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Snowfest brings plaza to life in dead of winter

BY MIKE WARREN
 EDITOR

MARSHFIELD - Weather conditions were not ideal for those visiting Wenzel Family Plaza in downtown Marshfield on Jan. 28. They were perfect, however, for the larger-than-life characters brought to life by four snow sculptors from the Milwaukee area participating in the inaugural Snowfest, presented by Boson Company.

"I've just been thinking about it for awhile," said organizer Kurt Boson. "Snow sculptures always seemed like something that would be really neat for people to see, and this just turned out to be the year where we made it happen," he added. "It's perfect," Boson added, about the event's location in the city's downtown plaza. "And with the amount of sculptures that we have, it fits perfectly with the sidewalks and people can see up close, and I think it's a great use for downtown Marshfield."

Boson worked in conjunction with the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry, which had a contact with an individual who runs a lot of sanctioned snow-sculpting contests, who just happened to know four gentlemen willing

to participate in Marshfield's event.

"And these people have all been champions of numerous contests all over the country," Boson said.

One of those snow sculptors was Greg Moerner, of Milwaukee. Moerner has been creating snow sculptures for thirty years.

"Students at Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design had a competition at the zoo, and my brother was going there, and he gave me a chisel and I was hooked," Moerner said. "Generally we have teams," he added. "So, there's three of us that decide (what to sculpt). For Frankenmuth, Michigan one year we did six polar bears holding a banner." Moerner's eight-foot-tall armadillo at Snowfest paled in comparison to that 10 by 10 by 30-foot long monster. The relatively small creature - along with a second sculpture featuring entangled lemur triplets - still took Moerner the better part of three days to complete.

Moerner and the other sculptors were working in ideal snow-sculpting conditions, with daytime temperatures hovering generally in the mid-teens to low-20s.

"They like it colder than warmer," Boson said. "They don't want it to be around



Greg Moerner, Milwaukee, puts the finishing touches on his armadillo sculpture, as part of Boson Company's Snowfest, held Jan. 28 at Wenzel Family Plaza in downtown Marshfield.
 Mike Warren photo

See SNOWFEST page 4

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Community invited to register for Mid-State's annual farm tour

FOR HUB CITY TIMES
WISCONSIN RAPIDS
 -- Mid-State Technical College will again host its annual Farm Tour on Wednesday, March 15, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The public is invited to the in-person event to explore the latest technology and agricultural practices designed to enhance farming operations.

This year's Farm Tour includes a showcase of Marshland Dairy in Spencer, owned and operated by Josh and Sarah Moga. Since taking over the dairy in 2015, the Mogas have modernized the farm through gradual budget-minded investments, including installation of automatic alley scrapers and a used robotic milker in repurposed existing buildings. They also converted to all Jersey cows and began breeding and selling cattle to



Marshland Dairy in Spencer, a featured stop on Mid-State Technical College's Farm Tour on March 15. Submitted photos

increase profitability.

Participants will also tour Bells' Runway Acres, a 1,250-acre corn and soybean farm in Marshfield, co-owned by Josh and Ken Bell. Converted from a dairy farm in 2015, the Bells will be showcasing their move to a dedicated grain operation, with all aspects of the business performed in-house, including soil management, planting, harvesting, grain drying, storage and trucking.

The Farm Tour will

also feature a lunch presentation from the 75th Alice in Dairyland, Taylor Schaefer of Franksville. As always, the day will include opportunities for networking, discussion and sharing of ideas between current agriculture students, agribusinesses and those interested in agriculture.

"Mid-State's Farm Tour offers a rare opportunity for anyone interested in agriculture to see emerging practices up



The grain storage and drying system at Bells' Runway Acres in Marshfield. The Mid-State Farm Tour will also feature a lunch presentation from "Alice in Dairyland," Taylor Schaefer.

close," said Mid-State Marshfield Campus Dean Dr. Alex Lendved. "We look forward to a wonderful day of connecting with our ag producers and showcasing what's working well for the innovative and resourceful farmers in our district."

Registration is required, and the cost is \$10 each for the first 100 people

to sign up, thanks to the Mid-State Technical College Foundation scholarship program. Tuition is otherwise \$30 per person. Those who need extra support can be considered for a full-tuition scholarship through the Foundation. Find full details and register at mstc.edu/farmtour.

Information sought on area communities of the past

FOR HUB CITY TIMES
CENTRAL WISCONSIN
 -- Two central Wisconsin historians are seeking information on several area "ghost towns" as they collaborate on an upcoming project.

Al Gurtner and Kris Leonhardt are searching for items, photos, and information on the former Clark County and Marathon County communities of Atwood, Bright, Cherokee, Hoffman, Longwood, Romeo, and Waterman.

Gurtner is the author of *A Village Called Unity* and Leonhardt is a community journalist.

If you have any information to share, please contact Gurtner at 715-613-4932, gurtners@msn.com, or visit www.facebook.com/ClarkCoWIGhostTowns.

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Thank You!

The Boson Company would like to thank everybody involved in helping to make the inaugural SNOW FEST a huge success!

Through the generosity of the attendees, we will be donating hats, coats, mittens, and other winter clothing to area elementary schools.

If you missed the event, you can still see these incredible snow sculptures at Wenzel Plaza.

SNOW FEST

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Meaning To Our Lives

Dear Reader,

At times, we may think about what gives meaning to our lives. Part of what we come up with are true friendships and religious beliefs. Both of these require personal sacrifices in order to nurture the friendships that come our way and explore the spirituality that surrounds us.



According to Saint Augustine, our love of others is the reflection of our love of God in whose image we are created. Thus they are inextricably intertwined.

A life without friends will feel insignificant and bereft of a higher ethereal calling. Is it worth all the investment when seeking a higher purpose beyond the pedestrian level of life? You decide.

PATRICK J. WOOD
Publisher

Author of "Dear Reader" and "Tapestry of Love and Loss"



Eight snow sculptures, done by four Milwaukee-area professionals, highlighted Boson Company's Snowfest, Jan. 26 at Wenzel Family Plaza. **Mike Warren photo**

SNOWFEST
from page 1

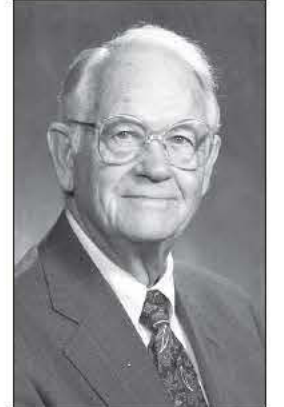
freezing or above. They want it to be cold, and it doesn't seem to bother them. Pretty hardy souls."

Organizers had small fire pits going to help people stay warm, and to enjoy s'mores. Several

youth groups were also on hand selling food, while Uptown Coffee provided coffee and hot chocolate. There was also a DJ providing music. Boson Company also used the event to accept donations of winter clothing for children in need of such items.

MARSHFIELD Honoring Marshfield's 150th

Marshfield 150 for 150: G. Stanley Custer



NOMINATED BY SHIRLEY MOOK

G. Stanley Custer, better known as Stan, was born in Madison, WI on February 4, 1915. After graduating from high school, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the Great Depression. His mother saved his pay so he was able to enter UW-Madison. He entered medical school in 1941. In the fourth quarter of his last year, he developed tuberculosis. He was able to take a verbal exam and graduate with his class. After nine months, the TB was inactive and he began to ambulate. In April of 1943, he was ready for work and it was highly recommended that he should come to Marshfield where the hospital badly needed an intern.

He was welcomed with open arms. He compiled histories, performed physicals, and delivered babies. His TB resurfaced three times, but by that point streptomycin had been discovered allowing him to recover and return to work.

In 1950, he was appointed to the Marshfield Clinic Board of Directors, which he remained a member of until 1983. Custer also served on the Executive Committee from 1960-1965, was Vice President from 1961-1962, and President from 1963-1965. He served on the National Advisory Council under Presidents Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson. He became heavily involved in the American Group Practice Association in the early 1970s and would fly to Alexandria, Virginia three days a week. He served as President in 1970-71 and acting Executive Director in 1972. He recognized his practice in Marshfield was suffering and thus resigned. Stan loved patients and often commented that he had made house calls on almost every house in town and that

he had his favorites. He also made house calls to farm families.

His other associations and services are far too numerous to list here. His greatest legacy, however, was his writing of the history of Marshfield Clinic. He had interviewed original Marshfield Clinic founders. He acquired diaries and minutes from Board of Directors meetings. He had not quite finished the history at the time of his death.

There was also another side of his life that was equally important. Violet Kohl moved to Marshfield in 1942 where she managed the Marshfield Clinic Laboratories. Stan began pursuing her and they were married in April 1944. When it was time to begin a family, Violet made a commitment that she would be a homemaker and raise the children so that Stan could be involved in the affairs of the community.

In 1950, Stan became the choral director of the St. Joseph's School of Nursing. The 40-voice choir would perform programs throughout the community. In 1950, Stan became involved with the arrangements for the first Palm Sunday concert and prepared the School of Nursing to participate. He was dedicated to the Palm Sunday Concert and was the General Chairman for 16 years. He selected the guest conductor each year. With his great love of music, he sang with the Central Chamber Chorale and directed the First Presbyterian Church Choir from 1968-1982.

In 1956, he was elected to the Marshfield Free Library Board of Directors and served until 1960, serving as president in 1958. In 1980, he served as United Way Fund Drive Chairman. Serving with youth, he

was involved with the Cub Scout Program. He and Violet served on the Lincoln Elementary School PTO.

In 1988, Stan joined the Citizens for City Hall effort to save Old City Hall from being demolished. The attempt was successful. When the Historic Preservation Association was formed in 1989, Stan and Violet became charter members. He was there when the Common Council began discussing the destruction of the old steam engine that stood at the entrance to Wildwood Park. "We saw this thing rotting and rusting. I figured it should either be taken to Shapiro's (salvage yard) or given to Clyde Wynia for one of his creations." This was Stan's first reaction to the condition of engine 2442. However, he had a soft spot in his heart for trains and the HPA was looking for a project to undertake. A fund drive was launched for \$25,000 and became known as the "Friends of 2442." Stan was a "mover and shaker" and used his persuasive tongue to convince colleagues and friends to give generously.

On May 4, 1995, Dr. G. Stanley Custer, wearing a conductor hat and red bandana, blew the whistle at the groundbreaking for the restoration of the deteriorating engine. September 14, 1996 he stood as master of ceremonies at the rededication of 2442.

G. Stanley Custer contributed much to this community. This was all possible because of the commitment Violet had made. Stan's comment was that she finished "summa cum laude."

When he retired, he made the commitment to give his life to Violet and he did. It was not uncommon to see them walking hand in hand wherever they went.

Farmers, ranchers sought for study on how they balance children and work

FOR HUB CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD -- Farm and ranch parents know how challenging it can be to balance children and work, especially when child care options (paid or unpaid) are limited. These challenges can have consequences for the farm business, the safety of children, and the well-being of the family as a whole. To better understand farm and ranch families' lived realities balancing children and work, researchers at the National Farm Medicine Center and The Ohio State University are asking farmers to share their experiences through a new national survey.

"We recognize that farmers often feel over-surveyed and have limited time and energy this time of year," said Florence Becot, Ph.D., an associate research scientist at the National Farm Medicine Center and affiliate of the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, in Marshfield. "However, we also know



that decisions are being made by local, state and national policymakers without a good grounding in the realities faced by actual farm families."

The survey is especially timely, Becot said, because this is a Farm Bill year, and some farm organizations and policy makers are debating if affordable child care in rural areas should become a priority.

"This is the first nationwide comprehensive survey focused on the realities of farmers and ranchers raising

See STUDY page 5

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- Polar Treat Vanilla Sundae Cones, 16 ct., 73.6 oz. **\$6.95**
- Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich 12 ct., 42 oz. (Case of 8 \$29.00) **\$3.95**
- Nabisco Premium Saltine Crackers, 1 lb. (Case of 12 \$21.45) **\$1.95**
- Nabisco Baked Large Wheat Thins Crackers, 8 oz. (Case of 6 \$10.75) **\$1.95**
- Kretschmar Sliced Baby Swiss Cheese, 8 oz. (Case of 12 \$21.45) **\$1.95**
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Health Career Connections is a program run by the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry that gives Senior-level students in the K-12 system an opportunity to job shadow a multitude of different healthcare-related businesses. Often times in healthcare we may only think of a doctor or a nurse, but there are many healthcare industries within the Marshfield area alone that can help expose students to other aspects of the industry. From chiropractic services, financial institutions, dental moldings, aesthetician services, physical therapy, blood care services, and more – are all represented. Thank you to the Marshfield Medical Center Credit Union for contributing to this scholarship and giving back to our future workforce in healthcare. For more information or to donate to this fund, visit: <https://www.marshfield.foundation>.

STUDY from page 4

children,” said Shoshannah Inwood, Ph.D., an associate professor at The Ohio State University. The survey asks farmers not only about their child care and schooling arrangements but also about how their decisions are connected to farm safety, the economic viability of their farm business, and their household finances.

“Over the years the U.S. Department of Agriculture has invested significant

resources to recruit and retain the next generation of farmers,” Inwood said. “Yet these programs and resources rarely consider or take into account the child care needs of farm and ranch families, despite evidence of child care challenges dating back to the 1980s.”

As one Ohio farm parent told Becot and Inwood during a focus group last year: “If America wants farmers, we need help with child care.”

The survey will provide important information about what solutions could

look like. The results of the survey will be available later in the year and will be shared with farmers, farm organizations, state agencies, and policy makers.

Farm and ranch families can respond to the survey online through this link: https://redcap.link/Survey2_FarmersRaisingChildren. They can also request a paper survey by contacting Becot in Marshfield (becot.florence@marshfieldresearch.org; 715-389-9379).

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 Word Search Marshfield Hub City Times 104 East 2nd Street Marshfield, WI 54449
 Note: There will be a drop box outside our office door, or you can mail your entry.
DEADLINE DATE! 12:00PM THURS., FEB. 16
 Only original forms will be accepted. All duplicated will be disqualified. Only one entry per household or address. Winners drawn at random of all correct entries. Winners will be announced in the February 22nd, 2023 edition.

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J	S	W	R	O	S	E	S	A	N	B	V	A	S	Q	F	R	R	Y	O
Q	L	J	S	Z	L	A	F	I	E	O	K	S	N	W	W	D	O	A	G
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Miscellaneous Real Estate 7487

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General Employment 7110

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The position comes with a full benefit package but most importantly includes flexible hours. About 50% of the time will be spent working on payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable – extensive knowledge of Quick Books is necessary. The other 50% of the time will be spent working on school bus or motorcoach related office activities that include extensive use of computer related programs, thus computer knowledge and capabilities are a must. We are a small and personable staff blessed with dedicated, caring people. Compensation is based on experience and the ability to fit in with our corporate culture of integrity.

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WISCONSIN MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR
34th Annual Finalist

General Employment 7110

City of Wautoma Public Works - General Laborer Position: The City of Wautoma, Wisconsin seeks a qualified individual for the position of Service Worker - Laborer in the Department of Public Works. High school graduate and required Commercial Driver's License (CDL); with air brakes endorsements or the ability to obtain within three months of hire required. Candidates with a CDL and some electrical, plowing, sewer construction or forestry work experience, along with any experience in local government preferred. Candidates must be capable of lifting up to 80 pounds, standing/walking or sitting for long periods of time and tolerate extreme weather conditions. Ideal candidate will possess strong public relations and interpersonal skills. Candidate shall be available 24/7 for call outs and shift work assignments. Hourly wage starts at \$20/hr. with an expected increase over \$23/hr. after successful completion of the probationary period and upon receiving ground water distribution certification. The city offers a highly generous benefits package, which includes low-deductible health care, city-funded HSA account, dental insurance, vision insurance and entrance into the Wisconsin Retirement System - the top-rated public pension in the nation. The application form is available at City Hall, 210 E. Main Street, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or requested by email to shelley-calder@cityofwautoma.com. Application deadline is Tuesday, February 28th, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. Candidates may attach up to two letters of recommendation, but are not required to do so. Wautoma is an EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. 920-787-4044, Extension 3

Insurance 7308

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Landscaping and Lawn 7326

The School District of Spencer is accepting bids for the April 2023 through October 2025 lawn mowing season. Prior to submission of bids, all interested parties must attend or be represented at an informational meeting to be held on February 16, 2023 8:00 a.m. in the Spencer School District Conference room 2060 at **Spencer Schools 300 N. School St, Spencer Wisconsin. Contact Bob at 1-847-421-3853 with questions.**

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Preview/Open House Date: Monday, February 13th (2pm-5pm) or by Appointment, (715) 305-2475
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NOV 2ND - 13TH, 2023

TRAVEL SHOW: Monday, Feb. 20th at 5:30pm
Partners Bank, 201 W Clark St, Spencer
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February 11th, 2023
Bingo Starts at 1:30pm
Doors open at noon
Upcoming Dates: March 11th & 25th
Open to public! Do not need to be an Elk member to attend!

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Area students named to UW-Eau Claire fall Dean's List

FOR HUB CITY TIMES

EAU CLAIRE -- The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire extends congratulations to the 2,783 students named to the fall 2022 Dean's List. The Dean's list eligibility criteria can be found online at <https://www.uwec.edu/news/news/fall-2022-deans-list-5573/>.

Students from our area who were named to the Dean's List are:

MARSHFIELD: Madison Armbruster, College of Education and Human Sciences; Olivia Bluhm, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Caitlyn Christensen, College of Education and Human Sciences; Jacob Dick, College of Education and Human Sciences; Bryce Fuerlinger, College of Business; Paige Gruenling, College of Education and Human Sciences; Elizabeth Hanson, College of Arts and Sciences; Julie Hertel, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Ryan Jennings, College of Arts and Sciences; Rosebud Johnson, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Eliana Kanitz, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Katelyn Larson, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Bailey Matis, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Karly Nikolai, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Cole Pearson, College of Arts and Sciences; Hailey Roehl, College of Business; Samuel Roherty, College of Arts and Sciences; Abigail Smith, College of Arts and Sciences; Nicholas Urban, College of Education and Human Sciences; Adam Walter, College of Education and Human Sciences

AUBURNDALE: Carl Lundgren, College of Arts and

Sciences

ARPIN: Faith Hafermann, College of Education and Human Sciences; Taylor Stanton, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

MILLADORE: Hannah Schulte, College of Education and Human Sciences

VESPER: Mya Bohman, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Wyler Lubeck, College of Arts and Sciences

JUNCTION CITY: Marlee Riehle, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

LOYAL: Bailey Bravener, College of Business; Keralin Genteman, College of Business; Vanessa Hebert, College of Business; Abrial Kubista, College of Business

GREENWOOD: Hannah Elmer, College of Education and Human Sciences; Brooke Hinker, College of Education and Human Sciences; Rachel Lindner, College of Education and Human Sciences; Reynold Nelson, College of Business; Hannah Peroshek, College of Business; Adeline Schoenherr, College of Business

WILLARD: Kiana Abel, College of Arts and Sciences

NEILLSVILLE: Kelly Barth, College of Arts and Sciences; Madelyn Chadwick, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Candice Hainz, College of Arts and Sciences; Jordan Zimmerman, College of Education and Human Sciences

DORCHESTER: Santiago Tzintzun, College of Arts and Sciences

OWEN: Ashley Bennett, College of Education and Human Sciences; Fidencio Lopez, College of Education

and Human Sciences; Reynold Nelson, College of Business

THORP: Hailey Barth, College of Education and Human Sciences; Matthew Moffitt, College of Arts and Sciences; Alyssa Quadracci, College of Education and Human Sciences

Arndt, Quinnell, Weiland reelected to Prevail Mutual Holdings, Inc. board

FOR HUB CITY TIMES

MEDFORD -- Prevail Bank has announced that Dr. Perry Arndt, Nathan Quinnell, and William Weiland have been voted in by membership to continue in their roles as Board Directors of Prevail Mutual Holdings, Inc. for the next three years.

The Annual Meeting of Prevail Mutual Holdings, Inc. took place Jan. 18, and Rhonda Kelley, Inspector of the Election, confirmed that directors Arndt, Quinnell, and Weiland were reelected.

Prevail Mutual Holdings, Inc. was established in August 2022, when Prevail Bank reorganized from a Mutual Savings Bank to a Mutual Holding



Arndt

Quinnell

Weiland

Company (MHC). The reorganization, approved by a Special Meeting of Members, the OCC, and the Federal Reserve Board, provides the bank more growth capabilities and opportunities.

Dr. Perry Arndt is a long-time respected resident and optometrist in Medford. Actively involved in many pivotal organizations, he was recently awarded the Medford Area Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime

Achievement Award. Nathan Quinnell started his financial career in 2005 as a credit analyst for River Cities Bank, ultimately working his way to the position of CEO. Today, he is Prevail Bank's President. William Weiland, active Lions Club member and philanthropist, is Prevail Bank's retired CEO.

Other members of the Prevail Mutual Holdings, Inc. Board are: Dean Carter, Jeannie Deml, Gregory Krug, Mark Scheunemann, and Michael Schaefer.

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You will not want to miss this 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with heated garage / shop on 2± acres west of Rhinelander, WI. This manufactured home is approximately 18-years-old, with 1300± sq ft of living space plus a full, unfinished basement. Property also includes a 28x40 garage with concrete floor, insulated & heated with 2-8'x10' garage doors. If you are looking for your northern Wisconsin getaway, look no further!

Ending Soon!

Online Bidding Ends Monday, February 20th

Open House Thurs., February 16th from 12:00pm-4:00pm

3627 Sterling Dr, Rhinelander, WI 54501

Call for more information: Hansen Auction Group: 715-607-4411, Bryce Hansen: 715-418-1030

Terms: 7% Buyers Fee. Bryce Hansen, registered WI auctioneer #225

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Open House

Sat., Feb. 11th, 1PM - 2:30PM

5742 Clark Street, Auburndale, WI 54412

4 bedrooms | 2.5 bathrooms | 2,160 sq. ft. | 0.35 acres lot size | MLS ID: 22205821

\$234,900

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Opportunity is knocking! Check out these 13.6 acres located on busy US Highway 10 and frontage on Hwy 73/95.

JULIE SIMEK 715-797-0306 JAKE ORMOND 715-937-3726

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Endless possibilities with this quality, unique property with 2 buildings. Each has their own character with many options for you.

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38 acres beautiful mixed acres right at the edge of Marshfield with frontage on Adler.

SHARON FRALICK 715-937-0897

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411 W 8TH STREET, NEILLSVILLE

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AMANDA NORMINGTON 715-630-4118

\$81,000. MLS# 22205348.

109 E 6TH STREET, MARSHFIELD

Looking for a high exposure building lot for your new or expanding business? Or maybe you'd like to put up a new multi-family unit?

SHARON FRALICK 715-937-0897

\$74,900. MLS# 21811624.

LOT 11 FAIRWAY DRIVE BUSHMAN ESTATES, MARSHFIELD

Country living, close to town complete with gorgeous sunsets.

JENI SCHOENHERR 715-305-6417

\$55,000. MLS# 22105959.

LOT 16 FAIRWAY DRIVE BUSHMAN ESTATES, MARSHFIELD

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\$52,000. MLS# 22105956.

LOT 9 BROOKVIEW COURT, MARSHFIELD

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MADDIE MICHAELS 715-650-1010

\$42,000. MLS# 22230037.

LOT 10 WILLS RUN, MARSHFIELD

SEARCHING FOR A LOT TO START YOUR BUILDING JOURNEY? This 2.02 acre lot provides just that.

MADDIE MICHAELS 715-650-1010

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LOT 128 W 9TH STREET, HEWITT

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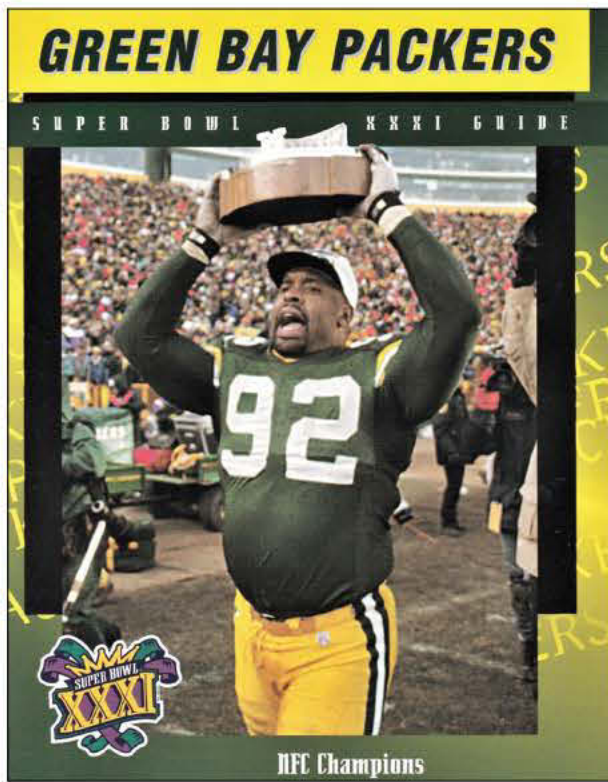
BY THOM GERRETSEN

"The road to the Super Bowl goes through Green Bay" is a concept that could disappear. Discussions continue in NFL circles to hold its two annual conference championship football games at neutral sites instead of the home stadiums of the highest surviving playoff seeds. Some team owners have come out against the idea, and here's why Packers' fans should oppose it.

During my 44 years of living in central Wisconsin, few things have warmed up a frozen January like the Packers' playoff run from their 1996 championship season – most of which played out right here in Wisconsin. I covered Super Bowl XXXI in New Orleans for WDLB Radio and Goetz Broadcasting – a 35-21 Green Bay win over New England. As exciting as it was, though, nothing stirred my emotions like the screams of joy two weeks earlier – when Green Bay played its final game that season at Lambeau Field and beat Carolina 30-13 during a -17 wind chill in the NFC Championship Game.

After that victory, the fired-up home fans stayed in their seats as Packers' general manager Ron Wolf asked them, "Guess where we're goin'?" Reggie White paraded the conference trophy around for the appreciative onlookers. For most in the stands, it was their final chance to cheer on the home team – and to wish them well in a generally distant Super Bowl city two weeks hence.

I've been to three Super Bowls as a reporter and five NFC Championship Games



Reggie White, the late Packers' "Minister of Defense," carries the NFC Championship trophy at Lambeau Field soon after it was presented following the conference title game on Jan. 12, 1997 in Green Bay. The photo is on the cover of the Packers' media guide for Super Bowl XXXI. The league is considering neutral sites for future NFC & AFC title games, ending the practice of hosting them at the highest remaining seeds in each conference.

Thom Gerretsen image

either as a reporter or a Packers' fan in the stands. Though fans bring "lots of juice" to the Super Bowl city the week beforehand, there is no way such passion translates to the game itself. It can get downright quiet in there. Each participating team only gets one of every six seats at a neutral Super Bowl site. Other tickets go to the NFL's corporate sponsors and various contest winners among others. Many in the seats don't have a rooting interest, much less a rabid longtime passion for those on the field.

As a result, much of the noise you'd expect at the Super Bowl just isn't there. That's especially noticeable on touchdowns, sacks, defensive stands, and other big plays. Jim Nantz told the New York Times in 2014 that the Super Bowls he called on CBS often had the feeling of a "Hollywood soundstage." In 1992, when I covered the Buffalo/Washington Super Bowl in Minneapolis, I thought a Native American pregame

protest outside the old Metrodome against the then-Washington Redskins' team name was as loud and emotional as a Bills' pep rally nearby.

I've often told people that if a Super Bowl gets close to them – or if their teams make it there – they should go. Even without game tickets, the weeklong series of fan fests, parties and more is almost non-stop – and for real fans, definitely worth the trip to the host city. Whether you'd see this kind of ramped-up atmosphere at neutral-site conference championships – the league's semi-finals – is a whole other question.

Home team crowds generate lots more decibels on big plays as fans high-five each other. At the Packers' NFC title loss at Seattle eight years ago, the Seahawks' fan to my left wouldn't say hello. But before every Packers' play, he yelled "AHHHHHHH" – as did thousands of others. With ridges at the top that keep the noise inside, the 'Hawks outdoor stadium

has long been considered the loudest in the NFL. My Packers' travel partner Mike Warren and I both wondered how those fans talk at their jobs the next day.

Other fan bases unleash similar passions. My son Bryan & I saw that firsthand in the 1995 season, when the Packers lost at Dallas – still the Cowboys' last NFC title contest appearance. After Mike Warren & I saw the Packers lose in Seattle & Atlanta, many Facebook friends told me never to see a road NFC Championship Game again. In the 2010 season, the Chicago Bears thought its fans just couldn't stomach the usual on-field trophy presentation – so the Packers had to quietly accept the honor in their locker room at Soldier Field.

Super Bowls at neutral sites allow everyone involved to plan ahead. Ticket prices that often exceed \$5,000 on the secondary market speak for themselves about the clientele the game attracts. Should the league consider something similar for conference title games, many have expressed concerns that those, too, would become unaffordable for the fans who've been most responsible for their teams' support – vocally, financially, and otherwise.

The Packers have hosted seven NFL & NFC championship games since 1939, including the infamous Ice Bowl victory over Dallas in 1967. That's seven mega-important games in 83 years – an average of almost one every 12 years. When this kind of opportunity comes this seldom, why wouldn't any profitable business allow the greatest number of its most loyal customers to savor such a payoff?

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Climate Change: A look back

I keep getting requests from readers to write more articles on climate change, and I've concluded that the old adage "The best predictor of the future is what we have learned from the past" seems to hold true.

The knowledge we have compiled from the past events and activities have caused life on the planet to adjust to environmental changes that have ensued through the eons. These changes are inexorable patterns that are influenced by factors that the laws of physics cannot yet fully understand or accurately model. It is apparent that there have been centuries of cold weather and other periods when the planet was under the influence of warming patterns. There are many notable events to reflect these changes.

In the mid 17th century (1640s) it was so cold that the Baltic Sea and the North Atlantic froze, making it impossible to travel to Iceland and Greenland where the newly established colonies failed



Mazza

because of lack of food and supplies. In the Middle Ages (9th - 13th centuries) the temperatures rose a few degrees above average and lead to variations in crops and crop yield in Europe and Scandinavia. It was also conducive to allowing sea-faring countries to explore other lands and establish colonies. The Vikings are a notable example of exploring and how climate was a major factor during that period. If we look back even further, evidence of climate change was apparent during the Roman warming period (100 - 400 AD) and the cold period of the Dark Ages

(5th - 9th centuries).

And if we think of more recent events related to climate, the paintings of Currier and Ives of the late 1880s show people ice skating on the Hudson River and the frozen New York harbor, and we soon realize we are currently in a warming period that is thought to have begun in the 1970s and is being greatly enhanced by greenhouse gasses (CO2 and methane) being put in the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels, used as our main source of energy.

But there are more factors to consider that contribute to the current warming trend, and temperatures are not likely to return to pre-industrial levels anytime soon, even if we stop burning fossil fuels. After reviewing the climate history of the last two millennia, the changes are cyclic and inevitable, like everything in nature, and will continue long after we are gone.

JJ Mazza
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