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Merrill Ice Reflections skaters make good showing at Badger State Games



McKenna Meyer competed in four events - Three solo events and a duet. She took second place in the Solo Pattern Dance - Gold; third place in Free Skate - Excel Juvenile; second place in the Showcase Duet/Trio - OJ/Int/Jr with Brooklyn Kraegenbrink; and fourth place in the Showcase Ensembles - Production.

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

Photo courtesy of MIRFSC.

The Badger State Games (BSG) Winter 2024 Figure Skating Competition was held this past weekend Jan. 25-28, 2024. Hosted by the Mosinee SilverBlades Figure Skating Club, the event was held at the Mosinee Recreation Center Ice Rink in Mosinee and was a qualifying event for State Games of America and National Showcase. BSG events are open to residents of Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The BSG Figure Skating Competition is United States Figure Skating (USFS) sanctioned, the USFS being the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States. However, while the USFS, founded in 1921, has 750+ member, school-affiliated, and collegiate clubs, the BSG Figure Skating Competition does not require membership in either the

See **SKATING** page 7



Merrill Dance Team members, L to R are: Shanna Herdt, Bryn Imhoff, Alyssa Schneider, Paige Byer, Adison Clark, Liberty Fuchs, Emily Hayes, Maddie Prentice, Tati Anderson, Molly White, Marielle Nass, Emilie English, and Kinsey Literski.

Stacy Literski photos.

Merrill Dance Team, White are bound for State competition this weekend

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Merrill Dance Team is headed to the Wisconsin Association of Cheer/Pom Coaches Inc. (WACPC) State Varsity Dance Competition this weekend to be held Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, in LaCrosse.

"The team will be competing in Division 2 HipHop," said Sydney Roberts, Assistant Dance Team Coach.

Last weekend the Merrill Dance Team competed at the WACPC Northern Regionals at D.C. Everest, competing in Division 4 Pom and Division 2 HipHop. In Division Pom, they were up against 11 teams and unfortunately didn't place high enough to advance to State. "This was our first year doing Pom," Roberts said. "It's a very hard category. Coach Cassie and I couldn't be more proud of the transformation Pom

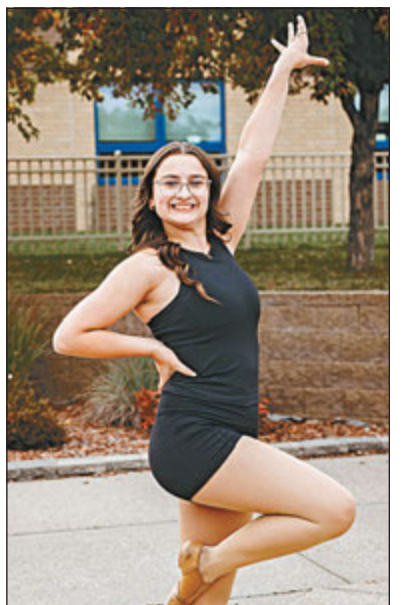
went through. They gave their best performance of the season in Pom last Saturday."

In Division 2 HipHop, the Merrill Dance Team competed against seven other teams and took third place, advancing them to State this weekend in the HipHop competition.

At State, the Merrill team will compete against nine other teams, and the top five will get trophies. "Just about every team we go against has placed at State before, with a lot of them being State Champs or State Runner Ups at one point," Roberts said. "Our goal is to just dance the best we can at State. If we get a trophy, that will be cool. But if we don't and we know we tried our hardest, that will be great, as well."

"The team's greatest challenge in going to State is being able to keep our

See **DANCE** page 3



Molly White will also be competing in a solo competition at State this Saturday.

City of Merrill Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) helps LMI residents with deferred, interest-free loans and grants

One Merrill couple shares how the program helped them at a critical juncture in their lives

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The City of Merrill offers low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents assistance with rehabilitating and improving their owner-occupied homes that are located within the city limits, through their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Over the years, that program has changed a bit, so it's worth revisiting how the program works currently. Eligibility for the

See **GRANT** page 2



After: All new windows, new siding, new soffit and fascia, a new front door and porch, and a handicap accessible ramp make their home maintenance free for many years to come and more easily accessible for Jacki.

Photos courtesy of the Alberts.

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GRANT from page 1

program is based on income and family size; the current income limit for a single-person household is \$48,350, for example.

“CDBG loans are specifically used to improve the home with siding, roof, windows, insulation, doors, drywall repairs, furnace, water heater, and plumbing,” said Shari Wicke, Community Development Director/ Building & Zoning Assistant for the City of Merrill. Other eligible repairs include interior repairs, updating wiring, repairing a chimney, foundation, porch, or painting the exterior of the home. It can also assist with modifications to make a home handicap accessible. Whenever possible, the City coordinates efforts with other established agencies and organizations such as the Community Action Program and Wisconsin Public Service to help the homeowner with their needs.

“This program is a win/win situation for the homeowner and the City,” Wicke said.

“The homeowner gets a 0% deferred loan to make improvements to their home, and the City benefits by cleaning up the neighborhoods and a possible increase in tax base.”

“Homeowner applicants must have adequate equity in their property to secure the City’s CDBG loan,” she said.

The answer they needed

Jacki and Mike Albert purchased their home at 204 E. Third St. in Merrill in August 1999 and had been paying on the mortgage for years. At one point they redid their roof and refinanced the mortgage for 15 years with a fixed rate. As they got close to having that paid off, they had planned to make more much-needed improvements to the home.

Then one evening in May nearly three years ago, Jacki tripped over their family dog in their kitchen while doing the dishes, and just like that, their lives changed. “I was doing dishes and she [the dog] was laying behind my



Before: The front street-facing view of the Alberts home at 204 E. Third St. in Merrill needed lots of improvements, new windows, a new porch, and to be handicap accessible for Jacki.

feet, and I didn’t know she was there, and I grabbed the tan towel,” Jacki said. “And when I turned around, I couldn’t see her – I had a towel in my hand. ...” It all happened so quickly when she fell that it was kind of a blur. “I remember her on my left foot and [then] picking myself up off the kitchen floor,” she said.

At first Jacki didn’t realize the severity of her injury. She finished the dishes and went to bed. But in the days that followed, it became apparent something was very wrong. For the first few weeks, Jacki thought she was having severe migraines. But eventually, after a cat scan, doctors discovered she had a subdural hematoma (bleeding on the brain) which was a slow bleed, and Jacki underwent brain surgery and was hospitalized nearly three weeks. The injury left her with long-term damage and Jacki could no longer hold a job.

So they had equity in the home, but now they had huge medical expenses to pay and they didn’t have the income to get a traditional loan on their home to do the necessary repairs.

“Every time we would get enough money to where we were ready to do it, something would happen,” Mike said. “And then when she had her brain surgery and all that, it just wiped us out.”

“We’d have lost this house if it wasn’t for that

block grant,” he said. So many things needed to be done to maintain the house properly, and they were even getting to the point where they considered selling it, but they didn’t have a more affordable housing alternative in mind either.

Instead, the Alberts were able to work with Chris Stoerzer and CTD Construction, RTL Electric, and other approved contractors on the CDBG Program list to make improvements and stay in their home.

Mike explained all the work that was done: A special company had to come in to remove their existing siding because it contained asbestos. Then, they discovered another layer of siding beneath that and CTD went to work removing that siding; followed by installing new siding, soffit and fascia, and gutters; ripping off an old enclosed porch and putting a new porch on; replacing almost every single window and trimming them out inside the house; removing a large, old unused deck in the back and putting a porch on back there; replacing doors; and building a handicap ramp. They also brought in other contractors to do some necessary replumbing and electrical work in conjunction with the project.

“They did a great job,” Jacki said of CTD. “They were a lot of fun.” The couple explained they had



The first layer of siding, containing asbestos, was removed by a specialty company. The Alberts discovered there was another layer of old shingle-style siding on the home that needed to be removed next. Photos courtesy of the Alberts.



Before they started that, they removed the old porch at the front of the house that was no longer stable--and discovered an old front door that had been covered up in remodels done by previous owners.

had problems in the past with some contractors never even calling them back or showing up for estimates, but Stoerzer and CTD and the companies they worked with were very responsive and good to work with.

The total process took about a year – between applying, getting approved, getting the contractor, getting the windows and siding and other materials, and getting all the work completed, they explained. Everything was finished last July.

“Don’t look at it as a challenge, because Shari works with you,” Jacki said. “And if you have any questions, she’s right there to answer them.”

“And she would stop in and check in while they were working and make sure everything was going smoothly, if there were any issues, etc. ... It’s a good program. She knows her stuff.”

How it works

The Alberts gave permission to share their

financial details. The Alberts explained they were approved for a certain amount based on the value of their home and the equity available. Their total project ended up costing \$103,865.36. Of that amount, \$27,260.00 is a grant the Alberts don’t have to repay; the Alberts only being responsible for \$76,605.36, Wicke said. The loan sits out there interest-free with no payments due on a regular basis, as would be the case with a mortgage or home equity loan, and only becomes due when one (the first) of the following occurs:

- In 30 years, or
- When they no longer live in the home as their full-time residence, or
- They transfer their interest in the property to anyone for any reason except that one transfer to a spouse is allowed and a transfer is allowed to an heir that also qualifies for the CDBG Program within its current income limits AND also resides there as his or her principal residence, or
- They fail to maintain insurance on the property to protect the City’s interest in the event of fire or other loss (and if in a floodplain, flood insurance), or
- They fail to pay property taxes or other assessments levied on the property.

In any of those situations, the loan becomes due and payable in full upon demand. In essence, the program is set up so that the home’s essential maintenance is completed, the family doesn’t have to stress about repayments on the loan, and in years to come, when the home is sold, the loan will be paid out of the proceeds of the sale.

For more information about the CDBG Housing Program, go to: ci.merrill.wi.us/homeowners or contact Wicke at Merrill City Hall. Call 715.536.4880 or email her at: shari.wicke@ci.merrill.wi.us.

Other CDBG Programs are also available for landlords whose tenants are LMI under the guidelines and to new LMI home buyers as matching funds to assist with a down payment and closing costs. For more information about those programs, go to: ci.merrill.wi.us/community-development

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Identity Theft Awareness Week: Tips from DATCP and DOR

FOR THE MERRILL FOTO NEWS

MADISON, Wis. – Tax-related identity theft involves the theft and misuse of your Social Security number (SSN). It generally happens in one of two ways: someone uses your SSN to get a job and their employer reports that person's income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as if it were yours, or someone uses your SSN to file for your tax refund. You may not even know your identity has been stolen until the IRS informs you of the unreported income or multiple tax return filings.

This tax season, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) are here to help. By taking a few proactive steps to keep your personal information private, you can reduce your risk of tax-related identity theft.

"Consumers should protect themselves from identity thieves, who are becoming craftier and more sophisticated every year," said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. "There are many ways you can take preventative steps to keep your data safe and secure."

Remember these tips to protect your identity this tax season:

- Never store your SSN on any device that may be vulnerable to malware or data theft.
- Install a mailbox lock or have your mail sent to a Post Office (PO) Box™ to prevent anyone from stealing sensitive

information.

- Destroy unneeded documents containing personal information, such as your SSN or IRS account number, using a shredder or similar method.

- Sign up for federal and state Identity Protection Personal Identification Numbers (IP PINs) to add an extra layer of security to your tax filings.

"The goal of the PIN program is to keep refunds in the right hands and out of the pockets of fraudsters," said Department of Revenue Secretary Peter Barca. "Another important thing to keep in mind about fraud, is that unless you have contacted us first, we never call people without first sending a letter. So, if you are getting a call or a text from us, but you haven't received a letter from us, that's a red flag for fraud. We always send letters first."

If you believe you may be the victim of tax-related identity theft, contact DOR by phone or email as soon as possible. If you received a notice from DOR, respond to the contact listed on the notice. If you did not receive a notice or have concerns about the validity of a notice, contact DOR at 608.266.2772 or DORIDTheft@wisconsin.gov. Instructions for reporting tax-related identity theft to the IRS are available on their webpage. If you confirm your identity was stolen, immediately inform your bank(s) and creditor(s) of your stolen identity and place a security freeze on your credit report with all three major credit

reporting agencies.

For more information about identity theft and additional consumer protection resources, visit DATCP's Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov or contact them at 800.422.7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

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DANCE from page 1

energy up the whole time!" she said. "It's a 2:15 routine of going full-out the whole time."

"The team's strength going into this competition is that the whole team does want to do good," Roberts said. "They do want to prove themselves to everyone that they are a State-placing team!"

One of the members of the Merrill Dance Team will also be competing individually at State. Molly White is a solo qualifier. "Junior Molly White will be competing to become part of Division 2 All State, which is essentially the best 20-30% of dancers in the state in Division 2," Roberts said. "Molly will be competing against 42 other dancers to become Division 2 All State." Only 20%-30% of the 42 will be announced as the 2024 Division 2 All State Team.

The Merrill Dance Team is comprised of Shanna Herdt, Bryn Imhoff, Alyssa Schneider, Paige Byer, Adison Clark, Liberty Fuchs, Emily Hayes, Maddie Prentice, Tati Anderson, Molly White, Marielle Nass, Emilie English, and Kinsey Literski. Cassie Lezotte is Head Coach.

"Out of the 13 dancers that are on the team, 9 of them are Freshmen!" Roberts said. "Our Freshmen have done

a great job with the transition to Dance Team from studio dance. Dance Team is very different from studio dance," she said. "You dance on a basketball court and you can see the judges just stare at you from the top of the bleachers."

"Molly, Adison, Liberty, and Maddie are the veterans on this team, and they have really stepped up into a leadership role this year without being asked."

"Coach Cassie and I both talk about how this has probably been our favorite year so far," Roberts said. "The girls are sooo much fun to work with. They all have great personalities and great work ethics."

"The parents this year are great, as well," she said. "They are the most supportive parents. We couldn't do it without them."

The State competition marks the end of the 2023-2024 Dance Team season.

The bus transporting the dancers to LaCrosse leaves from Merrill High School on Saturday at 5 a.m. If you're up dark and early, feel free to swing by and to honk for them and help give them an exciting sendoff.

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Underdown Free Pass Weekend is this weekend

Outlook for cross country skiing isn't good

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Lincoln County Forestry, Land, and Parks Department will host their annual Underdown Free Pass Weekend at the Underdown Recreation Area this weekend, Feb. 3 and 4, 2024. Visitors are invited to come out to use the cross country skiing, fat tire bike, and snowshoe trails for free on these days.

However, snow levels are very low and ski trails have not yet been groomed. It's "Not looking good for skiing, but hopefully fat bikes and hikers can take advantage," said Dean Bowe, County Forest Administrator for the Lincoln County Forestry, Land, and Parks Department.

For up to date Lincoln County trail conditions, go to: co.lincoln.wi.us or call their Trail Hotline at 715.539.1033.

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MERRILL Foto News

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OBITUARIES

Dennis A. Schmidt



Dennis A. Schmidt, 78, of Merrill, passed away Friday, January 26, 2024, at Mount View Care Center surrounded by his family.

Dennis was born January 22, 1946, in Merrill, son of the late Arthur and Phyllis (Kleinschmidt) Schmidt. He graduated from high school and enlisted in the United States Army in 1965. After serving during the Vietnam War, he was honorably discharged in

1967. Dennis married VerJean Kleinschmidt on April 26, 1969. She survives.

Dennis had worked as a bricklayer for various companies including McGovern Masonry. He was a fifty-year union member of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 6.

At age 46, Dennis was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. He never let his diagnosis deter him from anything. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, walking in the woods, cutting firewood, and camping. He also enjoyed cooking over a campfire and working on puzzles. Dennis would often be found at his home tinkering with a project.

Survivors include his wife, VerJean Schmidt of Merrill; son, Jeremy (Rick Palmerton) Schmidt of Wausau; grandchildren, Ashley (Ben) Jozwiak of Wausau and Madisen Palmerton of Winona, MN; great-grandson, Jayden; sisters, Polly Malik of Capitola, CA, Patty (Jeff) Reynolds of Tony, WI, Brenda Schmidt of Owatonna, MN, and Michelle Schmidt (Dave DeHart) of Merrill; brothers, Mike (Sue) Schmidt of New Auburn, WI, Gerald (Linda) Schmidt of Michigan City, IN, Randy (Peggie) Schmidt of Elk Mound, WI, Tom (Sally) Schmidt of Merrill, Dick (Roxann) Schmidt of Wausau, and Kevin (Lisa) Schmidt of Merrill; sisters-in-law, Marie Kleinschmidt of Merrill and Dawn Kleinschmidt of Missouri; brother-in-law, Jim (Char) Kleinschmidt of Lake Tomahawk, WI; and many nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

Dennis was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Phyllis Schmidt; sister, Karen Schmidt; brother, Stephen Schmidt; brothers-in-law, Jody Malik, Lawrence Kleinschmidt, and Ronald Kleinschmidt; and niece and nephews, Nickole VanHecker, Shane Schmidt, and Collin Schultz.

The funeral service for Dennis will be held at 12:00 P.M., Noon, Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. Lay Minister Everhart will officiate. Visitation will be from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm on Friday, February 2, 2024, and again after 10:00 am Saturday all at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial may be directed to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



Alfred "Jim" James Fox, 78, of Merrill, Wisconsin passed away Monday, January 22, 2024, at Pine Crest Nursing Home with his loving wife and family by his side after a long and courageous battle with myelodysplastic syndrome. He was born June 3, 1945, to Thomas "Ned" and Martha (Wangen) Fox. On July 19, 1969, he married Linda Fleischman. They recently celebrated 54 years of marriage.

Jim was a pillar of support for his family. His children fondly remember waiting impatiently for him to return from work each afternoon. Nobody was happy until daddy was home! A hardworking man, Jim worked at Northern Door in Merrill for over 26 years and spent another 20 years at Hurd Millwork, also in Merrill. He retired in 2009. His evenings and weekends were spent playing games in the yard with his children, attending their sporting events and encouraging them to help with whatever project he was working on. His children learned so much from him. His patience and kindness made him a natural teacher. Jim also enjoyed gardening, raising horses and tooling around on his John Deere tractor. If anyone needed a helping hand, Jim was always there with tools in hand.

His love for his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren knew no bounds. Jim and his wife, Linda shared a bond that withstood the tests of time, a love story that served as an example to all. His children and grandchildren were the joy of his life, and he took great pride in witnessing their accomplishments and milestones. In recent years Jim enjoyed watching his grandchildren and great grandchildren in any sporting event, dance recital or racing event that they were participating in.

Jim is survived by his wife, Linda Fox. His mother-in-law Iona Fleischman. His daughter and son-in-law, Becky and Dave Teeples and their children, Dylan (Jayden), Katlyn and Wesley Teeples. His daughter and son-in-law, Jamie and Jason Jablonski and their children, Mya and Ryan Jablonski. His son, Corey Fox. Jim is further survived by his grandchildren, Brandon, Ashley, Shealynn and Chloe and great-grandchildren, Alden, Liam, James, Sophia, Eliza, Louie and Olivia. Also surviving are Jim's sister Martha "Pat" (Walter) Bahlow, his brothers David (Marlene) Fox, Royal (Geraldine) Fox, and Dennis (Earleen) Fox. His brothers-in-law, Earl Dallman and Floyd Fleischman, Jr. Sisters-in-law, Marion Fox, Judy Damp and Cindy Fleischman. Jim is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews who affectionately refer to him as "Uncle Jimmy."

Jim was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas "Ned" and Martha (Wangen) Fox, his father-in-law, Floyd Fleischman Sr. His sisters, Edna (William) Dye, Carol (Carlos) Hass and Andrea "DeeDee" Dallman. His brothers Eugene (Lucille) Fox and Ned Fox. Brother-in-law Robert Fleischman and sister-in-law Geraldine Fleischman. Nephews Jesse Fleischman and Scott Dallman. Niece Carmen Plautz.

A memorial service to celebrate Jim's life will be held on Friday, January 26th at 11:00 a.m. at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Merrill, Wisconsin. The family will receive friends at the church from 9:30 a.m. until the time of services. A luncheon will follow the service.

Jim was a wonderful man who lived a beautiful life. His legacy will live on in the hearts of his family and those who knew him. His family would like to thank the amazing staff at Pine Crest Nursing Home for the excellent care and kindness. They were truly amazing! We would also like to thank Tim and John from Interim Health Care for their care and support. Thank you also to Dr. Onitilo and his amazing staff, along with the wonderful staff members at Aspirus Merrill Hospital Day Surgery for their caring and kindness.

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



Phyllis A. Frederick, 92, of Merrill, passed away Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at Aspirus Merrill Hospital.

Phyllis was born April 8, 1931, in Lincoln County, Wisconsin, daughter of the late Ella Mosser. Phyllis was raised by her mother and her stepfather, John Hopp. Phyllis married Elmer Frederick on June 19, 1948. He preceded her in death on October 17, 1995. Phyllis worked as a supervisor at Hanson Glove in Merrill. She then took a job with Anson Gilkey and was their first female foreman. Phyllis eventually retired from W.C.A. In retirement, she worked in the deli at Red Owl.

Phyllis was a classy, kind and giving person who loved and cared for her family and friends. She was ambitious and never shied away from taking on a project, always lending a helping hand. If someone told her she couldn't do something her motto was "watch me." She did everything from carpentry to cooking, baking, embroidery and sewing. She loved working in her flower gardens and was meticulous about her yard. While outside, she loved watching and feeding the birds. She enjoyed a good time with family and friends dressing up for mock weddings and Halloween and cheering on the Brewers and Packers. Her sense of humor never left her even at the end.

Survivors include her children, Linda Weege of Merrill and Jack (Kathy) Frederick of Wausau; very special friend, Fred Will of Merrill; grandchildren, Tim (Mandy) Frederick of Weston, Heather (Andy) Klade of Menomonie, and Tara (Willy) Schelbert of Merrill; great grandchildren, Maddie Frederick, Elijah Schelbert, and Ethan Schelbert; sisters, Lorraine Poi of Wausau, Vernetta (Louis) Heuser of Tomahawk, and Darlene (Joseph) Wimmer of Merrill; brothers, Roger Hopp of Merrill and Alan Rajek of Campbellsport; and special friend, Maxine Plammann of Merrill. Phyllis was preceded in death by her husband, Elmer Frederick; mother and stepfather, Ella and John Hopp; son-in-law, Don Weege; and brothers, Vernon Hopp and Harold Hopp.

The funeral service for Phyllis was held at 11:30 A.M., Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. Rev. Mike Southcombe and Mark Stillwell officiated. The family received friends beginning at 9:00 A.M. Wednesday at the funeral home. Taylor-Stine Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Merrill, is assisting the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Lincoln County Humane Society or St. Stephens United Church of Christ, Merrill.

Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



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Lonnie Lee Michael Tanck, age 71, passed away on Sunday, January 21, 2024, at the Howard Young Medical Center in Woodruff, WI, while surrounded by his loving family. Lonnie was born on March 3, 1952 to the late Alvin and Joyce (Heinz) Tanck in Wausau, WI. He attended and graduated from Wausau High School. Lonnie met the love of his life and best friend, Darlene "Dolly" Bosi, and the two exchanged marriage vows on April 17, 1971 in Merrill, a loving union lasting 52 years. She survives.

Lonnie worked for the SOO Line Railroad for many years and was the foreman of the bridge and build crew in Wisconsin and Illinois, a job he was very proud of. He also worked for Marathon Electric for many years. Lonnie was a skilled carpenter and helped many family members and friends with their building projects. He enjoyed woodworking and made many pieces over the years, something his family will now cherish. Family and fishing were the most important things in Lonnie's life. He was very involved with his family and fishing was his passion. Lonnie knew all the good fishing spots and the best lures to use. He was in multiple bass clubs and attended many tournaments. He also liked food, especially being able to grill and smoke meat. Lonnie looked forward to hunting as well, or just sit down and enjoy some old westerns. He is remembered as a reliable person that always had your back, a great father and husband, goofy and fun and most important; the rock of the family. Lonnie was truly a "manly man"! He will be sadly missed, but will always be with his family and friends.

Lonnie is survived by his step-mother: Anna Tanck, wife: Darlene "Dolly" Tanck, daughters: Toni Smith (Corey Wilk) and Brenda (Brian) Burkhardt, grandchildren: Brittany (Christian) Steinke, Logan Smith, Vanessa Smith and Matthew and Elizabeth Burkhardt, great grandchildren: Ava, Marjorie and River, sisters: Gail (Terry) Glisch and Glenda (Terry) Modrzejewski. He was preceded in death by his parents and step-father: Alvin Goetsch.

The funeral liturgy for Lonnie was held on Friday, January 26, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Waid Funeral Home in Merrill, WI. Father Maria Vallabhaneni officiated. Visitation was held on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. until the time of the liturgy, also at the funeral home. Entombment immediately followed the service and took place at Merrill Memorial Park Cemetery. A luncheon at the Northwoods Veterans Post, 601 Johnson St, Merrill, WI 54452, followed the entombment.

In lieu of flowers, family requests that donations in Lonnie's name be directed to the Fish & Wildlife Service at <http://www.fws.gov/program/national-wildlife-refuge-system>.

A special thank you to the staff of the Howard Young ICU for their care and compassion shown to Lonnie and his family during his time there.

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.

| OBITUARIES |



Norma J. (Alft) Hanson, 88, passed away on Monday, January 22, 2024, at Bell Tower Residence, Merrill. Norma was born in Merrill on February 15, 1935, the daughter of the late George and Renate (Siesennop) Alft. A graduate of Merrill High School, she married Carleton 'Cart' Hanson on September 12, 1953. He preceded her in death on May 30, 1985.

Norma had been a homemaker during her marriage; after Cart's death, she worked at Campbell's Clothes and Things for 4 1/2 years and then at Ace Hardware for over 21 years.

She was a lifelong member of St. John Lutheran Church, Merrill, belonging to various organizations there. Norma also was a former member of the Valparaiso Guild and the Good Samaritan Volunteers.

Norma enjoyed reading, traveling, and playing bridge. On a hot day, Norma and her friends were once spotted playing bridge at a table in the lake. Norma also enjoyed attending Wisconsin Badger football games. She loved spending time at the cabin on Tug Lake and the cottage in Manitowish Waters.

Survivors include her cousins and close friends. Norma was preceded in death by her husband, Carleton 'Cart' Hanson; parents, George and Renate Alft; and her son and daughter-in-law, Patrick C. and Diane Hanson.

The funeral service for Norma was held at 11:00 A.M. Monday, January 29, 2024, at St. John Lutheran Church, Merrill. The Rev. David Szeto officiated. Burial took place in Merrill Memorial Park Cemetery. Visitation began at 10:00 A.M. Monday at the church. Taylor-Stine Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Merrill, is assisting the family.

If so desired, memorials may be made to St. John Lutheran Church - 1104 E. Third St., Merrill, WI 54452 or TB Scott Library - 106 W. First St., Merrill, WI 54452.

The family would like to thank the staff at Bell Tower Residence and Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services for the wonderful care they provided Norma.

Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



Earl Harvey Dallman, age 92, of Merrill, died peacefully in his sleep on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at Pine Crest Nursing Home, while under the care of Interim Hospice. He was born on October 6, 1931 to the late Erwin and Martha (Grassberger) Dallman in Merrill. Earl attended Merrill High School and graduated with the class of 1949. He met his soul mate, Andrea Mae Fox, and the two exchanged marriage vows on October 18, 1952 in Merrill. Sadly, she passed away on February 19, 2016.

Earl took over the family farm in 1961 and was a dairy farmer for the majority of his life. Before farming, he drove gravel truck and worked in road construction. Earl also had a few jobs to supplement farming by working at the cranberry marsh, a short stint at J.W. Perry and working for the town of Corning, driving the town grader. Earl had a passion for the outdoors. Deer hunting was a priority and he formed bonds with his Buckhorn family that lasted his life. Earl loved making firewood and working in the woods. He made annual trips to Canada fishing. Earl and Andrea traveled after retirement, a 2-week train trip out West and visiting Switzerland, Florida and Branson, MO. He is remembered as a good person, that liked to joke around and always had a story to tell. Earl was a member of the Houndsman Club, AMPI and of Trinity Lutheran Church - WELS. He will be dearly missed, but never forgotten.

Earl is survived by his daughter: Marge (Gary) Roggenbuck, son: Mike Dallman, both of Merrill, grandchildren: Amy (Steve) Zimmermann of Kennesaw, GA and Mark (Krystal) Roggenbuck, Quentin Roggenbuck (Krysta Koenig), Scott Leo Dallman (Melissa Tremaine) and Travis (Cassie) Dallman, all of Merrill, great grandchildren: Emily Zimmermann, Sarah Zimmermann, Caylee Rose Dallman, Kaisyn Michael Dallman and Addilyn Rayne Dallman, sister-in-laws: Lorraine Dallman, Marion Fox and Linda Fox, brother-in-laws: Wally (Martha) Bahlow, David (Marlene) Fox, Royal (Geri) Fox and Dennis (Earleen) Fox and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, parents-in-law: Ned and Martha Fox, son: Scott Thomas Dallman, great grandson: Jake Roggenbuck, brothers: Myron (Deloris) and Lloyd Dallman, in-laws: Carlos (Carol) Hass, Bill (Edna) Dey, Eugene (Lucille) Fox, Ned Fox Jr. and Alfred (Jimmy) Fox.

The memorial service for Earl will be held on Friday, February 9, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church - WELS, in the town of Berlin. Rev. Andrew DeGier will officiate. Visitation will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Waid Funeral Home, and again on Friday, February 9, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the service, at the church. Inurnment will take place at a later date.

Family wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you to the staff at Pine Crest Nursing Home for their excellent care and compassion shown to Earl and his family, and to Interim Hospice for their support during his last days.

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.

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Measurements Of Being

Dear Reader,

Exploring success in life involves a nuanced perspective. While financial achievements like money, assets, and material possessions are conventional measures, the spiritual dimension, encompassing service, noble purpose, and positive impact on the world, adds profound depth to the concept of success.



The balance between material and spiritual fulfillment often shapes a more comprehensive view of a successful life.

PATRICK J. WOOD

Publisher

Author of "Reflections" a new book now available on Amazon.

| OBITUARIES |



John R. Burrow Jr., age 66, of Merrill, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, January 19, 2024, at his home. He was born on November 6, 1957 to the late John and Gladys (Bouchard) Burrow Sr. in Orlando, FL. John attended and graduated from the Rancho High School in Las Vegas. He went on to further his education by going to college for welding and blueprint reading. He married Brenda Boykins in Tomahawk, WI on July 22, 1989. She survives.

John was a truck driver in Fargo for the Berg, Grain & Produce Company for many years. He enjoyed working on his cars, and going for bike rides on his Harley Davidson. John liked to go fishing and doing yardwork at his home. He would go to car races every chance he had! John was a huge help to his neighbors, and would help them with various jobs, including snow blowing. He is lovingly remembered by his family as a funny man, that was also very creative and strong-willed. John will be sadly missed, but always in the hearts of his family and friends.

John is survived by his wife: Brenda Burrow, sons: David Burrow, John (Amber) Burrow III and Daniel Burrow, daughter: Christina Beyer, step-sons: Justin (Nicole) Boykins, Cliff (Brandy) Varner, Jason and Joshua Miller, grandchildren: Joanne, Craig, Addison, Valerie, Broghan and Zyin, sister: Joyce (Ken) Burrow, brother: James (Jen) Burrow, along with many extended family members. He is further survived by his cousin and best friend: Tony Moser. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother: Barry Burrow.

A Celebration of Life for John will be held on Friday, February 2, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Waid Funeral home.

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.

John E. H. Harder



John E. H. Harder, age 88 of Merrill passed away January 24, 2024, at Mt View Nursing Home. John was born December 7, 1935, in Minneapolis, Minnesota to the late Walter and Alida (Plante) Harder.

John served 20 years in the United States Air Force as a Mechanic from August of 1955 to July of 1975. He was first stationed in Wendover Air Force Base, Utah for school. Then he went to McChord

AFB near Tacoma, Washington, Luke AFB, Glendale, AZ. While stationed in AZ John was sent to Cam Ranh Bay AB, Vietnam. Last place he was stationed was Pope AFB in Fort Bragg, NC. John was also stationed in Reinheim, Germany and in Thule Air Base, Greenland.

When he retired in 1975, he moved his family back to Wisconsin. He first worked for Lincoln Wood Products as a Mechanic. He retired from LWP but worked part time at Dave's County Market, Napa Auto Parts and Kwik Trip. John was also a member of the VFW.

John enjoyed fishing, playing cribbage, smoking cigars, listening to music, building airplane models and going to the EAA airplane show in Oshkosh. Mostly he loved spending time with his family.

John is survived by one half-brother Kurt Braun, Merrill; three sons, Lyndon Harder and Derek (Mary) Harder both of Merrill; and J (Sherry) Harder of Rhineland; two daughters, Denise (Mark) Rehwinkel and Nicolette Barnett both of Merrill; 16 grandchildren; 33 great grandchildren; three great great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. John is preceded in death by his wife, Pauline; daughter, Paulette Pinegar; brothers, Jared and Denis Harder; and sister, Lenore 'Bubbles' Polowski.

The funeral service for John will begin at 11:00 am on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. The Rev. Greg Laska will officiate. The burial will take place in Merrill Memorial Park Cemetery with graveside military rites conducted by V.F.W. Post 1638, Merrill. Visitation will be from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm on Monday, January 29, 2024, and again after 10:00 am Tuesday all at the funeral home.

Online condolences may be made at www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com



Reigning AWSC Miss Snowflake Brianna Crotteau and AWSC past President Dave Newman.

Photo courtesy of Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce.

5th Annual Snowmobile Ride
tour stops in Merrill

Ride With The Cup promotes safe snowmobiling and tourism

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

On Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024, the 5th Annual Snowmobile Ride tour stopped in Merrill, one of nearly two dozen stops on a two-day tour that began in Wausau and ended on Jan. 19 in Eagle River. encompassing more than 200 miles altogether. What began in 2019 as a Torch Tour evolved this year into the Ride With The Cup.

Snowmobile clubs literally Ride With The Cup, a replica of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby Championship Cup, taking it from community to community with the assistance and sponsorship of clubs, businesses, and event supporters along the way, culminating in the Cup's arrival in Eagle River at the start of the Annual Opening Ceremony of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby at the World Championship Derby Complex in Eagle River Friday evening.

This year 16 snowmobile clubs, various Chambers of Commerce and Visitor Bureaus, and businesses throughout central and northern Wisconsin participated. Along the route, the replica Cup is passed along from snowmobile club to snowmobile club, with each taking it a little further along the leg of the journey.

In addition to signifying the kickoff of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby with the Cup's arrival, the 5th Annual Snowmobile Ride and Ride With The Cup is a public awareness campaign with a mission: To promote safe snowmobiling in Central and Northern Wisconsin along with tourism highlighting what Northern Wisconsin has to offer.

Sponsorships also assist with providing youth snowmobiling safety classes for new youth coming into the sport.

In Merrill, the Cup handoff came at DuWayne Kreager Insurance Center where the Wisconsin Valley Sno Jets Snowmobile Club passed the replica trophy Cup to the L&L Tree Dodgers who then took the Cup up the line to

See **SNOWMOBILE** page 8

LCHS December Honorariums

The Lincoln County Humane Society would like to thank everyone who donated in honor of a loved one in December:

Louise Fox by Heidi Schreiber & family, Paul & Karen Cournaya, Ann Lynch & Mark Hoffmann, Dawn Gourlie & Kenneth Graap, Kevin & Dawn Pflingsten, Sue Schumacher, Marge & Gary Roggenbuck & family, Earl & Mike Dallman & family; LaVonna Young by Terry & Nancy Kasper; David & Faye Jean Osness by Phyllis Buch; Raymond "Ray" J. Olson by Daniel Hurd; Veronica "Boots" Zwirchitz by Mike Zwirchitz; Sally Tupa by Ken Tupa Sr., Lora & Dave Reichelt & family, Ken & Tiffany Tupa, family & friends; K.J. Skofronick by David Blado; Mary Ann Rehwinkel by Mariann & Steve Hanig; Mary Lagerbloom by Lise Skofronick; LeAnna Wells by Charmaine Hamilton; Ed Endreas by Kris Lokemoen; Joe & Noelle Condon by Ron & Sharon Pankow; Bunter & Sheldon by Kim & Terri Kriewald; Max & Tucker by Linda Semling Peterson; Skyla Komorowski by Robert & Debra Brown; Jack Grawien by Peggy & Bob Bauman; Melvin Klebenow by Gerald & Dawn Schmidt; Ralph D. Voigt & Arlene Voigt by Tina Voigt; and Cricket the cat by Brenda Maloney.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

JANUARY 18, 2024

Girl, Remi Elaine, born to Jamie Beilke and Chaise Beilke of Athens.

Boy, Myles Michael Brandon, born to Lindsey Frederick and Michael Frederick of Weston.

Pet of the Week



Waverly is still looking for that special someone to adopt her. She loves to get attention and is crazy for her tennis ball! **Waverly** needs someone who likes to go for walks and play as much as she does. She's an absolute doll and would do great in an active home. She's OK with some dogs but will need to meet any that she might live with first. She would also be great as the only pet in the home. We are not sure how she is with cats. **Waverly** would be best with older kids in the home. She knows some commands, is housebroke and crate trained! She loves to cuddle and can't wait to find a nice cozy bed to call her own!

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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.

MOVIES YOU GOTTA SEE

Broadcast News explores journalistic ethics with humor and heart

BY JALEN MAKI

Broadcast News, released in 1987, was written, produced, and directed by James L. Brooks and stars Holly Hunter, Albert Brooks, and William Hurt as journalists working at a national television network's Washington, D.C. bureau.

Jane (Hunter) is a classic workaholic – well, considering her daily stress-induced breakdowns, you could say she's a slightly more extreme version. Aaron (Brooks), like Jane, is a talented journalist. He's also wry to a fault and extremely smart – the kind of person who's probably too smart for his own good. Aaron and Jane collaborate often and do stellar work together.

Then there's Tom (Hurt), a new hire at the bureau. While Jane and Aaron are veteran reporters of hard-hitting news, Tom's background is in sports, and even in this, he isn't very experienced – something he's self-conscious about. The guy's also not going to be splitting the atom any time soon, if you catch my drift. But he's a kind, charming, handsome dude, and he looks good on TV. Hurt absolutely kills as a guy who might be best described as a puppy that was recently transformed into a human:



not especially bright, but likeable, and just generally happy to be wherever he is at any given moment.

Broadcast News offers a thrilling and hilarious glimpse into the work of television journalists. Early in the film, Jane's in the trenches: she's in the editing room, putting the final touches on a piece while her deadline is literally minutes away. Tom's also

in the room, observing the process. By doing this, Tom represents the film's audience. Most viewers have never seen anything like this before, and neither has Tom; we're all in this together. And by "this," I mean witnessing utter chaos. Jane's story, on which she teamed up with Aaron, follows a veteran returning home from overseas. Jane gets the idea to use a Norman Rockwell painting depicting a World War II soldier's homecoming in the piece. They quickly and cleverly incorporate the artwork, producer Blair (the always wonderful Joan Cusack) literally runs the tape across the office to the control room, and the piece is featured in that evening's broadcast, just under the gun. Tom's wide-eyed shock gives way to exhilaration – he's completely intoxicated by what he had just seen, and he's especially impressed by Jane.

Later in the film, Tom gets his big break. While at an office party, word arrives that a Libyan plane had bombed an American military base in Sicily. Paul, the head of the network's news division, taps Jane to executive produce the special report, and Tom's chosen to anchor. Jane disagrees with

See MOVIES page 8

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WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN!



Merrill Area Public Schools 2024 - 2025 Kindergarten

Parents/Guardians:

Merrill Area Public Schools recently mailed a letter and postcard to the parents and/or guardians of Kindergartners for the 2024-2025 school year asking if their child will be attending public, private or another school setting. To be eligible for kindergarten, your child must be 5 on or before September 1, 2024.

If you did not receive a mailing from Merrill Area Public Schools, please contact Sarah Fuchs at 715-536-4581, Ext. 10007 or sarah.fuchs@mapsedu.org and she will include your child in the census and put on our kindergarten roster. Thank you.

| LEGAL NOTICES |

Legals 7700

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: 01/09/2024
/SHON. GALEN BAYNE-ALLISON
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BR I
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for
Name Change Hearing
Case No. 24-CV-04
IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME
CHANGE OF
Kaylee Elizabeth Snyder
By (Petitioner) Jessica Francis Snyder
By (Co-Petitioner) Brian Edward Cooke
NOTICE IS GIVEN:
A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
From: Kaylee Elizabeth Snyder
To: Kaylee Elizabeth Cooke
Birth Certificate: Kaylee Elizabeth Snyder
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 1 Merrill, WI 54452
Date: 02/28/2024
Time: 8:45 AM
If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 715-536-0319 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: 1/18/24, 1/25/24 & 2/1/24
WNAXLP

Legals 7700

Birth Certificate: Jessica Francis Snyder
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 1 Merrill, WI 54452
Date: 02/28/2024
Time: 8:45 AM
If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 715-536-0319 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: 1/18/24, 1/25/24 & 2/1/24
WNAXLP

DATE SIGNED: January 15, 2024
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar
STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
DORIS R. SMITH
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
Case No. 2024-IN-01
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth April 22, 1940 and date of death December 24, 2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 1500 O'Day Street, Merrill, WI 54452.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is April 26, 2024.
5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.
Craig J. Nienow
N5041 County Road JJ
Irma, WI 54442
Telephone: 715-536-7185
Bar Number 01015178
Published 1/25/24, 2/1/24 & 2/8/24
WNAXLP

Legals 7700

CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
Case No. 2024-IN-02
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
GERALD W. HENRICHS
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth August 16, 1935 and date of death December 13, 2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of 800 Superior Street, Merrill, WI 54452.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is April 26, 2024.
5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.
Craig J. Nienow
N5041 County Road JJ
Irma, WI 54442
Telephone 715-536-7185
Bar Number 01015178
Published 1/25/24, 2/1/24 & 2/8/24
WNAXLP

**Merrill Area Public Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
December 20, 2023 – Minutes**
The meeting was called to order by Blake at 5:30 PM in the Board Room. Board members present: Gremler, Krueger, Liberty, Ashbeck, Osness, Proulx and Blake. Board members absent: Woller and Yingling. Others Present: Superintendent Murray, MAPS Administrators, Student Representative Black, five people from the staff and public and Recorder Woller.
MOTION by Liberty, second by Proulx to approve the revisions to Policy 8500 Food Services. Motion carried unanimously.
Proposed resolutions for the 2024 WAB Delegate Assembly were presented to the Board and there were no questions or comments.
MOTION by Osness, second by Proulx for Dr. Strike and Shannon Murray to develop a referendum question to be presented on January 10, 2024, for \$16 million and for the referendum question to be asked in April. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve Option B of the 2024-2025 school calendar. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Krueger to approve the annual Self Assessment plan, process, and timeline as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Osness to approve the MHS Spanish immersion trip to Greece as presented for March of 2025. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Gremler to approve the MAPS 4K Contract for 2024-2025. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Liberty, second by Krueger to approve the four internal NVCI trainers in-district with the mental health funding provided from DPI. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve the BVA Governance Board enrollment limit recommendation for the 2024-2025 school year. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Krueger, second by Gremler to approve the MHS course description book for 2024-2025 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Liberty, second by Ashbeck to approve the broadcast of athletic events by HUDL. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Gremler, second by Proulx to approve stopping all employee portion deductions for dental insurance for April, May, and June of 2024. Motion carried with Osness abstaining from the vote.
MOTION by Liberty, second by Ashbeck to approve the addition of a 6th grade

Legals 7700

teaching position through the end of 2023-2024. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Liberty to approve the monetary donation from The ARC of Lincoln County valued at \$14,000 to create an account to assist students with special needs in the District. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Proulx, second by Osness to approve the donation of funds from Eric and Laura Lee valued at \$2,500 for the Nels P. Evjue School Forest to use as needed. Motion carried unanimously.
MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Osness 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 Osness, second by Liberty to approve consent agenda items a through d, which includes minutes of the November 15, 2023, and December 13, 2023 meetings; second reading and approval of Policies 3430.01 and 4430.01 Family & Medical Leave of Absence; claims, vouchers and receipts totaling \$3,233,552.82; and, donations totaling \$4,953.00. Motion carried with Proulx abstaining from November 15, 2023 minutes.
Blake called for a motion to adjourn into executive (closed) session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes under Section 19.85(1) (c); (f) except where par. (b) applies; and, 118.125. The purpose of the closed session is to discuss administrators' and supervisors' evaluations; and a student discipline update. MOTION by Liberty, second by Krueger to adjourn into closed session. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.
MOTION by Krueger, second by Ashbeck to adjourn at 7:20 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 February 1, 2024 WNAXLP

MERRILL FOTO NEWS

Student of the Week

This Week's Featured Student is



Abby Thompson
Daughter of
Holly Peterson & Andy Thompson
Abby is in 8th grade at Trinity Lutheran School.
She was nominated by Mr. Johnson.

What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
My favorite subject in school is English. I enjoy writing.

What is your favorite part of school? Why?
I enjoy recess because I get fresh air and to hang out with my friends.

What would you like to do/become someday? Why?
When I grow up I want to be a journalist because I really enjoy writing and sharing my opinions with others.

I am nominating Abby because I have witnessed her working with her peers to resolve conflict. She is a peacemaker and has a level-headed approach to helping her peers with problems. She is also an outstanding poet and wants to do her best in school.
~ Mr. Johnson

Student of the Week Sponsored by:



**1401 W. Taylor St.,
Merrill
(715) 536-5400**

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: 01/09/2024
/SHON. GALEN BAYNE-ALLISON
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BR I
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for
Name Change Hearing
Case No. 24-CV-05
IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME
CHANGE OF
Jessica Francis Snyder
By (Petitioner) Jessica Francis Snyder
NOTICE IS GIVEN:
A petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:
From: Jessica Francis Snyder
To: Jessica Francis Cooke

DATE SIGNED: January 18, 2024
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar
STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CITY OF MERRILL
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
Street/Utility Construction Project
The City of Merrill, Lincoln County, Wisconsin, will receive bids for a street and utility project. This project is located on O'Day Street between Martin Street and Riverside Park. **Bids will be accepted until 2 pm, March 20, 2024.** Bids will be received electronically through QuestCDN VirtuBid™ online bidding ONLY. No paper bids will be accepted. Bids will then be placed on file for further action. Bid documents will be available Monday, February 29, 2024. Plan documents can be downloaded for a \$50.00 non-refundable fee by inputting Quest Project # 8942467 (<http://www.questcdn.com/>).

Published January 25 and February 1, 2024 WNAXLP

DATE SIGNED: January 18, 2024
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
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Published January 25 and February 1, 2024 WNAXLP

SKATING

from page 1

USFS or the Ice Skating Institute (ISI). Anyone who is a member of one of the organizations, however, must be in good standing.

Twenty-five members of the Merrill Ice Reflections Figure Skating Club (MIRFSC) competed in this year's BSG over four days of competition, with competitors ranging from 5-year-old Lydia Hoffman on up to 21-year-old Madison Altman-Wendt. Merrill area figure skaters competed in individual events ranging from Basic Elements to Advanced Free Skates and some also competed in duets and team production events.

Medals were presented to the top three places in each event, and placing first, second, or third in any event qualified the skater to advance and compete at the State Games of America being held in San Diego, Cal., this coming summer. Those who placed first, second, third, or fourth in any Showcase Event at preliminary level or higher also qualified the Showcase skater or team for National Showcase being held this summer.

MIRFSC figure skaters made a great showing at the BSG, with 22 of the 25 competitors placing in the top three in at least one of their events. Complete results for MIRFSC are as follows: (see table to the right.)

Founded in 1995, MIRFSC follows USFS guidelines. Their season runs November through March each year and the Club's Mission is: To provide a fun and positive experience that will instill a lifelong love of skating.

They begin with the FUNDamentals to develop basic skills, agility, balance, coordination, speed, excitement, and a love for skating. Each skater progresses at his or own pace to master the skills. Lessons are Wednesday evenings (two sessions that start at 5:30 p.m.) at the Smith Center in the Merrill Area Recreation Complex (MARC). Additional classes and advanced sessions are available on Sunday evenings, and all skaters have the option to perform in the annual Ice Reflections skating show held the second weekend in February, as well as to compete in events like the BSG.

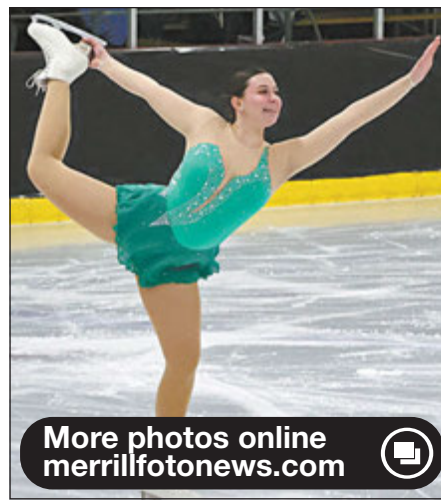
With 92 members, 2 professional figure skating coaches (Lea Beckman and Montana Grabowsky), 2 junior coaches (Madison Altman-Wendt and Brooklyn Kraegenbrink), and 3 intern coaches (Chloe Belant, McKenna Meyer, and Leah Freyer), MIRFSC is dedicated to giving families the opportunity to enjoy quality figure skating instruction in a positive environment that encourages each student's individual growth and success so that skaters of all ages and abilities can learn and enjoy the sport of figure skating. Private coaching is also available to members.

Mark your calendars for the MIRFSC annual

Skater	Levels/Competing Badger State	Results
Alexis Hoeft	Basic 3 Elements	6th
Aubree Grund	Basic 5 Elements Basic 5 Program with Music	4th 3rd
Brooklyn Kraegenbrink	Solo Pattern Dance - Gold Step Sequences to Music - Senior Jumps - Juvenile/Open Juvenile Compulsory Moves - Juv/Open Juv Free Skate - Excel Juvenile Short Program - Open Juvenile Spins - Open Juvenile Showcase Duet/Trio - OJ/Int/Jr w/ McKenna Showcase Ensembles - Production	1st 2nd 4th 5th 2nd 2nd 3rd 2nd 2nd 4th
Caelyn Belant	Aspire 1 w/ Music Aspire 1 Compulsory Moves	3rd 4th
Emilee Woodward	Basic 4 Elements	5th
Emily Freyer	Free Skate - Excel Pre-Preliminary Compulsory Moves - Excel Pre-Preliminary Showcase Duet/Trio - No Test / Pre-Prelim w/ Ruby	7th 5th 2nd
Haley Rindt	Jumps - Juvenile/Open Juvenile Pre-juvenile compulsory moves Pre-juvenile spins Excel Pre-Juv free skate	4th 3rd 6th 6th
Kambyl Mattke	Solo Pattern Dance Pre-Silver Free Skate Excel Preliminary Compulsory Moves Excel Preliminary Jumps Preliminary Spins Preliminary Short Program Preliminary Showcase Ensembles - Production	2nd 1st 5th 4th 4th 6th 4th
Kelsey Rindt	Aspire 1 Compulsory Moves Compete USA Program (w/ music) Aspire 1 Showcase Character Performance Aspire 1-4	4th 4th 3rd
Korina Kraegenbrink	Solo Pattern Dance Pre-Gold Step Sequences to Music - Novice Free Skate Excel Preliminary Compulsory Moves Excel Preliminary Jumps Preliminary Spins Preliminary Short Program Preliminary Showcase Ensembles - Production	3rd 1st 5th 5th 4th 5th 5th 4th
Lauren Zuelsdorff	Compete USA Program (w/music) - Aspire 3 Jumps - Aspire High	4th 1st
Leah Freyer	Step Sequences to Music - Junior Free Skate - Excel Pre-Juvenile Plus Compulsory Moves - Pre-Juvenile Spins - Pre-Juvenile Showcase Duet/Trio - Preliminary/ Pre-Juv w/ Bridgette Showcase Ensembles - Production	1st 1st 1st 2nd 1st 4th
Lilly Hoffman	Compete USA Program (w/music) - Aspire 2 Jumps - Aspire Low Showcase Duet/Trio - No Test / Pre-Prelim w/ Mya Showcase Ensembles - Production	6th 3rd 2nd 4th
Lizzy Hinz	Basic 6 elements Basic 6 program w/ music	2nd 3rd
Lydia Hoffman (5 years old)	Basic 1 Elements	2nd
Madison Altman-Wendt (21 years old)	Adult Free Skate - Adult Silver Adult Spins - Adult Silver	5th 3rd
Mariah Jacoby	Adult Free Skate - Adult Bronze Adult Compulsory Moves - Adult Silver Adult Jumps - Adult Bronze Adult Spins - Adult Silver Showcase Ensembles - Production	1st 1st 1st 2nd 4th
McKenna Meyer	Solo Pattern Dance - Gold Free Skate - Excel Juvenile Showcase Duet/Trio - OJ/Int/Jr w/ Brooklyn Showcase Ensembles - Production	2nd 3rd 2nd 4th
Mya Meyer	Solo Pattern Dance - Pre-Silver Compete USA Program (w/music) - Aspire 2 Compulsory Moves - Aspire 2 Jumps - Aspire Low Showcase Duet/Trio - No Test / Pre-Prelim w/Lilly Showcase Ensembles - Production	3rd 3rd 3rd 4th 2nd 4th
Ruby Freyer	Free Skate - Excel Preliminary Plus Compulsory Moves - Excel Preliminary Spins - Preliminary Showcase Duet/Trio - No Test / Pre-Prelim w/ Emily	4th 1st 1st 2nd
Ruby Nance	Solo Pattern Dance Preliminary Compete USA Program (w/music) Aspire 3 Compulsory Moves Aspire 3 Jumps No Test Showcase Ensembles - Production	1st 3rd 3rd 4th 4th
Sawyer Tucker	Basic 2 elements Basic 2 elements with Music	1st 5th
Sophia Schmidt	Aspire 1 w/ Music Aspire 1 Compulsory Moves	6th 6th
Sophia Volpe	Compulsory Moves - Aspire 1 Solo Pattern Dance - Bronze Compete USA Program (w/music) - Aspire 2 Jumps - Aspire Low	2nd 1st 2nd 3rd
Willow Bathke	Basic 6 elements Basic 6 program w/ music	1st 1st

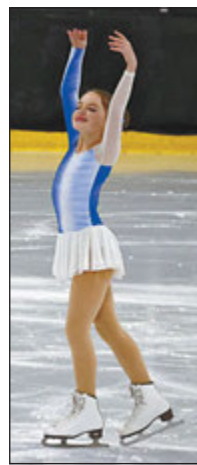
show: Happiest Place on Ice coming Saturday, Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and children 3 and under are free. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance at the Merrill Chamber of Commerce

or online at merrillskate.org. A Live stream is also available for purchase. It is never too late to learn to skate! For more information about MIRFSC, go to merrillskate.org or email MIRFSC@gmail.com.



More photos online merrillfotonews.com

Mya Meyer competed in six events, scoring no less than a fourth place and most were third place finishes; however, she placed second in the Showcase Duet/Trio - No Test / Pre-Prelim w/Lilly Hoffman.

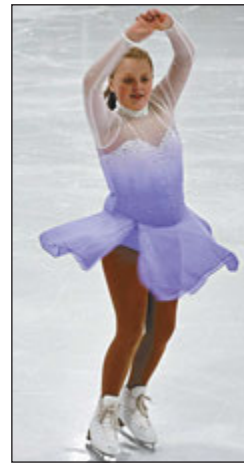


Sophia Volpe competed in four events and took second place in Compulsory Moves - Aspire 1; first place in Solo Pattern Dance - Bronze; second place in Compete USA Program (w/ music) - Aspire 2; and third place in Jumps - Aspire Low.



Brooklyn Kraegenbrink competed in an amazing nine figure skating events over the course of the four-day event. Her best performance was her first place finish in the Solo Pattern Dance - Gold. Her other events earned her four second-place finishes, one third-place finish, two fourth-place finishes, and one fifth-place finish.

Photos courtesy of MIRFSC.



Kelsey Rindt competed in three events, taking fourth place in Aspire 1 Compulsory Moves; fourth place in Compete USA Program (w/ music) Aspire 1; and third place in Showcase Character Performance Aspire 1-4.

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TUESDAY NIGHTS
 FEB. 6TH - LIVER & ONIONS
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 Dinner served: Tuesday 4:00-8:00 PM

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 FEB. 2ND - COCONUT SHRIMP
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 Dinner served: Friday 4:00-8:00 PM
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 LUNCH AVAILABLE:
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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
 W2604 County Road P, Merrill, WI

Sunday, February 11th
 Serving 10:30 am – 1 pm

Adults: \$10 • Age 6-12: \$5
 Under 6: Free

Women's Luncheon
 Saturday, February 17th
 11:00am - 1:00pm

Tickets \$15 Sold in advance only! Motivational Speaker:

Pastor Cheryl Dixon-Colburn is the senior pastor at Abundant Life Church in Eagle River, Wisconsin. She received an honorary doctorate from Jameson College. Pastor Cheryl is the founder of the "Steppin' Out Conference" which provides practical tools that support and aid women in their walk with God.

Cheryl Dixon-Colburn

• Limited Seats Available
 • Ages: 12 & Up

Located at:
New Testament Church
 N2519 County Road K, Merrill, WI 54452

Tickets sold at:
 New Testament Church - Merrill
 (715) 536-8554
 Face book Page:
 Hearts United Women's Ministry

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St. Francis Xavier
 1708 East Tenth Street, Merrill

FRIDAY LENTEN FISH FRIES
 4:30-7:00 P.M.

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 March 1, 8, 15, 22, 2024
 (Not Serving Good Friday)

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Area Events & Entertainment Community Calendar

Feb. 1 - Open Mic Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.
 Feb. 1 - BINGO at St. Francis

Feb. 2 - The VIBE Open Mic Night at St. Stephens UCC (Kuck Lounge)
 Feb. 3 - Ice Drags
 Feb. 3 - Annual Free Underdown Trail Pass Weekend
 Feb. 3 - Ice Cream for Breakfast Day at 17 Scoops, Gleason
 Feb. 3 - Rotary Uncorked
 Feb. 3 - Live Music by Alex & Oscar of Dig Deep at Sawmill Brewing Co.

Feb. 4 - VFW Post 1638 Bingo at Northwoods Veterans Post
 Feb. 4 - Annual Free Underdown Trail Pass Weekend
 Feb. 6 - Donating Blood for Brandtly Blood Drive at Merrill Fire Station
 Feb. 7 - Trivia Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.
 Feb. 8 - Open Mic Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.
 Feb. 10 - Ice Drags

Feb. 10 - Gleason Community Club Ice Oval Races
 Feb. 10 - Les & Jim's Craft & Vendor Sales
 Feb. 10 - Merrill Ice Reflections Figure Skating Club Annual Show at the MARC

For more information, go to: merrillchamber.org/events or contact the event sponsor.

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 SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:30, 7:00 & 9:20PM
 SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00PM
 MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

BEEKEEPER
 "R" (1HR 45MIN)
 FRIDAY: 7:00 & 9:00PM
 SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:15, 7:00 & 9:00PM
 SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:15 & 7:00PM
 MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

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 "PG13" (2HR 3MIN)
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 SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:30, 7:00 & 9:15PM
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 \$35 per person (must prepay by Feb. 4th)
INCLUDES AYCE & DRINK BEER & MIXERS
 \$50 after Feb. 4th

MOVIES from page 6

Tom's appointment, citing his inexperience, and pushes for Aaron, who's well-versed in American-Libyan relations, to get the nod. Paul ultimately sticks with Tom, and it's an absolute gut punch for Aaron, who reacts as any reasonable person would: by going home and making a few cocktails. The man does deserve some props, though; although he's wallowing in self-pity during the broadcast, he calls the studio and feeds useful information to Jane, who relays it to Tom, who, in turn, nails the report.

As the film goes on, Tom's stock within the network begins to rise, and Jane and Tom start to develop feelings for each other, despite their surface-level incompatibility: Tom, the embodiment of news becoming entertainment, represents everything Jane stands against as a journalist; and Tom finds Jane's experience and intensity intimidating. Meanwhile, Aaron harbors unrequited feelings for Jane, who only sees him as a close friend. The film is largely focused on the Jane/Tom/Aaron love triangle, but it's a set of circumstances exacerbated by each person's individual views on journalism in a time when how news was being reported was changing.

One of my favorite scenes features Aaron explaining to Jane why he believes Tom is "the devil": "He will be attractive. He'll be nice and helpful. He'll get a job where he influences a great, God-fearing nation. He'll never do an evil thing. He'll never deliberately hurt a living thing. He will just, bit by little bit, lower our standards where they are important. Just a tiny little bit. Just coax along flash over substance." Aaron ends his rant with a doozie of a line: "And he'll get all the great women."

Aaron's quite dismissive of Tom's reporting methods - specifically, Tom's use of emotion to drive a story home - and there's a case to be made that Aaron's criticism of this is hypocritical. On a piece focused on women who were sexually assaulted while on dates with men they know, Tom tears up while listening to a subject of the story recount her attack. Aaron writes this off as cheap pandering, yet in Aaron and Jane's story about the returning soldier, the Rockwell painting is used to achieve the same goal - to evoke emotion. Why is it exploitative when Tom tries to tug at the audience's heartstrings, but when it elevates a story by Aaron, it's simply effective journalism? And would Aaron feel so strongly about Tom's approach if he wasn't carrying an unreciprocated torch for Jane? It's easy to imagine that

Aaron's anger, jealousy, and insecurity are fueled by his own feelings of rejection. Later in the movie, some surprising information about Tom's story comes to light, and it's a bombshell in his relationship with Jane.

While journalistic ethics might not necessarily be the focal point of *Broadcast News*, I believe the film deserves a sincere tip of the cap for exploring the subject in a way that entertains the viewer while also pushing them to ask a few questions. Is the utilization of emotion in journalism manipulative? Or is it necessary in connecting with the audience on a human level? Are these ideas simultaneously correct? Are they mutually exclusive? Are these issues that black and white? Are any, when it comes to journalism? I don't know if there are definitive right or wrong answers to these questions, but *Broadcast News* interrogates them thoughtfully, with both humor and heart.

In an ideal society, *Broadcast News* would've aged horribly. Someone watching the movie in 2024 would optimally decry how unrealistic it is, saying something like, "Man, remember how back in the late '80s, TV news almost turned into 24-hour profit-driven entertainment? That was a close one." Unfortunately, the fears Jane and Aaron had about the direction of news media have largely come to pass.

I'd be negligent in writing about *Broadcast News* without mentioning its ending. The saga of the three main characters arrives at one of the oddest - and one of the most realistically mundane - conclusions ever featured in a drama-comedy film. Sometimes, there aren't fireworks or a party; some things just ... end with a somewhat boring peacefulness, and it took guts for James L. Brooks to wrap up his film on this note when he so easily could have gone a different route.

Broadcast News tries to pragmatically answer difficult questions about journalism, friendship, and relationships, and it confronts the reality that although sometimes you don't get the resolution you'd hoped for, the one you end up with might be better in the long run (I think The Rolling Stones wrote a song about this). The final scene with Jane, Aaron, and Tom shows three people who took paths that might not be the most exciting, but they're the right ones, and that's okay. In fact, it might even be great. But, if you happen to be really lucky, and your real life exceeds your dreams - keep it to yourself.

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



Members of the Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Chamber staff gathered with local snowmobile club members, reigning AWSC Miss Snowflake Brianna Crotteau, AWSC past President Dave Newman, AWSC Director of Marathon County Wayne Kreager and co-owner of DuWayne Kreager Insurance and his wife, Dawn Kreager, all gathered for the official passing of the replica Championship Derby Cup as it made its way from Wausau to Eagle River Jan. 18-19. Photo courtesy of Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce.

SNOWMOBILE from page 5

Tomahawk for the handoff to the Knight Owls Snowmobile Club. This year due to weather and lack of snow, the tour went by

truck and trailer and used the snowmobiles upon arriving at the World Championship Derby Complex on Friday night to complete their official lap around the track to signify the start of the event.



THE GLEASON CORNER

BY TINA L. SCOTT, EDITOR

Baker Barns: Built on creating community

Baker Barns, N5696 Hwy. 17 in Gleason, is a Mennonite-owned business that builds custom-made portable wooden “barn shaped” buildings, storage sheds, garages, cabins, and multi-purpose buildings. The buildings fit a wide variety of uses, limited only by the imagination of the purchaser and the zoning regulations of the municipality in which the building will be located. In fact, in Merrill, the structure that displays the 1892 horse drawn ladder wagon at the Merrill Fire Station is a custom-built Baker Barn.

Mervin Brubaker founded Baker Barns in Athens in his garage in 1999 and moved the business to Gleason when he and his wife came to the area to help establish a new Mennonite community. At his first Gleason location, Mervin modified the garage for his shop and then used a car hauler trailer to deliver the buildings to customers. In 2004, the business moved to its current location, and he modified the top story of an old barn for his shop. In 2015, the current Baker Barns shop was constructed. With each improvement to the facility, Mervin was able to make bigger, wider, longer buildings.

Baker Barns changed hands on Jan. 1, 2018, when Mervin and his family moved out of the area, and Jonathan Martin took over the business, somewhat jointly with Jonathan’s brother-in-law, Ronald Martin, who has been with the company since 2006. Ronald now owns the actual property, owns and handles the delivery service for the finished barns, and works in the shop, as his time permits, while Jonathan owns and manages the Baker Barns business itself. Several years ago, Jonathan’s son, Andrew, also became a part-owner in the Baker Barns business, and he is often key in working with customers to design a building according to their needs and specifications. Andrew started working for Baker Barns in 2016. His firsthand construction experience proves invaluable and also helps ensure the building design meets code.

Today the company can build up to 44’ long buildings, Jonathan said. Everything is contingent on being able to haul the completed buildings down the road. “In Wisconsin, the maximum width is 16’ wide on the eaves and 16’ high” with the only real limitation on length being the capacity of the trailer “and being able to navigate a corner,” Jonathan said. They produce 200-250 buildings of varying sizes per year, primarily serving the Merrill area and north, even into Michigan.

The business employs a number of other local area and Mennonite men and boys (not all are Mennonite) and is an important part of their community, Jonathan emphasizes. “We’re not just selling sheds here,” Jonathan said. “We’re trying to build character.” Since Mennonites end formal education at eighth grade, working alongside adults in the community provides youth with the opportunity to learn skills and a trade, build a good work ethic, focus on quality workmanship and a job well done, and form foundational character traits that will make them into contributing members of their faith community as adults. Jonathan likened it to growing up on a family farm and how that business was run and passed down through the generations. For most, a family farm is no longer feasible; creating businesses like Baker Barns is comparable.

Four things to know about ordering a Baker Barn:

1. You need a building permit. Contact your local municipality to learn more.
2. Baker Barns need a good, level gravel pad for a foundation. Concrete is not necessary.
3. Plan to go to Gleason to order and design your building, working with someone face to face. They do not have a website.
4. Order at least six months in advance. While they build year round, delivery is dependent on weather and weight limits on roads.



Employees at Baker Barns constructing a new building in the shop.



The Martin family and some of the Baker Barns employees.

Tina L. Scott photos

3rd Annual Dinner & Music

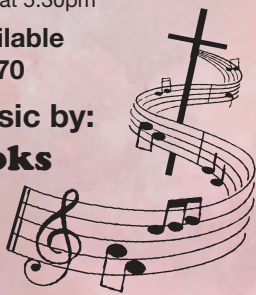
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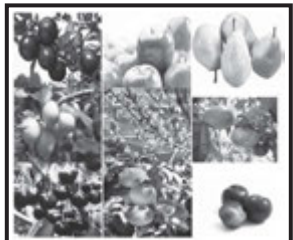
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Team Todd Night to benefit Todd Josiger

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

On Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024, beginning at 5:45 p.m. the Merrill Varsity Basketball Team will hold their annual cancer night/benefit. This year's event will benefit a man who is near and dear to the heart of many athletes in Merrill, Todd Josiger.

Merrill Varsity Basketball Head Coach Troy Pieper describes Todd as "a die hard Merrill Bluejay guy" and "an amazing man, a great family man."

Todd has also "been an important part of Merrill Athletics his entire life," Coach Pieper said.

Todd has been the bus driver for Merrill Wrestling, Merrill Baseball, and some football games, and the Merrill Basketball Program considers him a member of their Basketball family, as well. His son is the trainer for the Merrill Basketball Program, and Todd also has three grandsons and two nephews involved in the Merrill Basketball Program. "He's family, and Merrill Basketball is all about family!" Pieper said.

This year's event has been dubbed "Team Todd" and social media is using the hashtag #TeamTodd to get the word out.

If you're on social media, you might also notice the hashtag #WeWrestleForTodd. The Merrill Wrestling Team recently purchased their Team Todd t-shirts and had them printed with "We Wrestle for Todd" on the backside. They've been sporting their tees at recent wrestling events in support of their bus driver, as well.

Please come out and support #TeamTodd and the basketball teams on Tuesday evening. They will have raffle baskets and a 50/50 raffle. All money from the raffles, 50/50 raffle, and concessions proceeds will be given to Todd and his family to help with anything they need.

Game times start as follows: JV/JV2 at 5:45 p.m.; Varsity at 7:15 p.m. All raffles will be drawn at halftime of the Varsity game. Anyone who ordered a TeamTodd shirt can pick them up from the concession stand on game night, as well. Donations are also welcome and will be passed on to Todd. For more information, contact Coach Troy Pieper at: troy.pieper@mapsedu.org.

Merrill Women's Wrestling

BY BRIAN SUCHOCKI
MERRILL HEAD WRESTLING COACH

Merrill Women's Wrestling started Jan. 2, 2024. Coach Scott Arneson and Coach Isaac Buntrock took the lead in starting the Merrill Women's Wrestling Program this year. Throughout the years, Merrill has had girls competing on the boys' teams. This is the first time there is a separate practice time for girls exclusively - they practice from 6:00-7:20 a.m. daily. There are 12 weight classes for the girls, which are: 100 - 107 - 114 - 120 - 126 - 132 - 138 - 145 - 152 - 165 - 185 - 235. There are currently seven girls practicing: Kaylynn Allen, Olivia Barker, Adison Clark, Akeela Conley, Allison Hunter, Gemma Malone, and Merin Yates.

Arneson and Buntrock ran an intramural wrestling program in December to create interest in the sport of women's wrestling - which is the fastest growing high school sport in the United States. After the intramural program finished, girls had a choice to join and make a girls wrestling team and wrestle the rest of the high school season, which runs in unison with the boys' season calendar.

The girls are behind all other women's teams in that they all started their seasons the second week of November with the start of the boys season. But, the girls have done a

great job working and training with a purpose to compete at their highest level. Allison Hunter and Gemma Malone have been practicing the entire season, but the other team members have only completed three weeks of organized practice. Alison Hunter, Gemma Malone, and Merin Yates all competed in the Wausau West Challenge Series Tournament on Jan. 20, 2024. Allison finished the day 1-2, Gemma 0-2, and Merin 1-2. A neat note is Merin won her first match that she ever wrestled, with a pin in 3:58, and then was defeated in her next 2 matches. This past weekend, Jan. 27, two ladies participated in the Queen of the Mat Tournament in Marshfield - Kaylynn Allen also won her first match of her life and finished her first ever tournament 3-2 with a 6th place finish, while Merin Yates finished her second tournament with a 3-1 record and a 3rd place finish. The girls are signed up to compete this weekend in the Eau Claire North Husky Invitational - this will be a high level tournament for the girls with teams from Minnesota coming to compete.

If you see any of the girls, wish them luck. It is going to be another great learning weekend of wrestling for Merrill Women's Wrestling. Coach Arneson and Buntrock are challenging all girls that are not out for a winter sport to please join women's wrestling next year - our goal is to be one of the best Women's Wrestling Teams in the state next year. Keep WRESTLING - everyday is a new match!



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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK • JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 3

Love of Jesus and togetherness highlight Catholic Schools Week at St. Francis

BY JOY MARQUARDT

“Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community” is the theme of National Catholic Schools Week at St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Merrill Jan. 28-Feb. 3, with students spreading their love of Jesus and service to the community.

A special Mass begins the week at 9 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 28, followed by a pancake breakfast for the community and an Open House from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the school.

“Catholic Schools Week gives us a chance to celebrate what is special about going to a Catholic school,” said Principal Kate Shimel. “The week focuses on our relationships and how special it is that we get to talk about Jesus together and share our beliefs.”

Faith-based activities held during Catholic Schools Week will include presentations Wednesday, Jan. 31, by fourth and fifth grade students who have each selected a saint of the church to research and portray. The third through eighth grade classes will travel to St. Mary’s Catholic School in Tomahawk on Thursday, Feb. 1, to participate in a Mass conducted by Bishop James Powers of the Diocese of Superior and an all school retreat will take place Friday, Feb. 2, focusing on the Eucharist.

Other activities highlighting the week will include a teacher swap,

board games, themed dress-up days, and a family movie night. Students who have been competing to sell the most scrip as a fundraiser for the school will be awarded the title of principal for a day.

“We are going to come together as a school, celebrating our faith and learning about the Eucharist and putting Jesus first,” Shimel said. “The students look forward to the activities and getting to mingle with the other grades and enjoying the activities together.”

The school has chosen the Merrill Area Community (MAC) Home, a warming center and homeless shelter, as a service project for Catholic Schools Week. Students and staff will be collecting supplies for the facility throughout the week.

“Every year we try to choose a different place in Merrill to help,” Shimel said. “So this year I chose the MAC Home, because we have parishioners that volunteer there. The students are learning that there are people in need in our community, and they need our help.”

Theresa Anthony, Executive Director of the MAC Home, will give an informational talk at the beginning of the week about the facility and how it benefits the Merrill community.

“I’ll probably do a rundown of what we do here and explain what

homelessness is,” she said. “I’ll be telling them about what they can do to help the homeless and give a general overview of how people get into the situations they are in.”

Open since 2019, the nonprofit agency is both a transitional living center and warming facility which has served a total of more than 400 clients and last year provided more than 2,000 nights of safe lodging for people in the community.

“We are a warming center for adults on the main level, with five chairs and a shower facility,

See **ST. FRANCIS** page 14



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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK • JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 3

Community connection celebrated at St. Mary's during Catholic Schools Week

BY JOY MARQUARDT

St. Mary's Catholic School in Tomahawk will be celebrating National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 28-Feb. 3 by sharing their faith with the community.

Activities to correlate with the theme "Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community" will be held both in and out of the classroom, inviting the public to see what the school has to offer.

"The purpose of Catholic Schools Week is to bring awareness to our community as to what Catholic schools are all about," said Principal Juanita Skubal. "The academics are huge, but we also promote kindness and a love of God and each other and we teach the students to pray."

The week kicks off on Sunday, Jan. 28, with a special Family Mass at 9:30 a.m. in the church followed by a Community Breakfast in the Corpus Christi Center, which is open to the public.

"A lot of things we are doing we want to invite people in from the public," Skubal said. "That's why we are having the Community Breakfast for everyone. We believe the connection between school and community is important."

Catholic Schools Week continues with a Career Day on Monday, Jan. 29, at the school with students dressing for a career of their choice. Mini courses will be offered throughout the week on a variety of topics from hobbies to life skills, taught by members of the community.

"Something new we will be offering this year is the mini courses," Skubal said. "When I was a student here, we had the mini courses during Catholic Schools Week, and it was a huge thing, so we decided on bringing it back."

Designed for hands-on learning, the students can choose everything from first aid and woodworking to sewing,

See ST. MARY'S page 14



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ST. FRANCIS *from page 12*

laundry, and full kitchen,” Anthony said. “The transitional living center is a regular apartment upstairs for individuals and families where clients can stay up to 90 days.”

Students will be collecting kitchen and bath supplies, laundry soap, garbage bags, paper products, and other needed items for the facility.

During the school year, students work on various service projects, such as making cards and writing letters to veterans on the Never Forgotten Honor Flight, and take turns visiting residents at Pine Crest Nursing Home, among many other projects.

“We do service projects every month,” Shimel said. “The students are learning that they can give something even if they don’t have money. They can do something as simple as writing a card or praying with someone. You can help complete strangers.”

In her first year at St. Francis, Amanda Jeffers teaches second and third grade and has two daughters attending the school.

“I think by doing the service projects, the students are learning how to be a part of the community and how to show love and kindness towards people,” she said. “It gives them a sense of ownership in the community.”

Jeffers’ students attend morning and afternoon prayer in the school cafeteria, participate in mid week Mass, have weekly religion classes, and pray throughout the school day.

“We are able to talk about God and our beliefs, and we do a lot of praying,” she said. “My students enjoy talking about God and knowing He is there. They enjoy being here and learning as much as they can about God and everything else. It’s been a very rewarding experience.”

As a parent, Jeffers chose St. Francis for her children because of its welcoming atmosphere and faith-based education. She will be attending the school’s Open House during Catholic Schools Week as both a teacher and a parent.

“The community doesn’t normally get to see the school, and the Open House gives us a chance to show off our school,” she said. “We will be filling the halls with the students’ work, and the community gets to come in and see what we do.”

Nick Hoeft has served on the St. Francis School Board for more than two years and



has a son and a daughter enrolled in the school. He chooses to volunteer with the school to be involved with his children’s education.

“I wanted to be involved in something the kids had a stake in,” he said. “We are trying to make good decisions for the students and where the school is headed.”

Hoeft appreciates the small class sizes at St. Francis, the religious aspect of the school, and the quality of the teachers and staff.

“The school gives the kids the opportunity to explore their own faith and it gives them a foundation to be good people,” he said. “Both of my kids love going to school, they like the classes and the teachers, and they enjoy going to Mass.”

As a fundraiser for the church and school, the annual St. Francis Friday Fish Fries return Feb. 9 and run through March 22. Bingo nights, including a hot meal and snacks, take place the first Thursday of each month in the school cafeteria. The next Bingo night is set for Feb. 1, with doors opening at 5 p.m. and Bingo starting at 6 p.m. A Spring Family Dance has been scheduled for April 13, which will be open to the public at the school.

St. Francis will be accepting enrollments for the 2024-2025 school year beginning Feb. 1. For more information about the school or to schedule a tour, phone 715.536.6083.



ST. MARY’S *from page 13*

cooking, and maple syrup and butter making.

“We have an EMT coming in to talk about first aid and a grandparent of two of our students will be talking about making maple syrup,” Skubal said. “It will be interesting to see what the kids can do hands-on in a small group setting. They need to experience some of these life skills. That’s one reason why I’m bringing back the mini courses.”

Ryan Berg of Tomahawk has two grandsons attending St. Mary’s and will present on maple syrup producing, beginning with a history of the product.

“I’m going to start with the history of maple syrup from 1609 when the Native Americans first discovered what the liquid was coming out of the tree’s, up to the 1800’s when the settlers came,” Berg said.

Berg, who has been involved in syrup producing for more than 35 years, currently taps more than 1,200 maple trees and sells the product at area farmers markets. He plans to display some of the past and present tools and equipment used in the process and share photos of the large evaporators used today.

“I’m hoping the kids are interested and will ask questions,” he said. “I’ll have lots of visuals. I’m hoping it might spark an interest in them. If they have two or three maple trees in their backyard, they can get a starter kit and get into it as a hobby.”

A mini course in butter making will be presented by Colleen Schuett of Tomahawk, who will be demonstrating an antique butter churn used by her mother and grandmother dating back to the 1920’s.

“We always made our own butter at home, so it will be exciting to share something we are passing down to another generation,” said Schuett, who is a member of the alumni of St. Mary’s. “Of course, butter making is all automated now.”

Schuett plans to explain the process of cream separation and how butter forms in the churn. Students will have the opportunity to operate the hand crank and sample the finished product.

“The process is pretty simple,” she said. “The kids see it as something out of this world, and for them, it probably is. I think they will take home some nice memories.”

Celebration of Mass at 8:45 a.m. and an all school retreat focusing on the subject of prayer will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 31, with students dressing in sports attire and team jerseys.

St. Mary’s will host the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass conducted by Bishop James Powers of the Diocese of Superior at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 1, bringing together more than 270 students from St.

Mary’s, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Merrill, Holy Rosary Catholic School in Medford, and Nativity of Our Lord Catholic School in Rhinelander. A presentation by motivational speaker and magician Carl “The Energizer” Olson of Madison will be held in the afternoon for all students.

The week concludes Friday, Feb. 2, with field trips planned for the entire school. Older students in grades two through five will attend a production of “Dear Edwina Jr.” presented by the Central Wisconsin Children’s Theatre in Wausau. Students in preschool through first grade will travel to the Eagle River Children’s Museum.

As a service project for the week, St. Mary’s students will be collecting items to fill treat baskets as a thank you to area First Responders, police, and firefighters.

“I think Catholic Schools Week brings to light the whole aspect of faith,” said teacher Adam Gessler. “I enjoy spending time with the kids and deepening our faith. I like how it is a celebration, the kids have fun and the staff has fun, and it brings to light what we do here as a school.”

The public is invited to attend a Family Mass throughout the year which is held at 9:30 a.m. the third Sunday of each month. St. Mary’s students participate as readers and greeters and assist with other parts of the service.

Other family events coming up at St. Mary’s during the school year include a Father/Daughter Dance Feb. 16 at the Inshalla Country Club and a Mother/Son event Feb. 23 in the Corpus Christi Center, both of which are open to the public, and a family ski weekend at Camp 10 on Feb. 24 and 25 featuring downhill skiing and snowboarding.

The annual Spring Gala, the schools largest fundraising event, will be held April 19 at the Inshalla Country Club in Tomahawk with a Kentucky Derby theme. The event, now in its 19th year, features a silent auction, dessert auction, and Time and Treasure Raffle among other activities.

“We just love St. Mary’s; it feels like a family here,” said parent Heidi Micke who has served as past president of the Home and School Committee and has had four children attend the school. “We love that we can openly communicate with the teachers and really be involved with the students’ learning.”

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is being accepted for all current St. Mary’s students Jan. 29-Feb. 9 and opens to members of its three supporting parishes Feb. 12-16, with open registration for the community beginning Feb. 19.

St. Mary’s is open for school tours each Wednesday and other times by appointment. For more information about the school, phone 715.453.3542.



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Four inducted into Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

A crowd turned out to cheer on the Boys and Girls during their Varsity Basketball Games Saturday night, Jan. 27, 2024, but a good number of the fans were also there to support the Merrill Basketball Program's annual Hall of Fame (HOF) Night and to celebrate this year's four inductees into the Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame (HOF).

Rory Osnes - Boys' Player Inductee

Rory Osnes was the evening's HOF inductee in the Boys' Player category. Osnes was a Merrill Bluejay Boys Varsity Basketball player from 1988-1990 and racked up significant statistics during his years of play. He is only the second player to surpass 1,000 points in his Merrill Basketball career, finishing with 1,068 points in just three years. At the time, that was the second most points in Merrill High School (MHS) history. He still ranks 6th in Merrill for all-time scoring.

As a Sophomore player in 1988, Osnes averaged 12.2 points per game. He set new Wisconsin Valley Conference (WVC) records



Rory Osnes was the Boys' Player Inductee into the Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame at Saturday evening's ceremony. He was recognized for his long list of impressive statistics set in just three years on the Merrill Boys Varsity Basketball Team from 1988-1990.

for most free throws made and attempted in a game, going 20-24, along with scoring 33 points in a win against Wausau East.

In 1989 as a Junior, he made First Team WVC and ended up the fourth leading scorer. He scored 26 points in the Regional Final win against Rhinelander, taking the team to Sectionals at the Brown County Arena.

In 1990 as a Senior, Osnes averaged 19.5 points a game, totaling 274 points for the season, including scoring 38 of Merrill's 50 points in a game against Wausau East. He made nine 3-pointers in that game. He was named Second Team WVC and Team MVP. He ranks 27th all time in WVC scoring with 726 points, placing him third among all Merrill players.

Fun fact: Current Boys Varsity Head Coach Troy Pieper readily admits Osnes was his idol growing up. He said he would pretend to be Rory while playing basketball in his driveway and hoped that when he got to high school, he would become as good as him!

Melissa Yuska - Girls' Player Inductee

Melissa Yuska was a Merrill Girls Varsity Bluejay player from 1993-1997 and Saturday evening's HOF inductee in the Girls'

Player category. She played on the Merrill Girls Varsity Basketball Team coached by her dad, Bob Yuska, and was a four-year Varsity starter and letter winner, the first Freshman in MHS history to play Varsity Basketball. She made Honorable Mention All-State as both a Sophomore and Junior, made Second-Team All-State as a Senior, and was also an Honorable Mention All-American selection as a Senior. She was WVC First-Team All-Conference in 1995, 1996, and 1997; averaged 17.2 points and 10.1 rebounds per game as a Senior; was the first Merrill girl to score more than 1,000 points in her high school career; and she finished with 1,126 total points in her career. She still holds the record for Girls Basketball at MHS.

In constant pursuit of excellence in her game, Yuska participated in the first Nike All-American Camp for women; attended Women's Basketball Coaches Association Senior Camp for top 100 players; was a United States Army Reserve National Scholar/Athlete Award winner; and had numerous Division I scholarship offers before she accepted an offer from Indiana University. Unfortunately,

See HOF page 16



Kate Knott was this year's Friend of the Program/Lifetime Achievement Inductee into the Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame, recognizing her continued dedication to the Girls Basketball Program for more than 27 years, and she's still going.



Melissa Yuska was Saturday night's Girls' Player Inductee into the HOF, recognizing her contributions and records set from 1993-1997 as a member of the Merrill Varsity Girls Basketball Team. Her family came to celebrate this recognition with her, including her father and former Varsity Basketball Coach, Bob Yuska (far right).
Photos courtesy of the Merrill Basketball Program.

2024 WINTER MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCHEDULE

Girls Basketball (Varsity, JV & JV2)

Fri. Feb. 2	Crandon (JV)	Away	5:45 pm
Fri. Feb. 2	Crandon (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm
Tues. Feb. 6	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Away	5:45 pm
Tues. Feb. 6	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm

Boys Basketball (Varsity, JV, JV2 & JV3)

Thurs. Feb. 8	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Thurs. Feb. 8	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm

Girls Wrestling (Varsity)

Sat. Feb. 3	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	10:00 am
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Boys Wrestling (Varsity & JV)

Sat. Feb. 3	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	10:00 am
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Boys Ice Hockey (Varsity & JV)

Thurs. Feb. 1	Wausau West (JV)	Marathon	5:00 pm
Thurs. Feb. 1	Wausau West (Varsity)	Marathon	7:00 pm
Tues. Feb. 6	Marshfield (JV)	Away	5:00 pm
Tues. Feb. 6	Marshfield (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm

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Former Coach Tom Andreska was inducted into the Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame Saturday night. He spent 35 years as a coach at various levels of the program including 14 years as Head Varsity Coach, contributing significantly to the Merrill Basketball Program at multiple levels.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Ava Detert, a Junior at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named Athlete of the Week. Ava started playing basketball in fourth grade, playing on a traveling team until seventh grade when she played for Prairie River Middle School (PRMS). COVID canceled the eighth grade season. As a Freshman, she played JV and was pulled up to Varsity during Regionals, was split between the two her Sophomore year, and was pulled up to Varsity this year. She is a shooting guard.

Ava plays Volleyball with a similar journey bringing her to full-time Varsity this year. She also plays Club Volleyball, previously for Medford Storm, this year for Wisconsin Ice. And she plays Softball, starting in elementary school on city leagues, then traveling teams through PRMS, and at MHS, like her other sports, playing JV as a Freshman, split JV/Varsity as a Sophomore, and she anticipates Varsity this spring.

At school, Ava's favorite class is body structure and function. She was in LEAD the last two years, is in Link Crew and Big Brothers Big Sisters, and coached Junior Jays for Volleyball the last two years and plans to continue. She also works part-time at Z's Fork Horners. In her free time she likes hanging out with friends, going shopping, and taking road trips with her family.

The daughter of Trisha and Steve Detert of Merrill, Ava has a 3.48 GPA and plans to attend college for a career in radiology.



Ava Detert

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Merrill Lady Jays pull away late to defeat AFHS

BY RICK ARGALL
MMC STAFF

The Merrill Lady Jays put one in the win column versus non-conference opponent Adams Friendship High School (AFHS) Saturday night, Jan. 27, 2024, at home as part of Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame (HOF) Night. The game was part of a doubleheader that featured the Boys Varsity game immediately following the Varsity Girls matchup.

Fans were treated to a back-and-forth game where there were multiple lead changes throughout the contest. After AFHS took an early 2-0 lead, Merrill got on the board with a 3-pointer from downtown by Mia Ott (10 pts, 2 3pt, 4 FT) that gave the Lady Jays a 3-2 lead at the 16:05 mark of the first half. Merrill built a 6-2 lead on a basket by Maddie Ott (9 pts, 1 FG, 2 3pt, 1 FT) and a made free throw to complete the And-1 three-point play. Both teams played solid defense through the midway point of the first half, as the game was tied 9-9 before the first timeout at 10:48. The Lady Green Devils went on a 5-0 run to lead 14-9 when Coach Debuhr used a timeout to regroup. After the timeout, the Lady Jays



Maddie Ott attempts a free throw versus AFHS.



Grace Reimann sinks one of her four free throws Saturday night.

Rick Argall photos.

went on a roll with consecutive 3-pointers by Freshman Grace Reimann (19 pts, 6 FG, 1 3pt, 4 FT) and Senior Maddie Ott as Merrill pulled to within 1 point, trailing 16-15 at the 5:05 mark. Haley Rindt (7 pts, 2 FG, 3 FT) gave Merrill the lead, 17-16 with a key basket late in the half. The teams traded baskets as Grace Reimann scored consecutive hoops and Mia Ott hit 2 free throws to close out the half 23-23 as both teams headed to the locker room.

Merrill came out and started off with a big 3-pointer by Mia Ott to grab a 26-23 lead. A quick 8-0 run by AFHS built their lead to 31-26, with 12:30 remaining in the game, but the Lady Jays tightened up their defense and closed the gap again to 1 point, trailing 31-30 after baskets by Grace Reimann and Haley Rindt. Maddie Ott hit another 3-pointer to put Merrill up 33-31

and played tough defense down the stretch to maintain a 34-31 lead with 5:40 left in the game. After a timeout by AFHS, the teams battled down the stretch as AFHS took their final lead, 35-34, prompting Merrill to call a timeout to discuss strategy. Grace Reimann hit another key basket and Senior Sophie Wendorf (3 pts, 1 3pt) hit a crucial 3-pointer to extend their lead to 39-35 with 2:40 left in the game, a lead Merrill would not relinquish. Junior Haley Rindt hit 2 free throws to increase the lead to 41-35, and Grace Reimann added another 3-point play with a basket and free throw as Merrill pulled away 44-35 in the last minute of play. The Lady Jays continued their hot free-throw shooting in the closing seconds, hitting all 4 attempts, and the final buzzer sounded for a final score of 48-38, lifting Merrill's record to 9-8 overall.



Mia Ott attempts a free throw during the Lady Jays' 48-38 victory.



Sophie Wendorf plays defense at the 3-point arch.

Merrill was led by Grace Reimann (19 pts), Mia Ott (10 pts), Maddie Ott (9 pts), and Haley Rindt (7 pts). The Lady Jays return to conference play Tuesday night, Jan. 30, 2024, hosting Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School (WRLHS).

Box Score
AFHS 38 @ Merrill 48

Merrill Varsity Boys break their six-game losing streak with a home win on HOF Night

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Boys Varsity Basketball Team traveled to Wausau West last Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, to play the Warriors and the Warriors took the win that time around.

By the end of the first half, the Bluejays were down 23-35, and it didn't get any easier in the second half.

"We struggled on defense tonight, especially in the second half," said Troy Pieper, Boys Varsity Basketball Head Coach. "Our shooting struggles continued, as well. West is a very good defensive team, they play very aggressive, and they caused us some issues tonight. We will get it figured out, I'm confident of that; it's just a matter of time."

Ever focused on the positives and encouraging his team to overcome their setbacks, Pieper still found reason to celebrate despite the 84-62 loss to Wausau West.

"Cooper Wendorf got his first Varsity points, which was one positive from the night," he said. "He just recently came back from an injured hand that had him out all year until now. He's been chomping at the bit to get out there, so it was nice for him to get his first Varsity points, scoring nine in the second half."

Point leaders for the Bluejays were #2 Carter Baade (15 pts, 6 FG, 1 3pt, 1 FT, 4 ast, 1 stl), #5 Aidan Houghton (9 pts, 4 FG, 1 3pt, 1 ast), #13 Tyson Ott (9 pts, 2 FG, 1 3pt, 4 FT, 1 ast, 1 stl), and as previously mentioned, #22 Cooper Wendorf (9 pts, 2 FG, 1 3pt, 4 FT, 1 ast). Of particular note, Wendorf delivered up all this in just 8 minutes of game play and

scored 100% of his free throw attempts.

Box Score
Merrill 62 @ Wausau West 84

On Saturday, Jan. 27, the Merrill Bluejays played host to the Wausau Newman Fighting Cardinals, and this time the Bluejays were up for the fight. It probably didn't hurt that attendance and school spirit for the Merrill Bluejays was bolstered by the fact that Saturday was Hall of Fame (HOF) Night for the Merrill Basketball Program.

"Hall of Fame Night brings one of our best crowds of the season," Pieper said, "And it was a great atmosphere for both the Girls and Boys games. It was a great night celebrating and honoring four well deserving people as they got introduced and inducted into the Merrill Basketball HOF."

"Last year we lost on HOF night, which hurt a bit," he said. "It's nice to win on these special nights. Tonight we got the win, which made the night that much better."

Taking a look at the game itself, "It wasn't our cleanest game, especially on the defensive side as we struggled to contain their quick guards, as we had a few on ball breakdowns as well as weakside help breakdowns," Pieper said, "but the energy and effort were there tonight, [Now we] just need to get the last 'E' which is execution."

It was, however, a great night for the offense, he noted. Merrill was up 42-31 at the end of the first half. "It was one of our best nights on offense, which was nice to see," he said. "We were very efficient and moved the ball well and

moved without the ball really well. we shot 63% on the night inside the 3-point line, our 3-point shot didn't fall as well yet, which I think will improve if we continue to move and work together on offense like we did tonight."

Both teams put up 30 points each in the second half. "After games getting postponed and dealing with a six-game losing streak, we just needed a win," Pieper said. "We won't apologize for any wins. We will take any win we can get, and it felt so nice to get back on track. Now we have a busy week coming up. We play Monday at Rapids, Tuesday at Antigo, and Thursday at home vs Elcho."

Regarding specific players and their contributions, "I thought Tyson Ott (18 pts, 6 FG, 2 3pt, 4 FT, 1 ast) and E.J. Weix (26 pts, 10 FG, 1 3pt, 5 FT, 1 ast) were very efficient and good tonight," he said. "Tyson had his career high with 18 points, and E.J. was dominating all night, scoring 26 while shooting 10-15 from the field."

"Carter Baade (13 pts, 5 FG, 2 3pt, 1 FT, 3 ast, 3 stl) also finished in double figures with 13," Pieper said. "Getting three guys in double figures is very much a positive."

Another player of note: "I thought Carson Woellner (4 pts, 2 FG, 3 ast, 2 stl) gave awesome minutes tonight," he said. "He was moving great without the ball, he was making great cuts, and his energy was off the charts tonight. When we get that sort of energy from Carson, we are just a much better team as a whole."

Box Score
Wausau Newman 61 @ Merrill 72

HOF from page 15

her basketball career was cut short due to injuries, but everything she learned from playing for her father, who she credits with much of her success, came back to benefit MHS again some years later when Yuska became the Merrill Girls Head Basketball Coach from 2007-2014.

Currently, she is the Principal at Little Chute Elementary School in Little Chute, Wis.

Tom Andreska - Coach Inductee

Tom Andreska coached the Merrill Boys Basketball Team for 35 years, from 1983-2019. He started his basketball coaching career while attending UW-Stout, coaching the fifth and sixth grade team at St. Joe's Catholic School, before coming to Merrill. During his 35-year tenure at Merrill, he coached the eighth grade team for four years, the Sophomore team (when that was a thing) for two years, the JV team for 15 years, and then served as Head Varsity Coach for 14 years from 1993-2007. During his time as Varsity Coach, he set and still holds the Merrill WVC record for the most wins in a season, going 12-4 in 1993-1994.

In addition to that, he is the only coach in Merrill Boys Basketball history to coach a State Runner-Up Team (2010-2011) [Fun fact: He coached those same kids during their fourth through eighth grade traveling team years] and to coach a WVC regular season Conference Championship Team (2018-2019).

Andreska started Merrill traveling teams being part of the Great Northwest Basketball League (GNBL) and brought the GNBL State Tournament to Merrill. It is still held in Merrill. In 1993, he started the Merrill Boys Basketball Booster Club, which still operates today, as well.

In addition to coaching, Andreska taught Technology Education at MHS from 1983 until he retired in 2018.

Fun Fact: Current Merrill Boys Varsity Basketball Head Coach Troy Pieper had Andreska as his Varsity Coach from 1995-1998.

Kate Knott - Friend of the Program/ Lifetime Achievement Inductee

Kate Knott started as the Girls Basketball Team Manager in 1996 and still continues in this role, more than 27 years later. Players and coaches have come and gone through the

program, but Knott has been a constant. She loves what she does and shows up every day ready to work with a great sense of humor, a big smile, a lot of energy, and dedication that inspires others to be better, nominators said. She is especially known for her infamous and motivating team speeches. The players love her and say Kate is "secretly hilarious" and always gets the players smiling and laughing with her. They love how she gets them pumped up.

"Kate always delivers a great pre-game speech which always ends with her hand up in the middle of the team and saying, 'Now let's go win this thing!'" nominators said.

And at the last away game of the season, "she walks to the back of the bus and delivers her season re-cap to the team, letting them know that they had a great season and should be proud of themselves."

Beyond her contributions to the Merrill Basketball Program, inducting Knott into the HOF is not only a testimony to her spirit, her humility, and her dedication to her position as the Girls Basketball Manager, but also to her character.

Congratulations to all of this year's inductees into the Merrill Basketball Hall of Fame!