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Neenah water utility earns high marks

Aging infrastructure concerns remain

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The City of Neenah's water utility received top grades for water quality, finances and customer communication in a 2024 statewide evaluation, but aging infrastructure continues to pose challenges, according to a report from the Wisconsin Waterworks Excellence Project at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The utility earned an overall grade of A for water quality, scoring 99.9 out of 100, with testing showing no violations of state or federal standards. Acute and chronic contaminant levels including arsenic, lead and nitrates were found to be well below safety thresholds.

Director Tony Mach attributed the high score to water utility staff members.

"We have excellent staff members, and we want to produce the best water possible," he said.

Finances were also strong, with a grade of A and a score of 91.1. The utility report-

ed a healthy debt-to-asset ratio, with more than 400 days of operating reserves.

"We're very conservative with our spending, especially for tools and equipment," Mach said. "We're very cautious about where our money goes."

The utility also received a high mark in customer communication, earning an A and a 97.5 rating, attributed to a mobile-friendly website, accessibility options, online bill pay and transparent posting of reports and meeting information.

SEE **Water report** ON PAGE 3

INSIDE



Senior Standout
Weinke helps lead Rocket defense
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Photo by David Hall

Dan Johnson, known as "Dan the Mushroom Man," chats with customers while selling his homegrown and foraged mushrooms at the Future Neenah Farmers Market.

Hobby becomes fungi phenomenon

The Mushroom Man finds fans at market

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

For about eight years, Dan Johnson and his wife Pauline have been a staple at the Future Neenah Farmers Market, offering a colorful array of fresh, flavorful fungi, both cultivated and foraged from Wisconsin woods.

Known to many as "Dan the Mushroom Man," he started Back Forty Mushrooms and Forage with Pauline about 10 years ago at their Tigerton property, turning a neighbor's suggestion into a retirement hobby.

"I never thought about mushrooms, but my neighbor at the time out in the country, he had a microgreen place in Milwaukee, and he came to me one day, he says, 'Have you ever thought of growing mushrooms?' I'm like, 'No,'" Dan recalled.



Johnson

His neighbor was trying to find somebody to grow mushrooms to sell to a chef. The Johnsons were intrigued. They started reading about mushrooms and began growing them. The first couple of years, they shipped the mushrooms to restaurants in Milwaukee.

What began as a retirement project soon grew into a full-time passion. The Johnsons now attend five to seven farmers markets a week in the summer, with Dan in Neenah and Pauline in Wausau or Greenville. Back Forty Mushrooms are also sold at a farmers market in Weston and twice a month at a farmers market in New London.

"We pretty much just do farmers markets because that's more fun," Dan said.

Their offerings include several types of oyster mushrooms, along with shiitakes, portabellas, chestnut mushrooms, lion's mane and more.

Foraging for edible wild mushrooms is

SEE **Mushroom Man** ON PAGE 7

County sales tax resolution delayed until September

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

A resolution directing staff to draft an ordinance for a proposed 0.5% county-wide sales tax was pulled from the Winnebago County Board agenda Tuesday by Supervisor Chuck Farrey, who said he plans to bring it back to the board in September.

The resolution was pulled to allow time for additional comments from the public and municipalities, according to Board Chair Tom Egan.

County Executive Gordon Hintz gave a presentation on the proposal at the meeting, and the board discussed the possibility of implementing a sales tax ordinance. The board is expected to vote next month on a resolution directing staff to draft the ordinance. That ordinance would then go to the board for a final vote in October to

SEE **Sales tax** ON PAGE 5



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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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Hueckman joins Neenah News as advertising account executive

Neenah News

Kelly Hueckman joined the Neenah News team this week as an advertising account executive for the Neenah/Fox Crossing areas.

In 2024, Hueckman graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in multimedia journalism, where she spent four years working with the student newspaper.

She looks forward to using her background in student media and hospitality to create meaningful relationships with

local businesses.



Hueckman

With a commitment to help the Fox Valley community thrive, Hueckman is eager to connect with local businesses, understand their advertising needs and develop solutions.

She can be reached at 920-508-0119 or

kelly@neenahnews.com.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Cigar factory

The George Schmid & Son Cigar Co. was formed in 1876 and operated out of 129 W. Wisconsin Ave. The cigars were quite popular, and the factory employed as many as 40 cigar makers at a time.

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Calendar of events

Saturday, Aug. 23

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park
Art Mercantile, 9 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Wednesday, Aug. 27

Future Neenah Farewell to Summer Concert featuring Boogie and the Yo-Yo'z, 6 p.m., downtown

Saturday, Aug. 30

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park
Glass Blowing Demo by Mini Glass Works, 9 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee

Monday, Sept. 1

Labor Day Parade, 10 a.m., Menasha's Curtis Reed Square to downtown Neenah
Labor Fest, 11 a.m., Neenah Labor Temple, 157 S. Green Bay Road

Friday, Sept. 5

Riverside Players Theater presents Chicago, the Musical, 7 p.m., Riverside Park

Saturday, Sept. 6

Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park
Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass
Riverside Players Theater presents Chicago, the Musical, 7 p.m., Riverside Park

Sunday, Sept. 7

Riverside Players Theater presents Chicago, the Musical, 7 p.m., Riverside Park



Submitted photo

Rick Brunner of Rick's Toybox delivers donated items to Neenah Police School Resource Officers Erica Geschrei and Brandon Deich with the help of volunteer Bill Kocha. The officers can use the items in schools when working with students during the school year.

School resource officers get special delivery

Neenah News

Rick Brunner wanted to make a donation that can have a big impact on the local community.

To do so, on Monday he delivered packages with items that school resource officers from the Neenah Police Department can use when working with students during the upcoming school year. The items include what he calls Smarter Than a Fifth Grader packages along with wooden activity cars.

"They don't often get these types of items," Brunner said. "These smaller departments can often be overlooked, so that's why we go to these communities."

Brunner, founder of nonprofit Rick's Toybox in Green Bay, wants to take away from the negative things that are happening and focus on the positive. He makes similar donations to doctors, nurses and other police departments, including the

Menasha Police Department.

Along with the donations, Brunner said they provided training and suggestions on the usage of the program to take full advantage of using the items and getting the best results.

The games and activities in the packages are for a variety of ages, including older kids who can use the old fashioned games and puzzles while talking with the police officers. It's not always about who wins or loses, as Brunner said it's intended to be a tool to open lines of communication in those situations.

When officers see some of the games, Brunner said they often become interested in using them for a friendly competition among themselves. It helps to relax them in what can be a stressful job, he said.

Brunner isn't sure where he will go next with similar items but is open to road trips. With the help of volunteers, he said the organization sends donations worldwide.

Water report

FROM PAGE 1

The utility's lowest score came in infrastructure and operations, where it earned a C, with a rating of 79.8. The report cited water main and service breaks and water system losses as ongoing issues.

Mach said the low grade in that category is not unusual. In comparison, the 2025 report card for America's infrastructure ranked overall drinking water at a C-.

"So ultimately, our goal is to get to the point where we have zero water leaks every year, but we're just not there yet," he said.

The evaluation is part of an effort by UW-Madison researchers to make the performance of Wisconsin's water utilities more visible to the public.

"Delivering safe, healthy drinking water is the primary objective of any water utility, and grades are based on regulated contaminant levels for both acute and chronic contaminants," the report states.

Mach said many of the city's water mains have been around for 100 years.

"Our two top priorities are replacing aging infrastructure with water mains, and then also replacing lead service lines," he said.

There are 1,932 utility-owned lead service lines and 2,875 privately-owned lead service lines in Neenah, a reduction from previous numbers. The water utility is actively working to update its records, and Mach expects the numbers to improve further by the end of the year as more replacements are logged.

The city prioritizes replacing public laterals that leak or are damaged, and in conjunction with street reconstruction projects, which helps reduce the cost to

the property owner.

"We try to be the protectors of health in Neenah, because a lot of things start with us," Mach said. "So obviously, the hospital uses our water. People drink our water on a daily basis. So, our concern is, we want to make sure that we do everything possible in due time to get these all out and make sure the water is the best it can be, and it's as clean as can be."

Neenah's water utility draws its water primarily from Lake Winnebago. The lake's water quality, including the presence of algae blooms, makes treating the city's drinking water more challenging. Mach said the utility monitors water quality, uses satellite imagery to track algae blooms in real time, and applies additional treatment methods such as powdered carbon.

Though the raw lake water may vary in quality, Mach said the utility maintains drinking water so that residents do not notice any difference throughout the year, despite seasonal changes in the lake.

"It's a matter of the treatment process taking over, and our operators taking over, and making sure everything is adjusted carefully so that we can produce the best drinking water possible," he said.

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New playground coming to former Shattuck Middle School

Neenah News

New Springs Christian Academy, a new school occupying part of the former Shattuck Middle School building, plans to install a playground on its property at 600 Elm Street.

The donated playground equipment includes a slide, tunnel climber, jungle gym with monkey bars, stepping blocks, climbing dome, swingset, merry-go-round, spinning net climber and a bench. The equipment will be placed on the northwest corner of the property, an area that provides shade and is adjacent to the section of the building leased by the school.

During a public hearing held by the Plan

Commission Aug. 12, Board President Justin Stambuk responded to questions from residents, stating that the equipment would be placed around the existing trees and will have a pea gravel base. Though there are no current plans for fencing, the school may consider installing a fence in the future.

Stambuk said the goal is to revitalize the neighborhood and create a space for families, neighbors and schoolchildren to congregate. He confirmed that the playground would be open for community use.

Though no timeline was given, Stambuk said installation of the playground



Neenah News

Donated playground equipment will be installed as New Springs Christian Academy prepares to use part of the former Shattuck Middle School building.



Neenah News

Classroom revival

Some classrooms at the former Shattuck Middle School were once again filled with students Monday as New Springs Christian Academy held an open house. The private school, opening this school year, brings new life and a new mission to the former public school building, which closed in 2023 and was later sold to a developer.

will begin once all approvals are complete. The Common Council was expected to approve a special use permit for the playground at its meeting Wednesday.

The former Shattuck Middle School closed following the 2022-2023 school year and the Neenah Joint School District sold it to a developer that August. For most of the past two years the Shattuck building has sat vacant, other than the school district's Health and Wellness Center, which is in the same area of the school that New Springs is leasing.

Stambuk said the school has been clean-

ing, painting and modernizing its portion of the building. He also said the school plans to remain in the building for the foreseeable future under its current lease.

"I mean no disrespect, but it's essentially kind of been semi abandoned, and there's been some kids that are parading around there, and there's some debris, so we hope to breathe some light back into it and ultimately help that block thrive again," he said.

New Springs offers preschool through eighth grade, with about 110 students enrolled for the current school year.

Fundraising opportunities available for Furry Flurry

Neenah News

Fundraising is underway for the upcoming Furry Flurry: 15th Edition Pet Walk.

The Neenah Animal Shelter event is a way to support pets and the animals at the shelter. Those fundraising for the event can encourage their friends and family to

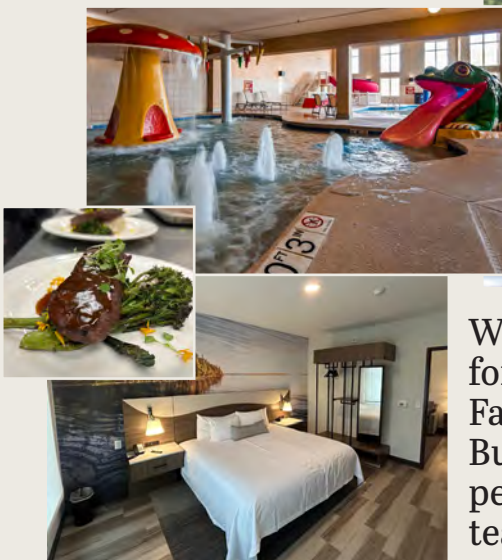
sponsor them. More information is available at bit.ly/IamFundraisingForNAS or at the shelter.

The goal this year is to raise \$38,000. The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 20 at Batley's Grill & Bar, 1010 Cameron Way in Neenah.

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Photo by David Hall

Building skyward

Visitors enjoyed Michael Mikula's glass sculptures on view through Feb. 15, 2026 during a recent SPARK! program at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass. The SPARK! program is designed for people with early- to mid-stage memory loss and their care partners.

GLASS Arts Festival award recipients named

Neenah News

The fourth annual GLASS Arts Festival held Aug. 9 at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass announced award recipients.

The awards were juried by Mary Childs, executive director of the Sandwich Glass Museum on Cape Cod.

First place went to William Manson sponsored by Rosann Baum Milius, second place was Connor O'Brien sponsored by the Paperweight Collectors Association and third place was Rosalie Phillips sponsored by the Lilian Noble Fund.

Honorable mentions were Sara Rezin, Laurel Grey, George Machart, Emily McBride and Martha Fetter.

Amy G. Moorefield, the museum's executive director, said the event was a success despite weather conditions.

"Despite soaring temperatures and afternoon thunderstorms, the museum welcomed thousands of community members," Moorefield said. "We are so grateful to our participating artists, sponsors, partners, board, staff and community for their great support."

The next GLASS Arts Festival is scheduled for Aug. 8, 2026.

Sales tax

FROM PAGE 1

meet the April 1, 2026, effective date listed in the resolution.

The sales tax would apply to the same items taxed under Wisconsin's 5% state sales tax, bringing the total rate to 5.5% in Winnebago County.

Public comments at the meeting were split, with speakers both supporting and opposing the tax. Supporters, including former Menasha Mayor Don Merkes, argued it would help reduce property taxes and capture revenue from non-residents who use local services. Opponents argued it's a regressive tax that will impact the poorest residents the most.



Farrey

With an additional 0.5% sales tax, a household spending an estimated \$20,000 per year on taxable purchases would pay about \$100 more annually, which is approximately \$8.33 per month or 27 cents per day.

Hintz's office projected the tax could generate about \$17 million annually, while Farrey's resolution estimated \$20 million. About 20-30% of the revenue generated from the sales tax would come from non-residents, according to Hintz, amounting to between \$3.4 and \$5.1 million.

Under Farrey's proposal, 30% of revenue from the tax would be shared with municipalities, an unusually high percentage, as no other county in Wisconsin shares more than 10%.

Hintz said the sales tax revenue could be used for property tax relief, balancing the budget, debt service, capital projects and master planning, municipal revenue sharing and local project funding.

"So, could we reduce property taxes? Yeah. It's been a conscious, intentional decision made by other counties," Hintz said. "Outagamie and Washington counties dedicate portions of their sales tax revenue to levy reduction and capital planning, easing property tax rates and broadening the funding base."

Winnebago and Waukesha are the only counties in the state without a county sales tax.



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Former city attorney denied release ahead of sentencing

Neenah News

A federal judge has denied a motion for release in advance of sentencing for Adam Westbrook, 36, of Neenah, who signed an agreement last year to plead guilty to one count of distribution of child pornography.

The ruling came after a hearing last week during which the U.S. Marshals Service informed the court that Westbrook had completed an orthopedic consultation and a specialist concluded he would need surgery at some point, but not immediately. Based on that assessment, the Bureau of Prisons determined surgery was not required during Westbrook's presentence detention.

The court said it will recommend at sentencing that Westbrook be designated to a facility where his medical needs can be ad-

ressed promptly. The court also directed the parties to schedule sentencing as soon as possible.

Westbrook faces a maximum of 20 years in prison, lifetime supervision and a \$250,000 fine. Under the plea agreement, he must be sentenced to between eight and 12 years in prison.

Westbrook resigned as Neenah's city attorney in 2022 and later served as Outagamie County's human resources director. He resigned from that position after his arrest early last year, when investigators executed a search warrant at his Neenah home.

According to charging documents,



Westbrook

Westbrook recorded videos of a naked prepubescent boy and sent them to Preston Kite, 38, then a Racine County sheriff's deputy. Kite was fired in February 2024 after being accused of lewd acts including exposing himself in a public bathroom while on duty and in uniform.

The exposure investigation uncovered evidence that led to child pornography charges against Kite and Westbrook. In February, Kite was sentenced to 67 years in prison on counts of child pornography, child sexual exploitation and bestiality.

Two more Fox Valley men were also sentenced early this year in connection

with Westbrook. Jacob Boudreau, 31, was convicted of possessing child pornography and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Noah Thiel, 22, was sentenced to a year in jail for bestiality.

Westbrook's defense attorney has asked the court to delay sentencing until December, citing plans to file new and broader objections to a presentence report. He said those objections could require an evidentiary hearing, in part because some allegations in the case stem from a foreign investigation in the United Kingdom with limited discovery material provided to U.S. authorities.

Author meet and greets set at Lyons Books

Neenah News

A series of author meet and greet opportunities have been scheduled in September at Lyons Books, 127 W. Wisconsin Ave. in Neenah.

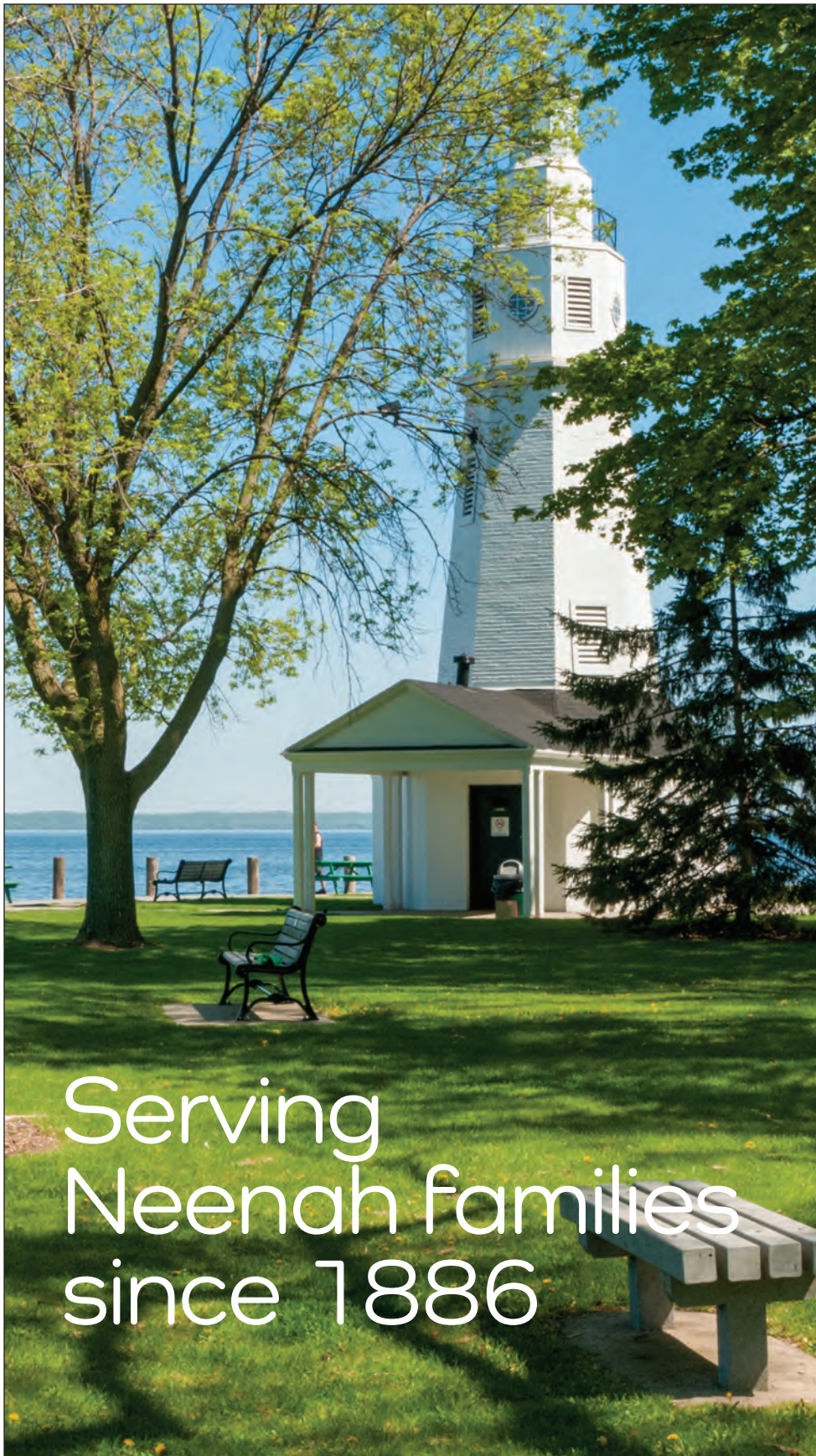
David Jones, the author of No Perfect Wife, No Perfect Crime and the Guardian of Rockport series, will be at the store from 4 to 6 p.m. Sept. 4.

Christine Calhoun, who wrote Good-

bye, My Love: A Memoir, is slated for a meet and greet from noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 13.

Brittany Feria will be talking about her book Sammy Goes to the Doctor from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 20.

Deb Biechler, whose books include Berry Hullabaloo! and Fish Hullabaloo!, is set to be at the business from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 27.



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Mushroom Man

FROM PAGE 1

also a big part of their business. “Like now in the summertime, probably a good three days a week I’ll get out in the woods and forage,” he said. “I’ve got chicken of the woods, hedgehogs ... black trumpet mushrooms.”

He noted that some wild mushrooms, like hen of the woods, are highly prized.

“The hen of the woods is probably my favorite of all mushrooms,” he said. “I love those; they’re like a gourmet.”

The state Department of Natural Resources cautions those foraging for mushrooms, noting on its website that some mushrooms are edible, others deadly, and it’s difficult to tell one from another. The Wisconsin Mycological Society website advises foragers to “not eat anything you cannot positively identify.”

Of the wild mushrooms safe for consumption, Dan said some people may have mild reactions to certain mushrooms, such as chicken of the woods, so it’s best to eat only a small amount the first time. Wild mushrooms should always be cooked and never eaten raw. He added that some, like morels, can cause illness if undercooked.

Growing mushrooms is both a craft and a science. Depending on the variety, the Johnsons use either straw or hardwood heating pellets as a substrate, which must be pasteurized or sterilized to eliminate unwanted fungi.

“With mushrooms, you have to kill all the competition, because mushrooms are a fungus, and mold is a fungus as well,” Dan explained. “So you have to make sure you kill all of the unwanted fungus.”

After inoculating the substrate with



mushroom spores, the bags are kept in a dark, warm incubator room for anywhere from 10 days to three months, depending on the type. Once ready, the bags are moved to grow rooms where changes in temperature, light and humidity trigger the mushrooms to fruit, mimicking the conditions they’d experience in nature.

Dan encourages people to experiment with different varieties of mushrooms. The couple sells a mixed basket so cus-

tomers can get a feel for what they like.

For those new to cooking mushrooms, Dan recommends a simple approach: “Just throw them in the pan with some butter or oil ... five, six minutes and then when it’s just about done, I take a little shredded cheese, I let it melt over.”

Mushrooms also offer health benefits, Dan noted, with growing interest in medicinal varieties like lion’s mane, reishi, turkey tail and chaga.



Submitted photos

Above: Bags of substrate inoculated with mushroom spores are stacked on racks in a grow room, where controlled conditions promote fruiting.

At left: Pauline Johnson harvests oyster mushrooms from grow bags at Back Forty Mushrooms in Tigerton, a small mushroom-growing business she runs with her husband, Dan Johnson.

“Mushrooms are generally healthy, they’re good for your immune system,” he said.

Above all, Dan values the relationships built over mushrooms at the market.

“It’s nice because in Neenah, I have my customers,” he said. “We talk, we laugh, we joke, and we have a good time, and it’s the social aspect of it that’s really fun because people get to be your friends.”

There’s almost always a line at Back Forty’s stand at the Neenah market, thanks in large part to Dan, who never rushes a conversation. Shoppers don’t seem to mind the wait, though; it’s part of the experience and he sells out nearly every week. After all, he likes to joke, “I’m a fun guy.”



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Paranormal investigation program coming to Doty Park Pavilion

Neenah News

The Ghostly Players Paranormal Team will host a free one-hour presentation at 8 p.m. Thursday about how they conduct a paranormal investigation in known and unknown haunted locations.

The presentation will be at Doty Park Pavilion.

The team will give their background and explain the equipment used to confirm the presence of spirits. The Ghostly Players Paranormal Group (GPPT) was established in 2016 and has investigated many locations in the Midwest.

Most recently, the GPPT was invited to Doty Cabin for a night-time investigation. Attendees of the presentation may see evidence caught that night. After the presentation, there will be a private tour of Doty Cabin for 20 City of Neenah garage employees.

Doty Cabin is open from noon to 4 p.m. every day until Sept. 2, when it closes for the season.

Private tours in September can be arranged with Neenah Parks and Recreation. Follow Doty Cabin on Facebook for the latest program announcements.

Missing person case from 1992 remains open

Neenah News

The 33-year anniversary of one of the more well-known missing person cases in Wisconsin was this week.

Laurie Depies disappeared from Fox Crossing on Aug. 19, 1992, just a month before her 21st birthday. Depies had graduated high school in 1990, after which she worked various jobs while deciding on a career path.

On the day she disappeared, Depies drove to her boyfriend's apartment at 310 Wilson Ave. in what was then the Town of Menasha and now Fox Crossing, after working a shift at the Graffiti store at the Fox River Mall in Appleton.

Depies' friends heard the loud muffler of her vehicle as she entered the parking lot of her boyfriend's apartment complex.

When Depies didn't enter the apartment, her friends looked for her. They found her locked vehicle in the parking lot with a soda cup on top of it but didn't see her.

Depies' family and friends made thousands of missing-person posters that were distributed throughout the United States. They spoke with the media, including televised appearances where they pleaded for answers. They rented office space on American Drive and established the Laurie Depies Search Center. The volunteer-staffed location was home base for search efforts and included an 800 number for people to call with tips.

Over the past three decades some leads have surfaced, but nothing has materialized to solve the case.



Photo by David Hall

Bargain shopping

The Friends of the Neenah Public Library used book sale was held over the weekend. The event provided a chance for guests to shop a large selection of both adult and children's titles — books, DVDs and music CDs. Proceeds from the sale are used to support library programming and services and to supplement the library's collection.

Business news roundup

The Boldt Company announced the appointment of Dale Lewis as Director of Data Centers, a strategic leadership role focused on driving project development and expanding Boldt's presence in this dynamic sector. Lewis joins Boldt from Microsoft, where he served as Director of Construction for the company's Milwaukee (MKE) campus. As director, Lewis will lead data center business development efforts across the company and identify partnerships with owners and trade partners to drive value by guiding operational approaches to achieve client goals. Additionally, he will oversee preconstruction services and ensure project teams are

set up for success from the outset.

McMahon announced Chris Dopkins, project manager, and Tony Kappell, water/wastewater project engineer, have been named directors in the company. Dopkins has been with McMahon for more than 27 years, serving as a project manager at the company's Machesney Park, Ill. office. Dopkins will hold the title of director of regional services. Kappell has served as a project engineer in McMahon's water/wastewater division, based in Neenah for 21 years. Kappell will hold the new title of director of water/wastewater division.



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Retooled Rockets ready for another run at FVA title

Neenah News

It isn't hard to see the holes in the Neenah High School football team's roster left by last year's graduation.

One Offensive Player of the Year in the Fox Valley Association who is now suiting up for the Wisconsin Badgers. One three-year varsity starter at quarterback who was equally adept at running the ball as throwing it. One two-way starter at tight end and linebacker who topped the team in tackles by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. Two starters on the offensive line who earned all-FVA recognition.

Football PREVIEW

That's just a portion. But instead of it being a rebuilding year for the FVA co-champions, the Rockets will likely be one of the top teams in the league with a veteran defense and the next batch of talented skill position players.

The Rockets defense has its share of returning starters and the team may need to lean on a unit that held 10 of its 12 opponents to 21 points or less last season.

Senior Nate Kramp is a returning first-team all-FVA selection on the defensive line and leads a position group that has plenty of experience. Kramp along with fellow seniors Henry St. Clair and Brayden Milbrodt all finished near the top 10 in tackles last season and will anchor the unit up front.

The Rockets boast a pair of returning all-conference players at linebacker. Senior Hunter Weinke was a second-team all-FVA selection at linebacker and finished third on the team in tackles, while senior Jonah Ritter earned honorable mention all-conference honors at inside linebacker and finished fifth on the team in tackles.

The offense certainly lost some firepower from last season but will have junior Ashton Van Beek stepping in at quarterback. Van Beek has experience at the position playing 10 games at quarterback – including nine starts – as a freshman when starter Evan VanEvenhoven was injured.

Van Beek threw for nearly 1,000 yards as

a freshman while also rushing for 563 yards and six touchdowns. Last year, he led the team in receiving yards and averaged nearly 25 yards per catch as a starting receiver.

The Rockets' top pass catcher from last season is senior Mathias Charles returns and will likely have a bigger role in the offense this season. Charles led the team with 24 catches.

Junior Cooper Sieck is expected to take over at running back this season after averaging more than six yards per carry in limited action last season.

It will be tough for Neenah's offense to replicate the scoring of last year's group as the Rockets topped the 40-point mark four times and averaged more than 28 points per game in conference play.

Neenah will also have one of the toughest schedules in the state with three opponents that reached Level 3 of the WIAA playoffs last year on the docket as well as perennial state powerhouse Kimberly.

The Rockets will open the season Friday at home against defending state champion Muskego before traveling to face Arrowhead – a 2024 quarterfinalist in Division 1 – in Week 2.

Neenah opens the FVA slate at Appleton East on Sept. 4 before returning home the following Friday to take on fellow co-champion Kaukauna.

St. Mary Catholic

The Zephyrs will have a new head coach leading the team this season as Rob Detterman takes the helm for a St. Mary Catholic that has struggled a bit since its return to playing 11-player football.

Detterman has helped out the school's middle school program in the past but also coached in Ohio before moving to Neenah five years ago.

The Zephyrs have won just three games in the past two seasons and went winless in its first year in the Eastern Wisconsin Conference but with an increase in numbers in the program – St. Mary Catholic has 53 players in the program this season – and a strong

offseason weightroom and conditioning effort, Detterman believes the team will be improved.

"We think we can take a step forward this season," Detterman said. "The kids have put the time in and I am very fortunate to have a great staff of assistants who have been working their tails off to get the team ready."

The Zephyrs will be keyed by an experienced offensive line where juniors Gibson Rause, Alex Klinkhammer and Brady Detterman are all returning and have played most of the last two seasons as starters.

All three linemen come in at more than 200 pounds and should anchor an offensive attack that will look to utilize an improved running game.

St. Mary Catholic also returns key members of its passing attack from last year as senior quarterback Maddox Dwyer and receivers Tarver Trinkner, a junior, and Mason Wagner, a senior, all return. Trinkner finished with 24 catches last season for 276 yards, while Wagner average nearly 18 yards a catch on 19 receptions and scored a pair of

touchdowns.

The receiver group is also expected to get a boost from junior Luke Fairweather who adds another target for Dwyer in an already athletic group.

Defensively, Wagner led the team with four interceptions and also recovered a fumble from his position in the secondary, while senior Zeke Hennessy and junior Dominic Todd will anchor the line.

Detterman said that the depth of this year's team will be improved with the increase in numbers as well as players focusing on positions on both sides of the ball. He said there may only be "four or five" two-way starters but that it's likely players will see action on both offense and defense.

"We want to control the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball," Detterman said of the key to the team's success. "We just have to get some confidence. These kids know how much work they put in and we know they will compete hard but it's something that we need to get to those Friday night lights to see."

Prep roundup

GOLF

Zephyrs' Nagel earns medalist honors

Olivia Nagel fired a 42 at Westridge Golf Club last Thursday to earn medalist honors at the season-opening Bay Conference South Division Meet.

Nagel finished nine strokes ahead of the rest of the field to help the Zephyrs to a team score of 234. St. Mary Catholic finished behind Fox Valley Lutheran (218) and Winneconne (226).

Martha Peters and Scarlett Reichenberger each added 62s, while Kieran Bergstrom chipped in a round of 68.

Rockets falls in two meets

Neenah dropped Fox Valley Association meets to Kimberly (189-192) and Hortonville (179-213) on Tuesday.

Lilly Quella and Adrienne Oitzinger each shot 46s and Jordyn Brockman added a 47 at High Cliff against the Papermakers.

Oitzinger led Neenah with a 48 at Grand View and Brockman added a 49.

TENNIS

Zephyrs open with win

The Zephyrs put on a strong performance to beat Shorewood, 5-2, at the Kohler Quad on Monday.

St. Mary Catholic was also scheduled to face Kohler and Xavier but those matches were moved to later date.

Erin Blaney, Halle Janssen and Kaylee Sommerfeld each earned singles wins for the Zephyrs.

The top doubles team of Vivie Auth and Adel Schneider along with the No. 2 pairing of Nadia Alexander and Lorelai Miller also were winners.

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Weinke proud to be part of Neenah tradition

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

When Hunter Weinke was a freshman he would watch the Neenah High School football team take the field at the old Rocket Stadium and picture himself one day donning the red and white.

He just had to wait his turn. "Freshmen aren't allowed to be on the sidelines (for games) and I remember being up there and just eager to get out there on the field," Weinke said. "When I got my shot, I was really excited."

He also proved to be pretty good. Weinke is the top returning tackler from last season for the Rockets, racking up 59 stops and four tackles for loss from his outside linebacker position. He was named to the all-Fox Valley Association second team following the season.

The start of this season couldn't come soon enough for the 6-foot-1, 195-pound senior.

"Especially with it being my senior year," Weinke said. "Since the winter I've been hanging out with all of the fellas in the weight room talking about it. It's been building to get back out there."

A season ago, Weinke helped a defensive unit that was one of the best in the FVA and allowed more than 14 points just twice all season.

This year, Weinke will once again be counted on to be productive but as one of the more experienced players on the unit will have leadership responsibilities as well. But it's a feeling he shares with everyone on the unit.

"I think we need to all step up as leaders," Weinke said. "I think everyone on the defense is a leader and can help control the game in their own way."

Weinke said that he is a part of the team's Football Leadership Council which comes up with ways to strengthen the



chemistry within the team.

He talked about the brotherhood he felt being a part of the Neenah program and how that plays an important role in the team's success.

"It helps a lot. We have a lot of new players this year and in getting to know them better we can help them out," Weinke said. "What I like most about football is the physicality and the brotherhood. We're here every day hanging out with each other and hitting each other. Nothing better than that."

This will be Weinke's third year playing at the varsity level for the Rockets as he saw limited action as a sophomore.

Part of that playing time came at running back where he scored a touchdown in Level 1 playoff game against DC Everest. He wouldn't mind seeing the end zone again this season.

"That's what I am looking for this year," Weinke said. "It's definitely on the list to do."

Weinke has scored a touchdown as a defensive player before and it's one of his earliest memories of playing football.

In his first Pop Warner game, Weinke was playing middle linebacker when an opponent's pass found its way into his hands.

"I got a pick six in my first game ever playing," Weinke said.

Football isn't the only sport Weinke excels at. He is also an all-conference in-



Hunter Weinke is a returning second-team all-Fox Valley Association linebacker who is entering his third season playing for the Neenah varsity football team.

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 12

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Returning state doubles champs lead talented Zephyrs

Neenah News

Adel Schneider and Vivie Auth had an impressive first season playing doubles together for the St. Mary Catholic tennis team. The duo rolled through an undefeated

regular season and then breezed through the WIAA Division 2 tournament winning seven of their eight matches in straight sets en route to claiming the state doubles championship. Now, the pair gets to try to do it all again. Schneider, a senior, and Auth, a sophomore, lead an experienced and talented

Zephyr squad that will be aiming to make a run at a berth in the Team State Tournament at the end of the year.

St. Mary Catholic finished a mere two points behind powerhouse Kohler at last year's Division 2 sectional tournament and will try to overtake the Blue Bombers this season and earn the program's first team state appearance since 2004. It would be the program's third team state appearance overall.

Schneider and Auth lead a strong doubles lineup for the Zephyrs after last year's state title winning run. The duo won all four matches at the state tournament in straight sets and dropped only nine games in Madison to finish off the year 31-0.

Junior Nadia Alexander returns to the Zephyrs' No. 2 doubles team, which also advanced to state last season, won a match and lost to teammates Schneider and Auth in Madison. Alexander and Emily

Vogel finished 25-4 last season.

Alexander is expected to be paired with sophomore Lorelai Miller, who played at No. 3 doubles last season and won a sectional title with the graduated Nolie Anderson.

Rounding out the doubles lineup will be senior Bree Pauly and freshmen Elsa Rossmesl, who will be both be playing their first seasons at the varsity level.

The top of the singles lineup for the Zephyrs will get a bit of a shake-up with the departure of No. 1 singles player Audrey Wanless.

Sophomore Ella Chier will step into the top spot in the singles lineup after playing at the No. 3 flight last season. Chier finished second in her flight at sectionals last season.

Senior Erin Blaney will return to the No. 2 singles flight, while junior Halle Janssen

SEE **Tennis preview** ON PAGE 12

Rockets aiming for continued success

Neenah News

The names may change every year for the Neenah High School girls swimming team but the talent and tradition in the program remain a constant.

The Rockets will once again be one of the top programs in the Fox Valley Association and will be counting on a nucleus of returning athletes

as the team looks to produce another successful season.

"We have a good core group of experienced athletes who are returning and will lead this year's team," commented head coach Carrie Raeth. "We look to build each week and to have some great performances at the end of the season."

Replacing quality swimmers is never easy for any coach but Neenah's strong tradition helps the program carry on its success, even when talented athletes leave the Rocket pool.

"We feel fortunate to have some great swimmers over the years and while it is always difficult to see them graduate, they have left traditions and routines with the athletes that then take over the leadership roles each new season," Raeth comment-

ed. "It comes from taking pride in our team and our work ethic and passing that on each year to the new team members."

One of the leaders for this year's group will be senior Anna Mulroy, who has swam at the state meet her first three seasons, including last year when she qualified as an individual in both the 100-yard butterfly and 100-yard backstroke.

Also returning after competing at the state meet a year ago is junior diver Sydney Hansman as well as junior Breleigh Maurer, who swam on the state-qualifying 200-yard medley and 200-yard freestyle relays.

Sophomore Bridget Bloomhuff also returns after being a regular in the varsity lineup a year ago, while freshman Elisabeth Hang is expected to step into a varsity role this season. Both Bloomhuff and Hang will likely compete in the freestyle events.

Neenah is coming of a season where it finished fourth in its WIAA Division 1 sectional meet, coming in behind a pair of FVA rivals in Appleton North and Oshkosh West. Those two teams along with Neenah are likely to be the top three squads in the FVA this season.

Neenah last won the FVA title in 2018.

Swimming PREVIEW

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Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing Case No. 2025CV000735

NOTICE IS GIVEN:

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To: First - Jaden Middle - Andrew Jones Last - Arguello

Birth Certificate: First - Jaden Middle - Andrew Last - Jones

IT IS ORDERED: This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Winnebago County, State of Wisconsin: Judge's Name: Hon. Michael D. Rust Place: 415 Jackson St. Oshkosh, WI 54902, Room 410 Date: 09-17-2025 Time: 9:45 AM

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 920-236-4811 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

NOTICE TO NEWSPAPER AND PETITIONER:

Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the following newspaper Neenah News.

BY THE COURT: DATE SIGNED: August 5, 2025 /s/ Hon. Michael D. Rust Winnebago County Circuit Court Judge, Branch I Runs: August 15, 2025, August 22, 2025 and August 29, 2025.

WNAXLP

SMALL CLAIMS PUBLICATION SUMMONS AND NOTICE Outagamie County

Case No. 25 SC 1575.

Plaintiff, Automax Financial, LLC dba CNAC W133N8569 Executive Parkway

Menomonee Falls, WI 53051 v. Defendant, Justin Richard Palmer 114 Olive St. Neenah, WI 54956

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability, to participate in the court process please call 920-832-5093 at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled court date. Please note the court does not provide transportation.

PUBLICATION SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF FILING.

TO THE PERSON NAMED ABOVE AS DEFENDANT: You are being sued by the person(s) above as Plaintiff. A copy of the claim has been sent to you at the address as stated in the caption above.

The lawsuit will be heard in the following Small Claims Court: Outagamie County Courthouse 320 S. Walnut St., Appleton, WI 54911 (Phone 920-832-5093) and VIA Telephone: Telephone No. 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 341 055 7261 on the following date and time 9/8/2025 at 8:30 a.m.

If you do not attend this hearing, the court may enter a judgment against you in favor of the person suing you. A copy of the claim has been sent to the address as stated in the caption above. A judgment may be enforced as provided by law. A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate you own now or in the future, and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property. You may have the option to Answer without appearing in court on the court date by filing a written Answer with the clerk of court before the court date. You must send a copy of your Answer to Plaintiff named above at their address. You may contact the clerk of court at the telephone number above to determine if there are other methods to answer a Small Claims complaint in that county.

Amy M. Bentley, Bentley Tuffnell Law, SC 933 N. Mayfair Rd., Suite 325B, Milwaukee, WI 53226 Phone 262-353-9556. State Bar No. 1025449. Date. 7/22/2025

Runs: August 8, 2025, August 15, 2025 and August 22, 2025

WNAXLP

REMARKABLE

Presents the 3rd Annual

TALENT TAKEOVER 2025

12 Sept 2025 5 pm Oshkosh Convention Center 537 N Main St, Oshkosh, WI 54901

Get ready for an unforgettable night of music, art, and community at this year's Talent Takeover! Our participants are taking the stage to showcase their incredible and diverse talents—from singing and dancing to unique art displays. This isn't just a talent show; it's a fundraiser with a purpose. All proceeds directly support our innovative programs, which provide a safe and nurturing environment for youth and adults with diverse abilities to thrive.

Join us for an evening that rocks for a reason. Every ticket helps us make a difference!

Scan QR Code for Tickets!



General Admission: \$55
Table of 8: \$420
Table of 10: \$530

Get \$10 off your ticket order! Use coupon code "Herald" at checkout to save \$10.

Your ticket includes:

- A delicious dinner
- An electrifying 10-act talent show
- Opportunities to bid on amazing raffles
- A night of connection and community

<https://remarkablewi.org/talent-takeover-event/>

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 11

crosse player for the Rockets.

He got started playing in seventh grade – learning the game through a friend who’s dad was a youth coach – and has become a stalwart on the Neenah defense.

“I ended up joining (in seventh grade) and kept with it because I really liked it,” Weinke said. “I think there are a lot of similarities (between the two sports). It’s all speed work and conditioning which helps me out here and then being physical.”

He even said that lacrosse can be a more physical sport than football in some ways.

Not necessarily with the overall soreness that follows a football game, but when a bunch of guys are running around with wooden sticks, one good wallop can certainly hurt.

“Both are physical, but when you get whacked with a stick in the arm or some-

thing, that can really hurt,” Weinke said. “You can have a pretty big bruise for a while.”

Weinke actually broke his thumb in Neenah’s final lacrosse game of the 2025 season last spring which forced him to step away from one of his favorite activities – golf. However, he did find an alternative.

“I started playing pickleball with my left hand,” Weinke said with a laugh. “It was pretty tough but I actually got pretty good at it.”

Weinke may or may not continue his off-hand Pickleball game following high school, but he is certain he wants to play sports in college.

He’s just not sure if it’s going to be football or lacrosse.

“I’m keeping my options open,” Weinke said. “We’ll see what happens.”

One thing Weinke is sure about is the pride he takes in being a part of the Neenah football tradition.

He said he remembers going outside in the rain to play football with his neighbor – former Rocket standout Darius Jones Jr. – and how that contributed to his desire to be a Rocket.

Tennis preview

FROM PAGE 11

and senior Kaylee Sommerfeld are expected to round out the varsity singles lineup.

Neenah

The Rockets continued their reign over the Fox Valley Association last season, winning the program’s 12th straight conference title and 33rd overall.

Neenah went on to win its sectional and qualify for the team state tournament for the 21st, standing behind only Eau Claire Memorial (23 state appearances) in WIAA history. The Rockets beat Notre Dame in the quarterfinals before losing to

“Seeing him as a captain when I was in the stands as a freshman, I wanted to be just like him,” Weinke said. “We have great coaches and a great community all around us. I just love this program.”

Arrowhead in the semifinals.

Neenah achieved that success with three sophomores in the singles lineup in Celia Gentile, Ella Motto and JB Kennedy, who all won sectional titles last season. Gentile won one match at individual state and both of her matches at team state.

The Rockets also had only one senior in its varsity doubles lineup and could return that group this season.

Ava Motto and Rebekah Thomas played at No. 2 doubles and won a sectional title to advance to the state tournament, while Josie Kohlbeck and Evelyn Buss were the Neenah duo at No. 3 doubles who also won a sectional crown.

Sydney Michalkiewicz, a freshman last season, played at No. 1 doubles.

Kid Scoop

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Batty Librarians

Whoops! Bats have knocked some of the words out of this article. Can you find where each word belongs?

VISIT
COVER **ALLOWED**
JOB **CARE** **RAINY** **NIGHT** **PESTS** **HARM**



Built in the 1700s, the Joanine Library is considered one of the most beautiful libraries in the world, attracting about half a million visitors each year.

PORTUGAL – The librarians at the Joanine Library in Coimbra, Portugal, have spent a long time taking _____ of precious books. And they have some unique, important helpers.

For more than 250 years, the librarians have _____ bats to live in the library. Yes—bats live in this library!

The librarians allow the bats to live there because they eat insects that could _____ the books. There are more than 60,000 historic books in the Joanine Library. Preserving the books is a full-time _____ for the librarians. They appreciate the extra help from the library’s bats.

If you were to _____ the library, you would not see the bats. They sleep during the day when the library is open. At _____, the bats flutter through the darkened library to dine on gnats, beetles and other insects. Their regular dining habit protects the historic books from these page-munching _____.

Each evening, librarians _____ the antique tables to protect them from bat droppings. The next morning, the coverings are removed and the library’s floors are cleaned.

Most nights, some of the bats leave the library to feast on insects in the nearby hills. But on _____ nights the bats stay home and dine in.

Standards Link: Science: Students understand what animals need to survive, including different food types and habitats.

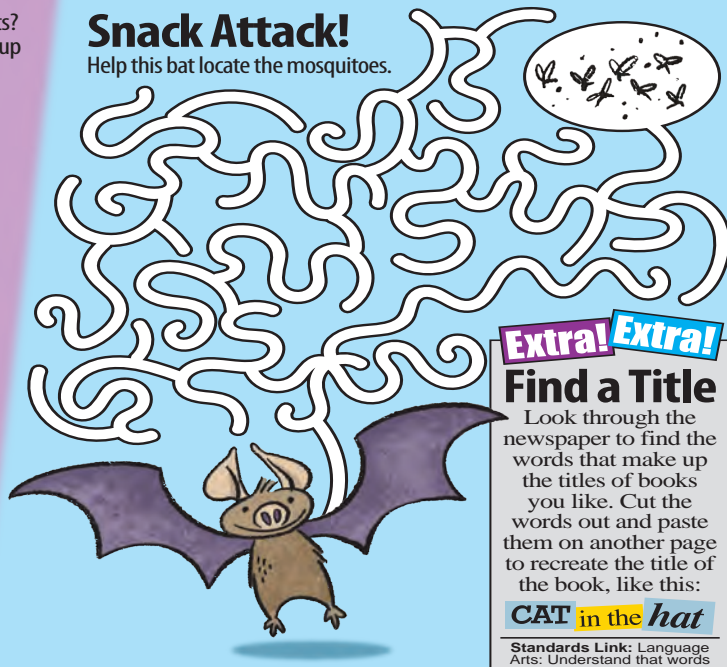
Bat Facts

How much do you know about bats? Take this quiz. Then hold the page up to a mirror to check your answers.

- All bats drink blood. TRUE FALSE
- Bats sleep upside down. TRUE FALSE
- Bats help the environment by spreading seeds, pollinating flowers, and keeping insect populations under control. TRUE FALSE
- One bat can eat 1,000 mosquitoes per hour. TRUE FALSE
- Bats use sound to “see” in the dark. TRUE FALSE

Snack Attack!

Help this bat locate the mosquitoes.



Extra! Extra! Find a Title

Look through the newspaper to find the words that make up the titles of books you like. Cut the words out and paste them on another page to recreate the title of the book, like this:

CAT in the hat

Standards Link: Language Arts: Understand that words make phrases and sentences.

Kid Scoop Together Let's Draw!

Follow the steps to draw a bat.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Standards Link: Visual Art: Reproduce a picture using visual clues.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Draw a line between each bat and its identical twin.



Standards Link: Science: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

Double Double Word Search

- AWAKE
- BATS
- BOOKS
- DARK
- FEAST
- GNATS
- HILLS
- HOUR
- LIBRARY
- OPEN
- PAGE
- PASTE
- PEOPLE
- QUIZ
- SLEEP

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

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

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

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Write On!

“I saw some bats in the library and ...”

Finish this story.

Standards Link: Writing: Write creatively in response to a prompt.