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## Two public schools face closure

### Neenah's Hoover, Jefferson in Menasha await decision

Neenah News

Two local elementary schools may soon be permanently shuttered.

The Neenah Joint School District will vote Tuesday on whether to close Hoover Elementary and the Menasha Joint School District will vote Feb. 26 on closing Jeffer-

son Elementary.

The potential closure of the schools follows statewide trends due to declining enrollment and budget deficits. In recent months the Green Bay Area Board of Education voted to close three schools and recommended closing another seven, while Kenosha Unified School District voted to close six schools.

Hoover is being considered for closure as part of the school district's plan to change

boundaries to deal with population shifts, with some schools under or over capacity. Students would be moved primarily to Horace Mann, with some being placed at Coolidge and Tullar. Hoover staff would be transferred to other schools in the district. Closing Hoover is expected to amount to \$400,000 to \$600,000 in annual savings.

Jefferson may be closed due to declin-

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Youth pastor sentenced for sexual assault  
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Photo by David Hall

### Sparse ice landscape

At Payne's Point Hook and Spear Fishing Club off Lake Winnebago last weekend, club member Jim Nobbe measured 7 to 9 inches of ice that was not recommended for anything but foot traffic and light small ATVs. Ice fisherees were canceled in the area as a result and it wasn't recommended to leave ice shanties out overnight. Recent colder temperatures were expected to improve ice fishing conditions.

## Breast cancer survivor: 'Every second counts'

### Community raising funds for woman's treatment

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

The community is rallying to support a local woman battling breast cancer.

When Dana Swanson was diagnosed with cancer last June, she said it felt like being hit with a bag of bricks. That's because the 38-year-old Neenah mother had done everything right.

After testing positive for the BRCA1 genetic mutation in February 2022, which increases the chance of breast and ovarian cancer significantly, Swanson was proactive in managing her health. She underwent screening imagery that came back clear, scheduled a double mastectomy and planned for a hysterectomy.

This past Mother's Day, Swanson found a lump in her breast. A few weeks later, she was diagnosed with stage 2, grade 3, triple-negative breast cancer. Seemingly overnight, the family's entire world was

turned upside down.

Before her diagnosis, Swanson enjoyed socializing, singing, going to concerts, being outdoors, visiting parks and lakes, traveling, cooking and organizing. But all those things have been on hold while she navigates a new world of medical testing, treatments, surgeries and procedures.

Swanson recently underwent six months of aggressive chemotherapy. Among the physical changes she experienced from chemo was hair loss. Two of her friends held a party and shaved their own hair off in solidarity.

The Appleton nonprofit Peaceful Purpose, which provides no charge or low-cost wigs, hats, head coverings and haircuts to those with medical hair loss, gave Swanson a wig.

"When it came in, and she put it on my head, I can't tell you how much I felt like myself again," she said.

On Nov. 29, Swanson rang the bell at the clinic, signifying the completion of her chemotherapy

SEE **Cancer survivor** ON PAGE 11



Submitted photo

Dana and Kenny Swanson hold their children, Summer and Grady, inside their Neenah home. The family will be the recipient of funds from an upcoming benefit to alleviate the financial stressors from Dana's recent battle with breast cancer.



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# Help for Homeless drive underway

The Family organization's annual Help for the Homeless hygiene drive launched Sunday and runs through March 3 to help stock the shelves of more than 100 homeless and crisis programs in 19 Wisconsin communities.

Donations in Neenah at Festival Foods, Walgreens or St. Vincent de Paul will go to Vinnie's Pantry. The goal of the program is to supply a year's worth of products to participating agencies.

COTS director John Nieman is the chair of the local program that includes

five agencies Winnebago County's – COTS, Father Carr's Advocap, Bella Medical Clinic and the Salvation Army.

Donors are asked to purchase new, unused hygiene and cleaning supplies and drop them off at the boxes located at participating churches, schools and businesses or organizations. Boxes are typically found near the entrance or checkout areas.

Most urgent needs include soaps, trash bags, diapers, unscented deodorant, wet wipes, toilet paper, paper towels, disposable razors, and tampons and maxi pads.

Help for the Homeless has provided \$5.4 million worth of hygiene and cleaning supplies to local crisis programs over the past 32 years. Community members at more than 900 businesses, churches and schools hosted collection boxes last year and donated \$665,000 worth of items to local crisis programs.

Money donated will be used to purchase gift cards to local retailers for hygiene supplies. Find more details on donating and the program at [thefamily.net/help-for-the-homeless](http://thefamily.net/help-for-the-homeless).

# Feeding America, Bucks star tip off campaign

With the state facing an increase in food insecurity among children, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is kicking off its 21st Annual PB&J Challenge, a two-month fundraising and awareness campaign.

According to recent statistics, one in eight children in eastern Wisconsin do not know where their next meal is coming from.

The PB&J Challenge through Feb. 29 encourages supporters to make monetary donations or organize a peanut butter and jelly food drive at their school or workplace to help Feeding America stock the shelves at area food pantries, meal programs and shelters.

"The high demand for peanut butter and jelly among our partners, coupled with the appreciative feedback from pantry guests that receive these donations, motivates us to expand this challenge more and more each year," said Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin president and chief executive Patti Habeck.

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin also announced a continued partnership with Milwaukee Bucks veteran forward Bobby Portis Jr., who will serve as the campaign's ambassador for the second year.

Growing up in a single-parent household, Portis understands family food struggles.

"It's all about giving back and spreading your blessings with others," Portis said. "I come from humble beginnings

and we never did it on our own – we always had help along the way. Being able to have this platform and spread my blessings with others has always been a calling of mine."

The campaign is presented by Hydrite, with additional support from Cousins Subs, Plum Media, Potawatomi Casino Hotel, Pick 'n Save, Drake & Associates, Old National Bank, and the Bobby Portis Foundation. To learn more, visit [FeedingAmericaWI.org](http://FeedingAmericaWI.org).



Neenah Historical Society photo

## 1980s-era shanty

Fisherman set up a sturgeon spearing shanty in 1983. The first modern sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago occurred during the winter of 1931-32. The current sturgeon spearing season begins on the second Saturday in February and lasts 16 days or until harvest caps have been reached. Spearers can fish from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and are required to register their fish at a DNR-operated station.

**Edward Jones**

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# Common Council candidates discuss top issues at forum

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Two of the three candidates vying for a District 1 seat on the Neenah Common Council faced off during a forum last week, with voters in Tuesday's primary selecting the top two candidates to advance to the April 2 election.

The forum was held by the League of Women Voters of Winnebago County and featured Brian Roeh and Kristen Sandvick, who are running for John Skyrms' District 1 seat. Skyrms was elected in 2021 and is not seeking re-election. Mark Ellis is also running for the District 1 seat but was not in attendance at the forum.

District 2 and District 3 seats are also up for election, with incumbent Brian Borchardt running unopposed, and Todd Stevenson, who has represented District 3 since 1989, not seeking re-election. Jeffrey Linski and William Pollnow Jr. are running for the vacant District 3 seat. With no challenger for District 2 or a primary race for District 3, Borchardt, Linski and Pollnow Jr. didn't participate in the forum.

The two District 1 candidates took a different approach to answering the first question, which required them to describe what has prepared them to handle city budgets.

Roeh said he has maintained an aviation maintenance engineering department, working with outside firms and an internal budget to ensure proper engineering resources.

"This is something I deal with on a daily basis," he said. "I'm constantly working with engineering firms to make sure that we're getting the best deal for what we're getting from them, either the services or the individual engineering packages, as well as within my own department."

Sandvick said her experience with budgeting comes from her own household budget.

"So in order to make ends meet, we often have to think very carefully about how we are spending our money. Oftentimes looking ahead to think about what will cost the least in the long run is an important thing in the budget, making sure that when we are paying for something, it is something that will last and be worth spending money on," she said.

When it comes to bringing better-paying jobs to Neenah, Roeh suggested using property that Neenah owns and offering it for sale at rates that are appealing to companies that may want to operate here. He said a grant funded small business development program could be successful in the city.

Sandvick said that tax incremental financing (TIF) can be successful in attracting businesses but noted it's also important to encourage small business growth. She said it's a struggle to find affordable commercial space to rent in Neenah, "so we need to find ways to incentivize and encourage people to be here."

On the topic of affordable housing, Sandvick noted there are a lack of options in communities throughout the country and suggested bringing in Section 42 housing, a tax credit that encourages developers to build affordable housing.

Roeh said he believes the government should not stand in the way of development.

"I believe that the best way for me to bring in housing is to allow housing to be developed in Neenah," he said.

The candidates were also asked about how the city could attract a grocery store to downtown Neenah, which has been

identified as a food desert, with Roeh stating that Neenah is standing in the way of bringing more Kwik Trips to the area.

"So again, we need to get out of the way of developments for these types of things," he said. "Again, going back to plots that the city may own right now that a grocery store could fit in. Again, we need to find developers that are going to take that property and turn it into something that's good for the community at large."



Roeh

Sandvick said the former Island Foods location on Doty Island would make a good location for a grocery store. She suggested offering incentives or grants to attract a grocery store or expanding the city's TIF districts for development in the area.

"That corridor right through there, I believe it's First Street, has been looking pretty bare for a pretty long time and I would love to see something going on there for Doty Island and all of downtown," she said.

The candidates answered several questions pertaining to sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Roeh focused on the treatment of stormwater, suggesting that the city build its own stormwater treatment plant.

"So we created these retention ponds throughout the city, valuable real estate that we would like to use for either home development or business development," he said. "Let's think to the future, know where we're going, have a five-, 10-, 20-

year plan, and building that plant."

Sandvick suggested small changes that could make a difference, such as making the city a safe place for pedestrians and bikers to reduce the amount of pollution.

The candidates were questioned on partnering with corporations to develop Arrowhead Park, with Sandvick noting she supports more development in the park and it's "a great opportunity for Neenah to really invest in itself."

Roeh questioned the stability of the ground at Arrowhead, which sits atop land created from paper mill waste, and whether any structures could be placed on the site.

"Right now we're focusing on putting a bridge to that property when there's a bridge to nothing right now," he said.

A follow-up question included whether the candidates would support grants to fund shoreline improvement, with Roeh noting that grant funds come with strings attached.

"I believe that if we put our minds to it, we can find ways to improve that property within the means that we already have at our disposal," he said. "We should try not to use grant money."

Sandvick said she would support using grant funds.

"I would be in favor of grants that would help us improve and clean up our shorelines and our blighted areas within the city," she said.

A question on the success of the city's Transportation Assessment Replace-

ment Fee (TARF), which is billed to residents and businesses as a replacement for special assessments for street resurfacing, reconstruction and sidewalk construction projects drew more general responses.

Roeh said he believes the TARF is being applied as it was intended.

"The money is going back to where it belongs with these, the way I understand that they're working right now," he said.

Sandvick admitted she was not familiar with the city's TARF and declined to give an answer. She later posted on her campaign social media page that she researched the issue and feels that the system saves families from undue financial stress when their streets need to be redone.

In his closing statement, Roeh said a good council member does research on the items that are voted on.

"What are the details - it's good to know what the endgame is - but how do we get from A to B," he said. "All the things that happen in between, I feel aren't always thoroughly researched prior to the votes happening and I promise that that is something I will be doing."

Sandvick said she is prepared to serve Neenah as it faces challenges and continues to grow and change.

"I will strive to listen to the concerns of my District 1 neighbors and work to keep our communities strong," she said. "I may never have all the answers to all the problems, but as your representative I will seek out information, listen to ideas and work toward compromises."

The full candidate forum is available for viewing on the City of Neenah's YouTube page.


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bergstromford.com

# Former youth pastor sentenced in sex assault case

By Jonathan Richie  
NEENAH NEWS

Jordan R. Huffman will be in prison until he is 78 years old after being sentenced last Friday in Winnebago County court where he said, "I'm the author of this tragedy."

Huffman, 52, plead guilty to child enticement with sexual contact and felony bail jumping in November after the most serious offense of first-degree sexual assault of a child was dismissed but read in for sentencing purposes.

He was sentenced to six years in prison followed by six years of extended supervision that will run concurrently with the bail jumping sentence of two years in prison and two years of extended supervision by Winnebago County Branch 6 Judge Daniel Bissett.

Huffman is currently serving a 20-year sentence for repeated sexual assault of a child in Portage County. His Winnebago sentence will run consecutively to that

charge and Huffman would be released in 2049.

The criminal complaint in this case explained a 12-year-old victim told police he had been kidnapped and taken to a hotel where he was sexually assaulted. The victim called police and gave them their location. Police then made a traffic stop and Huffman was taken into custody.

At the time, Huffman was out on bond living in Oshkosh when he picked up the victim from Appleton and drove him to a hotel in Fox Crossing.

Huffman's attorney Andrea Winder noted that Huffman was taking the victim home when he was pulled over by police. She also said that Huffman was intoxicated and didn't want to pick up the child but the victim repeatedly asked to be picked up.

During the sentencing hearing both assistant district attorney Tracy Ann Paider and Winder pointed out flaws in the criminal complaint. Paider explained the victim

initially told authorities Huffman knew the victim's location from a feature on Snapchat, but a subsequent investigation by Fox Crossing police found the victim told Huffman the address and gave a phone number.

This subsequent investigation also found that the victim was using a dating app that showed their age as 19. The victim, 12 at the time, did tell Huffman he was 15, which both Paider and Winder said Huffman should have stopped the interaction at that point.

Winder said there was a joint recommendation with the state to sentence Huffman to three years in prison to run consecutively with the Portage County sentence and have Huffman released when he was 75 and then on extended supervision for the rest of his life.

Bissett said it is not the court's role to factor in if a defendant will die in prison for sentencing purposes. He weighed the seriousness of the offense, the character of the

defendant and the need to protect society.

"My actions were evil," Huffman said during his sentencing hearing. He told the court he had been drinking a lot when he was out on bond for his Portage County case. He said he was in AA and was taking steps to deal with his attraction to teenagers.

Huffman said he has an "attraction to a category of people I shouldn't."

He said he takes full responsibility for his actions but said he didn't have the answers for why he did what he did with the victim.

"I'm an unhealthy person," Huffman said. He apologized to the victim, their family and his own family.

He said since being incarcerated he has been actively seeking help.

Before delivering his sentence, Bissett explained he believed Huffman was remorseful for his actions but also stressed the need to protect the public, saying, "(It's important to) make sure children are protected."

# Homicide trial underway in death of Fox Crossing man

Neenah News

Jury selection was set to begin today for a defendant accused of the November 2022 killing of a 31-year-old Fox Crossing man.

Eric Rogers, 54, of Appleton is on trial before Judge Carrie Schneider in Outagamie County Circuit Court on a charge of first-degree intentional homicide, robbery with use of force, take vehicle without consent with use of force, and a misdemeanor bail jumping charge. All the counts include a sentence modifier as a repeater.

Police found Erik Hudson dead with gunshot wounds in a "known drug house" on

Summer Street in Appleton, according to the criminal complaint. Shell casings from a 9mm handgun were located near his body.

Rogers resided at the home and his vehicle was in the driveway but he was not there when police arrived and discovered Hudson's body. The vehicle Hudson drove to the home, which he had borrowed from an acquaintance that day "to meet some friends," was missing from the resi-



Rogers

dence.

One witness told police that Hudson would regularly carry about \$2,500 cash, drugs and a 9mm handgun. After the killing, Rogers reportedly drove the car Hudson arrived in to an apartment in Green Bay where a witness said he was in possession of a gun, cocaine, methamphetamine and more than \$1,000 in cash.


Documents say Rogers went to a casino, stayed in a motel for a night and then at a homeless shelter, where he was arrested five days after the killing.

During an interview with police, Rogers denied killing Hudson or driving the ve-

hicle. Crime lab results indicated Rogers' DNA was found on the key and steering wheel, which was corroborated by video evidence of Rogers driving it shortly after Hudson was believed to have been killed.

Rogers has four previous convictions for knowingly violating a domestic abuse order and two for misdemeanor bail jumping. One week before the homicide he was charged with possession of cocaine and drug paraphernalia.

The jury trial is scheduled to continue through Thursday. If convicted, the homicide charge carries a mandatory term of life in prison.



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# Defective drawings alleged in apartment project delay

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Completion of The Brin apartments in downtown Menasha is more than six months behind schedule and a lawsuit alleges the delay is because of serious safety concerns in design that needed to be corrected before construction could move forward.

CR Structures is constructing a building at 1 Main St. with 8,800 square feet of commercial space on the lower level, 43 one- and two-bedroom apartments on the upper levels, and 43 underground parking spaces.

The \$11 million development was expected to be completed this past October but construction has continued through the winter.

CR Structures of Appleton filed a lawsuit in July against Vision Architecture of Neenah, Triumph Engineers of Appleton and ABC Insurance Co., alleging more than \$4.9 million in damages caused by defective drawings that delayed construction.

The 90-year-old Brin theater building at Tayco and Main was being used for retail and apartments in 2018 when it was destroyed by a fire caused by electrical issues. The city subsequently purchased it for \$1 and funded asbestos abatement and demolition.

Menasha sold the cleared site to CR Structures for \$1 in 2021 for redevelopment and agreed to provide 20% of the project's value in tax incremental financing.

CR Structures alleges that it contracted with Vision for architectural services to design the Brin and Vision subcontracted the structural engineering services to Triumph. Documents say when construction began that September it was based on the drawings provided by Vision.

The lawsuit notes that after construction commenced Triumph requested a peer review of the drawings in February 2022 that revealed safety concerns and a stop work request was issued. CR Structures then hired the independent architecture



Photo by David Hall

An aerial view of The Brin apartments neighborhood in Menasha.

firm ZS to review the drawings.

In a letter submitted as an exhibit, ZS identified 72 issues with the Brin drawings including structural calculations, general notes and specifications, schedules, load maps, foundation plans, foundation details, first-floor framing plans, wood framing plans and framing details.

According to the lawsuit, several defects indicated serious safety concerns regarding the integrity of the Brin's foundation and structure. ZS concluded "that there is significant cause for concern in the documents reviewed. The building requires (a) significant amount of redesign to the structure to be considered safe and will perform in (a) manner that will not lead to problems in the future."

Architects and engineers are required to be licensed by the state Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS). ZS issued remedial drawings that were approved by DPS on June 28, 2022, and construction commenced.

CR Structures alleges the safety concerns presented in the drawings delayed the Brin's completion date resulting in the

loss of anticipated commercial and residential rent revenue. Further, documents say the delay impacted CR Structure's cost to finance the project and caused its commercial construction loan to skyrocket.

CR Structures claims the new design required additional and different materials that with supply-chain issues and inflation were more costly when ordered instead of if ordered under the original drawings.

Documents say CR Structures funded the remediation design and construction including safety reviews, a new design and accompanying remedial drawings, increased storage, hauling and administrative fees, and costs for modifying the electrical roofing windows and other openings.

CR Structures is asking for a judgment against the defendants and an award of compensatory and punitive damages in an unspecified amount.

Vision's website includes a digital rendering of the Brin. In its response, Vision alleges that it subcontracted with Larson Engineering to provide structural engineering services and only subcontracted to Triumph after CR Structures "demanded and required that Vision hire Triumph to perform structural engineering services for the project."

Vision wrote that it sent CR Structures a termination letter dated Oct. 21, 2021, and denied that it provided defective drawings. Vision's attorney declined to comment on the pending litigation but said the firm disputes the allegations.

Triumph is listed online as permanently closed. Neenah News is not naming Triumph's owner because she is not expressly named in the lawsuit. An online profile for the owner indicates she was previously employed at Larson Engineering and Excel Engineering. In December she registered a new Appleton structural engineering business with the state Department of Financial Institutions. Triumph's attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

CR Structures executive vice president and co-owner Kip Golden declined to comment on the lawsuit. CR Structures also completed the \$9 million Banta Lofts apartments on Doty Island inside the former Banta Corp. building on Ahnaip Street.

The Brin building is expected to be complete and ready for occupancy by early April. Apartments and commercial space are currently being pre-leased with details at thebrinmenasha.com.



Neenah News

Construction of The Brin apartments in downtown Menasha is expected to wrap up by early April after more than six months of delays that a lawsuit alleges were due to defective design plans.

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# School board candidates share views in primary forum

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

A forum for the Neenah Joint School District Board of Education held by the League of Women Voters of Winnebago County last week gave candidates a chance to share their views on some of the issues of the campaign season.

Eight candidates are vying for three seats. Voters will choose the top six candidates in Tuesday's primary that will advance to the April 2 election.

They include incumbents Brian Epley and Kristian Sahr, and Tom Hanby who was previously on the board but failed to secure a seat in last year's election. They are joined by Susan Garcia Franz, Chari Long, Jeb Pfeifle, Roxanne Schwandt-Knutson and Alex Corrigan.

Seven candidates answered questions during the event, with Sahr unable to attend. Neenah News included portions of each candidate's response to the questions below, which were edited for brevity.

### Are private school vouchers good or bad for public schools? If the district would have gotten these funds, what should they have been used for?

Hanby: "It certainly seems to be counterintuitive to be taking money away from public schools when we are continuing to push more growth and more rigor to our staff and our students to basically continue to do more with less resources, is not ideally the way in which we operate it."

Long: "This is an issue close to my heart as I started homeschooling my son because the system failed to bring him to reading proficiency in second grade and they didn't seem concerned about his reading so what we're looking at is an ex-



Candidates for Neenah Joint School District Board of Education take part in a public forum Feb. 8 ahead of Tuesday's primary vote.

odus of students from the public school system."

Pfeifle: "We shouldn't be necessarily trying to freeze the competition out; we should be trying to understand why it's so successful and how we can outcompete and make sure that we are creating the most desirable solutions for our students and families and teachers."

Schwandt-Knutson: "But especially with special ed, there are a lot of resources that we could be using, a lot of tools we could be using with them. So I would allocate some money, some funds towards them if there were those kinds of funds coming back into the school."

Corrigan: "There's kind of a bait-and-switch that's going on about the program, particularly around special education. Private schools say we can do better, we're

smaller, we have smaller classroom sizes, send your kid here. Then they get a 90% reimbursement from the state to cover the special ed costs. Our school district has a 30% reimbursement rate."

Epley: "I would say that vouchers are bad for public schools. On the board, we hear a lot about transparency and accountability and I believe that taxpayers deserve to know where their money is going. If we're taking tax dollars and sending them into a black hole of private education, there's no accountability at all."

Garcia Franz: "There's still an obligation of the public schools to cover students that do end up going to private schools that end up with special learning disabilities, and struggle in that private school, there's still an obligation of public school to make sure that child gets educated. So there's still an obligation, and yet the money has gone elsewhere."

### Who makes the decision to remove a book from a school library or classroom and what criteria should be used?

Long: "I don't feel like there's a clear path for how the decisions or how the school library's collection is made. I think we could clear that up a little bit; have a collection analysis of this generation and a purchase recommendation, then it goes on to the administrative approval and purchase and addition to the collection."

Pfeifle: "Ultimately, how that is determined should be dictated by the policy of the school board and carried out by the district administration. Whatever it is, that policy should be crafted with input from teachers and the community."

Schwandt-Knutson: "If they're pitching to bring in a book that's controversial, I would just hope that it would be age ap-

propriate. Administration review for the book and approval would be a good thing to do."

Corrigan: "I think that the existing policies, where community members can challenge a book if they're interested in doing so, it exists. I personally am not a fan of challenging books."

Epley: "Reading books is good. I think knowledge is good. I trust our librarians. We have a hard enough time getting kids to read, not only teaching them to read, but also keeping them off their phones and engaged in learning. Reading is a life skill and something to continue with throughout their lives."

Garcia Franz: "Having a policy that exists, and then having a way for the public to put out a challenge if they are questioning the policy or questioning the specifics within the policy, such as a specific book that's been brought into the district, and they want to question it. It is the most important part of our strong democratic processes in which having input from the community is important."

Hanby: "I see, essentially, every book in our library could potentially be objectionable to somebody. Then of course, it's a democracy. So because it's objectionable to one family doesn't mean everybody else is denied access to it."

### How will you deal with the issue of retaining good teachers in the district?

Pfeifle: "I have talked to some teachers and I think that they, in a lot of cases where curriculum is concerned and decisions are made, don't feel like they're engaged and are afraid to speak up for fear of retribution. So I think making sure that they have

SEE **School board** ON PAGE 7

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Dr. Melissa Dintelman

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# School board

FROM PAGE 6

input and feel heard is critical.”

Schwandt-Knutson: “I think that it would be important to keep that communication with the teachers open with the administration, so that they don’t ever feel that they can’t come to the administration with a concern.”

Corrigan: “I looked into it, and apparently health costs for our teachers have gone up 400% in the past two years. We have teachers in this district that have a family deductible of \$12,000. That’s unconscionable for me. How are we supposed to expect our teachers to take care of our kids if they can’t take care of their family?”

Epley: “We have tried to retain our teachers by maintaining the highest starting salary in the Valley at \$46,000. The last 10 years we’ve provided at least cost-of-living increases for teachers. And, as Alex mentioned, health care has been a challenge. We had a health care provider for one year who dropped out of the market entirely.”

Garcia Franz: “That kind of starting salary is one that qualifies a lot of people that move into our district ... for housing assistance programs (with) that beginning salary, and they’re struggling to meet basic needs, in terms of the housing market has increased, in terms of looking at paying for their medical needs, in all the different areas, our families and our professionals are stretched.”

Hanby: “It’s the same complaints our community has – they don’t feel open, and they don’t have open communication, and they don’t feel they have a venue to appropriately make recommendations or requests that they might not, you know, receive retaliation for. So somehow, as a group, we need to bridge that gap.”

Long: “They want to feel supported by the school board, by the parents, by the community. If the curriculum changes in a manner where they are more focused on meeting children’s emotional needs, instead of actually teaching, they’re going to have problems, they’re going to be disheartened, and they’re not going to want to stay with us. They’re going to move on.”

## The school district votes next week on whether to close Hoover Elementary. How would you vote on that issue and why?

Schwandt-Knutson: “I know for sure that it will have an effect on kids’ mental health. I was very happy with how a lot of parents, teachers, and even a principal came forward to speak at the school board, to share their thoughts and their feelings with the school board. I think that is the most important thing to do so that the school board knows how the community feels.”

Corrigan: “It’s an impossible decision and I feel I don’t want to say that it’s rushed, because I haven’t been a part of the process this entire time, so I don’t want to criticize the people who are necessarily involved in the process. But it doesn’t

feel good to hear parents say (things) like, ‘These are our repeated concerns. The administration believes that this is the plan.’ It doesn’t feel like that is actually considering the parents’ concerns.”

Epley: “At the end of the day, we have to be responsible with our financial responsibility, and try to take into account all of the many factors. It’s not just about one piece, it’s about this giant puzzle that is really complicated. And it’s hard to get all that together and do the right thing because the right thing is really hard to do.”

Garcia Franz: “We’ve talked in the past about when you take away neighborhood schools, there is an impact to the neighborhood and there is an impact to the kids that live in those areas and have to go further out, farther away from their areas in which they live, and the challenges, especially in the district, in that part of the district. So I want to say that I need more answers to the questions I have and looking at the proposal.”

Hanby: “I would vote no to closing Hoover School, the same as I voted no to closing two elementary schools previously. There’s just no way to underscore the importance of having schools that are in proximity to young students’ homes.”

Long: “They’re really taking away a local school that’s not that expensive. I don’t have enough information. There’s no reason that I can see that this school is being closed and that these families are going to be, maybe, irreparably displaced.”

Pfeifle: “This is a huge decision to make that impacts a lot of families, students, parents, teachers, administration. I know that the administration has worked hard on this but I don’t think they have all the answers yet and there’s no reason why we can’t push the pause button on this and really make sure we understand the implications.”



Fox Cities Chamber photo

## Special honorees

Five longtime leaders in the Fox Valley were recognized for their achievements at the Fox Cities Chamber’s recent Celebrate: A Toast to 150 event. Award winners included (from left) former Boldt Co. president Bob DeKoch, philanthropist Mary Beth Nienhaus, Miron president and chief executive Dave Voss, entrepreneur and small business owner Maiyoua Thao, and Mike Weller & Associates chief executive Mike Weller.

## Cereal box competition set at Horace Mann

Horace Mann Elementary School is collecting unopened boxes of cereal to compete in a domino challenge March 6 with other schools of its size in Wisconsin.

Do Good Wisconsin is sponsoring the competition and asking for cereal boxes

that will be donated to Vinnie’s Food Pantry in Neenah. Schools will record the domino building March 6 and submit them in time for National Cereal Day on March 7.

Collections will be accepted at the school until the domino building event.



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# Beat those winter blues with some natural tools

By Rob Zimmer  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

After the Christmas season, many of us long for the beauty of spring and summer and fresh blooms and greenery. With cold, snow and cloudy skies, the winter blues can settle in quickly.

It's time to brighten up your home with cheerful flowers, foliage plants, silk arrangements, and wildflower and songbird art. Several local businesses are ready to help you beat those winter blues.

What better way to brighten your home than a selection of bundled tulips in all of the colors of the rainbow. Seven Thymes, Flowers & Other Lovely Thing in Neenah offers a tulip bundle subscription to last throughout the winter season. Or simply stop in and choose from a selection of cut flowers, arrangements and green plants.

"Tulips bring sunshine indoors and we'd like to share a little sunshine with you," owner Joelle Miller said.

In addition to tulips and cut flower blooms, Seven Thymes continues to add new spring products daily including a lineup of strawberry-themed gift ideas and books.

The theme of thinking spring continues at Cedar Ridge Crafts and Gifts, where owner Barbara Ann Elmer has assembled a talented array of crafters and artisans who offer their unique and locally made gifts and art.

Visit the store and enjoy strolling among colorful artwork in glass, silk, wood, fab-



Photos by Rob Zimmer

Tulips and other colorful house plants can add some fresh colors to a drab winter.

ric, as well as nature and garden-themed books, photographs and puzzles.

If houseplants and indoor gardening are your thing, there's no better place to shop than Watter Farms.

Owner Brian Hans travels the world, literally, to find the best and most unique,

hard-to-find house plants to meet the demand of the tropical plant crowd.

At Watters, you'll find plants you won't find anywhere else in the area, including rare and hard-to-find philodendrons, hoyas, succulents and so much more.

Hans is proud of his selection and his

knowledgeable staff who are always willing to answer questions and give advice on growing some of the most unique house plants you'll see anywhere.

Let these and other small businesses throughout the Neenah area help you beat the winter blues and get ready for spring.

## Fox Valley Technical College graduates

Fox Valley Technical College has announced its winter 2023 graduates, including these students from Neenah:

Tamara Bontorno, Interior Design

Tamara Bontorno, Interior Design – Kitchen and Bath Design

Holy Brecheen, Business Management

Cole Burdick, Supply Chain Manage-

ment

Mitchell Bushman, IT – Network Systems Administration

Thuyvi Ceelen, Nursing – associate degree

Cody Deisenroth, Supply Chain Management

Leopoldo Estrada, Nursing – associate degree

Michael Haidlinger, Nursing – associate degree

Michelle Hanneman, Nursing – associate degree

Brittany Hildebrand, Interior Design

Sarah Hlavacek, Practical Nursing

Paul Hodkiewicz, Accounting

Isaac Issa, Accounting

Ross Kleinmann, IT – Cybersecurity specialist

Samuel Knott, Mechanical Design Technology

Lily Kocha, Greenhouse Operations

Lily Kocha, Landscape Horticulture

Benjamin Makowski, Residential Building Construction

Jeremy Mansfield, Electricity

Mar'kilya McClain, Medical assistant

Michele McNeely, Health Information Technology

Andie Moore, Occupational Therapy assistant

Johnathon Pagel, Criminal Justice Studies

Ashlee Pairolo, Criminal Justice Studies

Kyra Petermann, Web Design

Charlie Pitzen, Practical Nursing

Arin Pitzrick, Legal Studies/Paralegal

Damian Pollock, Wildland Fire Crew

Damian Pollock, Wildland Firefighter

Benjamin Prasko, IT – Information Systems Security specialist

Joseph Pulda, Criminal Justice Studies

Josh Rankin, IT – Software Developer

Jessica Roberson, Accounting

Jessica Roberson, Accounting assistant

Erica Sewall, Nursing – associate degree

Robin Staffeldt, Early Childhood Education

Eric Steif, Mechanical Design Technology

Xavier Stone, Industrial Welding Technology

Jacob Thibodeau, Greenhouse Operations

Jacob Thibodeau, Horticulture/Landscape specialist

Jacob Thibodeau, Landscape Horticulture

Jack Vande Walle, Electrical Engineering Technology

Yiling Vang, Baking and Pastry Production

Kathryn Wagner, Nursing – associate degree

Courtney Wendt, Medical Coding specialist

Brianna Yang, Culinary Arts

Pahoua Yang, Human Resources

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# Chamber celebrating 150-year anniversary

The Fox Cities Chamber has kicked off its 150-year anniversary with plans to celebrate all year with members and the business community.

“While a lot has changed in that time, I’m proud to say the mission of the Chamber has not,” stated Becky Bartoszek, president and chief executive. “Our original 1874 charter outlines a focus of uniting the business community for greater economic impact, and that’s still a mission we share today.”

In August 1874, a group of Appleton business leaders met at the Waverly House to seriously consider an official Chamber

for the city. They made it a reality the next month, organizing the Appleton Chamber of Commerce. A.L. Smith, mayor of the city and founder of First National Bank, was board president.

The Menasha Chamber was formed around 1919 and the Neenah Chamber in 1940. In 1946, the directors of the Neenah Chamber invited Menasha businesses to join with them and reincorporated into the Neenah-Menasha Chamber of Commerce.

The Appleton and Neenah-Menasha organizations consolidated in 1976 to become the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry, creating a broader

geographical service base and range of business interests.

Over the years the Chamber has played a role in key developments such as State 441, the Fox Cities Expo Center, construction of the Oneida Street bridge, Outagamie County Airport and other aviation developments.

A formal presentation on the Fox Cities Chamber history is scheduled for Sept. 11 as part of the Appleton Historical Society’s Presentation Series. Chamber members with their own milestone anniversaries in 2024 are invited to share them with the Chamber.



## 2024 FOX VALLEY AREA HIGH SCHOOL GLASS EXHIBITION FEBRUARY 23– APRIL 14, 2024

The Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass is pleased to exhibit glass art made by area high school students. After creating glass art in our Glass Studio or high school classroom, students have the opportunity to share their work in this public setting.

The 2024 Fox Valley Area High School Glass Exhibition and Glass Experience Days are supported in part by the Lilian Noble Memorial Fund.

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## Calendar of events

### Friday, Feb. 16

King’s Conquest, 6:30 p.m., Faith Global Methodist, 1025 Tullar Road  
The Bankrupt Comedy Tour, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat’s, 905 S. Commercial St.

### Saturday, Feb. 17

Great Backyard Bird Count, 9 a.m., Kimberly Point & Wilderness Park  
Coffee & Coaching with Gemma Donaldson, 9 a.m., The Plaza & Globe Coffee  
Morgan Piontek and Mother Tree, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat’s, 905 S. Commercial St.

### Sunday, Feb. 18

Sunday Concert Series: Crystal River Trio, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library  
American Legion Auxiliary Presidents’ Day Pie Social fundraiser, 1 p.m., The Dome, 1338 Commercial St.

### Tuesday, Feb. 20

Winnebago Audubon field trip, 9 a.m., Kimberly Point and Wilderness Park, Neenah

### Wednesday, Feb. 21

Howard Hawks film series: “Scarface” (1932), 1 p.m., Neenah-Menasha YMCA

### Friday, Feb. 23

Short Pay Riders, Tom Thiel Trio and Eric Krueger & The Sheesh, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat’s, 905 S. Commercial St.

### Saturday, March 2

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

### Thursday, March 7

A German Bohemian Immigration, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

### Saturday, March 9

Jim Hart Scholarship Fund Concert, 7 p.m., The Ballroom at the Reserve, 116 S. Commercial St.

### Wednesday, March 13

Katie Reed from Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance: Phosphorus in Our Waterways, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

## YMCA continues Hawks film series

The Neenah-Menasha YMCA is continuing its Hollywood Master Director Film Series featuring the work of former Neenah resident Howard Hawks with three more of his iconic films being screened.

The series begins at 1 p.m. Wednesday with “Scarface” (1932), followed by “Sergeant York” (1941) on March 20 and “Rio Bravo” (1959) April 17.

Hawks was a major film director, producer and screenwriter of the classic Hollywood era during the 1930s-1950s. He was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director for “Sergeant York” and earned its Honorary Academy Award in 1974. He was the first-born child of Frank Winchester Hawks, a wealthy paper manufacturer, and his wife, Helen Howard Hawks, daughter of a wealthy industrialist from Neenah.

“Scarface” was the first Hollywood gangster film and was co-produced by Hawks and aviator and industrial tycoon Howard Hughes. The screenplay was written by Racine native Ben Hecht, a former Chicago newspaper crime reporter, who became Hollywood’s most prolific and highest paid screenwriter. The story is inspired by the life and career of Al Capone and with lead actor Paul Muni, who plays Italian immigrant and murderer Tony Camonte. Public censors banned the film in several large cities for its then-shocking on-screen violence.

“Sergeant York” presents the life of Alvin C. York, the most decorated American soldier in World War I. Gary Cooper stars as a young farmer in the Tennessee hills, despite his religious convictions against killing, is drafted into the Army. Cooper earned the Academy Award as Best Actor for his performance, while the film received another award for Best Film Editing.

“Rio Bravo” pits an aging but rugged



“Sergeant York” will be one of the Howard Hawk films that will be screened by the Neenah-Menasha YMCA.

Texan sheriff, played by John Wayne, against the leader of a powerful ranch family whose brother is arrested for murder and held in the town jail. The sheriff is aided by only a lame old man, Walter Brennan, a staggering drunk, Dean Martin, and a young gunfighter, Ricky Nelson.

Admission to the screenings is free. There will be popcorn and complementary pizza provided by Sammy’s Pizza.



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Fox Crossing Police Department photo

## Safety gear donation

Fox Crossing Police Department members display the donated Safeguard parkas, bomber jackets and gloves from J. J. Keller & Associates that will give the officers better visibility and protection this winter out on the roads.

## County loan administrator named

Neenah News

The Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corp. (EDC) has announced it will administrate the Winnebago County Revolving Loan Fund, an initiative supporting area businesses.

The program activates \$2.7 million in underutilized economic development funds for Winnebago County businesses, streamlining the application process and eliminating the requirement for municipalities to secure the loans. The program will match up to \$1 for every \$1 of traditional capital investment sources, within a funding range of between \$25,000 and \$250,000.

“We are excited to see these economic development funds in action, paving the way for important community projects and boosting growth and prosperity all around Winnebago County,” stated Tricia Rathemel, Greater Oshkosh EDC presi-

## Lead testing recommended for all children

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) recommends universal blood lead testing for children living in Wisconsin, which involves testing at ages 1 and 2 as well as any child between ages 3 and 5 who has not had a previous test.

Childhood lead poisoning remains a serious public health threat, despite significant progress in recent decades. Lead, a toxic metal, can cause irreversible damage to a child’s developing brain, affecting their learning, behavior and future potential.

A simple blood test can detect lead ex-

posure early, allowing parents and health care providers to take steps to protect a child’s health such as finding and removing lead hazards, providing a diet high in iron and calcium and connecting the child to early educational services.

Visit CDC’s Recommended Actions Based on Blood Lead Level page found at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for additional information on follow-up and case management of children.

Get more information about pediatric lead testing and the DHS universal blood lead testing recommendation at [dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov).

Interested parties can learn more at [greateroshkosh.com/funding-and-capital](https://www.greateroshkosh.com/funding-and-capital).

“Given my confidence in Greater Oshkosh’s management of the Winnebago County Revolving Loan Program, I’m optimistic about the opportunities it will create for businesses and residents across our county” stated County Executive Jon Doemel.

# Create a local Sunday drive to take in area sights

By Michelle Dunning  
FUTURE NEENAH

Get in your car and drive!

When I was a child, my parents would put us in our pajamas on a Sunday, get an ice cream cone for the road (thanks to Jumbo’s and Evelyn’s Drive-ins in Kewaunee) to take a cruise around town and see what was new or just put us to sleep, I’m not sure which.

I don’t know if people take Sunday drives anymore but let’s revisit that tradition right here in Neenah, not Mario Andretti style but rather think grandpa in his ’85 Olds.

Here are some suggested places for your route:

- Traditions are not meant to be messed with so before you go anywhere grab a cone in the drive-through at Tom’s Drive In.
- Let’s start with ThedaCare’s new hospital expansion on Doty Island. It’s a first-class facility our community can be truly proud of.
- When on Doty Island, drive past the historic homes along Forest Avenue.
- Take the Oak Street bridge off the Island, turn left and drive past the historic homes on East Wisconsin Avenue. While on the bridge, check out the library on your right. Fun fact – did you know the building represents an open book with



the spine at the corner facing the bridge?

- Turn off East Wisconsin Avenue and drive through Riverside Park – there’s a road through the park for that purpose.
- Admire the scenic beauty of Lake Winnebago as you coast down Lakeshore Avenue.
- While in the central city, drive past the Octagon House, it’s literally an eight-sided house and home to the Neenah Historical Society.
- Take a deep dive into the small neighborhoods and explore the side streets. So many people decorate for Halloween and Christmas now and several neighborhoods even do holiday luminaries. I may have even discovered the new paint color for my home siding driving through a neighborhood recently.
- Take a turn off the beaten path through the Industrial Park – you’ll see places you may not have even known were in Neenah such as Horseshoe Beverage Company, the Amcor innovation Center, Alta Resources Fulfillment Center or Plexus Neenah Operations Center.
- What Sunday drive route would be complete without a spin around a few roundabouts? (that’s Neenah humor for you).

If you see me or another Neenah friend on your drive, slow down, roll down your window and wave or honk. It’s the neighborly thing to do and certainly what Future Neenah Maintenance Man Mike would do. (When you know, you know!)

## Future Neenah honors top contributors

Future Neenah recently recognized individuals and businesses that, through partnerships, made serving as Neenah’s quality-of-life organization a success in 2023.

Plexus Corp. was recognized as Future Neenah Champion for its dedication and contributions to promoting the economic and cultural vitality of Neenah. They stepped up when Future Neenah was in search of a destination to host its first gala event to celebrate its 40th anniversary, offering its Neenah design center site along with staff, security and support.

Sunset Hill Stoneware was recognized with the Neenah With Pride Award for celebrating 25 years of excellence, community engagement and showing hometown pride. The family business designs custom stoneware including hand-crafted coffee mugs and beer steins.

The city of Neenah was named Civic

Partner of the Year. Future Neenah and the city worked together to accomplish Neenah’s first DORA (designated outdoor refreshment area) in conjunction with two summer street concerts. They also brought fireworks to the final concert of the summer celebrating the city’s 150th and Future Neenah’s 40th anniversary.

Downtown Business of the Year went to Grainworks Old + New: Local Bourbon Market, which moved into the district in 2022. They participate in all downtown community events and activities and host special events of their own.

The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Santiago Sanchez for sharing his time and talents providing photography for many special events and concert series. He was also one of the social media ambassadors for the inaugural year of a Future Neenah program to capture the community in photos.

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# Cancer survivor

FROM PAGE 1

treatment. She rang it with such force that the bell broke.

"I am so beyond grateful for this part of my journey to finally be done," she wrote on social media at the time. "Six months of chemotherapy was definitely harder than I ever could have imagined but I sure gave it my all and persevered."

A month later, Swanson was scheduled to have a double mastectomy. The day before surgery she woke up with a scratchy throat and tested positive for COVID. Her surgery was rescheduled and took place three weeks later Jan. 17.

Swanson had a follow-up surgical procedure Jan. 29 and when she woke up she immediately knew something was wrong. After a week of excruciating pain she ended up in the emergency room last week where she was diagnosed with a rare bacterial infection that she's currently being treated for.

"It's been a really long road," she said.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel. Pathology reports that recently came back show the cancer is gone. The doctors call it "complete pathological response."

Due to Swanson carrying the BRCA1 gene, the cancer has an elevated probability of returning. She'll continue having regular exams with her oncologist and breast specialist. She'll also need three more surgeries.

"It's important for me to stay here and be here for my kids," she said.

Swanson and husband Kenny were married in 2018 and have two children, Grady, who is 1, and Summer, who turns 3 next month. Swanson previously operated an online clothing business and worked from



Submitted photo

Dana Swanson recently completed six months of intensive chemotherapy.

home for a nonprofit organization. Most recently, she is a stay-at-home mother.

Swanson hasn't been able to pick up and carry her children for weeks due to medical restrictions.

"I've always said that whatever somebody throws at me, I get through it," she said. "But it's been really hard not being able to be there at 100% capacity for my kids."

Cancer may have taken many things from Swanson, but it can't take away the army of support lifting her up. Her friends and family have organized a benefit open to the public to raise funds for the family.

The Stronger Together benefit is from 1 to 6 p.m. Feb. 24 at Old 41 Saloon at 293 S. Green Bay Road. It will include basket raffles, a 50/50 drawing, paddlewheel, a gun raffle and 10 liners.

Lauren Moran, who is one of the benefit organizers, has been friends with Swanson for 14 years and described her as a ray of sunshine.

"She's funny, she's bubbly, she's a tough

cookie so she's been taking this all in stride, which is great," Moran said.

Barring any further medical complications, Swanson plans to be in attendance at the benefit, although she noted she won't be able to give hugs due to her surgical recovery.

"I just feel like everything's always taken away from me, like all these good things, and so I'm going to try my hardest to be there for the whole thing," she said.

Donations can also be made at gofundme.com/f/help-dana-swanson-beat-breast-cancer or by Venmo to @DanaS224. The proceeds will alleviate some of the family's financial stressors.

Swanson said the community's support has been incredible.

"We just want to say thank you to every person out there that helped or touched our lives somehow, through all of this," she said.

Swanson is already looking toward the future and hopes to use her experience battling cancer to provide support and resources to others who have recently been diagnosed.

"Just take it one day at a time," she said. "Try not to overwhelm yourself and try not to go down that bad thought process. Try to stay positive and lean on those people that are there for you and want to be there for you."

This past year has been the worst of Swanson's life, but it's also changed her perspective and encouraged her to live life to the fullest.

"I'm just going to spend every second I can with my kids and my family and friends and just cherish that time," she said. "You don't always cherish what you have but this definitely wakes you up and makes you realize that every second counts."

# School closings

FROM PAGE 1

ing enrollment and a \$3.5 million deficit. The Jefferson students would be moved to Butte des Morts Elementary and staff members transferred to other schools within the district. Closing Jefferson is expected to save the district about \$1 million.

While Neenah has held several informational meetings leading up to Tuesday's vote, Menasha's process only began last week.

Parents in Neenah expressed concerns about transportation and busing, student safety when walking to school and the district's plan for approving boundary exemptions.

Parents in Menasha questioned whether the plan would result in larger class sizes, a decline in educational quality and inquired about what would happen to the existing building. Neither school district has indicated its plans for the vacant elementary buildings once closed.

If the school closures are approved by the respective boards, students would transition beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

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# Zephyrs find shooting touch to pull away from Hilbert

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

When a shooter is in a slump or a team is struggling offensively, sometimes it's just a matter of seeing the ball go through the net that can turn things around.

It could be finally hitting an in-rhythm 3-pointer or converting a physical drive to the basket that changes the tune. For St. Mary Catholic's Fisher Mackenzie it was watching his free throws fall.

"It definitely helps," Mackenzie said. "I have been in a bit of a slump recently so that helped me a lot seeing the ball go in. It got me a little bit more confident stepping back behind the arc. It just helped me."

Mackenzie went 7-for-7 from the free-throw line in the first half and then erupted for 21 points in the second half – including a trio of 3-pointers – to help fuel the Zephyrs 81-65 win over Hilbert on Tuesday night.

"Most of the time shooting is a mental thing and when you get into a rut, you

need to see the ball go through the basket to feel good about it," St. Mary Catholic head coach Paul Bradshaw said. "When we got our pressure going and when we were able to run, that's when we are at our best."

While making free throws gave the offense a boost in the first half – St. Mary Catholic was 16-of-17 from the foul line as a team – the Zephyrs also used their defense to seize control of the contest.

St. Mary Catholic, which has won six of its last seven games and is tied with Howards Grove for first place in the Big East North, held Hilbert to just six points over the final seven-and-a-half minutes of the first half to turn a four-point deficit into a 38-30 lead at intermission.

"I was really happy when the defense started generating transition. When we get into transition, the shots are easier and then everybody is feeling better. Then you start hitting a few 3's and that's what really helped us stretch (the lead)," Bradshaw said. "Defense has become much more important for us during the year and we have worked much harder on it. If you look at this team compared to the last couple of years, we're better at it and more focused on it."

A layup by Mason Uhlenbrauck started the Zephyrs' 18-6 run to end the half, while Mackenzie followed with a 3-pointer and then two free throws.

Preston Fields added seven points in the tide-turning outburst that included a Luke Fairweather 3-pointer and capped by two free throws from Kieran Barrientos.

"We were really flat at the start. We talked about it before the game that we had to come out hot and didn't. Just one of those nights where we weren't ready to play," Mackenzie said. "Luckily we were able to get a lead in the first half and then came out in the second half boosted it up."

St. Mary Catholic extended the lead to double digits early in the second half converting four Hilbert turnovers into eight transition points in the first three minutes



Neenah News

St. Mary Catholic's Fisher Mackenzie goes up for a shot between a pair of Hilbert defenders Tuesday night.



Neenah News

Mason Uhlenbrauck soars to the hoop for a St. Mary Catholic basket on Tuesday night.

of the half.

The Wolves didn't let the Zephyrs pull away at that point keeping the margin between seven and 10 points for most of the half.

Mackenzie drained a 3-pointer to answer a 7-0 run by Hilbert to give the Zephyrs a 51-41 lead with about 10 minutes left in the game, while another 3-pointer from the senior standout came after the Wolves pulled within six points with 7:30 remaining.

Hilbert would stay within striking distance for the next few minutes before a Uhlenbrauck 3-pointer sparked an 11-4 run that helped the Zephyrs register a more comfortable final margin.

"The whole night was a little uncomfortable for me because we weren't scor-

ing like I knew we could and we weren't hitting out shots. When we get into that situation, you can feel the frustration and then guys start thinking about it and when guys start thinking about shooting, it's never good," Bradshaw said. "They worked hard, they were moving the ball. I thought it was pretty unselfish. It was just a matter of getting the shots to fall."

Behind Mackenzie's point total, three other Zephyrs reached double figures.

Braeden Brenn overcame early foul trouble in the first half to finish with 15 points, while Fields had another strong performance to finish with 15 points as well.

"Preston is not always the guy that is go-

SEE Zephyrs win ON PAGE 15

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# Neenah swimmers aim to earn state hardware

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

Neenah standout Drew Gaerthofner eyes a return to the podium at the WIAA Division 1 State Swimming & Diving Championships this weekend at the Waukesha South Natatorium.

But the junior certainly wouldn't mind sharing the stage with his teammates.

Led by individual qualifiers Gaerthofner, Tanner Trustem and Kyle Joneson, the Rockets be have entrants in seven of the 15 events on Saturday and are looking to bring home their share of medals.

"It's a lot more fun with the whole team there," said Trustem, a sophomore. "It just adds to the experience."

Both Gaerthofner and Trustem qualified for state in two individual events last season and both will be competing in two individual events this season, including one where they will both be in the pool at the same time.

The duo both qualified in the 100-meter breaststroke for the second straight year and will be swimming in the same heat on Saturday. Gaerthofner is seeded second overall among the 24 qualifiers, while Trustem is seeded seventh.

Gaerthofner – who finished fifth at the state meet last year – trails only Abram Mueller of Madison West entering the state meet. Mueller is the defending state champion and state record-holder in the event and Gaerthofner hopes to give him a run for the top spot on the podium.

"I really like racing Abram. It will be fun," said Gaerthofner, who won the sectional title in the event last Saturday with Trustem taking second. "I just love racing and I know what I have to do to fix some



Neenah News

Representing Neenah High School at the WIAA Division 1 State Swimming & Diving Championships on Saturday at Waukesha South Natatorium are: (front, from left) Braden Loudon, Drew Gaerthofner, Julian Kuehn, Liam Sieck, Joshua Youngwerth; (back) Gideon Benner, Kyle Joneson, Ryker Zarda, Tanner Trustem and Burke Wendell.

stuff and then just go out there and have fun."

Trustem also had a shot at the podium in the event, which would mean moving up into the top six.

His sectional qualifying time was about two-tenths of a second away from landing him a top-five seed and he will be looking to swim faster than he did last Saturday.

"It will be a good, close race for podi-

um," Trustem said. "I know the people I will mainly be competing against besides Drew and Abram and I know it will be really close."

Gaerthofner could also earn some hardware in his second event, the 50-yard freestyle. He won the sectional title in the event last Saturday.

He is seeded fourth among the state qualifiers, but with the top eight qualifiers separated by about six-tenths of a

second, anything can happen on race day.

"My personal best is three-tenths faster than what I am seeded so I obviously think I can go faster than I did (at sectionals)," Gaerthofner said. "The 50 is just get up and race and I love to race so I'm looking forward to it."

Neenah head coach Carrie Raeth believes Gaerthofner has the potential to return with medals in both events.

"He just has to do what he's been doing all year. He loves to race so he will be at his best, we know," Raeth said. "He's a great leader he sets the example in and out of the pool as far as work ethic and leadership."

Trustem's second event will be the 100-yard freestyle, which he won the sectional title in last weekend.

Trustem will swim in the second heat of the event and his qualifying time is about two seconds shy of being in the top five. Although he was a little disappointed with his sectional time, he knows making the podium in the event will be a stretch.

"It's one of the most if not the most competitive atmospheres I've been around," Trustem said. "Already having been there will help me substantially coming up this weekend."

The final individual who will be competing for Neenah will be senior diver Joneson, who took second at the sectional meet last week.

This will be Joneson's first time competing at the state meet but he does believe the experience of watching former teammate Ryan Foucault at last year's state meet will be a benefit.

SEE **State meet** ON PAGE 15

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# Prep sports roundup

## WRESTLING

### Rockets advance 12 to sectional meet

Declan Koch and Jacob Herm each won regional titles and Neenah advanced 12 of its 14 wrestlers to the sectional tournament at last Saturday's WIAA Division 1 regional meet at Kaukauna.

Neenah will be one of 16 teams competing at the Kimberly sectional Saturday, with the top two finishers at each weight class advancing to the state tournament. Neenah's 12 qualified wrestlers is tied for second most in the field with Bay Port and Hortonville. Kaukauna and Pulaski each qualified 13 wrestlers.

Leading the charge for the Rockets will be standouts Koch and Herm.

Koch (39-2) pinned his first opponent at the regional meet and then won a 16-5 major decision over Hortonville's Collin Schroeder to claim the 138-pound title.

Herm (40-0) won the 144-pound crown, scoring first-period pins in his first two matches and then winning by medical forfeit over Jack Cleereman of Hortonville in the championship match.

Eli Armatti also reached the title match before finishing second at 120 pounds.

Adding third-place finishes for the Rockets were Jaxon Ennis (106), Landen Sheppard (132), Kaden Roth (165), Jeremy Wiggs-Schmalz (215) and Nate Cleveland (285). Rounding out the sec-

tional qualifiers were fourth-place finishers Garret Nedens (113), Logan Tessier (126), Jaden Reay (150) and Miguel Mora (175).

Neenah finished third in the regional team standings with 195.5 points, trailing only regional champ Kaukauna (247.5) and Hortonville (240).

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Corso has huge game in win over Polar Bears

Brady Corso scored a career-high 43 points to lead Neenah to a 92-85 win over Hortonville last Friday night.

Corso hit six 3-pointers and finished 11-of-13 from the free-throw line in the game. He also picked up a team-high five assists in the game.

Charlie Wunderlich added 18 points and Luke Jung finished with 16 points for the Rockets.

Neenah led 48-26 at the half and withstood a 59-point second half by the Polar Bears to collect the win.

The Rockets ran their winning streak to seven games with an 83-30 win over Appleton West on Tuesday night.

Nick Schultz and Wunderlich each scored 13 points to lead Neenah, which has won 11 of its last 12 games to move into a tie for second place in the Fox Valley Association.

Corso added 12 points and Jung finished with 11 for the Rockets, who had 12

players score in the game.

### Fields registers triple-double in Zephyrs' win

Preston Fields racked up 19 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists to help boost St. Mary Catholic to an 84-57 win over Reedsville last week.

Braeden Brenn led the Zephyrs with 29 points, while Mason Uhlenbrauck and Fisher Mackenzie scored 12 and 11 points, respectively.

St. Mary Catholic led by just nine points at halftime but racked up 47 points in the second half to pull away.

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Rockets drop showdown with Hortonville

The FVA-leading Polar Bears pulled away in the second half for a 73-59 win over the Rockets last Friday.

Neenah trailed just 29-25 at halftime but couldn't keep pace with Hortonville the rest of the way.

Allie Ziebell scored 20 points to lead three players in double figures for Neenah. Rowan Klesmit added 16 and Ellie Buss added 11.

### Zephyrs grab another conference crown

St. Mary Catholic wrapped up another Big East North title Monday with a 68-13

dismantling of Hilbert. The Zephyrs led 44-8 at halftime and then held the Wolves to just five points in the second half.

Audrey Norville paced the win with 25 points, seven rebounds and seven steals, while Lauren Ripley added 13 points in the win.

On Friday, the Zephyrs knocked off Reedsville, 64-30, with Sienna Anderson's 18 points – all on six 3-pointers – leading the way.

Norville added 15 points, 10 rebounds and five steals in the win.

## HOCKEY

### Rockets cap regular season with victory

The Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha co-op hockey team rallied from a deficit entering the third period to claim a 4-2 win at Wausau West last week.

The Rockets trailed 2-1 entering the third period but tied the game 20 seconds into the period on a goal by Ben Carey. Macsen Slech and Mark Sutton also scored in the period to lift the team to the win.

Sutton also scored the Rockets' first goal in the first period.

Calvin Zinda finished with two assists in the game.

Owen Debbert got the win in goal for Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha, totaling 35 saves.

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# State meet

FROM PAGE 13

"It helps a little being able to see Ryan dive last year and know what to expect," Joneson said. "It's been a long time coming. I was super close last year. It was sad not to make it, so this year it feels nice."

Joneson enters the meet in the middle of the pack of 24 qualifiers but he is hoping to excel on Saturday.

"I'm hoping to place in the top eight. That's my goal," Joneson said. "It's definitely mental preparation (this week). Getting all of my dives set to go, it's a little bit of physical (work) but mostly at this point it's mental."

Neenah has also qualified in all three relays at the state meet and will swim in the fast heat for both the 200-yard medley relay and the 200-yard freestyle relay.

The foursome of Gaerthofner, Trustem, senior Braden Loudon and junior Julian Kuehn won the sectional title in the 200-yard medley relay, setting a school record in the process.

The group is seeded fourth for the state meet and is certainly in contention to earn a medal.

"I felt really good about the 200 medley this past weekend," Gaerthofner said. "Getting out of the gate and going super fast sets the tone for the rest of the meet. I think that showed itself at sectionals. We started out the meet extremely fast at sectionals and at state I think we can do that again."

In the 200-yard freestyle relay, Gaerthofner, Trustem, Kuehn and junior Joshua Youngwerth made up the team that won the sectional title and is seeded

seventh.

The group will need to go faster than it did last Saturday to earn a spot on the podium but it is certainly a possibility.

"We're definitely hoping one, if not both of those relays, can make podium. They get pretty excited about relays and they know there is still time to drop on those," Raeth said. "We just really fine tune this week so that starts are sharp and relay exchanges are good. Just fine tune and come with excitement."

The remaining entrant for the Rockets will be the 400-yard freestyle relay team of Kuehn, Youngwerth, Loudon and sophomore Liam Sieck. That group finished fifth at sectionals but squeezed into the state meet by less than two-tenths of a second.

"It's great to take the sectional team," said Raeth, who will also have relay alternates Gideon Benner, Ryker Zarda and Burke Wendell on the trip. "We knew if we got three relays down the whole group would be going. It helps to keep the excitement of this week and support down there for Saturday."

Neenah finished second to Bay Port at last Saturday's sectional meet with the state qualifiers leading the way.

Also picking up top-10 finishes at the sectional meet but not advancing to state were: Loudon, second in the 100-yard butterfly and sixth in the 100-yard breaststroke; Kuehn, fifth in the 100-yard freestyle; Zarda, sixth in the 200-yard backstroke and ninth in the 200-yard individual medley; Benner, 10<sup>th</sup> in the 200-yard freestyle; Youngwerth, 10<sup>th</sup> in the 50-yard freestyle and 10<sup>th</sup> in the 200-yard butterfly; and Wendell, 10<sup>th</sup> in the 500-yard freestyle.



Photo from AMA

# Top national racer

Jack Brucks of Neenah was recognized as the American Motorcyclist Association's Youth Racer of the Year as the organization recently named winners of its 2023 AMA Racing, Organizer and Volunteer awards. Brucks, son of Katie and Luke Brucks, was named the top AMA youth rider after taking home three championships at the Flat Track Grand Championships in DuQuoin, Ill., in June. AMA members participated in the selection process of certain racing categories while staff determined organizational and volunteer awards.

# Zephyrs win

FROM PAGE 12

ing to jump off the stat book the next morning, but he's becoming our best all-around player," Bradshaw said. "He's not a big guy, but he's huge for us on the board. It's all energy and all effort. When he's strong with his confidence, he's a good player."

Uhlenbrauck also reached double fig-

ures with 12 points.

The hot shooting at the foul line continued in the second half for St. Mary Catholic. The Zephyrs finished 25-of-27 from the free-throw line as a team, while Hilbert was just 5-of-7 from the charity stripe.

"When we hit our free throws, it's important and we don't always do that," Bradshaw said. "If we can shoot like that at the line, we are going to be tough."

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# Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

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## FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH African American Newspapers

### First African American Newspaper

*Freedom's Journal* was the first African American owned and operated newspaper. The newspaper editors said, "Too long have others spoken for us." They wanted to write about and for their fellow African Americans. Starting in 1827, *Freedom's Journal* helped lead the way for other Black-owned newspapers in the 1800s.



Standards Link: Read informational text about Black history and journalism.

### 1847

Frederick Douglass started a newspaper called *The North Star* in 1847. This was a newspaper where black people could write about their news, ideas and share opinions.

Use the code to find out what Frederick Douglass said about reading.

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

7 8 14 12 1 7 4  
9 12 16 6 8 5 7  
6 12 16 13 1 7 4  
2 10 9 9 15 12  
11 7 6 12 3 12 6  
11 6 12 12  
" — FREDERICK DOUGLASS

### How many papers?

Add up the numbers on the correct path of the maze to find out how many African American owned and operated newspapers circulated throughout the U.S. in 1861.



Standards Link: Read informational text about Black history and journalism.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

#### 1964

*The Washington Informer* is a weekly newspaper published in Washington, D.C. It is owned by a woman and reports on the African American community in the D.C. area.

The publisher is Denise Rolark Barnes. Her father, Calvin W. Rolark, founded the paper in 1964.

Fill in the missing vowels to find out something special about *The Washington Informer*.

THE WASH\_NGT\_N  
INF\_RM\_R P\_BLISH\_S  
K\_D SC\_P!

Standards Link: Language Arts: Spell words correctly.

### Double Double Word Search

BEE  
CENTS  
FREE  
IDEAS  
LEAD  
NEWS  
PAPER  
REPORTER  
RIGHTS  
SHE  
STAFF  
STAR  
TODAY  
WEEKLY  
WRITE

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

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

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

### Chicago Defender

Cut out each piece and paste the paragraph in the correct order in the space below.

so popular that he became one of African American newspaper. Abbott started the newspaper about \$7.30 today. His paper was In 1905, Robert Abbott founded Chicago's first Black millionaires. with 25¢. That's the same as *The Chicago Defender*. It was an

## SUNDAY CHICAGO BEE

Twenty-one years after Robert Abbott founded *The Chicago Defender*, Anthony Overton, an African American millionaire, started *The Chicago Bee* to compete with *The Chicago Defender*. It was a remarkable business as the staff was mostly women. That was very unusual in 1926. Olive M. Diggs was one of the newspaper's managing editors. Other female editors included Ida B. Wells. She helped start the civil rights organization known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

What year did Anthony Overton start *The Chicago Bee*?

### Simeon Booker Jr.

In 1952, Simeon Booker Jr. became the first Black reporter for a well-known and well-read newspaper that still publishes today. Circle every other letter below to find out the name of this newspaper.

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

### Newspaper ABCs

On one page of the newspaper, find and circle every letter of the alphabet that you can. Then connect the letters to create a design. Color your design and share! Have fun!

Standards Link: Language Arts: Follow written instructions.

### Kid Scoop Together

## Make a Timeline!

Look at the timeline dates below. Next to each one, write something you learned from today's *Kid Scoop* page on the lines next to each date.

1827

1847

1861

1905

1926

1952

1964

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## Leadership

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