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Neenah News

Enchanted forest

An enchanted forest of Christmas trees was created to welcome the associates of Remarkable, Inc. to its holiday party held Dec. 12 at the Oshkosh Convention Center. Santa, Mrs. Claus, Buddy the Elf and a special appearance by Miss Wisconsin 2025 Willow Newell created memories for all in attendance. The party was supported by nearly 50 volunteers from Jewelers Mutual, which also generously supported the party. Remarkable, Inc. is a nonprofit that elevates the lives of people with diverse abilities with locations in Oshkosh and Neenah.

Schildt Park plan faces pushback from neighbors

Residents raise concerns about new entrance

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Fox Crossing residents at an open house last week voiced concerns about increased traffic, pedestrian safety and the overall accessibility of a proposed new entrance to Schildt Park.

The proposed entrance is via a cul-de-sac on Benjamin Court and is part of a larger plan to improve access and recreational offerings at Schildt Park. Currently, the park's only entrance is at 1780 Cold Spring Road. If approved, the new entrance would create a through-way through the park.



Geiser

During the open house and Parks Commission meeting last week, neighbors said they are concerned with the risks posed by higher vehicle traffic in the area.

"People are walking and biking," resident Linda Dums said. "We don't have sidewalks. We don't have curbs. There is nothing there to keep our neighbors safe."

Residents say the entrance has the potential to attract more vehicles from outside neighborhoods.

"If that is going to be pushed through anyway, which we all really hope it's not,

SEE **Schildt Park** ON PAGE 7

INSIDE



Mat tested

Talented Kurszewski sets tone for Rockets
Page 10

Studio thrives

Atha Wellness stresses wellness, community
Page 5

City evaluates condition of downtown parking ramp

Church Street ramp faces costly repairs

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

A new structural survey of the Church Street parking ramp in downtown Neenah outlines a series of immediate and long-term repairs needed to deal with deteriorating concrete, corroded steel connections and aging sealants in the 20-year-old structure, according to documents presented to the Public Services and Safety Committee last week.

The ramp, built in 2005 as part of the Alta Resources development, has undergone a series of repairs over the past two decades, including warranty fixes for failed welds, joint sealant improvements and LED lighting upgrades.

In the city's 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the city budgeted \$18 million to construct a second downtown parking ramp. Now-retired Community Development Director Chris Haese said at the time that the proposed new parking ramp was included in the plan as a holding place. He said he was unsure when the appropriate time to construct it is and the city is continuing to evaluate redevelopment projects in the downtown that will utilize surface parking supply.

The latest condition survey of the Church Street ramp identifies multiple areas requiring immediate attention, labeled as "Condition A" concerns. The issues include cracked and deteriorating concrete corbels, which are the structural haunches that support the precast parking decks.

SEE **Parking ramp** ON PAGE 6



Neenah News

A new study indicates the Church Street parking ramp in downtown Neenah is in need of maintenance and structural improvements.

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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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Local Girl Scouts learn about safety topics this month

Neenah News

Local Girl Scouts earlier this month gathered to learn about various safety topics.

The Girl Scouts "Safety Award" event at St. Mary Catholic High School included several community partners helping to teach the girls about certain safety topics pertinent to their age, said Erica Chicchirichi, a troop leader for Daisy Troop 2508 from Neenah and event coordinator for the Neenah/Menasha Girl Scout Service Area.

The community partners included Fox Crossing Police Department, Fox Crossing Fire Department, pediatrician Dr. Santi Budiasih, licensed clinical psychologist Amber Greuel and Karate America Neenah.

Over 40 Girls Scouts from across Neenah and Menasha were registered to attend the event along with their parent or guardian, Chicchirichi said.

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Thank you!

The Candy Cane Carnival was a blast! We couldn't have done it without all of the volunteers who served and all who attended! Thank you and we hope to see you at the next one!

Calendar of events

Friday, Dec. 19

Sleigh Rides on the Farm and Cider with Santa, 5 p.m., Cavanaugh Carriages, 3910 Fairview Road

Cookies with Santa, 6 p.m., Fox Crossing Community Center, 1000 Valley Road

Saturday, Dec. 20

Meet and Greet Author Marc Drewek of "Wings in the Timber: Reflections of a Grouse Hunter," 11 a.m., Lyons Books, 127 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Sleigh Rides on the Farm and Cider with Santa, 1 p.m., Cavanaugh Carriages, 3910 Fairview Road

Horns A Plenty Christmas Concert, 2 p.m., 900 N Mason St., Appleton

Sunday, Dec. 21

Sleigh Rides on the Farm and Cider

with Santa, noon, Cavanaugh Carriages, 3910 Fairview Road

Peter Mayer Stars and Promises Christmas Tour, 7 p.m., Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 809 S. Commercial St.

Friday, Dec. 26

Library After Dark Dance Party, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Monday, Dec. 29

Retro Video Game Extravaganza, 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Tuesday, Dec. 30

Set Your Intentions for 2026, 3 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Open Chess (Special Date), 5:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Saturday, Jan. 3

Art Activity Day - Snow Friends Sun-catcher, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, 165 N. Park Ave.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Washington Park Winter Festival, 11 a.m., Washington Park



Neenah Historical Society photo

Bergstrom Paper Christmas Tree

The Bergstrom Paper Christmas tree tradition began sometime in the 1940's. The tree was sourced from a farm near Wittenberg. Leaders of Bergstrom Paper and the maintenance crew erected the tree in front of the red brick factory and decorated it for the season.

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December 26th issue:

- Space Deadline: Thursday 12/18 Noon
- Classified Deadline: Friday, 12/19 Noon
- Obituary Deadline: Monday, 12/22 Noon

Neenah News
Serving Neenah & Fox Crossing

January 2nd issue:

- Space Deadline: Thursday, 12/23 Noon
- Classified Deadline: Friday, 12/29 3pm
- Obituary Deadline: Monday, 12/30 Noon

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Photo from Neenah Police Department

Shopping with cops

The Neenah Police Department organized its first Shop with a Cop event Friday to bring Christmas joy to seven Neenah families. The community raised over \$4,500 to supply each member of these families with toys, clothes and other necessities. Kobussen provided the transportation for everybody to the Neenah Walmart where NPD employees and their families helped with the shopping. After shopping was done, lunch was supplied by Marco's Pizza and all the gift wrapping was completed.

Former area police officer passes away

Neenah News

Former Winneconne Police Department (WPD) officer Hayley Ackerman of Fremont was killed Saturday in a snowmobile crash.

Ackerman was a 2011 graduate of Neenah High School.

Ackerman joined the WPD in June after serving as a community service officer in Appleton while she finished school. She aspired to work in the K9 unit.

Ackerman had a background in veterinary medicine and a deep love for animals. She spent much of her time outside or helping around her dad's farm.

Winneconne Police Chief Ben Sauriol said Ackerman resigned from WPD to further pursue veterinary medicine, but many



Ackerman

of the officers stayed in contact with her.

"She was an absolute sweetheart," Sauriol said. "I was hoping to get her back at some point. I'm not sure if that would've happened, but at some point, I was hoping to. It's a tragic loss and we're all heartbroken. We give our sincere condolences to her family and her boyfriend, and especially at this time of year. It's tragic and our hearts break."

Other local agencies reacted to the news of Ackerman's passing.

"We send our heartfelt condolences to Hayley's family and friends in this tragic loss," the Winneconne Poygan Fire District said. "Hayley was a very helpful, kind and considerate partner whenever we responded to medical calls. She will truly be missed by many. Rest in peace, Hayley, we'll take it from here. Job well done."

A visitation will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday at Neenah's Westgor Funeral Home. A memorial service will follow at 4 p.m.

Local college graduates

The following individuals from Neenah are among the more than 1,300 prospective candidates for degrees attending University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee commencement exercises Sunday, Dec. 21 in Milwaukee.

Kaily Carson, College of Letters and Science, master of arts

Grant Gannon, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts

Logan Grotenhuis, College of Engineering and Applied Science, bachelor of science in engineering

Abigail Knauer, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts

Charles Mitchell, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts

Evan Piechocki, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts

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Retro video game event scheduled at Neenah library

Neenah News

Celebrate old-school video games with the Neenah Public Library at 1 p.m. Dec. 29.

Participants will be able to play classic hits like Ms. Pac-Man and Donkey Kong while competing for Blind Tiger gift cards. This is a friendly, all-ages event designed for all skill levels. The only requirement is that participants enjoy classic arcade games.

The two-hour long program will take place on the first floor in the Shattuck Community Room at the Neenah Public Library.

All interested individuals are welcome to attend this free event.

For more information, contact the reference desk by phone at 920-886-6315, e-mail: Library@neenahlibrary.org or visit the website, www.neenahlibrary.org.



Neenah News

Grand finale

Almost 400 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students packed the stage Monday for the finale of the Neenah Middle School choir concert. A shift in schedules meant all three grades were part of one concert led by directors Ellery Larson and Claire Sawall. The evening concluded with all the students taking the stage and singing "Jolly Old Saint Nick!"

Neenah Public Library throwing Latin dance party on Dec. 26

Neenah News

The Neenah Public Library is inviting families to join a Latin dance party from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Dec. 26 featuring an evening of music, dancing and fun.

Instructor Allison Lauber de Garza will lead an interactive evening of movement,

music, and cultural exploration for the whole family. Participants don't need any experience or a dance partner. They are just asked to come with an open mind and be ready to move to the music.

Family-friendly crafts and snacks will be provided. Participants will be able to get

quick tutorials on Merengue and Bachata, Salsa, and Cumbia dancing, then put their new dancing skills to good use.

This is an after-hours event: staff will be at the door allowing people in from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m. The event is free, open to the public and no registration necessary.

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Atha Wellness Studio creates wellness, community

Upcoming class blends yoga, physical therapy

Neenah News

Visitors to Atha Wellness Studio in Neenah will encounter a serene minimalist space specifically designed for thoughtful exercise and human connection.

Jessica Fagan, studio owner and lead instructor, created the studio “for more than physical exercise, but to become in tune with your body and find a community of belonging.” She is an experienced yoga and Pilates instructor in Neenah who invested in her dream of owning her own studio.

Atha opened at 1524 S. Commercial St. in April behind Subway in the former Ellipse Fitness space. Atha offers Pilates, yoga, barre and meditation classes and fills a niche for people who have otherwise had to travel outside Neenah for the studio’s full set of offerings.

The word atha means “an auspicious be-

ginning,” and Fagan explained that it is an invitation to self-discovery and transformation.

“There is beauty in the beginning,” she said. “Every day is a gift and an invitation to move, breathe and start again.”

Yoga classes at Atha include vinyasa, flow and restorative styles. Fagan is a master-certified yoga instructor with additional training for specific populations including prenatal yoga. All staff members hold advanced training in yoga, Pilates, and meditation and breathwork.

Pilates group floor classes feature low-impact, full-body exercise during 60-minute mat and barre sessions; midday express classes are 40 minutes. Pilates Reformer equipment uses a system of springs, pulleys and straps to provide various levels of resistance for exercise sessions.

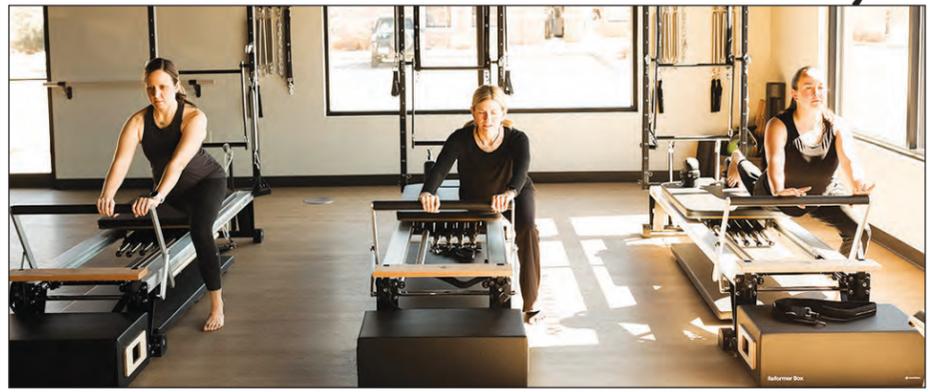
At Atha, a person can take private or small group Reformer sessions from Stott-certified instructors.

“Our Reformer classes are designed to feel like working with a kind and attentive personal trainer,” Fagan said.

For people interested in meditation and breathwork, Atha offers a Thursday evening and Sunday morning and evening breathwork class.



Fagan



Submitted photo

A Pilates Reformer equipment class is one of the offerings at the Atha Wellness Studio.

“It’s a good way to recalibrate for the coming week, and people really love it,” Fagan said.

Fagan has discovered many ways to serve the Neenah community since her opening in the spring. Atha offers free 15-minute meditation sessions at 8:15 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

“In a time when many people work remotely, it’s a powerful way to stay connected with others, even if it’s a simple, ‘good morning,’” Fagan said.

She also teaches free movement classes at the Neenah Farmers Market and offered free classes to Neenah Joint School

District employees as part of their recent professional development day focused on wellness.

The new year will bring PhysioFlow, pop-up vinyasa yoga classes led by a yoga instructor with the added expertise of a physical therapist.

“Justin will help students discover modifications to better suit their bodies and offer hands-on help,” Fagan said.

PhysioFlow will be held twice, first at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 8 and again at 8 a.m. Jan. 10. The classes will wrap up with a question-and-answer session. To learn more, go to athawellness.studio.



Submitted photo

Candy Cane Carnival

New Hope Ministries hosted an event Saturday that was full of laughter, fun and candy. Families from the community attended the Candy Cane Carnival with around 50 children participating in the activities. Organizers found a way to bring back a winter event that they said hadn’t been held in many years. They hope to be able to continue hosting similar events for many years to come.

Area jobless rate decreases in September

Neenah News

The Oshkosh-Neenah metropolitan area (MSA) and Winnebago County saw their unemployment rate decrease to 2.5% in September from 3.0% in August, while increasing slightly from 2.4% in September 2024, according to preliminary data from the state Department of Workforce Development.

The preliminary September unemployment rate decreased in all 13 metropolitan areas over the month.

Unemployment decreased in one metropolitan area over the year: Fond du Lac. Rates increased in the remaining 12 metropolitan areas.

Jobless rates decreased in all of Wis-

consin’s 35 largest cities over the month. Unemployment rates decreased in three cities over the year. Rates increased in 27 cities over the year and stayed the same in the five remaining cities.

Preliminary September 2025 jobless rates decreased in all 72 counties over the month. Unemployment rates decreased in 11 counties over the year. Rates increased in 44 counties over the year and stayed the same in the remaining 17 counties.

Estimates of unemployment and employment statistics are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The reporting of September numbers was delayed due to the federal government shutdown this fall.

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Parking ramp

FROM PAGE 1

The city has been dealing with corbel deterioration since shortly after the structure opened. Repairs require removing surrounding concrete, treating exposed steel and recasting the concrete.

Inspectors also found corroded shear-wall connections to double-tee support beams, delaminated stems on those beams, and widespread failed joint sealant, which allows moisture infiltration and accelerates corrosion. Failed welds on flange connectors, which tie the parking-deck slabs together, were also noted.

In addition to the urgent fixes, the ramp has several "Condition B" issues that should be addressed in the next two to three years. Those include minor deck cracking, epoxy injections for small structural cracks, corroded beam seats, facade-connection corrosion, failing safety cables, damaged column splice connections and localized shear-wall deterioration.

Lower-priority "Condition C" concerns include broken drain covers, ponding caused by improper floor-drain slope and

delaminated concrete patches. Maintenance would involve removing loose material, cleaning and coating steel reinforcement, and placing new repair mortar.

Public Works Director Gerry Kaiser said the city faces an estimated cost of just under \$400,000 for the initial Condition A repairs. The city has budgeted \$50,000 in the 2026 CIP for maintenance repairs and a consultant.

Kaiser said the repairs will be completed in phases, noting challenges involved with materials, weather and the need for specialized contractors.

Committee member Bill Pollnow Jr. discussed the possibility of selling the parking ramp to a private entity such as Alta to off-load liabilities.

"If this was a depreciated asset, if you're in real estate, you would think about selling this to them, and then all future liability and cost would be on them, which would be beneficial, I think, for the taxpayer," he said.

Kaiser said the committee will prioritize the most critical repairs and revisit questions of ownership, funding and ramp utilization in subsequent meetings. No timeline for construction work has yet been set.



Submitted photo



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Tradition returns

Members of Peace Lutheran Church played roles for a living nativity Dec. 5 on the front lawn of the Kessler Fahrenkrug Funeral Home. Organizers of the event brought back a tradition from nearly 75 years ago. Cavanaugh Carriages provided the animals for the nativity, which took place during the A Very Neenah Christmas event in downtown Neenah.

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Enhanced Respite Open House



Valley VNA Senior Care is offering an enhanced respite program starting in February 2026.

- Respite offered the first and third Friday of every month from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm. Cost is \$75 per session.
- Memory Impairment life enrichment programming.
- The program includes morning snack, afternoon snack, and lunch. Dietary needs accommodated.
- Personal care support available by Valley VNA staff, including assistance with meals, medication reminders, and bathroom needs.

Open House - Explore our resources, connect with the program coordinators, and tour the space.

Location: Valley VNA Senior Care
1535 Lyon Dr., Neenah

Questions: 920-727-5555

Tuesday, January 6
3:30 - 5:30 PM

Wednesday, January 7
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Saturday January 10
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM





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Schildt Park

FROM PAGE 1

what is going to be actively done to make those intersections more safe, because they are both unsafe the way it is, and increasing traffic will only make it that much more hazardous," resident Alison Galley said.

Resident John Gregorius said vehicles frequently fail to stop or slow down at the four-way stop at Benjamin Court and Olde Buggy Drive.

"If two or three out of 10 people actually make a complete stop at that stop sign, I would be shocked," he said.

He added that neighbors are worried for their children.

"A new road opens to the park," Gregorius said. "That situation only (will) get worse, and families who live on those corners with small kids, just like mine, will be the ones put at risk."

Residents said they are in favor of some of the park proposals. Attendees recommended surveying more neighbors, noting that many were unaware of the proposed changes.

Planned park improvements include a full-size basketball court, pickleball courts, a new playground, walking trails, a sledding hill, removal of the granary building, pavilion upgrades, and repaving of the parking lot and trails. A stormwater pond will also be constructed.

Park commissioner Jordyn Kurer said that proximity to parks tends to increase property values.

"So I do think looking at future home buyers and what people are looking for in this day and age, as younger home buyers come into the market, I think you're going to see a shift, and I think you're going to see that starting to become a popular amenity that is unique to this specific park in this area," she said.

Resident Tony Geracie responded that he doesn't think increasing traffic in front of homes will improve resale values.

"I don't move to a place to have more traffic in front of my house," he said.

The initial plan included a berm, intend-



Photo from Fox Crossing Parks & Recreation

A playground at Schildt Park will be replaced with a new one next year as part of a \$2.1 million park improvement plan.

ed to act as a buffer and provide privacy to neighboring residents. After receiving community feedback, the berm was removed at the neighbors' request.

Parks & Recreation Director Amanda Geiser said a final decision on the plan for the park has not been made.

"So ultimately, the Commission will have a discussion about it, and then to be determined," she said. "So really, from a park and rec standpoint, we're really just trying to serve the community, to see this as a valuable space that we didn't have access to before."

Geiser said Fox Crossing will continue communicating with neighboring residents.

"No one's intentionally trying to cause this to your neighborhood," she said. "From our standpoint, we're trying to look at it community-wide, which unfortunately affects specifically your street, but we will try and come to a resolution that hopefully works out for it."

Parks Commission chair Jim Beson said the Village Board will make the final decision on the park design.

"We have a lot of hypotheticals that have been presented and we're certainly going to take those into consideration as we look through this plan," he said. "The plan is not set in concrete, so it could very well change."

Fox Crossing plans to begin bidding for the project early next year and budgeted \$2.1 million for the work. Construction is expected to begin next spring and take much of the year to complete. The majority of Schildt Park will be unavailable for use in 2026.

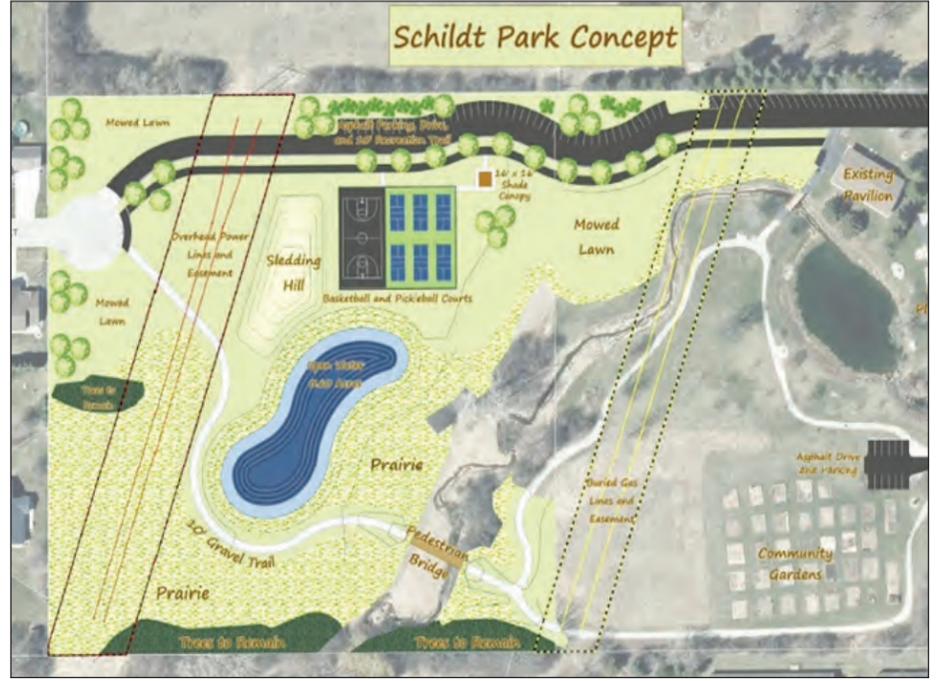


Photo from Fox Crossing Parks & Recreation

A concept plan shows proposed park amenities and a new entrance to improve access to Schildt Park.

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Prep sports roundup

BOYS BASKETBALL

Neenah picks up road win over Spartans

Nick Schultz scored 14 points to lead three players in double figures as the Rockets held off Oshkosh North, 51-47, in a Fox Valley Association game at Frank Schade Fieldhouse in Oshkosh.

The Rockets extended a one-point half-time lead in the second half to earn the win, overcoming a 3-for-8 performance at the free-throw line.

Jackson Rindt finished with 13 points for the Rockets, while Jacob Jungwirth chipped in 11.

The Rockets were coming off an 89-36 win over Appleton West on Friday in a game that saw Neenah bolt to a 33-point halftime lead en route to the win.

Jungwirth posted a double-double to lead the Rockets with 18 points and 11 rebounds, while Henry Farrell added 11 points. Schultz was the only starter in double figures with 10 points.

Jackson Rindt added nine points and

Matthias Charles finished with eight as the Rockets got 57 points off of its bench.

Neenah's defense forced 26 turnovers in the game and held the Terrors to a total of 14 field goals.

Fast start lifts Zephyrs past Mishicot

St. Mary Catholic erupted for 55 points in the first half and rolled to an 87-51 win over Mishicot on Tuesday night in a Big East North contest.

Dylan Brenn led the St. Mary Catholic with 16 points – all in the first half – as the Zephyrs had 10 different players score in the game and had seven players finish with at least seven points.

Gavin Beck and Luke Fairweather each scored 13 points, while Mason Uhlenbrauck chipped in 11 points in the win. Mason Wagner (9 points), Max Vosters (8 points) and Tarver Trinkner (7 points) also contributed to the win.

The Zephyrs knocked down 11 3-pointers in the win.

St. Mary Catholic was coming off a 79-64 loss to undefeated Howards Grove on

Friday.

Brenn scored 17 points in the win with Trinkner finishing with 15 points, Uhlenbrauck adding 12 and Fairweather chipping in 10.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Zephyrs stay unbeaten with pair of victories

St. Mary Catholic improved to 7-0 on the season following Monday's 64-14 rout of Mishicot.

Autumn Crowe finished with 15 points, eight rebounds and seven steals to spark the win for the Zephyrs, who had 10 different players score in the game.

Luci Nackers also finished with 15 points, while Piper Neubauer added 10.

Last Friday, the Zephyrs topped Howards Grove, 42-32, in a showdown between two teams who were each unbeaten entering the game.

Crowe totaled 13 points and eight rebounds to lead three players in double figures for the Zephyrs. Gabby Guerrero added 12 points and Lucy Norville had 10

in the win.

Bitsy McCauley totaled eight steals in the game as the Zephyrs forced the Tigers into 27 turnovers and held them to 0-of-8 shooting from 3-point range.

Buss boosts Rockets to easy triumph

Ellie Buss drained six 3-pointers and racked up 20 points to lead four Rockets in double figures in an 84-28 thumping of Appleton West.

Rowan Klesmit added 15 points and Sydney Michalkiewicz scored 14 points off the bench in the win. Farrah Danforth also reached double figures with 11 points.

The Rockets held the Terrors to just seven points in the second half.

HOCKEY

Rockets pick up pair of weekend wins

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha beat Eau Claire Memorial and Eau Claire

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 11

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Klesmit, defense carry Rockets to win over Spartans

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Rowan Klesmit said she had her typical game day sustenance from a certain sub sandwich shop prior to Monday's Fox Valley Association girls basketball game against Oshkosh North.

It certainly fueled her well.

Klesmit hit 6-of-8 3-pointers and tallied a season-high 34 points in leading Neenah to an 81-54 win over the Spartans.

"I get my Jimmy John's sub every game," Klesmit said with a laugh.

Klesmit finished with 22 points in the first half, scoring the Rockets first six points and tallying 11 points in a 14-0 run in the opening minutes of the game.

She also knocked down a couple of key 3-pointers midway through the first half as Neenah got a bit stagnant on the offensive and then capped a half-ending 12-3 run with a steal and layup to give the Rockets a comfortable 43-29 lead at intermission.

"In the first half, when we were struggling, she literally put the team on her back and carried us," Neenah head coach Andy Braunel said. "She's capable of doing that when we need her to."

With the talent around her, Klesmit knows that she doesn't have to score as much as she may have had to in past seasons.

But that doesn't mean she can't and complimented her teammates for recognizing she had the hot hand and continued to feed her the ball in the first half.

"Absolutely I know I can shoulder the load at times," said Klesmit, who is averaging about 24 points per game this season through six contests, having missed a game due to illness. "My teammates do a great job of getting shots for me and cre-



Neenah News

Neenah's Rowan Klesmit drives past an Oshkosh North defender in the first half on Monday night. Klesmit finished with a season-high 34 points in the game.

ating open looks. We all just work well together."

Klesmit also had the chance to face off with one of the other standout players in the FVA in Oshkosh North's Awut Alic. Alic finished with 16 points but was just 5-of-16 from the field with seven turnovers while facing a myriad of Neenah defenders, including Klesmit.

"We have known each other for a while through basketball and have respect for each other," Klesmit said. "She's a great player and it's always fun to play against her."

The Rockets blitzed the Spartans in the opening minutes of the game, building a 14-2 lead about six minutes into the contest.

The Spartans, however, put together an 11-0 run of their own to climb back into the game. Klesmit and Sydney Michalkiewicz each hit key 3-pointers for the Rockets to keep North from taking the lead during the first half before Neenah's surge going into intermission.

"That was huge and it started on the defensive end," Braunel said. "You could see where every time we would get a good

lead, we would relax a little bit and they jumped on it. North is never going to quit."

The Rockets broke the game open coming out of the locker room, scoring the first 13 points of the second half and building a 30-point advantage on a putback by Alissa Ebel seven minutes into the stanza.

Neenah led by at least 19 points the rest of the game.

"We knew they were a good team and wanted to make it chaotic for us," Klesmit said. "So just being able to stay composed and handle the ball was the biggest thing for us."

Neenah held the Spartans to just 40 percent shooting for the game and forced a whopping 31 turnovers in the contest to help fuel the win.

Braunel was pleased with effort on the defensive end but knows that there is room for improvement on that side of the court.

"By and large, through the 36 minutes of the game I was happy with our defense overall," Braunel said. "We're still early in the season and still trying to hit that consistency."

Michalkiewicz came off the bench to tally 16 points in the win, scoring 13 points in the first half. Ebel and Farrah Danforth each chipped in eight points for Neenah.

"Sid coming in and hitting some shots was big (in the first half) and in that second half it was more of equal distribution. That's where we are as a team," Braunel said. "We have a lot of kids playing a lot of minutes who don't have a lot of varsity experience so it's melding all of that together. We're on the right track and obviously doing a lot of good things but there are some areas of growth as far as our consistency that we have to keep working on."



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Kurszewski's passion for wrestling fuels success

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

The more Kylee Kurszewski talks about wrestling, the more the word "fun" trickles into the conversation.

All the running wrestlers have to do to be able to compete for six straight minutes. Fun.

Physically battling with teammates inside the practice room for a couple hours, pushing, grabbing, stretching and holding. Fun.

Getting beat during a tournament or getting roughed up at a practice, but learning from each setback. Fun.

Senior Standout



"I think wrestling is fun. I'm sure a lot of people wouldn't think so," Kurszewski said. "My dad always said that you have to be a little crazy to wrestle."

When Kurszewski talks about fun, it's clear to see her passion for the sport. And that's what has driven her to be an elite wrestler and one of the key faces on a blossoming Neenah program.

"Having that passion just keeps you coming to that practice room ready and focused every day. That's one of the most important things," Kurszewski said. "You can have all of the technique and talent in the world, but if you don't have the heart, you are not going to be able to finish those hard matches and get to the next level that you want to be at."

Kurszewski didn't wrestle as a youth but started in seventh grade when she – and good friend and fellow Rocket senior Janet Sorto – took on the role as managers for the Neenah Middle School.

It's a role for her that didn't last very



Kylee Kurszewski is a three-time state qualifier and is looking to become the first girls individual state champion for the Neenah program.

long. "We started watching the boys, we were like, we could do that too, and so we were like let's try it," Kurszewski said. "So, we joined together and it went from there."

Kurszewski admits that her first official match didn't go so well – "I kind of got my butt kicked," she said – yet, it hardly deterred her from moving forward.

In fact, even with the loss she knew she had found something special.

"There was never a time when I ever

doubted that I would be good. Even though in that first match, I got my butt kicked, I saw the potential in me," Kurszewski said. "I fell in love with it right away and that's what helped push me."

As Kurszewski arrived in high school, she was one of just five girls in the program as a freshman and spent as much of her time wrestling against boys as she did against girls.

Since then, the Neenah girls program has thrived, growing into as strong of a

program as there is in the state. Kurszewski has loved watching how its changed and playing a role in its rise.

"It was always fun beating up the guys but watching this sport grow, it's been crazy," Kurszewski said. "I feel like a pioneer and a role model to some of the younger girls starting out. That's something so special and not a lot of girls get to experience it. I am aware of how amazing and incred-

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 12

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Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 8

North by a combined 13-1 margin over the weekend to up its record to 7-0 on the season.

Six different players scored goals in a 6-0 win over the Old Abes. Cartyr Simonson, Cooper Zinda, Vinny Scholl, Macsen Selch, Zach Verhagen and Mark Sutton each found the net in the win, while Preston Liedke finished with two assists for the Rockets.

Matthew Nelson stopped 21 of the 22 shots he faced to earn the win in goal.

Nelson followed that effort up with a 14-save performance in a 7-0 shutout win over the Huskies on Saturday.

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha collected five goals in the second period to back Nelson's performance in goal.

Zinda and Scholl each had two goals in the game for the Rockets, while Clay Laabs, Mason King and Verhagen also scored. Simonson finished with a whopping five assists.

BOYS WRESTLING

Sheppard, Koch claim titles at The Husky

Landen Sheppard and Declan Koch each claimed individual titles to help the Neenah boys take third at The Husky tournament held at the Sonnetag Center in Eau Claire.

Sheppard claimed the 157-pound title, winning four matches to capture the title. Sheppard pinned his first opponent and then won two close decisions to reach the finals. In the championship match, Sheppard beat Mason Chambers of West Sa-



Neenah News

Neenah's Landen Sheppard controls Hortonville's Kyle Agnew in the 157-pound match at last week's double dual.

lem, 9-2.

Koch pinned three of his four opponents en route to capturing the 165-pound title, while also collecting a 19-2 technical fall win. Koch pinned Luke Pember of Menomonee in 38 seconds in the title bout.

Jaxon Ennis added a second place at the 138-pound weight class for the Rockets, while Broden Butzke at 113 pounds and Kaden Roth at 190 pounds each took fourth. Willy Brucks added a sixth place at 215.

The Rockets were coming off a 1-1 night at a Fox Valley Association double-dual night in Oshkosh, which included an 81-0 win over host Oshkosh North.

Butzke (113), Marcus Peterson (120), Steven Czechanski (126), Garrett Nedens (132), Cashtin Tiedt (138), Ennis (144), Dane Granditzke (150), Sheppard (157), Koch (165), Connor Simons (190), Brucks (215) and Brayden Milbrodt (285) all won by pin in the match.

The Rockets also dropped a 42-25 dual meet to Hortonville with Koch (175) and Roth (190) earning pins in the dual meet. Ennis (138) and Sheppard (157) each won by technical fall and Butzke (120) earned a decision win.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Rockets win team title at Waunakee Invite

Kylee Kurszewski captured the 126-pound title and Neenah earned the team title at the Waunakee Invitational last Friday.

Kurszewski pinned three of her four opponents in pool competition, while also recording a 20-3 technical fall in the first period. She then pinned Tesa Marrero of New Berlin West in 54 seconds in the title match. Only one of Kurszewski's matches lasted into the second period.

Amari Richard added a third place at 138 pounds, while Ava Armatti (145), Lluvia Carrillo (185) and Xiomara Liriano-Rueda (285) each took fourth.

SWIMMING

Rockets edged by Wildcats in dual meet

Neenah capped Tuesday's dual meet with a win in the 400-yard freestyle, but it wasn't enough to overtake Oshkosh West as the Rockets dropped an 86-84 decision in a Fox Valley Association matchup.

The Rockets were paced by a pair of 1-2 finishes in the meet.

Gideon Benner was first and Ben Munson took second in the 200-yard freestyle, while it was Ryker Zarda and Gage Jensen placing first and second, respectively, in the 100-yard backstroke.

Jack Zippa in the 500-yard freestyle and Burke Wendell in the 100-yard breaststroke also earned first-place finishes for the Rockets, while Wendell in the 200-yard individual medley, Zarda in the 100-yard butterfly and Benner in the 100-yard freestyle were each second.

Neenah also won the 200-yard medley relay with a team of Kippa, Wendell, Zarda and Jensen, with the winning 400-yard freestyle relay team consisting of Kippa, Zarda, Munson and Benner.

The Rockets also finished fourth at the Terror Relays last Friday led by the foursome of Zarda, Wendell, Kippa and Jensen, who teamed up to finish first in the 400-meter medley relay.

The Rockets also placed second in three relays.

Kippa, Jensen and Zarda made up the winning 300-meter backstroke relay, while Kippa, Munson, Jensen and Wendell finished second in the 400-meter freestyle relay. In the 500-meter freestyle crescendo relay, the team of Ryland LaPean, Joseph Van Handel, Crawford Pfeifle and Benner finished second.

Obituaries

Sue Erdmann

Sue "Emma" Erdmann, 67, beloved wife, sister, aunt, and friend, passed away on December 13, 2025, in Milwaukee, surrounded by her family. She was born on October 9, 1958, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the daughter of Dick and Doris (Bo-

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Menasha, WI 54952
Amber Faye Rodriguez
917 Jefferson Street
Menasha, WI 54952
Defendants.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

To each person named above as a defendant:

You are hereby notified that the Plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit or other legal action against you.

Within 40 days after December 19, 2025 you must respond with a written demand for a copy of the Complaint. The demand must be sent or delivered to the Court, whose address is: 415 Jackson St, Oshkosh, WI 54903, and to the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is:

Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C.,
376 East 400 South, Suite 300,
Salt Lake City, UT 84111. You may have an attorney help or represent you.

If you do not demand a copy of the Complaint within 40 days the Court may grant judgment against you for the award of money or other legal action requested in the Complaint, and you may lose your right to object to anything that is or may be incorrect in the Complaint. A judgment may be enforced 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.

Dated this 10th day of December, 2025.
Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Electronically signed by:
By: /s/ William N. Foshag
State Bar No. 1020417
376 East 400 South, Suite 300
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
Ph: 801-355-2886

Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C. is attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. If you have previously received a discharge in a chapter 7 bankruptcy case, this communication should not be construed as an attempt to hold you personally liable for the debt.

Runs: December 19, 2025, December 26, 2025 and January 2, 2026

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 10

ible that is and I'm so grateful to be a part of the opportunity to do it.

"It makes me happy that the sport's growing. I love that I am able to get in here and help these girls and grow their passion like a lot of people do for me."

Kurszewski has not only helped build the foundation for the program, she's set a standard of success on the mat that future Rocket wrestlers will shoot for.

She has already made three trips to the WIAA State Individual Tournament and will be trying for a fourth trip later this season.

Kurszewski also set a program mark with her 47 wins last season and was the

first Neenah girls wrestler to reach a state final – losing in the 114-pound titematch last season.

She now has her sights set on being the first girls individual state champion in the program.

"It would mean a lot," Kurszewski said. "I feel like I've already helped some of the youth wrestlers fall in love with the sport and to be able to create history and leave a legacy that no one would ever do again would be so special."

Losing in a state final might overwhelm some wrestlers, but not Kurszewski. Although obviously disappointed after the loss, she turned the defeat into motivation entering her final prep season.

Yet, there was more she took from last year's state tournament than just where she finished.

As an eighth grader, her dad, Jason – who serves on the Neenah coaching staff – took Kylee to the state tournament to watch.

"He told me, 'That's going to be you one day,'" Kurszewski said. "The moment I won the semifinal match (last year) and I looked at him and saw the joy on his face, it made me happy that I made him proud. So, after having time to reflect on it, last year made me excited and eager to go for that state title this year."

There is also another Kurszewski in the Neenah wrestling room as Kylee's younger sister, Jenson, also competes for the Rockets.

"I love it. She joined as a freshman and having her on the team is having so much fun. I like being able to help her grow in wrestling," Kurszewski said. "At my house

all we talk about is wrestling."

Although this will be Kurszewski's final season of high school wrestling, she is adamant that she will continue in the sport in college.

She has not decided where she will wrestle yet but plans to continue on the mats and pursue a career in education in the hopes of being a wrestling coach someday.

"Organization is key but also to make sure the athletes are having fun with it. If they aren't having fun it, what's the point?" Kurszewski said. "I want to be there as a coach to help them get better and support them through life."

"There are going to be hard times, you are going to face adversity, but just to keep pushing toward a goal. Little things count and you have to celebrate the little wins."

Kid Scoop

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The Mice Before Christmas

The holiday poem *The Night Before Christmas* begins:

'Twas the night before Christmas,
When all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse...

WAIT!
WHAT?



The fact that **house** and **mouse** rhyme makes this Christmas poem fun to read and listen to. But it seems that the author didn't know something important about mice.

Do you know what that is?

MICE ARE NOCTURNAL!

WE LOVE THE NIGHT LIFE!



Nocturnal means mice sleep during the day and are up finding food and doing mousy things at night.



So, they most certainly would have been "stirring" on the night before Christmas!

WORDS TO KNOW

'Twas: Short for "it was."
Nocturnal: Happening at night.
Stirring: Moving around.

The Whole Tooth

Mice teeth never stop growing. That's why mice keep gnawing and chewing. That helps wear down their teeth so they don't get too long.

Uh oh! This mouse gnawed some of the words out of this paragraph. Can you replace them?

Three Blind Mice

Another _____ that mentions mice is called *Three Blind Mice*. There is some _____ to this poem, as mice don't see very well. Their other senses are very _____. They use their sense of smell, their hearing, and the sensitive _____ of their whiskers to move about _____ find food, and _____ from danger.

CANDY CANES!
Yum! Help me climb up this stocking to get one!



FUN FACT: A group of mice is called a MISCHIEF or a NEST.

How does a mouse become mice?

A single mouse is, well, a **mouse**. But when there's more than one mouse, they're **mice**.

Circle every other letter to discover what you call a papa, mama, and baby mouse.

G B Y U L C T K

A papa mouse is called a

B _ _ _ _

A D H O V E

A mama mouse is called a

D _ _ _

I P C I A N X K S Y

A baby mouse is called a

P _ _ _ _

(or a PUP)

A Very Merry Mouse Party

Maddie and Misty are headed to the party. How many differences do you see?



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

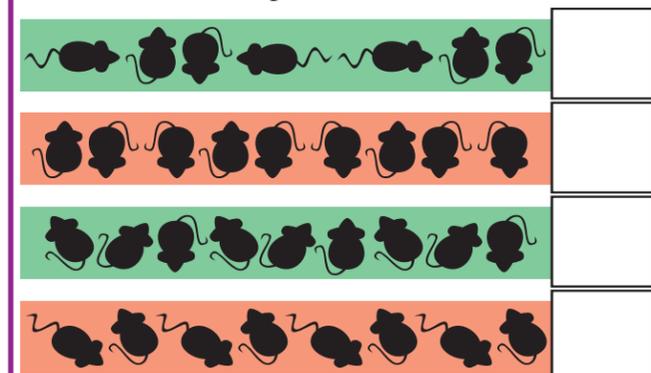
Extra! Extra! Plural Fun

Look through the newspaper for examples of words that describe more than one of something. How many can you find where the word changes, like mouse changes to mice?

Standards Link: Language Arts: Follow simple written instructions.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Continue the mouse pattern in each row by drawing the mouse shape that should come next.



Standards Link: Math: Recognize and continue patterns.

Double Double Word Search

BABY
CANDY
CANE
CHRISTMAS
FOOD
HIDE
MAMA
MICE
NIGHT
PAPA
POEM
SEE
SENSE
STOCKING
TEETH
WHISKERS

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

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

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

Kid Scoop Together Mice vs. Rats

Are mice and rats the same? Mice and rats are the same in that both are rodents. But there are many differences between them.

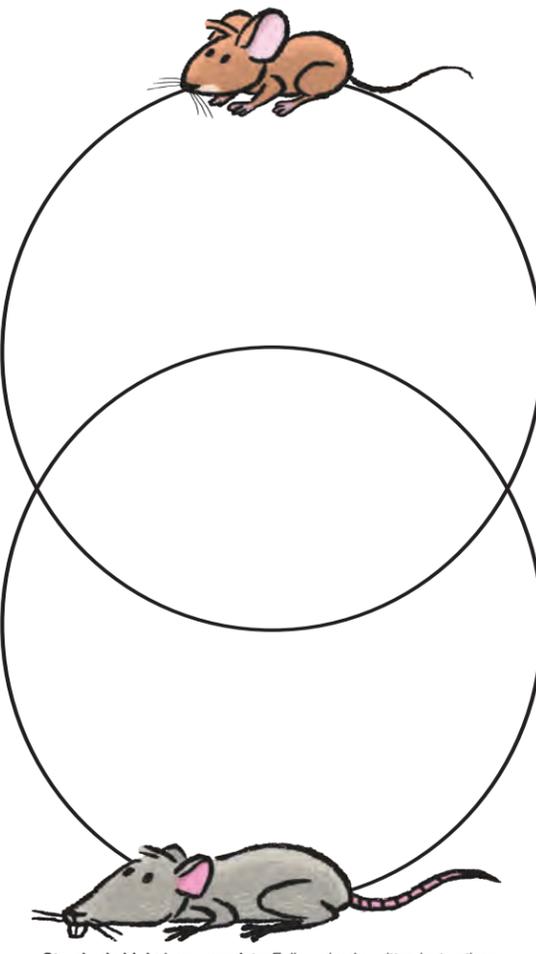
Look at the picture of the mouse and the rat. In the Venn diagram, write the ways they are the same in the center. Put what is only true about mice in the upper circle. Put what is only true about rats in the lower circle.

A mouse:

- Has hair on its tail.
- Is about 8 inches long, including its tail.
- Has small, delicate feet.
- Is a rodent.
- Has whiskers.
- Has fur.
- Is nocturnal.

A rat:

- Has large feet with sharp claws.
- Has a hairless tail.
- Is about 15 inches long, including the tail.
- Is a rodent.
- Has whiskers.
- Has fur.
- Is nocturnal.



Standards Link: Language Arts: Follow simple written instructions.

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Write On! Night Shift

Some jobs require working during the overnight hours. Write about what you think this would be like.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Write descriptively using supporting details.