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Tenant options weighed for UW space

Discussions about fate of local campus continue

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

There's still no word on what will become of the University of Wisconsin-Fox Cities campus after it closes next summer, though the Menasha Public School District is among stakeholders interested in the facilities, according to Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson, who made the an-

ouncement during a meeting Monday.

"Where things stand right now is we have received a lot of interest from the Menasha Public School District and a number of other stakeholders, and so I don't have anything to report specifically, aside from the message that Executive Doemel (and) myself would recognize how important this is to have a long term solution," he said.

The need for a new tenant to maintain the campus was stressed by Winnebago County Supervisor Steve Binder, who said that if the counties don't find someone to

take over the facilities, they face potential costs of \$750,000 annually for heating.

"We desperately need to find somebody to use this campus and that's got to be our main goal, and if we can get this building to be utilized, the planetarium and all that will provide," he said. "But our main goal, at least my main goal, is to get the tenant in this building so that we can keep that open."

Adding to concerns is the need for up to \$2.2 million in renovations at the Bar-

SEE **UW campus** ON PAGE 7

INSIDE



Rescue team

Fox Crossing business keys on aquatic species
Page 6

Land plans

Wild Ones group looks at property options
Page 3



Neenah News

Future Badger

Neenah High School senior Grant Dean signed his National Letter of Intent to join the University of Wisconsin football team, where he plans to play defensive back. The all-state running back will be graduating in January and join the program this spring.

Holiday Santa float tradition continues with special visits

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Legend has it that Santa Claus is flown through the air on a sleigh pulled by a team of reindeer. But each year in Neenah and Menasha, children of all ages eagerly look out the window, stand on the front porch or wave from the sidewalk as a jolly old man in a red suit rolls through neighborhoods on a festive float.

The Neenah-Menasha Santa float, which is operated by off-duty volunteer firefighters, began making its rounds in Menasha and Doty Island this week and will continue visiting select streets in Neenah tonight and next week. The village of Fox Crossing operates its own Santa float that this year runs starting Monday through Dec. 13.

With a booming "Ho, ho, ho," Santa sits atop a float featuring merry music, twinkling lights and holiday decorations.

Though the history of the float dates to

the 1950s, Neenah firefighters were playing Santa long before that, according to Erica Suchyta, executive director of the Neenah Historical Society, who recently gave a presentation at the Neenah Public Library on the history of the float.

Suchyta said that in 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression, firefighters teamed up with what was then the YWCA – now YMCA – to fix up and refurbish hundreds of donated toys to be distributed to those in need around the city.

"So we're talking almost 100 years ago that our local fire department was going above and beyond for the kids in Neenah," Suchyta said. "It's a pretty long legacy."

After World War II ended in 1945, Santa and a crew of firemen came aboard a fire truck and visited all grade schools in Neenah, where they shared safety tips and handed



Neenah News

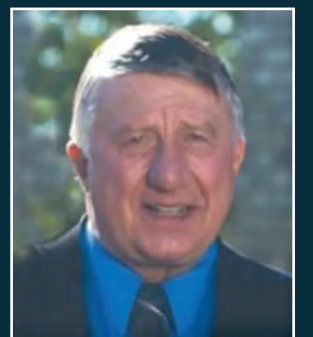
SEE **Santa float** ON PAGE 7

The Neenah-Menasha Santa float is returning to city streets for the holiday season.

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Gun deer hunt harvest tops last year

Neenah News

Preliminary figures show hunters in Wisconsin registered 189,622 deer during the 2024 gun deer season, according to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), including 89,787 antlered and 99,835 antlerless deer.

Compared with last year, the gun season harvest total is up 5.2% statewide, with the antlered harvest up 3.6% and the antlerless harvest up 6.6%.

Winnebago County reported a harvest of 721 antlered and 620 antlerless deer for a total of 1,341 taken as of Tuesday.

The number of deer hunters in Wisconsin slightly increased compared with 2023. As of Sunday, sales for deer hunting privileges – gun, archery, crossbow, conservation patron and sports licenses – reached 791,023, up from 788,697 for the same time period last year. Of those, 553,652 were for gun privileges only, up from 553,479 in 2023.

Final license sales figures will be released in January after DNR staff perform their analysis and interpretation.

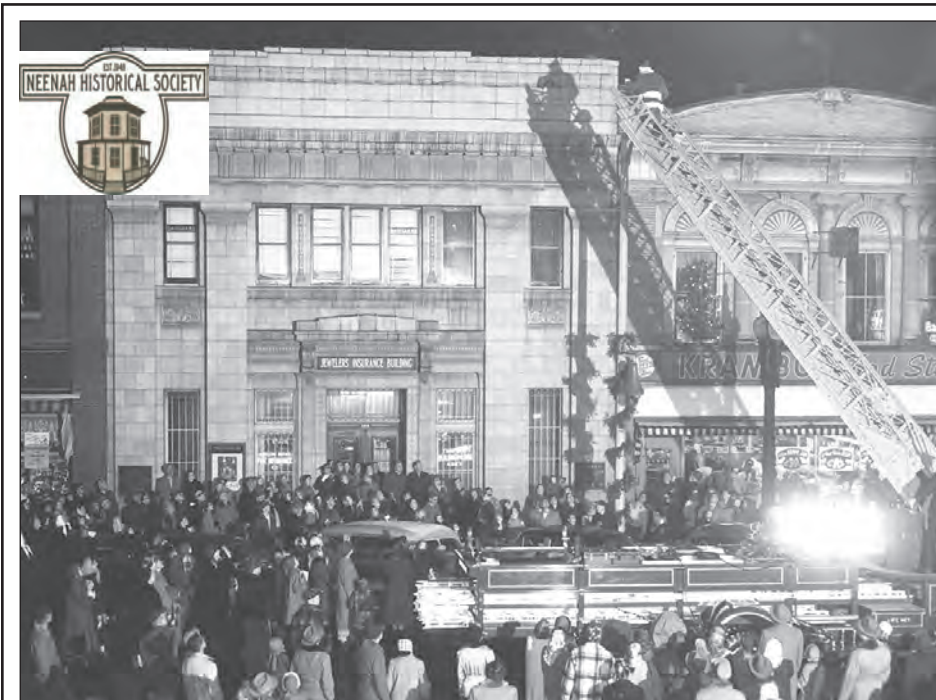
Since the opening of the bow and crossbow seasons, Wisconsin hunters have registered 289,361 deer, which is 8.7% ahead of the same time last year.

Adams County in the Central Farmland Zone led the state with 12.4 deer registered per square mile. Vernon County led the Southern Farmland Zone with 7 deer registered per square mile. Adams County also led the Central Forest Zone registering 4.2 deer per square mile. Florence

County led the Northern Forest Zone with 2.9 deer registered per square mile.

The DNR's Wisconsin Deer Harvest Summary webpage contains more information regarding preliminary harvest registration totals.

The DNR reports only one nonfatal firearm-related hunting incident during the gun deer season, which occurred Nov. 29 in Vernon County when a 14-year-old accidentally shot himself through both feet.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Christmas past

Santa Claus, atop a fire department bucket truck, ceremoniously lights the downtown Christmas decorations circa 1958. The crowd is gathered in front of Woolworth's, Jewelers Insurance and Krambo's Food Store where the Neenah Towers are now located on Wisconsin Avenue.

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Neenah Public Library Upcoming Events

- Discovering the Wisdom of Rocks with Marcia Bjornerud**
Wednesday, December 11
7:00 pm
- Hank Williams Ukulele Festival**
Saturday, December 14
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- Coffee Workshop with Bedrock Coffee**
Monday, December 16
7:00 pm
- Author Talk and Book Signing with Amanda Lauer**
Saturday, December 21
10:30 am - 11:30 am

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Space Deadline	Space Deadline
Thursday 12/19 Noon	Thursday, 12/26 Noon
Classified Deadline:	Classified Deadline:
Friday, 12/20 Noon	Friday, 12/27 Noon
Obituary Deadline:	Obituary Deadline:
Monday, 12/23 Noon	Monday, 12/30 Noon

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Wild Ones explores subdividing land, selling building

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

A nationwide environmental organization has announced it is subdividing its 16-acre property in Fox Crossing to transition operations entirely to remote work.

Wild Ones has operated the "Wild Center" at 2285 W. Butte Des Morts Beach Road for the past 18 years. The property includes a 5,400-square-foot, two-story residential building on a 1.5-acre lot and an additional 14.5-acre parcel of land, which was placed into conservancy when acquired in 2008.

Wild Ones is a nonprofit with headquarters in Fox Crossing focused on promoting the use of native plants in gardening. The organization has more than

11,000 members and 125 chapters across 36 states. The local Wild Ones chapter has worked to restore the Fox Crossing property to include prairie, riparian woodland and marshland habitat.

In a letter to its members, Wild Ones executive director Jennifer Ainsworth announced in October that the organization is making strategic decisions to align resources to support its mission of promoting native landscapes through education, advocacy and collaborative action.

"As we continue to grow our staff and transition into an effective remote operational model, the Wild Ones building no longer serves its initial purpose," Ainsworth wrote. "A place that once functioned as a physical work location for all national staff has shifted to become a

corporate address, a place to receive mail with a single staff member working there to process orders."

Ainsworth said the organization is surveying and subdividing the land and exploring options for the future of the building and conservancy land, including the possibility of transfer by gift, sale or bequest.

Concern among locals who commented on a social post about the topic was that the Wild Center and surrounding property would be subdivided to be turned into housing. Fox Crossing director of community development George Dearborn said that's not going to happen.

"The land was acquired through state grant funds so they cannot split that up and it's restricted in use to a natural area," he said.

Fox Crossing has been in discussions with Wild Ones over the future of the property and though the land will remain for a conservation use, the Wild Center itself could be sold to be used as a private residence. However, Dearborn said the

village is exploring other alternatives.

The trust has offered the land to Winnebago County, which was uninterested. Dearborn said the village is hoping another nonprofit will take over both the building and surrounding land and continue its operations, similar to Heckrodt Wetland Reserve in Menasha.

Looking forward, the village approved adding a parking lot for access and proposed a trail along the lakefront feeding to Prospect Avenue. Those improvements are in the works, with the village planning to apply for grant funds to cover costs.

Dearborn said the next steps are for Wild Ones to apply for an amendment to the future land use map and a modification of the conditional use permit and then a rezoning. He said he continues to explore options for another organization to step in and work with the village and the conservancy to maintain the property.

"We don't want to lose it," he said. "It's important to preserve that natural area."

Oshkosh city manager to join McMahon

Neenah News

Oshkosh City Manager Mark Rohloff, who announced he was leaving the city leadership role after 16 years, will take on the role of division manager at McMahon Associates engineering and architectural firm based in Fox Crossing.

Rohloff will take on the new position in January after his Jan. 3 retirement as city manager. Rohloff told the News he will be working in the public safety and municipal management division of McMahon on

projects.

McMahon serves municipalities and has many former local government employees, including a few like Oshkosh former finance director Russ Van Gompel, that Rohloff will be working with in his new role.

Rohloff will be working with municipalities on interim services such as staffing and recruitment, management strategies and building inspection services with the company.

Two injured in shooting on city's south side

Neenah News

Neenah police continue to investigate a shooting Nov. 28 on the city's south side that injured two people and led to the arrest of three.

Officers were dispatched at about 7:15

p.m. to 130 W. Bell St. for a report of shots being fired. Search warrants were executed and police said there was no further danger to the public related to the shooting but have released no other details as of Wednesday.

Greene's offers holiday tree photo fundraiser

Greene's Pour House will be raising funds for families in need during the holidays with a photo opportunity for families in front of its large Christmas tree in the upstairs event space at 134 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Photos can be taken by the tree from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday in exchange for a good-will offering. The downtown bar and restaurant will donate the money to families in the area.

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Calendar of events

Friday, Dec. 6

First Friday Concert Series: Mike Malone Trio, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library
 A Very Neenah Christmas, 5 p.m., downtown locations
 Malakai Flynn, 7 p.m., Xe 54, 1350 West American Drive, Fox Crossing

Saturday, Dec. 7

Grinch Family Breakfast, 9 a.m., Washington Park
 Timeless Treasures Christmas Bazaar, 8 a.m., Peace Lutheran Church, 1228 S. Park Ave.
 Art Activity Day and Holiday Open House, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass
 Driftless Revelers, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Sunday, Dec. 8

Sunday Concert Series: Christo's Novelty Combo, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Neenah Community Band Holiday Concert, 3 p.m., Neenah High School PAC

Monday, Dec. 9

Monday Matinees, 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library
 Short Story Night, 7 p.m., Lion's Tail Brewing Co.

Thursday, Dec. 12

Luminary Pop-Up with Cookie Crawl, 4:30 p.m., downtown Neenah

Friday, Dec. 13

Live Nativity, 5 p.m., Congregational United Church of Christ, 1511 Nicolet Blvd.
 Peanuts Christmas, 7 p.m., Xe 54, 1350 West American Drive, Fox Crossing

Sunday, Dec. 15

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

Thursday, Dec. 19

Art After Dark, 5:30 p.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Friday, Dec. 20

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

Menasha Corp. completes anniversary challenge

Neenah News

Menasha Corp. celebrated its 175th year with completion of a 175 Acts of Kindness challenge, a yearlong initiative by employees participating from locations across North America in a variety of community-focused activities.

The goal was to collect 175 photos and descriptions of employees participating in acts of kindness, which were documented and shared. The challenge inspired em-

ployees to get involved even more than they already do and make a difference in the lives of others, surpassing the anniversary-year goal.

"Our employees really took this challenge to heart," said Chris Drees, president and chief executive. "Seeing the photos come in throughout the year of their efforts and commitment to the community brought a sense of pride to everyone."

Local author inspires positivity with new book

Local author Spencer Jones brings light to the community this holiday season with the release of "You Are Enough: 101 Uplifting Quotes from the Prince of Positivity."

Behind the project is Jones' connection to the Fox Cities and passion for helping others embrace positivity and self-love.

"The hustle of daily life often leaves us feeling drained and overwhelmed. I wanted to create something that reminds people of their worth and helps them find clarity and joy — even on tough days," Jones said.

"You Are Enough" features 101 crafted quotes that resonate with readers from all walks of life, offering actionable wisdom and heartfelt encouragement. Jones said he wants the book to be a source of inspiration for individuals, groups, businesses and organizations seeking to cultivate positivity and personal growth.

The book is available on Amazon and



Lyons Bookstore in downtown Neenah. For more information, contact spencer@spencermjones.com or at 920-277-1183.

Neenah Arts Council receives state award

Neenah News

Erickson

The Neenah Arts Council was one of 14 municipal arts advisory committees presented with a 2024 Creative Community Champions Award recently by Create Wisconsin at the League of Wisconsin Municipalities' Annual Conference.

"We have an active and enthusiastic group of people in our community that believe in our mission of promoting and enhancing the arts for all," said Neenah Arts Council chairman Tami

Create Wisconsin, the state's community cultural development organization, has been presenting the awards to civic champions of the arts and creativity since 2009.

The municipal citizen advisory committees oversee arts programs, public art projects, creative economy development, policy, funding and fundraising, and accessibility for city and village residents in their communities.



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J&R Aquatic takes on exotic animal rescue mission

By David Hall
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

What do you do if you don't want your goldfish, alligator or pet python? A local pet shop or humane society usually does not accept exotics, so these animals are often flushed down the toilet or, worse yet, released into the wild.

In 2016, John Moyles started providing homes for unwanted exotics as leader of the Green Bay Aquarium Society. Gaining his love for natural resources management at Fox Valley Technical College, he founded J&R Aquatic Rescue in February 2020.

"We've seen firsthand how many people take on exotic animals without fully understanding their care needs or long-term commitment. This often leads to animals being neglected, surrendered or released into environments where they don't belong," Moyles said. "Our rescue exists to provide a second chance for these animals while educating the public about responsible pet ownership."

Situated in Fox Crossing, J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue stands as the state's largest exotic animal rescue dedicated to providing care and new opportunities for animals in need. Since opening, the organization has seen 7,641 animals surrendered and 7,483 adopted.

Operating as a nonprofit 501(c)(3), the rescue is volunteer-driven, hosting special community events to fund its mission and support the animals. In 2024 alone, the rescue facilitated 29 surrender events, taking in a variety of exotic animals — from alligator snapping turtles and a 6-foot Burmese python to an American alligator and Francis the Asian giant river turtle.

For species that are endangered or require special protection, the rescue coordi-



Photos by David Hall

Above: A pink-belly sideneck turtle is shown at J&R Aquatic Rescue.

At right: Evelyn, daughter of education director Renee Schulz, holds a ball python as one of the young volunteers.

minates with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to ensure proper care.

Supported by five employees, J&R Aquatic actively involves the community through education and outreach. Led by education director Renee Schulz, the organization partners with libraries and other groups to host engaging educational events. The next session is scheduled from noon to 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Pets Plus in Appleton. Additionally, a van donated by Petco enables the rescue to bring its mission on the road, expanding its reach.

Day-to-day operations require cleaning and feeding the animals with the help of volunteers and interns like Macy, a natural resources student at Fox Valley Technical College. Children also get involved but must be accompanied by an adult. Applications for volunteering or interning are available on the rescue's website.

The rescue funds its efforts by selling pet supplies, pets and hosting creative events such as birthday parties. Visitors are often drawn to meet notable residents like the



American alligator and Burmese Python.

J&R Aquatic Rescue not only saves animals but educates and inspires the community about responsible pet ownership and wildlife conservation.

"Through our programming and outreach efforts, we aim to connect with com-

munities, not just to find homes for these animals, but to create awareness about their environmental impact and inspire a sense of stewardship," Moyles said. "Our goal is to reduce the cycle of surrender and ensure people and animals alike can thrive."

Volunteer needs

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass is seeking friendly volunteers with customer service skills to assist in our gift shop for one to two 2-4 hour shifts per month during the holiday season. All volunteers receive training and a 10% discount in the Museum Shop. Contact Jayme at eisch@bmmglass.com or 920-751-4658 to learn more.

ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah is looking for pet therapy volunteers to share your pet with our patients. Flexible hours and scheduling. For more information or to request an application, contact sara.reybrock@thedacare.org or call 920-454-5571.

Girls on the Run of Northeast Wisconsin is seeking diverse community members to join its board of directors. No prior board experience required but there is a need for expertise in finance, fundraising, legal, marketing or strategic planning. Meetings are held bi-monthly, with virtual options. Term: six years. Contact Kathy at kathy.olson@girlsontherun.org for details.

Reach Counseling Services is looking for a volunteer advocate for the holiday season to provide crisis intervention and emotional support to survivors of sexual violence through its 24/7 hotline. In-depth training and shadowing offered. This is an ongoing volunteer opportunity. Contact Kylene at 920-722-8150 or volunteering@reachcounseling.com to learn more.

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Santa float

FROM PAGE 1

out treats including popcorn balls, a tradition that continued for years.

“What these images and stories tell us is that before there was a float, there was a Santa Claus and the fire department visiting children throughout the city to promote fire safety and spread holiday cheer,” she said.

The tradition of the Santa float that locals know today began in 1950 when Fire Chief John Zick came up with the idea as a gift to the children of the area. His wife made Santa’s first suit.

Suchyta said LaVern “Jumbo” Raehl and Fred Kampo of Kampo Transit Co. were the impetus for the float. Kampo donated the use of a flatbed trailer and agreed to drive the float.

“They took this idea that had kind of been worked around in the fire department and they put it on wheels, quite literally, on a flatbed trailer with wheels,” she said.

In the first few years, the Santa float visited each ward of Neenah, parks and school playgrounds, homes of children who were confined by illness, children at Theda Clark Hospital and the former Neenah/Menasha Armory.

In 1953, Suchyta said the float began touring several Neenah streets. The following year, the city retired its 1922 ladder truck and converted it for use as a float, which Suchyta said was decorated with reindeer, an igloo and trees. Aside from making stops in Neenah that year, Santa also began visiting some Menasha streets and spent time in what is now Curtis Reed Square.

In 1962, the old ladder truck was refurbished into a trailer to support the float and in the 1980s the trailer was rebuilt.

The Menasha Boy’s Club began its own Santa float in that city in 1989 and in the first year distributed candy and popcorn balls from a decorated hearse, which was later upgraded to a wagon and then a trailer. In 1997, the Menasha firefighters took over the float.

When the cities consolidated to form

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue in 2003, Neenah’s float continued to operate in both cities, though due to the size of the two communities, the float would skip every other street and alternate routes every year.

Last year, a new Santa float was built and introduced to the two cities.

“Neenah and Menasha firefighters spent hundreds of hours planning and designing a new float and the result exceeded everyone’s expectations,” Suchyta said. “Santa was thrilled to ride on a new trailer, in a new sleigh, with new reindeer music, synchronized lights, LED screens, smoke from chimneys and a snow machine.”

Suchyta said getting the float prepared each year is an all-hands-on-deck effort.

“Off-duty firefighters pitch in on everything from carpentry, paint, electric work, general maintenance, to make sure everything’s ready,” she said. “Every generation of firefighters since inception in the 1950s has worked on the float.”

As part of the onboarding process, Suchyta said every probationary firefighter has to

take a turn playing Santa Claus.

Though the community is largely supportive of the float, Suchyta said each year the department receives complaints varying from the noise of the float, to angry residents outside city limits inquiring about why the float didn’t visit their neighborhood.

“When I asked the current and retired firefighters what they wished the public knew about the float, the number one response was that it is entirely run by volunteer, off-duty firefighters,” she said. “The city does not fund the float. It’s entirely donation based.”

Information on supporting the Santa float and this year’s routes are at nmfire.org under the Santa Float tab. A list of Fox Crossing routes is at foxcrossingwi.gov.

Though the Neenah-Menasha Santa float has undergone many changes throughout its 74-year history, the tradition of spreading holiday cheer has remained steadfast.

“The float is a great source of pride for the fire department,” Suchyta said. “It is their gift to the city to spread Christmas magic.”

UW campus

FROM PAGE 1

low Planetarium, constructed in 1997, to replace the sound, lighting and HVAC system, which Winnebago County Supervisor Walt Ulbricht said is 26 years old.

“It’s based on vacuum tubes – remember those? And floppy discs. Antiques. That’s what we have is an antique system in the Barlow,” he said.

In 2022, both county boards approved funds for a feasibility study on upgrading the equipment. The results of the study were sent to UW Oshkosh for bids, but to date the university has taken no action on it.

“It is still in the hands of UW Oshkosh,

and for two years no action was taken, and the current person there has no desire to move it forward, put it into an RFP (request for proposal) process,” Ulbricht said. “So this is extremely frustrating and we need to move forward. The system is not stable in the planetarium, and we must move forward expeditiously.”

There was no clear decision on the feasibility study during the meeting, with some supervisors speaking in support and some stating the study should wait until the counties have a better idea of whether a new tenant will be taking over.

Winnebago and Outagamie counties, who own the real property at the campus, have been in discussions for months about what will happen to it after classes end next June and the campus permanently closes

next December.

In past meetings, dozens of community members advocated for the continued operation of the Barlow Planetarium, Communication Arts Center, University Children’s Center and Weis Earth Science Museum.

At Monday’s meeting, Bill Bultman, coordinator for the campus community gardens, advocated for their continued operation, noting they’ve been at the back of the campus for 20 years with about 25 families per year who garden there.

Bultman said the gardens are not costly to operate and the only cost to a future landlord would be a water pipe running out to them. The gardeners pay a maintenance fee of \$20 per year and the volunteers do most of the work.

“We make things work back there and won’t require a lot of money or effort, and we really just want to keep doing what we’re doing, unobtrusively in a back corner of the campus,” he said.

It was noted at the meeting that the Children’s Center plans to begin notifying parents of its permanent closure in January.

Nelson said both county executives are continuing discussions and hope to be able to share details on the plans for the campus by next month.

A community awareness meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Barlow Planetarium for donors, partners and community members to connect. The UW Oshkosh-Fox Cities Campus board of trustees meets next at 1 p.m. Jan. 27.

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Rockets hockey eyes successful season

Neenah News

With a handful of players who earned all-conference recognition returning from a squad that posted 15 wins a year ago, the Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha co-op hockey team seems poised for a big season.

The Rockets reached the Division 1 sectional semifinal last year before falling to eventual state champion Notre Dame and have the depth and talent to be in contention for the second state tournament trip in program history. The co-op program qualified for state in 2019 when it finished second.

"This leadership group needs to hold all the guys accountable to perform their roles at a high level," commented head coach Jeff Lindemann. "We are deep and this group is hungry for a deep run into March. We are looking forward to a great season."

The Rockets will return experienced players at all three position groups this season and will be led by a potent group of



Laabs



Cal. Zinda

returning scorers.

Senior Ty Laabs and junior Mark Sutton tied for the second most points on the team last season, with Laabs totaling 12 goals and 17 assists, while Sutton added 16 goals – second most on the team – and

13 assists. Both players earned second-team all-Badgerland Conference honors a year ago.

Joining that group of forwards will be sophomore Cartyr Simonson. Simonson tied Laabs for the third-most goals on the team last year with 12 and was fourth overall on the team in points, while earning honorable mention all-conference recognition.

The Rockets' scoring punch should also get a boost from two newcomers to the varsity squad as Preston Liedke and Keegan Krueger join Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha after playing for the Junior Admirals in Milwaukee a year ago.

The Zinda brothers – senior Calvin and junior Cooper – return to lead the Rockets on the blue line.

Calvin Zinda was a first-team all-conference selection a year ago and finished tied with Laabs for the second-most assists on the squad with 17. Cooper Zinda chipped in with six goals and nine assists a year ago and enters this season after participating in the USA Hockey National Camp this summer.

The Rockets also return five players who skated in nearly every game last season in forwards Miles Burger, Cole Rothermel and Jack Weinholzer and defensemen Macsen Selch and Drew Drach.

"I feel our depth will be our strength along with all the experience our guys got last season as we were pretty young," commented

In goal, the Rockets return their No. 1 netminder from last year in senior Owen Debbert, who finished with a .920 save percentage while playing in 20 games last season. Debbert didn't notch a shutout win last season but allowed just 2.13 goals per game.

The Rockets have started the season 4-0, including a win over the reigning Division 2 state champion St. Mary's Springs, but play four of the next five games on the road. The only home game before the Christmas holiday will be a Dec. 17 matchup against Fond du Lac.

Former Neenah football player earns conference, national honors

Former Neenah standout Matt Jung was recently named Defensive Player of the Year in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Jung, a sophomore for Bethel University, earned first-team all-MIAC honors after leading the team in tackles with 91. He also posted a team-best eight interceptions – three of which he returned for

touchdowns – along with 10 tackles-for-loss and two forced fumbles.

He is the first Royals player to earn Defensive Player of the Year honors.

Jung also earned first-team All-American honors from the American Football Coaches Association and is one of just 19 players in program history to receive the recognition.



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Neenah swimmers aim to carry on strong tradition

Neenah News

The Neenah High School swimming program is no stranger to success.

The Rockets have reigned over the Fox Valley Association 25 times in the past 30 seasons – including the current run of five straight titles – and is regularly well represented at the WIAA Division 1 state meet.

This year's group of Rockets expects to add to that strong tradition but head coach Carrie Raeth believes this year's squad might be able to cook up something a little extra special.

"This group is special and will definitely leave their mark on the program," Raeth commented. "We are very excited for the season and setting a goal to finish in the top six teams at the state meet."

The optimism is well warranted.

Led by senior standout Drew Gaerthofner, Neenah returns a pair of individual state qualifiers as well as the bulk of all three state-qualifying relays from last year. Neenah finished 14th in the final team standings.

Seniors Julian Kuehn and Joshua Youngwerth along with junior Tanner Trustem join Gaerthofner to give the Rockets an experienced and talented nucleus to build around.

"We are returning an experienced group of veterans to lead the team and will have other returning team members who are ready to help play major roles in the lineups," Raeth commented.

The leader of the group is Gaerthofner, who recently signed his National Letter of Intent to attend the University of Wisconsin next year and swim for the Bad-

gers. The senior also participated in the U.S. Olympic Trials in the breaststroke events and is returning after finishing third at the state meet in the 100-yard breaststroke last spring.

Gaerthofner also placed 10th in the 50-yard freestyle at the state meet a year ago and brings a wealth of talent to the Neenah pool. However, as talented as he is in the water his biggest asset for the Rockets may be his leadership.

"Drew brings a whole different level of intensity to our team. He is someone who makes everyone around him better," Raeth commented. "It is hard to put into words what he brings to the team because as good as he is athletically, he is even a better teammate. He sees the potential in others, sets the pace in the pool and weight room and encourages and supports his teammates."

Trustem also qualified for state in two individual events, placing 10th in the 100-yard breaststroke and 18th in the 100-yard freestyle.

Kuehn swam on all three state-qualifying relays from last season, anchoring the 200-yard medley relay that earned an eighth place-finish. Youngwerth swam on both of the sprint relays along with Gaerthofner and Trustem.

Both Kuehn and Youngwerth will add to the individual event strength as well for the Rockets, with Kuehn narrowly missing a trip to state in the 100-yard freestyle last season.

Raeth also expects junior Gideon Benner and sophomores Burke Wendell and Ryker Zarda to contribute on the varsity level this year after gaining experience

last season.

The success that Neenah will have in the pool this season will continue the team's longstanding tradition, however, it's what the group does when it is out of the water that will also go a long way.

"They give back their time and energy to our swim camps and community events," Raeth commented. "They are sharing their love of the sport with future Rockets and truly leaving a legacy that will inspire others."



NJSD photo

Swimming for Badgers

Neenah High School senior Drew Gaerthofner made it official last week when he signed his national letter of intent to swim for the University of Wisconsin Badgers. He is shown seated poolside with his family at the Neenah natatorium, where the current boys high school swim team, its coaches and some community members were in attendance. Gaerthofner is a four-year member of swimming and diving team and swims club for the Oshkosh YMCA.

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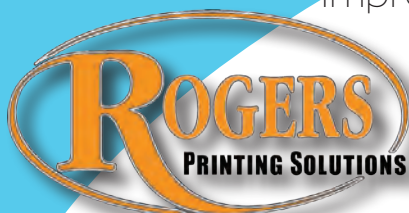


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Prep sports roundup

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Strong defensive effort carries Zephyrs to win

St. Mary Catholic held state-ranked Lourdes Academy to just 32 points and claimed a convincing 49-32 win at home Monday night.

The Knights were averaging 63 points per game entering the contest but the Zephyrs held them to just four field goals and 14 points in the first half and never trailed.

With the score tied at 11, St. Mary Catholic – ranked third in Division 4 – closed the first half with a 10-3 run with Nolie Anderson scoring six points and Emily Vogel adding four. The Zephyrs then scored the first seven points of the second half – highlighted by a Lauren Ripley 3-pointer – to take a 28-14 lead and the Knights never got close the rest of the way.

Anderson led the way for the Zephyrs with 13 points, while Vogel and Ripley finished with 11 and 10 points, respectively. Vogel also led the team with nine rebounds.

The Zephyrs were playing without leading scorer Autumn Crowe.

Neenah squelches

Lightning in FVA opener

The Rockets opened their Fox Valley Association slate with a 75-69 win over Appleton North on Tuesday night.

Rowan Klesmit continued her torrid scoring pace with 25 points, including five 3-pointers, to lead the Rockets. Ellie Buss added 22 points and added six rebounds and four assists, while Ava Kreger also reached double figures with 16 points.

Klesmit and Kreger each finished 6-of-6 from the free-throw line as the Rockets went 13-of-16 from the foul line in the game.

Neenah led 47-37 at halftime and then held the Lightning to 22 points in the second half.

The victory comes after the team suffered its first loss of the season on Saturday as Neenah lost to Homestead 64-47 in the Kettle Moraine Thanksgiving Classic.

Klesmit finished with 21 points and Buss added 11, while the duo each grabbed seven rebounds to lead the team.

The Rockets finished just 3-of-14 from 3-point range in the game.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Rockets fall to Brookfield East in opener

Neenah opened its season last week and suffered a 56-46 loss on the road at Brookfield East.

Luke Jung led the way for the Rockets with 18 points and eight rebounds, while Joey Daun finished with 15 points.

The Rockets went 8-of-9 from the free-throw line in the game, but were just 2-of-

16 from 3-point range.

Zephyrs drop contest against Bonduel

St. Mary Catholic had three players finish in double figures but couldn't slow down Bonduel in a 94-62 loss at home Tuesday.

Mason Uhlenbrauck scored 13 points to lead the Zephyrs, who trailed 40-28 at halftime. Kieran Barrientos and Preston Fields each added 11 points in the game, while Luke Fairweather chipped in nine points.

The Zephyrs were coming off a win in their season opener before Thanksgiving when they topped Wautoma, 87-42.

Barrientos had a career high 22 points in the win, while Uhlenbrauck added 16 points.

Myles Norville added nine points and 12 rebounds.

HOCKEY

Rockets off to 4-0 start after shutout win

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha scored an 8-0 win over the Fox Cities Stars on Tuesday to improve to 4-0 on the season with a whopping 28 goals scored over that span.

A five-goal second period keyed the win over Fox Cities.

Mark Sutton's unassisted goal had staked Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha to a 1-0 lead after the first period but the Rockets then got a goal from Keegan Krueger and two apiece from Calvin Zinda and Sutton to stretch the advantage to 6-0 entering the third period.

Zinda scored again in the final period to join Sutton with a hat trick. Preston Liedke added the final goal.

Zinda added three assists in the win, while Ty Laabs finished with two. Owen Debbert made 12 saves to earn the shutout.

The Rockets opened the season by notching a 7-4 win over St. Mary's Springs as Sutton and Ty Laabs each tallied hat tricks and combined for four assists in the win over last season's WIAA Division 2 state champion.

Macsen Selch also scored in the game, while Owen Debbert finished with 23 saves.

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha then won a pair of games at the River Falls Holiday Tournament, beating host River Falls 8-0 before topping Northern Edge, 5-1.

Seven different players scored in the win over River Falls with Calvin Zinda the lone player with two goals in the game. Clay Laabs, Cooper Zinda, Cole Rothermel, Zach Freund, Ty Laabs and Sutton also scored in the game. Preston Liedke and Cartyr Simonson each had two assists in the win as the Rockets put 54 shots on goal in the game. Debbert earned the shutout with 16 saves in net.

Sutton and Ty Laabs each had three points to fuel the win over Northern Edge. Sutton had two goals and an assist, while Ty Laabs had one goal and two assists to lead the Rockets. Liedke and Zach Verhagen also added goals, while Calvin Zinda added a pair of assists.

Debbert stopped 20 of 21 shots he faced to earn the win in goal.

WRESTLING

Rockets fall in first dual meet of the season

Neenah suffered losses in the first four contested matches and couldn't climb out of the deficit in falling to Hortonville 42-32 in the opening match of the season Tuesday.

Carson Finch's forfeit win at 106 pounds was Neenah's only points in the early going as the Polar Bears built a 21-6 lead five matches into the meet.

Pins for Jaxon Ennis at 126 pounds and Steven Czechanski at 132 pounds brought the Rockets to within three points but Hortonville rattled off wins in the next three matches to extend the advantage.

Neenah closed the dual meet by winning three of the final four matches as Declan Koch won by pin at 157 pounds, Jacob Herm registered a technical fall victory at 165 pounds and Kaden Roth capped the dual meet with a 6-5 decision win at 190 pounds.



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Neenah wrestling looks to be force in FVA again

Neenah News

Led by a formidable 1-2 punch in the middle of its lineup, the Neenah boys wrestling team looks to once again be in the mix in the Fox Valley Association as well as on a state level.

Senior Jacob Herm and junior Declan Koch bring a wealth of experience to the mats for the Rockets as well as state tournament hardware.

Herm was dominant in winning the Division 1 144-pound title last year, pinning three state opponents – including in the championship match – while scoring a major decision win in his other match to finish the season 47-0.

Koch ended the season with a 45-3 record and placed second at the state meet at 138 pounds, losing a tough 5-1 decision in the title match after pinning two of his three opponents to get there.

“Declan and Jacob are both tremendous ambassadors of the sport of wrestling. They are true examples of what it means to commit to wrestling,” head coach Kyle Kleuskens commented. “What I love about both of them is their dedication, passion and true love for the sport. These guys have been experiencing their wrestling journey together throughout their career so it will be bittersweet this season knowing it is the last year they will be together in high school as teammates.”

Herm and Koch were Neenah’s only two state qualifiers returning from last season, but they are part of a large contingent of wrestlers who competed at the sectional tournament.

Senior Jaden Reay – who joins Herm and Koch as team captains – and juniors Jaxon Ennis, Garrett Nedens, Landen



Submitted photo

Senior Jacob Herm returns after finishing an undefeated season by winning a WIAA state title last season.

Sheppard and Kaden Roth all reached sectional competition a year ago. Sheppard finished fourth at sectionals and finished the season with 31 wins, while Ennis posted 28 wins on the year.

In addition, Kleuskens expects juniors Dane Granditzke, Connor Simons and Brayden Milbrodt along with sophomore Jackson Lichty to step into the voids in the varsity lineup.

Kleuskens is certainly looking for the program to continue the successful run it’s been on, but he’s also got an eye on continuing to build the program to reach even loftier goals moving forward.

“We have some really important team goals this season as we make steps towards

our ultimate goal as a program to one day bring home a team state title,” Kleuskens commented. “We feel that we have the kids in our program now to eventually reach the peak of the mountain, however this year will be very important in making the progress we need in order to be in that position. We need to be positive in all that we do academically, in the community and in our wrestling experience.”

One of the reasons that Kleuskens can have one eye on the future is because of the growth the program is showing.

The Rockets welcomed 19 freshmen to the team this season – the most in Kleuskens 10 years as head coach – to go along with 11 sophomores on the 43-wrestler roster. Plus, Kleuskens said there are nearly 70 wrestlers in the middle school program that will serve to bolster the program’s numbers moving forward.

“We are really excited about the future of our program,” Kleuskens commented. “We are focused on both the short-term and long-term goals of the program. We are excited about seeing some new faces competing for some of the varsity spots as it has added more competition to our room versus previous years.”

Girls

The Neenah girls wrestling program also has a wealth of talent on the current squad while looking to future success.

The Rockets boast a pair of state qualifiers to lead their list of returning wrestlers and head coach Madison Ruckdashel continues to see growth in the program.

“I think we have something really good going on here in Neenah and it’s only going to get better year after year,” commented Ruckdashel. “I think as we continue to have success and also have a positive culture, our numbers will continue to grow as well.”

Junior Kylee Kurszewski and sophomore Amari Richard represented the Rockets at the state meet last year and will anchor the team’s efforts this season.

Kurszewski, who is a two-time state qualifier, finished 23-4 last season, while Richards posted a 37-8 record as a freshman.

“I think seeing both girls at state gives the rest of our girls the belief they can do it, too,” commented Ruckdashel. “We had many girls just miss out on state last year and I think they have a communal drive in the practice room with their state aspirations.”

Joining the state-qualifying duo will be senior Ashlyn Schiedermayer and juniors Ava Armatti and Joelle Reay, who each finished with at least 27 wins last season and wrestled at sectionals. Armatti and Reay were sectional finalists.

Ruckdashel will also be expecting a pair of freshman to strengthen the varsity lineup in Jenson Kurszewski and MacKenzie Kujawa.

“We have high expectations for this team,” Ruckdashel said. “Some of these expectations include winning our conference, regional and sectional tournaments and we expect to have four to six wrestlers at state and many have aspirations for the podium.”



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Holiday Science



I'm Dr. I. Cicle, the coolest scientist around these parts!

Try my fun and amazing holiday science experiments at home with a member of your family!

The Holidays Make Scents

Maybe it's because I have a carrot for a nose, but I don't get to smell much of the wonderful scents the holidays bring each year. See if your friends and family members can identify the secret scents hidden in five bags without looking in the bag.

- Stuff you'll need:**
- 5 paper bags
 - Marker
 - Pine needles
 - Cinnamon sticks
 - Hot cocoa powder
 - Candy Canes
 - Marshmallows
 - Cup of eggnog
 - Gingerbread
 - Popcorn
 - Roasted chestnuts
 - Pumpkin spice
 - Drops of vanilla extract
 - Holiday scented candle
- Choose any 5 of these items.

SCIENTIST'S NOTEBOOK

Question: Will people be able to identify every scent? Which one will every person correctly identify?
Hypothesis: Your guess at what will happen.

- Method:**
- Number the bags 1 through 5.
 - Place the bags on a level surface. Place an item in each bag.
 - Have each person sniff each bag and tell you what they think they smell.



Observation: Which scent was guessed correctly most often?
 Which scent was guessed correctly least often?
Conclusion: Explain what this experiment taught you.

Standards Link: Follow the scientific process to conduct simple experiments.

Incredible Vanishing Candy Canes

Try this awesome EXPERIMENT!
 This experiment will reveal how candy canes react to different liquids. What do you think will happen?
 Record your observations to see if you predicted the correct results.

- Stuff you'll need:**
- 4 small candy canes
 - 4 clear jars or glasses
 - Hot water
 - Cold water
 - White vinegar
 - Cooking oil

SCIENTIST'S NOTEBOOK

Question: How does a candy cane react when left in different liquids?
Hypothesis: Your guess at what will happen.

- Method:**
- Fill each jar or glass with one liquid. Use the same amount each time.
 - Place a candy cane in each container.
 - Watch what happens to the candy canes over the next couple of hours.

COOKING OIL	VINEGAR	COLD WATER	HOT WATER
after 15 minutes:	after 15 minutes:	after 15 minutes:	after 15 minutes:
after two hours:	after two hours:	after two hours:	after two hours:

Conclusion: Explain what this experiment taught you.

Standards Link: Follow the scientific process to conduct simple experiments.

Extra! Extra! Holiday Sights

Look through the newspaper for each of these words related to holiday celebrations:

- Lights
- Music
- Gifts
- Family
- Friends
- Joy
- Peace
- Fun

Standards Link: Use the newspaper to locate information.

Kid Scoop Together Fizzy Cookie Shapes

Baking soda and vinegar create a fizzy, bubbly reaction when mixed. Try this experiment with a family member.

- Stuff you'll need:**
- Baking sheet (makes cleanup easier)
 - Holiday cookie cutters
 - Baking soda
 - White vinegar
 - Green and red food coloring



Step 1: Add red food coloring to a cup of white vinegar. Stir. Repeat with green food coloring.



Step 2: Place a cookie cutter on the tray and pack it with baking soda.



Step 3: Add drops of green and red vinegar to the baking soda.

Observation:

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Dr. I. Cicle's Lab Equipment

Circle all the things that would be useful in a laboratory to conduct experiments. Do the math. The even-numbered items would be useful. The odd-numbered items would not be useful.

8 + 4 =
 6 + 2 =
 7 + 7 =
 10 + 8 =
 7 - 3 =
 14 - 6 =
 11 + 11 =
 9 + 7 =
 12 - 4 =

Standards Link: Solve simple equations; recognize odd/even numbers.

Double Double Word Search

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

BAGS
 CANE
 COLD
 FUN
 JAR
 JOY
 MUSIC
 NOSE
 POPCORN
 REACT
 SCIENCE
 SPICE
 VINEGAR
 WATER

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

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

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