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Miron leadership changing with CEO departure

Neenah News

Miron Construction Co. chief executive David G. Voss Jr. is stepping down Jan. 1 from the leadership role he has held for 25 years and will transition to an unofficial executive position with the company.

Voss has co-led the fourth-generation, family-owned construction firm since 1979 as president and CEO for its 1,700 team members. During that time he also held several leadership roles at nonprofit organizations.

"In his new role, Dave will continue to

SEE **Miron leader** ON PAGE 2

Thefts from vehicles draw police focus

Unlocked autos targeted in Fox Crossing cases

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Area residents are again being reminded to lock up and secure personal belongings as reports of thefts from unlocked vehicles continue to surge.

The village of Fox Crossing has seen a recent uptick in incidents where drivers discover their vehicles have been rummaged through and personal belongings stolen after the vehicles were left unattended and unlocked.

From November through the first week in December, Fox Crossing police received more than 30 reports of thieves

targeting residents' unlocked vehicles.

Among the streets receiving multiple reports were George Street, Barbara Avenue, Bartlein Court, Oneida Street and Goss Avenue.



Wiechman

Other streets targeted were Aykens Street, Gmeiner Road, Forestville Court, Carleton Avenue, Highland Park Road, Golf Bridge Drive, Fritsch Street, Valley Road, Lakeview Lane and Pepergrass Lane.

In one incident, an unlocked and running vehicle was stolen from the Kwik Trip parking lot. In another, the suspect

entered an unlocked garage to gain access to unlocked vehicles.

Though some residents reported their vehicles were entered and nothing stolen, some had items of significant value taken. Four unlocked vehicles on Oneida Street saw \$900 in cash, \$500 in gift cards and had 2 grams of silver taken. Wallets, purses, a backpack, knife and Nintendo Switch were among items reported missing.

Fox Crossing community liaison officer Daniel Wiechman said the pattern is similar in every theft.

"They are occurring in late hours of the night or very early morning, and the vast majority, if not all thefts from vehi-

SEE **Unlocked vehicles** ON PAGE 6

Food pantry seeks boost for holidays

Vinnie's in preparation for impacted residents

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

As families come together to share a meal this holiday season, an increasing number of residents will depend on Vinnie's Pantry to provide for their holiday feast.

The pantry is seeing a decline in donations, however, making it harder to ensure everyone in the community has a festive meal.

With about 1,700 families visiting each month and 3,500 families registered, this year Vinnie's Pantry distributed roughly 888,000 pounds of food to residents of Neenah and Menasha.

Around the holidays, that includes turkeys at Thanksgiving and hams at Christmas, though director of operations Jeremy Pingel said this year the pantry needs financial donations to procure more hams.

Vinnie's began operating out of a remodeled 27,000-square-foot space at 1421 S. Commercial St. next to the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store late last year, after outgrowing its location inside the store where it operated for two years. It previously served residents for 15 years out of a closet at St. Mary & St. John church in Menasha.

Pingel said there were concerns that the new location would be too big, but Vinnie's has settled into the space perfectly.

"The community reception from private donors, from financial, to product, to food, the community has been great," he said. "We've been embraced, and a lot of the religious organizations in the area are really working with us, financially and



Neenah News

Mike Clochesy was among volunteers at Vinnie's Pantry last Friday who helped distribute food to area residents.

food drive wise, and we're always looking for more."

With the move last year, Vinnie's has seen a significant increase in the number of people coming in for assistance.

"The inflation, combined with wages not rising - combined with everything that comes with it - just has driven people to need to find services of some sort," he said.

He added that recent pantry users have included middle-class residents who wouldn't normally need assistance but due to unexpected expenses were unable

to afford food. Senior citizens on fixed incomes also frequent the pantry.

For some residents, the pantry's waiting area is a social space. With a cup of coffee, pantry visitors share conversation while awaiting their turn to get food.

One of the unexpected challenges Vinnie's is seeing is the large number of unhoused individuals and the lack of services available in Neenah. With the nearest homeless and warming shelters located in Appleton and Oshkosh, Pingel

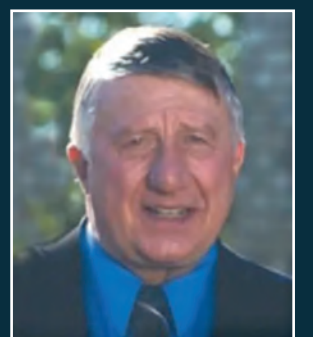
SEE **Food pantry** ON PAGE 6

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Corrections

It is the policy of Neenah News to correct all errors of fact. For correction information call 920-385-4512.

About the newspaper

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New winter road condition categories unveiled by DOT

Neenah News

New winter road condition categories were announced by the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to better reflect conditions on roads across the state.

The categories are now listed as Normal, Partially Covered, Completely Covered, Travel Not Advised and No Report to streamline the information for motorists. Drivers are encouraged to “know before you go” with 511 Wisconsin at 511wi.gov or via the mobile app.

“We continually look for ways to enhance our 511 Wisconsin traveler information service,” DOT Secretary Kristina Boardman said. “We know that road conditions during Wisconsin’s winters can change in the blink of an eye and drivers must expect the unexpected. We’re confident the updated winter road condition categories will help drivers make informed

travel decisions this winter and beyond.”

511 Wisconsin launched in 2009 and the travel information system has evolved with web and smartphone capabilities. Users can access live streaming video through hundreds of traffic cameras across the state and winter conditions for more than 14,000 miles of roadway.

To use the winter road conditions, visit 511wi.gov online or download the 511 Wisconsin app.

In the map legend, check “winter road conditions,” look for the colors outlining the roads from best to worst: normal (green), partially covered (blue), completely covered (pink), travel not advised (black), and no report (gray).

Users can still dial 511 to access travel information. Visit wisconsindot.gov/stay-safe for safe driving tips and best practices on winter roads.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Mahler home at holidays

The Ernst Mahler home was fully decorated on Christmas Eve in 1967. Mahler was an Austrian chemist who led Kimberly-Clark for more than 30 years. His Doty Island estate was built in 1920 on Lake Winnebago.

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Calendar of events

Friday, Dec. 20

Sleigh Rides on the Farm & S'Mores with Santa, 5 p.m., 3910 Fairview Road
Peter Mayer: Stars & Promises Christmas concert, 7 p.m., Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 809 S. Commercial St.

Erin Boehme & Mike Kubicki, 7 p.m., Xe 54, 1350 West American Drive, Fox Crossing

Sunday, Dec. 22

Sleigh Rides on the Farm & S'Mores with Santa, noon, 3910 Fairview Road

Monday, Dec. 23

Big Band Reunion, 7:30 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Mark Joseph, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Friday, Dec. 27

Murphy Brothers, 7 p.m., Xe 54, 1350 West American Drive, Fox Crossing

Monday, Dec. 30

Glow in the Dark Party, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Big Band Reunion, 7:30 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Miron leader

FROM PAGE 1

support, guide and influence various areas of the business as part of a multiyear succession plan that began over the course of the last two years and continues,” the company said in a statement. “Dave will maintain in his unofficial role as Miron’s chief cheerleader, and as an invaluable ambassador for the company he will spend time visiting project sites and community organizations to share his deep gratitude and support.”

Voss’ maternal grandfather Patrick G. Miron founded the company in 1918 as a local masonry shop. Voss originally co-lead Miron with Greg Kippenhan and Pat Voss and in 2003, Greg’s son, Tim, assumed co-ownership.

“Miron Construction has been my life’s work, and I am infinitely proud of what we’ve built,” Voss said. “I know the future is in good hands with the entire leadership group, as they have the vision, experience, and heart to lead Miron toward ongoing success.”

The company’s corporate officers will include Kippenhan as president & chief operating officer (COO), David Voss III as vice president and chief construction operating officer, Dan Voss as secretary and chief executive officer, and Dean Basten as treasurer and chief financial officer.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to build upon the incredible legacy that Dave has crafted,” Kippenhan said. “His vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment have shaped Miron into what it is today.”

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Alliance Church plans expanded services at local school

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Horace Mann Elementary will be the new satellite location for Alliance Church after the Common Council was expected to approve a special use permit this week for the religious institution to host services there on Sundays.

Alliance is entering into a facility rental agreement with the Neenah Joint School District to occupy the gymnasium, cafeteria and two classrooms at 1021 Oak St. from 6 a.m. to noon Sundays, with services at 9 and 10:30 a.m.

Adult worship will be held in the gymnasium, while Sunday school will be held in the two classrooms and cafeteria. Alliance also plans to hold a Christmas eve service next December.

District communications director Jim Strick said there is no contract and Alliance can choose whatever dates to rent the spaces, the same as any other person or group who wants to rent school facilities.

"It's very similar to reserving one of the city park shelters or a local banquet facility," he said.

The rental agreement runs through the end of 2025, with Alliance assessed \$1,050 each Sunday and a \$160 cleaning fee. If Alliance uses the space for all 52 Sundays in 2025, its annual fees will total \$62,920, of which the district would receive \$54,600 in rental fees and \$8,320 would go for cleaning.

Alliance Church was formed in the Fox Cities in 1932 by a group who gathered at the YMCA in downtown Appleton. The church transferred its affiliation to the Christian & Missionary Alliance in 1939.

It has a main location in Grand Chute and a satellite location at the Hortonville Opera House that has grown to a Sunday attendance of 500 adults and 100 children.

In Neenah, Alliance is planning on an

attendance of 200 adults and 50 children per service but noted a maxed-out service could see 235 adults and 65 children. Senior pastor Dennis Episcopal will be presiding over church services.

Director of operations Bill Douglas said Alliance's strategy is to plant satellite locations throughout the Fox Cities because people want to go to a church in their community.

"The whole idea is to get back into the neighborhood, where people can invite their friends and family if they live in the neighborhood," he said, adding that residents don't want to drive 20 or 30 minutes to go to church.

Because many of the Appleton Alliance congregants live in Neenah, Alliance has been searching for a satellite location here and even considered the former Shattuck Middle School before it was sold to a developer.

Neenah requires a special use permit for a religious institution to operate out of an area zoned residential. On its permit application, Alliance proposed having 294 chairs in the main gymnasium.

At last week's Plan Commission meeting, deputy director of community development Brad Schmidt noted the zoning code requires a minimum of one parking space for every four seats in the main auditorium, which would require 74 parking stalls. The site only contains 68 off-street parking spaces. In response, Alliance agreed to reduce the capacity of the auditorium to 272 seats.

The property has street frontage along Haylett Street to the north, Higgins Avenue to the west, Oak Street to the east and Campbell Street to the south.

Two residents expressed concerns over the parking situation at last week's meeting, noting that with limited spaces people will need to use street parking during what are currently quiet times on Sundays.

Schmidt said if on-street parking becomes an issue, such as if there is congestion due to traffic and parking, the city can decide to limit parking to certain streets.



Douglas



Neenah News

Horace Mann Elementary on Oak Street will be rented by Alliance Church to host services on Sundays in 2025.

Douglas acknowledged residents' concerns and noted parking will need to be resolved.

"We're going to do the best we can to make sure that doesn't end up being a barrier for any of our neighbors there and we're well aware that if we grow rapidly, then we'll have to really be careful about that," he said.

Alliance is in the process of purchasing supplies including a stage for worship and other equipment to transform Horace Mann into a temporary church. It's working with "Portable Church," an organization that will provide training for church staff and volunteers to perform a "load in/load out" process for equipment and supplies each week that will not disturb spaces that are used for school functions.

The church also plans to supply security and emergency medical teams at the Neenah satellite location.

Douglas said that the location inside

Horace Mann is temporary and Alliance would like to establish a permanent local presence.

"We really need a location that will have the availability of doing midweek ministry and so we know when we start the campus there in Neenah, we won't be able to do that for a while, so we're going to keep our eyes open for another location that lets us complete the rest of what we consider our ministry programs," he said.

Though the rental agreement begins Jan. 5, Douglas said actual church services won't start until this spring, with Alliance hopeful that services will begin in time for Easter Sunday on April 20.

"We want to be considered to be a great member of the community and a great member of the neighborhood where we're located," he said. "We want people to kind of say, well, I'm really glad that Alliance Church is across the street from me. That would be ideal for us."

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Business news roundup

Bergstrom Automotive has completed its acquisition of Lexus of Madison. This is Bergstrom Automotive's second Lexus dealership and will be the fifth Bergstrom location in the Madison Market, including a recently completed state-of-the-art body shop. The company, founded by John F. Bergstrom and his brother Richard A. Bergstrom, first entered the Madison market more than 20 years ago with the acquisition of the luxury brand Cadillac. Earlier this year the company reinvested in the Madison market by launching construction of a new Cadillac facility at its Fish Hatchery Road location.

J. J. Keller & Associates has appointed Stephanie Schmidt as the company's new vice president of client service, effective Jan. 1, succeeding Kari DuBois, who is retiring. Schmidt has nearly 18 years of experience at J. J. Keller in account management and service operations, the company said she has been instrumental in the success of its Managed Services. She previously served as the senior director of service operations.

Remley Law S.C. in Neenah has announced that three Remley Law attorneys have been recognized by Super Lawyers Magazine in its annual publication. Renee Read and Jolene Schneider are named for their work in family law, with attorney Matthew Borkovec honored as a Rising Star for his work in estate planning and probate. Only 5% of attorneys are honored as Super Lawyers, and 2.5% of attorneys are designated as Rising Stars.

Jewelers Mutual Group announced that its president and chief executive officer **Scott Murphy** was named one of Wisconsin's 275 most influential business leaders for 2024. The Wisconsin 275 is a special publication by BizTimes that highlights the 275 executives driving progress within the state's business sector. Murphy has led the Neenah-based insurance company since 2015. Before joining Jewelers Mutual, Murphy was an executive partner and principal at Triad Analytic Solutions, an insurance industry consulting group. He currently serves on the board of directors for the Jewelers Security Alliance.



Neenah News

Construction is nearing completion on a new medical examiner's office and evidence storage building shown near County Y and Jackson Street in Oshkosh.

New medical examiner's office nearing completion

Neenah News

Workers were installing fiber optic cable this week at Winnebago County's newly constructed medical examiner's office and evidence storage building adjacent to the sheriff's office Huber parking lot at 4311 Jackson St. in Oshkosh.

Miron Construction built the 5,482-square-foot building at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. It includes the medical examiner's office, morgue with

cold storage, an exam room and evidence storage garage large enough to accommodate a 53-foot semitrailer and tow vehicle and 25 vehicles inside and outside, respectively.

The county has been using a mobile morgue unit in the interim until the permanent location is completed. The Medical Examiner's office expects to begin operating out of the new morgue in mid-February.

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T H E

WREATH FACTORY

Three charged after shooting injures two

Woman and son among those accused in drug case

Neenah News

A 39-year-old woman, her 17-year-old son and another 17-year-old man have been charged in connection with a Nov. 29 shooting at an apartment complex in Neenah and related drug investigation.

Elizabeth M. Johnson has been charged with neglecting a child – consequence is great bodily harm, party to a crime of maintaining a drug trafficking place, party to a crime of possession of THC with intent to distribute or sell more than 10,000 grams and resisting or obstructing an officer.

Johnson's son, Anthony R. Hendricks, has been charged as an adult with two counts of first-degree reckless injury, aggravated battery, maintain a drug trafficking place, possession of THC with intent to distribute or sell more than 10,000 grams and resisting or obstructing an officer.

Another teen living in the apartment, Lamell A. Matthews, has been charged as an adult with harboring or aiding a felon-falsifying information.

A fourth individual referred to in the complaint as "TD" was arrested with Hendricks at a hotel in Grand Chute on Dec. 4 and had a gun with him but court records show he has not been charged in connection with the incident.

The victims were Hendricks' 11-year-old brother, who was shot in the lower back, and an adult male who had previously lived with the family and was shot above his groin and three times in the right thigh. Both victims were seriously

injured but survived.

According to the criminal complaint, the adult victim showed up at Johnson's apartment in the 100 block of West Bell Street to visit Hendricks and an altercation ensued. Hendricks allegedly grabbed Johnson's gun and shot at the adult victim three or four times. At some point his younger brother got in the way and was accidentally shot.

One witness said that immediately after the shooting, Hendricks ran guns out of the building in a red blanket. Security footage showed Matthews carrying a red blanket through the parking lot and off camera. Officers checked the area three days after the shooting and found a red blanket that was empty under a vehicle

east of the apartment complex. Johnson, Hendricks and Matthews all claimed that the adult victim's brother and two other males showed up and pointed guns at Johnson before the shooting. Surveillance footage showed one of the three men racking a handgun and holding it inside his coat at about 7:07 p.m., but all three had exited the building by the time shots rang out about four minutes later.

While executing a search warrant at the apartment, officers discovered more than 100 grams of marijuana, more than 900 grams of THC oil in vape cartridges and an estimated 3,208 grams of THC edibles. The items were primarily located in Johnson and Hendricks' bedrooms.



Photo by David Hall

Christmas cheer

Among the many festive holiday light displays in the area was this panorama on Nature Trail Drive.

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Unlocked vehicles

FROM PAGE 1

cles, are occurring to victims who have left them unlocked overnight," he said.

Wiechman said the thefts are crimes of opportunity, with the perpetrators appearing to only target unlocked vehicles.

"Detection is heightened if glass is broken or tools used to gain entry to vehicles that are secured, so they focus on cars that are easy targets," he said.

Fox Crossing police reported taking two juveniles into custody on Bartlein Court around 6:30 a.m. Nov. 22 in connection with the thefts from vehicles. One of the suspects ran from officers, was tased and transported to the hospital and then to Winnebago County shelter care. A firearm and other items were located in the area where the other suspect was taken into custody.

After the arrest, an additional nine vehicle break-ins were reported to Fox Crossing police.

Wiechman said the investigations are ongoing but with the sheer volume of

reported incidents in multiple neighborhoods and surrounding jurisdictions there may be additional suspects.

In response to the rising number of incidents, police have stepped up patrols in affected areas.

"Our agency does try to increase their visual presence to act as a deterrent to would-be criminal behaviors during that window of time when thefts seem to be occurring. However officers also have other roles and responsibilities that are prioritized and must be addressed first should they occur," Wiechman said.

The police department also shares social media posts to try to bring awareness to the issue and encourage residents to take a more serious approach to protect their homes and assets, including reminders of the nationwide crime prevention trend #9PMRoutine.

The 9pm Routine is a series of steps to take in the evening to ensure vehicles and belongings are safe. They include removing valuables from vehicles, locking and alarming vehicles, ensuring all garage, service and exterior doors on homes are closed and locked adequately, turning on outdoor lighting, and ensuring surveillance cameras or alarm systems are activated and working properly.

"If you feel you live in a safe neighborhood and 'no crime ever happens where I live,' there is a good chance the criminal feels the same way and will exploit that false sense of security," Wiechman said. "Ritualistically put the above steps into practice every night and you will not only help safeguard your and your family's belongings, but greatly decrease the odds of becoming a victim of theft from your unlocked car."

Food pantry

FROM PAGE 1

said Vinnie's offers these people food but doesn't have enough resources to provide additional support.

"I'd love to see a little bit more collaboration with nonprofit agencies and the city," he said.

As an example of how Vinnie's has impacted residents, Pingel shared that one pantry user was a woman who was leaving a domestic abuse situation, was unemployed and had two young children.

"She came in very nervous, very scared, as anyone in that situation would be, and we were there to help her get through that first month," he said. "She ended up getting employed here in Neenah, a large employer, and she has just filled out a volunteer application to come back. She doesn't use us as a service anymore."

Vinnie's relies almost entirely on its 50 volunteers to keep the pantry running smoothly, with only one paid staff member.

About 85% of the food distributed to residents is purchased by Vinnie's which spends about \$15,000 per month to ensure access to staples such as milk and eggs.

The pantry is primarily supported by proceeds from the thrift store, which also funds emergency services and mattress programs.

"We encourage everyone in the community to come and shop," Pingel said. "Keep donating, because that's what supplies food in the pantry."

The increased demand is putting additional pressure on already limited resources, and with corporate and private financial donations down this year, the amount of food that pantry users take home may be a little less than in past years.

"The sad part is the pounds per person have gone down because we're getting the same amount of food but the amount of people that we have has increased," Pingel said.

For those looking to help, Vinnie's accepts food and monetary donations, and volunteers to assist with sorting and distributing food. Donations can be made directly at Vinnie's or through its website at svdpneenah.org.

Perishable items such as frozen meat and fresh fruits and vegetables are particularly needed. Non-perishable foods such



Neenah News

Director of operations Jeremy Pingel opens a cooler that was largely empty last week as Vinnie's Pantry heads into the holidays.

as canned goods, peanut butter, jelly and cereal are also in demand.

Name-brand snacks are a special treat for pantry users. Having grown up in a family who used food pantries, Pingel recalled as a child how exciting it was when his family would get a special food item such as Oreos from the pantry.

Vinnie's also has a hygiene program and accepts donations such as toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, dish soap and laundry soap. First Presbyterian Church in Neenah recently agreed to financially support the hygiene program for a year.

In January, Vinnie's will be rolling out a new website that will include a monthly update on the pounds of food being distributed in the community and options to set up one time or recurring donations through PayPal and NetGiver.

Pingel noted that local businesses, schools, churches and community groups may also organize food drives to support Vinnie's.

With the season of giving upon us, Pingel reminded residents that food insecurity doesn't take a break for the holidays.

"As a lot of folks are getting together and celebrating and being grateful and thankful for everything they have, there's got to be time to reflect on those that are having a harder time of things, and it's hard for them to do those things on their own, and an organization like ours is here to help make things just a little bit easier," he said.

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Gaerthofner among state's best swimmers, eyes Olympics

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Neenah boys swimming coach Carrie Raeth laughed about a photo she has of the Rockets' 2022 200-yard medley relay team that placed ninth at the Division 1 state meet that year and set a school record.

The foursome included three seniors – Nolan Balensiefen, Austin Henderson and Carter Baumam – and one smallish freshman tucked in between the trio.

"It's a fun little picture to see what he was like as a freshman," Raeth said following a practice earlier this week. "It's fun to see how much he's grown since then and become the Drew we have now."

That freshman is now one of the top senior swimmers in the state who recently signed his National Letter of Intent to continue his career at the University of Wisconsin with the hopes of one day being a part of a U.S. Olympic Team.

Drew Gaerthofner has certainly come a long way over the past four years.

"It's really been exciting to see him grow and develop for anybody who has been associated with the team," Raeth said. "He definitely had potential as a freshman but we did not know he would have such an outstanding career. We see how hard he works. He's a leader in the pool and on deck and brings a lot to the team. We're happy for him."

Gaerthofner himself didn't envision such a decorated career – which includes multiple state medals the past three years

Senior Standout



while also earning a trip to compete in last summer's Olympic Trials – when he first donned the Neenah High School swim gear.

"No, it was not," Gaerthofner said. "A couple of years ago, I was one of the smallest kids on the team. I would have never thought of myself being in this situation."

Not only did Gaerthofner swim on a relay as a freshman, he also placed 22nd in the 100-yard breaststroke in that state meet. As a sophomore, he qualified for a pair of individual events, placing 10th in the 100-yard freestyle while making the awards podium with his fifth-place finish in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Last winter, Gaerthofner – who has competed on five relays at the state meet in his three trips – finished third in the 100-yard breaststroke and added a 10th-place finish in the 50-yard freestyle.

As he gets going on his senior season, his goal is to finally climb to the top of the awards podium in the 100-yard breaststroke.

"That would be amazing," Gaerthofner said. "The last couple of years I've been on the podium but not quite at the top. I just have to keep working in practice and



Neenah News

Neenah High School senior Drew Gaerthofner is one of the top swimmers in the state and will compete for the University of Wisconsin next year.

doing the right stuff. Put in the hard work and the results will come."

Gaerthofner said he naturally gravitated to the breaststroke as his strongest stroke.

"I always liked the breaststroke," Gaerthofner said. "A lot of it is anatomy, how your joints work and everything. Sometimes it's just what you get put into at a young age and whatever you like."

There are a number of factors that contributed to his emergence.

Obviously, his success has been the result of plenty of hours in the pool, swimming back and forth from one side to another. Even Gaerthofner admits that the training can be a little bit, well, boring.

"When it gets a little long and the sets are a little more distance-oriented, it gets a little boring. Most of the time, I just zone out," Gaerthofner said. "I like doing shorter stuff, fast stuff. The stuff I like to swim. You just have to try to get the most out of each practice."

One of the things Gaerthofner routinely does in the practice pool is create competitions – even if he's the only one in on the game.

"I make stuff a competition even if they don't think it's a competition. I will eye the guy next to me and try to beat him or try to go as fast as I can, try to lap them or get as far ahead of them as I can," Gaerthofner said. "I think training, what you do day in and day out, is how you are going to get better but when it comes to racing it's like the person who wins is the person who is more competitive and wants it more most of the time."

In addition to his success at Neenah High School, Gaerthofner has been a stalwart on the Oshkosh YMCA swim team.

It was while swimming with his club team that Gaerthofner earned his biggest accomplishment to date, landing a spot at the 2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials.

"It was an eye-opening experience. The World Championships had just finished and of all the men and women that were there, I could swim in a lane with them

warming up," Gaerthofner said. "Just having those people in the same building as you, you get a little anxiety and a few nerves. I don't remember the last time I was that nervous to swim."

Gaerthofner ended up finishing 48th out of 84 competitors in the 100-yard breaststroke and enjoyed the experience of sharing a pool with the nation's best swimmers – born after the year 2006 – in the race.

Gaerthofner knew that making the Olympic team last summer was a bit of a long shot but he wanted to get as much out of the experience as he could.

"I try not to think about I'm not going to do well or anything but the main goal going into that meet was to have fun and soak in the experience. My priority was to take in the experience for future years," Gaerthofner said. "I was super pleased with what I did. To be virtually the same time as my best time in that big of a meet."

He also believes the experience will help him entering his senior season at Neenah.

"I think it's just a confidence booster," Gaerthofner said. "If you have that little swag on, you can walk around a little more confident. I'm not the type to brag about going to trials or whatever but just in my head knowing that it feels good."

Even before swimming in the Olympic Trials over the summer, Gaerthofner had verbally committed to join the University of Wisconsin swimming program in college.

He made it official a few weeks ago by signing his National Letter of Intent, choosing the home-state Badgers over an array of offers.

"Growing up in Wisconsin and seeing Bucky and the W everywhere, I knew it would be cool to go there," said Gaerthofner, who's final decision came down to Wisconsin and North Carolina State. "Going into recruiting I had zero expectations.

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 11



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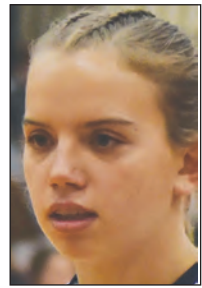


Vogel reaches career milestone as Zephyrs roll to win

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

It wasn't officially Senior Night for the St. Mary Catholic girls basketball team Monday night.

But it was the seniors that set the tone in the Zephyrs' 75-32 win over Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah and a memorable night for one particular senior.



Vogel

Emily Vogel became the fifth player in program history to top the 1,000 career-point mark in the game, when she converted a layup with 9:57 left in the first half to surpass the milestone.

St. Mary Catholic head coach Jeff Chew called a timeout after the basket as Vogel accepted congratulations from her teammates and was awarded the game ball before play resumed.

"I did know (I was close to the milestone) going into the game, but I tried not think about," said Vogel, who joins older sister Chloe - St. Mary Catholic's all-time leading scorer - in the 1,000-point club. "I was trying to play the game like normal. You have to play a team game to win, so that was kind of my thought process."



Neenah News

Autumn Crowe tries to rip the ball away from an Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah opponent during Monday night's win at the McClone Gymnasium.



Neenah News

Bella Jankowski puts up a shot in the first half against Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah on Monday.

"Once I started playing the game, I tried not to count in my head where I was at."

Vogel, who finished with 11 points for a career total of 1,001 points, scored four points in the opening two minutes but didn't try to force her way to the milestone.

She picked up another basket about six minutes into the game and then surpassed the mark with five points in a 31-second span. Vogel drained a 3-pointer from the left wing before getting the milestone with the lay-up that staked the Zephyrs to a 26-6 lead.

"It's important every game to come out strong," Vogel said. "We have to set the tone right in the beginnings so we know and (our opponents) know how it's going to go."

Vogel and her fellow seniors did all of the scoring early for St. Mary Catholic, accounting for the Zephyrs' first 28 points.

In addition to Vogel, Nolie Anderson had 12 points in the opening nine minutes, Lauren Ripley posted seven points and Eliana Brenn had a basket for the Zephyrs.

Sophomore Autumn Crowe was the first non-senior to score for St. Mary Catholic, converting a three-point play to ignite an 11-2 run that pushed the Zephyrs to a 29-point advantage as they eventually took a 43-17 halftime advantage.

The Zephyrs then outscored the Re-sorters 32-6 in the second half to close out the win, improving to 7-1 overall and 3-1 in the Big East North and earning the No. 4 ranking in the latest Division 4 state poll.

"Defensively, we are switching our defenses and doing some things well there,"

SEE **Zephyrs win** ON PAGE 11

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Rockets take down second-ranked Kaukauna

By Joe Matzek
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

After taking charge in the second half against No. 2 ranked Kaukauna, Neenah faced a crucial period where it nearly gave up its lead.

Yet, the Rockets came up with their best stretch of the game, pulling away with a 13-2 run behind some big moments from Luke Jung and Benjy Bell to claim a 66-56 Fox Valley Association victory Tuesday night at Neenah High School.

Neenah (2-2 overall, 2-1 FVA) led 29-28 at halftime and pulled ahead 40-32 after Bell sank back-to-back three-pointers. But the Ghosts (3-1, 2-1) fought back, using a disruptive trap to halt the Rockets' offense and cut Neenah's lead to 49-48.

"We were just panicking, so we knew we had to calm down, just play smart, play through it, read the passes, just be smart with the ball," Jung said.

The Rockets recovered, pushing their advantage to 62-50. During the critical stretch, Jung drove for three layups, scored

on a putback, then assisted Bell on a basket that led to a three-point play. Bell's two free throws with less than two minutes remaining ended the decisive run.

"(Jung) was absolutely relentless on the offensive glass," Neenah coach Lee Rabas said. "He's one of the better athletes in the FVA and he played like it tonight."

Bell's 13 points all came in the second half.

"(I'm) happy for Benjy Bell, a senior, who had kind of a signature game," Rabas said. "In the three (previous) games he kind of struggled to get it going, and then (he got it) going in the second half and hit some big shots and (made) free throws."

Rabas also credited junior reserve James Weiland, who played in his first varsity game "and was really pesky defensively and gave us a little bit of a spark in the first half."



Jung

Kaukauna entered the game averaging 89.6 points for its first three games with four players scoring in double figures.

"We have athletes that we can match up well with them and it just was going to come down to who wanted it more," Neenah senior guard Joey Daun said. "I knew that if we had a nice combined team effort that we could come out with a win. We forced them out and made big plays, and that's why we came out on top."

Jung drew the assignment of guarding UW-Green Bay recruit Keegan Van Kauwenberg most of the game, while Roan Koeper matched up with fellow 6-foot-9 forward Andrew Jensen. Both held their own most of the way, with Van Kauwenberg scoring several late baskets to reach a game-high 22 points while Jensen scored eight, which was 15 below his average.

The Rockets did benefit from facing Caden Graff for only half the game. Graff, a 6-foot-5 senior, dominated inside with 16 points in the first half but didn't play most of the second half due to injury.

They also were fortunate that Kaukauna missed some open shots, going 3-for-16 from three-point range, while the Rockets were 6-of-12 from beyond the arc.

"You've got to play tough defensively," Rabas said. "The effort has to be there and it was all night for us. The kids did the things we wanted them to do. They followed the scouting report, followed our game plan, and it came down to a couple of threes not falling for them."

While Van Kauwenberg and Graff combined for 38 points, Neenah was the team with balanced scoring – Daun with 17 points, Bell and Jung with 13 each and Nick Schultz with 10. Jung also pulled down 10 rebounds.

"We're not going to have one guy that's going to dominate like we did last year with Brady (Corso) or Charlie (Wunderlich)," Rabas said. "It's going to have to be by committee like it was tonight. It's good that when people prep for us, there's a whole bunch of guys that can do some things."

Prep sports roundup

BOYS BASKETBALL

Zephyrs outscore Resorters to collect win

St. Mary Catholic had five players finish in double figures and the Zephyrs pulled away over the final five minutes to claim an 86-80 win over Elkhart Lake-Glenbuelah on Tuesday.

The Zephyrs went on an 8-0 run to break a 70-70 tie and stayed in front the rest of the way to claim the win.

Preston Fields, who tallied 27 points in the win, scored six points in the decisive stretch, while a lay-in from Kieran Barrientos accounted for the other points as the Zephyrs grabbed their biggest lead of the night at 78-70.

The Resorters never got closer than five points the rest of the night as St. Mary Catholic went 8-of-12 from the free-throw

line in the final two minutes to help secure the win.

Barrientos scored all 15 of his points in the second half to help fuel the Zephyrs' win, while Luke Fairweather also finished with 15 points for St. Mary Catholic.

Mason Uhlenbrauck with 12 points and Myles Norville with 10 points rounded out the five double-digit scorers for the Zephyrs.

St. Mary Catholic was coming off an 81-40 win over Mishicot last Friday with Uhlenbrauck pacing the win with 24 points.

Fields and Tarver Trinkner each added 15 points in the win, while Miles Wagner totaled 10 points for the Zephyrs.

St. Mary Catholic has scored at least 80 points in all three of its wins this season, while being held to fewer than 65 points in all three of its losses.

Rockets fall on the road to Fond du Lac

Neenah couldn't nurse a halftime lead the entire second half as it fell on the road to Fond du Lac, 58-57, in a Fox Valley Association game last Friday.

Joey Daun finished with 19 points to lead the Rockets, who finished just 3-of-11 at the free-throw line. Luke Jung added 11 points and seven rebounds.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Defense lifts Neenah past Fond du Lac

The Rockets held the Cardinals to just 26 percent shooting and forced 25 turnovers in pulling out a 68-41 win over Fond du Lac at home last Friday night.

Rowan Klesmit hit five 3-pointers and finished with 27 points to lead the Rock-

ets, who led 37-21 at halftime before coasting in the second half. Klesmit leads the Fox Valley Association in scoring at nearly 26 points per game.

Ellie Buss added 12 points for Neenah, while Carli Baltus and Celia Gentile finished with eight and seven points, respectively.

St. Mary Catholic keeps up winning ways

The Zephyrs, ranked fourth in Division 4, picked up a pair of wins last week to continue their strong start of the season.

St. Mary Catholic earned a Big East North win last Thursday, rolling past Mishicot, 65-24.

Emily Vogel and Nolie Anderson each scored 16 points to lead the way for the Zephyrs. Anderson also grabbed a team-

SEE Prep roundup ON PAGE 11

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Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 10

high 15 rebounds.

Autumn Crowe chipped in 12 points for St. Mary Catholic.

On Saturday, the Zephyrs pulled away in the second half to top visiting Wrightstown, 62-48.

Vogel had a huge double-double on the night with 21 points and 16 rebounds while also securing a team-best six steals.

Crowe added 12 points and seven rebounds, while Lauren Ripley and Anderson each finished with 11. Ripley finished 9-of-11 at the free-throw line as the Zephyrs made 16-of-22 attempts at the foul line for the game.

HOCKEY

Rockets stay unbeaten with win over Cardinals

Zach Verhagen scored a pair of goals and Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha used a three-goal second period to break the game open in a 4-0 win over Fond du Lac on Tuesday night.

Mark Sutton staked Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha to the lead with a goal about three minutes into the game and the Rockets carried the 1-0 lead into the second period.

Verhagen notched his first goal 1:20 into the second period to extend the lead before Preston Liedke made it 3-0 about five minutes into the period. Verhagen then scored a little more than a minute later to give Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha the four-goal cushion.

Cartyr Simonson finished with three assists in the game while Calvin Zinda had two assists.

Owen Debbert stopped all 14 shots he faced to earn the shutout in goal.

Over the weekend, the Rockets picked up a win and a tie in a pair of games in Eau Claire.

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha topped Eau Claire North, 4-3, on Saturday as Zinda scored an even strength goal one minute into the third period to break a 3-3 tie to lift the Rockets to the win.

Verhagen, Liedke and Ty Laabs also

scored for the Rockets, who held a 3-1 lead late in the second period before Eau Claire North was able to tie the score heading into the final period.

Zinda and Drew Drach each had two assists in the win, while Matthew Nelson finished with 17 saves in net.

On Friday, Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha skated to a 1-1 tie with Eau Claire Memorial with Laabs picking up an assisted goal in the first period for the Rockets' lone tally.

Debbert racked up an impressive 46 saves in the game.

BOYS WRESTLING

Koch claims title at Husky invite

Declan Koch put on a dominant performance in winning the 157-pound title at the prestigious Eau Claire North Husky Invite on Saturday.

Koch went 4-0 on the day to claim the bracket crown, winning three of his matches by technical fall while also picking up a pin. The Neenah junior beat Kaukauna's Peyton Lee by a 15-0 margin in the title match.

Jacob Herm finished second at 165 pounds, suffering his first loss of the season in the title match. Herm notched two first-period pins and a 20-4 technical fall to reach the finals where he lost to Landon Robideau of St. Michael-Albertville (Minn.).

Kaden Roth went 3-1 to finish fifth at 190 pounds, while Landen Sheppard was sixth at 150 pounds after going 3-2 on the day.

Jaxon Ennis' ninth-place showing at 126 pounds was the only other top-10 individuals finish for the Rockets.

Neenah finished 11th overall in the 30-team tournament, which included top teams from both Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Earlier in the week, the Rockets went 3-0 at a Fox Valley Association quadrangular meet at Oshkosh North. Neenah beat Kimberly (42-29), Appleton North (43-24) and Oshkosh North (76-0).

The Rockets dropped the first four bouts before notching eight straight wins and rallying for the win over Kimberly.

Vogel said. "Any game, anyone can be a leading scorer. Everyone contributes every game. (Against Elkhart Lake-Glenbuelah), we even had everybody score."

The Zephyrs did have all 12 players who took the court score against the Resorters with Anderson leading the way with 18 points. Vogel and Ripley each finished with 11, while Crowe scored seven points and Lucy Norville and Bella Janowski each adding six. Ripley also had a team-high eight steals, while Brityn Voss led the team with five assists.

"The balanced offense is nice because you don't have to rely on one person," Chew said. "Whoever has the hot hand should be the one to get the ball and that's what we're doing."

the nation's top female swimmers.

"Having someone who knows the long pool is huge and having more Olympians every year in Madison is huge, too," Gaerthofner said. "I have full faith that I will be prepared for the next Olympic cycle."

And with how far Gaerthofner has come since he was an undersized freshman amidst those hulking seniors, there may be no limit to what he can do in the next four years.

"There is no reason not to have that goal," Gaerthofner said. "Seeing where I am now, there is no reason I can't see myself with the Stars and Stripes on my head."

Neenah led 15-14 over Appleton North before rattling off four pins and a major decision for the win. The Rockets tallied 10 pins in the shutout win over the Spartans.

Sheppard, Koch and Herm each went 3-0 with three pins on the night, with Garrett Nedens, Roth and Ian Thomas each posting two pins for the Rockets.

Brayden Milbrodt also went 3-0 at heavyweight for Neenah.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Reay, Kurszewski collect titles at Waunakee

Joelle Reay and Kylee Kurszewski each won individual titles to lead the Rockets to a second-place finish at the Waunakee Invitational on Friday.

Reay went 3-0 with a pin to earn the title in the 114-pound Gold Bracket, beating Monroe's Lexi Seffrood, 8-1, in the championship match.

Kurszewski pinned her first three opponents - two in less than a minute - and then scored a 16-2 win over Waunakee's Kit Alsaker to claim the 126-pound Gold Bracket championship.

Other top finishers in the Gold Brackets for the Rockets were: Ashlynn Schiedermayer, third at 120 pounds; Amari Richard, fourth at 132 pounds; Ava Armatti, fourth at 138 pounds; and Emma Verbrick, fifth at 235 pounds.

Julia Rangel finished first at 132 pounds in the Silver Division.

SWIMMING

Rockets splash past Cardinals in dual meet

Julian Kuehn and Drew Gaerthofner

were each a part of four wins for Neenah as the Rockets scored a 118-49 victory over Fond du Lac in a Fox Valley Association dual meet Tuesday.

Kuehn finished first in the 200-yard individual medley and the 100-yard freestyle for his two individual wins while Gaerthofner placed first in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard breaststroke - winning by a whopping 18 seconds.

Kuehn then joined Gaerthofner, Tanner Trustem and Gideon Benner in winning the 200-yard freestyle relay, while Kuehn, Burke Wendell, Benner and Trustem finished first in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Neenah also won the 200-yard medley relay with a team of Ryker Zarda, Trustem, Gaerthofner and Wendell.

Also picking up individual wins for Neenah were Benner in the 200-yard freestyle, Wendell in the 500-yard freestyle and Zarda in the 100-yard backstroke. Wendell in the 50-yard freestyle, Benner in the 100-yard butterfly and Gage Jensen in the 200-yard individual medley were each second.

On Saturday, Neenah finished first at the Terror Relays, placing either first or second in all 10 events.

The winning relay teams for the Rockets were: 100-meter freestyle relay (Austin Pierstorff, Joseph Van Handel, Seth Johnson, Jacob Reckner); 200-meter medley relay (Gaerthofner, Trustem, Kuehn, Wendell); 400-meter freestyle relay (Trustem, Joshua Youngwerth, Benner, Kuehn); 400-meter medley relay (Zarda, Wendell, Rylan Medoza, Jensen); 200-meter T-Shirt Free Relay (Youngwerth, Kuehn, Mendoza, Gaerthofner); and the 100-meter medley relay (Owen Klawikowski, Crawford Pfeifle, Pierstorff, Reckner).

Zephyrs win

FROM PAGE 9

Chew said following the win. "Offensively, we are starting to comprehend what we want to do and are starting to make good passes and move the ball. We're not selfish. The open person should get the ball and we are doing a really good job with that."

Sharing the ball has led to a balanced offensive attack for the Zephyrs with three players averaging on double figures and four players scoring at least seven points per game.

"That's probably our biggest strength this year just with how balanced we are,"

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 8

I didn't think people would be reaching out to me from all over the country. You get to experience different colleges and all that stuff in the visits and each was unique in its own way. I just knew if I could go anywhere, it would be Madison."

Gaerthofner also believes being at Wisconsin will help him reach his ultimate goal of making the Olympics under Badgers' head coach Yuri Suguiyama, who helped Katie Ledecy develop into one of

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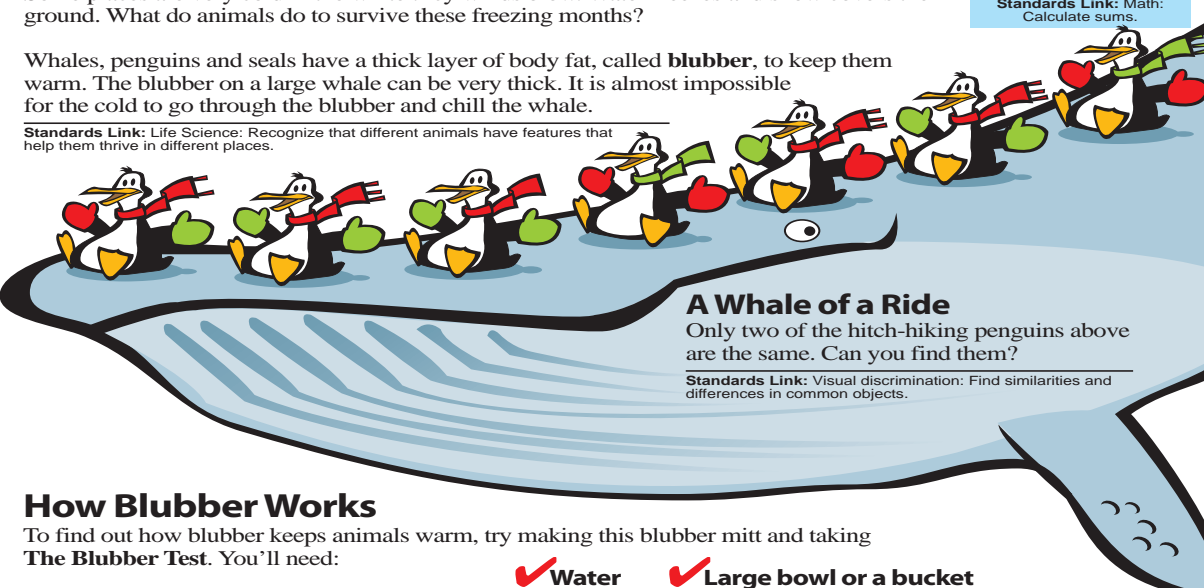
Kid Scoop FIT & FUN Penguin Fitness

THE BEAUTY OF BLUBBER

Some places are very cold in the winter. Icy winds blow. Water freezes and snow covers the ground. What do animals do to survive these freezing months?

Whales, penguins and seals have a thick layer of body fat, called **blubber**, to keep them warm. The blubber on a large whale can be very thick. It is almost impossible for the cold to go through the blubber and chill the whale.

Standards Link: Life Science: Recognize that different animals have features that help them thrive in different places.



A Whale of a Ride
 Only two of the hitch-hiking penguins above are the same. Can you find them?
Standards Link: Visual discrimination: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

How Blubber Works
 To find out how blubber keeps animals warm, try making this blubber mitt and taking **The Blubber Test**. You'll need:

- ✓ 1 cup of solid shortening
- ✓ 3 zip-lock sandwich bags
- ✓ Ice
- ✓ Duct tape
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Large bowl or a bucket

- 1** Put the shortening in a zip-lock bag.
- 2** Put your hand in the empty bag.
- 3** With your hand in the bag, put it into the bag with the shortening.
- 4** Seal the tops of the bags together with duct tape.
- 5** Squish the shortening around until it surrounds your hand.
- 6** Fill a large bowl or bucket with ice and water.
- 7** Slip your other hand into an empty plastic bag and tape the top of the bag to your wrist.
- 8** Stick both hands into the water at the same time. Which hand can stay in the water longer?


Now try: THE BLUBBER TEST

Extra! Extra! Hot Hunt
 Look through the newspaper for:
 • 3 ways to stay warm
 • 4 words that describe the weather
 • 5 numbers that add up to 100

Standards Links: Reading: Skim and scan reading. Science: Classification by common attributes. Math: Finding sums to 100.

A: Whale blubber can be inches thick.

Standards Link: Science: Follow a set of written instructions for a simple investigation.



Tummy Time


Penguins slide on their tummies to move across snow and ice.

Try holding this pose for 10 seconds at a time. It's not as easy as penguins make it seem!

Iceberg Hop

Pretend you are a penguin and hop like a penguin does from one chunk of (pretend) ice to another.

Jump back and forth 20 times.





Snow Angels

Lie on the floor and make imaginary snow angels by moving your feet and flippers—er, um, arms!

Balance

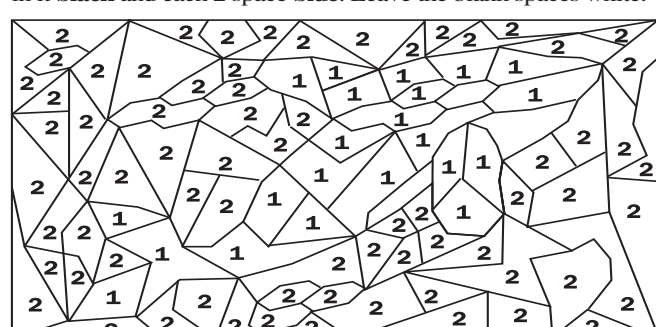
Penguins don't stand on just one foot very often, but pretend penguins can!



Standards Link: Physical Education: Use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

I'm found in oceans all over the world, but especially in the coldest ones. To find out what I am, color each space that has a 1 in it **black** and each 2 space **blue**. Leave the blank spaces white.



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Double Double Word Search

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

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

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



Write On! Wonderful Wiggly Walrus

Alliteration is when you use the same letter to start every word in a sentence. Write your own alliterations.

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