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It's a Jeep thing!



Splashing through a little mud after Friday night and Saturday's rain. Joseph Frederick photo.

BY TINA L. SCOTT
 EDITOR

By some counts, 80+ Jeeps came out in force, first congregating at Les & Jim's Lincoln Lanes/Center Grill in Merrill last Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023, before

See RIDE page 5



Inspired Creativity Supplies and More opens in Merrill

The make-and-take area will feature an inexpensive/low-cost craft item to craft in store, one for adults and one for kids. It's a great opportunity for a little fun crafting time. Tina L. Scott photo.

BY TINA L. SCOTT
 EDITOR

With supplies pertinent to a wide variety of different crafts, Inspired Creativity Supplies and More is a new craft supply store set on doing just as the name implies, inspiring creativity in those who come in to look

for particular supplies or to browse all that they have to offer.

Tanya Robl opened her new store at 705 S. Center Ave., Suite C, Merrill, in the building that was at one time Stark Automotive. That building has now been divided to make suites for a variety of businesses, and for Robl, the location is spacious with ample

parking and room to grow.

She opened her doors to the public on Aug. 21, 2023, and celebrated with a Grand Opening on Aug. 26.

"This has been a lifelong dream of mine," Robl said. Having grown up in Merrill, years ago the Ben Franklin

See INSPIRED page 2

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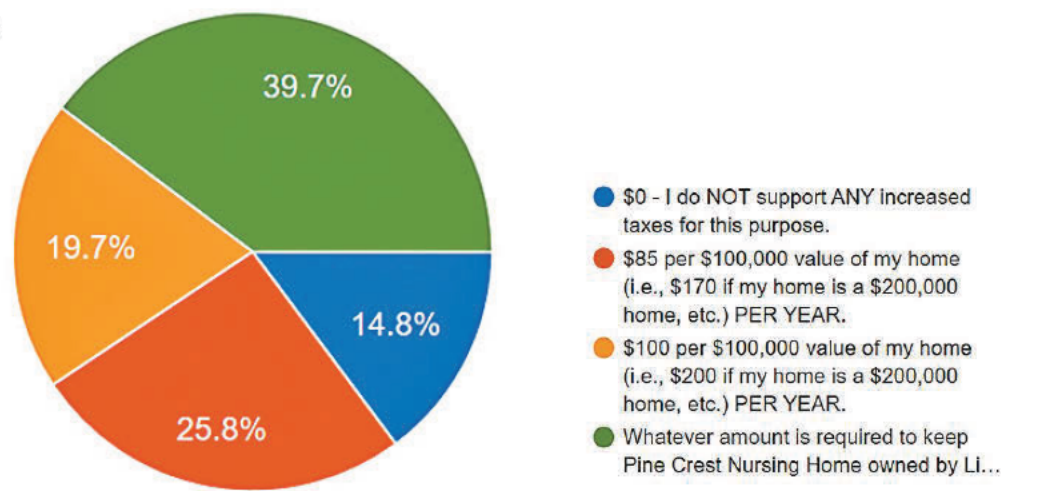
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Pine Crest survey results are in

How MUCH more would you be willing to pay on your real estate taxes, PER YEAR, in order to keep Pine Crest Nursing Home owned by Lincoln County?

763 responses



Respondents want to keep the nursing home County owned, want referendum

BY TINA L. SCOTT
 EDITOR

The results of the online community survey conducted by the Merrill Foto News and Tomahawk Leader are in, and respondents overwhelmingly indicated they want to keep Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill as a

Lincoln County owned facility, even if that means increased taxes to do so. Of course, it wasn't unanimous, but although the question wasn't on the survey, in the comments section it quickly became apparent that even more so, Lincoln County residents

See PINE CREST page 8

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INSPIRED
from page 1

had some craft supplies and now Walmart has some things, she said, but she dreamed of a place where crafters could congregate, be inspired, and also get the supplies they need to pursue their crafting hobbies or explore new ones.

"I've always been a crafter," she said, "And thought it would be a good idea to bring something like



A classroom at the back of the store provides space for about a dozen students to take on-site craft classes and workshops at Inspired Creativity Supplies and More in Merrill.



Bernat yarn creates a colorful display in-store, ready for knitting, crocheting, and craft projects. Tina L. Scott photos.

Petite Wheat Bread Dough 99¢ 4ct.	10" Pre-sheated Pizza Dough \$3.99 2ct.	Cherry Pie Danish Ready-to-eat \$2.99
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this to Merrill."

Prior to starting the store, she worked full-time as an agronomist for VanderGeest Dairy and was planning to retire, so that set the timing for her to start the store of her dreams. Her husband encouraged her to pursue that dream. "You should open your craft store," he said.

Robl said she had also been doing a "side hustle," creating customized products like shirts, can koozies, and ornaments doing "sublimation, DTF (direct to film) transfers, vinyl transfers, and stuff like that" and she will continue to offer those

ready-to-go products at the store.

"I like to share my creativity with other people," she said. Her new store provides the opportunity for her to do that and foster creativity in others, as well.

Personal crafting space for rent

The store features a private work area in back that will soon be available for a small fee so crafters can come in to craft, utilize some of the machines and equipment she has in house, and just enjoy a little personal time. "I will have the machines from my house, like my Silhouette,

and I do have a heat press and a sublimation printer and stuff. And then some certain craft supplies in here for people to utilize. They'll have access to a computer that'll be in here, printing capabilities, stuff like that. I'm hoping before December ... it's a work in progress," she said.

Crafting workshops

In addition to craft supplies for sale, Inspired Creativity will also offer workshops to teach people different crafts, with a variety of classes provided by a number of different local instructors in a private crafting classroom located in the back of the store. The instructors rent the space

to hold classes there and set their own fees for the classes, with class supplies included in the price, and Robl helps promote the classes. So far Robin Harder and Rachel Olson are the first teachers. Classes may range from making bead earrings to painting signs to all kinds of crafts. She also plans to offer workshops for kids.

"Kid workshops are on Saturdays and adult workshops are on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings, but Saturday mid morning is our kids ones. We're going to try to do at least one a month for kids. Right now for the month of October and November, we have two scheduled for each month," she said.

Robl said she is pretty much self-taught. For instance, she taught herself to crochet in a weekend, when she was couch bound after a surgical procedure, she said. But she recognizes that many people learn better from someone else demonstrating in person and providing assistance, so her workshops and private crafting area help all types of learners.

Inspired Creativity also has a make-and-take table with less expensive quick crafts customers can do right at the table in the store. "There'll be a kids one available and an adult one every week," Robl said. Examples of recent make-and-take crafts include a macrame keychain and a beaded bubble wand for the kids. She anticipates there will be quite a few paper crafting projects, too, "just cause those are easy make-and-takes; you don't really need somebody over there to explain it," she said.

"There's lots of crafts you can do, like easy crafts you can do with toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls. stuff like that. Or even clothes pins," Robl said. Many crafts will focus on an upcoming holiday theme, she said.

Yarn and markers and paints, oh my!

Robl said she conducted an informal online survey prior to starting the store "to get a feel for what other people were looking for in town" so she could try to stock in-demand items in the shop.

Inspired Creativity is large and spacious, handicap accessible and handicap friendly, with wide aisles and lots of room for growth. The store already stocks lots of products: basic sewing notions; supplies for yarn crafts including crochet hooks and knitting needles, crochet thread, and Bernat yarn; needle felting supplies; paracord for necklaces and bracelets; fat quarters (fabric) for quilting and crafts; Coats and Clark thread; fiberfill; kits; embroidery floss; macrame

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Inspired Creativity offers a variety of paper crafting and scrapbooking materials in-stock.

materials; dye markers, tie dye kits, etc.; clothing and fabric dyes, fabric markers; pouring paints; resin art supplies; Distressed Paints; acrylic and tempera paints, paint brushes, foam brushes, stencil brushes, and blanks (canvases and wood blanks for painting); wood shapes and blanks like the alphabet and seasonal cutouts (many cut by a local crafter), cutting boards, etc.; crafting tools; adhesives like craft tape, E6000, and glitter glue; Mod Podge products; scrapbooking and paper crafts; coloring books, adult coloring books; heat gloves; Silhouette supplies; basketry supplies; model kits; school supplies like crayons, markers, and construction paper; laminating pouches; gel pens, calligraphy pens,

and drawing pens; kids craft stuff including Color Wonder, a few beads, some window art, loops for looms, a sculpting wheel, mosaic tiles, modeling clay, and Diamond Art diamond painting are popular right now.

Some items almost flew off the shelves. "We had word search books and Sudoku books and stuff, but those are sold out already," Robl said. Their inventory of models was going fast, too. "These are the only two I have left," she said pointing to the shelf. "Before we put the price tags out, we sold two of them."

And "I had 3D puzzles up here, which were the first thing to be completely sold out, which was nice."

Signs on their shelves

remind customers: "Our shelves may look bare, but that is only because we are saving space for some awesome new inventory that will be coming in the next few months."

"We will be getting more in," Robl said. "A lot of our stuff is on back order yet. It'll be trickling in until the end of November."

Up and coming trends

So far Robl has already seen that 3D puzzles, word puzzle and Sudoku puzzle books, and model kits are incredibly popular.

"Macrame is also a big up-and-coming craft right now," she said. "It's coming back for sure. That's one of the hottest up-and-coming crafts," she said.

"Basketry is kind of making its way back," Robl said. "I love doing basketry. We will be doing some basketry courses, coming up probably after the first of the year, because right now we're on holiday crafts."

"And one thing I'd like to carry in here eventually is stained glass," she said. "But it's hard to come by, because there's only one main company, Delphi Glass, in Michigan. So it's not far away, but shipping is hard for stained glass. It weighs a lot, and it's very breakable."

Robl said her distributors set her retail prices, so she's assured her

See **INSPIRED** page 5

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CIRCULATION AUDIT BY

OBITUARIES



Cheryl L. Friel, of Merrill, WI, died peacefully on Sunday, September 24, 2023 at Aurora Zilber Family Hospice in Wauwatosa at the age of 66 years old. She was born in Illinois on September 19, 1957, the daughter of Raymond and Bernice (nee Haver) Podborny. On July 9, 1977 she married Thomas James Friel, he preceded her in death in January 2019. She was a very giving, unselfish person who made sure everyone was taken care of - she lived her life for others

and loved very deeply.

She will be missed by her sons James (Allison) Friel and Sean (Melissa) Friel; grandchildren Abigail, Clare, Emily and Tommy Friel; her sister Robin (Kurt) Schroeder and her brother Brandon. She is further survived by many other relatives and dear friends. She was preceded in death by her husband and sister Vivian Bandman.

A private family 'celebration of life' will be held in October. The family would like to thank all of the staff at Aurora Zilber Family Hospice for their loving care during her hospice care.

Randle-Dable-Brisk Funeral Home, Crematory and Pre-planning Service is honored to serve the family. For further information, please call the funeral home at 262-547-4035 or visit us online at www.randedable.com to leave the family an online tribute message.



Genevieve P. Jensen, 94 of Elkhorn, WI, passed away on Friday, September 29, 2023, at Golden Years of Lake Geneva. She was born April 25, 1929, in Niagara, WI, the daughter of the late Paul and Bertha (Bagley) Lange. Genevieve was united in marriage to Clifford Jensen on February 10, 1951, in Doering, WI. He preceded her in death on April 25, 2005. She was a member of Briggs Road Evangelical Free Church and loved her bible study group. Genevieve

worked at Lakeland Health Care Center and the Wisconsin School for the Deaf as a state certified cook until her retirement. Genevieve enjoyed researching genealogy, camping, hiking, traveling, and playing sudoku and dominoes. She loved making hospice bears and lap robes and other crafts. She was a member of the Red Hat Society. Genevieve loved to spend time together and eating out with her family and friends.

Genevieve is survived by her three children; Pamela (Jim Howard) Lukesh, Carla Ritchey, and Perry (Debra) Jensen, daughter-in-law, Kerry Jensen, 6 grandchildren: Richard and Stacy Abbott, Karl and Keith Jensen, Nichole Raine, and Clifford Jensen, five great-grandchildren: Benjamin, Maya, Jacob, Eleanor, Mikiah, and one more great-grandchild on the way, brother, Byron (Janet) Lange, and two sisters-in-law, Betty Lange and Barbara Montabon. She was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, Clifford, her parents, son, Stanley Jensen, son-in-law, Larry Ritchey, her siblings: Leslie Lange Sr., Marcella Hopp, Paul Lange Jr., and Ronald Lange and sister-in-law, Pearl Boyle.

Funeral Service will be 12:00PM on Friday, October 6, 2023 at Briggs Road Ev. Free Church, 4654 Briggs Rd. Elkhorn, WI. Visitation will be 10:30AM until service time at the church on Friday. Interment will follow services at Roselawn Memory Gardens. In lieu of flowers memorials may be directed to Briggs Rd. Ev. Free Church, Salvation Army, or Ronald McDonald Foundation. Online guest book at www.haaslockwoodfhs.com.



Morva J. Bishop, 95, of Merrill, passed away Sunday, September 24, 2023, at Pine Crest Nursing Home, Merrill. She was born June 1, 1928, in Abrams, Wisconsin, daughter of the late Rudolph and Barbara 'Florence' Bergner.

Morva was a very kind-hearted lady who strongly believed in The Lord. She was baptized as a Lutheran and attended Faith Lutheran Church in Merrill faithfully each week. Her faith was an important part of her life.

Morva was an excellent cook and baker, delighting her family with delicious meals and treats. She was also a talented seamstress, creating beautiful garments with her skills.

After graduating from Pulaski High School in Wisconsin, Morva dedicated her life to being a loving wife and mother. She had seven children: Joseph, Wendy Bishop, Kaye Severt (Greg), Jeri Robl (Tony), Becky Bolf (Mike), Todd Bishop (Mandy), and Connie Bishop. Sadly, Joseph passed away shortly after birth.

In 2003, Morva's beloved husband, Harold, passed away. They had been married for 55 years, and Morva took her marriage vows seriously, caring for Harold at home for 25 years after he had a stroke. During this time, she also managed and kept Harold's Bishop's Carpets business thriving.

Morva was preceded in death by her parents, Rudolph and Barbara Bergner; her grandson, Andy; and her brothers, Eldred and Neal. She leaves a legacy of love and dedication to her family.

Morva will be deeply missed by her family and friends, but her memory will live on in their hearts. May she rest in eternal peace.

A memorial service for Morva J. Bishop will be held at 11:00 A.M., Thursday, October 5, 2023, at Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. The Rev. Donald Love will officiate. The family will receive friends at the funeral home beginning at 10:00 A.M. that morning. The burial will take place at a later date at Faith Lutheran Cemetery - North, Village of Maine, Marathon County.

Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



Robert Gene Kleinschmidt, 38 years old, of Neillsville and formerly Merrill, WI., lost his battle with cancer on Sunday June 11th, 2023 at home under Hospice Care. Robert was born on May 14th, 1985 to Rhonda and Dale Kleinschmidt. Robert was a C.N.A. the majority of his adult life. He loved to help others and it showed in his compassion for his niece and nephew Lilith and Austin.

Robert leaves behind his children Hayden, Raya, and Amara and wife Lucy Kleinschmidt. His parents Rhonda and Dale Kleinschmidt. His sister Rebecca Kleinschmidt and her children Austin and Lilith. His brother Ryan Kleinschmidt wife Cerenity daughters Serena, Zoey, and Isabelle all of Florida. His sister Rachel Kleinschmidt of CA. And his Paternal Grandmother Detta Kleinschmidt. As well as many aunts, uncles and cousins. He was preceded in death by his Maternal Grandparents Robert and Jean Monti and his Paternal Grandfather Gene Kleinschmidt.



Duane C. Byrd, 87, of Medford, died Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at Aspirus Care & Rehab in Medford while under the care of Hope Hospice.

A celebration of life will be held starting at 3 p.m. on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at the Ice Age Pavilion in Rib Lake.

Duane was born October 30, 1935 in Wausau to Gertrude (Bauman) and Earl Bird. He was raised by Arthur and Ella Marquardt. He built his life in Rib Lake and on May 21, 1960 married the love of his life, Phyllis Schult.

Duane was employed by Linquist Motors and in later years became a self-employed logger. He loved logging, hunting, and gardening. He also enjoyed the many friendships he made over the years. One of his favorite activities was helping out with the area hunting shacks. He looked forward to hunting season each year and catching up with everyone who returned to the area to hunt and visit.

Duane served two terms as supervisor for the town of Corning; and was a member of the Interwald Snowmobile Club.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis (Schult) Byrd of Medford; children, Roger (Debbie), Carl (Ann Weymouth), Mark Byrd; grandchildren, Steven Byrd, Gregory (April) Byrd, Lindsey (Tyler) Krause, Emily Byrd, Wesley Byrd, and Wyatt Mallien; step-grandchildren, Dustin (Heather) Schmudlach, and Turner Ryan; great-grandchildren, Ellie Mallien, Tanner and Landon Krause; step-great-grandchildren, Breanna and Lila Schmudlach; in-laws, Willie (Karen) Schult, Ruth (Donnie) Klienschmidt, Jim (Diane) Schult, Paulette Schult, and their children.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers-in-law, LaVerne Schult, John Schult; sister-in-law, Ruth "Rudy" Schult; and grandson, Michael Byrd.

The family would like to thank Country Gardens in Medford, Aspirus Care and Rehab., and Hope Hospice for the wonderful care Duane received.

Hemer-Pickerign Funeral & Cremation Services of Medford and Rib Lake is serving the family. Please visit www.hemfuneralservice.com to share condolences online.

James Allen 'Jim' Strasser passed away September 27, 2023, in Tomahawk. Jim was born in Merrill on September 19, 1947, to George and Norma (Rusch) Strasser. He attended Merrill High School, graduating in 1966. He served in the United States Army in Vietnam. He enlisted in 1966 and was honorably discharged in 1969.

Jim is survived by a son, Jeremy (Gina); and three grandchildren, Desiree, Sabrina, and Damian Strasser all of Wausau. He is further survived by brother, Gene; sister, Sharon (Clint) Kasper; brother-in-law, Jerry Klempe; sister-in-law, Shirley Strasser; nephew, Eric (Julie) Kasper of Rice Lake; and niece, Samantha Strasser of Boston.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Rose Klempe; and brother, Dale.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Riverview Health Services in Tomahawk and Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services for the wonderful care they provided Jim.

Taylor-Stine Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Merrill, is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



Marilyn "Mert" Kufahl, age 96, of Merrill, Wisconsin passed away on Monday, October 2, 2023 at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill. She was born on August 18, 1927 to the late Ralph and Elsa (Hassel) Duranceau in the Town of Texas, Wisconsin. Marilyn married Kenneth Kufahl on October 24, 1960. He precedes her in death.

The full obituary for Marilyn can be viewed online at www.waidfuneral.com.

A funeral service will be held on Monday, October 9, 2023 at 11:00 am at Waid Funeral Home in Merrill. A visitation will be held on Monday, October 9, 2023 from 9:00 am until the time of service also at the funeral home. Interment will take place at St. Paul's Cemetery in the Town of Pine River.

Waid Funeral Home & Cremation Service of Merrill is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences are encouraged and may be made at www.waidfuneral.com.

Memory Bear Workshop

Please join us for a time of healing as we create huggable bears from your loved one's clothing. This free event will be held at Waid Funeral and Cremation Service, 301 Eagle Drive, Merrill, WI.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023
9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.**

We will start punctually as it takes the entire scheduled time to design, cut and sew the bears. One bear per family will be made at this event. We do have volunteers who can create additional bears outside this workshop. Contact Anna Winningham for more details. A light breakfast and lunch will be served.



To reserve your spot, RSVP before October 6 by calling 715-536-4646.

WAID FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES
301 Eagle Drive, Merrill, Wisconsin 54452
Phone (715) 536-4646 • www.WaidFuneral.com
Email: info@waidfuneral.com

Taylor & Stine
Funeral Home and Cremation Services
Leah D. Reist, Director
McKenna K. Meunier, Director
903 E. Third St. • Merrill, WI
715-536-6244
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STORE HOURS: Mon. - Fri. 9am - Noon & 1pm - 4pm

LEGAL NOTICES

Legals 7700

BY THE COURT
DATE SIGNED 09/29/2023
/S/HON. GALEN BAYNE-ALLISON
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BR I
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for
Name Change Hearing
 Case No. 23-CV-112
 IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME
 CHANGE OF
 Cyrus Elexander Ryan

By (Petitioner) Sebastian Williams
 To: Cyrus Elexander Williams
 By (Co-Petitioner) Lindsay Danielle
 Ryan

NOTICE IS GIVEN
 A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
 From: Cyrus Elexander Ryan
 To: Cyrus Elexander Williams
 Birth Certificate: Cyrus Elexander Ryan

IT IS ORDERED
 This petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin:
 Judge's Name: Honorable Galen Bayne-Allison
 Place: Lincoln County Courthouse BR I Courtroom
 1110 East Main St., Merrill, WI 54452
 Date: 11/07/2023
 Time: 10:30 AM

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

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED
 Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three (3) weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the Foto News a newspaper published in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin.
 Published: 10/5/23, 10/12/23 & 10/19/23
 WNAXLP

BY THE COURT
DATE SIGNED 09/29/2023
/S/HON. GALEN BAYNE-ALLISON
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BR I
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for
Name Change Hearing
 Case No. 23-CV-113
 IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME
 CHANGE OF
 Titan John Ryan

By (Petitioner) Sebastian Williams
 To: Titan John Ryan
 By (Co-Petitioner) Lindsay Danielle
 Ryan

NOTICE IS GIVEN
 A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
 From: Titan John Ryan
 To: Titan John Williams
 Birth Certificate: Titan John Ryan

IT IS ORDERED
 This petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin:
 Judge's Name: Honorable Galen Bayne-Allison
 Place: Lincoln County Courthouse BR I Courtroom
 1110 East Main St., Merrill, WI 54452
 Date: 11/07/2023
 Time: 10:30 AM

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 Published: 10/5/23, 10/12/23 & 10/19/23
 WNAXLP

DATE SIGNED September 19, 2023
 Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
 Probate Registrar

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
 Mark A. Kanitz
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
 Case No. 2023 N 42

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE
 1. An application for informal administration was filed.
 2. The decedent, with date of birth 2/18/1959 and date of death 6/21/2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of WI, with a mailing address of W5063 S. Shore Drive, Merrill, WI 54452.
 3. All interested persons waived notice.
 4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is January 12, 2024.
 5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.
 Dan C. Koblitz, Attorney
 2320 Parallel Lane
 Silver Spring, MD 20904
 Telephone 301-960-5857
 Bar Number 1102710
 Published 9/28/23, 10/5/23 & 10/12/23
 WNAXLP

DATE SIGNED September 19, 2023
 Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
 Probate Registrar

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
 Ernest P. Weisskopf
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
 Case No. 2023 N 41

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE
 1. An application for informal administration was filed.
 2. The decedent, with date of birth 1/17/1958 and date of death 7/26/2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of WI, with a mailing address of W2455 Burgener Ave., Merrill, WI 54452.
 3. All interested persons waived notice.
 4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is January 12, 2024.
 5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.
 Dan C. Koblitz, Attorney
 2320 Parallel Lane
 Silver Spring, MD 20904
 Telephone 301-960-5857
 Bar Number 1102710
 Published 9/28/23, 10/5/23 & 10/12/23
 WNAXLP

Legals 7700

Merrill Area Public Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
August 16, 2023 - Minutes
 The meeting was called to order by Blake at 5:30 PM in the Board Room. Board members present: Gremler, Liberty, Osness, Proulx, Yingling and Blake. Board members absent: Ashbeck, Krueger and Woller. Others Present: Superintendent Murray, MAPS Administrators, one person from the staff and public, and Recorder Woller.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Osness to approve the Lincoln County Health Department School Health Services Agreement for the 2023-2024 School Year Grades 4K-12 and NAC, a recurring cost that is annually built into the district budget. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve the new SEL coach positions as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Liberty to approve the renewal of the 2024-2026 WIAA Boys Ice Hockey co-op between Merrill, Wausau East, and Wausau Newman Catholic. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Gremler to approve Policy 5410 Promotion, Placement and Retention as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Osness to approve the updated Activities Handbook. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Proulx to approve the event workers' pay compensation plan for the 2023-2024 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Gremler to approve the updated Fall Play/Spring Musical Coach and Advisor pay. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve the FY24 preliminary budget to bring forward to the annual meeting in September as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Proulx to approve the resolution authorizing temporary borrowing in an amount not to exceed \$4,500,000; issuance of taxable tax and revenue anticipation promissory notes; and participation in the PMA Levy and Aid Anticipation Notes (PLANN) Program and approving Dr. Kelley Strike as the acting fiscal agent for MAPS regarding signatures required on the day of the offering and other documentation relating to this borrowing. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

MOTION by Osness, second by Gremler to approve the adjustments to the teacher compensation plan for the 2023-24 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Liberty for the approval to let administration sell a portion of the 6th gen iPads as proposed to MAPS staff and buyback company. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Gremler, second by Proulx to accept the proposal from School Perceptions to begin work on developing a survey to be administered to the community regarding the MAPS facilities study and the potential of an upcoming operations referendum. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Proulx to approve the donation of funds from Habitat for Humanity valued at \$5,000 for continued growth and projects of the Raise Your Voice Club. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Osness to approve the donation of funds from Bob and Janet Grunenwald valued at \$3,000 for the MAPS baseball field. Motion carried unanimously.

Neola's Volume 32, Number 2 technical corrections were shared with the Board. Technical corrections made throughout the policy manual to change the District Compliance Officer from Karen Baker to Amber Haluska were shared with the Board.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve the attached personnel report, contingent upon the satisfaction of the appropriate liquidated damages for resignations, if applicable. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Gremler to approve consent agenda items a through c, which included minutes of the July 19, 2023, meeting; claims, vouchers and receipts totaling \$2,393,508.30; and, donations totaling \$141.01. Motion carried with Osness abstaining from the July 19, 2023 minutes.

Blake called for a motion to adjourn into executive (closed) session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes under Section 19.85(1)(c). The purpose of the closed session is to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation, artifacts and goals for the 2023-2024 school year. **MOTION by Liberty, second by Proulx to adjourn into executive session. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

MOTION by Proulx, second by Yingling to adjourn at 7:27 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Kendra Osness Board Clerk KO/tlw
 (The official minutes in their entirety are available by calling (715) 536-4581, by visiting www.mapsedu.org, or by visiting the MAPS District Office at 1111 N. Sales Street, Merrill, Wisconsin.)
 Published October 5, 2023
 WNAXLP

Legals 7700

keep the position (High School Associate Principal) as is and post the position, up to review at the discretion of the superintendent. Motion carried.

MOTION by Krueger, second by Liberty to adjourn at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
 Kendra Osness
 Board Clerk
 KO/tlw

(The official minutes in their entirety are available by calling (715) 536-4581, by visiting www.mapsedu.org, or by visiting the MAPS District Office at 1111 N. Sales Street, Merrill, Wisconsin.)
 Published October 5, 2023
 WNAXLP

Merrill Area Public Schools
Special Board of Education Meeting
August 30, 2023 - Minutes
 The meeting was called to order by President Kevin Blake at 5:30 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room. Board members present: Nubs Ashbeck, Jacqueline Gremler, Chad Krueger, Kendra Osness, Paul Proulx, Brett Woller, Linda Yingling and Kevin Blake (a quorum was present). Board member absent: Ron Liberty. Others present: Shannon Murray, Superintendent; Trisha Kautzer, Elementary Principal; and Tammy Woller, Recorder.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Woller to approve the attached personnel report, contingent upon release of contract for hirings and upon the satisfaction of the appropriate liquidated damages for resignations, if applicable. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Proulx, second by Ashbeck to accept the bid from Resilite and approve the purchase of the wrestling mat for \$35,972.04 to be purchased with a donation from the Merrill Wrestling Club. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Gremler to approve the donation of a practice mat for the wrestling room from the Merrill Wrestling Club valued at \$35,972.04 for practice at Merrill Area Public Schools. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Krueger, second by Ashbeck to adjourn at 5:36 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
 Kendra Osness
 Board Clerk
 KO/tlw

(The official minutes in their entirety are available by calling (715) 536-4581, by visiting www.mapsedu.org, or by visiting the MAPS District Office at 1111 N. Sales Street, Merrill, Wisconsin.)
 Published October 5, 2023
 WNAXLP

To Advertise Call 715-536-7121

RIDE from page 1

heading out on their 5th Annual Fall Ride. The ride, open to all Jeeps, was organized by Central and Northern Wisconsin Jeep Owners, and Jeep owners were welcome to bring their Jeeps and come for the ride. Center Grill opened early to provide treats and beverages prior to the ride, and the Cenex gas station across the street made it easy for drivers to fill up on gas and snacks for the ride. Participants gathered beginning at 7 a.m. and headed out at 9 a.m.

The ride included black top roads, gravel roads, and some riding on trails through the woods, with opportunities to splash through some nice big puddles and a few muddy ruts after all the rain Friday night and into Saturday morning, but that just added to the fun and excitement.

The event was scheduled to go about three hours or so and ended up back at Les & Jim's for more food and drinks for those who were so inclined and an opportunity to reminisce about the ride and talk more about their Jeeps.

INSPIRED from page 3

prices are competitive even though she's a smaller retailer. "From what I understand, I am cheaper, if not the same price as other places," Robl said. She said she can see what the retail price will be when she places an order.

"If it's something that I feel is too expensive, like for me to purchase, I'm not going to want to get it in my store because other people aren't going to want to purchase it either. ... So, if I see it's way out of line, I'll be like, no, I just won't carry that. Or I'll look for a different brand of it."

Inspired Creativity Supplies and More accepts credit and debit cards and

Area Events & Entertainment Community Calendar

Oct. 6 - Medical Mayhem at the Haunted Sawmill

Oct. 6 - Flash Light Friday!

Oct. 7 - Merrill Area Farmer's Market

Oct. 7 - The Malevolent Masquerade at the Haunted Sawmill

Oct. 7 - Pine River Fire Department Annual Open House & Pig Roast

Oct. 7 - MEC's Fall Craft & Market

Oct. 7 - Fall "Everything Goes" Sale at MARC

Oct. 7 - History Hunt 2023

Oct. 7 - Saturday Corn Maze

Oct. 7 - Grampa's Farm Maze

Oct. 8 - Sunday Corn Maze

Oct. 8 - Grampa's Farm Maze

Oct. 12 - Merrill Chamber's Annual Celebration & Awards

Oct. 12 - Fromm Bros. Speakeasy

Oct. 13 - The Cult of 13 at the Haunted Sawmill

Oct. 13 - Flash Light Friday

Oct. 14 - The Sawmill Ball at the Haunted Sawmill

Oct. 14 - Grampa's Farm Maze

Oct. 14 - Saturday Corn Maze

Oct. 15 - Sunday Corn Maze

Oct. 15 - Grampa's Farm Maze

Oct. 15 - Fall Color Hike

Rib Mountain State Park

Oct. 18 - St. John Lutheran School Annual Bazaar

For more information, go to: merrillchamber.org/

events



Pet of the Week

Hey y'all! My name is Snowball. I came to LCHS with my 5 kittens. I spent time raising them in a foster home. I'm a young cat, so I have a lot of energy yet! My foster family kept me entertained by playing with laser pointers and ribbon toys. I'm also a pretty smart cat as I nearly taught myself how to open doors. Too bad the fosters foiled my plans by locking it! I also learned how to "shake" to get treats. While I did not like other cats, I did really well around kids that like to nicely pet and play with me. Yeah I'm that cool. Come see me for yourself.

Visit all the adoptable animals at Lincoln County Humane Society, 310 N Memorial Dr., Merrill. Hours: Mon-Sat 12-4 PM & Sun 12-2 PM. Call the shelter at 715-536-3459, or visit us at www.furrypets.com.

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Foster Grandparents

Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.

Looking for Volunteers to make a difference in a youth's life!

- One-to-One Guidance and Companionship to youth ages 14-17 in a Supervised Setting
- Are you interested in tutoring, mentoring and/or healthy social interaction?
- Building mutually beneficial friendships

If you are age 55 or older, meet income criteria, and able to volunteer a minimum of 5 hours a week or 260 hours per year. **Then YOU are exactly what we are looking for!** For your generous donation of time and talents. We provide, Free Lunches, mileage reimbursement, income eligibility stipend, and additional incentives.

AmeriCorps Seniors If Interested Call Jim at 715-536-8386 ext. 1220 or email at: James.Larkin@wisconsin.gov

Student of the Week

This Week's Featured Student is Paisley Smith

Daughter of Abby & Matt Smith

Paisley is in 2nd Grade at Kate Goodrich Elementary School. She was nominated by Mrs. Whooley Jepson.

What is your favorite subject in school?
 Why?
 My favorite subject in school is math because I get to learn how to count and add and subtract.

What is your favorite part of school?
 Why?
 I like the mornings because it's quiet and we are all ready for school.

What would you like to do/become someday?
 Why?
 When I grow up I would like to become a teacher because I want to teach kids.

Paisley is a bright light in class. She always has a smile on her face. She is a hard-working student who has accomplished great things in the short time we have been in school. Paisley is a respectful, kind, and well-rounded individual.
 - Mrs. Whooley Jepson

Student of the Week Sponsored by:
INTERFLEX GROUP
 1401 W. Taylor St., Merrill
 (715) 536-5400

City of Merrill Property For Sale

The City of Merrill is offering these formerly tax delinquent properties for sale. This is a sealed bid sale. Please submit bids using the bid form available online or at City Hall, for the properties below by Tuesday October 24th, 2023. Bids will be considered based on highest bid amount and proposed use.

Property Address	Property PIN #
503 Wisconsin Street	25131061130177
306 N Cleveland Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061230351
305 East Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061130413
211 N Cleveland Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061230371
400 E 4th Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061140194

Bidders are responsible for checking the accuracy of the provided information. Bids must be submitted to the Clerk Treasurer's Office in a sealed envelope marked "PROPERTY BID" no later than 4:00 pm Tuesday October 24th, 2023. Property will be conveyed via Quit Claim Deed. The City of Merrill reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid most advantageous to the city. For more information please contact Darin Pagel at 715-536-4880.

Published October 5 & 12, 2023 WNAXLP



THE GLEASON CORNER

Prairie Pines Country Store

BY TINA L. SCOTT, EDITOR

Founded in 2001 by Luke Martin when he and his family and a small group of Mennonites moved from Athens to Gleason to establish a new Mennonite church and community there, Prairie Pines Country Store has become a vital resource for the Gleason community and beyond and a frequent stop for tourists and travelers passing by on Hwy. 17.

Today the store is managed by Luke's youngest son, Matthew Martin, and jointly owned by Matthew and his brother-in-law, Ronald Martin (80%/20% but hoping to evolve into more like 55%/45%). Matthew is the youngest boy of 15 children.

Luke said his primary role now is to make runs to pick up produce and do other running for the business, as he is retired.

Luke started the store with no prior retail experience. "I was a farmer all my life, knew nothing about it," he said. However, his nephew, James Martin, who owns a similar store in another community, told him, "Uncle Luke, if you open a store there, it would be an instant success." James was an instrumental mentor and guide to setting the store up and getting it running.

"He actually came up," Luke said, along with his family and staff. "[They] came up and helped set up. He told us what to put on the shelves."

The benefit of James' experience in the business was critical, and business at Prairie Pines took off immediately. "We first opened in an afternoon and that first afternoon we had 33 customers. ... to have 33 customers to us is like, wow. ... They're amazing."

The majority of the customers the first years were the locals. "Obviously people started learning more about us," Luke said,

"And there's no grocery store within 15 miles in any direction," Matthew said. "... The local town has been a blessing to us. I just hope we've been a blessing back."

From idea to store in record time

Luke and his family moved into the duplex on the property in fall 2000 and worked on getting the necessary permits and rezoning for a store. "I had to get 25 signers here from around the community to see if they would be agreed that I would put a store here," Luke said. "There was no store in Gleason, so it wasn't hard at all."

They got more than 25 signatures and it easily passed. "Everybody was agreed to it, and there was nobody against it."

They got an architect and then in April 2001, Luke's son-in-law, Mark Miller, who is a builder from Thorp, got to work. He started on a Monday evening. "By Thursday evening, we had the roof on and everything shingled and everything," Luke said.

Everyone was wondering who did it, he said. "They never saw a building go up like that," Luke said.

Prairie Pines Country Store opened in June 2001, and by 2006 they needed more space, so they added a 24'x32' addition including a cooler.

But they still need more space, Matthew said.

They utilize a greenhouse next to the building seasonally and for storage and the garage next door for an extra warehouse. Recently they purchased and clearcut the land across the road and are hoping to build additional facilities, possibly a warehouse/

freezer/cooler combo. Their goal isn't to become huge, Matthew said, but due to the quantities of fruit and produce they handle, they need more space to accommodate the business and operate more efficiently.

Bulk foods, produce, and more

Prairie Pines is well known for selling bulk food and baking supplies like sugar, flour, noodles, spices, and cereal, but they also sell a lot of meat and cheese in their deli area, fresh cheese curds that come in twice a week year round (get them while they're fresh, warm, and squeaky!), and lots and lots of fresh produce. They get their produce from local farmers at auction and also get it shipped in wholesale from connections they have with orchards and vendors out in Pennsylvania.

Everything they order comes in large quantities and is repackaged into smaller consumer retail quantities with their store's label. They also do some repackaging/labeling for another business.

In addition to selling retail at the store, Prairie Pines also wholesales some items, like apples, to other stores and produce stands.

There are seasonal offerings, as well: flowers, bedding, and vegetable plants in the spring; fresh produce including pickles, sweet corn, cucumbers, beets, peaches, tomatoes, and more in the summer; cranberries, pumpkins, mums, and deer apples (seconds with blemishes many locals buy for making applesauce and apple cider) in the autumn; and sunflower seeds for birds and wood burning pellets for wood heating stoves in the fall and winter. "Often I will [also] try to run a bacon sale in the winter time," Matthew said. "I usually try to, at least once or twice a year, do a bacon sale."

Quite a few tourists come into the store "from all over the place," Matthew said. Snacks, candy, meat and cheese from the deli, fresh produce, dairy, and ice cream cones are consistently good sellers with the tourists. Blankets, an unexpected item to see in the store, are also good sellers. They have a few other items for the kitchen, a few little toys for kids, candles, and canning supplies, too.

The stores busiest days are always the Saturday of the holiday weekends near May 30, July 4, and Labor Day, they said the Saturday before Labor has always been their biggest day. Store hours are Mon. and Tues. 8-5; Wed. 8-6; Thurs. and Fri. 8-5; Sat 8-6. In the winter, they close at 5:30 p.m. on Wed. and Sat.

A family, Christ-focused business model

The store employs usually 3 or 4 full-timers, plus part-time employees, so in their busy summer season, they typically have about 12 employees in total. All are Mennonite, and a good number are family members; several of Matthew's nieces and even 10-year-old nephews are helping out in the store, and his children help when/where they can, but most are still a bit young.

More important than what the store sells, though, we want customers to know they will get good, honest service at Prairie Pines Country Store, Matthew said. "We want them to feel a warmth and a Christian atmosphere, to know that we honor Christ in what we do here ... the biggest thing would be that they would feel God's love whenever they're coming through the store."



Tina L. Scott photo



Tina L. Scott photo

FEATURE ITEMS



Black Oil Sunflower Seeds
\$24 50 lbs.



Deer Corn
\$8.99 50 lbs.

SUMMER HOURS: WED. & SAT. 8AM-5PM. MON., TUES., THURS., & FRI. 8AM - 6PM
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Gleason Mennonite Church
5626 State Road 17, Gleason, WI



For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.
Matthew 18:20

286183

Luther Memorial Church
N5308 Town Hall Rd., Gleason, WI

You are invited to
the Dedication Celebration Service & Open House for our new Sanctuary in Gleason.

October 15 at 2 PM

Snacks provided after the service

310438

• Portable Storage Sheds • Garages • Garden Sheds
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Free Local Delivery

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Displays in Rhinelander and at our Shop Located 1 Mile N. of Gleason on Hwy 17

310418

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17 SCOOPS
Ice Cream & Sandwich Shop

Ice Cream Pies!

Located Downtown Gleason, WI

NEW HOURS
11am-8pm
Tuesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Mini Ice Cream Sandwiches 3 for \$3.95



310268

MERRILLFoto News

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OLD TIME GENERAL STORE & MERCANTILE

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OCTOBER 21 2023
11AM-5PM
OPEN HOUSE

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FEATURING MERGETS MOUTHWATERING MAYHEM
N5342 HWY 17 GLEASON, WI

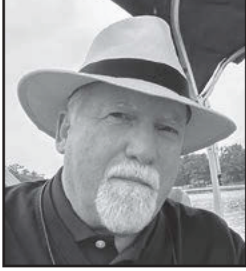
310268

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

An open letter to the Senators and Representatives of the United States

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I write to you today as a concerned citizen and a newspaper publisher who believes in the importance of a functioning government that serves the interests of all Americans. It deeply troubles me to witness the recurring threats of government shutdowns due to your inability to reach a consensus and your unwillingness to put aside partisan differences for the greater good.



It is imperative that you remember your duty is to the American people, and this duty should always come before your own political squabbles and differences. Shutting down the government has dire consequences for millions of Americans, causing economic hardships and eroding the credibility of our nation on the world stage.

It is disheartening to observe the radical and often ignorant actions and rhetoric from both sides of the aisle. As the next election approaches, we, the American people, should remember those among you who put your personal agendas before the well-being of our nation.

If you are willing to entertain the notion of a government shutdown, I propose a simple solution: Fine each of you for every day the government remains closed, and suspend your salaries until you do what is right for the American people.

In closing, I urge you to reflect on your roles as public servants and the trust that the American people have placed in you. It is time to set aside your differences, engage in respectful dialogue, negotiate, and compromise in order to prevent further harm to our great nation.

Sincerely, PATRICK J. WOOD Publisher of Multi Media Channels

PAID LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the Editor, a chance for members of the community to comment on issues of concern to them. All letters must be original, not duplications of letters addressed to public officials or written by others.

TO THE EDITOR:

First, I would like to acknowledge that the Foto News has recognized there is a major item on the budget, Pine Crest, that is important to Lincoln County.

The statement given at the September County Board meeting that the community survey will provide a "complete picture of the entire county" to gauge support, may have fallen short.

Initially, citizens were encountering problems that did not allow the survey to be processed. Many of these were addressed in the Sept. 28th edition, on the back page, 8 days into the 11-day window.

Of particular concern was asking those most affected to submit sensitive information that they have been told NOT to share; to use a tool that is uncomfortable, or that they may not have access to; that paper submittals would not be accepted, that the Foto News did not have the means to process them.

The assurance that "information will NEVER be sold or used for any other purpose" is GREAT, but came a bit too late.

Will the Foto News consider extending the window? Will you accept paper surveys and tally through a scanning process? How can citizens help?

Surveys can be a wonderful tool, but can also lead to or skew information if incomplete. Nevertheless, it is the process that the Foto News has provided. Many citizens worked with it. We did not turn our backs.

What we all want and deserve is a "complete picture of the entire county." Thank you.

- Eileen Guthrie Town of Pine River, Wis.

Editor's Note: The only information requested in this survey, to ensure the integrity of the data, was name (optional), email, address, and telephone number. This is not sensitive information; other than email addresses, such data is publicly available and for years was published in phone books. No sensitive information (i.e., dates of birth, social security number, or the like) was requested as a part of this survey.

The cost for Paid Letters to the Editor is \$40.00 per letter of up to 250 words, plus \$10.00 per additional 50 words, and must be prepaid prior to printing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the Editor, a chance for members of the community to comment on issues of concern to them. All letters must be original, not duplications of letters addressed to public officials or written by others.

TO THE EDITOR:

In regards of PRSYL having such poor undrinkable water quality due to PFAs, I can't help to wonder why MAPS doesn't just close it. How often has it gotten checked for PFAs in the last 40 years? Why don't they just move the kids and teachers to Washington School?

the kids, so why doesn't MAPS? Save the taxpayers money, especially due to the declining enrollment, and have a surplus of cash due to consolidating the kids.

- Chrissy Byers Merrill, Wis.

TO THE EDITOR:

I am a US Army Vietnam veteran. I have had the honor of sounding bugle calls for military funerals and other service-related events.

The past decade has witnessed more of these missions than there are buglers to staff them. To alleviate the shortage, the US military authorized the use of a recording or an electronic bugle to sound Taps and other calls when a live bugler is unavailable.

From what I have learned through experience, is that there is misunderstanding about when it is appropriate to employ a "substitute" bugle. There are some that believe a substitute should only be used as a last resort; others

See LETTERS page 27

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY:

*Letters must be 250 words or less. (There will be no exceptions to this. Any letter longer than 250 words will not be printed.) *The writer must include their full name, complete address, and a phone number where he/she can be easily reached for verification. Phone numbers and street addresses will not be published, but will be used for verification purposes, if necessary.

ESTATE SALE W6118 Forest Drive, Merrill Oct. 6-8 • 9-5 Tickets will be given out at 8am Friday. 60 years of household, misc., furniture, appliances, seasonal and outdoor recreational. CASH ONLY!

Annual Clothing Giveaway Tomahawk Community 7th Day Adventist Church 1529 E. Somo Ave. Tues., Oct. 10 - Thurs., Oct. 12, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All items are Free. There is something for everyone. Any questions call 715 612 1728 Or 715 453 5809 the days of the event

ATTENTION HUNTERS DO YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR HUNTING MEMORY OR EXPERIENCE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE? How about a particular photo of that trophy Whitetail Buck or other game? If so, we want to hear from you! Please send your submissions to Merrill Foto News Editor Tina Scott at tscott@mmclocal.com by Friday, Oct. 27. Your submission(s) may be featured in the Merrill Foto News' Annual Hunting Guide in mid-November! *Any hunting-related submission is welcome, regardless of how new or old. While e-mailed submissions are preferred, in-person submissions may be dropped off at the Merrill Foto News Office (2011. E. Main Street) between regular business hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m, Monday-Friday.

POLITICAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY: All letters submitted as an endorsement for a political candidate, referendum, or political agenda will carry the same guidelines as above; however, they will be charged \$40.00 per letter of up to 250 words in length. Longer political letters will be accepted but will be charged \$10.00 per additional 50 words.

FFA MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Alexis Kropp, a Sophomore at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named FFA Member of the Month for September 2023. Alexis joined FFA last year because she was interested in all of the things they help with and the trips they go on, she said. "...From helping with June dairy breakfast to helping with Grandpa's Farm, there are a lot of different opportunities to help. I will be helping with Grandpa's Farm and hopefully more to come."



Alexis Kropp



Congratulations from this sponsor: Gold Medal Trailer Sales W4650 Prairie Crest Ln. Merrill, WI 54452 715-536-1201

FFA Members highlighted in this feature are selected by the Executive Committee of the FFA, not by the sponsor.

PINE CREST *from page 1*

want to see a referendum to allow everyone in the County to have their voice heard and their vote counted.

The Lincoln County Census Bureau estimates there were 28,376 residents in Lincoln County, Wis., as of July 1, 2022. Of those residents, 17.4% or approximately 4,937 are under age 18 and 23,436 are adults. And Lincoln County has 16,882 active registered voters according to the Lincoln County Clerk's office as of Oct. 2, 2023.

A total of 782 people responded to our survey online. [While we requested only Lincoln County residents respond to the survey, that number includes 14 non-residents who responded to the survey anyway. Those 14 respondents represent 1.79% of respondents and did not make any significant difference in the outcome of the survey.] The 768 Lincoln County residents who responded represent 3.27% of the 23,436 adults in Lincoln County and 4.55% of Lincoln County's active registered voters. While this is a small fraction of Lincoln County residents, the results from those respondents were telling.

A majority of the survey takers were female; approximately 61% were female and 39 percent were male.

All respondents were over 18 years old, with the vast majority (97%) over the age of 30. Only 24 "young people" ages 19-30 (3.1% of responses) took the survey. Respondents ages 61-70 years old were the largest category of survey takers (32.9%). More than half (56.7%) were ages 61-80 years old. See graphics for complete results.

Of the 782 total respondents, only 7.3% (57 people) said they CURRENTLY have a family member residing at Pine Crest Nursing Home; 37.5% said a member of their family had "ever" resided there, and 62.5% of respondents never had a family member at Pine Crest.

Nearly half (49.7%) of respondents felt Pine Crest "residents receive exceptional (five star) care" and the next highest group of respondents (29.8%) thought Pine Crest "residents receive excellent (four stars out of five) care." Only 1.2% of responses (9 people) indicated "residents should have better care (two stars out of five)," and a single respondent thought "residents receive poor care (one star out of five)." Just over 12% of respondents said they did not have an opinion on the quality of care residents receive at Pine Crest.

To sell or not to sell, to raise taxes or not to raise taxes?

The responses to the questions most specifically related to the issue at the forefront of the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors, and in the freeform comments section, presented a clear directive from those constituents who answered the survey. A full 83.6% of respondents said "No," they did *not* believe Lincoln County should explore and consider selling Pine Crest to a private entity, thus removing taxpayers from the obligation to support Pine Crest costs and expenses. And 85.3% said "Yes," they *would* support an increase in their real estate taxes for five or more years, in order to keep Pine Crest Nursing Home owned by Lincoln County.

In fact, when it came down to the finances, only 14.8% (113 of the 763 people who answered this question) said they would *not* support *any* increased taxes for this purpose. The largest majority (39.7% of the 763 responses) said they would be willing to pay on their real estate taxes "whatever amount is required to keep Pine Crest Nursing Home owned by Lincoln County," another 25.8% said they would be willing to pay \$85 per \$100,000 value of their home in additional annual taxes, and 19.7% said they would be willing to pay an additional \$100 per \$100,000 of their home's value each year in taxes for this purpose.

Eight-five percent support increased taxes, if needed.

15 percent oppose higher taxes

Those in favor of selling the nursing home to a private entity and who did not support an increase in their taxes accounted for only 15% of survey takers. They offered some of the following comments:

"It is not the responsibility of government to fund a nursing home facility," one woman said. "Pine Crest has operated at a significant loss (\$1/2 million +/-yr) for many years, a fact which, under past County management, was hidden. Prior to the misguided expansion of the facility (2016), selling it to be operated by a private entity (still as a nursing home) was

briefly considered, but with a small group of vocal opponents showing up at a meeting, the Board caved to their demands. Since then, costs have spiraled out of control. The current Board is doing the right thing by selling it."

A number of respondents said the problem lies with management. "There are two privately owned nursing homes in Tomahawk that are offering excellent services at no cost to the taxpayers. Pine Crest could be run in the same manner," Charlie Jarvis said.

"I am in favor of the nursing home being privately owned ... As a family care social worker, I am in several nursing homes weekly [with]in a three-hour radius surrounding Merrill. Many are privately owned. They are run and managed differently," another woman said.

"As a former employee of Pine Crest, I think there is no solution under current management," said a woman who identified herself only as Heather. "Census will continue to be an ongoing problem until there are nurses and CNAs willing to work under the management. Management is the main reason for the staffing issues. Taxing the public at large, with no solution to the staffing issues, will only add a year or more to the eventual closing."

Others questioned why selling Pine Crest to a private entity was automatically perceived that it would result in poorer quality care for residents. "I totally support selling Pine Crest to a private company," one woman said. "Being a long-term healthcare worker, I know privately owned does not at all translate to poor care. Nursing homes are regulated and inspected. Staffing is an issue everywhere and a facility is only as good as the employees caring for the residents."

"I just can't come to terms with being okay with our taxes being raised to keep Pine Crest open," another woman said. "Why not sell it to a company that wants to keep it a nursing home."

"... We need to stop hemorrhaging money to keep this place afloat" and "It's time to stop the bleeding" and "I cannot afford higher taxes" were other comments.

"Government should have no part in private enterprise," Ginny Fedowitz said. "We, the taxpayers, should not have to support a business with our taxes that is government run. Period."

"Taxpayers aren't going to pay additional taxes for both Pine Crest AND schools," one Merrill resident said. "I feel passing a school referendum in Merrill should be our most important priority."

"Seems like Pine Crest has been a hot potato for long time now," Craid Madlun said. "Taxpayers are getting bombarded by 'it's only a couple hundred dollars more on your taxes.' Schools need more operating money, nursing home needs more operating capital, etc."

"Raising taxes is not a sustainable solution," one woman said. And another questioned why changes weren't being made to get the nursing home out of the red.

"What options have been explored that would provide income for the nursing home?" a Merrill man asked. "Lincoln County residents are already under financial strain from issues relating to the post pandemic, such as higher food costs, higher energy costs, higher insurance costs, higher rent, higher taxes, higher housing (rent & ownership), you get the picture?"

"Other healthcare entities like former Sacred Heart Hospital and Holy Cross Hospital have been absorbed into health care systems. Same for the medical clinics. There are efficiencies to be gained within a larger organization," he said. "Saving Pine Crest in the short term is not the answer. How many times will increases be passed on?"

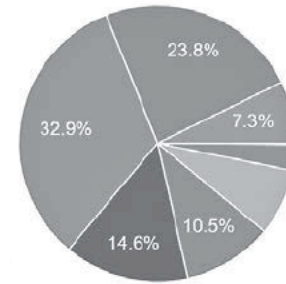
"My answers reflect the current management of Pine Crest," another woman who voted to sell the facility and not raise taxes said. "If there is restructuring and plans put in place that produce a balanced budget, I would certainly change my responses to this survey."

"I worked in accounts receivable and billing years ago prior to the new building," one woman said. "... Now knowing that 100 rooms are sitting empty is highly suspect! Can't pay the bills with 80 residents ... Why are we not filling those rooms with Assisted Living residents? Please look at Grace Lodge in Rhinelander as an example."

"Please retain Clifton Larson to evaluate (as suggested in a recent letter to the

What is your age?

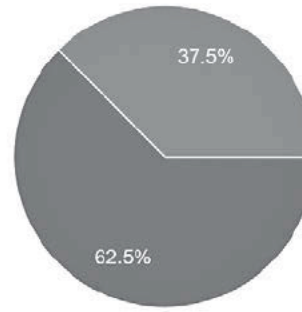
782 responses



- Under 18 years old
- 19-30 years old
- 31-40 years old
- 41-50 years old
- 51-60 years old
- 61-70 years old
- 71-80 years old
- 81 years or older

Has any member of your family EVER resided at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill?

782 responses

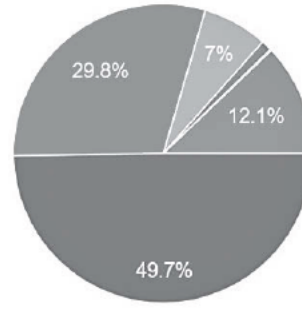


- Yes
- No

Graphics are available in full color on our website.

What is your opinion about the QUALITY of CARE residents receive at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill?

782 responses



- Residents receive exceptional (five star) care.
- Residents receive excellent (four stars out of five) care.
- Residents receive good (three stars out of five) care.
- Residents should have better care (two stars out of five).
- Residents receive poor care (one star...)
- I have no opinion on this.

editor)," Tommy Sanders said.

Increased taxes supported with a caveat

Even some respondents who said they would support a tax increase said changes need to be made. "The way I understand it, is that Pine Crest is operating way over their budget," a Merrill woman said. "If we are able to increase the budget a little, (with minor tax increases), that is fine with me. If it is going to require hundreds of dollars of increases in taxes, then I do not support that and feel it maybe should be sold."

"A society is judged by how it cares for the most vulnerable among them. How can we not care for those who spent their lives caring for us?" Cathy Robinson said. "I have followed this situation closely. It seems there have been options on the table the County Board has chosen to discount. It also seems, that while they were elected to represent our choices, they have instead chosen to prevent our opinions from being heard. Using the statement that the suggested options to keep Pine Crest open are just temporary measures and we will be back in this situation again in a couple of years suggests the future will always be the same as today. We have no way of knowing what the future holds, what other opportunities may arise to solidify the financial foundation of Pine Crest. Our county, our elderly, and those who need Pine Crest deserve the chance to work toward more permanent solutions."

"We need to have clear information regarding the current tax base, anticipated future tax base, actual costs to run Pine Crest, and a detailed plan for managing it well in the future if we keep it," Patty Procknow said. "Pine Crest is a County asset which has been relied upon for a very long time. I would like to see it stay as a County asset but we need a plan for managing it."

"[I] have 25+ years working as a CFO at three different Wisconsin hospitals and advanced each one from 6-digit annual losses to 7-digit annual profits," Thomas J. Semling said. "The primary cause was mismanagement and pocket lining."

"I would support Lincoln County retaining ownership of Pine Crest pending an assessment by an experienced consultant in geriatric services/long-term care specialist who could provide a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the existing services, given the declines that have occurred since the onset of North Central Health Care system assuming the management of the facility," Mary Jo Rajek said. "An experienced consultant can make recommendations as to how to maximize the potential for long-term care services and revenue-producing programs to offset the expected costs of operations when residents age in place and their care is

covered through Medicaid (which has never covered the costs of actual care needs). I have worked in rehabilitation services for over 44 years to include long term care, inpatient rehab services, outpatient rehab services, specialty outpatient clinics for traumatic brain injury, MS, home health, and adult day care. Both of my parents have been residents at Pine Crest ... What I have observed since my return to Pine Crest has been nothing short of an administrative debacle since the management takeover by NCHC. Cost cutting measures have directly impacted the quality of care the residents receive with loss of experienced clinicians, chronically short-staffed units, [and] temp staff who do not have the familiarity with the residents [and] their medical complexities and longer-term emotional needs. While the current care may be adequate, it is not remotely the quality it was when my parents were there several years ago."

"From my perspective, the County Board has been irresponsible in addressing the needs of Pine Crest for years," she said. "While COVID did have a major impact on the costs of care, there appears to have been prior lack of fiscal responsibility in exploring options to offset rising costs. Expenses for the Special Care Unit were ill planned and demonstrate no awareness of the clinical needs for dementia patients. The prior unit was set up more effectively for safe care of patients suffering from memory loss and safety needs. Anyone who has ever worked in a successful dementia program would never have constructed the new unit in the manner in which it was done with multiple rooms not visible to front-line caregivers. If you bother to check the statistics on fall occurrences at Pine Crest, you will find the majority are occurring on the Special Care Unit The Rehab Unit, which should be the revenue producer for Pine Crest, now has long-term care patients residing on the unit and a number of beds are being occupied by hospice patients. New rehab patients are strewn about the other remaining units, often sharing a room vs having a private room and similar services as the rehab patients. While rehab services are provided to all residents in the facility, the inefficiencies of having rehab patients placed all over the facility impacts multiple staff services. A sign remains outside the Rehab Unit indicating that is the location of a program that is no longer in existence ... it is to be called the West Wing. There has been next to no effective marketing of the rehab program, no community service clinics such as a Falls Screening Clinic, or Stroke Clinic, etc. to pull in potential referrals for both inpatient sub acute or outpatient services. One of my family members who works at a large

See PINE CREST page 21

HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming game preview: Bluejays vs. Hodags

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

This year's Varsity Homecoming Football Game will pit the Merrill Bluejays against the Rhinelander Hodags, and it promises to be an exciting game at Jay Stadium.

"On Saturday, October 7, the Rhinelander Hodags are rolling into town for a Homecoming showdown," said Merrill Varsity Football Coach Jason Wadzinski. With all of the fun events planned for Homecoming week, the game will be the highlight and one of the biggest events at the stadium this season.

"We've struggled to find our footing this year for the young squad we have," he said, "but we're hoping to put things together for the community on this unique day that means so much to so many. Thank you for your continued support."

In addition, "We will be recognizing the Silver M inductees at halftime of this game," Wadzinski said, "so we're hoping for a large and raucous crowd to cheer us on."

Wear some blue and bring your Bluejay pride, and plan to cheer on the hometown team as they battle it out against the Hodags!



2023 Homecoming Princesses

Freshmen - Lily Hoff, Sophomores - Destiny Trevino, Juniors - Mady Graap, Seniors - Kayli Wirtala, Sophie Simon, and Olivia Pierce. Missing from photo: Katy Glaze.

Photo courtesy of Merrill High School

GO BLUEJAYS!

MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL • 2023 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, Oct. 2

WEAR CLASS COLORS DAY

- Seniors - Blue • Juniors - Black
- Sophomores - Red • Freshmen - White
- Staff - Alumni Shirts

Powder Puff Football Game:

Senior Girls (in blue) vs. Junior Girls (in black)

7:00 p.m. at Jay Stadium • \$2.00 admission

Tuesday, Oct. 3

WEAR YOUR PAJAMAS DAY

Wednesday, Oct. 4

BARBIE VS. KEN DRESS-UP DAY

Powder Buff Volleyball Game:

Senior Boys vs. Junior Boys

7:00 p.m. at Merrill Field House

\$2.00 admission

Thursday, Oct. 5

CLASS DISTINCTION DRESS-UP DAY

- Seniors - Summer • Juniors - Spring
- Sophomores - Winter • Freshmen - Fall
- Staff - Road Construction Worker

Friday, Oct. 6

BLUEJAY PRIDE DRESS-UP DAY

Cross Country Team Running of the Ball: The Cross Country Team will drive to Rhinelander and run the Homecoming Game Football around Rhinelander's football field. They will then drive to Sara Park in Tomahawk and run the ball all the way from Tomahawk to Merrill, in time to run the ball in to the Homecoming Assembly!

Homecoming Assembly

1:00 p.m. at Merrill Field House

Bonfire starting at dusk

Saturday, Oct. 7

Parade 11:00 a.m.: Starts at Normal Park. Parade will go down 6th Street to Memorial Drive to the High School

Homecoming Football Game

1:30 p.m. at Jay Stadium

\$5.00 admission

Homecoming Dance

7:30-10:30 p.m. at Merrill Field House

Tickets \$5.00/person purchased at the dance
Only Merrill High School students allowed to attend (must have student ID)

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HOMECOMING 2023

GO



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Do you know the school song? Bet some of you are humming or singing along now even as you read the words.

Alma Matter

Hail to the Blue and Hail to the White
Hail to our Alma Mater Merrill High
True to our colors we will be
Ever pledged in loyalty
All Hail, All Hail
All Hail to thee our Merrill High

And what about these oldies? Do you remember how they go?

Loyalty

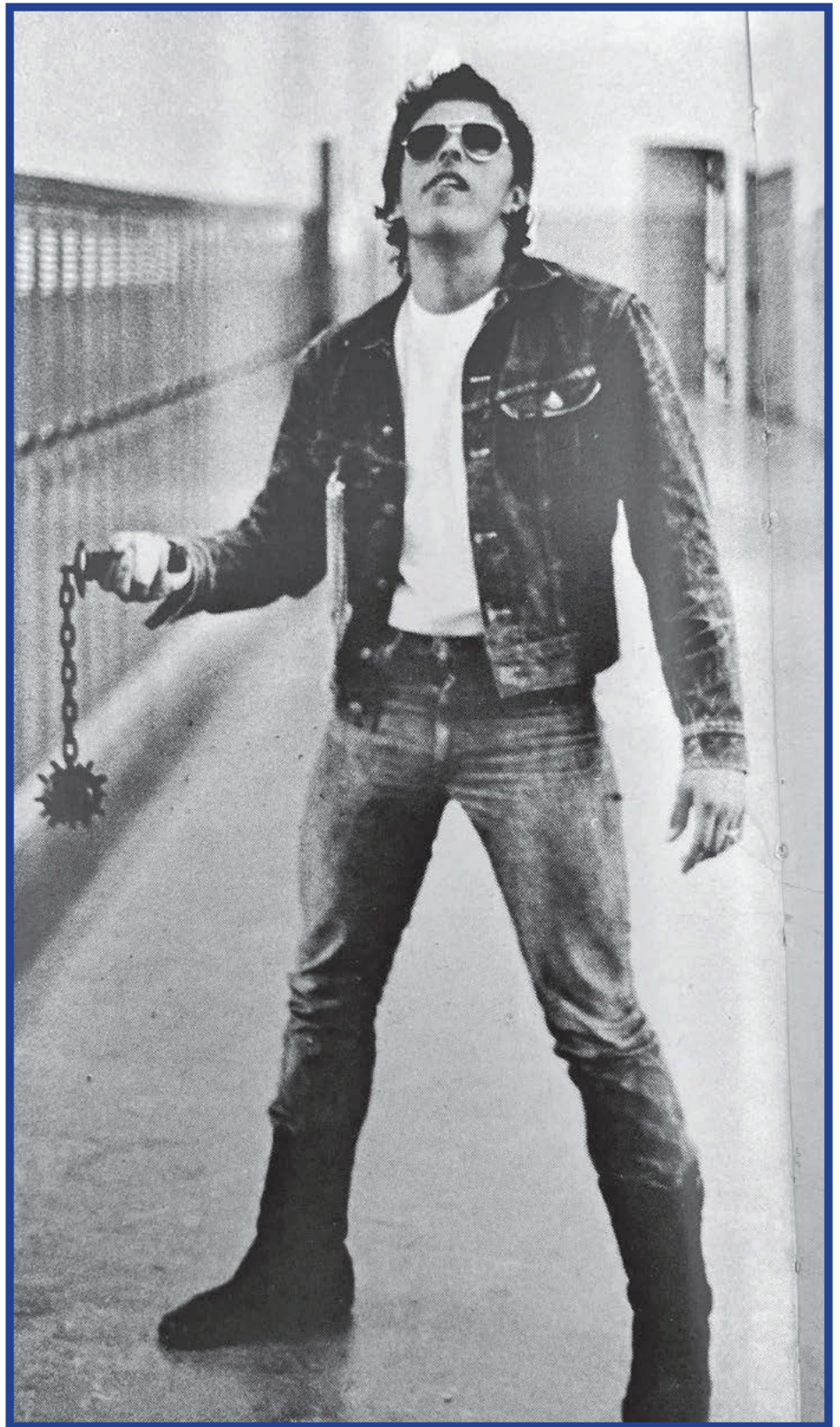
We're loyal to you Merrill High
For we know you are out to do or die
You never will stop till you reach the tiptop
You will go till you drop Merrill High
U-rah
Carry on as you have in days of yore
Live up to the grads gone before
You sure are the best of all
In spring, summer, winter, fall
We're loyal to you Merrill High

Let's All Stand Up

Let's all stand up and cheer for Merrill
Whether it's victory or defeat
We'll always keep our colors flying
Always advance, ne'er retreat
Our blue and white boys won't stop fighting
They'll always run that score up high
Come on and win team we're behind you
Fighting for Merrill to do or die

Homecoming ... through the years

50 years ago ... Homecoming 1973



In 1973, Nostalgia Day was one of the Homecoming Week events, and the theme was Grease. Bobby socks, leather jackets, and poodle skirts were the rage that day. Here Breck Mittlesteadt shows off his best impression of a greaser.

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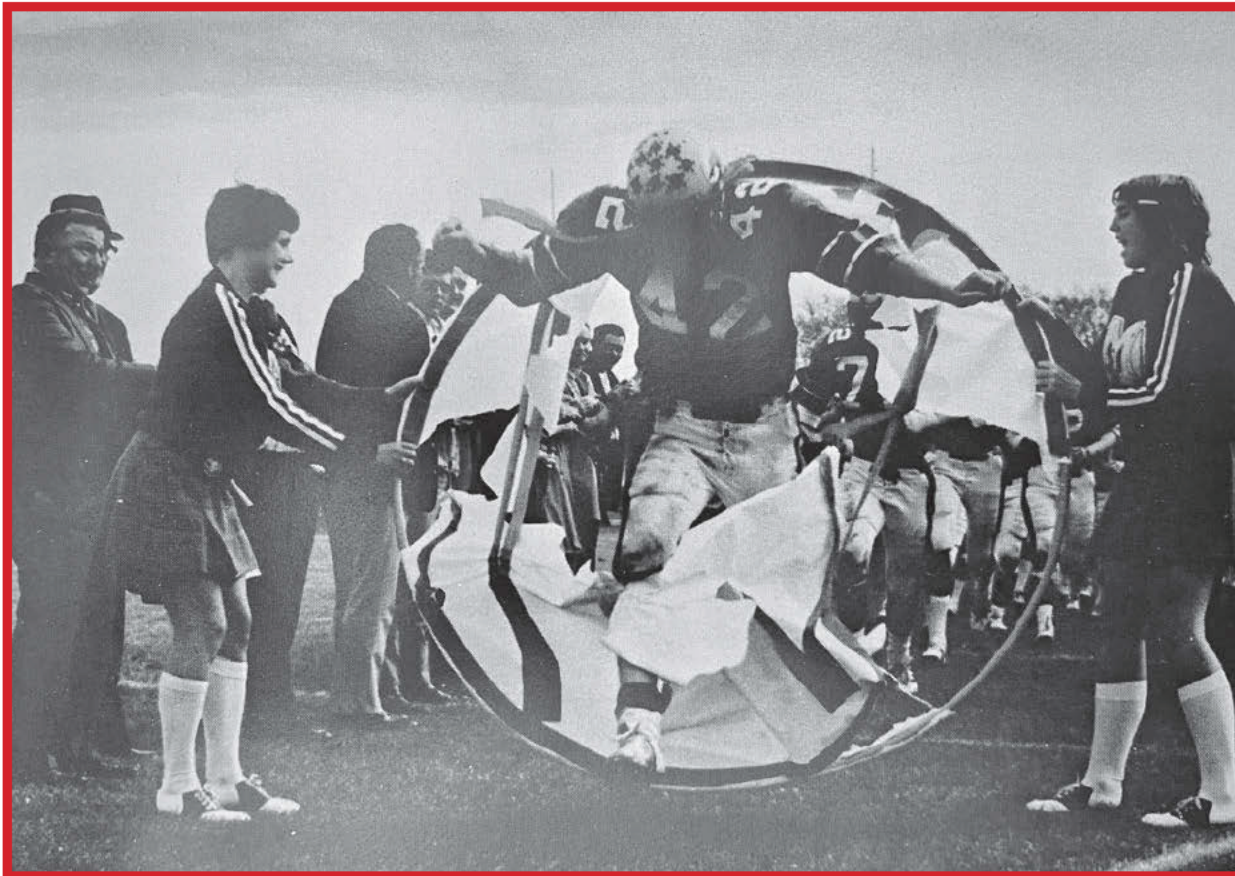
HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming ... through the years

50 years ago ... Homecoming 1973



The Bluejay luau float was the number one float in the Homecoming Parade in 1973.



The Merrill Bluejay football players run out onto the field for the big event ... the Homecoming game of 1973 against Marshfield. Sadly, it was a tough game and Merrill was defeated. But a week of festivities including a Homecoming Assembly, a Homecoming Parade, and a Homecoming Dance made it a great Homecoming celebration in spite of the loss.



Sue Anderson was crowned Homecoming Queen 1973. She was escorted to the dance by Wally Chase.

Good Luck
Bluejays against the Rhinelander Hodags!

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HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming ... through the years

25 years ago ... Homecoming 1998



1998 Homecoming Court.

GO BLUEJAYS!



"Peace Out" ... and flashing the peace sign ... Homecoming 1998.

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As we recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we remember the women who have lost their lives to the disease, and we voice our support for those in the fight of their lives.

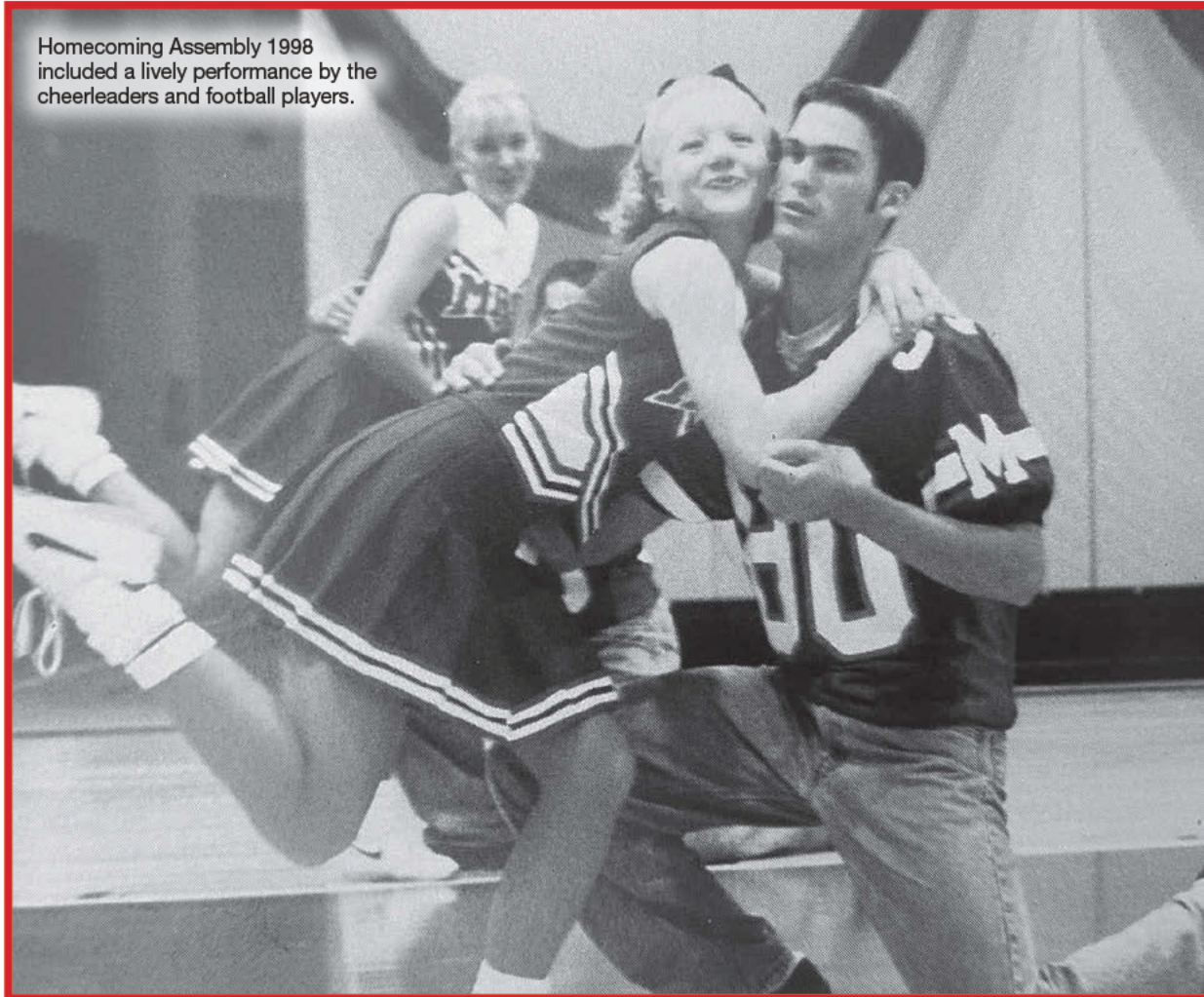


Share the aware on Facebook and Twitter to show your support for Breast Cancer Awareness Month this October. Visit facebook.com/nameorg or [@nameorg](https://twitter.com/nameorg) to help save lives with important screening information, healthy lifestyle tips, and more.

HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming ... through the years

25 years ago ... Homecoming 1998



Homecoming Assembly 1998 included a lively performance by the cheerleaders and football players.



Homecoming Week 1998 celebrations included a day to dress up like hippies because it was all about the 1970's, where bell bottoms were cool and Disco was king.



BELOW: The Junior and Senior girls face off in the Homecoming Powder Puff Game of 1998.



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HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming ... through the years

10 years ago ... Homecoming 2013



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HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming ... through the years

10 years ago ... Homecoming 2013



In 2013, Homecoming royalty included Caitlyn Kolehouse, Christa Schlieff, Connor Biesel, Emily Gessler, Isabelle Main, McKenna Robbins, and Cassandra Chism.



Homecoming Assembly 2013 included tug of war competitions, pitting the boys ...



... against the girls.

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HOMECOMING 2023

5 years ago ... Homecoming 2018



Homecoming Football Game 2018: The Merrill Bluejays vs. the Rhinelander Hodags.



Homecoming 2018 was a battle between the Bluejays and the Hodgs ... just like this year will be. In preparation for Homecoming Week, students painted business windows in the community to rev up the school spirit, like this painting of a Bluejay stomping a Hodag. Wonder who will stomp who this year! Go Bluejays!



The Senior Girls (in blue) and the Junior Girls (in black) are ready for some Homecoming 2018 Powder Puff Football. It's all in good fun!



Some of the Junior Girls playing in the 2018 Homecoming Powder Puff game pose for a picture.



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Katy Ball was named Homecoming Queen 2018.

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PINE CREST *from page 8*

local hospital has repeatedly indicated that Pine Crest is too slow in their acceptance of patients, often requiring the hospital to send patients elsewhere. Some individuals may be out of network, but the majority of the time it comes down to slow processing. While hospice care is definitely needed, it is unclear why the location of their placement is in a rehab bed, as their stay at the facility may surpass months. We had a Hospice Care Unit which allowed patients and their families access to staff experienced in their care and support needs and private areas to gather or grieve.”

“To add to the fiscal nightmare already in existence,” Rajek said, “There apparently are plans to construct an Ambulatory Dementia Unit where the original Dementia Unit was located. What family member in their right mind would bring their family member to this unit when the fate of Pine Crest is so up in the air? I am supposed to bring my family member to a facility that cannot currently meet their existing staffing needs, much less the needs of ambulatory confused, often agitated and restless, dementia patients. Most of us with experience with dementia patients who are ambulatory or independent in wheelchair use know the programming and service needs of these individuals is above normal staffing. What happens to those residents when they are no longer ambulatory? Do they go to the other Special Care Unit with a reduced level of services and new staff?”

“Staff on occasion are asked to provide input only to face further cuts and asked to keep doing more with less, keep documenting more care that they do not have time to provide, [and] keep trying to stay positive amidst the insanity and ignorance of County Board decisions,” she said. “I have worked for for-profit long-term care and rehab facilities and there are certainly pros and cons for that option. The one thing that is clear with those successful programs is that they anticipate the market, they promote their services in advance of financial calamities, they seek grant funding to offset care costs for special programs, they maximize the potential of their facilities whether it be space rental, collaboration with community programs that serve as referral sources; promote and protect or expand their revenue producing services; and keep their beds filled. Every long-term care facility at one point or another will have an increase in their Medicaid population. This should have been anticipated and efforts should have been taken to beef up the revenue producing side of their programs, long before COVID, and should have been immediately resumed once COVID subsided. What has resulted in North Central and the County’s pathetic fiscal management to date has been chaotic at best, short sighted, and a disservice to the residents at Pine Crest and to the committed staff who make every attempt to provide ongoing quality care in the midst of uncertainty. So much of this angst and fiscal mess could have been minimized had there been informed leadership committed to exploring options proactively in this challenging health care environment. Since that is a moot point at present, what our County needs is a viable quality-focused long-term care facility that meets the needs of its residents. Every effort should be made to keep Pine Crest as an option for care in this community; the alternative will be heartbreaking for so many and an unforgivable loss for years to come.”

“Many (if not most) of the residents at Pine Crest have lived their entire lives in the Merrill area working for low wages and no future retirement pension or 401K,” one Merrill woman said. “They kept Merrill businesses alive. When it came time to sell their homes at a low cost, it was not enough to cover nursing home care. Most households nowadays need two incomes to make ends meet. Families aren’t able to stay home and take care of their elderly parents like they used to. We owe it to our elderly to keep Pine Crest alive ... When my mother was a resident until 2011, almost all rooms were double occupancy. Single rooms were for self-pay only. When they added on, everything changed. I think they could make better use of the space and make some of the wings assisted-living only. Less staff needed for some areas. Why not sell the property to the east and help to pay off some of the debt? If Pine Crest is sold, that property is going to be sold to a

developer to make a hefty profit.”

“There has got to be a way to make this place profitable once again,” a rural Merrill woman said. “Adding an assisted-living portion would be great, possibly connected daycare options. Try looking for these things in this area. The waiting lists are long and sometimes there are no other options. We need to care for our aging population ... It’s time to brainstorm on how to improve the current situation, not sell it off to a private party.”

“Thank you so much for opening up this line of communication!” Janet Wells said. “Pine Crest has been a part of our community for a long time and should be given a high priority among our valued assets. I believe an unbiased, complete assessment should be made of its management staff and operations and, if they need to be made, changes should be implemented to reduce costs. I am also in favor of portions of the facility that are not occupied by residents being made available for other purposes, such as affordable day care for children; this particular option would generate some income, but more importantly for our community, it would give residents a new purpose and much pleasure and the children opportunities to learn about history as well as life-learned wisdom on life.”

“It is overly simplistic and misleading to ask what citizens are willing to pay without presenting a complete analysis, including expectations of future demand,” a Merrill man said.

Citizens for keeping Pine Crest County owned

“The community would like to keep Pine Crest community owned because the community is a family, and family care for their own,” Carey Volgman said.

“This facility is vital to the Lincoln County residents,” Linda Huss said. “We live in an area where many come to retire and enjoy the quiet life. Many have grown up here and returned after retirement to be back with family. These people need an affordable place to place aging parents nearby and not a couple hours away. If you interview the younger residents of Lincoln County, you will find that they are smart enough to know that a couple hundred dollars a year is a great investment for quality of life for the senior citizens of this county. It saddens me that the County Board has placed the value of a dollar over the value of caring for the aging and victims of stroke, major heart attacks, etc.”

“I worked over 23 years at Pine Crest and I am now retired,” Susan Thompson said. “I always thought Pine Crest would be there when and if I ever needed it. I am very concerned about having affordable and quality care available if Pine Crest is sold! I hope people in this county care more for their neighbors and family than they do about the almighty dollar!”

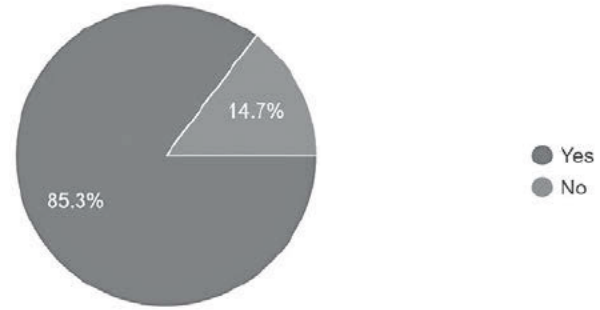
“If I ever need to go to a nursing home, I would want to stay in the town I live in,” Linda Proft said. “Merrill is my home. I don’t want to live anywhere else. It would be hard enough just leaving my house, but to leave my town too would just be too much.”

“Keeping Pine Crest a County-owned care facility would be beneficial to those who reside in Lincoln County because Pine Crest accepts more patients who are on a fixed or a lower income,” Taylor Polak said. “Instead of funds being solely sourced from property taxes, an increase of County sales tax would spread the need for funds across anyone who shops in Lincoln County. A sales tax increase of 0.5% would be a great start. This is an increase of 50 cents per every \$100 spent. This would solve the issues of those who only own property supporting the cost of Pine Crest. With a County-wide increase of sales tax, sufficient funds would be allotted to keep Pine Crest County owned. Keeping a County-owned nursing home in Lincoln County will allow fixed- or lower-income residents a safe place when they are in need of a nursing home.”

“One risk of selling Pine Crest to a private entity is the cost of staying there increased, [which could cause] fixed or lower income residents to be evicted,” she said. “Another risk would be the potential of Pine Crest closing, resulting in Lincoln County residents [having to look] elsewhere when they are in need of a nursing home. If a Lincoln County resident enters a nursing home in a different county, there is a potential of the entire family to move out of the area.”

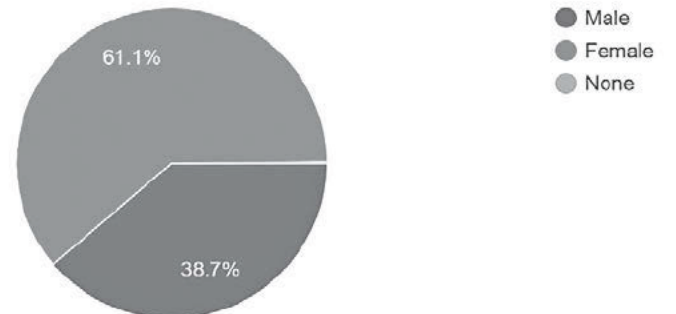
“Property taxes here are very low

Would you support an INCREASE in your real estate taxes for five or more years, in order to keep Pine Crest Nursing Home owned by Lincoln County?

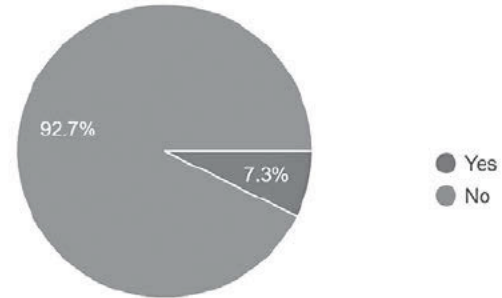


What is your gender?

782 responses



Is any member of your family CURRENTLY residing at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill?



compared to other places we’ve lived, both in and out of state-as well as other locations in Wisconsin,” Sarah Litzer said. “I have no children, but have never begrudged the amount of property taxes we pay in order to fund schools. I consider it an investment to make my community more livable-and the same is true for property taxes we pay that fund the MANY services our community offers, even if we don’t avail ourselves of those services. No taxes equals no services, a foolish choice for people living together in our present-day society. We are retired and live on a ‘fixed’ income, but we continue to CHOOSE to live here BECAUSE OF the services available and the relatively low cost of living. People who have never lived anywhere else seem to lack this perspective.”

“A recommendation I have for the County Board,” Polak said, “Is they should take a look at how other county-owned facilities are run and funded. How do they stay open and afloat? Why are they receiving more funds than Lincoln County? What can Lincoln County do to earn more government funding?”

“Pine Crest has been a staple in this community for as long as I am alive,” Adam Wegner said. “It has affected my family from both standpoints-from employment to care. I have family members that have worked at Pine Crest for many years. I have also had family members that received care for many years, as well. It was affordable care and in my hometown! If this facility is sold to a private company, or even worse vacated, it would be a terrible thing. Some of my family could possibly be out of work or out of care. I think that the County should stay in ownership of it and, as a County resident, it is a great value to have it. Not only for myself in the future or possibly my family members. If Pine Crest gets sold, who is to say that it will provide the care it does now or stay around. I like the fact it is close to family. If I would have to travel far to see family in care, it would be a great inconvenience ...”

“I have worked at a few health care facilities in Merrill and surrounding areas, Pine Crest included, and out of all the health care places [where] I have worked, Pine Crest was the one I loved working at the most,” Melissa from Merrill said. “When North Central took over, things started going downhill and, as employees, we no longer felt like we mattered; we were/are more just like a body or a number. Between NCHC causing several issues and due to

other unforeseen events in my personal life, I had to resign from my position as a CNA at Pine Crest at the end of June 2023. It would be a shame for Pine Crest to be shut down or for it to be under new ownership, as no one knows what would happen with a new owner. There also really is not anywhere else for us to take our elderly residents. Over the 7.5 years I worked at Pine Crest, we had several residents from surrounding nursing and assisted-living homes come to us with horrible bed sores and pressure ulcers from not being repositioned or taken care of properly. At Pine Crest, we did and do all we/they can to help heal the wounds, and most recover enough to no longer be bed ridden.”

“Pine Crest is the only 5-star rated long term care facility in the area,” Tricia Hoffman said. “Compared to the other privately owned facilities in Lincoln (and Oneida) County, this would be the only facility I would want myself or other family members to reside in if we needed it. I have heard nothing but glowing reports about this facility, and though it may run a deficit financially, it is a valuable resource for our county, and I would be willing to pay extra property taxes to help keep it County owned, as I fear once it becomes under private ownership, quality of care will begin to decline. It is hard to find a long-term care facility that people rave about in a positive manner, but Pine Crest has accomplished this, and we should not just ‘throw it away’ to the highest bidder.”

“Pine Crest Nursing Home is a shining star in Merrill ... No one wants higher taxes. However, some things are worth paying for,” Louise Doescher said. “... We will all grow old. Investing in Pine Crest is an investment in our future to be living in a loving and comfortable environment in our old age, when we can no longer take care of ourselves. I hope that we get together and work to save Pine Crest.”

“County-funded Pine Crest is a need in our community,” a Tomahawk woman said. “The amount of elderly needing care has declined, [but] the solution is NOT to sell out to a privately funded business. Find another solution.”

“The primary flaw in this survey is that the ONLY options that the survey offers for saving Pine Crest are property tax increases,” a Merrill woman said. “This makes it feel as though the survey makers have already accepted the inaccurate claim

PINE CREST *from page 21*

of the Pine Crest Ad Hoc Committee that no other options were worth seriously exploring. That's too bad-this survey idea was a good step toward impartial journalism. But obviously, it could be even better."

One woman summarized a common thread running throughout the responses: "People in this County paid for years for this nursing home," she said. "For many, it was all of their working life so far. Now it could be taken away from them, and that is not fair."

A referendum would settle the matter

The one thing both sides of this issue seem to totally agree on is this: "I think the matter should be addressed through a referendum. I am disappointed in the County Board's indifference to resident concerns," Brian Riese said.

The County Board's refusal to, thus far, put the matter to a referendum, has those with opinions on both sides of the issue frustrated and upset.

"Why does the County Board refuse to put this matter up for a referendum?" one respondent asked. Many others had similar comments.

"Honesty and transparency are ESSENTIAL when deciding this very important issue," Eileen Guthrie said.

"I believe that the voters should have the right to decide on the selling of Pine Crest," another woman said.

"Unfortunately, in the modern political climate, elected politicians often forget their mission is to govern the will of the people and not their own misguided political allegiances," Bruce Sunde said. "Denying the opportunity for citizen referendum is the epitome of political arrogance and voter marginalization. The current political notion of 'we know better than the people who sent us here' certainly can be rectified at the ballot box."

"In my opinion, the County Board made a mistake by not allowing the people of this County to vote on an issue that is very personal," Tyler Frederick said. "If the Board just allowed it to go to a vote by the people, then either the people would vote yes to increase in property taxes or vote no to not increase taxes. The yes vote gives the County money to continue the ownership of Pine Crest and no vote means they can now look at other options."

"Pine Crest is a vital asset for our community," a Merrill man said. "I'm sure a significant portion of residents would not be able to live there if it went private. I feel that

it would be worth exploring options for selling to a private entity, but only after all other options are exhausted. This really should be something to be voted on by a referendum of some sort. Give County residents the chance to make the decision since it will be coming directly from their pockets."

"I believe it is irresponsible of our elected officials to make such an important decision for the residents of Lincoln County without a referendum informing them of how their electorate feels about this issue," a Merrill man said. "No one wants their taxes to go up, but there is an obligation of the citizens to take care of each other. I am not sure a private entity has the same understanding."

"I definitely feel the matter should go to referendum," Shirley Engel said. "I would like the County to retain Pine Crest, but feel everyone should have a chance to express their opinion."

"[I'm] disappointed the ELECTED officials have not listened to people in the community. They have lost all trust for me," a Merrill woman said. Many others made similar comments. "I understand the complexity of this issue, and understand this is a tough issue. But listen to those who have elected you!"

"Listen to your constituents," Gwen Cotter said.

"There should be a referendum re the selling of Pine Crest," Nadine Appel said. "... Like others around the county, I find the Board's action suspicious and perhaps nefarious. The people should decide. ... Why the speed to sell? What's behind the reasoning and the benefit to those saying sell. The people of Lincoln County deserve a say and options."

"If Pine Crest is sold, there will be no turning back," she said. "Time to put the brakes on and rethink this whole decision with the public's input. Thank you for providing this survey..."

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The Lincoln County Humane Society would like to thank this very sweet girl, Addy, for coming in to volunteer with her grandma and bringing in some goodies for the pets and some cute cups of treats for the staff! "Thank you, Addy, for being so kind!" staff said. Submitted photo.

MAPS accepts September donations

The following donations were approved and/or accepted at the Sept. 27, 2023, Merrill Area Public Schools (MAPS) Board of Directors meeting:

Donation of funds from Marshfield Clinic Health System valued at \$2,807.00 for the Botvin LifeSkills Program in the Merrill Area Public Schools; donation of the zone-blocking chute from the Merrill Football Booster Club valued at \$3,305.00 as upgraded practice equipment for the high school football team; and donations of a check from Wausau Breakfast Optimists valued at \$1,000 for financial assistance to the Merrill Football to rent a coach bus for a game; backpack supplies from Merrill Forward Together valued at \$360 to students in need at Kate Goodrich Elementary School; backpacks and school supplies from Weinbrenner Shoe Co. valued at \$400 for helping Washington Elementary students in need; a check from Breaman Merrill Ford valued at \$100 for purchasing a new scorecard for the Merrill Tennis Team; funds from Merrill Forward Initiative valued at \$460.88 for providing extra lane dividers at PRMS; four gift cards for one large pizza valued at \$76.00 for PRSYL door prizes for Family Pizza Night; a check from Merrill Firefighters Charities valued at \$300.00 for buying three new score cards for the Merrill Tennis Team; a check from Gail Abegglen valued at \$25.00 for the Merrill High School Trap Team in memory of Mike Moellendorf; and, clothing from St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store valued at \$100.00 as backup clothing at Kate Goodrich Elementary School.

Thank you to all of the donors.

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MOVIES YOU GOTTA SEE

'School of Rock': Revisiting the quintessential Jack Black film 20 years later

BY JALEN MAKI

School of Rock could only be led by one actor on this planet, and his name is Jack Black.

In *School of Rock*, the 2003 comedy film directed by Richard Linklater (*Dazed and Confused*, *Boyhood*, the *Before* trilogy), Black plays Dewey Finn, a kind-hearted, struggling rock musician living with his friend and former-bandmate-turned-substitute teacher Ned Schneebly (Mike White, who wrote the film) and Ned's cold and controlling girlfriend Patti (Sarah Silverman). After being kicked out of his band (20-minute guitar solos and ill-fated stage dives among the reasons why) ahead of a potentially lucrative battle of the bands competition, and on the verge of being thrown out of the apartment by Ned at Patti's behest, a cash-strapped Dewey makes a desperate and risky move: he pretends to be Ned and takes a job as a substitute teacher at an esteemed local prep school.

What starts out as simply a scheme to pay his share of the rent takes an unexpected turn when Dewey makes a surprising discovery – the students in his class, all about ten years old, *rock*. Well, not exactly – although their focus is classical music, Dewey sees their headbanging potential, and with the battle of the bands competition's \$10,000.00 top prize seemingly within reach, he hatches a plan.

The students return from their music class to find that their classroom has been transformed into a makeshift jam space. A few of them are recruited as band members – lead guitar, drums, bass, keyboards and backup vocals – and Dewey takes on the role of lead singer and rhythm guitarist. The rest of the students are given an array of assignments, including band manager, roadies, and security.

Dewey tells the students that the battle of the bands is a prestigious class project that would have positive effects on their futures, but that's not true – he makes it up to pique their interest and ensure their full focus and participation.

Dewey casts the less important subjects aside (you know, like math and reading and social studies and whatnot) and replaces them with what is essentially Rock and Roll 101. As part of the coolest class ever conceived, the kids are given CDs by Led Zeppelin, Blondie, Rush, Pink Floyd, and other legends as "homework," and over the course of several weeks (depicted in a montage featuring my favorite Ramones song, "Bonzo Goes to Bitburg"), Dewey teaches the kids everything he knows about rock. He provides a lesson on the interconnectedness of music genres and shows the kids footage of the greats – the students attentively study Pete Townshend of The Who's trademark windmill guitar technique, legendary jazz drummer Buddy Rich, and Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. Meanwhile, the band and crew continue to gear up for the competition.

Although watching the kids learn the nuts and bolts of rock and roll is incredibly fun, the heart of the movie lies in Dewey's individual interactions with the students.

One of my favorite moments in the film happens when Lawrence, a shy piano virtuoso who's taken up the mantle of keyboardist, flawlessly sight reads The Doors' "Touch Me," to which Dewey reacts with the delight and giddiness of a child who was just handed three hundred dollars in cash seconds before entering a candy store. Later that day, Lawrence approaches Dewey in the cafeteria and confesses that he doesn't think he's "cool" enough to be in the band. Dewey's response – reassuring Lawrence that he is, in fact, "the cat's pajamas" and "the bee's knees" and the subsequent secret handshake he devises on the fly – is almost overwhelmingly kind.

Several other similar moments happen throughout the film – a student expresses their feelings of insecurity or doubt to Dewey, and he responds with genuine compassion and offers admittedly idiosyncratic, yet surprisingly sage, individually-tailored advice.

There are few things more important to a kid than feeling a sense of belonging. As an outcast himself, Dewey knows this as well as anyone, and through his own personal experience, he connects with the kids in a very unique and effective way. Dewey's ability to make the kids feel like they're part of something that matters, while, on a personal level, reassuring each of their importance to the band and encouraging them to empower themselves by embracing their skills, is simply wonderful and, in a strange way, kind of heartbreaking – it's easy to imagine that this kind of support was absent from Dewey's life at such a crucial age.

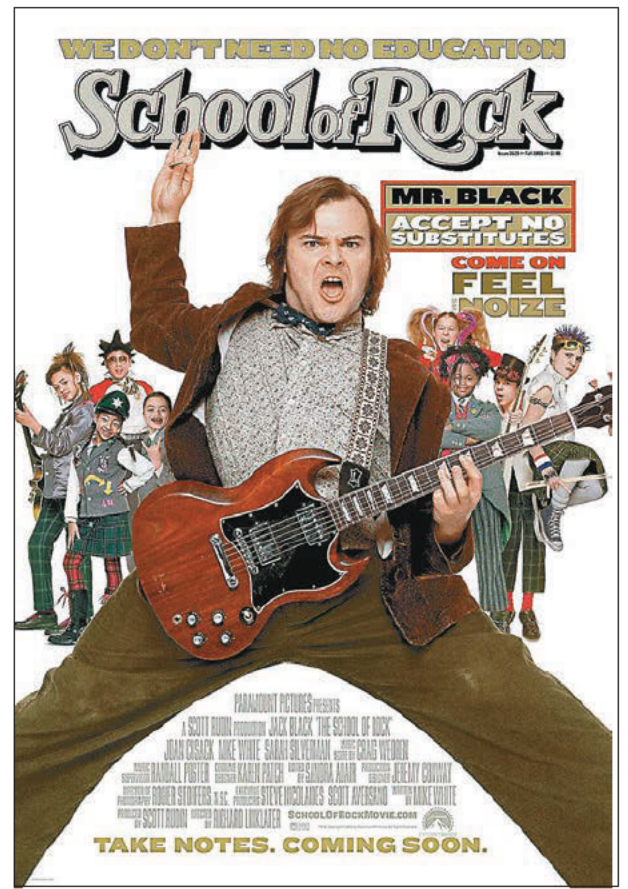
This all isn't to say Dewey's perfect. I mean, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that the man connived his way into a teaching position he was *extremely* unqualified for and exploited the students and the school for personal and financial gain. This is frowned upon, and from a legal perspective, you could probably make a pretty ironclad case that Dewey should've ended up in the crowbar hotel. But, no one was harmed, everyone learned a lesson or two, and the band ended up being pretty awesome, which, in totality, affords Dewey a little leniency from the long arm of the law, in my opinion.

School of Rock would not be *School of Rock* without Jack Black. He's a rocket ship to Mars from the opening scene to the end credits, delivering an absolutely singular performance. Black has an uncanny ability to shift gears dynamically – in one scene, he'll do something that would make other actors, let alone normal people, look insane (vocally improvising guitar solos, for example); and in

the next, he'll display authentic humanity and profound tenderness. Yet, these frequent changes in energy and tone aren't jarring or disorienting; Black oscillates between these two extremes with remarkable ease and grace. Black is the personification of charisma and kindness. He is the soul of the film.

School of Rock turned 20 years on Oct. 3, but it is absolutely evergreen. Neil Young once said, "Rock and roll can never die," and I believe that to be the truth, but the search for acceptance amid the trials and tribulations of youth will also endure. Everyone, whether they're 10 years old or 70, wants a place to belong, and the people who open their doors and hearts to such havens are the best among us. And if it just so happens that sanctuary involves melting a few faces or changing the world with one great rock show, then in the words of AC/DC (and Dewey Finn), I say: For those about to rock, I salute you.

Follow Jalen on Letterboxd at www.letterboxd.com/jalenmaki182/ to see what he's been watching, and read more at www.medium.com/@jalenmaki.



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Application forms are also available at the Lincoln County Service Center (upper level), 801 N. Sales Street in Merrill, Wisconsin and on the County's website www.co.lincoln.wi.us (career opportunities)

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Merrill Varsity Girls Tennis Team concludes their season

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Merrill Girls Varsity Tennis Team played at Conference on Sept. 28, 2023.

Singles:

No. 1-Wausau East's Abbey Olson def. Merrill's Emily Frahm 6-0, 6-0
DC Everest's Mika Bublik def. Merrill's Emily Frahm 6-4, 6-2

No. 2-Wausau East's Talia Schindwein def. Merrill's Kaytlyn Hulke 6-0, 6-1
DC Everest's Kylie Koch def. Merrill's Kaytlyn Hulke 6-1, 6-0

No. 3-Stevens Point's Isabella Williams def. Merrill's Rose Dornbrack 6-1, 6-0
Wausau East's Salome Ujarmeli def. Merrill's Rose Dornbrack 6-0, 6-1

No. 4-Wausau West's Alyssa Straub def. Merrill's Claire Hintz 6-1, 6-0
Merrill's Claire Hintz def. Wausau East's Lillyan Casey 6-7(3), 6-3, 10-4

Stevens Point's Kayla Peterman def. Merrill's Claire Hintz 6-0, 6-2

Doubles:

No. 1-Wausau West's Miranda Nelson/Chloe Vandenburg def. Merrill's Chloe Belant/Sarah Rell 6-1, 6-0
Chloe and Sarah went on to beat Wausau East's Naomi Potter/Scout Sweeney 6-2, 6-3

Chloe/Sarah then fell to DC Everest's Brianna Cook/Makenna Kampman 7-6(2), 6-3
No. 2-Stevens Point's Annika Borgnes/Sophia Brandt def. Merrill's Jenna Malluege/Korina Kraegenbrink 6-0, 6-0

Jenna and Korina then fell to Wausau East's Taryn Throm/Meghan Schwartz 6-2, 6-3
No. 3-Wisconsin Rapid's Greta Dickman/Annabelle Ross def. Merrill's

Johanna Dahlke/Parker Wagenaar 6-0, 6-1
Johanna and Parker then fell to DC Everest's Sandra Brierton/Kaylee Dunow 6-4, 6-3

"Claire Hintz, Chloe Belant, and Sarah Rell played great today," Merrill Varsity Tennis Coach Brad Barton said.

The Merrill Girls played in the Sub-sectionals Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, and wrapped up their Varsity Tennis season.

Singles:

No. 1-Emily Frahm, Merrill lost to Mia Bailey, Wausau West 6-0, 6-0. "Emily played well," Barton said. "Mia is ranked about fifth in the state."

No. 2-Kaytlyn Hulke, Merrill lost to Alexis Kloth, Wausau West, 6-0, 6-0. "Kaytlyn had grown tremendously over the last three years. She has reached #2 varsity singles."

No. 3-Rose Dornbrack, Merrill lost to Lilly Wittwer, Wausau West, 6-0, 6-0.

No. 4-Claire Hintz, Merrill lost to Natalie Preuss, Medford, 6-1, 6-1. "Claire is our top Freshman this year," Barton said.

Doubles:

No. 1-Chloe Belant/Sarah Rell, Merrill lost to Chloe Vandenburg/Miranda Nelson, Wausau West, 6-0, 6-0. "Chloe and Sarah have as many Varsity wins as anyone this year (four)."

No. 2-Korina Kraegenbrink/Jenna Malluege, Merrill lost to Rachel Harder/Mallory Smogoleski, Wausau West, 6-1, 6-1. Likewise, Jenna also had four wins, Barton said. And "Korina is at three wins this year."

No. 3-Johanna Dahlke/Parker Wagenaar, Merrill lost to Savannah Danielson/Ingrid Mahler, Wausau West, 6-1, 6-0.

This concludes the Merrill Varsity Tennis season.

Merrill football players hoping to turn their season around at Homecoming game

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

Merrill Varsity Bluejay Football players traveled to Hayward last Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, for another tough game. In the first quarter, Hayward got things started with a touchdown and scored 7 points while Merrill remained scoreless. Then in the second quarter Hayward made another touchdown, but the kick was no good, and the score jumped by another 6. The next time around, they fared better, though, scoring a touchdown and making the kick, as well. By halftime, Merrill was down 20 points, having failed to score.

Both teams remained scoreless in the entire second half of the game, and Merrill suffered a defeat.

"We were a handful of miscues away from making this a very close game," Merrill Varsity Football Head Coach Jason Wadzinski said. "The Bluejay defense kept them out of the endzone in the second half, but we weren't able to get the production from the other side of the ball yet."

During the game #102 Jacob Schmeltzer made 102 passing yards, #20 Callum Wheeler got in 25 rushing yards, and #2 EJ Weix racked up 34 receiving yards.

"Hayward played a nice game and earned the victory," Wadzinski said. "We will regroup as a team and look to put it all together on Saturday for Homecoming."

Box Score:

Merrill 0 @ Hayward 20

2023 FALL MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCHEDULE

Boys Football (Varsity, JV, & JV2)

Thurs. Oct. 5	Rhineland (JV2)	Away	5:30 pm
Sat. Oct. 7	Rhineland (Varsity)	Home	1:30 pm
Mon. Oct. 9	Rhineland (JV)	Away	5:30 pm
Thurs. Oct. 12	Mosinee (JV2)	Away	5:30 pm

Girls Tennis (Varsity & JV)

No Scheduled Events for this week.

Girls Swimming (Varsity & JV)

Thurs. Oct. 5	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity & JV)	Home	5:30 pm
Tues. Oct. 10	Lakeland Union (Varsity)	Home	5:30 pm
Thurs. Oct. 12	D. C. Everest (Varsity & JV)	Away	5:30 pm

Girls Cross Country (Varsity & JV)

No Scheduled Events for this week.

Boys Cross Country (Varsity & JV)

No Scheduled Events for this week.

Girls Volleyball (Varsity, JV, & JV2)

Sat. Oct. 7	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Away	9:00 am
Tues. Oct. 10	Marshfield (JV & JV2)	Home	5:30 pm
Tues. Oct. 10	Marshfield (Varsity)	Home	7:00 pm
Thurs. Oct. 12	Wausau West (JV & JV2)	Away	5:30 pm
Thurs. Oct. 12	Wausau West (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm

Boys Soccer (Varsity & JV)

Thurs. Oct. 5	Pool Play #1 (Varsity & JV)	Away	T. B. D.
Fri. Oct. 6	Rhineland (JV)	Home	4:00 pm
Fri. Oct. 6	Rhineland (Varsity)	Home	6:00 pm
Tues. Oct. 10	Pool Play #2 (Varsity & JV)	Away	T. B. D.
Thurs. Oct. 12	Pool Play #3 (Varsity & JV)	Away	T. B. D.

The Sports Calendar of events is sponsored by:



PROTECTING THE GREATER GOOD



LETTERS from page 7

believe it appropriate to only use a substitute, and not bother to locate a live bugler.

According to a description of the "Military Funeral Honors Program" from militaryonesource.mil, a live bugler is the preferred option. The American Legion website states that, "If a bugler is not available, an electronic recording will be played." It is clear from these statements that a live bugler should be the first option.

There are two national volunteer organizations, the members of which are vetted buglers, who stand ready to provide their services: BuglesAcrossAmerica.org and TapsforVeterans.org. Families of deceased veterans, funeral

directors, veteran service organizations, and others in need of a live bugler for events can request one through either of these websites.

If you have questions, I'll be happy to answer them or direct you to someone who can.

- Ed Kemery
Merrill, Wis.

TO THE EDITOR:

It looks as if our elders, who need sustained, long-term care, have now become a burden to us. We can't afford to take care of them anymore. Will it be like this for us, when we are old and frail?

When we were children, were we considered a burden to our parents? Did they refuse to pay our dental bills? Did they buy for us a much-needed winter coat when father might have liked to spend that money for a hunting rifle and mother needed a

better vacuum cleaner?

Now it's our turn to reach into our pockets and do the right thing. Pine Crest is not a business. It's not an "industry." It's a good, safe place that belongs to all of us for the care of a frail, older generation, people who can no longer take care of themselves as they once did. We hope Pine Crest will remain ours and that it will be there for us when we are in need of its services.

If you agree, please call your County Supervisors and urge them to not sell Pine Crest Nursing Home.

- Susanna Juon-Gilk
Merrill, Wis.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Jacob Schmeltzer, a Junior at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named Athlete of the Week. Jacob, quarterback on the Merrill Varsity Football Team, moved up to Varsity last year but tore his ACL in the first game in August, so this is his first year actually playing Varsity, he said. He started playing tackle football in the sixth grade.

Jacob also plays on the MHS Basketball Team and Golf team.

Mid-summer Jacob took a part-time job working for Central City Distribution in Weston. When school started, the company became a part of the MHS Youth Apprenticeship program, so he is continuing to work for them during the school year, as well.

In his free time, Jacob said he really likes to golf and enjoys swimming with friends at Council Grounds, watching sports, or playing basketball with friends at Riverside. He also enjoys family get-togethers.

The son of Tracy and Chris Schmeltzer of Merrill, Jacob has a 3.4 GPA. After graduation, he is planning to go to college but is undecided on a specific career goal.

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Jacob Schmeltzer

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Lincoln County Sports Club

BY KATHY YAHR
CONTRIBUTOR

For over 85 years, the Lincoln County Sports Club (LCSC) has served the local community to promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources and to educate and encourage youth to safely participate in outdoor activities. This has resulted in many changes and adaptations over the years.

LCSC is excited to be partnering with Access Ability Wisconsin (AAW) to offer an all-terrain wheelchair for use free of charge. This can be used for hunting, exploring, and other outdoor adventures all year long for those who might not otherwise be able to enjoy these pursuits. The club also works in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies to offer youth events such as the recent "Badges and Bows," which had police officers and club members helping children learn archery and air gun skills. Since 1967, LCSC has



The archery range at the Lincoln County Sports Club.

Submitted photo.

offered hunter safety classes, with 8,000+ graduates. Classes are a great hands-on learning time with experienced instructors. They are typically held in late winter or early spring. The LCSC has also held trapper education classes, learn to shoot trap and learn to hunt turkey and pheasant events, and plans to continue to help provide opportunities and education for all ages.

Monthly meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the LCSC clubhouse, located off of Schulz Spur Rd. The public is welcome, and will enjoy a variety of presentations, which in the past have included educational and entertaining talks about the Ice Age Trail, dog mushing, trapping in Canada, many aspects of hunting, and conservation.

A recent speaker was September's presentation by Meaghan Roble on "A Girl and A Gun" classes, and October will feature Jeff Traska giving a talk about black bears. The November meeting is held on the second Thursday of the month, with the DNR providing information about the upcoming gun deer hunt.

One of the most notable changes over the past

several years is on the shooting range. The LCSC now offers five 100-yard rifle ranges and a 25/50-yard pistol range. A Range Safety Officer (RSO) is present at all times, both to ensure safe shooting practices and to help as needed. See the LCSC webpage, lcscsportsclub.com, for range days and hours of operation.

With the dissolution of the Archery League, the

LCSC no longer has a full walking archery course, but they do have an updated practice range with 20-, 30-, and 40-yard targets. The archery range is open any time that the rifle ranges are open. Also during open range hours, members can bring their own thrower to shoot on the trap range.

LCSC offers rentals of the clubhouse for weddings, graduations, and other parties. The facility has a full kitchen and space for up to 200 people. The grounds are 240 acres of woodland and open space. The public is welcome to walk the grounds any time the ranges are not in operation, or visit anytime the ranges are open. The public is also invited to come to the annual Open House held each year the third weekend in May. At that event, attendees can see the building, grounds, and shooting ranges and learn about a number of conservation partners, participate in games, enjoy a meal from a food truck, and participate in raffles.

Correction

In last week's newspaper, wrestling photos were incorrectly identified as being a part of the WWE. This is incorrect. The photos were from the Great Lakes Championship Wrestling (GLCW) event held at the Merrill Expo Center on Sept. 23. We apologize for any confusion.

Free Grief Education and Support workshop begins Oct. 25

A four-week Grief Education and Support workshop series will begin on Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023, from 4-5 p.m. at Bible Presbyterian Church in Merrill. Grief can be overwhelming and paralyzing, and these workshops will help to better understand the grieving process and healthy responses to cope with death and loss. The program will run for four weeks, held each Wednesday evening at the same time and place. Topics include: Introduction to grief and what to expect; understanding the stages of grief; developing new coping skills; and moving forward, a new normal. There is no cost to attend, but registration is appreciated. To register, call or text 608.567.8582 or email mzjcoaching@outlook.com.

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