us tonight," Braunel said. "She has progressed a ton as an all-around player and will continue to grow. She will be an important piece for our success the rest of the way."

With Beaver Dam still hanging around, it was only a matter of time until sophomore Rowan Klesmit started to get rolling.

Klesmit, who also finished with 10 points, picked up several baskets late in the first half to keep the game close, but it was Beaver Dam that held a slim 31-30 lead at halftime.

Coming out of intermission, Neenah turned up the defensive pressure to spark a 9-2 run to surge back into the lead. Ziebell had seven of those nine points with Buss adding the other two.

Beaver Dam rallied to narrow the gap to one.

Things remained tight the rest of the way before Ziebell showed up down the stretch to help deliver a victory.

Looking to put the Golden Beavers away for good, Ziebell was responsible for 10 of the final 12 points for Neenah. Had it not been for a made free throw from Kayla White, Ziebell would have had the rest of the Rockets points as Neenah pushed its lead to 54-48.

The Golden Beavers would get as close as three in the final minute on a 3-pointer from Gabby Wilke, who finished with 30 points, but that was as close as Beaver Dam would get as the Rockets finished things up from the line.

Although it wasn't always the prettiest, these are the types of games a team needs late in the season in order to prepare for the postseason.

"This team has a ton of potential," Braunel said. "We are nowhere close to our ceiling as a team, which is our challenge now. Not only do we want to play to our potential, but we need to do it while also playing consistently which isn't always easy. We have a number of kids that can knock down shots for us, but they just need to believe in themselves enough to take those shots."

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# Prep sports roundup

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Zephyrs breeze to win over Wolves

St. Mary Catholic allowed only 19 points in cruising to a 70-19 win over Hilbert on Monday night.

The Zephyrs led 43-10 at halftime before surrendering just nine points in the second half.

Four players reached double figures for St. Mary Catholic, led by Emily Vogel with 13 points. Sienna Anderson added 12 and Lauren Ripley and Autumn Crowe each finished with 11.

The Zephyrs hit nine 3-pointers in the game with Anderson knocking down 4-of-6 from behind the arc to lead the way.

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Neenah cruises past Oshkosh West

Brady Corso posted a double-double and Neenah used a strong first half to roll past Oshkosh West 69-46 on Tuesday.

The Rockets held the Wildcats to just 15 points in the first half to take a 31-15 lead. Neenah then coasted in the second half.

Charlie Wunderlich led the Rockets with 17 points, while Corso finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Luke Jung also reached double figures with 10 points.

The Rockets also picked up a 62-57 nonconference win over Brookfield East on Saturday behind 32 points from Corso. The senior knocked down five 3-pointers, hit all five of his free-throw attempts and also finished with eight rebounds.

Wunderlich added 12 points and nine rebounds in the win.

### St. Mary Catholic picks up pair of wins

The Zephyrs erupted for 55 first-half points en route to cruising past Hilbert, 85-33, Tuesday night.

Five players for St. Mary Catholic finished in double figures with Mason Uhlenbrauck leading the way with 19 points. Fisher Mackenzie was next with 15 followed by Luke Fairweather and Preston Fields with 11 each and Kieran Barrientos with 10.

The Zephyrs led 55-21 at halftime and then held Hilbert to just 12 points in the second half.

It was the sixth win in the last seven games for the Zephyrs, a streak that included a 79-67 victory over Reedsville last week.

Mackenzie totaled 29 points and nine rebounds to lead St. Mary Catholic, while Fields posted a triple-double with 18 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists. Barrientos with 11 points and Uhlenbrauck with 10 points also reached double figures.

## HOCKEY

### Balanced attack carries Rockets to shutout win

Six different players scored goals and Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha pitched a shutout in a 6-0 win over Waupun on Tuesday night.

Calvin Zinda and Ben Carey opened the scoring as the Rockets took a 2-0 lead after the first period. Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha then tallied four goals in the second period with Evan Hans, Cartyr Simonson, Chase Collins and Cooper Zinda finding the net.

Simonson, Calvin Zinda and Carey each finished with two assists in the game for the Rockets.

John Horneck earned the shutout in goal stopping all 21 shots he faced.

## BOYS WRESTLING

### Neenah collects pair of easy FVA wins

The Rockets cruised past Fond du Lac (64-12) and Appleton East (79-0) in a Fox Valley Association double dual at Fond du Lac last week.

Three wrestlers pinned both opponents on the night as Logan Tessier, Landen Sheppard and Miguel Mora each stuck both opponents.

Jeremy Wiggs-Schmalz and Nate Cleveland also posted a pair of contested wins in

the two dual meets for Neenah.

Against Appleton East, Connor Simons, Dane Granditzke and Tyler Gillig also picked up pins, while Kaden Roth, Eli Armatti, Declan Koch and Jacob Herm won by pin against Fond du Lac.

## SWIMMING

### Neenah holds off Appleton West/Kimberly

Neenah swept the top three places in the 100-meter breaststroke and also posted a 1-2 finish in the 100-meter freestyle to key a 104-76 victory over Appleton West/Kimberly on Tuesday.

The Rockets' sweep of the top three places in the breaststroke came from Tanner Trustem, Burke Wendell and Leo Wilhelm, while Julian Kuehn and Joshua Youngwerth went 1-2, respectively, in the 100-meter freestyle.

Drew Gaerthofner added a pair of wins for the Rockets, placing first in the 200-meter individual medley and the 100-meter backstroke.

Kyle Joneson added the Rockets only other individual first place by winning the diving competition.

Trustem in the 50-meter freestyle and Braden Loudon in the 100-meter butterfly picked up second-place finishes.

Neenah also took first in the 200-meter medley relay with a team of Gaerthofner, Trustem, Loudon and Youngwerth, and the 200-meter freestyle relay with a quartet of Trustem, Youngwerth, Ryker Zarda and Julian Kuehn.

# Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 9

an end. I found a new opportunity and I took advantage of it. I couldn't be happier with my decision."

Carey said he started playing lacrosse in about fifth grade and played in both Neenah and later Appleton youth clubs before taking it up at Notre Dame as a freshman.

He was able to play with the Neenah High School team last spring and is looking forward to seeing what the group can do this season when lacrosse officially becomes a WIAA-sanctioned sport.

"It adds a little bit to the state tournament because it is the first state tournament ever in lacrosse," Carey said. "We should have a pretty good team this year and we could be in a good spot to win it with the group we have coming back. There are a lot of good teams in the state, too, but I like our chances."

Although the two sports are played on completely different surfaces, there are a lot of similarities between the two.

That's part of the reason why Carey has excelled in both arenas.

"Hand-eye coordination is a big thing and if you have good hands in one sport you're going to be predisposed to having good hands in the other," Carey said. "They are both pretty tough to play and are both physically exhausting. You have to be in great shape. I think they are very comparable."

Lacrosse will have to wait a few months at least as Carey focuses in on a strong finish to the Rockets' hockey season.

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha got off to a great start this season but then dropped three of four games over the holidays and into early January.

"We have to shake off the (rough stretch). You hear it all the time with goalies about having a short memory. But that's what we have to get back to it," said Carey who had a goal and two assists in the Rockets' 6-0 win over Waupun on

Tuesday. "I think we can get back to what we were in the beginning of the year, scoring 3-4 goals a game and producing."

Running a bit hot and cold isn't just a team result thing either.

As a goal-scorer, Carey admits there are times when every shot he takes ends up on net or in goal, while there are also times when its difficult to find the net from the edge of the crease.


"I've run cold in some games and it affects you a little bit," Carey said. "I just have had to shake it off and get back going. Get a few shots on the power play and see where it's at. If it's good, you shoot more and if it's not good, you shoot less. It's just the natural roller coaster of the game."

With his background, joining a new team for one year was not an easy road.



Although he has developed a bond with his teammates, how he would gel with the group was on his mind entering the season. He also wanted to make sure that his final hockey season was one to remember.



"I felt a little bit of pressure but not much just because of the group I have surrounding me," Carey said. "I feel like I've put more pressure on myself than other people have put on me because I'm coming back and it's my last year of hockey. I just want to do good for myself and my team and prove something to myself in my last year in hockey."

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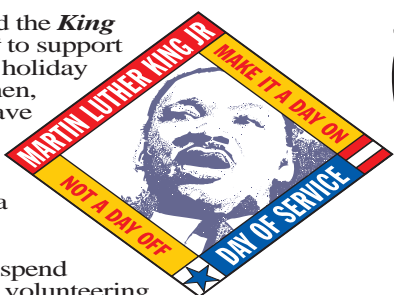
## Martin Luther King, Jr. DAY OF SERVICE

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."  
 — MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Service was at the heart of Martin Luther King's philosophy. He urged Americans to take action to improve the lives of others.

In 1994, Congress passed the *King Holiday and Service Act* to support efforts to make the King holiday a day of service. Since then, millions of Americans have honored the memory of Dr. King by making Martin Luther King Day as a "day on" instead of a "day off."

People across the nation spend Martin Luther King Day volunteering to make their communities better places. Some will plant community gardens, clean up parks or beaches, and others will read to children or the elderly.



Take a look at this list of MLK, Jr. Day Service ideas. Then look at each picture. Number the project you think each kid chose in the circles.

1. Clearing an elderly neighbor's sidewalk.
2. Collecting canned goods for a food bank.
3. Help coach a younger child's team.
4. Help a neighbor with some yardwork.
5. Play a game at the senior center.



### School Sign Painter

Write in the missing vowels to complete these signs.

SCH\_\_L  
 CL\_\_N UP D\_\_Y  
 TH\_\_S M\_\_ND\_\_Y!

USE THE  
 R\_\_CYCL\_\_ AND  
 C\_\_MP\_\_ST B\_\_NS!

H\_\_LP M\_\_KE  
 OUR SCH\_\_L  
 B\_\_T\_\_FUL



Many communities have a place that helps volunteers find ways to help others. Write the letter that comes after each letter of the alphabet on the spaces at right to find a place you can call to see how you can be of service to your community.

V  
 U N K T M S D D Q  
 B D M S D Q

### Service Starts at Home

Sometimes the best place to be of service is in your own home. Make a list of five things you could do on Martin Luther King Day to help your mom, dad, a grandparent, brother, sister or neighbor.

TASK	COMPLETED
Empty the dishwasher for mom	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

### Extra! Extra! Helping Others

- Look through the newspaper to find:
- An organization that helps others
  - A person helping others
  - Adjectives about helping
  - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day events

Standards Link: Civics: Know how various American holidays reflect values, principles and beliefs of Americans.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

#### Trash Bag Team

These students helped with a park clean up. How many bags of trash did each student fill? Use the clues to complete the chart.

- The 4 students filled a total of 15 bags.
- No one filled more than 7 bags.
- None of the students filled the same number of bags.
- Cassidy filled 5 bags.
- Owen filled 3 less than Cassidy.
- Sam filled the most bags.

Students	Bags
CASSIDY	
OWEN	
BODIE	
SAM	
TOTAL	15



Standards Link: Mathematical Reasoning: Use a variety of strategies to solve problems.

### Double Double Word Search

- ACTION  
 CLUES  
 GARDENS  
 GREAT  
 HELPING  
 HOLIDAY  
 HOME  
 IDEAS  
 KING  
 PROJECT  
 MEMORY  
 DAY  
 READ  
 SERVICE  
 STUDENTS

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

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

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

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